



Bennett Valley VOICE

www.bennettvalley.org

VOLUME 34, NUMBER 3

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION (BVHA)

MAY, 2011

Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Deems BVHA to be a Tax-Exempt Organization By Craig S. Harrison

On April 18, the IRS issued a letter to the Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA) that determined that the association is a public charity and exempt from federal income tax under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The notice states that the effective date of the exemption applies retroactively to February 10, 2010 -- the date that the BVHA first requested a change in its status from § 501(c)(4) to § 501(c)(3). With this change, contributions and donations which you've made for emergency planning or other association projects to the BVHA since February 10, 2010 can now be deductible for many taxpayers from their federal income taxes. The BVHA will request a similar change from the State of California later this year.

It's Time To Change The Name of Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA)

By Marilee Jensen and Craig S. Harrison

A homeowners' association, to most people including the IRS and other government agencies, is an organization that exists for the purpose of condominium management, residential real estate management, or time share management. When the BVHA began in 1970, there were few homeowners' associations in existence and there was little or no implication that the phrase "homeowners' association" would be an organization formed primarily for property management purposes on behalf of private land owners. Time has passed us by and our name, the Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association, is an anachronism which no longer reflects the purpose and intent of our organization. This has caused us a number of problems in recent years, such as local real estate agents concerned about how much a

BV property owner "owes" to this homeowner association when they are attempting to sell their property. As we know, no one "owes" money to BVHA; the dues are voluntary and optional.

Members of the BVHA Board, especially Treasurer Fay Blair and President Craig Harrison, spent countless hours developing information to provide to the IRS to satisfy its requirements and to respond to a series of detailed questions in regards to applying for this appropriate tax status change. The most difficult and almost insurmountable obstacle was the name of our organization as a "homeowner's association".

We recently encountered another situation in which our name as a "homeowner's association" proved to be problematic. The Bennett Valley Grange asked us to provide liability insurance for our meetings. We asked for insurance quotes from several insurance brokers, the cheapest of which was \$5,000 per year (more than we bring in for dues). Once again, the insurance companies believed that the BVHA is involved with property management, and most insurance companies are not interested in explanations about why the name of our organization is misleading.

For these reasons the BVHA board of directors will consider changing the name of BVHA to the **Bennett Valley Community Association** at its May 19th board meeting. If the Board approves this, then this name change will be submitted to BVHA members in an election. If approved by the members, then we can amend the articles of incorporation to become legally the Bennett Valley Community Association. This name will more accurately identify the purpose of our organization and remove us from all these legal entanglements now associated with "homeowners associations".

Speakers at the Thursday, May 19 BVHA

Meeting (BV Grange, 7:00 pm)

Bennett Valley Changes and Wildfire-Compatibility

1.) “Thinking Like An Oak, How Bennett Valley Has Changed Over The Last 200 Years And What It Means For our Future”

Speaker Arthur Dawson, Historical Ecologist

Arthur Dawson, director of the Sonoma Ecology Center’s Sonoma Valley Historical Ecology Project for the past 10 years, has developed an extensive archive and conducted creative and original research into changes in the region’s ecological health. Using historical maps and photos, 19th century land surveys, explorers’ journals, newspaper articles, and oral histories, he is able to create a detailed “story of the land”. Arthur has degrees in natural resources and biology, and has collaborated with many local, regional, and national organizations and agencies, including California Fish and Game, and National Park Service.

2.) “The Wildfire Wise Acre: Learning to Live With Wildfire”

Speaker Caerleon Safford, Fire Safe Sonoma

Caerleon Safford is passionate about teaching residents how to recognize the risk factors—small and large—that lead to home loss and how to prioritize a plan for a wildfire-compatible home. Recent research has shown that, during wildland fires, more homes burn because of very small windblown embers than because of a large flaming fire front. Wildland fire is a natural part of our environment and here is a great opportunity to learn to live with it! (See Page 4 to also learn about free chipper services, through Fire Safe Sonoma. For your questions, local firefighters will also be on hand.)

