



Bennett Valley VOICE

www.bennettvalleyhoa.org

VOLUME 32, NUMBER 4

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION (BVHA)

JULY, 2009

Living on the Edge

By Julia Fadda, April, 2009, NorthBaybiz.com "Hidden Gems" series focuses on the North Bay's lesser-known appellations (AVA) such as Bennett Valley...

"...I was on the way home to Santa Rosa from San Francisco one afternoon. It had rained earlier in the day, and the sun was beginning to break through the scattered clouds. I decided to take Petaluma Hill Road to avoid some traffic and enjoy the scenery. I turned onto Crane Canyon Road headed toward Bennett Valley—and as I crested the hill and began to make my descent into Santa Rosa, there was a brilliant double rainbow arched from one end of the valley to the other. It was so bright and breathtaking, it almost seemed unreal..."

Bennett Valley is one of those places that has a bit of magic to it. Nestled between Taylor Mountain to the west, Sonoma Mountain to the south and Bennett Mountain to the east, it's actually more of an alluvial benchland than a valley, constantly cooled by ocean breezes and fog.

A little history - The area was first settled by the Miwok, Pomo and Wappo tribes, who named the stream that flows southeast from Bennett Mountain into Sonoma Valley "Yulupa" (which loosely translates into "sacred" or "magical"). There's that word again. Spanish and Russian settlers began to move in, and an outbreak of smallpox wiped out most of the native populations. By the 1830s, General Vallejo's land grants prompted further Spanish settlement in the area and, in 1849, a Missouri immigrant named James Bennett purchased property on the peak called "Yulupa." Bennett prospered in his new found home, even rising to the position of assemblyman and introducing the bill that made Santa Rosa the county seat in 1854.

About the same time, an influx of settlers moved into the area, and Bennett Valley became a productive agricultural region. Its first winery, owned by Isaac DeTurk, was called Belle Mount. But after phylloxera and prohibition ensured its demise, wine grapes were put aside and agricultural products reigned. Following prohibition, winemaking came back on scene. John Shackleford Taylor (Taylor Mountain) had a dairy and a stock ranch, grew Zinfandel and Mission grapes, and owned the "White Sulphur Springs" resort (now Kawana Springs). He also helped get the first racetrack started for the county fair. In 1873, the Bennett Valley Grange Hall was built, and today it's the oldest standing active Grange hall in the United States.

Modern times - Bennett Valley received its official designation as an AVA in December 2003. The region encompasses 8,140 acres, of which about 850 are planted with grapes. It was a group effort that was spearheaded by Jess Jackson of Jackson Family Wines, which owns Matanzas Creek Winery, the largest and only commercial winery (*located*) in Bennett Valley..."

Rural Roads to Gravel, A Possibility?

▪ **Rural Michigan Counties Turn Failing Roads to Gravel** *Associated Press article in Lansing, MI newspaper, provided by Craig Harrison.*

Some Michigan counties have turned a few once-paved rural roads back to gravel to save money. More than 20 of the state's 83 counties have reverted deteriorating paved roads to gravel in the last few years, according to the County Road Association of Michigan. The counties are struggling with their budgets because tax revenues have declined in the lingering recession.

Montcalm County converted nearly 10 miles of primary road to gravel this spring. The county estimates it takes about \$10,000 to grind up a mile of pavement and put down gravel. It takes more than \$100,000 to repave a mile of road.

Reverting to gravel has happened in a few other states but it is most typical in Michigan. At least 50 miles have been reverted in the state in the past three years.

▪ **Excerpts from CHRIS SMITH column, Press Democrat, July 2.**

Phil Demery, public works chief... "It's extremely serious," Demery says. He's warning anyone who'll listen that if Sacramento goes ahead and snatches away gas-tax revenues from counties, the condition of Sonoma County's vast and priceless 1,384-mile network of county roads will go from bad to far worse. "We're going to lose more than 40 percent of our (road maintenance) revenue," he says. He knows the state and county are in a terrible financial bind, but he hates to imagine the county's transportation grid falling into such disrepair that some roads will revert to gravel, and the eventual cost of bringing the system back up to par will be bone-jarring. As Demery urges residents to press for ways to assure road-maintenance funding, a new national study has concluded that more than half of all highway fatalities are related to deficient roadway conditions..."

