

The Monthly Extractor



Volume 43, Issue 3

March 2018

This is our newsletter that reflects the various techniques, theories and art of sustainable beekeeping.

President's Message

Fellow Beeks,

March is fast upon us and with that comes Swarm fever! Of course, as per usual, nothing is predictable so, with the February heat, lack of rain and frost we have to again think differently than last year! A Bee curve ball perhaps? This is a good thing; it means you have to really pay attention to your bees. They are always having to adapt and in the care of them we too have to practice this important skill. As President I have to practice this daily. For the last 7 years I've been a "Sonoma County Beekeeper" taking on the advice and information from my mentors and bee buddies. What I'm beginning to discover is that there is a bigger world of bees and beekeeping out there. Sometimes what we believe to be the right, the best, and possibly the only way, might work for us but not for everyone.

We are fortunate to live in Sonoma County where we have access to a generally mild climate, and for the most part diversified forage. We also have the SCBA that provides information, support and now Bee Sharing. Other areas aren't so fortunate. Some parts of Southern Ca for example can't share their bees in the same way we can. They are encouraged to purchase packages as so many of their bees are Africanized. Around the world beekeepers use what they have to manage and care for the bees in the way they can, sometimes without support and with limited forage. Here in Sonoma County we have the SCBA as a framework in which we all have our own way of beekeeping. With so many different approaches to beekeeping we can learn from each other but must be careful to remain humble and open rather than judge other practices as "the wrong way".

Emails are coming in already concerned about swarming. Even though your hives might be bursting at the seams, it most likely is too early for splitting so adding frames is the best option but, having said that, remember if you're not sure, err on the side of caution and/or ask someone for help. One of the unique and successful aspects of SCBA is the conception of Clusters. Utilize your Clusters, go to the Bee Cafes, find a bee buddy (or two).

This is also the time to clean your equipment and prepare your apiary, make sure you have everything ready to go and available. The buzz is in the air!

All the Beest,



Kelli Cox
President

This Month's Calendar

Monthly Meeting: Monday, March 12

6PM Check out books and videos from our library, buy plants at our fabulous plant table, talk to expert beekeepers willing to share their knowledge with you and help with any problems, socialize with refreshments and meet your cluster leaders. Bring your own cup, please. If you like to bake we also would appreciate donations of your cooking skills!

7PM What can the SCBA do for you? How to maximize the benefits of being an SCBA member. Featuring Kelli Cox and SCBA board members.

Upcoming Meetings/Events

- April: Honey tasting with Orietta Gianjorio from Napa and UC Davis.
- May: Bernardo Niño from UC Davis will speak about the CA Master Beekeeper program, as well as providing perspectives on methods of Varroa mite control.

Contents

President's Message	1
This Month's Calendar	1
Beek Of The Month	2
Beekeeping To-Do List by Serge Labesque	3
Membership	5
YOUR CLUSTER SURVEY!	5
2018 SCBA Swarm List	6
Recipe to Use Honey Cappings	7
Bee Plants of the Month	8
Too Many Bees or Too Little Forage?	9
South Cluster	9
SCBA Educators	10
Honey Extractor Rental	13
Monthly Meeting	14
Contact Information	15
2018 Board Members	15

P.S. From Kelli "My new face book friend with his Fennel Crop in Jayantilal, India"



Beek Of The Month

Greetings SCBA Beeks!

February's Beek of the Month is Ann Jereb.

Some of you might know her as our 1st VP in charge of Membership. I think of her as my right hand. I'm left handed! Ann is a gift to our Association, a silent giant. She has, for the last 2 and moving into 3 years been integral in the development of the SCBA. Her dedication is extraordinary, attention to detail, stellar and support to all aspects of our organization commendable. She is sensitive and concerned with each and every one of our members. She makes herself available when the needs arise and is always thinking about ways to make our organization more efficient, effective and better for all involved.

Thank you Ann for your continued support!

Our "Beek Of The Month" for February

is

Ann Jereb

Kelli Cox
President



Ann Jereb

My March

Beekeeping To-Do List by Serge Labesque

© 2018

Beekeepers for good

As spring draws near, many beekeepers-to-be prepare to receive their first bees. Full of excitement, they anticipate the beehives that will adorn their yards or the gleaming jars of delicious home-produced honey that will be proud centerpieces on their dining room tables. A few even think that the bees will make them some money! Meanwhile, some of the beekeepers that had similar dreams a year or two earlier quit. Disillusioned by their brief beekeeping adventure, they are turning their attention toward other pursuits. Yet, there are also long-time and resolute practitioners who talk relentlessly and with passion about bees.

