

The Local Buzz

January 2016



President's Message, Jerry Van Heeringen

Most of my work as a general contractor has been outdoors so I've been working on dry days and any time I'm home it seems to be raining. We had a nice day yesterday and I got home early and finally got to see some of my bees flying. I have to admit that they have suffered from neglect this year but looking at the weather forecast for next week it looks like we're going to have a stretch of dry days so I hope to find time to open the hives. I'm anxious to see how they are doing but at the same time afraid of what I might find. I hope everyone else has done a better job of caring for their bees.

There were several members of the El Dorado Backyard Beekeepers at our last meeting. They wrote a lengthy article about attending our meeting. If you'd like to read the article you can find it at edbbk.com. Scroll down the page and look for the article titled "Our Neighbors to the North".

February 1st Meeting – 7:00 PM

Grass Valley Veteran's Memorial Building – 255 South Auburn Street in Grass Valley

Our speaker will be Elina L. Nino Ph.D.

Elina works at UC Davis department of Entomology and Nematology and has a BS in Animal Science and a Ph.D. in Entomology. We look forward to her talk about one of her many interests in Honey Bee Biology, Health, Breeding, Behavior, Reproductive Physiology, Genomics, Chemical Ecology, Sociology of Beekeeping.

Bee Bits

Randy Oliver, Contributor

I almost forgot what a rainy winter was like. So good to see these nice soaking rains one after another. During the brief breaks, the bees are flying avidly, and alder pollen is finally trickling in.

For those of us getting ready to move our hives to almond pollination, we are dreading the mud. Not only that, but a couple of days ago a friend told me that he saw an orchard in which the already-placed hives were under water up to the upper hive body. I haven't seen that happen since around the turn of the century (the 21st).

Although so far the generous amount of precipitation has not yet broken the drought, it certainly bodes well for a better honey flow this coming summer—let's keep our fingers crossed. As far as hive management this month, watch the entrances to see whether your bees are bringing in pollen. The next month or so is the most difficult time of the year for colonies (at least those in which varroa is controlled). It is the time of the "spring turnover," during which the aged "winter bees" must rear a new generation to replace them as they rapidly die off through attrition. In order to do so, they need lots of pollen. If it rains every day, they will not be able to forage, and they will be forced to curtail brood rearing. If you see this happening, it helps the colony greatly to give them some protein supplement ("pollen" patties).

The feeding of protein patties may get more complicated in Nevada County this year. For the first time, this summer we found Small Hive Beetle (SHB) larvae growing in the protein patties in our lowest elevation yards. It appears that SHB may be moving up the hill, to my great dismay. We sure don't need another headache!

On another subject, a member chastised me for interacting with Brion during his excellent presentation at last month's meeting. I guess that I was just a bit too comfortable, since Brion and I had been discussing his

presentation for a few days, and he had borrowed several of my slides. In any case, rest assured that if any of you wish to give a presentation, I won't be interrupting you. I apologize sincerely to any others whom I may have offended.

That said, I'm privy to seeing what happens at beekeeper's meetings all over the country. Some clubs are far more interactive with their speakers than others (including ours). For example, I recently gave back-to-back day-long presentations to a highly-involved group of beekeepers in Connecticut. The first day I got through a single PowerPoint presentation; ditto for the second day. During both days, there were so many audience questions and interactions that it took 6 hours each day to cover what would normally be a 1-hour presentation. What a great learning experience for all involved, including myself—the best way to learn something is to try to teach it. I find that being challenged during presentations forces me to question everything that I think that I “know,” and to see whether I can back it up with evidence.

The number of beekeeping associations across the nation has exploded in recent years. Some states have dozens of them. What's been interesting to me is to watch them evolve. As with most organizations, 5% of the members do 95% of the work. During the explosion of interest in beekeeping, there have been battles for direction in many clubs. One or more high-energy “newbees”, convinced that everyone must be a top bar beekeeper, or anti-neonic protester, or treatment-free beekeeper, hijacks the club. The experienced beekeepers give up and stop coming to meetings. Or they start a separate association (as happened in Colorado last year). I'm glad to see that our Association has so far evaded this sort of thing.

