
BENNETT VALLEY VOICE

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION
VOLUME 19 NUMBER THREE FALL ISSUE, 1996



ILLEGAL DUMPING IN BENNETT VALLEY

Residents have noticed for some time now an inordinate amount of heavy truck traffic along Bennett Valley roads; that is, traffic primarily along Bennett Valley Road and Sonoma Mountain Road. In addition, people have noticed terrible truck traffic noise and dust, the damage to roadways, the dangerous speed and driving habits of the truck drivers, and the long hours of hauling, (8am-7pm). However, no one knew the origin of the trucks or their destination.

In addition, on or about June 24th, a resident called the county building department to see if anyone had taken out a permit to dump debris on a nearby parcel. This resident had noticed that dumping of fill had been going on for a number of days. At first subsequent calls and even a fax elicited no response. Finally when it was verified that no permits had been obtained from the county, Code Enforcement was notified of the situation as was Supervisor Mike Cale's office.

Later, in mid to late July, county code enforcement officer, Ben Neuman, visited the 500+ acreage which stretches between Jamison

Road and Upper Sonoma Mountain Road; (previously part of the Bill and Ruth Jacobs ranch). He determined that there were multiple dumping sites being accessed at three different points. The first site was located at Jamison Road, the second at a driveway located at 6554-6556 Bennett Valley Road, and the third at a roadway located at 5530 Sonoma Mountain Road.

One dumping site measured approximately 10' x 20' x 100' and was in the creekbed of Matanzas Creek blocking the stream. The fill being deposited included immense chunks and sections of asphalt, large pieces of concrete pipe, plastic pipe, lumber, etc.

ONE DUMPING SITE WAS IN THE CREEKBED OF MATANZAS CREEK BLOCKING THE STREAM

A subsequent inspection of the contents of the debris caused even more concern to the county and residents alike, as transite pipe

was found at the various sites. Transite is known to contain asbestos. Then asbestos contamination was confirmed by laboratory tests done by the hazardous materials people with the North Bay Air Quality District. Mr. Tom O'Halleran is the inspector in charge for this district.

Determining the origin of the debris was not an easy matter since many trucks were unmarked, and it appears numerous trucking firms were involved. Rumor had it that the fill was coming from Santa Rosa, so the Santa Rosa Public Works Department was contacted. They denied knowledge of any "authorized" dumping from city projects. However, several trucking firm names were noted by several alert residents and some license numbers obtained. The Firms were found to be Feeley, Kehoe, and Calmar / Kalmar.

The biggest break in the mystery of the origin of the fill came when a Feeley truck was followed to and from the originating point within Santa Rosa. The origin of the truck turned out to be a project at the

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(illegal dumping story continued)

general confluence of Lewis, Franklin, Crest, and Murdock Streets. When presented with this information, the city acknowledged that they did indeed have a water main project located there. The person in charge of the project for the city reportedly disclaimed any responsibility, and seemed to be unconcerned about the impact of this illegal dumping.

At about the same time, a different trucker who was leaving one of the sites, stated that trucks were coming from all over Santa Rosa to the Bennett Valley sites. His load, he said, was from Santa Rosa Avenue.

Three sites on the property belong to Mr. Ron Wollmer, and three sites belong to Chuck Olson. On August 1st, these multiple sites were red-tagged by the county. This meant no further dumping was to take place. However, according to county records, dumping was observed to continue on at least one entrance to the property three to five days after the sites were red-tagged. Mr. Wollmer and Mr. Olsen were notified to stop accepting the debris and told to leave the already deposited contents undisturbed. But, on or about August 7th, the county red-tagged the Sonoma Mt. Road property *again* because the owner apparently went ahead and shredded, compacted, and graded the fill, and was in the process of terracing the fill presumably to bury the debris.

Throughout this process, the city and the pipeline companies who were involved on the projects have

denied responsibility. Because of air quality regulations which require that the inspector witness the act of violation or the results thereof, the only parties cited so far are the two landowners and P&M Pipeline Company.

Landowners cited by the North Bay Air Quality District will be required to hire trained hazardous material personnel to sort and remove the asbestos pipe from the fill. They are accruing daily fines starting from August 14th until all of the asbestos is removed, and the clean-up is approved by the North Bay Air Quality District. This agency governs only the clean-up of asbestos; the county is responsible for requiring clean-up of the remaining fill.

Among the dangers posed by this contaminated fill are: potential pollution of area water tables; pollution of run-off once rains begin; pollution of Matanzas Creek; pollution of any plant life which might be planted atop the contaminants; harm to humans and wildlife through ground, air, and water contamination; and physical damage to waterways. Another concern is the damage done to roads by the trucks.

And finally, one must view with dismay the complete and cynical disregard for county regulations, and the contempt shown for laws which are meant to protect citizens of this county.

