

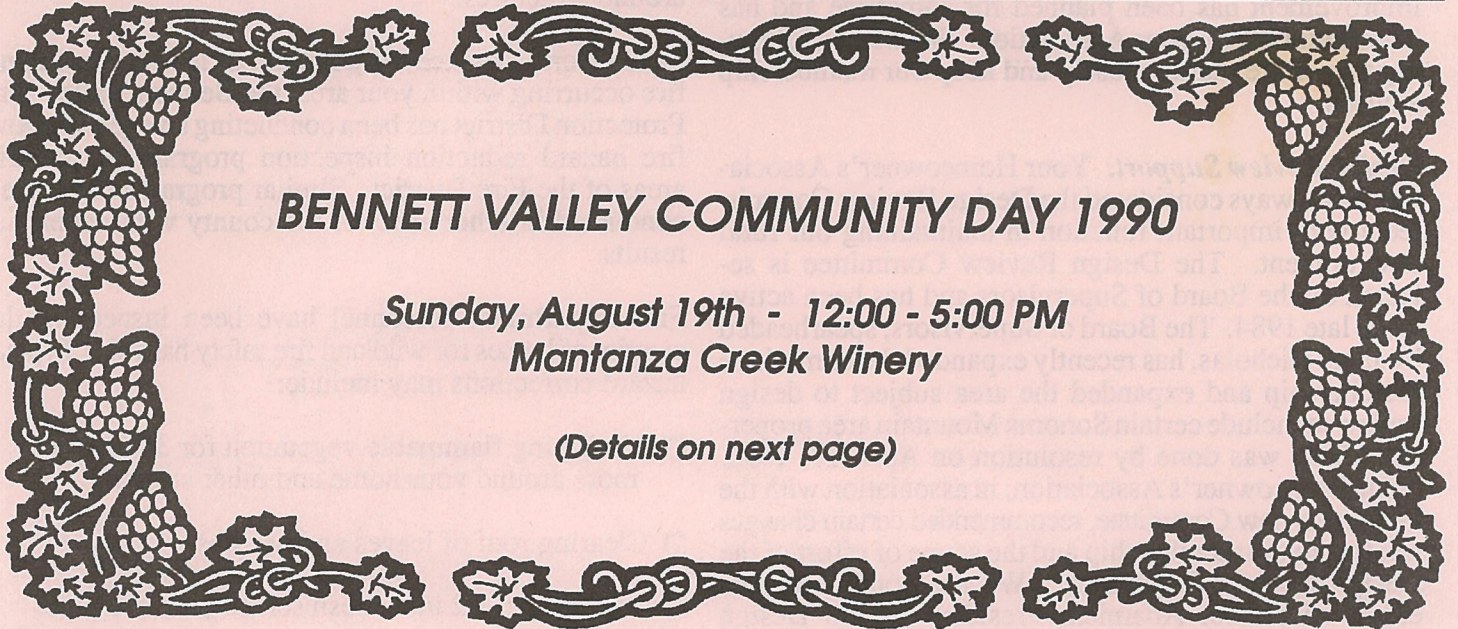


BENNETT VALLEY VOICE

Vol. 13, No. 2

Bennett Valley Homeowners Association

July 1990



BENNETT VALLEY COMMUNITY DAY 1990

Sunday, August 19th - 12:00 - 5:00 PM
Mantanza Creek Winery

(Details on next page)

MEMO FROM THE BOARD

Our second newsletter of the year summarizes the last 4 months of activity, particularly in the following areas: Namely, Proposed Annexation, Lot Splits, New Structures, Highway #12 Connector, and Design Review Support.

Annexation: As reported to you previously, there is a proposed annexation of approximately 39 acres adjacent to the Bennett Valley School. We have been quite active in attending hearings on the matter and had previously requested an Environmental Impact Report be prepared. Subsequent to our request, an Environmental Impact Report was prepared and distributed. We have made extensive comments relative to the draft Environmental Impact Report. Because of what we consider many deficiencies in the report we have stated that the draft EIR appears to be insufficient, only scratching the surface of numerous subjects, offering mitigations which are impossible to implement or which are not applicable to the problem, and suggesting as a mitigation action which would be illegal according to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) standards, we question certifying this EIR. A new report is being prepared and mitigated at this time. Detailed questions from letters are being answered. It is expected we will be reviewing a new EIR response and there is to be a Planning Commission hearing on July 12, 1990 on the entire matter. One of the basic concerns we have is high density housing in the event of annexation (as many as 76 units) in a highly sensitive environmental area.