Tending hives is not as easy as it may seem. Even though the bees can take care of themselves, as wild colonies demonstrate, being a responsible and successful beekeeper requires a fair amount of knowledge of the bees and dedication in applying it skillfully. Good stewardship of the bees certainly does not allow neglect. In fact, caring for a number of hives is a lot of hard work for sometimes scant rewards. The gap between the new beekeepers' expectations and reality is frequently so wide it should be no surprise many of them quickly become disappointed and give up.

Granted beekeepers are a varied and, at times, discordant group of people, but those who persist in caring for bees may have some traits in common. Disregarding the trite blanket statement that says that "one has to be nuts to be involved with stinging insects", I'll offer here my unavoidably biased opinion on what it takes to be a beekeeper for the long haul.

Beekeepers nurture bee colonies and confront everything that challenges the bees. Just like a gardener's work, a beekeeper's work is always in progress, never completed. A hive may be gorgeous for a while, just like a plant in bloom, but this may be only a passing phase that precedes its decline or failure. To keep it going well necessitates persistent attention from the beekeeper. Therefore, how could anyone keep bees year after year without a good dose of patience, tenacity, pragmatism, optimism and resilience in the face of adversity? A beekeeper must be prepared to accept setbacks and losses, to learn from them and also to rejoice in accomplishments, no matter how short-lived they may be.

Admittedly, this could be perceived as a depressing picture, but it's not. Although beekeeping is a mixed bag of joy and pain, it is a captivating activity where the successes are so enthralling they can wipe from memory the difficulties that must be overcome to reach them. Bees are fascinating animals indeed, and beekeeping often becomes a passion.

When we talk about keeping bees, we must be honest about what it really entails. Yes, there are joys in it, but also challenges and heartaches prospective

beekeepers need to be willing to face. If they are warned of the hurdles, their budding love of the bees may then prevail and turn them into beekeepers for good.

March in the apiaries

We've been longing to work with our bees for months. Now the time to jump into action has finally come, and there is a lot to do in the apiaries! However, we must be careful and flexible, as the growing colonies are still fragile while the weather remains unstable.

Inclement weather and cold nights place the colonies at risk. The populations are stressed by the demands of the large brood nests, and the stores are consumed at a very high rate. It's under these conditions that the danger of starvation is greatest, especially when the clusters must contract tightly and when they exhaust the honey that is directly accessible to them.

The colonies are developing at a fast pace. The brood nests occupy more and more cells every day. The populations are growing, too, but unlike the size of the brood nests, which increase gradually, the volume occupied by adult bees when they form their cluster can vary quite rapidly. The dimensions of the clusters are largely governed by the ambient temperature. They shrink as the ambient temperature drops. For this reason cold nights present a danger for the colonies that have very large brood nests relative to their populations. As the clusters contract to conserve heat, the bees are forced to abandon the brood that is at the periphery of their nests. Unprotected, this brood may be chilled and die.

Most often, and particularly when bees are allowed to build their comb freely, meaning without the coercion the use of foundation imposes on them, the brood that is found in the lower part of the brood chambers and along the sides of the nests is drone brood. This is a good thing, because drone brood is somewhat less sensitive to cold temperatures than worker brood. Moreover, the occasional loss of drone brood does not penalize the colonies as much as the loss of worker brood might. The bees demonstrate this when they spontaneously cull drones.

Stemming from these observations is that beekeepers should not stretch the brood by inserting frames in the middle of the nests early in the spring, when the weather is still greatly variable, and when the colonies are still fragile. Instead the addition of frames to the brood chambers should be done by placing the new frames alongside the nests at this time of year. This is but one more reason to let our bees build their comb without foundation and to respect the structure and organization of the brood chambers the bees have created. They instinctively place drone comb in the brood chambers where it should be.

The bees indeed structure their brood chambers with method. When the comb builders of a colony switch to

the drone-size cells during the downward construction of the new brood chamber combs, the colony has produced all the worker cells it senses it will need. I have come to recognize when the brood nest of a colony is reaching its optimal size in the large double-deep frames I currently use by watching when this transition occurs. This is easily missed in shallow hives or when the beekeeper's practices interfere with the organization of the brood chambers, for example by reversing supers or when the lower combs are routinely lifted into the brood chambers, as is done in the Warré method.

Considering the demands that are placed on the adult bees by the rapidly growing brood nests and the risks brought onto them by the weather, it is not surprising that the incidence of spring or stress diseases, EFB, chalkbrood, and to a lesser extent Nosema, is more frequent at this time of the year. When any of these problems occur, it is good to simply discard all the contaminated combs, shrink the affected hive, and give the bees a chance at a fresh start. Spring and summer are still ahead, which means that the diseased colony can bounce back. We increased the volume of the hives in early February in order to accommodate the colonies' need for egg-laying space, the growth of their population and the incoming nectar. Even though the cold weather effectively kept the bees inside for most of the latter part of February, colony development continued, sustained by the consumption of the stores that had been accumulated earlier. Evidence of the bustling in-hive activity was visible on the monitoring trays, at the busy hive entrances and at the water sources, when foragers could fly out. As the weather improves and the brood nests expand downward, we make sure that enough clustering space remains available to the foragers between the brood nests and the hive entrances. If necessary, supers with empty frames may be inserted between the hive bottoms and then brood chambers.

