



# Bennett Valley VOICE

www.bennettvalleyhoa.org

VOLUME 32, NUMBER 3 BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION (BVHA) MAY, 2009

## **The Wildflowers of Bennett Valley**

By Craig Harrison, President, Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association

BVHA is very fortunate to have Jeanne Wirka scheduled to speak at our next meeting, on Thursday, May 21, at 7:00 pm, at the BV Grange Hall, on the wildflowers in Bennett Valley. Jeanne is the Resident Biologist at the Bouverie Preserve of Audubon Canyon Ranch near Glen Ellen and co-directs the ranch's education program. She has been teaching classes on the wildflowers of the Sonoma Valley since she came to Bouverie in 2005. Jeanne has a masters degree from University of California, Davis, where she studied plant ecology. Her talk will feature photographs that will help you identify the wild flowers that you see on your own property as well as some of the common weeds.

### **Are Gravel Roads in Bennett Valley's Future?**

By Craig Harrison

Public Works Director Phil Demery and Pavement Preservation Manager Steve Urbanek discussed the future of Sonoma County roads in general and Bennett Valley roads in particular at a meeting of the Bennett Valley Homeowners Association on March 19<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Demery stated that his department has insufficient resources to maintain all 1,387 miles of county roads, and that most of the less-traveled paved roads will become gravel during the next decade unless new funding sources become available. Mr. Demery believes that repaving or chip-sealing roads that do not have proper foundations is a waste of funds. The county budget for roads is about \$19 million this year, \$7 million of which is spent on pavement. The public works budget is about \$3 million less this year because there is less state gas tax money available. Despite a decline in oil and gas prices, the price of asphalt remains high. Sonoma County received a federal stimulus formula allocation of \$6 million for road projects which were "shovel

ready", thus those projects needing significant environmental review or additional rights-of-way could not be considered. For these reasons, road conditions in 2009 will worsen even more.

Among the nine counties in the Bay Area, Sonoma County has two to three times as many roads and four to five times as many bridges as the other counties. Only three cents of the 18 cents per gallon state tax on gasoline is allocated to counties, and the formula for apportioning these funds among the counties in the state (mostly based on the number of registered vehicles and barely considering the number of miles of roads in each county) puts Sonoma County at a disadvantage. Mr. Demery stated that the county simply cannot maintain 1387 miles of roads on this budget, and that his department is preparing a proposal whereby the highest priority roads (about 350 miles) would be maintained to a high standard while the remaining country roads would essentially deteriorate to gravel during the coming decade. Precisely how "high priority" will be defined will be a decision ultimately made by the Board of Supervisors following public hearings to be scheduled. Mr. Demery believes that criteria such as traffic volume, safety and routes to schools may be used to make these decisions.

In the our area, Bennett Valley Road, Grange-Crane Canyon Road and Petaluma Hill Road may be designated as "high priority." Apparently Sonoma Mountain Road, Pressley Road, Enterprise Road and smaller roads would be lower priority. Pot holes will continue to be filled but the roads over time will deteriorate to gravel conditions. We urge residents of Bennett Valley to contact Valerie Brown ([vbrown@sonoma-county.org](mailto:vbrown@sonoma-county.org) or 565-2241) and to participate in the public hearings on prioritizing funding for the roads, if they do not agree with the future plans for our roads. These hearings are not yet scheduled, but will be sometime after June 2.

## **Bennett Valley Grape Growers**

By Joe Judge

Hello everyone, I am the new President of the Bennett Valley Grape Growers (BVGG) and we invite you to visit us at the [BVGG.org](http://BVGG.org). The BVGG had its annual meeting at the Grange Hall and about 30 members attended. We encourage any grape grower who would like to join the BVGG to please call Ken Hunt at 953-9872.