Lot Splits: There continues, as to be expected, additional lot splits that are taking place throughout our valley. We have reviewed these carefully to assure that all of these splits are consistent with the overall Bennett Valley Plan and the Sonoma County General Plan. There have been several instances where lots that are contiguous to Bennett Valley Road have proposed separate roadways to each lot. We have appealed to both the

Planning Commission and the applicants to minimize the number of roads intersecting Bennett Valley Road by having one access road to multiple adjacent dwellings. We are happy to report we have been successful in several cases. By having single road access, it enhances road safety and provides a pleasing visual affect in our rural environment.

New Structures: We have had several referrals from the Planning Commission on new homes, many which have come under the purview of the Design Review Committee, and in some cases we have jointly worked with the Design Review Committee submitting our comments to the planning staff. In one particular case, we were unsuccessful in supporting the Design Review recommendations relative to a new structure off Bennett Valley Road wherein we lost an appeal to the Planning Commission for a multiple story home which we felt would violate the standards we have established for the valley. However, there were other mitigating circumstances placed on the applicant which will hopefully minimize the impact of this new multiple story home with respect to surrounding oak trees.

Continued on next page

BVHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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The Board meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7:30 PM at the Bennett Valley Fire Station. We invite your attendance and participation.

MEMO (Continued)

Highway #12 Connector: As you know, we devoted our last newsletter to the activity and deliberations of the Sonoma County Transportation Committee and the City of Santa Rosa with respect to alternatives for the Highway #12 connector. We have written several letters both to Janet Nicholas, our Supervisor, and the Santa Rosa City Council. There has been no new information on the possible use of Bennett Valley Road for a parallel road for Highway #12 to Glen Ellen and to Sonoma.

We do believe the possible reconstruction of Mantanzas Creek bridge on Grange and a left turn lane on Bennett Valley Road onto Grange will take place next year. This improvement has been planned for sometime and has been endorsed by your Association. We will be following this entire matter closely and keep our membership advised.

Design Review Support: Your Homeowner's Association has always considered the Design Review Committee a very important function in maintaining our rural environment. The Design Review Committee is selected by the Board of Supervisors and has been active since late 1984. The Board of Supervisors, spearheaded by Janet Nicholas, has recently expanded the committee membership and expanded the area subject to design review to include certain Sonoma Mountain area properties. This was done by resolution on April 17, 1990. Your Homeowner's Association, in association with the Design Review Committee, recommended certain changes relative to the membership and the scope of effort of the Design Review Committee. We are continuing this effort with Chet Adamick, President of the Design Review Committee, in establishing what we feel are important guidelines to be presented to the County planning staff for their consideration with the objective of enhancing the future design review effectiveness.

Special Bulletin: As this goes to press, our Fire Chief Greg Martin and his wife, Gloria, are the happy parents of a new baby boy. Ryan was born June 22 and weighed 6 pounds, 11 ounces.

Bill Wright
President

BENNETT VALLEY COMMUNITY DAY 1990

Bennett Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association will again be hosting Bennett Valley Community Day. Mr. and Mrs. Bill MacIver have graciously donated the use of their beautiful winery.

The Association is planning a fun filled day, including entertainment, raffle, auction, music, wine tasting and a wonderful bar-b-que featuring salmon, chicken and pasta.

This year's proceeds from the event will go toward the purchase of a "jaws of life". The "jaws" will be on display and we will have a live demonstration on the usefulness of this life saving equipment.

Along with exciting auction and door prizes, we will be raffling off a complete 7 day cruise for two to the Caribbean.

If any group would like to set up a booth to display their crafts, we welcome you and ask that you contact me at 544-0826 as soon as possible.

Please join us and bring your family and friends for a "celebration in the country".

Gary Galeazzi, President
Bennett Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association

BENNETT VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT Fire Prevention Update

Fire protection agencies have been preparing for a dangerous fire season. Despite the late rain, the wildland areas have dried out quickly creating a dangerous fire hazard.

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District consumes 25 square miles of open wildland, dry grass and flammable vegetation. The best means of protecting homes from wildland fires in this area, commonly referred to as the interface, is to create and maintain a defensible space around structures.

In an effort to reduce the potential of loss to a wildland fire occurring within your area, the Bennett Valley Fire Protection District has been conducting a vegetation and fire hazard reduction inspection program in specific areas of the Fire District. Similar programs have been conducted in other areas of the county with beneficial results.

Fire Department personnel have been inspecting the exterior of homes for wildland fire safety hazards. Typical hazard corrections may include:

- Modifying flammable vegetation for 30 feet or more around your home and other structures
- Clearing roof of leaves and needles
- Providing a 1/2 inch mesh screen on stove pipes and chimneys
- Removing dead branches over roofs
- Removing tree branches within 10 feet of chimney openings
- Identifying your house with numerical address sign

In addition, we have been encouraging owners of larger ungrazed parcels to put in fire breaks where said property contacts roadways. Although not all land owners are cooperative about fire breaks and grazing, more and more are complying each year and we certainly recognize and appreciate their contribution toward fire prevention.

