



Bennett Valley VOICE

www.bennettvalley.org

VOLUME 34, NUMBER 5

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION (BVHA)

JULY, 2011

Speaker Michael Ellis on Bennett Valley Wildlife

BVHA Meeting, Thursday, July 21, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall

By Craig Harrison

Michael Ellis will speak about the wildlife of Bennett Valley at the BVHA meeting on Thursday, July 21, at 7:00 pm at the Grange Hall. Michael is the founder and owner of Footloose Forays, an adventure travel company in Santa Rosa where he personally leads every expedition. One of his trip participants said the following about Michael's knowledge and enthusiasm: "Start with an encyclopedic knowledge of all the sciences, especially botany, biology and etymology, add the ability to articulate this knowledge rapid fire in lay terms, laced with humorous anecdotes; add genuine love of nature and teaching — Michael combines all these ingredients to enthuse people about nature."

Michael has a B.S. in Botany and a Masters in Marine Biology, which are the foundation for his lifelong process of gathering information from travels throughout the natural world. He also guides trips for a number of Bay Area organizations. Michael is a regular contributor to the KQED-FM Perspective Series. We have asked Michael to focus on all wildlife, except birds, because we had a talk in September 2009 devoted to the birds of Bennett Valley. We hope you join us for this exciting talk.

Annual Barbecue, Bennett Valley

Grange and BVEP by Karen Sommer

To quote Chris Smith's column, *Press Democrat*, June 5, "Don't even ask if the rain would bother one whit the hardy souls who've planned today's barbecue at Bennett Valley's 1873 Grange Hall, the oldest continuously used Grange Hall in America." It was a rare June day with rain, but it could have been worse. The rain was much heavier on Saturday, the day before. But rain doesn't stop a tradition that is 139 years old. The Grange folks put on a great barbecue!

They were helped by a fork lift and truck that hoisted a large tarp over the BBQ pit. Spirits were high as people gathered in the large hall to hear a great bluegrass Band using old fashioned instruments such as washboards and taunt string attached to an old barrel.

And despite the weather, we had just enough delicious barbecued chicken, Asian cold slaw and watermelon to feed the crowd. And then there were the desserts! They were spectacular and not one of them was left. All the proceeds benefited both the BV Grange and Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness, a little less than last year, but still over \$1,000 each. If you couldn't make it, you missed a great party!

Free Chipper Program Helps Sonoma County Residents Prepare For Wildfire

Fire Safe Sonoma's **CHIPPERS AHOY!** program will provide FREE chipping services to dispose of vegetation cut by Sonoma County residents in areas at risk to wildfire, to help them create defensible space around homes and to help them better prepare for wildfire season. **You cut it and pile it, we'll chip it for free!** To participate, residents in at-risk wildfire areas cut and pile small trees and brush according to program requirements, as described in the guidelines, found at www.firesafesonoma.org. The guidelines tell you what may go in your pile and how and where it must be placed. When piles are complete, submit the "Request for Chipping Form", also available at this same website. We will send a chipper and crew to your property — for free!

Fire Safe Sonoma is a nonprofit corporation dependent upon grants, private donations and community volunteers. If you have questions, you may call Fire Safe Sonoma at 565-6070 or Caerleon Safford, csafford@mcn.org, 206-5467. Funding for **Chippers Ahoy!** was provided by a generous grant from the USDA Forest Service and the California Fire Safe Council. Fire Safe Sonoma's **Defensible Space Program** will provide additional assistance to low income, disabled or elderly residents who need help to create or maintain defensible space.

2012 BV CALENDAR "BENNETT VALLEY WILD"

Photo deadline approaching –
August 31

Please mark your calendar as this
will be the last reminder.

Better yet, send us your shots of
the WILD now!

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.**

SEND YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS (JPEGS) OF THE "BENNETT VALLEY WILD" TO THE CALENDAR COMMITTEE AT SherryParker@earthlink.net. (Or, you may send prints or discs by mail to 2750 Bardy Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404)

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

In advance, we thank you for your support of our annual Bennett Valley Calendar, from which proceeds go to Bennett Valley community organizations such as the Volunteer Firefighters' Association and the Bennett Valley Grange, and/or contribute to our Emergency and Safety programs.

BV Spring Clean-Up Roads Day!