Bennett Valley Calendar, May 2009

By Diane Hichwa, *Specialist in Local Birds*

As I turned the page to May in the 2009 BV Calendar of Birds and Blooms, I enjoyed the photographs once again. I would like to explain the difference between the labeled Cooper's Hawk and the photograph, which is of a Red-shouldered Hawk. Both inhabit Bennett Valley although the Red-shouldered is much more likely to be seen and heard. A Cooper's Hawk is an accipiter who dives into bushes and careens through the forest chasing songbirds for dinner; it has very long, thin "bird-taking" toes, very slender legs and a long narrow tail for maneuverability--this tail has dark brown, lighter brown banding. The Red-shouldered hawk is a buteo with broad wings--a smaller relative of the Red-tailed Hawk which we also see. The Red-shouldered often sits on a wire, hunched over and watching the ground for movement; its tail is banded white and brown. This bird is often heard "screaming" a repeated descending keer, keer, keer call. It is huskier in body, leg, and foot than the Cooper's. If you find an injured hawk (or owl or other bird), please contact The Bird Rescue Center (523-BIRD). You can also drop by to see some of our local hawks and owls during their public visiting hours 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm on the first Saturday and third Sunday of the month.

Email: dhichwa@earthlink.net

Bennett Valley Calendar, June/July, 2009

By Marilee Jensen

I wanted to share my pleasure turning the page each month in the 2009 Bennett Valley calendar, as I see the next photo. June's was such a beautiful rhododendron that I personally telephoned Suzanne Dougherty to share my appreciation for her work. July has lovely begonias in a quaint small wooden wagon, surrounded by impressive trees, plants and different bird feeders. Thanks so much to Marianne Warwick for this photograph, not to mention all of those who organize this BV calendar effort each year.

LandPaths Outings

www.LandPaths.org

"Fostering a love of the land in Sonoma County through public access, environmental education, and land stewardship... Leading free public outings on public and private lands on foot, by wheelchair, horseback, kayak and by stewarding those lands with picks, shovels and plant seedlings!"

Jacobs Ranch Family Exploration

Thursday, After Work, July 23, 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm,
Jacobs Ranch, off Sonoma Mountain Road, Bennett Valley

Families are encouraged. BYO picnic dinner. Connect your youngsters with the outdoors as we hunt for salamanders, coyote tracks, lizards and more at the District's Jacobs Ranch. We'll take a short, kid-friendly walk, exploring the redwood forest and along Matanzas Creek.

Difficulty: Easy, Mode: Walking/Hiking
Themes: Hiking, Kids / Family Activities

Registration required. To register, go to their website
LandPaths.org, or call 544-7284.

THE NEW 2010 BENNETT VALLEY CALENDAR

"THE MAGIC OF TREES"

**REMINDER: Entry deadline
Friday, September 4**

This year's calendar will focus on the Magic of Trees in Bennett Valley. It's time to start thinking seriously about submitting 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:

- Prints of trees in Bennett Valley will be accepted in 5"x7" or larger prints. 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 print 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 jpeg 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 information or questions, please call Sherry Parker, 528-6176.

Bennett Valley Grange Annual Picnic

By Janet Alfieri

Many thanks to all those attending and working at the BV Grange's 137th picnic on June 7. It was a wonderful day with a great dinner, live music, the wine auction, and the awarding of a Resolution of Appreciation to Marilee Jensen. In addition, the weather was lovely and the picnic once again generated a real feeling of community in Bennett Valley, as it has been doing for the last 137 years. Profits from this event will be used to update the BV Grange's water system. Our next public event is the spaghetti dinner on October 24th---plan on joining us.

Milk Maids Near Your House?