There is no better time to provide our bees with comb-building opportunities than spring. This allows them to use the wax they are producing. Doing so contributes to the renewal of their combs and helps delay the onset of preparations for swarming. At this stage of colony life, we monitor the hives with brief and pointed inspections, once a week to ten days at most, if possible, and only when the weather permits. The goals of these inspections are to make sure that the bees have all the space they need in order to gain strength, and also to detect the initiation of the preparation for swarming by the colonies. Therefore we focus our attention on the brood nests, and particularly on the open brood. A sudden reduction in the rate of brood production, which is evidenced by the presence of large amounts of sealed brood and of sparse open brood, is a strong sign that the colony might be initiating preparations for swarming. This may happen when the brood chambers become congested for lack of adequate hive volume, and it is something we need to avoid. But the colonies that have reached the stage of readiness for reproduction will do this, whether their brood chambers are crowded or not. The appearance of swarm cells signals that the colony is in the final stages of its preparation for swarming, which it

will do as soon as one of the queen cells is capped and the weather permits swarm issuance.

Recognizing when a colony is preparing to swarm allows the beekeeper to divide the hive at the best possible time, but only if the hive was managed to achieve its potential strength. The division of colonies that are preparing to swarm is an excellent practice, which satisfies the bees' reproductive impulse, especially when the splits are allowed to produce their own queens. Among the benefits of dividing hives, we find the production of new colonies that are headed by some of the very best queens, the protection of the bees from the high risks swarming presents and a reduction of bee pests and pathogens. Allowing colonies to swarm freely, on the contrary, exposes the bees to great risks nowadays. This is unfortunately no longer a responsible option for beekeepers. However, the congestion of brood chambers can drive colonies to swarm prematurely. Capturing these swarms provides them with a home. So, we keep our swarm-catching equipment handy and we set swarm traps out to invite them. Temporarily unused equipment or dedicated containers may be used as swarm traps. We are entering the best time of the year to produce queens. By using brood from our best hives, we can produce queen cells and excellent local queens that may be used to requeen failing or unsatisfactory hives, or they may be made available to neighbor beekeepers.

If supers are not already in place, they need to be added without delay, not only because the early spring nectar flow can be generous, but also to ensure that the bees will not congest the brood chambers with the nectar the foragers collect. Under favorable conditions it may even be possible to harvest some surplus early spring honey. When this is the case, harvesting and processing should not be delayed because much of the nectar that is gathered at this time of year, from mustard for example, will produce honey that will crystallize rapidly. Sadly, many beehives were lost to the October fires in California. But a new beekeeping season has started. The colonies that survived and that came out of winter successfully will help fill new hives.

Continued on the Next Page



In summary, this month:

- I highly encourage all beekeepers NOT to order, buy or bring in package bees, nucs and queens from outside our immediate area! Instead, arrange to obtain bees from neighbor beekeepers.
- Inspect hives regularly, on nice days, at a time when foragers are out in large numbers.
- Look for signs of preparations for swarming.
- Watch for signs of spring diseases and other health problems.
- Ensure unimpeded development of the brood nests. Add frames to provide egg-laying space and comb-building opportunities, as necessary.
- Add supers to provide nectar storage space.
- Ensure that the hives remain adequately ventilated.
- Remove old and misshapen combs that the bees have vacated.
- Ensure the presence of clustering space between the brood nests and the hive entrances.
- Perform the first hive divisions of the season (but only if and when the hives are ready and when weather permits!)
- Keep the hive tops securely held in place.
- Observe the performance of the queens and colonies.
- Requeen or combine hives that are not performing satisfactorily, and those that have failing queens.
- Rear a few queens from good stock.
- Observe the monitoring trays, particularly for signs of brood diseases, possible chalkbrood mummies, EFB-affected larvae, or other health-related problems.
- Gradually open the entrances of the hives to match the increasing forager activity.
- Set out and monitor swarm traps.
- Requeen or combine hives that are not performing satisfactorily, and those that have failing queens.
- Keep some equipment at the ready to catch the occasional swarm.
- Maintain sources of water for the bees.
- Pull weeds from in front of the hives.
- Clean or dispose of equipment that held colonies that failed, as appropriate.
- Render wax from discarded frames.
- Routinely clean and scorch tools and equipment.
- Harvest and process rapidly only surplus early spring honey.