## **Bennett Valley Grange** **137<sup>th</sup> Annual Picnic**

By Janet Alfieri

The Bennett Valley Grange will be holding its 137<sup>th</sup> annual picnic on its traditional date of the first Sunday in June. It will be held from 12 noon until 4:00 pm on Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>. There will be a barbeque chicken dinner, homemade desserts, children's activities, live music by the Susan Comstock Swingtet, and a wine auction (wines generously donated by the Bennett Valley Grape Growers and members of the Kenwood Yacht Club). The cost will be \$12.50 for adults and \$5.00 for children, with all the proceeds going to the upkeep of the oldest continuously active Grange in the United States, the Bennett Valley Grange. New this year is a special award to a person who best represents our Grange Mission Statement – *“Enhance our environment through community interaction”*. Please join the Grange at our community picnic in honoring Marilee Jensen, a true community contributor, with the presentation at 2:00 pm.

## **Sonoma Mountain Road Repairs**

By Marilee Jensen

Helen Bates recently informed me, with some enthusiasm, that she thought the road repairs would be completed by the end of May. Sarah Fredericks, the construction inspector with Sonoma County stated the following, on May 4, “The end of May was a good target last week. However, the rains have shut us down. We will not be able to accomplish anything this week. We will need several days of warm sunny weather before we can resume construction.

“At this point the TDA (Tire Derived Aggregate) placement has been completed. The next step is to place the soil that is immediately above the TDA and rebuild the slope between (and above) the road and the Bates’ driveway. Once that is complete we will install the surface drainage and the roadway section including the paving. Finally we will clean up and restore the staging areas that have been used during construction and install various erosion control

measures. All of this work should take about 4 weeks to complete, weather permitting.” Four weeks isn’t too much further to go!

## **Your Emergency Water Supply**

In April there was a group order for 55-gallon water barrels, for one’s emergency water supply, including a special preserver which will easily and safely store the water for 5 years. Some people feel they missed out on that and would still like to order one. You can either wait about six months for another group order or send an email to Mike Hickey, at [mnp4449@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mnp4449@sbcglobal.net). He can help connect you to the supplier in southern California, if you want to order one sooner, with a higher shipping cost.

## **THE NEW 2010 BENNETT VALLEY CALENDAR, "THE MAGIC OF TREES"**

**Entry deadline: Friday, September 4**

By Sherry Parker

This year's calendar will focus on the Magic of Trees in Bennett Valley – which should make a spectacular calendar, as we delight in the most stunning array of trees on the planet: mighty, gnarly oaks; prolific bays; towering redwoods and firs; sculptural madrones; colorful maples; and a plethora of other beautiful and intriguing trees.

**It’s now time to start thinking seriously about submitting your photos of Bennett Valley’s trees to the Calendar Committee.** We encourage photographers of all ages to enter with your special photos of Bennett Valley trees. Specifications for entry are as follows:

- For jurying, prints of trees in Bennett Valley will be accepted, 5"x7" or larger. Since the format of the calendar is horizontal, we prefer horizontal photos, but vertical prints in pairs will be accepted.
- Maximum entries per person will be 3 (paired verticals count as one entry). On the back of each print, please write your name, telephone number, and email address.
  - Digital or 35mm will be accepted. In the case of digital photos, we will require from the finalists a high resolution, low compression (high quality) jpeg or .tif or raw file for printing.
  - **September 4 is the deadline for submission.** Please send or deliver your photos to the Calendar Committee, 2750 Bardy Road, Santa Rosa, 95404.
- If you would like your prints to be returned after judging, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE).
- For more explanation, information or questions, please call Sherry Parker @ 528-6176.

## **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. Please confirm meeting date ahead of time.*

### **Bennett Valley Paid Firefighting Staff**

*Fire Chief:* Andy Pforsich, 823-1084

*48-hour Personnel:* Lieutenants Kevin Burris, Matt Tognozzi, and 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. Volunteers are also paid and interns used, as the third firefighter on duty during the day.*

## **Bennett Valley Firefighter Activities**

### **March/April, 2009**

**By Lieutenant Kevin Burris**

Medical Aids- 9;                   Structure Fires-1;  
Vehicle Accident- 6;       Alarm Soundings-1;  
Vegetation fires-2;       Other-5;

Total calls-24

On April 14, 2009 high winds hit Bennett Valley bringing down trees and power lines on both Bennett Valley and Sonoma Mountain roads. As a result of the downed power lines two small grass fires were started and quickly extinguished by Bennett Valley Fire personnel. When confronted by a situation such as downed power lines we urge the public to remain clear and call for assistance. Do not attempt to move lines or people touching lines or drive over the lines in your car. Even if the lines do not appear energized they are still a hazard. Public safety is our top priority, if you come upon such a hazardous situation make the proper call- **911**.

