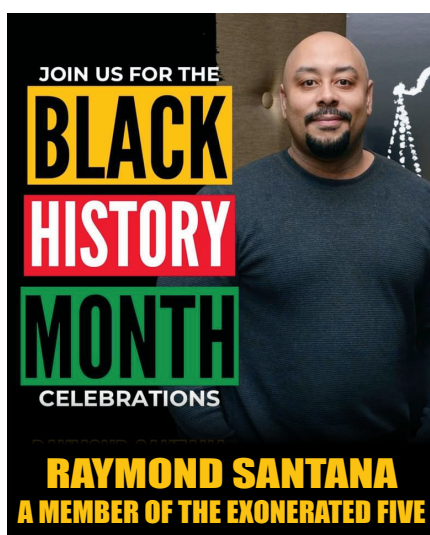




THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2024 YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER

*Create Hope
 in the World*

RAYMOND SANTANA A CELEBRATION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH MEMBER OF “THE EXONERATED FIVE”



On the night of April 19, 1989, a young woman was brutally attacked and raped in Central Park. When she recovered, she had no memory of the assault. Five boys, including Raymond Santana, were tried, and convicted of the crime in a frenzied case that rocked the city. At the time, the defendants were between 14 and 16 years of age. They became known collectively as “The Central Park Five.”

On December 19, 2002, the convictions of the five men were overturned. The unidentified DNA in the Central Park Jogger Case – unlinked to any of the five – had finally met its owner, a convicted murderer and serial rapist who confessed. Santana had spent five years in prison for a crime he did not commit.

Now known as “The Exonerated Five,” the group has been committed to advocating and educating people on the disparities in America’s criminal justice system. The investigation of this conviction has raised questions regarding police coercion and false confessions, as well as the vulnerability of juveniles during police interrogations. Santana tweeted award-winning director Ava DuVernay about the story of the Central Park Five, which led to it becoming the subject of the hit Netflix series, *When They See Us*. The four-part series not only became one of Netflix’s most-watched shows, but it also earned the streaming giant its most Emmy nominations with a total of 16. Santana now works closely with the Innocence Project and is a member of the New York City Justice League. He owns the clothing company Park Madison NYC, named after his home city of New York.

FOR THURSDAY’S MEETING

Greeters – Davis, East Valley, Eisenhower
 & West Valley High School Students
 Music – Heather Hill
 Invocation – Anthony Peterson
 Program – Erin Black
 Attendance – Rich Austin

FUTURE PROGRAMS

February 8th – New Member Meeting
 February 15th – Blair Day, Efforts to Create the Nation’s First
 Commission on Boys & Men
 February 22nd – Chris Wickenhagen, Kathy Geil & Sheriff
 Bob Udell, Yakima’s New Local Crime Lab
 February 29th – Mark Cheney & Steven Sanchez, Registered
 Apprenticeships

2025-26 YAKIMA ROTARY PRESIDENT

Sheri Bissell has been selected to serve as the 2025-26 President of Yakima Rotary. She comes to our leadership team with an impressive resume that includes chairing six different committees – Invocation, Academic Scholarships, Public Relations, Membership Development, Operation Harvest, and Ways & Means and next year will be co-chair of the Fellowship & Fireside Committee. She joined Rotary in 20014, served on the Board from 2019-22, and is a Paul Harris Sustaining Member and Rotary Trust Fellow. She was raised in Yakima, has been married to her husband Brad for 32 years, is the mother to 2 sons, loves playing golf, and loves her Buffalo Bills. Congratulations to Sheri!



REVIEW

The words “Man in Black” are the only words you needed to know that this week’s program was all about Johnny Cash. Our greeters for the day were Arthur Salido, Jesse Sims, Pattie Graffe, and our exchange student Myrtille. There was no music, but Johnny Cash songs were playing as we entered. Russ Wilkinson shared an invocation on the value of living life with a grateful attitude. President Erin welcomed our guests and with the help of Board members announced Sheri Bissell as our newest Rotary President to serve after Jim DeGrasse for the 2025-26 year. The response was a standing ovation; she is going to do a great job! Johnny “Get Out Your Cash” Cooper ended our Rotary business portion as sergeant-at-arms raising over \$225 for Rotary Charities.

Charlie Robin had the honor of introducing our program speakers Debbie Horton and Adam Pope, members of the cast of *Johnny Cash, The Official Concert Experience* that played at the Capitol Theatre last night and again tonight. Set up as a conversation with friends, we heard stories of how they got their parts, their touring experience, and stories about Johnny Cash himself.

Debbie Horton holds the distinction as the only woman to have played lead guitar for Johnny Cash. It was a friend of Debbie’s who told her that she had to audition. She participated in the Nashville audition and was the only women there. The first day lasted 5 minutes; she played a little, was stopped, and told to come back tomorrow. The next day she was there 5 hours. One by one as people auditioned, they were told to stay or leave. She was there all day. She got the call a few days later. She found out that Johnny Cash’s son was asked who he wanted – his answer was her. Adam did not go through the audition process. Thanks to Debbie (he had known her beforehand), he got a call the day before this past Thanksgiving that they were looking for another person to join the team. It was pure coincidence that when they called, he already had tickets to go see the show. They told him to give them away and come audition instead.

The tour began in October with a break during the holidays and just started again on the West Coast. It is nothing like anything that Debbie has experienced before. The buses are not the same as

they used to be. It is equipped with 12 bunks with a lounge in the front and the back. At each location, the crew sets everything up. (She and Adam had always been part of set up in past tours). They show up at 4pm for a sound check and perform. Afterwards they get back on the bus, travel all night, and wake up at the next destination. Adam joined the tour after the holiday break. His previous experience touring included traveling with his wife, 2 kids, 2 dogs, and at one time 2 cats. This was a top-shelf experience.

Debbie’s favorite part of Johnny was his humbleness. He was once asked what he would do if he was out to dinner, and someone came up and wanted his autograph – his answer was I would put my fork down. He appreciated where his success came from. As a teenager she was invited to his home for lunch and given a tour. Being a part of this brings back so many memories. Johnny died almost 21 years ago and still resonates with people of all ages. When asked why, the answer was that Johnny Cash was not country music. He was completely original. His music has the beat of heartbeat; it resonates with everyone. When a Johnny Cash song is played in Nashville, the crowd goes wild.

Johnny Cash, The Official Concert Experience is not a tribute show. It is a concert experience that includes Johnny with his son John Carter Cash providing narration between videos and setting up the songs they do live. It is full of remarkable music! There are still tickets available for tonight’s performance.

