



# BENNETT VALLEY VOICE

VOLUME 4 Number 3

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

July, 1981

## MEMO FROM THE BOARD

BVHA  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
1980-81

Hope your summer has been a good one so far!

In the interest of learning more about our area and getting to know one another better, we are delighted to invite you to a wine tasting at Matanzas Creek Winery from 2-4 PM on Sunday, August 30, 1981. Matanzas Creek Winery calls this their Barrel and Bottle Tasting.

The bottle part of the tasting will be a 1979 Sonoma-Napa Chardonnay which is due to be released in September. According to Matanzas Creek Winery, this wine is a blend of grapes grown in 4 regions - Sebastopol, the Sonoma Mountains, the Sonoma Valley and the eastern foothills of the Mayacamas Mountains. The unique character of each vineyard adds to the wine's complexity. A slow, lengthy fermentation (60% of the wine in oak, 40% of the wine in stainless steel) has resulted in a wine in which "crisp acid balances luscious, spicy fruit" with just a hint of oak. In addition to the Chardonnay, we will be tasting Matanzas Creek Winery's champagne which is available only at the winery.

The barrel part of the tasting involves tasting several wines drawn directly from the barrel in various stages of aging. Bread and cheese will be served along with the wines. There will be a \$2.50 charge to cover the cost of the wines which will be payable at the door.

In addition, we will be able to tour the facilities as well as meet the owners, the MacIvers, and the others who work so closely with the wine.

Please RSVP to BVHA members at 542-7102 or 584-8063 by August 23rd, if possible, so that we can give Matanzas Creek Winery an idea of the number of people to expect. Hope to see lots of you there!

We'd like to thank Sandra and Bill MacIver for working with us on this project and for being so accommodating.

(P.S. If any of you are interested in purchasing a bottle of the Chardonnay, a few bottles should be available at the tasting.)

## SEASONAL SAFETY


The warm weather seasons of summer and fall are well under way in Sonoma County. As the transition from wet, cool weather to warm, dry temperatures occurs every year, Bennett Valley residents in particular are faced with exceptional problems of safety.

(Continued on page 2)

President Tamara Boulton  
Vice-President Nancy Batson  
Secretary/Treasurer Barbara Maberry

Ted Chamberlain Max Moberly  
Bill Jacobs Paul Mowbray  
Sam Mitchell Warren Watkins

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*You are cordially invited*  
*to a*  
*Barrel and Bottle Tasting*  
*at*  
  
*6097 Bennett Valley Road · Santa Rosa, California*  
*Sunday, August 30, 1981*  
*2:00-4:00 P.M.*

*RSVP: 542-7102*  
*584-8063* *\$ 2.50*

## BENNETT VALLEY SECURITY PATROL

As you've travelled through Bennett Valley recently, perhaps you've noticed some vehicles with black and white signs on the sides which read Bennett Valley Security Patrol. As a result of increased concern by residents over the growing number of burglaries and acts of vandalism in our area, the BVHA board of directors voted to purchase three sets of the signs to be used by volunteers to monitor area roads. (A fourth set was contributed by the Moberly and Hopkin families) This idea was presented to the Sheriff's department and met with their approval. Residents who voluntarily patrol the roads take careful note of any suspicious cars or persons, and anything out of the ordinary. It is our hope that by doing this we can help de-escalate the burglary problem and that word will soon get around that homes in Bennett Valley are no longer so vulnerable.

A major cause for concern for all of us in the valley is automobile speed. There are many more activities taking place during these months as residents seek the outdoors for recreation. Children are no longer in school and may be seen on or near roadways riding bicycles, horses, motorbikes, and automobiles. Often their presence is obscured by roadside vegetation, bends in the road, or other vehicles. We can minimize the chance of an accident if we will slow down a little and be especially aware of hazards.

Fire is another safety problem which is compounded this time of year. The open, scenic, low density of Bennett Valley which we all enjoy also means possible fire danger. The rolling grassy hillsides and oak trees burn easily and quickly, especially on windy days. Each of us needs to be particularly cautious with bar-b-ques, chain saws, motorbikes, mowers, matches and other such fire hazards in these dry times. Check with the valley fire house if you have any questions or are aware of fires or possible fire situations.

