



THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 2024 YAKIMA VALLEY COLLEGE CONFERENCE CENTER

Create Hope
in the World

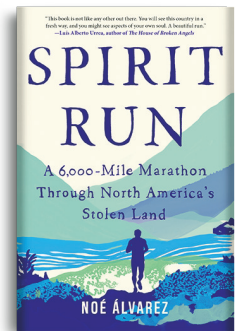
NOÉ ÁLVAREZ SPIRIT RUN



Noé Álvarez was born to Mexican immigrant parents and raised working-class in Yakima, Washington. He holds degrees in philosophy and creative writing from Whitman College and Emerson College, respectively.

He studied conflict analysis, peacemaking, and conflict resolution at American University and in Northern Ireland, received a fellowship at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School, and researched U.S. drug policy, military aid, and human rights issues in Colombia's Putumayo jungles.

He lives in Boston, where, until recently, he worked as a security officer at one of the nation's oldest libraries, the Boston Athenaeum. His debut memoir, "*Spirit Run: A 6,000-Mile Marathon Through North America's Stolen Land*" (Catapult), chronicles his upbringing and his experience in the Peace and Dignity Journeys, a spiritual marathon that unites Indigenous runners across North America. The book was named an Editors' Choice by the New York Times Book Review and was called a "literary tour de force" by Publishers Weekly.



FOR THURSDAY'S MEETING

Music – Charlie Robin
Greeters – Jolene Seda
Invocation – Tom Froula
Sergeant-at-Arms – Nancy Leahy
Program – Quinn Dalan
Attendance – Connie Falon

FUTURE PROGRAMS

March 21st – Steve Hobbs, Washington Secretary of State
March 28th – Amy Behrens, Maryhill Museum of Art
April 4th – Mike McMullen & Antone Miller, Emergency
Preparation
April 11 – Sheriff Bob Udell, Yakima County Drone Program

PROPOSED NEW MEMBERS

Unless written objection is received by the Board of Directors by Monday, March 18, 2024, the following candidates will be elected to membership:

Brent Elkins
Realtor
John L. Scott Real Estate
Classification: Credit Union, Marketing
Proposed by: Sharri Greene
Endorsed by: Rick Fairbrook

Robert Price
President
Price Cold Storage & Packing Co LLC
Classification: Agriculture, Fruit Growing & Packing
Proposed: Brad Hansen
Endorser: Erin Black

ROTARY SKI DAY FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2024



Save the date for Rotary Ski Day set for Friday, March 22nd at White Pass Ski Area. Enjoy a day of fun in snow soaking up the majestic views of the Cascades whether it be downhill skiing, cross country skiing or snow shoeing. Sig Fossum and the

Sporthaus will be on-site with demo skis for you to try at no charge.

Can't make it for skiing or don't ski? Join us for dinner at Bron Yr Aur Brewing Company in Naches. Pizza is on us; drinks are on you. Guests and prospective new members are invited to participate. Sign-ups are underway. Call or email the Rotary office to today to get your name on the list.

ROTARY SCHOLARSHIP DINNERS

SAVE THE DATE

May 10th – 23rd



CLASS DINING

REVIEW

Last week we welcomed two incredible individuals as our newest members. Connie Falon introduced her friend Melissa Brewer. Melissa grew up in Selah, the oldest of three, and attended CWU where she obtained a degree in interior design and a minor in accounting. She is the proud mother of Keenen and grandmother of Keenan Jr. Her career took her and Keenan on great adventures living in Yakima, Bend, Hawaii, San Diego, and Santa Monica before coming back home to Yakima in 2009. In 2012, she started her own company M.B. Designs located in the historic McIlvanie Machine Works building. She is a board member of CWHB; she and her team have received many awards for their design work. When not busy at work, Melissa loves taking care of her animals; a horse, donkey, two alpacas and a shepherd-cocker. Chris Rankin followed with the introduction of Yvette Inzunza. Yvette is a true California girl. The youngest of three, she was born Riverside, California to Mexican immigrant parents growing up in a small agricultural community. By the time she got to high school they had moved to Sacramento. She started her professional career in construction working in Public Works for 12 years. She fell in love with Yakima when she came to visit friends in 2015. So much so that she moved here in 2016; it reminded her of the small town she grew up in. Her first job was with the Yakima School District in the Special Education Department at Whitney Elementary, later transitioning on to data specialist and work media. In 2022, she took on her current position as the Yakima Police Department's Public Information Officer. Outside of work Yvette enjoys staying active in the Yakima community as a member of the Domestic Violence Coalition, is an avid golfer, and loves to travel. We are so happy to have both of them as members!