Spring Clean-Up BV Roads Day

Saturday, May 21, 8:30 am has been chosen for the next Clean-up Bennett Valley Roads Day after the last date, March 26, was once again rained out. We'll meet at the fire station and refreshments will be served. Don't forget to wear sturdy shoes, gloves and a hat for sun protection. This isn't necessarily a strenuous chore! BVHA provides orange safety vests and "pick-up sticks", that are a great help in preventing sore backs. **MORE VOLUNTEERS ARE ALWAYS NEEDED**, so please join us, and bring along other family members or friends. Middle school and high school students who volunteer will qualify for hours toward their “volunteer time” school requirement.

You can already see the sign on Bennett Valley Road, across from the golf course, as a reminder. If it rains, this event will have to be rescheduled, so please phone Sandy Sandine, 579-0282, for questions or to confirm date and time. We really do appreciate those residents who come out to help keep our community roads free from litter!

MATANZAS CREEK WINERY LAUNCHES ARTIST SERIES FOR 2011

Five local artists will be featured through December

Matanzas Creek Winery will showcase the work of some Bennett Valley artists in its new ARTaste Series, in 2011. As part of each exhibit, the winery will offer a special “art flight”, which will pair specific art pieces with a Matanzas Creek wine. The exhibits will be available for viewing during the tasting room hours of 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission is free, but guests not 21 years old must be accompanied by an adult.

The first exhibit will run through Wednesday, June 1, featuring **Karen Sommer, who is known for her monotype prints and sculpted paper fragments.** There was a reception for Karen on April 29; she reports over 70 people attended. She has 19 Monotypes on the walls and 4 Sculpted Paper Fragment vessels displayed on pedestals. There was considerable interest in her fragment vessels, a new process she has developed, as briefly described below. The Winery paired 5 wines with 5 pieces of her art. Karen's work may currently be viewed at the Winery or at: www.sommerartstudio.com.

Monotypes: Oil-based inks are commonly used and can be rolled or painted onto a flat plate of almost any kind, such as metal or plastic. Using various tools, ink is removed from the plate to help form the images. When the plate is completed, it is printed onto paper using the pressure from an etching press.

Sculpted Paper Fragments Vessels: Using her recycled monotype prints, which didn't make it, they are combined with parts of a figure drawing (with the unexpected face or foot appearing) and given a new life. Once a form is completed, several layers of a hard polymer medium are applied. These are decorative but are durable enough to be wiped with a damp cloth.

Upcoming exhibits in this year's ARTaste series will include:

Sherry Parker, mixed media collages. June 2 through July 14. **Reception for the artist will take place on Sunday, June 12, from 3:00 to 5:00 pm.** Sherry's collages can be viewed at: www.sherryparkerart.com.

Katie Black's fused glass collection. July 15 through September 1. Reception for the artist will take place Sunday, July 17, from 3:00 to 5:00 pm. Katie's art work can be viewed at: www.blackfusionglass.com.

Sally Weare's mixed media artwork. September 3 through October 13. Reception for the artist to be announced in the next BV VOICE. Sally's artwork can be viewed at www.sallyweare.com.

Deborah Salomon's mixed media collages. October 15 through December 2. Reception for the artist will take place Sunday, October 16, 3:00 to 5:00 pm. Deborah's collages can be viewed at www.deborahsalomon.com.

Matanzas Creek Winery is located at 6097 Bennett Valley Road. For additional information, go to www.matanzascreek.com.

2012 BV CALENDAR THEME "BENNETT VALLEY WILD"

CALL OF THE WILD: Bennett Valley photographers of all ages: start your hunt, and snap the WILD animals among us for the 2012 Bennett Valley Calendar.