By Mike and Patty Hickey

This is certainly a possibility, as is Butter n' Eggs, Froggy Toes, Hound's Tongue, and Mule's Ear. 'Milk Maids,' *Cardamine californica*, is a lovely white long-stemmed wildflower, seen in early spring on Bennett Valley's shaded slopes. Jeanne Wirka, a resident biologist at the Bouverie Preserve of Audubon Canyon Ranch, near Glen Ellen, held a crowd's attention at a well attended presentation preceding BVHA's May 21 meeting. Her energetic and knowledgeable talk was enlivened with a colorful slideshow of Bennett Valley's wildflowers. Wirka took questions on preserving native plants, controlling invasive non-natives, and identifying specific wildflowers. Her time came to an end before she could respond to questions about "wildflower versus weed," and the attendees said they hope she could return to talk at a future meeting. Available for purchase were laminated field identification cards for local wildflowers, grouped by early-season blooms and mid- to late- season blooms.

In the spring and fall you can take guided nature walks in Bouverie Preserve, in groups up to six walkers. Reservations are required; donations are requested. Check their website for available fall nature walk dates. Also, there are openings in the August training class for new docents at Bouverie Preserve. For more information or to ask questions about nature walks, or other activities, go to the Audubon Canyon Ranch's beautiful website, egret.org or email bouverie@egret.org or call 938-4554. Bouverie Preserve is 500 acres dedicated to environmental education of youth, preserving wild land and research. It is part of the Audubon Canyon Ranch, which also includes the Bolinas Preserve.

Treating Healthy Oaks Can Help

Excerpts from Meg McConahey's February 2 article in the Press Democrat.

“Study: Using fungicide can prevent disease, but popular treatment can’t.

Treating healthy trees with phosphonate can stem the spread of sudden oak death for up to two years, while a commonly used alternative may be worse than doing nothing, according to a new study by UC Berkeley researchers. Initial research showed the preventative fungicide, commonly sold in California under the brand name Agri-Fos, was effective for an undetermined length of time. But this latest round of trials confirmed that it provided protection for 18 months and in some cases up to two years...said Matteo Garboletto, an adjunct professor of soil pathology whose lab conducted the studies...

“The good news is, if you start treating trees, although you have to treat them forever, you don't have to treat too frequently. One treatment a year is sufficient, and if you live in an area where the level of infestation is moderate to low, one treatment every one to two years would be enough,” Garboletto said.

Conversely, a separate examination of a popular alternative treatment comprised of azomite soil amendments and a lime bark wash was ineffective at

stopping the spread of the deadly pathogen that has devastated California's oak woodlands, including some 60,000 acres in Sonoma County in the past several years. Garboletto likened the alternative to “treating pneumonia with orange juice.”... “If you're going to spend a lot of money, it might as well be spent on something that works.”... The studies paid for by the U.S. Forest Service, are published in the current issue of the University of California's *California Journal*.

Phosphonates applied to healthy trees are only effective as a preventative measure to stop the spread of Sudden Oak Death. Researchers have yet to come up with a cure for the disease, which is caused by the exotic water mold *P. ramorum*...The study results come at a critical time. If property owners apply a treatment now, trees will be protected if and when a winter wet season returns... Although the last couple of years have been dry, slowing the spread, the pathogen is like “a ticking time bomb,” he added. When the drought breaks, a large number of trees can be infected very fast... For more information, go to matteolab.org or suddenoakdeath.org.

Gardens Are Risky Diets For Deer

Excerpts from Rosemary McCreary's May 30 article, Homegrown, in the Press Democrat.

“...Before human landscaping appeared, deer roamed far and wide in search of food, holding their population to a fraction of what it is today. But, just as with humans, a plentiful food supply supports a growing family and we've been providing it for deer when they have access to our gardens.

As in most states, it is illegal to feed deer in California. One of the reasons, biologists point out, is that deer come to rely on supplemental food which limits their range and draws predators –mountain lions in this area.

Concentrated populations also promote disease and parasites. So if you're concerned about deer health, don't give them access to any food, in the garden or otherwise.

Repellants and deterrents on the market offer some short-term success in keeping deer away from our gardens, but the only sure protection is fencing. Yet there is an alternative to exclusion: stick with plants that deer won't eat.

Finding those plants is difficult even when we rely on lists of recommended species. Such lists usually claim deer-resistance, meaning that plants may survive even though eaten to one extent or another...

