



Bennett Valley

VOICE

VOLUME 27, NUMBER 2

Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA)

MARCH, 2004

Come Hear More About GROUNDWATER CONCERNS; Also Reducing Fire Risks, Native Plants, & Grange Road Bridge

- **GROUNDWATER CONCERNS FORUM:**

Because of the great concern expressed by a number of Bennett Valley residents at our last meeting on 1/21/04, we've scheduled this special meeting with an informed panel on Groundwater Concerns. As requested, Valerie Brown, County Supervisor representing Bennett Valley, will be on the panel at this Forum, on Wednesday, April 21st, 7:00 pm at the Bennett Valley Fire Station, along with Pete Parkinson, Director, and Dwayne Starnes, Deputy Director, of Permit Resource & Management Dept. (PRMD) and Charlie Judson, President, Weeks Drilling & Pump Company. What happened at the BVHA meeting on 1/21/04 which resulted in this concern? H.R. Downs and John King presented information about *Disappearing Groundwater*, including identifying specific areas of Sonoma County where groundwater is being used at a rate three times faster than the re-charge rate. When that is happening, it is just a matter of time until the water is depleted. See Page Five for more information about their presentation. The people in attendance on 1/21/04 expressed a strong interest in hearing more about the status of our groundwater. What can be done to reduce and/or prevent these problems? What actions can Sonoma County take to help improve this situation? ***Come participate in an open discussion with some different perspectives on the status of our groundwater in Sonoma County and recommended actions to protect and preserve our water.***

- **REDUCING FIRE RISKS PARTICULARLY IN BENNETT VALLEY:**

Following the recent Southern California fires, we want to do whatever we can to prevent such wildfires from destroying our homes and/or the trees and woodlands surrounding us.

For this purpose, BVHA is sponsoring a workshop on Reducing and Preventing Wildland Fire Risks on Saturday, April 17th, at 11 am, at the Fire Station. The presentation will be by Keith Warner, an Expert Fire Inspector, along with our Fire Chief, Andy Pforsich and some Bennett Valley firefighters. ***Come find out what you can do to help reduce this fire risk for all of us!***

- **BENNETT VALLEY "NATIVE PLANTS":**

Bonny Castelli from U.C. Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program will be presenting information and answering questions, at the BVHA Meeting on Wednesday, March 17th, at 7 pm about growing flowers, bushes, trees, vegetables, drought and deer resistant plants that do best in Bennett Valley. The Master Gardeners are volunteers trained at the University of California to provide science-based home gardening information. Handouts will also be available.

- **NEW GRANGE ROAD BRIDGE:**

John Maitland and Levi Gurule, from Sonoma County Public Works Department, have asked to meet with Bennett Valley residents to make a brief presentation and answer questions about the latest "final" plans for the new Grange Road Bridge at the same BVHA Meeting, on 3/17/04, around 7:45 pm. The County expects to have the plans for this proposed bridge go out to bid fairly soon and then construction to start later this year. First a temporary bridge will be built, in a different footprint, so that the old bridge can be torn down with the new bridge built following the same path along the roadway. It will leave a very different footprint, though, than the current bridge, because it will be fourteen feet wider and ten feet higher.

Matanzas Creek Winery Changes

Not too long ago, all of the grape vines were removed from the 40 acre vineyard along Bennett Valley Road, just west of the Bennett Valley Fire Station. Many people are wondering why the grape vines were removed. What changes are being planned?

Patrick Connelly, the General Manager of Matanzas Creek Winery, stated in a phone conversation that the grape vines were removed because of their poor condition. Matanzas Creek Winery is now treating the soil for about six months, which will also improve erosion control. Next, they are planning to plant all Chardonnay grape vines on the 40 acres in February or March, 2005.

Patrick Connelly also reports another upcoming change at Matanzas Creek Winery, in that the source of grapes for their wines will be mostly from their own vineyards in Bennett Valley. This includes the 100 acres of Merlot vineyards at the Jackson Park Ranch on Grange Road. Patrick states that in excess of 85% of the Merlot grapes in their Merlot wine will be from their "Estate" vineyards in the Bennett Valley appellation and their Chardonnay wine will also eventually have in excess of 85% of the grapes from their Bennett Valley vineyards. In this appellation, it has been said that about 42% of the planted grapes are Merlot and 30% are Chardonnay.

