



Bennett Valley VOICE

VOLUME 28, NUMBER 6

Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA)

NOVEMBER, 2005

Learn More About Water Conservation and Increasing Water Capture

Come to the Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association Meeting on Tuesday, November 15th, 7 pm, at the Bennett Valley Grange Hall, 4145 Grange Rd. The speaker will be Brock Dolman from the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center (OAEC). Brock represents their OAEC Water institute, which is promoting the concept that all human development decisions must be mindful of a "rehydration model", to insure the health of watersheds and the availability of water. He will present information about the broader picture of "conservation hydrology" and then get down to more specifics that you may make use of at home, to improve your water capture and water conservation. Be sure to join us for this informative community meeting, on Tuesday, November 15th, at 7 pm!

Marring the Window To The Universe

LIGHT POLLUTION

By Timothy Ferris, BVHA VOICE, February, 1994

In addition to the many conspicuous virtues of living in Bennett Valley—the sweeping mountain views, abundant wildlife, the clean, bracing air, and the peace and quiet of country life—we are blessed with another important resource, less often talked about but no less valuable: **the sight of dark night skies filled with stars.**

As recently as a generation or so ago, most Americans grew up in places where they could go out on a moonless night and see the four thousand or so stars normally visible to the naked eye. Parents taught their children to recognize Cygnus the swan and Orion the hunter, constellations that date back to the days of the ancient Greeks.

Today, as civic and commercial electric lighting has spread across the continent, many children—and often their parents—have never been privy to the thrilling sight of a genuinely dark night. When they look up at night they see a milky-grey scrim, through which can be perceived only a few dozen

stars. Lost to them is excitement of a direct encounter with nature on a grand scale, and also an important sense of historical continuity. After all, it was knowledge of the stars that...led escaped slaves on their way north to freedom.

Responsible for this loss is what astronomers call "**light pollution**". In a quest to better illuminate streets, sidewalks, and parking lots, many municipalities have inadvertently installed lights that also shine upward, blotting out the stars. It is estimated that Americans waste \$1 billion worth of electricity a year illuminating the bellies of airplanes and birds.

Light pollution has already taken a toll in Bennett Valley. At Rocky Hill Observatory off Enterprise Road, where an 18-inch reflecting telescope is used to search for exploding stars in distant galaxies, we estimate that about a third of the naturally visible stars are blotted out by the glare coming from Santa Rosa and other neighboring communities. Near the zenith the sky remains dark enough that we can investigate galaxies and quasars up to a billion light years away. But our community is growing, and each year there are a few more lights in the Valley, like a twinkling reflection of the real constellations above.

If we are to preserve our night skies, we need to keep light pollution under control in the Valley, while encouraging our neighbors to do the same. Homeowners can help by taking a few easy steps that also save money. To fight light pollution, make sure your exterior lights are shielded...Avoid the use of glaring "security" floodlights that stay on all night. Law enforcement officers advise that much better security is provided by lights equipped with motion sensors. These come on suddenly, startling intruders, and they can pay for themselves by cutting your monthly electric bill.

On the municipal level, great progress would be made if nearby communities shaded their street lights and replaced obsolete high-pressure sodium (HPS) globes with low-pressure sodium (LPS) ones.

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LIGHT POLLUTION

(Continued from Front Page)

LPS lights use a third as much electricity as HPS, and they have a pleasing sun-yellow hue. (A recent survey in Tucson, Arizona, which years ago passed an ordinance mandating LPS street lights, revealed that 88 percent of city residents preferred them to the old kind.) By taking just these few simple, cost-saving precautions, we can help insure that our children and their children will continue to benefit from the Valley's priceless window on the wider universe.

Timothy Ferris is the author of six books on astronomy. For more information about light pollution, write the International Dark Sky Association, 3545 North Steward, Tucson, AZ 85716

BVHA ELECTION RESULTS The Members

Vote to Not Change the BVHA Name!

With 55 NO to 21 YES votes, a definitive 72% of the voting members voted against the name change for Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association. That says it all.

The three candidates for the three positions on the BVHA Board were all elected: *Eric Burns, Larissa Goliti and Craig Harrison*. Congratulations!

