



# Bennett Valley VOICE

www.bennettvalley.org

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BENNETT VALLEY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION (BVCA)

MARCH 2013

## **Save Our Sonoma Roads (SOS-Roads) Wants To Know The Options You Would Select To Fix Our County's Rural Roads**

**(Check out the survey at [SOSRoads.org](http://SOSRoads.org))**

### **Help Inform County Leaders About Your Thoughts on The Best Ways To Solve This Problem**

By Craig S. Harrison

Save Our Sonoma Roads has developed an online survey ([SOSRoads.org](http://SOSRoads.org)) and invites you to give your opinion on several options to repair the county's rural roads. Among them are various tax increases, pruning other parts of the county budget, and establishing road maintenance districts that impose parcel taxes on residents. Pete Golis wrote a very good column in the Sunday *Press Democrat* on February 24<sup>th</sup> and stated "You have to like SOSroads. While other groups complain about the decline of government services, the people involved with SOSroads organized to do something about it."

The California Association of Counties' recent "California Statewide Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment" emphasizes that Sonoma County's road problems are not unique. The report concludes that California's local roads network is "not just at risk, it is on the edge of a cliff." It expresses concern that by 2022 the statewide pavement condition index will deteriorate from 66 to 53 and that a quarter of California's local roads will be in "failed" condition.

While we can be proud that Sonoma County is a worldwide leader in areas such as fine wines and cuisine, none of us are content that our county seems to be a model of a failed local road system. Sonoma County's pavement condition index has already descended to 50,

just one point above the "poor" category. The June 2012 board of supervisors' report found that 53% of the county roads already need reconstruction and 751 of Sonoma County's 1,283 road miles are failed or in poor condition. Unfortunately, Sonoma County can now serve as a laboratory that provides a glimpse of all of California's future 15 to 20 years from now if more resources aren't devoted to maintaining the deteriorating road systems.

For Sonoma County residents, the report provides little solace or information that we don't already know. Our road system is failing and if we don't do something about it locally we can expect that nothing will change. Please take the online survey and help us guide county leaders in solving this problem.

### **Susan Gorin, Our New District Supervisor, Will Be The Speaker on May 16, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall**

Susan Gorin, our newly elected supervisor, will be the speaker at our Bennett Valley Community Association (BVCA) meeting on May 16, at the time and place noted above. You're invited to come meet her, in order to learn more about her ideas and plans, and to share your ideas with her. If you have questions you'd like to ask her, please send them to Craig Harrison, at [charrison@hunton.com](mailto:charrison@hunton.com) or any member of the BVCA Board. Their names and contact information can be found on Page 7. The questions which you send in will be presented to Susan Gorin prior to the meeting.

**Introduction To Pat Gilardi,  
District Director For  
Supervisor Susan Gorin**

Pat Gilardi is the sole staff person working directly for Supervisor Susan Gorin, assisting constituents with district questions and issues, as well as representing the Supervisor when she is unable to be there. On the job since late January, Pat commented, "It is an honor to work for Supervisor Gorin and the people of the First District. I share Supervisor Gorin's staunch commitment to ensuring that government is responsive, effective and working every day to improve our community's quality of life."

Prior to joining Supervisor Gorin, Pat spent twelve years as a councilwoman with the City of Cotati, nine years as a member of the board of directors of the Sonoma County Transportation Authority, and over 25 years in private industry working as an advertising sales manager for Marin County's daily newspaper, the *Marin Independent Journal*. Her background also includes a wealth of community participation consisting of years of prior involvement in 4H, from founder of Cotati's 4H club, to project leader and executive board member of Sonoma County 4H.

A 28-year resident of Sonoma County, Pat is a native of the Bay Area, with roots in California that date back to the gold rush. Pat married her husband Ed 29 years ago. They lived on his family's Point Reyes Station dairy ranch for a short time before moving to Sonoma County. Pat and Ed are the parents of two grown children. Their youngest, Marissa, is a horse trainer working for a family in Bennett Valley.

When you have questions or comments for Pat Gilardi, (or for Susan) you can reach Pat at (707) 565-3752 or [pat.gilardi@sonoma-county.org](mailto:pat.gilardi@sonoma-county.org).

