


BENNETT VALLEY VOICE

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION - VOLUME 18 NUMBER TWO-JUNE, 1995



MICHAEL BATES' ENCHANTED GARDEN



High on the emerald face of Sonoma Mountain above Bennett Valley is a magical garden that has been the subject of numerous feature articles in the most prestigious of gardening magazines. This is the home and garden of English born Helen and Michael Bates, who in 1982 purchased a dilapidated turn-of-the-century farmhouse surrounded by weeds, asphalt, and chain link fences. Michael, a landscape designer with an artist's eye for visualizing possibilities, has effected the transformation from an "old home in need of love and care," into a quintessential garden display of flowering perennials and shrubs surrounded by 100 different varieties of cascading roses.

With clients and a gutted house competing for his attention, Michael painstakingly dug at rocks and roots, built walkways, terraces, stonewalls, arbors, and a 120 foot pergola all carefully designed to be the foundation and backdrops for the splendor of his plantings.

Michael's love for gardening started in his childhood, and today he heads *English Country Gardens*, his garden design firm. Through the years Michael has developed a design style that is naturalistic and responsive to the demands of the landscape and climate, and yet stays in touch with his English gardening heritage. To achieve his naturalistic style, he uses native trees as part of the garden architecture, and mixes in plants in natural and complementary ways. He says that "although these are California not English meadows, both plants and cultures commingle happily and come to lie down together in the garden."

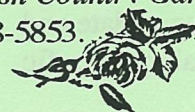
Michael is quoted in "Horticulture" as saying: "One of the more enjoyable but less predictable

aspects of the garden is how it grows and matures, and what repercussions this has for plantings. Spaces come and go. Plants that I was determined to find a place for outgrow their roles and are moved. Maintaining the balance between solids and voids, and recognizing the need for the spatial energy that this balance creates in a garden is an important lesson, which you must keep relearning as a gardener. There's always a plant waiting to fill a space, and soon there are no spaces. So ultimately what you leave out becomes as important as what you plant. You prune up to create canopies, which, in turn, open up new avenues of sight and suggest the line for a new path. But canopies axiomatically produce shade and soon you find yourself chasing the sun. Every year, just when I think I have it finished, my garden presents me with these new opportunities."

Helen and Michael have been actively involved in the community by serving for many years on the Design Review Committee and the BVHA respectively. Michael is one of the Founders of the Sonoma Mountain Preservation Committee on which he presently serves. Monet views of the Bates' garden have been featured this season in the following publications:

Sunset, Horticulture, Country Living, Garden Design, Country Living Gardening, and the *Press Democrat*.

The garden can be viewed personally in small groups by appointment. A \$3.00 per person donation is requested which is donated to the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society. *English Country Gardens* can also be reached at 578-5853.



VALLEY VIEWS: UPDATES ON ISSUES OF CONCERN

THE GOLF COURSE

The BVHA is closely monitoring the progression of the Bennett Valley Golf Course expansion. We recently attended the scoping session, chaired by the City and Baseline E.I.R. Consultants, at which the community voiced their concerns and wishes. One of the agreements that Supervisor Mike Cale has made with the City is that the Golf Course must remain on County land and become a permanent Community Separator, thus precluding further annexation into the Valley. This is a great relief to us, and Mike has our sincere thanks. The exact acreage of the separator beyond the Golf Course has not as yet been determined. Once the E.I.R. is completed, there will be ample opportunity for public input.

SONOMA MOUNTAIN A STUDY AREA

Sonoma Mountain is a magnificent scenic backdrop to the Valley. Due to the growing concerns of the Sonoma Mountain Preservation Committee and the BVHA regarding how the mountain will be impacted by sub-division development, Mike Cale initiated an Urgency Ordinance with a moratorium on sub-division development. This will allow time to identify and correct the land use and zoning ordinance discrepancies between the 1989 General Plan update and the 1978 Bennett Valley Specific

Plan. It was the intention of Mike Cale that the General Plan update relating to Bennett Valley be consistent with our Specific Plan, but regrettably this was never quite clear to the Planning Department. We are thankful that these discrepancies will now be corrected, and we are most grateful to Supervisor Cale, Planner Greg Carr, and Tamara Boulton, Design Review Committee member, for their dedicated efforts in preserving the essential tenets of the Specific Plan.

