



BENNETT VALLEY

VOICE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Bennett Valley 2000

Bennett Valley Fire District News

Kendall-Jackson Vineyards

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We are once again at that time of year when we ask you to renew your membership in the Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association or join for the first time. There will be no dues increase this year, however, you can always add a bit more to the annual dues if you feel so inclined. The Association is currently in good financial condition, and we would like to keep it that way. We never know what will come up during the year that may require substantial funds. This last year saw our membership at an all time high of over 400 families. It would be nice to better that number this year. Please mail in your membership early; it helps with the bookkeeping.

continued on next page:

BENNETT VALLEY 2000

By David Kest

On October 17, 1998 the first Bennett Valley Community Forum was held at the Grange Hall. With over 100 participants, attendance was far greater than anticipated: Clearly an indication of the care, concern and commitment of Valley residents. Sponsored by the Bennett Valley Homeowners Association, the Forum gave residents of the Valley an opportunity to raise questions, express concerns and develop recommendations around four topics of interest to those who call Bennett Valley home: Transportation/Circulation, Land Use, Open Space/Scenic Corridors, and Communication. Each group developed a number of recommendations that were then shared with all those attending. The one common recommendation was that there should be follow-up sessions that focus on each of the individual topics. This will allow for greater in-depth discussion and an opportunity to develop specific action-oriented recommendations. Each session will be held at the Grange on a Saturday morning from 8:30 AM-12:00 Noon. Coffee and refreshments will be served.

Bennett Valley 2000 Schedule

Transportation/Circulation	February 6, 1999
Communication	February 20, 1999
and Use	March 6, 1999
Open Space/Scenic Corridors	March 20, 1999

Hold these dates and join your Valley neighbors in helping to shape the new millennium in Bennett Valley! If you have questions, please contact a member of the Forum Planning Committee:

Lois Brown (578-0708) David Kest (584-5199)
 Marilee Jensen (576-0405) Lolly Mesches (545-8333)

continued from page one

The Association worked hard last year on the Grange Road Bridge Project along with the group known as CORE. Together with the Department of Public Works, a plan evolved that will keep the bridge in the same location thereby saving a great many of the oaks that were originally scheduled for cutting. The bridge will be wider and higher than the existing bridge, but all things considered, it was a great compromise. Latest word is that construction should start in the summer of 1999.

The Bennett Valley Plan came up for discussion when it was learned that the Planning Department wanted to include our plan in with the newly formed Sonoma Mountain Landscape Unit. This merger of the two plans would have weakened our plan considerably, so we argued at public hearings to make our point. It was finally agreed that the Bennett Valley Plan should stand on its own because of the success of the plan over the last twenty years.

The above two areas took the effort of many people over a long period of time, and to list them all would take another issue of the VOICE. I am sure I would miss someone, so suffice it to say *THANKS* to all of you. Supervisor Mike Cale was a big help in all of this and continues to be a friend of the Valley.

You may have noticed new paint on the Bennett Valley Fire Hall. This is a result of a joint effort between the Homeowners and the Volunteers of the Bennett Valley Firefighters. We supplied money and they supplied the talent to do the job. In all honesty we donated part of the money and they did the rest. A job well done!

This past year we sponsored a forum, Bennett Valley 2000, in which members of the community came together to share ideas and some dreams about what should or should not happen in the Valley in the future. The response was tremendous and it was clear that residents wanted to continue with the discussions. To achieve that, we have scheduled more meetings in February and March. More about this in another article in this issue of the VOICE.

We will attempt to keep you informed of issues affecting the Valley throughout the year. Time is always a factor, so we are exploring other methods of communicating with the residents such as a web page on the internet, e-mail, signs to announce special meetings, and of course smoke signals. Whatever works!

Let's get together in February and March to exchange ideas, and work to keep the Valley the special place it is. You are always welcome to attend one of our board meetings at the firehall the third Wednesday of the month.

Bill Sullivan, President

FIRE DISTRICT NEWS

The Board of Directors of the Bennett Valley Fire District would like to thank the Bennett Valley Homeowners Association for the donation of money for the paint for the fire station, storage building, and water tank. We would also like to thank Bennett Valley Design for its cooperation in getting the colors that fit their criteria.

