



Bennett Valley VOICE

www.bennettvalleyhoa.org

VOLUME 32, NUMBER 6

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION (BVHA)

NOVEMBER, 2009

Is This A Good Time To Go Solar?

By Craig S. Harrison, BVHA President

As a community service, BVHA is hosting Eric Theriot of Sequoia Solar at its Thursday, November 19th, meeting at 7:00 pm in the BV Grange Hall. This is a commercial presentation in which Mr. Theriot will be discussing the design, installation and financing of solar power at personal residences. BVHA is not endorsing this company or any other company and it is always recommended you carefully evaluate the company and their proposal for your residence before finalizing any agreement with them. The following information was provided by Sequoia Solar.

Residents of Sonoma County are eligible to participate in Sonoma County's Energy Independence Program. This program is available for residential and commercial properties and essentially provides a loan for the funds needed for the installation of solar power, to be repaid through a voluntary assessment to your property taxes. The program requires no money down and no credit check. In addition, state and federal incentives can reduce the capital costs of solar power by up to 50%. Depending upon the size of the photovoltaic system, many people realize immediate savings because their loan payments are more than offset by the savings from their electricity bills.

Sequoia Solar has offices in Santa Rosa (528-7652), Solana Beach, and Palm Desert. Its employees consist of both North America Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) and accredited Leaders in Environmental & Energy Design (LEED). Interested residents are encouraged to bring a copy of their recent PG&E bill, so the speaker can provide an on-the-spot quote. You can learn more about the company at sequoiasolar.com.

The new tenth anniversary

2010 BV CALENDAR "THE MAGIC OF TREES"

Now available at Ace Hardware,
Cottage Gardens and Joe Video

John Muir once wrote, "Between every two pines is a doorway to a new world." It's true. Trees frame our world. We see differently through trees. And this year's calendar – a juried compilation of photos taken by Bennett Valley residents, young and old – celebrates the magic, mystery, and greatness of the trees in Bennett Valley.

Calendars will be available at BV Ace Hardware, Cottage Gardens nursery and Joe Video, near the intersection of Yulupa Avenue/ Bethards Drive. CVS, formerly Long's) has chosen not to sell calendars this year. We will be selling them outside Safeway (weather permitting) on Saturday, November 14, or you can call Sherry Parker at 528-6176 for delivery.

This is our 10th anniversary calendar – a labor of love! During this past decade a group of neighbors has worked together each year to create a calendar celebrating our community. We look forward to seeing this tradition live on with your help and involvement.

Proceeds from calendar sales support Bennett Valley community efforts and organizations such as contributions to rescue equipment for our emergency programs (BVEP), the BV Volunteer Firefighters' Association and the Bennett Valley Grange.

Inspirational Splashes of Autumn Colors Now Permeating Bennett Valley Particularly From The Sweeping Vineyards

By Marilee Jensen

I always find it particularly enjoyable to drive through Bennett Valley during this time of the year, with the gold, orange and green colors stretching out before us in every direction.

In the past, most of this color has come from the trees, both non-native and native, that define this beautiful place that we call home. Over the years an increasing amount has come from the vineyards, adding their own dramatic hues after the end of the picking season.

In September, I had my first experience picking grapes in a Pinot Noir vineyard just off Sonoma Mountain Road, absorbing the inspirational view all around. I now feel more connected to the numerous grape vines surrounding us in all their seasonal glory...

I'll follow this with information on two local vintners who have vineyards and wineries in Bennett Valley. They are using different approaches for marketing and selling their wine, as extracted from two recent *Press Democrat* articles.

Press Democrat, July 5 – “Laurel Glen vintner **Patrick Campbell...** got a graduate degree in religion from Harvard University before eventually moving to the Sonoma Mountain Zen Center in 1974...At the Zen Center Campbell met his winemaking fate. ‘I saw a 100-year-old Palomino grape vineyard and it really spoke to me, ‘It was beautiful.’ And so it began, Campbell’s grape-growing odyssey. Campbell became the caretaker of the vineyard and in 1977 he and his wife, Faith, bought the nearly 3-acre Laurel Vineyard, now expanded to 28 acres. Today, Campbell is known for his high-profile Laurel Glen cabernet, his moderately priced Counterpoint cabernet and his inexpensive brands, which include Reds and ZaZin, as well as malbec from Argentina. When it comes to his less expensive brands, Campbell opts for a “virtual winemaking” model, where he doesn’t own land or buildings. ‘It’s less cumbersome and financially it’s less risky, It allows you to move very quickly. ...If it’s not working you can stop it and if it is working you can expand it.’ Ray Kaufman, co-winemaker of Laurel Glen, has worked with Campbell for 23 years and said, ‘Patrick is simple and complicated at the same time...He is a true renaissance person. He can fix a tractor and he was a musician (playing viola) for the Santa Rosa Symphony. He is an intellectual in farmer’s coveralls.’”

