



Bennett Valley

VOICE

VOLUME 27, NUMBER 1

Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association (BVHA)

JANUARY, 2004

BENNETT VALLEY

*“...This Wonderful Place to Live In and To Enjoy.”**

“As I write this during the early morning hours, the sun is slowly reaching into the Valley and I am once again struck by the beauty of Bennett Valley and how fortunate and privileged we are to live here. Were it not for those few people who many years ago had the foresight to start our Association to save our Valley from over development, and those people who worked long and hard on the Area Plan, we would not have this wonderful place to live in and to enjoy.”

*Bill Sullivan, BVHA VOICE, March, '97

Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association (BVHA) is one of the best ways to be actively involved in maintaining this wonderful place to live. Get Involved! Stay Informed! It's time to step up and join the Bennett Valley Homeowner's Assn. for 2004. We need members to help actively pursue our BVHA Mission of *promoting and preserving the rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley, while serving as a forum for community participation and providing a bridge for communication.* Your continued support is very important. Please send your annual dues of \$15, made out to BVHA, plus any donation you might like to make, to Blair/Dougherty, 7373 Bennett Valley Rd. Santa Rosa, CA 95404. A dues form and envelope have been included in this VOICE for your convenience. You can get your copy of the VOICE faster and help the Association save money by getting your copy of the VOICE by e-mail. At the present time 120 households use this service, at a savings of \$266.40 in postage alone. The Board has agreed to send the VOICE to all Valley homeowners, as long as the budget will allow. This is one way you can help to keep costs down and keep the VOICE available to all. Just circle yes and include your email address on your membership form and return with your dues. We will do all the rest. Please e-mail Bobbie at dreams7373@sbcglobal.net or call her at 542-1608, if you have questions.

Information Presented By BVHA In 2003:

- Sonoma Mountain Appellation
- Bennett Valley Vineyard Spraying
- A Closely Watched New BV Vineyard
- **Forum On Morley Winery Project, 6/18/03**
- Bennett Valley Appellation
- Wildlife Friendly Fencing
- Injured Deer Information
- Report on Sudden Oak Death Fungus
- Welcome, Supervisor Valerie Brown
- Sonoma Co. General Plan Updates
- Grange Road Bridge Updates
- Jacobs Ranch Purchase, Open House Dates
- Sonoma Mountain Preservation Group
- 4th Annual Art on the Ridge
- BV Artists in Art Trails Open Studios
- Nature Condos For Barn Owls
- Growing Native Flowers
- Bennett Valley Mail Theft
- Residents Warned of High Fire Risk
- Reducing Wildfire Threat w/ Defensible Space
- Bennett Valley Fire Station; New Fire Chief, Staffing, Emergency Calls, Training, Explorers
- BV Community Day Celebration
- Bennett Valley Clean-Up Roads Days
- Bennett Valley Community Activities
- Bennett Valley Annual Calendars
- Water Quality in Your Well
- **Groundwater concerns: Speaker, 1/21/04, 7 PM, BVHA meeting, Fire Station**

During 2003, we sponsored speakers at the beginning of two of the BVHA Board Meetings, presenting information on the following:

- **May 21st – Septic Systems**
- **September 17th - “What you need to know about Water Quality in Your Well.”**

Please let us know other speakers/topics you'd be interested in hearing or discussing at future BVHA Board meetings!

Glen Ellen Fire Station in BV

The Glen Ellen Fire District has had, for about 40 years, a “fire station” at the corner of Enterprise and Sonoma Mountain Roads, on the Derickson property. This situation exists in that the Fire District boundary overlaps the “Bennett Valley Study Area”. Glen Ellen Fire covers most of Enterprise Road and even parts of Sonoma Mountain Road west of Enterprise Road. The Sonoma Mountain Zen Center is just inside the Bennett Valley Fire District.

This fire station has included the Derickson Victorian House, which was the initial dispatch center for Glen Ellen Fire and a “garage” where an active but temporary fire engine is still kept. The Glen Ellen Fire District has nine volunteers living close to that “fire station”, who use that fire engine for any nearby emergency. This significantly improves the Glen Ellen Fire emergency response time for that area. It also can be very helpful to Bennett Valley Fire, which is stationed considerably further away.

