

The Monthly Extractor

Our goal is to increase interest in and knowledge of bees and beekeeping for the hobby and commercial beekeeper, and to educate the general public in the value of bees.

Monthly Meetings- Held at 6th and Wilson (New College) in Santa Rosa
February 12 at 7 p.m. - General Meeting –Hive management techniques and queen rearing talk by Kathy Cox.

From Your President

I thought our first meeting of the year went very well. We had a large assortment of goodies thanks to the generosity of our new goodies chairwoman Sharilyn Bunce, Rick and Joanne Wallenstein and me. Sharilyn has already gotten volunteers for this month's meeting and I think maybe some even for March! What a great group you are!

So far this year I have kept my new year's resolution to be a more organized beekeeper. My grandson Marshall spent several of his college vacation days working to help me clean out and organize my workshop area. I am now able to find all my tools, wax foundations, empty boxes, frames that need cleaning and/or new foundation and all sorts of things. It is wonderful! I hope it lasts!

Don't forget to send me any information concerning bees and/or plants they like. We do want to keep interesting articles in the newsletter. Serge has been so generous with his time each month reminding us what we need to do to keep our hives healthy. I know a lot of you have knowledge to share. Please do not be shy!

Hans Schrader called me the next day after our last meeting to pass on some gardening advice. He says now is the time to add lime and dolomite to the soil to encourage the bushes to bloom for the bees. He said cotoneaster needs Kali salt fertilizer to increase its metabolism. The Leeds' Beekeeper Association newsletter said, "Talking of cotoneaster, you will probably get a call saying there is a swarm of bees in the garden. Well when you get there a lot of bees are certainly there but it is not a swarm, simply lots of bees collecting nectar from the flowers they like." Sounds like we need to plant that one!

General Meeting January 8th, 2007.

7:05p.m. Called to order by our wonderful president. Approximately 40 members in attendance including board members; Ettamarie Pres., Michael Johnson 2nd V.P., Sean 1st V.P., Kathy Kellison, Sec. and Jackie Whitford, Historian who were also introduced to the group as seated for the year 2007. Sharilyn Bunce volunteered to coordinate sweets and treats to be brought to future general membership meetings. (Her phone # is 538-7190 to call her to volunteer for Mar. or later meetings.)

Q. & A.

Most of the discussion centered on the needs of the bees during this inhospitable season. Hans advised feeding may be necessary as bees can consume up to a quarter of a frame of stores a day. "Bee Feed" should contain a source of protein

(pollen) not just sugar (honey or sugar syrup). He recommends bee feed contain a mixture Brewers Yeast, bee pollen and dextrose. When feeding bees inside the hive, be sure to protect against exposure of the entire colony by covering frames with a towel as you work is the advice of Kathy Cox. Be sure to work quickly as the bees will need to consume stores to bring the cluster back up to temperature. When seeking advice about hive management regardless of the time of year, be sure to weigh the recommendations in relation to the location of the hives. Conditions can vary within even a few miles.

Having equipment prepared for upcoming spring may require scraping any excess comb or propolis from the top and bottom bars. There was some discussion about plastic frames and their viability for reuse. As usual, there were pros and cons on how good plastic frames are.

A gentleman asked about our affiliation and/or relationship with the county staff and regulation of beekeeping in Sonoma County. He asked if we have a person in our club who is a liaison. Ettamarie told him she has had phone conversations with the Ag. Department and they are mostly looking for information on the small hive beetle. She requested that anyone seeing any of these needs to call the Ag. Department.

The presenter for the evening was our very own brilliant and dynamic president, Ettamarie. We were treated to a very informative and delightful account of beekeeping in early California. An east coast botanist by the name of Christopher Shelton transported the first honey bees to the Santa Clara Valley in 1850 the same way many fortune seekers made their way to the gold fields; by ship to Central America and then across the isthmus to an awaiting ship to complete the journey to Northern California. These pioneer bees were known as "common bees" and more exactly, German Black Bees.