Drew Harris had the honor of introducing Raul Martinez and Liz Smith as our program speakers who gave an excellent presentation about the Department of Natural Resources. Liz works in the Southeast Region, one of six DNR regions in the state. Raul's work is with the Office of the Commissioner of Public Lands.

What does DNR do? They manage 5.6 million acres of land with a diversity of ecosystems made up of timber, aquatic areas, rangeland, and desert areas found in our own region. The land they manage includes a lot of land leases; one example shared was the Red Mountain AVA leased for the production of wine grapes. Money from the land leases go back to public beneficiaries such as schools, universities, and structures. They also preserve natural resources for future generations; facilitate outdoor recreational opportunities; and engage in wildfire prevention and wildlife fighting – something that we deal with regularly.

It wasn't luck that the 2023 wildfire season wasn't crazy. It was the 2nd worse year in the last 20-30 years for the number of ignitions. The difference was that 95% of the fires were under 10 acres. In 2021, state legislation gave DNR \$125 million per biennium over two cycles to take a deeper look at firefighting through equipment operations and community resilience by teaching community members and neighbors to make their homes more defensible against fires. The 10-year average of acres burned is 472,881. Last year, even though it was a crazy year for the number of fires, the total acres burned was 165,365. One of the tools used to fight fires is aircraft. A few years ago, DNR had 8 aircraft

available for firefighting (all Vietnam era craft) based in Olympia. Today they have 37 aircraft (many of them leased) strategically placed throughout the state. The lease cost is more expenses upfront, but they are spending less money with the destruction of fires.

The teaching aspect of reducing fires includes the Wildfire Ready Neighbors Program. It was started by Commissioner Franz after seeing homes untouched after wildfires and asking why. Those homeowners had taken specific steps to make sure that their homes were defensible. The Ready Neighbors Program was created to provide a way for all homeowners to secure a free home risk assessment and if applicable, a forest health consultation. To-date, 3,000 assessments have been completed with over 28,000 actions taken. In Yakima County there have been 150 assessments and 1,400 actions. Liz manages a cost share program for private homeowners in the SE Region to act after an assessment. The DNR Cost Share Funding program partners DNR with landowners to help pay for fuel reduction on their property by providing a list of contractors if the landowner doesn't want to do the work themselves, following up, and reimbursing owners for a portion of the work done. Reimbursement rates are not quite 50/50; the main reason is the increased cost of fuel and equipment. If they can get multiple neighboring landowners to come together, the amount of reimbursement can be 100% funded. Projects undertaken in Yakima County include a project in Tampico with the West Valley Fire Department to reduce fuels on 14 acres. There is also a project underway within the Ahtanum State Forest and Conrad Meadows for fuel reduction work on 67 acres of private forest lands. That has not been completed because of snow. When completed it will provide not only a firebreak but access for emergency vehicles. We heard the personal experience of a homeowner whose home survived a fire, and before and after pictures of the fuel reduction areas in our own community. Rotary gives an opportunity to learn something new every week – this was one of those times. It was a great meeting.

What other things happened? Kaylene Stiles and Molly Neal served as our greeters. Sheri Bissell shared a beautiful message about gratefulness, the four seasons, the month of March and springing into April. Steven Gustafson raised money for Rotary Charities with an auction inspired sergeant-at-arms. John Baule made a correction to a presentation that he made two weeks ago where it came out that he indicated that the Yakima Public Schools were segregated in the 1950s-60s. That was incorrect – the school system was not segregated. Soni Alexander announced the dates for the annual Scholarship Dinners as May 10-23. Tyler Schultz invited everyone to Rotary Ski Day set for Friday, March 22. Don't ski? Come for dinner only afterwards at Brun Yr Aur in Naches. President Erin shared three opportunities for community involvement. The Yakima School District is looking for families to host Japanese students coming to Yakima as part of a 50-year exchange tradition between Yakima and Japan. Each family would host 2 students. The dates are April 12-26; if interested, please contact fellow Rotarian Trevor Greene. Habitat for Humanity is hosting the 2024 Women's Build from March 20th-23rd. The last was a call for judges to help with the Robotics Competition at the State Fair Park on March 15 and 16. No STEM background is needed.