

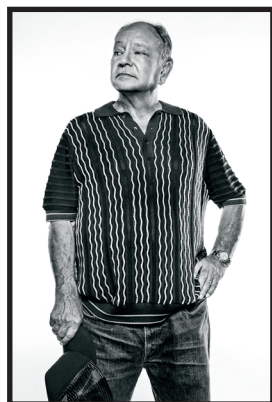


THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2024 YAKIMA VALLEY COLLEGE CONFERENCE CENTER

*The Magic
Of Rotary*

CHEECH MARIN

AN AFTERNOON WITH CHEECH: ART, CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT



A paradox in the world of entertainment, Cheech Marin is an actor, director, writer, musician, art collector, humanitarian and a multi-generational talent. As Cheech himself jests, “people know me from the womb to the tomb.” Widely acknowledged as a cultural icon, he is perhaps best known as one half of the hilariously irreverent, satirical, counterculture comedy duo Cheech and Chong.

In addition to a successful life in entertainment, Cheech is recognized today as a preeminent advocate for Chicano art. In the mid-1980s, he began developing what is now arguably the finest private collection of Chicano art. His collection has been featured in over a dozen exhibitions organized and shown at more than 50 museums in the U.S. and Europe. Comprising mostly of paintings, followed by drawings, prints, mixed-media artworks, sculptures and photography, his formerly private collection now serves as the core of The Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art & Culture of the Riverside Art Museum, which just celebrated its two-year anniversary in June. His long-term goal is to supplement and expand the collection with Chicano artists, media, and subject matter not currently included through acquisitions and donations from artists and their estates, art collectors, dealers, and institutions; and to bring “Chicano” to the forefront of the art world.

Cheech was born Richard Anthony Marin in South Central Los Angeles and was an Angeleno until a move to Canada where he serendipitously met Tommy Chong. He moved back to Los Angeles with Chong and their comedy duo proved entertainment gold. Six of their albums went gold, four were nominated for Grammys, and their Los Cochinos won the 1973 Grammy for Best Comedy Recording. The critically acclaimed duo made a fluid transition to films, starring in eight features together. Their first -- "Up In Smoke" -- was the highest grossing comedy of 1978, topping \$100 million at the box office.

During a split with Chong, Cheech wrote, directed, and starred in the comedy “Born in East L.A.” and went on to a fruitful acting career. To date, he has appeared in over 25 films, including his scene-stealing role as Kevin Costner's caddy in "Tin Cup" and eight of Robert Rodriguez's movies for which he played international characters. Recent films include the romantic comedy film with Jennifer Lopez called "Shotgun Wedding" (2023), "Champions" with Woody Harrelson, and "The Long Game," a golf period piece. Cheech has also had numerous roles in animated movies, including "Oliver & Company," "The Lion King" and "Cars."

Marin made his TV debut as a sitcom regular on “The Golden Palace,” before joining Don Johnson on the CBS drama “Nash Bridges” (and later, a reboot movie on the USA Network). He also appeared in “Lost” and “Jane the Virgin.” In 2022, he made guest appearances on the TV sitcoms “Home Economics” and “Lopez vs. Lopez.”

In 2008, the legendary Cheech & Chong reunited after 25 years apart and embarked on the “Light Up America” comedy tour. “It felt like it was part of our DNA, we were meant to be together,” said Cheech. They also shot a full-length live comedy film Hey Watch This in 2010. The pair followed with subsequent tours, satisfying audiences thirsty to see the pair together. They continue to perform together as their schedules allow.

Given his knowledge about cannabis, Cheech developed his own personal brand called Cheech’s Stash. Along with daughter Jasmine Marin and son Joey Marin, Cheech personally selects strains and works with master growers to sustainably produce an all-natural selection of quality cannabis products, representative of over four decades of legendary experience.

Cheech’s memoir Cheech is Not My Real Name...But Don’t Call Me Chong! was published in 2017. He is also an author of children’s books such as Cheech the School Bus Driver. Marin splits his time between Pacific Palisades and Joshua Tree, California with his wife Natasha Marin, a classical pianist.



FUTURE PROGRAMS

October 10th – Vocational Scholarship Awards
October 17th – Jon DeVaney, History of Politics
October 24th – James Rothenberger, Private Equity in Agriculture
October 31st – Jarod Higginbotham, Yakima Bait

ROTARY OPERATION HARVEST – OCTOBER 12, 2024

There is GREAT need for VOLUNTEERS to DISTRIBUTE bags to preassigned routes BEFORE Operation Harvest between October 4th and October 10th AND to COLLECT food from a route on Saturday, October 12th.
If you can help, PLEASE contact the Rotary office today.

REVIEW

As has been the case so many other times, our members have provided some of the best programs we've ever had. This week was no exception as with a full house, Kelly Gasseling introduced Rob Phillips to share his journey to becoming a best-selling author.

