

BENNETT VALLEY VOICE

Vol. 12 No. 1

Bennett Valley Homeowners Association

February 1989

BVHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bill Wright	President
Welles Wagner	Vice President
Nancy Batson	Secretary
Terry Babineaux	Treasurer
Michael Bates	
Tamara Boulton	
Marilyn Franc	
Bill Jacobs	
Dave Steiner	

BOARD ELECTION/OFFICERS

We are happy to report that namely, Nancy Batson, Tamara Boulton and Michael Bates have been re-elected as board members. The new officers for 1989 are shown to the left.

MEMO FROM THE BOARD

In the past few months the BVHA board has been very active in several key areas; namely, Road Safety, unauthorized structures, a proposed annexation by the City of Santa Rosa and comments/inputs to the new County General Plan. We have made good progress in all these areas as summarized below:

Road Safety - I'm sure many of you have observed double yellow lines and speed limit signs on Bennett Valley and Grange Roads.

We are advised by Janet Nicholas, First District Supervisor, that the proposed drainage improvement which would allow shoulders to be constructed in the "Pisenti road area" is scheduled for the 1989 construction season. This improvement would greatly enhance Road Safety in this critical AREA where many accidents have occurred. Also, the intersection improvements at Grange and Bennett Valley Roads is in the review stage and scheduled to be completed in 1989. We are working with the Public Works Department for further speed limit signs and yellow striping in other areas, and in particular the improved Mantanzas Creek Bridge on Grange Road.

Unauthorized Structures - We have been successful in several cases where unauthorized structures, trailers and mobile homes have been cited. In one specific instance the county has "red tagged" a two story structure which was built without a permit. This structure will be disassembled, a permit issued and it will be re-built according to existing codes and will receive the Bennett Valley Design Review approval prior to initiation of construction.

Proposed Annexation - We have been very active with the Santa Rosa Planning Commission and the County in reviewing and subsequently objecting to the annexation of 39 acres adjacent to the Bennett Valley school which, in our view, violates the Santa Rosa General Plan, would be improperly zoned and certainly would have an environmental impact on the rural surrounding area (see following update). In addition, it raises significant concerns for the Bennett Valley Fire Protection District inasmuch as it would create a "Fire Service Island" and potentially creates congestion and increased response times of emergency personnel and equipment.

County General Plan - We are pleased to report that Janet Nicholas, First District Supervisor, has advised us that in re-

sponse to our inputs to the General Plan, the Board of Supervisors has directed that (1) Enterprise Road be established as a Scenic Corridor and expand the Scenic Landscape Unit to encompass all lands depicted as scenic backdrop and additional lands south of Sonoma Mountain and Pressley Roads, (2) Sonoma Mountain Road be established as a Scenic Corridor and (3) expand the Scenic Landscape Unit to include all visual corridors depicted in the Bennett Valley Specific Plan Open Space Map. This means visually sensitive areas will be protected by a scenic designation and Design Review.

We have also been advised that the Board of Supervisors has supported Janet Nicholas request to provide 2 new Community Separators. The Eastern Santa Rosa/Oakmont Separator and the Sonoma Valley Separator which will offer the potential for permanent protection of some of our area's most sensitive and visually important open lands. As soon as maps are printed, copies will be provided. Of possible interest to equestrians and naturalists in Bennett Valley, is the Board's approved revision to the General Plan which establishes a long range designation and strategy to achieve a new County wilderness area/park in the Sonoma Mountains, between Jack London Park and the Diamond A Subdivision. This area contains truly beautiful unspoiled lands and important habitat for wildlife. The potential "park" envisioned would allow limited public use for those desiring a wilderness experience while clearly giving preference to the habitat needs of wildlife. Most important, public ownership and/or scenic easements of this mountain range will ensure that the visual open space that we all enjoy from the Highway 12 Corridor and throughout the Sonoma Valley is preserved in perpetuity in its unspoiled state.

