

The Nevada County Beekeepers' Association



January 2006

President's Message

Welcome to the New Year my fellow beekeepers! Where did last year go? It seems as though a few months ago I was attending my first beekeeping meeting.....and now I'm 'El Presidente' (thanks Randy). I am looking forward to a bright new year filled with happy bees, healthy animals, and lots of fresh vegetables. My once abundant vegetable garden is now reduced to brown wilted rotting vegetative matter. This is the time of year that I start planning next year's garden....exciting!

As your president for 2006, I want to build on the great job that past president Gary Wood has done. Thank you Gary! And thanks to Bonnie Bagwell! I spoke to her the other day and she has offered to continue to edit *The Buzz* for us. I let her know that we sincerely appreciate the job that she does. The Board for 2006 met on the 19th of December and we scheduled an outstanding array of programs for the upcoming year.

As far as the bees go, we can only hope that all of our bees make it through the winter and the season starts much earlier than last! Indeed, it's frustrating to those of us who have bees as a hobby, but it can be devastating to the people that depend on bees for a living. Good luck to us all!

For those of you who attended the holiday party at the December meeting you know that a good time was had by all. The food was outstanding and the gift exchange turned out to be a hoot! Just when someone became attached to their gift, it was snatched from them (I'm still enjoying the Biscotti, Randy).

One of the things that I would like to expand on as your president is the raffle we have each meeting. I'll talk to the Board and see if we can't expand the prize assortment. Also, feel free to bring items from home that you no longer use for the raffle. You know what they say: One man's/woman's junk is another man's/woman's treasure.

As your president, I am open to suggestions. Feel free to contact me with any questions, complaints, or concerns that you might have. With good weather,

hard work, and really good luck, 2006 could be the best year ever for beekeepers! Enjoy your New Year.

Your President,
Shane Mathias

Time To Pay Your 2006 Dues! Are You Online?

Help us reduce paper and mailing costs, get your newsletter electronically and we will reduce your family membership fees to \$10.50. Leslie Gault will be collecting dues for the year 2006 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 \$12.50 (to receive newsletter through mail) or \$10.50 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 me at 530-346-6439 or email me at rubes@infostations.com.

Thanks, Janet, Treasurer

January Program

This month our speaker is the highly entertaining commercial and migrating beekeeper, John Miller, fresh back from his latest adventures at the recent national beekeeping meetings.

Please join us for a no-host gathering at Maria's in Grass Valley at 5:30 to share dinner with our speaker prior to the meeting.

California Department of Agriculture Announces Pilot Bee Certification Plan

In order to expedite inspections of out-of-state shipments of bees to pollinate California's 2006 almond crop, the California Department of Food and Agriculture has adopted a voluntary, pilot certification plan. The plan was announced at a recent Almond Board of California seminar and is a modification of

the effort to exclude entry of bee colonies contaminated with red imported fire ants (RIFA) and noxious weeds at California border stations. Under the new pilot scheme, if shipments have certification from a regulatory official in the state of origin, they are subject to less stringent border and destination inspections. Certified shipments must meet a tolerance of five or less RIFA to avoid rejection at the border. The certification also allows those found to be pest free to be delivered to their destination without waiting for clearance from the county agricultural commissioner. The pilot plan will be evaluated, with input from almond growers and beekeepers, at the end of the 2006 pollination season.

<http://westernfarmpress.com/news/12-16-05-pilot-bee-certification/>

Power Lines a Home for Bees?

A scientist at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City says she has a novel solution to the dwindling number of U.S. honeybees. Citing the thinking by some scientists that wild, native bees can take up the slack, Kimberly Russell, a researcher of invertebrate zoology, says bees take refuge under power lines when utility companies allow such land to grow shrubs and flowers. However, utilities routinely keep the land mowed beneath their power lines to prevent vegetation from interfering with electricity delivery. She also thinks this idea could help electric utility companies address adverse feelings about power lines. "If they can put up a sign that says Wildlife Refuge, maybe people will dislike the lines less."

From: <http://science.monstersandcritics.com>

December Minutes

No Club business took place at the December potluck meeting.

