



Bennett Valley
VOICE

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Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association (BVHA)

MAY, 2003

The Sonoma Mountain Appellation*

*VOICE, February, 1989, Originally By Marilyn Franc; Updated By Patrick Campbell; Then Edited April, 2003

An appellation is a geographically designated area where a particular type of fruit or vineyard land is located. A portion of the north and northeastern slopes of Sonoma Mountain has been designated as a sub-appellation of the larger Sonoma Valley Appellation. It includes approximately 1,000 acres of vineyards with elevations ranging from 400 to 1200 feet. At this elevation there are more moderate temperature fluctuations than in the valleys, staying cooler in the daytime and warmer at night. There is not the persistent summer fog, which maximizes the early to midday sunlight hours. The inclination of the land is towards the morning sun and away from the hot afternoon sun. Protection is provided in the lee of the mountain from the prevailing southwest winds.

This appellation was approved in August of 1984 after a great deal of hard work by Patrick Campbell and Dave Steiner in researching the history, soil and climatic conditions to gain the approval of the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. Their motivation was to have this area officially recognized as a distinct viticultural zone which produced a high quality product. . .

Before this designation, grapes on Sonoma Mountain were known to be of high quality and commanded higher prices. Mountain grapes tend to have a lower yield than valley grapes, due to the more shallow soil being volcanic in origin. Higher elevation grapes need less water, grow in more stressed conditions and generally develop greater intensity of flavor. They are harder and more expensive to farm requiring lots of terracing. . . The hillsides here on Sonoma Mountain were perfect for the traditional European viticulturalist.

(Some excerpts from the historical section of the proposal by Campbell & Steiner.) "In 1862, Jackson Temple planted the first vineyards on Sonoma Mountain, shortly afterwards building the first winery on what is now known as the Jack London Ranch. . . Viticulture was well established on Sonoma

Mountain by 1877. . . Phylloxera was known to have wiped out all of the first plantings in the late 1800's... Some of the old family wineries made it through the rough times...(prohibition, the Depression, etc.)."

Today, in the Sonoma Mountain appellation, some of the larger vineyards are Benziger, Murray, Jack London, Laurel Glen, Dinner, Pickberry, Steiner, Berger, and Van der Kamp. These Sonoma Mountain vineyards vary a great deal in size, with the largest vineyard being over 100 acres. Vineyard acreage has increased significantly in recent years. Some of the biggest buyers of these grapes are Matanzas Creek and the Benziger Winery. There are some 40 wineries in the overall Sonoma Valley appellation.

Sonoma Mountain has three of these wineries; H. Coturri and Sons, Laurel Glen Vineyard, and Benziger Estate Winery. The Benziger Winery is open for tasting and tours but the others are not. Patrick Campbell of Laurel Glen produces 3,000 cases of cabernet sauvignon from his estate grapes on Sonoma Mountain under the Laurel Glen and Counterpoint labels. In addition, he makes 40,000 cases from vineyards in other areas of California as well as in Argentina and Chile. All of the non-estate wines are produced in Laurel Glen's winery outside of Sebastopol. The Coturri sons, Tony, the winemaker, and Phillip, the vineyard manager, specialize in making wines from grapes grown on Sonoma Valley Appellation hillside vineyards. They make 4,000 cases of mostly zinfandel from their estate vineyards on Sonoma Mountain and throughout the Sonoma Valley. Benziger has a diverse portfolio of wines from estate grapes as well as from grapes grown in Sonoma County and beyond: in all, they produce over 80,000 cases of wine per year. The most successful grapes and wines produced on Sonoma Mountain have been Cabernet Sauvignon. The future looks promising for the Sonoma Mountain appellation.

Bennett Valley Vineyard Spraying

About this time last year, Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association received a letter from a very concerned Bennett Valley resident about her observations at a Bennett Valley vineyard on 5/2/02, from 6:45 pm until about 10:45 pm. She described "three (3) large and noisy farm vehicles dusting what appeared to be white powder over the young grapevines. . . The wind was very strong and was. . . carrying this white stuff directly over all the homes. . . on the South side of (Bennett Valley) Road for at least a half a mile. . ."