## **Additional Water For The Bennett Valley Fire District.**

**By Joe Judge**

With the free assistance of Bartley Pump Co. and the Bennett Valley Fire Protection District (BVFPD) we were able to adapt my Judge Family Vineyard well, located on Grange Rd, to become a future water source for the Bennett Valley Fire District. This could possibly save valuable minutes to reach water should a fire occur in this vicinity. The Bennett Valley Fire Chief, Andy Pforsich, says that anyone with a 10,000 gallon or more water storage tank would be especially helpful for the Fire District. If you have that storage tank or are willing to put one in, please call the Fire Station at 578-7761.

## **Volunteer Help/Supplies for BV Fire Station Addition?**

Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness (BVEP) has been working together with the Bennett Valley Fire District for sometime about having a storage container/shed at the Fire Station. This shed would be used for storage of emergency supplies as well as being a centralized location for CERT volunteers and communication volunteers using both walkie-talkies and ham radios during an emergency. The BV Fire Station is no longer able to fit all its vehicles in the Fire Station, so Andy Pforsich, the BV Fire Chief, was considering having a small addition built onto the Fire Station, for both of these purposes, that is for parking one of their fire vehicles and for the volunteer emergency supplies and centralization. He felt the first informal estimate was a higher cost than they wanted to consider, but some of the Bennett Valley Homeowner's Board felt they could possibly get enough volunteer help to make it feasible. Since then, one of the BVHA Board members, Paul Hamilton, a retired architect, has worked with Andy and fire personnel, to draw up some plans for this addition, pro bono. Next the BV Fire Board will consider approving an expenditure to cover the basic costs for the foundation. If that is approved, then Paul feels he can get an engineer to look at his plans, at partial fee, and then obtain commitments for donations of contracting, lumber and labor. If any of you might be interested in helping with this project, please call Marilee Jensen, 576-0405.

## **CERT CHALLENGE III, March 28, 2009**

CERT Challenge III was six hours of training at the Santa Rosa Training Tower for those already CERT-certified, with 6 teams and about 8 to 10 people on each team, including Bennett Valley. This training covered a major earthquake scenario (2 teams, 90 minutes); stress management; hazard house; PG&E electrical/power line information; and medical skills, such as controlling bleeding, opening airways for breathing and heart attack symptoms. These were very useful experiences, such as the two teams not familiar with each other working together under a self-chosen joint incident commander in the major earthquake scenario, which included different "houses", different victims, etc.

In the PG&E workshop we learned that if a loose power line falls on your car **do not get out! You can get electrocuted leaving the car.** Have someone call PG&E, and drive forward or backward to try to get the wire off the car. Stay in the car until a firefighter or PG&E tells you it is safe to get out. In CERT, one of the most useful concepts we learn is first be sure your family and your home are safe. Then, assist your neighbors, always work with a buddy, and carefully size-up all situations for potential danger. If it is questionably dangerous, be sure to walk away, in order to be able to provide help to as many people as possible.

