



Bennett Valley VOICE

VOLUME 30, NUMBER 3

Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA)

MAY, 2007

DEFENSIBLE SPACE and THE DREADED DEAD SPOT *At the Next BVHA Meeting*

Defensible Space Around Your Home *By Lieutenant Gabe Stirnus, BV Fire District*

It's the time of year again when the grass starts to dry out and we start to become concerned about increasing fire danger in Bennett Valley. It is important that homeowners remember that they are the first line of defense when it comes to vegetation fires in their area. We rely on you to create a defensible space for us to protect, should a wildland fire occur. Many may ask what exactly is defensible space? **Defensible space is the area between a house and an oncoming wildfire where the vegetation has been modified to reduce the wildfire threat and intensity, in order to provide an opportunity for firefighters to effectively defend the house.** This can only be accomplished by reducing the amount of flammable material surrounding a home. Consequently, the most important person in protecting a house from wildfire is not a firefighter, but the property owner. It's the action taken by the owner before the wildfire occurs that is most critical. Furthermore, homes with both an effective defensible space and a nonflammable roof (composition shingles, tile, metal, etc.) are many times more likely to survive a wildfire than those without defensible space and with flammable roofs (wood shakes or shingles). If you would like more information about defensible space, please attend the next BVHA meeting, **Wednesday, May 16th, 7:00 to 7:20 pm, to hear Gabe Stirnus discuss this in more detail and answer questions.** You can also search google for the CDF website or the other site referenced below, both of which announce that, **"Recent changes to Public Resources Code (PRC) 4291 expand the defensible space clearance requirement maintained around buildings and structures from 30 feet to a distance of 100 feet."**

<http://www.bof.fire.ca.gov/pdfs/4291final.guidelines2.23.06.pdf>

"Beware The Dreaded Dead Spot: Cell Phone Users Throughout Sonoma County Frustrated by Geographical Lapses in Service", *The Press Democrat, November 25th, 2005*

Most of Bennett Valley has been a "dead spot" for many cell phone companies. This can prove to be both nerve racking and life threatening, when you can't reach a regular telephone in an emergency. Now Allen Fink, representing Verizon Wireless, is saying they **"would like to place a treepole (cell phone tower) at the Bennett Valley Fire Station."*** And apparently they want to make it tall enough, perhaps as high as 72 feet, so that other companies can also contract to use it. Some people in the area feel improved cell phone coverage in Bennett Valley is the primary issue, while others are concerned about the appearance of this cell phone tower in the center of our community. **Allen Fink, representing Verizon Wireless, will be at the next BVHA meeting, Wednesday, May 16th, 7:30 pm until 8:15 pm, to "provide drawings and photo simulations and answer any questions..."** Everyone is encouraged to come see simulations of the cell phone tower (*treepole*) being proposed, learn about the lengthy county approval process (12 to 18 months), ask questions, and discuss the proposal with other Bennett Valley residents.

The Bennett Valley Website Is "Rather Complex" *By Eric Burns, BVHA Website Coordinator*

One of the first things I volunteered to do for BVHA (before becoming a Director) was to help on the website. At the time I hadn't seen the site and wasn't aware of its complexity. The site had been developed to have a very clean appearance, but behind the curtains it's rather complex. For example, the main page, which really only has links to other pages and a photo, is actually a file that has 2000+ words in 300 lines. The page for the meeting dates, minutes, and agendas is **(Turn to next page.)**

