



# Bennett Valley VOICE

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

BV Fire District Funding  
Upcoming Board Elections  
BV 2002 Planning Mtg.  
Report, BVHA Board Mtgs.  
Silent Auction, 8/26/01  
BV Community Calendar  
Next Board Mtg. Agenda  
Live Art Events, 8/26/01  
BV Calendar, 2002

VOLUME 24, NUMBER 4

Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA)

JULY, 2001

## Bennett Valley Fire Protection District;

### *More Bennett Valley Volunteers Are Needed!*

Currently Matt Phillips and Joe Stans are the only two volunteers in the Bennett Valley Fire District who live within the confines of Bennett Valley. The percentage of volunteers from this area has steadily fallen over the years, and now most of them reside in Santa Rosa. Because it takes them longer to get to Bennett Valley for emergencies, this presents a safety concern.

Most of the young people attracted as volunteers are seeking jobs in emergency services. They become volunteers while they are in school or waiting for full-time employment. With the demand for firefighters and emergency medical staff (EMS) personnel at an all-time high, these volunteers are not around very long. Each summer the problem is exacerbated because the California Department of Forestry (CDF) hires firefighters during the summer fire season and many of the volunteers take these seasonal jobs both for the pay and the experience. That leaves Bennett Valley short of volunteers, especially during the day, when many of the remaining volunteers are at work.

This problem is not unique to Bennett Valley. All Fire Districts with large components of volunteers are suffering. Fire Chief Kent Reynolds, Assistant Fire Chief Joe Stans, and the volunteer officers are brainstorming solutions. Besides recruiting additional volunteers who live in Bennett Valley, the most promising suggestions involve non-firefighting volunteer positions.

Volunteers who want to help but NOT as firefighters could help in support roles, such as driving trucks and fire engines (when qualified), helping with hose cleanup and reload, and driving the Support Unit when it is activated. Some support volunteers could also help with preparing and distributing educational material regarding fire safety in Bennett Valley, providing food and other auxiliary services for the firefighters during fires or other emergency actions, and helping to raise funds for the Bennett Valley Fire Station. This would include writing the thank-you letters to those who have made a donation or contributed a significant service to the firefighters.

**More volunteers are needed for our improved safety! If you know of anyone in Bennett Valley who would be willing to volunteer either as a firefighter or in one of the support roles, please call Chief Kent Reynolds at 578-7761.**

**Recommended Fire Safety Standards Are Not Being Met in Bennett Valley With Present Funding! What Choices Can We Make To Change That? \*(See next page.)**

## **\*Bennett Valley Fire District Funding**

*by Joe Stans, Assistant Fire Chief*

The passage of particular propositions in the last few years has restricted the income of local Fire Districts. We can only anticipate a 1% increase in funds each year, and with inflation running at approximately 3%, we continually fall behind. The Board of Directors of the Bennett Valley Fire Protection District and Chief Reynolds have done an amazing job of reallocating and restructuring but we are at a point now where Bennett Valley safety is possibly being compromised.

Unfunded state and federal mandates continue to erode our ability for apparatus replacement such as twelve Bendix-King portable radios with chargers, needed for improved communication and a 2500-gallon water tender. The water tender would be to provide for additional transportable water as needed for a major structure fire. We also have trouble finding available funds to meet the infrastructure needs of the District, such as the windows, doors, floors and repair of the septic system which the BV Fire Station needs right now. (Note: Matanzas Creek Winery is graciously allowing the volunteers to use one of their homes until the septic system is repaired.) The BV Volunteer Firefighter Association is regularly raising funds for the purchase of major life-saving equipment for the District, such as the new fire engine described in the March, 2001 issue of the VOICE, because the District does not have the funds necessary for these extra purchases. But there is only so much which can be purchased from voluntary contributions.