# **HOW TO PREPARE YOUR HOME AGAINST WILDFIRE**

Presented by Darrin DeCarli, Battalion Chief, Gold Ridge and Bennett Valley Fire Districts, April 25. BV Grange Summarized by Anne Giles

Like last year, the fire season is starting 3 to 5 weeks ahead of usual - not a good sign. The key concept to remember is **fires need fuel to burn**. Be sure you have defensible space around your home - approximately 100 feet in all directions - with reduced and spaced fuel and a place from which the firefighters can safely fight the fire and defend your home. **Read the booklet, "Living with Fire in Sonoma County" for lots of detail on how to do this. This booklet can be obtained from the Bennett Valley Fire Protection District, 578-7761, or downloaded from [firesafesonoma.org](http://firesafesonoma.org).**

## In brief:

- Separate trees & shrubs by at least 1 1/2 time their height (pines, firs and eucalyptus burn fast; bay trees burn pretty fast; live oaks burn slowly; deciduous trees usually do not burn.) Everything burns quicker at the end of the season.
- Keep dried weeds and grasses mowed down to at least 3". (Near the house, mow, rake up and remove any dry grass or weed areas, to remove the fuel)
- Keep tree limbs 6 feet above the ground, 10 feet away from chimneys, heat vents, rooflines, eaves and gutters
- Remove leaf litter and needles from roof, gutters, and porches.
- Keep the woodpile and stacks of lumber 30 feet away from the house

## When deciding whether to create a defensible space, keep the following in mind:

- In a wildfire situation, firefighters have 2 to 5 seconds to decide if your home is defensible or if there is a safe place from which to fight the fire.
- If not, they may move to the next home.
- If the homeowner does not care enough to prepare/protect their own home from possible fire danger, why should the firefighters risk their lives to try to defend it?

## Fire runs uphill:

- On a slope, the fuels are preheated because the heat rises ahead before the fire hits there.
- The steeper the slope, the faster the run.
- Steep drainages and canyons cause wind turbulence, erratic fire behavior, and create a chimney effect.

## Wind affects the rate and direction of fires:

- Convection columns caused by the heat of the fire lift burning material into the air.
- Large and small embers can settle on homes and vegetation as much as 1/2 mile or more away, causing spot fires.
- Embers can be very fine and get into *everything* - a broom left on a porch, gutters, even a supposedly closed electrical box . Put fine wire screening (1/4" or less) on all

vents to prevent embers from being sucked into them and starting a (temporarily) "invisible" fire.

## A common cause of wildfires is machinery, such as the following :

- Mowers in high grass - a metal blade striking a rock can spark a fire.
- Weed eaters without spark arresters or with metal blades
- Chain saws
- Vehicles, with their catalytic converters hot after being driven, pulling onto dry grass high enough to touch the bottom of the car

## To cut high grass and weeds safely:

- **No metal blades**
- Only cut while the grass is moist, once the bottom of the grass starts to dry; 10:00 am most days, earlier on a dry hot day, perhaps noon on a foggy day
- Watch out for wind

In case of a wildfire, you will be notified of evacuation by a "reverse 911" call or a loudspeaker, and if told to get out, do it! Do not wait. Get your "grab and go bag" and leave. Use common sense - evacuate if you feel you should, whether notified or not.

## Cal Fire's policy is:

- Prepare your property ahead of time and then if a fire comes, get out;
- To "stay and defend" is to risk your life and possibly the lives of those trying to assist.

## If you wait too long to drive out on our narrow roads:

- You may block the firefighters who are trying to get in
- You may encounter heavy smoke, making driving more dangerous than driving in our worst fog.

## **See page 15 of "Living with Fire in Sonoma County" for what to do if wildfire approaches.**

## If the only ways out are shut off, find an area of safe refuge, such as:

- A large, mowed pasture
- A house; close windows, dog/cat door, any way fire can get in, close heavy curtains, remove light ones.
- **NOT** in a vehicle - it heats quickly and is not safe

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This talk was a sobering yet encouraging experience: wildfires are scary, but there is a lot we can do to prepare. The home that has a proper "defensible space" has a good chance of surviving a wildfire. We can't change the steep hillsides and ravines nor the roads, but we can create defensible spaces around our homes. We can prepare our homes, our "grab and go" bag and list of what to take, and what to do if there is a fire.