(Continued from Page One) over 624 lines long and close to 2500 words. (From what I've read, the Declaration of Independence is 1300 words.) The length and complexity of these pages have made editing them tedious. The lines are very long, and it's important to keep your place or you can break the whole format of the page. In the process I've become a bottleneck in getting the pages updated with the current minutes, VOICE and agendas. So the website is being enhanced to allow anyone on the Board to submit the VOICE, agendas or meeting minutes through their web browser and have it automatically put in the correct location. It's also being set up so that the meeting dates can be set without having to hand edit any long files. All of these actions will require a password, so they'll be safe from being compromised. Currently the website has information about Bennett Valley, important contact numbers, past copies of the VOICE, our agendas and meeting minutes. The new enhancements will help keep it current. I'm also hoping to find a way so that any board member can add current events in the area. If all the pieces fall into place I'm hoping to demo the site and the steps at the next meeting. This will involve borrowing a projector and wireless card from work - and having that card get reception at the Grange. If I can't get reception, I'll at least have some screen shots to walk through. I've been promising to get this done for a long time, and it's time for me to deliver!

BVHA CONCERNS, QUESTIONS, BV ROADS

✦ Letter from Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association to Valerie Brown, Chairwoman of the Board of Supervisors, sent in March, 2007:

Dear Ms. Brown:

The Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association exists to promote and preserve the rural residential character and natural environment of Bennett Valley, serve as an open forum for community participation, and provide a bridge for communication between government agencies and the Bennett Valley community. This letter is sent to communicate to the Board of Supervisors a summary of questions and concerns of Bennett Valley residents regarding the current condition of the roads serving our area.

What is the Board of Supervisor's plan regarding the maintenance of rural roads in Sonoma County? Including the roads in Bennett Valley?

The Press Democrat has given the issue quite a bit of coverage recently:

- We have learned that Sonoma County has 1400 miles of "rural roads", of which about 25 miles are the main roads in Bennett Valley.
- That the current debate at the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) is focused on the \$351 million requested to address safety and congestion issues, such as the widening of Hwy 101, not the maintenance of rural roads, such as those in Bennett Valley.
- That the expected cost of repairing the collapse of Sonoma Mountain Road is \$1.5 million, which is 10% of the \$15 million annual budget for road mending in Sonoma County.

But we are thinking beyond the Sonoma Mountain Road disaster to the long-term issues of road maintenance in rural areas. Do the Supervisors have a plan? What can rural residents expect?

The main "through" roads in Bennett Valley – Bennett Valley Road, Sonoma Mountain Road, Grange & Crane Canyon Roads, Pressley Road, and Enterprise Road – have deteriorated in the last two years to a level that is unacceptable to local residents and may impact property values. The "Pot Hole Brigade" cannot be the sole maintenance provider for these roads! Sonoma County's roads increasingly resemble rural roads in third world countries.

We are aware of the inclusion in the Draft GP-2020 of issues such as "Maintenance of Rural Character" and "Heritage Roads". We think these are particularly applicable to Bennett Valley. Maintaining rural character is a principal goal of the BV Area Plan (1978) that BVHA strongly supports. We need creative planning and policies to maintain rural roads in general, and in Bennett Valley in particular.

What is the Plan? Is County funding unable to maintain our roads? Do we need to consider asking local residents to contribute to the maintenance of roads, as they do to the maintenance of local fire services?

As the local organization concerned with issues in Bennett Valley, BVHA would like to know what the Board of Supervisors is thinking. We welcome your response and would appreciate your considering visiting one of our future meetings to discuss and share ideas and possible solutions.

Thank you for considering our concerns and for helping us address this issue that affects the health, safety and welfare of Bennett Valley residents.

Sincerely, Timothy J. Murphy, President

✦ Response From Valerie Brown, 3/26/07

Tim- Thank you for your letter regarding future plans for transportation in Sonoma Co. We have just hired a new Public Works Director who begins in May. Currently we are undergoing a management audit of the department. These two changes coupled with Sonoma County's Strategic Planning process should take us a long way toward answering many of your questions. I ask for your patience as we evaluate and develop a long range strategy. It is an exciting time and our board as well as those we serve will be advantaged by the process.

Sincerely, Valerie

Can You Help Coordinate BV Clean-Up?

