



THE

# Highlander

Nov./Dec. 2019

The Rural Bonny Doon Association Newsletter

## **RBDA Public Meeting: History and Terroir of Bonny Doon Ryan Beauregard**

Wednesday November 13, 7:30 p.m.  
Bonny Doon School Multipurpose Room  
Pine Flat Road & Ice Cream Grade

The 38,000 acre Ben Lomond Mountain AVA (American Viticultural Area), has a long, but intermittent, history of viticulture. First planted in the 1860s, the area became prominent before the century's end, led by William Cooper's Ben Lomond Wine Company. His death caused a long dormancy, but the area was resurrected in the 1970s, inspired by the world class Pinot Noir made by McHenry Vineyard and Felton Empire. Today, this appellation doesn't get the label recognition it deserves. In spite of reports of persistent deer and bird damage to vineyards as well as having been hit hard by Pierce's disease, the quality of fruit sourced from its vineyards still commands respect.

Beauregard Vineyards currently is leading the charge with 60 acres under vine and producing the only wines currently carrying the "Ben Lomond Mountain" appellation designation. The 4 by 16 mile viticultural area reaches elevations up to 2,600 feet, and sits above the fog, soaking in summer sunshine. The elevation and ocean proximity ensure a cool climate, and grapes ripen over an extended growing season.

Starting with 13 acres bought in 1949, the wine business has captured the attention of the Beauregard family for 4 generations. After decades of growing mountain grown grapes like Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandel, the Beauregards decided to break into the wine business directly. The original 13 acres of vines are still intact today and comprise the Beauregard Ranch Vineyard, planted with mostly Pinot Noir. From Amos to Bud, Jim and Ryan, the family has expanded its activities in the industry to the point of moving their tasting room to the old Lost Weekend bar location on Pine Flat.

Jim Beauregard was responsible for establishing the Ben Lomond Mountain Appellation, with the idea that the wines of this region have their very own distinct qualities that set them apart from the rest of the Santa Cruz Mountain appellation. The uniquely cool climate in Bonny Doon lends itself to wines that have complete flavor development and evolution, vineyards with rich soils and diversified microclimates and an overall feeling of rustic land-focused viticulture.

*Join us at the November meeting to hear Ryan Beauregard speak about his vineyard and winemaking operations as well as the special conditions Bonny Doon provides which allow Beauregard Vineyards to succeed in a very competitive wine market.*



## **Election for Adopting Proposition 218 Now Scheduled, Despite Local Objection**

*The following is an invited contribution from Steve Homan and Russell Mackey, Bonny Doon Residents, in response to the recently completed Engineer's Report from the County General Services Department which evaluates increased assessment rates for County Service Area (CSA) 48.*

The proposed Prop. 218 CSA 48 fire tax is being represented as a special benefits tax, with 4 criteria, so that the election can be won with 50%+1 vote, rather than the usual 2/3 vote under Prop. 218. We refuse to consider supporting such a measure until the Board of Supervisors orders a management study and a forensic audit of the existing Cal Fire Administration's management of CSA 48 County Fire. Cal Fire is currently not meeting its contract to recruit, train, and retain volunteers for County Fire. **All Cal Fire wants is more paid firefighters, not a vibrant and vigorous volunteer firefighting force.** Cal Fire wants its new paid employees to be paid for by County Fire, while it provides lip service to its contractual commitment to the County Fire CSA 48 Volunteer Program.

In past years, Cal Fire Administration had a \$500,000 grant to recruit, train, and retain volunteers. They spent less than half of this grant, and when they asked for a grant extension/renewal, they were denied. Cal Fire has little real interest in recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers. That is because it is against the interests of Cal Fire to have more volunteers; rather, Cal Fire Administration wants more paid firefighters, instead.

