

# The Nevada County Beekeepers Association

# Local Buzz



June 2010

## President's Message

I think my bees went south, maybe to Palm Springs or Arizona. Maybe I will go with them. I don't know about you but I am getting tired of this miserable weather. It looked as though I did go queenless. The weather has been so bad I can't get out to check my bees. We keep getting snow and hail every other day or so, and our high temperature has been around 48. The weather will get better, I hope. Don't forget dinner before the meeting.

Your President, Larry Meritt

## June 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting

Presentation—Continuation of the presentation regarding bee breeding by Randy. No-host dinner will be at Lin-Q @5:30 PM, in the Raley's shopping center in Grass Valley.

thank you, Jeremiah Farrell, VP

## Bee Bits

By Randy Oliver

What a cold and wet spring! I have seen one unfortunate swarm after another starve and die when it is caught in the rain (so much for bees predicting the weather!). Here in the foothills, colonies rarely starve during winter—however, they may easily starve in spring weather such as we are experiencing. The honey bee colony is a warm-blooded animal, which burns the sugars in honey and nectar to produce the heat necessary to maintain the constant 94° broodnest temperature. The larger the broodnest, the more area to heat. When spring nectar and pollen flows stimulate the colonies to expand the broodnest, they can wind up living hand to mouth on each day's nectar income. If the foragers are kept in by a few days of cold rain, a strong colony can quickly starve.

In the past week, I've had four beekeepers report that nucleus colonies that they had purchased had starved. None had realized just how hungry a strong nuc can be, and just how fast it can burn through its honey reserves.

In my operation, we are madly getting ready to leave for Australia on May 28—right during the main honeyflow! So we are supering like crazy in the rain! At the same time, we are feeding our splits sugar syrup, just so that they can survive this storm until the weather is warm enough for them to take advantage of the bloom! So we are actually in the unusual situation of putting on honey supers and sugar syrup at the same time! (The bees will consume the small amount of syrup that we are giving them before the predicted warm days). It's tough for us to leave the hives for two weeks during these exceptional conditions!

We finished up the endpoint analysis of the Remebee trial at Loma Rica Ranch. Dr. Eric Mussen joined us, and was able to see for himself all stages of collapsing colonies. I feel that we have documented the progression of colony collapses after inoculation with viruses, and have a pretty good understanding of the positive feedback loops that then lead to collapse. I'll be writing more about this.



Here's a photo of a recently collapsed colony. All five of these frames had been covered with brood and bees a few days previously, judging from the still live larvae

and pupae. The colony was empty of bees, with only a handful on the bottom board.



Here's a photo of a brood frame from a healthy adjacent colony—note the abundant pollen stores, which indicate that there was plenty of forage available. Photos by Nitzan Paldi.

## Librarian's Message

By Your Librarian, Tynowyn Slattery

A new book:

*The Buzz About Bees, Biology of a Super organism*, Jurgen Tautz. Translation published by David C. Sandeman in 2008.

This book has 10 chapters dealing with significant new discoveries in bee science in the last 15 years...each presented as supporting evidence in regarding bee colonies as sharing characteristics and some survival strategies with the, highly developed, mammals.

Dr. Tautz addresses complex research in bee biology in a way that is readily accessible yet never talks down to the reader. There is a lot of information here, organized in such a manner that enables the reader to a deeper understanding of the inner life and functions of the bee colony. The many phenomenal pictures are a tribute to some very patient and talented photographers.

I enjoyed the *Buzz About Bees* so much that I plan on reading it again...of course, after others have had their chance.

A side note: As I sat writing this review, it crossed my mind that much that I have admired in this book, particularly about taking potentially confusing scientific data and distilling it so we get the insights and information we need to be the best beekeepers we can be, can be found in the articles in the *American Bee Journal* by (our own) Randy Oliver. If you missed them in the magazine you should check out his website, *Scientific Beekeeping*.

2 new DVDs...

First is a replacement for our old fuzzy video of *Bees: Tales from the Hive*. A Nova Production for Public Television.

The production date was 10 years ago but I remember it as one of the first visual recordings of the inner workings of the hive available to the general public and I was very happy to get my own copy.

Now, there are a few moments where I find the music a bit bombastic and, in comparison with the following DVD, it seems a bit general as to information but I still enjoy the beautiful photography and recommend (and lend) it to friends who "want to know more about the bees".

