

The Nevada County Beekeepers Association ~ June 2014



Local Buzz

President's Message

Leslie Gault, President



Hello Beekeepers: You'll be glad to know that my swarm from last month is safely moved inside the fence in my bee yard and is now protected from bears. The colony is building up well, but probably isn't strong enough to make enough honey for us to rob. I considered re-combining it with the parent colony, but given my usual success rate in splitting and combining colonies, decided to leave it alone. Instead we'll keep the two healthy, albeit smaller-than-they-could-be, colonies for the long run. Besides, doing nothing is less work...

The blackberry flow is on in the Grass Valley. Keep your fingers crossed for...something more substantial than the last couple of years! Think positively, we could hardly harvest less honey than the last two years and the flowers look robust. Although I notice that in some areas the growing tips of the blackberries have a stunted, yellowed curly look—like someone has sprayed them. The extent of the yellowed plants is too widespread and uniform to be the result of spraying, so it may be more like a virus (don't you hate it when weeds harbor diseases and pests?) Let's hope what ever is causing the yellowing doesn't affect nectar production.

The blackberry flow is on in the Grass Valley. Keep your



Above is a photo of my honey house visitor 'Lizzie', she's an alligator lizard who's been hanging around helping me keep the room wax moth and bug free. She will also eat honey bees if they come within reach, and seems to regard me with great suspicion. But otherwise our relationship is working well.

The photo to the left is of my happenstance bee-waterer. We purchased a new hose and went to discard the old leaky one, and realized it was already serving to water the bees this year. This one small brick is enough to keep bees from five colonies away from the pool cover and other moist places, so we left it for the time being. Hope you're enjoying the spring, and we'll see you at the meeting!

June 2nd Meeting – 7:00 PM

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

Our speaker at the next NCBA meeting on June 2nd, is Gary McClaughry. Gary moved to Nevada County from the Bay Area 35 years ago to avoid med-fly spraying. Over the years he has built McClaughry Farms up to 750

colonies at last count. He will be speaking to us about making honey and keeping bees healthy in our area. Gary loves to talk about bees and it should be a great program.

No-host Dinner at Marias in Grass Valley

If you are interested in joining us for a no-host dinner at Marias restaurant, at 5:30, on Monday the 2nd of June, please RSVP to Brion Dunbar at 559-1422, or email at brion@bourbonhillbees.com. Marias is located at 226 E. Main Street in Grass Valley.

Beekeeping at the State Fair

Nevada County's exhibit at the California State Fair in Sacramento July 11-27 this year will feature a 4' by 6' panel about beekeeping in Nevada County. The exhibit is being put together by the Nevada County Board of Supervisors office. If you have an outstanding high resolution photo or an amazing fun fact about Nevada County beekeeping you think is worthy, let president Leslie Gault know!

Association Logo Contest

(Please note the clarification to the Logo Contest flyer that was handed out at the last meeting—immediate family members of NCBA members in good standing may participate also.)

The Nevada County Beekeepers Association (NCBA) is sponsoring a contest for creation of a logo to represent the Association. The winning logo will be used on the Association's website, newsletter, and other applications. Contestants must be NCBA members in good standing, and immediate family members of NCBA members may enter also. Please submit a large and small printed copy of your logo, plus an electronic version on memory stick, to NCBA President Leslie Gault, PO Box 548, Chicago Park, CA 95712. Submissions may also be brought to the June or July meetings. Your name and phone number must be on all three items. One printed copy must be approximately 2" by 2", and the second approximately 8" by 10". The electronic copy must be openable in Microsoft Word.

The DUE DATE for submissions is MONDAY JULY 7th, 2014. NO EXCEPTIONS!

A committee of NCBA Board Members will consider all submissions and choose the top 3, 4, or 5, depending upon number and variety received. In choosing the top logos, among other things, the Board will be looking for:

- General appeal of logo
- Quality of artwork
- Ability of logo to convey regional beekeeping activities
- Clarity of logo in both large and small print
- Ease of reproduction of logo

The winning logo will then be chosen from among the top logos by a popular vote of the fair-goers at the 2014 Nevada County Fair, August 6-10. The winning artist will receive recognition for her/his artwork and a free one year membership to the NCBA!

Submissions may not be copyrighted. The winning logo will become the property of the NCBA.

Minutes from Last Meeting

Jack Meeks, Secretary

President Leslie Gault opened with Q&A

Pres. Gault asked for graphic logo designs for our BUZZ and Website. Any and all logo designs are requested, to be chosen for our media.

Finance Janet Brisson AprilStartBal \$4715.11; Rec \$402.18; Exp \$209.80; EndBal \$4907.49.

PROGRAM Randy Oliver presented "Summer-Fall Beekeeping" with photos and charts including the flowers and herbs bees prefer, such as White Dutch clover- when it's tall. Oxalic acid is excellent when brood is a minimum, August and December. Deformed wing virus causes bees walking on ground.

Potluck at the Fairgrounds – August 3rd

Karla Hanson, Coordinator

August 3rd is the Potluck BBQ for the fair. Which EVERYONE is welcome to come to. The more the merrier... Come help clean up the bee booth at 5:00PM and then dinner starts at 6:00PM. Enjoy an evening with fellow beekeepers. It's always an evening of learning something new, having fun, lots of laughter and plenty of good food. The club furnishes the gourmet hot dogs, hamburgers or vegetarian meat substitute when asked. With all the fixings too! Contact Karla Hanson at (queenez@att.net) know if you are coming and what kind of meat you prefer.

