



Bennett Valley VOICE

www.bennettvalley.org

VOLUME 37, NUMBER 6

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION (BVHA)

NOVEMBER, 2014

Winter Opening: North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve, Starting At Jacobs Ranch by Marilee Jensen

During the last two decades, Sonoma County Open Space District has purchased the five smaller properties making up the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve, totaling over 700 acres. The fee titles for these property, including Jacobs Ranch and Cooper's Grove, have now been transferred to Sonoma County Regional Parks, but the Open Space District will retain the conservation easement and will receive a recreation covenant that obligates the County to provide public access to this property, in perpetuity.

"We'll do regular site visits to ensure that the terms of the conservation easement are met," says Sheri Emerson, the stewardship program manager for the Open Space District, "but long-term land ownership and day-to-day management fall more within the portfolio of Regional Parks." A Sonoma County Regional Parks ranger is permanently stationed at the former Jacobs Ranch and the department is eager to open the new property to the public.

From the beginning, says Emerson, the trail "has been a collaboration. The Open Space District, Regional Parks, the Ridge Trail Council, State Parks, LandPaths, and the State Coastal Conservancy, all contributed. So did the Jacobs family and other landowners who wanted to see the essential character of Sonoma Mountain preserved. It took about 18 years to put all the pieces together, and it wasn't always easy. Without everyone working together, public agencies and private citizens, this never would have happened."

Sonoma County Regional Parks is now working on construction of a new vehicular bridge on the Jacobs Ranch driveway, crossing over Matanzas Creek. Once this bridge is completed, perhaps even as early as December or January, 2015, Sonoma County Regional Parks is planning to open the North

Sonoma Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve to public access.

An integral part of this new park is the Ridge trail, from Jacobs Ranch to Jack London State Park, which is 4.5 miles long and crosses over Cooper's Grove, and the only two remaining redwood groves on Sonoma Mountain. The trail was engineered with moderate gradient and minimal environmental disturbance in mind and is to be used by hikers, cyclists and equestrians. In short, the trail is spectacular. Jacobs Ranch is the park entrance, near the intersection of Sonoma Mountain and Pressley Road, and already has newly-constructed restrooms and ample accessible trailhead parking.

Karen Davis-Brown, with the Sonoma County Regional Parks, says when the park is opened, the charge for the parking of vehicles will be the admission fee. If you walk or ride a bike to this park, there will be no charge. The Sonoma County annual park pass will also be accepted for admission.

As the natural resources planner for the Open Space District, Kim Batchelder said, "This is a fairly long trail in a sensitive environment. This isn't a build-it-and-forget-it situation. Monitoring impacts on an ongoing basis are an essential part of trail management... from erosion to wildlife movement... Sonoma Mountain supports both a rich diversity and large numbers of wild animals, including black-tailed deer, coyotes, mountain lions, and bobcats," Batchelder says. "The (*discretely hidden*) cameras are motion-activated, and they're providing excellent data on animal distribution that will really help managers protect Sonoma Mountain's wildlife."

A formal dedication of the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve is being planned for the spring 2015.

Bennett Valley Road Report

by Craig S. Harrison

On November 3, the county began a comprehensive rehabilitation of 2.5 miles of Bennett Valley Road between Old Bennett Ridge Road and Warm Springs Road. The project may last as long as 3 weeks, depending in part upon weather. It will disrupt traffic between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 pm, particularly during the initial grinding and mixing operation. During construction hours Bennett Valley Road will be closed to through traffic, including pedestrians and bicycles. Local access for vehicles will be maintained, but there will be significant time delays and alternate routes are advised. The corridor will be open after working hours and on weekends, including to pedestrians and cyclists. When the road is open and the surface is not yet paved, motorists are advised to proceed slowly and with caution on the slippery surface. The unpaved surface will not be accommodating to cyclists.

The treatment is called full-depth reclamation (www.fhwa.dot.gov/pavement/recycling) and is a recycling method whereby the entire asphalt pavement and some underlying materials are ground-up and treated to produce a stabilized road base. The depth of grinding and mixing extends about 12 inches. Once the stabilized road base has cured, an asphalt overlay will be applied. The finished product will essentially be a new road that should give 25 years or more of good service. For further information contact Ghilotti Construction (585-1221) or the County Public Works Construction Office (565-2231).

