

# Washington Township Historical



## MAY - JUNE 2012

VOL 36

NO. 03

PRES: GIL GARZA

(510) 494-1186

V.P.: JUDY SPRAGUE

(510) 657-0661

REC. SEC.:

**NEED A VOLUNTEER**

TREAS.: REGENA DENNIE

(510) 656-3892

**MEETING DATE: MONDAY, May 28, 2012 TIME: 7:15 PM**  
**PLACE: MUSEUM OF LOCAL HISTORY, 190 ANZA ST., FREMONT**

Washington Township Historical Society Editors: Regena Dennie and Al Minard

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Washington Township Historical Society Members and friends,

The Washington Township Historical Society plaque committee has targeted a handful of historical sites for plaques. The locations for the projected sites will include Fremont, Newark and Union City. After a fairly comprehensive survey we have a number of options for plaque types and materials. The plaque types allow us to address the aesthetic sensitivity and requirements of the specific site. The different plaque types also allow more options for the amount of text and level of graphics needed. Newer materials will also help us mitigate issues with vandalism and metal theft. You'll hear more on this topic as things progress.

I would like to propose to the membership a pot-luck or dinner for our WTHS July 23rd meeting. Actually I'm looking for someone to make a proposal for a potluck/dinner with a program topic and presentation. The person making the proposal would take the lead in putting together the program contents and make arrangements for the dinner or pot-luck. WTHS can help as needed. This is a great opportunity to take the lead and draw attention to your area of interest with a captive audience of historically minded folks. I'm looking forward to seeing the various areas of interest and ideas of our membership.

***Gil Garza***

**Our speaker for the May meeting is Lila Bringhurst.**

Lila Bringhurst is a long time friend of the historical community. She and her husband Dr. Deon Bringhurst restored the A. O. Rix house in Irvington, and they moved and restored the Saint Joseph rectory. Lila has a BS from the University of California in Berkeley and has been a writer for the Argus and the Tri-City Voice. Lila's latest project has been the Train sculpture on Mission Boulevard at the end of Mowry Avenue. She will be talking about her experiences of moving and restoring buildings as well as the construction of the sculpture on Mission Boulevard.

A. O. Rix was the son of pioneer settler Timothy Rix, a native of New Hampshire who arrived in San Francisco in 1849, at the height of the Gold Rush, when he was around 52 years old. Timothy Rix placer-mined in the Sierra and worked in San Francisco as a wheelwright before settling in Washington Township in the early 1850's. His 156-acre ranch fronted on the county road about a half-mile northwest of Washington Corners, later known as Irvington. Rix opened a general store in the village and served as its first postmaster. Soon, however, he took up his old profession as a wheelwright, forming a partnership with the town's pioneer blacksmith, Herman Crowell. The firm of Crowell & Rix was one of the first manufacturing operations in the township, turning out wagons, carriages, and agricultural implements for the area's burgeoning population.

## ITS IN THE MAIL BAG

**Alameda County Historical Society Quarterly**, April 2012, Dennis Evanosky writes, “The Maker of San Francisco” called the Camron-Stanford house home. When David Hewes got the nickname “Steamship Paddy” for the steam paddies that his company used to carve away the pesky sand dunes in what is now San Francisco’ Fianancial and South of Market districts, the Hewes lived in Oakland between 1877 and 1881, then sold the house to Leland Stanford.

**Union City Historical Museum**, May 2012, Anthony Gualco writes, “Tales of Alvarado Justice”. It was 1855, and Sheriff Broder was in search of four desperate villains, which he found in San Jose.

**Mission Peak Reporter**, April/June 2012, is taking reservations for their “Sweet Violet Tea’, which will be held on Thursday, June 7, 2012 at the Shinn House on Peralta Blvd. For Reservations call Michi Yee at (510) 793-9352. The price is \$23.00. Barbara Anderson, Librarian at the Shinn House, will be getting a collection of books on the Shinn Family and Alameda County.

**The Club Car**, April and May magazines have many beautiful pictures of various Steam trains and other train activity in the Niles Canyon.

## MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

***Tri-City Voice***, March 27, 2012, **Phil Holmes** writes, “Homeless”. The Child Welfare Club of Washington Township, organized at the home of Mrs. Frank Dusterberry in 1928, appears to be the only one to survive. Today, the Tri-City Homeless Coalition celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 2009 with the name change to Abode Services.

***Fremont Bulletin***, April 6, 2012, **Dorothy Bradley**, Essanay Silent Film Museum President, commemorates 100 years of silent films at the Niles Town Plaza.