Serge Labesque
© 2018

Membership

Thank you to all who have renewed their 2018 SCBA membership. Your continued support, interest and involvement in our beekeeping community is valued by all and especially by the bees!

Ann Jereb
1st VP



YOUR CLUSTER SURVEY!

By Sally McGough

By the time you read this, you should have received this year's survey from your cluster - in fact, you may have received it twice! There was a glitch with the first mailing and many people did not receive it, so we've sent it out a second time. If you already filled out the survey, PLEASE DO NOT FILL IT OUT A SECOND TIME! However, if you didn't receive the first mailing or haven't yet filled it out, now is the time to do it! If you're a current member and still have not received the survey, first look in your email spam folder and then contact your cluster coordinators - they can send you a copy.

Taking the survey only takes about 2 minutes and it gives your cluster coordinators valuable information about who needs bees, who has bees, how many hives you currently have and where, and what type of equipment you use. It also gives you the opportunity to tell your cluster coordinators what you'd like to see happen within your cluster. If you want to participate in this year's bee sharing program, filling out the survey is essential. Thanks for participating in this important endeavor!

Your Cluster Coordinators

2018 SCBA Swarm List

This year's swarm list closes for submissions on **March 15, 2018!**

Recent Important Changes: Please Read!

Swarm season is approaching. The swarm list will be closing for submissions on March 15, 2018. In order to be considered for the Public Swarm List, the following are required:

- 1. One year of beekeeping experience and**
- 2. A current SCBA membership**

Please see the list below for the other requirements.

Previous swarm list member requirements:

For members who have been on the swarm list in the past and want to be on it this year, you must sign a liability waiver. Due to recent liability concerns of our insurance carrier all participating swarm list members must now sign a liability release form.

The Liability release and swarm participation agreement form will be available at:

- March general meeting on Tuesday, March 12, 2018
- From Cluster coordinators or at the following link.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ejdLWj_kNg0n4jgeYH8eTzIrsDbhXYQI/view?usp=sharing

The form can be returned in person or mailed to:

SCBA, P.O. Box 98, Santa Rosa, 95404

You will not be listed on the final public swarm list until the swarm committee has received your signed Liability release and Swarm participation agreement form.

New swarm list member requirements:

For members who have not been on the swarm list, you must have:

- 1. At least ONE year of beekeeping experience**
- 2. Have attended one of the Swarm Orientation/Training Sessions that were held during February and**
- 3. Have a signed liability release form.**

Swarm List questions can be E-mailed to swarm@sonomabees.org.



Recipe to Use Honey Cappings

By Ettamarie Peterson

(With Information From Christopher Slade)

Christopher Slade is a beekeeper friend of mine in the UK. He calls his recipe “Flapjacks” which sounds to us like a recipe for pancakes. It is really what we would call granola.

I have made some modifications to suit my own situation. Instead of using wax from the entire hunk of honeycomb I used just the well-drained cappings. The following is in Chris’ own words (*with my comments in italics.*)

Take a shallow baking tray. (*I used a cookie sheet that had an edge.*) Fill it with porage oats (*I used regular oatmeal.*) to the thickness you would like your flapjack to be. (*This is how you measure the amount of oatmeal.*) Put the lumpen wax (*the cappings you have squeezed the honey out of*) into a plastic bowl. (*I used a Pyrex glass bowl.*) Put the bowl in the microwave for 30 seconds; then another 30, then 10, then 10, repeating until it is just starting to melt – the contents, that is, not the plastic!

Add the oats and some seeds and some more seeds and some more seeds (all different) and some chopped crystallized ginger, maybe a bit of cake fruit or anything else you think you might enjoy. (*I used sunflower seeds, bits of dried fruit – raisins, bananas, and peanuts.*) Give it a good stir. Transfer it to the baking tray, spread it out, press it flat, add a sprinkling of sesame seeds maybe (*I did that!*). (*I had sprayed the tray with baking spray but it still stuck so next time I will try lining the tray with parchment.*)

Put the oven on “Hot”. (*I used 350°F.*) Put the tray in, close the door, and get on with something else in the vicinity until your nose tells you it’s time to take a peek. Probably this would be a good time to go over it with a pizza wheel or knife to cut into handy sized pieces, but you could leave it till the end when it is still warm. (*Mine seemed to be done in about 45 minutes.*)

Allow to cool, break along the dotted lines. (*In theory this should be like granola bars but mine didn’t hold together in bars because it stuck to the pan and broke a lot.*) Eat some, store some. (*I put it into zip lock bags and am enjoying it as snacks.*) It should be “healthy eating” having no processed ingredients, added fat or sugar. It has honey to give you a quick boost and oats for slowly released carbohydrate as well as some protein. I don’t know how the wax is digested but it can’t be harmful. (*I think it is just like any oil we eat.*) Pollen will also give protein and minerals provided your digestive juices can get at it.