During September, county crews striped 2.2 miles of the surface of Sonoma Mountain Road from Bennett Valley Road to Pressley Road, so this section should remain in very good condition for a long time. BVCA will continue to urge the county to fix the remaining 5.7 miles of Sonoma Mountain Road and Pressley Road, especially now that North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve (including Jacobs Ranch) is scheduled to open in the next couple of months and non-local traffic will increase. In late October road crews cut trees along Sonoma Mountain Road beginning at Warm Springs Road with plans to continue toward Pressley.

In mid-November, you will see notices of road construction for 0.91 miles of Arnold Drive from the north end of the bridge over Sonoma Creek in Glen Ellen to the Highway 12 intersection. A conventional approach will be followed which involves removing and replacing deteriorated areas of pavement, called "digouts" and you may see "alligator" cracking, rutting, or other surface imperfections. Once the base materials are

repaired, the roadway will be overlaid with asphalt. Local access will be provided, but again there may be some delays. Bicycle travel through the corridor is not recommended until the final asphalt overlay is applied. Like Bennett Valley Road, the finished road should give many years of good service. This work is dependent on weather conditions and temperature. Traffic will be disrupted particularly during the grinding and mixing operation. The hours of operation will be between 8:00 am and 7:00 pm. During these working hours, there will be traffic delays on this segment of Arnold Drive. The same as for the Bennett Valley Road construction, once the construction begins you can contact Ghilotti Construction at 585-1221 or the County of Sonoma Public Works Construction Office at 565-2231.

The Sonoma County Supervisors have pushed the proposal for a quarter cent road sales tax back from March to the June 2015 ballot in order to plan a more extensive outreach, before asking the community to support this tax measure. They've also reduced the proposed time span for this sales tax from twenty years to five years, thinking that would be more likely to be passed by the voters.

On behalf of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, County Public Works is pleased to advise us that the county is now in a position to continue a comprehensive program of rehabilitating our transportation infrastructure. Many citizens have indicated that this is one of the top priorities for the county.

With the advent of what we hope is the storm season, the county road work will focus on filling pot holes, clearing downed trees and cleaning clogged culverts. County road crews will respond as quickly as possible, but often must prioritize when problems are occurring simultaneously all over the county. Call Public Works (565-5100) to report safety issues or road hazards, including clogged drains. For road hazards after hours or weekend emergencies, call the Sheriff dispatch (565-2121).

Public Hearing on Final Draft of Riparian

Ordinance, Monday, Nov. 24, 2:10 pm

Kenwood Press, November 1

The final draft of a new ordinance governing setbacks from Sonoma County creeks and rivers is up for adoption by the Board of Supervisors on November 24, 2:10 pm, at the Board of Supervisors Chambers in Santa Rosa. Setbacks of 50, 100 and 200 feet from stream banks will be added to the zoning code definitions. A final draft is available for public review on the PRMD website.

Sonoma Clean Power (SCP) Comes to Bennett Valley: Opt Out Notices Were Sent To Us in September or October.

by Marilee Jensen and Craig Harrison

Sonoma Clean Power is now the default electric generation provider in the unincorporated areas of Sonoma County, such as Bennett Valley, beginning in the month of December. Residents of Bennett Valley received a 6-inch by 11-inch tri-fold color mailing from Sonoma Clean Power during September or October, entitled "Cleaner Energy." On first glance it appeared to be an advertisement for SCP and does not clearly and in bold lettering clarify that it is a legally-required official opt out notice. Many residents may have discarded it as junk mail and did not read its contents. You may be a strong supporter of SCP, an opponent, or not have a strong opinion about whether you want SCP to become your provider for electricity generation, but if you don't call SCP at 855-202-2139 during the month of November, you will be automatically switched from PG&E to Sonoma Clean Power sometime in December for your electric power generation. You can also call that same number, or go to sonomacleanpower.org to either opt out or find out more about the changes in cost for you.

We have found the people answering the phone at SCP were very helpful and knowledgeable about the numerous questions which were asked. When you do call them, push the number zero (0) near to the beginning of the call, so that they will switch you immediately to a person to whom you can talk. Also, have your last PG&E bill with you when you call, which will be requested, to make sure you're receiving correct information.

