



# Bennett Valley VOICE

www.bennettvalleyhoa.org

VOLUME 34, NUMBER 1    BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION (BVHA)    JANUARY, 2011

## **Time to join Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association!!**

BVHA has provided information or activity on the following subjects during this last year:

**Speakers:** We hold our meetings on the third Thursday of January, March, May, July, September and November, at 7:00 pm, at the BV Grange. At three of our six meetings, we had speakers:

- March 18 – Two Master Gardeners with special training in *Sudden Oak Death* spent an hour or so telling us about the disease spread, hazards, and preventative treatment options available.
- May 20 – The two candidates for the Sonoma County District Attorney's position, Jill Ravitch and Stephan R. Passalacqua, were willing to send us a summary of their background experiences, printed in the May VOICE, and then discuss the same list of questions in a debate at our BVHA meeting, a little less than 3 weeks before the election.
- November 18 – Vines To Wine. Joe Judge is a twenty year resident of Bennett Valley, owner of the Judge Family Vineyard, and one of the founders and now president of the Bennett Valley Grape Growers Association. He shared details about his challenges (and moments of joy) in planting a vineyard in the appellation of Bennett Valley. (See Page 2)

Bennett Valley Emergency Preparation, under Karen Sommer's leadership, has made some real gains, including over 50 BV residents trained in CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), an Emergency Storage Unit in place at the BV Grange, ongoing CPR training at the Fire Station and a plan for an addition at the BV Fire Station for a second Emergency Storage Unit. Funds will need to be raised and the commitment for volunteer time will need to be in place in order for this project to move forward. (See Page 5 for more information.)

Glimpses of different facets of Bennett Valley history were included in the VOICE, using a Press Democrat article from in 1966 plus three articles from earlier VOICES, in 1978, 1982 and 1984.

Craig Harrison, BVHA president, has been maintaining contact with Rob Silva, the Sonoma County Road Maintenance Foreman, so we now have regular reports about Bennett Valley road work in each issue of the VOICE.

Because of a significant increase in BV rural burglaries, we had numerous articles both describing these burglaries and tips on preventing burglaries (May, September and November, 2010). We also sent out the BV Email Alert to 300 BV residents in October regarding some recent BV burglaries.

We have a volunteer webmaster for the BVHA website, Bill Finkelstein, a Bennett Valley resident, so the website is now kept current. If you have any comments or questions about this website, please contact Bill (see Page 4 for contact information).

Ongoing reports were presented during the year on the improvements being made at the Jacob Ranch and the Sonoma Mountain Trail, connecting with Jack London State Park.

Other community service actions included our 2011 BV calendar, identifying correct emergency phone numbers, free brush chipping, two scheduled BV clean-up road days, research and information about the county's changes in trash removal, dead animals, and disintegrating rural roads, the BV Grange/BVEP annual picnic, BV Fire District information, recycling, toxic disposal and composting ideas, BV Community Calendar, and many more.

**We'd like you to join us for 2011!** The dues are \$15, per year, to help cover our costs for information dissemination plus we need extra "donations" for BV Emergency Preparation supplies and equipment. All the activity done by BVHA and BVEP is done by various volunteers. In 2010, the BVHA membership increased from 268 members to 332 members; let's continue that trend. The membership form and envelope are attached.

## **Bennett Valley Wine Grapes and Judge Family Vineyards, VINES TO WINE**

Notes made from Joe Judge's presentation at the November 18 BVHA meeting, with input from Joe & Gail Judge  
by Marilee Jensen

Joe Judge and his family purchased twenty acres off of Grange Road about ten years ago, to plant vineyards. He had first been told it would take four men working for about a week to remove all the large rocks on his acreage.

Instead, *"There were so many rocks on my 10 acre site that it took three crews of eight men plus big equipment three weeks to get the ground ready for planting, even though they had been instructed to not take out any rocks smaller than a basketball...We removed 1,000 tons of rock before we were through."*

In general, when starting a vineyard, you get about 1/3 of a crop two years after you first plant, 2/3 of a crop after three years, and finally a full crop after four to six years. All varieties of grapes take a varying number of days above 50 degrees, commonly known as degree days, to reach maturity. The Bennett Valley appellation is considered to be among the coolest in the county, and for that reason our valley isn't well suited for growing certain varieties, such as zinfandel or mourvedre.