First Swarm Caught Last Year March 18 on a wall of a house.
Photo by Ettamarie Peterson

Bee Plants of the Month

By Alice Ford-Sala

Comfrey *Symphytum officinale*

Family: boraginaceae

Comfrey – sounds like comfort- and this medicinal herb provides aid and comfort to all aspects of the garden including the humans who tend it.

Let's start with soil. Comfrey is high in nitrogen and potash, making it a great organic fertilizer. You can mulch with the large green leaves, which quickly break down and become available to plant roots. You can also add it to a compost pile, where comfrey acts as an activator, helping heat and stimulate the pile. Comfrey makes an easy compost tea, just fill a bucket with leaves, add non-chlorinated water, stir a couple of times a day, then after a week or so, you can nourish your plants with a nice drink of tea. Said to be especially good for tomatoes, and other vegetables.

The roots of the plant are very large, shaped like turnips and bring up nutrients from the subsoil to enrich the topsoil.

Next, if you have animals to feed, comfrey is often used to supplement their diets, usually used dry as the fresh leaves have prickles of silica (like borage, a cousin) that quickly disappear as the plant is dried. It is said to be useful as a tonic for many farm animals.

Bees absolutely adore the bell-shaped flowers that can be blue, pink, deep purple or creamy white. They will visit the flowers throughout the day, indicating that nectar is in abundance for a long period of time. Bumblebees and hummingbirds enjoy the nectar, also.

Humans have used comfrey for centuries for a variety of conditions. Leaves and roots are used in herbal medicines. High in a chemical compound, allantoin, which is said to help repair cells, it is often used in salves and poultices to aid in wound healing, bruises and muscle pain. Comfrey has a long reputation as a bone-healer; in fact the name derives from "bone-knit" in Greek.

More controversial is internal use. Some sources say it should not be taken internally due to a liver-damaging compound, pyrrolizidine alkaloids. Some herbalists say it is safe to use short-term if not pregnant or nursing, especially if the tea or tincture is made from dried leaves. ***The medicinal uses are mentioned here for interest only and are not recommendations.***

Plant comfrey in a garden bed under or alongside fruit trees or bushes, in good soil with moderate water. Easiest to get established with bare root cuttings, they are available at good nurseries or on line. Comfrey will spread; plant it where you want it to stay. The cultivar "Blocking 14" is sterile, so won't send out seedlings. If the plant gets too big, harvest the leaves for your compost or other uses. The leaves disappear in winter but re-emerge in spring and grow through late fall.



Comfrey *Symphytum officinale*

Alice Ford-Sala

Too Many Bees or Too Little Forage?

By Miles Sarvis-Wilburn

Working in the restaurant industry, and in life generally, I meet a lot of people. Whenever I mention that I research sustainable beekeeping people respond very positively. They often follow up their affirmations with something along the lines of “my neighbor keeps bees and they seem to be doing well, would you like to keep some on my property?” or “I’d really like to keep bees on my property, is it hard to get started?” To this I always have the same response: the best thing you can do to help the honey bee is not to keep a colony but to plant ample and diverse forage for all pollinators. As beekeepers we know this already; we understand that [each colony needs at minimum one acre of forage to survive year to year](#). Borrowing from the preceding link, many beekeepers believe we need *two to five acres of forage per colony*. Do we apply this knowledge in practice?

There are over four hundred members in the Sonoma County Beekeeper’s Association. I think this is fantastic and am continuously impressed with those of you I meet at various occasions, presentations, and meetings. When we think about forage for our bees, though, this means that should each of us have a single hive we would require four hundred acres of forage. Many of us have at least two hives so we are closer to needing eight hundred acres of forage. Some of us have larger operations of ten, twelve hives, or more! Note that this simple calculation takes the *lowest acreage necessary* and ignores the needs of all other pollinators including native bees, hummingbirds, butterflies, bats, and so forth. The point is obvious: each colony may only require one acre of quality forage for sustenance but the ecosystem upon which the colony relies will need more, perhaps five acres per colony. I believe we should take this argument seriously.

Sonoma County has 1,576 square miles of land, or just over a million acres. Of this, around twenty five percent is residential for a total of about 250,000 acres. Given that residential land includes structures such as houses and garages as well as roadways leading to said structures, how much is forage for pollinators? Or perhaps a better question: out of what forage exists, how much is accessible to our honey bees and other pollinators? The answer is clear: we beekeepers are relying on forage that we do not provide to sustain our colonies. As more and more people become beekeepers and as our apiaries expand, this “free” forage will become less and less viable. Should agricultural practices shift or natural disasters strike again, we may see a dearth in pollen and nectar flows. Who knows what the climate will bring? No matter the speculation, there is one conclusion that is certain to be of benefit to our honey bees, pollinators at large, and ourselves as apiarists. **We must plant more forage.**

And there is no better time to begin planning than now! Spring has apparently arrived and the climate is ideal for planting diverse flowering plants that will bloom year round. Don’t know what to plant? Check out [Pollinator Partnership’s ecoregion planting guides](#) that can be tailored to your specific region. You may also enjoy [The Xerces Society’s planting guides](#). Better yet, head out to your favorite nursery and ask! Planting forage is fun and there is little more satisfying than watching a blooming shrub be mobbed by honey bees, bumble bees, carpenter bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds.

