



Bennett Valley VOICE

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BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION (BVHA)

JULY, 2008

Excerpts from **How To Survive A Disaster**

By Amanda Ripley, May 29, 2008 Ripley, a senior writer at TIME, covers homeland security and risk. This article is adapted from *The Unthinkable: Who Survives When Disaster Strikes—And Why*, 2008 by Amanda Ripley. To be published by Crown Publishers, a division of Random House, Inc., on sale 6/10/08.

When a plane crashes or the earth shakes, we tend to view the survivors as the lucky ones. Had they been in the next seat or the apartment across the street, they would have perished. We marvel at the whimsy of the devastation.

The recent earthquake in China and the cyclone in Burma, not to mention the battery of tornadoes and wildfires ripping through the U.S. this season, remind us that disasters are part of the human condition. We are more or less vulnerable to them, depending where we live.

But survival is not just a product of luck. We can do far more than we think to improve our odds of preventing and surviving even the most horrendous of catastrophes. It's a matter of preparation—bolting down your water heater before an earthquake or actually reading the in-flight safety card before takeoff—but also of mental conditioning. Each of us has what I call a “disaster personality,” a state of being that takes over in a crisis. It is at the core of who we are. The fact is, we can refine that personality and teach our brains to work more quickly, maybe even more wisely.

Humans are programmed with basic survival skills. When frightened, we get a shot of performance-enhancing hormones, and the blood pumps to our limbs to help us outrun whatever enemy we face. But in modern times, we're hardly aware of such natural skills, and most of us do little to understand or develop them... for many of us, preparation means little more than crossing our fingers and hoping to live.

Over the years, I have interviewed survivors of unimaginable tragedies. Most say that during their ordeals, almost nothing felt, sounded or looked the way they would have expected. Reality was in some ways better, in other ways worse. They say there are things they wish they had known, things they want

you to know. Here, then, are (parts)...of their stories...

Panic Can Be Your Friend When disaster strikes, a troubling human response can inflate the death toll: people freeze up. They shut down, becoming suddenly limp and still. That's what happened to some people on Sept. 28, 1994, when the M.V. Estonia went down in the Baltic Sea, the worst sea disaster in modern European history.

The huge automobile ferry had left its home port in Tallinn, Estonia, on a routine 15-hour trip to Stockholm. Although the weather had been stormy all night, the crew did not expect serious problems. A band was playing in the Baltic Bar and the 10-deck vessel churned through the inky waters as it had for 14 years.

Kevin Harstedt, now a member of Sweden's Parliament, was then a 29-year-old passenger. That night he was hanging out in one of the ship's bars, with about 50 other passengers... He recalls, “Everybody was laughing and singing.” But just after 1 a.m., the Estonia suddenly listed starboard 30 (degrees), hurling passengers, vending machines and flowerpots across its passageways. In the bar, almost everyone fell violently against the side of the boat. Harstedt managed to grab on to the iron bar railing and hold on, hanging above everyone else.

“In just one second, everything went from a loud, happy, wonderful moment to total silence. Every brain, I guess, was working like a computer, trying to realize what had happened,” he says. Then came the screaming and crying. People had been badly hurt in the fall, and the tilt of the ship made it extremely difficult to move.

Harstedt began to strategize, tapping into some of the survival skills he had learned in the military. “I started to react very differently from normal. I started to say, O.K., there is option one, option two.

CONTINUED ON PAGE TWO

Decide. Act. I didn't say, "Oh, the boat is sinking." I didn't even think about the wider perspective...But as Harstedt made his way into the corridor, he noticed something strange about some of the other passengers. They weren't doing what he was doing. "Some people didn't seem to realize what had happened. They were just sitting there," he says. Not just one or two people, but entire groups seemed to be immobilized. They were conscious, but they were not reacting.

Contrary to popular expectations, this is what happens in many disasters. Crowds generally become quiet and docile. Panic is rare. The bigger problem is that people do too little, too slowly. They sometimes shut down completely, falling into a stupor.

