

## The Nevada County Beekeepers Association ~ February 2013



# Local Buzz

## President's Message

**Jeremiah Farrell, President**

Hello all, we survived another year of beekeeping and boy has it been a challenge from making splits in the early spring's weird weather to feeding all summer. When you think you are done its time to feed and give pollen patty to get them geared up for almonds. Now the fun begins, the 5AM loads of bees and the joys of the orchard mud butt. That is what we like to do, it just wouldn't be almonds without a good stuck truck of bees. Well at least for everyone else I got a 4 x 4 bee truck. I hope to see everyone at the meeting.

## February 4th Meeting - 7:00 PM

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

Our program will be a presentation by Master Gardener Lyn Muth on 'alternatives to pesticide use in the garden'. Please join us for an energetic and enlightening presentation by Ms. Muth on how to make your garden and bee yard work better without toxic chemicals. You're also welcome to join us in a no-host dinner at the Lin-Q buffet in the Raleys shopping center in Grass Valley at 5:30 PM.

## Bee Bits

**Randy Oliver, Contributor**

What a difference between two winters! Last year's was one of the warmest on record; this year we had record cold in early January. Last winter was great for the bees; this year is much more stressful. The hot topic at the moment for commercial beekeepers is whether there will be enough bees for almond pollination. The widespread drought across the U.S., coupled with high mite levels due to the warm winter, plus lack of the favorite commercial varroa control product resulted in a lot of substandard colonies going into winter. As you can imagine, they don't normally come out in better shape! We could see desperate growers offering \$200 hive rental rates.

The frosty weather this month brought early buildup in many hives to a screeching halt—the queens stopped laying. We only saw egg laying resume mid January, when things warmed up a bit, and the foragers started bringing in alder pollen. This setback hurts the ability of the colonies to get a jump on spring buildup. What happens next depends largely upon how much good foraging weather there is to allow pollen collection. Locally, I'm seeing nosema take a bite. Over the past few days, I've processed samples from 13 colonies that either had dead bees in front, or were dinks. Nine of the 13 had high nosema levels.

On the research front, California queen producers have been blaming problems with queen cells on a recently-introduced fungicide—Pristine. I just finished writing about the fascinating investigation into the problem. The fungicide manufacturer, BASF, worked with the California queen producers to see whether Pristine was indeed the problem. To make a very long story short (you'll be able to read it in its entirety in ABJ), we discovered that in the same years that the growers started spraying Pristine, that they also starting using some other products too!

One of those products was an insect growth regulator (IGR) called Dimilin. They started using this product because it was more environmentally benign than the dormant oil/organophosphate sprays that they had

previously been using. The bottom line is that it appears that in trying to go “green,” that they inadvertently caused problems for some queen producers when the IGR prevented queen pupae from metamorphing into adults. There are so many surprises in pest management—and bees sometimes bear the brunt of our learning curve.

Regarding your own bees, many local colonies went into winter short on pollen stores. If you don't see your bees bringing in lots of pollen, you may wish to help them out with some protein supplement.

## **From the Librarian**

**Tynowyn Slattery, Librarian**

*The Complete Meadmaker* by Ken Schramm, First publication date 1959

212 pages with conversion charts, glossary, bibliography and index, although, because of the date of publication, many of the sources are out of date.

Ken Schramm has written THE book on mead making, it's not that hefty but covers everything that a beginner will want to know, in four sections: Background (history), Process, Ingredients, and Recipes.

Whether you want a fascinating read on the subject or are starting to actually enter the world of mead making, this is one of the most well written, informative books you will come across.

Mr. Schramm is a award winning mead maker and is, "the founding Competition Director of the oldest American mead competition, the Mazer Cup", but first and foremost he is a guy that really wants everyone that tries to succeed in making the best batch of mead possible and he gives all the information, including his own mistakes, needed to that end in an engaging and well edited style that bears reading over and over.

I suppose that one could wish for more recipes but I think working with his basic recipe, for my first few batches, was the reason that I didn't have any real failures.

I bought a large amount of Sage honey that was too strong for the table, for a good price, from NCBA member Rick Cullen many years ago and made some very nice batches of sparkling, semi-dry mead with it, nice enough to be called, the "nectar of the gods", and drinkable enough to underestimate consumption and earn, the "hangover from Hades".

