

The Nevada County Beekeepers Association

Local Buzz



May 2009

President's Message

Well it's April 20th and I'm half done making up nucs, the balance will be done when I get the next batch of cells. Everyone has taken their large colonies and at least split them in half right? This will not only double your fun, but knock back swarm urge. So far it's been a good bee year—strong healthy colonies, with some three and four deeps packed with brood.

Make sure to write down questions for next meeting and please don't forget: the raffle is how we make money. See you there!

Your President, Rob Slay

May 4th Program

The May meeting will be a presentation about queen rearing. Would you like to propagate daughter queens from your favorite queen bee? Randy Oliver will demonstrate simple methods for rearing a few queens. The production of new queens for your colonies is one of the most rewarding aspects of beekeeping!

Karla's Report

Please remember to bring your donations to the meeting for the raffle. Old equipment, pots, seeds, plants, something cute.... use your imagination.

There were tons of swarms in Yuba City this last month. One member picked up 19 swarms during this last month alone! Please let Karla queenbeez@att.net or Lynn (info on back page) know if you will go to Yuba City to pick up a swarm. I hope to have a great picture of Stephanie and me getting a swarm in Yuba City. I am waiting for the lady to send the picture via email.

Your Vice President, Karla Hanson

Bee Bits

By Randy Oliver

Our foothill weather roller coaster is still in full swing! As I write this, temperatures are dropping thirty degrees in two days. The combination of rain and sun has been great for local flora, and also for our bees. In most of my yards, strong colonies easily gained fifty pounds. Some of the fresh honey has been absolutely delicious—especially manzanita and meadow foam. As I write this apples are in full bloom in many areas, with some varieties just starting.

The combination of good bee nutrition and excellent nectar flows is a strong stimulus for swarming. I've been working dawn to dark many days just trying to keep my bees from all flying off! We've been able to avert many swarms by reversing the brood chambers and adding extra boxes of

drawn combs. Some yards we simply split into singles, then returned four days later to add queen cells to the boxes without eggs.

However, I will be the first to admit that the recurrent storms and cold weather has probably prevented more swarms than my feeble actions. Colonies have built swarm cells, and been ready to go, then torn them down when the weather changed. Nature can be tough on bees, and we watched a nice swarm in a tall pine on my property die in the cold rain. On the other hand, we've also hived some huge ones.

A couple of days ago, my son Ian and I hived two swarms that were about ten feet apart. After a few minutes, the much larger one suddenly issued from the box with a roar. We laid back on the grass and looked up through them. If you've never done so, it is an amazing sight to watch the visual "traces" of their flight—it looks like black streaks about a foot long criss-crossing the sky.

The swarm slowly moved above us, then whirled down to join the smaller one. We had to shift boxes, since they couldn't all fit into a single deep.

It's not unusual for swarms to join together, or to split apart. Newbie Nick Colyer watched a swarm issue, then return. The old queen just couldn't fly well, and was on the ground with a bunch of bees in front of the hive. When this happens (it will happen with queens who have had their wings clipped on one side), you have a chance to split the colony before it swarms again with a virgin queen.

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April Minutes

Pres. Rob Slay opened with Q&A. Karla Hanson is signing up for Swarm Hotline 265-3756. Hive swarming is beginning in Yuba City and surroundings in the Central Valley.

Finance Janet Brisson Mar Start \$3006.18; Inc \$135; Exp \$94.28; End Bal \$3046.90.

Program: Randy Oliver: Exchange of supers if most brood is in upper, separating the supers and adding queen or queen cell until built up; recombining at start of honeyflow when swarming season is over. If you have several swarm cells, the latest is the best. Band of stored honey should be moved below, reduces swarming--bees build new foundation above open area, not above honey band. John Miller's nucleus box assembly line photos--300+ ready to ship Honey business looks good this year.

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New Zealand Beekeeper Ordered To Pay Victims

March 27, 2009

A Whangamata beekeeper who admitted selling honeycomb that poisoned 22 people last Easter has been ordered to pay more than \$3000 in reparation to victims in a case brought by the New Zealand

Food Safety Authority. Kevin Prout, of Projen Apiaries, had earlier pleaded guilty to four charges under the Food Act. Three related to the sale of contaminated honeycomb, and a fourth covered incorrect labeling of the honey, which was produced and sold on the Coromandel Peninsula.

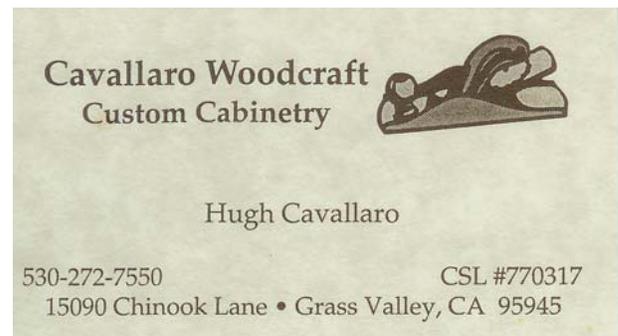
At Waihi District Court yesterday, Prout was spared a fine for the charges relating to the sale of honeycomb, but told to pay a total of \$3,350 reparation to some of the victims plus \$750 in laboratory costs and \$450 in solicitor's fees. He was convicted and discharged for the labeling offence. ³Some victims in this case were violently sick and taken to hospital suffering seizures. It is fortunate nobody died, said New Zealand Food Safety Authority Assistant Director Compliance and Investigation Justin Rowlands. He said the verdict was fair and reasonable: People need to be aware that there are laws governing food businesses, which are there to protect the consumer. If people fall foul of these, they can expect to be prosecuted.

The court heard that 22 people fell ill after eating Mr. Prout's honeycomb in March last year. Testing of the leftover honeycomb found the honey, marketed as 'Taste of Whangamata Pure Honey', contained high levels of tutin. Toxic honey is produced when bees gather honeydew excreted by vine-hopper insects that have fed on the native tutu bush. Although tutin has no ill effects on bees or vine hoppers, it is highly toxic to humans - as little as one teaspoon of toxic honey can affect the nervous system. Under the Food Act, all food sold to the public must be safe to eat and sellers of food must be able to show they have taken all reasonable precautions to ensure the food they sell is safe. At the time of the poisonings, beekeepers were expected to manage the risk of their honey containing tutin either by removing hives and honey frames containing honey for human consumption before the risk period, or by closely monitoring the tutu, vine-hopper and foraging conditions around their apiaries during the honey season.

The Food (Tutin in Honey) Standard 2008 that came into force in January 2009 sets a maximum

level of tutin in honey sold for human consumption. It also requires beekeepers in risk areas to ensure their product is safe by complying with at least one of a number of risk management options. These include harvesting honey before the end of December, checking tutu bushes for toxic honeydew or placing hives away from tutu. Honey may also be blended and tested as an alternative.

Beekeepers that follow the requirements of the food laws that apply to their business, and comply with the standard, are highly unlikely to sell products such as those that caused the tutin poisonings last Easter, Mr. Rowlands said.



Honey Wanted

Editor has received an inquiry from 'Amanda' regarding purchasing local unheated honey. If you have about 20 Lbs to sell, please give Amanda a call at 530-613-3861. She said any type would be fine. Thanks from Amanda

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. The deadline for the June 2009 edition is May 20th. 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

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Nevada County Beekeepers Association



c/o Steve Reynolds
PO Box 548
Chicago Park, CA 95712
First Class Mail
May 2009

May 4th Program

The May 4th program will be a presentation about rearing queens, at 7 PM at the Grass Valley Veteran’s Hall.