When this letter was received we contacted both the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's office and BV resident, Matt Phillips, former vineyard manager at Kendall Jackson, to find out more about this spraying. We were told the spraying was for mildew which usually happens between May and July every year. Spraying is done during this period approximately every 10-14 days if there is no rain.

The material being sprayed was not dust but a sulfur derivative, *micronized wettable sulfur*, in which water has been mixed with the sulfur, resulting in lower sulfur content, less drift and smaller particles which stick to the leaves. Sulfur has low toxicity but it can be an irritant for people or animals. Matt Phillips stated this spraying is usually done between 2 am and 6 am, when there are fewer people around. Also, according to the Agricultural Commissioner's office, it is better to spray when there is some wind (less than 5 mph). The spraying is supposed to be kept on site (as much as possible) and should not be sprayed when there is a "strong" wind.

Both sources of information encouraged cooperation between neighbors and growers. Any concerned neighbor can contact the vineyard manager to find out what was being sprayed and why the spraying was happening on that particular day, especially if there was a strong wind. Anyone can even ask that he/she be informed ahead of time about when the spraying is going to occur at a particular vineyard, even though that is not a requirement. On the 10th day of each month, there is a requirement that a report be filed in the Sonoma Co. Office of the Agricultural Commission showing exactly what was sprayed on a particular day, time, and place in the previous month.

Other sprayings which might occur at Bennett Valley vineyards include spraying for mites about every four years and spraying for oak caterpillars, if there is an especially bad year, as there was in 2002.

Bennett Valley Tidbits

CALENDAR NEWS!!!!

The Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association gave the Bennett Valley Volunteer Firefighters a check for \$740 from the sale of the 2003 Bennett Valley calendars. You will find a *Photo Entry Form* for the 2004 calendar in both this issue and the July issue of the VOICE. The deadline for entries is **August 31, 2003**. Entry forms will also be available in the Homeowners' drawer at the BV Fire Station. You may reserve your calendar(s) by calling Judy @ 544-0234 or Suzanne @ 542-1608.

A Closely Watched New BV Vineyard

A Bennett Valley resident called to report that he talked to Gail Davis from the Sonoma Co. Agricultural Commissioner's office about the freshly disked dirt visible from Bennett Valley Road on the west side of Bennett Ridge. This developing vineyard is on a slope which is up to 49%, very close to the maximum allowed. Gail is in charge of enforcement of the relatively new Sonoma County vineyard ordinance and she is meeting with the responsible engineer and vineyard manager for this vineyard regularly to be sure all the requirements are being met and erosion is being prevented.

Bennett Valley Community Day Celebration

Come join the fun! It's time again to mark your calendars for Community Day activities, expected to be on Sunday, September 7th, from noon until 5 pm. This celebration is held annually as a fundraiser by Bennett Valley Volunteer Firefighters. There will be a chicken and salmon barbecue, pasta, salad, beer, wine, soft drinks, games, fun for the kids and much more. The Live and Silent auctions items include art, wine, food, body work, timeshares, collectables, dinners, weekend get-aways and more. Proceeds from this event are used by the firefighters for purchasing additional lifesaving and safety equipment as well as continuing training and education. This event gives us a wonderful opportunity to thank these volunteers and show them we continue to support them. If you can donate items for the auction, please call Bobbie Blair, 542-1608.

Update: Grange Road Bridge

The County is currently negotiating the rights-of-way necessary for both the temporary bridge and the permanent new bridge. Once this occurs the project is expected to go out for bid. The earliest possible start date for putting in the temporary bridge is now July, 2003.

Bennett Valley Homeowners' Membership

There are now 280 members, but we want to increase that number in order to be able to show strong support for "promoting and preserving the rural and natural environment of Bennett Valley". Please send in your \$15 annual BVHA membership dues to *Blair/Dougherty at 7373 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa, 95404*. Besides the benefits resulting from your community support and participation, membership gives you the right to vote in the election for the BVHA Board of Directors or to run for office. (See article in next column.) **We value each and every member and would like to give a big THANK-YOU to all of you who have sent in your dues for 2003** (as indicated by a checkmark in the box on your VOICE address label).