We need your help. A number of volunteers help clean-up the litter along BV roads twice a year, (see page six) so it is not a real time consuming job. Those who have been doing it for over ten years are ready for a change. If you're possibly interested, please call Tim Murphy at 542-7114.

Ready For The Worst, With A Plan

HOW DO WE GET STARTED?

Compiled by Marilee Jensen

Emergency Preparedness was the topic once again at the last BVHA meeting, with Paul Hess, Director of Emergency Preparedness for the City of Santa Rosa, as the speaker. All the information in this article is from what he said or material he distributed. If you need more detailed information on COPE or emergency preparedness, and you have access to the Internet, you can download written material on these subjects by doing a Google search at "*City of Santa Rosa Emergency Preparedness, How to COPE with Emergencies (Guide for Setting Up COPE Neighborhood Teams)*" and "*COPE Neighborhood Team Census Form.*" If you don't have Internet access, you may call Paul Hess directly, at 543-3711.

The mission of COPE, *Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies*, is to help residents, families, and neighborhoods become and remain better prepared to respond to and recover from emergency situations. **This includes developing individual household response plans, maintaining individual household emergency supply kits, and outreaching to your immediate neighbors, in clusters of ten to twenty homes, for neighborhood emergency plans.**

To quote Sue Hattendorf, an Oakmont resident who has signed up over 1,800 households in Oakmont and organized them into 180 COPE teams, "*During an emergency, your neighbors are your closest family. Learn what you need to about them, without impinging on people's privacy.*" **The following seven steps are guidelines to aid COPE Leaders develop COPE Neighborhood Teams:**

✿ **Define the Scope of Your Neighborhood, the segment of homes to be included on your "team".** *Paul Hess suggested that a planned pizza party or potluck barbecue for the homes potentially on your team can be a good way to get your neighborhood started on making plans.*

✿ **Build Your Neighborhood Leadership Team.** Enlist one Leader and recruit two to three people as Co-Leaders. They should be committed to the COPE program and capable of responding to rapidly changing situations.

✿ **Take a Census of the Residents in Your Neighborhood Team.** Document resident names, contact information, information about pets, special skills, special needs, physical limitations, health problems, and equipment that could be useful such

as generators, chainsaws, tractors, etc. Be prepared to help neighbors who need assistance completing this form.

✿ **Record Information About Each Home,** such as location of gas, water and electric shutoffs. Understand manual operation of garage door and note specific fire dangers.

✿ **Identify Central Meeting Site and Escape Routes.** Choose a central meeting site where neighbors can congregate when emergency occurs. If people don't show up there, then someone needs to check their home to be sure they don't need help. Define alternative escape routes for evacuation based on specific situations.

✿ **Schedule and Conduct a Meeting of Residents.** Introduce COPE Neighborhood Team Leader and Co-Leaders. Review results of COPE Team Census Form. (*Perhaps these could be completed individually at the first social get-together, with confidentiality maintained.*) Discuss central meeting site and escape routes, team actions in the event of an emergency, communication sources and transportation, as available or needed.

✿ **Maintain Your Plans and Kits with Ongoing Effort.** At least every six months, conduct a COPE Neighborhood Team meeting; review and update all COPE material. Complete COPE Team Census Form for new residents. Review planned meeting site and escape routes. Inform residents of any changes.

HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY PLANS

(Selected Items from a comprehensive list)

✿ **Safety Survey Your Home** Sit in each room and ask yourself what would injure you if a major earthquake hit... Fix any possible hazards.

✿ **Automobile** Always keep gas tank ¼ to ½ full. After an emergency, drive car out of garage and load it with supplies to prepare for evacuation, if necessary. Keep cell phone charger in car.

✿ **Draw a floor plan** for your home, with two escape routes from each room marked.

✿ **Have a battery powered or hand-cranked AM/FM radio or TV;** listen to KZST 100.1 FM, KRSO 1350 AM OR KFTV 50 for emergency information...

EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT (Selected Items as above)

✿ **Water.** Have at least one gallon per person per day, for up to two to three weeks.

