



Bennett Valley VOICE

www.bennettvalley.org

VOLUME 31, NUMBER 1

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION (BVHA)

JANUARY, 2008

To Help Bennett Valley Residents Prepare For Unforeseen Disasters or Emergencies!

The above statement is the goal of the recently formed Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness Steering Board (BVEP), now under the auspices of the Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association, with technical oversight from the Bennett Valley Fire Protection District personnel.

As one of the first steps for this Steering Board, Bennett Valley has been tentatively **divided into seven large "neighborhoods", as shown on Page Five**. In this process, a decision was made to not include the homes on the Crane Canyon side of Mount Taylor, as they are on the other side of the Rodgers Fault, and would probably be able to get more direct help from the Rohnert Park and Rancho Adobe Fire Districts, particularly in response to an earthquake. If there is interest in including that part of Bennett Valley, too, this can be reconsidered.

The seven designated neighborhoods are as follows: **Section 1 – Enterprise Rd., eastern Sonoma Mountain Road; Section 2 – Pressley Road and middle Sonoma Mountain Road; Section 3 – Bennett Ridge, Savannah Estates, Matanzas Creek Lane (aka Molinari Road) and BV Road encircling Bennett Ridge; Section 4 – Woodside, nearby BV Road and Sonoma Mountain Road, including Hidden Acres; Section 5 – Grange Road, Matanzas Creek Winery area and nearby BV Road; Section 6 – BV Road west of Grange Road; Section 7 – Holland Heights.** Can you identify your section?

Next we need to identify key contact people in each of these larger "neighborhoods", to help establish the smaller groups of 10+ households to work together in preparing for emergencies. If you are possibly interested, please contact Karen Sommer, 528-8982. A central communication site is also being considered at the BV Fire Station, plus an emergency shelter site at the BV Grange Hall.

Get Involved! Stay Informed!

It's time to step up and join the Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association for 2008. We need members to help actively pursue our Mission: *Promoting and preserving the rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley, while serving as a forum for community participation and providing a bridge for communication between government agencies and the BV community.* Your continued support is very important. Get involved, stay informed, and support the activities and information emanating from BVHA, as described in detail for 2007 on Page Two.

Please send your annual dues of \$15, plus any extra donations you're willing to make, especially for BV Emergency Preparation (BVEP). These extra donations will help us cover the costs for further fund-raising for emergency planning supplies, activities and training as well as enable us to send the VOICE to all 900 Bennett Valley parcel owners. In addition, these funds support our website so that everyone has the opportunity to be well-informed. Make your checks out to BVHA and **send to Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association, P.O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa, CA 95405.** For your convenience, a dues form and envelope are attached to this issue of the VOICE.

You will get your copy of the VOICE faster and help the Association save money by receiving this newsletter via e-mail. At the present time 178 households use this service, at an annual savings of \$437.88 in postage alone. This is a way you can help keep our costs down; just include your e-mail address on the membership form and return it with your dues. We'll do all the rest. If you have questions, please call Larissa Goliti or Jean LaCombe, Membership Coordinators, at 578-3453 or 585-3482; email <lgoliti@hotmail.com>.

BVHA in 2007

What did Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association accomplish in 2007?

- Produced another spectacular BV calendar, for 2008, with marvelous pictures of BV wildlife.
- Organized the BV Clean-Up Days on April 21st and November 3rd.
- Help to recruit and even paid some of the costs for a second Bennett Valley Community Emergency Response Training (CERT). We also agreed to incorporate Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness Steering Board as part of BVHA.
- Sent a letter to the Open Space District, supporting the proposed Trail (#5 below).
- Sent out six VOICE newsletters during the year, to the 900 homeowners in Bennett Valley, regardless of membership, which included a great deal of useful information.
- Arranged for the following speakers to make presentations for Bennett Valley residents at five of our seven meetings during the year:
 1. **January 17– Patty Keiser and Dan McCaskell discussed "A Brief History of Early Bennett Valley, 1850 to 1865".** Patty Keiser's grandparents had purchased 600 acres along Bennett Valley Road; she still lives on part of that same acreage.
 2. **March 21– Paul Hess, Director of Emergency Preparedness for the City of Santa Rosa discussed ways to better prepare for emergencies,** both individually and with neighbors.
 3. **May 16– Allen Fink, from Verizon Wireless,** answered questions and presented drawings/photo simulations of the **proposed treepole (cell phone tower) at the BV Fire Station.** (*As of 12/20/07,*) *Verizon has now applied to the County for approval for this cell phone tower.*) **Next Kevin Burris, from the BV Fire Station, discussed advisable pre-summer fire protection actions.**
 4. **September 12– Valerie Brown, the First District County Supervisor, and Phil Demery, the new Public Works Director,** discussed long-range planning on rural roads, especially BV Roads and the Sonoma Mountain Road closure. **At our request, Phil Demery also personally agreed to come out to examine the BV roads during the rainy season.**
 5. **November 14 – Kim Batchelder, from Sonoma Co. Open Space District, discussed the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project,** a proposed 4.25 mile public trail between Jack London State Park and Jacobs Ranch.