Press Democrat, September 8 - “...**Eric Flanagan** spent millions to build the finest boutique winery money could buy. He purchased 120 hilltop acres with panoramic views of Bennett Valley (*Editor’s Note: just west of Bennett Ridge subdivision*), hired the best vineyard and winemaking consultants, and spared no expense in constructing his Flanagan Family Winery. Complete with caves bored deep into the hillside and the finest French oak fermentation tanks and barrels, the modern, curved-roof facility opened in 2006. But Flanagan...made a critical mistake – he assumed California’s high-end wine market would continue its inexorable march upward. He found out how wrong he was last fall, just as his \$100 wines were trying to gain traction in the market. The economy was in free fall, housing prices were plunging and consumers were pulling back sharply, eating out less and shunning luxury goods. His timing couldn’t have been worse...The winery, including 16 acres of cabernet sauvignon and syrah vineyards, is now for sale for \$8.5 million...The demise of Flanagan Family Winery is just one stark example of a powerful shake-up under way in the U.S. wine industry. Consumers who for decades have been steadily trading up to higher-priced vintages have reversed course, trading down to cheaper wines in search of better values.”

Autumn Update On Bennett Valley

Road Work By Craig S. Harrison

Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works hopes to complete the brushing (removal of extraneous brush along road) on Sonoma Mountain Road from Pressley east to Enterprise Road by mid-November. They will then turn their attention first to Pressley Road and then to Crane Canyon Road where brushing should be completed by the end of this year. Crews from the California Department of Forestry (CDF) continue to do the work on Tuesdays and Wednesdays unless they are called to higher priority duties such as fighting fires.

The county has completed the cleaning of roadside ditches on Sonoma Mountain Road from Bennett Valley Road to Enterprise Road. They have also finished spot grader patching of portions of Sonoma Mountain Road which was cut short by the heavy rainfall in mid-October. Additional work on Sonoma Mountain Road may be completed in spring 2010. For the time being, road repairs will be limited to filling pot holes and unplugging culverts, but if you experience road emergencies, such as dangerous potholes, please feel free to call the Road Maintenance office (565-5100) and report the condition. They will have someone investigate the call as soon as possible. Sonoma County is also hoping to do work on Bennett Valley Road next spring, but the budget remains tight as far as the eye can see.

Marring the Window To The Universe

LIGHT POLLUTION

By Timothy Ferris, BVHA VOICE, February, 1994

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

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

Today, as civic and commercial electric lighting has spread across the continent, many children—and often their parents—have never been privy to the thrilling sight of a genuinely dark night. When they look up at night they see a milky-grey scrim, through which can be perceived only a few dozen stars. Lost to them is excitement of a direct encounter with nature on a grand scale, and also an important sense of historical continuity. After all, it was knowledge of the stars that...led escaped slaves on their way north to freedom.

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

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

If we are to preserve our night skies, we need to keep light pollution under control in the Valley, while encouraging our neighbors to do the same. Homeowners can help by taking a few easy steps that also save money. To fight light pollution, make

sure your exterior lights are shielded...Avoid the use of glaring “security” floodlights that stay on all night. Law enforcement officers advise that much better security is provided by lights equipped with motion sensors. These come on suddenly, startling intruders, and they can pay for themselves by cutting your monthly electric bill.

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

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

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

Many Bennett Valley Residents May Legally Burn Wood All Winter - Can You?

By Craig S. Harrison

In July 2008 the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) promulgated regulations to restrict particulate matter from wood-burning devices from November to February. Most homes cannot legally burn wood in a fireplace or wood stove whenever the BAAQMD has announced a “spare the air tonight” episode. These typically occur on the coldest winter nights just when you might want to crank up some additional heat. Rural residents of Bennett Valley may qualify to legally burn wood during spare the air tonight episodes. You may ignore the ban on wood fires if you live in an area where natural gas service is not available (Rule 6-3-110), when electric power is temporarily not available (Rule 6-3-111) or if your only source of residential heat is a wood stove (Rule 6-3-112). You can find the rules on the BAAQMD web site, <http://www.baaqmd.gov/>. Click on “Rules and Regulations” and find Regulation 6, Particulate and Visible Emissions, Rule 3, Wood Burning Devices.

