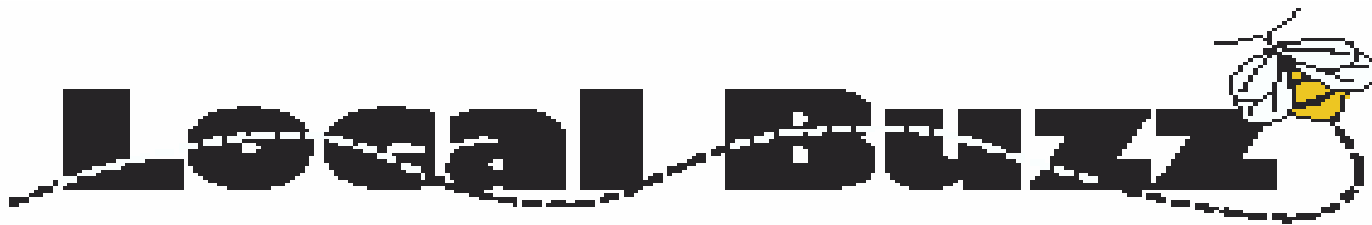


# The Nevada County Beekeepers' Association



February 2006

## President's Message

Hello fellow beekeepers. It's definitely winter here on the ranch. Last night was 28 degrees with lots of hail that stayed on the ground almost all day. The day before (Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>) was a beautiful day and a great opportunity to check the hives, as they were very active. I was amazed at the amount of bright yellow pollen that the bees were bringing into their hives. Their legs were packed with it. And for the life of me I cannot figure out where they were getting it. Still, as an extra measure I placed a brood builder patty in each hive and a fresh jar of syrup on top. Both hives were loaded with eggs and brood.

Thank you John Miller for your informative lecture! It was an eye opener for me as well as everyone else, I'm sure. Those of you who are on the fence on whether to invest in bees for pollination, it's no secret that there is money to be made now and in the next few years, if you can keep your bees alive. While surfing the web recently, I stumbled upon the Almond Growers Newsletter ([www.beesource.com](http://www.beesource.com)). The almond growers are hoping that with the current high cost of bee rentals, it will encourage more people to invest in bees. Thus, when the new crop of almond trees come on line in 2010, there will be an abundance of bees, hence, driving the cost of renting bees way down. Sounds good in theory, but we'll see.

The year promises to be an exciting one for all beekeepers, both hobbyist and commercial. I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

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. I will be collecting dues for the year 2006 at February'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](mailto:rubes@infostations.com).

Thanks, Janet, Treasurer

## Fellow Beekeeper Gone

Those of you that have been with the NCBA for a while will remember Frank Johnson, president in 1998 and 1999. Sadly, Frank passed away on January 7 at age 72. He was well known within the NCBA for sharing advice with new beekeepers, such as: "Don't sell your hard-earned honey at less than market prices, it's a precious thing, and there's always a market for good local honey". He advocated volunteering to your club, being a mentor to new beekeepers, and was always pointing out, "like gardening, if you ask 10 beekeepers the same question, you will get about 10 different answers." Frank loved beekeeping, and talking about beekeeping with others. He had a vision, and was always willing to lend a hand to others. Frank, our condolences to your family, thank you, and you will be missed.

Leslie Gault

## February Program

Janet Brisson will discuss the state of the beekeeping world, virtual and traveled. Her presentation will include a talk on caging queens and the use of powdered sugar for varroa control. She will also bring along bottom boards for sale at \$25 plus tax.

## Aster and Strawberry Plant Giveaway

After the meeting Janet Brisson will offer aster and strawberry plants to members who wish to relocate transplants.

These asters grow up to 6' tall and are invasive with water and fall flat in the rain. I think they are deer proof, but not sure. Why should you have these asters? These are the last blooming flower before frost and a wonderful bee plant. The bees love these long sprays of small purple flowers with the bright yellow centers that go dark after pollination. Make sure you plant them where you want them (background plant, on fences, not close to walkways), you can't dig them up later, they return with a vengeance.

The strawberry plants are a tri-star variety that bears a medium-size, intensely sweet fruit from June to frost, talking off only when the temperature goes above 100 degrees.

I should have plenty of bags and will have them available after the meeting.

Thanks, Janet

## Magic Formula to Make an Enemy

**Peaceful**, Navajo

Courtesy of Tynowyn Slattery

Put your feet down with pollen.

Put your hands down with pollen.

Put your head down with pollen.

Then your feet are pollen,

Your hands are pollen,

Your body is pollen,

Your mind is pollen,

Your voice is pollen,

The trail is beautiful,

Be still.

## January Minutes

President Shane Mathias opened with Q&A. Randy showed new books and videos for our library. He brought pollen supplement made from brewers yeast, soy flour, sugar and pollen, mixed with water to make patties, which are placed in the center of the cluster of bees, between the supers.