This "Engineer's Report" barely mentions volunteers as being the existing and affordable 3rd and 4th responders to firefighting calls, it just focuses on

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**KEEPING BONNY DOON RURAL AND NATURAL SINCE 1957**

# **Town Hall for Santa Cruz County Fire Focuses on Proposition 218 Balloting Process**

*On August 13, Fire Chief Ian Larkin met with about 50 Bonny Doon residents. He presented an overview of the state of the Santa Cruz County Fire Department (SCCFD), answered general questions from the audience and explained the Proposition 218 ballot proposal to have the owners of the average single-family residence pay an estimated \$150/year for fire services. SCCFD claims that without this funding or money from the County, they may have to close fire stations during the winter. The following is an invited contribution from Doug Aumack, chairman of the Santa Cruz Fire Department Advisory Commission and a volunteer engineer with Company 29 South Skyline Fire and Rescue. We present a different perspective about this in this issue of The Highlander. The RBDA Board has not taken an official position on this issue yet.*

The August 13 Town Hall for Santa Cruz County Fire, held at Bonny Doon Elementary School, was well attended. Thank you to all who came to listen and participate by voicing your questions and concerns.

Many people were unaware that our Santa Cruz County Fire Department is actually a combination of five Volunteer fire companies located throughout the County and responsible for covering approximately 266 square miles. Each Volunteer company is paired with a corresponding State fire station. The Bonny Doon Volunteers are your local volunteers, and they respond with Cal Fire personnel from the Fall Creek station.

Many of the questions were focused on the nature of the Proposition 218 balloting process, including how the weighted vote works, and how much people would pay if a ballot measure is passed. Chief Larkin and other speakers explained this in detail at the meeting. To recap the main points:

1) A Proposition 218 ballot is initiated following approval of the County Supervisors, at which time ballots are

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# **Response to Engineer's Report for Prop. 218 Ballot**

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obtaining another paid firefighter during the non-fire season.

The Board of Supervisors has been told by County staff at budget hearings that within the existing funding scheme, County Fire is good through 2023, at least. What is the rush to adopt this proposed tax increase, which on its face appears not to be legally supportable under Proposition 218?

The proposed criteria for the Special Benefit Fire Tax Increase include the four following categories: 1) Fire-risk; 2) Structure replacement value; 3) Fire hazard risk zone and 4) Travel time from closest fire station. Our evaluation of their assessment of each criterion follows.

**Fire risk.** Fire risk values are proposed to be based on the type of parcel, land use, structure use, and type of structure. In order for this to be a special benefit tax, each parcel would require an individual inspection, rather than being grouped in a chart based on estimated risk factors. Doing this makes it a general benefit? Where is the actual science in this method? Where are the actual data? This criterion seems unlikely to withstand a legal challenge.

**Structure replacement value.** This is based on an average, which is quite a bit lower than what many of the residents in CSA 48 have their homes insured for. Larger parcels, even those with just one home on site, are proposed for an additional tax assessment, based on the agricultural or rangeland use (or forest, open space, or timber harvest use?). This part of the proposal is an attempt to tax local property owners within CSA 48 for firefighting that is actually 100% the responsibility of Cal Fire in State Responsibility Areas, which includes most of the unincorporated area of Santa Cruz County. ***Cal Fire wants the County to pay a second time for rural wildland firefighting that is already funded by State of CA property taxes.*** Cal Fire wildland firefighting is being conflated by Cal Fire and the Engineer's Report with the local structure fire, accident response, and medical response by Volunteer Firefighters. This criterion seems unlikely to withstand a legal challenge.

**Fire hazard risk zone** (This is very similar to #1 in concept). This is a method of computing fire hazard based on county hazard maps, which are based on the subjective opinion of county map-makers over the decades, and some history. There is no hard science to base these findings on. The difference in risk between "None" and "Very high" risk is 20%, an artificially assigned subjective value. Where is the science supporting this finding? Where is the real data? This criterion seems unlikely to withstand a legal challenge.