Deer do not relish highly scented herbs such as lavender, rosemary, thyme, winter savory, germander, and lemon verbena which become even stronger under drought conditions. Other aromatic perennials such as Jerusalem sage, shrub marigold, pitcher sage and curry plant have also proven safe, as have myrtle, rue and chamomile.

Many perennial salvias are completely deer proof – the showy Mexican sage with velvety purple spires is a good example...ornamental grasses are top choices for landscaping in deer country... Conifers, both trees and shrubs, are godsend for gardeners and ignored by deer, but there are other trees that are deer proof. Magnolias, olive, eucalyptus, palms, ginkgos, and oaks are some of the best for our climate.”

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, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm:

Engineers Patrick Tognozzi, Brian Drees
and Ronnie Lakin

*Supplemented and supported by many trained firefighting
volunteers. Three separate teams 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 fourth firefighter on duty during the day.*

Bennett Valley Firefighter Activities

May / June, 2009

By Lieutenant Kevin Burris

Medical Aids- 10; Vehicle Accidents-6;
Hazardous Conditions-6; Public Assists- 2;
Vehicle Fires-1; Vegetation Fires-1;

Total calls 26

As temperatures begin to rise and conditions continue to dry out, Bennett Valley Fire Protection District is urging residents to take advantage of this time to create a 100 foot defensible space zone around their homes. Wildfire in our area can be ignited by a wide array of sources, but one of the more common causes of wildfires is mowing or the use of small gas powered equipment during the heat of the day. These citizens have the best intentions of protecting their home against wildfire, but just a rock strike from a mower blade could put homes in jeopardy.

Here are some tips that can help your home survive a wildfire:

- Mow early and mow often. Use trimming, mowing and power equipment before 10:00 am and after 6:00 pm, not in the heat of the day and not during extremely dry and windy weather.
- Clear all needles and leaves from roofs, eaves and rain gutters.
- Trim branches six feet up from the ground.
- Landscape around your home with fire resistant plants.
- Use fire resistant building materials whenever possible.

For more information on defensible space, please visit www.bennettvalleyfire.org or www.cafire.gov .

Following Lieutenant Burris' recommendation, the following article is taken from the Bennett Valley Fire District website, bennettvalleyfire.org, with more information on fire protection defenses.

Fire is a fact of life in our community. The climate and scenery that make this such a desirable place to live also increase chances for fire. It's really a matter of when, not if, a fire will occur. The individual impact of these fires will vary greatly depending on your family's preparedness. All the fire engines in the world won't be able to stop a fire if the conditions are right and you haven't taken these simple and common sense steps:

Summer

- Create a "defensible space" by removing all flammable vegetation at least 100 feet from all structures. (*In January 2005 a new state law became effective that extended the defensible space clearance around homes and structures from 30 feet to 100 feet. Proper clearance to 100 feet dramatically increases the chance of your house surviving a wildfire. This defensible space also provides for firefighter safety when protecting homes during a wildland fire.*)
- Landscape with fire resistant plants.
- On slopes or high fire hazard areas, remove flammable vegetation out to 100 feet or more.
- Space native trees and shrubs at least 10 feet apart.
- For trees taller than 18 feet, remove lower branches within six feet of the ground.
- Plant trees which will not interfere with power lines.
- Keep your driveway accessible and clearly marked. Fire engines need access which is approximately 12 feet wide and 12 feet tall.

In the event of a major incident in our district, it is very likely that many more homes will be threatened than fire engines are available. If you haven't taken some of these steps, it's unlikely crews will be able to save your home and may be forced to drive down the road and find a home that's defensible. Help us help you!

Winter

- Have your chimney cleaned regularly.
- Make sure and have a spark arrestor on your chimney.
- Clear all leaves and needles from your roof and gutters.
- Never store cleaned-out fireplace ashes in the garbage or in combustible containers. (*This sounds like common sense but many people don't realize the ashes can smolder for days.*)
- Never overload the capacity of electrical outlets.

Year Round

- Change your smoke detector batteries twice a year, at daylight savings switch.
- Designate a meeting place outside your home.
- Secure your water heater and never store flammable liquids such as gasoline in the same area.
- Discuss stop, drop, and roll techniques with your family.