Mountain Man

*The following are excerpts from an article **about Jess Jackson** in the San Francisco Chronicle on February, 19th, 2004, by Linda Murphy, Chronicle Wine Editor.*

"When **Jess Jackson**, one of the two most powerful vintners in the country - Ernest Gallo is the other - retired from Kendall-Jackson Wine Estates in November 2000 at age 70, he had built or bought some 25 wine brands and controlled 12,000 acres of vineyard property. He was one of the first Americans to make wine in Chile, started wineries in Australia and Argentina and acquired Villa Arceno in Tuscany.

...When he announced his retirement, Jackson said, "It's time for me to spend more time with my family, ride my horses, play a little golf and concentrate on life as a rancher and farmer." He said he was ready to become a "gentleman farmer," working for pleasure and not profit.

Some retirement. Some farmer.

Today, at 73, the San Francisco-born Jackson is as involved as ever at Kendall-Jackson Wine Estates. Although he turned over the board chair duties to his wife, Barbara Banke, and hired former Southcorp of Australia executive John Grant

as president, Jackson has remained as CEO and embarked on perhaps his most ambitious project yet - an overhaul of the flagship Kendall-Jackson brand designed, he says, to "distinguish ourselves from the other guys" in a world awash in wine.

Jackson's plan is twofold: achieve greater quality and complexity in the Kendall-Jackson brand without raising prices, and assemble a collection of wines called "Kendall-Jackson Highlands Estates" - ultrapremium, single-estate bottlings made from the Jackson family's best vineyards in Sonoma, Napa, Santa Barbara, Mendocino and Monterey counties.

..."I've been working on this vision for 20 years now," he says. "It's taken us this long to find the best vineyards."

...the 1,200-acre Jackson Park ranch east of Santa Rosa in southeastern Sonoma County stretches as far as the eye can see; peaks and valleys, vineyards and dense woods, houses and horse stables fill the frame.

In June, Kendall-Jackson will release the 2002 Taylor Peak Estate Merlot (\$30) from the Jackson Park property, which Jackson purchased in 1994 and began planting in 1997. He also owns Matanzas Creek Winery nearby; both are in the new Bennett Valley appellation, an area Jackson says is ideal for Merlot. The grape likes the warm side of a cool climate, warm days during the growing season and fog from the Petaluma Gap chills the evenings and early mornings.

There are 110 acres of vines at Jackson Park, most of them Merlot planted at elevations of 1,200 to 1,400 feet in 10 to 12 different soil types and exposures. A barrel sample of the first Taylor Peak Merlot showed an exotic nose and juicy, intense black cherry fruit and chocolate on the palate.

"This may be the No. 1 Merlot vineyard in the world," Jackson says, "even in Bordeaux."

Matanzas Creek will get some fruit, as will Verite winemaker Pierre Seillan (who oversees all red winemaking for Kendall-Jackson Wine Estates); only Kendall-Jackson will have a vineyard-designated wine from here.

Jackson proudly points out that Jackson Park was developed without removing any trees. Cougars, deer, wild pigs, turkeys and an occasional five-point buck roam the expanse. He says he is committed to preserving 900 of the ranch's 1,200 acres as open space - with maybe a 36-unit spa/resort, a golf course and a Taylor Peak visitor center; a horse stable will be converted to a barrel-aging room. He and Banke are land-use attorneys, which is to their advantage when they buy and develop properties - sometimes against the wishes of their neighbors..."

SHARE THE ROAD!

On a number of roadways around Sonoma County, you can see *SHARE THE ROAD* signs with a bicycle rider pictured on them. These signs are being installed along roadways in unincorporated areas as bicycle caution signs, to raise awareness and encourage open dialogue about sharing the road between the general public and the bicyclists. The signs also compliment the ongoing Sonoma County *SHARE THE ROAD* bicycle awareness campaign.

Where did the idea for these signs come from? The Sonoma County Bikeways Plan, prepared by the Sonoma County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (SCBPAC) and adopted by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors in 1997, recommended the installation of bicycle caution signs along identified roadways in unincorporated areas. The "*SHARE THE ROAD*" bicycle signs that have been installed in Sonoma County are also officially approved in the Highway Design Manual by Caltrans.

Where did the money come from? The funding that is being used to purchase and install the "*SHARE THE ROAD*" signs is coming from a portion of a grant from the State Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) and from local Transportation Development Act (TDA) Article 3 funds allocated to the County of Sonoma.