So as we begin a new season of beekeeping, let us remember that the honey bee is only half the equation. Without adequate and diverse forage that blooms throughout the year our colonies will not be healthy enough to overwinter and consequently we, as beekeepers, we will be doing our bees a disservice. Happy planting!

South Cluster Holds Hive Clean-Up Workshop in February

By Kelli Cox

Even though it was biting cold some of the South Cluster Beeks got together to cull comb and rewire frames on the last Saturday in February. It was so much fun and not only gave us a chance to prepare our equipment for upcoming season but also talk bees and learn!



SCBA Educators High School Students on Bees and Art

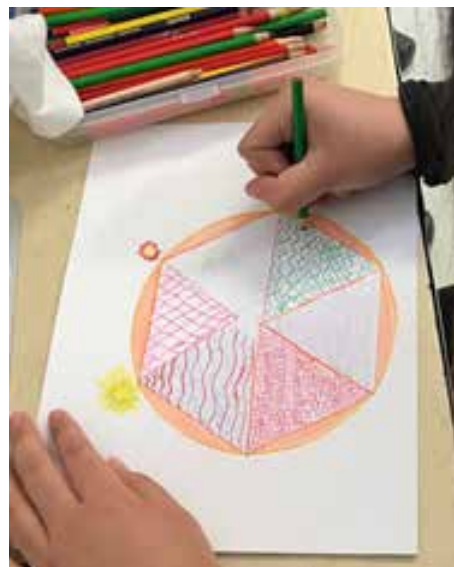
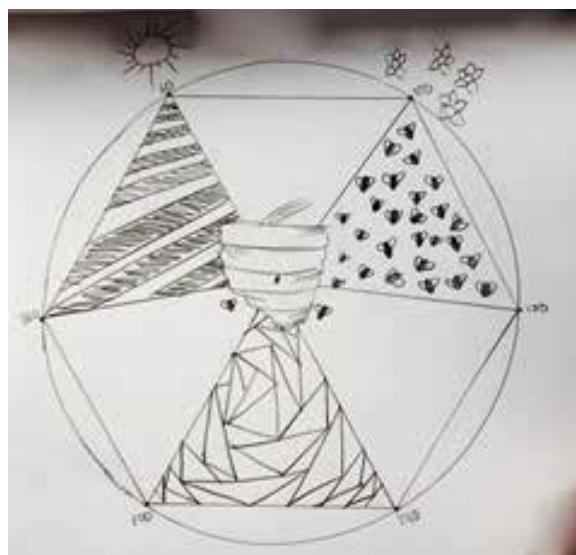
By Thea Vierling



You might ask, “What do honeybees have to do with art?” Well, we wondered that too! A teacher from a local continuation high school asked us to come tell her students about honeybees and art so we decided that with some creative thinking, we could do it. We figured that honeybees are very popular now. They are the new chickens! Everyone is using or seeing something honeybee everywhere! The use of the honeybee in our surroundings includes honeybee shapes especially the hexagon shape. We all wore our honeybee jewelry (Ear rings and necklaces), our SCBA t-shirts, and, of course, we brought plenty of tea towels (with hexagons on them!), locally made hexagonal soap bars (thanks to Darlene and John McGinnis), quilts with hexagons thanks to Connie Neuhauser.

We mentioned careers in art, retail, printing, greeting cards, food products, landscape design and more, all using honeybee themes. Lynn Koch told the students about her work as a Landscape designer and showed books with photos of how hexagons were used in such things as patio umbrellas and gazebos. Linda Hagel brought in some bricks from outside where a high school graduate had designed the entire courtyard out of stones... that is right, all hexagon stones. Amazing how much is done using hexagons. We showed how the honeybees use the hexagon to communicate where the flowers are and how they tell the rest of the bees where to fly!

It was a great success. The students were very involved. They loved the stories about the honeybee, using a protractor to make the hexagons and learning just how and why hexagons are the only figures that fit together beautifully so the bees save wax. The art teacher is going to show the students the waggle dance using their computer as a follow up activity!



