

The Local Buzz

June 2019



President's Message, Jerry Van Heeringen



Here it is June again, it happens every year about this time. Although the Nevada County Fair is still a ways off NCBA members need to start thinking about which shift you would like to volunteer for in our fair booth. The response to this call for volunteers has been great the last two years and I'd love to see that continue. Our officers and board members put in a lot of time and effort throughout the year to make it possible for us to have a venue where we can converse with like minded people and get our beekeeping questions answered. All we ask of you is just a few hours once a year.

Our bylaws state that the purpose of our organization is "apicultural education and to promote better understanding and acceptance of apiculture". What better way to accomplish this than in our booth at the County Fair. You don't have to be an expert, if you can give honey samples, help look for the queens and be pleasant you're qualified. You'll be surprised at how much you know. Please come to the June meeting and be first in line to sign up.

June 3rd Meeting –7:00 PM



Our speaker will be Randy Oliver addressing the topic of mite control.

Bee Bits

Submitted by Randy Oliver

Thank you Nevada County beekeepers – with your encouragement, our Board of Supervisors passed our requested ordinance to ensure the sustainability of beekeeping in our County for us and future generations! *This is a wonderful example of us beekeepers asking our local government for self-funded and reasonable regulation of our own design, working closely with our Agricultural Commissioner.*

Our foothill landscape was under threat of being overstocked with out-of-county hives intended for almond pollination, using our County merely as a “holding yard” during summer. We now have an Ordinance that restricts that practice, which was disrespectful to the local beekeepers. Of course, no ordinance can be perfect, so for simplicity and ease of enforcement we came up with four figures (in red) that you all should know:

1. **100%** of all beekeepers in California are required by State law to register their apiary locations each year.
2. Recreational beekeepers keeping **9** or fewer hives have no further restrictions.
3. Anyone keeping **10** or more hives in an apiary in Nevada County is now considered to be a “Commercial” beekeeper, and must pay a yet-to-be-determined annual fee for each apiary.
4. Any new commercial apiaries (with few exceptions) must be at least **2** miles distant from any other registered commercial apiary, by GPS coordinates.
5. No beekeeper can keep more than **48** hives in an apiary between the dates of **May 15 and October 15**. This will protect everyone’s chance at making honey during the flow, yet allow those of us who pollinate almonds to move our hives to winter holding yards.

The above restrictions protect all County beekeepers from the overstocking of our landscape by large-scale commercial beekeepers. The 2-mile restrictions and 48-hive limit allows recreational beekeepers to enjoy honey crops from apiaries placed between commercial apiaries—the commercial guys now protect the hobbyists!

Last week I congratulated my son Eric, telling him that he now holds the record for the most difficult spring for beekeeping that I’ve ever experienced. Between the delay of bloom, non-stop rain and cold, starvation followed by a drowning manzanita nectar flow, followed by intense swarming, then poor queen mate out, followed by winter revisiting us in late May – along with more starvation, it’s just been one thing after another. After filling his orders for nucs, he’s now on the long, hard path to attempt to rebuild the operation in order to fill our almond pollination contracts for next February.

An article in the recent Scientific American explains how climate change is affecting the Jet Stream, and that this may be the new “normal” – high- or low-pressure systems parking for long periods, rather than moving west to east. If this is indeed the case, any or all parts of the world will be experiencing more intense heat and cold waves, droughts, and flooding. This will be a challenge for agriculture, as well as for the plants and animals adapted to the “old normal.”

This spring, Stephanie watched our family of bluebirds (four this year) return to their nest box, but then decide not to nest for the first time in years. Yesterday I asked one of our yard owners who has several bluebird nest boxes and a yard full of bluebirds each spring about how hers were doing. She sees the same thing—no nesting this year.

Other property owners called me about the lack of bees on their pear trees. I needed to explain that the odd weather delayed the bloom of many fruit trees, and then when we had our brief warm spell, all species bloomed at the same time, rather than in their normal progression over weeks. Thus, the bees ignored the low-sugar pear nectar in favor for the high-sugar apple nectar. At least the apples likely got pollinated – some of my unfortunate peach, nectarine, and plum trees flowered when it was raining every day.

And it’s still not too late for some of you to engage in my citizen science project to quantify varroa immigration into hives in the late summer. You’d need to take twice-weekly stickyboard counts from late August through fall (OK to go on vacations). The results will give us a much better idea as to just how much of a problem late-season mite immigration is in various areas. If interested, please write me at randy@randyoliver.com – put “mite drift” in the subject line.

As far as management now, as I type these words on May 23, it looks as though we may finally be having some nice springtime weather in the low 70s coming up. Colonies flew well yesterday and were bringing in pollen. Blackberry is already blooming at low elevations, and vetch and clover should start pumping. It’s time to make sure that your colonies don’t starve this week, and then prepare for what may be our best honey crop in years (don’t forget that I still have some of Kathleen’s bee equipment for sale at discount price).

I wish you all a great honey crop this season—this may be the best blackberry crop in years. Blackberry produces a water-white, slightly spicy honey with very nice floral notes. Extract it before it gets mixed with the

late July and August honeydew from the cedars, which produce the dark “honey” that is often erroneously labeled as “blackberry.”

Happy beekeeping!

Minutes ~ May Meeting

Submitted by Ann Hiner – Acting Secretary

President Jerry Van Heeringen called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. on Monday, May 6, in the downstairs meeting room of the Veteran's Memorial Building in Grass Valley, CA.