Specifications for photos:

- Subject matter: wild animals (which include mammals, birds, insects, amphibians, etc.) Domesticated animals, as adorable as they may be, must be excluded.
- Digital jpegs are preferable (300 dpi or larger), but film (prints) will be accepted. Horizontal format, please.
- If prints are sent, they should be 5"x7" at the minimum.
- You may submit as many as 5 entries per person.
- **Deadline for submission: August 31.**

IT'S NOT TOO EARLY TO SEND YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS (JPEGS) OF WILD ANIMALS IN BENNETT VALLEY TO THE CALENDAR COMMITTEE AT SherryParker@earthlink.net. (Or, you can send them by mail to 2750 Bardy Road, Santa Rosa, CA. 95404.)

If you have any questions, feel free to email or call Sherry Parker at (707) 528-6176.

In advance, we thank you for your support of our annual Bennett Valley Calendar, which provides funds for various Bennett Valley community organizations such as the Emergency Preparedness Programs.

Septic Systems Focus of Proposed New Statewide Policy ... to ensure that surface waters and groundwater used for drinking is safe for consumption.

From "Fact Sheet" published by State Water Board, www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/owts/

Overview The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) is drafting a new policy to meet a legal mandate that requires the State Water Board to develop statewide regulations/standards for septic systems. The proposed policy was rewritten in response to public comments made regarding the prior proposed regulation (*resulting in strong objections two years ago*). The overview explains what the proposed policy is expected to require of owners of small, domestic septic systems and other types of onsite wastewater treatment systems that fall under the proposed policy.

In this and all documents related to the State Water Board's proposed policy, the term *Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems(s) (OWTS)* is used. (OWTS are commonly referred to as septic systems or septic tanks, however other types of onsite wastewater treatment systems are occasionally used and covered by this proposed Policy.)

How Does the New Proposed Policy Affect Septic Tank Owners? More than 95% of current OWTS owners that are covered by the policy are expected to experience little or no change in the manner in which their systems are regulated. If an individual OWTS is currently in good operating condition, and it is not near a stream, river, or lake that the State has identified as polluted with bacteria and/or nitrogen-related compounds - then this proposed policy would have little or no effect on that property owner. It is estimated the proposed policy will affect less than five percent of existing OWTS.

Who Will Be Affected By the Proposed Policy? Owners of existing septic systems adjacent to an impaired surface water body, someone installing a new or replacement OWTS, and owners of an existing system that has failed....Owners of OWTS that are located adjacent to a surface water body that exceeds water quality standards for bacteria or nitrogen compounds, such as nitrates, may have to retrofit the septic system with supplemental treatment. Maps of water bodies impaired by bacteria (pathogens) or nitrogen compounds (nutrients) can be viewed on the State Water Board's website listed above, with some additions (*after "programs" add "/tmdl/integrated2010.shtml"*, Go to the tab marked "Map" and then select the type of pollutant to view.)

Public Process The State Water Board follows a strict, legally mandated process when adopting any proposed regulation or policy. There will be multiple opportunities for public comment and discussion...

How to Stay Informed The goal, for those who think they might be affected, is to both **stay informed** and **participate**. The State Water Board's website, listed above, has the most current information regarding development of the new proposed policy. In addition you can subscribe to our email list again through the website...

Comments must be submitted by noon on Thurs., May 19, to Jeanie Mascia, owts_commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov.

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 Volunteer Firefighters

BV Firefighters are supported by as many as twenty-five trained firefighting volunteers. 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 at times.

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District

Call Activities, March and April, 2011

By Lieutenant Kevin Burris

Medical aids- 14;	Vehicle accidents-5;
Structure fires-2;	Hazardous conditions-4;
Smoke investigation-3;	Fire alarm-2;
Total calls for service-30	

With fire season around the corner, Governor Jerry Brown has declared May 1-7, 2011 "Wildfire Awareness Week". During that week, CAL FIRE is urging homeowners to be ready for wildfires. Wildfire Awareness Week is designed to not only remind Californians of the dangers wildfires pose, but also to educate them on how to prepare their property.