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 5:00pm:
Engineers Patrick Tognozzi, Brian Drees and Ronnie Lakin
Permanent Part-time Firefighters (new), 8:00am to 5:00pm
Firefighters Mike Alcocer, Ly Leng and John Matej

Bennett Valley Volunteers

Supplemented and supported by as many as twenty-five trained firefighting volunteers. Also three separate shifts of volunteers are paid to sleep overnight at the Fire Station, three at a time, for improved coverage. During the day, interns are also used when available, about twelve days a month, as the fourth on-duty firefighter.

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District

Call Activities September/October 2009

By Lieutenant Kevin Burris

Medical Aids- 15 Vehicle Accidents-6
Public Assists- 3 Fire Alarms- 2
Vegetation Fires- 2 Structure Fires-1
Hazardous Conditions- 3 Vehicle Fires- 1

On September 27, at 1:10 am, Bennett Valley Fire Protection District was dispatched to a structure fire in the Sonoma Mountain Road area of Bennett Valley. With an on-duty crew of four (1 fulltime Lieutenant and 3 volunteer firefighter sleepers), Engine 7881 was able to respond with the on-duty crew, and make an interior attack without the need to wait for a mutual aid engine company to arrive. When the mutual aid fire engine arrived from Santa Rosa Fire Department, they were impressed with how effectively the four firefighters from Bennett Valley did on their own in controlling this fire.

National regulations require that to make an interior attack on a structure fire there must be a minimum of four firefighters at the scene, two to go inside the structure and combat the fire while the other two remain outside as a safety crew. This fire illustrates how valuable our volunteer sleepers are to the Bennett Valley Fire District, giving us the staffing to better serve and protect our community against all types of emergencies.

It's Time To Change Smoke Detectors Batteries!

Most Bennett Valley residents remembered to change their clocks to Standard Time on November 1, 2009. That is also a good semi-annual reminder to place fresh batteries in your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, a simple act that can save lives.

An Introduction to the Third New Permanent Part-Time Firefighter, Ly Leng By Marilee Jensen

In the September VOICE, information about two of the new permanent part-time firefighters, Mike Alcocer and John Matej, was presented. This month, information about the third new firefighter, Ly (*pronounced "Lee"*) Leng, is being presented following a personal interview with him.

Ly Leng is almost 28 years old. His wife just had a baby girl, their first child, at the end of October, so there are some adjustments going on at home. Ly expressed excitement and commitment to this baby.

Ly's family is from Cambodia. He was born in Thailand and has been in the United States since he was about two years old, most of that time in Sonoma County. He has three sisters and one brother living in this area, which means a lot to Ly.

After high school, he joined the Navy for four years, as an electrician mate. He was stationed on an aircraft carrier often anchored close to Iraq. One of his duties in the Navy was to put out fires which might start on board their ship. He found he really enjoyed the fire fighting activities, so after he was discharged from the Navy, he worked for one year, then signed up for the Firefighters' Academy at Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC). While enrolled in that program, he served as an intern at our Bennett Valley Fire Station for about one year. Last year he received his Fire Science Associate Degree from SRJC. He applied for and was selected as one of the new Bennett Valley firefighters, starting on August 1.

The BV firefighters all work on a schedule of two days on-duty and four days off-duty. It seems that the part-time paid firefighters generally stay on duty for 48 hours, along with their lieutenant, but they are reimbursed as volunteer sleepers between 5:00 pm and 8:00 am. With the same extra sleeper joining them at 5:00 pm each day, they have become a tight group of four firefighters during these hours, which helps increase their working efficiency together, as noted in the previous article about the structure fire on September 27.

One of the specialty areas in firefighting in which Ly is especially interested is urban search and rescue. He looks forward to obtaining more training and experience in that area. This frequently includes search and rescue dogs helping in the process.

