

# Bennett Valley Voice

The Bennett Valley  
Homeowners' Association  
Volume 21, Number 1  
January, 1998



## A Message from the President

This is the start of the third year of my presidency, and I feel that the BVHA is accomplishing its goal of preserving the valley. The overall look and feel of the valley is much the same as it has been for years and hopefully we can continue to keep our finger on the pulse of what's happening, and keep you informed of any proposals that will effect us as a community.

The number one item on the agenda for this year will be a satisfactory resolution of the Grange Road Bridge replacement project. It now appears that the bridge will not be replaced until the summer of 1999, because of design delays and delays in the environmental review process. In spite of what you may have heard, these delays have not be caused by the BVHA, but rather by administrative changes and delays at the county level. BVHA is currently having ongoing meetings with Public Works to come to an acceptable location and size for the bridge.

Another issue we are currently working on is a proposed land development at the intersection of Grange Road and Perraca Road. We have asked the planning department to take a close look at the project as to how it will effect Hidden Acres in view of their soils problems during heavy rain years.

*(continued on next page)*



*A view of the  
Grange Road  
Bridge.  
Construction is  
now scheduled to  
begin sometime in  
1999.*

## Grange Road Bridge Review

Construction on the Grange Road Bridge will not begin until 1999. There are several reasons for this. First of all, the EIR report was not presented to the Environmental Review Committee until November of last year. The committee voted that a mitigated negative declaration be passed on to the Board of Supervisors. This means that the committee requested the county staff to make some changes concerning noise level reports, traffic reports, and a complete biology report to the study before they report to the Board of Supervisors. The report should be presented to the Board of Supervisors at any time now. In addition to this there have been several changes of personnel. There is now a new engineer on the project.

The BVHA contracted with a traffic engineer, Dalene Whitlock of Whitlock & Weinberger Transportation, Inc. to come up with a different design perimeters other than those proposed by the County. The County design does not fit the requirements of the Bennett Valley Area Plan. We presented our findings to the Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works in December.

It should be stressed that although the bridge needs to be replaced, it is safe and and is regularly checked by the County.

(continued from page one)

## Message from the President

This is the first issue of the new year and we are once again asking for your continued support, and ask that you renew your membership early in the year. The dues have been increased to \$15.00; the first increase in many years. The cost of mailing and printing the Voice has increased, and we find that as we strive to protect the valley, we need more and more professional help so that we can achieve our goals; this help is not cheap.

Your membership is very important to the preservation of the valley; sheer numbers are important to the powers that be! If you find that the new rate of \$15.00 is not adequate, please feel free to throw in a few extra bucks.

Remember, this is YOUR VOICE and we want to represent YOUR concerns, please let us know how we are doing.

Bill Sullivan



## Open Space District

At their October 16, 1997 meeting, the Sonoma County Open Space Authority on a 3-2 vote authorized the expenditure for the acquisition of the Keegan & Coppin property. The 24 acre parcel is located on Bennett Valley Road near the Pisenti Curve.

At the October 28, 1997 meeting of the Board of Supervisors, the Board voted to follow the Open Space District's recommendation and purchase this property. However, Supervisor Mike Cale put restrictions on the purchase so that this land could never be used as a public access for Annadel State Park. That is, it can never be used as a parking lot or staging area.

This restriction will not limit the possible uses for the land except in this one specific way.

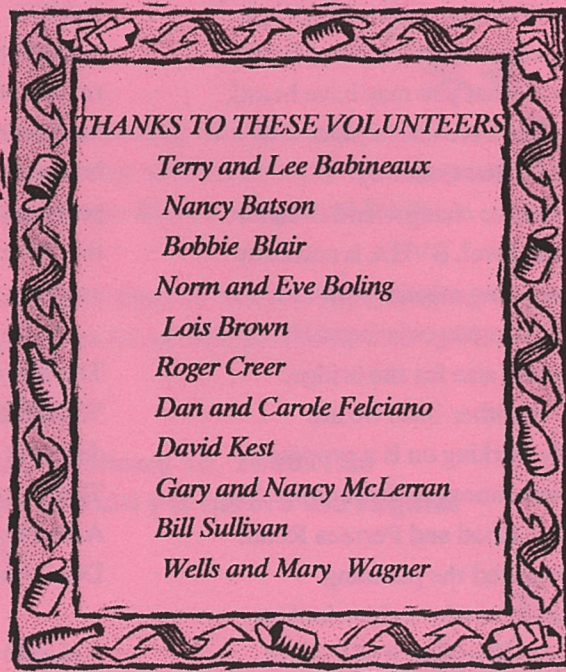
## Bennett Valley Road Clean-Up Day

On a Sunday morning last October, volunteers met bright and early at the Fire Station for the first Bennett Valley Road clean-up day. After coffee and muffins, volunteers broke up into teams of two and picked up trash along six miles of Bennett Valley Road from the City Limits sign near Yulupa Avenue to Old Bennett Ridge Rd.

