



Bennett Valley VOICE

www.bennettvalleyhoa.org

VOLUME 33, NUMBER 3

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION (BVHA)

MAY, 2010

Candidates Debate: Sonoma Co. District Attorney

Craig S. Harrison, BVHA President

BVHA is pleased to announce that the candidates for Sonoma County District Attorney have agreed to participate in our forum on Thursday, May 20. The District Attorney is responsible for prosecuting all criminal matters in Sonoma County. Each candidate will be asked identical questions that must be submitted to the moderator in writing at the forum. The candidates have provided the following statements.

Jill Ravitch began her career working in the Alameda County District Attorney's office after graduating from University of San Francisco Law School in 1987. "I went to law school to become a prosecutor," proclaims Ravitch.

After a few years in Alameda County, she joined the Sonoma County DA's office and quickly earned a reputation as a top-flight prosecutor and trial attorney. She would go on to earn "Prosecutor of the Year" honors for her exceptional work.

She eventually took her skills and passion to the Mendocino District Attorney's office, becoming Chief Deputy District Attorney. She has succeeded greatly in Mendocino County, being named "Victim Advocate of the Year" by the DA's office and winning tough verdicts in murder trials and against gang criminals.

Sonoma County deserves the best top law enforcement official around, and that person is Jill Ravitch.

Leadership with Conviction:

- Prosecutor for 18 years with more than 100 jury trials in Sonoma, Mendocino & Alameda Counties;
- Chief Deputy District Attorney, Mendocino County;

2011 BV CALENDAR THEME

- Prosecutor of the Year, Sonoma County;
- Victim Advocate of the Year, Mendocino County;
- Professor of Criminal Law, Empire Law School;
- 20 Year Sonoma County resident, 1990-Present

Stephan R. Passalacqua For eight years, I've worked strategically to protect you and your families. Violent crime in Santa Rosa dropped 27% and property crime dropped 31%.

Developing a top-notch office, I turned retirement into opportunities. We recruited experienced prosecutors and the results are clear in the courtroom. Our felony trial conviction rate is 88% (2009) and our overall conviction rate increased to 74%.

To improve crime prevention programs, I collaborated with the community partners. Gangs have recruited less kids, fewer seniors are victims of elder abuse and repeat drunk drivers are being kept off our roads.

Making victims' rights a priority, I hired bilingual victim advocates and worked to increase victim restitution to over \$5M. Through outreach, we partnered to bring victim services all under one roof with the Family Justice Center opening in 2010.

The work of the District Attorney requires a leader who has built strong relationships, both inside and outside of the office, to keep Sonoma County safe during this economic crisis. This is not the time to take risk on your public safety.

I understand the job, and have a proven record of being tough on violent gang members and protecting our children from sexual predators.

“SEASONS OF BENNETT VALLEY”

"To be interested in the changing seasons is a happier state of mind than to be hopelessly in love with spring."

IT'S NOT TOO EARLY TO SEND YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE BENNETT VALLEY SEASONS TO THE CALENDAR COMMITTEE AT SPARKER@IX.NETCOM.COM. (Or, you can send them by mail to the Calendar Committee, 2750 Bardy Road, Santa Rosa, CA. 95404.)

The seasons wear many alluring costumes – glistening rain, mysterious fog, bright colorful wildflowers and gardens, bounties of ripe fruits and vegetables, brilliantly red and yellow fall trees and grapevines, and occasionally even snow.

We welcome and encourage photographers of all ages to capture the uniquely beautiful seasons of our valley.

Specifications for photos:

- **Jpegs or prints; horizontal format preferred.**
- **If prints are sent, they should be 5"x7" at the minimum.**
- **No more than 4 entries per person. Try to send a photo of at least 2 different seasons. One of each season would be great.**
- **Use your imagination. You can shoot almost anything – plants, scenes, animals, trees, vistas, water, sky, sunsets, etc, as long as the photo suggests one of the four seasons in our valley: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall.**
- **Deadline for submission: August 30.**

Please join our effort to make this the most beautiful calendar ever! If you have any questions, feel free to email Sherry Parker, at sparker@ix.netco.com or call her at (707) 528-6176.

**Bennett Valley Grange
Annual Picnic and Benefit**

Sunday, June 6, Noon to 4:00 pm

By Karen Sommer

The Grange and the Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness Program have teamed up for this annual fund raising event. Proceeds will benefit both organizations.

