

# The Local Buzz

January 2020



## President's Message, Amy Husted

Living in a Blue Zone - Pura Vida

This last fall I was lucky enough to spend 7 weeks in Costa Rica. My children were able to attend a Costa Rican school on the Nicoya Peninsula for 4 of those weeks. Costa Rica has been a major tourist destination for many years, and for good reason. This tiny country is home to an abundance of diverse flora and fauna, not to mention the friendly people. During my time in Nicoya (Montezuma, specifically) I was unable to connect with any local beekeepers as beekeeping is not very common in low lying coastal areas. I did observe a lot of bees in the wild, and my home was host to several colonies of native angustula bees! They are very tiny and hard to photograph, but I got some video of them hovering around the entrance of the hive during the heat of the afternoon. I also saw orchid bees, but they too are difficult to photograph.

The Nicoya Peninsula is a Blue Zone. Before I arrived I had never heard of blue zones. The term "blue zone" grew out of research done by a pair of demographers in the early 2000's and refers to areas of the world where people live much longer than average. There are currently 5 blue zones: Sardinia, Italy; Okinawa, Japan; Icaria, Greece; Nicoya Peninsula, Costa Rica and (surprisingly) Loma Linda, California. Inhabitants of the blue zone have several common attributes that are said to contribute to their longevity. These are a strong family unit, less smoking, semi-vegetarianism, constant moderate physical activity, social engagement, and legume consumption.

Recent research has called into question the validity of the blue zone research, but my limited experience in the Nicoya Peninsula has taught me to slow down and enjoy life a little bit more. The Costa Ricans have a saying, "Pura Vida" that is used ubiquitously. It's directly translated as Pure Life, and it describes the way Costa Ricans live. They don't stress about much, if anything, the way that we do. No worries, no fuss, and no stress, being thankful for what you have and not dwelling on the negative. Maybe that is why they live for so long. So in this new year, my goal is to live a more Pura Vida life - relax and enjoy!

## January 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting – 7:00 PM

We will be watching a short film by Meghan Milbrath entitled "Why did my bees die?"

Meghan Milbrath is a beekeeper and the coordinator of the Michigan Pollinator Initiative at Michigan State University. She performs pollinator related research and extension work, and works with beekeepers and stakeholders around the country. She started keeping bees over 20 years ago

The movie will be followed by discussion.

## Bee Bits

Submitted by Randy Oliver

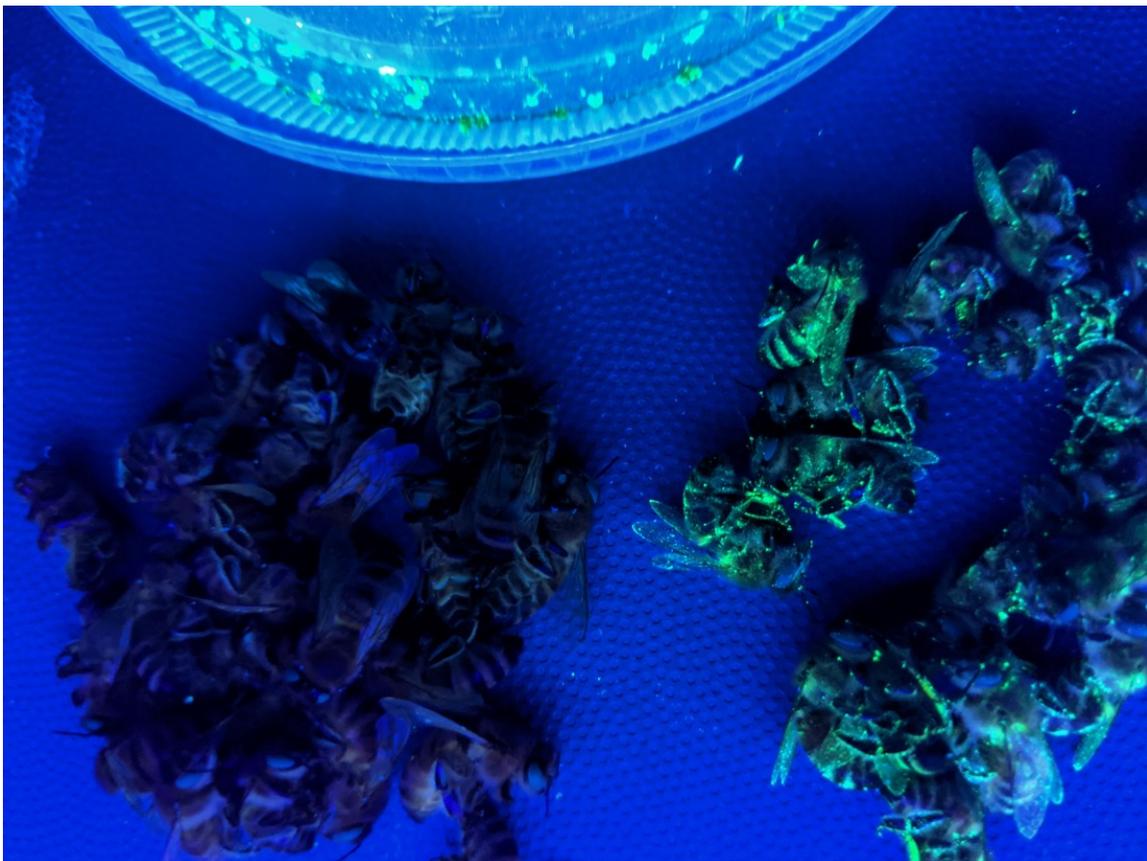
It's been a fun run around the sun! Each new year gives us a chance to learn more about our bees and beekeeping. Believe it or not, oddball that I am, I couldn't help but get up at 4:00 am on Christmas morning to enter field data into Excel to graph out how the varroa infestation rate of bees differs from frame to frame in a hive. Sandy Honigsberg and I tediously collected the data from seven high-mite hives in mid November.