On the Estonia, Harstedt climbed up the stairwell, fighting against gravity...Most people strained to hold on to the rolling ship and, at the same time, to look for life jackets and lifeboats. British passenger, Paul Barney remembers groups of people standing still like statues. "I kept saying to myself, "Why don't they try to get out of here?"..."

Later, when interviewed by the police, some survivors said they understood this behavior. At some point, they too had felt an overwhelming urge to stop moving. They only snapped out of the stupor, they said, by thinking of their loved ones, especially their children—a common thread in the stories of survivors of all kinds of disasters.

At 1:50 am, just 30 minutes after its first Mayday call, the Estonia vanished, sinking upside down into the sea. Moments before, Harstedt had jumped off the ship. He climbed onto a life raft and held on for five hours, until finally being rescued. All told, only 137 of the 989 people on board survived the disaster. ...Investigators would conclude that the ship sank because the bow door to the car deck had come unlocked and the sea had come gushing into the ship.

Firefighters, police trainers ... have told me similar stories of seeing people freeze under extreme stress. Animals go into the same state when they are trapped, evolutionary psychologist Gordon Gallup Jr. has found. Playing dead can discourage predators from attacking. In the case of the Estonia and other disasters, the freezing response may have been a natural and horrific mistake. Our brains search, under extreme stress, for an appropriate survival response and sometimes choose the wrong one, like deer that freeze in the headlights of a car.

But the more encouraging point is that the brain is plastic. It can be trained to respond more appropriately. Less fear makes paralysis less likely...If we can reduce our own fear even a little bit, we might be able to do better...These rituals that we consider an utter waste of time actually give our brains blueprints in the unlikely event that we need them.

We can also help each other do better. A loud sound will cause animals to snap out of their stupor. Likewise, many flight attendants are now trained to scream at passengers in burning planes, "Get out! Get out! Go!" People respond well to leadership in a disaster, and then they can do remarkable things...

All of us, but especially people in charge—of a city, a theater, a business—should recognize that people can be trusted to do their best at the worst of times. They will do even better if they are encouraged to play a significant role in their own survival before anything goes wrong...

How One Person Made A Difference In every disaster, buried under the rubble is evidence that we can do better. Much of that work is physical—building stronger buildings in safer places, for example. But the work is also psychological. The more control people feel they have over their predicament, the better their performance. When people believe that survival is negotiable, they can be wonderfully creative. All it takes is the audacity to imagine that our behavior matters.

When the planes struck the Twin Towers on Sept. 11, 2001, Rick Rescorla embodied that spirit of survival. The head of security for Morgan Stanley Dean Witter at the World Trade Center, Rescorla believed that regular people were capable of great achievements, with a bit of leadership. He got Morgan Stanley employees to take responsibility for their survival—which happened almost nowhere else that day in the Trade Center...

Rescorla felt it was foolish to rely on first responders to save his employees. His company was the largest tenant in the Trade Center, a village nestled in the clouds. Morgan Stanley's employees would need to take care of one another...And so Rescorla started running the entire company through his own frequent, surprise fire drills. He trained employees to meet in the hallway between the stairwells and go down the stairs, two by two, to the 44th floor.

On the morning of 9/11, Rescorla heard an explosion and saw Tower 1 burning... Rescorla grabbed his bullhorn, walkie-talkie and cell phone and began systematically ordering Morgan Stanley employees to get out. They performed beautifully. ..."Knowing where to go was the most important thing. Because your brain—at least mine—just shut down..."", says Bill McMahan, a Morgan Stanley executive...

Rescorla taught Morgan Stanley employees to save themselves. It's a lesson that has become, somehow, rare and precious. When the tower collapsed, only 13 Morgan Stanley colleagues—including Rescorla and four of his security officers were inside. The other 2,687 were safe.

NOTICE OF ELECTION

The 2008 BVHA election season is upon us. Members of the BVHA Board of Directors serve for three year terms at the end of which they may choose to run for re-election. Terms are ending for three of our current BVHA board members: Craig Harrison, Larissa Goliti and Eric Burns. Craig, Eric, and Larissa have each agreed to run for re-election.