***Tri-City Voice***, April 10, 2012, **Phil Holmes** writes, “Washington Township Village Landmarks”. Mentioned are Washington High School, Masonic home, Irvington Monument, and St. Joseph’s Church.

***Tri-City Voice***, April 10, 2012, **Pat Kite** writes, “Raspberries really”. For plant folklore, the Ifugaos, a mountain people of the Luzon area, located in the Philippine Islands, may hang raspberry vines by their house door when there is a death in the house. If the spirit of the dead person tries to sneak back in, it will become entangled in the raspberry brambles.

***Fremont Bulletin***, March 13, 2012, **Dirk Lorenz**, owner of Fremont Flowers, submitted an idea for the proposed florist disclosure law.

***Tri-City Voice***, April 24, 2012, **Phil Holmes** writes, “Hidden Valley”. Charles Shinn referred to it as “one of the most picturesque ravines of the Mission Peak Mountain group”.

***Tri-City Voice***, May 1, 2012, **Pat Kite** writes, “A mouse visits”. Author Topsell, in his 1607 historic of Foure-Footed Beastes, mentioned mice might be boiled, roasted, fried or reduced to powder and “given in some pleasant or delightful drink”.

***Tri-City Voice***, May 8, 2012, **Phil Holmes** writes, “Photographers and Photography”. The photo of Mission San Jose taken by C.E. Watkins in 1853 is apparently our oldest surviving photograph.

Members who have paid their dues since our March meeting

Katie Janssen, Nabil Matta, Carolyn & John Watson, and Virginia Stull

# Old Style Plaques



This style of plaque has historical significance because of the creator but limits the amount of words that we can put on the plaque to define what this plaque refers to. Some of our historical sites have limited information and just need some identifying plaque to let people know that it has historical significance. We are proposing this style to replace the one in Niles for the Essanay Studio. There are probably other buildings that this style of plaque would be both appropriate and appreciated by the owner. As soon as we can get some better language for the Niles Essanay Studio plaque we will get it made and installed. Please look at the second page of plaques and see if that style would be more appropriate for your building.

# New Style Plaques

This plaque is the style that we are proposing for some of the locations because we can get more information on them and can include color pictures. The cost is very similar to the cost of the original plaques above. We will let the owner of the site choose which plaque they would prefer. We would like to place plaques on the Horner House on Driscoll and the California Sycamore tree on Rancho Higuera Road. We would prefer that we use this new style plaque for these locations because we can put pictures on them and more information.



.....  
 FAMILY MEMBERSHIP: \$10.00 per year                      PATRONS MEMBERS: \$50.00 for one year

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL CHECK TO: Washington Township Historical Society      PO BOX 3045      FREMONT, CA 94539

Last meeting we had our own Al Minard speaking about the Conference of California Historical Societies (CCHS) Symposium in Pasadena. On Wednesday, May 23, 2012, the Conference of California Historical Societies is holding a workshop in Niles at the Essanay Silent Film Museum from 8:30 am to 3:30 p.m. The speakers include: Ariel Weintraub, Institutional Giving Manager Oakland Museum on White Elephant Sale  
Avi Black Alameda County Office of Education History Department on History Day  
Jeff Rubin, Planning your Publication on how to make newsletters get your readers attention  
Chris Mieuli, InDesign expert to show you how to make a newsletter look attractive  
And Autumn from TechSoup.org who will show us how to get top line software at a very affordable costs for Non-Profit organizations. This price for this event is \$30 which includes coffee, sweet rolls, and juice in the morning and a lunch provided by The Nile Cafe in Niles. This is a good time to network with other historical organizations, it is amazing what you can learn when you talk to other people in similar organizations.

The Conference of California Historical Societies is also having their Annual Awards luncheon and workshop this year in Santa Barbara. There are lots of museums and since we are members we can get a small discount on our tickets. Santa Barbara is both beautiful and a little pricey so it will cost a little more than some of the other locations. CCHS has been trying to get into Santa Barbara for years because of all of the history in Santa Barbara and this is the first time that CCHS has had a Symposium there.

California History day was held in Riverside this year. The Alameda County History Day event was held at the Oakland Museum prior to the California event in Riverside. This year we had several students from Hopkins Junior High, Warm Springs Elementary and Mission San Jose High School who entered the Alameda County competition. Several of them were advanced to the State competition in Riverside but none of them advanced to the National Championship. Hopefully next year we will have some that go to the National Championship for History Day.

