

# The Nevada County Beekeepers Association

# Local Buzz



March 2009

## President's Message

Hello all bee lovers, time to get into your colonies and make sure food stores are acceptable, queens are laying and overall health is good. If no food, feed, if no queen or she's not laying combine perhaps to split later. Make sure to keep notes up to date, and start thinking about your goals for this year. Are you going to need queens, queen cells, equipment? Make your plans now as the bee year here is very short, and will be over before you know it. Bring questions to next meeting, and maybe a raffle prize to donate? And don't forget a few dollars to purchase raffle tickets from Karla.

See ya there! Your President, Rob Slay

## Why Did You Get This Newsletter?

If you are not already a member of the Nevada County Beekeepers Association, it must be because you visited our Beekeeping Booth at the Nevada County Fair last August and signed up for information on the upcoming beekeeping classes. Not only do we have an exciting program next Monday, March 2 at 7PM at the Grass Valley Veteran's Hall, 255 South Auburn Street in Grass Valley, we have the information needed to help you and your family to easily and safely become beekeepers. This is the orientation meeting for Randy Oliver's 6 week course in Beginning Beekeepers. The cost is \$40.00 entire families and \$20 returnees, including field classes and working in a bee yard. All materials and bee gear are

provided. If you miss the Monday March 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting and would still like to participate, please contact Randy with questions about the classes at [randy@randyoliver.com](mailto:randy@randyoliver.com) or 530-277-4450

## March 2<sup>nd</sup> Program

The March meeting is the orientation and sign up for Randy's Beginning Beekeeping class, see previous article.

## Goodie Sign-Up

Thanks to these people who volunteered to bring goodies for the March meeting:

Martha Dixon  
Deb Cavallero  
Larry Merritt

We still need more people to volunteer for April, May, and June, so we'll circulate a sign up sheet at the March meeting.

## Bee Bits

By Randy Oliver

You just gotta love California weather! We were working with our shirts off under warm, sunny skies in January, and then covered with snow two days later. What a shock for the bees—going from warm flight days and plenty of pollen to 10 days buried under snow! The result is that the early stimulation stimulated them to expand the brood nest. The brood still needs feeding even when the foragers can't bring in pollen. So when they are trapped by

poor weather, the colony can quickly go into protein deficit.

Those few of you who make a little cash by renting your bees in almonds were in for an unpleasant surprise this year when a glut of bees materialized due to the various factors that I mentioned last month. The situation has gotten ugly, what with growers reneging on contracts, and beekeepers cutting each others' throats in a race to the bottom pricewise. Lots of hard feelings, unfortunately.

I had the pleasure of speaking to the Alberta Beekeepers Association a week ago. What a great group of people! Canada runs a few years behind the U.S. in bee and mite problems, so they were keen to get a heads up on what is or is not working here.

The other speaker was Dr Mark Goodwin of Australia—a brilliant and meticulous scientist who has done a great deal of research on AFB and varroa mites. The mite has only been there for several years, and their bee viruses have not yet evolved to take advantage of the situation. Their colonies can still be crawling with mites before they need to treat. Our colonies typically die, nowadays, of a virus epidemic if mite counts get much above 1000 per colony. In New Zealand, it is not unusual for a colony to appear healthy with a mite count of 20-30,000 mites! That's a mite on every other bee!

Dr Goodwin, oops, in New Zealand they are very egalitarian, and don't have much use for titles—everyone calls each other by first name, so Mark has also written a book about controlling AFB without antibiotics, which are not approved for bees in NZ. The beekeepers there decided to go on a mandatory burning program, with great results. AFB has not been eradicated, but it is extremely rare (by our standards).

In some areas of NZ, bees gather a honeydew from a treehopper that feeds on the toxic Tutu shrub. This honeydew is so toxic to humans that it is illegal to sell comb honey in NZ. Mark said that there are stories of a beekeeper dipping their finger into a comb for a taste, and then waking up two days later on the floor. The honey once caused a poisoning of some twenty schoolboys in England, who wound up writhing in pain on the floor of the

dining hall after breakfast. All NZ honey is now required to be tested for the toxin before export.

Locally, I tried a bit stronger oxalic acid dribble this year (45g/liter, as opposed to 35g), and got great mite control, with no apparent bee toxicity. However, I need to do a trial with controls next year, since some colonies that I treated with MiteawayII formic pads looked stronger than oxalic treated colonies in the same yard. Don't know if it was due to a positive effect of formic, or a negative effect of oxalic, or something else.

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## February Minutes

Dr Eric Mussen was our guest for dinner before the meeting. Pres Rob Slay opened with Q&A: Beginning Beekeeping class with Randy Oliver starts with March 2 meeting. Thereafter, class meets at the Imaginarium at 6:30 for five more Mondays, plus weekend field demonstrations. Cost is \$40 per family.

PROGRAM: Dr Mussen answered members' questions: Tucson Bee Diet pollen patties seem superior, but add some natural pollen for best results. Mix pollen pellets with syrup, smear around edges of cluster. Heavy syrup for fall and winter 1:1 sugar:water. At end of honeyflow, July-August, 1:2 light syrup will expand and continue nesting/storage. He recommends continuous feeding to prevent winter die-outs.

Varroa, Nosema ceranae and CCD Collapsing Colony Disorder all seem to be on the decline generally. Break-even for pollination is around \$125/colony. Breeding for hygienic behavior is good economically.

FINANCE: Janet Brisson Dec Bal \$1795.63; Inc\$758; JanEndBal \$2553.65. Extractor sold for \$700.

Janet has discount coupons for American Bee Journal \$19, and Bee Culture Magazine \$21.

Jack Meeks, sec

## Trivia Question

Which State has named the honeybee as its State Insect? Hint: the honeybee adds over \$25 million to the State economy each year (answer at bottom right).

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## The Secret Life of Bees Sticky Chicken Recipe

1 cup soy sauce  
1 cup honey  
2 cloves minced garlic  
1 Tb chopped fresh ginger  
Black pepper

2 small chickens cut up in 10 pieces. If you discard the back, each chicken makes 2 legs, 2 thighs, 2 wings, and 4 breast pieces. If you want to make a cheaper version of this, just use chicken wings. They're delicious.

Line a baking pan with two layers of aluminum foil, leaving enough hanging over to fold over the top. Lay chicken pieces on foil. Cover with marinade, seal the foil. Bake 3 hours at 325. Turn now and then.

Great at a party with a big bowl of cold Szechuan noodles.

(Trivia Question Answer: No, it's not California, it's South Dakota that names the honeybee as its State insect, the only State in the US to do so!)

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 April 2009 edition is March 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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**Nevada County Beekeepers Association**



c/o Steve Reynolds  
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First Class Mail  
March 2009

**March 2<sup>nd</sup> Program**

Our March 2<sup>nd</sup> program will be introductory meeting of the Beginning Beekeeping class taught by Randy Oliver. 7 PM at the Grass Valley Veteran’s Hall. See inside for details.