

The Local Buzz

March 2021



President's Message, Spencer Wingfield

This is probably the only month of the year I will write this message and not have any beehives in Nevada County. It was around Valentine's Day that I completed moving all of my colonies down to the Almond Orchards. This year, I held off on taking them down to the orchards until I saw those first blossoms. I took a lot of chances in waiting so long; weather can move in and make it difficult to get to some bee yards to collect them, as well as wet ground conditions at the destination orchard. I held off taking them so long because they were very actively foraging and collecting a lot of pollen here locally. I know in the last message I mentioned that I thought the Alders were going to be done, but I was wrong and they just kept on going producing pollen and the bees only benefited from this natural pollen flow. I also kept my bees spread out and smaller in numbers in their bee yards, just as we do for nectar flows, but for the benefit of the pollen flow.

I would consider these "management practices" to be somewhat different than what I have done and seen done in the past. The payoff, or not, always comes later and that is when you can look back and give a pat on the back, or tell yourself, "I probably won't do that again". The jury is out on waiting so long this year. I know they benefited from the pollen, and I believe some of the yards even pulled in some Manzanita nectar and pollen. They would have been otherwise flying fruitlessly in the orchards had they been moved earlier. In addition to fruitless foraging in the orchards, they run the risk of bringing back sprays (herbicide, fungicides) to the colony while in the orchards. Another risk in the orchards is drift from other beekeepers' bees and the possibility of theft. On the flip side, there is a small but real chance that they can forage some mustard pollen, but my orchards are not really close to any plum or walnut orchards where this becomes a real consideration. I did however manage to get stuck in the mud a half dozen times, and I learned that a 16,500 pound winch is sized too small for my truck + bees combination. At the end of the day, nobody got hurt, mud washes off, and sleep can be caught up...

As I mentioned above manzanita is blooming and is likely a factor currently in your bees' buildup. I had split apart some hives and already exhibited some drone brood between top and bottom supers. This means that they are building up now and you will need to keep an eye on the strong hives with drone brood. Make a plan that involves knocking them back by pulling resources from them, or splitting them. Or be ready to watch them swarm off on you. The weather is looking favorable next week so that will be the time to get the smoker lit and check on your bees.

March Meeting 6 PM– **ON ZOOM**

Due to current events the upcoming regular meeting will be hosted on Zoom. New meeting time is **6 PM**. Meeting access information will be emailed to the membership.

Our March meeting, via zoom, will be Ana Heck presenting her must see program.

Queen issues and events: Learn to decipher queen events like swarming, supersedure, and emergency queen loss and deciding when to intervene.

Ana Heck began as an Apiculture Extension Educator at Michigan State University (MSU) in July 2020. She was introduced to beekeeping while working in Nicaragua for 2 years with a non-profit organization that engaged local communities in rural development projects. She joined the University of Minnesota Bee Lab's Bee Squad in 2014, and she began with Michigan State University in 2019. Her work involves apiculture

education initiatives and implementing policies to protect managed pollinators. Heck holds a Master's degree in Public Policy and a graduate minor in Entomology from the University of Minnesota.

Bee Bits

Submitted by Randy Oliver

Just when I thought that we weren't going to get a winter, bang, it came in! Thank heaven for the rain (and snow), which we so desperately need. The weather did unfortunately overlap our important alder bloom, but in some of our yards, the colonies were able to pack it in, and engage in serious brood rearing.

We've got all of our hives down in almonds now, but for the first time in years, we struggled to fill our contracts, due to the poor condition of colonies from many of our yards. We saw a large yard-to-yard difference in performance, despite our feeding of pollen sub to all yards. In some yards, the colonies just looked a whole lot better. Frustratingly, I can't definitively say why, but suspect that there was more natural pollen coming in in those yards. As they say, All beekeeping is local.

Now's the time to start hefting your hives to make sure that they have enough honey reserves. If the cluster has abandoned the lower brood chamber, it will help them to move it above the cluster as soon as the weather warms. If there's no nectar flow on at that time, feeding some sugar syrup will help the bees to expand upward onto those combs.