There is quite a bit of complexity in this billing process, which they are willing to help you understand, as you determine which company will provide you with the best cost in the generation of your electricity. PG&E will continue to do all the billing and to deliver your power on their power lines, so regardless of which choice you make, you will continue to receive the one monthly bill from PG&E. It will include the amount you owe PG&E for the delivery of your power, which we understand is generally most of the monthly bill, plus the amount you owe SCP for the generation of your power, if that is the choice you've made. You will send your monthly payment to PG&E, and they will transfer the correct amount to SCP. If you do opt out, you will then pay PG&E both for the generation and delivery of your electric power, as you do now. Online you will see that Sonoma Clean Power is saying that their rates for their CleanStart are lower than PG&E's (4 or 5% lower depending on your current power rate) and the power is much cleaner. Another difference is that Sonoma Clean Power is operating as a non-profit organization.

For both companies, PG&E and SCP, summer charges are from May 1 until October 31, and winter charges are from November 1 until April 30. Each week, the peak hours are M-F, from noon until 6:00 pm, and the non-peak hours are all the week-end hours and from 6:01 pm

until 11:59 am, M-F, during the week. The particular season and the particular hour are factors both companies use to determine what you will be charged for the kilowatt hours' (kWh) you have used.

We personally asked the representatives from SCP to compare their generation charges with what PG&E had charged for kWh's in October, 2014, on a particular rate schedule, E7, which has been grandfathered in. Your rate schedule is found on Page 1 of your monthly PG&E Energy Statement. There are a total of 93 different rate schedules which are expected to stay the same in this transition. They are all identified in the online website of www.pge.com/tariffs. On this E7 rate schedule, PG&E divides power usage into up to 5 tiers and then charges a higher rate for each tier, as they go from tier 1 to tier 5. In one example in the month of October 2014, defined as a summer month, PG&E charged varying amounts for each tier, ranging from 10 cents per kWh to 52 cents per kWh, depending on which category and in which tier those kWh's had been used. Sonoma Clean Power explained they do not use tiers in determining their charges for their electrical generation. The SCP flat rates for the summer peak-hours are 39.5 cents per kWh and 6 cents per kWh for the summer non-peak hours. For the winter peak-hours SCP will charge 25.2 cents per kWh and 3.7 cents per kWh for winter non-peak hours, again without any tiers. **Thus, depending on how much and when your household uses electricity, your bill might be significantly higher or lower under SCP or PG&E.**

Meanwhile PG&E will continue to use tiers in determining your charge for the delivery of your electricity. The PG&E rates now include both the generation and delivery charges, so one of their representatives explained PG&E will have to "unbundle" their rates, to determine the charge for only the delivery of electricity, which they will continue to do when you are using SCP for your generation of electricity.

Also, when you're using SCP for the generation of your electricity, PG&E will also charge you additional fees for the delivery of your power, roughly between \$5.00 or \$6.00 a month, depending on how many kWh per month you're using. These additional fees are explained online, at sonomacleanpower.org, under Rates and PG&E fees.

One of us also has solar power so when we generate electricity with the solar panels, we receive a credit from either PG&E or Sonoma Clean Power, depending on who is doing the electrical generation. SCP credits significantly more than PG&E, during peak hours, but slightly less in non-peak hours, for both summer and winter. Solar panels do generate more electricity in the peak hours, generally with increased sun, from 12 noon until 6:00 pm, so that may prove to be an SCP benefit.

You can choose to not opt out, (of Sonoma Clean Power) and use their generation services, by default. but if you want to return to PG&E for all of your electricity costs and more than 60 days have elapsed, you'll owe a termination fee to SCP, in the amount of \$5.00 for residential users, or \$25 for commercial users. Also if you do that, you cannot choose to return to SCP for one year. If you decide to return to PG&E for all of your electricity in less than sixty days, then there will be no termination fee.

Sonoma County Spraying Along BV Road

by Rob Silva, County Road Maintenance Division Manager

Both Bennett Valley Road and Grange Road are on our crews' spray route. The spraying they do is for roadside vegetation, for both sight distance and fire fuel reduction. It is possible that young trees, especially wild sprouts that are beginning to grow alongside and close to the road, may get sprayed... Larger trees would not be affected. Spraying may also have been done by the vineyard owners along the road... Any spraying by us would be done only on small suckers growing close to the road in our right-of-way to prevent future sight distance issues, root damage to the road, and removal/pruning costs.