Bennett Valley Well Project Update

Doug Martin, who is handling this project for BVHA, reports that he has measured the water level in 20 individual wells so far. His next measurement of wells is scheduled to begin in April, so be sure to call him at 577-0360 if you're interested in having the water level of your well measured. As a part of this project, the current water levels will be compared with the initial water level for each well. Doug is also in the process of making arrangements with the following water companies in the Valley, for this same project: Bennett Ridge, Sonoma Mountain Water, Summit View, Waldruhe Heights and Woodside. The more who participate, the more accurate the results will be in regards to the status of groundwater in Bennett Valley.

REPORT ON BVHA CLEAN-UP DAY

By Eve Boling

The Homeowner's Association held its Fall clean-up day on Saturday October 8th. It was a beautiful day, and the volunteers did a great job of helping keep the valley beautiful. We would like to thank the following people for their time and effort: Sandy & Dave Sandine, Bobbie Blair, Suzanne Dougherty, Mike & Patty Hickey, Patty Gundry, Sandra Carr, Brad Hunter, Bob & Sharon Sorani, Kati Quibell, Bill & Patty Allen, Ron Simpson, and Norm & Eve Boling.

We always use the Fire Station for our base and we would also like to thank everyone there for accommodating us all these years. Also a thank you to Luci at Road Maintenance for arranging for the trash bags and for scheduling the pick up of trash.

BENNETT VALLEY 2006 CALENDAR

The calendar committee reviewed the final proof from Chromagraphics on November 3rd. The calendars are expected to be ready for delivery by Friday, November 18th. You will be able to purchase them at BV Ace Hardware and BV Long's Drug Store, on Yulupa Avenue, as well as the Bennett Valley Fire Station.

As determined by the judges, there are some lovely pictures of Bennett Valley in the 2006 Calendar. Once again, these calendars will only cost \$15. The calendar is being dedicated to Ruth Dicker, a well known artist from Bennett Valley who recently passed away. Any net proceeds from the sale of the calendar will be donated to a local Bennett Valley organization as determined by the BVHA Board at the next meeting on November 15th. If you weren't able to order your calendar on Election Day, Tuesday, November 8th, at the BV Fire Station, please call Eve, 573-8614 or Suzanne, 542-1608 to reserve your calendars and/or to obtain further information about the calendar.

When You See Garbage Along the Road

You can call Sonoma Co. Public Works Road Maintenance at 565-7280 to notify them about the location of the "garbage". If it's blocking the road, call the sheriff's office at 565-2121.

"Putting Down Roots in Earthquake Country, ...for the San Francisco Bay Region"

This well-done 32-page Handbook, published in 2005, was developed by a number of different organizations including the Southern California Earthquake Center and the U.S. Geological Survey. It was also published as USGS General Information Product 15, and is available online at <http://pubs.usgs.gov/gip/2005/15/>. Recently it was available for no charge at Home Depot, next to their Earthquake Safety products. It is well worth reading and following for earthquake preparedness.

The information in this Handbook includes: *The disastrous 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake was not the "Big One"!... Your life could change unexpectedly in the next quake... Will you be able to stay in your home?... seven steps to earthquake safety... Identify potential hazards in your home and begin to fix them... create a disaster plan and kit, ...protect yourself during earthquake shaking, ...*

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District

6161 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa
(707) 578-8471 (Non-Emergency #)

BENNETT VALLEY FIREFIGHTING STAFF

24-hour Shift Firefighting Engineers:

Brian Campbell, **Gabe Stirnus**, and Bryon Reid

Daytime Firefighters, 8 am to 5 pm:

Danny Connelly*, **Steve Gritsch**, Matt Tognozzi*
(*Also Engineers)

Who Are These Newly Hired Bennett Valley Firefighters, Steve Gritsch and Gabe Stirnus?

By Marilee Jensen

Stephen Gritsch was born in San Francisco in 1985, and his family moved to Sonoma County that same year. His father was a firefighter in San Francisco for 27 years and his mother is a trauma nurse who is currently the Trauma Coordinator for Memorial Hospital.