On Saturday, May 21, once again the major BV roads were cleaned by 22 volunteers. A special thanks to each of them: *Dave & Sandy Sandine, Mike & Patty Hickey, Bobbie Blair & Suzanne Dougherty, Steve & Phyllis Ribeau, Karen & Bob Anderson, Quinn Klausner, Jill Gerry, David Macon, Spencer Macon, Mike Treinen, Bob Sorani, Emily Hewitt, Annette Thiessen, Matthew Daniekzyk (sp.?), Pat Werth, and Gary & Leslie Rea.* There were a number of new people helping out, which is especially important and 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. We would like to consider cleaning up additional Bennett Valley roads, but we would need to have more people to accomplish that. If you have any innovative ideas for getting more people to participate in this clean-up effort, please contact mnp4449@sbcglobal.net, and let Mike Hickey know your ideas.

Bennett Valley Road Report for July

By Craig S. Harrison

A report in the *Press Democrat* last October said that funds to properly preserve county roads will be devoted to the 150 miles with the highest traffic counts. The article suggested that roads that carry 4,500 or more vehicles per day would be in this category. The county did an assessment of Bennett Valley Road in January and February 2009, and found the following traffic volumes: west of Grange Road to Santa Rosa 5,862/day; Sonoma Mountain Road to Grange Road 3,294/day; and west of Warm Springs Road 2,523/day. We understand that some or all of Bennett Valley Road might be added to the highest priority list, but this will not happen unless residents remind their elected officials that having a well-maintained Bennett Valley Road is important to them.

The Sonoma County Transportation and Public Works Department does not have any major projects in the Bennett Valley area during July or August. Crews from the California Department of Forestry might finish brushing parts of Bennett Valley Road if they complete work in other parts of the county. Even with reduced funding for maintenance, safety remains the highest priority for the Transportation Department. If residents see conditions that threaten safety they should immediately call 565-5100.

Proposed Changes, BV Area Plan

On May 26, the Sonoma County Planning Commission approved unanimously a number of proposed changes to the Bennett Valley Area Plan. Our Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA) urged the planning commission, both in writing and in person at this commission hearing, to defer its consideration of this issue. Since then there has been a public hearing for us at the BV Fire Station, on June 15, so we now have more understanding of the proposed changes. These proposals will become final if the Board of Supervisors approves them at its meeting on Tuesday, August 23, 2:10 pm. (The proposed changes were to be presented to the Board on July 12, but Craig Harrison sent a message to Supervisor Brown requesting that it be delayed.)

What is the Bennett Valley Area Plan? The goal of the Bennett Valley Area Plan is to preserve the beauty and rural character of this area. One of the proposed changes is to require all roofs in Bennett Valley to be dark toned, in response to a Board of Supervisors order in 2005. Currently, only those roofs in the Bennett Valley area which are "visible" (not defined) are required to be dark toned, both at the initial building and for significant remodels. Is this something with which you concur? If not, it would be useful if you contacted Supervisor Valerie Brown, expressing your ideas on this proposed change, with a copy sent to the BVHA Board.

Another of the proposed changes is a map correction to the Bennett Valley Area Plan boundaries, to include adjacent land areas located to the southeast of the plan boundary, known by PRMD as the "Area Subject to Design Review." When asked, Amy Wingfield of PRMD, stated that this area includes 15 parcels, totaling roughly 1,283 acres. When asked, she stated that the owners of these parcels have not been informed about this change. The maps also indicate a small area west of Taylor Mountain is in overlapping area plans, including the South Santa Rosa Area Plan and the Bennett Valley Area Plan. This area will now be included only as part of the Bennett Valley Area Plan.

Currently, only a portion of the Bennett Valley Area Plan area is in a General Plan Scenic Landscape Unit. PRMD is proposing that this be changed so that the General Plan is amended to include the entire Bennett Valley Area Plan within the "Scenic Landscape Unit". These efforts are intended to clarify that the area is subject to the current Bennett Valley Area Plan Design Standards and will not result in any new regulation.

If you want to discuss any of these issues with our county supervisor, Valerie Brown, she can be reached at 565-2241.

Parks Alliance Formed to Keep State Parks in Sonoma County Open

The Parks Alliance for Sonoma County has been formed in response to the threatened closures of Annadel, Jack London, Sugarloaf Ridge, Petaluma Adobe and Austin Creek State Parks, and also to the degradation of service levels at Sonoma Coast and all of the State Parks in Sonoma County. The Sonoma Land Trust, Sonoma County Regional Parks, and the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District have initiated this formation of the Parks Alliance for Sonoma County. This will be a forum for all of the public agencies, nonprofit groups and individuals concerned about the threatened closures to come together, coordinate their actions, and keep the State Parks open. This forum will also work on improving the parks' operations with volunteers, new funding and new ideas.