Anyone interested in joining the BVHA Board of Directors is encouraged to submit a Candidate's Statement to Jean LaCombe, Chair of the BVHA Nominating Committee, by no later than August 28, 2008. Statements should be no longer than 250 words.

Minimum Qualifications are 1) Candidate must be a member of good standing in the BVHA, with paid dues current, and 2) have a strong commitment to "promoting and preserving the rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley". If you are interested but are not yet a member of BVHA, you may join at any time before August 28, 2008 simply by submitting your check to the BVHA Membership Committee. Contact Larissa Goliti, Chair, at (707) 578-3453 for further membership information.

Mail your Candidate Statements to:
2008 BVHA ELECTION
ATTN: JEAN LACOMBE
P.O. BOX 2666
SANTA ROSA, CA 95404

If you prefer to e-mail your Statement, please send it to Jean at spinningsnake@peoplepc.com.

Candidate Statements will appear in the September 2008 BVHA VOICE. All voting members of BVHA will be sent an Official Ballot 30 days prior to the annual Election Meeting, scheduled for November 19, 2008.

Should you have questions, please contact any of the current Board Members whose phone numbers appear in each BVHA VOICE, or call Jean LaCombe at (707) 585-3482.

ATTENTION "BIRDS AND BLOOMS" BV 2009 CALENDAR ENTRANTS!

- **Deadline for entries for 2008 Calendar is approaching: September 2**
- **Pictures of (wild) birds and/or flowers/blooms accepted in 5"x7" or larger horizontal prints**
- **Submit to Calendar Committee, 2663 Bennett Ridge Road, SR 95404**
- **Maximum 3 entries per person**
- **Label each print on the back with your name, address, and phone number.**
- **For more information or questions, please call 527-6002 or 528-6176**

Sonoma Mountain Road Repair

On July 7, Valerie Brown, our First District Supervisor and Phil Demery, Sonoma County Director of Public Works, with other county staff and an advisor, held a meeting at the Glen Ellen Fire Station to present the latest information on the plans for repairing and re-opening Sonoma Mountain Road. Because of landslides, erosion

and long-standing drainage problems, a small portion of Sonoma Mountain Road has been closed since January, 2007 -- a long time for residents living near there.

Valerie Brown stated definitively that the money to pay for this major repair is now "in the bank". Since this has been a dry year, the county is very interested in proceeding with this construction as soon as possible, before the rainy season begins. The county is planning to go to bid on this project in the next month with actual construction to begin by the end of August or early September. If everything proceeds as planned, it is expected that this will be completed by the end of October.

Sonoma Mountain Road is a one-lane road in some places, but this repaired section will be two lanes, with no shoulder. The water which runs off from the adjacent hill will be drained into Sonoma Creek utilizing underground pipes at each level. The rights of ways still need to be negotiated with adjacent property owners before the work can begin. Another possible problem is that the price of everything in construction is rising rapidly at this time, so the bids received from the various contractors may be higher than anticipated. As Valerie pointed out, once the road repair begins, it will be a difficult two months for the residents living around this road closure, but having it opened again will be a long-awaited change.

Rural Roads

by Peter Leo

Reading the last few issues of the newsletter, I've noticed quite a few comments regarding the sad state of our local roads. It's true that some stretches are a little rough. Cracked asphalt, potholes, gravel and overgrown vegetation all work against a smooth and swift journey. They are, however, not as some have stated "third world" class. As one who has traveled extensively, I can attest to that. For starters, these roads are, with few exceptions, drivable any time of the year. They are also fairly well marked with center dividers and signage, which if driven with caution and a reasonable speed, are rather safe. Also remember, these rural roads were never intended to be major thoroughfares, nor were they meant to imitate manicured suburban streets.

When I hear suggestions for government to step in and take care of the problem, I cringe. A major infrastructure project such as rebuilding our road network is sure to be very costly. Has any thought been given to who will be funding the project? Surely state and county taxpayers are not going to be very interested in paying for improvements to roads which will only benefit relatively few properties. Much more likely would be added taxes and assessments to our properties. Do we really want this?

