

BENNETT VALLEY VOICE

VOLUME 5 Number 1

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

January, 1982

MEMO FROM THE BOARD

Since our last issue

The wine tasting which we held at Matanzas Creek was a very enjoyable outing..... beautiful weather, nice turnout, exceptional wine, champagne and cheese . . . wish more of you could've joined us! We were privileged to taste Matanzas Creek's 1979 Chardonnay which subsequently won not only a gold medal at the Sonoma County Harvest Fair but was named the Grand Sweepstakes winner. We congratulate Matanzas Creek on their success and are proud of the honor it has brought to Bennett Valley.

Election night was held in October to elect 3 members of the board to 3 year terms. Re-elected to the board were Bill Jacobs, Sam Mitchell, and Max Moberly. At the subsequent monthly board meeting, the board re-elected the 1981 officers to another term of office in 1982.

In November we met with a member of the Road Department to discuss the status of the safety project to improve the intersection of Pressley and Sonoma Mountain Roads. We had written the Road Dept. in December, 1979 asking for safety improvements at the intersection, and included an engineer's drawing of a proposed realignment which we felt was in the best interests of the area in a letter in January, 1980. Subsequently we reported to you that the project had been placed on the priority list of safety related road improvements. However, apparently no consideration was given in the interim to our suggested plan even though periodic contact was made concerning the status of the project and even though we were told ours was a very good proposal. This past fall, the Road Department resurrected a 1975 plan which had previously not been acceptable to the area. Our meeting was to go over the two plans and to try to come up with a solution. Since we feel the issue is of great concern to many residents, particularly those who live on eastern Sonoma Mountain Road and on Pressley Road, we are providing sketches in this newsletter to give you an idea of the two proposals and ask that you give us your preferences and comments by January 31st. We will give the information to the Road Dept. . . .and the Board of Supervisors, if necessary. If you would like more information or wish to see to scale maps, please contact us.

Its membership dues time again . . . a form is included in this newsletter.

Hope to be hearing from you soon!

We would like to thank Warren Watkins for researching and writing the articles on horse breeding and the old schools.

BVHA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
1981-82

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Bill Jacobs	Paul Mowbray
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BENNETT VALLEY'S HORSE BREEDING INDUSTRY

When we think of agriculture in Bennett Valley, we often visualize grapevines, fruit trees and other crops, or dairy and cattle feeding operations. A very important and growing agricultural pursuit in the valley is horses. Many of us own a horse or two as encouragement to our young people to assume responsibilities while participating in a wholesome activity.

Californians have always loved and owned horses since the earliest Indian settlers. Today, Sonoma County is a leader statewide in per capita horsiness. The horse is a graceful and beautiful animal even to those of us who may think the thoroughbred is the only pure breed and the quarter horse is three-fourths something else. There is an increasing group of horse people who know much more than this.

Maybe you didn't know that horse breeding is a serious business at several ranches in Bennett Valley. For example, take Paul and Ellen Slayton at the White Horse Ranch, 6595 Bennett Valley Road. After a start in Missouri, they have been raising and breeding the Foxtrotter breed here since 1976. Somewhat of a rarity in Sonoma County, the Foxtrotter is known for its easy, soft, natural gait where the horse walks with its front feet while doing somewhat of a trot with its rear legs. The breed is very sure-footed with good endurance and disposition. For this reason, the U.S. Forest Service has purchased many Foxtrotters.

This breed was established in 1948 as a cross between the American Saddle Bred horse and the Tennessee Walker. The Slayton's registered stallion, Mr. Goodman, is tops in the country having won 100 consecutive blue ribbon showings. It is no wonder they have a waiting list for the foals from Mr. Goodman and their 8 brood mares at the ranch. Additionally, they provide stud service for visiting mares and occasionally engage in boarding and training. This breed is excellent for western trail riding and showing.

Also in the valley is the Southern Cross Arabian Horse Ranch, John and Heather Hartman, 4724 Guenza Road. Several years ago, while living in Kenwood, they decided to begin raising purebred animals. They chose horses over cats and selected the historically purebred Arabian instead of developed cross-breeds. The Arabian is popular in the state and a pleasure to work with, says Hartman. It is smart, fast, and quick learning. They are adaptable to either Western or English riding, showing, or breeding, depend-

HORSE BREEDING (con't.)

ing on the athletic and other characteristics of each individual animal.