**Travel time from the closest fire station.** This criterion is ridiculous on its face. Under this proposal, taxpayers living farther from a fire station can expect to pay less tax. However, taxpayers farther from a fire station do not receive less service; rather, it just takes longer for the service to arrive and begin. When the station is distant it takes more vehicle fuel, firefighter time, and fire engine time to accomplish firefighting, water transport, and lifesaving. In Bonny Doon, as an example, there is one (mostly 24/7) Cal Fire Station, one heavily used volunteer fire station, and one volunteer fire station that receives limited use. There is no intelligent way that we know of to compute the distance from a potential fire or lifesaving location to these three stations, each with different levels of use. This criterion makes no sense. It is based on the potentially false assumption that properties farther from a fire station receive reduced service. Furthermore, 2/3 to 3/4 of fire calls are calls for medical assistance. Some volunteer firefighting units in County Fire CSA 48 have emergency medical responders who may respond from their own homes closer to the call, using personal vehicles, and this has nothing to do with the distance from the fire station. This criterion seems unlikely to withstand a legal challenge.

We argue that all of these criteria are based on assumptions, subjective findings, past subjective mapping, and contrived calculations, rather than on data or facts. This is not an engineer's report; rather it is a sales proposal that is based on unsupported assumptions and contrived calculations. ***Despite objections, on October 22, the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to proceed to a ballot, and plan to hold a postcard election for all property owners. There will also be a public hearing on January 14.***

## Prop. 218 Town Hall

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mailed to all property owners in the CSA 48 area. The owners have 45 days in which to respond.

2) Votes are tallied on a weighted basis proportional to the benefit received. The amount the property owner would pay is also calculated in proportion to the benefit received for each property and will be clearly shown on each ballot. The average single-family homeowner would pay about \$151 per year. Some owners will pay more and some less, depending on their proximity to the closest available fire station and other factors. These are described in the online FAQs (see link below).

3) The proposed Proposition 218 ballot measure fee is in addition to the CSA fee shown on your current property tax bill. For a single-family home, that amount is approximately \$160 per year.

4) The history of CSA 48 and the Santa Cruz County Fire Department dates back all the way to Proposition 13 in 1978 and the resulting formation of CSA 48 in 1998 to provide the necessary additional funding to keep our County fire department viable. Details of this are being added to the online FAQs.

Following the meeting, many people did take the time to talk with Chief Ian Larkin and express their appreciation and support for Santa Cruz County Fire. Thank you!

More details on the above and answers to many other questions are being added to the FAQs at [santacruzcountyfire.com/front\\_page/csa\\_48\\_faq.pdf](http://santacruzcountyfire.com/front_page/csa_48_faq.pdf). For more information, visit our website at [santacruzcountyfire.com](http://santacruzcountyfire.com) or email Chief Larkin at [csa48feedback@gmail.com](mailto:csa48feedback@gmail.com).

## RBDA Board Nominations Vice Chair and Treasurer Needed

The RBDA serves as a pipeline to the Santa Cruz County government to advocate for necessary public services and for strong land use regulations that protect Bonny Doon from negatively impactful development.

To continue to serve in that role, we need board officers. As usual, at our General meeting on November 13, we will open nominations for positions on the RBDA Executive Board, and the election will be held at the January 2020 Annual RBDA meeting. You can nominate yourself, or somebody not present.

The terms of two officers, Kendra Turk-Kubo, and David Rubin, expire in January. Martin Burmeister was appointed to the vacancy left by Tom Hearn's retirement, and he will be formally nominated to fill the balance of Tom's term which ends in January 2021.

In addition to these seats, we will have two additional positions to fill, the Vice Chair and Treasurer. The primary responsibility of the Vice Chair is to identify and organize the speakers for our public meetings. The Treasurer is responsible for basic bookkeeping, and a yearly simple tax filing with the IRS. Both positions do not require much time commitment.

Many of our currently serving board members became involved through a desire to advocate for a particular issue facing their neighborhood.

If you are interested and able to help Bonny Doon and the RBDA by serving as a Board officer, please contact the Board by email at [board@rbda.us](mailto:board@rbda.us). To be nominated or to vote you must be a member in good standing. You can join or renew your membership at a public meeting or at [bonnydoon.got.net/members.html](http://bonnydoon.got.net/members.html).