✿ **Food.** Pack non-perishable, high-protein items, including energy bars, ready-to-eat soup, peanut butter, canned foods, dried fruits, nuts, crackers, etc. Include a manual can opener, eating utensils, bowls, plates and cups.

✿ **First Aid Kit.**

✿ **Flashlights...**

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District

**6161 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa
578-7761 (Non-Emergency Business Phone)**

Board of Directors

**Mark Richardson, President
Joseph Mazeau, Vice-President
Marilee Jensen, Secretary**

Arnie Tognozzi, Don D'Avanzo, Directors

The Board meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday each month, 7:00 pm, at the BV Fire Station. You're welcome to attend, but please confirm the meeting date first. If you have any questions or concerns, you can leave a message for the Bennett Valley Fire Chief, Andy Pforsich, at 823-1084.

Bennett Valley Paid Firefighting Staff

24-hour Shift Personnel:

Lieutenant Gabe Stirnus

Engineers Kevin Burris and Matt Tognozzi

Daytime Firefighters, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm:

**Engineers Danny Connelly and Steve Gritsch
Firefighter Ronnie Lakin**

Supplemented and supported by 23 Trained Firefighting Volunteers. Every night at least two of the volunteers spend the night at the Fire Station

Wildfire Evacuations

By BV Fire Chief Andy Pforsich

Clearing and providing sufficient buffer (at least 100 feet) around a home is crucial to the protection of a structure (defensible space) and makes it more likely that it will be safe to stay inside the home during a wildfire. During the incident, the decision to leave or stay needs to be made early on, probably based on public broadcasting forecasts, automated telephone warnings to the affected area, intensity of the fire/wind, or their intestinal level of fear. If they decide to stay and wait it out, then they must not change their mind and try to leave as the fire is making its final run toward their home. This is precisely when fire engines, bulldozers, bosses and crews are moving toward them. In smoky conditions, the likelihood of being involved in a crash with responding equipment, all of which is much bigger and heavier than their automobile, is much greater. Besides risking injury, a crash which blocks the road into the area would delay and hamper the fire suppression effort. In general, staying in their homes is much safer than the residents would believe. Falling embers are usually the cause of a fire in a home near a wildfire. As the fire burns from the outside near the home, the house itself can provide shelter and safety until the wildfire moves past the house, after which they can step out to safety.

An engine will ordinarily be committed to a house for structure protection. However, if that isn't the case because of the size of the incident or lack of available resources, then the resident who has stayed in his/her home will be able to call 911 if the house becomes involved.

The decision to stay or not is highly dependent on the circumstances, but hopefully, this provides a little more information on which to base a decision.

BV Firefighter Activities; March/April, 2007

By Engineer Steve Gritsch, Cell # 477-6850

Medical Aids/Rescues- 17; Structure Fires-5

Vehicle Accidents-6; Other - 15

Total Runs: 43

Vehicle Spotlight: 7831, The Light Rescue Truck

In early December of 2006, the Bennett Valley Fire District purchased a new vehicle from an emergency vehicle manufacturing company. The vehicle was designed for "light" rescue, and is equipped to handle medical aids, vehicle accidents and extrications, and other limited rescue situations. It was purchased as a way to decrease the wear and tear on our large frontline fire engines; and because of its smaller size, this rescue vehicle is able to access tighter and narrower driveways with ease. 7831 is a "first out" vehicle to all medical aids, and a second out to any vehicle accident, behind 7882, our structure engine. After being in service for a few months, the entire district loves the new rescue vehicle. It is a highly-effective tool, and a great asset to our equipment pool. Some of the features on the rescue vehicle are:

- *A full complement of extrication equipment (the "Jaws of Life"), pre-connected on 100 foot reels.
- * Specialized vehicle stabilization equipment for overturned/off-axis vehicles.
- *A full compliment of medical equipment, with capability to handle larger Multi Casualty Incidents.
- * A large "command light" setup on top of the chassis box, with six halogen lights putting out upwards of 3000 watts.