Then relax and enjoy our beautiful area. Anne Giles

## **EMERGENCY “GRAB & GO BAG”**

By Sally Badger, Bennett Ridge Registered Nurse

A “grab & go” bag is what you grab when you need to get out in a hurry! Use a light weight back pack so both hands are free. A walking stick or cane may be useful.

### **Highly Recommended:**

1. Vital medications for 1 week; 2. Flashlight with extra batteries; 3. Basic First-Aid kit (*Suggestions for content: [www/ready.gov/first\\_aid\\_kit.html](http://www.ready.gov/first_aid_kit.html)*); 4. Extra car and house keys; 5. Extra eyeglasses and/or hearing aid; 6. Whistle; 7. Plastic bag, rain poncho; 8. Warm and cool clothing (preferably non-synthetic); 9. Sturdy shoes; 10. Hat; 11. Necessary pet supplies (*vaccination information, food, leash, etc.*); 12. Waterproof packet with the following: a.) *Emergency information, with family phone numbers & email addresses, including someone out of the area* b.) *List of medications, allergies, medical information, MD name and phone* d.) *Copy of ID and Health Insurance Cards* e.) *Emergency cash (small bills and coins)* f.) *Calling card or cell phone with charger;*

### **Useful Items:**

Mylar space blanket; Snack goods; Small bottles of water; Vital documents (*Copies of passport, birth certificate, driver’s license, list of bank accounts, mortgages, loans, insurance policies, credit card-both sides*); Notepad and pen; Personal hygiene supplies (*toilet paper, etc.*); Portable radio; Plastic bags.

## **Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness (BVEP)**

By Karen Sommer, 528-8982 or [ksommer11@earthlink.net](mailto:ksommer11@earthlink.net)

- Our CPR class for June is full, so we can’t accept any more in the class. If there is enough interest for a second class, we will schedule one for the fall. Please contact me to be on the list for a second class.
- We have cancelled the CERT class but hope to have this course available next winter, possibly February.
- Also, we’re planning a class on emergency communications using FRS (Walkie/talkies) in the fall in conjunction with ham radio operations. We will include more details in future VOICE articles.
- If you are looking to host a neighborhood meeting on emergency preparedness, let me know. There is lots of help available to help you organize your neighborhood to prepare for earthquakes or fire. We should all know what to do and how to evacuate or shelter in place if such an event occurs.

## **BVHA Neighborhood Alert, April 6**

### **Next time, let us reach you by email!**

By Marilee Jensen

On April 6, Bennett Valley Homeowner’s Association made the decision to send out a Neighborhood Alert to everyone on our mailing list, both email and hand-delivered postal mail. This cost BVHA over \$300, but the BVHA Board decided it was worthwhile. There was a man following women around Bennett Valley (and other rural roads in Sonoma County), trying to pull them over, after dark, and sexually accost them if he could get them to stop. We personally knew of five such instances in Bennett Valley during the first week of April, so a number of us felt some alarm at this situation. The man has now been apprehended and even has a previous record of similar behavior in San Francisco four years ago. Unless there are copycats, we think it is relatively safe on our rural roads once again, although I would still recommend being wary and not stopping for anyone you don’t know, especially at night.

This experience made us realize how valuable a BVHA email list would be, even for those who prefer to receive the VOICE by postal mail. We’re asking you to send a note to P.O. Box 2661, Santa Rosa, 95404, or an email to [lgoliti@hotmail.com](mailto:lgoliti@hotmail.com), with your name, address, phone number, email address and your preference for receiving the VOICE, that is by email or postal mail. To reiterate, we’re requesting your email address even if you prefer receiving a hard copy of the VOICE. I’m hesitant to give out my email address as some organizations send out material almost daily, certainly weekly, but BVHA would only send occasional important information to you, such as Neighborhood Alerts, reminders about emergency workshops or the scheduled speaker(s) at the next BVHA meeting. I’ve prepared a suggested Eaddress Notice below, which you can either cut out to mail in or copy. For questions, call 578-3453.