Twenty-five bags of trash were filled during the morning. Those participating in the clean-up felt that this would be a worthwhile project to repeat on a regular basis. The BVHA hopes to sponsor two clean-ups a year perhaps in the Spring and the Fall.

A special thank you to David Kest for helping to organize the event and for picking up the county equipment needed for the project. Also, thank you to David and Sandy Sandine for thinking of the idea.

Finally, a big thank you to all the Bennett Valley residents who volunteered to clean the road.



# HEARD IN THE VALLEY\*\*\*\*\*

COMPILED AND EDITED BY MARILYN STOCKS AND ROGER CREER

"We are going to build a new home in Bennett Valley. Besides the valley's obvious beauty, we are impressed with the sense of community."

"A lot of people must be planning to put their homes on the market with so much clean-up going on? The valley is looking so much better these days."

"It doesn't seem possible the Farmer's Lane extension may come years after the land is built out in the area which the City of Santa Rosa is planning to annex. I'll bet it will be a lot harder and more expensive to get agreement on what the extension should look like after there are thousands of more homes in that area. Do I hear 'Fountain Grove Parkway' in the background? It must be better planning for the infrastructure to go in before the development or at the very least simultaneously."

"At this time of the year it's not hard to understand why so much of Bennett Valley has such low density. Homes can't be built just anywhere out here. The land is prone to slides with obvious slippage, and it's easy to forget how many "water flows" are everywhere. Seasonal ponds almost make it feel like Minnesota."

A BIG THANKS to the owners of the vineyard on Bennett Valley Road who are putting screening around their pumps and pressure tanks. It's a real respect for the visual corridor designation of this road."

"Our neighbors have recently re-painted their house. I can't believe the difference. Before it jumped out when you came around the corner, and now you hardly know it's there." (Paints with low reflectivity make a significant difference. The reflectivity index is almost more important than the color pallet.)

"With such heavy laden power poles along Bennett Valley Road near Grange, I wonder what the threshold is when it becomes cheaper to put utilities under ground? These poles must have hearts of steel. Is there such a term as "power pole pollution"?"

"I'm so conscious of how much the color white stands out after the reference in the Bennett Valley Voice, now when I notice it I almost find it more offensive than trash."

"With more dead wild-life on the roads, do we too often fence in our entire property when we only need to fence in our crops which can be destroyed by animals. I'll bet we often could give the animals more room and still meet our needs."

"I hope the erosion on the new vineyard on Bennett Valley Road doesn't undermine the roadway."

"I noticed the light on Crane Canyon Road, which I think is on all night for the safety of horses, has been modified to a down light. What a difference. *Again, is this a great place or what!*"

## Living With Wildlife

One of the beauties of living in an area like Bennett Valley is the abundance and variety of wildlife that also live here. While engaging and often beautiful to look at, many wildlife species can be quite destructive to vegetation. The question then arises, "Can I live with the animals and still have crops or decorative landscaping? HOW??"

We have talked with Fish and Game experts and they state.....the single, greatest negative impact to fish and wildlife resources result from deer-proof perimeter fences erected when properties are developed. This prevents the free movement of wildlife along the stream corridors and within their native habitats. It is an unacceptable and unnecessary long-term loss of resources.

Experts recommend that *(1) Agricultural protection fences be placed only around specific agricultural units, and (2) Appropriate perimeter fencing should be composed of four to five foot (4-5ft.) field fencing with a bottom space of eight (8) inches above the field, or barb wire to allow deer passage.* This type of fencing is also appropriate for other areas where specific protection is not required. So, the rules of thumb to remember are:

**\*DO NOT ERECT TALL PERIMETER FENCING.** (i.e., don't fence entire parcel with high, wildlife precluding fences. This includes deer as well as smaller species.) Wildlife must reach food and water sources.

**\*FENCE ONLY THAT AREA THAT MUST BE PROTECTED.** (such as an edible crop.)

**\*LEAVE SOME PORTIONS OF YOUR PROPERTY "WILD" AND LEAVE WOODLANDS AND STREAM AREAS OPEN.**

**\*USE NATURAL OR ARTIFICIAL REPELLENTS OR REMOVABLE PROTECTIVE MEASURES ON OTHER AREAS.** (spray or repellents, netting, electric fence, etc.)

