

The Nevada County Beekeepers Association



October 2006

President's Message

Dear Fellow Beekeepers,

Here it is, the end of September. I do not know where the summer went. Lots of things were done around here on the ranch. Our honey room (a.k.a. Honey Hut) is nearing completion. We have a few finishing touches on the inside and some siding on the outside. No more extracting, grafting, sugar syrup mixing, and other messy things will be done in the house!! That should make for less mess in the house, which equals more peace in the household!

We recently had a few hats printed out with our new company name and a logo on them, along with business cards. While wearing the hat, I've come in contact with people who ask questions. I am amazed at how many people are interested in bees, beekeeping, and honey. I find myself in conversations with people all day long dispelling myths and educating people on the process of obtaining honey. This is very enjoyable for me. I think it's important that we as beekeepers take the time to answer people's questions and promote our hobby/livelihood in a positive light. The average person has no idea how important the honey bee is to the human race.

The bees seem to be doing great. We lost two colonies out of 43 over the summer, so I figured that wasn't too bad. The remaining colonies have all been treated and seem to be strong. We are looking forward to getting the honey room organized and making it a very functional space.

Last week I drove down to Mann Lake and purchased the new 9/18 frame electric radial extractor for the

organization. The unit is very nice and should serve us well. Karla Hanson will be in charge of maintaining and renting the unit out to members. The unit cost around \$1000.00 and the minimal rental fee will go to paying the association back. Enjoy it.

Until our next meeting on October 2nd, Happy Beekeeping!

Your President, Shane Mathias

Why Did I Get This Newsletter?

Check out the fine print by your name on the label. You signed up at the Nevada County Bee Booth at the 2006 Nevada County Fair for news and information about bees and classes. Here's your chance to attend one of the best and most beloved programs of the year--- Randy Oliver's narration and slide show on flowers and plants, native and not, that are valuable as food sources for bees and native pollinators. Want a better garden next year? Interested in harvesting your own honey? This is a must-see program for the experienced beekeeper, those interested in becoming beekeepers, or the curious person who wants to plant flowers to attract pollinators. Please plan to attend and bring your list of questions of what it takes to be a beekeeper.

October Snack Sign Up

Thanks to these people who offered to bring snacks to the October Meeting:

Pam Hart, Amber Johnson, and Tom Wade

Don Hill, Life Member

At the September meeting, the membership voted to bestow a life membership to long time member Don Hill as a thank you for years of membership and service. Congratulations Don!

Bee Bits

By Randy Oliver

The main thrust of my beekeeping of late has been the interviewing, writing, and follow up to my almond pollination article. You'll see it in the October issue of American Bee Journal, which should be arriving any day. If you don't get ABJ, log on to www.dadant.com, and hit the blue link "Almond Pollination Outlook for 2007." The photos are grainy in the web version, but you'll get the idea. Much of the article has already been published in "The Australian Nut Grower," of which I just received a copy (betcha didn't even know that magazine existed!).

Interviewing for, and publishing this article has introduced me to a number of the big players in the industry. Not only beekeepers, but the Almond Board, pollination brokers, researchers, publishers, and a honey market analyst. I'm very much looking forward to meeting a number of them in person at the upcoming California State Beekeepers Association meeting at Lake Tahoe, at which I will be on the pollination panel discussion. I've also been invited to speak at the California Queen Breeders Association meeting, and have gotten an invitation to the Almond Board's honeybee seminar in Modesto. I may have bitten off more than I can chew!

Thank Brion Dunbar for this one: Google the video "30 Hornets Vs 30,000 Bees." Makes you glad you're not a beekeeper in Japan!

We're actively feeding pollen supplement and syrup to those colonies that haven't built up fully, and supplement alone to those lacking local pollen flows. Since we get paid in the almonds for the strength of

our colonies, an investment in protein feeding now will pay off.

Speaking of payment, don't sell your honey too cheaply. The world price of honey is rising, and the "new shipper loophole" for exporters of foreign honey to the U.S. has been closed. Expect the price of honey in the U.S. to climb sharply. China's crop is toast, Argentina is in a drought, and our midwestern clover dried this year. Honey supplies are short from these major players, so the market for your honey should be good.

