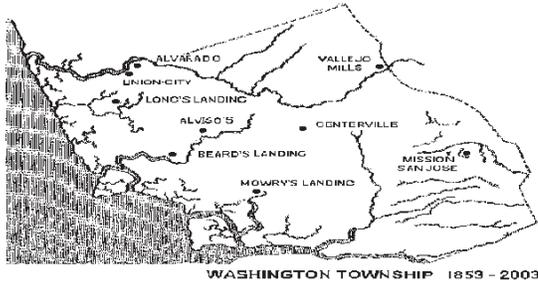


Washington Township Historical Society



JAN - FEB 2022

VOL. 46

NO. 01

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MEETING DATE: MONDAY, JANUARY 24, 7:00 PM
LIVE AT THE WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP MUSEUM OF LOCAL HISTORY
AND VIRTUAL ON ZOOM, <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/76473734687>

Washington Township Historical Society Editor: Al Minard

Let's Go Fishing!

By Paul Sethy, Vice-President
Washington Township Historical Society

Our next WTHS presentation will occur on Monday, January 24, at 7:00 PM.

LIVE AT THE WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP MUSEUM
OF LOCAL HISTORY AND VIRTUAL ON ZOOM:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/76473734687>

We will honor Mr. "BJ" Bunting, friend to many of us, who passed away just short of age 95 from COVID related complications; as well as past President Emeritus of WTHS, who descended from two Washington Township gold rush pioneer families and was a fishing enthusiast to boot! We will all miss BJ's storytelling about local history and his near century of community insights!

The Topic:

The History of the Alameda Creek Watershed & Fishery Restoration Projects

This will be a two-part presentation, the first being from representatives of the Alameda Creek Alliance and the second from the Alameda County Water District.

Part One (by Alameda Creek Alliance leaders): The

History of the Alameda Creek Watershed, the historical fishery habitat, and the multi-decade effort toward re-establishment of the watershed for migration of California Central Coast Steelhead and Chinook Salmon.

Part Two (by the Project Manager in charge of the Alameda County Water District's Lower Alameda Creek Fish Passage Improvements Projects which are nearing completion in 2022):

Synopsis of Presentations:

The Alameda County Water District's (ACWD's) Lower Alameda Creek Fish Passage Improvements will enhance the ability for threatened and federally listed steelhead to migrate through Lower Alameda Creek between the San Francisco Bay and rearing habitat within the Alameda Creek Watershed and its rivers and tributaries. This comprehensive program aims to restore the historic migratory corridor which has been largely obstructed since the 1970s.

The program involves multiple projects, including two innovative fish ladders, rubber dam foundations and structural improvements, multiple new and improved water diversion structures with fish screens, improvements to power and control systems and other major improvements. ACWD completed its Rubber Dam No. 3 (RD3) Fishway Project in May 2019. This project featured the construction of a new fishway around an existing inflatable rubber dam in Alameda Creek and

replacement of the aging dam fabric.

ACWD's second major fish ladder project began in 2019 and is nearing completion after three seasons of major construction work in the Lower Alameda Creek channel. This final fish ladder spans both ACWD's Rubber Dam No. 1 (RD1) and a large flood control structure (the elevated BART train tracks foundational weir) which spans the width of Alameda Creek and forms an obstruction to migratory fish. This project also includes major new water diversions that are both operationally efficient and fish friendly.

While the program serves as an important restoration opportunity providing significant impact on the ability of fish to migrate back and forth and re-establish threatened aquatic life, it also allows the continued management of water resources in the Alameda Creek that serves as a major water source for the local area, providing in a normal rainfall year about 40% of the water supply for over 357,000 people and numerous commercial, industrial and institutional customers in Fremont, Newark, and Union City.

As founding members of the Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup, ACWD and the Alameda Creek Alliance have collaborated with multiple stakeholders since 1999 on efforts to benefit Central California Coastal Steelhead. The Workgroup includes members from advocacy, water management, consulting, environmental, government (federal, state & local) and educational groups with interests in the Alameda Creek watershed and steelhead trout restoration. It is a testament that careful planning and meaningful partnerships can result in real advancements for the environment while protecting our area's water supplies for generations to come.

Estimated Costs: \$80M for fish ladders and all additional creek construction projects.

Offsetting grants to date: \$33M (more expected).

Ratepayer net: ~ \$47M in water bills.

Significant Trivia: The combined length of both fish ladders, 854', is in a vertical plane taller than the Transamerica Pyramid (853'), the San Francisco Bank of America skyscraper (779'), the Oroville Dam (770', the tallest dam in America), and the Golden Gate bridge towers (746'). By comparison the height of the Salesforce.com skyscraper in downtown San Francisco is 1070'. The RD1 fish ladder traversing the BART weir by itself is 624' long!! Wow!!!

Presenters:

Jeff Miller

Jeff is the founder of the Alameda Creek Alliance and has served as Executive Director since 1997. Jeff also works with the Center for Biological Diversity on media, outreach, writing endangered species listing petitions, and working on biodiversity issues and endangered species protection throughout California.

Pete Alexander

Pete is the current President of the Alameda Creek Alliance. He retired from the East Bay Regional Park District after 28 years as the Fisheries Program Manager and 8 years as Fisheries and Water Management/Fisheries Resource Analyst. He has been working on Alameda Creek steelhead restoration since 1988. Pete holds a Professional Fisheries Certification with the American Fisheries Society.