The questions before us are "What level of service do we want?" and "How will we fund it?" **The most feasible reliable option is to increase the Benefit Assessment tax for the Bennett Valley Fire Protection District from \$60 a year to somewhere between \$120 and \$180 a year, per household.** This would take a 2/3's vote to pass, so it is a choice we will all have to carefully consider before any changes can be made. You can expect to see more detailed information in the coming year, prior to the November, 2002 general election, about the various cost levels of meeting the different safety standards. **Bennett Valley will always have fire protection: That is mandated by state law. But what kind of fire protection service do we want and how much are we willing to spend for it?**

**Special Note:** *Greg Martin has accepted a new position as a Sonoma County Fire Inspector, effective 7/10/01. After 20 years here, he will no longer work for BV Fire District, but he says he'll still be around.*

## **Bennett Valley Tidbits**

### **Matanzas Creek Watershed Group**

The Sotoyome Resource Conservation District has now identified three possible "study reach" areas along Matanzas Creek for future monitoring of the Creek, primarily below the dam. The owners of these pieces of property have been sent "Access Agreements" which they are being asked to sign for a trial period of one year. When an area is secured with property owners' permission, there will then be training scheduled for interested residents on creek monitoring. Please contact Sierra Cantor at (707) 569-1448 with any questions.

### **Bachman Appeal to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, Tuesday, 7/17/01, 3:00 pm**

Stephen and Kim Bachman have filed appeals on the Sonoma County PRMD administrative determination and the Sonoma County Board of Zoning Adjustments Resolution, both stating that the Bachmans cannot build a new residence on the knoll in the Visual Corridor, **as identified in the Bennett Valley Area Plan**, on their property at 5560 Sonoma Mountain Road. According to PRMD, there is approximately 13 acres available for development of a homesite on their parcel outside this Visual Corridor with at least two building sites available, both of which are seen as preferable to the proposed building. "To permit this new residence in the Visual Corridor would set an inappropriate precedent for future similar requests for properties within the Bennett Valley Area Plan." (Board of Zoning Adjustment Resolution, dated 4/26/01) Prior to the hearing, you may review the project details or submit written comments to Nick Chase, the Staff Planner at PRMD, 565-1932, 2550 Ventura Ave., Santa Rosa.

### **Grange Road Bridge**

Levi Gurule, Sonoma County Senior Civil Engineer, reports they are into "detailing plans" for the proposed new bridge, following the alignment of the current road/bridge. Staff is considering a three-span bridge, with the spans straddling the flow of water rather than having any piers in the creek. They are also considering using precast bridge beams which would allow for faster construction. They hope to avoid permanent right-aways, although construction easements will need to be obtained from adjacent landowners and some driveways will have to be relocated. The design plans usually takes about six months, but the "out-to-bid" date will be dependent on how long the right-aways take to secure, both for the construction and the driveway relocations. The County is still hoping construction can begin in the Spring 2002.

## Upcoming BVHA Board Elections

Come one, come all! The time has rolled around once again for nominations for positions on the Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA) Board of Directors.

**Three directors are to be elected, and the term of office is three years.** The Board meets the third Wednesday of each month, at 7:30 pm at the Bennett Valley Fire Station, except for the following: November's meeting this year will be on the second Wednesday, November 14th, rather than the night before Thanksgiving, and there will be no meeting in December.

Qualifications for office (from the BVHA bylaws) are that each candidate (1) must be a voting member of BVHA and (2) must have a strong commitment to promoting and preserving the rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley. This second qualification must be evidenced by a statement of 250 words or less, to be included with each candidate's request for nomination. Members may declare their candidacy and submit their statements after July 1st.

All requests for candidacy, with accompanying statements, must be in the hands of the Nominating Committee by 5 p.m., August 15, 2001. Candidates may present their packets to any of the Nominating Committee members.

For campaign purposes, such as sending out flyers, candidates may submit a request, including the intended use, for a list of names and addresses of those members entitled to vote in the election for directors. If there is no reason to believe the list would be used for any other purpose, then the candidates will receive the current list. (Note: a number of members have, however, expressed strong objection to having their telephone numbers given out, and/or being telephoned by candidates or their supporters; therefore, the list of telephone numbers will not be released or used for this purpose.)

Ballots, together with candidates' statements, instructions for voting, and return envelopes, will be mailed out to the membership with the September VOICE, which is to be mailed September 11th. Results of the election will be announced at the October 17th meeting of the Board.