Top Bar Hives Alternative Hives and Then Some

By Thea Vierling

Jim Spencer is the coordinator of the Top Bar hive group which covers so much more than just TBH's. Alternative hives include the Warre hive, the Cathedral hive, the Eco hive and now the Double deep hive. So exciting. Last week Jim led us in a great presentation about the top bar hive along the lines of Serge one, two and three. Instead of going up and down like the Langstroths, he took the group sideways. (When you are alternative, it is important to be flexible and if necessary, go sideways!) What is interesting is that when you veer from the well-beaten pathway of the Lang hive, there are other things that one can learn, many of which can be applied to the Lang.

Today I spent a few hours with a Warre member, Shelly Larson. It was great. She coined a wonderful expression: "a making mind". I think that many beekeepers have "making minds". Beekeepers are so creative. They come up with the greatest inventions. I think they keep Dadant, Brushy Mountain and Mann Lake jumping! If there is a problem, the beekeeper will solve in by invention, creativity and a "making mind". Pretty soon the catalogue contains all the solutions that beekeepers have come up with.

Shelly is very immersed in the Warre Hive but now has made her own Top Bar hive with some thick wood her father gave her. I am including some pictures of her work on the hive and some of her creative ideas especially the top bars that are difficult to make.

I also am including a few pictures of Lizanne with her double deep (DD) hive. DD's are an interesting concept and we will see how it works out. I actually think there are quite a few folks trying out the DD's. But remember that when you have a unique hive, it is not so easy to split a hive because who will you give it to? That's right, another DD person. Where do you find this DD person? Are there a lot of DD's around? Some people think they are DD's but they are so totally super! All of this is a deep subject so we will skip that one for now.

There are several nice features about top bar hives for instance they have a window! That's right. Now everyone wants a window and large round holes are appearing on different hives everywhere. You can see the bees at work; even see the queen emerging from her cell. What is the world coming to? No privacy anymore; that poor queen!! It is easy to look into the window of a TBH and see the bees at work because there are no sidebars on the frames but it also means that some of the comb gets stuck to the sides of the hive. Everything in beekeeping has problems which have solutions but that brings up more problems, which brings us to the "Making Mind".

I hope you will join us at the next TBH/alternative hive meeting because we are a fun group and we have a lot to share especially our "making Minds".



Shelly has made her own top bar frames!
Shelly making a roof for her Top Bar hive!



Jim Spencer
and Lizanne
going into her
Double deep!



Lizanne
going into her
double deep.



Thea has made a follower board for her TBH
and on the right is an observation board.



Providing Quality Hives and Components at an Affordable Price

- ~ Complete Hives ~ Screened Bottom Boards ~
- ~ Supers with Frames and Follower Boards ~
- ~ Top Feeders ~ Vented Top Covers ~
- ~ Wired Frames ~ Follower Boards ~
- ~ Telescoping Top Covers ~ Hive Stands ~
- ~ Wooden Swarm Traps ~ Solar Wax Melters ~

*Designed and endorsed by Serge Labesque
Recommended by Christine Kurtz*

John McGinnis

(707) 478-9787

803 Lynch Rd, Petaluma, CA 94954

By appointment only

goahwayranch@gmail.com

Bee Conscious Removal



---LIVE BEE REMOVAL---

We specialize in removing bees alive from
Walls, barns, sheds, and trees.

“Difficult” extractions are our specialty.

Beekeeping lessons offered at reasonable prices.

Wild bee colonies for sale.

We have been doing wall extractions for 10 years and have done over 450 to date.

Call Chris Conrad at 415-350-5700

Santa Rosa

Free Bee Colony for successful referral.

Honey Extractor Rental

Members have use of the association's honey extracting equipment, as available. Rental fee is \$5 per day. Extractors must be returned clean.

Email or call to reserve:

South

Ettamarie Peterson
707-479-1613

editor@petersonsfarm.com

Central

Paul Quistgard

PaulQuistgard@aol.com

West

Cheryl Veretto

707-827-3774 (preferred)

cheryl@cbfreelance.com

East

Susan Simmons

925-408-4529

Susanjsimmons@gmail.com

The Top Bar Hive group has a fruit press available for use in honeycomb crushing. Contact Jim Spencer at topbargroup@sonomabees.org



Bee Hive Management & Local Honey Sales

Michael Turner
Owner/Beekeeper
415/871-4662

info@marincoastalbee.com



R Honey Pots
Pottery, Beekeeping & Metalwork

Liz Russell & Joey Romo R
Forestville, Ca

www.RHoneyPots.com

@RHoneyPots

email: RHoneyPots@gmail.com

cell: (707) 696-0861/540-2551

Swarms & Live Honey Bee Extraction

Dishwasher, Microwave & Oven Safe Functional Original Artwork

Thank you for supporting us, we appreciate you!
Bees & Supplies

921 Gravenstein Hwy. S,
Sebastopol
(707) 824-2905
beekind.com

beekind.

Order Bees Now!