The goal of the Alliance is to work toward sustainable funding, to maintain a thriving system of parks throughout Sonoma County. The Sonoma Land Trust retained Dave Gould, a retired park superintendent from Sonoma, and Lauren Dixon, a policy analyst from Sebastopol, to staff the Alliance. Sonoma County Regional Parks, under the leadership of Caryl Hart, will provide office space for the Alliance. Initial members of the Alliance include the Valley of the Moon Natural History Association, the Sonoma County Trails Council, LandPaths, the Sonoma Ecology Center, Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, and others.

And now, more than ever, since its formation in 1967, the Sonoma County Trails Council is needed. With financial support from members and events like the Annadel Half Marathon, the Trails Council is expanding its volunteer-based work maintaining trails at parks throughout Sonoma County. From organizing regular workdays (every 3rd Saturday) at Annadel to keeping trail users informed about issues impacting Sonoma's state and regional parks, the Sonoma County Trails Council is our connection to the trails of Sonoma County. To find out more about the Trails Council, the Parks Alliance, and ways you can help, contact Ken Wells, SCTC Executive Director, at kenwells@sonic.net or visit the Sonoma County Trails Council website, www.sonomatrails.org.

Santa Rosa Neighbors Summit, August

19-20 Friday evening, 7:00 pm, Santa Rosa City Hall Chambers; Saturday, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, Finley Community Center. *Want to organize your neighborhood? Want to get more neighbors involved? Want to get your neighborhood prepared in the event of an earthquake. Then the Neighborhood Summit is for you. There are 10 "How to Workshops" and yes, you are more than welcome as a rural unincorporated area. At santarosaneighborsummit.weebly.com website, you will find more information.*

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 used when available, allowing the fire station to have the ideal fourth on-duty firefighter at times.

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District

Calls for Service, May & June 2011

By Lieutenant Kevin Burris

Medical aids- 16; Vehicle accidents-2;
Structure fires-1; Hazardous conditions-4;
Smoke investigation-3; Vegetation fires-2;
Total calls for service-28

The Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act (Senate Bill - SB 183) requires all single-family homes with an attached garage or a fossil fuel source to install carbon monoxide detectors within the home, by July 1, 2011. Owners of multi-family leased or rental dwellings, such as apartment buildings, have until January 1, 2013 to comply with the law.

You can't see or smell carbon monoxide, but at high levels it can kill a person in minutes. Carbon monoxide (CO) is produced whenever any fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal is burned. If appliances that burn fuel are maintained and used properly, the amount of CO produced is usually not hazardous. However, if you're in an enclosed area with a vehicle running or appliances are not working properly or are used incorrectly, dangerous levels of CO can result quickly.

On June 24, the *Press Democrat* included some pictures of special "live-fire training exercises" for firefighters from Santa Rosa, Rincon

Valley and Bennett Valley. "It is the first time that such live-fire training exercises have been conducted in 15 or 16 years", a very valuable experience for our firefighters.

We Are Asking For Additional Help To Fund The Volunteer Emergency Communications Center In An Expansion Bay At Our Fire Station.

By BV Fire Protection District Fire Chief, Andy Pforsich and BVEP Coordinator Karen Sommer

When a major disaster such as an earthquake strikes our area, we will be on our own for at least 72 hours. How we prepare now will be critical to our safety and survival during this time. This program will use ham radio operators along with FRS (walkie/talkies) in the neighborhoods to report conditions directly to our volunteer operations center at the fire station. This last piece is critical. During a disaster this communications center will be our link to resources and residents in need. It will operate off of the existing emergency generator at the fire station and will be a central volunteer check-in point. **Please help make this a reality.**

We thank you for the generous contributions we've received in the last couple of months in response to our fund-raising letter, totaling almost \$15,000. Because we still have a way to go, we're asking you to consider sending your tax-deductible contribution to the Bennett Valley Fire Protection District, 6161 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa, 95404. You can watch the painted barometer in front of the fire station to see how much further we have to go to fully fund this Emergency Communications Center!

Bennett Valley Special Fire Tax

2011/2012 By Marilee Jensen, BVFPD Director

In the BV Fire Protection District budget, computed for the June 14 BV Fire Protection District Board meeting, we had just been informed by the County that the projected property tax revenue we would receive was \$20,000 less than we had anticipated, because of reduced real estate assessments. The County had actually billed the Bennett Valley property owners that much less for 2011/2012. It appears this total amount is \$30,965 less than the property tax received in 2010/2011.