We would also like to give a big WELCOME to the following members who've recently joined, either for the first time or after a time lapse: *Charles Hall, Steve Goody & Catherine Daley, Geoff & Evelyn Hornsby, Gary Garabedian, James & Kathleen Petrulli, Marilyn Wilson, Patti & Russell Moreci, Geary & Leslie Rea, Gary & Teresa James and Gary & Nancy McLerran*.

Some members have made the choice to also send in an extra donation along with their dues. This has proven to be very beneficial and helps with some of our basic ongoing costs including the following:

- *Printing and mailing the VOICE to the 800 BV parcels who have not chosen to receive it by way of e-mail.*
- *The BVHA Board of Directors' liability insurance.*

We would need 414 memberships just to cover these two costs alone. These supplemental donations have enabled us to pay for important extras such as producing 6,000 copies of the Bennett Valley pamphlet, which continues to be mailed out regularly to real estate agents with listed property for sale in the Valley, as well as the BVHA web-page.

We take this opportunity to give a **BIG THANK-YOU** to the following, who've chosen to send a donation along with their dues to BVHA: *Steve Goody & Catherine Daley, Jan Brutocao, Michael & Helen Bates, Ann Hodder, Tom Engle & Debra Forton, Jeannette Pierre, Chuck & Kati Quibell, Gary Garabedian, James & Kathleen Petrulli, Robert & Jocelyn Thompson, John & Deborah Myers, Gary & Susan Shaw, Ed & Sally Jensen, Mark & Lisa Young, Susan Gilliland, Barrett & Katherine Roach, Clay & Anne Stephens and Mike & Maggie Treinin*.

Come Find Out About Septic Systems!

On Wednesday, May 21st, beginning at 7 pm at the BV Fire Station, Richard Lease, a Registered Environmental Health Specialist, will speak about septic systems in general and maintenance in particular as well as answer any and all questions you might have. Following his presentation, the BVHA Board of Directors will have their regularly scheduled May meeting, if you'd like to stay.

BVHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR MEETING , Wednesday, 5/21/03, 7:00 pm, BV Fire Station

- Call to Order
- 7:00 PM, Speaker, Richard Lease, SEPTIC TANKS**
- Public Input, Approval of Treasurer's Report and Minutes, Last Meeting
- Monthly Report: Board of Supervisors, Open Space District, Matanzas Creek Watershed Group, Sonoma County Public Works & PRMD
- BV Clean-up Day, rescheduled for June 21st
- BVHA Amended Articles of Incorporation
- Reaching-out plans for new BV Residents
- BVHA web-page update
- Suggested Speakers, July 16th Board Meeting
- BV Fire Water Tank; Landscaping or Screening?
- California Flag at Fire Station?
- BV Community Day Status
- PRMD Reports; Dragonsleaf, 7400 BV Road and (Jess) Jackson Enterprises, Grange Rd. & BV Road
- BVHA Board of Directors next election, Sept.,03

Upcoming BVHA Board Elections

In the fall of each year, three directors are to be elected for a term of three years. Qualifications for office (per 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. Members may declare their candidacy and submit their statements between July 1st and August 15th, 2003 to the BVHA Nominating Committee, chaired by Phil Temko (544-0234). Think about if you are interested and watch for further details in the July VOICE.

Bennett Valley Clean-up Day

On 4/12/03, BV Clean-up Roads Day was canceled because of rain. It has now been re-scheduled for Saturday, June 21st, 8:30 am, BV Fire Station. Please join us to clean up litter on the BV roads! Coffee & donuts will be served.

NOTES: Bennett Valley Fire Station

- **Five Bennett Valley Fire Explorers**, all high school students, traveled to Downey, California for a week long training academy in mid-April. During this week, the young men were subjected to long days (18 to 20 hours long) which included several hours of hands on training followed by several more hours of classroom instruction by some of California's most respected fire officers. As in years past, all five came back with a scratchy voice from yelling at the top of their lungs all day, tired, a few pounds lighter, and a lot more confident.

