



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2024 YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER

*The Magic
Of Rotary*

JAMES ROTHENBERGER PRIVATE EQUITY



James Rothenberger is the Managing Partner at Sugar Tree Capital, a firm specializing in mergers and acquisitions within the food, agribusiness, and specialty services sectors. With over 17 years of experience in private equity and corporate finance, James has built a reputation for guiding middle-market businesses through critical transitions, including sales, acquisitions, and capital raising. His prior roles include Managing Director at Meridian Capital and Partner at Moss Adams Capital, where he supported family-owned and closely held businesses across the Western U.S. James' expertise spans the full range of corporate finance services, including strategic acquisitions and M&A activity that align with the unique needs of his clients.

James holds a degree from the University of Washington's Michael G. Foster School of Business. Throughout his career, he has been passionate about the agricultural sector, and he has been involved in numerous transactions that have shaped the future of the food and agribusiness industries. His commitment to serving local communities extends beyond his professional work, as he actively engages in discussions about the impact of private equity on the Yakima Valley's farming industry. His insights into the intersection of private equity and agribusiness provide valuable perspectives on how the influx of outside capital affects the sustainability and identity of local farms in the region.

Today, James continues to focus on helping businesses grow while maintaining their core values, with a keen awareness of the larger economic and cultural forces at play in regions like the Yakima Valley.

FOR THURSDAY'S MEETING

Greeters – Clark Permann, Larry Hull
Inspiration – Paul Trotter
Sergeant-at-Arms – Steven Gustafson
Program - Jordan Matson

FUTURE PROGRAMS

October 31st – Barb Petrea, Madd Hatters Haunt
November 7th – Brad Hansen, Kevin Good & Dan Sullivan, Charitable Giving
November 14th – LTC Chris Herion, Veterans Day Program
November 21st - Adam Beach, Native American Heritage Month

OCTOBER SECOND CHANCE SOCIAL



The air is crisp, the leaves are changing, and the abundant harvest of the Valley is slowly coming to an end. It's the perfect mix for October's Second Chance Social. The date, location and time are Wednesday, October 23rd, at Wilridge Winery between 5pm to 6pm. Think lively conversation, delicious appetizers provided by Rotary, and the perfect drink purchased by you. You don't want to miss this!

ROTARY OPERATION HARVEST



ROTARY AUCTION HIGHLIGHT

CASA COSTA BLANCA: THE HOUSE THAT TRANSFORMS GOING TO THE BEACH



For one glorious week, you can lose yourself in the mesmerizing views from your own private beachfront escape in Playa Bonita, Costa Rica tucked between Playa Avellanas and Playa Langosta. Embrace the joy of sandy toes, and tranquil seaside strolls. This stunning luxury home includes seven bedrooms with sleeping arrangements for 22, seven baths, a giant infinity pool, Jacuzzi, sun terrace, and barbecue rancho. Comes with elite service of daily housekeeping, breakfast in the morning (you provide the groceries) and a world-class concierge, who will take every detail to make your stay truly remarkable. You will also have access to the Hacienda Pinilla Beach Club with a beachfront infinity edge pool, fitness center, golf course, tennis & pickleball courts, the spa and restaurants at the JW Marriot Hotel, and access to hiking and biking trails. Dates to be used are anytime between August 1st and October 31st, 2025. Get your travel buddies together now!

Donor: Bruce & Rosanne Bacon and Russ & Cate Wilkinson

Minimum Bid: \$15,000

REVIEW

It was a busy Rotary day with a board meeting in the morning, our noon meeting, and Rotary Education beforehand. Each part was great in its own way. We have a dedicated Board working on our behalf, we've got the best new members who are active and engaged, and as Past President Craig Mendenhall likes to say, we have the Finest Rotary Club in America.

A special thank you to those who volunteer week after week to help make our meetings the only place to be on Thursdays. Joel Ylvisaker and Drew Harris served as our greeters. Laura Crooks shared a beautiful message from Black Elk, an Oglala Sioux and Spiritual Leader called "What is Life?" President Jim welcomed our guests, shared the date for Dr. Mike Lawler's Celebration of Life happening on November 1st, and thanked Larry Mattson and Steven Gustafson for all their hard work chairing Operation Harvest. It was a huge success; we'll get final numbers from Larry and Steven in a few weeks. For the next 5 weeks, you're going to hear a spotlighted auction item that could be yours with the right bid on Saturday, November 16th. This week's highlight was a week at a stunning beach home in Costa Rica. See the description above. Bob Udell served as our sergeant-at-arms – he is known for doing a spectacular job. He didn't let us down.

