

# The Nevada County Beekeepers Association

# Local Buzz



December 2010

## December 6<sup>th</sup> Holiday Potluck and Pirate Gift Exchange

Our next meeting will be our Holiday potluck and pirate gift exchange - Monday, December 6 starting at 6 PM at the Grass Valley Veteran's Hall. Main course items have been arranged - turkey by Debbie Cavallaro and Ham by Karla Hanson. Last names beginning with A-M please bring a side dish to share; N-Z please bring a dessert to share. Please bring serving spoons, knife etc. to serve your item, and bring your own place settings and drinks. Per Veteran's Hall policy candles cannot be lit and we were recently told we could not have alcohol. A prize will be awarded for the best place setting, so bring your fancy settings!

After dinner we will have a pirate gift exchange. Please keep your gift at a \$15.00 value. Once again, Deborah Morawski will be overseeing the gift exchange and have numbers ready for people to pick. Each person that brings a gift will get a number and participate in the fun.

Thank you Debbie, Karla, Deborah! **Please note the earlier than usual starting time, potluck at 6:00 PM!**

This meeting is always a lot of fun, with lots of laughs and your opportunity to finally have time to talk to everyone!

## Bee Bits

By Randy Oliver

Winter is upon us, in case you hadn't noticed! The hills are alive with the sound of generators. Bees have gone into tight cluster, and have largely curtailed broodrearing.

Stephanie and I took a "beekeepers vacation" and went to San Luis Obispo to the State Beekeepers Conference. The most important take home messages:

1. Varroa is still our number one problem.
2. There were no miracle miticides coming down the pipe.
3. Good husbandry is necessary for maintaining strong, productive colonies.

Data from Dr. Frank Eischen confirm that any varroa take a toll on a colony. The more mites, the worse the toll. At natural mite drops of over 50 mites per day in October, unless you immediately get mite levels down, those colonies won't make it through the winter.

Re new miticides, I've tested the HopGuard strips that will soon be available. They are cardboard strips soaked in hops oil extract. They are considered to be "food grade" and safe to use in the hive during the honey flow. They drop phoretic (hitchhiking) mites like crazy, but only for about three days. They have an effect similar to a good sugar dusting, or somewhat better.

I've also just completed the California trail for the new MiteAway Quick Strips (MAQS). These are formic acid gel strips that are laid across the tops

of the frames between the brood boxes. They are very safe and easy to use, and can also be used during a honey flow. As opposed to the hops strips, MAQS also kill some mites in the brood cells, and are designed to target the delicate male mites. The theory is that if you kill the males before they can mate, then any surviving females would be sterile.

The results were impressive: mite counts dropped from an average of about 30 to about 1 per 300 bees. The trial was run from Nov 1-24, spanning an entire brood cycle; high temps during the outgassing period ranged from 65-85F. However, the bees were curtailing broodrearing during this period, so I can't really say how well the MAQS would work during heavy broodrearing. The inventor/manufacturer, David Vanderdussen, who kindly spoke at our last meeting, says that the strips work fine during broodrearing.

## **2011 Classes and Programs—Hey Did You Sign Up for Beekeeping Classes?**

Hello new, old and soon-to-be beekeepers. The Nevada County Beekeepers Association has many exciting events planned for 2011, including two classes offered by notable veteran beekeepers. Please mark these events on your calendar. All events meet at the Grass Valley Veterans Hall, back door, on the first Monday of the month at 7 PM, unless otherwise noted. Jeremiah Farrell will be setting up no-host dinners to honor our guest speakers, and let us get together as a pre-meeting social. Restaurants are announced in The Buzz prior to the meeting.

**January 15th, Saturday, 8:30am to 4:30pm. Holiday Inn Express at 155 Bank Street, Grass Valley, CA.** A one day intensive beekeeping class with Sonoma County's most famous beekeeper, Serge Lebesque. Called the 'Bee Whisperer' on some of his You Tube videos, Serge, who was voted the 2006 Western Apiculturist Society's

Innovator of the year, is famous for his wholly natural approach to no-treatment beekeeping and raising his own queens. Registration information will be provided at the December meeting.

### **April 4<sup>th</sup>, the meeting you've been waiting for, our free Orientation meeting and Beekeeping Class sign ups.**

You will hear all about 'Being a Beekeeper' and will be able to sign up Randy Oliver's classes, suitable for the whole family. Our program will also include Swarms and the Swarm Hot Line with Lynn Williams and Karla Hanson, plus we will have Rob Slay talking about making successful splits. You will get another free newsletter notification of this event in late March. Randy Oliver's classes are \$50 (family price, the whole family, kids encouraged), which will include the handout, a series of Monday night classes, and unlimited field practice sessions. Randy covers all types of beekeeping and brings up-to-date information to the classroom. All equipment and beekeeping gear is provided to make this a fun and exciting experience.

**February 7th meeting,** Randy Oliver will give his fascinating program on small scale queen rearing.

Many other exciting programs are planned for this next beekeeping year, and we're in the process of confirming speakers and dates which will be announced next month!

## **Election Results**

Here are our officers for 2011. Welcome (back) and thank you all:

Rob Slay, President  
Jeremiah Farrell, Vice President  
Janet Brisson, Treasurer  
Jack Meeks, Secretary

Board Members:  
Karla Hanson, Randy Oliver, Charlie Whittlesey ,  
Larry Merritt

## November Minutes

Pres Larry Merritt opened with Q&A comments: December 6 meeting will start at 6:30 with potluck. Ham and turkey provided. Bring your place setting, salad, canapes, desserts, veggies, casseroles, beverages. Place setting setups will be judged, with prize for winner. "Pirate Gift Exchange" follows, if you bring a wrapped, value around \$15, gift to swap.