In addition to carefully controlling our expenses, the special tax rate was adjusted up \$10 at this meeting, to \$170 for the year, in order to generate \$11,000 to bridge the revenue gap.

NOTICE OF ELECTION

The 2011 BVHA election season is upon us. Members of the BVHA Board of Directors serve for three-year terms at the end of which they may choose to run or not run for re-election. Terms are ending for three of our current BVHA board members; Craig Harrison, Larissa Goliti and Karen Sommer (filling Eric Burns' position).

Anyone interested in joining the BVHA Board of Directors is encouraged to submit a Candidate's Statement to Jean LaCombe, Chair of the BVHA Nominating Committee, by no later than Tuesday, August 30, 2011. Statements should be no longer than 250 words.

Minimum qualifications are: 1) Candidate must be a member of good standing in the BVHA, with paid dues current, and 2) have a strong commitment to "promoting and preserving the rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley". If you are interested but are not yet a member of BVHA, you may join at any time before August 30, simply by submitting your check for \$15 to the BVHA Membership Coordinator, Larissa Goliti, at 578-3453.

**Please mail your Candidate's
Statement to:**

**2011 BVHA ELECTION
ATTN: JEAN LACOMBE
P.O. BOX 2666
SANTA ROSA, CA 95404**

If you prefer to email your statement, please send it to Jean at jeannelacombe@gmail.com. These Candidate Statements will appear in the September BVHA VOICE. All voting members of BVHA will be sent an Official Ballot 30 days prior to the annual Election Meeting, scheduled for November 17.

Should you have questions, please contact any of the current board members whose phone numbers appear in each BVHA VOICE, or call Jean LaCombe at 585-3482.

Swain Family Farm Produce
4824 Grange Road, Bennett Valley
(BVHA feels it is important to support these efforts. Craig Harrison, BVHA President and Marilee Jensen, Editor)

We are a very small family farm, just opening in Bennett Valley, growing meat, poultry, produce and eggs the old fashioned way, naturally, without hormones, pesticides or chemical fertilizers.

Our mission is to provide good, clean, wholesome food to our local community. We have radishes and wonderful greens available now - Collard, Spinach, Bok Choy, Chard, and Kale, with a variety of vegetables being added as the growing season progresses.

Starting July 5th the produce stand will be open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm, just inside the gate, at our address, or by appointment. We also fill phone orders for produce so all you have to do is come pick it up. That way it is picked to order, straight from our gardens to you. To place an order or for more information, go to www.swainfamilyfarm.com or call Stephanie Swain at 529-6330.

Brief Responses to Some Comments on 2011 BVHA Membership Forms

1.) "Why were the trees along Bennett Valley Road cut back so severely recently (*two or three months ago now*)? ...Why were so many trees and large branches cut down?..."

Answer by telephone from Rob Silva, Sonoma County Road Maintenance, on May 9. The Cal-Fire crews cut back the trees in order to suppress fire hazards. They cut more than usual, as they don't expect to be back for ten years, with 1,382 miles of roadway to cover and a limited inmate crew. Tall grass can ignite lower tree limbs and allow a small ground fire to become a larger fire. They did a good job of cutting enough back so the limbs left were above a potential fire. They were also cutting back for improved vehicle vision along the road.

2.) "I'm concerned about dropping water levels in Bennett Valley. In 2010, several families on our street (Batesole Dr.) lost their wells and I fear that the viticulture industry is causing this ..."

Answer from Joe Judge, President, BV Grape Growers Association, by written memo, May 9. The water table in Bennett Valley is very fractured and quite tricky depending on where you live. I've spoken with a few different well drillers who mention Sonoma Mtn. Rd. as a very "hit or miss" type of area with no promise as to how long a well will produce...I know of people along Sonoma Mtn. Rd. who have lost their wells over the past 20 years even though there was no vineyard anywhere near them. Some of the factors involved include how close the vineyard is to the wells, how much water does the vineyard well pump, when does it pump, at what level is the pump set, what are the underlying geological rock types, rock fracturing, typical water table levels, and many other factors.

BVHA Open Forum, On Bennett Valley Road Conditions, Response to Excerpts from Donald Pedrazzini's Letter, dated 2/21/11, as printed in the May, 2011 VOICE. From Tom O'Kane, Deputy Director, Sonoma County Transportation and Public Works

I just read Mr. Pedrazzini's recent letter (*in your newsletter*). He (*is*) frustrated and very concerned with the deteriorating conditions of County roads, as most people are. It is a very serious problem across the state and not an isolated situation just here in Sonoma County. The presentation to the Board of Supervisors last fall was intended to bring to their attention and (*to*) the public's (*attention*) the dire situation that we have with our infrastructure. It might be good to advise your readers (*about*) some of the background that may have been missed in the presentation.

