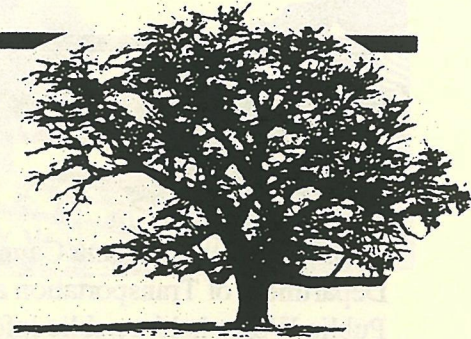


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# BENNETT VALLEY VOICE

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION  
VOLUME 19 NUMBER TWO SUMMER ISSUE, 1996

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## KENDALL-JACKSON COMES TO BENNETT VALLEY

In March of this year, Kendall-Jackson Winery of Santa Rosa purchased the 1,200-acre Friedman ranch on Grange Road. According to *The Press-Democrat*, Kendall-Jackson paid between \$7 million and \$8 million for the property which comes with a lake, stable, and barn.

The Friedman ranch is only one of several tracts of land that Kendall-Jackson has acquired in Sonoma County during the last year. The ranch becomes part of the fastest growing wine company in California.

What does the sale of this land to such a large and powerful company mean to Bennett Valley? Naturally residents here are curious about such a large enterprise in their midst.

For instance, how much of the land is suitable to be planted in grapes? What does Kendall-Jackson plan to do with the buildings on the property? If a winery with tasting room is located on Grange Road, what does this do to traffic? Where will the entrance be? What about the beautiful oaks located on this land? How many will be cut to make

room for vineyards? What happens to the rural character of Bennett Valley which is so important to most people living here. These are the concerns that have been voiced by residents to the BVHA since the sale of the Friedman Ranch.

Kendall-Jackson hosted a get-together for community leaders last month. There was no formal presentation by the new owners, but the following information was given to guests about *TENTATIVE* plans for the Friedman property:

*1. At least 200 acres will be planted in grapes. Jess Jackson will produce chardonnay and pinot noir wine grapes to meet the wine company's growing demand for those premium wines.*

*2. The present barn will be the tasting room.*

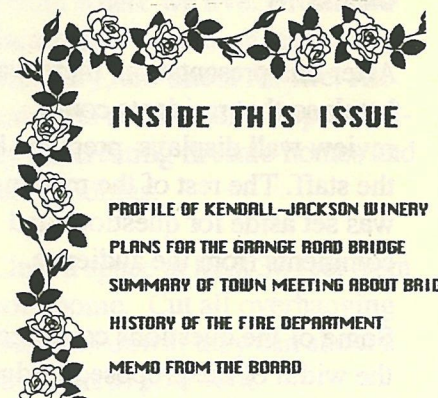
*3. There will be a production facility on the site.*

*4. Twenty development rights have been purchased by Kendall-Jackson.*

*5. It was also mentioned that Jess Jackson has thought about putting a golf course on the property.*

*Wine Business Insider* printed the following about Kendall-Jackson's purchase of the Friedman Ranch: "...the 1,200 acre Friedman Ranch in Santa Rosa's Bennett Valley (is) where Jackson is considering building a golf course amid vineyards and oak groves." (Volume 6, Issue 23, 6-10-96.)

The information in this article has been gleaned from articles in Wine publications, the Press Democrat, and what was informally said by Kendall-Jackson. We made it as accurate as possible.



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PROFILE OF KENDALL-JACKSON WINERY  
PLANS FOR THE GRANGE ROAD BRIDGE  
SUMMARY OF TOWN MEETING ABOUT BRIDGE  
HISTORY OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT  
MEMO FROM THE BOARD

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# PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS GRANGE ROAD BRIDGE

On May 8th, the Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works held a public information meeting at the Grange Hall. The Public Works staff wanted to present the different alternatives for construction of the bridge, to discuss these alternatives with the community, and to hear opinions and concerns from Bennett Valley residents. Approximately 75 people attended the meeting.

Supervisor Mike Cale was present at the meeting. The Department staff who made the presentation included Susan Klassen, Senior Civil Engineer; John Kottage, Engineering Services Manager; Tim Mayer, Environmental Specialist; and Janice Thompson, Design Engineer.

A slide presentation showing the problems with the present bridge was shown. Then several project alternatives were presented. Project funding and environmental guidelines were also discussed. The height of the new bridge, location of the bridge, detours during construction were all discussed.

After this presentation, there was a break so that residents could review wall displays prepared by the staff. The rest of the meeting was set aside for questions and comments from the audience.