The Grange Hall is the pride of our valley, operating for 137 years; it is the oldest operating Grange in the nation. Formed in 1873 in the middle of a national economic depression and on the heels of the Civil War, Bennett Valley residents met to form a Grange. The national movement was started only six years before and known as the “Granger Movement”. It was an organization for farming communities to unite and increase production and distribution. In remembrance of the first harvest feast on Founders’ Day, the Bennett Valley Grange has continued the picnic tradition each year on the first Sunday in June. The shared proceeds from this event will help maintain this precious historic structure.

For the first time and in the Grange community spirit, proceeds will be shared with the Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness Program. This program, started in 2007 under the auspices of Bennett Valley Homeowner’s Association, promotes education, CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) training and disaster preparedness. The shared proceeds from this event will help to purchase emergency and shelter supplies for the newly purchased container located on the Grange site. In addition, proceeds will help us in our fundraising efforts to build an emergency communications structure at the Fire Station. In a disaster such as an earthquake, volunteers will be using Ham and walkie talkie radios to help in disaster efforts.

This year’s picnic promises to be a very lively affair, with music by the Barrel House Band, Chicken BBQ and homemade desserts, wine auction, silent auction, art display, 4-H animal show, games, and more. We are looking for more donated items for the silent auction. If you have anything you would like to donate such as wine, works of art, a vacation rental, fishing or boat trips, dinner at a nice restaurant, picnic basket with goodies, gift certificates, services or any fun item, contact Karen Sommer at ksommer11@earthlink.net or call her at 528-8982.

Come and enjoy the day with neighbors and friends, bid on items and enjoy the food and music. Tickets are on sale at local Bennett Valley merchants: Exchange Bank, Barleycorns, and Pizzeria Grillo, or at the Grange on the day of the event; \$12.50 for adults, \$5.00 for children 10 and under.

**Yes, Call 911 From Your Cellphone
New From California Highway Patrol**

New instructions for using your cellphone to call 911 from within Bennett Valley have been provided, based on changes in technology and legislation. Mary Pat Marshall, the Public Information Officer for the California Highway Patrol, Golden Gate Communications Center in Vallejo, strongly recommends calling 911 from your cell phone in an emergency (as well as the land line from your home) rather than your local 7-digit dispatch number, as BVHA had recommended in the past. Previous delays have been reduced significantly or eliminated and more local law enforcement agencies are now receiving these 911 calls directly, including some by the Sonoma County Sheriff's office. While many of these calls are still routed to Golden Gate Communications Center in Vallejo, 45% of the 911 emergency calls are now received by the local law enforcement agencies with jurisdiction from where you're making the call. Again, with improved technology, when you call 911 from your cell phone, the cell phone tower where your call is coming from can be identified, in order to better determine your approximate location. Due to technology changes and participation of local law enforcement agencies the 911 call volume to Golden Gate Communications Center has been reduced by approximately 20,000 each month.

Mary Pat Marshall encourages anyone to contact her with further questions regarding these changes. Her direct phone line is (707) 551-4185 and her email address is mpmarshall@chp.ca.gov. The main problem 911 calls are now having is people misusing them for events which are not emergencies, such as even "testing" to see if 911 is working. Those kind of calls need to be eliminated. One of the examples she used was if you woke up in the morning and your car had been stolen, you should call the local law enforcement agency rather than 911 as an "emergency" response is not going to make any difference for you or your car. On the other hand if someone is in the process of stealing your car, then you'd want to call 911. As she said, more education is needed for the public on appropriate use of 911 calls. When inappropriate 911 calls are made, it can actually be interfering with saving someone's life.

"Trash Along County Roads"

As stated in the *Press Democrat* article on April 19, "Budget woes force Sonoma County to eliminate funding for roadside waste clean-up." A month ago rural residents could expect Sonoma County Public Works to remove trash dumped alongside county roads. As explained in a phone interview on May 5, by Jeanine from Sonoma County Road Maintenance, for budgetary reasons the county no longer picks up dead animals or litter alongside the roads. If a big item is in the middle of a road, such as a deer or a couch, they will pull it over to the side of the road, but not remove it. Their policy on responding to public reports about dangerous potholes or fallen trees hasn't changed and they will come out to handle those problems.