This training academy is extremely rigorous. The Explorers who attend are usually nervous with anticipation on the first day, then strutting around like Roosters by the last. They receive training in all aspects of fire service and walk away with a higher level of knowledge coupled with pride in their abilities to operate safely and effectively on the fire ground back home.

The cost of the academy is approximately \$300 per Explorer. This year the young men were able to attend with zero cost to themselves. Donations and funds raised with the *Explorer Address Sign* program paid for their tuition. Desperately needed gear was donated by Gold Ridge Fire District, and a vehicle and its fuel were donated by a valley resident so the boys could make the trip. The Explorers are tremendously thankful for the generous and continuous support of their post.

The Explorers drill every Monday evening at 7:00 pm. Valley residents are encouraged to stop by and view them in action. The post is currently full and there is an active waiting list for new applicants. If you have a son or daughter who is at least 15 years old and is interested in fire service, applications are being accepted. Interviews and appointments will be made as positions open up.

Matt Phillips, Captain, BVFPD

- **Andy Pforsich is the new Bennett Valley and Gold Ridge Fire Chief. Kent Reynolds worked his last "shift" as Fire Chief on April 30th**, although he will be available on a consultative basis until 12/31/03. He and his wife are looking forward to the move to their new home in Grants Pass, Oregon, which is on 10.5 acres with numerous trees, a year-round creek and adjacent to hundreds of acres of open space. They also have lots of birds and wildlife there, including elk.

We certainly appreciate all of Kent's special efforts for Bennett Valley Fire. Meanwhile, Bennett Valley and Gold Ridge are continuing to negotiate about a possible future Administrative Agreement between the two fire districts.

▪ **Results of New BV Special Fire Tax**

*Effective 2/1/03, our three paid firefighting engineers, Jason Mallory, Brian Campbell and Mike Musgrove, had their pay increased to \$13/ph, compared to the \$8.90/ph they were making previously. As Captain Jason Mallory said, this has enabled them to depend less on other outside jobs.

* Fire Chief Andy Pforsich and his staff are interviewing applicants for the new position of daytime firefighter at the Bennett Valley Fire Station. Once this firefighter starts work, which is expected to be the first of June, there will be two paid firefighters at the Fire Station, Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, in addition to any volunteers who might be available.

*Also about June 1st, the BV Fire Protection District is expecting to start paying stipends for two volunteers each night, at \$25 each, to sleep over at the Fire Station. The purpose of this is to better insure that three firefighters are on duty each night.

▪ **We need more BV Volunteer Firefighters!**

There are currently 17 active volunteers at the BV Fire Station, and this number always decreases in the summer, when a number of volunteers get paid for summertime firefighting jobs with the California Department of Forestry (CDF). Jason Mallory and Brian Campbell are even continuing to serve as volunteer firefighters for BV emergencies when they are off-duty. If you know anyone who is 18 years of age or older and might be interested in being a volunteer firefighter, please encourage him/her to stop by the BV Fire Station to sign up.

▪ **Help the Firefighters Find You Even Quicker!**

Captain Jason Mallory confirms that the reflective, two-sided green & white *Explorer Address Signs* are much easier to find than almost any other address signs. If your address sign "blends into the environment", that means it is more difficult to see, especially when it is dark or gloomy outside. As you can imagine, this kind of delay in locating your home may be life-threatening to you. Be sure to order your **Explorer Address Sign** as soon as possible, at a cost of \$12.50, from the Bennett Valley Fire Station. (578-8471)

▪ **LIVING WITH FIRE IN SONOMA COUNTY, A Guide For The Homeowner**

– This is an excellent new 12-page brochure prepared by FireSAFE Sonoma and other Fire Agencies of Sonoma County. You can phone 565-1152 to find out how to obtain a copy, at no cost. The Bennett Valley Fire Station will eventually have some copies, also.

