

BENNETT VALLEY VOICE

VOL. 9 NO. 2

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

MAY 1986

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ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS UPDATE

Bennett Valley Road/Yulupa Avenue Intersection:

An earlier VOICE article reported that the BVHA Board had persuaded the Santa Rosa City Council to modify their original project to allow a safer traffic flow and merging of outbound Bennett Valley Road with Yulupa traffic. While the city DID give us a free right turn (better than their original, full-stop project), the turn on Bennett Valley Road is too sharp to be safe. So far the City has refused to consider any further modifications to the intersection.

We have sent copies of our most recent request to the people who run the school buses—hoping to get their support. If you wish to VOICE your thoughts on the subject please address them to the office of the City Manager, Ken Blackman at 100 Santa Rosa Avenue, Santa Rosa, 95401 or call 576-5361.

Bennett Valley Road/Matanzas Bridge Realignment: On May 20, 1986, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors approved the Public Works proposal for improving and realigning of Matanzas Creek Bridge.

The bridge is to be widened from its current 25.4 ft. width to 43.5 ft., and lengthened from its current 53 ft to 85 ft. The bridge deck elevation will be 6 ft. higher than the existing bridge. Bennett Valley Road will be widened from 24 ft. to 32 ft. (two 12 ft. travel lanes and 4 ft. shoulders).

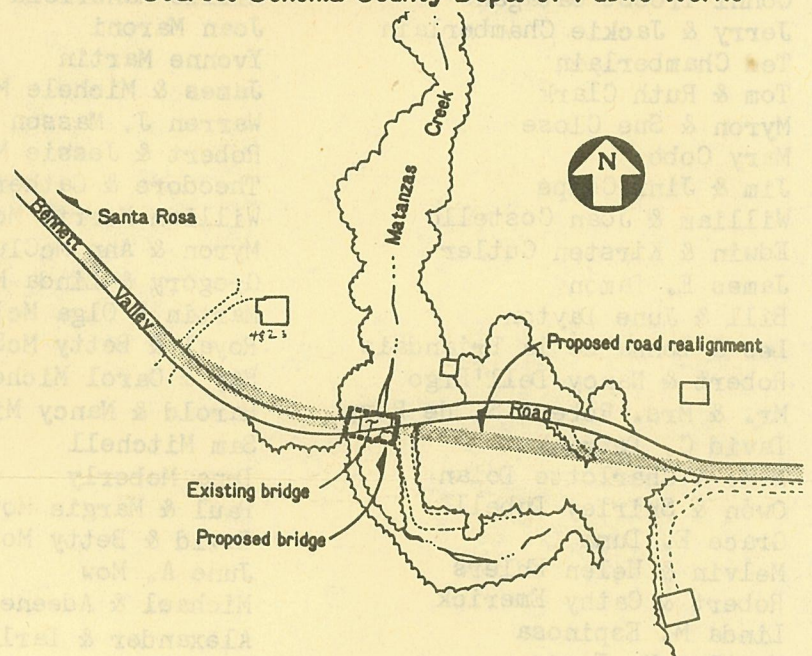
In general, Bennett Valley Road will be realigned starting at the driveway at 4823 Bennett Valley Road (the old Bruggeman property) and brought about 30 ft. closer to the house connecting with the west end of the new bridge. On the east side of the bridge, the curves will be eliminated making the road straight from the bridge to the curve at the eastern portion of the Mitchell walnut orchard/hay field (4968 B.V.Rd.) and the Pisenti property (4975 B.V. Rd.). This represents approx. 1500 ft. of realignment. During construction, a temporary 2 land earth fill detour will be constructed south of the existing bridge. Total estimated cost: \$475,000.

The project being fairly complex, this is, necessarily, a brief summation of the project.

A majority of the Homeowners Board voted to support this project although there was strong dissent.

If you have comments about this project, pro or con, contact Supervisor Janet Nicholas at 527-2241, Monday-Friday.