My plan to teach an in-person beginners class in April have been put on hold. I was recently diagnosed with a tumor in the base of my tongue, and start radiation/chemo March 1st. The doctors say that it may be difficult for me to talk for a while, so I'm playing it by ear. I may need to hire "technician" help this spring for my bee research – let me know if you've got a scientific bent, are comfortable in the hive, and are looking for part-time work.

It sounds as though demand for packages and nucs will be high this spring, so if you're interested in reserving any nucs, please write: Eric Oliver oliverhoneysales@gmail.com

Treasurer's Report – January

By Janet Brisson

Beginning Balance	\$4,351.17
Credits	503.61
Subtotal	<u>\$4,854.78</u>
Debits	123.50
Total (Ok r/c) 2/18/21	<u>\$4731.28</u>

DUES R DUE!

It's time to pay dues for 2021.

Being a member of the Nevada County Beekeeping Associations has many perks. Your membership entitles you to our newsletter, "The Local Buzz," sent monthly, informs you of our association's activities and lets you know what your bees should be doing at that time.

Thanks to our membership dues, we are able to get top people in the beekeeping industry for a lot of our monthly programs. Look forward to hearing from Dr. Ana Heck in March from the University of Michigan and Dr. Samuel Ramsey in April from the USDA in Maryland.

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.

We sincerely hope that you decide to continue your membership with our club and most important, continue being beekeepers. We are here to help.

You can mail your dues or pay through PayPal (which costs an extra \$1.00

<https://nevadacountybeekeepers.org/content/join-ncba>.

\$20 for an email subscription and \$25 to get your newsletters via USPS.

Or make your check out to NCBA

Mail to:

NCBA c/o Janet Brisson

20693 Dog Bar Road, Grass Valley, CA 95949

Any questions, not sure if you paid? Please feel free to call me at 530-913-2724 or email me at

rubes@countryrubes.com

Swarm Hotline

The NCBA Swarm Hotline List is in the process of being updated for 2021. We need to add to our list of people we can contact. If you want to be on the list as someone who can be called upon to retrieve a bee swarm then please send the below information via email to Lynn Williams at iamlynn@hughes.net or call 530-675-2924.

Even if you were on the list for last year, please confirm your participation for 2021. Note that many calls come from the Yuba City/Marysville area so help is needed in this area. We can also use help from people who can do bee removals (such as from walls, etc.)

NAME | PHONE | CITY OF RESIDENCE | ANY AREA LIMITATION | CAN ALSO DO REMOVALS?



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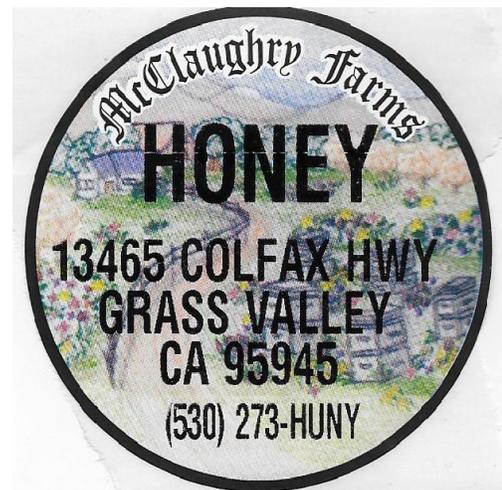


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Advertising rates are \$7 per year for NCBA members and \$16 per year for non-members.

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

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. Please email Janet Brisson at rubes@countryrubes.com

Nevada County Beekeepers Association
www.nevadacountybeekeepers.org



c/o Janet Brisson
20693 Dog Bar Road
Grass Valley, CA 95949
First Class Mail

March 1st Meeting

MEETING ON ZOOM – 6PM

Ann Heck: Queen issues and events

Nevada County Beekeepers Association

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