Some of the questions concerned the width of the proposed bridge.

Susan Klassen answered that this is a local issue not a Federal one. In other words, even though there are Federal guidelines for the project, these guidelines are not rigid.

When a poll of the audience was taken, the majority by far preferred a two-lane road.

Residents voiced their concern that the new bridge have a rural character and fit in aesthetically with the scenic beauty of the

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***"All we're trying to do is get you a new bridge before the old one falls down!"***

**Supervisor Mike Cale**

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valley. Susan Klassen replied that a top-notch design firm will be retained to design the bridge.

Another aesthetic concern was the ugly guardrails (adjacencies) on each side of Grange Road. Will Federal funds be used to remedy this problem? Mike Cale said he will attempt to include this in the project, but he can't promise that it can be done.

Another question also dealt with the approach from Bennett Valley Road to Grange. There is a safety problem when drivers don't wait for cars to turn right onto Grange Road, but instead go around the car and through the yellow island. Supervisor Cale said that this situation will be looked into and remedied.

Another resident asked if Bennett Valley Road would be widened any further to accommodate the new bridge. The staff answered that enhancing and accommodating the right hand turn will make the road a little wider.

Valley resident Phyllis Ribeau thanked Supervisor Cale and the Department Staff for organizing this meeting to inform the community about the new bridge and for their informative presentation. The audience responded with rousing applause.

Gene Darling, president of the Grange closed the meeting by also thanking the Supervisor and the Department Staff.



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# GRANGE ROAD BRIDGE

The Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works is now in the process of planning the project to replace the Grange Road Bridge. The existing bridge is in a complete state of disrepair and must be replaced.

The flood in the Winter of 1995 irrevocably damaged the bridge. Erosion has undermined the bridge foundations causing uneven settlement and displacement of the piers and deck. In addition, the bridge railings are deteriorating, and the middle of the bridge is beginning to separate.

Because of the condition of the bridge, it is inspected weekly to make sure that it is safe for vehicles to use.

The County has installed steel shoring so that the bridge can still be used, however, this is only a temporary repair. Approximately 2600 vehicles per day use the bridge.

According to Susan Klassen, a design firm will be hired to design the new bridge. The bridge will be built with Federal money, and will cost approximately two million dollars. Since Federal money is being used, this means that certain guidelines must be met. This does not mean, however, that these guidelines are inflexible. A bridge that fits the needs of this particular location can be designed, and still fit Federal guidelines.

Presently the Public Works staff

has determined that the new bridge will be built downstream from the existing bridge. The staff is now working on the design of the railings and the aesthetics of the bridge.

Susan Klassen, the Senior Engineer on the project, also said that the staff is doing a further traffic study to settle the issue, once and for all, of a left turn lane on the new bridge.

Construction is slated to begin in June of 1997, and the bridge will be finished in October of that same year.



*Nerium oleander*



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## HELP FOR THE FRUSTRATED GARDENER

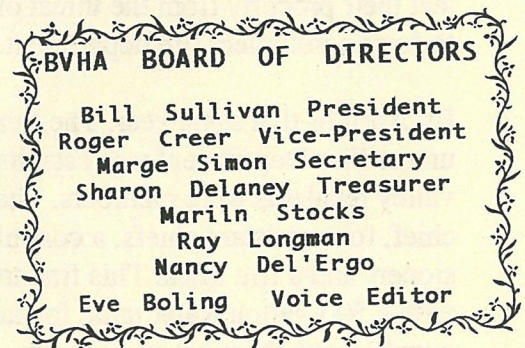
There is a Chinese proverb that tells us "Life begins the day you start a garden." For those of us in Bennett Valley who believe this proverb, there are certain obstacles in this locale we need to take into account.

Many gardeners here look for plants that are deerproof and drought-tolerant. In addition, it would also help if the plants were fire retardant. Is this asking too much? There are some plants that fill these requirements.

Here they are: *Rosemary*; *Lavender Cotton*, (*Santolina chamaecyparissus*); *Oleander*; *Artemisia* (only *artemisia caucasica* is listed); *Yarrow* (*Achillea tomentosa*); some *yarrows* are eaten by deer. *Bottlebrush*; *Century Plant* (*Agave americana*); *Aloe*; and *Snow in Summer* (*Cerastium tomentosum*).

Nine plants do not make a large list, but some of these plants make great mass plantings!

*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.*





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## WHO IS KENDALL-JACKSON?