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## RBDA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**Yearly dues are \$20/pp or \$15/pp for multiple members at same address.**

**Memberships expire on Jan. 31 of the next year. \***

Number of Members \_\_\_\_\_ Number of years you are  joining or  renewing for \_\_\_\_\_

Multiply years times number of memberships. Checks only, please, made out to RBDA.

Amount enclosed for dues: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I also wish to support the RBDA with an additional contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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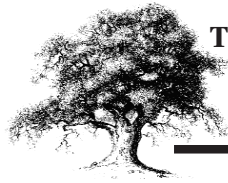
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Clip out and mail to RBDA, P.O. Box 551, Felton, CA 95018.

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your voice for keeping  
Bonny Doon rural  
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Additional contributions  
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greatly appreciated!

\*Dues paid after Nov. 30  
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# THE Highlander

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*Bonny Doon's voice in preserving our special quality of life, The Highlander, is mailed free 6 times a year. RBDA Public Meetings are usually held the second Wednesdays of January, March, May, September and November. We encourage you to participate. Send correspondence to The Highlander at the above address.*

**Access the RBDA on the Internet at:**

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*RBDA, Rural Bonny Doon Association*

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**ADVISORS:** Ted Benhari and Marty Demare (former board members)

***Bonny Doon Resident  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060***

## ***Public Meeting Nov. 13: Ryan Beauregard on Bonny Doon Terroir***

### ***UCSC Lurches Toward a New Growth Plan***

As UC-Santa Cruz lumbers toward creating a plan for its future growth, community sentiment continues to coalesce around limiting its impacts on local resources and the quality of life.

The UCSC 2020-2040 Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) is aimed at studying what it would mean, in terms of facilities and campus land use, for the university to grow from its 2020 limit of 19,500 students, to an enrollment in 2040 of 28,000 students.

With Santa Cruz traffic growing increasingly worse, and housing costs continuing to rise, the UCSC growth target has ignited alarm, and united in purpose, everyone from neighborhood groups to commercial interests to local officials and activists who have worked for years to preserve the quality of life in Santa Cruz and surrounding communities, like Bonny Doon, which are impacted by constant UCSC expansion.

Added to the concerns in the last few years is the clear deterioration of the quality of a UCSC education, with overcrowded facilities, increasing student to faculty ratios, and problems like students not being able to take classes

needed for graduation on a timely basis, which is expensive for the students and their families and increases the impact on local resources and housing.

UCSC is planning to publish the outlines of its 2020-2040 growth plans in early 2020, at which point it will begin preparing an Environmental Impact Report to study the ramifications of executing those plans. The first draft of that report is scheduled to be published early next year. UCSC recently released two rough versions of what it may explore. Alarmingly, both place most of the growth on the North Campus, in Bonny Doon. Another disturbing revelation is that in each version the university is thinking about building employee housing on the open western side of Empire Grade.

In the meantime, the City and County have funded (approximately \$60,000 each) a program to try to influence the State Legislature to increase support for the UC system, which has greatly lagged the ever-increasing costs. An advisory group representing various local interests has been created (the RBDA is a participant). This may be a quixotic quest. To succeed, it will take a coalition of local

citizens of the UC host cities, students and their families to support the effort. Clearly, that will be very difficult to achieve.

One of the first efforts of the advisory group is to gather statistical evidence of the local impacts of UCSC growth, such as water use, traffic counts and housing costs, to form a measurable baseline to understand factually what it means to say that the university has exceeded the carrying capacity of the community.

The UCSC LRDP process has been delayed to give new Chancellor Cindy Larive a chance to put her own imprint on the plan. At a recent meeting of the Community Advisory Group UCSC created to get local input on its growth plans, Chancellor Larive said she was open to alternatives to placing all the planned growth on the local campus. UCSC has a satellite campus in Silicon Valley, for grad students, and owns land in Ft. Ord where another satellite campus might be created. While her willingness to explore these options was welcomed, if they don't result in legally binding commitments to move ahead with them, they are meaningless and will do nothing to alleviate the impact on our community.