There are far simpler ways to keep our roads from deteriorating. For example, I see a lot of cars and heavy commercial traffic tearing down streets, hogging both sides of the road, while trying to negotiate turns way too fast. This can't be good for the road surface, nor is it safe for the rest of us. I'm sure that a little better enforcement of the motor vehicle rules already in place would do wonders for the condition of our roads. Additionally, it's amazing how much more enjoyable the ride is when we slow down a bit and enjoy our wonderful scenery.

Another Perspective On "Rural Roads"

By Craig Harrison

On December 20, 2007, the Santa Rosa Press Democrat reported that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission released its latest ratings of the roads and concluded that for the fourth year in a row the roads in unincorporated Sonoma County were the worst of all Bay Area cities and counties. On March 13, 2008, the Oakland Tribune reported that a study by Washington-based The Road Information Program (TRIP) concluded that the Bay Area has the nation's second worst road and highway conditions, after the Los Angeles area. The study found that poor highway conditions on 62 percent of the Bay Area's main thoroughfares cost motorists an average of \$761 a year in auto maintenance compared to an average of \$413 throughout the United States. "We want to make motorists aware that they're essentially throwing money out the window of their cars," said Carolyn Bonifas, a research director at TRIP. "It's much cheaper to make the repairs than to pay the consequences of driving on roads that are in inadequate condition."

Bracing For Disaster

Press Democrat, May 5, 2008, Derek J. Moore

"There are a few people who heed the warnings, but most say they don't have time to prepare for THE BIG ONE. ARE YOU READY? Santa Rosa COPE program (is) urging residents to protect homes, stockpile supplies for (the) next big quake. Inside Jerry Bender's Rincon Valley home, bricks hold down lamps, museum wax affixes pictures to wall and 40-pound fishing wire prevents books from falling off shelves. If an earthquake strikes, the retired Agilent engineer will be ready. The question is: **Why are so many of his neighbors not?** It's like pulling teeth," Bender said of his efforts to organize his ...neighbors into creating a disaster plan. "Everybody says, 'Yeah, I know it's a problem.' But there's a hesitancy to do something that's not a crisis."

Even a recent study in which scientists practically guaranteed a major quake will strike California within the next 30 years...- does not appear to have jostled people into action. An estimated 95 percent of households in Santa Rosa have no disaster planning in place, a fact Paul Hess, the city's Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, termed "amazing." He said people will realize their mistake only after a major quake hits. "I tell people it's going to be like two weeks of extreme camping, with medical triage thrown in. You probably will not be able to reach the 911 call center. You're going to have to learn how to patch injuries..."

(Jerry Bender and his wife, Santa Rosa Councilwoman Jane Bender) are hoping to inspire their neighbors into developing their own disaster plans under a city program called Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies, or COPE. The program involves neighbors exchanging information that can prove useful in an emergency, such as contact numbers, the location of gas shut-off valves and the names of people, and pets, that reside in the home. Hess says the program is designed to take as little time as possible. "If they know this is going to take three or four hours max, most people will give you that..." **When you're ready to give three or four hours of your time for BV, please call Karen Sommer at 528-8982! See next article.**

Be Prepared When Disaster Strikes...

The Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness Program (BVEP) is organizing neighborhoods for preparedness. **Neighborhood Alert and Planning** is a key component for being prepared, helping your family, your neighbors and your community when disaster strikes. The program, similar to COPE, includes:

1. Selecting a safe shelter site
2. Locating emergency storage for first aid supplies, shelter supplies, tools and equipment to be used when disaster strikes.
3. Communication with neighbors and public safety agencies is a key component of preparedness, whether it be by telephone, email or with walkie-talkies and ham radios when power and telephones are not available.
4. Each neighborhood will have a damage assessment team that will survey roads and bridges after a disaster. These teams will remove debris and report on any downed power and communication lines. They will assess bridges for damage and report on their safety.
5. Neighborhood alert teams will assess each household for damage to persons and property, help when safe to do so and report to authorities as possible.
6. Large animal and pet rescue teams will help transfer animals to safety.