The Glen Ellen “temporary” fire engine kept on that property is an older engine that does not meet the ISO (insurance) requirements for the Sonoma Mountain area. Glen Ellen Fire applied for and received a FEMA grant to be used to obtain a better fire engine meeting ISO requirements for that particular location.

They now have a new Type 2 Fire Engine meeting these requirements, with all the equipment necessary to fight both structure fires and wildland fires. It seats 5 firefighters, holds 500 gallons of water and pumps 1,000 gallons per minute. It has a tight turning base, necessary to turn the tight corners found on the narrow roads and steep driveways in that part of Glen Ellen. Because of its added size and weight, this fire engine cannot be stored in any of the available buildings on the Derickson property. It currently has to be stored at the Glen Ellen Fire Station on Arnold Drive. To meet the NFPA (National Fire) standards for storage of this fire engine, a building is needed with non-flammable walls and a floor of six inches of reinforced concrete. The building’s dimensions need to be 20 feet by 30 feet, with a height of about 14 feet, matching the pitch of the surrounding roofs.

Bill Murray, the Glen Ellen Fire Chief for the last five years, has been talking to Sonoma County officials about how and where this necessary storage building could be put on the Derickson property, which is designated as an historical landmark and also covered by the Bennett Valley Area Plan. The current proposal is to remove a large cargo container and replace it with this building, which will be even shorter than the container. This building is to be designed to match the style and colors of the surrounding buildings. It will use dark metal panels for the walls. The roof will be metal with the same

pitch and color as the surrounding metal roofs. It will blend into its surroundings much better than the peach-colored 40’ by 10’ metal container box which is now in that same location.

As an example of Fire District boundaries, Chief Murray described the situation at the Mayo Winery, just off Keiser Ranch Road. On the same parcel, the parking lot is in the Bennett Valley Fire District, the home is in the Kenwood Fire District, and the Winery is in the Glen Ellen Fire District. All of the Sonoma County Fire Districts have agreed, through their new computer dispatch system, to cover any nearby emergencies, therefore Glen Ellen, Bennett Valley and Kenwood Fire Districts will all show up for any emergency in that vicinity.

In his explanation of what was being proposed, Chief Murray included a great deal of local history. For instance the Derickson family (originally the Thompsons) first homesteaded their property in 1852. There is a little shed-like building which they first lived in, still standing next to the bigger “newer” Victorian home, which was built in 1885.

Stacia Thompson Derickson continues to live in her home on the corner of Enterprise Road and Sonoma Mountain Road, where the Glen Ellen fire engine is also kept. Bill Derickson was her husband and they had seven children: six boys and one girl. All nine members of this Derickson family were volunteers for the Glen Ellen Fire District, with Bill Derickson being a Battalion Chief, Stacia Derickson being the first dispatcher from their home, and all seven of their children serving as volunteer firefighters. [This sounds very similar to the Gloeckner family at the Hessel Volunteer Fire Station, now a part of Gold Ridge Fire, where the fire station was on their property. Agnes Gloeckner was one of their first dispatchers and her husband, son and three grandsons all served, or are serving, as firefighters nearby.]

Hopefully, the new Glen Ellen “Fire Station” can be ready for this new fire engine before too much longer. There have been a number of discussions between Chief Murray, PRMD (planning) staff, a Deputy County Counsel, and Supervisor Valerie Brown’s office, even though the permit application has yet to be submitted. Chief Murray expects to file this application shortly, because the sooner this new fire engine is in place, the sooner the fire protection in that area will be markedly improved.

Chief Murray wanted to be sure that Bennett Valley and Sonoma Mountain residents knew what was being proposed and why it was necessary, in advance. He will be at the BVHA meeting on 1/21/04, around 8:00 pm, to answer any questions anyone might have.

Jacobs Ranch Open House

By Marilee Jensen

Groundwater Concerns

On Saturday, December 6th, at 10 am, at the Jacobs Ranch, located at 5297 Sonoma Mountain Road, Supervisor Valerie Brown presented an official acknowledgement to Kip and Marilyn Herzog, Bill and Ruth Jacobs' daughter and son-in-law, for their willingness to sell the 168-acre Jacobs Ranch to the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District. This acknowledgement was done in the living room of this single family residence at the Jacobs Ranch, with about thirty or forty people present, despite the rainy conditions.

