

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2024**

**YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER**

*Create Hope  
in the World*

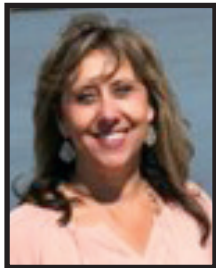


**CHRIS WICKENHAGEN, KATHY GEIL & SHERIFF BOB UDELL  
 BECAUSE TIME IS CRITICAL  
 YAKIMA’S NEW LOCAL CRIME LAB**

In August 2023, Yakima County became home to a new regional crime lab. Centrally located in the City of Zillah, this unique partnership between law enforcement agencies and Yakima Valley Conference of Governments is the first of its kind in Washington. Joining us this week are Kathy Geil, Chris Wickenhagen, and Sheriff Bob Udell, each of whom was actively involved in bringing to reality one of the most significant projects for public safety in Yakima County.



**Kathy Geil** is the Crime Lab’s manager. She came with 22 years of experience as a Forensic Scientist working with Washington State Patrol Crime Lab, Las Vegas Metro NIBIN Unit Manager, Crime Scene Response Unit, and Firearms and Toolmarks Examiner. Her expertise includes trace, microanalysis; shoe print pattern analysis; and blood pattern analysis. She was lauded as Employee of the Year by the WSP Crime Lab. She is a published forensic expert, serves on Forensic Science Boards, and has testified in court as an expert witness.



**Chris Wickenhagen** is the Executive Director for the Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG). She has 30 years in public service including stints at the Naches School District, Highland School District, and the Selah School District. She joined YVCOG in 2011, first as a Finance Officer before moving into the role of Deputy Director, and her current position as Executive Director which she has held since August 2019. She is an active member of her church having served as Children’s Ministry Director, Sunday School Director, Women’s Ministry Director, Board Member, and Treasurer.



**Sheriff Robert Udell** is a 34-year veteran of the Yakima County Sheriff’s Office. He has been a patrol deputy, detective, off-road vehicle deputy, DARE officer, and first-line supervisor. As an administrator, he managed both the civil and criminal divisions, as well as local drug and crime task forces. More importantly, he is a life-long resident of Yakima County and has raised his family with his wife right here.

**FOR THURSDAY’S MEETING**

- Music – Linda Kaminski
- Greeters – Tom Gaulke, Steven Gustafson
- Invocation – Celisa Hopkins
- Sergeant-at-Arms – Bob Romero
- Program – Larry Mattson
- Attendance – Courtney Beckler

**FUTURE PROGRAMS**

- February 29th – Mark Cheney, Steven Sanchez, Javier Arce & Peter Finch, Registered Apprenticeships in the Yakima Valley
- March 7th – Raul Martinez, Diverse Lands, Unified Vision:  
The Expansive Reach of DNR
- March 14th – Noe Alvarez, Spirit Run
- March 21st – Steve Hobbs, Washington Secretary of State

## ROTARY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY IN TRUJILLO, HONDURAS

In 2016, the World Community Service Committee through the leadership of Ken Smith and Rod Knipper began a grant process to fund an Outdoor Therapeutic Center to service children with disabilities in Trujillo, Honduras. In partnership with LHBH and grants from our club and Rotary International the Center was funded and completed in 2020. In 2019, a group of Yakima Rotarians traveled to assist with the construction. Since that time, adverse weather conditions that included a hurricane have taken their toll.

This week, the Allocation & Review Committee along with the Board approved funds not only to make repairs but to send another work party to help. The timing of the work group trip is late April with Felix Rifa serving as the team leader. Scholarship funds have been approved to help with travel expenses. If you are INTERESTED in participating, please contact Felix or the Rotary office today.

## PROPOSED NEW MEMBER

Unless written objection is received by the Board of Directors by Friday, February 23, 2024, the following candidate will be elected to membership:

**Melissa Brewer**

Owner

M.B. Designs

**Classification: Building & Construction, Interior Design**

Proposed by: Rebecca Pennell

Endorsed by: Connie Falon

## REVIEW

It was a great day at Rotary made possible by a group of great volunteers helping out. Our greeters were Rosylen Oglesby and Steven Gustafson, who stepped in to help. With an inspirational message, Sharon Miracle challenged us to take the time to ponder through prayer about the actions we can take and make change to alleviate pain, suffering and evil we see in our world. President Erin welcomed our guests, presented a blue badge to Magaly Solis, and recognized Amy Maib and Sean Kinney for recent achievements. Amy is a Keller Williams team leader in addition to being a realtor; Sean recently competed in the Badwater 267 VR where he ran 260 miles in less than 30 days at a 10-minute pace. Sergeant-at-arms was all about the day after Valentines Day put together by Kellie Connaughton.