If we could have only one mead book in the library, this would be the one.

end note:

There are always differing opinions as to the length of fermentation necessary before drinking mead but I've sampled my mead at different times and can say it definitely rewards waiting a whole year; it's that delayed gratification thing that is so hard to do

....and a note about late books:

The library books are checked out for a month, which can be extended by another month by calling, or preferably, e-mailing me. If problems arise with returning material it can be mailed to:

Tynowyn Slattery, 20493 Rome Road, Nevada City, CA 95959, 530-265-6318 - swoolman@saber.net

## **Raffle Prizes**

**Karla Hanson, Coordinator**

Thank you all for bringing some great items for our raffles, keep it coming. Plants, eggs, jewelry, soaps, bee items, jams, beautiful metal garden art, the list goes on and on... Thanks to everyone!

## **This Month's Recipe**

**Contributed by Janet Brisson**

**Baklava** - Adapted from a recipe in 'The Beekeepers Bible', Harpers Collins Publisher.

### Syrup

1 ½ cups sugar (preferably unrefined superfine)  
finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon  
1 cinnamon stick  
2/3 cup honey  
1 tsp rosewater or ½ tsp vanilla (optional)

### Baklava

2/3 unsalted butter, melted  
18 sheet frozen phyllo dough, thawed  
2 cups salted shelled pistachios (or other favorite nut), chopped  
2 cups walnuts, chopped  
2 Tbsp sugar  
1 Tbsp honey  
1/2 tsp ground cardamom  
1/2 tsp ground cloves  
1/3 cup chopped nuts to top

Make the syrup: place sugar, lemon zest and juice, cinnamon, and 1 ½ cups water in a saucepan, stir over medium heat until sugar dissolves. Then adjust heat to boil gently for 15 minutes until thick and syrupy. Add the honey and cook over low heat for 2 minutes more. Remove cinnamon stick, add rosewater or vanilla if using, cover and chill.

Make the baklava: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Brush a 7 by 11 inch baking pan with a little butter. Line with a sheet of phyllo dough and brush with butter. Repeat dough and butter for a total of 10 layers. In a small bowl, mix the pistachios and walnuts with sugar, honey, spices, and stir well. Spoon the nut mixture over the dough and spread evenly. Top with another piece of dough, brush with butter, and continue until all the dough is used up. Brush remaining butter on top, and then use a small sharp knife to score halfway through the layers in a diamond pattern. Bake in oven for 20 minutes, decrease temp to 300 degrees and bake for 35 to 30 minutes longer until golden brown. Remove from oven, then cut through to the bottom of the pan. While still hot, pour chilled syrup over, then let cool completely. Sprinkle chopped nuts on top to serve.

## **6th Annual Organic Beekeeping Conference**

**Contributed by Janet Brisson**

I went to the 1<sup>st</sup> Organic Beekeeping Conference back in 2007 and it was amazing. It got us to get all of the plastic out of our hives. We are using natural and Small Cell Beekeeping. It's ton's of fun, the YMCA camp is rustic, but darling and ad had great vegetarian and full meat menus.

The meeting is to be held in Oracle, Arizona at the YMCA Triangle Y Ranch Camp and Retreat Center on March 1 - 3, 2013. Beekeepers into Organic Beekeeping come together to associate for clean sustainable beekeeping with ZERO treatments and getting off the artificial feeds and artificial breeding parameters not in tandem with Nature. Registration is \$190 per person and includes accommodations (dorm style), six meals and access to all workshops and events. Bring your own bedding or rental is available.

For more information please visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/organicbeekeepers/>

## Country Rubes Combo Screened Bottom Boards

Special NCBA Club Price! Call Janet for details. 530-913-2724 or [rubes@countryrubes.com](mailto:rubes@countryrubes.com)

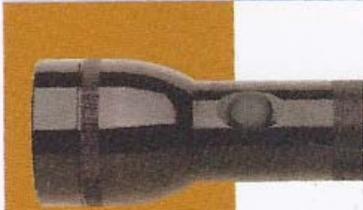
## Honey Extraction House

A to Z Supply has a honey extraction house available for rent. Equipment is provided and the room is heated and there's lots of hot water for clean up. For more information: 530.273.6608

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## Goodies Sign-up

**Karla Hanson, Coordinator**

Please let me know if you can bring a treat for any of the coming meetings. We still need treats for our September, October, and November meetings. Contact Karla Hanson, [queenbeez@att.net](mailto:queenbeez@att.net)

## January Minutes

**Jack Meeks, Secretary**

Club officers and Board met Jan 7th at LinQ buffet to finalize 2013 meeting activities and schedules.