That said, most likely the damage could be from frost and/or drought damage. We've received several complaints this year concerning eucalyptus trees. One complaint I received earlier this summer included a grove along Petaluma Hill Rd and another on Bennett Valley Rd near Grange Rd. Our tree arborist identified both locations as having frost damage from last winter's cold spell. I believe both those locations involved the larger trees. Drought is also playing a role on the deteriorating appearance of several tree species around the county. The eucalyptus grove along Bennett Valley Rd near Grange is being looked at for possible safety trimming before winter.

Belden Winery On Sonoma Mountain Road, Approved by County Board

Editor compiled excerpts from *Kenwood Press*, November 1, Alex Peters and *Press Democrat*, October 14, Angela Hart

The county Board of Supervisors gave final approval ...to a new winery and creamery ... striking down an appeal by Bennett Valley residents, who said the project would measurably change their rural environment. The proposed Belden Barns Winery, was approved by a 4-1 vote, with Supervisor Susan Gorin, whose district includes the Beldens' property, voting against the first commercial winemaking, wine tasting and retail outlet on Sonoma Mountain Road. "I support the Beldens' vision for a small family-run operation that promotes agricultural operations...but what the board approved tonight was not in scale of the Bennett Valley area," Gorin said. "Neighbors submitted the names of over 140 residents on Sonoma Mountain Road and in Bennett Valley who were opposed to the proposal."

Of primary concern was the impact of the increased traffic on the 7.5-mile, hilly Sonoma Mountain Road, which in many places is winding, narrow and in poor shape. "It's not just a winery and an event center, (*but it's*) on one of the worst roads in all of Sonoma County," said Donna Parker, a Sonoma Mountain Road resident. She warned that approval would set a "highly dangerous precedent" for the area... Owners Nate and Lauren Belden, who currently farm 20 acres of grapes on the 55 acres they purchased in 2005, applauded the decision... "We're excited to move forward with our family business... but I think now it's up to us to be good neighbors and succeed."

Canine Companions For Independence (CCI)

Marilee Jensen and Kathy Bellino (puppy raiser and breeder caretaker)

In the September 2014 *VOICE*, we had stories from two Bennett Valley families who had their children helping care for Canine Companion puppies, beginning in 1975, when this program initially started in Bennett Valley. Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) continues to be headquartered in Santa Rosa, and is a nonprofit organization that enhances the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained assistance dogs and ongoing support to ensure quality partnerships. It is the largest non-profit provider of assistance dogs, with six training centers through out the U.S. and is recognized worldwide for the excellence of its dogs, and the quality and longevity of the matches it makes between dogs and people. The result is a life full of increased independence and loving companionships for these people.

After seeing the *VOICE* article, one of my neighbors, Kathy Bellino, contacted me with more information about CCI. She is now raising her fourth Canine Companion puppy for its first twenty months, at which time they are ready to enter more intensive training. On Bennett Ridge we've all enjoyed meeting her puppies, Petunia, Jose, Tag and Sandoval, when Kathy was taking them for walks. Two of them are still with her. She explained that during their time with her, even as young puppies, they go to weekly training, for their socialization and obedience training.

Now CCI is using only Labradors, Golden Retrievers or a mix of these two breeds, as assistance dogs. All the breeding of these future CCI dogs is done here in Santa Rosa, supervised by a veterinarian, Dr. Ruth Daniels, who uses technology to meticulously select and pair dogs for breeding. The result is more puppies with the right temperament, good health and good genetics for their successful work as assistance dogs. They generally mature into very loving kind dogs.

Volunteer breeder caretakers provide homes for the breeder dogs and the puppies, returning the puppies to the Santa Rosa headquarters, at eight weeks old. From there, puppies are placed with volunteer puppies-raisers across the nation, such as Kathy Bellino. Around the age of twenty months, the puppies return to one of the six Canine Companions Regional Training Centers across the country for six months of training. CCI trains four types of assistance dogs to master over 40 specialized commands: Service Dogs, Skilled Companions, Hearing Dogs and Facility Dogs. After completing training, the dogs are teamed with a graduate during an intensive two week training period. During their almost 40 years in business, CCI has established over 3,500 "quality partnerships" between people with disabilities and the CCI dogs. Last year alone, they produced 255 excellent graduate teams and conducted over 900 follow-up visits to ensure quality partnerships, entirely free of charge.

