

The Nevada County Beekeepers Association

Local Buzz



March 2007

President's Message

Hello Fellow Beekeepers,

By now everyone that had bees going to pollination should have taken them by now. I was up in Durham this weekend and the almond trees were in full bloom. It was a beautiful sight driving down the road and seeing miles and miles of pure white blossoms on both sides of the road. We ended up taking 27 colonies to pollination, up from 3 last year. Next year 100?

There has been a lot of news coverage on the plight of the bees. Apparently we (beekeepers) have done a great job of educating the public about the necessity of bees. I have been inundated by people both by telephone and email showing concern about the bees and wanting to know how my bees were doing and if I had suffered as a result of the situation.

I am looking forward to this season--buying new equipment and expanding the operation. The honey room is now 99.7 ¼ % complete and I am thinking about extracting honey for people for a fee. If you are interested, let me know what you think a fair price would be. Looking forward to seeing you all at the next meeting on March 5th, 2007.

Your President, Shane Mathias

March Program

Dr. Larry Connor, noted entomologist, publisher and author of many books including his latest "Increase Essentials" will be our guest speaker. Dr. Connor has been touring the United States, visiting beekeepers, picking up tips and reporting them in his latest series in the American Bee Journal, "The Traveling Beekeeper". His top priority has been educating beekeepers in topics such as beekeeping management, queen rearing and pollination issues.

Are you Wondering Why We Sent You This Newsletter?

If you are not a member of the Nevada County Beekeepers Association (NCBA), you must have visited our Beekeeping Booth at the Nevada County Fair last August and signed up for information on the upcoming beekeeping classes. Not only does the NCBA have an exciting program planned for the next meeting (see previous paragraph, meeting location is on the back of the newsletter), but you and your family can sign up for Randy Oliver's Beginning Beekeeping course. The cost is \$40.00 per family (\$20 returnees), which includes six Monday evening classes, plus field classes working in a beeyard. All materials and bee gear provided. Contact the instructor, Randy Oliver, with questions about the classes at randyoliver@infs.net or call 530-277-4450

Beginning Beekeeping Class Starts in March

See above article for details.

2007 Membership Dues Due!

Janet will be collecting 2007 membership dues at the March meeting. Dues are a bargain at \$12.50, or \$10.50 if you receive your newsletter electronically. If you are paying in cash, please try to bring the exact change. Or mail dues (make check out to Nevada County Beekeepers Association) to her at:

NCBA c/o Janet Brisson
20693 Dog Bar Road
Grass Valley, CA 95949

Questions? Call Janet at 913-2724 or email rubes@countryrubes.com

Raffle Items Wanted

Our Raffle Chair, Karla Hanson, sends out a request for items to be donated for the raffle. Bring new or gently used items to the meeting, or call her at 265-3756. Karla says, "Remember: one man's trash is another man's treasure." ☺

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Snack Sign Up

Our March snack sign up sheet doesn't have any names on it, so if you feel creative and want to bring goodies, please do so!



Mite-y Bees Wanted

Randy Oliver is looking for a couple of colonies with high mite levels, or colonies which have not been treated or tested in a while. He will replace your donated colonies with healthy bees. Contact Randy at randyoliver@infs.net or call 530-277-4450.

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
- Gifts, books, ready made candles

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February Minutes

Pres. Shane Mathias opened with Q&A.

Program: Randy Oliver discussed latest methods of varroa mite control worldwide. Varroa has become resistant to Amitraz in Europe, fluvalinate and Coumaphos in US. The chemicals remain in the wax when made into new foundation blanks. Old dark comb may kill brood if chemicals build up in wax. Queens prefer to lay eggs in fresh comb. Varroa mites infest drone brood three times as much as worker brood. Queens usually lay 15% in drone brood. To kill maximum mites, deep frames #3 and #7 in the upper box are replaced in the drone rearing season--fall and winter--with only two inches of foundation at the top, which will fill with honey. The space below will be built with drone cells, which are cut out and destroyed before the drones hatch in a month. The frames are returned to build more drone cells. Hives should be inspected with sticky board monthly. A collection of 25 mites in 24 hours is ominous, the infestation doubles monthly. Mite drop varies by season according to where the mites are living. The mite cycle is 14 days, the drone cycle is four weeks. An infected hive should be treated at once; robbing of a die-out spreads mites widely. Dusting with powdered sugar at this time, using a bee brush to spread the sugar, gets it on all the bees. Menthol 5% for tracheal mites can be added. These steps kill the most mites without chemicals.

Jack Meeks, sec.