Introductions of many new members and visitors were welcomed. Those who had attended the Woodland Bee Festival made note of some the speakers. Tickets were made available for tonight’s raffle; many plants were donated and adopted.

Old Business - none noted.

Treasurer Report for April 30, 2019

Beginning Balance:	\$ 5,816.21
Deposits:	369.73
Subtotal:	6,185.94
Debits:	(52.72)
Total and Reconciled 5/6/19:	<u>\$ 6,133.22</u>

New business - Randy Oliver discussed storing beekeeping equipment from members who are retiring or who wish to pass it on to others.

He also read high points of the proposed Nevada County Apiary Ordinance and will be emailing it to all members. Randy urged good attendance at the Board of Supervisor’s meeting on Tuesday, May 14 at 9:00. A show of support is crucial for supervisors to meet our hobbyists and commercial beekeepers and to learn of critical changes happening in bee-yards in our county.

The purpose of the Apiary Ordinance is to protect small and large Nevada County beekeepers from encroachment coming out of other counties, particularly large untended commercial operations looking for open space and forage. (Estimates: 200 - 500 hives are being dropped off in Nevada County near our hobbyists and professional bee keepers, causing overuse of limited forage and the spread of diseases through neglect).

If you have your hives registered, you are grandfathered at your current location. There will be a limitation of the number of colonies as well as a separation distance of 2 miles between beekeeping locations. You are considered a commercial beekeeper if you have 10 or more colonies. Our county commercial apiaries and the Agricultural Commissioner Chris de Nijs and his staff are working together on the ordinance for the well being of our bees and beekeepers.

In other new business, Janet Mather (last month’s speaker and guests) has declined the honorarium of \$200 and would like it returned to be used to encourage youth to learn beekeeping. After some discussion, it was agreed

that Janet would check with Rob Slay to see if 4-H could benefit and be involved.

Q & A

When asked how our bees are doing, it was all about hives packed with pollen. Some hives are spotty with their brood laying, but all in all, it was great to have good weather and finally see the bees flying and new bees practicing their flight.

Those who have packaged nucs should not let their guard down. Check for mites in June and July. Most packaged nucs were treated but sifting with powdered sugar or doing an alcohol shake now will help you see your baseline.

PROGRAM

Guest speaker and principal Drafter of the 82 page **Best Management Practices for Hive Health Guide** was Dr. Dewey M. Caron, Western Apiculture Society, Emeritus Professor of the University of Delaware, and Affiliate Faculty , Oregon State University. He kept us awake and mesmerized with his strong voice, and shared all 8 chapters in detail. If you missed the meeting, go online to honeybeehealthcoalition.org/tools-and-resources/#oec. Curser down to Hive Management Resources, to the square pic of 2 beekeepers. Click there to access the Best Management Practices for Bee Health (green ink) bottom left. You can download the 82 page collaborative detail onto a memory stick or print it and use the info. for Randy's next pop quiz!

You won't be disappointed. We are all still learning, as is he. "Bees are the Teachers." Beekeepers adapt the science and the art of beekeeping from our bees and our willing and able teachers. Our retired UC Davis Apiary Teacher, Dr. Eric Mussen, was one of the contributors of this Honey Bee Health Coalition Guide. Check it out! Call Ann Hiner at 265-5153 if you are having trouble downloading it. It was a bit of a challenge to follow the website.

Did You Know?

- North Dakota has led the nation in the production of honey for a decade. Production in 2013 totaled about 34 million pounds — more than one-fifth of all the honey in the country and a crop valued at nearly \$65 million.
- Almond growers in California rent upwards of 1.5 million colonies of honeybees a year, at a cost of around \$300 million.
- There are 1600 species of native bee that can be found in California. Most of our native bees are solitary, live in wood or underground tunnels and do not make honey. Native bees differ in the seasons they appear, habitats they prefer, and flowers they favor.



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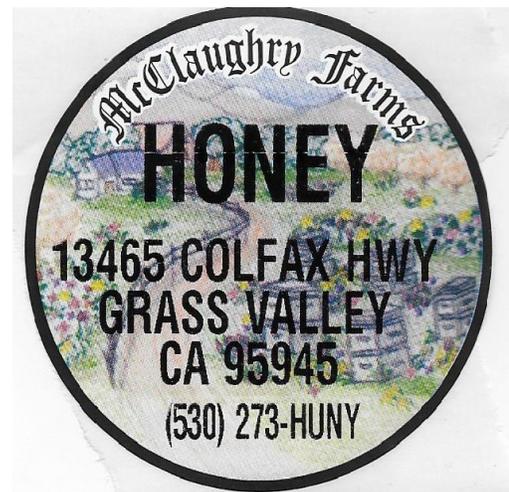
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Advertising rates are \$7 per year for NCBA members and \$16 per year for non-members.

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

Advertising space (3" by 2") in this newsletter is usually available and need not be bee-related. Advertising rates are \$7 per year for NCBA members and \$16 per year for non-members. Please email Janet Brisson at rubes@countryrubes.com



Nevada County Beekeepers Association
www.nevadacountybeekeepers.org

Nevada County Beekeepers Association

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All area codes are 530 unless noted otherwise.



c/o Janet Brisson
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June 3rd Meeting 7:00PM

Randy on mite control