

Local Buzz



January 2009

President's Message

Happy New Year, beekeepers! I hope all had a great holiday season. Once again I made a new year's resolution to keep better records with regard to my bees. I'm happy to report my honey house is almost complete, just needs an electric honey extractor and deep sink. For almond people it's time again for a trip to the orchards after getting bees revved up to max colony strength. I'm looking forward to Randy's talk and slides at the Jan. meeting. Hope all will be there because it's also membership dues time.

Your President, Rob Slay

January 5th Program

Join our lively regular question and answer session starting promptly at 7 PM followed by a brief meeting and refreshments and a great program. Randy Oliver will give a PowerPoint presentation on the biology of parasite resistance in honey bees and other animals. This is a fascinating subject of interest to all!

TIME For 2009 DUES!

Help us reduce paper and mailing costs, get your newsletters electronically and we will reduce your family membership fees to \$15.00. Leslie Gault will be collecting dues for the year 2009 at January's meeting. If you are paying in cash, please try to bring the exact change. If you would like to mail your dues, please send your check made out to NCBA or Nevada County Beekeepers Association for either \$20.00 (to receive newsletter through mail) or \$15.00 for email delivery and mail that to me at :

NCBA c/o Janet Brisson
20693 Dog Bar Road Grass Valley, CA 95949
Any questions, please feel free to call or email me at rubes@countryrubes.com

Bee Bits

By Randy Oliver

It is of interest that our small association enjoys as members both a major promoter of powdered sugar dusting for mite control (Janet Brisson), and a researcher/writer on the subject (myself). I have recently sent the third article in my series on sugar dusting off to the American Bee Journal. I suggest that you should all subscribe to at least one of the journals, but if you don't, you can read all my articles, after publication, at scientificbeekeeping.com.

I was having trouble getting all the data from my first tests to jibe. I couldn't reconcile the percentage mite drop from dusting that I observed when I sacrificed three small colonies, with the calculated mite drop based upon mite infestation level of other colonies. So I ran another experiment, in which we took samples of 300+ bees from the broodnests of nine colonies before, and an hour after, dusting. By washing the mites from these samples in alcohol, I hoped to measure the percentage drop of phoretic mites from the bees.



My son Ian washing mites from a bee sample. We used the large graduated cylinder to estimate the count of bees in each sample.

As is often the case, the results surprised us. In four of the nine colonies the after-dusting mite level was higher in the sample than prior to dusting! What became apparent was that a 300-bee sample is simply not a good indicator of mite level. However, by pooling the data I was able to salvage something useful—I confirmed that sugar dusting gives a pretty accurate assessment of mite infestation level. A strong colony with a 1% mite infestation will drop about 3-4 mites in the first 10 minutes after dusting. This number should give you a handle on your mite infestation level.

Well, winter sure hit us and our bees by storm! We went from 65° flight weather with plenty of pollen coming in, to a foot of icy snow in a period of less than two days. The marvel is that the honey bee is a tropical insect that has adapted for life in a temperate climate. If bees chill below 41°, they die. That they can handle swings of temperature like we recently saw attests to their remarkable abilities.

The national beekeeping conventions both take place in January. One is in Sparks, and would be worth the drive if you are interested (and if I-80 is open). Items of interest from recent conventions are the consensus that coumaphos (the white Checkmite strips) are bad news for bee colonies. Dr. Jerry Bromenshenk's team has been able to create color graphs of the weekly changes in virus levels and species composition within colonies. There have also been some advances on the pesticide front. The election of Barack Obama signifies that science and logic may again become part of the decision making process in Washington, DC. This means that the EPA may be able to get back into the business of protecting the environment, and all of us that live in it. The timing is fortuitous, since two major meetings concerning beekeepers and pesticides recently took place. The first was at Lake Tahoe, and I was privileged to be a part. A hand picked group of beekeepers met with representatives of Bayer CropScience, bee scientists, the Almond Board, and State regulators. Bayer, a major manufacturer of pesticides worldwide, offered to work with beekeepers to better avoid problems with their pesticides. This involves the sharing of data, plus beekeeper input into the experimental design of future pesticide toxicity testing. Other pesticide manufacturers are already wanting to join the group! This is very exciting.

The second meeting took place between a group of Eastern beekeepers and the EPA. A good dialog was started, and I have hopes for the future.

By the way, the editor of Bee Culture magazine, Kim Flottum, writes a blog on honey bee issues at The Daily Green <http://www.thedailygreen.com/environmental-news/blogs/>. You can get feel for some of the issues facing beekeepers at the national level.

Happy New Year to all, and best wishes for a great season!

Randy Oliver

For Sale

For Sale: Country Rubes Combo Screened Bottom Boards

Special NCBA Club Price!

Call Janet for details. 530-913-2724 or email at rubes@countryrubes.com.

Mann Library Expands Online Library of Rare Beekeeping Volumes

Submitted by Janet Brisson

Our club contributed to this project last year; we can go online and see 1861 pages of the American Bee Journal. Take look, it's wonderful, the original pages scanned in.

<http://bees.library.cornell.edu/>

Cornell University's Albert R. Mann Library is delighted to announce the addition of the first twenty volumes of The American Bee Journal, a key American beekeeping publication, to its Hive and the Honeybee online library of historical beekeeping materials.

U.S. beekeepers will be familiar with The American Bee Journal, the first English-language journal devoted to the beekeeping field. First published in 1861, The American Bee Journal featured contributions by major figures of 19th century American apiculture such as L.L. Langstroth, Henry Alley, Moses Quinby, A.I. Root and others. Still being published today, the ABJ exists as a monument to the long history of American beekeeping and the ingenuity of its practitioners.

