



Hello, Friend,

Welcome to the December 2025 edition of the Ben Lomond Village Alliance newsletter! What a beautiful month November was here in the mountains - clear, crisp sunny days and the kind of cold nights that really let you know winter is coming!

And of course, here in Ben Lomond we welcomed winter with our second annual Tree Lighting at the Fire Station, and it was a night to remember. Hundreds of people came to celebrate the season; enjoying seeing friends and neighbors and engaging with crafts, vendors, musicians, caroling, and of course hot cocoa!

Read on for information about some exciting upcoming events and ways to stay connected and get involved.

~The Team at the BLVA

UPCOMING BLVA EVENTS

SUPPER CLUB - HOLIDAY COOKIE EXCHANGE

Sun, December 14 | 1:00 - 3:00 PM

Howden Castle, Ben Lomond

Come to the Howden Castle for a Holiday Cookie Party! Your hosts Will and Tia will provide beverages and some finger food while guests are asked to bring at least two dozen of their favorite holiday cookies (along with 25 copies of the recipe) to share. Snacks and mingling will be followed by a cookie exchange. Plan on bringing an extra container to pack up your share of the cookies!

100% of the proceeds from this event will benefit Valley Churches United, so please select a ticket price that fits your ability to donate. Let's help out our neighbors who are experiencing food insecurity. Make a donation to reserve your spot [HERE](#)



CONTRA DANCE & POTLUCK

Fri, January 9 | 5:30 - 10:00 PM

Park Hall Community Center, 9400 Mill Street

Come Contra dance with a live band an excellent caller - no experience necessary! Doors open at 5:30pm

Potluck 5:30pm – 6:30pm

Beginner's Tutorial – 6:30pm – 7:00pm

Dancing 7:00pm – 10:00pm

Please plan to bring your own dishware, utensils and cups to the potluck.

Get your tickets [HERE](#). All ages are welcome, and this will be an alcohol-free event.

If you are asking yourself, “What is Contra Dance?” it’s actually quite similar to Square Dancing... Contra Dance is a traditional American dance in which couples dance in two long facing lines or in groups of four. Affectionately referred to as an “entryway dance” by dancers, contra dance is by far the most accessible of all dances for beginners. Contra dance is also known as English country dance, New England folk dance, a barn dance, or Appalachian folk dance.

BEN LOMOND HISTORY PRESENTATION – TALES OF BEN LOMOND PART 1 RETURNS!

Thurs, January 15 | 7pm (doors open 6:30)

Park Hall Community Center, 9400 Mill Street

Back by popular demand with expanded content and new photos! Local historian and Realtor Ronnie Trubek will present an engaging lecture on the history of Ben Lomond and the colorful characters who shaped the history of the San Lorenzo Valley. Ronnie will present Part 1 again of a three-part series with new historical photos and expanded material. Parts 2 and 3 of the series will be presented on March 12 (Part 2) and April 16 (Part 3). This event will include an intermission and concessions for sale.. Tickets are available on the BLVA website [HERE](#).

OTHER LOCAL EVENTS

MOUNTAIN FEED & FARM SUPPLY

9550 CA-9, Ben Lomond

Seasonal Wreath Making Class

Saturday, 12/13 | 10:00 am-12PM

With Jess Tunis, you'll create a one-of-a-kind seasonal masterpiece including dried flowers, and foraged accents.

More info and register [HERE](#)

Santa Day Encore

Saturday, 12/20 | 11:00am - 2:00pm

Stop by and meet Santa! Enjoy complimentary local, fresh pressed cider, photos for families & friendly pets, (bring your own cameras please).

SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS ART CENTER

9341 Mill Street

For last-minute shoppers, SCMA is staying open every day from December 15 through the 22nd, 12-5:00 pm. Visit their annual holiday-themed show for a dazzling selection of everything from framed paintings, crafty wall hangings, and functional ceramics to sculpture, jewelry, cards, glass, woodwork, and more! Find out more [HERE](#).

Free Family Gift-Making Workshop

December 13 | 12-3pm

A favorite holiday tradition is SMCA's family gift-making workshop. Talented member artists show up to offer crafts that are fun for the whole family. It's always free and always fun.

LOCAL MOVIES & FARO

Thursdays 4-10pm

Brookdale Lodge

Come by the Brookdale Lodge on Thursday evenings for showings of a variety of short films organized by Scott Deal. Check [KSLV.tv](https://www.kslv.com) for updates and buy your ticket there or at the door.