There had been some expressed concerns in Bennett Valley about any parking along Sonoma Mountain Road which might be necessary for public access to the Jacobs Ranch. It turns out the ranch is a considerable distance from its address on Sonoma Mountain Road, up a number of different winding roads. All the people attending this Open House were able to find parking around the house and other buildings. Parking along Sonoma Mountain Road was not a practical or desirable option.

Also present at this Open House were a number of staff from Sonoma Open Space, including General Manager Andrea Mackenzie, and a representative from Landpaths, the non-profit organization which is helping to steward this ranch, and sponsor occasional docent-led tours of the ranch. Andrea McKenzie presented information and answered questions about their future plans for the ranch and the nine other properties in the vicinity, which they are exploring for possible Open Space acquisition, most likely as part of a State or County park system. Because of the Jacobs' involvement with horses, and the two horse-stall barns on the property, Andrea did say Jacobs Ranch will include some equestrian use for sure. After the presentations, the Open Space staff led those who were interested through the open meadows and oak woodlands, up the hill to the redwood forest grove.

The funds used to purchase this land are from the designated ¼ cent Sonoma County sales tax, approved by county voters in 1990, for twenty years, to preserve Agriculture and Open Space in Sonoma County. This is a very unusual use of sales tax, for which Sonoma County can be especially proud. It will be one of the planning tools which will help us remain a little further removed from urban sprawl, as seen in Santa Clara County and other locations over the last fifty years. This acquisition of Jacobs Ranch by the Sonoma County Open Space District has preserved a place of great value for public appreciation and enjoyment in the future.

As described in more detail in the November VOICE, the speaker at the next Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association meeting, on Wednesday, January 21st, at 7:00 pm, will be H.R. Downs, presenting information on "***Groundwater, Inherently Invisible, is Disappearing.***" He is President of the O.W.L. Association, which stands for Open Space, Water Resource Protection and Land Use. As a quick summary of his ideas, "*Nobody can look down a modern well... if the groundwater level drops, most people are completely ignorant of the fact.... **what you can't see can still hurt you.***" For more information, please refer to Page Two of the November VOICE, or call 576-0405.

You Can Still Get A 2004 BV Calendar!

Bennett Valley 2004 Calendars are still available at the Fire Station, Paterson's Nursery or thru Suzanne, 542-1608 or Marilee, 576-0405.

The following is a quote from the Press Democrat in an article describing different calendars, on 12/9/03, "*Bennett Valley*", featuring paintings and photos celebrating this southeast Santa Rosa community. Published by the BVHA to benefit their fire department..."

Take advantage of the special price of \$12 per calendar, while they still last.

Grange Road Bridge Update

Sonoma County Public Works Department needs to secure the necessary right-of-ways to install the temporary bridge, which will happen prior to tearing down the old bridge and constructing the new bridge.

There is one piece of property on which they have not yet been able to secure the right of way. They have already held the *Hearing of Necessity* on this property, so they don't expect the condemnation procedure to be a lengthy one. The uncertain variable is how long it will take the County Counsel to complete this procedure. Sonoma County Public Works can proceed at this time to request the construction funds from CAL-TRANS, but they can't go out to bid for the bridge construction until after the right-of-way is secured. They are still hoping that construction of the temporary bridge can begin this year, but that is not yet a certainty.

● **Who Is Andy Pforsich, BV Fire Chief?**

When Andy was asked to tell us about himself, he wrote: *Here is a little bit about me. I am 44 years old, live in Sebastopol with my wife, Andrea, and our two children, Carson, 4, and Kelsey, 2. I was born and raised in Sebastopol, attended Twin Hills Elementary School, Analy High School, graduating in 1977, and Santa Rosa Junior College, graduating in 1984. I joined the Explorer Post at Twin Hills Fire District (which became Gold Ridge in 1993) and was appointed to firefighter at age 16 (in 1975). I have held several positions during my tenure at Twin Hills/Gold Ridge including Board member from 1978-1985, then Assistant Chief from 1985-2003.*

After working many jobs as a kid including picking apples, cleaning floors at Fircrest Market, milking and feeding cows at Miller's Dairy, and clerk at Sebastopol Hardware (which was owned by my parents) I was hired as a firefighter-trainee at Santa Rosa Fire Department at age 17. In 1979 at age 19, I was hired as a full-time firefighter, then promoted to Captain in 1985 and Battalion Chief in 2000.

