

# THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

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## What You Missed

The October 1<sup>st</sup> meeting saw another packed house at the Draper Farms' barn. Mea McNeil and Jerry Draper shared their experience at Apimondia, which was held this year in Montpellier, France. There were over 5000 attendees from all over the world. The conference included over 265 presentations covering all kinds of bee-related topics. The concourse in front of the conference hall was set up with many booths with products and information in an effort to educate the general public about the honey bee.

Mea and Jerry also visited a beekeeping school located in the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris. The school trains students in the art of beekeeping over a nine month period. While in Paris, they also visited La Maison de Miel, a famous honey shop with an extensive selection of honeys from all parts of France and other parts of the world.

*see What you Missed on page 2*

## Third Annual Extraction Party

Setting up to do your own extraction for a small number of frames can be very time consuming, messy and generally a lot of work. For this reason, club member, David Peterson hosts a fall Extraction Party in his garage in Ross, now a three-year tradition.

Over the weekend of September 26 & 27 there were 22 participating Club Members. Eight were new beekeepers with no frames to extract and came just to observe. Several other NewBees only had a few frames to extract while others came with two or three supers of full frames. More than 150 frames were run through the Club's extractor resulting in over 450

*See Extraction on page 3*

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## What's the Buzz

Our next meeting will be on Thursday November 5th at Draper Farms, 11 Sacramento Avenue, San Anselmo, starting at 7:30. A panel of Mea McNeil, David Peterson, and Dan Stralka will present some of the basics of beekeeping and entertain questions from the audience. The panel represents some of the most experienced beekeepers in our club. Bring your bee questions and problems along and they will do their best to provide the answers.

Upcoming Meetings:

December 3rd

*see Buzz on page 2*

Mea and Jerry Traveled to the apiary of John Kefus near Toulouse, France. John has been keeping bees without using chemical treatments since 1993. He challenges visitors to find varroa mites on his bees and offers to pay 1 cent for every mite that you find. Mea and Jerry took him up on the challenge, but were unable to find any mites. A group of Polish beekeepers visiting John at the same time were only able to find three.

John also presented a talk at Apimondia titled "To Treat or Not to Treat" He generously gave Mea and Jerry a copy of his powerpoint presentation which they shared with us at the meeting. His argument is that it is cheaper to breed disease-resistant bees than it is to rely on chemical treatment. Hopefully, he will convince commercial beekeepers that they should give up chemicals.

The presentation generated a discussion at our meeting about chemical-free bees and the survivor stock program that our group is starting.

The meeting ended with a tasting of various honeys harvested by members of the club. We also sampled home-made mead that Dan Stralka brought to share with us.

## Dues are Due

A reminder that annual dues for 2010 are now due. Dues are still just \$20 per year. You can pay in person to David Peterson at the monthly meeting or mail you check made payable to Marin Beekeepers to:

Marin Beekeepers  
c/o Mary Nordquist  
2072 Hatch Road  
Novato, CA 94947

New members and members with new contact info please make sure to include your address, phone number and e-mail.

Our December meeting will feature Kate Frey "Creating a Bee Garden". Kate is an internationally distinguished garden designer, who has been awarded two gold medals at London's Chelsea Flower Show. She worked for 18 years at Fetzer's organic gardens in Hopland, CA, which was used as a test plot for pollinators by Dr. Gordon Frankie at U.C. Berkeley. She currently specializes in creating beautiful habitat and pollinator gardens. Web sites are [www.rustictowers.com](http://www.rustictowers.com), and [www.themelissagarden.com](http://www.themelissagarden.com)

### January 7<sup>th</sup>

January will feature a presentation by prominent local beekeeper Serge LaBesque. As a passionate beekeeper, Serge maintains bee colonies in four separate locations in Sonoma County. Over the past ten years, he has experimented with different methods of keeping bees. He has also designed and fabricated his own beekeeping equipment. His goal is to maintain bee colonies by relying on the natural strength of local strains of bees, by completely eliminating the need for antibiotics or chemical compounds for pest and disease control, and through techniques that allow beekeepers to be self-sufficient practitioners.

### February 4<sup>th</sup>

February will feature Dr. Marla Spivak. Marla Spivak is Professor and Extension Specialist in Apiculture, University of MN. Dr Spivak, along with Gary Reuter developed the line of Minnesota Hygienic bees in an effort to reduce or eliminate the need for chemical treatment of bees for parasites as well as many common bee diseases.

## ASK ERIC

Dr. Eric Mussen is the UC Cooperative Extension Apiculturist.

If you have a question, email it to [nuc@marincountybeekeepers.org](mailto:nuc@marincountybeekeepers.org). We'll select one for Eric

to answer every month.

**Q:** (Note: written in September) A friend nearby will be finishing up a cone extraction from a house in the next couple of weeks. They want to bring the bees to their house, but it is only 1 mile away. We have offered a temporary space in our yard until the foragers have been replaced by new. Does the 21 day rule still apply to winter bees or is a longer period of time required?