I've been experimenting with powdered sugar treatment for varroa. Tina Keller has also been filing reports, thank you (I'd appreciate hearing anyone's positive or negative experiences with it). I've been hearing of Janet and others' success with powdered sugar, and seeing that they still have colonies alive. I can likely attribute their live colonies to the sugar treatments, with a few caveats: 1) some are using additional mite controls, e.g., Janet also uses screened bottoms and drone brood removal, and 2) mite levels are low this year for most beekeepers in the area (this also happened about four years ago). If sugar is indeed effective at causing most phoretic (those on adult bees) mites to drop, then theoretically three sugar treatments four days apart should prevent virtually all mites from reentering brood cells. The logic is that mites are hidden for 12 days in the cell, then come out for four or more days to feed upon adult bees before they reenter a cell. Therefore, the 3 x 4 treatment should remove a high percentage of mites through an entire generation cycle.

Unfortunately, the results of our tests is that it is not as effective as expected. The mite counts a few days after the three treatments are less than before, but not by a whole lot. That's with me dusting both top and bottom boxes! So now I'm really curious--if the mites aren't set back that much by sugar, how are colonies only receiving sugar treatment surviving? I just bought 50 lbs. of 10x powdered sugar to do more testing.

There is a new mite-control product registered in California--Apiguard. It is a thymol gel, and initial feedback has been very positive. It should be used

after your honey is pulled, since it will strongly flavor the honey like Listerine. For information, go to www.vita-europe.com/en/products/apiguard.htm. The product is carried by Dadant & Sons. You must obtain a "user's number" from the Ag Commissioner to purchase it. It is very safe to use, and "organic," but the feds want to keep track of its use under its Section 24 "Special Local Need Registration." Our local ag commissioners office has recently finalized the complete turnover of its honeybee-experienced staff due to retirement. The new staff are very nice, but know next to nothing about beekeeping issues. I've been trying to sort out certification in order to purchase the product for a week, and am scheduled to try again tomorrow morning. If I'm successful, they should then know how to handle obtaining a number for you. To purchase Apiguard, you need to fax Dadant (530 893 0922) a copy of your "Operator/Site Identification Number." You may obtain a number by calling the Ag Commissioner (273 2648) to make an appointment with Joe. You must then show up in person; there is no charge. It is not physically painful, and there is no test.

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Internet Tip of the Month

By Janet Brisson

Storing wet supers after extraction has been my big problem, putting them back on the hive, the bees will start filling them up rather than cleaning them out. Jim Fischer on Beesource.com gave this tip. Store your wet supers after extraction by tying a strap around the super and frames and put them upside down over the inner cover. If you have an upper entrance, block that off. The bees will clean it up and will not store or try to use the frames.

November Program—Crafty Volunteers Needed

For our November program, we plan to have a series of short presentations on beekeeping-related Christmas crafts. If you have a craft or talent such as beeswax candle making, cooking honey-based treats, decorating with bee items, and etc., please volunteer to speak to us for a few minutes in November. Small or large, basic or wildly creative crafts welcome! Contact Detlef, Shane, or Randy (numbers on back page).

Smoker Safety

The recent Dobbins fire was reputed to have been started by a beekeeper using a smoker. Although none of the members attending the September NCBA meeting were able to confirm that this was true, it still serves as a reminder to use caution with your smoker to avoid fires:

- If you don't have a hose and water supply near your apiary, bring a fire extinguisher with you.
- Provide a non-flammable surface to rest your smoker when not in use. An old pizza pan, cookie sheet, or grveled area work well.
- Consider not using your smoker on windy days, or postpone beekeeping activities until the wind dies down.
- When finished, place your smoker in a non-burnable location and allow it to burn out and cool thoroughly, preferable overnight, before emptying the can.

Remember, California grasslands and forests are extremely dry this time of year, and it only takes a single spark.



“Killer” Bees

Africanized bees haven't yet swarmed north of the 35 degrees N parallel (Bakersfield-Amarillo-Atlanta) so we're told, so we don't worry--but they can hitchhike on trucks and motorhomes. We read that if you sprint 1/4 mile they'll give up chasing you (which is why many of the people they kill are.) Horses and cows in corrals, and dogs on chains are routinely killed by sheer numbers of stings. The Union 9/8/06 described a killer bee attack on a South African SPCA shelter in Newcastle (between Capetown and Johannesburg,) killing 22 dogs including 12 puppies, stung trying to burrow into the dirt to escape. The news report said no reason for the attack was known. (African bees have resisted civilizing for years or centuries.) Nevada County swarm catchers should consider wearing Nikes, just in case the motorhome parked next door came through Texas.