My hobbies and interests include enjoying time with my family, bicycle riding, spending time on our houseboat at Lake Sonoma, working in the yard which includes a small orchard and vineyard, and community service to Gold Ridge and Bennett Valley Fire Districts (as Fire Chief for both Fire Districts).

The following information about Andy Pforsich is quoted from the *Chris Smith* column in the Press Democrat on 11/20/03: *Andy, an avid cyclist, was pedaling on Bodega Avenue in west Sebastopol when he jammed on his bike's brakes to avoid a pickup that made a right turn in front of him. He sailed over the handlebars, hit the pavement and slid underneath the truck. He pushed up against it as the right rear tire ran over him. An ambulance took him to Memorial Hospital, where doctors checked him out and sent him home, with a, "Boy, are you lucky!"*

Bill Pisenti and I met separately with Andy at the BV Fire Station, three days after this accident. Despite a few scabs and bruises, he looked so healthy it was hard to believe his story. Chris Smith's column also mentions *"the time he was attacked by dogs, or the time he involuntarily slid down a phone pole..."*

Everyone you talk to about Andy has great praise for him, way beyond his apparent fortitude. That's our Bennett Valley Fire Chief!

● **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

● **BENNETT VALLEY FIREFIGHTER TRAINING**

By Captain Brian Campbell, B-Shift Engineer

December 2003 Training was our Multi Casualty Incident or M.C.I. Triage training. This is when we encounter multiple patient incidents. Triage is a term that means doing the most good in the least amount of time. When we get on scene we can tag the patients with "Triage Tags". These tags identify the patients into categories of severity, so that patients with the most need get the appropriate care first.

Also Bennett Valley was involved in Santa Rosa Fire Department's major drill. These drills take place once a month and are excellent experience for the Bennett Valley firefighters. This month's topic was roof operations and search and rescue. Roof operations are when firefighters go on top of the roof and cut holes to release smoke and hot gases from a burning structure. This is extremely important when there is a structure fire.

● **DECEMBER FIREFIGHTER ACTIVITIES**

By Bryon Reid, C-Shift Engineer

During the month of December, the BV Firefighters had 2 structure fires, 7 vehicle accidents, 8 medical aids, 1 tree down and 1 public assist. On the 5th of December, at 12:30 am, BVFPD went to assist Rancho Adobe Fire District in *mutual aid*. There was a structure fire in one of the new dorms at Sonoma State University and the Bennett Valley Engine 7882 (our new Type I structure fire engine) was one of the first units at the scene. After donning Self Contained Breathing Apparatuses (SCBA's), the Incident Commander assigned our 7882 crew to conduct horizontal ventilation by laddering the second story of the dorm and breaking out the windows in the fire room. After that was completed, the crew completed other assignments. Rancho Adobe, Rincon Valley, Rohnert Park and Petaluma Fire Districts also responded to that incident.

We frequently take our engines out of district to assist our neighboring agencies in *"automatic mutual aid."* Whenever this occurs, the crew leaving Bennett Valley ensures that the station always gets staffed with additional firefighters in the event that another emergency call occurs within Bennett Valley in their absence. Whenever there are emergency calls in Bennett Valley the surrounding fire districts also respond with *"automatic mutual aid."*

All of the support received from the community during the holiday season is immensely appreciated. Here at Bennett Valley Fire Station, we keep the best interests of the community in our thoughts and actions and it is flattering to know that the community keeps us in their thoughts as well. We look forward to providing unmatched service to our community in the upcoming year and thank the residents of Bennett Valley for all of their support!

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District

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

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 call the Bennett Valley Fire Chief, Andy Pforsich, at 823-1084

Brief Summary of BVHA Board Meeting

(For a copy of the minutes, please call Bobbie Blair, 542-1608.)