This has taken tremendous amounts of donated money, including a major contribution from Charles and Jean Schultz, combined with great amounts of volunteer help, to provide this invaluable service at no charge.

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District

1616 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Phone: 578-7761

bennettvalleyfire.org

Board of Directors:

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

Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper

Kori Lantow, 823-1084, klantow@comcast.net

Ruth Newman, Administrative Supervisor

Board meetings are generally held on the second Tuesday each month, 7:00 pm, at the BV Fire Station. Be sure to confirm the meeting date in advance, by calling 823-1084.

Bennett Valley Paid Firefighting Staff:

Fire Chief: Dan George, 481-8105,

Battalion Chiefs: Darrin DeCarli, 823-5502, Adam Schipper

48-hour Personnel: Lieutenant Matt Tognozzi,

Lieutenant Travis Browne, Engineer Rene Torres

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

Engineers Ly Leng, Andrew Keefer, Andrew Tognozzi

Bennett Valley Volunteer Firefighters

There are approximately 23 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, from time to time, firefighter interns are available, at no cost.

Bennett Valley Call Log September/October 2014

by Lieutenant Matt Tognozzi

Structure Fire – 2	Vehicle Fire – 0
Grass Fire – 1	Medical Aid – 22
Vehicle Accident – 7	Public Assist – 3
Strike Team – 1	Hazardous Condition – 5
Smoke Check – 1	Alarm Sounding – 2

Total - 44

Bennett Valley Fire District Recent Strike Team Activity

by Lieutenant Matt Tognozzi

On 9/14/14, BV Fire Engine #7861 responded to a strike team request to the Black Fire, burning in the Redwood Valley area of Mendocino County. While assigned to this fire, #7861 was involved in direct fire suppression. The fire burned over 400 acres, 5 homes and 6 outbuildings. The strike team and #7861 were moved to the King Fire burning in the Eldorado National Forest. The fire consumed 97,717 acres, destroyed 12 homes and 68 other minor buildings. Fire Engine #7861 and our strike team returned to the Bennett Valley Fire District on 9/25/14.

Safely Decorating Homes and Businesses During the Holiday Season

CalFire - fire.ca.gov, Excerpts by Lieutenant Matt Tognozzi

Unfortunately it's these Christmas decorations that increase the chance of fire. Follow a few simple holiday tree and decoration fire safety tips to ensure happy holidays. Christmas trees can remain relatively fire resistant if you follow these simple steps:

- When selecting your live Christmas tree, choose a fresh one with green needles.

- Re-cut the trunk at least two inches above the old cut as soon as you get it home. This allows it to continue to pull moisture into its foliage.
- Keep the trunk in water immediately after it is re-cut. Moisture is the key to keeping the tree fresh and thereby enhancing its fire resistance. If the tree will be kept outside for a few days, stand it in a bucket of water until you are ready to bring it indoors.
- Check the water levels daily... Never let the water level go below the bottom of the trunk. Commercial floral preservatives can also be added to the water to help keep the tree fresh.
- Locate the tree at least three feet away from sources of heat. Avoid placing any tree, live or artificial, near a heater outlet, wood stove or fireplace. Put it in the coolest location possible.
- Never leave a lighted tree unattended.
- Remove the tree immediately after the holidays. Even a properly cared for live tree will eventually die. Take it to a recycle center or leave for your refuse collector.

LIGHTS & DECORATIONS:

- Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Keep decorations away from heat sources, windows and doors.
- Properly install your holiday lights. Use lights that have the safety label from an independent testing laboratory.
- Be sure to use indoor lights inside and outdoor lights outside.
- Make sure all electrical cords have no frayed or cracked wires or broken sockets. Do not attempt to repair a worn light set! Throw it away and purchase a new replacement.
- Do not overload electrical outlets.
- Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe.
- Do not leave lights turned on when unattended or for prolonged periods.
- Keep your exits clear by keeping decorations away from windows and doors.
- In addition to being shatterproof and shock resistant, LED lights produce almost no heat, making them safe to touch and greatly reducing the risk of fire.

Access to Approved Minutes For Bennett Valley Fire Protection District

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, at the BV Fire Board of Directors' meeting, or by telephone, 823-1084. What follows are highlights selected by the VOICE Editor from the approved minutes for two meetings, August and September, 2014. The minutes for the October 14 meeting will not be approved until the November 11 meeting.