When I say that associations are evolving, what I'm seeing is that the members of many young associations finally get tired of seeing their colonies die year after year. The members lose respect for those adamant leaders, and finally get back to learning how to keep bees healthy. Practicality trumps idealism. My inbox gets flooded with letters from beekeepers in their 4th or 5th year who finally feel successful—they are bubbling over with excitement, and warm my heart.

I've been suggesting of late to our Executive Board that we form a Program Committee, and solicit more “outside” speakers. One thing that works well (in my humble opinion) is asking successful (as in have been able to keep their colonies healthy and productive for a number of years, or that have a profitable business involving some aspect of bees or hive products) beekeepers to put together a presentation of what they've learned and how they do it. (Of note, there are also a number of popular speakers who tend to be heavier on rhetoric than reality. As anyone who has Googled for information on beekeeping knows, there is no lack of strong opinions when it comes to beekeeping). Anyway, if you know of someone who you feel has something of value to share with our Association, please let V.P. Dave Pfadt know.

Minutes from Last Meeting

Pres Jerry Van Heeringen opened meeting. Leslie Gault acting treasurer took 2016 dues for Janet Brisson. No finance report. Former President Rob Slay of A-Z hardware announced beginning beekeeping classes. Several members reported colonies starved out. Randy Oliver has been working on an ordinance to discourage Valley commercial beekeepers from sneaking in entire apiaries, and planting them in locally established yards, without owner ID. If you have a good location, don't tell the world.

Program: Brion Dunbar on 'Divides.' A colony which has built numbers over the winter and is strong enough to be split, can avoid swarming loss by having the majority of capped comb and young bees separated into a new hive. The old queen and foragers will start new succession queen cells and rebuild the colony if pollen and nectar allow. The bees in the split hive will start queen succession cells and raise queens if drones are flying, but there will be no brood for 24 days. The queenless split can be given a bred queen and take earlier advantage of honey flow, or get a queen cell which will emerge soon, but will not lay eggs for 12 days, and no workers will be available for a month. Oxalic acid will be most effective against Varroa when applied to the old hive when split (minimum brood) and to the new hive between 19 and 30 days (no sealed brood.)

Raffle Prizes

We always need more contributions to the monthly raffle! Almost everyone loves having more plants. Be creative. For every item you bring, you receive a free raffle ticket. The raffle helps with the club's expenses. Thanks!

From the Librarian

Tynowyn Slattery

Library books are checked out for 1 month, if you want to extend it for a second month just call or e-mail.

Remember...If you can't make meetings to return books, you can always mail them to:

Tynowyn Slattery 20493 Rome Road Nevada City, CA 95959 swoolman@saber.net 530-265-6318

One (more) Thing I Learned about Beekeeping

By Brion Dunbar

I had about a dozen or so colonies die out between early December when I treated with oxalic acid dribble, and early January when I did inspections and added pollen sub. Many of these colonies starved out with a full box of honey in the top box. The bottom box may have been a bit too light going into the winter, but overall the weight seemed ok. What was common was the top box of honey was all 'light' comb, never had brood in it.

Apparently some colonies are hesitant to move up into light comb. So the takeaway message is to insure there are a couple frames of dark comb/honey in the top box before going into winter.

Time to Pay Your 2016 Dues!

Janet Brisson, Treasurer

As a valuable club member you receive coupons for 25% discounts on a major beekeeping magazine and local discounts on equipment. Your dues help support Beekeeping in Nevada County.

The NCBA works towards educating people about beekeeping and agriculture, keeping everyone up to date on the latest news and techniques for the beginning beekeeper to the very advanced.

You can pay dues at the meeting, if using cash, please try to bring the exact change. If you would like to pay dues through the mail, please send your check made out to NCBA or Nevada County Beekeepers Association, for either \$20.00 (includes newsletter through mail) or \$15.00 (includes digital newsletter).

