

BOOMING GROWTH IN THE TEHACHAPI VALLEY

You'd have to keep your head in a bucket to not see all the growth taking place in the Tehachapi Valley. New housing developments are being constructed in the City of Tehachapi; Golden Hills is booming for real estate sales and Brite Valley shows a number of new homes. Entering Cummings Valley, one can see some new construction there, and many new homes in Stallion Springs are under construction. Home prices have jumped pretty dramatically in 18 months. In Bear Valley Springs, contractors have put up a number of new homes, particularly in the valley part. Available BVS valley floor lots are becoming rare. New homes in BVS seem to be selling very fast. We are now starting to see contractors buying property at higher elevations and building "spec" houses, a distinct change over the past ten years. There are also fewer real estate listings of homes for sale. The demand side has increased while the supply side hasn't increased as quickly, it appears.

Growth in our valley has impacts, and now is a particularly important time for the CVPA. Traffic has increased. We've had traffic congestion in the Cummings Valley, specifically near the school. We've gone from one full traffic light in Tehachapi to four, with at least one more planned. Traffic is especially tough in Golden Hills. Supervisor Don Maben is keeping a good eye on all this (Thanks, Don!) and has pushed for an additional traffic connection to be developed between Tucker Road and Golden Hills. That would offload much traffic from Valley Boulevard in Golden Hills. (I find myself turning right onto Banducci from eastbound Highway 202 and taking Highline to Tucker Road or Curry Street.) It is an important time for the Tehachapi Valley area. We desire development to be managed effectively so we don't end up being "just a suburb". *How I hope that we don't lose our small town, rural feel!* ja



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BIRDS, BIRDS AND MOORE BIRDS

The Cummings Valley Protective Association will hold its next meeting Thursday evening, February 5, 2004 at 7:30PM at the Stallion Springs CSD meeting room at 28500 Stallion Springs Drive. The guest speakers for the evening will be Jean and Clark Moore, who will present a program on "*Birding and the Many Projects of the Tehachapi Mountains Birding Club*".

Jean and Clark Moore, who have been birding for 53 years, retired to Bear Valley Springs fifteen years ago. They soon discovered that very little birding activity existed in the Tehachapi area, so they organized the Tehachapi Mountains Birding Club. Since that time, they have conducted bird identification classes, organized and compiled the Tehachapi, Bear Valley Springs/Cummings Valley and Red Rock Canyon Christmas Bird Counts, and have written many articles on birding for local newspapers.

Both Jean and Clark are members of the American Birding Association. In their presentation to the CVPA, they will review and summarize such projects as the Christmas Bird Counts, the Raptor Rescue, the California Condor Recovery Program, and the Turkey Vulture Migration Census. The evening will be of great interest to all those who enjoy the beauty of nature here in Tehachapi and who have a curiosity about our feathered neighbors.

SPEAKING OF BIRDS . . .

Dan Armstrong is one of the local flying hang gliders since 1975 and the Cummings Valley, launching from number of times. Here are some of his

"I have flown with condors several times in my hang glider. Most times, I have seen multiple condors, they seem to go in groups. I launched in the Cummings Valley and saw them in the Cummings Valley. They are pretty big! You can see the tags on them but I couldn't make out the numbers. Their performance is better than a hang glider and they typically come up underneath you, climb above and then glide away. The longest I've flown with one at one time was for about ten minutes. They fly very smoothly, and don't seem intimidated by hang gliders. They have broad wings, a long span and you can see slots in the tip feathers."

Dan hasn't seen condors when flying sailplanes, but other pilots have reported sightings. ja

CUMMINGS VALLEY FLOODING

A number of people have expressed concern about the agricultural flood control berms constructed along roadsides in Cummings Valley. Agricultural producers have taken steps to protect their crops after great losses from the incredibly heavy rains of last July 31st. The Kern County Roads Department has been made aware of the berms and has not objected except to require that the one along the south side of Giraud Road be moved farther from the roadway, which was done. Dick Considine of Superior Sod has talked with the Kern County Roads Department to encourage placement of larger culverts under Pellisier Road where the main flooding problems have historically occurred.

