

The Nevada County Beekeepers Association

Local Buzz



August 2010

President's Message

We are home now after a wonderful vacation in Glacier National Park in Montana. Montana is a very nice area. The mountains aren't as high as ours. The park is a hikers paradise, we did about 18 miles in three or four days. On the way up we stopped in Twin Falls ID, met a beekeeper at the growers market, bought some honey. She has about 400 colonies. Met another beekeeper in Hungry Horse MT, who told us he had lost 4 colonies due to the cold. It get down to 30 or 40 below.

Hope all of you are planning to come to the clean up and pot luck out at the fair grounds. It is always a lot of fun. Karla still needs helpers in the booth. Contact her if you can help.

Larry Merrit, your president

August 2nd Meeting

Our August 2nd meeting is time to set up and clean up the bee booth at the Nevada County Fair Grounds for the Fair Bee Booth for the upcoming fair starting at 5:30 PM. (Note the earlier time!) Bring brushes, buckets, rags, and soap to clean up. Following the clean up we will be having our annual Bee Club Potluck Bar-B-Q Party. The club will be providing hamburgers and hot dogs and all the fixings. Everyone attending please bring a salad, baked beans, etc. We need only two or three people to bring desserts, please. Last year we had more desserts than salads which is of course not good for our health or our waist lines!

Please contact Karla Hanson at 265-3756 if you would like to bring a dessert. Everyone should also bring chairs, plates, silverware and something for your family to drink.

Tribute to Burt Spangler

(Editor:) We reported with sadness last month that one of our long term members and club mentors, Manford Burt Spangler, had passed away on June 21 at age 90. Burt was one of the driving forces that created our Nevada County Beekeepers Association as we know it today. Burt had many interests including beekeeping. He was a private pilot, stained glass artist, RV enthusiast, and belonged to many clubs and organizations. He served in the US Army during the Korean conflict, and retained a reserve commission for 30 years, retiring with the rank of major. He worked in the personnel field, retiring from the Department of Labor in 1980 when he moved with his family to Grass Valley. He is survived by his wife Betty. Burt, thank you for your many contributions, we will miss you.

(Randy:) I first met Burt in the mid 1970's, and came to know him (and his family) well, both in beekeeping, in doing remodel and repair work on his home over the years, and most importantly, as a friend and colleague. Burt was instrumental to the foundation of our Association, laying the groundwork for its success today. The first meetings that I attended were not much more than a half dozen old guys getting together once a month to tell the same old stories, and to grouse about the same old complaints.

Burt and I set out to remake the Association into something better, along with the constant help of his wife Betty, who was always there to type and help with secretarial work (remember, no computers or internet in those days). Many others came and went, but Burt and I were constants. Burt wrote the bylaws for the Association, and served variously as President, Secretary, Program Chair, Sergeant at Arms, as a Board member, and probably every other possible position. Burt was a patient teacher, from whom I learned about running and organizing meetings.

He was also instrumental, along with his friend, California Extension Apiculturist Dr. Eric Mussen, in the formation of the Western Apicultural Society, which was founded in the model of the Eastern Apicultural Association, targeted at researchers, hobbyists, and sideliners. Burt taught beginning beekeeping classes, and was always there to help any and all in need. He also instituted the Honeybee Hotline for swarm calls, and kept close relations with the Agricultural Commissioner, the Board of Supervisors, and the Fair Board.

Burt wrote monthly columns about local beekeeping, and organized plenty of outdoor events, barbeques, etc. He was a driver in getting our permanent Fair Booth organized and built, along with the help of various members.

It was sad to see his failing health finally prevent him from attending his beloved bee meetings, and going through his belongings is a walk down memory lane for me. His express wishes were for his library and bee equipment to go to the Nevada County Beekeepers Association.

I consider myself blessed to have known and worked with Burt, and will miss him.

Bee Bits

By Randy Oliver

It seems that we are finally getting a respite from California's long drought! I watched folks skiing at Boreal in July! And burn permits were pulled two months later than they have been in recent years. As we pull honey in mid July, the combs are still shaking

fresh nectar—something that I haven't seen this late in years!