Brief Highlights of BV Fire Board Meeting, August 12

- Karen Sommer spoke about the estimated costs of the emergency communications project and the letter that needed to go out to the donors. Karen will present the letter at the next Fire Board meeting for approval. Kori Lantow will present Karen with the spreadsheet of donors and addresses and will print out labels for the mailing.
- Explorer Post - They are rolling along with five Explorers.

Brief Highlights of BV Fire Board Meeting, September 9

- **AT&T Cell Tower** - Chief Dan George sent an email to AT&T to see what to expect in timing. AT&T expects to start breaking ground at the BV Fire Station in January, 2015
- **Personnel/Training** - Major Drill is on-going. This month they did a ventilation drill at the Lucky Building in Roseland.
- **Old Business** - Emergency Communication Project - Ruth Newman gave Director Jensen the mailing labels prepared by Kori Lantow for donors to the emergency communications project. Director Jensen will give them to Karen Sommer for the mailing.
- **New Business - Resolution 2014-2015-** Setting the Appropriations Limit for the 2014-2015 fiscal year was reviewed. Director Don D'Avanzo made a motion to approve the 2014-2015 Prop 4 Limit at \$1,410,848. The resolution was seconded by Director Mazeau and passed unanimously by roll call vote.
- **Final Budget** -The fire chief and bookkeepers met with the budget committee this year, Director Jensen and Director Tognozzi, and reviewed the 2013-2014 year-end numbers. Some adjustments were made to the preliminary budget. Director Jensen made a motion to approve the final budget in the amount of \$860,489. The motion was seconded by Director Mazeau and passed unanimously by roll call vote.
- **Sonoma County Fire Services Presentation** - Peter Bruland, Administrative Analyst, from the Fire Services Ad-Hoc Committee gave a presentation on the project. They are reviewing existing fire services in Sonoma County to make recommendations for a more effective fire system.

Who Are The Beck Brothers?

by Marilee Jensen

In the September, 2014 *VOICE*, I asked this question. We knew that they had lived at 4300 Grange Road from 1917 to about the mid-1980's, but initially, no one I talked to knew their first names. After asking this question, I had about four or five phone calls, letters or personal visits with people who had known them and shared the following.

Peter Beck, their father, was born in 1858 in Denmark and immigrated to the United States in 1883. He married Leah Merrison, who was born in England in 1878 and also moved to the United States in 1883. Peter and Leah had four sons born in

California; Robert, born in 1899, Rudolph, born in 1901, Waldemar (known as Walt), born in 1903 and Peter, born in 1905.

The Beck family bought their place on Grange Road, in Bennett Valley in 1917. This farm had originally belonged to Alexander Benjamin, who purchased 103 acres for \$35 per acre, in 1877. At the time of the 1920 census, Peter Beck was the head of the household and living on Benjamin Ranch with his two younger sons. By the time of the 1930 census, Robert Beck, age 30, was the head of the household and doing dairying and fruit growing on the Beck ranch. His father, Peter (age 70) and mother, Leah (age 55) were retired. Rudolph (29) was working in a cannery and brothers, Walt (26) and Peter (24) were working on the farm. Their father, Peter, died soon after that, in 1932. Rudolph apparently married and moved to Sacramento, but the other three brothers remained on the ranch with their mother until her death in 1956. The 1961 *Sonoma and Marin Farm, and Ranch Directory* listed Waldemar (Walt) as owner of the ranch; it was still 98 acres in size at the time. The 1978 historic survey of the property, based on an interview with Walt, noted that the property was used over time as a farm, dairy and vineyard, and that turkeys, cattle and sheep had been raised on the property.

Walt, who died in 1986, at the age of 83, was the last surviving Beck brother. Rudolph died in Sacramento, in 1963, Robert died in 1973, and Peter died in 1980, both in Sonoma County. Apparently it was in 1980 or earlier that Walt Beck sold the property to the Scholten family, but retained a life estate. He lived on the property several more years, before moving to assisted living where he died in 1986. From both the *Press Democrat* obituary, (5/13/86) for Waldemar Beck, and the Chapel of the Chimes, where he is interred, Pauline Beck, was listed as his conservator and was identified in his obituary as his sister-in-law. Apparently, she had been married to his brother, Rudolph, who had died over 20 years earlier.

