



# BENNETT VALLEY VOICE

VOLUME 7 NO.1

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

JANUARY 1984

## MEMO FROM THE BOARD

As has been the custom in recent years, the January edition of the Bennett Valley Voice newsletter is being distributed to all area homes as part of our membership effort. We ask you to join or re-join at this time as your input and support is needed. The Board meets the third Wednesday of each month except December at 7:30 in the firehouse. You are welcome to attend.

The present Board Directors and Officers are listed on this page of the newsletter.

### Update: Roads

Refer to the road improvement interview article in this newsletter.

The BVHA would like to congratulate Jim Fatland, Bruce Benson, and Peter Floodman for their election in November to the BV Fire District Board and to Millie Mansfield who was re-elected to the BV School Board.

Although things were fairly quiet over the holidays, we have just recently been informed by the County Planning Department of an application by Matanzas Creek Winery to expand its facilities in the center of the valley.

Tastings will continue to be by invitation only. A poll of the Board showed no opposition at this time and we wish the best to this successful winery.

When you re-join, please fill out and tear off the slip below. Mail it in the attached self-addressed envelope.

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1984 membership dues  
BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

New membership---- \$5.00      Renewal---- \$3.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: Bennett Valley Homeowners (BVHA)

## BVHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Warren Watkins
Vice-president	Dave Steiner
Secretary	open
Treasurer	Nancy Batson
Dona Moberly	Tamara Boulton
Bill Jacobs	Paul Mowbray
Sam Mitchell	

This newsletter is compiled and distributed to members quarterly, the next issue arriving in April.

We welcome your opinions and thoughts for future articles. Let us hear from you.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR BENNETT VALLEY AREA

The following is a listing of events and organizations serving the Bennett Valley area. They all hope you might be able to attend a meeting or function sometime in 1984.

**BENNETT VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
Firemen's Breakfasts will be held May 13 Mothers Day, and October 21. The firemen meet every first Tuesday of each month for drill. Business Office 544-6161. Emergency Phone-545-3696.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR BENNETT  
VALLEY AREA - CONTINUED

INTERVIEW WITH MR. DONALD P. HEAD,  
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT  
BY MARILYN FRANCO

BENNETT VALLEY GRANGE

New officers will be installed in January. William Allen is the Master for 1984. A business meeting is held every first Friday of the month beginning at 8:15p.m. A potluck is held every third Friday of the month, beginning at 7p.m., followed by cards or bingo or a guest speaker. The Grange has many activities throughout the year, including Spaghetti dinners. In June, the 111th Annual Consecutive Picnic will be held. In October they will host the State Grange Convention at the Tropicana. For information contact Ann Burow, Secty. 528-8928

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

Meets every third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the Firehouse. For information call Warren Watkins 545-5701. Dues \$5.00/year.

SONOMA MOUNTAIN GARDEN CLUB

Meets the last Tuesday of each month at 1 p.m., usually in individual homes. Interesting tours during the year include Sunset House and Filoli Gardens in Woodside. There is an annual Christmas luncheon and fashion show. For information, call Maggie Bartlett, president 546-5324 or dues can be sent to Ingrid Walker, treas. 6600 Warehill Lane, Santa Rosa (04)

4-H GROUPS - BENNETT VALLEY

Contact Geoff Hornsby 546-9606 or Marilyn Evans 528-3014. Meetings are held monthly on the second Thurs. at the Grange Hall at 7 p.m.

4-H calendar of events may be available from Carol Selicano 525-0862.

RAINBOW VALLEY 4-H Meet first Monday of each month at Yulupa School - recreation begins at 7:15, and meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. Contact Shirley Rose 546-9314 or Joan Anderson 528-8206.

Clover 4-H Contact Val or Destra Hurley at 584-9243. In-home meetings held monthly in Bennett Valley.

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Bennett Valley School, Bennett View Drive. For information call Patrick Campbell 526-3914.

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS - BENNETT VALLEY  
and SONOMA MOUNTAIN

In a recent conversation with Donald P. Head, director of Public Works Department, on January 3rd, the following questions were asked him and answered. To begin with, Mr. Head was thanked for the fine job done in widening and improving the surface of Sonoma Mountain Road and on down Pressley Road.

WILL THE ROAD BE STRAIGHTENED AT THE  
BRUGGERMAN BRIDGE CROSSING MATANZAS  
CREEK APPROACHING TOWN?

