

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 2024 YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER

*Create Hope
in the World*



TODD KLEPPIN FORGE YOUTH MENTORING



Todd Kleppin is passionate about helping young people find hope and supportive adults. For nearly 30 years he devoted himself to youth development, first as a Pastor of Student Ministries in churches throughout the Northwest and then in founding and directing two nationally recognized mentoring programs.

In 2018, Todd and a college buddy launched FORGE Youth Mentoring, a chapter style franchise, with the goal of reaching kids all around the country, connecting them to caring and committed adults. Todd was born and raised in Yakima and is married to his high school sweetheart, Wendy. He has three adult children and three grandchildren.

FOR THURSDAY'S MEETING

Greeters – Steven Gustafson
Music – Doug Rich
Invocation – Tressa Shockley
Sergeant-at-Arms – Brad Hansen
Program – Sharon Miracle
Attendance – Marisol Fast

FUTURE PROGRAMS

January 18th – Panel Discussion, Intimate Partner & Domestic Violence
January 25th – Debbie Horton & Grant Tobias, Johnny Cash, The Official Concert Experience
February 1st – Raymond Santana, Black History Month
February 8th – New Member Meeting

PROPOSED NEW MEMBER

Unless written objection is received by the Board of Directors by Friday, January 12, 2024, the following candidate will be elected to membership:

Fotinos Panagakos

Dean

PNWU School of Dental Medicine

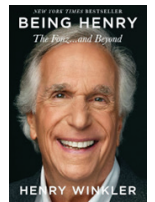
Classification: University Administration

Proposed by: Mike Lawler

Endorsed by: Tom Scandalis

JANUARY BOOK CLUB SELECTION

This month the Rotary Book Club is taking a lighter turn with a biography featuring comedian/actor – The Fonz. An instant New York Times Bestseller, *Being Henry: The Fonz...and Beyond* by Henry Winkler is described as being filled with profound heart, charm, self-deprecating humor, and about so much more than a life in Hollywood and the curse of stardom.



It is a meaningful testament to the power of sharing truth and kindness and of finding fulfillment within yourself. Get your copy, start reading and mark your calendar to join fellow bibliophiles on January 24th from 5pm to 6pm at the John I Haas Invocation Center.

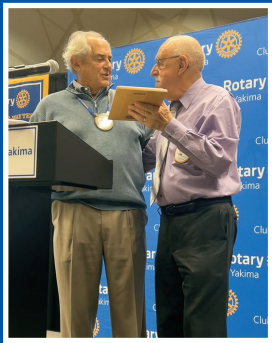
MLK JR. BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



Every year OIC of Washington organizes a basketball tournament in celebration of the MLK Jr. holiday for underprivileged youth from kindergarten through 8th grade providing an opportunity to be part of a positive group activity regardless of their skill level. The dates and location are Saturday and Sunday, January 13th and 14th at Lewis & Clark Middle School. To make it all work, volunteers are needed to referee, work at the concession stand, and/or sponsor a youth(s). Games run from 8am to 8pm – you can choose a time frame that fits your schedule. The cost of sponsorship is \$13 a child and includes entry and a meal. If you would like to help or sponsor a child, please call or email the Rotary office today.

REVIEW

With a New Year upon us, it was great to be back together to share a wonderful presentation by Russ & Nancy Mazzola and Celisa Hopkins on their experiences walking the Camino de Santiago and to celebrate community member Tom Oliva as a Rotary Unsung Hero.



Rick Pinnell and Tom Oliva

Rick Pinnell presented the Unsung Hero Award to Tom Oliva. Tom is the true definition of a friend and role model who greets everyone with a smile. He doesn't know a stranger; when he meets someone his focus is on them. He makes them feel seen and valued. Tom had a 30-year career at the YMCA. The last 12 years he ran the Aspire Program (Rotary was part of the program). Retired for the past 5 years, he spends his time volunteering in our community. He teaches Sunday school to 3- to 5-year-olds at Grace of Christ Presbyterian Church, volunteers at the Yakima Greenway in a

golf cart traveling the pathway greeting and handing out water, and volunteers at Adams Elementary where he is known as Mr. Tom. He also has a gift of magic that he loves to share. We are honored to have him as an Unsung Hero. He truly exemplifies Rotary's motto of *Service Above Self*.

