



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2026 YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER

*Unite For
 Good*

BLAINE TAMAKI & CAITLIN OIYE COON JAPANESE AMERICAN DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

The Japanese American Day of Remembrance marks the signing of Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, which enabled the United States military to forcibly remove and incarcerate 120,000 Japanese American men, women, and children during World War II.



Blaine is third-generation Japanese, raised in Yakima, and graduated from Davis High School in 1975. He earned his J.D. degree from the University of Washington (UW) School of Law in 1982 and graduated with a B.A. in Economics with Honors Distinction from UW in 1979. In 1994, he started Tamaki Law, which achieved unprecedented success as a diverse plaintiff's litigation law firm representing clients of all ethnic cultures throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Fueled by a passion for justice because of his father's experience in the Japanese incarceration camps during World War II, Blaine's life has been dedicated to helping correct the injustices suffered needlessly by the injured, abused, and neglected. In response to COVID-19, Blaine and his wife launched a family foundation in 2020 called the Blaine and Preciosa Tamaki Foundation with a mission to support charitable organizations that promote inclusion and justice with a focus on nonprofits in the Yakima Valley.

In 2017, he was appointed by Governor Jay Inslee as a Regent at the UW. In 2020 and 2025, he rose to Chairman of the Board of Regents and is the first Chairman from Yakima. He is currently in his second term as Regent at the UW.



Caitlin Oiye Coon graduated from the University of Washington with a BA in History. She also holds an MA in History/Archives and Records Management from Western Washington University and an MLIS from San Jose State University. Caitlin has over 15 years of experience as an archivist, with a specific interest in community-based archives and the impact of technology in the archival profession.

At Densho she currently manages their archives program in which she oversees a team dedicated to the preservation and access of historical materials and oral histories through digital technologies.

Please join us to learn more about Executive Order 9066, local history of the Yakima Valley Japanese community before World War II, and personal stories from our community members.

FOR THURSDAY'S MEETING

Greeters – Esther Magasis, Jane Sobottka

Inspiration – Sharon Miracle

Sergeant-at-Arms – Mike Hummel

Program – Dana Eliason

Attendance – Jake Hambly

FUTURE PROGRAMS

February 26th – Megan Murphy, World Marathon Challenge

March 5th – Quinn Dalan, Patti Powers, Tammy Hanlon & Sara Watkins, Women in Law Panel

March 12th – District Governor Tracy McCall

March 19th – Joe Meza, Pexco & the Aerospace Industry

THE HEART OF OUR CLUB CARD DRAW!



Here's the play...purchase tickets before Rotary for \$5 each. If your ticket is drawn at the end of the meeting, you get to select a card from the deck. Find the Joker and win half the pot. If the Joker isn't drawn, the chosen card gets tossed and the prize money rolls over to the following week.

The deck only includes Hearts and Clubs (diamonds and spades have been benched) and enough cards for the remaining meetings under Head Coach Bissell. Bring your luck, bring your confidence, and bring some extra cash!

ROTARY SKI DAY IS CALLING!

Dust off your skis, lace up your boots, and join us for an unforgettable day of mountain magic on Friday, March 13th at White Pass Ski Area. Whether you're a black-diamond daredevil, a bunny-hill beginner, or more of a scenic snowshoe stroller, Rotary Ski Day has your name written all over it. Want to test out some of the newest gear? Sporthaus is providing free skis, snowboards, and snowshoe rentals to Rotarians and their guests along with free demo skis to try on the slopes!

Not into skiing or snowshoeing? No problem. Join us at 4pm at Bron Yr Aur Brewing in Naches for pizza, laughs and tall tales from the mountain. We'll be gathering with our friends from Southwest and Sunrise Rotary Pizza is on us – drinks are on you – good times are guaranteed!

Grab your gear (or just your appetite) and come out for a day packed with fresh air, fantastic views, and Rotary camaraderie. Sign ups will be on the tables next week.



REVIEW

Agriculture took center stage this week with a panel discussion moderated by Jon DeVaney who was joined by Bud Hollingbery, a fruit and hop grower with 57 years of experience; Jack Field, the Executive Director of the WA Cattle Feeders Association and a rancher; and Sara Higgins, the Executive Director of the Washington Winegrowers Association.

The state of agriculture economy is very troubled. Recently the WA Agriculture Department and WSU released a report showing Washington with the lowest profit margins and the highest production cost increase of any state in the nation. In 2024 we ranked 50th in the nation in grower take home pay with net farm revenue of negative \$288 million. When the ag economy struggles it affects everyone, especially in our Valley where 23% of all jobs in the county are tied to agriculture. The entire industry has been dealing with rapidly increasing production costs. In the tree fruit industry, even as the retail price has been going up, the wholesale price has been going down. The Gala apple is the state's largest apple variety – with the current average sales price, farmers are producing 25% below their cost of production. Yakima County lost 15% of its farms between 2017 and 2022.