Southern Cross owns two registered stallions which are proven performance horses. They keep seven brood mares and train their stock before sale. John Hartman believes in the future prospects for his business despite the effects from the slumping national economy. He feels Sonoma County is a good horse area with good trainers and an established word of mouth sales network.

A second Arabian breeder in the valley area is Sonoma Springs Arabians, 2276 Crane Canyon Road. The owners are John and Judy Moorhead and the trainer is Jeff Green. They have bred Arabians in Woodside and expanded here two years ago.

The Moorheads chose Arabians because of their beauty and versatility as jumpers, Western or English riding, or pleasure driving (Harness). They hope to specialize in Russian Arabians and have travelled to the Soviet Union recently in search of an appropriate stallion. The Russian Arabian is rare in the U.S., combines the best in Arabian breeds, and sells for prices similar to quality thoroughbred race horses, according to Green.

Sonoma Springs has 23 horses on the ranch now including five brood mares. They are engaged in training and sales and hope to have a stallion standing soon. The owners are also looking for a Polish Arabian brood mare to breed with the prospective Russian stallion. As with their breeding stock, the ranch complex is growing. A new 30 stall horse barn is being added to accommodate future plans.

Jack, Judy and Angela Williams of Glenwood Farms Hannoverians, 6730 Enterprise Road, also raised and bred Arabians for many years. They made a change three years ago, however, sold their Arabians, and began the slow process of starting over. The Williams' selected the Hannoverian as their new breed after much research and have travelled to Germany several times in the last few years in search of top stallions and prospective brood mares.

The Hannoverian is known for its beauty, size, temperament, and athletic ability. They are often seen taking the highest prizes at the Olympic Games in English riding, dressage, and jumping. The movement, sturdiness, and size of this breed combined with an agreeable temperament enables the Hannoverian to perform both as a jumper and in the precise, collected dressage.

Glenwood Farms has 25 of their own horses on the ranch including fifteen brood mares and their licensed stallion, Diamont, who is 17 hands tall and available for stud service. Another licensed stallion is on the way from Germany. Many new stalls have been built this year to board visiting mares and permanent stock. Also a video system has been purchased for training and analyzing purposes.

Although I was unable to make contact, the grapevine revealed a budding thoroughbred breeding ranch at the white fences along Bennett Valley Road near Grange Road. I was told that Don Wehr is the owner of this substantial endeavor.

As can be seen, horse breeding is a growing agricultural pursuit in Bennett Valley. The owners and trainers are experienced, but the breeding operations are relatively new and expanding. Other residents are breeding on a smaller scale. Horse ranches are an economically healthy and interesting aspect of life here. If you need a good horse, look in Bennett Valley!

Not all of us remember the days when the teacher as well as the students often walked several Bennett Valley miles each day to attend school. Nor did all of us learn the 3 R's in a one room building with a coal stove, no running water, and a pair of out-houses located a sufficient distance away. Some of us may be amazed to learn that in the good ol' days it was not uncommon for teachers to live with school board trustees or parents. Well, if you were an early Bennett Valley resident, you may recall some of this. If not, here are a few comments to bring you and me up to date.

By 1857, the James N. Bennett family had lived in the valley for approximately eight years. During those years several efforts were made to educate the scarce and geographically dispersed young folk. It was only common sense that led these Bennett Valley pioneers to locate the first school on the banks of Matanzas Creek to facilitate the bucketing of water used daily by the teacher and students. It didn't take long however, for everyone to tire of the periodic flooding of the school and it was moved to higher ground to the west. Since these educational efforts had given Bennett Valley a head start over the Santa Rosa area in school building, our first school was able to be named the Santa Rosa School, a title we kept until 1942.

Long distances to school and a growing population motivated upper Bennett Valley citizens to build another school on a strawberry covered hill near the intersection of Grange and Guenza roads. This, the first Strawberry School, opened in 1857 and remained at that location until 1879. About that same time, Sonoma County was getting its first high school. Because of hard times (sound familiar?), the high school was closed after two years, only to re-open again in 1883.