Felix Rifa invited Rotarians to be a part of a work group to travel to Trujillo, Honduras to make repairs on a Rotary Outdoor Therapeutic Center funded by our Rotary club with a grant from Rotary International. The timing is late April – scholarship funds are available to help with the travel expenses.

The next announcement was spectacular as Mike Hummel, Quinn Dalan, and Mike Norton officially kicked-off the 2024 ROTARY AUCTION to support Yakima Rotary Charities. With banter, costume changes, and impressive visuals the theme UNDER THE BIG TOP was revealed. The date is set for Saturday, November 16th. It will be a spectacular night featuring Kevin Joyce from EnJoy Productions in Seattle as our auctioneer and professional Cirque Du Soleil actors showcasing their talents. Save the Date – it is going to be AWESOME!

Jennifer Bliesner had the honor of introducing our speakers Blair Daly and Jamie Holter. Blair is a founder of Washington Initiative for Boys and Men (WIBM); Jamie is a fellow core member of their advocacy team. WIBM does advocacy journalism and grassroots political organizing focused on boys and men's issues. They began by sharing the four main points they planned to share: (1) there are a broad set of issues that you could call boys and men's issues; these are areas where males are struggling (2) Boys and men are a population group that is severely lacking advocacy in the public arena (3) the Washington Initiative for Boys & Men exists to meet that advocacy need. Their approach is middle-of-the-road, not based on resentment or anger – it is moderate and nonpartisan. They aren't interested in stoking culture wars and (4) they are wide open for cooperation and working with others.

What Blair does with WIBM is a mix of advocacy journalism and grassroots political organizing. He has written over 150 articles or blog posts since he started 3 years ago; they are not just about how boys and men are struggling, but include positive, uplifting articles and videos as well. The majority focus is on matters in Washington.

The statistics he shared about boys and men were startling; all were on the Washington state level. 71% of deaths from overdose are male. 72% of opioid overdose deaths are male. The percentage of deaths from alcohol are 66% male. Victims of suicide are 77% male; youth victims of suicide are 78% male. When it comes to mental health counselors and social workers to serve, only 25% of counselors are male and 16% are social workers. Unsheltered people are 70% male; homeless people are 63% male. Imprisoned people are 94% male; those in jail are 87% male. Youth in juvenile rehabilitation are 91% male. Missing persons in the state of Washington are 56% male, uninsured people are 65% male. The people killed at work are 90% male; they are most likely to work dangerous jobs. 76% of homicide victims are male. The trends continue in education. 60% of high school dropouts are male. The gap in literacy for boys versus girls is 50% versus 58% for grades 3 to 5 in meeting or exceeding grade standards. For grades 6 to 8 it is 49% versus 60%. Gender parity among teachers is also going the wrong direction. Enrollment in Community & Technical College for boys and men is down; undergraduate enrollment is decreasing; and the gap in postgraduate enrollment is widening. In single parent households only 25% are male. There are a lot of dads with minimal involvement in their kids' lives – if they could have it their way, they would take a lot more time. With every statistic the same numbers cut across racial and ethnic lines. Male gender gaps exist within every racial or ethnic group.

Government and philanthropists and foundations are also underinvesting in boys and men. From 2017-2021, grants serving women and girls in Washington had over 2,000 grant makers, awarding 13,000 grants totaling over \$700 million. For the same period 1,000 grant makers awarded 3,500 grants, totaling \$200 million serving boys and men. For every 50 nonprofits advocating for women and girls there is one advocating for men and boys.

Blair and Jamie believe that a commission on boys & men is needed. They have spent the last three years trying to get a bill passed that would establish a commission. They have strong bipartisan support with 14 legislators serving as sponsors. Half are Republicans and half are Democrats and half are women. They were unable to secure a public hearing this year but will keep trying. They are all about working with others – how? By inviting guest writers or co-writers to produce articles, allowing an interview, endorsing the legislation, advocating to legislators, and inviting them to speak. Washington has the potential to be the first in the nation to establish a Commission on Boys & Men.