Kendall-Jackson is a privately held company headed by retired attorney Jess Jackson and his family. In 1982, when there was a wine glut in California, and Jess Jackson couldn't sell the grapes from his vineyard in Lake County, he decided to make his own wine. Fourteen years later Kendall-Jackson has emerged as the largest winegrape grower in Sonoma County. Before 1991, Kendall-Jackson owned no land in this county.

During the last five years, Kendall-Jackson spent \$60 million buying vineyards and production facilities surpassing the \$25 million that E. & J. Gallo spent for their expansion properties. According to *Wine Business Monthly*, who reviewed county property records, much of the K-J expansion was funded by John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company.

Kendall-Jackson is now the sixth largest vineyard owner in California with approximately 7,376 planted acres. The company has revenues of more than \$100 million, and has holdings not only in Sonoma, but in Napa, Mendocino, Lake, Monterey, and Santa Barbara counties. Kendall-Jackson also owns property in the

Tuscany region of Italy and Chili. The company also has a barrel making facility in France. During the last year, Jackson has expanded his wine empire by not only buying the Friedman property here in Bennett Valley, but also the 1,230 acre Clegg Ranch in Knight's Valley and the 5,600 acre Gauer Ranch in Geyserville.

All this frenetic buying of land is caused by winery owners wanting access to winegrapes which they need to keep up with record sales of premium wines.

In *Wine Business Monthly*, Jess Jackson is described as being among the state's "vineyard royalty." Another winegrape grower (who didn't want to be identified) described the persons in this group as "... people (who) have scratched, pushed, outmaneuvered, outrun and out-financed just about everybody else on the block in an effort to guarantee their access to the winegrapes on their newly acquired properties; they are truly kings and princes in this new vineyard royalty that has emerged." (Volume III, No.5, p.1.)

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## HISTORY OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT



In the early months of 1948, residents of the 86 farms, homesites, and ranches included in the Bennett Valley district decided they needed to do something to protect their property from the threat of fire. They agreed to form a volunteer fire department.

By April of that same year, The Bennett Valley Volunteer Fire Department was established, and all 86 valley residents were members. The department had a chief, four assistant chiefs, a committee of commissioners and a fire truck. This first truck was equipped with a 500-gallon water tank, fog and high pressure nozzles, and chemical equipment.

Money was raised by staging a benefit dance, and

volunteers built a firehouse on property donated by Thomas J. Steel. This is the same site of the present firehouse.

The first fire call came for the department while volunteers were constructing the firehouse. It was a brush fire on the slopes of Bennett Peak on the W.R. Carithers property. The fire covered 12 acres on the mountain slopes, and was put out by the Bennett Valley Fire Department with help from the California Department of Forestry. The first fire chief was Ernest Guenza who was a dairy farmer in the valley.

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Source: The Press Democrat, Sunday, May 29, 1949.

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# MEMO FROM THE BOARD



## COMMUNITY DAY

Bennett Valley's annual Community Day will take place on Sunday, August 25, 1996. The event will be co-hosted by Matanzas Creek Winery and will be held on the winery grounds. The festivities will begin at 12 noon and run until 5 PM.

Community Day is the main fund raising event for the Fire Department. All proceeds are used for the purchase of life saving and fire fighting equipment to protect and serve the Bennett Valley community.

This is a popular social event in the Valley, so come join your neighbors, and have a good time!

## ELECTION

October is the time of year when elections are held for the BVHA Board of Directors. Last year elections were held by mail in order to have greater representation on the Board. There will be no nominations from the floor.

There will be three seats on the Board up for election. The terms run for three years. If you are interested in placing your name in nomination, please prepare a brief statement telling us about yourself and why you are seeking election to the Board. These statements will be published in the Fall issue of the

Voice which will be published in September along with a ballot. Serving on the Board is a very satisfying way to be part of the community effort to preserve the rural character of Bennett Valley.

The deadline for receipt of statements is September 1st. Nominations can be sent to Bill Sullivan, President, BVHA, P.O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa, CA 95405.

## UNFINISHED TERM

Because of the death of Board member Jerry Toso in February, there is an opening for a 1-year term on the BVHA Board.

This term is in addition to the other regular terms up for re-election in October.

If anyone is interested in serving on the board for this one year, please contact Bill Sullivan at the address listed above.

## THE GEARY RANCH

The 590 acre Geary property (formerly the Carrithers Ranch) has been sold.

Open space funds are being pursued to preserve some of the acreage.

## NEUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The proposed clustered eight lot subdivision of 163+ acres is located along Bennett Valley Road about one mile past Bennett Ridge.