NEUMAN SUB-DIVISION

After nearly a year of meetings with developer Ron Neuman and his planning consultant Mike Morrison, the BVHA and the Sonoma Mountain Preservation Committee reached an agreement that was approved by the Board of Supervisors in April.

Although there were compromises on both sides, we believe that the final project has some positives. Mr. Neuman has dedicated in perpetuity the top 80 acres of his property to be used as a public trail to someday access Jack London Park when other connecting properties can be acquired. The other plus is that Sonoma Mountain Road will not be widened the several hundred feet in front of the property, which was to be a condition of approval for the project. Residents have historically ob-

jected to so called "road improvements" because they do not want Sonoma Mountain Road to become a thoroughfare thus increasing traffic and raising the risk of accidents. *The better the road, the faster they go.* Mr. Neuman has pledged to continue to cooperate with us as he develops the C.C.&R's for the Homeowner's Association he proposes to put in place. Compliance with these regulations will be critical to assure that the four homes sited on the slope of the mountain will be well blended into the landscape.

DESIGN REVIEW NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Our plea for committed people to serve on the Design Review Committee successfully brought forth many interested applications. Mike Cale interviewed and appointed three new members, Roger Creer, Les DeLaBriandais, and Spencer Humphrey. Those applicants not appointed at this time will provide a much needed pool on which to draw as openings arise. Thanks to all of you who showed a willingness to serve on this important committee.

A REMINDER FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

Since this year's high grass is especially hazardous, it is important to mow weeds thirty feet away from your home.

MEMO FROM THE BOARD

Our grateful thanks to all our new and renewed members for supporting our work. Without your membership, we would not have the means to keep in communication with the community and to pay for consultants when needed.

A special thanks to the Babi-neaux, Gregerson, Landreth, MacIver, Simon, Bill Sullivan families, and to former Bennett Valley TIC for their generous additional contributions to our Preservation Fund. Having this added funding has given us a solid position in conflict resolutions. Although we have always tried to work cooperatively and have so far avoided litigation, it is comforting to know that if necessary, we now have an additional tool to protect Bennett Valley.

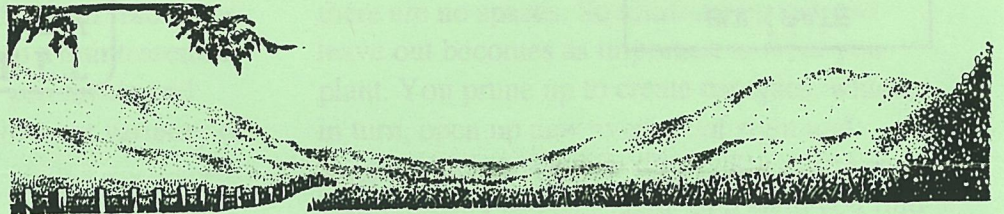
BENNETT VALLEY T-SHIRTS

In exploring ways in which we could raise money for our Fire Protection District, we have designed a beautiful Bennett Valley T-shirt which will be for sale at the Fire Station after mid-June. It will also be available at Community Day in August.

The T-shirts were designed by our own local artist Nancy Dell'Ergo, and they are being silk screened and distributed by our own local funny man Dan Felciano.

The shirts will be in the Valley colors of Oaktree green or in natural, and they will depict the beauty of our rolling hills. The cost will be \$12 for sizes M, L, and XL, and \$14 for XXL.

We hope to sell hundreds of them to swell the Fire District coffers, so do support our volunteer firemen while at the same time making a unity fashion statement.



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The Board meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at the Fire Station. Your attendance and participation are welcomed.

NEW COUNTY PLANNING PROCESS

The Planning Department has reorganized and consolidated the permit process. The Department will be moving July 6th to 2550 Ventura Ave. There will now be a more convenient and efficient "non-stop shopping process" for buildings, road encroachments, sewers, wells, and grading permits.

The Planning staff has been trained to inform Bennett Valley applicants that they must first go before the Bennett Valley Design Review Committee. Hopefully no more slipping through the cracks!