We're Looking for Volunteers for the BVHA Nominating Committee, to be appointed by May, 2008. We're also looking for a **BV Clean-up Roads Coordinator.** If you're interested, please call Craig Harrison at 573-9990.

Ham Cram, January 19th!

Are you interested in becoming licensed as a ham radio operator?

On Saturday, January 19th, a "ham cram" has been scheduled, from 8:30 am until 1:30 pm, at the Petaluma Senior Center, 210 Novak Drive. This is where you will be handed the booklet containing all 350 possible questions which can be asked on the 35-question test for a ham radio license, along with all the correct answers. You have several hours to study the booklet, with the exams starting at 1:30 pm, either for the beginning Technician Class or the more advanced General Class. The tests are graded shortly after you turn them in and you wait to find out if you've passed, what your FCC-assigned call sign is, etc. This is apparently working to get people quickly licensed as ham radio operators, as last year 90% passed the introductory Technician Class test.

Communication is one of the most crucial elements in an emergency. Home telephones and cell phones cannot be relied upon, and ham radios, officially known as amateur radios, operating on battery power, are the most reliable form of emergency communication. Sonoma County Office of Emergency Services has a group of 144 volunteer licensed ham radio operators for this reason. It would be helpful in Bennett Valley if more people were licensed as ham radio operators, with their own basic equipment, to facilitate communication between the widespread neighborhoods in Bennett Valley, as well as with the BV Fire Station.

If you want to sign up for this "ham cram", call Dale at 762-9414 or wb6tms@arrl.net. Leave your call back phone number, full name, mailing address, and call sign if you're already a licensed amateur. You can also sign up online, at www.smrs.us, as well as find directions to the Petaluma Senior Center, near East Washington Blvd. and McDowell Blvd. When you come to the "ham cram", you need to bring a photo ID, your social security number and the \$25 fee, which includes both the preparation and the exam.

If you are already a licensed ham radio operator, please contact Marilee Jensen, KF6IAM, at 576-0405, so that we may better organize our emergency communication in Bennett Valley.

Local Bennett Valley History

By Craig Harrison

This obituary, taken from the December 16, 2007 Press Democrat, contains some local history that ought to be remembered and preserved.

Bennett Valley developer and landscape architect Emmett Kent Sibbald died at home Dec. 4. He was 89. Sibbald and his brother, John Sibbald, developed Summit View Ranch in Bennett Valley in the 1970s on their mother's ranch. Though the project was criticized by anti-growth forces in the community, the brothers earned enough votes from the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors to develop the property. The brothers developed 23 lots and built 22 single-family homes.

"It was never a financially productive ranch," Nancy Sibbald said. "But it became a lovely little community with people of all different ages and types and professions." Sibbald, a professional landscape architect, designed the neighborhood to be spacious. Of the original 320 acres, 200 were left as open space. Each home also sits on several acres. He returned to Santa Rosa in the 1980s to live in a new house in the Summit View Ranch development, within sight of the old ranch house he grew up in.

Services will be at 1 p.m. Jan. 27 at the Bennett Valley Grange.

Bennett Valley T-shirts

Bobbie Blair and Suzanne Dougherty arranged to sell a number of Bennett Valley T-shirts this last year, with the \$1200 profit going to BVHA, for Emergency Preparedness. The art work on these lovely T-shirts was done by **Nancy Dell'Ergo, and we want to especially thank her for her special ability and contribution to BV Emergency Preparation.**

Bennett Valley 2008 Calendars

This was a most successful year for the Bennett Valley 2008 Wildlife Calendars, with most of them already sold. Special thanks to Sally Weare, for organizing this calendar production so rapidly (with a mid-August start date) and so well, along with a number of other people who were instrumental in this success. We also want to thank the local businesses who helped to sell these calendars: Ace Hardware, Cottage Gardens Nursery, Curves, Long's Drug Store, and Matanzas Creek Winery.