Last July, the county stopped using their own road crews to pick up litter, because of the staff cutbacks. Since then

they have been using a program for jail inmates to retrieve trash, but that program ran out of money in mid-April. Some county officials expect more money will become available for the jail inmate program to remove trash as early as July, but apparently other county officials are saying it will be three to five years before that service will be resumed.

When Andy Pforsich, our Bennett Valley Fire Chief, was asked about this change, his email response stated as follows. *"If debris is causing an imminent traffic hazard, the California Highway Patrol should be called and they will call out the county road crew to remove the hazard. The county will no longer be sending people out on scheduled and routine patrols for roadside debris... However, hazardous situations will still be handled by a road crew just as we expect when a tree falls, a large pothole develops, or there's a slide. As always, if any resident has a concern, they're welcome to call or stop by the fire station and let the on-duty officer know. He'll look into it and either handle it or refer it to the proper authority."*

Craig Harrison, BVHA President, has stated the following in a letter dated April 28, 2010, to our Supervisor Valerie Brown about this problem:

"On behalf of the Bennett Valley Homeowners Association (BVHA), the board of directors wants me to respond to recent reports in the Press Democrat that Sonoma County will no longer remove trash from county roads. The BVHA was established in 1970 and is dedicated to promoting and preserving the rural, residential character and natural environment of Bennett Valley. The roadsides of our rural community area have for decades been a dumping ground for discarded furniture, appliances, mattresses and building materials. We doubt that any is dumped by local residents and from our experience this activity is unrelated to the economy. While we appreciate the current budget situation, we urge the county to resume debris removal from rural roads. While each spring and autumn our community has an organized trash removal day to remove small items (beverage containers, plastic bags, etc.) from our roadsides, removing furniture is beyond our capability. Our roads have blind curves and few shoulders. Asking public volunteers, who have no legal authority to stop traffic or place cones, would be very dangerous and could risk life and limb. We suggest that the county utilize its portable surveillance cameras at locations where this type of dumping has been a chronic problem. We believe that the identification and prosecution of a few individuals who dump trash would go a long way toward solving this problem and easing the financial burden on the county. Please contact me at 573-9990 if you wish to discuss this."

As of May 9, Craig Harrison notes that Valerie Brown has not responded to this letter.

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District

6161 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404

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, 8:00am to 5:00pm

Firefighters Mike Alcocer, Ly Leng and John Matej

Bennett Valley Firefighter 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, as the fourth on-duty firefighter.

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District

Call Activities March/April 2010

By Lieutenant Kevin Burris

Medical Aids: 13	Vehicle Accidents: 9
Hazardous Conditions: 6	Fire Alarms: 2
Vegetation Fires: 1	Smoke Investigations: 2
Total: 33	

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) kicks off Wildfire Awareness Week, May 2 through May 8, to highlight the importance of the homeowners' role in preparing their property and families ahead of time to survive a wildfire. Preparing for a wildfire starts with 3 simple steps: Ready, Set, Go. These steps incorporate both making your home more resistant to wildfires and ensuring that your family is ready to evacuate early and safely when wildfire happens. See websites ReadyForWildfire.org or fire.ca.gov/ for more detailed information on surviving a wildfire.

1) **READY** - Being **Ready** starts with ensuring your home has enough defensible space, that is a buffer zone around your home in which you've reduced the amount of flammable vegetation so there is separation from an approaching fire; 30 feet immediately around your home which requires the greatest reduction in flammable vegetation, plus 70 additional feet or up to property line with modified fuel reduction. Also you want to be sure your home is "hardened", that is constructed with material less

likely to be ignited by burning embers, the major risk factor for homes being destroyed by wildfire. To complete your readiness, you should also have a family disaster plan in place with evacuation routes, safe meeting areas outside the fire hazard area, plans for your pets/animals and a disaster kit.

2) **SET** - As a wildfire approaches, it is important that you get **Set**. Prepare yourself and your home for the possibility of having to evacuate. This means going through a checklist of items you will need to take when evacuating. And be ready to implement your Family Disaster Plan.

3) **GO** - This is the simplest step, to **Go** quickly. If you have your home and family **Ready** and **Set**, you'll be well prepared to **Go**. Evacuate early to ensure your and your family's safety. This will also help Fire Crews access properties by reducing traffic on Bennett Valley's many narrow road ways.