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

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A REMINDER FROM OUR ELECTION COMMITTEE

By Jeannie LaCombe

BVHA members, please be sure to return your official ballot to the BVHA Election Committee, P.O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa, 95405, by Thursday, November 19. If you miss the U.S. mail, you may hand deliver your completed ballot to the BV Grange no later than 7:00 PM on November 19. In order to vote in the BVHA elections, you must be a paid member before November 19. Annual dues are \$15 plus any additional contribution you want to make, payable to BVHA. Questions? Call 578-3453.

Brief Summary of BVHA Meeting

September 17, 2009

▪ Guest speaker Ron LeValley gave a presentation on the Birds of Bennett Valley. Using his slide show with pictures of different birds and their bird calls, he provided us with interesting information about birds, while being very entertaining. The room was filled with enthusiastic attendees and he was very well received. A number of us asked that he come back as a speaker to another BVHA meeting with more information on the different birds in Bennett Valley.

▪ The business meeting was called to order by President Craig Harrison at 8:25 pm. The Treasurer, Fay Blair, had information on the last two months of cash activity in his Treasurer Report. This included the transfer of \$2,500 from a CD to checking and a \$1,000 check written for the structural engineering fee for the storage shed/addition at the Fire Station, drafted by Paul Hamilton, Board Director. Paul's neighbor, Bob Falconer, a contractor, is

now pricing the costs for this plan so we can determine the amount of donations needed for implementation.

▪ Craig Harrison reported that Fay Blair had been able to purchase a small used movie screen for \$50.

▪ Fay Blair also reported that the profit for the last two Bennett Valley calendars, 2008 and 2009, totaled \$559.50. The Board moved to transfer this two-year profit to the Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness (BVEP) reserves, for rescue equipment for emergencies.

▪ BVHA eMail list usage. The BVHA members will be notified that while their eMail addresses may be used on occasion to send them other notices, such as special alerts, that will be done infrequently.

▪ The voluntary BVHA well-project information will be shared with Rob Thompson, as described in the September VOICE, once he has signed a confidentiality form.

Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness

(BVEP) Opportunities By Karen Sommer

CPR classes are offered twice a year, the next class will be Spring 2010. These classes fill up fast so

be sure to put your name on the list. As soon as we have dates we will let you know. **Neighborhood**

COPE: If you wish to prepare your neighborhood for disaster and would like to host a meeting at your

home, we can supply materials and coordination for this event. **Disaster Communications:** If your

neighborhood is organized and wishes to learn more about protocol and use of FRS (walky-talkies), we

can teach a short 2 hour class in your neighborhood. Know what to do and how to convey vital

information when traditional forms of communication are not available. **CERT**

(Community Emergency Response Team) classes will be offered this Spring on 3 Saturdays

(March 13th, 20th and 27th). These classes will cover Disaster Preparedness, Fire Safety, Medical First Aid

and Triage, Light Search and Rescue, CERT Organization, Disaster Psychology, Course Review

and Disaster Simulation. Fee for these classes will be approximately \$40. Completion of all classes is

required for a certification, but make up classes are available in other local communities. **For more**

information, contact Karen Sommer at

ksommer11@earthlink.net or phone 528-8982.

Board of Directors' Tentative Agenda

November 19, BV Grange Hall, 7:00 pm

▪ **Guest Speaker from Sequoia Solar to discuss residential solar power, 45 minutes**

▪ **Report from Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness Committee**

▪ **Road maintenance issues**

▪ **Guidelines for roadside banners put up by the different Bennett Valley organizations**

▪ **Speakers for January and subsequent meetings**

▪ **Election Committee Report**

▪ **Adjourn (Following adjournment, new Board will select officers for 2010)**

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

bennettvalleyhoa.org

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, November 19, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall. Guest Speaker from Sequoia Solar, regarding Residential Solar Power. See Page Five 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.) **AMATEUR RADIO (Ham Radio) LICENSING IN JUST ONE DAY:** (From website smrs.us) Saturday, December 12, 8:30 am to 1:30 pm, Petaluma Senior Citizens Center. Register online or contact Dale at 762-9414.
- 4.) **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 her staff assistant, Jennifer Hainstock, at 565-2241, if you have any questions or concerns.
- 5.) **PERMIT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT** – Hold the date, Monday, January 11, 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm, For a Public Workshop on Vacation Rentals, Susan Dahl, Planning Division Secretary, 565-1947

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

- Call Sonoma County Road Maintenance, at 565-5100 to report dangerous potholes which need fixing, or bulky/weighty 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 hours every day, with emergencies that require a law enforcement response or with other concerns that you're not sure are an emergency or not.