**Bennett Valley Road Work Report**

Craig S. Harrison and Rob Silva

As the rainy season ends, crews from the Sonoma County Dept. of Transportation/Public Works continue to fill potholes and clear roadside brush in various areas around the county. They're scheduling Cal Fire crews to do some roadside brush removal along the narrows of Bennett Valley Road – east of the Fire Department to Old Bennett Ridge Road - around mid-April. The reason for the brushing is to clear the road for equipment and trucks for this summer's chip seal of that section, which is currently planned for the week of July 15<sup>th</sup>. This spring the dept. will crack seal the portion of Bennett Valley Road between Grange Road and the narrows, to where they stopped paving last summer. This is also part of the necessary preparations to chip seal much of Bennett Valley Road during July. As always, please call Public Works at 565-5100 to report any safety issues.

**Bennett Valley Grape  
Growers (BVG) Meeting**

On March 7, the Bennett Valley Grape Growers met at the Grange Hall with approximately 30 members in attendance. The guest speaker was Karissa Kruse, who is currently the Marketing Director and President-Elect of the Sonoma County Winegrape Commission. Karissa spoke on opportunities for available grant monies for advertising, such as the March 9 weekend edition of the Wall Street Journal which is publishing a full page of Sonoma County wine ideas. One of the major tourism tracking websites has now ranked Sonoma County as the #2 most sought after worldwide destination behind Bordeaux, France, significantly ahead of Napa County.

**Bennett Valley Clean-Up Day**

Time for Spring Cleaning! On Saturday, April 20th, meet at the Bennett Valley Fire Station at 8:30 am for donuts and coffee before heading out to clean up the trash from roadsides in Bennett Valley. Wear sturdy shoes, garden gloves and a hat -- we supply the safety vests, pick-up sticks, and trash bags for clean-up day. This is a good time to get out with your family and friends to help make our valley beautiful once again. Teenagers can get credit for volunteer hours required by their schools. See you at the Fire Station! We will reschedule in the event of rain. Questions? Call Sandy Sandine, 579-0282.

**PG&E's Clear Cutting Trees, Why?**

By Marilee Jensen

What brought about this change from PG&E, which had been successfully trimming trees in Sonoma County under their high power transmission lines for 50 years? Following a massive power outage back east in 2003, the authorities determined that "multiple blackouts occurred and ... that some of them may have been delayed, or possibly avoided, if utilities had not neglected trimming trees to the minimum safe clearances that were supposed to have been maintained along their transmission lines." (North American Electric Reliability Corporation, NERC, 2004) While trees were not solely to blame, it brought to regulatory attention that multiple utilities were increasing their profit margins by neglecting their vegetation management obligations. As a result, in 2006, federal regulations were enacted that could heavily fine utilities if they neglected their vegetation management programs under high transmission lines.

As Bob Bell, program manager for PG&E's vegetation management, stated at the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors' meeting on February 5, fines of up to \$1 million per day can be charged where trees cause a power failure or fire on high-voltage lines, noting that ratepayers absorb that cost. With this federal change, though, clear cutting was not required or even recommended as the way to maintain required clearances. Most utility companies have NOT chosen to clear cut, despite the heavy fines, including all of the other utility companies in California, except PG&E. Trimming continues to be the primary way that utility

companies in general are maintaining the required minimum clearances under high transmission lines.

Apparently PG&E and these few other utility companies have decided that if they clear cut all the trees/bushes in the vicinity of the high transmission wires, they will increase their profits even further, by not having to periodically check and trim vegetation around these wires. At the same time this can reduce their chances for making an error, with all the trees gone, and the required clearances being maintained; that means less chance for any fines. From what the arborists in SOS-Trees, a local organization of people objecting to PG&E's new clear cutting policies, are saying, PG&E is not facing the long-range consequences of removing all of these trees, including on slopes over 40%, or the results of leaving all the debris from this tree-cutting on the ground, as summarized in the following. From [www.sos-trees.org](http://www.sos-trees.org), "...PG&E has the responsibility to maintain electricity service in a way that is safe and protects the public from power line failures and mishaps. We recognize and support this duty. However, the new clear cut policy is deeply flawed. It is **needlessly aggressive** and has a number of unintended consequences, including:

- **Loss of thousands of trees, many of which will never impact the power lines.**
- **Loss of habitat, which may include significant impacts on endangered or protected species.**
- **Erosion from impacts of clear cutting directly over streams and headwater areas...**
- **Fire danger from tree refuse left behind (they do not clean up the felled trees and vegetation, unless asked to do otherwise).**
- **Damage to water habitats impacting fish and other wildlife, through silting and stream degradation.**
- **Severe impact on the view shed and scenic qualities of miles of Sonoma County.**
- **Devaluation of home and property values."**

In addition to SOS-Trees activities, a state assemblyman has recently filed a formal complaint with the California Water Quality Board (WQB) in regards to PG&E's tree removals in Sonoma Mountain Woodlands riparian watershed without permits. While PG&E typically claims a categorical exemption from needing permits for their tree removal, the WQB actions resulted in PG&E being required to document and justify their past and future tree removal plans before being allowed to continue in those areas. A follow-up action was submitted by SOS-Trees requesting the same review by WQB for the Russian River watershed.

What has resulted from the negotiations between SOS-Trees and PG&E's representatives during the last year, over these new clear cutting policies, is that when and if property owners know what is being proposed and express their objections, then PG&E has been more responsive to their requests for reasonable trimming rather than clear cutting trees and for removing the tree refuse left behind. When requested, even directly by Congressman Mike Thompson, PG&E has not been responsive to putting these policies in writing, to distribute in advance to the property owners under the high transmission wires.

#### Recommendations For Property Owners Under High Transmission Lines

- In advance of your meeting with PG&E regarding their vegetation management, be sure to get a copy of their

easement rights on your property. What are their legal rights on your property?

- You can determine with the PG&E representatives what trimming or clearances on your property are reasonable and acceptable to maintain their required clearances while reducing negative consequences.
- Contact your state assemblyman/woman and state senators, to get legislation approved, perhaps similar to last session's draft AB 2556, to rein in PG&E's needlessly aggressive overreach.

## **Supervisors Weigh In On PG&E**

**Clear Cutting** *Kenwood Press*, February 15, Gus Peters and Jay Gamel; *Press Democrat*, February 6, Guy Kovner

"What might have been a 10-minute consent item ... of the county Board of Supervisors on Feb. 5, turned into a wide ranging discussion of the county's role in coping with new and aggressive tree cutting policies by the state's biggest utility, PG&E...Where property owners have objected, PG&E has allowed for much more trimming than clearing. Where owners have not pushed back or have not been aware of the program, PG&E has removed up to 90 percent of the trees, angering owners and neighbors alike... Several members of SOS Trees, a local organization of property owners in Bennett Valley and Oakmont, spoke to the board... 'The distance (from the lines) and rules haven't changed', SOS Trees member Tom Hauck said, referring to the minimum required distance between a line and a tree. 'The million dollar fine is for when they don't cut the tree. If they maintain the distance, they are not fined.' James Casciani, a Sonoma Mountain landowner, said he was shocked by the tree removal on mountain slopes. ..Emery Dann of ...SOS-Trees said clear-cutting at Sonoma Mountain Woodlands amounted to 'complete devastation.'

"Supervisors Susan Gorin, Shirlee Zane and Mike McGuire, ...all expressed concern that PG&E's clear cutting program is a departure from long-standing, successful vegetation management practices and needs a fuller airing at both state and federal levels. 'I'm worried about habitat, erosion, and more,' Gorin said. 'We have been paying millions to restore creeks due to damage. We have a stewardship responsibility.' The Board unanimously agreed to have open space and parks staff work with PG&E to come up with concrete guidelines for their tree management policies, at least over county-owned land. 'More than \$14 million has been spent to acquire and develop the four [*county*] properties [*under high transmission wires*]: Cooper's Grove, Sonoma Mountain Woodlands ... [*in Bennett Valley*], Saddle Mountain Open Space Preserve on the east edge of Santa Rosa, and Shiloh Regional Park near Windsor.' They asked that [*these concrete guidelines with PG&E*] be done in 90 days, or by the end of May."

## **Bennett Valley Fire Protection District**

(BVFPD) 6161 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Phone: 578-7761 [bennettvalleyfire.org](http://bennettvalleyfire.org)

### **Board of Directors:**

Mark Richardson, President; Joseph Mazeau, Vice-President;  
Marilee Jensen, Secretary;  
Don D'Avanzo and Arnie Tognozzi, Directors.