We would like to remind everyone that the burning season is now in effect until the end of April. Fire permits are necessary for all agricultural burns (only burning allowed) and the permits are available at the fire station.

Wells Wagner, Chairman,



**BENNETT VALLEY 2000
CIRCULATION/TRANSPORTATION
FOLLOW-UP MEETING--FEBRUARY 6, 1999**

For the purpose of planning the Circulation and Transportation follow-up meeting, a Committee Meeting was held on December 12, 1998. It was decided that this follow-up meeting on Saturday, February 6, 1999, at Grange Hall, would be from 9AM until 12 NOON, with people encouraged to come for coffee beginning at 8:30 AM. It was also decided to have spokesmen from both the California Highway Patrol, and John Maitlan, an engineer from Sonoma County Transportation and Public Works, in attendance at this follow-up meeting. They will be there from 9:00 AM until 10:30 AM .

It was felt that the information which they could provide us with would be very helpful in understanding better the different ways in which specific changes can be accomplished

After a break, the meeting will continue from 10:45 AM until noon for the purpose of developing a consensus on a recommended plan of action to bring about improvements in circulation and transportation in Bennett Valley. This plan will then be presented to the Bennett Valley Homeowners Association Board of Directors at their next meeting on February 17, 1999.

Marilee Jensen
Forum Planning Committee

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

THE BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS MEETS THE 3RD WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 7:30 AT THE FIREHOUSE

THE DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETS THE 2ND AND 4TH WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH BEGINNING AT 7:00 PM AT THE FIREHOUSE. ITEMS NEED TO BE ON THE AGENDA. CONTACT CHAIRPERSON TAMARA BOULTBEE AT 584-8483.

THE BENNETT VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT MEETS THE 2ND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 7:00 PM AT THE FIREHOUSE.

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETS EVERY TUESDAY EXCEPT ON WEEKS WHEN THERE IS A HOLIDAY. INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.SONOMA/COUNTY.ORG

**Bennett Valley Homeowners'
Association
Board of Directors**

**Bill Sullivan, President (528-6804)
Ray Longman, Vice-president (545-2054)
Nancy Dell'Ergo, Treasurer (525-1202)
Leanore Mesches, Corresponding Secretary
(545-8684)
Eve Boling, Recording Secretary (573-8614)
Kent Chilcott
Roger Creer (584-5199)
Jim Katon (528-9487)
Marilyn Stocks (528-2458)**

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.

NORM & EVE BOLING
2769 ROILLO RD.
SANTA ROSA, CA 95404

CLEAN UP BENNETT VALLEY DAY
IS MAY 1ST, 1999!!!



SAVE THESE DATES !!!
BENNETT VALLEY 2000

FEBRUARY 6TH
FEBRUARY 20TH
MARCH 6TH
MARCH 20TH

TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION
COMMUNICATION
LAND USE
OPEN SPACE

ALL SESSIONS WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAYS AT THE GRANGE
FROM 8:30 AM TO 12:00 NOON.

COFFEE AND REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED

KENDALL-JACKSON VINEYARDS IN BENNETT VALLEY

(west of Grange Road)

by Marilee Jensen

On November 12, 1998, several residents met with Tony Korman, Director of Real Estate for Kendall-Jackson, and Matt Phillips, Assistant Vineyard Manager for the new Kendall-Jackson vineyard being put in just west of Grange Rd. in Bennett Valley. The purpose of the meeting was to obtain more information about plans by Kendall-Jackson for this vineyard, and share that information with Bennett Valley residents.

The 1,200 acres of the Jackson Park Ranch is about 60% covered with trees. Kendall-Jackson is only developing the open areas of this ranch as vineyards. They are now in the process of preparing just 92 acres for the planting of grapes this spring of 1999. They may eventually end up planting as much as 250 acres over time. That will be determined during this process of preparing the land for the cultivation of grape plants, after the ground is opened and samples of the soil are sent to a lab. K-J says the conditions in this area are ideal for growing premium "merlot" so that is the grape which they will be primarily planting. They will also plant small amounts of chardonnay, pinot noir, and cabernet sauvignon grapes.

