

# The Nevada County Beekeepers Association



September 2005

## President's Message

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HELP

Thank all the Volunteers that make the meetings go so well. Thanks to all the 2005 Nevada County Fair participants, those who manned the Booth and those who contributed entries in the competition. Especially thanks to Randy Oliver, our God Father, our spiritual leader, our go-to guy.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IN SEPTEMBER OF 2005 FOR MY BEES?

Summer is just about over. Summer will officially end when Fall begins, with the Vernal Equinox, days and nights are each 12 hours and nights are getting longer, sunrise is almost 7am and sunset will be about 7pm.

What does it mean to you?

It Depends. It depends on what shape your bees are in and what's happening in your vicinity. But you could

- Pull honey and extract
- Treat for Verroa
- Watch for robbing
- Re-queen
- TM Patty

Don't forget Elections for next years NCBA Officers.

Yours in beekeeping,

-Gary Wood, President

## September Program

The September program will be a hodgepodge: Gadgets, gizmos, seed and plant sharing, plus Randy summarizing the topics of the W.A.S. convention.

Please bring any interesting beekeeping gadgets, and seeds or plants to share.

## Beekeeping Results from Nevada County Fair

Class 1- Liquid honey, white or light

First Place

Janet Brisson

Second Place

Leslie Gault

Third Place

Randy and Stephanie Oliver

Class 2- Liquid honey, medium

First Place

Janet Brisson

Second Place

Hugh Cavallaro

Third Place

Randy and Stephanie Oliver

Class 3- Liquid honey, dark

Second Place

John Meeks

Class 5- three 12-ounce pieces or one pound jar of cut comb or chunk honey

First Place

Hugh Cavallero

Class 7- three identical novel shaped containers filled with honey of any class

Second Place

Tynowyn Slattery

Class 9- one frame, any size of extracting honey

First Place

Randy and Stephanie Oliver

Second Place

Hugh Cavallero

Class 10- pure beeswax, single block form, not less than one pound

Second Place

Randy and Stephanie Oliver

## Killer bees not quite as fierce as once feared

By Walt Wiley ~ Bee Staff Writer

*Published 2:15 am PDT Friday, August 12, 2005.*

*Story appeared in the Sacramento Bee, Metro section, Page B2.*

Twenty years ago, killer bees were speeding toward Sacramento.

It was only a matter of time until they arrived and made life as we know it utterly impossible. No more outdoor barbecues. No more mowing the lawn without protective clothing from head to toe. No more keeping honeybees as a hobby. These were killer bees, "mutant bees from hell," Africanized honeybees.

They were called Africanized because a Brazilian scientist, attempting to breed more productive honeybees, imported some queen bees from Africa, where the bees are much more active. He was cross-breeding them with gentler European bees, hoping to come up with a gentle bee that produced prodigious amounts of honey.

But in 1957, 26 of the African queens were released accidentally into the wild and their offspring began to spread through the tropics.

As the insects spread through Mexico and approached the U.S. border, hysterical stories of their evil ways filled the media. Supermarket tabloids had a field day.

And the bees did arrive. The first ones arrived sporadically during the 1980s in freight shipped across the border, but eventually, in the 1990s, they started arriving under their own steam.

Today, Africanized bees are an established part of California's landscape, just as predicted. And the bees are ill-tempered and hair-trigger quick to defend their own turf, just as advertised.

Nevertheless, the alarm has died down, probably because the bees just have not become the scourge that was being predicted 20 years ago. Not that there haven't been some unpleasant incidents. Africanized bees were blamed last month in Palm Springs when a kitten was stung to death and the man holding it hospitalized with stings. Last year near Barstow, 11 people were stung, six hospitalized, after an attack by bees thought to be the hybrids.

"What we think is happening is that these bees, as they move north, are interbreeding with our European strains, and they're losing some of their most undesirable traits," said Eric Mussen, apiculturist - beekeeping expert - for UC Davis Extension.

But European bees that have interbred with their African counterparts still are too excitable to be used in traditional situations.

"You couldn't use them for pollination anywhere near houses, and a lot of our orchardists live right there among the trees," Mussen said.

Likewise, operating machinery near them can trigger an attack. And an attack by Africanized bees is much worse than an attack by European bees. Usually, he said, in a European hive there will be about 200 "guard bees" loafing near the entrance, ready to attack any intruder.

"In an Africanized hive, there will be 2,000 guard bees, and they'll attack sooner and faster and they won't quit," he said.

