

# CIVIL ENGINEER



T H E N E W S L E T T E R

Tacoma ♦ Olympia Section of the  
American Society of Civil Engineers



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**CIVIL ENGINEERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!**

**THEY PROVIDE THE QUALITY OF LIFE!**

The **Civil Engineer Newsletter** is published for the Tacoma/Olympia Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers monthly from September to June.

To submit ads or articles of interest, please contact the current President of the Section or the Editor. Information must be submitted not later than the 15th of the month prior to publication.

For address changes and corrections, contact the Editor.

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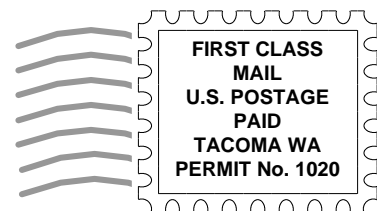
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**CIVIL ENGINEER**  
**The NEWSLETTER**

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# March Program

## "The Tacoma Narrows Bridge"



**Tuesday**  
**March 10, 1998**  
**Landmark Center, Tacoma**  
**Social 6:00 PM**  
**Dinner 6:30 PM**  
**Program 7:30 PM**

**Brian Ziegler** of the Washington State Department of Transportation is presenting this timely program. Mr. Ziegler is a Saint Martin's Graduate from 1979 and now serves as a Project Development Engineer for the Olympic Region of WSDOT.

He will touch on several topics related to the proposed Tacoma Narrows Bridge project.:

- The Need for Action
- The Major Investment Study
- The Origin-Destination Study
- The Environmental Impact Statement
- The Boundary Study and Public Vote
- The Project Schedule

There will be time for questions about the project. Based on his credentials as a member of the City of Olympia Planning Commission and from his work on the State Freight Rail Program, Brian should be able to answer many of our questions including the following.

For instance, how does this project accommodate the regional mass transit direction of providing commuter or light rail service? How does this project fit with the freight mobility improvements being performed in the region? Twenty or thirty years from now when the Ports of Tacoma and Olympia are at capacity, will we be kicking ourselves for not providing for freight rail capacity over the Narrows? How was the new capacity sized and does it coordinate with the GMA plans for the origin and destination regions? If the articles in the newspaper leave you wondering what's really going on in this process, come listen to this speaker.

Thank you, Richard Swanson for setting up this month's program.

**Directions** to Landmark Convention Center **From Tacoma or Olympia:** Take exit 133 (I-705) to downtown; take 15th Street Exit; up the hill past the Sheraton Hotel; turn right on Market Street and go three blocks past the Municipal Building. Continue onto St. Helens Avenue travel approximately 3 more blocks to the Tacoma Landmark Convention Center (old St. Helens Center) on the right at 47 St. Helens Avenue.

### Attention Students

It is the Tacoma-Olympia Section's long-standing policy that your meal price is half off. Remember to say you are a student when you make your reservation. As always, there is no cost to attend the presentation.

### Reservations

Reservations for dinner are strongly suggested. **MEMBERS WITH RESERVATIONS WHO DO NOT ATTEND WILL BE BILLED.** For your reservations please call **Chris Beckman** at (253)798-3557 (new number) or **Mark Leingang** (360)586-6163 by the close of business, Friday March 6, 1998. You can also make reservations by accessing the Tacoma-Olympia Section Home page at: <http://www.asce.org/gsd/sections/tacoly/tacoly.htm>

It is very important to make firm reservations for the section meetings for the following reasons:

- To make sure that we have a place set for everyone;
- So the presenter can bring enough hand-outs for all who are present;
- We (section) give an advance count of attendees so the proper amount of food will be prepared;
- We are charged for each person we make a reservation for;
- If the meeting is canceled, we can notify you.

### ASCE Activities

On March 5 ASCE will release a report card on America's Infrastructure. This rating of the country's needs for roads, bridges, mass transit, aviation, school buildings, drinking water supply, wastewater treatment, dams solid waste facilities, and hazardous waste facilities comes 10 years after the National Council on Public Works Improvement report card.

I'm curious to see how we've done. Hopefully, we've improved in at least some areas, say hazardous waste. After all, didn't the EPA finally give up a smidgen of their power and delist a handful of sites in the last decade?

ASCE nationals states that the report card project is an effort to make the public more aware of the need to invest in rebuilding our infrastructure. I'm guessing it's not the lack of awareness so much as the lack of direct adverse consequences that keeps infrastructure from floating to the top of the public priority list. (Cont Page 3)



## A Fish Story

There's been some news coverage to the listing of the king salmon as threatened in the Puget Sound area. For over a week I've tried to clarify my thoughts on the issue so I could write a clear editorial on the subject. However, I'm afraid there is just too much sediment in the waters of this issue.

For years I've considered the Endangered Species Act a tool that city people use to feel better about their ongoing, extreme land use modifications and habitat destruction. By supporting the listing of cute little species or subspecies that live off in the rural areas, city folks can require other people to make the sacrifices and still wash their responsibility for habitat changes down the storm drains along with the soapy car wash water and oil drips. Past listings have not shaken up the situation of having one's environmental cake and eating it too.

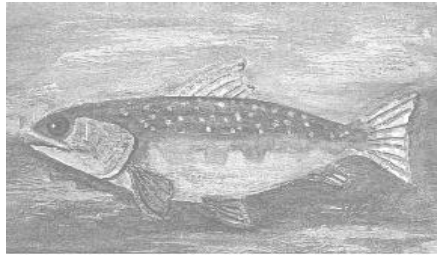
For this reason, I think it's about time that everyone understands that there is no selfish, ignorant, or malicious **them** affecting the environment. There is only the selfish, ignorant, and lazy **us**, and we are going to have to change our habitats at home, not just at our places of work.