Finance Janet Brisson: Nov Begin \$3061.33; Inc\$161; Exp \$130.94; Nov End \$ 3091.39.

Randy Oliver will have bee nucs and queen cells available starting April 1.

Randy Oliver presented slides on "Recognizing Bee Diseases." Larger colony sizes decrease more in winter than smaller ones, and the smaller ones show larger increases in spring. Pollen stores should be checked in late summer, and supplemented if not plentiful. Low honey stores should be provided with sugar syrup, easiest with jars inverted over top covers, with pinholes in plastic screw tops.

Gizmos and gadgets will be on the program later in 2013.

# Another Recipe This Month

Contributed by Karla Hanson

## Spiced Honey Fingers

- **Spiced Honey Fingers**
- **Mixed Spice Recipe**
- **Cookie Icing**

Makes 24 cookies

- 40 g butter
  - 180 g (½ cup) honey
  - 150 g (1 cup) plain (all-purpose) flour
  - ½ teaspoon bicarbonate of (baking) soda
  - 1 teaspoon ground ginger
  - 1 teaspoon mixed spice \*\*If not available – see Mixed Spice blend below
  - 4 teaspoons milk
1. Preheat oven to 180° C (350° F). Line 2 baking sheets with non-stick baking paper or silicone mats and set aside.
  2. In a small sized saucepan over low heat, melt the butter and honey. Bring to a boil and simmer for 2 minutes. Set aside and allow to cool slightly.
  3. Place the butter and honey mixture into a medium sized heatproof bowl. Using a fine mesh sieve, sift the flour, bicarbonate of soda, ginger and mixed spice over the butter and honey mixture and mix to combine.
  4. Gradually add the milk, stirring until well combined and the mixture has formed a dough. Set aside to cool.
  5. Turn dough onto a lightly floured work surface and knead until smooth.
  6. Roll dough into 4 X 36-cm-long (¾-inch X 14-inch) logs. Cut into 6-cm (about 2½-inch) lengths, tucking the edges under to form rounded ends.
  7. Place on prepared baking sheet (12 to a sheet) and bake, rotating sheet halfway through baking, for 8 to 10 minutes or until the tops of the cookies begin to crack.
  8. Transfer to a wire rack and allow to cool completely before icing.

## Mixed Spice Recipe

Makes about 2 tablespoons

- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
  - 1 teaspoon ground coriander
  - 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
  - ½ teaspoon ground ginger
  - ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
  - ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
1. Place all the spices in a small bowl, stir together to well combine.
  2. Store in an airtight container. Will keep for up to 2 months.

## Cookie Icing

- 400 g (2½ cups) icing (confectioners') sugar, sifted
  - 1½ tablespoons (a little more may be necessary if icing is too thick) boiling water
  - Yellow gel paste food coloring
1. Place the icing sugar and water in a bowl and mix until smooth. If you find the icing is too thick, add ½-tablespoon of boiling water at-a-time until desired consistency is reached (should not be watery but at the same time should not be a paste).
  2. Divide icing between 2 bowls, add one drop of gel paste food coloring to one bowl and stir to combine. If you prefer a darker color, add one drop of gel paste at-a-time, stir to combine, until the desired color is reached.
  3. Spread half of the cookies with yellow icing and the remaining cookies with the plain icing.
  4. Return to wire rack to allow icing to set.

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](mailto:garyg@newpress.com)

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

## Nevada County Beekeepers Association



c/o Steve Reynolds  
10838 Ridge Road  
Nevada City, CA 95959  
First Class Mail

### **February Meeting - 7PM**

Program: alternatives to pesticide use in the garden

No host dinner at Lin-Q - 5:30PM

## Nevada County Beekeepers Association

### **Officers**

President: Jeremiah Farrell ..... 632-3303  
Vice President: Leslie Gault ..... 346-7092  
Secretary: Jack Meeks..... 432-4429  
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Treasurer: Janet Brisson..... 913-2724

[rubes@countryrubes.com](http://rubes@countryrubes.com)

### **Board Members**

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Randy Oliver..... 277-4450  
Charlie Whittlesey.....292-3249  
or 755-0468  
Deborah Morawski...675-2924  
Karla Hanson..... 265-3756

### **Committee Chairs**

Swarm Hotline: Karla Hanson..... 265-3756  
Lynn Williams ..... 675-2924  
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Newsletter Mailing: Steve Reynolds..... 268-2133  
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