



BENNETT VALLEY VOICE

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BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

AUGUST 1984

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MEMO FROM THE BOARD

The supervisor candidates night held in late April was well attended by homeowners and many questions were answered. As you know, those of us in the first district will be represented by Janet Nicholas (see interview article) beginning in January. Also, because of the death of Helen Putnam, a new supervisor for the second district will be appointed by the governor to serve until then, followed by an election held in November to select a permanent replacement. We are grateful for the years of service by Mrs. Putnam.

The BVHA was formed in the early 1970's because of the threat of a mobile home park in the heart of the valley. We are again faced with the possibility of mobile homes here as the board of supervisors addresses the question of amending ordinance # 2985. This amendment, if adopted, would allow individual mobile homes with permanent foundations on properties previously zoned only for conventional housing. Although design restrictions would apply, the BVHA board unanimously opposes this action. We have written a strong letter to the county planning commission and will send copies to the board of supervisors. This item will be taken up by the supervisors at a hearing on September 18, at 4 pm. If you are concerned with this change, write or phone the supervisors now and attend the hearing. Call the planning department at 527-2412 in September to check on the time and date.

As you may have read, the Farmlands Initiative will most likely qualify for the ballot in November. This initiative deals with reversing the trend of continued loss of prime farmland in Sonoma County. As promoting agriculture in Bennett Valley is an objective here, residents need to follow this issue.

AN INTERVIEW WITH JANET NICHOLAS

We spoke with newly elected first district supervisor Janet Nicholas recently and asked her the following questions. Below is a brief summary of her responses.

WHY DID YOU RUN FOR SUPERVISOR?

I ran primarily for three reasons. I wasn't happy with some of the decisions made regarding land use, particularly in regard to the balance between urban and agricultural uses. I want to be involved in the 1985 General Plan update. Secondly, as I made clear in my campaign, I am concerned with policies on transportation in the first district. Thirdly, I would like to use my financial and economic background as budget problems in Sonoma County increase in dimension.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW TO PREPARE FOR THIS JOB?

My years on the Planning Commission have made me familiar with the General Plan, but I am working to learn how the various county departments function. I have been meeting with department heads, learning budgets, and asking questions.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS MAJOR ISSUES?

Land use decisions will continue to be controversial. Money sources and spending priorities will be more complex as the county grows.

WHAT NEW IDEAS WILL YOU PRESENT?

I would like to make the budget easier for the public to read and understand. I am going to push for some agenda changes at our meetings, and want to use my financial expertise in forming the budget. Also, I am not satisfied with land decisions made in recent years.

WHAT DO YOU SEE FOR BENNETT VALLEY?

I support the Bennett Valley Specific Plan and the design review committee. Some of the ideas used in the valley were novel, but they work and I would like to see them implemented elsewhere. I see a continuance of existing trends. Agriculture has proven it has a future here. The Summerfield road extension proposal will be an issue.

In the Last issue of the VOICE we reviewed the beginnings of the Association, why it was formed, and the work involved in setting it in motion. Land use will be the focus of this article as it seems to be the main issue of the Bennett Valley Specific Plan, the Homeowners Assoc., and residents of the Bennett Valley area.

A little history first.

The valley was settled first by the James N. Bennetts in 1849, having purchased the property from General Vallejo in 1852 as a part of a Spanish land grant called Yulupa.

Vineyards were planted in 1854 and by 1884 there were 4000 acres producing grapes. In 1890, the vines were destroyed by Phylloxera, an aphid species which attacked the roots of the vines. The land was thus turned to other agricultural uses; apples, pears, plums and prunes, hay, and stock farms for cattle, sheep, dairying and horses.

Today, much of the agriculture and ranching continue with a resurgence in the grape producing industry. 1978 brought the opening of the first winery in recent times in B.V., Matanzas Creek Winery. Horse ranching and breeding also seem to be a thriving business today.

Bennett Valley is truly a community within itself with a school district that began in 1857, one of the oldest Granges in the U.S., a fire protection district established in 1948, 4-H activities for our future farmers, a Garden Club, a Homeowners Association, a Specific Plan for Land Use and growth control, and a Design Review Committee.

Bennett Valley has come a long way since 1850 but there still remains a strong interest to protect the values of those who originally settled the area and continue today.

Approval of the Bennett Valley Study came in 1978 after a year and a half of meetings by an appointed citizens committee representing B.V. and the Sonoma County Planning Dept. A February '79 article in the Press Democrat was headlined "One House per 40 acres - Board adopts plan for Bennett Valley". Not all residents were in favor of all

aspects of the plan, but today it is working smoothly.

