



BENNETT VALLEY VOICE

VOLUME 4 Number 1

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

January, 1981

MEMO FROM THE BOARD

BVHA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
1980-1981

As we begin a new year, we look back over the events of 1980...

December-February - Met with residents in the vicinity of the Sonoma Mountain and Pressley Road intersection to draw up an agreeable solution to the safety problems of the intersection. Plans were then drawn up, voluntarily, by a civil engineer and presented to the County Road Department. At that time, the intersection was placed on the County's priority list of road improvements.

Annual billing reinstated.

March - 1st newsletter of 1980.

May - Distributed over 900 leaflets in Bennett Valley announcing our first candidates' night. All six candidates for 1st District Supervisor were represented.

June - 2nd newsletter of 1980.

September - 3rd newsletter of 1980, delivered to all county Bennett Valley residents. Held a dual-purpose meeting - (a) A representative from the Sheriff's Department came, complete with movie and demonstration mockups, to address the burglary problems of our area and to indicate the best ways to combat the problem. (b) The two run-off candidates for 1st District Supervisor came to answer questions from Bennett Valley residents. Held annual board elections. Results: Warren Watkins, Barbara Maberry, and Paul Mowbray elected to three-year terms.

October - Officers for 1981 elected.

November - At board's request, the County road crews trimmed the brush overgrowth along Sonoma Mountain Road and on Pressley Road south of the Sonoma Mtn. intersection which was creating road safety problems. Also enlisted the road crew's assistance in trimming dangerous tree overhangs at Cooper's Grove (at owner request).

President	Tamara Boulton
Vice-President	Nancy Batson
Secretary/Treasurer	Barbara Maberry
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Ted Chamberlain	Max Moberly
Bill Jacobs	Paul Mowbray
Paul Hamilton	Warren Watkins

In addition, the BVHA board regularly reviews notifications from the County concerning proposed land divisions in the Bennett Valley Study Area. We have worked with and for area residents on concerns or problems they've brought to our attention. We urge you to become involved in our area and to give us your in-put. Our primary goal is working together for the betterment of Bennett Valley and its residents.

In 1981 we will be meeting on the 3rd Wednesday of the month (instead of the 4th Wednesday as in the past) at the Bennett Valley Fire Station. We invite you to come to any/all board meetings and to contact us at any time with your comments. A quarterly newsletter is planned for this year, and we invite your suggestions for articles. Newsletter ideas and articles may also be submitted to Carolyn Dowdy (527-5682).

Hope to see you in 1981!

SONOMA COUNTY LEASH LAWS

Many residents in the valley have been having problems with dogs running loose, noticeably in Annadel Park and adjacent areas. Some of the residents have lost baby rabbits and young calves. This spring there will be lambs and young colts. Please think when you allow your dog out...anyone has the right to shoot if the dog is going to annoy the animals.

Nancy Batson

WHAT IS THE BVHA?

The forming of the Bennett Valley Homeowners Association began with a meeting on May 7, 1971, at the Bennett Valley Grange Hall. Homeowners in the Bennett Valley area at that time wanted to have a voice in how Bennett Valley grew in the future. The Association was incorporated officially on June 1, 1971.

Today, as in 1971, growth is a major concern. Higher population in the last nine years has required widening of roads and proposals to improve other roads. Incidents of crime, including theft and vandalism, have increased immensely since the early seventies.

Since its inception, the Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association has been a strong voice with recommendations to the County regarding growth and its inherent problems in the Bennett Valley area. Many members of the Association contributed much over the years with their suggestions for controlled growth. Individuals contributed hours of their time to make the Bennett Valley Specific Plan (an extension of the General Plan) a plan that considered the concerns of all the people of Bennett Valley, not only with zoning but with uses and capabilities of the land.

When I became a member of the BVHA, one of my main concerns was the growth of Bennett Valley. There is no doubt that the area will continue to grow. I only hope that common sense prevails with developers and county officials so that we will still have an area that preserves

one of the most scenic areas in Sonoma County. Also, I hope that future generations of people in Bennett Valley and the surrounding areas can enjoy the country atmosphere - the cows, sheep, horses, goats, deer, and all the wild life along with the trees, meadows, and rolling hills.

Ted Chamberlain

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WHAT IS THE DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE?

Over the past several months a bit of confusion seems to have arisen over the differences between the Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association and the Bennett Valley Design Review Committee. They are two completely different entities. The Homeowners Association is a group of concerned residents who represent and respond to the people of Bennett Valley and any issues that arise concerning the area. The Bennett Valley Design Review Committee is a committee of 5 area residents appointed by our County Supervisor to insure that the policies and requirements of the Bennett Valley Specific Plan are complied with by builders. A major purpose of the Committee is to accommodate the increasing number of buildings with the least amount of intrusion on the natural landscape...to maintain the inherent characteristics of the area. They bring to the Committee particular areas of expertise--be it engineering, farming, architecture, etc.--areas of knowledge which are most important in applying the design review requirements written into the Bennett Valley Plan. It is a difficult and often thankless job. To better understand how they function, area residents might wish to observe at one of their meetings: 7:30 p.m. at Bennett Valley School, 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the month.

The Bennett Valley Homeowners Association collects dues in January of each year. With this annual collection, we hope to encourage participation in the Association, to maintain a current list of members, and to finance activities of the Association, such as publication of the Bennett Valley Voice, normal operating expenses, as well as any future get-togethers.

We exist to serve this area and need your support to be truly effective. We hope you'll join us as well as encourage your neighbors to become members of the Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association.

If you would like to join, please fill out and tear off the slip below. Mail it in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION
1981 Membership Dues

New membership.....\$5.00
Membership renewal.....\$3.00

Please remit by February 29, 1981

Make checks payable to: Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association.

