



Bennett Valley VOICE

www.bennettvalleyhoa.org

VOLUME 33, NUMBER 1 BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION (BVHA) JANUARY, 2010

What BVHA Accomplished in 2009!

There are many reasons why it is valuable to you to send in your **\$15 annual dues plus extra donations** to our association. BVHA –especially though this newsletter – is a good source of information that is specific to Bennett Valley property owners while advocating to area agencies and organizations on your behalf. While all of these important activities are on freely-donated time, there are costs for printing, paper, postage, printer ink, etc. that we need to cover. Please send your 2010 dues now with additional donations welcome! Special donations are especially encouraged for Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness (BVEP), as described in more detail on Pages 1, 2 and 5. A *BVHA Annual 2010 Membership Dues* form is attached, along with the envelope addressed to us, to make it more convenient for you. **Below are some of BVHA'S highlighted accomplishments for 2009.**

Speakers: March 19, Phil Demery, Sonoma Co. Director, Transportation and Public Works; April 25, "How To Prepare Your Home Against Wildfires, Darrin DeCarli, Battalion Chief, BV Fire District; May 21, Wildflowers of Bennett Valley, Jeanne Wirka, Resident Biologist at Bouverie Preserve; September 17, The Birds in Bennett Valley, Ron LeValley, senior biologist of Mad River Biologists; November 19, Eric Theriot of Sequoia Solar, Good Time to Go Solar?

- April 18 and November 7: Two clean-up days, where 18 volunteers helped to organize or pick up litter along the BV streets, placed it in bags and arranged to have it taken away by Sonoma Co. Public Works.

- 2010 Bennett Valley Calendar, "The Magic of Trees", with photos of local trees by BV residents combined with poetry, with three pictures by BV children, ages 8 – 11 years old included.

- BVHA newsletters (the *VOICE*) are sent out to 984 property listings in Bennett Valley every other month throughout the year, plus one special alert was sent out in April 2009 about a man harassing a number of different women in the BV area. Many emails of thanks were received re: this special alert.

- Bennett Valley Emergency Preparation (BVEP): 1) BV Fire Station and BV Grange Hall are the two proposed locations for Emergency Supplies/Communication units for Bennett Valley. BV Fire District has approved \$15,000 for a foundation for this unit as an attachment to the Fire Station, on the condition that BVHA/BVEP will raise or donate the remainder of the volunteer labor and/or funds needed to build the unit. BVHA has agreed to donate \$5,000 for this unit. Geoff and Evelyn Hornsby have contributed \$2,500 for a similar Emergency Supplies unit to be located at the BV Grange. A fundraiser will be planned in the spring to kick off this BVEP project. 2) June 6 and November 15, CPR classes at BV Fire Station organized by BVEP.

- Information on the following in the *VOICE*: BV Fire District activities, such as the 2009-2010 budget, detailed fire engine descriptions, and introduction of new firefighters; ongoing BV road repairs including Sonoma Mountain Road; cell phone tower installation; individually-ordered emergency water storage barrels; reduction of your propane costs; "Spare the Air" exemption regulation when one does not have access to natural gas.

NOTE: BVHA had planned a presentation on Bennett Valley Wildlife, on January 21, at 7:00 pm, at Grange Hall, but it had to be cancelled because of a family emergency. There will still be a BVHA business meeting on that date.

Bennett Valley Road Work Update

By Craig S. Harrison

The Sonoma County Department of Transportation will be using crews from the California Department of Forestry (CDF) to remove extraneous brush and undergrowth in the immediate vicinity of the roads, known as “brushing”, in order to improve motorists’ visibility, maintain and re-establish drainage and to reduce chances of fire. This will be done along Crane Canyon Road during January, followed by Pressley Road until about mid-March. In mid-March or April, CDF brushing efforts will be directed toward Bennett Valley Road. Work is usually done on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. During January, the department will be repairing guard rails on bridges where Bennett Valley Road crosses Matanzas Creek. Otherwise the repair and maintenance efforts in our area for the coming months will be directed toward filling pot holes and unplugging culverts from winter storms.

THANKS for BV Clean-Up Roads Day!