### **Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper:**

Kori Lantow, 823-1084, [klantow@comcast.net](mailto:klantow@comcast.net)

(Gold Ridge Fire Administrative Supervisor, Ruth Newman)

Board meetings are held on the second Tuesday each month,  
7:00 pm, at the BV Fire Station. Please confirm meeting date  
ahead of time by calling 823-1084.

### **Bennett Valley Paid Firefighting Staff:**

Interim Fire Chief: Darrin De Carli, 823-5502

48-hour Personnel: Lieutenants Matt Tognozzi and Travis  
Browne, Engineer Rene Torres

Part-time Firefighters, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm:

Engineers: Mike Alcocer, Derrick Alvestal,  
Ly Leng, Jon Matej and Patrick Tognozzi

### **Bennett Valley Volunteer Firefighters**

There are about 29 BV Firefighters, including the volunteers  
and interns. Three rotating shifts of three volunteers each  
are paid a stipend to sleep overnight at the Fire Station,  
for improved coverage. During the day, interns are used at  
no cost, when available, allowing the fire station to cover  
unfilled firefighter positions on those particular days.

## **Bennett Valley Fire Protection District**

By Lieutenant Matt Tognozzi,

Call Log; January/February 2013

Structure Fire – 4	Vehicle Fire – 0
Grass Fire – 0	Medical Aid – 30
Vehicle Accident – 2	Public Assist – 5
Strike Team – 0	Other Type Call – 4
Total – 45	

## **Fire Destroys Barn Off Crane Canyon Road**

*Press Democrat, March 6, by Julie Johnson*

“Flames destroyed a large barn and threatened two living quarters Tuesday, March 5, at Fairwind Farm, a large property off Crane Canyon Road. Two families were displaced by the 8:00 pm blaze, but no one was hurt, including about 65 horses kept on the property. This property is about a mile up Crane Canyon east of Petaluma Hill Road.

“As rain poured down, residents, horse trainers and others huddled under trailers and watched fire crews cut holes in the barn sides to allow pent-up heat and smoke to escape. One of the residents...smelled smoke and saw flames shooting from the adjacent barn when he stepped outside. He got his wife and two children, ages 5 and 2, out of the home, called 911 and grabbed a hose. ‘It grew very fast,’ he said...

“Bennett Valley Chief Darrin De Carli said firefighters found heavy fire in the center of the barn. ‘The roof was probably half-involved.’ De Carli said... Fire crews split, with some protecting the residential units and others launching an exterior fire fight at the two-story barn...The property owner, standing nearby, said she was just relieved no one was hurt. The fire chief said they kept the fire from spreading to the living quarters, though there may be some water damage. Rancho Adobe, Gold Ridge, Santa Rosa, Wilmar and Rincon Valley firefighters joined in the effort [with the Bennett Valley Fire District]. De Carli said they would remain on the property through the night.”

## **Gabe Stirnus, Former BV Firefighter**

*Press Democrat, January 17, Chris Smith column*

“(Gabe) Stirnus is a 1998 Monty grad who became a Bennett Valley firefighter/paramedic and a few years ago received a Medal of Valor for his and a colleague’s dramatic rescue of a man from a burning car [on Grange Road]. His partner [and colleague at Bennett Valley Fire] was Steve Gritsch who became a San Francisco police officer and weeks ago drew praise for his quick action in reviving an abandoned newborn... Stirnus, happily employed by the Sonoma Valley Fire & Rescue Authority, has been named California Firefighter of the Year by the Veterans of Foreign Wars. His service on-duty and off, including his career-prep work with teens through the CHOICES program, will be saluted Friday night in Sonoma at the awards banquet of VFW’S Bear Flag Post 1943.”

## **Recruiting Explorers for BV Fire Station**

Trevor Galeazzi and Travis Browne, Captain and Lieutenant, respectively, at the BV Fire Station, have been working at recruiting some Explorers for the BV Fire Station. Explorers are defined as high school students who are interested in being trained as firefighters. They can be a great resource as future volunteers at the Bennett Valley Fire Station, once they are 18 years old. Trevor and Travis prepared some recruitment fliers for potentially interested students. They had significant help from a Santa Rosa police officer assigned to Montgomery High School in their efforts to set up contacts with these students. Captain Galeazzi reports that about 15 students attended the session they had on March 1 and upon request, 8 applications were passed out, with a deadline of March 8. Galeazzi is hoping they can have a training class started at the BV Fire Station for those they select within the next month to six weeks. There will be further information on this in the next VOICE.