### **Eaddress Notice**

***My eaddress for special alerts, notices or reminders is \_\_\_\_\_.***

***Name \_\_\_\_\_***

***Address \_\_\_\_\_***

***Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_***

***Please check one of the following:***

\_\_\_\_ I do not have an email address:

\_\_\_\_ I want to receive my VOICE by postal service.

\_\_\_\_ I want to receive my copy of the VOICE by email.

Please send this information to P.O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa, CA 95405 or email to [lgoliti@hotmail.com](mailto:lgoliti@hotmail.com).

## **Measure Your Well Water**

**By Joe Judge**

A number of Bennett Valley residents with their own well participated in the Bennett Valley Well Project, a voluntary well depth survey, as described below in more detail, from the September 2005 *VOICE* and the March, 2007 *VOICE*. This project was conducted by Doug Martin, a retiree from Sonoma State University, who can no longer continue with this project. To avoid losing the data I asked Doug if he would allow me to be its custodian with the hope of keeping the project alive. I have assured Doug and the Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association that all confidentiality will be observed. If you would like to help in the data collection process or have your static depth-to-water measured for your well as part of this project, please call Joe Judge at 479-7020.

### **Proposed Bennett Valley Well Project**

**September, 2005 *VOICE***

**BACKGROUND:** Bennett Valley groundwater is the sole source of water for residences and agricultural users in the Valley. A recent study commissioned by Sonoma County examined newly-drilled wells, finding, "The trend analysis of depth-to-water in new wells together with reports of dropping water levels, seasonal well failures, and complete well failures, all suggest overdraft conditions." "But, the data do not show whether water levels in existing wells are dropping." There is no organized historical record of groundwater depth in Bennett Valley. The description which follows is an outline of a project to construct a record of groundwater depths. ...

**MISSION:** The Bennett Valley Well Project will maintain an organized record of static depth-to-water for 20-30 wells in the Bennett Valley watershed. Some of these wells will be individually owned or some will be operated by a mutual water system. The data on depth-to-water will be measured accurately and will be organized in a systematic way. These data will be available for community groups to (1) educate residents concerning water issues and (2) provide factual information for community groups to use in public settings, like meetings of the Planning Commission or the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors. In any case, any public presentation of these data will be coded in such a way that individual property addresses will not be revealed.

**OPERATIONS:** Any monitored well in this project must have a copy of the original well driller's log in order to provide baseline data on the static depth-to-water. We will help homeowners' obtain a copy if needed. The exact coordinates of the well will be determined, using GPS technology, and the height of the well-head above sea level will be estimated. Twice a year the static depth-to-water will be determined, perhaps using a sonic depth meter on loan from SWIG. Some well owners will prefer to do this measurement themselves, while others will need assistance. The date and depth-to-water will be recorded and maintained, to establish an organized historical record of groundwater depth in Bennett Valley, in at least a sampling of existing wells.

**\*Bennett Valley Well Project**

**By Doug Martin, March 2007 *VOICE***

The Bennett Valley Well Project measures depth-to-water in 17 residential wells in the Bennett Valley watershed twice a year. The goal of the project, begun in September, 2005 by BVHA, is to understand whether there is a general groundwater decline in our watershed.

Bennett Valley groundwater is affected by two factors: annual rain, a small part of which percolates into porous rock to resupply the aquifer; and water withdrawal when we pump for domestic or agricultural use. Annual rain can vary quite a lot year-to-year. For this reason, groundwater studies are long-term efforts spanning many years.

The Well Project has some long-term data from a few well-owners who have kept records over two or more decades, but most of the wells have only been measured recently. Some of these wells do, however, have records from the time they were originally drilled. From all this

data, one definite conclusion can be drawn: ***There is no clear overall pattern across the entire watershed.*** As you would guess from looking around the valley and surrounding hills, our geology is not very uniform. The valley and hills were formed by old volcanic flows and shifting of the earth from earthquakes. So, it's pretty cut up down there and the well data shows this, with some wells showing a decline and others holding steady. We'll try to keep our eye on things over the years...