**\*IF, PARCEL SIZE OR LIVESTOCK MAKE, PERIMETER FENCING NECESSARY, FOLLOW THE ABOVE PERIMETER FENCING GUIDELINES FROM FISH AND GAME.**

Wildlife tend to be creatures of habit, and often have established routes to and from their food and water sources. Care should be taken to recognize these routes

and preserve wildlife's ability to travel safely and easily.

By understanding the interaction between domestication, agriculture, and wildlife, we can preserve the qualities that make rural living so desirable.

If you would like assistance in planning your fencing needs, Fish and Game representatives can help landowners find ways to maintain a wildlife friendly living and working situation. Dept. of Fish and Game can be reached at (707)944-5500; Mr. Allan Buckmann, Wildlife Biologist (707)944-5537; Mr. Carl Wilcox, Environmental Services Supervisor (707)944-5525.

## From the Fire Chief



The Burn season begins the middle of November and runs through April 30th of each year. In Bennett Valley, burning is regulated by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). Each day the BAAQMD determines if burning is permissive, non-permissive or conditional. The burn day status is updated each afternoon for the following day and can be checked by calling 544-BURN (2876). Burning is primarily restricted to agricultural materials (vineyard, orchard pruning, etc.) and in certain situations permits can be issued for range management (horses cows, sheep) and hazard reduction. The burning of back yard debris and waste is strictly prohibited. You must have good clearance (minimum clearance 50ft.), and be in attendance of the burn at all times.

Permits can be acquired at the Bennett Valley Fire Station, 7 days a week between the hours of 8AM and 5PM. The cost for the permit is \$10.00, good for the current season. For additional burning information, call the fire department at 578-7761.

The fire district recently took delivery of a used support vehicle donated by Mr. Thomas Carlson. The unit comes from Rolling Meadows Fire Department of Chicago, Illinois, and is in excellent condition. This vehicle can carry seven firefighters and a large assortment of equipment. In addition, the volunteers have outfitted the new unit with a cascade air system for filling breathing apparatus. We have had a need for this type of vehicle for many years, and are grateful to Mr. Carlson for his generous donation.

Greg L. Martin, Fire Chief

## Post Office Collection Box

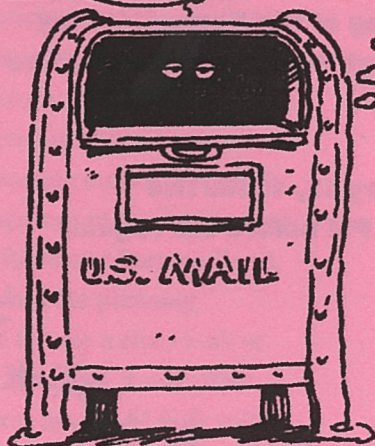
There is now a United States Post Office collection mailbox in Bennett Valley. The box is located at Ponderosa Drive and Bennett Valley Road. This location has sufficient space for cars to pull over safely.

The mail will be picked up once a day at 11:00 AM by our rural carrier. The Post Office wants to clarify any confusion that can arise over the pick-up times on the box. The times shown are 11:00 AM and 6:15 PM. However, the latter time is not related to this mailbox, which has only the one pick up in the morning. The 6:15 PM time is the last pick-up for mail in the Santa Rosa area.

Therefore, if you need to have a piece of mail date stamped on a particular day, be sure it is put in there by 11:00AM, and that it is not a Sunday.

Many thanks to Marilee Jensen for contacting the Post Office to get the collection box in the first place, and for all the time and patience it took to organize and install the mailbox .

*Don't forget; mail must be put in this box by 11:00 AM if you want it picked up on that day. No pick-up on Sundays.*



## Sonoma Mountain Visual Resource Study

Last Summer the Board of Supervisors directed the Permit and Resources Department to conduct a study of the visual impact of residential development on Sonoma Mountain. The county staff was asked to evaluate the effectiveness of existing open space policies. These policies aimed at minimizing the impact of construction on the ridge lines and other visually prominent locations on Sonoma Mountain.

The Problem with the study area is that it overlaps with the Bennett Valley Area Plan. These overlapping plans will cause confusion and problems down the road. The BVHA Board concurred that what is covered by the Bennett Valley Plan should be exempt from the study, and wrote expressing this opinion to the Planning Commission in September.

The Planning Commission conducted a bus tour in the Fall to view what the plan proposes for preserving Sonoma Mountain. Representatives for the BVHA and Design Review were on this tour.

The Planning Commission will now present the changes they directed the County Staff to make in the Study at a public meeting on February 5th at 2:00 PM. We will keep you posted as to what happens.



### Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association Board of Directors

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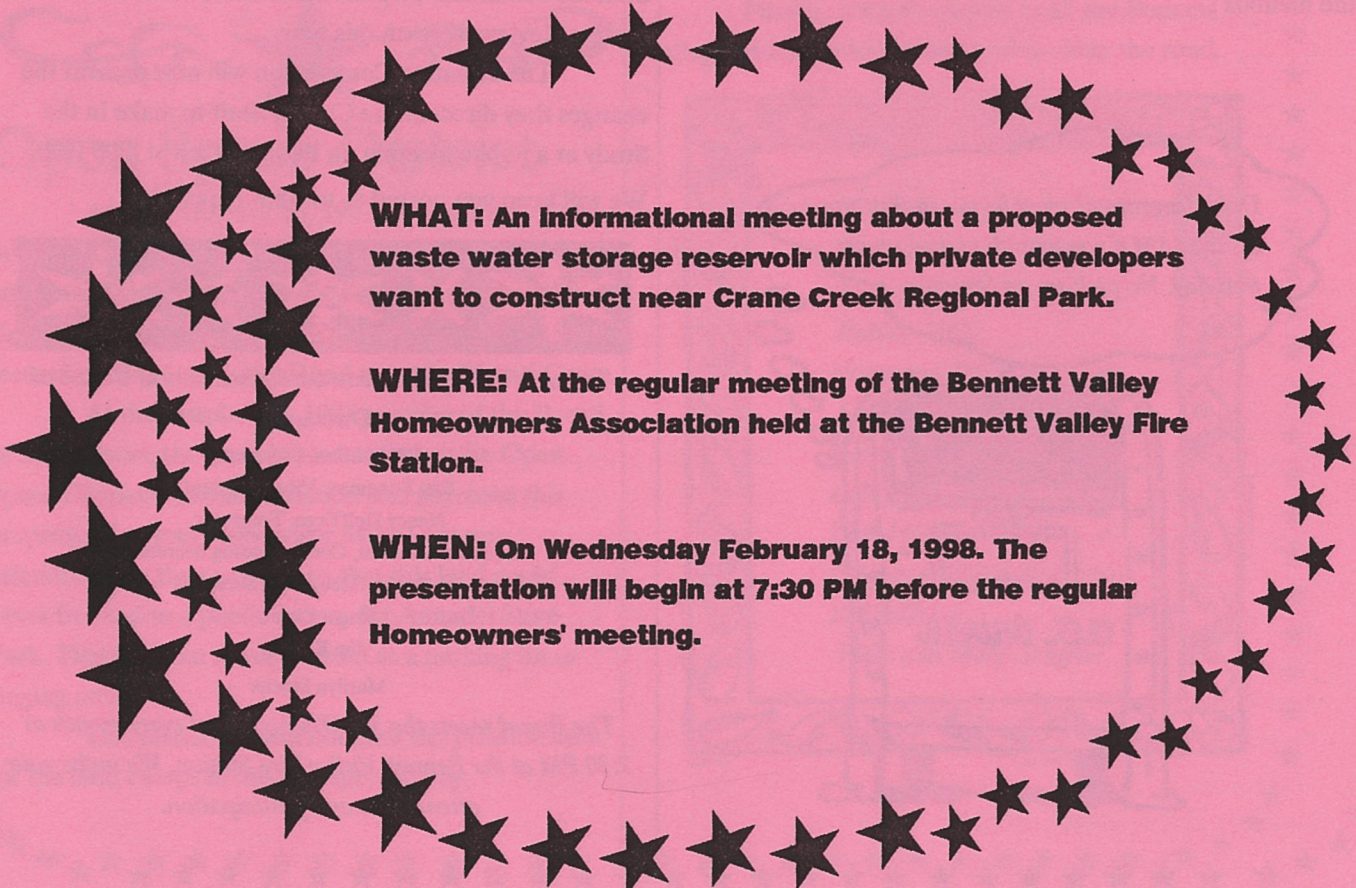
*The Board meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7:30 PM at the Bennett Valley Fire Station. We invite your attendance and participation.*

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BENNETT  
VALLEY  
VOICE



BENNETT VALLEY  
HOMEOWNERS ASSOC.  
P. O. Box 2686  
Santa Rosa, CA 95405



**WHAT:** An informational meeting about a proposed waste water storage reservoir which private developers want to construct near Crane Creek Regional Park.

**WHERE:** At the regular meeting of the Bennett Valley Homeowners Association held at the Bennett Valley Fire Station.

**WHEN:** On Wednesday February 18, 1998. The presentation will begin at 7:30 PM before the regular Homeowners' meeting.