An additional safety concern where Bennett Valley homeowners are vulnerable is criminal activity. Many of us live on large parcels of land with distant neighbors and wouldn't have it any other way. Also, this is the season when families take extended vacations. For these reasons, our homes are often easy marks for burglars. There are many recent instances of property being stolen both inside and outside the home, during day or night. The sheriff's patrols in our area are an insufficient retardant and their recovery rate of stolen property is not high. Please help by watching out for unfamiliar vehicles and individuals "casing" surrounding residences and by reporting suspicious behavior.

The warm weather season is a great time of year and we look forward to its arrival. At the same time, all of us should concern ourselves with avoiding automobile accidents, fire, and crime.

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#### A CHAT WITH MERRY EDWARDS

When I arrived at Matanzas Creek Winery one nice, warm morning, I found winemaster Merry Edwards busy at her desk with her new baby boy asleep nearby in his swing. In the course of our conversation, I found that she had come to Matanzas Creek Winery in 1977 from a winery in the South Bay area where she had been winemaster for three years. Her masters degree in enology was earned at U. C. Davis.

Desiring to relocate to an area with both fine grape growing potential and fine living conditions, she and her husband came to Sonoma County because they loved the area and were already firm believers in the wine making potential of Sonoma County. It was after they had come to Sonoma County that she became aware of Bennett Valley's burgeoning grape growing community. A taste of Dave Steiner's Cabernet convinced her that a tremendous potential lay in Bennett Valley holding promise of a bright future. Shortly thereafter the opportunity to set up the wine making facilities at Matanzas Creek Winery was offered to her and thus began her present relationship with Bennett Valley.

According to Mrs. Edwards, one of the unique grape growing features of Bennett Valley is the capability of the area to grow a wide spectrum of grape varieties. Whereas most grape growing areas usually concentrate on growing only one type of grape be it early, mid-season or late, very different grapes such as Chardonnay and Merlot grow well in close proximity in Bennett Valley because of our many micro-climates. In the Bordeaux region of France, the Merlot grape has been held in high esteem and used primarily for blending high quality wines rather than as a varietal. However, in California, Merlot has not reached the level of prominence it enjoys in France because the vines generally have not done very well. Since Merlot vines do grow quite well in Bennett Valley, Mrs. Edwards feels they can prove to be a boon to the area - establishing Bennett Valley not only as a unique viticultural area but as an area with a reputation for excellence in wines. As winemaster at Matanzas Creek Winery, Merry Edwards likes to experiment with different blends of Cabernet and Merlot. Their '78 and '79 Merlots were blended with just a touch of Cabernet while their '78 and '79 Cabernets were 100% Cabernet.

Matanzas Creek Winery has, on the premises, approximately 10 acres planted in producing Merlot and 12 acres planted in grafted Chardonnay. More acreage is currently being planted in Chardonnay so that eventually they plan to have a total of 60 acres planted in grapes. In the long range scheme of things, Matanzas Creek Winery is exploring the feasibility of expanding to double their present capacity and no more. Their desire is to remain relatively small so that quality can be closely monitored and controlled. Any larger and, Mrs. Edwards feels, close control might be hard to attain.

At present, over fifty percent of the grapes crushed at Matanzas Creek come from Bennett Valley grapes. Half of the Chardonnay grapes come from the Sonoma Mountain area and all of the Cabernet is raised in Bennett Valley. The volume of grapes grown on the premises, while small, numbers approximately 15 out of 70 tons. They look forward to the day when all their grapes can come from Bennett Valley.

The wines of Matanzas Creek Winery are distributed in most of California as well as in other states such as Texas, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island -- even in England! Due to the small amount of wines available each year, wines must be handled on an allotment basis. There is one representative only in each given area and the winery maintains a waiting list of restaurateurs and retailers who wish to handle Matanzas Creek wines in the future. As might be expected, their wines sell out fast -- even at \$14 a bottle.

I enjoyed talking with Merry Edwards about her ideas on the wine producing aspects of Bennett Valley and the part Matanzas Creek hopes to play in this area's future. I hope we can feature the views and plans of our other two wineries - Laurel Glen and H. Coturri & Sons - in future issues.

TSB