The Board of Supervisors will be holding a public hearing on this matter on Tuesday, September 17th, at 2:30 PM. We urge all citizens to come to that hearing. We would also encourage the Bennett Valley Community to write, fax, or call any or all of the following:

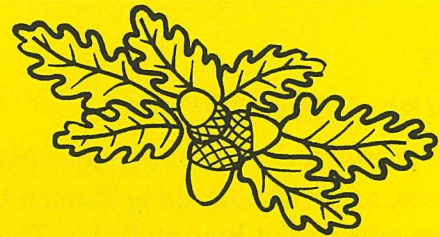
**SUPERVISOR MIKE CALE
575 ADMINISTRATION DR.
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403
TEL: 527-2241 FAX: 527-3778**

**MR. KEN BLACKMAN
SANTA ROSA CITY MANAGER
100 SANTA ROSA AVE.
SANTA ROSA, CA 95404
TEL: 543-3010**

**THE PRESS DEMOCRAT
427 MENDOCINO AVE.
SANTA ROSA, CA 95404
TEL: 546-2020**

**TOM O'HALLERAN
NORTH BAY AIR QUALITY
DISTRICT
(415) 749-5071
ENFORCEMENT DIVISION
(415) 749-4989**

MEMO FROM THE BOARD



ELECTION

October is the time of year when elections are held for the BVHA Board of Directors. This is the second year that elections are being held by mail. This method of electing Board members was begun last year in order to encourage more members to vote for whom they want to represent them. No nominations are taken from the floor.

There are three seats on the Board up for election. The terms run for three years. Four candidates are running for these seats this year. We urge all members to take the time to read the statements prepared by the candidates, and to cast their vote.

The more members who participate, the stronger the organization. Member input is very important!

LITTER

There is an accumulation of trash along Bennett Valley Road which seems to get worse every year. Efforts to have the County provide clean-up have been unsuccessful because the manpower is not available to do the job. Up to now residents have been cleaning up what they can, but it is a daunting task.

Several residents have requested the Homeowners' Association to sponsor a *Clean Up Bennett Valley*

Road Day. Therefore, a committee is being formed to tackle this problem. If you are interested in serving on the committee to formulate plans for such an event, please contact Eve Boling at 573-8614.

GRANGE RD. BRIDGE

There is a new engineer on the Grange Road Bridge project. John Maitland has replaced Susan Klassen. The county is still doing a traffic study to determine if there is a need for a left turn lane.

We will keep up-dating residents as we get information on this project.

MAIL THEFT

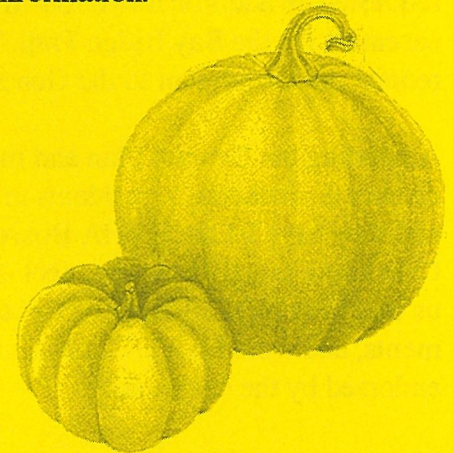
There have been several incidents of mail being stolen in Bennett Valley. Mail has been taken from about six residencies on Bennett Ridge and also from Matanzas Creek Winery. The U.S. Post Office reports that this is an increasing problem in affluent rural areas where thieves seem to be primarily after credit cards and telephone calling cards.

The Post Office recommends that residents not leave anything of value to be picked up by the mail carrier; that outgoing mail be mailed in town rather than left for the carrier; and that residents consider buying

a locked mail box in order to protect incoming mail.

If anyone is having problems with mail theft, they should report it to the sheriff's office and the U.S. Postal Inspectors at (415) 778-5800. Postal Inspectors are investigating these matters in the Bennett Valley area.

Many thanks to Marilee Jensen, President of the Bennett Ridge Community Association, for this information.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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ROGER CREER, VICE-PRESIDENT
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The Board meets the third Wednesday of every month at 7:30 PM at the Bennett Valley Fire Station. We invite your attendance and participation.

UPDATE

NEUMAN SUBDIVISION

This is a proposed clustered eight lot subdivision of 163+ acres, and is located along Bennett Valley Road about one mile east of Bennett Ridge. This development is also known as Savannah Estates.

At a June 6th Planning Commission meeting, the subdivision was approved. At that time, Mr. Neuman asked for and received an inclusion of "Ag Use" in the zoning of Savannah Estates. The BVHA was unaware that Mr. Neuman would ask for such an inclusion. The BVHA Board NEVER approved such an inclusion in their approval of the subdivision. Therefore, the Board wrote the Planning Commission protesting "Ag Use" in the zoning of Savannah Estates.

In addition, after the June 6th Planning Commission meeting, Mr. Neuman resubmitted his plans and requested an additional two lots in exchange for an easement for the Bay Ridge Trail. This request would require an amendment to the General Plan.

Amending the General Plan and increasing housing density is anathema to residents in Bennett Valley, and they have let the BVHA Board and Supervisor Cale know exactly how they feel. Mike Cale assured us that he is NOT in favor of General Plan Amendments, and would not back anything which was not endorsed by the community.

Many residents have also pointed out the inadequacy of the location for the proposed trail easement. It is rocky, steep, and if it were fenced, would interfere with deer and other animals that move back and forth between the park and land that borders the park. It is not a good place for a path.