Preparing For Fire Season with Free Chipping, Fire Safe Sonoma Chipper Extravaganza Program

By Karen Sommer

Good news! Fire Safe Sonoma has received a large grant for brush/ tree limb chipping for Sonoma County. Residents trim their trees to eliminate 'ladder fuels' (these are low limbs that can catch fire from the dry grasses), remove dead brush, and clear small firs. Fire Safe Sonoma will contract to have the brush chipped. The U.S. Forest Service grant will start June 1 and continue through 2011, it is available until the funds run out. They would prefer a group of neighbors or neighborhoods to participate in the free chipping program for economy of scale. If you want more information on this program go to www.firesafesonoma.org. You will see the heading for the chipping project at the top of the home page, then follow it to application forms. This site has good information on making your home fire safe. Or you can contact Corinne Barclay of Fire Safe Council for more information at: corinnebarclay@msn.com or call 953-4084.

This grant is large and hasn't been advertised as of yet. Please act now: Take advantage of this, especially by neighborhood areas, and make our Valley a little more fire safe. If your neighborhood would like a drive-through by firefighters to help in sizing up the fire safety of your area, contact Mike Mickelson at mikemickelson@fire.ca.gov of Cal Fire, or call him at 484-5060. A second good contact for this is Darrin DeCarli, at ddecarli@sonic.net, or call 823-1084. He is a Bennett Valley Fire Battalion Chief.

Bennett Ridge neighborhood recently had this drive-through done for sizing up their fire safety and found it very informative. The neighborhood then prepared and is implementing the Bennett Ridge Community Wildfire Protection and Vegetation Management Plan, for both the neighborhood and individual homeowners.

BV Spring Clean-Up Roads Day!

On Saturday, April 24, once again the major BV roads were cleaned by 19 volunteers. We want to express our special thanks to these volunteers who helped clean our community roads: *Dave & Sandy Sandine, Lu Schultz, Mike & Patty Hickey, Norm Boling, Bobbie Blair & Suzanne Dougherty, Jessie & Eric Kahle, Gene & Gail Graser, Tom Knox & Al Fecarotta, Karen & Bob Anderson, Sam Sweet, Tim Murphy, and Corine Bollinger*. There were a number of new people helping out, which is especially appreciated. We also give special thanks to 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 creative ideas for finding ways to get more people to help with this Bennett Valley clean-up effort, please contact Mike Hickey at mn4449@sbcglobal.net.

Update On Bennett Valley Road Work

By Craig S. Harrison

The Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works will continue to use crews from the California Department of Forestry (CDF) to complete the brushing of Pressley Road during May and June. CDF work is usually done on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Some residents are concerned that the brushing in certain areas has been too aggressive. The department responds that its approach is to brush or mow several feet behind or above the drainage ditches on both sides of the road within the county's right of way. These activities facilitate drainage and improve the condition of our roads. In addition, the brushing is intended to remove fuel in the event of fires. CDF currently classifies Sonoma Mountain Road and Pressley Road as high fire hazard areas. Some major road work is scheduled for Bennett Valley Road during late July, which we will address in the July *VOICE*.

Burglaries on the Rise in Semi-Rural Areas

By Karen Sommer

There has been an increase of burglaries in semi-rural areas of Sonoma County. The Sonoma County Sheriff's office suggests the following:

- Install door and window alarm systems, and cameras if possible (photos are necessary for conviction of theft; otherwise suspected criminals can only be charged with possession of stolen goods).

The Sheriff urges anyone that encounters anything suspicious to:

- Note the day and time of the encounter
- Contact the Sheriff's office at 525-2121
- Try to get the vehicle license number and make of car.

If your neighborhood is interested in learning more you may contact the Sonoma County Crime Prevention office at 565-3107.

Toxic Disposal/Composting Option*

By Marilee Jensen

• **Dangers of Mercury** "... One serious hazardous item that often is improperly disposed of is **compact fluorescent light bulbs or CFC's**. While these bulbs are safe to use, and a great way to save energy, they contain mercury vapor... When these bulbs are broken, the mercury can disperse into the environment and cause dangerous problems including mercury poisoning in people... Symptoms of mercury poisoning include sensory impairment, a disturbed sensation, a lack of coordination, and loss of skin, hair and teeth. Exposed small children are at risk for nerve damage... Prolonged exposure results in brain damage and even death... Putting (these) bulbs in the garbage will result in guaranteed breakage and releasing toxic mercury vapors... Please be a responsible citizen and dispose of properly, not in the trash."