NCBA C/o Janet Brisson

20693 Dog Bar Road Grass Valley, CA 95949

Any questions, please feel free to call me at 530-913-2724 or email me at rubes@countryrubes.com

Mason Valley Beekeepers Conference

By Janet Brisson

Mason Valley Beekeepers are holding their yearly conference in Yerington, Nevada February 26th and 27th. It is reasonably priced at \$65.00 and includes a Friday night Banquet and a Saturday Lunch. The conference features Dr. Larry Conner, Randy Oliver and a mead maker, among others. I'm speaking as well, but giving the same talk on Winter Feeding & Counting Mites that I did last year. The main part of the conference is Saturday, but Dr. Conner is going to be the guest speaker during the banquet Friday night. Check out the information here <http://www.masonvalleybeekeepers.org/2016-beekeepers-conference.html> or google Mason Valley Beekeepers. Their website has more information plus places to stay.

A Guide to Beekeeping in West Virginia

An interesting 47 page document covering many things a beekeeping needs to consider.

<http://www.agriculture.wv.gov/divisions/comm/Documents/Publications%20Print/Beekeeping%20in%20West%20Virginia.pdf>

Beginning Beekeeping Classes

- February 20th with Serge Labesque
- March 19th with Gary

All classes are held at the Horseman's Lodge, located at 10600 Bubbling Wells Rd.

Times are 8:30 am to 4 pm

Cost is \$40.00 and includes lunch

Upcoming classes are sponsored by A To Z Supply. Contact them to reserve a spot: 530.273.6608.

Nevada County Ag Department Update

The county is no longer mailing out the apiary registration form.

You can go into the office to get a copy, or get it online here: <http://ow.ly/Xn5IU>

Registration is free for hobbyists and is a good idea so as to be notified of any pesticide application in your area.

"Apiary locations derived from the registrations are uploaded into our pesticide permitting program, allowing us to condition pesticide permits when adjacent to known apiaries. Apiary registrations also allow the Agricultural Commissioner's staff to better investigate complaints related to bees. Apiary registration is not a new law; it has been in effect in part since 1967, and in its current form since 1987.

California Food and Agricultural Code (FAC) Section 29040 requires registration of your colonies within 30 days of the new calendar year, or no more than 30 days after arriving in the state. A completed registration form, *including current apiary location(s)*, and the Request for Pesticide Notification can be honored. We use the location information when issuing pesticide permits and for responding to possible complaints. Checks are payable to Nevada County Department of Agriculture. Bee yard locations may also be submitted electronically to agdept@co.nevada.ca.us."

BEE OR WASP?

HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE:



BEE

1. Pollinates Flowers
2. Makes Honey
3. Improves The Environment
4. Reluctant To Sting

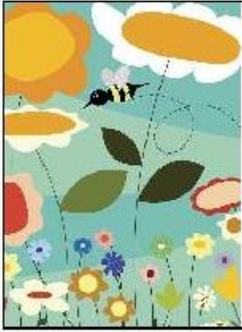


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Honey Extraction House

A to Z Supply has a honey extraction house available for rent. Equipment is provided and the room is heated and there's lots of hot water for cleanup. For more information: 530.273.6608

Dadant Little Wonder Honey Extractor with stand.

Hand extracts 4 deep or shallow frames per load. Used twice. Excellent condition. \$380 for both.
274-1098 Kathleen

Advertising space (3" by 2") is available here and need not be bee-related. Advertising rates are \$7 per year for NCBA members and \$16 per year for non-members.

Goodies Sign-up

Karla Hanson, Coordinator

Please let me know if you can bring a treat for any of the coming meetings. We only need a couple of folks each month, so pick a month and let me know. Contact Karla Hanson, queenbeez@att.net

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The Nevada County Beekeepers Association is dedicated to apiculture education and promotion of the art and science of beekeeping among beekeepers, agriculturists, and the general public. This is a “not for profit” organization. Donations are welcomed.

Meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 7 PM at the Grass Valley Veteran’s Memorial Building at 255 South Auburn Street in Grass Valley. All visitors are welcome. Use the back entrance.

The newsletter is published monthly as a service to the membership. Articles, recipes, commentary, and news items are welcomed and encouraged. Contributions should be received by the 20th of the Month to be included into the next issue. Submit to garyg@newpress.com

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Nevada County Beekeepers Association

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Nevada County Beekeepers Association



c/o Janet Brisson
20693 Dog Bar Road
Grass Valley, CA 95949
First Class Mail

February 1st Meeting - 7pm

Program:

“Healthy Beekeeping”
presented by Elina L. Nino Ph.D.