Candidates, please send notice of your candidacy together with accompanying statements to any of the three committee members, listed below. BVHA members or others having questions concerning these procedures should also contact one of the members of the nominating committee:

### **BVHA Nominating Committee Members**

Eve Boling, 2769 Rollo Road, SR 04	573-8614
Jean LaCombe, 4393 Pressley Rd., SR 04	585-3482
Phil Temko, 4780 Hidden Oaks Rd., SR 04	544-0234

## Bennett Valley 2002 Planning Meeting

Bob Hasenick was Facilitator and Patricia Gundry was Recorder for this planning meeting on Saturday, June 16th, at BV Grange Hall. The following decisions were made:

**Purpose of BV 2002:** Education, emphasis on communication, current information about issues and concerns in Bennett Valley, with information gathering to be done prior to the BV 2002 meeting this year.

**Invitees for BV 2002:** Property owners, people who live in BV, business owners, BV School Board members, people interested in BV and Mike Cale, 1st District Supervisor.

**Date for BV 2002:** Saturday, February 2nd or Saturday, February 9th, 8:30 am - noon. It was felt that more people would be able to attend at that time of year.

### **Topics for Discussion:**

A.) **Water;** quantity vs. scarcity, Bennett Ridge water levels are much lower than usual, Matanzas Creek Watershed, information from different water companies and individual well owners about pumping rates, levels, quantity of water usage, and rainfall, possible contingency plans for BV and the need to address issues before they become urgent.

B.) **Fire and Disaster Preparedness;** Obtain information on BV Fire Station funding needs, possible solutions, develop plans for disasters, arrange for CPR and 1st Aid classes at the BV Grange Hall in the next few months.

### **C) Educational Items;**

- 1.) Learn from agricultural community in BV about their vineyard management, especially spraying & water usage.
- 2.) School Funding & Educational Foundation Information
- 3.) Open Space & Land Conservation Information

### **Conclusions:**

- 1.) Break-out Topics at BV 2002
    - a.) Water (Patty Gundry\*, Frank LaCombe & Marty McDonough)
    - b.) Fire & Disaster Preparedness (Patty Allen, Weldon Jackson, Marilee Jensen\*, Bonnie Rhodes)
- \*Person who will insure further meeting prior to next planning meeting.
- 2.) Presentations on Educational Items; VOICE, web-page, BVHA Board meetings and/or BV 2002.

**Organization team** – Bill & Patty Allen, Bob Hasenick

**Next Planning Meeting:** Sat. Sept. 22nd, 9 – 11 am, Bennett Valley Grange Hall **Please Join Us!**

## Report on the BVHA Board Meetings, May 16th and June 21st, 2001

The **Board Agenda** for each meeting is posted on a bulletin board at the BV Fire Station at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. The agenda includes a brief description of items for proposed action or discussion at the meeting, and information on the scope of the proposed action.

**Board meeting on 5/16/01:** only four Board members attended, so there was not a quorum. Seventeen other Bennett Valley residents also attended, a number of them to hear and participate in the discussion by Greg Carr and Scott Briggs on the upcoming Sonoma County General Plan update. **To get on a mailing list, make suggestions or ask questions about this General Plan update, anyone can call Scott Briggs at 565-1936 or e-mail him at <sbriggs1@sonoma-county.org>.** Four Bennett Valley residents, who were not able to attend the meeting, e-mailed their concerns about the traffic on both Bennett Valley Rd. and Grange Rd. These residents were referred to Scott Briggs.

Even though no action could be taken at this Board meeting, information was shared about the Bachman Appeal to the Board of Supervisors, a response letter from PG&E regarding Sudden Oak Death and the Davey Tree cutting in the Bennett Valley area, BVHA calendars for 2001 (profits to be contributed to BV Fire District) and 2002 (described on back page), the BV 2002 Community Forum planning meeting, (see page 3) and a change in policy regarding precise tape recording of motions approved by the BVHA Board of Directors.

**Board Meeting on 6/20/01:** attended by eight of the nine Board members and ten other Bennett Valley residents. During **Public Input** one person presented some problems he was having with his neighbors' management of their property. He was referred to Sonoma Co. PRMD and Code Enforcement and the BVHA web page, **Bennett ValleyHomeowners.org** for the Bennett Valley Area Plan.

After the Treasurer's Report was presented, information was shared about the Matanzas Creek Watershed Group, the Grange Road Bridge, (see page 2) and the Public Work's plan for improved markings on Bennett Valley Rd.

