theTooter

President…….. John Cooper
President-Elect……... Bruce Bacon
Immediate Past President…… Sheri Bissell
Secretary/Treasurer…… Tony Farina
Executive Director……..... Carolyn Flory

Directors: Dana Eliason, Celisa Hopkins, Mike Hummel, Mike Norton, Anthony Peterson, Teresa Pritchard, Felix Rifa, Charlie Robin

email: yakimarotary@yakimarotary.org website: www.yakimarotary.org

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE ROTARY CLUB OF YAKIMA
P. O. BOX 464, YAKIMA, WASHINGTON 98907-0464 OFFICE: 1704 WEST NOB HILL BLVD., TELEPHONE 509-452-8332

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2026
YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER

Create Lasting Impact

MEGAN BEWLEY & SARA WATKINS
29029 CHALLENGE

The concept is simple: You have 36 hours to climb the height of Mt. Everest at a ski hill. 29,029 feet of elevation gain. Hike up, ride the gondola down as many times as it takes. But what really does it take to take on this challenge? And why would anyone even do this crazy thing? 29029 is more than just a physical challenge, although it certainly is that. It's also a mental challenge, a resiliency challenge, a flexibility challenge, a time management challenge, and the ultimate you vs. you challenge where it doesn't matter who finishes first or last, when you finish or even whether you Everest. It is the ultimate way to find out your personal physical and mental toughness and who you are, and want to be, when times are challenging.

JD and Megan Bewley and Sara Watkins all took on this challenge in 2026--JD and Megan at Steamboat, and Sara at Sun Valley.



Megan grew up in Yakima, where sports were a big part of her life, eventually taking her to play collegiate softball at both the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and Ohio State. After spending years living in cities across the country, she found her way back to Yakima, where she and her husband, JD, are raising their six-year-old twins, Dane and Emily, and carrying on her family's McDonald's business.

Always up for an adventure and admittedly a little competitive, Megan enjoys fitness, travel, and finding new ways to challenge herself. When the opportunity to take on 29029 came along, it seemed like the perfect combination of adventure, athleticism, and a questionable amount of physical suffering. Months of training later, she headed to Steamboat Springs to find out just what they'd signed themselves up for.



Sara grew up in the flat lands of Wisconsin, mostly golfing and playing basketball. She moved to Oregon for law school and fell in love with the PNW and hiking. She spends weekends hiking in the Gifford Pinchot, Mt. Rainier, and the Central Cascades. Two years ago, her LinkedIn algorithm found 29029 and she instantly was obsessed. As someone who has done two half marathons but hates to run, it was just the type of challenge she was looking for. When she isn't hiking, she is working at the City of Yakima or reading (but if you follow her on Instagram, you know she also sometimes stops and reads mid-hike).

Megan and Sara are going to talk about their "why", training, the event itself, and lessons learned from 29029 and the mountain.

YAKIMA ROTARY DIA DE LOS MUERTOS DISPLAY



FOR THURSDAY'S MEETING

Greeters – Dave Heinl, Jan Luring
Inspiration – Sharon Miracle
Sergeant-at-Arms – Ryan Griffee
Program – Sharon Miracle
Attendance – Megan Bewley

FUTURE PROGRAMS

November 12th – Mike Mittelman, Veteran's Day Program
November 19th – Dr. Lori Alvord, Native American Heritage Month
November 26th – No Meeting, Happy Thanksgiving

AUCTION ITEM HIGHLIGHTS

A PARISIAN ESCAPE

Two people will have the opportunity to visit and immerse themselves in the one and only fabled Paris, France, where every moment feels touched by art and romance, and the air carries the scent of fresh baguettes and blooming jasmine. Your adventure begins with four nights (breakfast included) in a Prestige Room at the refined historic Left Bank 4-star Hôtel Louison, once home to Madame de Maintenon, the governess to Louis XIV's children. On one evening you will ascend the iron lattice of the Eiffel Tower and view the glittering city below you before entering the Tower's famed elegant Madame Brasserie Restaurant, where acclaimed chef Thierry Marx transforms the finest seasonal ingredients into edible art. Finally, you get your choice to learn the delicate art of the French macaron with the guidance of a skilled pastry chef or take a masterclass in the art of wine and food pairing at a private tasting salon. Reservations must be made 75 days in advance of travel. Reservations are subject to availability, blackout dates, and major holidays. Airfare not included.

VEGAS NIGHTS & PARIS LIGHTS

Say oui to an unforgettable getaway filled with a touch of Parisian romance and the dazzling excitement of Las Vegas! Enjoy a two-night stay at a 4-star hotel on the Las Vegas Strip and take center stage with 2 tickets to the show of your choice at the iconic Sphere Las Vegas where the world disappears for a few unforgettable hours. Take a stroll beneath the dazzling lights of the Strip, visit the iconic replica of the Eiffel Tower, and soak in the romance of Paris without ever leaving the country. It's the perfect recipe for a fabulous adventure: une touche de Paris, a dash of glamour, and plenty of Vegas excitement. Reservations must be booked 60 days in advance of travel. Airfare not included.

REVIEW

If you noticed someone different leading the program, you were right as Past President Kurt Labberton was president for the day – he did a remarkable job! Other volunteers for the day included our greeters, Quinn Dalan and Aryn Masters. Brad Hansen's inspirational message was a story of recently visiting Omaha Beach and thinking about the boys who fought and the frustrations of everyday realizing that there are people across the world doing hard things too. Find the thing that centers you. For the second week in a row, Quinn Dalan volunteered for sergeant-at-arms; with a program about Elf the Musical, it only seemed right that Christmas was the theme.