Sonoma County Beekeepers Association

Monthly Meeting

February 12, 2018

Location - 4H Building , Rohnert Park
Start 7:04
In Attendance 154

Items covered:

- ~Thank you to Volunteers, President called out Cluster Cos, Gardening, Librarian, Cookies and tea, Board
- ~Intro Newbees (approximately 8 new members)
- ~Beek of Month - Bill MacElroy (Ettamarie spoke on his behalf)
- ~Membership Ann Jereb
- ~ Intro Swarm Committee
- ~ Intro SBFF Committee
- ~ Intro Ed Committee
- ~ Gardening Committee (Ellen Sherron) update
- ~Announce Assistant treasurer position needed

Presentation: Swarms Christine Kurtz PowerPoint

Mike Turner, Thea Vierling, Ettamarie Peterson, John McGinnis present stories and show & tell

Christine finishes up with what to and NOT to do

Thank you to Susan Kegley

Adjourn 9pm

Submitted by

Kelli Cox
2018 President
and

Peter Jones
Secretary

For Sale By Leonard Riepenhoff
Dual pane window inner cover and solar oven \$120

Phone Leonard 707-525-8424

Advantages Using a Dual Pane Window

After you install the dual pane window you can enjoy the following without getting stung: Lets you and your friends watch your bees inside the super. Your bees will signal you when to add a honey super. Provides necessary ventilation inside the hive. Lets you feed your bees without getting stung. Lets you feed the bees with syrup or pollen without attracting robber bees. Helps keep colony warm in cold weather and cooler in hot weather. Lessens the chance of your bees to swarm.

Advantages of a Solar Oven

A simple way to separate honey and wax from foreign debris. Easy to load and easy to clean. Start to finish on any day 75 degrees or warmer. End up with 3 pounds of clean edible honey. End up with a chunk of wax to make candles or whatever. Converts crystallized honey to liquid. Very compact, easy to store.

Contact Information

Regular monthly meetings of the Sonoma County Beekeepers' Association are held on the second Monday of each month, at 7 pm at the Rohnert Park 4-H Building. The meetings cover a wide range of topics of interest to beekeepers. Everyone wanting to learn about honeybees is cordially invited to attend. You do not need to be a member nor a beekeeper to attend these meetings. Dues can be paid online at our website sonomabees.org, at our monthly meetings or by mail. Please see our Website for the application and various kinds of memberships available.

Our mailing address is:
Sonoma County Beekeepers' Assoc.
P.O. Box 98
Santa Rosa, CA 95402-0098

2018 Board Members and Other Helpful People

Board Officers:

President - Kelli Cox president@sonomabees.org
1st Vice President - Ann Jereb 1stVP@sonomabees.org
2nd Vice President - Susan Kegley 2ndVP@sonomabees.org
Secretary - Peter Jones secretary@sonomabees.org
Treasurer - Sue Owens treasurer@sonomabees.org

Appointed Boardmembers:

Extractor Editor - Ettamarie Peterson editor@sonomabees.org
Bee Sharing (team) - Christine Kurtz (Joy Wesley, Lizanne Pastore, Bruce Harris) beesharing@sonomabees.org
Education Coordinator (team)- Thea Vierling, Jen Espinoza, Ettamarie Peterson
At Large Director 1 - Bruce Harris atLarge1@sonomabees.org
At Large Director 2 - Bill Genthe atLarge2@sonomabees.org

Friends of the Board:

Auction - Darlene McGinnis , Christine Kurtz auction@sonomabees.org
Volunteer Coordinators - Karen Kappa, Carol Ellis, Sonja Moug and Emily Gaines volunteer@sonomabees.org
Assistant - Linda Burns assistant@sonomabees.org

Cluster Leaders:

Regional Coordinator - **OPEN** – regionalcoordinator@sonomabees.org
Central - Brad Lee, Rorie Sweeney, Maggie Weaver, Ann Jereb centralcluster@sonomabees.org
East - Laurie Dorman, Susan Simmons eastcluster@sonomabees.org
North - Cheryl Caletti, Laurie Smith, Candice Koseba northcluster@sonomabees.org
South - Aerial Gilbert, Cynthia Rathkey, Kerrie Williams southcluster@sonomabees.org
Topbar - Jim Spencer topbarcluster@sonomabees.org
West - Bruce Harris, Gina Brown westcluster@sonomabees.org

Groups:

Topbar - Jim Spencer topbarcluster@sonomabees.org
Gardening Group - gardening@sonomabees.org
Swarm - swarm@sonomabees.org
Historian - Kirstie Stramler historian@sonomabees.org
Librarian - Nadya Clark librarian@sonomabees.org
Communications - Bill MacElroy communication@sonomabees.org
Webmaster - Cheryl Veretto webmaster@sonomabees.org