

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2025 YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER

*The Magic
Of Rotary*



DARCIE ROBERTS LOCAL FINE ART



Darcie Roberts was raised in Wapato, Washington. She received a BS in Business Management from the University of La Verne in Naples, Italy and later a BS in Education at CWU after which she taught Spanish for the 13 years at La Salle High School. She has been painting professionally since 2016, full-time since 2019, and has received several hours of professional training. She is an active member in many organizations such as the Women Painters of Washington, the Northwest Pastel Society, and the Pastel Society of America.

Her work is sold at local, regional and national shows as well as on her website. She accepts commissions and enjoys donating work to local non-profit organizations as a way to give back. She will be sharing her work, her art journey, and question our beliefs about creativity as it relates to us, our beliefs, and stages of life.



FOR THURSDAY'S MEETING

Greeters – Linda DiLembo, Arthur Salido
Inspiration – Joshua Shockley
Sergeant-at-Arms – Doug Rich
Program – Kelly Gasseling
Attendance – Jennifer Bliesner

FUTURE PROGRAMS

March 6th – Vicki Baker, Yakima City
Update
March 13th – Shawn Boyle, City of
Yakima Police Chief

ROTARY SECOND CHANCE SOCIAL

On Wednesday, February 26th, come join the fun,
From 5pm to 6pm, we'll be second to none!
At WaterFire Restaurant, we'll gather with cheer,
Appetizers are on us, so bring a friend near!

Drinks are on you, but the fun is on us,
Great conversation and laughs, no need to fuss!
So come one, come all, for a social so grand,
It's a second chance to connect, so take a stand!



ROTARY LEARNING INSTITUTE

Are you ready to elevate your leadership skills and connect with like-minded individuals and learn more about Rotary? The Rotary Learning Institute is your chance to do just that! This one-day event will take place on March 22nd from 8:30am to 3:30pm and is designed to provide members with the tools and knowledge needed to enhance their Rotary experience, gain new ideas for our club, and gain leadership skills. Topics covered will include: My Rotary, Membership, Rotary Opportunities, The Rotary Foundation, Vibrant Club Meetings, and Public Image and Marketing.

The location is the Yakima Greenway Visitors Center located at 111 S. 18th Street and will include lunch. Space is limited, so contact the Rotary office to reserve your spot. The cost is \$50 a person - Yakima Rotary will cover the full cost of participation for members.



ROTARY SKI DAY

Get ready for a day of adventure and camaraderie at Rotary Ski Day, set for Friday, March 14th at White Pass Ski Area. Whether you're an experienced skier, novice, or just looking to enjoy the winter beauty of our region on snowshoes, this event promises something for everyone. Demo skis will be available to try at no charge from Sig Fossum and the Sporthaus.



Don't ski or snowshoe? We would still love to have you join us for dinner at Bron Yr Aur Brewing in Naches at 4pm. Enjoy some of the best pizza around and enjoy the company of fellow Rotarians that will include Southwest and Sunrise members. The pizza is on us; drinks are on you.

Grab your gear and get ready for a day of fun, food, and fantastic views!

REVIEW

Special thank you to everyone who participated this week. Alex Ditto and Tammy Hanlon served as our greeters. Celisa Hopkins shared an inspirational message about Rotary, the 1.4 million Rotarians around the globe who help create positive lasting change, the power of service, and how together we can make a difference. President Jim welcomed our guests and shared three upcoming opportunities for Rotary fellowship and fun: Second Chance Social next Wednesday at WaterFire Restaurant, Rotary Ski Day on March 14th, and the Rotary Learning Institute on March 22nd. Steven Gustafson raised money for Rotary Charities with a National Pets Day themed sergeant-at-arms.

Doug Rich introduced his good friend, Dave Desmarais as our newest member. Dave is a lifer of the Yakima Valley, growing up on the family hop farm while attending Catholic schools in Yakima. Hops had some trouble back then. His parents sold the farm and moved to their cabin on Chinook Pass – it began a lifelong love for Highway 410 and the Naches community. As a young boy he started his working career washing dishes and pumping gas at Whistlin' Jack's Lodge. He went on to Apple King working his way up and eventually moved into sales through a partnership with John Roche and other folks. In 2001 he formed his own sales business called MMD Sales. He serves as the chair for Naches Dollars for Scholars, and at one time was very active in Upper Valley Sports and the Boot & Spur. He is the proud dad of one daughter who recently graduated from UW Foster School of Business. He met his wife Gina after reconnecting to his church in Naches; together they continue to serve. We are so happy to have him as part of our club!