General - The specific and primary purpose of your Homeowner's Association is to promote and preserve the rural, residential character and natural environment of Bennett Valley.

We have many challenges in the future as our valley continues to grow. We have to accommodate this growth while protecting our natural beauty. We meet every 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at the Fire Station. We hope you can attend these meetings and participate with us in our future endeavors. All of our board members can be reached by telephone. Do not hesitate to contact us, we welcome it!

BILL WRIGHT

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Your board finds it necessary to increase the Homeowner's dues for new and re-newing members. This is felt necessary due to the increased costs for publishing and mailing the Bennett Valley Voice as well as the types of problems we are faced with in protecting and preserving the rural character of Bennett Valley. Some problems look easy -- like the removal of a trailer that is in conflict with County code. This takes months, for even after the County has notified the offender, he frequently appeals. The Board must closely work with the county throughout the whole procedure. More complicated, and sometimes beyond our expertise, are requests for annexation to Santa Rosa. To assure the best chances for success, the project is planned and guided through the planning process by a Planning Consultant. Your board is no match for these professionals, so we have to hire our own. So far, we have been successful in stopping unwanted developments in the valley, but, this takes a lot of dedication, time and occasionally additional expenses for consultants.

We are told that with the development of the West Side, the pressure for development of the Valley now is nothing compared to what will come to bear when the developers have used up all available property. The Bennett Valley is a natural for the NEXT BIG DEVELOPMENT PUSH BECAUSE OF ITS BEAUTY AND RURAL NATURE, YET WITH THE CONVENIENCE OF CLOSE PROXIMITY TO SANTA ROSA.

Please help preserve what we have. The membership dues of just \$7.00 is but a small membership fee in accomplishing our objectives.

TERRY BABINEAUX

BENNETT VALLEY UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT HOLDS ELECTION

The Bennett Valley Union School District held an election in November to select four members for their five member Board of Trustees...two to serve the remaining two years of unexpired terms of former trustees, and two to serve regular four year terms. Katie Sanchez and William Stephens were each elected to serve four year terms, while Dr. Frank Hodges and Philip Kelly ran unopposed for the two year terms. Three of the four are new to the Board of Trustees, the exception being Dr. Hodges who has been on the board since April, 1983. Tamara Boultee is the remaining member on the five member board.

The four new Board of Trustee members were sworn in by Lyle Graf, Superintendent, at the December 7th board meeting. Officers were also elected for the coming year, they are: Tamara Boultee, President; Dr. Frank Hodges, Vice-President; Bill Stephens, Clerk; Phil Kelly, Representative to the County Committee on School District Organization; and Katie Sanchez, Alternate. Appointed to the Board Policy Committee by the president were Katie Sanchez and Bill Stephens.

The Board of Trustees hold their regular meetings the second Wednesday of each month at Strawberry School at 7:30 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

TAMARA BOULTBEE

Please cut along dotted line and return with your check. Thank You.

MEMBERSHIP DUES THE BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

1989

RENEWAL \$7.00

NEW MEMBERSHIP \$7.00

(Please Print)

NAME _____

OCCUPATION _____

ADDRESS _____

Please make checks payable to Bennett Valley Homeowners Assoc., and send in by March 31, 1989. Enclosed is a return envelope for your convenience. Send to:

Bennett Valley Homeowners Assoc., P.O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa, CA 95405.

THE SONOMA MOUNTAIN APPELLATION

An appellation is a geographically designated area where a particular type of fruit or vineyard land is located. A portion of the north and northeastern slopes of Sonoma Mountain has been designated as a sub-appellation of the larger Sonoma Valley Appellation.

It includes approximately 800 acres of vineyards with elevations ranging from 400 to 1200 feet. At this elevation there are more moderate temperature fluctuations than in the valleys, staying cooler in the daytime and warmer at night. There is not the persistent summer fog maximizing the early to midday sunlight hours. The inclination of the land is towards the morning sun and away from the hot afternoon sun. Protection is provided in the lee of the mountain from prevailing southwest winds.