Anyone wishing to see the rescue vehicle, or any other piece of apparatus the District has, is welcome to come by the firehouse during business hours. We'll be happy to give a tour.

As of April 30th, burn season is now closed. Wildland season is rapidly approaching, and the Bennett Valley Fire District wants to remind all homeowners, again, that 100 ft. of clearance is now required. The 100 ft. rule was signed into law as of January, 2007 so help yourself by maintaining "sufficient" defensible space around your home.

How Many BV Neighbors Have Started To Initiate COPE Teams?

When Can You Start?

Please call Marilee Jensen, 576-0405 or email marileejensen@sbcglobal.net during May or June if you're even beginning to think of forming a COPE team in your neighborhood. At the July BVHA meeting, we think it would be useful to have different potential COPE neighborhood teams talk about what they've started, what they think is next and any questions they might have. We're hoping this will help encourage others to take the first steps, to fight the inertia we all face when it comes to being better prepared for a potential emergency.

If you're just beginning to think of possible neighbors to include, or if you've actually had a first meeting, please let us know. It is important for improved regional planning that we eventually think of increasing the Bennett Valley COPE structure to include coordinators for several different neighborhood teams and a District Coordinator for all the COPE teams in the BV Fire District. Apparently Oakmont currently has 180 COPE groups and Santa Rosa has 340 COPE leaders. The number of COPE teams in Bennett Valley will depend on the number of households willing to participate and one or more neighbors taking the first steps to organize a neighborhood team.

With 126 homes, Bennett Ridge has divided into eleven teams with between ten to fifteen homes in each team. There have been COPE meetings in November, February, and April, plus one or more individual meetings for nine of the eleven teams. Many of the Census Forms have been filled out, but they are working on completing those. Each team is also identifying central meeting places and possible central storage areas for useful emergency equipment. One of the computer-wise BR residents is "mapping" the location of the houses for each team, important emergency equipment, swimming pools (for water access), people with special skills, such as nurses, different egress routes and the best helicopter landing site on the Ridge. Three Ridge ham radio operators can help with communication in an emergency, when there is no power. Residents are tentatively planning to purchase walkie talkies for each team. The teams will also be working with their members on individual household emergency plans and emergency supplies, which is the heart of emergency preparation. Even with a number of loose ends, the Ridge residents are becoming better prepared for an emergency, individually, as part of a team and as a neighborhood. *Again, please let Marilee Jensen know if you've even considering starting this process or if you have any questions.*

Find Out About Bennett Valley CERT Training For You!

Learn how you can be more prepared as an individual in case of a disaster such as a major earthquake or wildland fire. An orientation on Bennett Valley Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training is planned for Saturday, May 19th from 9:00am to 10:30am at the Bennett Valley Fire Station. This meeting will give a brief description of the CERT training, and how this program can prepare you and our community if a disaster strikes. We will also consider possible options for the best time to schedule 20 hours of CERT training in Bennett Valley for residents who want to participate. Possibilities include evening meetings, Saturday meetings or a combination of the two. For any questions regarding the BV CERT program, you may e-mail Karen Sommer at ksommer11@earthlink.net or call her at 528-8982.

Emergency Calls From Cell Phones

By Marilee Jensen

The Sonoma County cell phone network needs to be updated, so that every community has an "enhanced 911 system", which tracks the location of the cell phone user and routes the call to the appropriate local agency. This system is already in place in Healdsburg, Sebastopol and much of Santa Rosa. Until that happens, Bennett Valley residents need to store their local seven-digit emergency numbers in their cell phones, as they can't rely on 911 in an emergency. For Bennett Valley, those numbers are:

- **Fire & Emergency Medical –576-1365 (Redcom Dispatch emergency number)**
- **Sonoma Co. Sheriff's Dispatch – 565-2121**

An article in the January 2007 issue of the University of California, Berkeley WELLNESS LETTER recommends that if you have a cell phone, you program an ICE (In Case Of Emergency) name and phone number, so that emergency medical workers will know whom to call—not only to let that person know what happened to you, but also to get your medical history. You will probably need to research this further through your cell phone company.