On Saturday, November 7, Bennett Valley Road, Grange Road and Pressley Road were cleaned by 16 volunteer Bennett Valley residents. We want to express our great appreciation to all of those who helped, either in the clean-up or in other coordination efforts: **Bobbie Blair & Suzanne Dougherty, Norm Boling, Scott Chilcott, Dave Dammuller, Dan Derdula, Karen Dionne, Al Fecarotta, Mike & Patty Hickey, Marilee Jensen, Jessica & Stephanie Kahle, Tom Knox, Frank LaCombe, Dave & Sandy Sandine, Lu Schultz.** We also want to express appreciation to BVHA for authorizing the purchase of more safety vests, pick-up sticks and 3 signs that say, “Road Clean-up Today”. The Bennett Valley roads are cleaned by volunteers twice a year, so the next Clean-Up Roads Day can be expected in April. Additional help is always needed, so you are welcome to join us then. **Special thanks to Dave & Sandy Sandine, Bobbie Blair & Suzanne Dougherty, Norm & Even Boling and Mike & Patty Hickey, for their continuous efforts over the years.**

Emergency Water Barrels By Mike Hickey

Last year 80 emergency water barrels were purchased and installed in homes by BV residents. If you’re interested, you can consider placing a direct order at BestBePrepared.com. For one complete set, you should get one 55-gal storage barrel, one bottle of water preserver, one hand siphon pump, one bung wrench and a 2-piece set of protective bung caps, costing approximately \$136, including shipping. You may contact me at mnp449@sbcglobal.net if you have more questions.

Bennett Valley Emergency

Preparation (BVEP) By Karen Sommer

We are very excited about preparations for a Volunteer Emergency Supplies and Communications addition to the Fire Station. We need help from the community to make this happen. You can donate your expertise, materials or money to support this effort (see dues/donation form attached to this *VOICE*).

A very special Thank You to Evelyn and Geoffrey Hornsby for their generous donation of \$2500. This donation is specific to purchasing an emergency supplies storage unit at the Grange for community shelter supplies. The Grange is designated as a site for residents to go to in case they cannot reach a Red Cross shelter and cannot stay in their home when disasters such as an earthquake occur.

CERT classes are scheduled at the fire station for March 13th, 20th and 27th. This series will cover Disaster Preparedness, Fire Safety, Medical First Aid and Triage, Light Search and Rescue, CERT Organization, Disaster Psychology, Course Review and Disaster Simulation. The fee for these classes will be approximately \$40. Completion of all classes is required for certification. Make up classes are available in other local communities.

CPR is tentatively scheduled for April, with the date in the next *VOICE*. This class fills up quickly, so if you’re interested contact me to get on the list.

If you would like to organize your neighborhood for emergencies let me know. I can supply information on how to make your neighborhood be better prepared.

For more information or to sign up for any of the above, contact me at ksommer11@earthlink.net or phone 528-8982.

Exemptions from Spare the Air Days

To reiterate what was said in the November *VOICE*, you are exempt from Spare the Air restrictions on wood burning fires if any one of the following three conditions apply to you:

- Rule 6-3-110, Natural gas service is not available to you, even temporarily, even when propane gas is available.
- Rule 6-3-111, Electric power is not available to you.
- Rule 6-3-112, Your only source of residential heat is a wood-burning device.

You can find these rules on the Bay Area Air Quality Management District web site, <http://www.baaqmd.gov/>.

Bennett Valley Calendar **AN ENDANGERED SPECIES**

By Sherry Parker

We need more help from the community if we are to continue producing our Bennett Valley Calendar!

After a decade of publishing the Bennett Valley Calendar, which we have worked hard to make more spectacular each year, we are now at a crossroads. First of all we would like to thank all of you – and there have been many – who have given your time and expertise to the design, production, and sales of the calendars, which, ultimately, benefit our Bennett Valley Volunteer Firefighters, BV Grange or BVEP.

Those of us involved would like to continue the tradition of bringing the community together in support of this activity. However, we need more help both on the Calendar Committee and personal involvement from the community by submitting photographs, purchasing, and helping to sell these calendars.