Later in 1853 adds appear advertising hives for sale promising to yield seven to eight swarms in a season and fetching a per hive price of \$110. Some individuals failing to strike it rich in the gold fields apparently drew on their farming experience and tried their luck at beekeeping as honey provided a more reliable source of income. Of course only comb honey was available as it would be sometime before the rotating extractor was developed. Answering the rising demand for bees in California resulted in "bee brokers" with insufficient experience shipping off boxes of bees from the east that died before arriving in California. By the 1860's there was a reported 2000 hive surplus

saturating the market and plummeted the per hive price to between ten and twenty dollars when it had been well over \$100 earlier.

In 1860 there is recorded a meeting of the Pacific Apiary Society in which the agenda included "The Price of Bees". The determination by that group was that a colony covering 2000 cubic feet be valued at \$80. It was also concluded that a decaying hive or diseased hive that was offered for sale would reduce the seller's status to that equal of a common thief. As well, any person known to capture a swarm from another's apiary would be regarded similarly. Though over a century has past beekeeping ethics have remained unchanged.

Italian Bees came into play in 1860 when Lorenzo Langstroth wrote about their virtues to a California beekeeper and sold him some. There was a good bit of time devoted to Harbison and also Langstroth and his hive, which cost \$2.00 to construct. Harbison patented his hive and offered instruction free of charge to those wanting to begin in beekeeping by buying his bees and hives. A man named S. B. Flushings in New York imported the Italian bees for Langstroth who promoted them as superior to "common bee" being used in California. There are also reports of the problems inherent in beekeeping as evidenced by records of "fool brood" and damage by wax moths.

The door prize for the drawing was a hive lid donated by Ettamarie. The winner was Erica Kane who is also a new member. Congratulations Erica!!

The group is asked to keep bringing plants that bees are working. Highlighted at this meeting:

Strawberry Bush, Australian Fuchsia (*Correa pulchella*), California Lindens, Rosemary and Eucalyptus are in bloom.

Last year our association contributed \$150 to Cornell University towards their on-going project of digitizing the archived issues of American Bee Journal. \$150 is the cost to digitize one issue. SCBA was given credit on the University's web site.

Arbor Day coming! March 7th. Perhaps we could get some ideas and commitment for tree planting sponsored by our club...

Word of caution: FYI planting of the variety of Sycamores that have been planted in this area is now discouraged as the leaves are reservoirs for a fine dust that is emitted and is a potent allergen.

February Meeting: February 12th, Lincoln's Birthday...
Hive Division and Swarm Management

Meeting closed 8:50 Minutes by Secretary Kathy Kellison

Jan. 15, 2007 Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order 7:45p.m. Home of Ettamarie Peterson Attending: Ettamarie, 1 VP Sean Straw, 2 VP Michael Johnson, Treas. Donna Nelson and Sec. Kathy Kellison

Treasurer's Report submitted and accepted. Current checking: \$3,326.30 Current savings: \$3,052.49

It is the board's recommendation that presentations be "scrap booked" into the Association's book. This book can be a valuable resource to schools and other interested organizations.

Consideration was given to SCBA joining the California

State Bee Keeper's Association. We will look further into the benefits of becoming a member in exchange for the annual dues of \$75.00 before deciding.

The board decided against inviting Dr. Larry Connors to be our guest speaker in March because of his fee protocol.

Special Events Vice President Michael Johnson will pursue the viability of SCBA planting a tree in recognition of Arbor Day to bring attention to our club with media coverage of the event.

Our Librarian, Michael, brought to the board's attention that members have been remiss in promptly returning books and videos from the club's library. Several ideas were discussed to help correct this problem such as a reminder e-mail or phone call.

February's meeting will feature multiple topics appropriate to hive management this time of year. Kathy Cox will speak on queen rearing and package bee installation. Sean will cover the essentials of successful swarm capture.

Our club meeting date, time, and location will be added to local community calendars offered by KCRB and the Press Democrat.

Next board meeting: Home of Donna Nelson, Feb. 19th.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30p.m.

Minutes submitted by Sec. Kathy Kellison

My February Beekeeping To-Do List

By Serge Labesque

February is arguably the most dangerous month of the year for bees in our county. This is because the typically unstable weather, which is frequently cold, rainy, or windy at this season, stresses the colonies at a time when they are in a fragile stage of development: the transition from winter to spring.