Bee Bits

Randy Oliver, Contributor

As this odd season progresses, it just keeps getting stranger and stranger. Normally, I observe our Himalayan blackberry to begin flowering at my low-elevation yards on McCourtney Road a full month before my higher elevation yards around GV and NC. But last week the vines were at exactly the same stage of flowering in both areas. What this presages for our honey flow, I have no idea, but the foragers that I observed appeared to be filling their crops with nectar, and I'm able to shake nectar that tastes like blackberry from colonies in some yards. So I'm guardedly optimistic.

Water for bees will likely be an issue this summer. I suggest that you train your bees to water sources now, before they get hooked on the neighbor's bird water bath. A plastic wading pool with a drip of water, aquatic plants, and floating chunks of pine bark is attractive to bees.

On the pesticide forefront, Dr. Lu of Harvard Medical School released another "study" claiming that neonics caused CCD. Again, his methods and conclusions are an embarrassment to the scientific method of investigation. I posted a critical blog at <http://scientificbeekeeping.com/news-and-blogs-page/>. Of interest is that after posting my critique, I received appreciative emails from bee researchers from across the country, who thanked me for publicly saying what they felt themselves. Politics are such that many of them feel constrained from saying embarrassing things about a Harvard researcher. Amusingly, one reporter called me and said that he had first interviewed Dr. Lu, and then phoned the USDA lab for their take on Lu's findings. The reporter told me that the USDA had referred him to me; he was curious why our top researchers would steer him to a beekeeper out in the sticks :)

I'm currently writing a series of articles for ABJ covering the history of honey bee domestication, and how this has led to the problems that we're having with bees today. My current article will come out in the June and July issues, and includes some very interesting findings about the genetics of our feral survivor stocks. These findings suggest to me that we should be paying far more attention to those "wild" colonies of bees that have been able to survive despite the impact of varroa.

On the bee nutrition front, the large trial that I ran over the winter clearly demonstrated the benefit of feeding pollen sub in the foothills. But there didn't appear to be any added benefit when natural alder pollen was coming in. I'm starting a new trial this week to confirm that hypothesis. Thanks to those members who helped me set it up.

If you haven't supered up your hives for the honey flow as of yet, I suggest that you do it now! I have no idea whether the honey flow will be weak or strong, or short or long, but if you don't provide the bees with a place to store surplus honey, they won't be able to do so.

I'm always interested in grafting from "survivor stock"—colonies that are productive, gentle, and that have survived for at least two full seasons without mite treatment. Please let me know if you have one (colonies on movable combs only—not bee trees—as I need to be able to graft from a brood comb).

One Thing I learned about keeping bees this month

Brion Dunbar

This time of year many of us are adding a second box to a single. If you don't have enough drawn comb, your second box has to be made up of frames of foundation. Bees are oftentimes slow to start drawing comb on new foundation. One trick to induce them to move up into the second box and start drawing comb is to 'bait' the box with one of your frames of drawn comb, usually a frame with some brood, from the first box. It makes sense to put this frame in the middle of the top box. So it seemed natural to fill the hole left in the middle of the first box with a frame of foundation. This is what I did on many of my colonies this year.



What I found was that it worked well in the areas where there was a decent nectar flow going on, as the bees drew out the new frame in the brood area almost immediately. But in some yards where there wasn't a good flow, the bees did not draw out any wax on this frame of foundation in the middle of their brood nest. Of itself not a huge problem, but it turned out to be a barrier the queen did not want to cross. So she was confined to half the lower chamber, and all growth of the brood area came to a halt during this period. Next time in this situation, I think it better to either put the new frame of foundation on the outside of the lower box, or check on whether they are drawing out the foundation in the center, and if not, feed some syrup to the colony.

Pictured is a Tulip tree blossom (Liriodendron) blooming in Nevada City on May 20th. Note the native bee and also four honeybees down in the depths.

Beekeeper's Booth Gets a New Roof

Karla Hanson



Many many thanks to Matt Pagan, General Contractor and Ed Pagan, Roofing Contractor for the re-roofing of our Bee booth at the Nevada County Fair Grounds.

The old roof was ripped off last week and then the roofing began. The roof should be completed by the end of May.



Country Rubes Combo Screened Bottom Boards

Special NCBA Club Price! Call Janet for details. 530-913-2724 or rubes@countryrubes.com

Honey Extraction House

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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.

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From the Librarian

Tynowyn Slattery

It would be extremely helpful to have a person, interested in books and who can make it to most of the meetings, help in the library. If you think you would like the opportunity, please talk to Tynowyn Slattery during the break.

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

The Nevada County Beekeepers Association library is located in the foyer of the building. Our Librarian, Tynowyn Slattery (left), is usually available before and after meetings to help club members find both children and adult books, DVD s and videos on beekeeping. Stop by and browse the library!

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.

Nevada County Beekeepers Association

Officers

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|--|----------|
| President – Leslie Gault | 346-7092 |
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| Vice President – Brion Dunbar | 559-1422 |
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| rubes@countryrubes.com | |

Board Members

| | |
|------------------|----------|
| Jeremiah Farrell | 632-3303 |
| Randy Oliver | 277-4450 |
| Karla Hanson | 265-3756 |
| Deborah Morawski | 675-2924 |

Committee Chairs

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|--|----------|
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| Lynn Williams | 675-2924 |
| Librarian – Tynowyn Slattery | 265-6318 |
| Newsletter Mailing – Steve Reynolds | 268-2133 |
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| garyg@newpress.com | |

Nevada County Beekeepers Association



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

June 2nd Meeting – 7PM

**Program: Gary McClaughry
of McClaughry Farms**