Learn how you can help your family and neighbors.

Be Prepared! Contact Karen Sommer at 528-8982 or email: ksommer11@earthlink.net

BVEP Donations Needed

In recent editions of the VOICE, requests for donations have been made for the Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness (BVEP) fund. The money is needed for the emergency supplies and communication equipment which will be housed in two storage units to be located at the BV Fire Station and the BV Grange Hall, to help us better **"Survive a Disaster"** in Bennett Valley. If you can help with a donation, please send a check for any amount to P.O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa, CA 95405. Checks should be made payable to BVHA with a BVEP notation on the check.

Evelyn Hornsby

COPE: DEVELOPING EMERGENCY PREPARATION KITS

Top Three Items To Have: 1. Water - 4 cases at home, 2 in trunk of car **2. Bandaging Supplies - Strips of cloth for bleeding injuries, strips of cardboard and towels for splinting** **3. Tools - Prying, cutting, sawing, hammering, flashlights, AM/FM radios, walkie-talkies, heavy duty work gloves, shoes, duct tape and face masks** Paul Hess, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, Santa Rosa City, phess@srcity.org Check out the website at cope.srcity.org

REFLECTIVE ADDRESS SIGNS

These green reflective double-sided address signs which many of us already have are essential for reducing the time it takes for emergency personnel to find your home. To order one, please stop by the Bennett Valley Fire Station.

CERT Training and Challenge II

By Marilee Jensen

A CERT training class was held for the required twenty hours at the Bennett Valley Fire Station on May 3, May 10, May 31 and June 14. Twelve additional Bennett Valley residents have now participated in the CERT training, to better help all of us to ***“survive a disaster.”***

In addition to that was the CERT Challenge II, a follow-up training for those already CERT certified, on Saturday, June 21st, at the Santa Rosa Fire Training Tower. There were six CERT teams in attendance with 44 participants, from Bennett Valley, Healdsburg, Rohnert Park, Santa Rosa/Graton combination and Sebastopol. Karen Sommer was the Incident Commander for the whole event and Katy Mangan was the team leader for the Bennett Valley team. We were trained and tested in Hazards, Cribbing, Communications, Fired-up, Kids & Pets, and Triage. The training in each of these areas was very well- done by all of the trainers, including a sheriff deputy, a number of firefighters, communication experts and the Red Cross. This follow-up CERT training is especially worthwhile, as it is helping the trainees to remember and expand what they had learned previously, while using this training more comprehensively than they did the first-time around in their CERT training classes.

- **Hazard:** In this training, we examined a “damaged” house to be sure the utilities were turned off and to locate victims in the darkened house. The Sheriff Deputy leading that training provided us with lots of useful information both before and after the actual exercise.
- **Cribbing:** We had more experience in using leverage and team work to safely lift heavy items to get people out, as needed.
- **Communications:** We practiced communicating with both walkie-talkie’s and ham radios. Available classes to obtain the license necessary to operate a ham radio were discussed.
- **“Fired-Up”:** Four Healdsburg firefighters had each of us put out a small fire, both with wet blankets and shovels. The wet blankets were to be lowered very slowly over the flames to more effectively douse the fire. It worked! With the shovels, we were told to throw the dirt rapidly onto the flames, rather than dumping the dirt on the flames. Again, the flames went out quickly.
- **“Kids and Pets”** We learned a number of interesting new points listed below from a Red Cross representative:
 - In a disaster if there are some aggressive dogs running around loose, try to open a car door. Nine out of ten dogs will jump into the car.
 - With cats, you can put them into pillow cases and tie the pillow cases shut. The cats are able to breathe and seem to find this very secure and calming. They can then be moved more easily to other locations as needed for their safety.
 - When you find young children wandering around, it is important to confine them in some safe area with adult supervision. **DO NOT PUT NAME TAGS ON THEM** as they are more likely to go with a stranger who happens to know their name.