**Access to Approved Minutes For  
Bennett Valley Fire Protection District (BVFPD)**

Members of the public can request the meeting agenda be emailed to them 72 hours before the board meeting or they may pick up a copy of the agenda at the BV fire station 72 hours before the meeting. Complete minutes from the previous month's meeting will be available to the public after board approval, either by picking them up at the next Board meeting, or requesting a copy be mailed to them. Please make these requests to the Bennett Valley Fire District Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper, Kori Lantow, by email, [klantow@comcast.net](mailto:klantow@comcast.net), at the BV Fire Board of Directors meeting or by telephone, 823-1084. Below are highlights selected by the VOICE Editor from the approved minutes for the monthly board meetings on December 11, 2012 and January 8, 2013.

**Brief Highlights of BV Fire Board Meeting,  
December 11, 2012**

- At this meeting, it was mentioned that Travis Browne and Trevor Galeazzi would be doing recruiting for potential Explorers at the local high schools, after the holidays. The results of this action are described in the article above.
- There was a discussion about Rancho Adobe Fire District, whose tax measure failed in the November 2012 elections. They have started doing a rolling blackout and one station will be closed per shift. It could impact our firefighters, who receive mutual assistance from that fire district, but Ranch Adobe is saying they will still honor their automatic-aid agreements, even though in some cases they will be responding from further away.

**Brief Highlights of BV Fire Board Meeting,  
January 8, 2013**

- The AT&T and Verizon cell tower design is being reviewed. It has been agreed that they will have to have one larger tower to accommodate both companies. This is still in the designing stage, but will eventually have to be approved by Sonoma County Planning.
- There is an effort being made to get more interns on board, to help cover firefighter positions especially where there are no longer paid firefighting staff, such as one of the part-time firefighters on the C Shift.
- At this meeting it was stated that 2 -3 intern interviews were scheduled and 3 more interns want to be interviewed. Interns work for experience for a designated amount of time and are not paid.
- It was reported that there was one Explorer applicant, which Travis Browne and Trevor Galeazzi were going to accept with the hopes that it would lead to more. See article above on recruiting Explorers.
- Director Jensen made a motion to keep the Board Officers the same for this next year, which was seconded by Director D'Avanzo and passed unanimously. The officers are Director Richardson as President, Director Mazeau as Vice President and Director Jensen as secretary.

**Rare "Domestic Cat" Rabies Case in**

**Glen Ellen** *Kenwood Press*, February 1

"A domestic cat owned by a Glen Ellen couple contracted rabies in January and was put to sleep. Sonoma County's Department of Health Services said this is the first domestic animal to test positive in the county since the 1990s when a dog tested positive. The owners of the two and a half-year old cat...asked not to be identified... On January 14, their cat started acting oddly, and then became very aggressive to one of the family's other cats over the next two days... They... brought the cat to the Glen Ellen Veterinary Clinic, where the cat had an elevated temperature and was given antibiotic shots.

The cat was isolated in a locked bedroom at the residence and then began to exhibit "very frightening" behavior, tearing apart houseplants, and hauling comforters and wicker baskets around. To get in and out of the bedroom, the wife put galoshes on her arms and the cat would attach himself to the boots in an aggressive manner. On Monday, January 21, the cat was still acting erratically and bit through the woman's sweat pants. The woman said the cat wasn't even moving like a regular cat anymore and the animal was put down that day. A tissue sample of the [cat's] brain was sent out for testing, and came back positive for rabies on January 23. Both the husband and the wife have had to have rabies shots...and the Department of Health Services is currently quarantining ... (*their other*) pets.

Dogs are required by state law to have rabies vaccinations. Cats are not, although animal control officials encourage owners to have their cats vaccinated for rabies. The health notice stated that the incident is an important reminder that rabies is still present in the animal population (most often bats, raccoons, foxes and skunks in California) and that sporadic cases in domestic animals can still occur."