Bud, Jack, Sara were asked, is this just normal volatility in agriculture, are we seeing something fundamentally different, what challenges do they face, and is there reason for any optimism? Bud was first. There is always stress in agriculture; he has seen good times and bad. This moment is probably the worst he has seen with the crops he is associated with in the last 57 years. However, 59 years ago it may have been just as bad. His dad had been trying to sell their ranch for 3 years; Bud bought the ranch but needed an additional job to survive. Like any commodity, if there are too many apples the prices go down, if there is too little, the price goes up. Unlike apples which are elastic, hops are inelastic. If you have too many, you can't sell them. Pellet form does allow storage for up to 5 years. Challenges include the cost of prevailing wages, H2A, housing, water sources, government influence and the increased employees to maneuver rules, regulations, and trade. Craft beer had a major impact on the hop industry. During its peak hop acreage increased from 40,000 to 60,000. Currently, it sits at 41,600 acres. It's much easier to put in and take out hop acreage than apples. Big money like Goldman Sachs and John Hancock are buying up farmland. Ever the optimistic, his philosophy is *Its always darkest before dawn* - sometimes it's hard to see the dawn.

The wine industry is a much younger industry in our State. Commercial production ramped up in the 1970s and 1980s. In 2016, they were crushing 272,000 tons of grapes; last year that number dropped to 150,000 tons. Preliminary reports show that number dropped to 108,000 tons in 2025. 90% of the industry is made up of small wineries that produce less than 5,000 cases annually. Chateau St. Michelle is the big gorilla in the industry. In 2023, they announced they would be reducing their grape supply by 40% over the next 5 years. The impact is 70% of the entire industry going down to 30%. It is significant and unprecedented. Oversupply and under demand is global. The reasons range from health preferences, anti-alcohol movement, to competing beverages. Challenges they see come from policymakers making decisions without a full understanding of the implications. Currently there is a bill to decrease the blood alcohol content level for DUI. It was tried in Utah and didn't make a difference. The tariffs with Canada also hit hard; they were our number one export country. What they have found an opportunity to rip out diseased blocks and a new focus on the sweet spot which seems to be wines in the \$15 to \$30 range.

Jack shared that cattle ranching is a shining star that comes on the heels of multiple years of a nationwide drought and reduced numbers. 1951 was the last time they had this low of mother cows in the U.S. The challenges of reduced supply and very strong consumer demand have resulted in them being within \$2 of the highest

cash price on the nationwide index they've ever seen - it's a strong market. Concerns for the future include maintaining demand and the cost of reentry for a cattle feeder to buy a calf. Today's limited supply affects packing plants with reduced need. Recently a Tyson Fresh Meats closed a packing plant in Texas and experts are saying we will see more plants closing. Ranchers will have to travel further to bring their cattle to market. Washington has 2 large processing plants that are in good shape. Other bright spots included the USDA food pyramid guidelines placing proteins and dairy at the top and the increased size, the health, and the quality of today's beef. Challenges mirror those in other industries - overtime pay, vehicles, housing, medical benefits and other compensations. In their industry they pay an estimated 10 to 15 hours of overtime on every single employee. On the trade front, the USD closed the southern border of the import of feeder cattle leaving feed yards in the south empty. It's also a reason for high prices even in our state. It's essential to the cattle industry that we maintain viable exports.

The positive - Farmers are basically optimists who are focused on what they do better than anyone else. Greg Stewart introduced the program with the best line: *when you sit down to dinner you become part of agriculture.*

What else happened during the meeting? John Cooper introduced our newest member, Randy Bonds, Jr. Randy attended and graduated from Northwestern University with a degree in Intercultural Studies. After graduation he stayed at Northwestern doing IT work for the University for about 12 years. Today he supervises the GIS Application Development and Support for the City of Yakima where he has been employed for the last 14 years. He is married to his wife, Noel; together they have two children. In his free time, he likes running, hiking, and is a big fan of soccer both playing and coaching. He is active at Stone Church and is planning a mission trip to Argentina this summer. He generously donates to his community and church and enjoys hands-on projects. He is going to make a great Rotarian!

Our recognition of Black History Month continued with Eugene Vigil who shared a small part of his story. He recently started to explore his genealogy; what he found surprised him. On one side, his ancestry traced back to West Africa like many if not most of Black Americans that carries a story pain, strength, and survival. On his other side, he found a Spanish ancestry that traces back to the 1600's as one of the early founding families in Mexico. It blew his mind that both sides stretch back so deeply into the history of this country and the story of how it came to be – colonization, hardship, restructuring and rebuilding. Somewhere in that history, his grandfather migrated to Yakima through New Mexico and Colorado. As a youth his grandfather dropped out of school and became his family's breadwinner. Just like his grandfather, Eugene found his way to Yakima too. He has lived in Bremerton, Tacoma, Gig Harbor, Wenatchee, Tri-Cities, and Spokane and has seen a lot of Washington. It's made him realize that migration isn't just a random thing in his family, but a pattern from West Africa to America with forced migration and from Spain to Mexico for new opportunity. He is connected to enslaved Africans, Spanish settlers and native roots in the Southwest. It is the story of America itself. Black History Month reminds us that our stories are layered, and we are a part of something bigger than ourselves. Standing here, he is continuing a story that started centuries ago.

Our song of the day, chosen by Elisabeth Tutsch was Golden by K Pop Demon Hunters to honor our local high school swimmers who just competed in District finals at Lion's Pool for their grit and perseverance. Kurt Labberton shared a story from childhood that ended with during the Valentines to always to choose the "elbows" in life. Sam McClung was presented with his blue badge and Zeb Ruff raised money for Rotary Charities with an agriculture quiz.