

## The Nevada County Beekeepers Association ~ March 2013



# Local Buzz

## President's Message

**Jeremiah Farrell, President**

It's that time of year again in the almond orchard. The beginning of spring and the bees are building up their colonies, Get your equipment ready for splits and decide how many colonies you want to manage this summer. Fortunately, we had a dry January and February so no stuck trucks in the orchards, but now we need the rain for good spring buildup and a honey crop. I don't want to spend all summer feeding bee's again, but at least I have enough feeder jars to feed if I need to.



## March 4th Meeting - 7:00 PM

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

As those of you at the February meeting learned, our speaker Lyn Muth had to cancel at the last minute because she'd caught the flu. We are grateful to Randy Oliver and Janet Brisson for stepping in and making presentations about Randy's latest research, and Janet's rise to renown in the organic farming and beekeeping supply businesses.

Lyn is feeling better by now (it's a nasty bug this year) and is eager to make her presentation, having done a lot of reading about bees and pesticides in particular. Please join us in welcoming Lyn to hear her talk on "alternatives to pesticide use in the garden". Lyn's talks are always energetic and thought provoking and you're sure to learn something new.

We are also taking Lyn out to dinner at Lin-Q Chinese buffet before the meeting, all members are welcome to join President Jeremiah and others for a no-host dinner, 5:30 PM at Lin-Q in the Raley's shopping center in Grass Valley. Come join us!

## Bee Bits

**Randy Oliver, Contributor**

February 17, 2013

As the almond bloom belatedly begins, many beekeepers found that they had more deadouts and weak colonies than they had allowed for, and came up short on filling their contracts. There is a screaming shortage of bees in the Delta and San Joaquin Valley. Desperate growers are offering over \$200 for any colony to rent.

Several of us predicted that due to the drought and other factors that this was likely to happen, but few growers were willing to pay their beekeepers any extra for supplemental feed that might have kept them alive.

Another major issue was varroa—many beekeepers couldn't get their hands on their favored miticide this summer, and allowed mites to build to damaging levels. And just how high would that level be? I've had the chance to see in the three field trials that I am currently running, along with the rest of my operation.

- In my main operation (**low mite**), in which we tried to keep mites knocked back to the 2% infestation level (2 mites per 100 bees) in late summer and fall, and about 1% in winter, we had **normal winter mortality of about 10%**, and colonies graded at 8-frame average in early February, although a greater than normal percentage of colonies were weak.
- In a trial of 150 colonies (also **low mite**), that we made up in early December from our weakest hives, averaging 6¼ frames in mid December, and fed syrup weekly. These colonies averaged 5 frames at the end of January and were full of brood and ready to explode, with only 2 dead (**1.3% mortality**).
- In another test yard of 36 colonies (**higher mite**) graded at an average of 9¼ frames in early Sept, in which we were asked to hold back a bit on our fall mite treatment, we waited until Nov 23 for our oxalic dribble, at which time mite levels averaged 5%. Although these colonies were fed syrup and pollen supplement in fall, they dwindled severely to 3½-frame average in mid January (**16% mortality**).
- In a third trial of 90 colonies (**highest mite**), made up to 8 frames of bees at the end of October, fed, but not treated for mites since September (I don't have the mite data yet), most went seriously downhill by mid February to 3½-frame average, with 22 dead (**25% mortality**).

There are some important take-home messages from these results:

1. That there is a huge difference in colony dwindling and mortality between colonies with a winter mite infestation rate of 1% compared to 5%! It appears that allowing mite levels to climb above 2% in late fall really hurt these colonies. Delaying treatment 'til November was clearly too late.
2. Winter feeding of weak colonies, even though they weren't much interested in syrup during the cold weather in January, really stimulated broodrearing! The early January chill shut down broodrearing in unfed colonies, whereas even the weak syrup-fed hives were full of brood.
3. Even my weakest colonies in December, given a good location and syrup, rebounded strongly in late winter/early spring. This despite the presumption that they were likely weak in December due to virus or Nosema issues, and that my data from previous warmer winter (45°F average vs. 41.7°F) suggested that such 6-frame colonies might be expected to suffer substantial mortality.

On another subject, this winter began with excellent precipitation, but has now turned quite dry. Unless we get some serious rainfall soon, the honey flow may well be meager again. On the other hand, if your bees are still sitting at home, forage is currently excellent, with Manzanita coming into bloom.

## From the Librarian

Tynowyn Slattery, Librarian

One very old book: *Honey Wines and Beers* - with short historical notes on these ancient beverages  
Clara Furness

Northern Bee Books, Scout Bottom Farm, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, England 1988

This book has been in the Association's library for quite a while and, along with a few others, has entered the rare book stratum while just sitting on the shelf.

The research for this report has been a great bit of fun... one of my favorite and often, first resource is, World Cat... "the world's largest bibliographic data base founded by, "Frederick G. Kilgour, a distinguished librarian who nearly 40 years ago transformed a consortium of Ohio libraries into what is now the largest library cooperative in the world, making the catalogs of thousands of libraries around the globe instantly accessible to far-flung patrons, died on Monday in Chapel Hill, N.C. He was 92." this quote is from his 2006, New York Times obituary.

Using Fredrick Kilgour's brilliant creation, I have found that there are copies of this thin book in the libraries of Oxford and Cambridge universities, 4 copies in as many Australian libraries and 6 in libraries in the United States.

There are only 16 copies listed in all of the World Cat, and while searching rare book services I found only two copies in England each for \$50.00D which certainly makes it irreplaceable for our library.