Bennett Valley Road at Matanzas Creek Bridge Replacement and Road Realignment Proposed Project Source: Sonoma County Dept. of Public Works



LAND USE ISSUES UPDATE

Haas Great Oak School, 6480 Sonoma Mountain Road: The Haas' have dropped their request for enlarging their school to 75 students. They are allowed to continue operation of the school as a legal, nonconforming use because it was in operation prior to the adoption of the Bennett Valley Specific and the County General Plans.

Schweiger Lot Split, 4714 Pressley Road: This proposal was denied on appeal to the Board of Supervisors.

Taylor/Nelson Lot Split, 6624 Bennett Valley Road: This project involves splitting 125 acres of property formerly owned by the Walkers into 60 and 65 acre parcels. The new owners are keeping the properties in Ag Preserve under the Williamson Act and a 25 acre vineyard is presently being developed. We understand that both owners plan more vineyard development. We are pleased to support these new residents and their commitment to agriculture in Bennett Valley.

Thompson 2nd Unit, 4729 Pressley Road: Wayne and Nadine Thompson have requested a permit for a 640 sq. ft. second dwelling on their 15.3 acre parcel. The unit is an existing conventional metal mobile home that the owners desire to modify to conform with building and use ordinances. A public hearing before the County Board of Zoning Adjustments is scheduled 22 May.

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TO THE MEMBERSHIP

Thank You to those old members who renewed and to our new members who just joined the Association. For those of you who haven't renewed your membership and wish to continue to receive the VOICE, please send in your dues by June 30. Thanks again to all of you for your continued support.

RUTH JAMISON JACOBS

...at age 73 is Bennett Valleys oldest living resident having been born here, lived here her whole life and raised a family here.

Her mom, Margaret Steele Jamison, was born in New York of parents who came from Belfast, Northern Ireland. Her father Jim Jamison was born in Occidental, California. His parents died when he was young so he was raised by relatives James and Rachel Marshall. Margaret's parents moved from New York to Duncans Mills to work in the lumber industry in the early 1900's. Margaret & Jim met, married, and bought property in Tomales (Marin Co.), started a dairy and sold it to the Sartori family, whose descendants still remain owners.

In 1910 Jim & Margaret came to Bennett Valley buying the ranch now known as Greendale Farms. They had a Guernsey Dairy and raised Hampshire sheep. The Dairy continued until 1961 under the direction of Ruth and husband Bill, having the oldest family of Guernsey cattle in the County. In fact, the Stornetta Dairy bought their first Guernseys from the Jamisons.

In 1912 Ruth's grandparents, the Steeles, also came to Bennett Valley buying the property across from today's fire house. They had a Jersey Dairy and chickens. In New York Mr. Steele worked with horses in stables.

Jim Jamison was the first to try and succeed in getting electricity and telephone service into the valley. He was instrumental in restarting the Sonoma County Fair in 1936 and setting up its current Fair Association.

JAMISON WILL SEEK REVIVAL OF COUNTY FAIR

Widely Known Rancher Recalls Horse That Won Fame For City

The Fair had been held sporadically since its beginnings in 1855, was not held at all during World War I or from 1921 to 1936. His son Wes took over his position on the Fair Board when Jim died in 1937 at the age of 52. Jim Jamison was also one of our first Supervisors, then the 3rd District, but served only 25 days before he died. One of the issues then was the improvement of Crane Canyon Road.

Margaret Jamison loved to ride horseback all her life and felt this was the best way to see anything, a feeling that has carried thru the family. She canned and did all the ranch cooking for family as well as ranch hands who roomed and boarded on the ranch. For a number of years she also roomed and boarded the teachers of the Strawberry School. She also raised enough turkeys to pay the property taxes in those days. She had three children, Wes, the oldest, Ruth, and Marshall, the youngest. She died in 1942, age 57.