Rob has been writing his entire life. During school he was one of those guys who waited until the day before a term paper was due to get it done. With a career in copy writing, he's written hundreds of tv and radio commercials, newspaper and magazine ads, and catalogs. He always wanted to be an outdoor writer. In 1986 he decided to try writing a magazine article; it sold. Since then, he's written articles in Northwest Sportsman, Pheasants Forever, Salmon, Trout, Steelhead, and many more. In 1991 he went to the Yakima Herald and asked if they needed someone to write about hunting and fishing that actually did it. They told him to bring them something – they ran it. He brought another article the next week - they ran it. He's been doing it for 33 years.

When Covid hit he asked himself the question, why don't you write a book. He had nothing better to do so he sat down and wrote, and wrote, and wrote. He had no idea how to write a book, but he knew he liked mysteries and outdoors. He came up with a protagonist named Luke McCain, a game warden who patrols from the Columbia River to the Pacific Crest Trail. He was 6'5" with a full dark head of hair, strong, and smart – all the things he wasn't. Next, he needed a story line - why not a situation where someone is killing women and dumping them in the Cascades where his guy could get involved helping find the bodies and the killer. He needed more characters, a love interest, and a dog and names for all the characters. He found them at the cemetery, obituaries, and even looked through the Rotary roster. He kept names simple and a journal of names to cross reference for future use. As he wrote he sent chapters to his son. They liked it and encouraged him to keep writing. He started his first book on April 4, 2020; his first draft was done on April 28, 2020. He found a boutique publisher in Spokane who read the manuscript, gave him suggestions (which he took), formatted it for printing and set it up on Amazon.

On October 15, 2020, he had his first book, Cascade Killer - actually 150 of them. He put on his marketing hat, went to Inklings, and built a display. They sold. He did the same thing with Ace Hardware in Naches. They sold there too. In no time, his 150 books were gone; he ordered more and more. His publisher shared that he could sell all the books he wanted in local bookstores, but it was nothing compared to what Amazon can do for him. In order to do so he would need good book reviews from readers that couldn't be family or friends. People liked it and wrote reviews. Today he has over 3,100 four and five-star reviews for the Cascade Killer. Inklings has sold over 3,000 copies making it the all-time best-selling book

in the store's history. Nearly 30,000 copies have been sold via independent bookstores. In one weekend in September 2022, Cascade Killer was downloaded over 33,000 times on Amazon, making it the most downloaded book in the world during that period. And in, July and August of this year, the Luke McCain series had over 1-million-page reads.

Each success encouraged him to keep writing. There are now seven books in the series with nearly 70,000 books sold locally and around the world. Some other cool things that have happened...walking into a bookstore and seeing all his books, and receiving an email from his favorite author, John Sanford telling him he liked his books. Audio versions are available on Audible, Amazon and iTunes and book #8 is in the works to be published in early 2025. He gets emails from Australia, England and all over the U.S. His publisher has had two different inquiries about turning it into a tv series or movie. Nothing has happened and he doesn't expect it to happen. It's been four years who knows where it's going to go. It's been a humbling and amazing journey.

Other news of the day included a thank you to our greeters, Rebecca Thornton and Rodrigo Renteria-Valencia; an inspirational moment by Sheri-Lou Creson with the poem The Harvest Moon by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow; a "Rob Phillips" themed sergeant-at-arms by Bob Romero; and announcements by President Jim, Larry Mattson, John Cooper and Sonia Rodriguez True.

President Jim presented a blue badge to Enri Garcia-Sanchez; recognized Kellie Connaughton for her new role at the Greenway Foundation as their Development & Special Projects Coordinator, and John Gasperetti, Eric Silvers, Cheri Kilty, Bob Romero, and Curt Wilson as recipients of the 2024 Readers' Choice Awards; and the one-year Rotary anniversary for Jesse Sims.

Larry Mattson made a request for Operation Harvest volunteers. The biggest need is to distribute bags on preassigned routes before the event and to collect food on day of, October 12th. John Cooper shared the importance of membership with the unveiling of Membership wallet-sized cards to share with your colleagues, friends, and potential members. Using a Navy analogy we heard "Without the member there is no ship. It takes all of us to be on deck." Sonia Rodriguez True continued our weekly recognition of National Hispanic Heritage Month by reminding us to take time to embrace and enjoy the celebrations and events taking place from September 15th through October 15th. Next week we have Cheech Marin to learn about his life experiences. Our city and county are 50% Latino; as Rotarians we have the ability to reach out, bring the community together to learn, and invite them to be a part of our organization.

SAVE THE DATE NOVEMBER 16, 2024



THANK YOU TO OUR ROTARY AUCTION SPONSORS!

Platinum



Gold



Silver



Morgan Stanley



Quinn & Aaron Dalan



Bronze



Want to be a SPONSOR and get your logo added to the group?
Contact John Cooper at john@visityakima.com