To reiterate information about one of the speakers at the next BVHA meeting, on Thursday, May 19, 7:00 pm, Caerleon Safford from Fire Safe Sonoma will be talking about, "The Wildfire Wise Acre: Learning to Live With Wildfire". She is passionate about teaching residents how to recognize the risk factors—small and large—that lead to home loss

from wildfires and how to prioritize a plan for a wildfire-compatible home. Recent research has shown that, during wildland fires, more homes burn because of very small windblown embers than because of a large flaming fire front.

With above average rain fall this year in Bennett Valley and across the state, many areas are abundantly green and overgrown. However soon the warm temperatures and winds will be here to dry out all of this abundant greenery. Home owners must remain vigilant in maintaining a 100 foot area of defensible space. As a home owner you provide the defense for your home; Bennett Valley Fire Protection District will provide the offense.

Chippers Ahoy!

Fire Safe Sonoma's **Chippers Ahoy!** Project supplies free chipper services to residents improving defensible space. Come to the next BVHA meeting on Thursday, May 19, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall or visit www.firesafesonoma.org to learn more. For your questions, local BV firefighters will also be on hand.

Bennett Valley Emergency

Communications Center

We Need Your Help to Accomplish This Expansion of the BV Fire Station

A letter was sent to everyone in Bennett Valley explaining our plans for expanding the BV Fire Station to add a volunteer communications center. We're asking you to make a donation for this center, our link to resources and residents in need when a disaster, such as an earthquake, strikes locally. Communication equipment can operate on the existing emergency generator at the Fire Station and the center will also serve as a central volunteer check-in point. Bennett Valley Fire District and Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association have together donated \$30,000 toward this addition, so we're aiming to raise about \$50,000 more. Since this letter went out, we have received an additional \$3,000 in donations. We plan on adding red marking tape to the "expansion" barometer in front of the BV Fire Station each time the donations reach an additional \$10,000. Please send your check to the Bennett Valley Fire Protection District, 6161 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness

After the summer fire season is over, additional training in CERT and/or CPR is being planned. If you're interested, contact Karen Sommer, 528-8982.

Bennett Valley Grange **Annual Barbecue and Benefit** **Sunday, June 5, Noon to 4:00 pm**

R U READY?

By Karen Sommer

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

The Grange Hall is the pride of our valley, operating for 139 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 second 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 the 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 Emergency Storage 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 in this structure 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 Blue Grass Band, a Chicken BBQ with all the fixings and homemade desserts, wine auction, 4-H animal show, games, face painting, a raffle, the new Emergency Storage Container (newly painted), sample preparedness kits, and **Chippers Ahoy!** forms for free chipping services. We are looking for more donated items and funds to support both the BV Grange Emergency Storage Container and the emergency communications structure being planned at the BV Fire Station. A complete list of needed items can be found in the next article. If you have anything to donate, call me at 528-8982 or contact me at ksommer11@earthlink.net

Come and enjoy the food, music and fun with your neighbors and friends. Tickets are on sale at the Exchange Bank, or at the Grange on the day of the event; \$12.50 for adults, \$5.00 for children 10 and under.

What's Happening at the BV Grange **Emergency Storage Container**

On Sunday, May 1, eight people, Karen Sommer, Bobbie Blair, Anne and Diane Giles, Darryl Huisman, Bill and Patty Allen and Deborah Rogers, worked hard all day, painting the emergency storage container and building a lattice wall on one side to make it attractive from the street. The cement had to dry for a few days before the lattice work could be completed. The BV firefighters had power washed the emergency storage container before the painting started. Karen thinks it looks great and is looking forward to showing it to everyone at the BV Grange picnic on Sunday, June 5.

