This week’s program will feature three of our own members, Pete Bansmer, Sunny Cameron, and Mary McFadden as they give their Classification Talks. When members join Rotary, they are assigned a classification representing their current or past occupation, professional expertise, or service to their community. Set up by the founders of Rotary, the purpose is to bring people from different fields, industries, and experiences together to learn from each other and serve their communities.

Pete Bansmer joined Rotary on January 19, 1995. He retired after many years as the President of Yakima Federal Savings and Loan. He remains an active, vital part of our community exemplifying a life of service through his dedication to the Yakima Rotary Food Bank, his service on many local boards, and his long-time volunteerism with Rotary Operation Harvest.

Sunny Cameron joined Rotary on August 27, 2009. She received a bachelor’s degree in business administration & management from Washington State University. She is the Owner/President of SKC Consulting, LLC serving Central Washington as an owner’s representative for commercial construction projects.

Mary McFadden is the most recent Rotarian of the group having been introduced less than a year ago on August 18, 2022. Mary was born in Mexico and grew up in the Yakima Valley. She and her husband Tim moved back to Yakima after 35 years and are co-owners of Health Within Wellness offering a unique integrated approach to healthcare.

Classification talks are entertaining, fun and a wonderful way to learn about fellow Rotarians. They are a mainstay of Rotary and help build better relationships. By sharing their own stories, interests, careers, and families, Pete, Sunny, and Mary become part of a club tradition that goes back over 100 years.
This week’s program was a celebration of our 2023 Yakima Rotary Academic Scholarship recipients. With their family and friends present each one came to the podium to share where they will be attending school this fall, their planned course of study, something unique about themselves, and what they treasure about our community.

Their choice of colleges was the most diverse that we’ve ever seen: the University of Washington, Gonzaga University of Oregon, University of San Diego, University of Idaho, Yakima Valley College, Boise State University, George Fox University, Montana State, Central Washington University, University of St. Thomas, College of Idaho, New York University or the University of Arizona, Franciscan University of Steubenville, and Washington State University.

Their studies were just as impressive with many taking on double majors: History, English Literature, Sports Psychology, Kinesiology, Mechanical Engineering, Applied Mathematics, Applied Physics, Aerospace Engineering, Chemistry, Biochemistry, International Relations/Global Studies, Spanish, Accounting, Journalism, Environmental Sciences, Social Sciences, Psychology and Theology, Broadcast Journalism, Financial Markets, and International Business.

I think most of us would agree that the best part was the things that they treasure about Yakima. Number one was the sense of community whether it was the warmth of the people who live here, Domino’s Pizza opening up after hours to feed a high school team, or community events such as Gap to Gap and Hop Fest that give them opportunities to be involved. They treasure our weather, the sheer beauty of our sunrises and Mt. Adams in the backdrop, the small-town feel, and the world’s best home-grown fruit.

They are remarkable young individuals who are going to do great things and who also shared some great words of wisdom - there is no such thing as too much good or too much happiness, a strong faith in God, seeing the silver lining in everything they do, the importance of putting aside differences, and loving living life.

A special thank you to the members of the Academic Scholarship Committee and to those who helped make the meeting a success that included Enri Garcia-Sanchez and Jim DeGrasse serving as our greeters, David Lynx for his inspirational message, Dave Hargreaves’ sergeant-of-arms that raised money for Rotary Charities and David Brown who served as the master of ceremonies.