

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 2024 YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER

*Create Hope
in the World*



DEBBIE HORTON & GRAHAM TOBIAS JOHNNY CASH, THE OFFICIAL CONCERT EXPERIENCE



Debbie Horton is the lead guitarist for the Johnny Cash, The Official Concert Experience international tour. She holds the distinction as the only woman to have played lead guitar for the Great Cash himself. Debbie first met Johnny Cash when she was a child, and the two maintained a friendship for more than twenty years.

Debbie says of Johnny, “He was the most charismatic person I have ever met, but with the humblest way about him. What a blessing it was for me to have been around him as much as I was. This show is not a “tribute” show, but it is as close as you will ever get to attending a Johnny Cash concert, which was a truly magical experience. It is a thrill and honor to be a part of this talented team.”

Born in Newport News, Virginia, Debbie is a multi-talented musician, performer and show producer. She was the first female radio disk jockey, interviewer, and concert MC in Norfolk, working with people like Hank Williams, Jr and Kenny Rogers. She is an accomplished songwriter whose songs have been recorded by the likes of rockabilly queen Wanda Jackson and Grand Ole Opry star, “Pretty Miss” Norma Jean. She hosted her own show at the Boxcar Willie Theater in Branson, Missouri, and has performed on the legendary Grand Ole Opry, the Louisiana Hayride, the Ernest Tubb Midnight Jamboree and recently had a show residency at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Debbie created the successful traveling show, Branson on the Road (seen nationally on RFD-TV), and for the last 20 years the production has been booked into performing arts centers, dinner theatres and historic venues throughout the US, Canada, and Europe.

Joining Debbie will be Graham Tobias. Graham serves as the audio engineer for the show.

FOR THURSDAY’S MEETING

Invocation – Russ Wilkinson
Sergeant-at-Arms – John Cooper
Program – Charlie Robin
Attendance – Jake Hambly

FUTURE PROGRAMS

February 1st – Raymond Santana, Black History Month
February 8th – New Member Meeting
February 15th – Blair Day, Efforts to Create the Nation’s First Commission on Boys & Men

2024-25 RI THEME UNVEILED



RI President Elect Stephanie Urchick recently announced her presidential theme “The Magic of Rotary” and called on Rotarians to recognize and amplify the organization’s power to save lives. In making her announcement to District Governor’s around the world she said, “Don’t misunderstand me – we are not going to end polio or bring peace to the world by waving a wand and saying some funny words. It’s up to you. (Rotarians) to create the magic with every project completed, every dollar donated, and every new member.”

MLK JR BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

Last weekend 347 underprivileged children from kindergarten through 8th grade were provided the opportunity to be part of a positive group activity and participate in a basketball tournament celebrating the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. Thanks to the generosity of Downtown Rotarians every single child's entry and a meal was sponsored. We are truly a SPECIAL club!

REVIEW

Thanks to everyone who braved the weather conditions to attend this week's meeting. President Erin opened the meeting by thanking our greeters, Curt Wilson and Magaly Solis and welcoming guests. Doug Rich did double-duty providing music and sergeant-at-arms and Sharon Miracle provided our invocation.

Jim DeGrasse introduced Paul Trotter as our newest member. Born in California, he was raised in Illinois when his family moved there when he was 5 years old. His mom was a substitute teacher and his dad, a machinist. His dad was his hero, serving in WWII and the Korean War. After college, Paul took a job selling specialized medical equipment. He met his wife while traveling and moved to Yakima where she's from. They have 2 children and 1 grandchild. He enjoys music, hiking, skiing, backpacking, and tennis. Jim ended by sharing an incredible story of circumstance that found them both helping a victim of a hit and run accident last Friday. What an example of Rotary superpowers in action!

President Erin introduced Juanita Silva who shared her insight into this year's Rotary project Healthy Futures, as a partner through MultiCare Memorial's ACT program. She was joined by Beatriz Blanco who as a participant in the program shared how beneficial Healthy Futures has been for her family. It was a wonderful firsthand look at the impact we are having on our community.