This appellation was approved in August of 1984 after a great deal of hard work by Patrick Campbell and Dave Steiner in researching the history, soil and climatic conditions to gain the approval of the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. Their motivation was to have this area officially recognized as a distinct viticultural zone which produced a high quality product. A move that was supported by 99% of the growers in the area.

Before this designation, grapes on Sonoma Mountain were known to be of high quality and commanded higher prices. Mountain grapes tend to have a lower yield than valley grapes due to the more shallow soil being volcanic in origin. Higher elevation grapes need less water, grow in more stressed conditions and generally develop greater intensity of flavor. They are harder and more expensive to farm requiring lots of terracing.

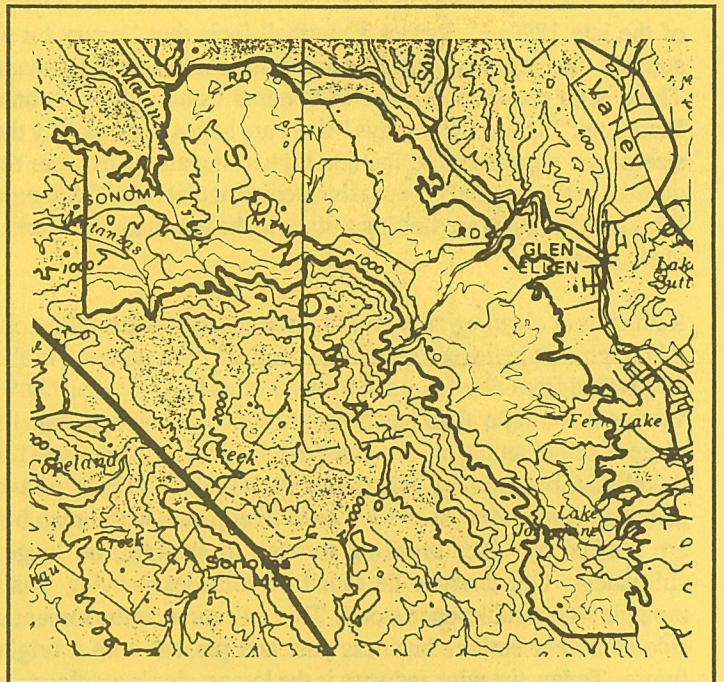
The following is an excerpt from the historical section of the proposal by Campbell & Steiner.

"In 1862 Jackson Temple planted the first vineyards on Sonoma Mountain, shortly afterwards building the first winery on what is now known as the Jack London Ranch. In 1867 Robert Potter Hill, a major landowner around Glen Ellen, planted 80 acres of vineyard on land now owned by the State of California."

"Viticulture was well established on Sonoma Mountain by 1877, when Thomas H. Thompson published his pioneer work, *Historical Atlas of Sonoma County, California*. The map of Sonoma Mountain shows the many ranches which had sprung up on the Mountain by that time. J.P. Munro-Frazier's *History of Sonoma County, 1880*, discusses many of the vineyard owners on Sonoma Mountain and corroborates much of the information in Thompson's atlas. Munro-Frazier includes Sonoma Mountain in his observation 'that in the opinion of many (this area is) the finest grape growing section in the State of California!'"

"Perhaps the most detailed description of grape growing on Sonoma Mountain at this time is Isaac de Turk's *The Vineyards of Sonoma County, 1893*. De Turk, as the head of the Board of State Viticultural Commissioners, published this compilation of all the vineyards and wineries in the County. It lists three wineries and 10 vineyards on Sonoma Mountain, ranging in size from 8 to 125 acres and totalling 288 acres. Kohler and Frohling Winery, which de Turk notes 'includes a large wine cellar and distillery', was one of the largest wineries in California at the time and was engaged in shipping its products to the East Coast around the Horn. This winery included the original buildings of Jackson Temple's pioneer winery. In the description of these vineyards de Turk refers time and again to the excellence of the 'red loam and light red gravelly mountain soil', one characteristic which distinguished Sonoma Mountain from much of the greater Sonoma Valley."

