



BENNETT VALLEY VOICE

Vol. 15, No. 1

Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association

February, 1992

VISIT BY OUR COUNTY SUPERVISOR



Mike and Jeannie Cale

The Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association (BVHA) was treated to a January 15, 1992 visit from newly appointed 1st District County Supervisor Mike Cale. Between 60 and 70 members came, making this one of the best attended BVHA meetings in recent history. Supervisor Cale made brief introductory remarks and then opened the floor to questions and answers. Both his initial remarks and his responses were clear evidence of his long background in land use planning.

The Supervisor stated that his short term goals, with regard to Bennett Valley, were:

- 1) *To maintain the integrity of the Specific Plan for Bennett Valley while bringing it into closer coordination and conformity with the newly updated General Plan for the county.*
- 2) *To strengthen the design review process so that there is better communication between the County Planning Department and the Design Review Board.*
- 3) *To assure that the growth and development approved by the City of Santa Rosa is compatible with Bennett Valley or at least its impacts will be minimized.*

4) *To maintain pressure on County highway officials so that the planned improvements to the Pisenti curves and the Grange road intersection are accomplished in 1992 as planned.*

Supervisor Cale was asked many excellent questions by the audience. For those he could not fully answer, he promised further investigation. A representative sampling of questions asked are as follows (some editorial license was taken here, but the essence is, hopefully, set forth):

Q: What plans are there for Bennett Valley Road improvements?

A: *As I understand it, two areas are to be improved: The proposal for Grange Road is an additional turn-off lane, and improvements to the bridge. For Pisenti curve, I believe they plan an increased shoulder and perhaps some widening and/or straightening.*

Q: What about a bike lane?

A: *The concept of a bike lane is good, but it would require the taking of property along some portions of Bennett Valley Road and I am not sure whether you would want that or whether the County is prepared to take that step.*

Q: What are your views about the extension of Highway 12 and possible alternatives?

A: *I don't think it will happen in my life time. The environmental concerns are too great in extending over Spring Lake. I certainly wouldn't support routing Highway 12 through Bennett Valley. I believe that we must now live with the inefficiencies of using existing streets to get people out of the neighborhoods and onto main roads. For a variety of reasons, I don't think that the Highway 12 extension will either go over Spring Lake or through Bennett Valley, but will have to occur on existing roadways.*

Q: Could Highway 116 be widened to take some of the Highway 12 traffic?

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A: *I don't think that is being considered currently. It would be a possibility.*

Q: Are you familiar with the light rail proposals?

A: *Yes, and I am excited about them, but I see it as a long term activity. The planning process will be slow. There is a Spot Bill in the Legislature now designed to address the specific question of district authority. There are a number of people and organizations working on the problem of trying to find the appropriate transit mode and routing, as well as financing, etc.*

Q: Can you help to improve City-County communication and ensure more advance warning of city activities?

A: *Yes. I have served on the Santa Rosa City Planning Commission and I know a number of City officials including the City Manager, Ken Blackman. Blackman has come to my office to talk about concerns and I think that we have an excellent opportunity to improve communications between the city and the County that have been lacking in the past. I will specifically discuss with him the "early warning" idea.*

Q: Will the City annex added areas toward Bennett Valley?

A: *The City will seek to annex areas within its service areas and its urban boundaries. However, in order to do this it will need the approval of the County Local Area Formation Commission. I do not think that it will seek to annex areas toward Bennett Valley as it does not show up in either the County or the City General Plans.*

Q: Do you see any zoning changes for Bennett Valley in the next 10 years?

A: *No, both the Specific Plan for Bennett Valley and the County General Plan update were adopted after considerable hearing and consideration. I want to respect the recent update of the General Plan and to keep faith with those documents.*

Q: How can you make the County staff more customer oriented?

A: *It will take some retraining of the staff to make them more responsive. I believe they have a responsibility to let all people know about the process and their options for appeal, whether or not they agree with the customer/citizen's position.*

Q: Will the Granny Unit Ordinance be revised?

A: *All housing policies will be revisited in an attempt to find reasonable ways to accommodate housing for our citizens.*

Q: Where will affordable housing go?

A: *Mostly in the cities and on their fringes. Unincorporated areas are not places for affordable housing unless people want to build such housing on the land that they own. In other words, I wouldn't support increased density in rural areas to accommodate affordable housing, but would tend to want to find areas for that housing in or near cities.*

Q: Do you support School Parcel Tax Measure C?

A: *I will lend my support to any proposal to support education and our schools.*

Q: Do you support Regional Government?

A: *I will fight any plan which gives land use planning to any regional government. There are definitely regional issues, such as transportation, environment, housing; but I do not support any system that would allow other Bay Area counties to tell Sonoma County that we will have to develop to take on the housing.*

Q: Can we get more recycling along Bennett Valley Road?

A: *I will talk to Empire Waste.*

Q: Do you think the supervisorial district's boundaries will be changed?

A: *Those boundaries were recently expanded back to their historic boundaries and I expect them to stay there for the foreseeable future.*

Q: Could you institute a locked complaint box so that we can communicate directly with you?