Steve became an Explorer at age 16 and was even sleeping at the BV Fire Station on the weekends within six months. He did everyday training on his own accord with Jimmy Gloeckner, one of the highly qualified firefighting engineers who previously worked at Bennett Valley Fire Station. When Steve turned 18 years old, he became a volunteer with the Bennett Valley Fire Protection District and was paid as a sleeper on a regular basis.

When one of the Bennett Valley firefighters left for different employment, Steve was selected as the most qualified applicant for this position and started work on September 3rd. Steve had already received a Class B Firefighter License, which qualifies him to drive all the fire engines. He has also completed the necessary training to become an "engineer" within a few months. His long-range goal, once he has attained a number of years of experience, is to be hired as a firefighter in San Francisco. He would still want to live in Sonoma County, but commute to the City early in the morning (4:30 am to 6 am) similar to what his father did for a number of years.

Gabe Stirnus started at the age of 18 by attending a fire training academy for new volunteers in October, 1998 at the Gold Ridge Fire Station. This initial training took a couple of nights each week for five months, and then Gabe could start as a volunteer firefighter at Bennett Valley. He has continued to work as a volunteer at Bennett Valley, but he also has worked for California Department of Forestry (CDF) during the summers, including helicopter duty for two years. During these seven years, he also has completed a fire technology course at Santa Rosa

J.C. and received a Bachelor's Degree from Sonoma State University, in Sociology.

Gabe became a firefighting engineer in March, 2004 and recently has been employed as an engineer in part-time shifts at the Gold Ridge Fire District. He competed in the four-part examination for this paid full-time engineer position at Bennett Valley, which included a practical exam on firefighting techniques, a subordinate counseling test, power point mode for a structure fire and an interview with the Fire Chief. Gabe was then selected as the finalist for this position, which had become available when Mike Musgrove recently accepted a position with the City of Santa Rosa Fire Department.

When the fire season officially ended on November 1st, Gabe's summer position with CDF ended and he started at Bennett Valley Fire on November 2nd. On his own volition, he is planning to start attending paramedic school in January in a one year program; six months in the classroom, two months in a hospital and four months in an ambulance, to increase his skills as a firefighter even further. As he said, 70% of their work is with medical emergencies, so this training will enable him to do an even better job for Bennett Valley. This training is only two days a week, so he feels he'll be able to fit it into his schedule as a Bennett Valley firefighting engineer, similar to what Bryon Reid has been doing for the last six months.

Bennett Valley residents can feel very reassured with the qualifications and commitment of these two newly hired firefighters, along with all of the other paid and volunteer firefighters working for Bennett Valley Fire Protection District.

BV Firefighter Activities;

September/October, 2005

By Bryon Reid, 24-Hour Shift Firefighting Engineer
September/October Incident Activity

<i>Medical Aids-12;</i>	<i>Vehicle Accidents-2;</i>
<i>Vegetation Fires-1;</i>	<i>Structure Fires 3;</i>
<i>Smoke Investigations-1;</i>	<i>Hazardous Conditions-1;</i>
<i>Public Assists-3</i>	<i>Fire Alarm Soundings-8;</i>
<i>Hazardous Material Incidents-1</i>	

Summer is over and all of us in Bennett Valley got through another fire season without a significant incident to threaten the fire safety of any of our residents here in the valley. Bennett Valley has significant potential for a large scale fire to occur but with awareness and prevention we avoided disaster. A sigh of relief is usually let out when the grapes are harvested and rain begins to fall in Bennett Valley. The first rains of fall traditionally mark the end of fire season in the State of California. This end of fire

season is also characterized by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) considerably downsizing their staffing levels. With the significant decrease in the concern for fire danger comes the winter burning season.

In conjunction with the CDF approval for burning, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), which, in fact, is the governing body over burning regulations, must also give its blessing for burning. Together, both organizations have approved the 2005/2006 Burn Season which is now open. In order to burn, one must obtain BOTH a current Bennett Valley Fire District burn permit and a BAAQMD notification form. Both documents are available at the fire station during normal business hours. Copies of the BAAQMD regulations are also available at www.baaqmd.gov.