Items still needed for the emergency storage container at the Grange include: **tools and tool box, pry bar, towing chain, bulletin board, folding cots, blankets, first aid supplies, flash lights (LED preferred) & long life batteries, paper goods such as plates & utensils, paper towels, toilet paper, sanitizers, working gloves and latex gloves, children's games, garbage bags, and buckets.** You may drop off items at the BV Grange Picnic (June 5, noon to 4:00 pm) or make a financial donation for these items (now tax-deductible) and get a receipt for your donation. If you are unable to attend the picnic and have items to donate you may contact Karen at ksommer11@earthlink.net or call her at 528-8982.

Bennett Valley Road Maintenance Update

By Craig S. Harrison

The Sonoma County Transportation and Public Works Department does not have any major projects scheduled in the Bennett Valley area during May or June. They will continue to respond to problems concerning pot holes or removing downed trees when residents alert the department about the problem. There are some projects in the planning stages for later this year, but the budget situation continues to be difficult and those projects might not be approved.

BVHA Nominating Committee Volunteers

By Marilee Jensen

If you're possibly interested in being on the nominating committee for BVHA for 2011, or if you have questions about it, please call me at 576-0405 or contact me at marileejensen@sbcglobal.net. In this role you would help identify and encourage different BVHA property owners to consider being candidates for the BVHA Board of Directors. This position on the nominating committee would only be from May until November, with most of the activity being in July and August. This would not take a great deal of your time and can be done during the day or in the evenings. We'd really appreciate your participation in this process.

Excerpts from a Letter Written By A BV Resident re: Road Conditions

From Donald Pedrazzini, 2/21/11, to Valerie Brown,
First District County Supervisor

Dear Ms. Brown: As a resident of Bennett Valley, I have been closely following the status of the condition of Bennett Valley Road at the meetings and discussions held to date on that subject. I was shocked to read in the November 2010 Bennett Valley Voice that the Board had decided to allow rural roads to disintegrate...

Although I was not present at the Board of Supervisors meeting on October 26, 2010, I have viewed the entire meeting via a recorded video link. Mr. Phillip Demery (*Director of Sonoma Co. Transportation and Public Works Department*) made some statements during that meeting that I find very contradictory and incorrect. He started out the presentation by quoting John Kennedy: "It is not the wealth of a nation that builds roads, but the roads that build the wealth of a nation." Truer words were never spoken so it is hard to understand why at the conclusion of this presentation it was decided to allow the roads to disintegrate. Another statement made by Mr. Demery that I find interesting was that rural roads in Sonoma County essentially started out as cattle trails meant for wagons ...(*which*) were eventually paved over or chip sealed. Mr. Demery and everyone in that chamber should know that all of the roads in California built in the early part of the 1900's started out that way. ... This highway (101) was also a trail in the beginning but upgraded by forward thinking governments that believed in the principals that would later be articulated by John Kennedy... If it had not been maintained and updated, Santa Rosa and all the towns North of San Rafael would be small "cow towns" unreachable by the vast majority of people that are now living here.

The rains of mid February have devastated Bennett Valley Road. As I drive this road several times daily I can see new pot holes appearing almost hourly. When my Dodge Ram pickup truck had only 81,404 miles on it, the entire front end of the vehicle's steering mechanism had to be completely rebuilt at a cost of \$1,300.... I was told that it was not **how** I was driving but **where**. The tire manager at Costco tells me that I am getting one half the tire life from my tires as opposed to other customers that live in town and commute on the major roads using the same tires.

At the conclusion of the Board meeting during the Q and A, two very important issues were brought up. The first was by you, Ms. Brown. You asked, but it was never really explained, how Grange/Crane Canyon Road can be a road that is important and will be maintained but

Bennett Valley Road, which is the only way you can get to Grange Road, is not considered important and will not be maintained? How can that be? I heard Mr. Demery say that they have a task force of "traffic counters" that sit by a road and count the cars. I would strongly suggest that a more sophisticated system of car counting be initiated (a mechanical device that has a line across the road that when each car passes it is counted) to get an accurate count on the cars on BV Road...