The B.V. Specific Plan is being used as a guideline for the updating of the Sonoma Co. General Plan. A conversation with Ken Curtis, head of the Comprehensive Planning Dept., brought the following information. "The So. Co. General Plan, which was adopted prior to the B.V. Study, is being revised to meet the more detailed Specific Plan, as there are some discrepancies between the two. Each area of Sonoma Co. will be reviewed, one area at a time. Public meetings will be held prior to the draft, taking 1½ to 2 years to complete."

Curtis also said, "Each time an application for development of property in B.V. is received by the Planning Dept. the Specific Plan is reviewed, but there have been no major changes since 1978. The Specific Plan and the So. Co. General Plan are enforced by the state as well as the county."

The Homeowners Assoc. upholds the guidelines set down in the Bennett Valley Study and has monthly meetings to discuss Land Use issues as they come up. Members are encouraged to attend at least one meeting a year to get an inside view of the considerations given by the Board to issues in Bennett Valley.

Copies of the B.V. Study are available from the Planning Dept. It is a comprehensive study of land use, zoning recommendations, population, trafficking, endangered species (plant and animal) and other visual considerations.

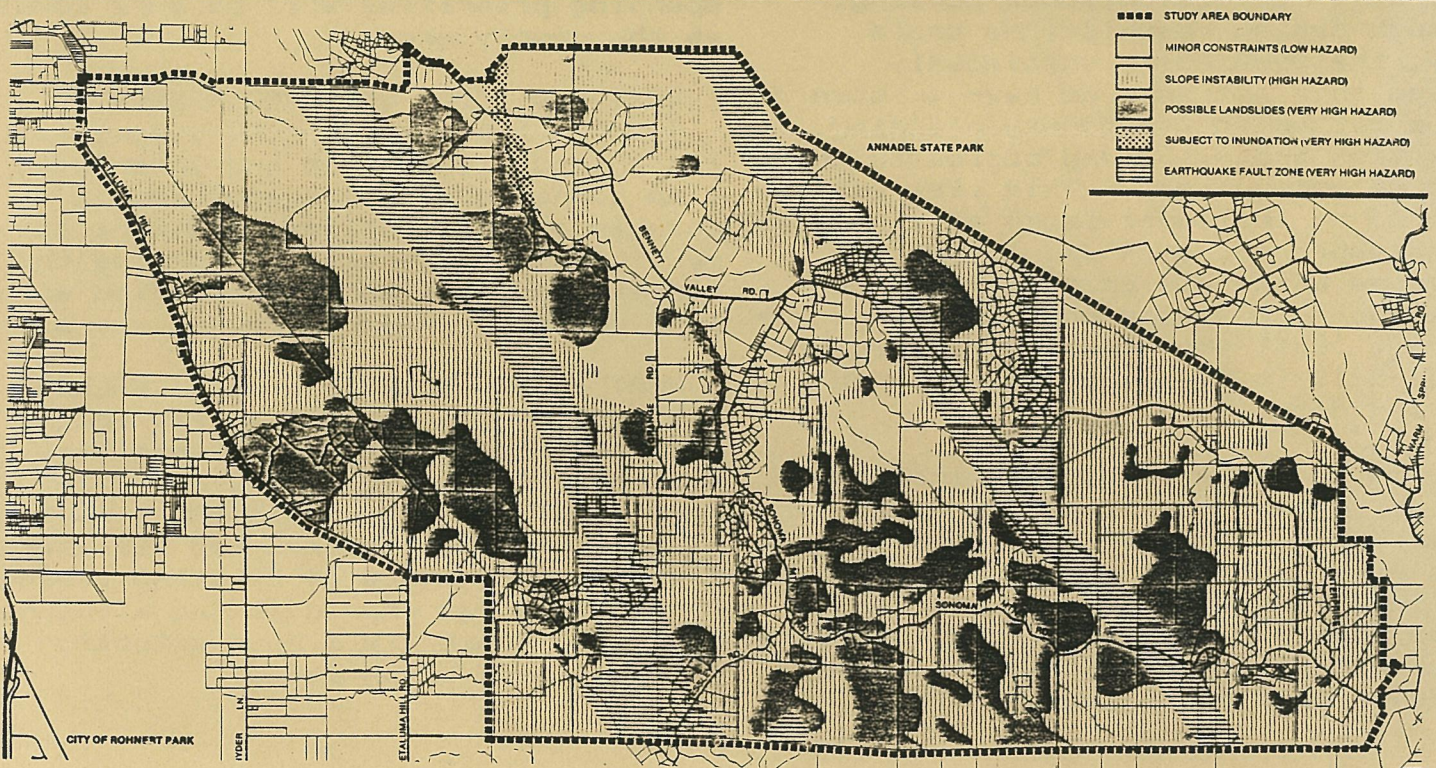
Past Presidents of the Assoc. for this period 1978-84 were Paul Mowbray, Max Moberly, Tamara Boulton, and Warren Watkins.