How many signs are there total? Have they all been installed by now? There are a total of 68 locations that the SCBPAC has identified to have "*SHARE THE ROAD*" signs installed. Phase one included the purchase of 41 signs with funds from the State OTS grant which have already been installed at various locations (such as the existing sign located southbound on Sonoma Mountain Rd., near Bennett Valley Rd.). The remaining 27 signs will be purchased and installed as part of phase two later this summer, including a sign to be installed eastbound on Bennett Valley Rd., at the Santa Rosa City Limits sign. The SCBPAC is also working with Caltrans to have another 26 signs installed on the State Highways in Sonoma County. The grand total, therefore, after phase two is completed later this summer will be 94 such signs.

The hope is that in addition, the incorporated cities such as Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park and Petaluma, will also install *SHARE THE ROAD* bicycle caution signs within their city limits.

To find out more about *SHARE THE ROAD* signs and their locations, you may contact Steven Schmitz, Transportation Planner with Sonoma County Transit, at (707) 585-7516 or e-mail him at steven@sctransit.com.

2005 CALENDAR "VINTAGE EDITION"!

Our 2005 edition of the Bennett Valley Calendar will be unique. We are planning a Vintage Edition to celebrate our Valley's history, with vintage photos and long-time residents' memories of times past in this Valley we love and hope to preserve. We need your help in going through your old photos and sharing your memories for this next edition of the calendar. Please call Suzanne, 542-1608, or Judy, 544-0234, with questions or suggestions about people we should contact.

BVHA MEMBERSHIP, 2004

We want to thank all of you who've taken the time to join the Homeowner's Association. We really need as many members as possible to help protect and preserve this beautiful Valley. **A BIG THANKS FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT!**

We now have 153 households that receive their VOICE by e-mail, which provides us with an annual savings of \$340. **THANK-YOU!**

We want to **WELCOME** the following new members who have never been members or are back after an absence. *Dexter Vineyards Partnership, Susan & Damian Evans, Lisa & Michael Topolos, Melanie & David Conley, Jean & Frank LaCombe, Craig & Cheryl Johnston, Hilary Joslyn, Peter & Mary Leo, David Card & Cynthia Gessele, Marilyn Evans, Dawn & John Pickering, Ashlee & Harry Koch, Bob & Eleanor Nixon, Shawn & Angela Johnson, Mike & Sharon Burris, Marlene & Jim Sullivan, Julia & Bob Iantosca, Shirley & F. Scott Chilcott, Luella & Roger Sterr, Esther & Daniel Penn, Judy White & Lee Perron, Kathleen Stevens, Teresa & Eric Stine, Wendy Griggs, Edie & Mark DeMeo, Carla & JC Carvajal, Roger Fortain, Eileen & Kevin Berger, David Hom & Pamela Greiner, Laura Saunders, Danielle & Richard Hejmanowski, Nichole & James Duncan, and Alexis Proctor.*

A BIG THANK-YOU also goes out to those who included an extra donation along with their dues. The list of names is extensive so we did not have the space to thank each and every one of you, but please understand how grateful we are. **These extra donations enable us to provide extra services to all Bennett Valley parcel owners.**

Bennett Valley Fire District Information

- **Bennett Valley Firefighting Staff**

Firefighting Engineers, 24-hour shifts:

Brian Campbell, Mike Musgrove and Bryon Reid

Part-time Firefighters, 8am to 5 pm:

Kevin Burris*, Matt Tognozzi*, Danny Connelly

**Kevin Burris and Matt Tognozzi have both recently been promoted to firefighting engineers (as well as Gabe Stirnus). While Kevin and Matt's paid position continues to be that of a firefighter, they are now available as substitutes for one of the engineers.*

- **EMERGENCY CALLS** - In the event of an emergency the best, and fastest way to get help is to dial 911, ***unless you're using a cell phone!*** Calling 911 from a cell phone in an emergency can result in significant and even damaging delays. Be sure to put local emergency numbers into your cell phone. For this area, the recommended emergency numbers would be (707) 565-1700 for fire or medical dispatch, and (707) 565-2121 for the sheriff's office.

- **BENNETT VALLEY FIREFIGHTER TRAINING**
By Captain Brian Campbell, B-Shift Engineer

The past few months we have been working on our mandated training, which included the following:

Proficiency Packets – These are a list of specific skills for which we need to maintain proficiency, such as the breathing apparatus and the heart defibrillator.