○ **Triage:** We found that we needed some “retraining” in triage more than in the other areas. A brief summary from our Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Participant Manual follows:

- **Triage is a French term meaning “to sort.”**
- **The CERT program goal is to do the greatest good for the greatest number.**
- Triage has been found to be an effective strategy where there are many more victims than rescuers, there are limited resources and time is critical. This is a system for rapidly evaluating victims’ injuries and prioritizing them for treatment. ***It includes evaluating the victims’ airway & breathing rate, bleeding & circulation and mental status.***
- Once each of the victim’s condition is evaluated, the victims are prioritized and labeled (tagged) into three categories:
 1. ***Immediate (I): The victim has life-threatening injuries that demand immediate attention to save his or her life; rapid life-saving treatment is urgent.***
 2. ***Delayed (D): Injuries do not jeopardize the victim’s life; treatment can be delayed.***
 3. ***Dead: No respiration after two attempts to open the airways.***
- **CERT members ability to open airways, control bleeding, and treat shock is critical to saving lives.**
 - ***Use the Head-Tilt/Chin-Lift method for opening airways.***
 - ***Control bleeding using direct pressure, elevation, and/or pressure points.***
 - ***If there is a question about a victim being in shock, treat for shock; lie flat, elevate legs and maintain body temperature.***

HAM RADIO LICENSE

If you’re interested in getting a license to operate a ham radio, please call Marilee Jensen, 576-0405. At least two Bennett Valley residents were able to pass the test for their ham radio license on June 28, at Vista Del Lago. If we have at least ten people from Bennett Valley who are interested, then Dale Westerterp, is willing to teach the class in Bennett Valley. These ham cram sessions go from 8:30 am until 3 pm, generally on a Saturday.

EMERGENCY TIPS

- If your water is pumped electrically and there is enough warning before the power goes out, fill your bathtub and spare containers with water. You can flush toilets by pouring some water into the bowl.
- To help prevent food from spoiling, fill larger used plastic soda bottles with water and put them in freezer now. During an outage, transfer the bottles to your refrigerator. Keep the freezer & refrigerator doors closed as much as possible. Block ice in your refrigerator and dry ice in your freezer will help keep them cooler when the power is off.

Excerpts from PG&E Spotlight, November, 1996

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District

6161 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa

Non-Emergency Business Phone: 578-7761

Board of Directors

Mark Richardson, President; Joseph Mazeau, Vice-President; Marilee Jensen, Secretary; Arnie Tognozzi, and Don D'Avanzo, Directors
Board meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday each month, 7:00 pm, at the BV Fire Station.

BENNETT VALLEY PAID FIREFIGHTING STAFF

Fire Chief: Andy Pforsich, 823-1084

48-hour Personnel: Lieutenants Kevin Burris and Matt Tognozzi, Engineer Danny Connelly

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

Engineers Patrick Tognozzi, Brian Drees and Ronnie Lakin

Supplemented and supported by many trained firefighting volunteers. Three separate shifts of volunteers are paid to sleep overnight at the Fire Station, three at a time, for improved coverage.

Bennett Valley Special Tax Rate

Each year the Bennett Valley Fire District Board of Directors approves the annual special tax rate for Bennett Valley residents, based on a careful analysis of what funds are necessary to maintain our well-run Bennett Valley Fire District. The maximum tax rate for each single family dwelling could be as high as \$180 per year. Since this special tax was approved in 2002, the annual tax rate has never exceeded \$160 per year, per household. For 2008/2009, the annual special fire tax rate will once again be \$160 for each single-family dwelling.

Improved Staffing, BV Fire Station

When this new special fire tax was approved by Bennett Valley residents, in November, 2002, the district was able to improve their staffing, so instead of one paid firefighter, there were two paid firefighters on duty each day (the 24-hour engineer and a "part-time firefighter", 8 am - 5 pm). At that same time it was also budgeted and approved to pay a sleeper stipend of \$25 a night to two volunteer firefighters who would spend the night at the fire station. Prior to that time, apparently volunteers only slept at the BV Fire Station occasionally. Effective June 25th, 2008, there are now three firefighters on duty during the day and with three paid sleepers, there are generally four firefighters on duty during the night. This added staff on duty at the fire station helps tremendously when they receive emergency calls. While it still takes the off-duty volunteers a little extra time to get to the BV Fire Station, the three or four firefighters on duty can accomplish a great deal more on their own before the volunteers arrive.