The primary source of funding for road infrastructure in Sonoma County is the gas tax. It is tied to the quantity of fuel sold and not the price so whether regular gas costs \$2/gal. or \$4.50/gal. the amount of the tax is the same. The main problem is that the tax has not been adjusted since the early 1990's, almost 20 years ago. During that same period, highway maintenance products (asphalt, concrete, pipe, base rock, fuel, equipment, etc.) have risen in price by double or triple digits. Also, it is certainly admirable that the public has more efficient vehicles, but it has resulted in declining fuel consumption and less revenue. Fuel efficient vehicles travel on the same roads as the gas guzzlers did. Due to the state budget woes, the past state administration held the gas tax revenues from localities for six months last year and eight months this year. Many municipalities had to borrow money to make payments for their operations which included paying interest. The state paid no interest on the money they "borrowed".

There is always the mention from residents that they pay high property taxes so the roads and other infrastructure should be maintained in better condition. Actually, when the 25% general fund reduction imposed on the Public Works budget takes place in July, the Department will receive less than one half of one cent on every property tax dollar collected (\$0.005) The residents can do the calculation and see that an extremely small amount of property taxes get into the maintenance of roads budget. ***The latest message from Tom O'Kane, on July 11, reports that "the Public Works Dept. budget was not reduced by 25% as was originally proposed, so the road maintenance situation pretty much remains at status quo... We were pleased that the hit was not as dramatic as we thought..."***

We have talked about this in the past, but the budget cuts over the past few years have taken a serious toll on this department and our ability to

provide adequate service. Mr. (*Phil*) Demery (Director of Sonoma County Public Works Department) emphasized this point in his presentation. We have closed two road yards, eliminated 30+ pieces of equipment and vehicles, reduced the departmental staff by almost 60 persons (in administration, engineering, construction, and operations), and we were anticipating a cut of a million dollars from maintenance materials. These actions have definitely had a very negative impact on services normally provided by the department.

Again, I know that the public is frustrated as they see the continued deterioration of the County infrastructure, but until there is a significant change in the revenue stream for roads and infrastructure, the situation will not improve. It was quite discouraging this week to hear ... the Speaker of the House in Washington bragging that there will be no new taxes. I assume he does not travel by car...

Question for Tom O'Kane - "I don't understand Tom O'Kane's point about the Speaker of the House...and federal taxes. I don't think county roads anywhere... are funded by the federal government. Funding for local roads is from the state or the county." Excerpts from Tom's response:

My statement about the Speaker of the House and his unfortunate comment of no new taxes was to show how out of touch some of the elected officials are in Congress. The country's infrastructure is in terrible shape and getting worse when one of the country's top leaders would not consider raising gas taxes to begin to get our national transportation system back in shape. They are supposed to be leaders, setting the pace for the whole country, but they are in denial. We are being left behind by much of the rest of the world. The County transportation network does receive some direct Federal funding through various Caltrans and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) programs, including the bridge rehabilitation and replacement program, safety grants, and most recently, several injections of significant amounts of economic stimulus funds ...

Our primary source of road and bridge maintenance funding is from local gas taxes. There is a very small amount ... from property taxes. There are several state funded programs that provide limited funding for County roads....

As I understand the process in California, the state legislature is the body that has the ability to change the gas tax rate. Over the past few years, they have had the option to do so, but decided to pass. A dime per gallon would have gone a long way in beginning the infrastructure recovery process. I hope this information helps with your article. No one likes the idea of raising taxes on anything, but likewise, no one enjoys traveling on deteriorated roadways either...

Tom O'Kane

Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association

(BVHA) Board Of Directors

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

Website: bennettvalley.org

Craig Harrison, President

charrison@hunton.com 573-9990

Larissa Goliti, Vice-President,

Membership Coordinator

lgoliti@hotmail.com 578-3453

Fay Blair, Treasurer

fayblair@sonic.net 576-0152

Tim Bosma, Recording Secretary

tbosma@comcast.net 953-8873

Gary Barner, Director

gbarner@cds1.net 481-6196

James K. Cobb, Director

cobblaw@pacbell.net 586-9172

Frank LaCombe, Director

FrankKLaCombe@gmail.com 585-3482

Richard Lukasko, Director

rlukasko@hotmail.com 566-7803

Karen Sommer, BVEP Coordinator, Director

ksommer11@earthlink.net 528-8982

BVHA VOICE Editor – Marilee Jensen, 576-0405

marileejensen@sbcglobal.net

BVHA Webmaster – Bill Finkelstein, 536-1026

bill@williamfinkelstein.com Any questions you have about the BVHA website can be directed to Bill Finkelstein.