### **BV Spring Clean-Up Roads Day!**

On Saturday, April 18, once again the major BV roads were cleaned by the 24 volunteers listed below. There were a number of new people helping out, which is especially appreciated. We want to express our special thanks to all of those who helped clean our community roads: *Dave Dammuller, Dave & Sandy Sandine, Lu Schultz, Mike & Patty Hickey, Norm Boling, Sandra Carr, Patty Gundry, Bobbie Blair, Sue Butcher and her children Avery, Evan & Nolan, Cindy Sumrall, Patti Boysen, Suzanne Dougherty, Lino Vicente, Margarita Macon & son, Arleigh, Shay Lamb, Sam Sweet, Craig Cousins, and 3 "mystery" people seen helping pick up litter near the riding stables on Crane Canyon Road.* We also want to give a SPECIAL ROUND OF APPLAUSE to people who did some picking up in the area around their own property on their own time schedule. Another person to give special thanks to is Valerie Kneit, who works for Sonoma Co. Public Works and has been very helpful in making the necessary arrangements for these BV clean-ups, twice a year. **If you have any novel ideas for finding ways to get more people to help with this Bennett Valley clean-up effort, please contact Mike Hickey at [mnp4449@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mnp4449@sbcglobal.net).**

### **Delay for Opening Jacobs Ranch**

**And Will Dogs Be Allowed?** By Craig Harrison

The State has put a freeze on bond funding and it likely will continue into early next year. Consequently, trail construction for Jacobs Ranch is delayed until 2010. The trails will need time to cure over a rainy season bringing an expected opening sometime in 2011. Ultimately Sonoma County Regional Parks is slated to operate Jacobs Ranch.

Dog use is not currently allowed for properties that are not open. Prior to opening, the Sonoma Co. Open Space District will work with Regional Parks on various management issues, including dog use. Most of the Regional Parks do allow dogs. If you have any further questions, you may call Bill Keene, Acting General Manager or Karen Gaffney, the Stewardship Program Manager, at 565-7360.

## **Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA) Board Of Directors**

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

**Craig Harrison, President**

[charrison@hunton.com](mailto:charrison@hunton.com), 573-9990

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**Bennett Valley Emergency Preparation Coordinator**

**Karen Sommer, 528-8982, [ksommer11@earthlink.net](mailto:ksommer11@earthlink.net),**

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

[marileejensen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marileejensen@sbcglobal.net).

### **A Message From Your Membership Coordinators,**

#### **Larissa Goliti and Jeannie LaCombe**

Thank you all for your response to the annual membership drive and your generous contributions. It is never too late to become a member of Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association. Annual dues are \$15 plus any additional contribution you want to make, payable to BVHA. If you want your extra contributions (over \$15) to be used for any specific purpose, please indicate on the check, under "memo". Send your check to: BVHA, PO Box 2666, Santa Rosa, CA 95405. Questions? Call 578-3453.

### **Brief Summary of BVHA Meeting**

**March 19, 2009**

- Phil Demery, Director of Sonoma Co. Public Works Department and Steve Ubanek, Pavement Preservation Manager, spoke about Sonoma County roads and the Bennett Valley roads. See Craig Harrison's description of this speech on the first page.
- Fay Blair gave the Treasurer's Report. Our calendar sales broke about even this year, without the profit of most of the previous years, because Long's Drug had misplaced one of the unopened boxes of 50 calendars. So far this year, there are 201 dues paying families, donations of \$930 and donations to BVEP of \$770.
- Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness Committee Report:

- James Cobb reported that the application for changing BVHA to IRS section 501 (c) (3) are ready to go. They were signed and James will mail them along with the \$30 fee. They will be forwarded to the IRS by the Secretary of State.

- Update on Storage Room Developments at the BV Fire Station, as described by Paul Hamilton. See Page 3. Paul brought some of his first drawings of the proposed addition to the Fire Station to the Board meeting.