• For **Toxic Disposal Information**, see recyclenow.org. Every Tuesday there are free Community Toxic Collections throughout Sonoma County for household waste, from 4:00 to 8:00 pm, with one or two of them being in different locations in Santa Rosa each month. You must make an appointment in order to use this service. The next one in Santa Rosa is on Tuesday, June 8, from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm, at the Santa Rosa Veteran's Memorial Building, across from the Sonoma Co. Fairgrounds. To make an appointment, call 877-747-1870.

• **Composting in my kitchen, for reduced landfill garbage and beneficial recycling.** Did you know that 30% of what we send to the landfill in our garbage cans is compostable? When it's sent as garbage to the landfill it emits methane, a major contributor to global warming, which is much more toxic than carbon dioxide. If you compost your vegetable and fruit scraps, dead flowers, etc., you help farmers and gardeners improve their soil, instead. I noticed this being done in some friends' kitchens and decided to try it. First you need the right container to hold all of these scraps. For less than \$10, I purchased a large plastic container, with a secure lid as well as a smaller lid which opens and shuts easily. When this gets filled, I empty the contents into a large brown paper bag or newspaper for disposal into my Yard Waste Container for the Redwood Empire Disposal's weekly pick-up. I then wash the plastic container out and return it to the kitchen. This has significantly reduced the quantity of my weekly garbage.

What can be put into your composting container?

Vegetables (corn husks and cobs, potato peelings, pumpkins, etc.), fruit (apple peelings and cores, orange peels, watermelon rinds, etc.), bread, coffee grounds & filters, tea bags, a smattering of wet paper towels, dead flowers, landscape prunings... Not accepted are meat, cooking oil and liquid waste, bones, dairy and cheese, plastic bags...

**Spring 2010 Redwood Empire Recycling News*

Easement Keeps Bennett Valley Land Wild

Sonoma Land Trust Spring 2010 Newsletter

Once someone falls in love with Sonoma County, they are often moved to take steps to protect it. In 1996, Oakland residents Kathy and Peter Drake... found 47 stunning acres on the north flank of Sonoma Mountain in Bennett Valley that was surrounded by open space. But a few years after they bought it, a subdivision was proposed nearby, so, in 2008, the Drakes purchased the scenic 34-acre lot adjacent to their property to prevent its development... Boasting sweeping views of the Mayacamas Mountains and Annadel State Park, and situated on an important wildlife habitat corridor between Annadel and Jack London State Parks, this property was considered a priority for conservation. Fortunately, the Drakes' tax attorney suggested they consider donating a conservation easement on the new acreage to protect it forever and they contacted the Sonoma Land Trust. "We wanted it to remain beautiful and untouched because it is such an exquisite area," said Peter. "It's important to us to keep some of the ridgelines green and open, and to provide oxygen and land for animals and plants. It is just so important." ...Coastal oak woodland covers more than half of the total area, along with perennial and annual grasslands, and 30-40 different species of plants. With habitat of such high quality, wildlife is abundant and varied from ground-nesting birds and burrowing mammals to wide-ranging predators, like grey fox, coyote, bobcat and mountain lion. The Drakes have even spotted river otter eating crayfish in the seasonal creek and pond. The conservation easement will eliminate in perpetuity any real estate development and commercial, industrial and agricultural uses on the land... They are also thrilled to be able to offer limited access to the Land Trust for guided hikes so that others can enjoy the wild land and spectacular vistas, too.

**Taylor Mountain May Be County Park,
By 2012** From a *Press Democrat* article, April 21

Planning for opening the 1,100-acre Taylor Mountain open space purchase as a regional park got under way... when Sonoma County supervisors approved spending \$438,000 on a master plan. The park... could be open by 2012. The Taylor Mountain acquisition, so big that it spreads into two supervisorial districts, is one of the district's most notable in terms of creating parkland between southeast Santa Rosa and Bennett Valley... The parkland stretches from Petaluma Hill Road to Bennett Valley Road, and its northwest corner will host a small section of the proposed Farmers Lane extension... The Open Space District intends to turn the property over to the county regional parks departments later this year... Since the quarter-cent sales tax to fund the Open Space District was overwhelmingly re-authorized by voters in November 2008, supervisors and open space advocates have worked to balance the growing clamor for access with funding for parkland maintenance and operations.