Can You Burn Wood Next Winter?

By Craig Harrison

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) has proposed regulations to restrict particulate matter from wood-burning devices that could take effect each winter beginning November 15, 2008. Under the proposal, it would be illegal to operate any wood burning fireplace or stove whenever the BAAQMD announced a "spare the air tonight" episode. Such episodes would typically be on the coldest winter nights. There are two exemptions that could apply to residents of Bennett Valley. First, any home whose sole source of heat is wood is exempt. Second, homes that are not supplied by natural gas are exempt. The second exemption allows wood to supplement propane because propane costs twice as much as natural gas on a heat basis. PG&E charges about \$17/million BTU for natural gas, and propane at a cost of \$2.42/gallon is equivalent to \$34/million BTU.

The proposal would bring the Bay Area into compliance with new federal standards for fine particles in the ambient air. There are several defects in the proposal. The BAAQMD treats the entire San Francisco Bay area -- from San Jose to Santa Rosa -- as a single homogenous air mass. Yet the accumulated wisdom after centuries of grape agriculture stresses the importance of micro-environment, and it seems silly to treat large areas as a single air mass. The BAAQMD has not identified any periods when Sonoma County has exceeded federal standards. The worst areas are San Jose (90 miles away) and Vallejo (35 miles away). Both of these cities have heavy truck traffic that may cause their problems, and the prevailing southwest winds would not push particulate matter from Sonoma County to the urban core of the Bay Area. The final rule may divide the Bay Area into subdivisions so that curtailments would be site-specific rather than region-wide. In addition, BAAQMD may exempt clean-burning wood stoves that meet EPA standards.

Get Your Car Ready For Winter Driving*

- Replace the windshield wiper blades if they're frayed or can't produce a clean windshield.
- Test your battery. Cold weather can rob up to 30% of its power. Replace if over four years old.
- Check your tires. Good tread allows water to escape and increases traction. Proper inflation improves safety and gas mileage.
- Keep your gas tank **FULL** for the unforeseen storms and possible emergencies.

**AAA Member Connection Brochure, Winter 2007*

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District

6161 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa
578-7761 (Non-Emergency Business Phone)

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. .

BENNETT VALLEY PAID FIREFIGHTING STAFF

Fire Chief: Andy Pforsich, 823-1084

24-hour Personnel: Lieutenants Kevin Burris and Matt Tognozzi, Engineer Danny Connelly

**Daytime Firefighters, 8:00am to 5:00 pm:
Engineer Patrick Tognozzi, Firefighters Brian Drees and Ronnie Lakin**

Supplemented and supported by many trained firefighting volunteers. Three volunteers are paid to sleep overnight at the Fire Station, for improved coverage and safety.

BV Firefighter Activities: November/December Lieutenant Kevin Burris

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District's call activity for the months of November and December 2007 was as follows:

Medical Aids, 14	Vehicle Accidents, 9
Alarm Sounding, 1	Smoke Checks, 2
Hazardous Conditions, 1	Public Assists, 5
Structure Fires, 3	Vehicle Fires, 1

Total Calls for the two months were 36.

- Bennett Valley Fire Protection District's final call total for the 2007 year was 293 emergency calls. This was a large increase (36%) from last year's total call volume of 216.
- Bennett Valley now has 10 Explorers in training every Monday night at the BV Fire Station. They are volunteer high school students receiving training to be firefighters. They sometimes share training with the Gold Ridge Explorers, including ladder training at the Santa Rosa Fire training tower.
- Lieutenant Gabe Stirnus and Engineer Steve Gritsch have recently left BV Fire to take promotional jobs with other public safety agencies. Two new BV firefighters, (Brian Drees and Patrick Tognozzi) were recruited from the volunteers at Bennett Valley and Gold Ridge Fire Protection Districts.
- Greg Martin, a former BV Fire Chief who works for Sonoma County, is now also working as a volunteer firefighter at Bennett Valley. His son, Ryan Martin, is one of the BV Explorers.