Our second new DVD, *City of Bees: A Children's Guide to Bees*, is a joint production of companies in the UK and Denmark geared to children grades K-6, it has a downloadable teachers' lesson plan. One can tell from the first picture of the hive boxes and a few other cultural items that "we're not in Kansas anymore". The loose story follows 2-3 children as they explore the world of bees and flowers. The narrators voice is good and clear and the dialogue is simplified for a child's understanding but I was pleasantly surprised at the amount of information offered. There were a couple of statements that seemed a bit odd..."the queen can live to be 7 years old"... "a worker is 6 years old when she leaves the hive"... (must be something in the water in Denmark).

A side bit of fun was identifying the many plants that were shown. As in the above book and DVD, the pictures and footage of the countryside and bees are outstanding.

I bought this DVD for the library as a resource to anyone doing a demo in the schools but I think anyone interested in bees will enjoy it.

Missing from the library for a long time:

1. *A Guide to Observing Insect Lives*
2. *Sierra Nevada Natural History: An Illustrated Handbook*, Storer & Usinger

If you happen to browse through your library and find either of these books and bring it back to the library we will happily activate our "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

## Raffle

Please remember to bring your unwanted bee equipment or whatever else you have extra at the house for our raffle. Thanks. Karla Hanson, raffle chair.

here. Co-chair of the swarm committee is Karla Hanson 265-3756.

## Fair Booth Sign-up

The Nevada County Fair will be August 11-15, and once again we will be staffing the bee booth. The Fair has requested that people sign up for the by June 25th. Please have people let me know if they would like to work the fair, you may call 265-3756 or email me at [queenbeez@att.net](mailto:queenbeez@att.net)>

Working at the fair is not only fun, it also serves as outreach and education for the public. The Association will give you a free entry ticket. Shifts are 10 AM-2 PM, 2-6 PM, or 6-10 PM Wednesday thru Sunday. Contact me early to get the best slots!

Karla Hanson

## Snack Sign-up

Thanks to all these people who have already signed up to bring snacks to our meetings. Please be sure that when preparing (or buying) snacks, there are no partially hydrogenated oils in the cookies or cakes. It would be nice to have at least four people to sign up for snacks per month. If you can help fill in the schedule please email Karla Hanson at [queenbeez@att.net](mailto:queenbeez@att.net).

### June

Diane Benton  
Jeff Purcell  
Nancy Tavares  
Linda & Steve (last name?)

### July

Dan Wheat  
Boorinakis/ Harper  
Patrick McCauley

### August

Rob Slay  
Myra Traugot

### September

Mari Wolf

### October

Sherry Skolfield  
Charles Whittlesey

## Swarm Hotline

If you haven't signed up for the swarm hotline this year you June call Lynn Williams 530-675-2924 to get on the list of people who will pick up swarms. Please state where you will drive to. Marysville/Yuba City area is especially needed since a lot of calls come from

## For Sale: Country Rubes Combo Screened Bottom Boards

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## May Minutes

President Larry Merritt opened with Q&A. New member lists were available. Members are invited to gather for dinner at 5:50 before meetings.

Finance Janet Brisson: April 1 \$2818.44; Inc\$461; Exp\$65.25; April End \$3214.19.

MOTION Phyllis: Station KVMR Julia Harper 3rd Thurs interview. Beekeepers will contribute six memberships as program prizes. Carried, show of hands.

MOTION Oliver: Have all our VHS tapes rerecorded to DVD discs for library. Carried, show of hands. (Custody of VHS tapes not discussed. To remain in library.)

PROGRAM: Randy Oliver. PowerPoint photos; Bee breeding, genetics, epigenetics (rapid evolution of traits by interaction with genes during exchange of egg and sperm alleles.)

Jack Meeks, sec

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 Leslie Gault at [lesliegault@yahoo.com](mailto:lesliegault@yahoo.com). The deadline for the July 2010 edition is June 25<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 [lesliegault@yahoo.com](mailto:lesliegault@yahoo.com)

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    Lynn Williams ..... 675-2924  
**Librarian:**      Tynowyn Slattery... 265-6318  
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**Honey Extractor:**      Karla Hanson..... 265-3756

**Nevada County Beekeepers Association**



c/o Steve Reynolds  
 PO Box 548  
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 First Class Mail  
 June 2010

**June 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

The June 7<sup>th</sup> program will be a continuation of the presentation on bee breeding by Randy Oliver, starting at 7 PM. dinner will be at Lin-Q @5:30 PM.