



THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2025 YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER

*The Magic
Of Rotary*

VICKI BAKER COMMUNITY AT A CROSSROADS



Vicki Baker was born in Corvallis, Oregon and moved with her family to Yakima in 1982. She graduated from Eisenhower High School and attended and graduated from Oregon State University with a BA in Technical Journalism and a minor in Spanish.

She and her husband Dennis purchased the Grocery Outlet store in Yakima from her parents in 1999. In addition to owning and managing Grocery Outlet, she ran her own public relations firm, was the interim executive director at Habitat for Humanity, served as a Yakima County Commissioner, and held the position of deputy director at Yakima Valley Conference of Governments. In August 2024, she was hired as Yakima's city manager.

Vicki has served on numerous boards and commissions and enjoys giving back to her community by being involved. She lives in Yakima with her husband Dennis and daughter Lauren. When she isn't working, she enjoys spending time with her family and going to the beach.

FOR THURSDAY'S MEETING

Greeters – Clark Permann, Liz Hobson
Inspiration – Kurt Labberton
Sergeant-at-Arms – Kellie Connaughton
Attendance – Mary McFadden

FUTURE PROGRAMS

March 13th – Shawn Boyle, Yakima
Police Chief
March 20th – Msgr. John Ecker, 93 Years
of a Life Well-Lived

PROPOSED NEW MEMBER

Unless written objection is received by the Board of Directors by Friday, March 7, 2025, the following candidate will be elected to membership:

Ryan Griffiee
Managing Partner
Larson Griffiee Pickett
Classification: Business Law
Proposed by: Paul Larson
Endorsed by: Kevin Good

EXPERIENCE A WORLD OF FRIENDSHIP

The Yakima School District is continuing the 50+ year tradition of the Yamate Japanese Exchange program and need your help with host families. From April 11th-25th, Yakima will be hosting 76 Japanese students. In July, 35 Yakima students will travel to Japan. This is a wonderful opportunity for local families to experience Japanese culture firsthand while creating connections, bridging cultures, fostering international understanding and building lifelong friendships.

Two students are assigned to each home. If you are interested in serving as a host family, please contact Kirsten Fitterer at Yakima School District at 509-573-7000 or visit their website at ysd7.org/YamateExchange. It's also a great way see if you'd be interested in being a Rotary Youth Exchange host family.

ROTARY SKI DAY



Rotary Ski Day is approaching fast on Friday, March 14th as we gather at White Pass for a day of skiing, snowshoeing, and great fun.

Not a skier or snowshoer? No worries! You're welcome to join the fun and meet up with fellow Rotarians from all three clubs for pizza at Bron Yr Aur Brewing in Naches beginning at 4:00pm. It's a perfect way to cap off the day. If you haven't had a chance to sign up, please RSVP the Rotary office to ensure we order plenty of pizza.



HAPPY ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Foti Panagakos

ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE: FRIDAY, MARCH 7th

REVIEW

This week featured local artist Darcie Roberts, who generously shared her art story, the unfolding of her own creative thread, and creativity as part of the human drive. As an artist, she paints mainly in soft pastels. Soft pastel is one of the oldest art mediums. It is handmade of pure pigment, clay and binder, and has a truer pigment than acrylic or oil. She also enjoys working abstractly with acrylic; it frees her up, lets her work intuitively and gets her out of a rut.

She shared her artistic journey in three different acts. Act 1 chronicled her childhood through college - the beginning of her creative thread. She grew up on a farm in Wapato and left at the age of 18 never to come back. She went off to Seattle Bellevue College and the University of Washington. She had to put herself through school. By junior year she was burned out; together with a girlfriend she moved to Venezuela. It was a great adventure; six months later she moved to South Carolina. She learned that if she went to school at military school in Europe and worked for one of the universities serving families, she could take night classes for free. Germany became her first destination where she worked for the University of Maryland followed by Naples, Italy working for the University of La Verne. After completing her schooling, she stayed 2 more years working for naval housing as a DOD employee. Knowing that if she wanted to get married and have children of her own, she needed to come back to Seattle to be closer to her family. Act 2 came with marriage, motherhood, career change. She met and married Brian and moved back to Yakima. She changed careers and went back to school to become an educator. Their daughter was born, and they adopted their son at birth. Her creative thread was building. Her teaching career required clock hours; she took every class she could at the Larson Gallery. In 2019, she made the decision to homeschool their son; which also gave her more time to devote to her artwork. Act 3 became art as a career that allows her to support her hobby with a little extra. Art is very therapeutic for her; the supplies are much cheaper than a therapist.

Creativity is therapy. There are many studies that show physiological, psychological, social and behavioral benefits. It lowers a person's cortisol response and is often likened to meditation. It gives a sense of purpose and helps you cope. It has given her a voice and broadened her identity. The art community is welcoming and supportive. It helps adopt healthier habits. Creativity is part of our drive as humans. There are so many ways you can be creative: performing, literature, visual, cultural and digital.

There was a study done in 1989 by NASA engineers to help them find creative people. They conducted a test on 1,600 4-5-year-olds following their progress into adulthood. At the

age of 4 and 5, 98% tested genius level for creativity. By the age of 10 that number dropped to 32%; by the age of 15 it dropped to 10%, and by the age of 31 it was only 2%. What happened? Did it just disappear? Did they forget? There is a book called *Brave Not Perfect* that shares the idea that as children there is a focus on being perfect, doing everything to the best of one's ability, and to winning. In the process is creativity being crushed?

She ended with our own visualization to close our eyes and see back to a happy childhood moment - what were you doing, making mud pie, playing Barbies, did it involve creativity? Can you see your own thread of creativity? Creativity is part of everyday - closing a sale, problem solving, and customer service. It was a great presentation that included a showcase of her art and an encouragement to explore our own creative threads.

The day also included greetings from Linda DiLembo and Arthur Salido as we arrived; an inspirational message from Joshua Shockley that today's date is the first day of our life; sergeant-at-arms by Doug Rich; and announcements by President Jim. Foti Panagakos was recognized for his one-year Rotary anniversary; Joe Biondi and Rodrigo Renteria-Valencia were presented their blue badges; reminders were shared about the deadline for Academic Scholarship on March 7th and Rotary Ski Day on March 14th; and an ask was made for volunteers to serve as host families for a Japanese Exchange program in partnerships with the Yakima School District.

Ester Huey completed our celebration of Black History Month with the last Black History moment of February. She shared her pride of being a member of our club - a club that is a leader in celebrating Black History. This year's celebration was one of the best with former Seahawk Shaquem Griffen who inspired the young people who joined us. One in particular shared that after hearing Shaquem, they told their teacher that they were going to do better in school. We've come a long way with Rotary putting the pieces together with CWU and our community. Sponsors are always needed. Rotary has taken the banner and built a tradition of honoring all cultures in our Valley. All the things we participate in, including walking in the MLK parade and the Racial Justice Committee, have deep meaning and appreciation for her. Her last project took 20 years to come to reality; the aquatic center on east side - Rotary contributed towards it. The best part was that her birthday was the next day (Friday). Ester was celebrated with a standing ovation that included cake, a candle, and an entire Rotary chorus singing happy birthday.



THANK YOU TO OUR ROTARY AUCTION SPONSORS!

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