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

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

Craig Harrison, President
charrison@hunton.com, 573-9990

Eric Burns, Vice-President
datamonk@svn.net, 584-7531

Fay Blair, Treasurer
fayblair@sonic.net, 576-0152

Connie Montague, Recording Secretary
ecmonty@teevax.com, 542-4987

James K. Cobb, Director
cobblaw@pacbell.net, 586-9172

Larissa Goliti, Director
lgoliti@hotmail.com, 578-3453

Paul Hamilton, Director, 527-0671

Frank LaCombe, Director
franksgarage@peoplepc.com, 585-3482

Richard Lukasko, Director
rlukasko@hotmail.com, 566-7803

BVHA VOICE Editor – Marilee Jensen,
marileejensen@sbcglobal.net, 576-0405

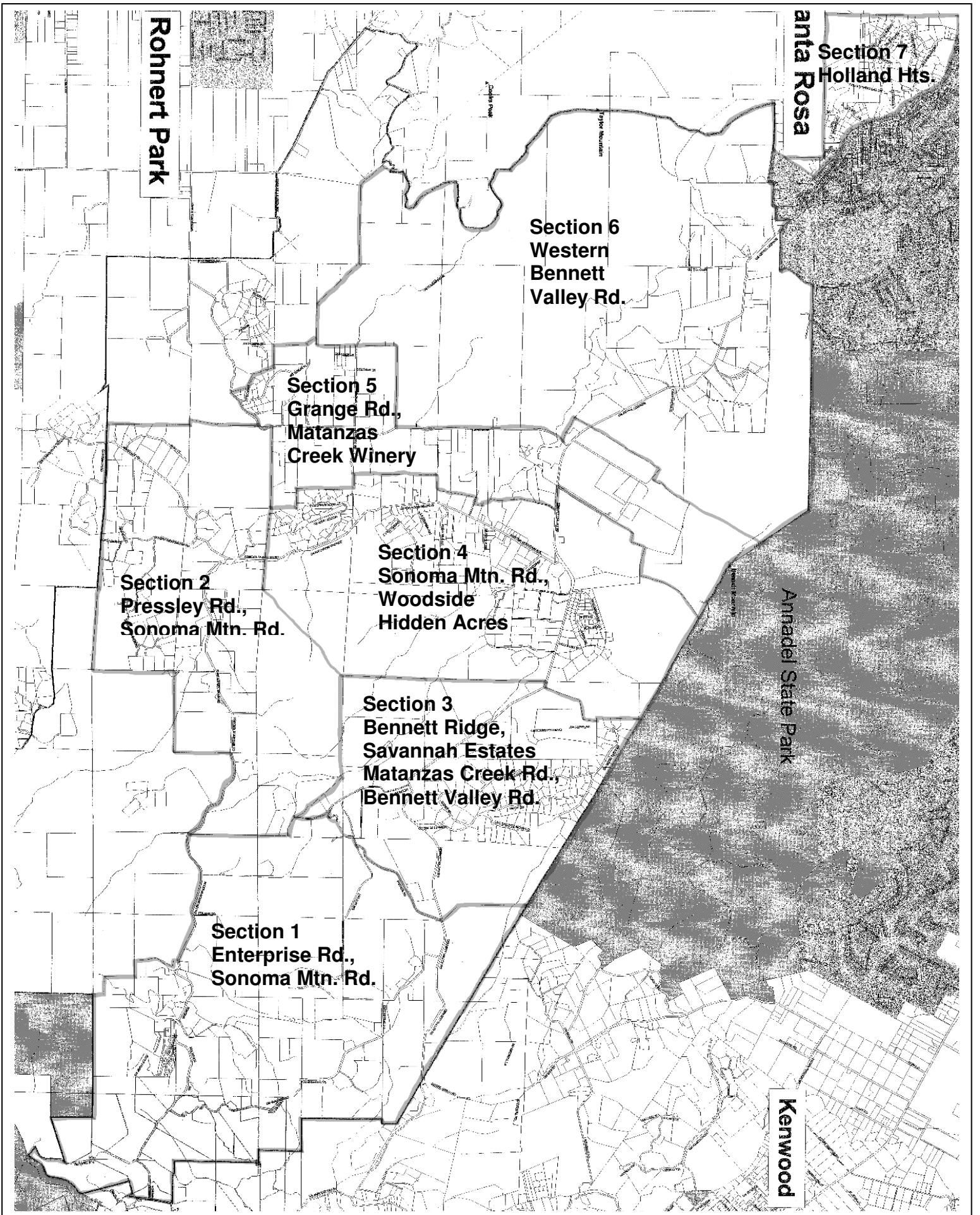
Brief Summary of BVHA Meeting, Nov. 14th