Sonoma County Open Space District

Volunteer Patrol Programs have been developed for the District's larger fee properties as a means of establishing both a presence on the properties and also to build a constituency in the community. LandPaths and Sonoma Ecology Center have joined with the District in coordinating and facilitating this outreach to the neighbors, who often have familiarity with the property. These Volunteer Patrols are now being used at Taylor Mountain (823 acres), Jacobs Ranch (168 acres) and Cooper's Grove (226 acres) in Bennett Valley.

BV Spring Clean-Up Roads Day!

On Saturday, April 21st, the rain held off until just after some BV roads were cleaned by the twenty volunteers listed below. We want to thank all of those who helped: **Jim Alfieri, Dave & Sandy Sandine, Pat Werth, Gail Graser, Lu Schultz, Mike & Patty Hickey, Tim & Janice Murphy, Norm Boling, Suzanne Dougherty, Sandra Carr, Ron Simpson, Michelle Friend, Bill & Patty Allen, Susan Nazor, Bobbie Blair and Katy Mangan.** Jim Alfieri agreed to go to the Sonoma County Public Works yard on Airport Blvd., to pick up the necessary litter bags, equipment, etc. Jim asked us to give a **BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE to Valerie Kneit.** She works for Sonoma Co. Public Works and Jim (and Marilee) found her very helpful, in arranging for the pick-up of necessary equipment and the trash pickup.

As another unusual touch to Spring Clean-Up Day, it turns out that Bennett Valley Road had been cleaned for the Bicycle Tour on February 20th. By April 21st, though, there was still quite a bit of litter once again on Bennett Valley Road. Also, Patrick Connelly, the General Manager of Matanzas Creek Winery, sent a memo to his staff stating that "as stewards of the land...it is in our interests to have clean and attractive roadsides within our community...a pristine Bennett Valley." He offered a bottle of Matanzas Creek wine to any of his staff who participated in our BV Spring Clean-Up Roads Day. We sure appreciated his supportive words and efforts.

Tick Season!

See *Press Democrat* article, Life Section, May 8th, 2007
The danger of contracting lyme disease from the Western black-legged tick in Sonoma Co. is highest in May and June, when the small, immature nymph form of the tick is active, especially in tall grass and wooded areas. These nymphs are the size of a poppy seed and difficult to see. Wear light-colored clothing with long sleeves and pants, tucked in, to help avoid the ticks getting to your skin. Check body carefully. Be sure ticks are removed in less than 24 hours.

Tick Removal By Walter May, *Email message, dated 5/2/07, sent by Bill Sirvatka, Bennett Valley resident,* "...A School Nurse has written the info below...And it really works!! I had a pediatrician tell me what she believes is the best way to remove a tick...it works in those places where it's sometimes difficult to get to with tweezers..."

Apply a glob of liquid soap to a cotton ball. Cover the tick with the soap-soaked cotton ball and let it stay on the repulsive insect for a few seconds (15-20), after which the tick will come out on its own and be stuck to the cotton ball when you lift it away. This technique has worked every time I've used it (*and that was frequently*), and it's much less traumatic for the patient ... Please pass on; everyone needs this helpful hint."