On the other hand, as I understand it, it's not exactly like these fish are about to disappear. It just happens that they are not in every Washington river that ever had (or was reported to have) them. There are very few deer in the cities of the Puget Sound either, but that hardly makes them threatened. Extinction means gone from the earth, not just gone from whatever someone defined as a study area.

Then of course, there is the issue that many of these Puget Sound rivers do have the fish, it's just that the fish aren't "wild", they had midwives at

the hatcheries. Well, there are few wild dogs here, but the species is in no danger of dying out, so this argument seems a little weak as well. Once again, extinction means gone, not divided into a caste system where only those with the right parentage count.

So the thing nagging at me is, why are we going to suffer the blunt trauma of the Endangered Species Act for a fish that is still commercially harvested farther north and south of here, still recreationally harvested, and still present in our rivers? Is it just because we can't get our act together for incremental improvements and need a swift kick in the pants, or is it because we are missing the forest of Intent by focusing on the trees of Statistics?



Rebecca Vader, President  
Tacoma Olympia Section  
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### ASCE and America's Infrastructure Report Card *(continued from Page 2)*

When the jail system fails and felons are let out early and repeat the crime, it's obvious the system is in failure. So people demand more jails. Most engineering categories aren't at Obvious-To-Mr.-and-Ms.-Doe levels of failure. So far, no community was left without garbage pick-up because there was no place to take the trash.

However, when a road washes out or another piece of engineering infrastructure does fail, the public is not shy about demanding a fix. I don't think that it's inappropriate to give the highest priority to the piece of the fabric of life that is the most frayed. Then again, lack attention to long-term planning leaves us in the ugly, unhappy mode of chronic crisis response.

The national announcement stated that the report card is intended to generate more support for public-private partnerships and ways to move innovation into practice. It will be interesting to see the reaction, if any, of the various city, county, and state agencies. How can a rating list motivate people to change unless there is a consequence associated with the rating?

### Check it Out

Check out the infrastructure report card on the member's only web site at [www.asce.org](http://www.asce.org) Also, the web site continues to expand its functionality. You can now use it to check into all the benefits, update your membership information, and locate personnel that would help you if only you knew

### Position Wanted

**Chris Beckman, PE;** BS Architectural Engineering, structural concentration, 1975, seeks position as an upper level engineer for projects or a municipality. Employed in public and private engineering positions since 1973. Member of ASCE and holder of a responsible position in the Tacoma-Olympia section. To contact call (253)798-3557, email [cbeckma@sttl.uswest.net](mailto:cbeckma@sttl.uswest.net), or write 2500 Alder Street, #4, Milton, WA 98354-8605

## Software Review

Topo ! Interactive Maps On CD-ROM by Wildflower Productions, San Francisco, CA (415)558-8700, www.topo.com

A geologist in my office recently introduced me to this great map program that will replace USGS maps in my office for any project in western Washington. As you can probably guess from the company name, these folks are not the typical builders of an engineering tool, but what they came up with will grace my reports and vicinity maps rather than the cut and paste versions that have served until now.

This program combines about a hundred digitized USGS topographic maps per set, USGS digital data, and a map browser that's billed as state of the art. The software lets a user browse, print, and customize USGS maps. The map software measures distance and direction, builds elevation profiles, and provides locations in latitude and longitude. The program prints this stuff out with your own text, symbols, and routes, plus Wildflower's name and copyright, just so you don't get into any legal trouble.

The developer calls it an Interactive Map, and my computer-speaking husband says that's because you can just roam around on the map, you don't have to call up specific files. When you're tired of touring, the map is searchable by feature (lakes ski areas, etc.), place name, and latitude and longitude. This feature is very handy for those obscure places that you just don't know where to look for on a regular map.

The maps are available on CD for two western Washington regions: Seattle, Mount Rainier, and Central Cascades; and Olympic Peninsula, San Juan Islands, and Puget Sound. Two regions in Colorado and seven regions in California are also available.

## PNC

Jim Carlsen will be representing our section at the Pacific Northwest Council (PNC) meeting. The meeting is scheduled for the third weekend of this month in Spokane, WA. All of the sections from Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana, along with District 12 and Zone IV officials will send representatives to hash out details of what we want from nationals, what we want of ourselves as a region, etc. So, if you have any great idea, have a chat with Jim at this next section meeting. Progress will be slow, but your idea might generate action and it never hurts to ask for what you want.

A special highlight closes this PNC meeting: Grand Coulee Dam will be designated a National Historic Engineering Landmark. A ceremony at the dam and dam tours will take place Saturday, March 21.

## Section Resume Policy

Our section newsletter will provide free space for ASCE students and members to advertise their qualifications. The resume information needs to be received by the 20th of the month to make the next newsletter. If you still don't have a job, send it again the next month. The resume information is limited to: Name, engineering degree/year, position desired, years of related experience, membership status ASCE section, address to obtain more information, and daytime phone.

Please send information to Rebecca Vader, 2917 South 17th Street, Tacoma, WA 98405 or e-mail [timv@halcyon.com](mailto:timv@halcyon.com)

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## ASCE Calendar

### March

4 Board Meeting, Olympia  
10 Section Meeting, Tacoma

### April

1 Board Meeting, Tacoma  
14 Section Meeting, Olympia

### PELP Programs

Achieving Real Success as a Project Manager March 4 and 5, 1998:  
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
\$330 (early registration)/\$365

Design and Retrofit of Culverts in the Northwest for Fish Passage  
April 22 and 23, 1998: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. NEW DATES \$345 (early registration)/\$375