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District Board of Directors

**6161 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa
(707) 578-7761**

Matt Phillips, Chairman
Dan Felciano, Deborah Haarstad
Mark Richardson

The Board meetings are on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, at 7:00 pm. at the BV Fire Station. The dates for the next two meetings are June 10th and July 8th. Everyone is welcome to attend. If you have any questions or concerns you can call the Bennett Valley Fire Chief, Andy Pforsich, at (707) 578-7761.

Bennett Valley Community Calendar

Don't forget to write these dates on your calendar!

1. Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association The BVHA Board meets at the BV Fire Station the third Wednesday of every other month, with the next two meetings being on May 21st and July 16th. Normally these meetings start at 7:30 pm, but when a speaker is scheduled (such as Richard Lease, the Environmental Health Specialist on Septic Systems, on May 21st) then the meeting will start at 7 pm. **Please join us at 7:00 pm, May 21st - especially if you're interested in septic systems.**

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. Please feel free to attend.

3. Bennett Valley Grange #16 - Everyone is invited, on Sunday afternoon, June 1st, to the 130th (that is 100 + 30) Annual Picnic and Barbecue at the Grange. Watch for the signs with more details!

4. Bennett Valley "Clean-Up Roads" Day
Rescheduled for Saturday, June 21st, 8:30 am, BV Fire Station. **We'd really appreciate you spending a couple of hours helping us clean up the litter along the BV roads!** Remember to wear sturdy shoes, gloves and hats for sun protection. BVHA provides pick-up sticks, to reduce your bending over, and safety vests.

5. Sonoma County Board of Supervisors – Meets at different times 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.

Brief Summary of BVHA Board Meeting March 19th, 2003

- If you see fliers advertising "Night Club" activity on Roberts Road on Friday or Saturday nights, be sure to notify the Sheriff's Department (requested by both neighbors and Sheriff Deputy White).
- The Board agreed to purchase two new signs (cloth, not plywood) for BV "Clean-Up Roads" Day.
- Tim Murphy is working on amended Articles of Incorporation and ideas for welcoming and orienting new BV residents.
- Eric Burns is working on making the BVHA web-page less cumbersome for additions and changes.
- BVHA Board of Directors' Liability Insurance is in effect as of 2/1/03, @ \$1,000 annually.
- BVHA Board will reconsider possible actions in May to make the water tank at the Fire Station less noticeable...painting? landscaping?
- The California flag at the BV Fire Station was shredded in the wind. One of the Board members may have an extra to give to the Fire Station.
- The BVHA Board agreed to write a letter helping to secure a location for BV Community Day, in liaison with Captain Jason Mallory.
- The BVHA Board decided that **cultural events and community-type events specific to Bennett Valley were appropriate for inclusion in the VOICE**, even if they appeared to be "advertising".
- Helen Bates agreed to confer with Karin Theriault, PRMD, regarding an application for a variance from Dragonsleaf Estate Vineyard, 7400 Bennett Valley Rd.

For more information about this meeting, you may call Bobbie Blair @ 542-1608.

**BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS'
ASSOCIATION (BVHA) BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
P.O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa, CA 95405
BVHA Web-Page <bennettvalleyhomeowners.org>

Marilee Jensen, *President & VOICE Editor*
(576-0405; phone # and FAX #)

Michael Friedenberg, *Vice-President* (579-5310)

Helen Bates, *Treasurer* (695-8760)

Bobbie Blair, *Recording Secretary & Mailing List/Membership Coordinator* (542-1608)

Leanore (Lolly) Mesches, *Corresponding Secretary* (545-8684)

Eric Burns, *Director, Web-Page Coordinator*
(584-7531)

Jennifer Combs, *Director* (546-1190)

Tim Murphy, *Director* (542-7114)

Marilyn Stocks, *Director* (528-2458)

**CALENDAR PHOTO ENTRY FORM
2004**

Deadline: August 31, 2003

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ NUMBER OF ENTRIES: _____

- Photos of the valley and photos of original paintings of the valley are acceptable.
- 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.
- If you want your pictures mailed back to you, please include a SASE.

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

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

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Bennett Valley Homeowner's 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

**HELP CLEAN-UP BV ROADS!
June 21st, 8:30 am, BV Fire Station**