In discussing the transfer of BVHA funds to a **Charles Schwab checking account**, there was some concern about the broad resolution which organizations are required to approve prior to opening an account, giving all

the Board members authority to open a number of different Charles Schwab accounts. Michael Friedenberg suggested this be handled by requiring two signatures on each check exceeding \$250. If Charles Schwab wouldn't except the \$250 limit, then two signatures still would be required, regardless (the Treasurer, President and/or the Secretary). This was moved, seconded and approved unanimously by the Board.

David Phillips announced the **BVHA web page** is up and running, and people can now log on to add agenda items to the next Board meeting, ask questions, and state concerns. The **BV Pamphlet** is ready to go to print once information on the map is corrected and improved. See the enclosed flier for **Silent Auction** information, a fund raiser for the BV Volunteer Firefighters Association. More volunteers are needed for the set-up on Saturday and the Silent Auction on Sunday and more donations are encouraged. Next the outcomes of the **BV 2002 Community Forum** planning meeting on 6/16/01 were discussed. (See page 3.)

**Burn Permits and Regulations** were discussed under New Business. It was agreed the best thing to do was to call the BV Firefighters (578-7761) any time you want to burn something outside. They can help you select the best time and place to do it, and you'll learn more about what is required.

In response to a resident's suggestion, the Board moved, seconded, and approved a motion to **help purchase new flags for the BV Fire Station** (to be shared 50/50 with Bennett Ridge Community Association). Included in this motion was an additional contribution of \$50 from BVHA to help pay for paint for the white fiberglass door on the compressor shed (next to the Fire Station) so the door can match the rest of the building.

Information was shared about the proposals for Sonoma Co. Supervisorial redistricting (everything will apparently remain the same for Bennett Valley), lavender flags & white poles in front of Matanzas Creek Winery, lights at night, and possible code enforcement problems with various vehicles parked along the road. Following a question from one of the BV residents regarding Sonoma County PRMD land use notices, the BVHA Board decided that they should all see these PRMD documents when they are sent to the Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association.

# BENNETT VALLEY COMMUNITY DAY CELEBRATION!

August 26, 2001 12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m.

Jackson Park, Grange Road

As residents of Bennett Valley, we all know how valuable and important the **Bennett Valley Volunteer Firefighter's Association** is to our community. The time has come to help them in their efforts to purchase additional life saving and fire fighting equipment. To raise much-needed money for this equipment, and as a means of thanking the BVVFA for their support of us, we are pleased to announce our first-ever Silent Auction. **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

Donation items are still being sought for this event. Be creative! Donate any of the following items - or others - which can be auctioned off to raise money for this important cause.

- Dinners for 2
- Time Share Spots
- Artwork / Photographs
- Get-away Trips
- Computer Training
- Collectibles

## QUESTIONS OR PICK-UP?

Contact **Bobbie Blair** (707) 542-1608

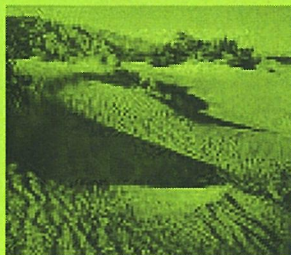
or **Heather LaRiviere** at 522-0106

to arrange pick-up of your auction item, or  
for further information.

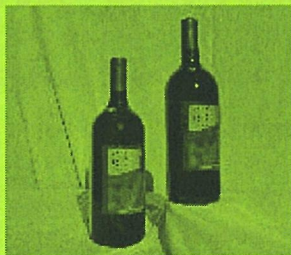
*Visit our website at: [bennettvalleyhomeowners.org](http://bennettvalleyhomeowners.org)*