What seems to be needed is a valley-wide coordinated plan for flood control and perhaps also including recharge plans. It needs someone with a keen interest to bring together property owners who could enlist the help of agencies like the Natural Resources Conservation Service (an arm of the USDA), the Tehachapi Resource Conservation District, the Tehachapi Cummings County Water District and others. CVPA is very interested in this issue. We'd love to hear from members interested in this particular topic. cm



CONDORS IN THE CUMMINGS

DUST STORMS

It is the season for dust storms in Cummings Valley, but thus far, they haven't been horrible. We had one bad plume this fall, during which this writer did not go out to identify the source. Special recognition goes again to Grimmway Farms for their cover cropping of fallow fields where possible. Jeff Huckaby, the General Manager of Organic Farming at Grimmway, is dedicated to trying to avoid dust storms, to the extent they even had a crew out on Thanksgiving laying sprinkler lines to stop blowing dust. Jeff knows it makes no sense to let the wind blow away the topsoil which has been improved with expensive organic soil amendments. And he definitely does not want to annoy the neighbors.

The sod farms in the Cummings Valley usually don't have their soil exposed for much time between sod crops, although some of the Pacific Sod acreage north of the old Cummings Valley School building appears vulnerable. Bare roadsides are another problem. If they are found to be a major dust problem, CVPA will begin negotiations with the Kern County Road Department to remedy this problem.

We've had a number of days in the last 6 weeks in which we had east winds. Some dust plumes have been noted in Brite Valley. It appears that this might be related to some of the new homes that have been built there in the last few years. Observations on blowing dust will be welcomed. Leave a message for the CVPA on this topic by calling 822-3478, 822-6589, or 821-0346. *cm*

CVPA ACTION RELATED TO BRITE VALLEY ILLEGAL MOTOCROSS TRACK

The CVPA has sent a letter to the Kern County Planning/Code Enforcement Department related to the illegal motocross track on the Wilsted property on Cummings Valley Road in Brite Valley. An excerpt from that letter is included here:

"••• It has been more than a year since we filed a complaint about the illegal motocross track on the Wilsted property on Cummings Valley Road in Brite Valley. It appears that the attempt to gain approval of CUP #40, Map 165 has been abandoned. Whether it is being used or not, the track is still a track and is in violation of the Zoning Ordinance along with the fact that it was constructed without a grading permit. CVPA requests that the owners be required to restore the numerous large jumps and other parts of the track to original grade. We would appreciate being kept informed of the progress in remedying this violation. •••"

SNOW CONTEST.... NO WINNER... PRIZE ROLLS OVER TO NEXT YEAR!

No one guessed the first day of snow here in our end of the world, which was December 11th. Love this early snow!! 'Tis really good for all the trees and water supply. Due to popular demand, we will roll the prize over to next year. Winner of the contest next fall will get a free year membership to the CVPA. Start polishing your crystal ball.

WATER PIONEER DIES

On January 6, 2004 Pete Joseph Vukich, visionary pioneer and businessman, passed away in Arvin. Born in Monolith in 1917, Pete was one of the key players in assuring water resources for Tehachapi Valley. He also was a good friend of the Fickert sisters, members of the pioneering family in Bear Valley. Pete served as one of the historians for the Fickert Cemetery. He shared stories with this editor of digging the graves for Nellie ("Mary E") and Louise Fickert in December, 1959. Pete also remembered that there were 17 grave mounds in the cemetery in 1959, which is important data now that not all 17 mounds are evident.