Bennett Valley Fire website: bennettvalleyfire.org

This website contains the following information plus more:

- Personnel (Fire Chief & 3 Battalion Chiefs)
- Fire Prevention, including a free visit to your dwelling for a parcel fire inspection, by appointment
- Job Applications
- Explorers Program

Bennett Valley Fire 2009/2010 Budget

- Staffing will be increased at BV Fire, so that there will be four firefighters on duty more often, for improved safety; an additional part-time firefighter will be hired so that on those days when there is an intern on duty, there will be four firefighters at the Fire Station.
- Fire district staff will not receive any raises this next fiscal year, other than step increases, because of the tight financial situation.
- The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Gold Ridge has been changed in the following way, "Either District may terminate the MOU at January 1st or July 1st, with or without cause, upon six (6) months notice to the other District. The payments owed will be based on 50% of one Battalion Chief's total compensation and 40% of the Fire Chief's total compensation."
- 2007/2008 estimated ERAF tax shift (to schools, from Bennett Valley Fire District) is \$37,374; cumulative as of June 30, 2008 is \$351,250. *[In the early 1990's the state siphoned millions from cities, counties and special districts, without paying it back (and this tax shift from the Bennett Valley Fire Special District funds continues, but not from our BV Fire Special Tax). A voter-approved ballot measure in 2004 prohibited those sorts of raids, but gave state lawmakers the power to borrow property tax dollars intended for local governments in an emergency as long as it was repaid in three years, with interest. Press Democrat, May 29]*
- Even with these changes, our BV Fire Special Tax for 2009/2010 will be the same as last year, \$160 annually for a single-family residence.

Bennett Valley Fire District

Homeland Security Grants Received

By Lieutenant Matt Tognozzi

Every year the Department of Homeland Security has a competitive grant process that enables fire departments like our own the opportunity to add or upgrade equipment, thus allowing fire departments to operate more safely and efficiently while having little impact on their operating budgets. This past year the Department of Homeland Security received more than 21,000 applications totaling more than three billion dollars with requests for everything from new vehicles to training materials. The Bennett Valley Fire District applied for a grant, along with the 21,000 other departments across the United States. We requested \$24,250 to purchase a new diesel generator that could run the entire station in case of a loss of power. We were pleased to find out mid-winter that we were awarded the money to purchase the new generator. Since then we have installed the new unit at the fire station and it is fully operational. This grant money also provided funding for us to purchase an automatic transfer switch for the generator so when the power goes out, it automatically starts the generator. This is the third grant that the Bennett Valley Fire District has been awarded by the Department of Homeland Security. **(Editor's Note: Special thanks to Lieutenant Tognozzi for successfully obtaining this latest grant.)** We also received a grant to purchase a breathing air compressor in 2007 (\$37,236 in money received) and a vehicle exhaust extraction system for our apparatus bay in 2006 (\$40,432

in money received). **(Editor's Note: Special thanks to Gabe Stirnus and Brian Campbell for preparing the applications for these first two grants.)** This money has allowed the fire district to purchase much needed equipment without affecting our normal operating budget.

Bennett Valley Fire Apparatus (Vehicles)

This information was compiled by Marilee Jensen, from an article written in the September 2002 VOICE, by Joe Stans, formerly BV Assistant Fire Chief Emeritus, the bennettvalleyfire.org website and verbal information from Lieutenant Kevin Burris, both as of July, 2009.

Bennett Valley has some unique topography to consider when purchasing a fire engine. The hills and narrow roads make it important that the engines we've selected are able to both negotiate narrow roads and driveways and powerful enough to climb the hills fast enough to meet a reasonable response time for any local emergency. At the same time, we now have the total pumping capacity we need to maintain our rating, in order to keep our insurance rates lower. These vehicles are not luxuries, and can make the difference between life and death.

Our two type 1 engines (7881 and 7882, below) are structural engines specifically selected for use in our area. They have short wheelbases and are smaller than some type 1 engines, that are simply too large for Bennett Valley roads and are unsuitable for use off well-paved roads.