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO ASSIST WITH THE AUCTION

## LIVE ART EVENTS



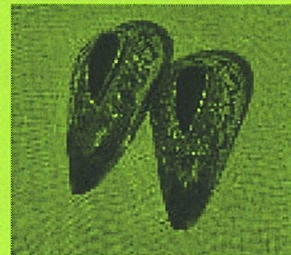
*Marge Alette*



*Laurel Glen Vineyard*



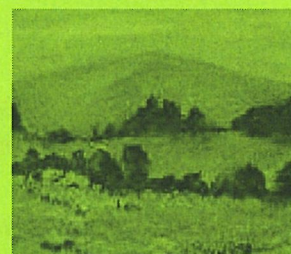
*Mary Mack*



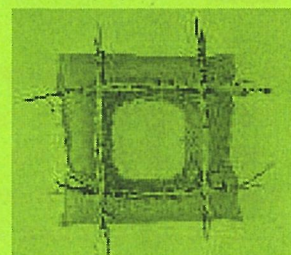
*Ed Teixeira*



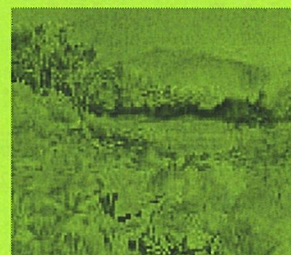
*David Phillips*



*Monica Schwalbenberg-Peña*



*Deena Paulson*



*Donna DeLaBriandais*

## Bennett Valley Community Calendar

- 1.) **Bennett Valley Grange** – This last year they've added many new members who have helped to revitalize the BV Grange. They are in the process of making sure all members have a voice in determining the direction the Bennett Valley Grange is to take. They are also in the process of actively repairing, upgrading and maintaining their Hall, so that it will be safe for the community to use for programs that "educate, engage and...enrich their lives..." Their work party dates are Saturday, July 7th and Saturday, August 4th, 8 a.m.-11:30 a.m. The next public events sponsored by the BV Grange are in October and will be announced in the September VOICE. For further information, contact Bill or Patty Allen at 544-3721.
- 2.) **Bennett Valley Volunteer Firefighters' Association Community Day** – Be sure to come, one and all, Sunday, August 26th, noon until 5 pm, Jackson Park! This is the big fund-raiser for the Bennett Valley Fire Station and it includes a barbecue, food, wine, the Silent Auction and Live Art Action. The Fire Engines will be on display and there may even be a helicopter or two around, along with Emergency Action demonstrations. This event plays a significant part in paying for major life-saving equipment for the Bennett Valley Fire Station (see page 2). As mentioned earlier, more volunteers and donations are needed for the Silent Auction, at Community Day. Come Support Your Fire Station, While You're Enjoying Yourself!
- 3.) **Bennett Valley 2002 Community Forum** – Join us for the next planning meeting on Saturday, September 22nd, 9 to 11 am, at Bennett Valley Grange Hall as described on page 3. We welcome your input!
- 4.) **Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association** -The BVHA Board of Directors meets the third Wednesday of each month, 7:30 pm, at the Bennett Valley Fire Station. The next two meetings are on July 18th and August 15th. You will find the "Tentative Agenda" for the July 18th meeting on page 7. Please note that the November meeting will be on the second Wednesday, that is November 14th at 7:30 pm, rather than the night before Thanksgiving, and there will be no meeting in December. *These Board meetings are intended to be informal and an Open Forum for Bennett Valley residents. We encourage you to attend.*
- 5.) **Bennett Valley Fire Protection District** -The Board of Directors meets the second Tuesday of each month, 7:00 pm, Bennett Valley Fire Station, (July 10th, August 14th and September 11th). The Bennett Valley Fire Protection District Board of Directors includes: Wells Wagner, Chairman; Lee O. Liddell, Marie Nottingham, Matt Phillips and Nola Stans. *The Bennett Valley Fire Chief, Kent Reynolds, encourages Bennett Valley residents to attend.*
- 6.) **Sonoma County Board Of Supervisors** meets every Tuesday (except on weeks when there is a holiday) at 575 Administration Drive, Santa Rosa. Information about the Board of Supervisors agenda, meeting dates or times can be found at [www.sonoma-county.org](http://www.sonoma-county.org) or you can call 527-2241. Mike Cale is the Supervisor representing Bennett Valley as well as Sonoma Valley, in District One.

For additional community information, please check the BVHA web page at  
<[www.BennettValleyHomeowners.org](http://www.BennettValleyHomeowners.org)>.