Shane O'Nesky, P.E.

Shane has served as an engineer and Project Manager for Alameda County Water District for the past 20 years. He served as the Project Manager for the construction of the District's first fish ladder over its Rubber Dam No. 3 in Lower Alameda Creek and most recently served as Project Manager for the District's final and largest fish ladder over Rubber Dam No. 1 and new water diversions and fish screens along Alameda Creek. Mr. O'Nesky holds a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from UC Davis, and a Professional Engineering license from the State of California in Mechanical Engineering.





Beverly James "B.J." Bunting
January 5, 1927 – December 26,
2021

B.J. Bunting, born on January 5, 1927, was the youngest of five sons born to Lawrence and Genevieve Bunting. B.J. is a descendent of the Bunting and Overacker families. His great grandfather, Howard Overacker came to the area in 1853 with his brother Michael. After trying out the goldfields they came to Washington Township. Howard purchased 250 acres along what is now Peralta Blvd.

The Bunting family came to Centerville in 1873. John A. Bunting and his mother, Evelina purchased 18 acres. John married Fleda Overacker, Howard's daughter. John and Fleda had five children. Their son Lawrence married

Genevieve Garvey in 1914.

Lawrence and Genevieve purchased the old Sanborn property consisting of 3.5 acres on the southwest corner of the road to Mission San Jose and the road to Centerville. B.J. grew up in this historic house on the edge of Bunting Pond. The family continued to live there until the property was sold under duress on June 10, 1981.

He attended Niles Elementary school and enjoyed playing with the neighborhood boys and swimming in Alameda Creek. B.J. recalls that the people were great; they knew each other and watched out for one another.

His first job was cutting apricots for 4 ½ cents per tray. B.J. also worked at the nearby International Kitchen unloading pottery and washing dishes. The owners were very good

to the boys and sometimes gave them pieces of broken pie as a special reward. B.J. had a pet cow, "Pretty", that he rode to school. He is pictured riding his cow in the pet parade in Niles.

B.J. entered Washington Union High School during World War II. His older brothers, Peter, Tom, and Bob joined the Navy, and he also wanted to join when he turned 17. He went with seven other boys from Washington High School to the San Francisco Naval Induction Center. They all passed their physicals and went to the US Navy except B.J. who joined the Merchant Marines. B.J. served on ships transporting bombs and other munitions. His ship carried about 10,000 tons of munitions to various destinations including 3,000 tons of dynamite to Guam and other supplies to Alaska. After serving 30 months he returned home to Niles in 1947.

When B.J. was 16, he began working weekends in the track department of the Southern Pacific railroad at 53 cents an hour. In the summer of 1944, at age 16, he worked as a signal helper. Then the Western Pacific railroad called him to work, at the Niles Tower near his home, where he hung orders for the trains and operated levers that directed train traffic. At age 16 he was operating these five-foot levers, some of which were very hard to move.

Due to the war, the railroad was short of manpower and B.J. went to high school during the day and worked in the Niles Tower from four o'clock in the afternoon to midnight. After returning from the Merchant Marine his job with the Western Pacific railroad was waiting for him. In 1947 he left Western Pacific to take a job to become an assistant signalman for the Southern Pacific railroad and B.J. continued working for them for over 42 years. In 1952 B.J. was promoted to lead signalman and then was promoted to signal foremen in 1962. He held this position until 1975 when he began working on signal maintenance.

B.J. met Dorothy Lee Williams at his brother's shivaree soon after he left the merchant marines. She had been working in the Naval Research Office at Moffett Field. They were married in Niles in 1947. B.J. built a two-bedroom house next to his parents' home on the Sanborn place where they raised their sons James, Lee, and David until they were forced to sell their property through eminent domain to the water district.

Besides working for the railroad B.J. became an Alameda County Reserve Deputy Sheriff in 1952 and served 6 years. He was in the Fremont Police Reserve for 14 years. His police adventures included assisting people fleeing from their homes in the 1955 Christmas Eve flood in Niles. He recalls seeing Christmas presents floating in flooded cars.

B.J. also assisted in the recovery operations of a plane crash into a field in Alvarado in 1953. He received a call about 6:00 pm to report to the Peralta sub-station to be dispatched to Alguire Road. As he neared the designated site, he could see flashing lights and he realized that this was no drill. It was a disaster. There in the farmer's field was a crashed and burning airplane. It was a charter military plane that had pancaked into the ground killing 30 military personnel and the three-civilian crew.

B.J. always enjoyed gardening and had a fine vegetable garden on the Sanborn place. After he established another home in Fremont, he continued to enjoy his gardening with his late wife Dorothy of 62 years. Dorothy raised flowers and B.J. raise the vegetables and fruit trees.

We can describe B.J. Bunting as a very caring and considerate person. He was a man with very special talents and abilities. We join with all those who are proud to call him our friend. We honor his memory and send our condolences to his family. We are told that a Memorial service will be held later.



BJ on his jersey cow named "Pretty" (above)
BJ in his Merchant Marine uniform (below)

BJ in his reserve officer uniform (below)



January 24, 2022, MEETING

Will be in person at the Washington Township Museum of Local History, 190 Anza Street, Fremont, OR on Zoom starting at 7:00 P.M.:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/76473734687>

NEW MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR SINGLE ADDRESS

ONE-YEAR \$10 FIVE-YEAR \$40 TEN-YEAR \$70 PATRON: \$50.00 for one year

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WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP 1853 - 2003