Yes. The Bruggerman Bridge is a high priority due to the numerous accidents there. The bridge will be widened approximately ten feet. The road approaching Santa Rosa will be angled to the right approximately 10' and the road entering the bridge towards Bennett Valley will be widened 10' changing the angle of the approach to the bridge. An archaeological find was discovered last year on the property to become a part of the road. The design and money are there to make the improvements but permission to build the road over the archaeological site is still pending. Hopefully, the widening of the bridge will be done this year. Also, plans for getting rid of the dip at the bridge on Crane Canyon Road just off Bennett Valley Road are well under way. Money has been set aside for this to be done in '84. Plans are to put in a large culvert and raising the level of the road.

WILL THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT  
HAVE TO CLOSE THE SONOMA MOUNTAIN  
ROAD APPROACH TO THE REDWOOD GROVE  
WHILE FIXING THE WASHOUT FROM 1983  
WINTER?

At this time it doesn't seem feasible to divert traffic so many miles around this site by closing it. The work would proceed more quickly if the road were closed, however. Most of the outside pilings are in - deadmen are to go in place under the road. Approximately one months work is left to do.

(ed note: the latest information is that Sonoma Mt. Rd. will be closed for approximately one month, beginning January 23)

WHAT ABOUT THE SLIDE JUST DOWN FROM  
HIDDEN ACRES TOWARDS SANTA ROSA?

A temporary retaining wall has been put in and fill has been added to the road behind this. Permission has been granted by the property owner there to straighten a short piece of the creek this summer, diverting the creek. Will have to wait till summer time to put a dozer in the creek as it's too wet now.

## WILL THE INTERSECTION AT SONOMA MOUNTAIN ROAD AND PRESSLEY ROAD BE IMPROVED THIS YEAR?

Plans have been approved but something is holding up the work. I would suggest a meeting of the Homeowners Board and perhaps the School Dept. to settle this.

(At the January Homeowners meeting Mr. Head will be meeting with the Board to discuss and hopefully come to a decision on whether Sonoma Mt. Rd. or Pressley Rd. will get the right of way or a stop sign. The improvements can be made this summer. The money is available.

WHEN WILL WORK BEGIN ON THE SLIDE 3 MILES UP SONOMA MOUNTAIN FROM PRESSLEY AT THE OLD EARL SUTHERLAND HOME, NOW OWNED BY THE BATES? The heavy rains last winter didn't permit the proper finishing of this job. We would like to have finished it up last year, but were only able to complete half of the retaining wall. The slide that occurred was the result of the old retaining wall giving way as we had thought it might do. Completion of the remainder of the new retaining wall should begin after the repair of the slide at the Redwood Grove. Work will continue throughout the winter here.

## VACATION RESORTS 1903 - BENNETT VALLEY AREA

an article by Marilyn Franc

From the 1880's through the early 1900's Bennett Valley and Sonoma Mountain homes and ranches hosted many a traveler looking for the peace and quiet the country offered from San Francisco and surrounding cities. A recent trip to the Sonoma County Historical Library found a very interesting publication by the Northwestern Railway on Vacation Resorts along their routes in Marin, Sonoma, Lake and Mendocino counties.

Individuals or parties interested in a vacation resort would write for reservations, all of whom follow were addressed in Santa Rosa. The homes listed were BENNETT VALLEY address Mrs. G.W. Mayfield, BREMNER'S address D.B. Bremner, HANSON'S HEIGHTS address Peter Hanson, WALDRUHE address C.H.W. Bruning, and WALNUT LANE address Julien J. Scheibel. Most of these vacation spots were advertised as being between 5 and 8 miles from town, guests to be met at the depot, offering meals, lodging, fishing, swimming, hunting, hiking, and daily mail delivery!! Rates were \$6.00 per week, special rates for families.

The Johnstone place, also called the Sutherland place, now the Steiner residence, took guests on a resort basis during this period. In talking with Mrs. Wm. (Ruth) Jacobs, Mr. Leonard Talbot, and the Brunings, many of the old homes took in summer guests, not necessarily as a resort for extended periods, but on occasion. Some of these old homes are still standing; the Bruning home WALDRUHE, the Talbot home (for 2 years took in summer guests), the Schiebel or Cambou place WALNUT LANE (present site of Woodside), the Guenza home HANSON'S HEIGHTS now owned by the Witt's, the Mayfield home BENNETT VALLEY having been located on the now Batesole Lane off Sonoma Mtn. Rd., and the BREMNER'S home very near the Talbot's in Bennett Valley.