In the hives, the brood nests are expanding, as the queens lay more eggs every day. The larvae that ensue have to be fed, and all the brood is to be kept warm. This represents a huge load for the dwindling numbers of aging bees. It is a real struggle of a few for the survival of the colony. It is a race against time for these wonderful, under-appreciated, yet invaluable do-it-all members of the honey bee colony: the winter bees. But their days are numbered.

While this is happening in the sedentary hives of our county, others have been moved to the almond orchards, where they are hard at work. They are earning pollination fees for their owners, having been subjected to forced feedings and drastic hive combinations to meet the criteria set by the growers. This is happening because almonds bring lots of money to the growers, whose intensive use of the land to maximize earnings has destroyed the local ecosystem. Any plant that is not an almond tree is gone, and native pollinators have been decimated along with any other insects, be they good or bad, if there is such a thing as

a bad insect. Greed here, greed there, sounding every year more loudly the accelerating beat of the approaching demise of our gentle local bees.

Back to our bee yards:

The sources of pollen and nectar are rapidly becoming more numerous and generous in February. When the weather is favorable to foraging, strong colonies can produce a great air show in front of the hives, their field bees bringing nectar and colorful loads of pollen. But some years, nice February days can be few and far between, and weak colonies hardly benefit from these periods of nice weather. This month is definitely when the results of preparations for winter begin to show in earnest. The verdict will be pronounced next month.

In February, more than at any other time of the year, the advice to beekeepers is to be patient: No matter how anxious you may be for spring, do not stress your colonies. A lengthy, poorly conducted hive inspection, for example, can condemn the colony, or at least set it back.

- Walk through the apiaries.
- Conduct exterior hive inspections.
- Observe bees on the landing boards for possible symptoms of disease, Nosema in particular (the bees should not be slow moving), but also tracheal mites and PMS.
- Check hives that do not show any sign of activity. With your ear on the side of the hive, a tap on the hive should trigger an audible hum. If no noise is heard, the hive must be closed immediately, investigated, and appropriately dealt with as soon as possible. Same thing when monitoring trays show signs of robbing.
- Lift the back of the hives to feel their weight.
- On nice days, when foragers are out in large numbers, perform brief hive inspections. Focus your attention on accessible stores, brood pattern, brood nest development, health status of the colonies, hive condition, and, possibly, on honey supers. Get a whiff of your hives (the odor should be pleasant).
- Keep an eye on laggards, but do not stress them.
- By the end of the month, combine hives that are weak, but otherwise healthy, and do not show any sign of development (open brood/sealed brood proportions).
- Supering is to be done, as warranted by local conditions, and by the strength of the colonies.
- Initiate swarm prevention measures.
- Avoid congestion of the brood nests, and honeybound conditions.
- Prepare hives that have been selected for queen rearing.
- Don't miss watching foragers on the blooming rosemary. This plant, which is very attractive to bees and many other pollinators, is a real observatory for bee lovers. It is also the source of one of the finest nectars. If you do not have any, plant some!

At home:

- Complete and prepare equipment that may be necessary for hive development, apiary expansion, possible early swarms, etc.
- Beekeeping classes at Santa Rosa Junior College.

Serge Labesque © 2007

Serge Labesque's Beekeeping Classes Schedule

Introduction to Beekeeping Sect: 9094

Wed. February 14-March 7, 6:30 PM-9:00 PM
2707 Maggini Hall, Santa Rosa Campus
Fee: \$67.00 (includes \$5.00 of materials)
4-session class.

Intermediate Beekeeping for spring and summer Sect: 9093

Wed. March 21-28, 6:30 PM-9:00 PM
2707 Maggini Hall, Santa Rosa Campus
Fee: \$45.00
2-session class.

SRJC web site:

<https://busapp02.santarosa.edu/CommunityEducation>
or
Call (707) 527-4824

Reminder to those who want to purchase ad space that the business card size ad is \$5, the 1/4 ad is \$10, and the 1/2 page ad is \$20. Classified ads are free to members.

Member Ad Space

(Free ad space to all dues payers)

April Lance and Linda Clary have a lovingly cared for 'up and running' healthy beehive with bees that can be delivered to your location. Please call us! Fine, established, producing, very clean and healthy, well cared for bees and hive components for sale. Hives have been requeened with beautiful 2006 queens this year. No pesticides ever used. Bees from 80 dollars --- then you select any hive parts you wish to incorporate (bottom boards, deep and honey supers, additional bees, inner cover, lids and more, or you provide your own ---- all at very reasonable prices to get you started. Simple or elaborate. We will also have nucs for sale in the spring of 2007. Please Call 707-431-1569

Kathy Cox and Scott Nelson:

PACKAGE BEES - 3 & 4-POUND PACKAGES, \$65.00 & \$80.00, includes a free class on installing package bees. Available in April. Pay on ordering.