A: *There is no need, as my door is always open, and I am there for comments or questions from citizens.*

Q: What issues are particularly important for you for 1992?

A: *First, get elected; affordable housing for all members of the community, vigilance about any proposals for regional government, transportation issues, County jail, and our budget shortfall.*

We thank Mike Cale for this special opportunity to hear his views on our expressed concerns. We are looking forward to working co-operatively with him toward our mutual goals. We are hoping on hearing responses to a few of the issues Supervisor Cale promised to follow up on, and we will pass these on to you in a future issue of The Voice.

John Mackie and Kate Ecker

FISH AND GAME WARDEN SPEAKS TO HOMEOWNERS



Mike Wade, local resident and Captain with the State Department of Fish and Game, spoke with us at our October 16th meeting. His message was very interesting and informative. He stated that his Department is mandated to count, patrol, study and enhance the wildlife of Bennett Valley (as well as the rest of the State). Animal wildlife in the Valley, in addition to our familiar deer, squirrels, and jack rabbits, includes bobcats, coyotes, raccoons, river otters, our native fish, grey and red foxes (yes there are some red ones), and mountain lions. Poaching and the pollution of streambeds are the number one problems for the Department, and citations are issued for these infringements. Trash and other debris must not be dumped or placed within 150 yards of a streambed. Property owners must obtain a permit to alter a streambed, even if it is a dry streambed. Wildlife belongs to all of us, and we are responsible for its protection. As human population increases and the drought continues, more and more survival pressures are placed upon the animals and fish with whom we share space. The Fish and Game Department is helping to maintain an environmental balance between man and wildlife. For further information regarding any aspects of our wildlife in the Valley, call 1-944-5512 or 578-3740.

Fable Annexation Update

The request by Mr. Claudio Fable, represented by James Hummer, to annex 38 acres without the development plan required by the city planning department, was heard by the Santa Rosa City Council on December 10, 1991 (As reported in our September issue, this request had previously been approved by the City Planning Commission). After lengthy testimony and discussion, the City Council voted 4-to-1 to require a development plan prior to annexation. On December 18, 1991, the Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association was notified by the city planning staff that Mr. Hummer had appeared before the City Council subsequently to request that the Council reconsider its decision in light of the fact that he was unable to be in attendance for the duration of the hearing on December 10. The City Council has agreed to reconsider the request for annexation without a development plan but no date has been set. The BVHA Board has strongly supported the need to have a development plan prior to annexation, as required by the city planning staff, and has suggested that the zoning placed on the property be more in line with the adopted EIR's preferred alternative total allowable lots.

Tamara Boulton

BENNETT VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT Fire Prevention Note

The Bennett Valley Fire Department has experienced a large increase in calls for chimney and flue fires. In most cases the cause was due to chimney build-up of creosote and residue; in others, due to improper use and maintenance of wood stoves and fireplace. *All chimneys (masonry or metal) should be inspected and cleaned annually!* For more information about chimney maintenance and other fire safety questions, contact the Bennett Valley Fire Station, Monday thru Friday, between 9 A.M. and 5 P.M., at: 578-7761.

Greg Martin, Fire Chief

THANKS TO TERRY

Our sincere appreciation to Terry Babineaux for his many years of service. Terry has decided to retire before the expiration of his term on the BVHA Board. He has served as Vice President, President and Treasurer, and our meetings will be ever so less colorful without his fervent style. Thank you Terry, and know that you will be greatly missed. Kate Ecker has joined the Board to fill the vacant seat. Welcome Kate.

44th Annual Firemens' Pancake Breakfast

The Bennett Valley Volunteer Firemens' Association would like to have you join them for their traditional fund-raising breakfast on Sunday, April 12, 1992

7:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., at the Fire Station.

Pancakes, ham and eggs, orange juice, milk, and coffee.