Battalion Chiefs at Gold Ridge Fire

Per the Administrative Agreement between Bennett Valley Fire District and Gold Ridge Fire District, the three Battalion Chiefs at Gold Ridge provide day-to-day supervision for our firefighting personnel at Bennett Valley. Their names are Dan George (Assistant Chief),

Adam Schipper and Darrin DeCarli, with Darrin having just been hired this year.

Bennett Valley Firefighting Activities

May & June 2008 By Engineer Danny Connelly

15 Medical Aids	10 Vegetation Fires
5 Structure Fires	5 Hazardous Conditions
4 Vehicle Collisions	2 Out-of-County Strike Teams
39 Calls, plus Two Strike Team calls	

What is a strike team? When assistance is needed with a particular fire or a number of fires in another area, as is the case right now, then a call is put out for a strike team which consists of five fire engines of one particular type, such as a wildland fire engine, from a number of different fire stations. Three or four firefighters from the same district will come with their particular fire engine. Usually all five engines on a strike team will be from the same county, so that the different engines could be from Santa Rosa Fire Department, Gold Ridge Fire District, Rancho Adobe Fire District, etc. With each strike team there is a qualified pre-appointed strike team leader, such as one of the Battalion Chiefs from Gold Ridge Fire District. There is financial reimbursement to a fire station for the use of their engine and firefighters, after the fact.

The first strike team left on June 12th and headed to Butte County just east of Chico...After five days of fighting fires, they returned to BV on June 17th. Four days later, BV was asked to send another strike team to help fight the fires in both Humboldt and Mendocino Counties. The BV Wildland Fire Engine (a Type 3 engine) left on June 21 and is still gone, along with eight BV firefighters, four of whom just returned after 14 days of continuous firefighting, including Lieutenant Kevin Burris. Now Engineer Danny Connelly and three more BV firefighters have left to take their places fighting fires in Mendocino Co. Strike team calls are very unusual in June & July.

Introducing Danny Connelly, The Newest Full-Time Engineer at BV Fire

Danny Connelly's Dad is retired from the Oakland Fire Dept. and his brother has worked for the Oakland Fire Dept. for three years., so it seems Danny's interest in being a firefighter runs in his family. In 2001, when Danny was 19 years old and living in Sebastopol, he began working as a volunteer for Gold Ridge Fire District. In 2003, he was hired as a "part-time" firefighter for Bennett Valley Fire District. In that same year, he also began working for an ambulance company, as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). Danny passed the engineer test in 2004. In December, 2007, he was promoted to the position of full-time engineer for the Bennett Valley Fire District, working 48 hours-on-duty, then four days off duty. He also continues to work for 10 days a month for Gold Ridge Fire District, and has worked part-time for Glen Ellen Fire. He keeps himself very busy getting additional experience as a firefighter. Danny's goal is to move on to a fire station at a larger city department, as his Dad and brother have done, once he receives the necessary training and experience at Bennett Valley Fire. In accordance with the personnel policies, he has to be employed for one year at BV Fire as an engineer in order to qualify as a lieutenant.

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(BVHA) Board Of Directors**

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**A MESSAGE FROM YOUR MEMBERSHIP
COORDINATOR TO MEMBERS WHO RECEIVE
THE VOICE BY E-MAIL**

Please let me know if you change your E-mail address. It is impossible to decipher some of the addresses when they are returned as undeliverable. Either call Larissa Goliti at 707-578-3453 or email me at lgoliti@hotmail.com. Thank you in advance, Larissa Goliti

Brief Summary of BVHA Meeting

May 21st, 2008

▪ Fay Blair's Treasurer's Report showed that 231 households are dues-paying BVHA members for 2008; 86 of these members have also sent donations for BVHA. Profit from the 2008 BV calendars was \$624. The amount of funds in the budget allocated to Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness (BVEP), such as from the t-shirt sales in 2007, will be more clearly identified. Karen Sommer has shown a total net profit of \$1,450.05 from the t-shirt sales and the 2008 CERT training profits. The BVEP fund-raising goal is \$5,000, to purchase storage units, printed materials, emergency supplies and communication equipment.