(Native Bees) Creating Buzz by Susan Tweit,

Audubon Magazine, May-June, 2007 (Excerpts)

- **Don't invite native bees to your yard just to be virtuous. Do it because they will pump up your garden's produce production.*
 - **These little-known, often misunderstood insects are vital to North American's ecosystems. Our 4,000 species—new ones are still being discovered—are key pollinators for most native flowering plants and many crop plants as well, including tomatoes, fruit and nut trees, squashes, melons, and blueberries....native bees are easy to get along with—they rarely sting...*
 - **And they're in trouble. The research that has been done thus far seems to indicate that populations of some of these critical pollinators are declining worldwide due to habitat loss and pesticide uses, as well as to climate change, competition with introduced species, including honeybees, and imported diseases.*
 - **...gardeners can help: "A plot (of bee-friendly plants)...can provide significant habitat...Bees return the favor by pollinating your flowers, thus increasing seed and fruit production...(Even plants that don't rely on pollinators produce more seeds after being visited by bees.)*
 - **...native bees require...a safe, healthy place to live, (with) water, and food--out with the Roundup and other toxic chemicals(A)ttractants for native bees... (include) yarrow, Parry's primrose, purple lupine,...California poppy, black huckleberry, rosemary...sunflowers, mints, salvia, ...squashes, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, fruit trees... lavender and thyme.*
 - **(Commercial tomato growers prize bumblebees. ...as their) high-speed abdominal vibrations ...liberate streams of pollen from...these difficult-to-pollinate flowers, resulting in dramatically higher fruit yields.)*
- ### **Are Mobile Phones Wiping Out our Bees?**
- By Geoffrey Lean and Harriet Shawcross,,4/15/07, (<http://news.independent.co.uk/environment/wildlife/article/2449968.ece>) Excerpts from this article:
- **The theory is that radiation from mobile phones interferes with bees' navigation systems, preventing the famously homeloving species from finding their way back to their hives. Improbable as it may seem, there is now evidence to back this up.*
 - **Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) occurs when a hive's inhabitants suddenly disappear...(CCD) has now hit half of all American states. The West Coast is thought to have lost 60 per cent of its commercial bee population, with 70 per cent missing on the East Coast. CCD has since spread to Germany, Switzerland, Spain,...and (other European countries.)*
 - **Albert Einstein once said that if the bees disappeared, "man would have only four years of life left."*

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▪ **BVHA Membership Coordinators**– Larissa Goliti, 578-3453, and Jean LaCombe, 585-3482

▪ **BVHA VOICE Editor** – Marilee Jensen, 576-0405

marileejensen@sbcglobal.net

***BVHA Nominating Committee** – *Bylaws state the Board of Directors will select a nominating committee of three members no later than the regular meeting held in May. The nominating committee may advertise in the July 'VOICE' and shall otherwise locate nominees for the vacancies about to occur at the next Annual Meeting (October 17th, 2007). On January 17th, 2007, Jean LaCombe agreed to be the BVHA Nominations Committee Chairwoman for 2007.*

Brief Summary of BVHA Meeting

March 21st, 2007

- ♣ Twenty-six people were in attendance to hear the presentation by Paul Hess on "Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies" (COPE) and how you get started in your own neighborhood. See the article on Page Three.
- ♣ Larissa Goliti shared that the PRMD zone maps are going to a digital form, so the public will be able to get map information, permit history for a particular address, etc. from the PRMD website.
- ♣ Bennett Valley Roads: BVHA sent a letter to Supervisor Valerie Brown (see Page Two). BV Roads were discussed along with the Sonoma Mountain Road closure. Inviting Valerie to a BVHA meeting and/or Bennett Valley residents attending a Board of Supervisors' meeting are being considered, preceded by a VOICE article on BV roads. There were other questions about the shoulders on the Grange Road Bridge (which the county says will not be lined) and the Matanzas Creek Bridge.
- ♣ **BV T-Shirt Fundraiser** – **Bobbie Blair showed the Bennett Valley t-shirt, designed by Nancy Dell'Ergo, that was on order. They are now available for \$15, at BVHA meetings or call Bobbie at 542-1608, with all the proceeds going to the BV Emergency Preparedness Fund.**

♣ BVHA Meeting Schedule – For May, see Tentative Agenda below. For July, the plan is to have BV residents talk about their experiences at getting COPE teams started in their neighborhoods, possibly with sharing food at the meeting. For September, asking Valerie Brown to speak regarding the conditions and future of our BV roads is being considered.