**A:** Foraging honey bees can remember the landmarks around their territory for many weeks as infrequently flying wintering bees. Of course, they are going to die before the bees that have never foraged (true "winter" bees). The true winter bees will have no idea of where they live until they start flying around the neighborhood.

## Other Happenings

October was a busy month for Marin Beekeepers. A group of us learned the art of mead making from member Joshua Archer owner and mead master at Beowulf Mead. We also got to taste some of the mead that club members made last year. We are expecting the finished product to be ready sometime around the holidays. For now we just have to let the fermentation process take its course.

The club also sponsored four hive tour workshops with Rob Keller, local beekeeper and owner of the Napa Valley Bee Company. Rob is a full time beekeeper specializing in apiary management, sustainable beekeeping, hive removal, sales of bees, and conducting classes in beekeeping. Rob met each group and a selected member's apiary and conducted a hands-on inspection of the hives. He discussed how bees in nature tend to arrange their hives and how we can copy this arrangement. Both NewBees and experienced beekeepers took away valuable information from the tours.

pounds of honey.

Dave sets up the extraction equipment in the garage since getting kicked out of the kitchen where he originally extracted by crushing and rendering. He reported his 15 hives produced over 700 pounds of honey this year. He extracted some 300 frames in advance of the weekend Extraction Party.

Dave also stores and schedules the Club's extraction equipment at his place. The equipment is available for use by all Club Members and can be reserved by contacting him at [dpeterson307@aol.com](mailto:dpeterson307@aol.com). The extractor is a 12 frame, stainless steel, variable speed, electric powered centrifugal extractor. It measures 2ft. x 2ft. x 4ft. and generally requires a station wagon, SUV, van or truck to transport. Club Members can check it out for use a few days at a time. There is also an electric uncapping knife, a scratcher and uncapping bin available to go with the extractor. The equipment should be picked up, used, cleaned and returned within a few days to a maximum of one week.

## Food For Thought

Submitted by Mea McNeil

This is a letter sent by Larry Conner to the Southern New England Bee Association.

My message this year will be pretty simple—it is time to stop treating for varroa mites (and other beasties) and adapt a state-wide or Northeastern program to eliminate susceptible bee colonies. We started this discussion with our first SNEBA with Mike Palmer and Dave Tapy. We have the tools, so why do people still buy susceptible queens from SunBelt queen propagators??? I would really like every bee club in New England and New York to have a voluntary program that every beekeeper uses ONLY bee stock from a supplier that has shown reduced mite levels.

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I really do not care what the method of resistance might be — hygienic cell cleaning, out-brooding the mites with reduced developmental times, grooming behavior, or bad tasting bees—there are an estimated thirty methods of resistance to varroa, so we might as well get rid of tracheal mites, foulbrood, chalk brood and a bunch of other problems at the same time. The question will be simple: Can we get all the beekeepers on board to cooperate? Or will they continue to get susceptible stock from Hawaii or some place where they continue to produce bees and queens like granddad and grandma did.

LJConnor

## And Now for Something Completely Different

### **Bee Trivia:**

Scarlett Johansson received a beehive as a wedding present from Samuel L. Jackson.

### **Department of Magical Bee Thinking:**

Last July, Twitter promoted a "mass role playing experiment" they called "tweehive" in which a person tweets as a bee and can follow the threads as immediate responses.

### **Here's a Riddle:**

Q. Which bees never have a father, but always have a grandmother and grandfather? Think about it!

### **Riddle Answer:**

Drones are raised from unfertilized eggs and therefore have no father. However the laying queen mother was raised from an egg -- fertilized by one of the many drones mated with that queen, the grandmother, one of which is the descendant drone's grandfather.

The birth of drones can come about in three ways:

- 1) The queen, after mating with a drone, can lay two types of eggs, fertilized which produce workers or queens, and unfertilized eggs which produce only drones. The unfertilized egg received no sperm and hence, no father for the drone in this case of parthenogenesis, or virgin birth.
- 2) A virgin queen, one who has never mated with a drone, can lay only unfertilized eggs which, again, produce only fatherless drones.
- 3) In certain conditions such as a colony becoming hopelessly queenless or in other abnormal situation, a worker may lay eggs which will produce drones since the worker had never mated and the eggs were infertile.

Paraphrased from an anonymous saying and posed to Jerry Hayes and answered in his book "THE CLASSROOM", a collection of the Q & As from his monthly articles of the same name in the American Bee Journal.

## Equipment Order

Bonnie Bollinger is organizing a club equipment order from Mann Lake. Equipment cost will be the same as shown in the catalog. However, since we will be picking the equipment up from Mann Lake's store directly, you will save on the shipping cost. Look for the order form and information coming to your email soon.