November 19th, 2003

- *BVHA Web-Page-Sonic* is now our carrier for the web-page, at a cost of \$25 per month. All of the 2003 VOICES will be on the web-page and BVHA Director Eric Burns will continue to update and make the system more user-friendly.
- *BVHA Amended Articles of Incorporation*-Tim Murphy reports that now that they have been approved by the BVHA members in the last election, they will be submitted to the Secretary of State with the \$30 fee.
- *BVHA Meeting Schedule, 2004*- 3rd Wednesday; January 21st, March 17th, May 19th, July 21st, Sept. 15th, October 20th, and November 17th.
- *Speakers at BVHA Meetings*- The Board is requesting ideas, plans for speakers from BV residents. Bobbie will put a sign up in front of the fire station for the speaker on January 21st.

BVHA Board Of Directors
Tentative Agenda For Meeting

January 21st, 2004, 7:00 Pm, BV Fire Station

- Call to Order, 7:00 pm
- Speaker, H.R.Downs, *Groundwater Concerns*
- Bill Murray, Glen Ellen Fire Chief, to discuss Fire Engine Storage in Bennett Valley Area
- Public Input, Minutes, & Treasurer's Report
- Monthly Reports: Sonoma Co. Board of Supervisors, Open Space District, Public Works, & PRMD
- Updates: BVHA Web-page, Morley Winery public hearing, 12/11/03, 2004 BV Calendars
- Annual Orientation on Important Documents, Including: Amended Articles of Incorporation, Conflict of Interest and Updated BVHA Board of Directors List.
- Speaker Suggestions, Plans, Dates

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, *Web-Page Coordinator* (584-7531)
Jennifer Combs, *Director* (546-1190)
Tim Murphy, *Director* (542-7114)
Marilyn Stocks, *Director* (528-2458)

Letter to the Editor:

Saving The Owls And Other Species

I am writing in response to the November 2003 VOICE article entitled "Nature Condos for Barn Owls." I think this was a wonderful article to include in your newsletter. I have several nesting boxes for owls on my property.

I was dismayed to find that you did not include the following information, which I think is most important. Someone using rodent poison and encouraging owls to frequent the area, would end up poisoning the owls as well. Rodents with poisons in their system will be much slower, and more likely to be caught by raptors (*definition-a group of birds of prey with a strong notched beak and sharp talons, as the eagle, hawk, owl, etc.*). Owls and other raptors that eat rodents who have ingested poison can themselves be killed by it. So I urge you to publish a follow-up article with a warning for those people who plan to purchase a "Nature Condo".

Please let them know that if they would like to see more of these beautiful birds, they must make sure they are not using any sort of poisons that may pose a threat to them. They must make certain that in an effort to control rodent populations, they are not doing the same to other, more welcome, species.

Sincerely,

Michelle Friend,
(*Bennett Valley Parcel Owner*)

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

(BVHA MAILING LABEL)

Please mail in this form 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 or call (707) 542-1608.

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, or telephone #. If you don't have enough room, insert additional paper. Thanks!

Comments/Changes: _____

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

(BVHA MAILING LABEL)

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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, or telephone #. If you don't have enough room, insert additional paper. Thanks!

Comments/Changes: _____

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Bennett Valley Community Activities

Remember to note these dates on your calendar!

- 1.) **Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association** -The BVHA Board meets on the third Wednesday of every other month. The next meetings are on January 21st, at 7 pm and March 17th, at the BV Fire Station. **Be sure to come hear H.B. Downs talk about our invisible but disappearing groundwater at the January meeting at 7pm.** 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 Fire Risks** - A workshop for all Bennett Valley residents is scheduled for Saturday morning, April 17th, at the Bennett Valley Fire Station, to discuss the different possibilities to help reduce high fire risks, such as when a home is up a hill or close to a number of trees and/or fields of grass and brush. Andy Pforsich, the Bennett Valley Fire Chief, will be helping to arrange for different firefighting staff, including CDF, to speak at the workshop.
- 4.) **Bennett Valley Grange # 16** –If you're interested in knowing what the BV Grange is planning, please be sure to call Patty Allen, at 544-3721.

4.) **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.

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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?
Come Hear Speaker 1/21/04!**
**B.V. 2004 Calendars Available
BV Fire Station and Paterson's Nursery**