In 2010, because of cool and generally wacky weather from Mexico to Washington State, some grapes never fully ripened. Most wine grapes were at least three weeks behind. It started with a cold wet spring of long duration. That left the roots on the grape plants colder than usual. Buds and flowers were then pushed 2 to 3 weeks late. Next followed a prolonged cool and foggy summer. At a certain point in the growing season many farmers in the county decided to pull leaves that were shading the grape clusters. It was at this important juncture that we experienced a brief spell of extremely hot weather, with temperatures reaching 105 to 114 degrees, with some vineyards losing 5-100% of the maturing grapes.

"We make world class wines in Bennett Valley, with top-notch grapes. This was the single most expensive season to grow grapes and most farmers were lucky to break even this year." Some grapes had 50% to 100% fatality with the bad weather. How will the wines turn out this year? For the grapes that made it, the quality has been exceptional so we should be looking forward to some wonderful wines. As all farmers know, Mother Nature bats last!

## **Flanagan Vineyards**

By Marilee Jensen

Eric Flanagan bought property on Bennett Valley Road in 1999 for his planned vineyards and winery. The grape vines were planted in 2001 and 2002 on 6 x 4 spacing. The vineyard is at 1,200 feet elevation and there are 13 acres planted with grape vines; 6 acres with cabernet, 1.5 acres with Merlot and 5.5 acres with Syrah. There is quite a bit of information about these vineyards and the winery at [www.flanaganwines.com](http://www.flanaganwines.com). "We have been very active with the winery and have had terrific success." (Eric Flanagan, 1/5/11) They have a wine dinner scheduled at the Baci restaurant in Healdsburg on Thursday, January 27, as described on their website.

This vineyard is a warm site with a cool climate, which results in the buds breaking early, but the picking being a little late. "This extra time on the vines combined with the low yields and the hillside site delivers intense complex fruit with beautiful flowers." ([flanaganwines.com](http://flanaganwines.com))

Eric Flanagan and his family moved to Sonoma County in August. His three daughters are attending Sonoma Country Day School. They are designing a house for the vineyard property. "We love living here and the kids are really enjoying their new school." (Eric Flanagan, 1/5/11) Eric has always been a thoughtful, cooperative neighbor for Bennett Ridge residents and it's nice to have him here in Sonoma County.

## **Sonoma Mountain Trail/Jacobs Ranch**

By Marilee Jensen

I recently talked with Kim Batchelder of Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District Office regarding the status of the Sonoma Mountain trail from Jack London State Park to Jacobs Ranch. He explained they have started the first mile of the trail from the Jack London State Park and they have finished most of the improvements at the Jacob Ranch, so it can serve as the trailhead for this trail. They will be completing a necessary pedestrian bridge this next spring. They expect to finish the trail, 3.5 miles to go, and necessary improvements from May through July of this year, with the inauguration in the late summer.

Kim explained they will be turning the trail over to the Sonoma County Regional Parks for ongoing maintenance once it is complete. There is some interest in allowing leashed dogs on the Sonoma County side before reaching Jack London State Park; Kim explained this will be decided by Regional Parks, once it is opened and evaluated further.

# Seasons of Bennett Valley 2011 Calendar – ALMOST SOLD OUT

BUY THEM NOW AT ½ PRICE:  
\$7.50

@ Ace and Cottage Gardens

or call Sherry Parker,  
528-6176, for delivery

**Proceeds from the sale of these  
calendars contribute to our  
Volunteer Firefighters and  
emergency and safety programs.**

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR NEXT  
YEAR?

BENNETT VALLEY WILD!