Code 3 Driving – The BV Fire Protection District insurance carrier wants us to do annual driver training to meet our requirements.

Weapons of Mass Destruction – Since September 11th, we are required to have minimum training on what to do if we come in contact with biological, nuclear, or chemical attacks; such things as how to decontaminate ourselves and our patients.

We also had a refresher course in *Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)* training in February.

- **FIREFIGHTER ACTIVITIES, JAN. & FEB. 04**

By Bryon Reid, C-Shift Engineer

Vehicle Accidents 11 Medical Aids 6

Fire Alarms 3 Structure Fires 2

Vehicle Fires 2 Downed Wires 2

Other 1

Due to the weather, vehicle accidents have been the majority of our emergency calls during the last two months. The rains have been heavy at times, making for hazardous road conditions. ***We at the fire department can't stress enough the importance of driving safely and allowing extra time when driving on slick and flooded roads!***

In mid-February three fire engines responded to a vehicle accident on Sonoma Mountain Rd. When the first engine arrived at the scene they found a single vehicle that had struck an oak tree on the driver's side door. The patient was trapped so the firefighter crews had to use the "Jaws of Life" in order to free the patient. Once crews from Sonoma Life Support (AMR) arrived, the patient was transported to the hospital.

At one of the structure fires, three Bennett Valley fire engines responded and found that a propane dryer had caught fire and charged the house full of smoke. The burning contents were removed from the house and placed outside, while crews ventilated the house in an effort to remove all of the smoke. During this fire, a Glen Ellen fire engine and its crew covered the Bennett Valley Fire Station. This is a good example of how the firefighting crews from the different fire districts work together to cover these emergency calls.

Late one evening on Bennett Valley Road a small pick-up truck hit a telephone pole and sheared it off. When fire crews arrived the lines were down, blocking the road. The patient was taken to the hospital and CHP closed the road until repair crews from the phone company could repair the broken pole and re-hang the phone lines.

BURN PERMITS - Please note that through April 30th, it is burn season for those who've obtained a burn permit. Burn permits and Bay Area Air Quality Management District notification forms are available at the Fire Station between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm. If you have any questions about this, please call 578-8471 between these hours.

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District
6161 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa
(707) 578-7761 or 578-8471
Board of Directors

Matt Phillips, Chairman
Dan Felciano, Deborah Haarstad,
Marilee Jensen, Mark Richardson

*The Board meetings are on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, at 7:00 pm. at the Bennett Valley Fire Station. **You're welcome to attend**, but it is recommended you confirm the meeting date first. You can call Bennett Valley firefighters at 578-8471 if you have any questions or concerns. You can also leave a message for Andy Pforsich, at 823-1084.*

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

Please mail in this form, along with your annual dues of \$15, plus any donation you're willing to make, so that we may continue to pursue our mission. Mail the envelope to Blair/Dougherty, 7373 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

Let us know, by circling below, if you would like to receive the VOICE by e-mail. If yes, include your e-mail address. Thanks. YES or NO
E-mail address: _____ Phone#: _____

We also are interested in hearing any comments or concerns you might have, or any corrections or additions we should make to your name(s) , address, (as found on the mailing label on the reverse side of this form) or telephone #. If you don't have enough room, insert additional paper. If you have any questions, please call (707) 542-1608. Thanks!

Comments/Changes: _____

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| <p align="center">Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA) Board Of Directors P.O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa, CA 95405 BVHA Web-Page <bennettvalleyhomeowners.org></p> <p>Marilee Jensen, <i>President & VOICE Editor</i> (576-0405; phone and FAX)</p> <p>Michael Friedenber, <i>Vice-President</i> (579-5310) Helen Bates, <i>Treasurer</i> (695-8760)</p> <p>Bobbie Blair, <i>Recording Secretary & Mailing List/Membership Coordinator</i> (542-1608) Leanore (Lolly) Mesches, <i>Corresponding Secretary</i> (545-8684)</p> <p>Eric Burns, <i>Web-Page Coordinator</i> (584-7531) Jennifer Combs, <i>Director</i> (546-1190) Tim Murphy, <i>Director</i> (542-7114) Marilyn Stocks, <i>Director</i> (528-2458)</p> |
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water is present nearby, the salt water can leach in to the water supply if you take out too much fresh water.

- Bill Murray, the Glen Ellen Fire Chief, presented information about the new storage facility needed for their new fire engine in Bennett Valley on the corner of Sonoma Mountain Rd. and Enterprise Rd.
- The Board decided that Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association will be the official and preferred name for BVHA, not Homeowners', in order to emphasize the individuality.