Trevor Greene continued our recognition of February as being Black History Month with a reflection on Dr. King's legacy. Our city like many others across the U.S. bears the name of Dr. King in places that matter – a school, a street, and a park – all represent a commitment. Our school represents an investment in the future; our street represents a journey that connects neighborhoods, businesses and schools; and our park provides a gathering place for families and reminds us of the community that we must nurture. Nationally his legacy is celebrated at the MLK Jr. Memorial in Washington, D.C. the first to honor an African American. The Stone of Hope on which it stands provides quotes and words that transcend time. As individuals, we have the ability to honor his legacy and bring his vision to reality in Yakima and beyond not just in words but actions that build bridges by mentoring a child, supporting equitable policies, fostering understanding and dedicating acts of love and justice.

This week's program featured two of our own members, Andi Hochleutner and Foti Panagakos, who shared their stories and unique journeys to who they are today with classification talks. Each one did a great job sharing their stories. Andi began by sharing how much she loves this group and the question she is often asked, how a girl from the great state of Texas ends up in Yakima, Washington. The answer is sheer dumb luck and fate. It all starts with her parents. Her dad was German and from a big Catholic family; her mom is full Greek and granddaughter of a priest. They very much represent the real-life version of My Big Fat Greek Wedding. They met when her dad in search of orange towels for his sister attending the University of Texas, met a lovely Greek girl working at Sears. They happened to meet again, went on a date to a hockey game, were engaged 1 week later, and happily married for 30 years. (Orange and the Texas Longhorns have a special place in Andi's heart). In 1986, at 36, Andi's dad suffered a heart attack. One year later he made history as the first heart transplant at Baylor Scott & White and the fifth successful transplant in the Dallas area. As a little girl she remembers the kindness of the nurses, and witnessed her father's determination to be out of rehab in two

short months so he could celebrate her birthday and his subsequent advocacy to make the world a better place. He visited schools to talk about the dangers of drugs and alcohol; she begged to go with him. She learned the importance of being an advocate and using her voice to make the world a better place through service (Rotary's message). Her senior year of high school, her father experienced another heart attack. Earlier in the day she had gotten mad at him. As a trained lifeguard, she administered CPR until help arrived; she spent a week in the hospital waiting for him to come out of a medically induced coma. Approximately one year later during her first year of college, on April 15th her dad passed away. His last words to her were a few days earlier when she needed some quotes from a book at home, "I love you and good luck on your paper." Andi wouldn't be here without the fearless dedication it takes to put aside differences and do what you need for your family. She, her mom and sister moved forward together. Once she helped get her sister through college, she could think about her own dreams. She moved to Washington D.C. and took the lessons learned from sitting around the table as a family talking about politics and turned it into a career. She will always be CPR certified!

Foti's story began with the first of three life experiences that shaped who he is today. First, was his dad. He was a typical Greek immigrant who had a third-grade education and ended up owning his own diner in Raleigh, New Jersey. He was the father from the Big Fat Greek Wedding and fond of saying if it wasn't for the Greeks, we'd all be living in caves. Foti started working in the diner at the age of 11 and worked there through college. Life in the diner was working with a diverse group of people economically and ethnically – it was truly a United Nations of people. His father had a simple metric, if you want to work, I'll give you a job. He learned customer service. It is a skill that he uses today with the students he serves; and he learned responsibility. As an 18-year-old kid, he often worked until 2am locking the place up. Sometimes he left at 6am as his father was walking in for the start of his day.

The second experience was a fast forward to coming out of high school; he wanted to go to college. They were not a family of means which meant he would have to go to a local college. He was fortunate to get a scholarship through the U.S. Army and ROTC and able to go to Lehigh University in Pennsylvania. It was the start of his career. He served as cadet commander in his senior year. He met his wife Judy there. He went on to Dental School where upon graduation, he had to decide whether to go active duty as a dentist or join the reserve. He joined the reserve serving most of his time as a tank officer. He learned leadership skills; values and integrity; and planning and organization.

His time in corporate America was number three. He had been teaching at Rutgers University for 13 years when he was asked to join Colgate Palmolive. Thinking he would do so for a couple of years before going back to his love of teaching, he ended up staying 13 years. He held a global position, traveling around the world meeting people and representing the company; he still has a network of friends from those travels. He learned communications and teamwork - it is important when working with a global team. It was before Zoom and meant picking up the phone or using email. He learned financial management and what it meant to be responsible for budgets and meeting the bottom line; something he never experienced through academia. Networking and partnerships were a big part of the job. His life experiences inspired his future and where he is today. There were challenges and setbacks along the way.

Just as promised their presentations were nothing short of fantastic. Thank you for sharing the special life moments that have brought you to where you are today.



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