SALE: 5 Frame Nucs, \$125. '07 queen, her bees and brood, with honey and pollen. 5 frame exchange. Price includes a free class at Wine Country Honey. Deposit of \$60 is required.

For Sale: Whole hives, \$250. '07 queen, her bees and brood, with honey and pollen. Price includes a free class at Wine Country Honey. Deposit of \$125 is required.

For Sale: Queens. \$20. Available May '07. Full amount due when ordering.

Apprenticeship Opportunity. Call to spend a day or a week apprenticing with Wine Country Honey beekeepers. Wine Country Honey, 4979 Occidental RD, Santa Rosa, CA 95401. 707-578-0797. www.winecountryhoney.com

Bob Burris – Front mount pollen traps-used \$10 each, about 600 available. This is a trap designed by Peter Heuter, an old beekeeper the long time members knew years ago. Call Bob at 707-894-2829

Saints Preserve Us!

Did you know St. Valentine is one of the many patron Saints of Beekeepers? As well as St. Ambrose of Milan and St. Valentine of Rome you can also take your pick from St. Bernadine, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Ponc, St. Alexios, St. John and St. Bartholomew. Yes, more, what about some Irish Saints: St Modomnoc who, it is alleged, first brought bees to Ireland and is depicted in a stained glass window in memory of Rev. J.G. Digges in Mohill Church on the Farnought estate in County Leitrim. St. Gobnet, a female Saint, who is depicted in a beautiful stained glass window by the famous Dublin stained glass artist, Harry Clarke, in the Hogan Chapel in University College Cork. When Modomnoc returned to Wales after studying with St. David, swarms of bees left Scotland to follow him, thus supposedly being introduced to Ireland. His Saint's Day is February 13th.

This article was compiled by Ettamarie Peterson with help from the Yahoo Irish List.

What's In Bloom

Janet Liesen noticed that the California Bay Laurel was blooming in late January. She also noticed Manzanita, rosemary, Russian sage, cotoneaster, some dandelions and some eucalyptus blooming.

Yellow mustard and many ornamental fruit trees are also blooming now.

Apimondia 2007 Will Be in Australia

Next September 9th to the 14th will be the world conference for beekeepers in Melbourne, Australia. For all the details, go to <http://www.apimondia2007melbourne.com/>. There will be exciting pre- and post- tours too!

We know of a female member of the association who is looking for a person to share hotel rooms with. She is also planning to go to Tasmania. Let us know if you would like to be her room mate (females only, please).

Hector's Honey Takes the Family to Italy



Hector Alvarez, his wife Sandra and his two daughters Cynthia and Sandy work very hard on their family's apiary business. They sell honey, pollen, wax and candles at eleven different farmers' markets. Last spring a lady wrote an article about their honey for the Slow Food's newsletter. Later the Slow Food organization asked the family to represent honey and the Healdsburg Farmers' Market in the international conference in Turin, Italy. Slow Food is a non-profit, eco-gastronomic member-supported organization that was founded in 1989 to counteract fast food and fast life, the disappearance of local food traditions and people's dwindling interest in the food they eat, where it comes from, how it tastes and how our food choices affect the rest of the world.

The sixth Slow Food conference was held in October 2006. This enormous food exhibition drew over 150,000 visitors to Turin, Italy. Small-scale food producers came from all over the world to showcase their products. The event was dedicated both to excellent food and to the extraordinary people who produce it. Hector was proud to carry the American flag with his wife and daughters during the opening ceremonies.

The Alvarez Family was able to see and taste products and cuisines from all over the world and went to several workshops. They went to talks by beekeepers from all over the world. The discussions included such things as marketing and fair allocations of sites to put their beehives. They were able to taste honey from floral sources not grown in California. Hector was able to exchange ideas with beekeepers from Italy, Mexico, Spain, Kenya and Nicaragua. Some items that were discussed by the speakers were legal aspects to make pure honey and marketing clean products. Some of the pictures they took were of honey and a presentation by

a group of Kenya, Africa, beekeepers showing uses for their honey beer and their beeswax.