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

LA PLACA FAMILY BAKERY

9280 Hwy 9, Ben Lomond

A sometimes overlooked spot, La Placa Family Bakery is a great place to go when you are hungry or in need of coffee and a sweet treat! Enjoy authentic Sicilian almond cookies (gluten free!), puff pastries, dolci, and delicious thin-crust pizza. They also serve a variety of other Italian foods changing from day to day - lasagna, calzone, sandwiches and other delicious entrees. And don't forget espresso drinks and gelato too! While you are there, ask for the cannoli. Open 7am-8pm Tuesday through Sunday, you can't go wrong popping in for a treat [HERE!](#)

SLV WATER ASSISTANCE

SLV Water has openings in the low income assistance program. For more information click [HERE](#).

GET INVOLVED

SUPPORT BEN LOMOND VILLAGE ALLIANCE

Are you in need of some stocking stuffers or last-minute gifts on hand? It's not too late to purchase from the BLVA Merch store. Limited quantities of items still available include:

- The inaugural Supper Club Cookbook
- Ben Lomond Village Alliance holiday mug
- Ben Lomond Village Alliance tote
- 2025 Ben Lomond Village Alliance Ornament
- Ben Lomond Scottish Day long-sleeve t-shirts

Order yours [HERE](#) today and we'll arrange to get them to you before Christmas.



BEAUTIFICATION & BETTER STREETS COMMITTEE UPDATES

The County's contractor has begun repair of our downtown decorative streetlights on Mill, Main and Highway 9. In February, the Better Streets committee submitted a list of 18 streetlights needing repair. About half of those have been fixed and are making walking in downtown safer at night. The committee has offered to help clean the poles of moss, tags and graffiti and to re-number the poles for easier identification when reporting an outage. Kudos to the County Public Works Dept.



Better Streets Committee members Nicole Liebenthal and Jamie Helmer have begun meeting with Santa Cruz Trails Executive Director Matt DeYoung to learn more about trail development, volunteer opportunities, stewardship and the organization's 2030 strategic plan. This aligns with the Committee's vision to connect the Ben Lomond Village to surrounding ridges and new and existing trail systems.

Caltrans indicated at Supervisor Martinez' State of the Roads Town Hall on November 13 that work orders are being processed to post Highway 9 in downtown Ben Lomond to a 25mph speed limit. Caltrans is also installing more highly visible accessible ramps on Highway 9 at Glen Arbor Rd., Main St. and Fillmore Av. Thanks to Caltrans for helping to slow traffic and making crossing our streets more accessible and safe.

The BLVA Board has been actively involved in reviewing the Regional Transportation Commission's draft plan for future safety enhancements on Highway 9 in downtown Ben Lomond. Nine segments of rural highway were selected on six different State Highways throughout Santa Cruz County, and Highway 9 in downtown Ben Lomond was identified as an area with a higher than average risk to drivers, pedestrians and cyclists. After outreach to downtown businesses and stakeholders for input, our recommendations were submitted to the RTC on November 19.

If you are interested in timely updates or to get involved with any of the initiatives the Beautification and Better Streets Committee is working on, you can join the committee. Please sign up [HERE](#).



RECENT IMPACT

TREE LIGHTING & HOLIDAY MARKET

Held November 30 at Ben Lomond Fire Station

The second annual Tree Lighting was a huge success! Hundreds of people came to the Ben Lomond Fire Station and enjoyed a sumptuous hot cocoa bar, music, crafts for the kids and more. This year we incorporated a Holiday Market where local craft people and artists sold their wares, giving lots of opportunity for gift shopping. A troupe of volunteer carolers led the crowd singing, and Santa made it safely to the event on his fire truck to the delight of the crowd. Thank you to everyone who volunteered to make this event a success, and to everyone who came to celebrate the season with friends and neighbors!



THANK YOU! ❤️

As we wrap up the year, we're filled with gratitude for the passion, generosity, and neighborly spirit that define Ben Lomond. Every event you've attended, every idea you've shared, and every time you've shown up for our village has made 2025 a truly meaningful year for the BLVA. Thank you for helping us build a community rooted in connection, care, and joy. We're excited to step into the new year together and continue the work that makes our village such a special place to call home.

Please help spread the word so the BLVA can reach even more community members in the year ahead. Share our mission with your network, invite your friends and neighbors to [join our membership list](#) and stay connected online. Follow us on [FACEBOOK](#) and fave us on [NEXTDOOR](#).

If you have questions, would like more information about BLVA initiatives, or have any Ben Lomond-related announcements for us to share in our newsletters, please contact Ariel at Secretary@BenLomondVillage.org

Thank you for being a part of the Ben Lomond Village Alliance family. We wish you a safe & happy holiday season!

Warm regards,

Ben Lomond Village Alliance

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Our Mailing address is:

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