Officers for 2011, elected by acclamation:  
President Rob Slay; Vice Pres Jeremiah Farrell,  
Treasurer Janet Brisson, Secretary Jack Meeks.  
Finance Janet Brisson: October start \$3073.85; Inc \$99; Exp \$202.46; Oct End \$2970.39.  
Randy demonstrated an accurate Varroa count using 300 bees shaken in alcohol, then strained. Three mites visible in the alcohol would indicate 1 % infestation; 3 % or more is warning to treat the hive.

David VanderDussen, [www.miteaway.com](http://www.miteaway.com)  
Frankford, Ontario, demonstrated formic acid 'Miteaway Quick Strip' which evaporates without residue. Cost will be \$5.50 per hive; EPA approval pending. OK to use any time, including honeyflow.

PROGRAM: Dr. Eric Mussen UC Davis entomology. CCD is decreasing--75% of US beekeepers are now unaffected. Queens, purchased and home bred, are not lasting --6 weeks to 6 mos life spans. Southern CA bees are producing more honey; 200# per hive vs Northern Ca hives 60#. Propolis suppresses bacteria, fungi and viruses, aiding bees' weak immune systems. Fumagillin vs Nosema, Tylosin vs Varroa, Terramycin vs American foulbrood are still effective.

Jack Meeks, sec

## For Sale: Country Rubes Combo Screened Bottom Boards

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Call Janet for details. 530-913-2724 or email at [rubes@countryrubes.com](mailto:rubes@countryrubes.com).

## TIME TO PAY YOUR 2011 DUES! ARE YOU ONLINE?

Help our club reduce paper and mailing costs, get your newsletter electronically and we will reduce your family membership fees to from \$20.00 to \$15.00. I am going to be out of town for 1/3/11 meeting. Deborah Morawski will be collecting dues. If you are paying in cash, please try to bring the exact change. If you are a new member, we will ask you to fill out a short form at the meeting. If you would like to pay your dues through the mail, please send your check made out to NCBA or Nevada County Beekeepers Association, for either \$20.00 (to receive newsletter through mail) or \$15 for NET OFFER to me at:

NCBA  
C/o Janet Brisson  
20693 Dog Bar Road  
Grass Valley, CA 95949

New members please provide all family member names, full mailing address, indicate whether you want to be a library member (add \$5.00 to amount please) and state whether or not you want your name listed in the member directory.

Any questions, please feel free to call me at 530-913-2724 or email me at [rubes@countryrubes.com](mailto:rubes@countryrubes.com)

Thanks, Janet Brisson, Treasurer

## Sacramento Beekeeping Supplies

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Webpage at [www.sacramentobeekeeping.com](http://www.sacramentobeekeeping.com)

email: [info@sacramentobeekeeping.com](mailto:info@sacramentobeekeeping.com)

Open Tuesday through Saturday 10:00 – 5:30

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## Nevada County Beekeepers FORUM

We have an NCBA Beekeepers Forum on the internet, but if you're not used to using the Yahoo Groups function, it may seem difficult to find or access. I've made it easy for myself by bookmarking it so I always go right to that page. But getting to that page may be fun. Here are some ways to get in:

1 When you get a notification that there's new information in the forum, use the link at the bottom.

2 You can go directly to [groups.yahoo.com](http://groups.yahoo.com) or put YAHOO GROUPS into the search engine. Once there, put in Nevada County Beekeepers in the FIND A YAHOO GROUP box.

3 To use the forum you must first join Yahoo with a name and password. THEN BOOKMARK THE PAGE once you've found it. If you are not already a member of our group, request it from Janet Brisson and I will let you join. We are asking that you be a member of our club in good standing to use the forum. Please email me at [rubes@countryrubes.com](mailto:rubes@countryrubes.com) if you have any problems or wish to join.

Thanks,  
Janet Brisson, Treasurer



Bobbie donated that fabulous bee jewelry to our September raffle. For wonderful holiday gift ideas, please contact her.

## Honey Update

(From the internet, and see more at <http://skamberg.com/honey.htm> )

The 2009 U.S. honey crop was the poorest U.S. honey crop in recorded history. The 144 million pound crop was down 12% from the 2008 crop, and down 28% from the 200 million average crop levels of 10 years ago. Over the last 5 years, the U.S. honey crop has averaged 156 million pounds.

Some of the reasons for the poor 2009 US crop:  
Weather – Drought conditions in the West, and very cool, wet weather in the upper Mid-West  
Reduced forage area – Much of the prime forage area for bees has been turned into farm land for cash crops or developed for commercial or residential use.

Fewer bees – Colony Collapse Disorder and increased pesticide use in what was once bee forage areas has reduced bee colony numbers. The decline in U.S crop production, along with poor honey crops produced in most of the world's leading honey producing countries, has created critical supply shortages. Since demand for this honey has not fallen significantly, raw honey prices in the world market are rising.

The best that most can hope for price relief is a bumper U.S. crop in 2010, but even if that happens, prices will start out very high and only drop back if buying drops off.

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 January 2010 edition is December 22<sup>nd</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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**Honey Extractor:**      Karla Hanson..... 265-3756

**Nevada County Beekeepers Association**



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

**December 6<sup>th</sup> Program**

The December 6<sup>th</sup> meeting will be our annual holiday potluck party and gift exchange starting at **6 PM.** Details inside.