The Cummings Valley Protective Association sends its condolences to the Vukich family. Rest in peace, Pete, and thank you for your water resource efforts for our community! *ja*

REGARDING THE FICKERT CEMETERY

We've been amazed at the number of calls and comments we still are receiving about the CVPA-AAUW-Tehachapi Heritage League event at the Fickert Cemetery last fall. People with a particular interest in this interesting piece of local history can keep in touch with Janice Armstrong, the neighbor to the cemetery, by calling 821-0346 or danarmstro@aol.com.

TRASH TEAM ALERT

Get rested and ready – a great morning will be taking place in the spring, probably in May. If you haven't participated in the CVPA Trash Pickup Day, you might want to consider it this year. Yes it is work, but boy is it fun! First of all, it is anthropologically interesting to see what kind of trash is out there. Truly, what is one person's trash is another's treasure. Plus, we always have good discussions and lots of fun, working cooperatively to help keep this place beautiful. More details on this in the next newsletter. Join the trash team in 2004. *ja*

NO BUS TOUR IN '04

Remember, the bus tour is biennial, so there will be no bus tour in 2004. Spring 2005 will see the next one.

A GREAT BOOK

In preparation for a Christmas trip into the Eastern Sierra and Death Valley, I picked up a great book at the Apple Shed. "Sierra Nevada: The Naturalist's Companion" by Verna Johnston is a keeper. This book has provided me with information about many of the animals that wander through our yard in Bear Valley Springs. It is a great natural history text for the Sierra Nevada, "the longest, highest single-block mountain range in the United States". Pick up this book and enjoy! *ja*

MEMBERSHIP/TREASURY REPORT

The year 2004 began with our members numbering 418 individuals, but 134 are in arrears. Fifty-two memberships have been prepaid to year ending June 2005 with ten of these prepaid through 2006. We especially thank these prepaid memberships for their continuing support. The year/date at the center of the top line of your address label will show 2004 or greater if you are current. If you are not current, won't you please fill out the membership renewal application and send it with your check for dues. Remember, the more members we have, the stronger our voice!

Our treasury during the first six months of the fiscal year shows a net increase of about 10% in assets value. This will allow us to continue our support of area wide noxious weed control programs. As usual, our corporate books are available for inspection per state requirements. Thank you for your support! *pm*

OAK TREE WORKSHOP

Friends of the Oaks (FOTO) along with the Tehachapi Resources Conservation District (TRCD) will present an evening all about indigenous oak trees of Tehachapi at 7 pm, Wednesday, February 18th at the Multipurpose Room of the Cummings Valley School. On display will be live examples of indigenous oaks and an oak will be given away. Refreshments will be served. Learn how to avoid causing stress to our irreplaceable trees. *lr*

Renewal Membership Particulars

Please send this form with your payment to renew. Consider renewing for more than one year. Check your address label for accuracy. If the year at top center of the label is 2003 or earlier, you have not paid dues for the 2003-04 membership year which began July 1st. We value your support!

Cummings Valley Protective Association, Inc.				
Membership Application - July 1 through June 30				
Name(s) _____				
Local Address _____				Phone () _____
Mail Address _____ (If not same as local)				Phone () _____
Check Appropriate Area				
<input type="checkbox"/> Alpine Forest Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Country Oaks	<input type="checkbox"/> Golden Hills	<input type="checkbox"/> Oak Knolls	<input type="checkbox"/> Stallion Springs
<input type="checkbox"/> Bear Valley Springs	<input type="checkbox"/> Cummings Valley	<input type="checkbox"/> Hidden Oaks	<input type="checkbox"/> Old Town	<input type="checkbox"/> Tehachapi
<input type="checkbox"/> Brite Valley	<input type="checkbox"/> Fairview Ranches	<input type="checkbox"/> Indian Hills	<input type="checkbox"/> Sand Canyon	<input type="checkbox"/> ? _____
e-mail addr: _____				
Annual dues are \$12 per family. Please check one:			Mail with payment to:	
<input type="checkbox"/> One year \$12	<input type="checkbox"/> Two years \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> Three years \$36	Cummings Valley Protective Association P.O. Box 1020 Tehachapi, CA 93581-1020	