**Taylor Mountain Preserve Is Open**

*Press Democrat*, February 21, By *Brett Wilkison*

"Sonoma County's newest regional park, the 1,100-acre open space on Taylor Mountain overlooking Santa Rosa is open to the general public beginning Saturday, February 23. The large preserve currently features four miles of trails for hikers and a three-mile network for equestrians and cyclists. Plans call for 17 miles of trails to be built. The main entrance off Kawana Terrace will be open from 8:00 am to sunset. Vehicle users without a Regional Parks membership will be charged a \$7 a day use fee. Construction of a larger parking lot and trailhead off Petaluma Hill Road is set to begin this summer. The county's Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District purchased most of the park acreage between 1995 and 2005 for \$21 million... Rangers will be on hand to direct and assist new visitors. Dogs are allowed on leash."

## **Bennett Valley History: The DeTurk Ranch in Bennett Valley Is For Sale For Just The Third Time in the Past 100 years**

*Press Democrat, January 27,  
santarosa.towns.pressdemocrat.com*

### **Historic Bennett Valley landscape mostly conserves 19th-century character**

“The historic DeTurk Ranch on Bennett Valley Road...was founded by Isaac DeTurk, one of the county’s earliest wine pioneers, and is protected against development by an agricultural easement. Marcia and Barry Cox have ... [lived there for] 16 years of growing grapes and breeding horses on the 600-acre ranch they purchased in 1996...The Cox’s revived the estate to mirror founder Isaac DeTurk’s twin passions of winemaking and racehorses.

DeTurk came west to California in 1858. The son of German immigrants, he had developed a love of wine from his father, who tried unsuccessfully to create European varieties in Indiana. ‘His father’s failures made DeTurk appreciate the ease with which all varieties of grapes grew in California soil.’ wrote Gaye LeBaron in “Santa Rosa: A Nineteenth Century Town.” He may have been the first to appreciate the importance of grape culture to the future of the Santa Rosa Valley. In 1862, DeTurk founded Belle Mount vineyard at the base of Bennett Mountain, the ruins of which lie a few hundred feet away from the farmhouse the Cox’s live in. DeTurk acquired the land from so-called ‘squatter’ James Bennett, for whom the valley is named. Bennett acquired it from General Vallejo under the Yulupa land grant.

DeTurk’s winery grew to become one of the largest in the state, with a capacity of around a million gallons in 1888. An infestation of phylloxera wiped out all of DeTurk’s and other Bennett Valley vintners’ crops in 1890. Coupled with the effects of Prohibition, it caused DeTurk to sell his land to a dairy farmer around 1920. Despite the winery ruins, the property is still home to several large dairy barns installed by the second owner. The farmhouse was built in 1910, with French doors that overlook a pond they [DeTurk’s] installed and the vineyards they revived. Though the vineyard makes up just 25 of their current 430 acres, last fall’s crop produced ... tons of grapes.

“...The Cox’s donated about 170 acres to the state in 1998, extending the borders of Annadel State Park. Of the remaining 430 acres, 310 are protected under the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District. “It’s in a category called ‘forever wild,’” said Barry [Cox]. “You can’t even turn the dirt, and about all you can do is run animals on it.” Cattle have been on the property since it belong(ed) to the Carithers family. They bought it in 1957... The original dwelling on the property sits about a quarter mile down the lane, lined with walnuts, where it was moved when a farmhouse was built. The Cox’s now live in that farmhouse, updating it while retaining the original style. “We didn’t change the original footprint at all,” said Barry [Cox].

DeTurk’s secondary success was in horseracing, and in 1885, his primary horse Anteo won a high stakes race in San Francisco. Winning three heats and setting a track record, the horse became a stud almost overnight. Marcia Cox was the first occupant to return horses to the

property ... “Barry is the wine guy, and I’m the horse girl,” she said. To satisfy her passion, they built a full-scale equestrian facility on the property, using it for many years to breed quarter horses and Freisians. Over the years she kept 11 horses on the property, the last of which died recently. ... The land itself remains, still nourishing the twin passions of winemaking and horseracing.”