In preparing this land for planting, they have not cut down ANY trees and had to prune only three trees. To the soil, they are adding manure, for fertilizer, and gypsum, to help improve the drainage. The planned vineyard is on sloping hills, so they have been extremely careful to be sure that erosion is prevented, by such action as adding drain pipes, and having a helicopter sprinkle 110 pounds of grass seed on each acre over the entire Jackson Park Ranch. This was then followed by spreading straw over the grass seeds, so that any heavy rains wouldn't remove the

seeds. When asked, they said they absolutely would not be using any methyl bromide. As mentioned above, the fertilizer they will be using initially for the vineyards is manure. Later, with drip irrigation, there will be liquid fertilizer used on the plants. For a short span during the year, they will use sulphur to control mildew. For weeds, they'll use "Round-up" sprayed close to the soil, so that it won't drift to the grape plants or other plants which they want to preserve. Fences are to be put around the vineyards, in order to keep out the deer and the pigs, but they will not be adding deer fencing to the remaining acreage.

In this conversation, as it related to pesticides, K-J mentioned the role of the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Office. To find out more about this, I telephoned this office and spoke to one of the Inspectors. Each agricultural grower must register monthly with this Office, reporting the pesticides which they have purchased and used, including sulphur, which is classified as a soil amendment and fungicide. Fertilizer does not require registration. The public can view this information about pesticides used by each grower, and purchase copies of these reports at 10 cents a page. If you are interested in doing this, be sure to know the name of the grower under which the vineyard is registered, and call the Agricultural Commissioner's office first (527-2371), to find out the correct procedure for viewing these records. This vineyard on Grange Road being planted by Kendall-Jackson is registered under the name of "LaCrema", which is also the name of Matt Phillips' employer. *continued on next page*

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"Water" was another subject discussed. These vineyards will be irrigated with drip irrigation which uses only 10% of the water used by some of the other methods of irrigation. Besides limiting the water directly to the grape plants, there is far less evaporation with drip irrigation. There is a high clay content in the soil of these vineyards in Bennett Valley, and clay improves the water retention of the soil. Bennett Valley has been rated as producing medium amounts of water from their wells, but that can vary from well to well. Kendall-Jackson has three wells so far on this ranch, which can pump from 50 to 400 gallons of water a minute. They expect to eventually drill more wells. Similar to Bennett Ridge, this soil has a volcanic structure which is heavily fractured, which is where the water is stored underground.

Sometime in the future, Kendall-Jackson plans to have a winery on the Jackson Park Ranch. They have found it very useful to have a winery in the same place as the grapes are grown, and then they can produce "estate" wines. At this time, K-J is evaluating local vineyard production to determine the size and location of the winery and whether or not it will include a tasting room. Tony Korman pointed out that Kendall-Jackson is spending far more per acre on their vineyards than anyone else in the area. He also stated they have maintained a very positive relationship with Bill Cox, from the State Department of Fish and Game, as they have worked to help preserve trees, significant plant-life and wildlife habitat on their vineyards throughout Sonoma County. If you have any additional questions about this particular vineyard being developed on the Jackson Park Ranch, feel free to call Matt Phillips, the Assistant Vineyard Manager, at 696-0239. He is kept very busy with this new vineyard, so it may be a matter of hours before he can respond to your message.

A LITTLE HISTORY

Bennett Valley is drained by Matanzas Creek which has its headwaters in the Sonoma Mountain country and flows into Santa Rosa Creek.

The stream itself is of historical significance. It got its name from the Spanish for "Place of Slaughter". Vaqueros made a practice of slaughtering beef for Senora Carrillo's household on the banks of the stream.

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



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

A date has been selected for Bennett Valley Clean-up Day. Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 1, 1999. We will begin at 8:00 AM. Coffee and donuts will be served., Please meet at the Fire Station.

In addition to Bennett Valley Rd., we would like to clean Grange Rd., Crane Canyon, Pressley, Upper and Lower Sonoma Mtn. Rds. and Enterprise. Rd. Therefore, we are seeking Block Captains. If you can help, call 573-8614 to volunteer as a Block Captain.