Thank you for your continued support with the success of Community Day which took place at Matanzas Creek Winery this year. The event featured a chicken and tri-tip BBQ, wine tasting, raffle prizes, a live auction, and music. The firefighting staff and volunteers at the Bennett Valley Fire Station appreciate all the support that we receive from our community that we serve.

Bennett Valley Fire District Board

New Appointments and the Election

There have now been two new appointments to the Bennett Valley Fire Board: Joseph Mazeau and Arnie Tognozzi, who were both sworn in on September 14th, 2005, replacing Deborah Haarstad and Dan Felciano. As a way of introducing them, their statements requesting nomination to the BVFPD Board are cited below:

Joseph Mazeau *"I am applying for appointment to the Board of the Bennett Valley Fire Protection District. I retired 2 years ago after 29 years with the San Francisco Fire Department, the last 10 years as a Battalion Chief. I've enclosed an old resume that lists some of my fire suppression related background & qualifications. (I've lived in Bennett Valley for 21 years.) Any questions, give me a call. Sincerely, Joe Mazeau, 544-8782"*

Arnie Tognozzi *"I am applying for the vacant position on the Bennett Valley Fire District board of directors. I have resided in the district for 19 years, I am married and have three children ages 21, 19 and 14. If picked, I would bring to the board 21 years experience of co-owning a landscape supply and building materials business with 31 employees. I am directly involved in yearly budgets, the workman's compensation program, hiring employees, and over -*

seeing a 3 million dollar material and equipment budget. I also have had 12 years experience as a paid firefighter starting with Roseland Fire District and ending in 1984 with the Santa Rosa Fire Department. I consider myself a team player and am self motivated. I can be reached at home (707) 579-2487 or work (707) 543-8404. Arnie Tognozzi.

Every odd year, such as 2005 and 2007, two or three of the five Fire Board directors are up for re-election. This year two of the directors, that is Mark Richardson and Arnie Tognozzi are "up for re-election". They both had to file "Candidate Statements" with Sonoma County Registrar of Voters by the deadline in the second week of August.

Who is **Mark Richardson**? *Mark has been on the Bennett Valley Fire Board since July, 2002. He has lived in Bennett Valley for 43 years and continues to work as a firefighter for the City of Santa Rosa, where he has been for 29 years.*

Since there are only two people running for the two positions on the Fire Board this year, Mark Richardson's and Arnie Tognozzi's names did not appear on the special election ballot, as stipulated by law. When this happens and the County does not have to include any BV Fire District names on the ballot or count votes for the BVFPD election, it saves the Fire District at least four thousand dollars each time. After the November election, Mark Richardson and Arnie Tognozzi were "appointed as if elected", for another four years, until 2009.

Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association

(BVHA) Board Of Directors

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

Marilee Jensen, *President & VOICE Editor*

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Marilyn Stocks, *Director* (528-2458)

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Membership Coordinator Bobbie Blair, 542-1608

7373 Bennett Valley Rd., Santa Rosa, 95404,

dreams7373@sbcglobal.net

Board of Directors' Tentative Agenda

Tues., November 15th, 7 pm, BV Grange

- Brock Dolman, Speaker, *Water Conservation*
- BVHA makes correspondence public, with writer's OK?
- Selecting BVHA cabinet for BV Grange Hall.
- Which organization will receive BVHA donation from calendar proceeds?
- Grange Road Bridge landscaping timeline?
- Status of BV Well Project
- BV 2006 Calendar update
- Agenda on BV Web-site? VOICE? Minutes?
- Orientation and documents, new Board members
- After adjournment, directors select officers for year

2005 BVHA Membership

Send \$15 or more to Blair/Dougherty, 7373 Bennett Valley Rd., Santa Rosa, CA, 95404.