**Back by popular demand!  
It's not too early to start  
shooting the WILD SIDE of  
Bennett Valley. And, it's not  
too early to email your jpegs  
to Sherry Parker:  
sparker@ix.netcom.com.**

(more details to come in the next  
issue of the *VOICE*)

## **Bennett Valley Road Work Update**

By Craig S. Harrison

The winter storm season is well underway with unusually high rainfall during autumn and early winter. The limited resources of the Sonoma County Transportation and Public Works Department are primarily devoted to fixing pot holes, removing downed trees and clearing drainage culverts. In the immediate aftermath of large storms this can be a challenge. Residents are encouraged to report dangerous pot holes by calling 565-5100. In the Bennett Valley area, the California Department of Forestry will continue brushing Bennett Valley Road on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

For some time, the county has been observing the erosion of a small portion of Sonoma Mountain Road into the South Fork of Matanzas Creek. The bridge crew will construct a viaduct that will hopefully solve this problem and avoid a sudden collapse of Sonoma Mountain Road. The latest announcement received is that Sonoma Mountain Road, between Bottasso Court and La Paz Lane, will be closed to through traffic from 7:00 am until 4:00 pm Monday through Friday for construction of this viaduct from January 3 through February 19. Alternate routes are recommended. During non-working hours and weekends, the road will be open to one lane traffic with stop signs at each end of the job. The dates of completion may change but you can check this out further on the county website at [coc.sonoma-county.org/RoadClosure/](http://coc.sonoma-county.org/RoadClosure/).

On January 6 and 7, the county had the newly paved sections of Bennett Valley Road, in the narrow sections under the oak trees, striped. This was very much needed for reasonable visibility and safety, so we were pleased that the limited resources were stretched to include this.

## **It's Raining, It's Pouring, But Who Knows?**

By Marilee Jensen

We've had about 150% of normal rain for this time of year in our area so far. We've already had more rain this year than we've had in some of our drought years. Still, we can't be sure that we'll continue to get even enough.

## **Concise Summary of BVHA Minutes,**

November 18, 2010

- BVHA has moved to pay the BV Grange \$600 a year for the usage of their buildings. BVHA will also update their insurance certificate.
- The three candidates elected for the BVHA Board for the next three years are James Cobb, Frank LaCombe and Richard Lukasko. Karen Sommer was appointed to the BVHA Board to fill the remaining two years of Eric Burns' term. (He has sold his property in Bennett Valley.)
- The BVHA elected officers for the next year are Craig Harrison, President, Larissa Goliti, Vice-President, Fay Blair, Treasurer and Tim Bosma, Secretary.

## **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 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, allowing the fire station to have the ideal fourth on-duty firefighter.*

## **Bennett Valley Fire Protection District**

### **Call Activities November/December 2010**

By Lieutenant Kevin Burris

Medical Aids: 15	Vehicle Accidents: 6
Structure Fires: 2	Fire Alarms: 2
Public Assists: 3	Hazardous Conditions: 3
Total: 31	

Winter driving here in Bennett Valley can be a pleasant adventure or it can be frustrating, tiring and sometimes even hazardous. Here are a few tips that may help you out on your next winter-time driving expedition:

- Make sure your brakes, windshield wipers, defroster, heater and exhaust system are in top condition.
- Check your antifreeze and be ready for colder temperatures.
- You may need to add concentrated windshield washer fluid to the windshield washer fluid reservoir to prevent an icy windshield
- Check your tires. Make sure they are properly inflated and the tread is in good condition.

- Weather conditions may warrant detouring traffic from the main roadway. It is strongly suggested that drivers always keep an updated map containing the areas of travel.
- If you have a cellular telephone, pre-load any emergency telephone numbers that you may need.
- Always remain aware of changing road conditions, and expect the unexpected. Spin outs and motor vehicle accidents are common in the Bennett Valley area and could possibly be around the next blind corner.