Mr. & Mrs. H. J. Simon
2820 Bardy Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

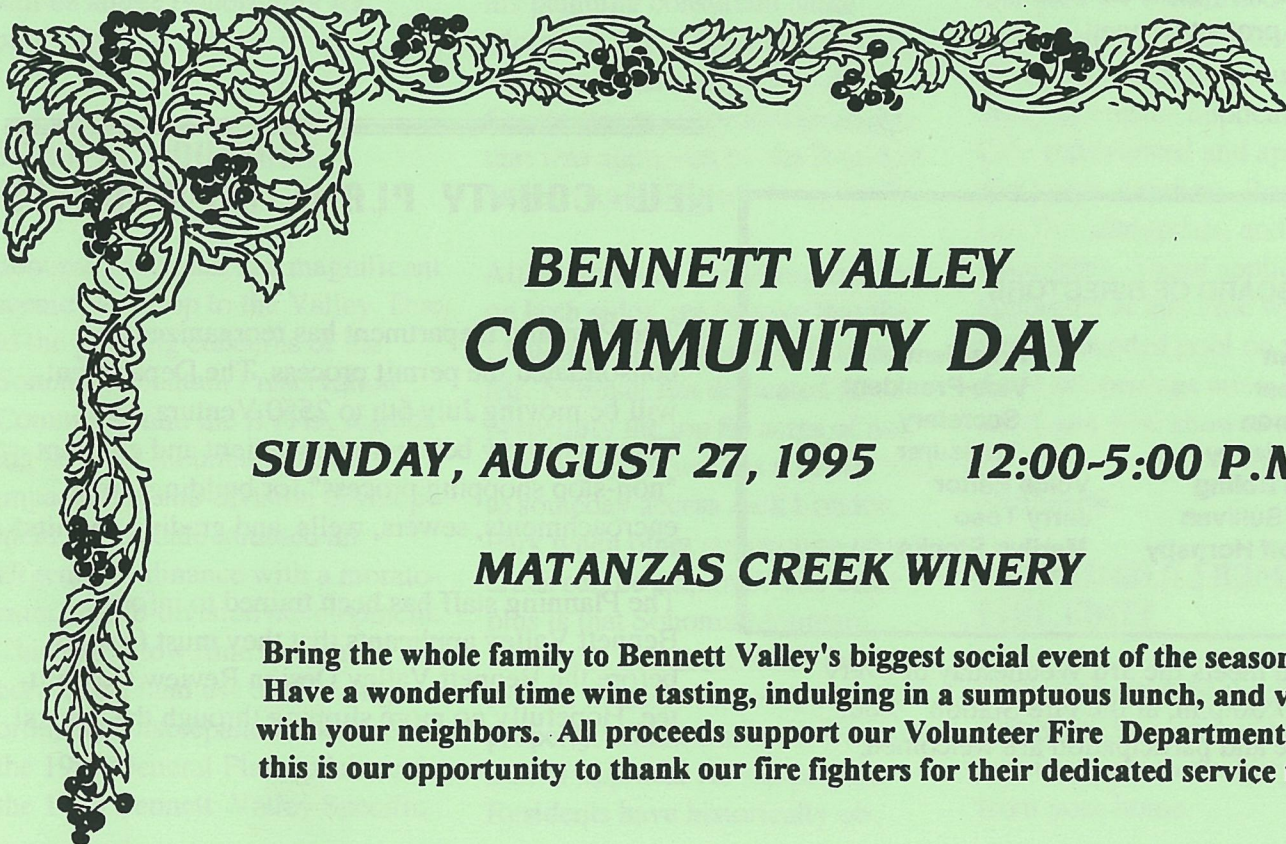
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BENNETT VALLEY COMMUNITY DAY

SUNDAY, AUGUST 27, 1995 12:00-5:00 P.M.

MATANZAS CREEK WINERY

Bring the whole family to Bennett Valley's biggest social event of the season. Have a wonderful time wine tasting, indulging in a sumptuous lunch, and visiting with your neighbors. All proceeds support our Volunteer Fire Department, and this is our opportunity to thank our fire fighters for their dedicated service to us.