♣ BVHA has purchased a new laptop computer for maintaining the BVHA mailing list, files, and for other records. The motion to purchase the computer and printer for \$1,365 was made and all were in favor.

♣ The proposed Verizon cell tower at the BV Fire Station was discussed. A Verizon representative will be at the next BVHA meeting, to provide BV residents with information about what is being proposed and an opportunity to ask questions and discuss it further.

♣ By-law revisions were on the agenda, but this was postponed because of the lateness of the evening. The meeting was adjourned at 10:18 pm.

Board of Directors' Tentative Agenda,

May 16th Meeting, BV Grange Hall

by Tim Murphy

♣ Speaker Gabe Stirnus, BV Fire Protection District, will discuss weed abatement and fire protection measures, **7:00 to 7:20 pm**

♣ Speaker Allen Fink, Verizon Wireless, will discuss proposed installation of a cell phone tower at the BV Fire Station, including drawings, photo simulations, and answering questions, **7:30 to 8:15 pm.**

♣ **Abbreviated Business Meeting, 8:30 pm**

1.) Information on BVHA Website status, by Eric Burns. (See his article starting on Page One.)

2.) BVHA Schedule: Confirmation and discussion of meeting dates, speakers/themes.

As a side note, we all appreciated Connie Montague making and serving the following at this March BVHA meeting. Thanks!

Chocolate Chip Cookies at Their Best

1 C (1/2 lb.) butter or margarine (I used half of each.)
1/2 C solid vegetable shortening, 1 1/3 C gran. sugar
1 C firmly packed brown sugar, *Beat the above 5 minutes on high speed until light and fluffy.* 4 eggs – *Add one at a time and beat well.* 1 T (tablespoon) vanilla, 1 t (teaspoon) lemon juice – *Beat in both.*
3 C all-purpose flour, 2 t baking soda, 1 1/2 t salt,
1 t ground cinnamon, 1/2 C rolled oats (instant)
Stir together and gradually add to butter mixture.
2 (12 oz. each) packages semisweet chocolate chips
2 C chopped walnuts –

Hand stir in both. Drop rounded T of dough onto lightly greased baking sheets. Bake 350 12 minutes until golden. Store air-tight. Makes over 3 dozen. Enjoy, Connie Montague*

BENNETT VALLEY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Mark these dates on your calendar.

1.) **Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA)**: The next meeting will be on Wednesday, May 16th, 7:00 pm at the BV Grange Hall, 4145 Grange Road, with Lieutenant Gabe Stirnus, BV Fire, discussing fire protection measures and Allen Fink, Verizon Wireless, answering questions and presenting drawings and photo simulations of the proposed treepole (cell phone tower) at the BV Fire Station.

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 important you call 578-7761 or 823-1084 to verify the meeting day in advance.

3.) **Bennett Valley Grange: 135th Annual Picnic with western theme - Community Day Round-Up**. 4145 Grange Road. Sunday, June 3rd, noon to 4:00 pm with barbecued tri-tip and chicken, beans, salad, bread, and yummy desserts. Wine Auction and Silent Auction throughout the day, 4H animal exhibits, and games. Live western and blue grass music by *Manzanita Moon* (with banjo, fiddle, guitar, bass, drums, and vocals). Pre-sale tickets \$12, \$6 under 14 yrs, call Jocelyn Thompson, 542-6289. Tickets will be \$15 at door. Proceeds will benefit the upkeep of this historical building—the pride of our community.

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 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.

"Never underestimate the ability of a small group of committed individuals to change the world. In fact, that's the only thing that ever has."...Margaret Mead

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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

**BV Grange 135th Annual Picnic
Community Day Round-Up
Sunday, June 3rd, noon to 4:00 pm**