Bee Bits

By Randy Oliver

This year's almond bloom started late. The cool weather held back the trees for about a week, then we had two days of 70+ springlike conditions. The trees responded immediately. Two days ago, there was barely a bud open in an entire orchard in Williams. Yesterday morning when we arrived, a smattering of white was appearing. Throughout the day we watched the bloom unfold before our eyes. It was amazing how the trees could transform so quickly!

We could easily note the change hour by hour, since we kept driving up and down the same rows, transferring bees and brood to equalize our colonies. I've never seen the process happen so quickly. When we arrived this morning, the entire orchard was white. The early variety and the main variety were at about 1/3 bloom, and the late variety was at about 10%. All three varieties in bloom simultaneously. I don't see that occur often.

The big question is still, how will the supply of bees pan out? It was holding a few days ago in the Bakersfield area, and in the North Valley, but reports are that the Fresno area is experiencing a shortage. We won't really know until the growers and inspectors actually look into the colonies to see if they contain bees. At that point, we'll see how strong the supply really is.

I received one report from Fresno a few days ago. Seems that some Midwestern beekeepers placed 2200 colonies into a very large orchard. Then they asked for the check immediately, so they could have cash when they got home. However, the request made the grower a little suspicious, what with all the news in the papers and on TV about CCD (colony collapse disorder). So he quickly hired an inspector, and found out that the colonies averaged only two frames of bees--an unacceptably weak level. The grower called his bank and stopped the check for \$300,000! My guess is that this action will get the other growers' attention. Delivering weak colonies is like delivering a load of cars without engines. They may look good in the orchard, but they aren't worth much for doing the job.

Those of you at the last meeting heard about some of the experiments that I will be running, probably next month. I will probably run them on a weekend, and could use all the help I can get, so we can perform them all at the same time, to avoid variability. Thank you very much to Thom Staser for his generous donation toward the research--it will help to defer costs of the tests.

If there is someone who would like to run an experiment for me this year, here's one: I'd drop off perhaps 36 colonies. The experimenter would treat 12 every two weeks with powdered sugar and drone comb removal, 12 every month, and 12 would be controls. The main work would be changing sticky boards twice a week. The experimenter wouldn't even need to count them--just replace each one and store for later counting. This experiment would confirm or disprove the efficacy of the combination of the methods. To date, no such experiment has been written up. It could have great implications for the beekeeping community. It could be performed in one of my yards, or at your home if you have room. The main requirement is the consistency at replacing the stickyboards. Any volunteers?

Placer Nature Center Asks for Help With Observation Hive

Linda Desai of the Placer Nature Center sent the following letter to us via Karla Hanson, asking for help with building and stocking a new observation hive:

“Dear Karla,

The Placer Nature Center has had a viewing beehive since 1994. That hive was made by a senior at the local high school and we have used and repaired it through the years. This past year both hive and bees didn't it make it through the fall so we would like to replace the old viewing hive with a new and improved viewing hive. The Placer Nature Center has their viewing hive in the Discovery Room. Every class that comes to the Nature Center visits the bees and are fascinated by them. Our docents and staff enjoy sharing the amazing facts about bees. During the summer, the children at our summer camp visit and watch the bees daily. The honeybee is an integral part of our environmental education programming. We really miss not having them to share with the children and public.

Is there anyone in your organization that would build a viewing hive for us? I have the plans for a 4 frame viewing hive from UC Davis. The Placer Nature Center would pay for the materials. Could you donate our starting bees and queen? If anyone can help or know of someone that can, please let us know. Thank you.

Linda Desai, Education Director
Placer Nature Center
linda@placernaturecenter.org
www.placernaturecenter.org
3700 Christian Valley Rd.
Auburn, CA 95602
530-878-6053”

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 April 2007 edition is March 20th. 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

2007 Officers

President: Shane Mathias..... 308-1376
lawdawg911@earthlink.net

Vice President: Rob Slay 268-8656

Secretary: Jack Meeks..... 432-4429
jackm@nccn.net

Treasurer: Janet Brisson....530-913-2724
rubes@countryrubes.com

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Randy Oliver..... 277-4450

Karla Hanson..... 265-3756

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Lynn Williams..... 675-2924

Librarian: Tynowyn Slattery... 265-6318

Newsletter Mailing: Gary Wood..... 477-9202

Newsletter: Leslie Gault..... 346-7092

lesliegault@yahoo.com

Honey Extractors: Karla Hanson.... 265-3756

Nevada County Beekeepers Association



c/o Gary Wood
10396 Mountain Lion Lane
Grass Valley, CA 95949
First Class Mail

March 2007

March Meeting Program

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