Program: John Miller. There's lots of adulterated or 'honey blend in markets. Purity can be readily measured with spectroscopy. Producer \$1.40/lb honey is now down around \$0.78. On the other hand,

almond prices quadrupled to \$1.70/lb, and bee pollination contracts only doubled \$80 to \$160. Now 2.6 million US bee colonies, only 4 million more, while almond acreage increased 26,000 acres, and almond research grants are twice bee grants. Amitraz 'Tactic, a miticide for ticks also used in US breaks down fast but is easily overdosed on bees. Oxalic acid research is ongoing in Europe.

Jack Meeks, sec

## Bee Bits

By Randy Oliver

Last month I expressed thanks to those members who help out with special tasks for the Association. It was abundantly clear last meeting that I neglected to mention Tina Mateo, who normally picks up the key to the Vet's Hall for our meetings. Thank you, Tina.

We've been busy stimulating our bees for almond pollination. Stephanie found a motorized paint stirrer at a garage sale, and I modified it to fit a 55-gallon drum. I fitted a 1" spigot to the bottom of the drum and mounted the whole assembly on a pallet to fit on the back of our bee truck. We can now buy sugar a thousand pounds at a time from the grocery (5 lb bags are cheapest!) and mix 200 lbs at a time into syrup quite quickly. Then off to the bee yards to fill the feeder jars. Mixing sugar syrup right now is actually cheaper than buying high fructose corn syrup in bulk.

Our colonies are gobbling up pollen supplement. We return each week to keep them constantly fed; once they're expanding the brood nest, you don't want them to run out of pollen. Most colonies are building up well, but we're really seeing that the ones that had mite problems in Fall just aren't cutting it. I've fed

bees before, but never to this extent, since our colonies usually come back fat and strong from Nevada in the fall. I'm very curious to see how cost effective the feeding is.

On the Varroa front, the thymol-based product, Apiguard(www.vitaeurope.com/products/apiguard.htm), has been approved by the EPA, and now it's up to the individual states to register it. Dadant will be distributing it. Apiguard has shown 90-95% efficiency in killing Varroa when used above 60°F, and also kills tracheal mite and chalkbrood! This product could complete an IPM strategy of "organic" Varroa control—that is, resistant bees, oxalic acid in December, Spring/Summer control by drone brood removal, oxalic, Sucroside, and/or powdered sugar, and Apiguard on August 15th. There will no longer be any reason for the diligent beekeeper to lose colonies to Varroa, without the use of synthetic chemicals!

By the way, the August 15th date is starting to look like the critical date for getting Varroa numbers way down. Computer modeling with the Varroapop program (ABJ Aug. 2005) indicates that this treatment is far more important than any other treatment, at any other time! Refer to the attached graphs. Waiting until early September (as we've been doing) is not nearly as effective. As with so many other things in beekeeping, timing is everything!

I've pulled an image (from Speedy Bee) of a pallet of Australian package bees being unloaded at the airport. One Durhan beekeeper purchased 3,200 4-pound packages this year at almost \$100 a package. For the mathematically challenged, that order was worth about \$300,000! This scale of importation is a little scary for some of us—there's always a risk of transmitting new diseases or pests when bees are shipped between continents.

Thanks to John Miller for being our speaker last month. For those of you interested in seeing the graph of projected pollination needs of the almond industry, go to

<http://almondboard.files.cms-plus.com/PDFs/Heintz%20-%20ABC%20Research%20Review.pdf>.

## Thank You

I wish to offer a sincere word of thanks to Carl Ubis for coming to my home and helping me right my beehive. I am most grateful for his help. I learned that placing hives on wooden pallets is not a good idea, over time they rot.

Bonnie Bagwell

## Sacramento Beekeeping Supplies

- Complete line of all beekeeping supplies
- Candle making supplies (molds, wicks, dyes, scents)
- Glycerine 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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are needed to see this picture.

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](mailto:arwg@infostations.com). The deadline for the March 2006 edition is February 15<sup>th</sup>. 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](mailto:arwg@infostations.com).

#### 2006 Officers

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Secretary: Jack Meeks.....432-4429  
[jackm@nccn.net](mailto:jackm@nccn.net)  
Treasurer: Janet Brisson.....346-6439  
[rubes@infostations.com](mailto:rubes@infostations.com)

#### Board Members

Past President Gary Wood.....477-9202  
Randy Oliver.....272-4450

#### Committee Chairs

Swarm Hotline: Leigh Johnson.....273-1382  
Lynn Williams.....675-2924  
Library: Tynowyn Slattery...265-6318  
Newsletter Dist. Gary Wood.....477-9202  
Newsletter: Bonnie Bagwell.....878-3622  
Honey Extractor: Karla Hanson.....265-3756

## Nevada County Beekeepers Association



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

First Class Mail

February 2006

**Next meeting, February 6, 2006, Janet Brisson, our NCBA Treasurer will discuss the state of the beekeeping world both virtual and traveled.**

Nevada County Beekeepers' Association