Those of you in yellow star thistle areas may even get a bit of exquisite star thistle honey—a world-class variety. In any case, Nature is being much more friendly to bees this year.

I'm freshly returned from Minnesota, where you can drive all day, and see nothing but corn, soybeans, more corn, and more soybeans. Hardly a wildflower to be seen. Although one of the large beekeepers there produced a million dollars worth of honey last year, he must keep his hives in yards of only 24-30 in order to provide them enough forage. I looked at the large map that covered his wall, with hundreds of push pins marking his locations.

The large Minnesota beekeepers move their hives to Texas for the winter, and then back up in late spring for the dandelion, clover, alfalfa, and basswood blooms. A treat for me there was to see, for the first time in my life, fireflies glowing in flight.

Nevada County Fair!

The Nevada County Fair is August 11-15, and workers are still needed for some shifts at the bee booth, 10 AM-2 PM, 2-6 PM, or 6-10 PM. Please contact Karla Hanson at 265-3756 or email queenbeez@att.net

Don't forget to allow plenty of time to prepare your entries for the honey and hive products competition in time to deliver them Thursday, Aug 5th.

Finally, see you at the fair booth cleanup and potluck the usual evening of our monthly meeting, Monday August 2, but starting earlier at 5:30 PM.

What Is That Tree?

By Janet Brisson

At July's meeting, member Kathleen Madeira announced we should see the tree outside, it's dripping with bees and can anyone identify it? I went outside to see this enormous tree with small yellow flowers covered with bees. It had a strong sweet fragrance which quickly reminded me of my neighbor's tree of my youth when I lived outside of London, England.

This was a Lime tree and each year the bees would cover it and then fall to the ground. The neighbors told me that the bees were drunk off the nectar. I later saw this tree in the states with the American name, Linden. I told Kathleen, I was pretty sure it was a Linden Tree, but Randy was our expert biologist, so let's take some samples and ask him. Randy quickly announced it was a Basswood tree and the bees loved it. It happened to bloom at our dearth, right between the blackberries and thistle flow, the perfect 'nectar' tree for our yard. Our goal has been to have continuous year round bloom for our girls and we were forever on the lookout for nectar producing flora. I looked it up, and we were both right. The Linden tree and the Basswood were the same tree, and a close relative to the English Lime tree all from the Tilia family. I went about trying to purchase it. The Arbor Society has them, but will not ship them to California. I found one site that wanted \$45.00+ S&H for each tree and I'm pretty sure those are saplings. I took a chance and went on eBay, put in Basswood and found seeds, 50 for \$3.50 plus \$1.50 S&H. Perfect. And the seller has 9 more packages if anyone else is interested, otherwise you can go directly to the website at www.datreestore.com and order, plus the sites has all sorts of sprouting tips. On Wikipedia I found the tree can grow up to 100 feet tall and normally thrives in humid climates, which means we would have to coddle this tree. Most amazing, not only is the honey from the flowers famous and the wood desired for instruments, but the leaves and flowers are considered medicinal and are often used as a sedative. Hence the 'drunk' bees.

Sincerely Submitted,
Janet Brisson

Nevada County's Beekeeping Forum

Our club is developing this great forum which I have been sending invitations to all members to join. I discovered recently not everyone got an invitation. I invited Karla Hanson several times and she never received one. Yikes, I'm not giving up, but I see there's a big problem here. So, if you are not on our forum, please go to <http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/NCBEES/> and request an invitation. This forum is a great way to ask questions, post pictures and get information to members fast. We've been posting all sorts of great information. If you are having problems, please email

me at rubes@countryrubes.com and we will get you on.

Thanks,
Janet Brisson

Snack Sign-up

Thanks to the people who signed up to bring snacks to our meetings. Remember that our hearts appreciate no partially hydrogenated oils. We'd like to have at least four people per month, so if you can help please email Karla Hanson at queenbeez@att.net.