Rick Fairbrook had the honor of introducing Lisa Sargent as our newest member. Lisa is the Corps Officer and Director for the Yakima Salvation Army with the title of Envoy. She was born in Baltimore, Maryland and 3 months later moved to Yakima so her parents could be closer to family. Lisa is married to Chuck; they met in high school and are the parents of 3 children. She has a huge heart for people in our community and loves to partner with others, other people, other businesses, and other organizations. For the last 23 years she has been part of the Salvation Army, she has dreamed of a site that would house all their services in one location. That dream has come true with the purchase of a new building at 509 N. 4th Street. She is a model of service making her a perfect match for Rotary. We are so happy to have her as part of our Club!

Brad Hanson introduced fellow Rotarian Jon DeVaney as our program speaker. Politics may seem like a taboo subject, especially with a presidential election right around the corner. Jon took the subject of politics and transformed it into a hands-on assessment of our political system and how we've arrived at the current state. Politically, things have been getting worse over time, more and more bitter, and less and less functional. It's been happening gradually over decades; because of that we aren't able to recognize how badly the current system is operating. Partisan politics have become more like a sport where it is more important to defeat the other side than to actually do something.

We were not always in the same partisan environment that we are now. Things did not always function that way. Some of us may remember there used to be liberal Republicans and conservative Democrats with party platforms based around a list of issues that candidates were going to accomplish. Today we talk about their ideological orientation to the extent that there is a sorting of par-

ties. In the 1970s, in both the House and Senate there were quite a few Republicans on the Democratic side and vice versa. Ten years ago, any overlap became nonexistent, making it hard for anyone to work together. There was also a shift ideologically for voters. There are fewer people in the middle. Voter views on how they view each other have changed - 90% of Republicans don't like Democrats; 90% of Democrats don't like Republicans. There has been a shift from policy to ideology. What does that mean? He used chips and guacamole as an example with everyone choosing them as the policy. Why did they choose? Maybe it's because it's gluten free, maybe vegetarian, or maybe it is something else. That is ideology. The "why" has outranked the "what" in politics.

In a slower-paced world with less information we used to elect people to do specific things and report back. 40 years ago, C-SPAN was created and began streaming 24-hour news cycles. With more and more information available, we don't trust our elected officials to make decisions on our behalf; we want them to follow what we would do in their place. Delegating power to elected officials to decide for us feels undemocratic. We have turned our elected officials into chat boxes that make decisions for us. That comes with negative consequences. What happens is that motives matter more than the thing itself. Conversations are viewed as not talking about an issue but about someone's values; you are not just wrong you are a bad person, an evil person. That makes it harder to compromise. Politicians all think compromise is important but only if it compromises to their view.

Voters have issues they are most concerned about. When polled the #1 issue today is abortion; the #2 issue is immigration. If you poll results on the same group of people 56% support Trump's view on immigration and the same 56% support Harris' views on abortion. They have issues that cut party lines. However one feels about Trump, he is all over the map on policy issues. Those that work in politics may say he is not doing it right. A lot of voters like a cafeteria approach to issues; they don't like to be told what box they fit in. We can't just assume things will settle down; tribalist tendencies are enduring. When talking about values it is hard to have constructive political debate.

For successful communications, we need to be weary of triggering a value discussion when trying to talk about a fact or policy and avoid conflicts that we didn't mean to engage in. Focus on the "what" and accept that there may be multiple motivations for the same action. Don't be afraid to present the arguments that speak to the other person's beliefs and values – that's not dishonest. Celebrate agreement and opportunities to cooperate on specific issues with those who have different values – that doesn't make you a traitor or heretic.

We may have created this problem; but we can fix it. We need to focus on the "why" not the "what" in our policy and political policies. We don't need more politics at Rotary, but we need more Rotary in politics.

SAVE THE DATE NOVEMBER 16, 2024



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