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 242 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 (these contributions to BVHA are now 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 instructions. If you have any questions, please call 578-3453.

Summary of BVHA Minutes

May 19, 2011

- The meeting started with two speakers, Arthur Dawson, on "How BV Has Changed Over The Last 200 Years And What It Means For Our Future", then Caerleon Safford, "Learning to Live With Wildfire".
- The business meeting started at 8:51 pm, with Larissa Goliti announcing that the IRS had approved the BVHA application for the § 501(c)(3) designation.
- On the name change for Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association, it was decided to consider this further. Frank suggested that the new name be Bennett Valley Community Forum, eliminating the word "association" altogether. This will be discussed further at the July meeting.
- Concerns were expressed re: the proposed Amendments to the BV Area Plan. Craig was planning to attend the Planning Commission Meeting on this subject on May 26.
- Karen Sommer pointed out that the Emergency Preparedness container at the BV Grange Hall had been power washed and painted by volunteers, and that it will soon be stocked with emergency supplies hopefully donated by State Farm Insurance during their moving process.
- Craig asked if Jean LaCombe would again head the BVHA Election Committee. Frank LaCombe felt it was possible.
- Craig said that Michael Ellis was scheduled for the July BVHA meeting and that possibly Valerie Brown would consent to speak at the September meeting.
- The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Frank LaCombe.

Board of Directors' Tentative Agenda

- Thursday, July 21, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall
7:00 pm, Guest Speaker: Michael Ellis, Wildlife of Bennett Valley
8:15 pm approximately. Call to Order, Business Meeting
- Announcements and Public Input. Speakers may address board for up to 3 minutes with name, address and concern.
 - Approval of Minutes for last two meetings
 - Treasurer's Report and Spending Requests
 - Changing Name of Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association
 - Bi-Monthly County Reports: Board of Supervisors, Open Space District, PRMD, Public Works, Alcoholic Beverage Control Permits
 - Amendments to Bennett Valley Area Plan
 - BV Emergency Preparedness Committee Report
 - Nominations for Board due August 30
 - Speaker for September 2011
 - New Business as Determined by Board

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

Bennett Valley 2012 Calendar
BV Spring Clean-Up Roads; BV July Road Report
Proposed Changes, BV Area Plan
Parks Alliance, To Keep State Parks Open
BV Fire Protection, Donations for Communication Center
BV Special Fire Tax
BVHA Notice of Election; Swain Family Farm
Brief Responses to Readers' Comments on Dues Form
BVHA Open Forum, County Roads
BVHA Board; Membership; Minutes; Agenda

Bennett Valley Community Calendar

Mark your calendars now!!

- 1.) BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION:** The next meeting is on Thursday, July 21, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall. See Tentative Agenda on Page 7. Michael Ellis, known to be an outstanding speaker, will be discussing BV wildlife at this meeting.
- 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.) ART ON THE RIDGE:** Saturday and Sunday, September 17 and 18, noon to 5:00 pm, Five studios located in the Bennett Ridge community will host 13 artists. The studios are open once a year to the public with art for sale that includes paintings, photography, jewelry, kiln formed glass, mixed media collage, wood turning, sculpted paper, monotypes and mobile sculpture. Visit the blog, www.artontheridge.blogspot.com for more information and directions.
- 4.) CERT TRAINING,** Prospective dates; Saturdays, October 29, November 5 and November 12, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, not yet confirmed. If possibly interested, please contact Karen Sommer, BVEP Coordinator, 528-8982 or ksommer11@earthlink.net.
- 5.) AMATEUR RADIO (Ham Radio) LICENSING IN JUST ONE DAY:** (From website smrs) Below are dates now set for the one day licensing classes and exams. Preparation fee including exam is \$25.00. Two classes are scheduled at Petaluma Senior Center, 211 Novak Drive, Petaluma, on Saturdays September 17 and October 8. 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** usually 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

- 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 discuss concerns that may possibly be an emergency or a situation that may require a law enforcement response.
- Call Sonoma County Road Maintenance, at **565-5100** to report any condition which threatens safety on county roads, including 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.