As a young girl Ruth was more interested in being a cowgirl and ranching than both her brothers combined. As youths, she and Muriel Bush Horgan and brother Marshall would drive 20-35 head of cattle for Ben Buzzini (Sonoma Mtn)

or Frank Kirch (Pressley & Sonoma Mtn. Rd intersection) through the Genazzi Dairy down Lakeville way or to the Ewart Meat Co. in Penngrove. They would get an early morning start and stop for ice cream in Petaluma on their way home that afternoon.



Ruth at age 19 on Rollo

Draft horses were also a farm necessity and they had Shires who served both for drawing wagons to town and plows for the fields.

Ruth, with help from Marshall had to corral the sheep at night giving them hay in the barn and lighting kerosene lanterns on top of fence posts outside to keep the coyotes away, a most difficult task due to the regular windy evenings. She recalls the story of a train robber who escaped from jail in Santa Rosa and told authorities (after being caught in Sonoma) that he spend the night in a barn about 10 miles south of Santa Rosa where a couple kids rounded up sheep.

Ruth and neighbor kids rode horseback to the second Strawberry School near the Bottasso's. She best remembers her first grade teacher Lucille Hanson Bailey who was one of the four teachers she had during her grammar school years there. Ten years ago Ruth and Dolly Lafranconi started a yearly reunion of Strawberry School students which meets in June.

When high school time came she had to get a special permit to drive herself and 4 neighbor kids to Santa Rosa High School for the 4 year duration. She drove a Dodge Touring car and had quite a responsibility at an early age for her passengers. After graduating in 1932 she attended and graduated from Close Business College in S.R. She worked for Safeway's district office in S.R. which then had 25 stores in Sonoma, Lake, Mendocino, and Marin Counties.

Brother Marshall was a mechanic for Stevensons Equipment Co. in S.R. when it was on 2nd street, then surrounded by what Ruth recalls as a Chinatown, where the Chinese lived in small unfinished dwellings with wooden sidewalks, and a laundry.

Wes, by the way was milking the cows when the sheep were being rounded up. He attended the University of Calif. Davis, received a degree in Agriculture, taught and became head of the Agriculture Dept. at Santa Rosa High School for

35 years. He also took over the position on the fair board in 1937 when his father died and had served the fair association in one capacity or another ever since. He's been the fair manager, assistant manager and was the first livestock premium manager.

Fruit crops on their farm were gravenstein apples, pears, prunes and grapes. Ruth & Marshall also gathered mushrooms with horse & sled and sold them to markets in S.R. Also firewood was cut & sold, taken to town by 2 and 4 horse team wagons. The harnesses had bells on them, a little for show and a little for letting another driver know when you were approaching. Ruth still has reins made by Grandpa Bailey, a good acquaintance who had a saddle shop, tanned his cowhides, cut them in strips and made reins.

At 12 years old Ruth worked a 4 horse team bundle wagon picking up oat hay to take to the thresher.

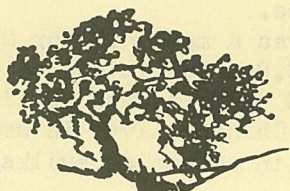
Ruth met Bill Jacobs at the Bennett Valley Grange in 1936. They were married in 1938. Bill's dad came cross country to California on mule back before returning to Germany to be married; they came back to California and settled on 40 acres in Albion (Mendocino Co.) where Bill was born and raised. Both in their 70's Ruth and Bill are still cowboys. They raise commercial cattle, registered beef cattle and herefords. They also raise their own registered Quarter horses for work and pleasure. They plant 125 acres of oat and vetch hay each year. Their daily live is devoted to their ranching. They also had two children Marilyn and Billy who are now grown and each have 3 kids - 6 grandchildren. Marilyn was California Dairy Princess in 1961-2, graduated from U.C. Davis with a degree in Home Economics, married

dairyman, Max Herzog, Jr., Sleepy Hollow Dairy, and today is a district manager for a fabric business based in Kansas City, Missouri. Billy graduated from Oklahoma State, married Sherry Knight, taught agriculture at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo for 16 years and is now a partner in the K74 Hereford Ranch in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

MARILYN FRANCO



Ruth & Bill Jacobs today 1986 still riding and enjoying it



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