One gentleman who called me about the Beck brothers still lives in Bennett Valley, and said he used to meet Walt and Pete Beck for a beer in Lazzini's, on Bennett Valley Road after work. He mentioned the 1950 pickup "which only Pete would drive." He said they use to drink a "fair amount". Another local source told me, "The two brothers (Walt and Pete) would drive into town in their old pickup - usually never exceeding 5-10 miles an hour, all the way into town. Everyone who lived in the valley knew their truck and got stuck behind them at one time or another." This same source added, "I mostly remember the Becks from the 60s - they were pretty eccentric then and a lot of the teen-agers in the valley would swim and party at the lake in back of their house... One (of the Beck brothers, apparently Bob) we called "curly" because he had some mental problems and was a little frightening to kids with his wild, long curly matted hair and a long unruly white beard. He didn't leave the house much."

A woman born in this area in 1917 called me, because she remembered the Beck Brothers from her days in Bennett Valley. In an interview with her, she remembers seeing the Beck Brothers working on their farm, when you drove by. She said they stayed to themselves, pretty much, and farmed as long as they could. She told me that Bob Beck never left the house and seemed to have some special problems. Another lady wrote me a note about the Beck Brothers, saying they would give the Bennett Valley Safeway a hard time, switching prices, etc. but the store treated them as two old eccentrics to be watched. She ends her note saying, "These men helped add character to our area." There are other wild unverified stories about them which I've chosen to not repeat.

The Benjamin Ranch, and the property the Becks purchased in 1917, includes Joe & Gail Judge's vineyard, at 4200 Grange Road, across from the Bennett Valley Grange Hall. The smaller portion of this property, where the Becks actually lived, was transferred in 2010, from the Scholten's to Rosemarie and Dieter Rief, who currently live elsewhere in Bennett Valley.

Bennett Valley Community Association

(BVCA) Board Of Directors

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

www.bennettvalley.org

Craig S. Harrison, President

charrison@hunton.com 573-9990

Larissa Goliti, Vice-President and

Membership Coordinator

lgoliti@hotmail.com 578-3453

Debra J. Forton Engle, Treasurer

reddogvineyards@gmail.com (415) 987-5677

Frank LaCombe, Secretary

FrankKLaCombe@gmail.com 585-3482

Gary Barner, Director

gbarner@cds1.net 481-6196

Tim Bosma, Director

tbosma@comcast.net 953-8873

James K. Cobb, Director

cobblaw@pacbell.net 586-9172

Bill Finkelstein, Director, BVCA Webmaster

bill@williamfinkelstein.com 536-1026

Karen Sommer, Director, BVEP Coordinator,

ksommer11@earthlink.net 528-8982

BVCA VOICE Editor – Marilee Jensen, 576-0405,

marileejensen@gmail.com

BVCA MEMBERSHIP DUES, 2014

If you haven't yet paid your dues for 2014, the annual dues are \$15 plus any additional contribution you want to make. These contributions to BVCA may now be tax-deductible. You may either send in your check to BVCA, 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 BVCA website), then choose from the menu on the left side of the first page "Join/Renew: BVCA Membership", and follow the instructions. If you have any questions, about your membership dues, please call Larissa Goliti, 578-3453. If you have any questions about paying online, please call Bill Finkelstein, 536-1026. The VOICE is sent to anyone requesting it by email, regardless of membership, but it is only mailed to BVCA members, except for the month of January, each year. In January, the VOICE is mailed to everyone on the mailing list and the annual dues are requested. The VOICE may also be viewed by anyone, online in the Bennett Valley Community Association website.

Highlights, BVCA Meeting Minutes,

September 14

- Assembly candidates Bill Dodd and Charlie Schaupp participated in an election forum question and answer program at this meeting. Both candidates are looking to fill the seat of Assemblywoman Mariko Yamada, whose term is expiring.
- Debbie Forton discussed the financial reports and monthly expenditures as well as the status of the money market account and cash on hand. There was a discussion that membership was on the rise after notice was sent regarding the VOICE.
- BV Emergency Preparedness Committee (BVEP): Karen Sommer reported that the BV Fire Board of Directors approved the transfer of funds to BVCA, still held in the building fund. The amount is

approximately \$16,000 and will be transferred in January 2015, allocated for BVEP.