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

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

Website: [bennettvalley.org](http://bennettvalley.org)

**Craig Harrison, President**

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

**Larissa Goliti, Vice-President,**

**Membership Coordinator**

[lgoliti@hotmail.com](mailto:lgoliti@hotmail.com), 578-3453

**Fay Blair, Treasurer**

[fayblair@sonic.net](mailto:fayblair@sonic.net), 576-0152

**Tim Bosma, Recording Secretary**

[tbosma@comcast.net](mailto:tbosma@comcast.net), 953-8873

**Gary Barner, Director**

[gbarner@cds1.net](mailto:gbarner@cds1.net), 481-6196

**James K. Cobb, Director**

[cobblaw@pacbell.net](mailto:cobblaw@pacbell.net), 586-9172

**Frank LaCombe, Director**

[FrankKLaCombe@gmail.com](mailto:FrankKLaCombe@gmail.com) 585-3482

**Richard Lukasko, Director**

[rlukasko@hotmail.com](mailto:rlukasko@hotmail.com), 566-7803

**Karen Sommer, Director, BVEP Coordinator**

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

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

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

**BVHA Webmaster – Bill Finkelstein, 536-1026**

[bill@williamfinkelstein.com](mailto:bill@williamfinkelstein.com) Any questions you have about the BVHA website can be directed to Bill Finkelstein.

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

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

- Status of IRS Issues, BVHA Requested Change
- BV Emergency Preparedness Committee Report
- Speakers for May, 2011
- Amendment of Bylaws So That a BVHA Election is Not Held When the Number of Candidates Equals The Number Of Vacancies. (As done by the School Districts and the Fire Districts.)
- New Business As Determined by Board

## Proposed Fire Station Addition for Emergency Preparation: We Need Your Help to Accomplish This!



Our Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness program has made some big advances in 2010.

- Thanks to Paul Hamilton for his architectural expertise, we now have plans for an addition to the Fire Station (pictured above). This addition is part of our strategic Emergency Preparedness Plan to be built by Bennett Valley volunteer donations and labor. In an emergency when conventional communications are not available, we will be able to set up emergency communications using the emergency generator at the Fire Station with our local ham radio operators and other emergency communications such as FRS (or walky-talkies). This will be a valuable resource to communicate with Bennett Valley neighborhoods and residents using their FRS radios and then to relay the damage and injury assessments to County Emergency Personnel via a ham radio.
- Thanks to Evelyn & Geoffrey Hornsby, Eric Burns, and Kevin Holtzinger we now have an emergency storage unit located at the Grange. When skies clear and the weather is just a little warmer, we will be painting this storage unit to blend in with the natural Oak woodlands. We plan on making additional improvements so that it is an attractive addition at the Grange. 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.
- We graduated another 11 CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) members this last fall. We now have over 50 CERT members in Bennett Valley that have taken this course. They will be a valuable resource for Bennett Valley during a disaster.

For 2011, BVEP (Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness) plans are:

- Finish stocking the Emergency Storage Unit at the BV Grange and have a plan for accessing these supplies.
- Create an emergency communications link with all of the Bennett Valley neighborhoods. We hope to locate and/or train ham radio operators and have classes in using the FRS radios, which would include information on the proper channels and how to best communicate important information. (See details below and in the BV Community Calendar of two of the ham radio classes offered in Sonoma County.)
- Raise the necessary money and recruit the necessary volunteer labor to complete the construction of the addition to the Fire Station. (The BV Fire Station would then pay for the foundation for the addition.)
- Working with the Fire Safe Council to prepare our neighborhoods against a wildland fire. In May, 2011 we will have an exciting presentation from Caerleon Safford of Fire Safe Council and Arthur Dawson, an historical Ecologist talking about how Bennett Valley oak woodlands have changed over the last 200 years and what it means for the future, (Look for another free brush chipper project from the Fire Safe Council again this year.)
- Have another CPR training this Spring and CERT training in the fall.

For more information contact: Karen Sommer 528-8982 or email: [ksommer11@earthlink.net](mailto:ksommer11@earthlink.net)

**Ham Radio classes offered this year:** Feb. 11, 12, 13; July 22, 23, 24; Oct. 21, 22, 23; February class is at Windsor Fire Station, 8200 Old Redwood Highway, Windsor. July and October classes are at the Santa Rosa Red Cross building, 5297 Aero Drive, Santa Rosa. Friday evening 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm, Saturday 8:00 am to 5:30 pm and Sunday 8:00 am to 2:30 pm. Return at 3:00 pm for the FCC exam! There is a follow-on class entitled "How to put your amateur radio station together and how to operate it" one week following each of the above classes, as follows: 6:00 pm until 9:00 pm (no cost); February 18, July 29, and October 28, at the Santa Rosa Red Cross building, 5297 Aero Drive, Santa Rosa. For more information, contact John Breckenridge, WB6FRZ, 707-217-1017. See Page 6 for another ham radio class.