Bee Bits

By Randy Oliver

Happy Holidays to All! It was great fun to see many of you at the Christmas party, and my best to those who were unable to attend. Thank you to **Gary Wood** for being at the helm this past year, also **Janet Brisson** and **Jack Meeks**. I would like to give a special thanks to others, such as **Leigh Johnson** and **Lynn Williams** for manning the Swarm Hotline, **Tynowyn Slattery** for organizing the club library, **Karla Hanson**

for checking out the honey extractor, and **Gary Wood** for helping to mail the newsletter. These people work largely unnoticed and put in a great deal of time, without which our association would cease to function. But the most unnoticed person is probably **Bonnie Bagwell**, who has been graciously putting together our newsletter for some time. She is unable to attend our meetings, so you may not have seen her face, but she's working hard for the Association every month. Bonnie could use all of our help with newsletter submissions. Original articles are great and she could use other items of interest to the membership: news articles, recipes, photos, book reviews, and items forwarded from the Internet. Please think of the newsletter when you see something of interest. Thanks!

I write this article on the Winter Solstice, the shortest day of the year. Even in this storm and cold, the bees will soon start their new year, and the queens will soon begin laying eggs for the spring buildup. We commercial beekeepers will be helping them by stimulating them with sugar syrup, and feeding them pollen supplement for protein. We want our colonies to be big and strong by February 10th, when the almond orchards start blooming. This may mean working, treating, and feeding colonies in lousy weather throughout the winter. Commercial beekeeping is considerably different than hobby beekeeping!

Stephanie and I attended a Christmas party of commercial beekeepers in one of their warehouses. The beekeeper had pallets of pollen substitute stacked high, and hundreds of 3-gallon plastic buckets that he uses for syrup feeders (saves time feeding three gallons at once). It's always interesting visiting other beekeepers' operations and seeing how each one does little things differently. I can attest that beekeepers are an ingenious lot. No two operations seem to be run the same. Each beekeeper at the party mixes and feeds his or her pollen supplement a little differently. It's fun, and sometimes tough to decide which methods are best for our operation.

I'm in the middle of writing an article on the state of Varroa control. The research is fascinating, and often contradictory. We all are dealing with similar bees, and similar mites, but each country tends to take a different tack. Plus, it's often difficult to reconcile theoretical advice, laboratory results, proprietary

claims, and practical experience. I just forked out the \$75 to join the International Bee Research Association, so I have access to their online library. If any member has a topic of interest, I may be able to help research it.

Here's an interesting article to check out about drone brood removal as a means of controlling Varroa:

http://www.masterbeekeeper.org/B_files/dronecomb_exchange.htm. The accompanying photo is from that article-if you ever see bees this infected with mites, that colony will not survive for long!

I wish you all a happy and prosperous New Year, with healthy bees, and a great honey crop!



Honey Industry Facts

From: www.honey.com/pressroom/industry/industry.html

HOBBYIST/PART-TIME BEEKEEPERS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has estimated that there are between 139,600 and 212,000 beekeepers in the United States. The vast majority (95%) are hobbyists with less than 25 hives and about 4% are part-timers who keep from 25 to 299 hives. Together, hobbyists and part-timers account for about 50 percent of bee colonies and about 40 percent of honey produced. The number of U.S. bee colonies producing honey in 2004 was 2.56 million (based on beekeepers who manage five or more colonies).

COMMERCIAL BEEKEEPERS

Commercial beekeepers are those with 300 or more bee colonies. There are approximately 1,600 commercial beekeeping operations in the United States, which produce about 60 percent of the nation's

honey. Many commercial beekeepers migrate their colonies during the year to provide pollination services to farmers and to reach the most abundant sources of nectar. Commercial beekeeping operations are frequently family businesses that are handed down from generation to generation.

CONSUMPTION

The U.S. per capita consumption of honey is around 1.29 pounds per year.

AGRICULTURE'S DEPENDENCE

Millions of acres of U.S. fruit, vegetable, oilseed and legume seed crops depend on insect pollination, including honeybees. A 1999 Cornell University study concluded that the direct value of honeybee pollination annually to U.S. agriculture is \$14.6 billion. This is a 56.7% increase from \$9.3 billion determined by the same study in 1989.

Sacramento Beekeeping Supplies

- Complete line of all beekeeping supplies
- Candle making supplies (molds, wicks, dyes, scents)
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- Gifts, books, ready made candles

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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 Bonnie Bagwell at arwg@infostations.com. The deadline for the February 2006 edition is January 15th. 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 arwg@infostations.com.

Nevada County Beekeepers Association



C/o Gary Wood
10396 Mountain Lion Lane
Grass Valley, CA 95949

First Class Mail

January 2006

Next meeting, January 2, 2006, John Miller an NCBA member and commercial beekeeper will present a lively discussion on issues of interest to all bee lovers.

Nevada County Beekeepers' Association

2006 Officers

President: Shane Mathias.....308-1376
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Randy Oliver.....272-4450

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Lynn Williams.....675-2924
Library: Tynowyn Slattery...265-6318
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Honey Extractor: Karla Hanson.....265-3756