We are currently looking for three more volunteer members of the Calendar Committee. Sherry Parker, Dina Kuntz, and Bobbie Blair have committed to being on the team this year. But we need a larger committee to share the responsibilities.

Job description. The job will involve:

- 3-4 meetings a year to decide on a theme and design of the calendar, judging the entries, approval of layout/comp, and strategies for distribution and promotion.
- Each committee member will be responsible for one sales venue, such as Ace, Cottage Gardens, CVS, Voting day, etc. (This involves supplying calendars/signage and periodic replenishment.)
- With six people on the Committee this will not take much of your time, and, importantly, it's a fun and rewarding experience.

Qualifications for prospective committee members:

- Appreciation of photography
- E-mail literate.
- Enthusiasm.

That's it, and it's fun! If you are interested, please call Sherry Parker at 528-6176 by February 15th. If we can get three more people on the Committee, we will go ahead with the calendar for 2011.

Anyone interested in buying a 2010 "Magic of Trees" Calendar: they are now on sale for HALF PRICE at Cottage Gardens, on your BVHA dues form, or call Sherry Parker.

Redwood Empire Recycle Information

Fall, 2009 By Marilee Jensen

The latest newsletter sent out by Redwood Empire, dated Fall, 2009, covered many pertinent areas of recycling in great detail. Certain sections of that newsletter have been extracted and presented as possibly of interest to you. If you don't have a copy of this newsletter, you can contact **Redwood Empire Disposal, PO Box 1916, Santa Rosa, 95402, (707) 585-0291.** Office Hours: Monday – Friday 7:00 am- 6:00 pm, Saturday - Sunday 7:00 am – 3:00 pm. Or you can check out their website at unicycler.com.

▪ **Toxics disposal service options for residents:**

1) Household Toxics Facility, located at the Central Disposal Site, 500 Mecham Rd., the Household Toxics Facility is open every week, on Thursday, Friday & Saturday, 7:30 am- 2:30 pm for **free drop-off** of toxics from Sonoma Co. residents. Bring your ID to prove residency. No appointment required.

2) Community Toxics Collections, by appointment only. Every week there is toxics collection somewhere in Sonoma County. Bring your ID to prove residency. For your appointment call **795-2025** or **1-877-747-1870**, at least 24 hours prior to the collection events, which are held on Tuesdays, 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm. Visit recyclenow.org for a complete schedule of events.

▪ **Yard Waste and Organics Guide** Did you know that the contents of your green (or brown) organics cart are turned into compost and mulch?... Be sure to keep garbage, plastic bags and plant pots, as well as glass and other debris out of the green organics cart... If you have any questions, call Sonoma Compost Company, at 578-5459.

1) Place only clean green in your green (brown) cart:

Vegetative food waste - **such as tea bags, coffee grounds, coffee filters, bread, pasta, rice, vegetables and fruit, peelings, and wet paper towels, which can be kept in a small garbage can or container, to be emptied directly into the green cart.** Also grass cuttings, prunings, leaves, weeds, berry vines, garden waste, and tree trimmings less than 4 inches in diameter may be included in your green cart.

2) These are not allowed in your green (brown) cart:

Meat, cooking oil, bones, dairy, foil, and other garbage, plant pots, plastic bags, dirt, rock, wood/plywood, glass, metal, pet waste, bamboo, palm fronds, poison oak

3) Green (brown) carts are collected every week:

Do not put yard waste in plastic bags. All yard waste must fit completely into the green cart with the lid closed or it might not be accepted.

▪ **Advertise Your Discards! SonoMax.org**

What is SonoMax? SonoMax, Sonoma County Materials Exchange, is a free online resource where you can find or discard items. It demonstrates the idea that *one person's trash is another's treasure*. Simply log onto the SonoMax web site and create a *wanted* or *available* listing. You can find everything from packaging peanuts to pallets. SonoMax is a program of the Sonoma County Waste Management. **Post an ad or browse for materials. Visit us online!**

▪ **Local Disposal of Batteries:**

Redwood Empire Disposal identified **Whole Foods Market**, 1181 Yulupa Ave., Santa Rosa as the local resource for disposing of old batteries, no longer allowed in your garbage.