The beginnings of the California wine industry started in Sonoma. In 1824 Padre Jose Altamira planted over 1,000 vines at the Mission for sacramental use. General Mariano Vallejo vinted his first wines in 1841 and over the 25 years following increased his vineyards to 70,000 vines. In 1856, Agoston Haraszthy came to Sonoma and began the Buena Vista Winery. He has become known as "the father of California viticulture" preaching the virtues of non-irrigation hillside planting. He was sent to Europe



by Governor John Downey returning in late 1861 with 200,000 cuttings of nearly 500 varieties which were sold to other growers statewide. He was a strong lobbyist for the industry and attracted many growers to the area.

In 1868 General Vallejo deeded the land, where the Glen Ellen Winery is now located, to his carpenter Julius Wegener for building his landmark home in Sonoma. Wegener built a winery and distillery. The hillsides here on Sonoma Mountain were perfect for the traditional European viticulturalist.

The wine industry over the years has faced many foes. Phylloxera was known to have wiped out all of the first plantings in the late 1800s. Prohibition began in 1919 and closed all wineries. Repeal of prohibition began in 1933, just as the depression was beginning, making it difficult for vintners. During WWII grape supplies ran short and vintners prospered but in 1947 a glut caused a market crash. Jug wines grew popular in the 1950s. In 1969 table wines overtook dessert wines. Some of the old family wineries made it through the rough times. Many of today's wineries started in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s.

Today, in the Sonoma Mountain appellation, the larger vineyards are Kunde, Jack London, Glen Ellen, Laurel Glen, Steiner, and Berger. The smallest of these vineyards is 30 acres, the largest exceeding 100 acres. There are many many more smaller ones who contribute greatly to the annual production. Over the past 10 years vineyard acreage has increased by over 30%. Some of the biggest buyers of these grapes are Kenwood Winery, Sebastiani, Matanzas Creek and the Glen Ellen Winery. Sonoma Mountain has 3 wineries (there are 33 wineries in the Sonoma Valley appellation); H. Coturri & Sons, Glen Ellen Winery, and Laurel Glen Vineyard. The Glen Ellen Winery is among the top 10 in production in the United States producing 3 1/2 million cases per year. Laurel Glen produces 5,000 cases per year and Coturri 2,500 cases per year. The Glen Ellen Winery is open for tasting and tours, the other are not. Coturri and Laurel Glen wines can be found in many specialty markets and fine dining establishments locally, nationally, and internationally. The Benzigers of Glen Ellen Winery buy grapes and wine from all over California for the making of their moderately priced blends. They also offer prize winning estate wines from their 80 acres of vineyards. The Coturri sons, Tony, the winemaker and Phillip, the vineyard manager, specialize in making wines from grapes grown on Sonoma Valley Appellation hillside vineyards. Patrick Campbell of Laurel Glen makes only one wine, Cabernet, exclusively from his own grapes. The most successful wines produced and grapes grown on Sonoma Mountain have been Cabernet Sauvignon.

Continued on next page

Sonoma Mountain Appellation - Continued

The future looks promising for the Sonoma Mountain Appellation. The official designation has helped increase the exposure and notoriety of the quality grapes and wines produced in this region. Wines labeled from Sonoma Mountain have increased in value. "Plantings in recent years have surpassed even the heyday of the late 1890s." Patrick Campbell feels that "every bit of suitable vineyard land will be planted here in the next 10 years. There is no better appellation in Sonoma County than Sonoma Mountain." Dave Steiner says "there are hopes of increasing the size of the appellation to include higher elevations as were requested in the original proposal but denied at that time." Sonoma Mountain vintages are finding a place in the international market place as well.

