

The Local Buzz

January 2016



President's Message, Jerry Van Heeringen

I am looking forward to serving as president of the NCBA this year. I've been a hobbyist beekeeper for about eight years and a member for as long. I have gotten so much out of attending the meetings that I'm happy to be able to give something back.

Diane and I regretted missing the Christmas potluck and pirate gift exchange but that was the only week we could schedule a short vacation to a warmer climate. Hopefully the event was well attended and all had a good time, the gift exchange is always so much fun.

We are making good progress on the renovations to the bee booth at the fairgrounds. Many thanks to Brion Dunbar for not only organizing the project but working there as well. Thanks also to Dave Pfadt who has put in a tremendous amount of time and effort. The Fairgrounds are closed for the holidays but will reopen after New Year's weekend and we will continue the work then.

We have been spoiled with several mild winters but now it looks like we're back to our normal winter weather pattern. With this long stretch of cold and rainy weather it's important to be monitoring our colonies and responding to their needs. Please attend the January 4th meeting so your questions based on what you're seeing in your hives can be answered.

Our new vice president Dave Pfadt has some interesting programs lined up this year that will provide information, education and entertainment.

January 5th Meeting – 7:00 PM

Grass Valley Veteran's Memorial Building – 255 South Auburn Street in Grass Valley

The program for our January meeting is "Doing Divides" presented by Brion Dunbar. Make an increase in your colony count by "Dividing". It's not too early to start planning for divides in the spring.

Bee Bits

Randy Oliver, Contributor

Happy New Year to all! I struggle with trying to balance running a commercial bee operation with field research, writing, and speaking engagements. I was on the road for speaking engagements for 18 days in total during a 60-day period this fall. My New Year's resolution is to spend more time catching up on the home front. Anyway, I apologize for not being able to make time to write for the Local Buzz the last few months. I'll try to make up for it now.

Wow, what a year 2016 was for us and "our" bees! Eric, Ian, and I expanded the operation to our goal mark—hitting over 1400 colonies of bees at top out in June. The strong early rains last fall raised the possibility of the drought ending, and since there is a long lag time for equipment orders in springtime, I ordered another 1000 deep supers and preassembled frames.

But the hoped for winter/spring rains never materialized, and most of the equipment still sits stored for better times. The drought continued. Although we made a bit of honey in some yards, August was brutal for the bees.

At my home yard, nearly all the colonies went completely broodless that month, due to lack of pollen. By late summer, many of our native trees were already dying from water stress, and it is only some fortuitous fall rain that saved others.

Varroa again continued to be difficult to manage. We utilized the decreased broodrearing in August and September to gain control over mite populations, in the process testing various “natural” treatments. But by the time we finally wrestled control from the mites, our colonies were desperately in need of protein. During late September and through October we fed each colony an average of \$15 worth of pollen sub and sugar syrup. The bees responded amazingly quickly—most of our yards completely turned around in 4-5 weeks. The sad exception was the home yard, in which the colonies had dwindled so badly that many just couldn’t get it together by winter.

As I type these words, we’ve received a tantalizing amount of rain, but El Niño has yet to break the drought. And long term, we’re facing a Presidential election in which all of the candidates in one of the major parties is in denial of the climate change that is occurring all around us--a disconnect from reality that is truly troubling. The commercial bee industry is in for trouble as the current miticide of choice—amitraz—begins to fail due to overuse. Beekeepers forget that treatments are only a stopgap measure until our industry shifts to stock bred for innate resistance to varroa. But so long as chemical control was cheap and effective, there was little demand for stocks bred for mite resistance. With the impending failure of amitraz, we may finally start getting serious about bee breeding.

In that light, there are safe, natural products that can be effectively used to manage mites. Although some appear to have luck with powdered sugar dusting, most do not use it often enough for good control. On the other hand, thymol, formic acid, and oxalic acid (all approved for organic beekeeping) can clearly do the job. But they must each be used correctly, and appropriate for conditions.

This summer we tested various formulations of thymol, and combinations thereof with formic acid. To my surprise, Apiguard thymol gel, applied per manufacturer’s instructions, on top of the hive, in a 1½” rim, gave the best control, and did not cause noticeable colony stress even at temperatures in the low 90’s F:

Minutes from Last Meeting

Last Month's meeting was the Christmas Party and there are no minutes available.

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!

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 530-265-6318



Pumpkin Honey Bread

In large bowl, cream honey with butter until light and fluffy. Stir in pumpkin. Beat in eggs, one at a time, until thoroughly incorporated. Sift together remaining ingredients. Stir into pumpkin mixture. Divide batter equally between two well-greased 9 x5 x 3-inch loaf pans. Bake at 350°F for 1 hour or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Let loaves cool in pans for 10 minutes; invert pans to remove loaves and allow to finish cooling on racks.

1 cup - honey
1/2 cup - butter or margarine, softened
1 can (16 oz.) - solid-pack pumpkin
4 - eggs
4 cups - flour
4 teaspoons - baking powder

2 teaspoons - ground cinnamon
2 teaspoons - ground ginger
1 teaspoon - baking soda
1 teaspoon - salt
1 teaspoon - ground nutmeg



Colorful Cotton Blanket, for the Lottery

Submitted by Tynowyn Slattery

These are pictures of the little blanket for the lottery, colorful and very whimsical too. The size is a generous 36" x 46". It is double sided and washable cotton. Cute as a bug! The perfect gift for the little beekeeper to be. I'll bring it back to the next meeting.

Time to Pay Your 2016 Dues!

Janet Brisson, Treasurer

Being a member of the Nevada County Beekeeping Associations has many perks.

Your membership entitles you to our newsletter, "The Local Buzz," sent monthly, provides information on our association's activities and lets you know what your bees should be doing each month. As a member you receive coupons for 25% discounts on a major beekeeping magazine and local discounts on equipment.

The NCBA works towards educating people about beekeeping and agriculture, keeping everyone up to date on the latest news and techniques for the beginning beekeeper to the very advanced.

I will be collecting dues for the year 2016 at the January 5th meeting. If you are paying in cash, please try to bring the exact change. If you would like to pay your dues through the mail, 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 newsletters.

NCBA C/o Janet Brisson

20693 Dog Bar Road Grass Valley, CA 95949

Any questions, please feel free to call me at 530-913-2724 or email me at rubes@countryrubes.com

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Honey Extraction House

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Dadant Little Wonder Honey Extractor with stand. Hand extracts 4 deep or shallow frames per load. Used twice. Excellent condition. \$380 for both.
274-1098 Kathleen

Advertising space (3" by 2") is available here and need not be bee-related. Advertising rates are \$7 per year for NCBA members and \$16 per year for non-members.

Goodies Sign-up

Karla Hanson, Coordinator

Please let me know if you can bring a treat for any of the coming meetings. We only need a couple of folks each month, so pick a month and let me know. Contact Karla Hanson, queenbeez@att.net

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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. 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

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Nevada County Beekeepers Association

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Nevada County Beekeepers Association



c/o Janet Brisson
20693 Dog Bar Road
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First Class Mail

January 5th Meeting - 7pm

Program:

"Doing Divides"
presented by Brion Dunbar