- President Craig Harrison announced the selected officers for the next year, as noted above.
- Craig asked Fay Blair, the new Treasurer, to prepare the proposed 2008 budget, for approval by the Board at the next meeting in March.
- At the Sonoma Mtn Road closure, gravel has been put in place for emergency vehicles only, but the heavy barriers still have to be removed to use it.
- Karen Sommer gave a BVEP presentation, including the mission statement. See Page One.
- A sub-committee of the Board will be presenting proposed changes to the BVHA bylaws at the next meeting; Larissa Goliti, Connie Montague and Craig Harrison.
- BVHA is considering having both candidates for the First District County Supervisor, Valerie Brown (incumbent) and David Reber, make a presentation at the BVHA March meeting, prior to the June election.
- Kim Batchelor, from Sonoma County Open Space District, made a presentation about the proposed Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail, which BVHA supported with a follow-up letter.

Board of Directors' Tentative Agenda

January 16, 7:00 pm, BV Grange

- Proposed 2008 Budget
- BVHA Bylaws Revision
- 2008 BVHA Meeting/Speaker Schedule
- Other business as determined by the Board



Rohnert Park

Santa Rosa

**Section 7
Holland Hts.**

**Section 6
Western
Bennett
Valley Rd.**

**Section 5
Grange Rd.,
Matanzas
Creek Winery**

**Section 2
Pressley Rd.,
Sonoma Mtn. Rd.**

**Section 4
Sonoma Mtn. Rd.,
Woodside
Hidden Acres**

**Section 3
Bennett Ridge,
Savannah Estates
Matanzas Creek Rd.,
Bennett Valley Rd.**

Annadel State Park

**Section 1
Enterprise Rd.,
Sonoma Mtn. Rd.**

Kenwood

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES, 2008

(BVHA MAILING LABEL)

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If you would like to receive the VOICE by e-mail, include your e-mail address.

E-mail address: _____

We also are interested in any corrections or additions we should make to your name(s), address, or phone #. (Current Phone#: _____) and hearing any comments or concerns you may have. If you don't have enough room, insert additional paper. Thanks!

Comments/Changes: _____

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES, 2008

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If you would like to receive the VOICE by e-mail, include your e-mail address.

E-mail address: _____

We also are interested in any corrections or additions we should make to your name(s), address, or phone #. (Current Phone#: _____) and hearing any comments or concerns you may have. If you don't have enough room, insert additional paper. Thanks!

Comments/Changes: _____

BENNETT VALLEY COMMUNITYCALENDAR

Remember to Mark Your Calendars.

1.) **Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA)**: Next meeting, Wednesday, January 16, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall. See Page Four for tentative agenda.

2.) **Bennett Valley Emergency Preparation (BVEP)** is working on having a class in CPR, First Aid and/or possibly Environmental Emergencies at the Bennett Valley Fire Station sometime this spring. If you're interested, please send an email to Karen Sommer, ksommer11@earthlink.net .

3.) **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 verify meetings in advance.

4.) **Sonoma County Board Of Supervisors** meets every Tuesday (except on weeks when there is a legal holiday) at 575 Administration Drive, Santa Rosa. Valerie Brown is the Supervisor for our First District. You may call her or Lynn Morton-Weil, her Aide, at 565-2241, if you have any questions or concerns.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

- Call Sonoma County Road Maintenance, at 565-7280, to report pot holes which need fixing or trash which needs to be picked up on the BV roads.
- Call 576-1371 to report emergencies from a cell phone in Bennett Valley; call 565-2121 to talk to someone at the Sheriff's office 24 hrs. every day, with concerns that may or may not be an emergency.

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

Website: www.bennettvalley.org

SPECIFIC PURPOSES OF BVHA: *"To promote and preserve the rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley, serve as an open forum for Bennett Valley community participation and provide a bridge for communication between government agencies and the Bennett Valley community."*

**Step Up;
Join 2008 BVHA!**

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