A profile of the WALDRUHE RESORT here follows as a result of visiting with Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Bruning January 5th, 1984.

The Waldruhe (meaning "Forest Rest" in German) was owned and managed by the parents of Mr. Herbert Bruning at 6565 Sonoma Mtn. Rd. Herbert Bruning was born the youngest of three children in 1910. The main house of the resort still stands and was built in two stages. The front part of the house was built in 1886 and included 5 bedrooms and a parlor. The kitchen and dining area were housed in a nearby building. In 1910 an addition was added to the back of the house and included a living room, pantry, a 24X24 dining area, kitchen and bath. In those days the dining room would be cleared and used as a dance floor. Mr. Bruning's sister played piano and people came from all around for the music and dancing. When the phonograph came along the piano became outdated but the people still came for the entertainment.

Guests arrived by spring wagon from the train depot in Glen Ellen. The now narrow stretch of Sonoma Mountain Rd. between the Brunings and the bottom said grade (once slated for improvement IE: environmental report 1976) had been located on the opposite side of the creek. The present road having been put in by the senior Mr. Bruning many years ago after automobile travel became impossible on the bed rock road traveled for so many years by wagon.

The resort accommodated guests for the weekend, a week or two weeks mostly during the summer months, occasionally guests came during the winter. Choices of rooms included the main house, a 6 room cottage with beds or tents on platform. As many as 100 guests would stay over the 4th of July. The Sonoma Creek boasted some 15 foot swimming holes then.

Once a month saw a visit to Santa Rosa for supplies by horse drawn wagon. The resort had a garden, chickens, and dairy cows for milk products. Several hogs were butchered in a year and all tomato products were home canned. Daily meals cost 25 to 30 cents. The elder Mrs. Bruning did all the cooking and reportedly cooked for the Kaiser in Germany before coming to this country. She came to this country with the influx of Germans fleeing the harsh military service in Germany then. In later years, butter and cream was sold to neighbors and to the Vella Cheese Company in Sonoma.

Jack London visited the mountain often riding horseback across the Bruning property. Mr. Bruning knew well, Martin Eden, a subject of one of London's books. Mr. Eden was a Swedish man who worked around many of the ranches from the Thompsons down into the valley. When haying time came neighbors gathered together to help one another. Mr. Bruning recalls helping at the Thompson ranch and the old Sutherland place. Also, of attending the Enterprise school.

The original WALDRUHE RESORT consisted of approximately 200 acres below Sonoma Mtn. Rd. now mostly sold as Vineyard property. In 1917, the elder Mr. Bruning purchased 100 acres across and uphill of Sonoma Mountain timbered with oak, madrone and bay. The purchase was made to preserve the timber and land. Later it was sold and developed into WALDRUHE HEIGHTS by a Capt. Obermeyer of San Francisco. The property was split into lots of 25' x 100'. These lots with a cabin and furnishings went for \$285.00 payable in monthly installments of \$5.00, and included improvements, care when unoccupied and free of taxes and interest for 3 years. It was advertised as the "SWITZERLAND OF AMERICA". Most people bought up several lots so as to have some acreage around their vacation cabin or permanent residence. Unimproved lots went for \$100.00, payable in \$2.00 monthly installments. (For these prices we're all 60 years too late - sorry folks).

At the time of the development approximately 22 cabins were built. Today about 15 homes are in the "HEIGHTS" and all but one or two of the original cabins remain.

With the advent of the automobile most people wanted to travel farther from the city for vacations, so the trend for travelers to visit the routes along the railroad in time soon vanished.

Today, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Bruning continue to reside on the Bruning's WALDRUHE RESORT site. They farm five acres of vineyards producing Gewurztraminer, Chardonnay and the Napa Gamay grape. Most of the grapes are sold to fine wineries, they make some of their own wine and maintain a year round garden.

I would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Bruning for their warm hospitality and the time they took to tell this story. The history of the Resort and Heights are truly of historical importance to this area.

Also, I would like to thank Mrs. Wm. (Ruth) Jacobs and Mr. Leonard Talbot for their help in rediscovering the locations and names of the other homes listed here.

Marilyn Franc