And it is a delightful book, only 32 pages long, many of those with black and white pictures of basic fermenting equipment, that devotes only a page or two to the full range of the many aspects of brewing with honey, but the author has such a store of historical anecdotes, poems and quotes along with a solid, English common sense point of view of the process that one reads it not for any particular instructional material, although there is much to learn here, but to enjoy one of the many interesting articulate people that are drawn to the world of the honey bee; reading this book is like a conversation with a favorite, slightly eccentric aunt whom one doesn't want to interrupt lest it stop the flow of words and thoughts.

There has been much thought about how to make books like this available to the general membership without putting them in peril of the common mishaps that can befall the regular library books. One is to offer them for use during the meetings only, not the most convenient for the reader, but which will have to be employed for some books. Another option, which would work for this book because of how few pages there are, is to make a copy for checking out. I'm fairly certain it would fall under fair use for educational purposes and I will do this, if there is a request.

....and a note about late books:

The library books are checked out for a month, which can be extended by another month by calling, or preferably, e-mailing me. If problems arise with returning material it can be mailed to:

Tynowyn Slattery, 20493 Rome Road, Nevada City, CA 95959, 530-265-6318 - [swoolman@saber.net](mailto:swoolman@saber.net)

## **Raffle Prizes**

**Karla Hanson, Coordinator**

Thank you all for bringing some great items for our raffles, keep it coming. Plants, eggs, jewelry, soaps, bee items, jams, beautiful metal garden art, the list goes on and on... Thanks to everyone!

## **NC Beekeepers Association - Club Dues**

**Janet Brisson, Treasurer**

With the March issues of The Local Buzz Newsletter, if your label or email says "Dues", you are not current and we need you to pay these soon. The last newsletter sent out without dues being paid will be April.

Being a member of the Nevada County Beekeeping Associations has many perks. Your membership entitles you to our newsletter, "The Local Buzz," sent monthly, informs you of our association's activities and lets you know what your bees should be doing at that time. As members, you receive coupons for 25% discounts on two major beekeeping magazines and local discounts on equipment.

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.

We sincerely hope that you decide to continue your membership with our club and most important, continue being beekeepers. We are here to help.

**Current Dues:**

\$15.00 for email copy of newsletter

\$20.00 for your newsletter through the mail

- You can pay at the next meeting on March 4th
- You can go online at <http://countryrubes.com/nevadacabeekeepersassociation/membershipsignup.html>  
The cost to pay online has a one dollar surcharge
- Send your check in the amount of \$15.00 or \$20.00 to (Make check payable to NCBA)  
NCBA  
c/of Janet Brisson  
20693 Dog Bar Road  
Grass Valley, CA 95949

**Country Rubes Combo Screened Bottom Boards**

Special NCBA Club Price! Call Janet for details. 530-913-2724 or [rubes@countryrubes.com](mailto:rubes@countryrubes.com)

**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 clean up. For more information: 530.273.6608

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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 still need treats for our September, October, and November meetings. Contact Karla Hanson, [queenbeez@att.net](mailto:queenbeez@att.net)

## January Minutes

### Jack Meeks, Secretary

VP Leslie Gault opened with Q&A. Randy Oliver reported on fungicide Pristine effect on queen cells, and an IGR insect growth regulator Dimilin. Randy's queen cells will be available in April for those of us who want to recover from fall and winter losses.

Nosema ceranae is a bigger problem these days. Fumagillin is recommended. Almond pollination colonies are renting for more money for less bees, since the number of boxes per acre is an important part of pollination contracts. While there are 20 frames in a two deep colony, the number of frames covered with bees varies widely. Randy says hives with as few as four bee-covered frames have been rented in desperate situations. Janet Brisson showed pictures of her travels and experiences promoting apiculture.

## Beginning Beekeeping Classes

### By Randy Oliver

I will be teaching two beginners classes in Grass Valley this spring. You have a choice of attending either four Monday nights, 6:00 - 8:00 pm (March 18 - April 8), or an all-day Saturday class on April 6. The all-day class is an overwhelming of information for the day and I suggest attending the four night classes if possible. Cost is \$40 per person; classes will be held at the "Cottage" at the Nevada County Fairgrounds, just outside Gate 5. There will also be field sessions as weather permits.

To enroll, send an email. Your place in class will be held upon receipt of payment for the class:

- Pay Randy in person
- Use Paypal at [ScientificBeekeeping.com](http://ScientificBeekeeping.com) (please add a note that it is for the beginners class)
- Send a check to: Randy Oliver ~ 14744 Meadow Dr., Grass Valley CA 95945



## Flowers Buzz Bees with Electricity

### From ABC, News in Science

Flowers may be silent, but scientists have just discovered that electric fields allow them to communicate with bumblebees and possibly other species, including humans. "We just now have discovered that electrical potentials, an unavoidable by-product of flying in air for bees and being grounded for the flower, is being exploited to benefit both parties," says co-author Daniel Robert.

Full story at <http://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/2013/02/22/3696146.htm>

## Resonance - Beings of Frequency (documentary film)

This James Russell film is a sensational eye opening documentary that examines 60 years of scientific research. The film explores electro magnetic radiation found in our environment and the effects it has on the pulse of our earth and its inhabitants, including its effect on honey bees (around 20 min timestamp).

View the film here: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vb9R0x\\_0NQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vb9R0x_0NQ)

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](mailto: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.

## Nevada County Beekeepers Association

### Officers

President: Jeremiah Farrell ..... 632-3303  
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[jackm@nccn.net](mailto:jackm@nccn.net)  
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Newsletter Mailing: Steve Reynolds..... 268-2133  
Newsletter: Gary Gustafson..... 478-1216  
Honey Extractor: Karla Hanson..... 265-3756

## Nevada County Beekeepers Association



c/o Steve Reynolds  
10838 Ridge Road  
Nevada City, CA 95959  
First Class Mail

### **March 4th Meeting - 7PM**

Program: alternatives to pesticide use in the garden

No host dinner at Lin-Q - 5:30PM