LOCAL WINERIES

I have read that nearly 486,000 gallons of wine was produced from Bennett Valley grapes at the turn of the century. Most of these vineyards, which were not disease resistant varieties, were later killed by phylloxera, or most recently, replaced by housing. The industry is recovering, however, due to the use of disease resistant rootstocks, and this recovery is evidenced by the arrival of three new wineries within the last few years.

The first and largest winery to appear was Matanzas Creek Winery. It is owned by the MacIvers and located against the hills on the valley floor along Bennett Valley Road. The winemaker is Merry Edwards. Matanzas Creek Winery plans to ultimately produce 12,000 gallons of top quality red and white wines, largely from Bennett Valley grapes. Their white wines include Chardonnay, Gewurztraminer, Pinot Blanc, and Semillon. Red wines produced consist of Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Merlot. Some champagne has also been made.

The Matanzas Creek wines are premium quality, full-bodied, and aged in French oak. They sell quickly by invitation at the winery or at selected retail outlets. M.C.W.'s 1978 Chardonnay won the Vintner's Club tasting and has been given the highest rating by Connoisseur's Guide to wine. The wine is described as "unsurpassed", with "intense fruit and superb balance".

Our second winery, Laurel Glen Vineyards, is also off to a good start. Located off Sonoma Mtn. Rd. and owned by the Campbells, the grapes from their vineyard (in a Chateau St. Jean 1977 Cabernet Sauvignon) won the gold medal at this year's Sonoma County Harvest Fair. Not surprisingly, winemaker Patrick Campbell says Laurel Glen Vineyards will specialize in Cabernet. The first release of his full-bodied, French oak-aged premium Cabernet Sauvignon will be in 1983.

Laurel Glen Vineyards plans to remain a small or boutique winery with a capacity of 6,000 gallons yearly. Somewhat unique to the winery will be experimentation in blending the other red varieties of Bordeaux with Cabernet Sauvignon. These "relatives" to Cabernet include seldom-planted Cabernet Franc, Malbec, and Petite Verdot, all to be grown by Laurel Glen.

Our third local winery is H. Coturri and Sons, a family winery in the boutique class with a capacity of approximately 3500 gallons. The winery is secluded along Enterprise Rd. in an excellent, growing viticultural area.

H. Coturri and Sons has been bonded since July 1, 1979, and is making Pinot Noir, Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon, Gewurztraminer, Chardonnay, Johannisberg Riesling, and Semillon. No wines have been released yet, as all are being aged in oak. In fact, their wines will be in the traditional European style, with long aging potential. Additionally, H. Coturri and Sons wines will be made in the purist sense, using no chemicals and relying on the grapes' own yeast in the fermentation process. Their wines will eventually be sold by newsletter, in restaurants, and through retail outlets.

The appearance of Matanzas Creek, Laurel Glen, and H. Coturri and Sons wineries in the Bennett Valley area is testimony to the strength of the viticulture and winemaking industries here. We wish them the best of luck.

Warren Watkins

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BENNETT VALLEY CEMETERY

The sign is gone now, torn down by vandals who tipped over headstones, partied under the trees, and left their broken beer bottles behind them; and you have to look quickly to see it at all, as you round that last curve on your way to town. But the pioneer Bennett Valley Cemetery is still doing business on the hill across the road from the golf course.

The town, of course, has slowly crept out to meet it, until now the little graveyard, once described in County records as "five miles from Santa Rosa", nearly straddles the city limits. Otherwise not much has changed since the cemetery was established over a century ago on 3 acres of land donated by a settler named Hedrick.

There are still lots for sale at \$100 apiece, according to Assistant Sexton Sherman Boivin. And, although no one was buried there during the past year, at least one burial took place the year before. Mr. Boivin and Sexton Bill Sawyer, along with President Lester Whitaker, Secretary Mildred Hill, and Treasurer Florence Maxwell, are members of the Bennett Valley Cemetery Association, which has the responsibility for the cemetery's administration and maintenance.

The organization meets on the first Saturday of every March to plan their annual cleanup day, usually held on the first Sunday in May. The members recruit those persons who have a familial connection with the cemetery (or just an interest in its upkeep)

continued

CEMETERY, continued

to help with raking leaves, chopping weeds, and picking up trash. A cable placed across the entrance two years ago has reduced the number of trespassers, but some litter and vandalism problems continue.

Although the ranks of those who feel kinship ties to the cemetery have dwindled over the years, the currently active Association members take their positions seriously. Mrs. Maxwell, whose parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents are buried on the hill, "inherited" her job from her mother, who had taken over as treasurer after the death of her husband. Another family member served as secretary.

Although several dozen pioneers and early Valley residents are named in a list compiled by the DAR in 1934, Mrs. Maxwell reports that many more persons were buried without headstones. That fact, combined with toppled markers and some apparent inaccuracies in the early day records, lends something of a mysterious note. However, the list, according to Mr. Boivin, contains the names of many settlers from Missouri and points south, reflecting the dominance of southerners in Santa Rosa's early history.

The records further indicate, and Mrs. Maxwell affirms, that the cemetery was established to meet a definite need, as the area seems to have suffered a number of epidemics and a high rate of infant mortality during the 1800's. "Diphtheria", suggests Mrs. Maxwell, although typhoid and other diseases surely contributed. Lucinda Badger and her husband, listed in the DAR record only as "J.J.", lost three sons and three daughters, ranging in age from one to eleven years.

Despite whatever changes the years have brought, it is nice to know that there are those who care about maintaining ties with the past and that those who have lived in and loved the Valley can choose to be buried here.

Carolyn Dowdy

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REMEMBER!

Call the LITTER HOTLINE at 527-2068 to report any County road or highway that needs the extra attention of the cleanup crews.