Firsts in Fire Protection (*Bennett Valley*)
Historical - By Warren Watkins, BVHA VOICE, April 1982

... Long-time valley residents remember when we didn't have any area fire protection. In fact, the first meeting to discuss local fire protection in Bennett Valley wasn't held until June 10, 1948 at the BV Grange (where else?). The meeting was chaired by valley cattleman Bill Pisenti and attended by many other familiar names. Among those active in the early fire planning included such personalities as Ernie and Phillip Guenza, Bill Carithers, Dwight Batesole, Bill Jacobs, Sam Mitchell and George Crane. In reading over the well written minutes of the early meetings, taken by W.H. Armstrong, family names frequently appearing were Beck, Molinari, Babcock, Mow, Dexter, Walker, Beach, Dedekam, Cundiff, and Bottasso. Many of these people or their offspring are still living in the valley.

Well, the talk about fire protection got serious at the second meeting on June 16, 1948 when a secret ballot was taken of the 45 individuals attending to determine how much money could be initially raised. When \$1,435 was pledged, the fire district was born. The group took little time in selecting Bill Jacobs as its first chief along with three assistants, a secretary, treasurer, and five commissioners. One of the original assistant chiefs, Al LaFranconi, remains active today!

Further meetings led to the purchase of the first fire truck, a used one ton 1942 International 4WD. The truck had a 200 gallon water tank and cost just \$1,700. (Today it costs \$80,000 for an 1800 gallon pumper). The license plate of this original truck is on display... at the fire house, and the original pump is still being used.

Continuing to move quickly in June 1948, our first firemen held the first training session for volunteers. It was attended by 25 eager residents. Following the training that day, beer and sandwiches were served...

As start-up expenses mounted, new sources of revenue were sought. The county agreed to contribute \$60/month to the district if Bennett Valley firemen would be on call during the dry summer to help out elsewhere in the county if needed. The Bennett Valley 4-H also made a cash contribution. Additionally, Mel Potterman donated 10 gallons of gas for the fire truck, although there was some question whether the old ranch bridges could support the weight of a truck filled with gas, water, and fire tools. The Powell ranch, near Farmer's Lane and Bennett Valley Road had the dubious honor of having the first fire in August 1948. Quick response by the new firemen resulted in only a few scorched grape vines.

Other "firsts" include the first fire telephone at the Grange installed in November 1948, and the first Fireman's Ball (complete with door prizes) on January 22, 1949. The first firehouse was built in March 1949 in the middle of the valley on the Steele property along Sonoma Mountain Road. The site was made available under a long term "verbal" lease and is still used by the fire district for storage. Volunteers erected the metal building with \$574.56 worth of Mead-Clark materials. Not unlike today's tax climate, the first attempt to assess valley residents for fire protection was vigorously opposed.

... we became a bona fide fire district in 1964 when Fire Chief Ruhlman was appointed... At that time, a \$100,000 bond issue was passed to secure the present one acre site (purchased from assistant chief LaFranconi for \$1,000), build the firehouse, and buy more fire equipment. Today, the fire district employs a full time fire chief, an additional fireman during the summer, and "sleeper" students on weekends and nights. There are 30 volunteers on call also. Over half of the approximately 100 calls responded to yearly involve matters such as automobile accidents, heart attacks, and other medical emergencies. Unfortunately, the fire vehicles are aging... Only the recent rescue squad vehicle is new. Do we need to modernize?...

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

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

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A Message From Your Membership Coordinators, **Larissa Goliti and Jeannie LaCombe**

Thank you for all your responses to the annual membership drive combined with your generous contributions. We welcome each of you as a BVHA member. If you haven't sent it in yet, annual dues are \$15 plus any additional contribution you want to make. If you want your extra contributions (over \$15) to be used for any specific purpose, please indicate so on the check, under "memo". Send your check to: BVHA, P.O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa, CA 95405. Questions? Call 578-3453.