If you have any questions concerning fire prevention, please feel free to contact the Bennett Valley Fire Station, Monday - Friday, 9 AM - 5 PM, at (707) 578-7761. Thank you for helping to prevent and control the spread of wildfire.

Greg L. Martin, Fire Chief

HIGHWAY 12 CONNECTOR UPDATE

The March, 1990 Bennett Valley Voice articles describing Highway 12 options has generated response and volunteers. At this time, the Bennett Valley option does not appear viable. In addition to opposition from Valley residents and homeowner's associations, Supervisor Janet Nicholas has criticized the option and the Santa Rosa City Council still appears attracted to a Spring Lake proposal. The situation is fluid and could change in time. Therefore, the Highway 12 Committee will continue to monitor the situation and keep the names of those who have volunteered assistance. If there is a change in circumstances, we will alert you through the Voice.

Kevin McCarthy, Chairman
"Highway 12" Committee

URBAN BOUNDARY INITIATIVES

Citizen groups in Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park and Cotati have submitted proposed initiatives to their City Councils requesting an ordinance which would provide that the ultimate Urban Boundary of Sonoma County's cities could only be expanded by vote of the electorate of those cities.

Urban Boundaries can now be changed simply by a majority vote of a City Council, and present law allows such a change up to four times each year.

The purposes of such an initiative are to protect and enhance agricultural land uses outside the existing city limit; direct future residential, retail, commercial and industrial growth away from areas of large land holdings which are or should be devoted to agricultural use, and inwards to areas already served by infrastructures; and to contribute to the improvement of local transportation by encouraging compact development inside the present urban boundaries.

This action could have a profound affect on Bennett Valley wherein limitations of unwarranted annexations could be realized, thereby protecting open space and community separators.

A majority of the members on the Santa Rosa and Cotati City Councils were receptive to the idea of some form of "locking in" the Urban Boundary. A compromise was reached with the agreement that a measure be placed on the November ballot. This initiative would allow boundary changes only every five years through a Comprehensive General Plan update with input from a citizen's advisory committee.

BENNETT VALLEY GRANGE

Grange Master Al Lafranconi wishes to extend his thanks to all the Valley residents who helped make the 117th annual Chicken Barbecue such a great success.



HISTORICAL NOTES

Early Bennett Valley Politics

Bennett Valley has had political "ties" since its infancy. In the 1853 Assembly race, James N. Bennett who lived in Bennett Valley and for whom it was named, and Judge Robert Hopkins were nominated by the Settlers party. At the same time, the Democrats, who held their convention in Santa Rosa, nominated Joe Hooker of Sonoma Valley and Lindsay Carson. The election on September 7 sent Carson to the legislature but ended in a tie between Hooker and Bennett.

The main issue of the ensuing campaign was the removal of the county seat to Santa Rosa from Sonoma. According to accounts of that time, Santa Rosans said very little aloud about the issue and Sonomians were afraid to mention it. But the candidates did and on October 29, 1853 in a tight contest, James N. Bennett beat Joe Hooker by 13 votes. In the legislature, Bennett introduced a bill which would submit the question of the location of the county seat to a vote of the people. This bill was passed quietly by the legislature in 1854 before "drowsy Sonomians in the historic old city" knew what was going on.

Supposedly Sonomians didn't think the country upstarts in Santa Rosa could garner enough votes to move the county seat, or for that matter, even come up with an appropriate edifice. Santa Rosans, however, were busy — talking about, among other things, the need to have the county seat located in a central spot of the county. On election day, September 6, 1854, the issue passed — much to the surprise and chagrin of the Sonomians. On September 22nd, the archives were moved to the new county seat in Santa Rosa.

Source: *Historical and Descriptive Sketch of Sonoma County, Ca.*, Robert A. Thompson, 1877.

Y-Lupa or Ya-lupa

Much has been said about the proper way to pronounce "Yulupa" and the word's origin.

According to Dr. Platon M. G. Vallejo (he was the son of General Vallejo), Yulupa is an Indian word pronounced ee-oo-loo-pa. It means literally, "near the sea-plunge" or "place of the sunset".

In olden times, the conical mountain we know as Bennett Peak was named Yulupa. Due to its location, lying to the west of the Sonoma Valley, during certain seasons of the year the descending sun would center behind this shapely peak creating quite a pleasant effect. Hence the Indian name. This same name, Yulupa, was given to the first rancho created from the lands surrounding Yulupa Mountain and deeded from Vallejo to Miguel Alvarado. Alvarado was a soldier who had served at the presidios in Sonoma, San Francisco and Santa Barbara. He gave ranching a try for a while but abandoned his effort after war began in California in 1848. Mariano Vallejo reclaimed the land (the land encompassed 3 leagues of land) but only after an extensive court battle.

Source: *History of Sonoma County, Ca., Vol. 1;* Honoria Tuomey, 1926.