**BVHA Board of Directors Tentative  
Agenda for the Next Meeting, 7/18/01**

- Call to Order, Approval of Minutes and Treasurer's Report, Public Input
- Monthly reports: Board of Supervisors, Open Space District, PRMD Land Use Applications, BV Fire District & Matanzas Creek Watershed Group
- **OLD BUSINESS:**
  - Updates; Charles Schwab Checking Account, BV Pamphlet, Silent Auction and BVHA Web Page
  - Report on purchase of flags and painting of white shed door at Bennett Valley Fire Station
  - Discussion: (1) Lavendar flags and white poles in front of Matanzas Creek Winery (2) Should BV Fire Station sign be lit at night? (3) Are there code violations on car for sale & commercial vehicles parked just off Bennett Valley Rd. and truck parked on wrong side of road?
- **NEW BUSINESS:**
  - Outcome of Bachman Appeal to Board of Supervisors on July 17th
  - Representation of BVHA by Individual Directors on Board; Discussion & Possible Motion

-----  
**Welcome to the new members who have joined BVHA this year since March:** Christine & Steve Cooney, Jean & James Benson, Gerald & Marcia Lang, Mary Sibbet, William & Clarice Clarke, Harry & Ferment Coturri, Craig & Dorla Cousins, Jon & Margareta Merry, James & Rebecca Casciani, Al Newton, Melinda Hughes, Robert & Patricia Carroll, John & Deborah Myers, Richard & Danielle Hejmanowski, Dale & Deborah Britt, James Topper & Phillip Wennblom, Tim & Stephanie Harris.

**A big Thank You to the following people who have joined BVHA since March plus given extra donations:** Mike & Donna Wade, Matt & Stephanie Molteni, Roberta & David Shihey, Patricia Jordan, Kathleen deRopp, Mary Sibbet, Leonard & Connie Mygatt, William & Clarice Clarke, Shirley Williams, Edward & Sally Stephens, James & Kathleen Petrulli, Mark & Patti White, Steve & Nancy Crisafulli, Jim & Jenness Keller, Don & Donna Parker, Edward & Diane Muendel, Joe & Pat Mazeau, Tim & Vicki Haddad, Tom & Nancy Gross, Jim & Sue Kaufman, Patty Gundry & Sandra Carr, Robert & Susan Mellberg, John & Deborah Myers, Lee & Cindy Liddell, Norman Nielsen, Gordon & Janet Vehar, Tina & Robert Yahng.

**BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S  
ASSOCIATION (BVHA) BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS**

P.O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa, CA 95405

Marilee Jensen, *President & VOICE Editor,*  
(576-0405 - phone # and FAX #)  
Michael Friedenberg, *Vice-President (579-5310)*  
David Phillips, *Treasurer*  
Bobbie Blair, *Recording Secretary & Mailing  
List/Membership Coordinator (542-1608)*  
Leanore (Lolly) Mesches, *Corresponding  
Secretary, (545-8684)*  
Nancy Dell'Ergo, *Director (525-1202)*  
Jim Katon, *Director (528-9487)*  
Marilyn Stocks, *Director (528-2458)*  
Bill Sullivan, *Director (528-6804)*

*Thanks to all the volunteers who help with the BVHA efforts. If you're not sure if you're a paid member or not, you can look at your mailing label to see if there is a check mark in the box. To join BVHA,, just send \$15 plus donations to Bobbie, BVHA membership, 7373 Bennett Valley Rd., Santa Rosa, CA 95404.*

**LIVE ART EVENTS AND  
SILENT AUCTION**

A Benefit for the BV Fire Protection District  
Bennett Valley Community Day Celebration  
Sunday, August 26th,  
Jackson Park on Grange Road

Special art events will be scheduled throughout the day:  
Come watch the fun and creative process. Many of the art projects will be auctioned.

- Junk Yard Competition – Dueling Artists  
Teams of artists will be creating art projects based on a specific creative problem.
- Quick Draw Collaborative project of several Bennett Ridge artists.
- Local artists are invited to paint on location at the Jackson Ranch.

For more information, contact art event coordinators,  
Donna DeLaBriandais, 544-2153 or Karen & Stan Sommer,  
528-8982.

Don't Forget  
www.BennettValleyHomeowners.org

Return Service Requested

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

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

**BENNETT VALLEY CALENDAR PHOTO ENTRY FORM  
2002**

**Deadline: August 31, 2001**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **NUMBER OF ENTRIES:** \_\_\_\_\_

- This year we are accepting both photos of Bennett Valley and photos of original paintings of Bennett Valley.
- A horizontal format works best on the calendar page.
- Please put the photo title and date taken on the back of each picture.
- Please do not put your name on the back of the photographs.

Mail this form and photos to: Stephanie Zaborowski,  
4184 Sonoma Mountain Rd.,  
Santa Rosa, 95404

We are happy to answer questions. Call: Judy @ 544-0234 or Suzanne @ 542-1608