Here's a teaser from one of the hives:

Hive #	114		Temp:	70F		Colony condition: 10 frame				
Date:	15-Nov		Flight:	minimal						
Time:	2:30		Previous day's mite count from an upper frame:			26				
Frame number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Upper comb content	Honey	Honey	Honey	Honey	Honey	Honey Drawn	Drawn	Honey	Honey	Honey
	Drawn		Drawn			Mixed brood	Mixed brood			Drawn
Mite count	17	18	13	20	15	36	31	19	13	18
Lower comb content	Honey	Honey	Honey	Honey	Drawn	Queen	Drawn	Honey	Honey	Honey
					Beebread	Beebread	Beebread			
	Drawn		Drawn	Drawn	Drawn	Drawn	Drawn			
Mite count	13	8	9	13	17	9	18	7	4	15

Note the surprisingly large variation in the mite counts of ½-cup samples of bees. Oddly, sometimes the bees on an outer frame exhibited higher mite levels than bees closer to the broodnest. I'll be publishing the full results of all 7 hives soon, with the overall averages.

During the cool weather I'm also running incubator trials. One thing that I tried was to see whether I could use a fluorescent tracer to track the distribution of oxalic acid, applied by dribble, on the bees. So I put a couple hundred bees each into two cup cages, with a piece of foundation for them to cluster on. In one cup I dripped a few drops of oxalic dribble, mixed with a fluorescent pigment. I left the bees in the other (control) cup alone. I'd take the clear cups of bees into a pitch-black darkroom every few hours and view them under a blacklight. It was impressive how quickly and evenly the glowing pigment spread over all the bees. After 3 days in the incubator, it started to diminish, so I froze the bees and took some photos:



At the top is the bottom of the cup to indicate the color of the tracer. The control bees at the left did not glow at all (what looks like a glow is only a reflection). The bees on the right had clearly spread the few drops of pigment all over their bodies. It was pretty impressive in the darkroom!

My question now is whether the glow actually serves as a proxy for the amount of oxalic acid that it was applied with. So now I'm going to sort the bees by their amount of glow, and then use chemical titration to determine whether the amount of glow correlates with the amount of invisible acid on their bodies. Cross your fingers!

Welcome to our new officers! Please folk, we need a few more of you to step up and take over for us aging long-time "doers." And don't forget to register your apiary locations with the County.

There's not much to do in your hives at this time of year, unless you plan to take your hives to almonds. If we have nice weather in early January, your bees will likely forage on alder pollen – even if that requires a long flight to a riparian location. Those of us who go to almond pollination pray for good weather then, otherwise we'll be feeding pollen sub to encourage early buildup. Hobbyists, on the other hand, may not want to do so, since that would result in early swarming. As long as your hives are heavy with honey, you can just leave them alone for a while.

## **In The Yard**

**By Brion Dunbar**



Unidentified species of a bumblebee on a rhododendron from Bhutan.  
I just put it this into the iNaturalist, so maybe someone will have a species ID soon,

## **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!

## **Club Dues R Due**

**Submitted by Janet Brisson**

Dues are \$25/yr. (printed mailed newsletter) or \$20/yr. (email newsletter). You can pay dues at the January, 2020 meeting or mail dues to (make check out to NCBA) NCBA C/o Janet Brisson 20693 Dog Bar Road Grass Valley, CA 95949. Or go our website at <http://nevadacountybeekeepers.org> and click "JOIN" to pay your dues. Any questions, please feel free to call me at 530-913-2724 or email me at [rubes@countryrubes.com](mailto:rubes@countryrubes.com)

## **2nd Annual Beekeeping Day hosted by Pestoni Winery**

Representatives from the UC Davis Master Beekeepers Program will be in attendance to lead discussions and answer questions. With wine tastings and a food truck available. Nucs will available as a pre-order from A & Bee Provisions. This event takes place in Napa Valley around the end of April. For more information or to pre-order Nucs please visit <https://abeeprovisions.com/>

## **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](mailto:swoolman@saber.net) 530-265-6318

## **Apiary Registration Required Each January**

Did you know that State law requires all apiaries to register with their County Agricultural Commissioner during the month of January of each year. This regulation is designed to be beneficial to beekeepers as well as people who live and work near bee yards.