August: Rob Slay, Myra Traugot

September: Mari Wolf

October: Sherry Skolfield, Charles Whittlesey

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July Minutes

V.P. Jeremiah Farrell opened with comments, Q&A. Buckeye gives the hive and the honey a foul odor. Most bees die outside the hive, except for starvation, where they face into the cells. Only the nurse bees use pollen, to make royal jelly. Hive crash factors are: nutrition, cold snaps, parasites, environmental toxins.. Bees' resistance to varroa is increasing. Tall tree swarm capture--throw or shoot arrow with string, tie a few frames of used comb, raise to contact swarm. A hive with all drone cells has a laying worker, and the

hive should be joined with a queen-right hive.
MOTION Randy Oliver 2nd Thom Staser: Apply the bequest of Manford "Burt" Spangler, 90, who died June 21, to construct a library area for beekeepers books and videos. Passed, voice.
FINANCE Janet Brisson: MayEnd \$3441.33; Inc\$113; Exp \$111.58; JuneEnd \$3442.75.
PROGRAM: Randy Oliver. Activation of young bees as foragers is controlled by 'epiolate' feedback decrease. Foragers do not deposit nectar or pollen in cells; they pass it through older receiver hive bees, who take the risk of toxins brought in, so the queen and young have a protective firewall. Russian bees stop brood rearing after honey flow, and eject mites. In *Apis cerana* (Asiatic,) drones are the main host to *Varroa*, while with *A. mellifera* (European,) workers and drones are both susceptible. In bees, cross breeding between strains does not produce hybrid vigor, which strengthens most species.
Jack Meeks, sec

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Librarian's Review

By Tynowyn Slattery, Librarian

The library now has the following in either VHS or DVD format:

Living With Africanized Bees....produced by KNSD News San Diego County and a private pest control business.

As you might suspect from the producer, this 15 minute program is presented in a dramatic news-room format with a few eye witness accounts of Africanized bee/human interface which is followed by brief "sound bites" of bee history, importance of the honey bee as a pollinator, what to do in an emergency, (run into a room and shut the door) and removal of bee swarms and closing holes in structures where they might get in, this last, is where the pest control company comes in.

The production values are professional but if you know anything at all about Africanized bees this DVD might be a little too basic for you and if you want to learn more, there is a book and more pamphlet information on the AHB that you can check out of the library. Library Review

Why Honey Bees?...Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences

I have to admit that I never watched this because I thought the ambiguous title was an indicator of an uninteresting program. Was I ever wrong! In 35 minutes there are engaging personal stories of everyday beekeepers, queen breeders and farmers, more history, with pictures, than is usual in an introductory offering, well written descriptions of the hive and phases of a bees life, information about pollination and honey extraction and more, all with beautiful images of bees and flowers and pleasant, upbeat music that weaves in and out, moving the narrative right along.

When a newcomer to the club asks for a good overview of the life of honeybees, this is the video I will recommend.

Small Scale Honey Harvesting ...Bee Culture's Beekeeping Workshop with Kim Flottum

This one-hour program is for a beekeeper with a few honey boxes to extract, doesn't know where to start and who doesn't want to make the fairly large investment in an extractor.

Kim Flottum is the editor of Bee Culture magazine and narrates this well organized production. The vocals are clear and I like the "old timey" music that is used between segments...I was also impressed by the sparkling whiteness of his bee suit.

His program gives good, solid information that a beginner needs to know about inexpensive, low tech and sanitary extraction of honey and should be viewed well before the extraction begins as there is a lot of information to absorb, some basic equipment to gather and, during the late summer, it gets checked out often. Also, If you are checking out this video/DVD you will probably appreciate knowing that the Association has a 4-frame, hand-cranked extractor that is available for rent to members at \$35.00 for up to a week (please remember that there might be a waiting list at harvest time.) with a refund of \$10.00 if it comes back clean.

The person to call for rental and reservation...Karla Hanson...265-3756

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 September 2010 edition is August 26th. 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
 August 2010

August 2nd Meeting

The August 2nd meeting is a fair booth cleanup party, with potluck following. Starts earlier than usual at 5:30 PM, see inside for details.