At a June 6th Planning Commission meeting, the subdivision was approved.

## FOURTH OF JULY SAFETY

May we remind residents in the Valley of the dangers that fireworks pose in a rural community such as ours.

**NO FIREWORKS PLEASE!**


## FIRE SAFETY

At this time of year we like to remind people of the nature of the terrain where we live. Brush and flammable vegetation, especially when dry, are tinder for fire. All residents need to take responsibility for creating firesafe homes and surroundings.

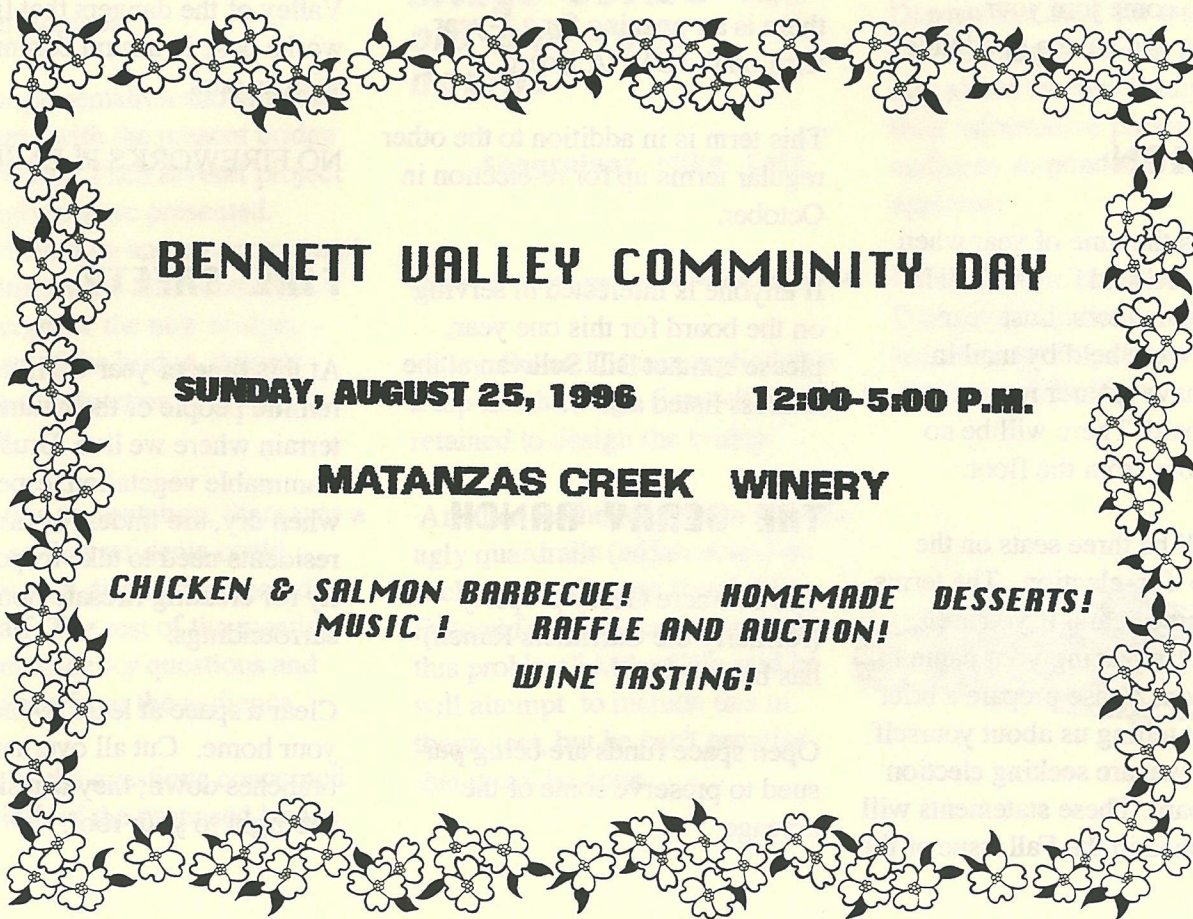
Clear a space at least 30 feet from your home. Cut all overhanging branches down; they can shoot a fire right to your roof.

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BENNETT VALLEY VOICE



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



**BENNETT VALLEY COMMUNITY DAY**

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 25, 1996      12:00-5:00 P.M.**

**MATANZAS CREEK WINERY**

**CHICKEN & SALMON BARBECUE!      HOMEMADE DESSERTS!**  
**MUSIC !      RAFFLE AND AUCTION!**

**WINE TASTING!**