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| <p align="center">BVHA Board Of Directors Tentative Agenda For Meeting March 17th, 2004, 7:00 Pm, BV Fire Station</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Call to Order, 7:00 pm▪ Speaker, Bonny Castelli, BV Native Plants▪ John Maitland, Grange Rd. Bridge Update▪ Sonoma Mountain Zen Center application for modification of use permit, relocation and increasing size of mediation hall.▪ Michael Cronin has asked that any BV resident be able to vote for the BVHA Board regardless of BVHA membership.▪ Planning for <i>Reducing Fire Risks Workshop</i>, 4/17/04, <i>Groundwater Panel Forum</i>, 4/21/04 and <i>BV Clean-up Roads Day</i>, 4/24/04. How can we get signs?▪ Updates on BVHA Web-Page, Amended Articles of Incorporation & Bennett Valley Calendar |
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Brief Summary of BVHA Board Meeting
(For a copy of the minutes, please call Bobbie Blair, 542-1608.)
January 21st, 2004

- Two speakers presented a great deal of information on groundwater problems in Sonoma Co., such as the following: *Sonoma Co. leads the state with 40,000 domestic wells. Sonoma Co. was warned about the water problem in 1972. There is a major need for a groundwater management system here. There is a substantial conflict potential by 2025 for this area due to decreasing water. A well can draw from up to a 2-mile radius over time. In areas where salt*

**Don't Forget the Spring *Bennett Valley* 8:30am at Bennett Valley Fire Station. Watch
Roads Clean-up Day, Saturday, April 24th, for the reminder signs. We need your help!**

Bennett Valley Community Activities

Remember to note these dates on your calendar!

1.) **Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association** -The BVHA Board meets on the third Wednesday of every other month. The next meeting is on March 17th, 7:00 pm at the BV Fire Station. **Join us to hear Bonny Castelli from the Master Gardener Program, talking about BV native plants, followed by John Maitland presenting information about Sonoma County's plans for the proposed Grange Road Bridge.** You can check our web-page at <bennettvalleyhomeowners.org> for more information about BVHA meetings. Everyone is invited to attend these Board meetings.

2.) **Bennett Valley Fire Protection District** -The Board of Directors meets the second Tuesday of each month, 7:00 pm, at the Bennett Valley Fire Station. Call 578-7761 to confirm the meeting date and time in advance. Everyone is invited to attend these Board meetings.

3.) **Workshop on Reducing Wildland Fire Risks** - A workshop for all Bennett Valley parcel owners is scheduled for Saturday morning, April 17th, 11:00 am, at the Bennett Valley Fire Station. Keith Warner, an expert fire inspector, will be discussing actions necessary to help reduce high risks for wildfires. Andy Pforsich, Bennett Valley Fire Chief, and other firefighting staff will also be adding their insights to the discussion.

4.) **Groundwater Panel Forum** – Valerie Brown, our County Supervisor, will be participating on this panel on Groundwater concerns, along with Pete Parkinson & Dwayne Starnes from PRMD and Charlie Judson, from Weeks Drilling and Pump Company, on Wednesday, April 21st, 7:00 pm, at the BV Fire Station. On this important topic, let's hear these different perspectives, ask our questions and add our input!

5.) **Sonoma County Board Of Supervisors** meets every Tuesday (except on weeks when there is a holiday) at 575 Administration Drive, Santa Rosa. Valerie Brown is the Supervisor for our First District. You may call her or Lynn Morton-Weil, her Aide, at 565-2241, if you have any questions or concerns.

Page Two
Page Three
Page Four
Page Five

Inside This Issue

Matanzas Creek Winery Changes
Mountain Man
SHARE THE ROAD!
2005 Vintage Edition!
BVHA Membership, 2004
Bennett Valley Fire District Info
BVHA Annual Dues
BVHA Board of Directors
Summary & Agenda, BVHA Meetings

Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association
P.O. Box 2666
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

BVHA web-page <bennettvalleyhomeowners.org>

BVHA Mission Statement: *"Committed to promoting & preserving the rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley."*

Return Service Requested

IS OUR GROUNDWATER DISAPPEARING?
Let's hear more about it! April 21st, 7:00 pm
WANTED: Vintage Photos of Bennett Valley

REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS!
Join April 17th, 11 am