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 rotating shifts of three volunteers each are paid to sleep overnight at the Fire Station, 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 November/December 2009

By Lieutenant Kevin Burris

Medical Aids- 19	Vehicle Accidents-7
Public Assists- 1	Fire Alarms- 2
Structure Fires-3	Hazardous Conditions- 3
Vehicle Fires- 1	

Locating an address in inclement weather can be difficult. During an emergency when seconds count, an easy way to ensure help arrives in rapid fashion is to properly identify your home. At Bennett Valley Fire Protection District we make reflective address signs, which are double-sided green in color and are highly visible at night and in low visibility conditions. You may order a sign any time from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm, at the Bennett Valley Fire Station. The cost for one sign with mounting bracket is \$15. Help us find your home by properly identifying your property, thus insuring a rapid response in your time of need.

Bennett Valley Fire District Website

(bennettvalleyfire.org) by Marilee Jensen

This is a great source of information about the Bennett Valley Fire District! The home page provides the **history of our fire district**, which was started in 1948, as an all volunteer fire district. The first fire station was a small

shed near the corner of Sonoma Mountain Road and Bennett Valley Road. The current station was built during the 1960's by volunteers. In 2002, the BV residents approved a parcel tax enabling them to staff the station 24/7 with paid firefighters. The District now included both volunteers and paid staff, with a paid lieutenant on duty 365 days a year. An engineer (engine operator) and firefighter are on duty from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm daily. At 5:00 pm three trained volunteers come on duty, to sleep overnight at the station and are paid a stipend for their immediate availability. So each night our district residents are protected with four to five trained firefighters and Emergency Medical Technicians. ▪ The Fire District covers 25 square miles with approximately 1200 homes. The firefighters are continuously trained to assure they are using the most current techniques and technology for lifesaving and firefighting, and they have a highly functional fleet of vehicles. ▪ Next, there is a list of the firefighting **Administrative Personnel**, with information about their experiences, their responsibilities and their eAddresses. This includes Chief Andy Pforsich, Assistant Chief Dan George, and the two Battalion Chiefs, Adam Schipper and Darrin DeCarli. ▪ There are then sections on Fire Prevention, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), and the Apparatus (the six BV Fire Engines). The **Fire Prevention** section gives you a few choices, including **information about defensible space** and **free home fire inspections**, with links to California Department of Forestry Website and Fire Safe Sonoma. For **Winter Time** fire prevention the following is listed:

- Have your chimney cleaned regularly.
 - Make sure to 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. ...many people don't realize the ashes can smolder for days and cause fires.
 - Never overload the capacity of electrical outlets.
- For **Year Round** fire prevention, the following is listed:
- Change your smoke detector batteries twice a year.
 - 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.

The next section is **Job Applications for Volunteers** and **"Ride Along Applications"**, for those who are interested in seeing what firefighters do on a daily basis; downloads are available. ▪ There is a full description of the **Explorer Program**, sponsored by the Bennett Valley Fire District, through a charter with the Boy Scouts of America. This program is for interested youth 14 - 18 years of age, with training every Monday evening, 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm. "Live fire training is not a part of the Explorer curriculum until the Explorer has received several years of training preparing for such events, have been signed off by their instructors, and have received permission from their parents. Safety is our number one priority." An application to become an Explorer is also available to be downloaded. This is one of the main sources for BVFD volunteers, after they turn 18 years of age. ▪ This website also has extensive information on Burn Permit Requirements and Controlled-Burn Guidelines, in addition to pictures, videos, links and contact information.

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

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

Website: bennettvalleyhoa.org

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Brief Summary of BVHA Meeting

November 19, 2009

▪ Program Speakers: Sonoma County Water Agency's Liz Yeager and Sequoia Solar's Eric Theriot described a new program known as the Sonoma County Energy Independence Program which started in March, 2009. Through this, Sonoma County will finance energy home improvements with a simple 6% interest. The costs and interest for these improvements will be added to your property tax bill and do not affect the county assessment of the property. Information is available at the office: 404 Aviation Blvd., Santa Rosa, 95403; or visit sonomacountyenergy.org. Sequoia Solar will provide a free site evaluation, including possible group discounts and help with county permits, state rebates and federal tax credits. For more information, contact Eric Theriot, etheriot@swquoisolar.com or 528-7652.