The second Strawberry School, built near the Bottasso property on Sonoma Mountain Road had more staying power than most early schools and remained in operation until it burned in 1952. In bygone days, it was customary for the school trustees to do much of the work maintaining the school house. Thus it was, in the summer of 1952, following the close of the school year, that the trustees redid the wooden floors and desks and then locked up the school house doors for the summer. Unfortunately, the oily rags used in the work were inadvertently left in the building. During the summer the heat built up within the school house until one day the rags combusted and sent the school house up in flames. There was little that anyone could do with no source of water available so the school house burned to the ground. We are told that students watched, in tears, as the building burned.

Construction of today's Bennett Valley School soon began at its present location and "Strawberry School" was only a memory for fifteen years. But in 1976, during a "Name That School" contest for the new district elementary school off Summerfield Road, the old school name re-surfaced. Young Teresa O'Hanlon suggested using the Strawberry title for the new school and won the contest. This third Strawberry School in the valley was dedicated in 1978 and the ceremony was attended by 28 of the old school alumni.

We can only guess that someday there will be another "Santa Rosa School" in Bennett Valley or a fourth school named "Strawberry".

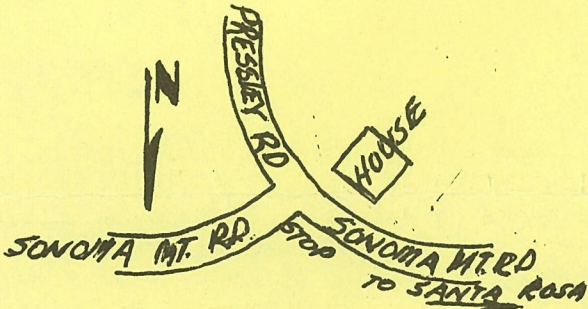
INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT

INTERSECTION (con't)

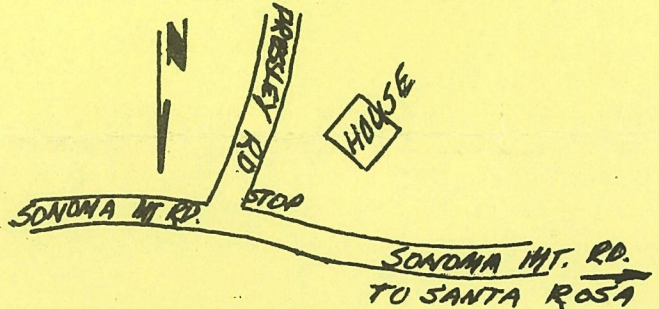
The Sonoma County Road Department is scheduling work on the intersection of Sonoma Mountain Road and Pressley Road. The plan presently being considered by the Road Department would have traffic headed west on Sonoma Mountain Road stop at the intersection, with Pressley-Sonoma Mountain Road being considered the through road. This is shown in Sketch "A". The alternate plan, and the one favored by the Homeowners Board, would be to have Sonoma Mountain Road the through road and Pressley would traffic stop, as shown in Sketch "B".

In the past, Sonoma Mountain Road has been considered the through road and only in recent years has Pressley Road been improved to the point that there is confusion as to which way to go to be on Sonoma Mountain Road. Should plan "A" be adopted, strangers to Bennett Valley will surely continue on Pressley Road when they want to follow Sonoma Mountain Road east.

The Homeowners Board would appreciate receiving responses from the people who drive the two roads as to which plan they would like to see constructed. You can respond either by writing the Homeowners Board at P.O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa, Ca. 95405 or by calling T. Boultee at 584-8063 or P. Mowbray at 545-6523.



Sketch "A"



Sketch "B"

The Road Department has the construction plans prepared for the plan shown in Sketch "A" and says the work would be delayed if the plan shown in Sketch "B" were to be chosen. However, less fill would be required in plan "B" and therefore less cost.

Sonoma Mountain Road/Pressley Road Intersection Survey

I prefer Sketch "A"

Name _____

I prefer Sketch "B"

Address _____

Comments:

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 membership roster, and to finance activities of the Association such as publication of the Bennett Valley Voice, normal operating expenses as well as an annual get-together.

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
1982 Membership Dues

New membership . . . \$5.00

Existing membership renewal . . . \$3.00

Name _____

Address _____ (B.V. address, if different) _____

Please remit by February 28, 1982

Make checks payable to: Bennett Valley Homeowners Assoc.