▪ Karen Sommer presented a report showing the number of CERT classes given, the number of residents who attended, and the income and expenses involved. From the income collected the Board approved a payment of \$115 to Sonoma County CERT, out of the BVEP funds. The Board moved to donate some money toward the BVEP

storage unit (about 10' x 20') and asked how much it would cost. Karen will provide a budget on that for the next meeting, but believes the cost will be about \$2,500. Another BVEP goal is to have 100 Bennett Valley residents trained in CERT. Presently there are about 50 BV residents who are CERT trained.

▪ BVHA is interested in changing their tax status to 501(c)(3), rather than a 501 (c)(4), as donations to the former can be deducted as charitable contributions. There was a motion for Jim Cobb to draw up revised Articles of Incorporation and BVHA Bylaws to apply for the 501(c)(3), by identifying all of our educational activities as part of the organization's purpose.

▪ Craig appointed Jean LaCombe as chair of the Nominating Committee.

▪ The Board approved a donation of \$1,000 to the training of high school-aged BV Fire Explorers, the source for most of the trained BV firefighter volunteers, once they turn 18.

▪ Craig Harrison reported that the cell phone tower will be approved by PRMD at a height of 58 feet, so only Verizon will be able to use it. A public hearing by PRMD can be expected shortly. If anyone is interested in being notified about this public hearing, they should email Blake Hillegas at bhillega@sonoma-county.org.

▪ For the September meeting, Frank LaCombe will contact the geologist from SSU, as a speaker. Eric Burns suggested that we have a speaker on wildlife for the November meeting. Craig Harrison wants us to use cards and signs to publicize these meetings.

Board of Directors' Tentative Agenda

July 16, 2008, BV Grange Hall, 7 p.m.

- Report from Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness Committee and Discussion on Update on Applying for IRS 501 (c)(3) status
- Appointment of Nominating Committee members, with Jean LaCombe as Chair
- Status of Cell Phone Tower
- Update on Reopening Sonoma Mountain Road
- 2008 BVHA Meeting Schedule—Speakers for September or November?

Follow-up On BV Roads Report

As reported in the May VOICE, Craig Harrison & Marilee Jensen surveyed the BV roads on 3/3/08, with Rob Silva and Jess Ross, Road Maintenance managers. Since then, the Calif. Dept. of Forestry crew did the brush-cutting on Enterprise Road and Sonoma Mountain Rd., from Glen Ellen to the road closure. They didn't receive any complaints for a change, which they attributed to the explanation in the VOICE. They had hoped to do more brush-cutting but were called away for the earlier-than-usual firefighting. They were also able to do improved ditching along Sonoma Mountain Rd. **Result: Improvement For BV Rural Roads.**

BENNETT VALLEY COMMUNITYCALENDAR

Remember to Mark Your Calendars.

1.) BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION (BVHA): Next meeting, Wednesday, July 16th, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall. See Page Seven for agenda.

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 call 823-1084 to verify meetings in advance.

3.) SONOMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS meets every Tuesday (except on weeks when there is a legal 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. Be sure to vote for the First District Supervisor candidate of your choice on June 3, Sonoma County Election.**

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

- Call Sonoma County Road Maintenance, at 565-7280, to report pot holes which need fixing or trash which needs to be picked up along the BV roads.
- Call 576-1371 to report emergencies from a cell phone in Bennett Valley; call 565-2121 from any phone, to talk to someone at the Sheriff's office 24 hrs. every day, with concerns that may or may not be an emergency.

Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association

P.O. Box 2666

Santa Rosa, CA 95405

Website: *www.bennettvalley.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

Send in your photos with wild birds and/or blooms!

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