Registration Fee for hobbyist beekeepers is waived. A hobbyist beekeeper is defined as having less than 10 hives in the apiary. If you have 10 or more hives, a \$10 registration fee is required with the registration form.

The Nevada County Dept of Agriculture maintains information and registration forms related to beekeeping. [www.mynevadacounty.com/982/Agricultural-Commissioner](http://www.mynevadacounty.com/982/Agricultural-Commissioner)

The County Department of Public Works is responsible for roadside spraying. If you want to get "Do Not Spray" signs for your frontage, you'll need to complete an agreement with the Road Maintenance Division. [www.mynevadacounty.com/374/Road-Maintenance](http://www.mynevadacounty.com/374/Road-Maintenance)

## **Minutes ~ December Meeting**

No minutes available. This was our annual Christmas dinner event.

## **Club Secretary Needed!**

This club depends fully upon volunteers just like you.

If you can step up for this club office please contact president Amy.

Don't worry you can get guidance if needed.

**CLASSIFIEDS**

**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

**Amy Hustead, Bear River Bees**

Consultations, Swarm Removal  
One on One Mentoring  
**530.613.7171**  
[BearRiverBees@gmail.com](mailto: BearRiverBees@gmail.com)

**Spring Nucs — taking orders now**

Available for pickup in Napa or Waterford in late April. For more information on bulk orders, deliveries and pricing please visit <https://abeeprovisions.com/>

**A to Z Supply**   
13396 Ridge Road  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530-273-6608/274-3871  
**FULL LINE OF BEEKEEPING SUPPLIES**



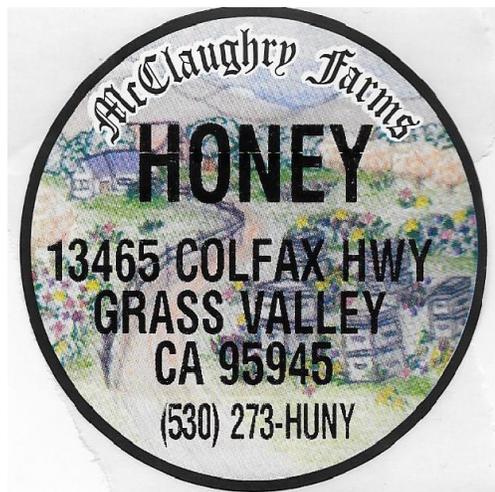
**HOURS:**  
M-F: 730 AM—530 PM  
SAT: 8 AM—5 PM  
SUN: 9 AM—4 PM  
[www.atozsupply.com](http://www.atozsupply.com)  
[sales@atozsupply.com](mailto:sales@atozsupply.com)



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Open Tuesday through Saturday  
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Family owned business since 1985  
Come and see us!

- Everything you need for backyard beekeeping & lots more
- Exclusive U.S.A. dealer for BJ Sherriff suits
- DIY candle and soap making - scents, molds, dyes, wax, etc.
- Honeycomb sheets for rolling candles - over 30 different colors!
- Bee themed gifts & decor for home and garden
- Wide variety of books - children's, beekeeping, DIY soap & candle making



**YOUR AD  
HERE**

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. Please email Janet Brisson at [rubes@countryrubes.com](mailto:rubes@countryrubes.com)

## NCBA Leadership

For 2019 all the Officers, Board Members and Committee Chairs will remain the same with the exception of a new President, Amy Husted.

Nevada County Beekeepers Association  
[www.nevadacountybeekeepers.org](http://www.nevadacountybeekeepers.org)



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

January 6th Meeting - 7PM

“Why did my bees die?” Viewing of this short film followed by discussion.

## Nevada County Beekeepers Association

### Officers

President – Amy Husted  
[bearriverbees@gmail.com](mailto:bearriverbees@gmail.com)  
Vice President – Spencer Wingfield 300-3217  
[spencerwingfield@gmail.com](mailto:spencerwingfield@gmail.com)  
Secretary – position not filled

Treasurer – Janet Brisson 913-2724  
[rubes@countryrubes.com](mailto:rubes@countryrubes.com)

### Board Members

Leslie Gault 346-7092  
Randy Oliver 277-4450  
Karla Hanson 265-3756  
Deborah Morawski 675-2924  
Brion Dunbar 559-1422

### Committee Chairs

Fair Booth Coordinator - Rob Slay 263-5618  
Swarm Hotline  
Karla Hanson 265-3756  
Lynn Williams 675-2924  
Librarian – Tynowyn Slattery 265-6318  
[swoolman@saber.net](mailto:swoolman@saber.net)  
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Social Media  
Amy Husted  
Jess Ferrer

All area codes are 530 unless noted otherwise.