- Karen Sommer said the Matanzas Creek Winery is donating a storage container to be placed at the Grange, for emergency supplies, communication and centralization during an emergency. See Page 4 for a description of the "Fire Faire" at the Grange on April 25, "How To Prepare Your Home Against Wildfires". Also see Karen's article on Page 5 re: other upcoming BVEP activities as described at the Board meeting.

- Craig Harrison reported that the cell phone tower will be functional shortly.
- Craig Harrison will be searching for a speaker for our May meeting. See Agenda below for the results.

### **Board of Directors' Tentative Agenda**

**May 21, BV Grange Hall, 7:00 pm**

7:00 pm – Wildflowers of Bennett Valley, Jeanne Wirka, Resident Biologist, Bouverie Preserve of Audubon Canyon Ranch (Glen Ellen), *Jeanne must depart by 8 pm.*

8:15 pm (approximate) Board of Directors business meeting (1 hour)

- Appointment of Election Committee
- Bi-Monthly County Reports: Board of Supervisors, Open Space District, PRMD, Public Works, Alcoholic Beverage Control Permits
- Report from the Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness Committee
- Transfer of Bennett Valley Well Monitoring Project
- Status of Reopening Sonoma Mountain Road
- Updating Website
- Speaker for September Meeting
- New Business as Determined by the Board
- Adjourn

**Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association**  
**P.O. Box 2666**  
**Santa Rosa, CA 95405**

[bennettvalleyhoa.org](http://bennettvalleyhoa.org)

**SPECIFIC AMENDED PURPOSES OF BVHA:** *“To educate, instruct, train and inform the local residents on disaster preparedness and emergency response as well as local environmental and land use issues; to promote and preserve the residential rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley; to serve as an open forum for Bennett Valley community participation; and to provide a bridge for communication between government agencies and the Bennett Valley community.”*

**Return Service Requested**

**Grange 137th Annual Picnic, June 7**  
**Emergency Water Barrel Orders, Page 2**

**Bennett Valley Community Calendar**

*Remember to mark your calendars!*

- 1.) BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION (BVHA):** Next meeting, **Thursday, May 21**, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall, with speaker Jeanne Wirka, on Bennett Valley wildflowers. 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 as they can be changed at the last minute.
- 3.) LandPaths OUTING:** Saturday, May 16, walk at Taylor Mountain. There will be a hike to the summit for a picnic lunch, taking in the spectacular vistas and exploring the diverse habitats. Moderate hiking; uneven footing; 3-4 miles; BYO picnic lunch; 11:00am-2:30 pm. Call LandPaths Event Line: (707) 524-9318 or email: [outings@LandPaths.org](mailto:outings@LandPaths.org).
- 4.) BENNETT VALLEY GRANGE:** The 137<sup>th</sup> annual picnic is being held on June 7, noon until 4:00 pm; \$12.50 for adults, \$5.00 for children. All proceeds go to the Bennett Valley Grange. This includes barbeque chicken dinner, homemade desserts, children's activities, live music by the Susan Comstock Swingtet, and a wine auction (wines generously donated by the BV Grape Growers and members of the Kenwood Yacht Club). New this year is a special award to Marilee Jensen, at 2:00 pm, for "enhancing our environment through community interaction". Please join the Grange at our community picnic.
- 5.) AMATEUR RADIO (Ham Radio) LICENSING IN JUST ONE DAY:** (From website [smrs.us](http://smrs.us)) Saturday, May 16 or Saturday, August 8, 8:30 am to 1:30 pm, Petaluma Senior Citizens Center. Register online or contact Dale at 762-9414.
- 6.) SONOMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS** meets every Tuesday (except on weeks when there is a legal holiday), at varying times, 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.

**IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS**

- Call Sonoma County Road Maintenance, at 565-5100 to report potholes which need fixing, or trash which needs to be picked up along Bennett Valley roads.
- Call 576-1371 from a cell phone to report emergencies in Bennett Valley. Call 565-2121 from any phone, to talk to someone at the Sheriff's office 24 hrs. every day, with emergencies that require a law enforcement response or with other concerns that may or may not be emergencies.