Another very significant point was made by Supervisor Shirlee Zane. If the rural roads are allowed to disintegrate how will that affect the very important tourism industry in Sonoma County. Most wineries in the county are located in rural areas, not in city centers. Visitors to these wineries also spend money in restaurants, hotels and many other businesses in the county during their stay. If road travel becomes difficult they will find other places to spend that money. In Napa County the situation is completely different. Almost all of the wineries, restaurants, hotels and businesses are located along only two major routes, Highway 29 and 128, the Silverado Trail. Having only two major roads to maintain will be easily affordable and that is where our tourist dollars will go...

After watching the entire video of the October 26th meeting, it was clear that the agenda item was carried over until June 2011 when further discussions would be held on finding additional revenue sources to fund the maintenance and repair of the roads currently deemed as critical. The quick and easy solution to "raising taxes" was briefly discussed but is not a realistic solution to this problem. A reallocation of the resources currently available is the solution...So I have to ask again, what am I getting for that huge amount of money that I pay in taxes? You would think that we could at least expect decent roads.

It is not that there is not enough money to cover the cost of maintaining the roads. It is that it is being spent in ways for which it was never intended. I would ask you to look at (*a number of state agencies*). Do you see money in there that is being spent on unnecessary programs and agencies that could be better used to maintain our roads? I do. The bottom line is that tax revenues from the sale of gasoline are increasing but the funds are obviously being diverted for other purposes. I would suggest that the board spend its time at the June meeting trying to learn how those additional funds could be redirected to their intended destination rather than trying to increase additional revenues through raising taxes or other "revenue enhancing schemes."

Sincerely, Donald Pedrazzini, Savannah Estates
This letter is on our BVHA website fitting into our open forum function. Other opinions are welcome on significant Bennett Valley issues when they're not offensive and of general interest to our community.

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

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

Website: bennettvalley.org

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A Message From Your Membership Coordinators,

Larissa Goliti and Jean LaCombe

Thank you for all your responses to the annual membership drive combined with your generous contributions. We now have 235 household memberships and we welcome each of you as BVHA members for 2011.

If you haven't sent it in yet, annual dues are \$15 plus any additional contribution you want to make (the contribution can now be tax-deductible). Any amount paid in excess of the \$15 annual dues will be directed to Bennett Valley Emergency Preparation (BVEP), unless you indicate otherwise. You may either send in your check to BVHA, P.O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa, CA 95405, or pay online with a credit card or PayPal account. To pay online, go to www.bennettvalley.org (the BVHA website), then choose from the menu on the left side of the first page "Join/Renew: BVHA Membership", and follow the instructions. If you have any questions, please call 578-3453.

Summary of BVHA Minutes

March 17, 2011

- The Treasurer, Fay Blair, presented his usual complete record of the budget for 2011, plus income, expenses, and ending balances for January and February, 2011. The budget included such items as the net income for the 2011 calendar (\$1020), expected costs for the 2012 calendar, BVEP

revenue and expenses, the fee to the IRS for the application for the § 501(c)(3) tax status change and updating the membership computer program. He also updated information about insurance coverage and PayPal usage for membership and donations.

- The status of the IRS application for the § 501(c)(3) tax status seemed very bad on the date of this meeting. We had received a letter dated March 10, 2011 telling us that our application had been closed administratively and that if we wanted to pursue tax-exempt status we had to reapply all over (fill out lots of forms and send another check for \$400. Unexpectedly, with no further communication, approval was received from IRS at the end of April, effective February 10, 2010.)
- In discussing this "failed" application to IRS, a conclusion was reached by the BVHA Board that we've encountered a number of difficulties relating to our name which includes "homeowner's association". Over the last forty years, this has taken on a different legal meaning relating to private property management. The Board decided that it was time to make a name change to Bennett Valley Community Association, to be more reflective of the purpose and intent of the BVHA organization.
- Karen Sommer, as the BVEP coordinator, reported that plans were being made to paint the new emergency storage container at the BV Grange on May 1. She was also implementing plans to collect more emergency supplies for this container.
- Karen Sommer discussed the possibility that the BV Fire District and BVEP were considering sending out a joint letter to raise funds for the proposed emergency communications center at the BV Fire Station.
- The March VOICE mentioned the two speakers for the May BVHA meeting, Arthur Dawson, historical ecologist and Caerleon Safford, from the Fire Safe Sonoma, to present information on planning a wildfire-compatible home plus the availability of free chipping service.
- Michael Ellis, an outstanding speaker, has agreed to present information on BV wildlife for the July BVHA meeting on July 21.