- VOICE Issues - Bill Finkelstein reported that postcards went out to non-members, informing them that mail delivery of the VOICE would be discontinued to non-members. The mailing produced additional membership applications. The Board also reaffirmed the BVCA policy of not allowing advertising in the VOICE.
- Board Elections - There were no new candidates and the Board members up for re-election were elected by default, under the BVCA bylaws.
- Discussion was held regarding possible speakers. Further inquiry was required to determine availability.

Board of Directors' Tentative Agenda

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

- Approval of minutes
- Treasurer's Report, Spending Requests
- Dues Increase
- County Reports
- Report from BV Emergency Preparedness Committee
- County Road Issues
- VOICE Issues
- Speakers for Upcoming Meetings
- New Business as determined by Board
- Adjourn. After adjournment, the elected board meets alone to have an organizational meeting for 2015, including selection of officers for the next year.

Ann Burow, "Appears To Be Oldest Woman in Sonoma County", from *Press Democrat* Columnist, Chris Smith, October 26

"... Bennett Valley community pillar Ann Beach Burow marked the anniversary of her birth. Ann belongs to the large and prominent Pisenti family that first appeared in Santa Rosa in the 1870's and settled en masse in 1922. As a young woman, Ann helped run a dairy on what's now Summerfield Road, and later she worked many years in the county Elections Department (*not to mention her 60+ years as the secretary of the Bennett Valley Grange*). She turned 109 years old on *October 23rd*. It appears Ann is the oldest woman in Sonoma County..."

Bees Could Benefit From Review

Press Democrat, September 27, 2014

Gov. Jerry Brown on Friday announced he signed legislation to accelerate the review of an insecticide that may be killing honey bees.

AB1789 by Democratic Assemblyman Das Williams of Santa Barbara sets a timeline and requirements for an ongoing pesticide review of compounds known as neonicotinoids. They are the most widely used class of insecticides and are acutely toxic to bees. They are suspected of being among several factors, including disease and declining forage space, leading to the collapse of honey bee colonies through out the U.S.

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

www.bennettvalley.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

Bennett Valley Community Calendar

Mark your calendars now!!

- **Bennett Valley Community Association:** The next meeting is Thursday, November 20, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall. See agenda on Page 7.
- **Bennett Valley Fire Protection District:** The Board of Directors generally meets the second Tuesday of each month, 7:00 pm, at the Bennett Valley Fire Station. Please call 823-1084 to confirm meeting date.
- **Bennett Valley Grange #16.** BV Grange Hall is serving as our Disaster Preparedness Center and a meeting place for community activities. They're having a Fall Harvest Dinner, Friday, November 21st, 6:00 pm, for members, family and friends. On Friday evening, November 14, from 5:00 pm until 8:00 pm, the Rincon Valley Charter School will be holding a benefit dinner, at the Grange. See Grange article on page 3 and go to <http://bvgrange.org> for more information. If you have any questions, please call Bill or Patty Allen, 544-3721.
- **Ham Radio Licensing, In Just One Day:** (From website [smrs](http://smrs.org)) The next scheduled one-day licensing class and exam is Saturday, December 13, at Petaluma Senior Center, 1310 Redwood Way. Cram session at 9:00 am, \$10, Exam session, 1:00 pm, \$15. Total \$25. Reservations required. Contact Dale, 762-0414 (leave message) or wb6tms@arrl.net, to get help with obtaining your Federal Registration Number.
- **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 elected Supervisor for our First District. If you have any concerns or questions, you may contact her District Director, Pat Gilardi, 565-3752, pat.gilardi@sonoma-county.org. Or you can contact Susan Gorin at 565-3752, susan.gorin@sonoma-county.org.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

- For emergencies, use your landline or your cell phone to call **911**.
- 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 a law enforcement response, call 565-2121.
- Call Sonoma County Road Maintenance (Public Works), 565-5100 to report dangerous potholes, clogged drains, fallen trees or landslides and to request possible help with litter control and bulk trash in the road. After hours, call 565-2121, for help from Sheriff's office.
- Call Sonoma County Animal Control, 565-7100, regarding the removal of dead animals along the road.
- Call California Highway Patrol, 588-1400, as another resource, if debris is causing imminent traffic hazards on county roads.