Hector and the family were really impressed that the President of Italy was there and addressed the Slow Food organization. The Italian President is a great supporter of the movement that was started in his country. Italians really know how to serve wonderful food. All seven days of the conference they ate beautiful, tasty food. They enjoyed all of it so much that they even snapped photos of various meals and dishes.

They stayed in a town that was an hour and a half away by bus. This gave Hector and his family plenty of time to observe the beehives set along side of the many orchards between Vicoforte and Turin. They enjoyed seeing both the small rural town and the large city.

Bee Trivia

The Islands of Saint Kitts and Nevis have the earliest documented evidence of honey bees in the Caribbean.

I Learned About Beekeeping From This

By Ettamarie Peterson

Years ago I was fortunate to be able to buy an observation hive from Jonathan Taylor. It has given me hours of pleasure and been a great teaching and learning tool.

The first lesson I learned from my observation hive was how easy it is to make your own queen. I had a nuc of bees ready to install in the observation hive. One member of the association came over with her beekeeping son to help me with the process of moving the bees into their new home. What I had thought was a queen-right colony turned out not to be. You can see I was a real novice at this point!

Well, my friend's son said not to worry. He knew I had a couple of active hives down in the old chicken barn. He went through one colony and selected a beautiful frame of mixed stages of brood. He put that in the observation hive with the queenless bees.

I was delighted to be able to watch the colony make its own new queen. What a great lesson this was!

If you can get an observation hive, do it! Your knowledge of bees will grow by leaps and bounds! Though I warn you; looking at it can become addictive. You will have a difficult time tearing yourself away from it.

February Recipe

Beehive Cookies

Makes about 2 ½ doz. cookies

¼ C. honey

1 egg, beaten

1 tsp. vanilla extract

2 C. sweetened shredded coconut

1 C. chopped pitted dates

2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour

Preheat oven to 325° F. Grease cookie sheets.

In medium bowl, beat honey, egg and vanilla until blended. Stir in coconut and nuts. In small bowl, coat dates with flour. Add to honey mixture and stir to combine.

Drop batter by tablespoonfuls onto prepared cookie sheet. Bake 12 minutes, or until lightly browned.

Remove from cookie sheet and cool on wire rack (about 35 minutes).

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Swarm List- Do you want to be on it?

Think about this, "Bill Dennison, the former Mayor of Toronto and **beekeeper** had bees before his election- keeping them in the heart of the city. Whenever there was an angry swarm, the police would call His Majesty the Mayor. He would get his smoker and go fetch the bees - not every city of 3 million can claim such hands-on care from an elected official!!"

Now if a mayor can do it, why not you? Read on!

Important Swarm List Information

By Sean Straw, Swarm Chairman

Swarm season is fast approaching. This year, I hope to build upon the successes of last years swarm list. To do that, we need participants to provide us the necessary information in a timely and organized fashion.

To facilitate swarm readiness, one of the presentation topics at the February SCBA general meeting (on 12 February) will be on swarm catching and

handling. It may seem a bit early to tackle the topic, but by March or April, swarm season will have begun, and we need to have printed and mailed the swarm list by then so that the public can access beekeepers. If the local weather continues like it is, we'll likely have many early swarms.

Catching swarms is a fairly easy process and pretty much any first year beekeeper should be able to manage it with a small amount of preparation. It is an excellent way for beekeepers - especially hobbyists - to increase their colonies.

One major change to the swarm list for this year is that I'll be collecting names and info for people who don't feel up to working as a front-line swarm catcher, but who would like an opportunity to tag along on other swarm calls so that they can develop the necessary skills and confidence to eventually deal with swarms on their own next year. This "junior swarm catcher" list for lack of a better name would be referred to by any beekeepers that are going out on a confirmed swarm call, basically inviting you along. I believe this will be a great opportunity for some members to gain hands-on experience, for others to interact with newer members and have a helping hand to steady a ladder or whatnot. It'll be a win-win for everyone.

