



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2026
YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER

Create
Lasting
Impact

TOM DAVIS
JOHN I HAAS SENSORY PANEL



Tom Davis is the Chief Executive Officer of John I. Haas, Inc., a global leader in hop production and innovation with a long history in the Yakima Valley. Tom joined Haas in 2004 as Chief Financial Officer and has since held leadership roles across finance, manufacturing, and operations before being named CEO in 2023.

Throughout his more than 20 years with Haas, Tom has played an important role in the company's growth and continued development. His experience across multiple areas of the business has given him a broad perspective on the hop and brewing industries and the customers Haas serves around the world.

As CEO, Tom continues to build the Haas legacy while focusing on innovation, strong customer partnerships, and continued growth for years to come. This Thursday, he will share how Haas continues to adapt and innovate as the hop industry evolves, the challenges shaping the industry, and what the future may hold for hops and the opportunities ahead.

FOR THURSDAY'S MEETING

Greeters – Jake Hambly, Toni Benetti-Flabetich
Inspiration – Amy Maib
Sergeant-at-Arms – Randy Beehler
Program – Megan Nobbs
Attendance – Megan Bewley

FUTURE PROGRAMS

October 29th – Elf the Musical
November 5th – To Be Determined
November 12th – Mike Mittelman, Veteran's Day Program
November 19th – Dr. Lori Alvord, Native American Heritage Month

SECOND CHANCE
SOCIAL

Wednesday, October 21st
Single Hill Brewing
5pm to 6pm
Your second chance is here –
don't let it pass you by!



ROTARY AUCTION WALL OF WINE



Our annual auction is just around the corner on November 14, and we need your help to build a Wall of Wine for the live auction. We're asking Rotarians to donate one or more bottles of wine valued at \$25 or higher. The goal is to collect 100 bottles, creating a fun and exciting auction item.

The proceeds from the auction directly benefit projects and initiatives that strengthen our community. You can bring your bottles to Rotary or drop them off at the Rotary office.

SCHOLARSHIP THANK YOU NOTE

Dear Rotary Club of Yakima Scholarship Committee,

Thank you for selecting me as a recipient of the Vocational Scholarship. I am truly grateful for your generosity and investment in my education. As a student in the Business Technology and Accounting program at Perry Technical Institute, this scholarship helps ease the financial burden of tuition and allows me to stay focused on finishing my education and building a better future.

Your support is an encouragement to keep working hard and moving toward my goals. I appreciate the opportunity you have given me, and I am honored to be chosen.

Thank you again for your kindness and support

Sincerely,

Shelly Kershner

Perry Technical Institute Student

REVIEW

This week we celebrated National Hispanic Heritage Month with some stunning artwork created by students from West Valley High School; beautiful music provided by 11-year-old Noelia Delgado who recently won the 2026 National Youth Mariachi Vocalist Competition in Houston, Texas; inspiration words from Lupita Carrillo; and the presence of our featured speaker J.R. Martinez who was introduced by Sy Ruiz.

As an actor, best-selling author, motivational speaker, advocate, and wounded U.S. Army veteran, J.R. shared his story and wisdom with humility, humor, and grace. His story did not begin the day he was wounded in Iraq. His mother came to the U.S. from El Salvador looking for opportunity. His father was from Mexico. They met and nine months later, J.R. was born. Nine months later, his father decided he wasn't going to be in the picture. His mom worked multiple jobs to support them. For the first 9 years of his life, he witnessed his mother being subjected to abusive relationships; it was his reality. It was dangerous and toxic, but at the end of the day it was what he knew, and he was with his mom. At the age of nine, they moved to Hope, Arkansas. His mom worked the graveyard shift; he had a lot of responsibility to get himself to bed, get up for school, do laundry and sometimes cook. He was one of the first Hispanic kids in his school and immediately became a target. The only way he knew to deal with adversity was to fight back. He'd be suspended for periods of time, come back to school and be lost as the rest of the class had moved on from the curriculum. His defense mechanism was to become a clown. At no point from 3rd grade to 11th grade did any educator interject and ask, hey what's going on kid or what's going on young man. They moved again at the end of his junior year to Georgia. He instantly felt like he had found a community - people like him who were proud of their American roots but equally proud of their Hispanic heritage and culture. Within the first 2 weeks he was called to the principal's office. It wasn't because he was in trouble, it was to share that he wasn't going to graduate high school on time and to ask what's going on. J.R. started to tell him things that he had experienced. Together they made a plan for him to graduate on time - somebody cared. After graduation he saw a commercial about the military and went to visit the recruitment office for each branch. He told his mom he wanted to join the army; she said, absolutely not. He continued to push the idea, instead of shutting him down, she pulled up a chair and asked him to explain why it was the best thing for him to do.

He joined the army in September 2002, seven months after enlisting he found himself fighting for his life after hitting a landmine that resulted in burns over 34% of his body. He ended back in the U.S. at the burn center for military in San Antonio. His new reality was that he would not be allowed to remain in the military; his service and mission were over. His mom challenged him to believe that something good could come from it; to be himself - be silly, funny, a clown and light-hearted. He made a practice of finding

something every morning and every evening to be grateful for; it had to be intentional. Six months into his recuperation, a nurse asked him to visit another patient. What started in a dark room making J.R. uncomfortable turned into a 45-minute conversation. As he left the room, the person he had visited had turned on a light above his bed and opened the curtains to let light bathe the room. He began visiting patients every day. He didn't need any special qualifications or training, he just needed to show up. He was 22 years old when he left the hospital. He was healed physically but not emotionally or mentally. It took a night out trying to fight someone to be told that he was not healed to bring tears and unload his emotions. That person became his best friend.

His life stories came with many important lessons:

- He didn't decide one day to be resilient. It was conditioning that happened over the course of 19 years of his life.
- Adversity is a terrible thing to waste. Embrace it and learn from it.
- It is important to be vulnerable.
- He is not ashamed to say that he struggles sometimes. One of the things he is most proud of is being a cycle breaker of the generational trauma that he inherited.
- He learned that he could continue to serve. It looks different from a military perspective. He had a new mission to become an advocate for and involved with non-profits to raise awareness for service members and their families.

Finally, he left us with a challenge: the next time we encounter a veteran, instead of simply saying, "thank you for your service" to replace those five words with "tell me about your service." It was a remarkable day!





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