- **1.) 7882 – This is a type 1 structural engine** placed in service with the Bennett Valley FPD in 2002. It carries 750 gallons of water, has a rated pump of 1,250 gpm, and a six-man cab.
- **2.) 7881 – This is also a type 1 structural engine** which was placed in service in BV in 1990 and moved to reserve status in 2002. It only carries 500 gallons of water with a rated pump of 1,000 gpm and a 3-man cab. It will be sold and replaced with a newer type 1 structural engine, soon.
- **3.) 7831 – This is classified as a light rescue** and has a full complement of shoring (*to support or make stable*), extrication, and lighting equipment. It has a built-in generator that runs its power unit and the 3,000 watt light tower.
- **4.) 7861 – This is a wildland suppression type 3 engine** placed in service by BVFPD in 1998. It has the ability to access remote locations to help battle wild fires. It can carry a crew of five with a full complement of wildland firefighting tools, 500 gallons of water and an unrated pump of 500 gpm. It has the maneuverability and ground clearance to drive off-road.
- **5.) 7891 – This is a type 2 water tender, which carries 1,650 gallons of water**, placed in service for BV in 1995. It carries a crew of three, with an unrated pump of 500 gpm, equipment for medical aids, wildland firefighting, structural ventilation and hazardous materials incidents.
- **6.) 7841 – This is a utility vehicle (a pick-up)** used for every day work, and emergency responses to Annadel State Park. It carries a full complement of rope rescue and medical equipment and can seat a crew of five.

NOTICE OF ELECTION

The 2009 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 or not. Terms are ending for three of our current BVHA board members, that is Fay Blair, Paul Hamilton and Connie Montague, who may or may not choose 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 30. 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 30 simply by submitting your check to the BVHA Membership Committee. Contact Larissa Goliti, chair, at 578-3453 for further membership information.

Please mail your Candidate Statements to:

**2009 BVHA ELECTION
ATTN: JEAN LACOMBE
P.O. BOX 2666
SANTA ROSA, CA 95404**

If you prefer to email your statement, please send it to Jean at spinningsnake@peoplepc.com. These Candidate Statements will appear in the September 2009 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.

Should you have questions, please contact any of the current board members whose phone numbers appear in each BVHA VOICE, or call Jean LaCombe, 585-3482.

Bennett Valley Emergency Preparations

By Karen Sommer

If you are considering hosting a neighborhood meeting on emergency preparedness, I'd be glad to help. There are lots of materials available to help 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.

Contact Karen Sommer: 528-8982 or email ksommer11@earthlink.net

New Sex Charge for (Bennett Valley) Attack Suspect

By Marilee Jensen

On April 6, Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association sent out a special alert, because a man was following women in their cars in Bennett Valley (as well as other places in Sonoma County) after dark and trying to pull them over to the side of the road. When he was successful, he would then accost these women victims in an aggressive way, with sexual intent. The following information provides one with a number of examples of what he was doing and why no driver should ever stop at night for an unknown person. The law enforcement recommendation is to use your cell phone to call for help (565-2121) and/or find some place where there are lights and other people, such as the BV Fire Station, before stopping your car.

The following are excerpts from the *Press Democrat*, dated May 1.

"A Cotati man, Thomas Boccaleoni, 44, appeared in court...to answer to the sexual assault and eight other felony charges...The complaint against Boccaleoni recognizes three victims in three separate incidents. It is the foundation of what investigators believe will be an expanded criminal case as they continue their investigation into a series of mostly rural roadside attacks that have been reported over the past five months.

In the first case, a young woman was sexually assaulted when she pulled over on Bennett Valley Road while driving home from Santa Rosa Junior College late on the night of November 18, 2008, authorities said. DNA evidence collected from her clothing in November was returned to investigators late Wednesday as a match with Boccaleoni's DNA, Sheriff's Department officials said. Boccaleoni is charged with sexual assault, assault with intent to commit a sex act, battery, false imprisonment and making threats in that case. Sheriff's Lt. Chris Spallino said he could not discuss details of the charges, which allege sexual penetration with a foreign object against the victim's will...

In the second case, a woman was attacked late Jan. 6 on Calistoga Road... Boccaleoni was identified in a photo by the woman, authorities said...