Brief Summary of BVHA Meeting

March 18, 2010

- The first hour of the meeting had two Master Gardeners presenting detailed information about Sudden Oak Death, with an audience of around 50 people in attendance.
- The BVHA business meeting was called to order at 8:17 pm.
- Martin McClure, a BV resident, presented pictures of the proposed 39 acre, 4 parcel development on Grange Road, showing the proposed heights and envelopes for the proposed home. The county's public hearing on this proposal was scheduled for April 15 and Mr. McClure was encouraged to attend, preferably with other neighbors, to present his concerns.

Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association

- Fay Blair, the Treasurer, was not able to attend, but the Board approved \$350 for signs, regarding our speakers, an additional \$100 fee for our application to IRS to change from 501(c)(4) to 501(c)(3) and \$100 to update our computer software for 2010 members, as noted on our address labels.
- Karen Sommer presented information about the joint event on June 6 (see article on Page Two), encouraging donations for BV emergency preparation plans.
- The Board discussed the approximately 326 BVHA newsletters being sent by email, bimonthly, and the necessity that we include on those copies a statement that they may unsubscribe at any time, by contacting Larissa Goliti, at 578-3453.
- Speakers for our meetings for the balance of the year were discussed. Candidates for the June election were suggested for the May meeting. A local wildlife talk was suggested for the September meeting. Also there was an interest in earthquakes due to all the recent news reports.
- Following the suggestion from a BV resident, BVHA had asked BV Fire District/Association to consider having their signs up for Community Day or other events no more than "14 days prior and 2 days after an event." In the return letter from the BV Fire Chief, Andy Pforsich, he stated that when this was discussed at the BV Fire Board of Directors meeting on January 12, "The Firefighter's Association was involved in the discussion, based on their banner placement at least twice a year for the pancake breakfast and Community Day. The firefighters feel 30 days is necessary to adequately convey their message prior to these events. Removing the banners the day of their event has been their practice and will continue to be. In support of the Firefighter's Association and their continued commitment to these events and the service that they provide the community, we intend to honor their request to place their announcement banners 30 days prior to an event. Sincerely, Andy Pforsich" This is a voluntary decision by each of the organizations.

Board of Directors' Tentative Agenda

Thursday, May 20, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall

- 7:00 pm - Forum: Jill Ravitch and Stephan Passalacqua, Candidates for Sonoma County District Attorney
- 8:15 pm (approximately) Call to Order
- Treasurer's Report and Spending Requests
- Report from BV Emergency Preparedness Committee
- Road Maintenance and Brushing Issues
- Trash Pick-up Along the County Roads
- Speakers for Remainder of 2010

P.O. Box 2666
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

bennettvalleyhoa.org

PURPOSES OF BVHA: "To promote and preserve the residential rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley; To educate, instruct, train and inform the local residents on disaster preparedness and emergency response as well as local land use and environmental issues; 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

**by BV Grange picnic & Benefit
Sunday, June 6, 1:00 - 4:00 pm**

Bennett Valley Community Calendar

Mark your calendars now!!

- 1.) **BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION:** The next meeting, Thursday, May 20, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall, will include a presentation by the candidates for Sonoma Co. District Attorney, that is **STEPHAN R. PASSALACQUA** and **JILL RAVITCH**.
- 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 confirm meeting date ahead of time.
- 3.) **LandPaths Outings & Events:** Visit LandPaths online at www.landpaths.org. Their event phone # is (707) 524-9318. They are planning an event relating to Taylor Mountain June 19, 9:00 am - noon, Stories About This Place.
- 4.) **BENNETT VALLEY GRANGE and BENNETT VALLEY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,** Sunday, June 6, BV Grange Hall, 1:00 to 4:00 pm, Annual Picnic and Community Fund raiser. See Page 2 and watch for signs. Be sure to join us!
- 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 (Note changes)

- ***For emergencies, use your landline or your cellphone to call 911.*** See Page Three for additional information.
- Call 565-2121 to talk to someone at the Sheriff's office 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, either to report an emergency that requires a law enforcement response or with other concerns that may possibly be an emergency.
- Call Sonoma County Road Maintenance, at 565-5100 to report dangerous potholes, fallen trees or landslides.
- Call California Highway Patrol, at 588-1400, if debris is causing imminent traffic hazards on county roads.