Rick also had the privilege of introducing our program speakers. Russ & Nancy presented first sharing the history of the Camino de Santiago before talking about their own personal experiences. St. James the Apostle is the patron saint of Spain. He preached in the early church in Spain and returned to Jerusalem where he was martyred. Around the first century his remains were returned to Spain for burial; the site was kept secret because the Romans were in charge. Around 1850 there was enough of a Christian presence that they felt safe enough to rebury him in the town of Compostela. They built a church around his tomb and by the 12th century it had become a cathedral. Since that time, pilgrims have traveled there for many reasons that include spiritual, atonement, or to avoid jail time for certain crimes. The earliest guidebook was written around 1150. Today, there are 9 routes to the cathedral.

Nancy chose to do the pilgrimage for her 70th birthday. It didn't come from a conversation with someone else; she had read a lot about it. She was determined to make the journey as much like the early pilgrims as she could. It was a 500 mile journey and she was determined to carry everything on her back and trust in the Lord that she would have a place to lay her head at night – that worked really well until one day it didn't. Russ wasn't as thrilled about the trip to begin with; he wanted to be there to support and keep Nancy company. Their trip began at St. Jean de Pied, France on the west side of the Pyrenees. Upon arrival that day, they checked in, went out to a pilgrim meal, and attended Mass. It took place at a church built in the 11th or 12th century with 200 other pilgrims. He experienced an overwhelming feeling of connectedness with all mankind – if he hadn't started the Camino, attending Mass made it all worthwhile. They mostly stayed in albergues (coed dormitories). Their day

would start out at 7:30am – 8:00am. They would purchase fresh fruit or vegetables, walk 1 ½ to 3 hours, take a break, walk until noon for a meal, and walk another 3 to 4 hours until 4:30pm - 5pm. They would check into another Albergue, wash clothes, get a meal, and attend Mass if there was one and repeat the next day.

Celisa took her journey nine years ago with her mom, sister, and good friend. Looking at her journals to prepare her talk brought her right back to what the trip gave her. They walked the 156-mile Portuguese coastal route. The Camino de Santiago is called a pilgrimage for a good reason; something happens to you despite whatever the intention was for going. She had never done anything like it, but she was a walker and a hiker. What she didn't do on a regular basis was walk with 20 pounds on her back. It is said that the first third of the journey is physical, the second third is mental, and the last third is spiritual. They carried only what they needed in their backpacks - sleeping bags, pillow, clothes, and first aid kit. It became apparent pretty quickly that anything that didn't serve you was not needed – something true in life as well. Much like Russ & Nancy they didn't have a plan. They did not know where they would stay at night; they trusted yellow arrows and scallop shells would get them where they needed to go. Her experience that took on a life of its own learning what you are made of, how you react in the face of adversity, and how you handle suffering. There is a community of spirit from other pilgrims and people encountered along the way. Celisa experienced the most generous and strongest version of herself. Along the way they experienced the best of others that included another hiker giving up her hiking sandals for Celisa's sister, and a local welcoming them with oranges, food, water, and a place to rest. Random acts of kindness happened everywhere. They began each day at sunrise and as they walked 15 to 20 miles a day. The journey was one of peeling layers of herself and letting go of expectations and responsibilities. It was about loving others and feeling loved, being present in the moment, seeing beauty, finding joy, compassion, laughter, generosity, kindness, strength, teamwork, and perseverance.

It was a remarkable program. Together, Russ, Nancy and Celisa left us with moments of laughter, awe at what they experienced and accomplished, and for many of us inspired to take our own journey.

What else happened at the meeting? Charlie Robin with Bob Hamilton on the keyboards led us in singing *This Land is Your Land*. It sounded great. Kurt Labberton followed with a serendipitous invocation and encouragement to learn and experience new things in the New Year. President Erin presented a blue badge to Shawna Masters, recognized Past President Eric Silvers for a recent national award from State Farm and announced two volunteer opportunities to be a judge for the State DECA Competition taking place next Monday and to volunteer or serve as a sponsor for the MLK Jr. Youth Basketball Tournament on January 13th and 14th. A vote was held on our Board nominations for Celisa Hopkins, Mike Hummel, and Charlie Robin – there was unanimous approval. Congratulations to each of them! Kelly Gasseling wrapped up Rotary business with a football themed sergeant-at-arms that ended with only the truest football fans standing.