In the third case, a 46 year old woman stopped on Sexton Road outside Sebastopol early in the morning of April 18, when her assailant persuaded her to pull over by saying her car was leaking fluid. He then tried to yank her out of the car, grabbed her by the neck and threatened her if she resisted. She managed to shove him off her before throwing her car into gear and speeding away with the door open, authorities said. That woman also identified Boccaleoni in a photo, authorities said...

Detectives are continuing to investigate Boccaleoni's potential involvement in a series of other episodes on rural roads in which women traveling alone reported being followed aggressively by a male driver who sometimes flashed his headlights, pulled alongside or feigned emergencies to try to get them to pull over..."

Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association
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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

May 21, 2009

- Jeanne Wirka from Bouverie Preserve gave a talk with a colorful slideshow on the wildflowers of Bennett Valley. About 45 people were in attendance.
- Fay Blair gave the Treasurer's Report. He noted under income that members' payments for the water storage barrels are flushing through our treasury and amounted to about \$7,000. He also noted that he wrote two checks to cover those expenses to djKiwi Enterprises, Inc. Mike Hickey thanked us for accounting for the rain barrel monies and noted that the shipping cost was down from \$30 to \$8 per barrel. This accounts for a refund of about \$23 per person (about \$280 total). He said that 53 barrels were sold. Purchasers were asked to donate a portion to BVEP. Karen Sommer noted that we have pamphlets from Fire Safe Council and asked if we

could make this donation. The Board approved making a \$50 BVEP donation.

- Craig Harrison suggested that we nominate Jean LaCombe to continue in the position of Nominating Committee chair.

- Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness Committee Report: Karen said that the fire prevention workshop had 30 people in attendance and that it was a great presentation. The CPR class is full for June 6. The CERT class is postponed. They will try to arrange to have the next CERT class in February, 2010. Karen is organizing a communication class in the fall and will send out fliers. She wants to work on neighborhood groups next.

- Helen Bates has contacted Valerie Brown to arrange for a celebration for the completion of the repair of Sonoma Mountain Road which was expected shortly. Helen would also like to research the process to designate this road with a heritage road status which the general plan allows.

- Craig said that our July meeting will just be a business meeting, but he's arranged for a speaker on "Birds in the Area" in September.

- Marilee is encouraging everyone to send their email address to Larissa, specifically for emergency communication.

Board of Directors' Tentative Agenda

July 16, BV Grange Hall, 7:00 pm

- Appointment of Nominating 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 and Fire Station Storage Room Status
- Reopening Sonoma Mountain Road
- Updating Website
- Speaker for September Meeting
- New Business as Determined by the Board
- Adjourn

Sonoma Mountain Road Completion!

By Michael & Helen Bates

Argonaut Construction did an amazing job! We are all thrilled with the "new" road! It was opened to traffic Friday, June 5 and we had a fun neighborhood celebration party, on the road, June 10, including Valerie Brown and her aide, Jennifer Hainstock.

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

bennettvalleyhoa.org

SPECIFIC 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

Bennett Valley Community Calendar

Remember to mark your calendars!

- 1.) BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION (BVHA):** Next meeting, **Thursday, July 16**, 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 as they can be changed at the last minute.
- 3.) LandPaths OUTING:** Jacobs Ranch Family Exploration, Thursday, July 23 after work, 5:30 pm-8:00 pm. Families encouraged. BYO picnic dinner. See Page Two. Call LandPaths Event Line: (707) 524-9318 or email: outings@LandPaths.org.
- 4.) AMATEUR RADIO (Ham Radio) LICENSING IN JUST ONE DAY:** (From website smrs.us) Saturday, August 8, 8:30 am to 1:30 pm, Petaluma Senior Citizens Center. Register online or contact Dale, 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 Jennifer Hainstock, 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 heavier trash which needs to be picked up along Bennett Valley roads.
- Call 576-1371 from a cell phone to report emergencies in Bennett Valley except law enforcement emergencies, which should be directed to 565-2121. You can call 565-2121, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, to talk to someone at the Sheriff's office, either with emergencies that require a law enforcement response, or with other concerns that may or may not be emergencies.

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