Brief Summary, BVHA Board Meetings

September 20th, 2005

The meeting started with Dean Parsons and Karen Theriault from Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD) spending almost an hour speaking to this group, answering questions and having discussions. Besides the Board, at least 20 people were in attendance, including Lynn Morton-Weil, Supervisor Valerie Brown's Aide. Karen presented background information regarding the Bennett Valley Area Plan and step by step information regarding how one proceeds through the building permit process with the county. **It was emphasized that meeting with PRMD at all stages in a project is the best way to have a project move as smoothly and quickly as possible.**

- Public Input – How can one initiate clean up of unsightly debris (old cars) on a neighbor's property? How do you get the County to cut a tree blocking visibility of the road? Various solutions were offered.
- Doug Martin presented information regarding the Bennett Valley Well Project. He thought he could get 20 parcel owners in Bennett Valley to agree to let him measure the depth of the water in their wells and compare it to the original level when the well was first dug. Bennett Ridge water company had agreed to share their data with him on water levels. He hoped to get Woodside and Summit View water companies to do the same. It was agreed that all information on individual water levels would be kept confidential and not shared without the consent of the well owner. The Board approved BVHA overseeing this project.
- When the Grange Road Bridge was first completed, there was some concern about the harsh glare of

the new metal on the bridge railings. There was agreement that the metal is already mellowing and with time this will not be an issue.

- The Board agreed the BVHA minutes should be posted on the BVHA web-site.

October 18th, 2005

- Marilee reported that at the October 6th meeting of the Open Space District, their Board approved the acquisition of "fee title" to the Taylor Mountain property, totaling 823-acres, for up to \$18 million. One of the conditions of this purchase is for there to be no commercial or residential development and for the property to eventually be dedicated for public use.
- Frank LaCombe has written a letter to the owner of a parcel, offering assistance with cleaning up the debris on his property, if the owner so desires. Judy Temko reported the County did remove the tree which was blocking visibility from the road.
- Marilyn Stocks will contact the County to find out about the timeline for landscaping near the Grange Road Bridge, so we can plant our donated tree.
- Suzanne Dougherty reported she had the posters and the photo album from the bridge celebration. Marilee agreed to ask the Grange if we may have space for some kind of a display cabinet for these photo albums and other BVHA memorabilia.
- At Michael Cronin's request, it was verified that the BVHA Agenda is displayed at the BV Fire Station at least 72 hours in advance. Through an error, this was not done for the October meeting.
- Michael Cronin also asked that the issue of BVHA correspondence being open to the public be discussed again. He felt that the letter from a BV resident which was mentioned in the September VOICE should have been shared with the public. Marilee agreed that at least the writer of the letter should have been asked if he objected to his letter to the Board being made public. This will be on the Agenda for the November meeting.
- Marilee reported for Doug Martin that the Bennett Valley Well Project has measured about 15 wells, but Doug is still waiting for an agreement with three other water companies to share their data with him: Summit View, Woodside and Sonoma County Mountain Water District (60 homes on one well along Crane Canyon Rd., including Alta Monte Drive and Inverness Avenue.)
- The BVHA Nominating Committee, Phil Temko (chair), Eve Boling and Jean LaCombe, verified the election results, as reported on Page Two. They also announced that Jean LaCombe would be chair in 2006.
- As all the Board members were not present, it was decided to wait to elect officers.

BENNETT VALLEY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

(Remember to mark these dates on your calendar.)

1.) Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA): The next BVHA Board meeting will be on Tuesday, November 15th, 7:00 pm at the BV Grange Hall. Brock Dolman, from Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, will be presenting information on *Water Conservation!* See the Tentative Agenda for this next meeting on Page Five. BVHA meetings are on the third Tuesday of every other month, plus October, starting at 7:00 pm, at the BV Grange Hall, 4145 Grange Rd.

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. You are welcome to attend these Board meetings, but it is recommended you call 823-1084, to verify the meeting day in advance.

3.) 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 County 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 Homeowner's Association
P.O. Box 2666
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

BVHA web-page: bennettvalleyhomeowners.org

SPECIFIC PURPOSES OF BVHA: *“To promote and preserve the rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley, serve as an open forum for Bennett Valley community participation and provide a bridge for communication between government agencies and the Bennett Valley community.”*

Return Service Requested

**Be Sure To Order Your
2006 BV Calendars!**