▪ Craig Harrison announced that he has the confidentiality agreement from Rob Thompson on the well monitoring project, so that we can transfer the past well monitoring information to him.

▪ Patty Allen announced that the Bennett Valley School District has the Bennett Valley School site property up for lease; they're checking on the zoning to see what the possibilities might be.

▪ The BV Calendar sales have been down this year, without an election in November and the area drug store (now CVS) no longer participating. Suggestions for improving sales included the School Craft Fair, Farmer's Market, Community Days, and having people order them when they pay their BVHA dues. See BVHA Dues Form, attached.

▪ Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness (BVEP) Report: Karen Sommer reported that the CPR class in November was successful. Another CPR class is scheduled for April, with 10 participants at a time, so let Karen know if you're interested. The next CERT session will be on March 13, 20 and 27. Karen reported that Geoffrey and Evelyn Hornsby would like to donate \$2,500 for the Emergency Supplies unit at the Grange. Bill Allen is getting bids for these storage units. Karen stated that BVEP can cover the costs for site preparation. A spring fund raiser is being planned both for this Grange unit and the Fire Station unit; see BVEP information on Pages 1 and 2.

▪ Craig Harrison communicates regularly with Rob Silva regarding Sonoma County Public Works road repair plans for Bennett Valley, summarized as updates for the *VOICE*.

▪ The BVHA Board discussed banners posted along BV Road for community events, such as by the BV Grange, BVHA and/or the BV Fire District. The BVHA Board agreed that two weeks before an event and 48 hours after an event should be adequate time to have banners posted. Marilee Jensen will see that this is discussed at a BV Fire District Board meeting.

▪ BVHA plans on having three speakers per year, with one of the speakers in 2010 covering "sudden oak death".

▪ The BVHA Election Committee reported that the three candidates running were elected, that is Fay Blair, Gary Barner and Tim Bosma. The new BVHA officers, as selected by the new Board, are Craig Harrison, President; Eric Burns, Vice-President; Fay Blair, Treasurer; and Tim Bosma, Recording Secretary.

Board of Directors' Tentative Agenda

Thursday, January 21, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall

- Public input, approval of minutes, Treasurer's Report, bi-monthly county reports
- Report from BVEP (Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness) Coordinator, Karen Sommer
- Consideration of an internet discussion group for Bennett Valley area
- Speakers for remainder of 2010
- New business, as determined by Board

Conservation Tips, BAAQMD Website

Drive Smart – Cut down on speeding, rapid acceleration and heavy braking; can reduce gas mileage by 30%.

Disconnect electronic devices that are not in use.

Passive usage accounts for 10% of home energy use.

Buy local groceries and products instead of items that must be transported long distances.

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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, January 21, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall. 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) Saturdays, January 23 and March 6, 9:00 am to 1:30 pm, Petaluma Senior Center. Thursday, February 18, Red Cross, Santa Rosa. Contact Dale at 762-9414.
- 4.) LANDPATH OUTINGS, ACTIVITIES:** LandPaths, the Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District and Regional Parks are offering an interim permit program for anyone interested in hiking, biking and horseback riding on the 1000+ acre Taylor Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve. “Birds of the Petaluma Marsh, Saturday, February 13, 10 am-1:30 pm. Hope to spot some of the nearly 150 bird species that call this place home.” Is one of their many planned outings through out the year. *To request more info or to make reservations for one of their outings, visit LandPaths.org or call 524-9318.*
- 5.) 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.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

- Call Sonoma County Road Maintenance, at 565-5100 to report dangerous potholes which need fixing, or to remove bulky/weighty trash which has been dumped along Bennett Valley roads.**
- Call 576-1371 from a cell phone to report emergencies in Bennett Valley.**
- Call 565-2121 from any type of phone, to talk to someone at the Sheriff's office 24 hours every day, either for emergencies that require a law enforcement response or with other concerns that may or may not be an emergency.**