Past Supervisors for our District since 1965 were I.G. Vella, Brian Kahn, Bob Adams, and currently Janet Nicholas.

Beautiful Bennett Valley, a part of Luther Burbank's "chosen spot on earth", has an ideal climate for agriculture, livestock and planned residences, with a history past, present, and future.

(Resources: B.V. Study, past BVHA Newsletters, and the Records of the BVHA.)

BOUNDARIES OF THE B.V. STUDY include part of Petaluma Hill Rd. to Santa Rosa, part of Pressley, most of Sonoma Mtn. Rd. and B.V. Road, Enterprise Rd. and Annadel State Park to Yulupa.



SONOMA COUNTY FAIR - JULY 23 to AUG 5

Our Bennett Valley Grange received another first place ribbon for their booth in the Main Pavilion. Ann Burrows says this is the 6th or 8th year in a row that the Grange has received first place. The Theme was "Mistress Mary, How Does your Garden Grow." All the vegetables in the exhibit were homegrown in Bennett Valley. Master of the Grange this year is Wm. Allen.

4-H'ers were also well represented in the stock shows and other classes. (Tallies were not in soon enough for this printing.)

The Fair's focus this year was on free entertainment, all concerts being free with gate admission.

1984 HARVEST FAIR - OCTOBER 5,6,&7

Premium Books will be available by August 10th. Kids day is Friday, the 5th, when 1500 school kids visit the fair on field trip to see demonstrations and exhibits.

An Art Reception will be held Friday p.m. and will feature paintings, photos and needlework (a new class), all with a Harvest Theme. Art pieces will be judged and for sale. To enter any of these classes see the Premium book - the Fair gets 15% commission.

Saturday, September 29 is awards night from 7 to 9:30 p.m. A new class is open to professional caterers and restaurants for hors d'oeuvres. These hors d'oeuvres will be served on awards night along with the wines and pro french bread winners.

Barbecues will be held each day from 12 to 5. Friday will be a chicken barbecue, Saturday - Pork barbecue, and Sunday - Beef Barbecue.

The following was taken from the B.V. Study

BENNETT VALLEY STUDY DISTRICT
RARE AND ENDANGERED PLANTS

1. DOHU - *Downingia humilis*

A spring-flowering annual of the Bellflower Family (Campanulaceae) added to the Main List CNPS in 1976. It may be found in a number of vernal pools in Napa, Sonoma, Merced and Stanislaus Counties, but was first described in 1910 from Sonoma County. Reconfirmed in Bennett Valley Vernal Pool in 1974, not seen there during succeeding dry years.

2. ISHO - *Isoetes howellii* Engelm.

A small amphibious herb of the Quillwort Family (Isoetaceae) added to the CNPS Appendix II list in 1978; distributed through out the Coast Ranges. Although widespread in distribution, loss of habitat through urban development and agriculture has decreased the species.

3. LIRU - *Lilium rubescens* Wats.

A bulbous perennial herb of the Lily Family (Liliaceae) Commonly called the Redwood Lily, it is distributed through Coast Ranges as far south as Santa Cruz County. A target of the tourist, gardener, commercial horticulturist and deer, the species has declined and is found in Sonoma County in relatively few areas.

4. PIAM - *Pilularia americana* A. Br.

An inconspicuous perennial of the Pillwort Family (Marsileaceae) found on the margins of ponds and vernal pools, below 5500 feet.

5. PLHO - *Plueropogon hooverianus* (L. Benson)

A perennial semaphore grass of the Fescue Tribe (Festuceae) Grass Family (Gramineae) Located in wet meadows and grassy places in Mixed Evergreen Forest from Marin to Mendocino County; two known locations in Sonoma County.

6. PODOP - *Pogogyne douglasii* ssp. *parviflora* Benth

A small aromatic annual in the Mint Family (Labiatae). Found in dry beds of vernal pools; Coast Range Valleys in Sonoma, Mendocino and Lake Counties. The species in this location should also be classified as PC (possible candidate).

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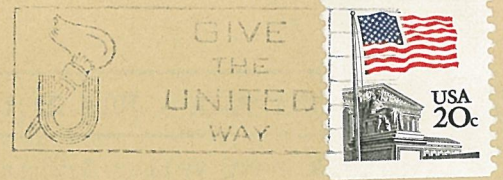
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