"With European bees, you just stand still and they'll go away. But as long as the Africanized bees can smell the venom of a sting, they'll sting and sting and sting some more."

And there's no chance Africanized bees will not reach Sacramento, he said. They already are in Madera County as well as in all the counties of Southern California, and they can tolerate cold well enough to survive in Flagstaff, Ariz. - snow country.

In San Diego, beekeepers who used to work their hives in T-shirts and shorts now wear full-coverage bee suits, even as they strive to keep Africanized bees out of their bee yards, Mussen said.

The queen bee mates during one or more maiden flights in which she receives and stores all the sperm she will need during her life of laying thousands and thousands of eggs. Some beekeepers are using artificial insemination to keep their queens from acquiring Africanized sperm in the wild. Others use queens bred where they will not likely meet Africanized drones - male bees.

But as the beekeepers work to keep their bees from becoming Africanized, they look with envy at the Africanized bees' resistance to diseases that are plaguing the beekeeping industry.

"We're hoping to gain something from these things as we learn to live with them," Mussen said.

## August Minutes

President Gary Wood opened with Q&A comments.

Randy Oliver described 'Honeybee Biology & Beekeeping' by Dewey M. Caron, 2006.

Pollination contracts projected to be over \$100 per colony.

The Union published Janet Brisson's article on Amber's intro to bees.

Finance - Janet: June Ending Balance \$2606.45; Income \$63; Expenses 367.12; Ending Balance 23202.33.

MOTION by Randy Oliver: Buy portable color TV/DVD/VCR for meetings: passed Charlie Whittlesley offered his to the club; a much needed addition.

PROGRAM: Bee Culture magazine Workshop on Extracting. Methods include: Brush each frame and store under screening Porter type bee escape with one-way tunnel. Must be checked so bee can pass (3/8" or pencil thick). Can get jammed with drones preventing ventilation and suffocation (use peg board and install more than one escape). Fume board painted black (hotter) with Bee-Gone butyric acid on toweling placed above super will clear it in seven minutes. Blower will clear bees-they will be docile but try to return to super as there will be bees flying all around.

## Bee Bits

By Randy Oliver

I'd like to start this month's column with an apology. It seems that some members were offended by my behavior at last month's meeting. What I thought was a lighthearted attempt to help Gary to move through some action items was taken as inappropriate. To any offended, I offer my heartfelt apology. I have spoken with Gary in person. That said, in my defense, I would hope that everyone would be clear of my motivation and intent, which is simply to keep our meetings moving on at a fast clip so that we might get the business completed, and move on to the program. After 25 years of being a prime mover in the Association, I sometimes let my enthusiasm get the better of my discretion.

I'd like to thank everyone for their help at the Fair. Our booth looked great, the observation hives did well, and members were helpful in working with Gary and I to get the booth staffed.

As far as our bee operation, we finally got our last load of singles up to Nevada for the rabbitbrush bloom. To our dismay though, when we checked the colonies that had been moved up in early July, they had been hit hard by pesticide. Dead bees in drifts in front of the hives, few bees in the hives, some dying brood, and no honey. The local aerial applicator says that nothing unusual had been sprayed. I'm still waiting for a call back from the Mosquito Abatement District, as I suspect that they may be poisoning the ditch water that the bees drink, in their quest to control West Nile Virus. If those colonies are unable to build up for almonds, we're looking at a \$30,000 loss in pollination and honey. Sometimes commercial beekeeping challenges my cheerful disposition.

Stephanie and I attended the Western Apicultural Society convention in Moscow, Idaho. I was struck by the fact that we were seeing the older generation of researchers and members retiring, and a new crop of researchers moving to take their places. I will be summarizing the presentations at the September meeting. Some topics will be queen biology, drone mating, stingless bees in the the tropics, almond pollination, breeding for varroa resistance, genetic loss in US bee breeder queens, and use of formic acid.

As far as your bees, now is the most important time for mite control. Janet Brisson is having excellent control with powdered sugar and screened bottoms. We've been experimenting with oxalic acid and Sucroicide. I'd suggest that hobbyists use either Janet's method, or Sucroicide (you can get small quantities from me).

### Sacramento Beekeeping Supplies

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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.

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 September 2005 edition is August 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).

## Nevada County Beekeepers Association



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First Class Mail

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### Nevada County Beekeepers Association

#### 2004 Officers

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