This week's program included a panel discussion on a crisis within our own community – the issue of domestic/intimate partner violence. The panel consisted of Yakima YWCA Chief Executive Officer Cheri Kilty, Judge Sonia Rodriguez True, Judge Jared Boswell, Yakima County Prosecutor Joe Brusich, Yakima Police Chief Matthew Murray, and Lisa Wallace as our facilitator. As a team, they shared the impact of the crisis, some of the efforts being undertaken to address the issue, and how we can be a part of that.

MAGNITUDE:

Yakima has the highest rate of domestic violence in the state. When Cheri Kilty came to Yakima six years ago, she was shocked to learn about the amount of suffering happening. At that time, the YWCA was serving 6,000 people a year; today that number is 14,000 plus people. In 2023, the YWCA crisis calls to their hotline increased from a typical 500 calls a month to over 1,000 calls a month.

Chief Murray came to Yakima from Denver where he had spent a lot of time in the domestic violence unit as a detective, sergeant, and deputy chief. Denver is a big city of 800-850 thousand. Just like Cheri, he had never seen anything like what was taking place in Yakima, a town of 100,000. At the peak of crisis, the police department had 3,500 domestic violence filings (cases brought to the prosecutor) and less than 300 relating to gangs. Prosecutor Joe Brusich shared the three main drivers of crime in our community as drugs, domestic violence, and gangs. Of the current 14 felony prosecutors in his office, five deal with these cases directly.

Judge Boswell defined it as the greatest problem in this community. It presides in the shadows and affects everyone in the room. At a recent judge retreat, Judge True shared that there are over 2,000 open criminal cases (felonies) of which an overwhelming part is domestic violence. She has seen the impact firsthand. There are repeat offenders. Jail doesn't seem to be a deterrent and people

have no problem violating court orders. The level and description of the violence is hard to comprehend. What is extremely difficult is kids are present. For victims it is generational. She has seen children who are now adults engaging in the dynamic – it is complex and complicated.

EFFORTS UNDERWAY:

Over the pandemic there were renewed efforts for different systems to come together and transform themselves. People from the courts, prosecutor's office, police department, YWCA, churches, social services, and community members have met monthly as part of a Yakima Domestic Violence Coalition to look at what they are doing, how they can do it differently, and how they can do it better together. Examples include officers on the scene calling the YWCA, a special phone line with the prosecutor's office, and efforts by the YWCA to raise \$18 million to renovate the old St. Elizabeth's nursing building for an additional emergency shelter.

Chief Murray couldn't be prouder of what is happening. There has been a dramatic shift. They are using strategy's from Don't Shoot: One Man, A Street Fellowship, and the End of Violence in Inner-City America to domestic violence. Success benchmarks are not measured by the number of incidences. If you do this well, you'll get more people that wouldn't have come to you to say they need help. Three years ago, Yakima had 4-5 domestic violence homicides; the next year it was zero. Yakima School District partners with a program called Handle with Care. The police department notifies the school district when they encounter children with traumatic experiences that night. The school district doesn't know exactly what happened, but they know that the following day that child needs special attention. In 2022, there were 1,837 kids reported to Handle with Care. That number has decreased by nine percent.

The Prosecutor's Office deals with identified cases immediately. They provide not just prosecution but support and legal guidance. Clear strides are being made. Last year they had 663 cases of domestic/intimate partner violence. Half are still pending resolution. Only 20 were no charge cases.

WHAT CAN ROTARIANS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS DO?

As Rotarians we could form a network of volunteers who have skills to help. It can be as simple as helping to fix a car or household repair – is there something we have skills to help victims. Often times they go back to what they know because it is a matter of survival. As a part of the court system, Judge True is always mindful of the response she gives to victims seeking protection, how she explains things, and how she makes them feel in courtroom. Judge Boswell asked that if we see something, document what you see, call law enforcement, write a statement, be a witness. Be the person that a victim might not be able to be because of survival. Chief Murray asked that we stand up for the prosecutor, stand up for the courts, stand up for the department. Will they always be perfect? No, but they are trying to fight a battle. Push back at criticism.

CLOSING:

Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence cuts across every social economic boundary. Everyone knows someone that has been through domestic violence. Just asking how they are without any judgment goes a long way. Take a tour of the YWCA to see what they are doing. It is not a "them" problem, it is a "we" problem.