Everyone should know that November 14th is the night of the most important event of the year – A Night in Paris Rotary Auction. Co-Chairs Josh Shockley and Chase Powell encouraged us to get in our reservations and invite friends and family to go as well. Don't forget to drop off your bottle(s) of wine for the Wall of Wine at the Rotary office. The goal is 100 bottles – we are less than 10 away.

We had a club first as Mike Norton introduced a father and son team, Lester and Daniel Cohen, as our newest members. Lester was born in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1961 and graduated from the University of Witwatersrand with a degree in business. He and his wife, Barbara, immigrated to Seattle in 1986 where they began building their life and careers. Retired, Lester's professional career has spanned accounting, business ownership, telecommunications, consulting, change management, and professional services. Community service has always been important; he served on the Mercer Island Schools Foundation Board, Island Park Elementary Auction Committee, and volunteered with the Fred Hutch Cancer and Teen Feed. Yakima became his home in September as they relocated to be close to their son, his wife, and new grandchild. He is an avid cook and gardener and enjoys pickleball and bridge. Daniel was born in Mercer Island. Growing up he stayed busy with basketball, baseball, cross-country and track. His summers were spent at a Jewish sleepaway in Tumwater where he learned a deep appreciation for indoor plumbing. He attended San Diego State University where he graduated with a degree in economics. In 2018, he had the opportunity to partner with Mike Latimer in Yakima at Morgan Stanley. At 24, with no wife, no local connections, he packed up and made the move. It turned out remarkably well; he met his wife and is a new dad. Outside of work, Daniel likes to play golf, is an avid snowboarder, basketball coach at Eisenhower, and loves watching the Seahawks. We are so excited to have them both be a part of Rotary!

Charlie Robin had the honor of introducing our featured speaker, Kori Prior, the executive producer of Elf the Musical. Yakima and the Capitol Theatre are one of those places that, if a production is starting their tour on the west coast, they use for their pre-tour tech. Elf the Musical is the first time, that not only the technicians are here, but the actors are doing their rehearsals here as well. As an executive director, Kori oversees the production teams, technical teams and creative teams. She works with the folks in the office who are managing the tour to bring all the actors and technicians as they travel across the country. You have to be organized and ready. What happens is not possible without the local community. The Elf team has been in Yakima for three weeks total with the actors here 1 ½ weeks. They are staying in our hotels, shopping at our grocery stores, eating at restaurants, and at the hardware store purchasing technical and set supplies. What has their experience been? She has not heard a team rave about local establishments before – they are raving about the food and the kindness received as they're coming in and out of shops. Everyone has asked; can we do this again next year. They have also run into some of the best technicians that they've met all over the country. Some of them end up being recruited to be a part of future tours.

Kori works for Crossroad Live, North America. They have been doing what they do for almost 45 years. Her own career path included spending 21 years with the Blue Man Group working all over the U.S. and the globe. She started as a stage manager, became a general manager, to becoming an executive producer. Why this field? She had some incredible high school drama teachers. She started off in front of the stage but quickly developed an intense love for backstage and sets. She is proof that following one's passion can work.

One question often asked is, how much is Elf the Musical like the movie. Elf the Musical has been around a long time. The current production has been nurtured and reimagined. It includes major highlights that you would see in the movie, but you'll see it in a musical live format. There is a lot of magic and a lot of joy. It's a show about finding your people. In general, it takes about 7 years to develop a Broadway musical from beginning to end. It took about 18 months to create the Elf touring production that exists today – from casting to building sets, costumes, video, and scenes. While a Broadway show is sitting for weeks in the same location, at the end of a tour location you have 8 hours to pack up and move to the next destination where you have 3 hours to unload. This is an 8-week holiday tour. When it's resurrected next year, the majority of the cast wants to come back. That is unheard of and a testament to a premium team.

With this coming to you on Monday, I will share that after seeing Sunday's production, it became one of my all-time favorites!



Charlie Robin & Elf the Musical Executive Producer Kori Prior

a Night in Paris

THANK YOU TO OUR ROTARY AUCTION SPONSORS!

Platinum

GILBERT ORCHARDS
ESTD 1897

Gold

LEGENDS CASINO • HOTEL

CWU

Trouvés

SAINT ELIZABETH'S

Silver

Heritage University

Morgan Stanley

CAPITAL ADVISORS WEALTH MANAGEMENT

CENTRAL WASHINGTON INSURANCE AGENCY, INC.

PaintSmith EST. 1973

Friendly AUTOMOTIVE

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS · ASSET MANAGEMENT · INSURANCE SERVICES · ALEGRIA

VALLEY MALL

Yakima Valley Community Foundation

BAIRD

Bronze

MultiCare

Quinn & Aaron Dalan

Greg & Jan Luring

Yakima Federal Savings and Loan Association

H.R. SPINNER QUALITY PRODUCE PACKAGING SINCE 1916

KeyBank

GLACIER SALES, INC.

ASCEND FINANCIAL GROUP LLC EXPERIENCE YOU CAN TRUST

COMPASS FINANCIAL NETWORK

BANNER BANK

Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences

TERRIL, LEWIS & WILKE INSURANCE, INC.