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

**bennettvalley.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**

#### **Inside You'll Find**

*Vines to Wine, Joe Judge; Flanagan Winery  
BVHA Calendars, 2011, 2012; Sonoma Mountain Trail Status  
Bennett Valley Road Work; BVHA Summary of Minutes  
Bennett Valley Fire District Information  
BVHA Board; Tentative Agenda for January 20 Meeting  
Sketch of Fire Station Addition; BV Emergency Preparation Report  
BVHA Annual Membership Form*

### **Bennett Valley Community Calendar**

***Mark your calendars now!!***

- 1.) BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION:** The next meeting, Thursday, January 20, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall. See Tentative Agenda on Page 4. At the July 21 meeting, Michael Ellis, an outstanding speaker, will be discussing wildlife in BV.
- 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.) AMATEUR RADIO (Ham Radio) LICENSING IN JUST ONE DAY:** (From website [smrs.us](http://smrs.us)) Saturday, February 26, Petaluma Senior Center, 211 Novak Drive, Petaluma 778-4399. The session starts at 9:00 am, exam at 1:30 pm. Contact Dale at 762-9414 or [wb6tms@arrl.net](mailto:wb6tms@arrl.net) for registration or more information. Preparation fee including exam is \$25.00.
- 4.) BENNETT VALLEY SPRING CLEAN-UP ROADS DAY** – Saturday, March 26, 8:30 am, BV Fire Station, Let's make up for the clean-up day which was rained out in October. Watch for signs!
- 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 cell phone to call 911.
- Call 565-2121 to reach 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 or suspicions that may possibly be an emergency.
- Call Sonoma County Road Maintenance, at 565-5100 to report dangerous potholes, fallen trees or landslides and to request possible help with litter control and bulk trash in the road.
- Call Sonoma County Animal Control, at 565-7100, regarding the removal of dead animals along the road.
- Call California Highway Patrol, at 588-1400, if debris is causing imminent traffic hazards on county roads.

**BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION 2011 MEMBERSHIP DUES**

**(BVHA MAILING LABEL)**

Please mail this form with your annual \$15 dues for BVHA membership plus your extra donation for Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness (BVEP), which is now concentrating on raising funds for an addition to the BV Fire Station. (See Page 5 for more information.) In an emergency when conventional communications are not available, we will be able to set up emergency communications using the emergency generator at the Fire Station. Any amount sent to BVHA in excess of \$15 will be directed to Bennett Valley Emergency Preparation for their important work in our community, unless you indicate otherwise. Mail your check payable to Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association, to P.O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa, CA 95405. If you have any questions, please call our Membership Coordinator, Larissa Goliti, at 578-3453.

**BV EMAIL ALERT!** You'll want to be sure to sign up for the BV Email Alert. In October, 2010, our BV Email Alert was sent to the 300 email addresses we had in Bennett Valley. We wanted to let them know about a number of BV burglaries during that month to forewarn them. In April, 2009, when a man was frequently following women driving cars at night in Bennett Valley, trying to force them off the road to sexually abuse them, we chose to send out a BV Mail Alert because we did not have enough email addresses at that time. We need your email address in order to send you the occasional BV Alert in the quickest, simplest, most economical way. Please write down your email address here, so you're on our BV Email Alert list: \_\_\_\_\_

If you already receive a paper copy of the *VOICE* every other month, you'll continue to receive it that way. If you want to change the way you receive your *VOICE* from a copy mailed to you to an email transmission of the *VOICE*, please check here \_\_\_\_\_ and include your email address. We will only send your *VOICE* by email if you've been receiving it that way or you left a check mark here.

We want to know any corrections or additions we should make to your name(s), address, or phone number. (Current phone number: \_\_\_\_\_) We're also interested in any comments or concerns you have. If you need more room, insert additional paper. Thanks! Comments/Changes \_\_\_\_\_

-----