Jack Meeks, sec

Sacramento Beekeeping Supplies

- Complete line of all beekeeping supplies
- Candle making supplies (molds, wicks, dyes, scents)
- Glycerin soap making supplies (soap base, molds, scents, and dyes)
- Honeycomb sheets for rolling candles (50 colors and in smooth)
- Beeswax and paraffin, special container candle wax

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September Minutes

President Shane Mathias opened with Q&A and members' comments: Randy Oliver expects 2007 pollination prices to start soft, then rise. His commentary on the 2006 season will be published in the American Bee Journal and the Australian Nut Grower magazines. CA may be 30,000 colonies short. Huge almond plantings continue ('a can a day is not enough any more') MOTION Oliver: Janet to exchange newsletters with Sonoma and other bee assoc, and publish excerpts on her website <rube@countryrubes.com> Passed, voice. MOTION Brisson: Make Don Hill official life member of Nevada County Beekeepers. Passed, voice. MOTION Oliver: Accept August minutes as published in Local Buzz. Passed, voice Finance Brisson: JulyEndBal \$2348.25; Inc 5.50; Exp. 110.29; AugEndBal \$2243.46. Randy Oliver: Mann Lake sells a "portable" Italian centrifugal extractor; holding 9 deep or 18 medium frames: hand operated \$700, motorized \$1050. MOTION Oliver: Association to purchase motorized Italian extractor. Passed, voice. Leslie Gault recommended smoker fuel using sliced & expanded box cardboard used as soft padding. Powdered sugar applied three times, four days apart, takes advantage of mites' cycle of 12 days in brood, then 10-15 days out. This should kill 90% of mites. PROGRAM Video 'Instrumental AI Artificial Insemination of Queen Bees, by Sue Cobey, breeder of Carniolans. Instruments used: Schley manipulator, needle forceps, ventral hooks, stinger hooks, capillary syringes et al. A large supply of mature drones is needed, each producing one microliter of semen. The queen is placed in a tube, anesthetized with carbon dioxide, the valve held open with hooks and semen inserted into oviduct. The sperm migrate to her spermatheca which stores it for a year or more of egg laying. A

microscope, micrometer tool holders and steady hands needed. Jack Meeks, sec

Want a Chance to Read an Online Book in the Making?

Michael Bush, Beesource.com's most knowledgeable beekeepers, has put his best tips about beekeeping, both on large cell and small cell foundation on a webpage and is considering making it into a book. My favorite page is Lazy Beekeeping, click on the right. Read it here:

<http://www.bushfarms.com/bees.htm>

Corrugated Cardboard Smoker Fuel

As Jack mentions in the minutes, I recently received some machinery packed in recycled corrugated cardboard packing material and tried it in my smoker. The cardboard had been macerated with cutters in kind of a criss-cross pattern. The cardboard lights quickly, stays lit a long time, makes a cool dense smoke, stores easily, tears easily with gloved hands, is easy to handle, and leaves very little ash and no creosote. It's the perfect smoker fuel—look for some!

-Leslie Gault-

Infants and Honey

At the bee booth at the fair this year, we had to stop more than one parent from attempting to let their baby taste our honey samples. Most of you probably know that honey (and many other foods) may contain clostridium botulinum, the bacterium that causes botulism. Babies under the age of about one year are susceptible to the bacterium until they develop the intestinal microflora that helps them resist this serious disease. So remember, young infants should not be fed honey.

Apple Honey Tart

Makes 4 Servings

Ingredients

1 (17 ¼ oz) puff pastry dough
1 egg, well beaten
1 cup white zinfandel wine or apple juice
½ cup honey
1 3-inch stick cinnamon
3 whole cloves
1 slice fresh ginger root
3 medium apples, pared, cored, and sliced
Whipped topping or sour cream

Directions

Cut two 5 inch hearts out of the puff pastry. Cut ½ inch wide strips of pastry from remaining dough. Brush edges of hearts with beaten egg. Twist and line edges of hearts with dough strips, joining ends of strips with egg mixture as necessary. Bake according to pastry package directions. When golden, remove or push down the puffy centers of the hearts to allow space for apple filling. Boil wine, honey, and spices in a skillet, reduce heat, cover and simmer 10 to 15 minutes. Place apples in one layer, return mixture to boil, and simmer 10 to 15 minutes more until apples are tender. Carefully remove slices from liquid and drain thoroughly. Boil syrup until reduced to a syrup. Cool, and brush bottom of crust with syrup. Arrange poached apples over syrup, and serve with topping or sour cream.

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. Detailed instructions are included.

To order send check for \$15 (Cost of book is \$12, plus shipping and tax) to:
GREEN BLESSINGS
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greenblessings@infostations.com.

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 November 2006 edition is October 21st. 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

Nevada County Beekeepers Association

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Nevada County Beekeepers Association



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First Class Mail

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October Meeting

Our October 2nd meeting program will be a presentation by Randy Oliver regarding wildflowers.