Mr. Neuman has withdrawn his second proposal, and the original plan approved on June 6th is where we are now.



URBAN BOUNDARY MEASURE

When Bennett Valley residents are asked what they like about their community, most answer that they live here because of the rural atmosphere, and the scenic beauty of the area. Therefore, the concern over the encroachment of Santa Rosa and the threat of urban sprawl has always existed here.

Bennett Valley is not the only place where such concerns exist. Residents of Sonoma County cities have also felt uneasy about future outward growth, and want the spread of urbanization slowed. This uneasiness over the loss of open space and rural areas has led to an idea whose time has come: Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB's). These are official, long-term fixed lines that divide the city from the country.

Now there is an Urban Growth Boundary measure on the Santa Rosa Ballot. This is *Measure G*. This measure is the result of the Santa Rosa Urban Boundary Committee which was formed three years ago by a group of environmentalists, builders, neighborhood activists, politicians, and members of the financial community.

What would Measure G do? It would limit the City's expansion, and discourage speculative development pressure on the fringe of the City for 20 years. A fixed 20-year UGB would preserve separators between Santa Rosa and Rohnert Park, Windsor, and Sebastopol, and protect agricultural resources and open space. It would affirm that the Urban Boundary confirmed in the 1996 General Plan Update would remain in place for 20 years.

Sonoma County is also sponsoring a similar initiative (*Measure D*) that will insure 20-year community separators. These separators will be around each city. Bennett Valley residents can't vote for Measure G, but Measure D will be on our ballot.

The success of both Measure G and Measure D would have a positive impact on Bennett Valley. It would be a blessing to have fears of annexation alleviated, and to have a sense of stability regarding the future of our community.

ELECTION OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THE BVHA NOW HOLDS ITS ELECTIONS BY MAIL. BELOW ARE STATEMENTS PREPARED BY THE CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR THE BOARD.

MARJORIE SIMON: My husband and I have been residents of Bennett Ridge, in Bennett Valley, for over ten years. We first fell in love with Bennett Valley almost thirty years ago, but we were unable to bring things together to move here until the mid 1980's.

I have been active on the Board of the Bennett Valley Association for the last three years, and have thoroughly enjoyed the progress which has been made to develop more responsiveness on the part of the Sonoma County Planning Department to the Bennett Valley Area Plan.

Having moved to Bennett Valley after living most of my life in central Marin County, I really appreciate the beauty of our hills, trees, and open vistas. If I am re-elected to the Board, I will continue to work to keep future development in Bennett Valley consistent with the intent of the Bennett Valley Area plan, and to preserve our rural scenic backdrops and visual corridors.

JIM KATON: I have lived on Enterprise Rd. since 1978, and have lived in Bennett Valley since 1975. I am married and have a son 16 who is a student at Cardinal Newman, and a daughter 9, who goes to Strawberry School. I worked in wineries for 11 years, and since 1978 have been a vinyard owner and also a vinyard manager.

Because I have lived here for twenty years, I have been able to observe the changes in Bennett Valley. Especially troubling is the traffic congestion which is degrading the quality of life here. Maintaining the quality of life in the Valley is important to me.

I have served as an officer in the Enterprise Rd./ Sonoma Mt. Rd. Homeowners' Association. I feel that I have lived here so long that I would like to be able to participate and be a part the BVHA, and to contribute to the Bennett Valley community.

PHILIPPE MICHEL: I moved to Bennett Valley on the 4th of July, 1995 with my wife Penny and two boys, Martin 9, and Max 5. We came from Chicago and our two choices were Sonoma or the South of France. After discovering Sonoma and Bennett Valley, our choice was easy! Many people have a hard time to believe it, but now, even my friends from Europe understand.

We came here from the Big City to find a more rural atmosphere, and a good place to raise our two boys. My wife is a ceramist, and I am self employed, selling different products to the vineyards from the area. We both want to see Bennett Valley protected from the city tentacles, and being self-employed, I am flexible with my time.

EDE BOLING: My husband, daughter, and I have lived in Bennett Valley for 17 years. I have served on the Board for one term, and have also served as Editor of the Voice for 1 year. Working on the Board for the last 3 years has enabled me to become acquainted with the current issues of our community.

This is a challenging time to be serving on the Board. There are constant attacks on the integrity of the Bennett Valley Area Plan which must be dealt with. I am committed to working to preserve the rural character of our valley, and to working to make sure the Bennett Valley Area Plan is adhered to. I ask for your vote for an additional 3 year term.



NOTE FOR THREE CANDIDATES:

Please return your ballot in the enclosed envelope. There will be no nominations from the floor. Votes will be tallied and results announced at the October 16th Board meeting, 7:30 PM at the Fire Station.



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BENNETT VALLEY VOICE

IMPORTANT MEETING

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS WILL HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE ILLEGAL DUMPING IN BENNETT VALLEY. WE ARE URGING ALL CITIZENS WHO ARE ABLE TO ATTEND

WHERE: 575 ADMINISTRATION DR.

WHEN: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17TH, 2:30 PM