Board of Directors' Tentative Agenda

Thursday, May 19, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall

- Treasurer's Report, Spending Requests, PayPal and Insurance Update
- Approval of IRS Application for § 501(c)(3); California Application?
- Approval of Name Change from Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association to Bennett Valley Community Association
- Appointment of BVHA Nominating Committee
- Bimonthly County Reports: Board of Supervisors, Open Space District, PRMD, Public Works, Alcoholic Beverage Control Permits
- BV Emergency Preparedness Committee Report
- Speakers for July and September, 2011
- New Business As Determined by Board

Seasonal Rain Report: GOOD!

May 4 Data For the 2010/2011 Season

Bennett Ridge –Individual's record, 49.9 inches, 129% of normal for this date

Santa Rosa, Press Democrat, 35.36 inches, 117% of normal for this date

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

www.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

Speakers, BVHA Mtg., Thurs., May 19, 7:00 pm
Spring Clean-Up BV Roads Day, May 21, 8:30 am
Artist Series, Matanzas Creek Winery, 2011
Bennett Valley "Wild Animals" 2012 Calendar
Proposed Statewide Policy on Septic Systems
BV Fire District plus Chippers Ahoy!
Bennett Valley Emergency Communications Center
BV Grange and BVEP, Annual Picnic, Sunday, June 5
What's Happening, BV Grange Emergency Storage Container?
Excerpts From BV Resident's Letter on Rural Road Conditions
BVHA Board, Meetings, Agenda

Bennett Valley Community Calendar

Mark your calendars now!!

- 1.) BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION:** The next meeting is on Thursday, May 19, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall. See Tentative Agenda on Page 7. Two speakers at that meeting, one discussing 1.) Bennett Valley Changes over 200 Years and the other discussing 2.) Protecting Your Home Against Wildfires. See Page 2 for more detail. At the July 21 meeting, Michael Ellis, known to be an outstanding speaker, will be discussing BV wildlife.
- 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.) SPRING CLEAN-UP BENNETT VALLEY ROADS DAY** – Saturday, May 21, 8:30 am, BV Fire Station, Let's make up for the two clean-up days which were rained out in October and again in March. The signs are already up! See article on Page 2.
- 4.) BV GRANGE 139TH ANNUAL BARBECUE/PICNIC, WITH BVEP,** Sunday, June 5, noon until 4:00 pm. See article on Page 5.
- 5.) AMATEUR RADIO (Ham Radio) LICENSING IN JUST ONE DAY:** (From website smrs) Below are the dates now set for the one day licensing classes and exams. Preparation fee including exam is \$25.00. Two classes are scheduled on Saturdays, at Petaluma Senior Center, 211 Novak Drive, Petaluma. June 11 and July 9. Classes start at 9:00 am, exam is at 1:30 pm or earlier. Please pre-register so they can help you obtain your Federal Registration Number. Contact Dale, (707) 762-0414 or wb6tms@arrl.net
- 6.) SONOMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS** meets every Tuesday (except weeks when there is a legal holiday), at varying times, 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 talk to someone at the Sheriff's office 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, either to report concerns or suspicions that may possibly be an emergency or to report an emergency that requires a law enforcement response.
- 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.