### **Local Special Interest Notes**

- **Wearing Reflective Gear While Walking at Night – Bennett Valley resident’s recommendation** – “We all know how dark our local roads can be. It would be a good idea to encourage wearing reflective gear while walking at night – especially during the shorter winter days. Inexpensive reflective vests, for example, work wonders for increasing nighttime pedestrian visibility and can be found at most hardware stores.” Peter Leo
- **Winter Spare the Air Season is Over, As of February 28 – (Bay Area Air Quality NEWS, released October 31)** “...Still there are year-round prohibitions on excessive smoke, and on the burning of garbage and other harmful materials in fireplaces and woodstoves... The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the Bay Area.”
- **Morton’s Warm Springs Resort in Glen Ellen has been sold, effective January 31.** (Kenwood Press, February 15) “It was purchased by investor and entrepreneur Stephen Portis. Portis and his wife, Natalie, have property in Sonoma. The Portis’ have declined to comment on what plans they have for the property. County planning and neighbors have prevented this facility from operating year-round, despite numerous requests by owners.”
- **“It is only a matter of time until Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC, in Glen Ellen) is shut down.”** (Kenwood Press, February 15) ‘It’s going to be not whether it’s closing, Jim Shorter said. It’s going to be when it’s closing and how it’s closing. Shorter is Executive Director of the Golden Gate Regional Center. The Sonoma Developmental Center, situated on 1,670 acres spanning from Highway 12 to the border of Jack London State Park, is one of five such centers throughout the state, handling people with severe developmental disabilities who need full-time care. (Press Democrat, March 7) The State Dept. of Developmental Services announced... that Karen Faria had been hired as the new executive director [at this] facility, home to 507 developmentally disabled people... A state licensing review in December revealed 57 deficiencies at this center, including four cases of ‘immediate jeopardy’ to patient health and safety, including instances of patient abuse. The center has since lost federal funding... \$1.37 million a month, funds the state is now providing. The state has taken what it calls ‘aggressive actions’ to fix the problem, including hiring Faria, with her extensive experience, previously, at this center, to provide the strong leadership needed to improve services...”

**BENNETT VALLEY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**  
**MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 2013**

- **Learn about our beautiful and interesting community....**
- **Find out about events and people that will affect our valley.**
- **Support volunteers and neighbors who work for all of us.**

**Join or renew your membership in our**  
**Bennett Valley Community Association!**

Annual dues are only \$15, plus any extra you can send to better enable BVCA to carry out our stated purposes. Easy options to pay...

- Cut this form out along the lines, complete it and send in with your name, address, phone # (see below) and check, to: BVCA, P.O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa CA 95405
- Pay online with your credit card or PayPal account. On our website [www.bennettvalley.org](http://www.bennettvalley.org) see the Menu on the first page, left side. Select "Join/Renew: BVCA Membership" and follow easy instructions.

**How do you want to receive your VOICE**  
**newsletter? Check one box.**

- By email to me at (email address)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Paper in the mail, to my address on the label used on this VOICE, or to the following address:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Special BV email alerts!** These are only sent to alert the community to immediate safety or security matters (repeated burglaries, stalkers or attempted personal harm, etc.) Be sure to sign up for these email alerts!

- Yes! Send these alerts to this email:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Do not include me in these email alerts.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

??? Questions about membership, dues, VOICE mailing, special email alerts ???

Please call Larissa Goliti, Membership Coordinator,  
578-3453

**Bennett Valley Community Association**  
**(BVCA) Board Of Directors**

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

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

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**BVCA VOICE Editor – Marilee Jensen, 576-0405,**  
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**BVCA Webmaster – Bill Finkelstein, 536-1026**  
[bill@williamfinkelstein.com](mailto:bill@williamfinkelstein.com) For any questions about the BVCA website contact Bill Finkelstein.

**Brief Summary, BVCA Minutes**

January 17, 2013 Meeting

- Fay Blair sat in for Debbie Forton, to review bank statements and the treasurer's report, noting that the ending balance for 2012 was even higher than projected in the original 2012 budget. There were 243 dues payments for 2012.
- Our newly elected 1<sup>st</sup> district Supervisor, Susan Gorin, has agreed to be the speaker for our May meeting. Speakers for July and September are sought.
- There was no new business discussed.