As always, participation on the swarm list requires that you be a dues-paid member. If you haven't renewed your SCBA membership for 2007 (now \$25 per person), please be sure to do so BEFORE signing up for the swarm list -- if you're not paid up, I can't collect your swarm participation information, because it's tied right to your membership in the member database. So, get that membership renewal in.

If you were on the swarm list in 2006, we still have the details of your prior participation - please refer to the printed edition which was sent out in a newsletter last year (April, if I recall), or check the SCBA website:

<<http://www.sonomabees.org/swarms/>>

Last years information will continue to appear through the end of February, when only current 2007 members will be listed, and of those, only those who are confirmed to be participating for 2007.

Being listed for 2006 DOES NOT MEAN YOU'LL AUTOMATICALLY BE LISTED FOR 2007.

If you wish to participate for 2007, and everything about your listing for last year is just as you'd want it for this year, please indicate as much -- but first confirm that the listed contact numbers are valid. We do not want to publish a number you had a year ago, and which some other individual now has - someone who would probably get very annoyed at receiving phone calls about bees. If you're new to the list, we need confirmed phone numbers, what zones you wish to participate in, and a comment about services and fees. The key elements of the comment are whether you charge a fee or not and whether you deal with structural extractions. You might also indicate you only deal with a specific city within the zone, or have specific hours. Look to the prior list for a guideline. Common comments look like:

No fee; swarms only; no structural extractions

Fee dependant upon distance; structural extractions

The swarm zones are:

- 1 Rohnert Park, Petaluma and Bodega Bay
- 2 Sonoma and Sonoma Valley
- 3 Santa Rosa and Sebastopol
- 4 Healdsburg, Cloverdale & North of Santa Rosa
- 5 Marin County

6 Mendocino & Lake Counties

7 Napa County

While there are counties other than Sonoma on the list, we do not mail the list to agencies outside of Sonoma County at this time, and in order to participate you still must be a dues paid SCBA member.

A definition of "Structural Extraction" will be added to the site soon.

Last year, I took the time to call and confirm each listing. That's amazingly time consuming, especially since many participants did not return calls, even after being called several times. I cannot commit to repeating that effort this year.

How does the swarm list work? After collecting up all the participant data by early March, the swarm list is printed and mailed to 150 or so agencies in Sonoma County - Police, Fire, Parks and Recreation, School Board offices, pest control outfits, etc. That includes a cover letter explaining the use of the list (and how their reps should cycle through the listings, or refer callers to the website where applicable). The website allows us to service people who take the time to look for a solution online, and also allows us to update the list (though obviously not the already distributed print version), either adding, removing, or tweaking existing entries due to errors.

I'm aware of at least one member who had the impression that an SCBA officer acted as a dispatcher, receiving calls for swarms and then calling around to swarm participants to find someone to handle the call. That is not how it works. The public at large (and occasionally, a police dispatcher) will call participants to report swarms directly. These people get your details either from our website or by calling one of the many agencies which the list is distributed to.

The website shuffles the listings - each time someone visits the site, the order of the names within each zone is different - it is completely shuffled, like a deck of cards might be. This better ensures that each participant has a realistic opportunity to receive swarm calls, since if the list were static (like the printed copy distributed to agencies), then the people at the top of the list would receive a lot of calls, and those at the bottom would receive very few, if any. Randomly shuffling the list means nobody gets any special treatment. The printed and mailed copy itself is printed from the website data, but ALL of the printed copies are reproduced from a single printing, and therefore are identical.

It should be noted that making changes to the list still involves work - if you're expecting to get on and off again as the whim suits you, please don't sign up - you should consider making arrangements for another beekeeper in your area to refer a few swarm calls to you.

Here's to a successful 2007 swarm season. Hope to see you on at the February general meeting.

SCBA Executive Board 2007

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Maxfield 527-5913

Regular monthly meetings of the Sonoma County Beekeepers' Association are held on the second Monday of each month, at 7 pm. The meetings cover a wide range of topics of interest to beekeepers. Everyone wanting to learn about honey bees is cordially invited to attend. You do not need to be a member nor a beekeeper to attend these meetings. Please contact the treasurer to pay dues.

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Meetings are normally held the second Monday of each month at New College, 6th and Wilson in Santa Rosa, CA.

⇒Don't forget to send or bring in your \$25 fee to renew! We value your membership!⇐