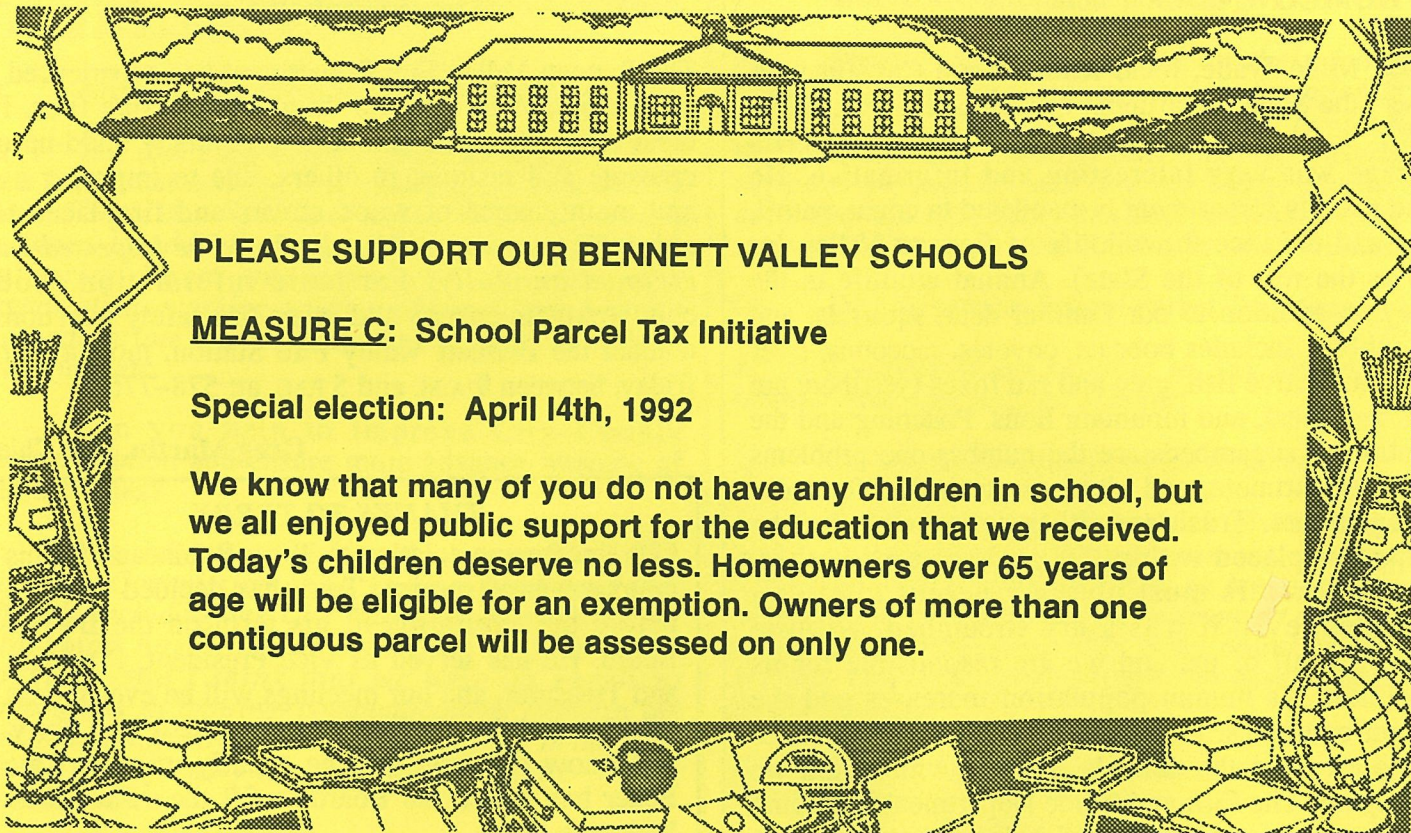
Adults: \$5.00, children: \$3.00 (under six: free)
Proceeds will go for emergency fire and medical service here in the Valley.



BVHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin McCarthy	President
Lois Brown	Vice-President
Nancy Batson	Secretary
Sam Dakin	Treasurer
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Kate Ecker	Dave Steiner
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The Board meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7:30 at the Bennett Valley Fire Station. We invite your attendance and participation. The Voice is published by Lois Brown and Sam Dakin.



PLEASE SUPPORT OUR BENNETT VALLEY SCHOOLS

MEASURE C: School Parcel Tax Initiative

Special election: April 14th, 1992

We know that many of you do not have any children in school, but we all enjoyed public support for the education that we received. Today's children deserve no less. Homeowners over 65 years of age will be eligible for an exemption. Owners of more than one contiguous parcel will be assessed on only one.



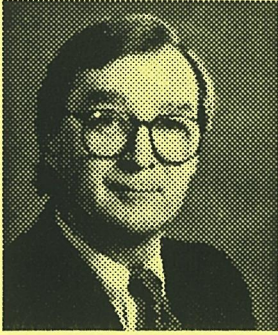
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HOMEOWNERS ASSOC.
P. O. Box 2666
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

BENNETT
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VOICE

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**Next Meeting of the BVHA:
Wednesday, March 18, 1992
7:30 P.M. at the Bennett Valley
Fire Station.**

**Glenda Humiston, Executive Director of the Sonoma
County Farmlands Group will be there to speak and
answer questions about open space and farmland
issues. Local residents and Members are invited.**



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

We were very pleased by the large turnout to meet Supervisor Mike Cale at our January 15th meeting. As Mike is running for election in November, this was truly "*democracy in action*". Our elected officials are interested in the problems and concerns of the citizenry, but they can only be effective to the degree that we are organized and present a clear agenda of issues and rational solutions. Here in Bennett Valley, we are blessed with a beautiful rural environment, an active homeowners' association, and 1771 hopefully actively involved registered voters. Our recent survey graphically illustrated the consensus of opposition to any Bennett Valley option for Highway 12, as well as any commercial or small lot (high density) residential development. Residents also expressed strong support for reasonable safety improvements to Bennett Valley Road. Your Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association is actively committed to and working on these issues. To be efficacious, we also need your continued support and your neighbor's support. As an Association member and supporter, your involvement is important and appreciated. However, about one-half of the households in the Valley are not members. Tell your neighbor about BVHA, its goals and activities. Get them to join. The more active members that we have, the more successful we will be.

Kevin McCarthy