Remnants of old vineyards can still be seen on close examination. Although it is believed that all the original vines planted in the 1800s died from Phylloxera there are stories that some may have survived; a single thick-stemmed row comfortably taking its place as senior among newer vines or an old variety not suited for this climate but thriving, perhaps having been here so long to have adapted. Some vineyards have been overgrown with brush but are marked by vines breaking through to sunlight, no longer cultivated. Old terraces lie faded on hillsides heaving small mounds where stalks once stood. This, of course, is the romantic side of a very serious business past and present with a bright future. Today, the wine industry is the largest single employer in Sonoma County. One out of every six dollars made in the County is generated from the wine industry.

MARILYN FRANCO

Thanks to P. Campbell, D. Steiner, Sonoma Valley Vintners Assoc., So. Co. Wineries Assoc.

BENNETT VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

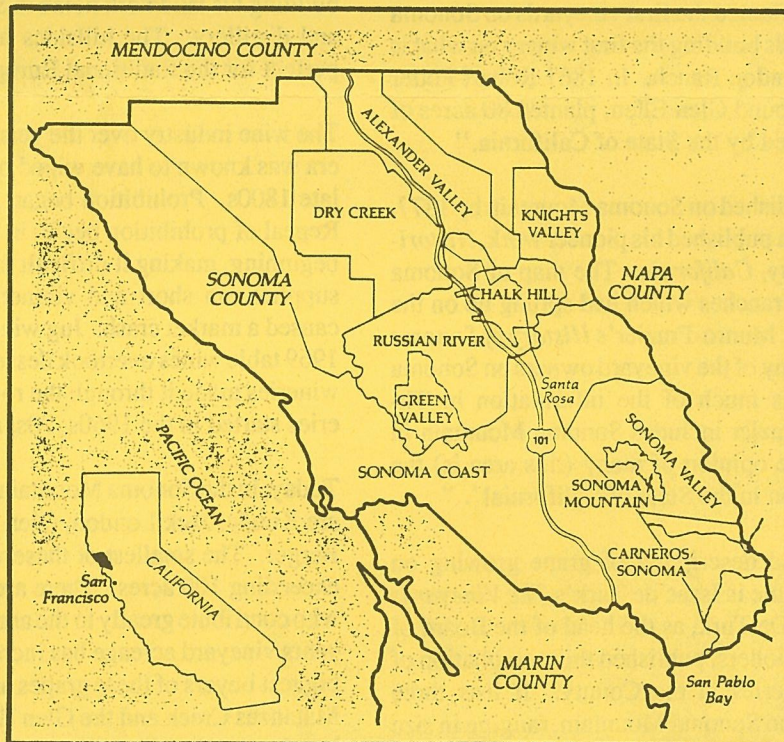
FIRE CHIEF'S 1988 SUMMARY

During 1988 Emergency responses increased 20%, mostly due to the busy wildland fire season and an increase in vehicle accidents. Despite the increased activity many of the Departments goals were met. These accomplishments included revised and adopted standard operating procedures (S.O.P.s), training goals established and met, administrative procedures revised, and the increase of dedicated and active volunteers. In addition the Fire District has begun the first stage of our 5 year Capital Improvement plan, using revenue generated from the Special Benefit Assessment, passed by the voters in 1987. All of the above have placed this department at a very high level of service and operation with one common goal to provide the best possible Fire and Emergency service to the community.

GREG L. MARTIN
Fire Chief

DESIGN REVIEW VACANCIES

As of March 31 there will be two vacancies on the Design Review Board. Replacements are being sought. If you would be interested, please contact the new President of the Board, Chet Adamick, at 578-6007 or one of the BVHA Directors. As well, alternates are needed to fill-in when someone on the board is absent.



BENNETT VALLEY
HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 2666
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