**Board of Directors' Tentative Agenda**

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

- Report Bennett Valley Emergency Preparation Committee
- Status of Expanded Cell Tower At Fire Station
- Road Issues
- Update on PG&E Tree Clearing
- Speakers for July and September meetings
- New business as determined by board.
- Adjournment

*In Bennett Valley, in March; "A multitude of daffodils fluttering and dancing...Tossing their heads in sprightly dance. And then my heart with pleasure fills. And dances with the daffodils."* Excerpts, Wm. Wordsworth's poem, "I wandered lonely as a cloud."

**Bennett Valley Community Association**  
P.O. Box 2666  
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

[www.bennettvally.org](http://www.bennettvally.org)

**PURPOSES OF BVCA:** *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 This Issue**

- Introducing Susan Gorin's District Director; BV Road Work
- Bennett Valley Grape Grower's Mtg.; BV Clean-Up Day
- PG&E Clear Cutting Trees; Why?; Supervisors Weigh In
- BV Fire Protection District, Staff, Call-Log
- Fire Destroys Barn, Crane Canyon Rd., March 5
- Gabe Stirnus, Former BV Firefighter; Recruiting Explorers
- Highlights of Two fire board meetings
- Rare "Domestic Cat" Rabies Case; Taylor Mountain Opens
- Bennett Valley History, the DeTurk Ranch
- Local Special Interest Notes; BVCA Board, Agenda, etc.

### **Bennett Valley Community Calendar**

*Mark your calendars now!!*

- **Bennett Valley Community Association:** The next meeting is Thursday, March 21, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall. See Tentative Agenda on Page 7.
- **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.
- **Bennett Valley Grange #16.** Go to [bvgrange.org](http://bvgrange.org) to learn more about and to become a member of the Grange. BV Grange Hall is serving as our Community Activity Center. Coming soon: On Monday, March 25, 6:00pm, there will be the first picnic planning meeting at the Grange Hall. Please help us make this year an even bigger success than last year's annual picnic, the first Sunday of June. The Sonoma County Radio Amateur clubs (SCRA) will be holding classes and exams in learning ham radio at the Bennett Valley Grange. When these dates are set, it will be noted in the calendar on the Grange website, [bvgrange.org](http://bvgrange.org).
- **Earn Your Ham Radio Over A Week-end!!** When? Where? Friday evening, May 31, 6:00 -9:00 pm, Saturday, June 1, 8:00am to 5:30 pm, Sunday, June 2, 8:00am to 2:30 pm. Return at 3:00 pm for the FCC Exam! Class is at First American Title, 627 College Avenue, Santa Rosa, corner of Humboldt St. \$30 cost. Contact [jeff.tonelli@yahoo.com](mailto:jeff.tonelli@yahoo.com) ,539-3272, for pre-study guide.
- **Amateur Radio (Ham Radio) Licensing In Just One Day:** (From website [smrs](http://smrs)) The next scheduled one day licensing class and exam is Saturday, April 13, Petaluma Senior Center. Cram session, 9:00 am - \$10, Exam session, 1:00 pm, \$15. Please pre-register in order to get help with obtaining your Federal Registration Number. Contact Dale, 762-0414 or [wb6tms@arrl.net](mailto:wb6tms@arrl.net).
- **Sonoma County Board Of Supervisors:** Meets every Tuesday (except weeks when there is a legal holiday), at varying times, 575 Administration Drive, Santa Rosa. Susan Gorin is the newly elected Supervisor for our 1st District. If you have any concerns or questions, you may call her District Director, Pat Gilardi, 565-3752, or send Pat an email at [pat.gilardi@sonoma-county.org](mailto:pat.gilardi@sonoma-county.org). Or you can call Susan at 565-3752, or send her an email at [susan.gorin@sonoma-county.org](mailto:susan.gorin@sonoma-county.org).

#### **IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS**

- For emergencies, use your landline or your cell phone to call **911**. Or you can also report emergencies to dispatch, 576-1365.
- To talk to someone at the Sheriff's office 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to either report concerns that may be an emergency or to discuss a situation that may require law enforcement response, call 565-2121.
- 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. After hours call 565-2121.
- Call Sonoma County Animal Control, at 565-7100, regarding the removal of dead animals along the road.
- Call California Highway Patrol, at 588-1400, as another resource if debris is causing imminent traffic hazards on county roads.