The ABJ's first twenty volumes, now available at <http://bees.library.cornell.edu/>, cover the years 1861 through 1884. From observations on Chinese methods for harvesting honey to tips on the use of wild onions and other herbs as honey plants, these early volumes present a treasure trove of often beautifully illustrated details on the theory and practice of 19th century American beekeeping. Online access to ABJ's early volumes is the result of a multi-year initiative supported by beekeepers from across the United

States. Contributions sent in from beekeeping associations from California to Maine made the digitization of these volumes possible, while matching funds from Mann Library's preservation program have supported the scanning of an additional twenty volumes that will be available online by Spring 2009. The Hive and the Honeybee is a free, full text digital archive of selected works from Mann Library's E. F. Phillips Collection, one of the world's most comprehensive apicultural libraries. This growing online archive, generously supported by American beekeepers, offers ready access to works of historical importance and usefulness to both scholars and practicing beekeepers today. In addition to the newly added volumes from The American Bee Journal, the site currently offers over thirty key historical monographs, including classics such as the 1623 edition of Charles Butler's The Feminine Monarchie, and Samuel Hartlib's work, The Reformed Commonwealth of Bees, published in 1655. Thank to Mann Library and the generous donation of all beekeepers & beek associations who have made this possible!

December Minutes

The December meeting was a Christmas potluck and pirate gift exchange. Thanks to all the people who brought such delicious food!

Cottage Cosmetics

A how-to guide for making fine olive oil soap and all natural personal care products using beeswax is available from local author and herbalist, Linnie McNaughton. The guide includes detailed instructions. To order send a check for \$15 to:

Green Blessings
21055 Dog Bar Road
Grass Valley 95949
Call (530) 906-0831

For more information & to register for classes go to secure website: greenblessings.com or call Linnie at: (530) 906-0831

This Month's Bee Events

Jan 6-10 American Honey Producers Association Convention, Fresno

Jan 13-17 North American Beekeeping and American Beekeeping Federation Conference, Nugget Casino Reno/Sparks. The convention includes a Fri/Sat serious sideline convention, see information at <http://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?eventid=683003>. Registration is \$175/125/75 for full conference/two days/one day attendance. If no email you may call 912-427-4233.

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Bear Convicted

From the UK news media Telegraph, submitted by Tynowyn Slattery

A bear who could not keep its paws out of a beekeeper's hives has been convicted of theft and criminal damage by a court in Macedonia but the honey-stealing bear was nowhere to be seen as the court in Bitola handed down its judgment.

The case was brought by a frustrated beekeeper, who, after a protracted battle, turned to the law to stop the bear from attacking his beehives.

Zoran Kiseloski said he tried to keep the bear away by playing thumping "turbo-folk" music and buying a generator to light up the area. "I tried to distract the bear with lights and music because I heard bears are afraid of that," Mr. Kiseloski told the Dnevnik newspaper." So I bought a generator, lit up the area and put on songs, "But when the generator ran out of power and the music fell silent, the bear was back. It attacked the beehives again," said Mr. Kiseloski.

The court found the bear guilty and, since it had no owner and belonged to a protected species, ordered the state to pay the 140,000 denars (£1,724) damage it caused to the hives.

There was no information on the whereabouts of the bear.

Feeling Old?

Try this: Ralph Waldo McBurney (October 3, 1902 —), usually known as 'Waldo', is said to be the oldest living worker in the United States. At age

106, he still lives and works as a beekeeper in the city of Quinter, Kansas. Although he was born in Quinter and has lived in the Quinter area for many years, he has also lived near the Kansas cities of Sterling and Beloit.

(submitted by Janet Brisson)

Register Your Hives by January 31st

Jeff Pylman, Nevada County's Agricultural Commissioner, has been working closely with the beekeeping community in recent years to make sure that local beekeepers register their hives. The hive registration program allows the Ag Commissioner's office to track and monitor the number hives in the County in order to be able to support beekeeping in proportion to the amount of local activity (no bees, no support activity). Just as importantly, you can request to be notified of pesticide spraying in your area when the chemical has the potential to affect your bees.

In 1993, the Nevada County Board of Supervisors waived the registration fee for hobby beekeepers, defined as those having less than 10 hives. If you have 10 or more hives, a \$10 registration fee is required. Both hobby and non-hobby beekeepers are required by state law to register their apiaries with the County Ag Commissioner. Our Ag Commissioner has requested that we register by January 31st each year.

In this time of increasing difficulty in maintaining bees, we all know the benefits of keeping our hobby and livelihood on the radar screen. The NCBA supports the hive registration program, and we encourage you to participate. If you have not received your renewal letter from the Ag Commissioner's office, or this is your first time to register your hives, you may call the Ag Commissioner's office at 273-2648.

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. 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. The newsletter is published monthly as a service to the membership. Articles, recipes, commentary, and news items are welcomed and encouraged. Submission by email is encouraged. Please submit to Leslie Gault at lesliegault@yahoo.com. The deadline for the February 2009 edition is January 22nd. A limited amount of advertising space (business card size 3” by 2”) is accepted and need not be bee-related. Rates are \$1 per issue or \$7 per year for NCBA members and \$16 per year for non-members. All revenue from advertising goes to the Association treasury and helps offset the cost of producing and distributing this newsletter. To receive the *Local Buzz* via email: please email your request to lesliegault@yahoo.com

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Nevada County Beekeepers Association



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January 2009

January 5th Program

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