

# THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

Volume 3, Issue 3

March 2011

## What You Missed

Our February meeting saw a full house convene at The American Legion Log Cabin to hear a presentation by Serge LaBesque titled "The Basics of Beekeeping". Serge is a local beekeeper from Sonoma County with many years of beekeeping experience. He has been keeping bees without chemical treatment for over ten years. He has found that, once you adopt a no-treatment policy for bees, it becomes much easier to manage your colonies. Here are some of the highlights from Serge's presentation.

Serge explained that there are many books about bees and beekeeping. Beekeeping books are usually How To books which are based on manipulating the bees. Serge believes that instead of manipulating them we should allow them to develop naturally.

We are influenced in many ways by commercial beekeepers. Hive design, methods of keeping bees, colony health, and bee genetics are all affected by the commercial market. As an example, He pointed out that there are only a few queen breeders in the U.S. and that they don't necessarily promote genetic diversity.

Pollinators are very important to man. We rely on them to pollinate many food crops. They are an indispensable element of the ecosystem. As

*see Missed on page 2*

## What's the Buzz

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, March 3, 2011 at the American Legion Log Cabin, 20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo, CA, starting at 7:30pm.

### Special Guest Speaker

Our guest speaker will be Dr. Eric Mussen. Dr. Eric Mussen is the UC Cooperative Extension Apiculturist. Dr. Mussen will speak on the general welfare of bees and beekeeping

### Upcoming Meetings:

**April 7<sup>th</sup>**; Maryanne Fraser from the entomology dept at Penn State University. She is an expert on pesticide use and honey bee health. Her focus at Penn has been to work on an IPM approach to control honey bee diseases and mites and to improve information transfer techniques through traditional and innovative methods.

**May 5<sup>th</sup>**; Randy Oliver, scientist/migratory beekeeper, researches worldwide scientific literature and beekeeping practices, applying his knowledge to practical beekeeping. [www.scientificbeekeeping.com](http://www.scientificbeekeeping.com)

**June 2<sup>nd</sup>**; Jeremy Rose, author of Beekeeping in Coastal California. He is co-founder of the California Bee Company, which promotes the health and well-being of honey bees by using natural management methods, and breeding queens with mite-resistant behaviors. He will have his book available to buy at the meeting

---

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 What you Missed
- 1 What's the Buzz
- 2 Other Events
- 2 Help Wanted

beekeepers we have a big responsibility towards bees. Bees are not domesticated. We need to recognize this and allow them to be naturally strong, not intervening with treatments and unnecessary feedings. We should trust the bees. They have thrived for millions of years.

We should practice a proven strength building approach to our bees (let the bees do the work) as opposed to the pessimism of conventional beekeeping methods. Serge believes that we should not interfere with natural selection. Don't treat for pests or diseases. Treating allows inferior bee genetics to survive. This weakens the bees as a species. Some pest and pathogen pressure is necessary. It bolsters inherent good colony health in the presence of pathogens and parasites instead of seeking pest eradication. Treatment breeds stronger pest.

Serge believes that bees raised from local stock will have the best chance for survival in our area. Under Serge's method of beekeeping, bees that do not have the characteristics to combat parasites and diseases in our area will die out. The genetics of bees that are able to cope with parasites and diseases are nurtured by creating splits of those hives or rearing replacement queens. Serge states that "Given enough time, the bees will learn how to deal with diseases and parasites."

Serge will return to teach a split workshop in April for those interested in promoting local survivor bees.

recently. If you're doing some spring cleaning & come across a book or two that you think the Marin Beeks will enjoy, consider donating it to the library! See Marina at the back of the meeting room for more information.

We have application forms for the American Bee Journal and Bee Culture magazines. If you're a member of the club, you're eligible for a discount on your annual subscription.

## OTHER EVENTS

Workshops:

**March 12<sup>th</sup>**; Dave Peterson: Split workshop

**April 23<sup>rd</sup>**; Serge Lebasque: Making Splits

**May 6<sup>th</sup>**; Randy Oliver: Hive Inspection and Practical Beekeeping Tips

**June 4<sup>th</sup>**; Marissa Ponder, Gardening for Native Bees

**June 18<sup>th</sup>**; Celebration of the Bees

## NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY



### Recent Additions to the Library

Honeybee Democracy by Thomas Seeley  
The Queen Must Die by William Longgood  
The Classroom by Jerry Hayes

Many thanks to those who have donated books

## HELP WANTED

### WANTED FOR FARM DAY

Each year, the University of California Cooperative Extension of Marin County and the 4-H sponsor Marin Farm Day. More than 1,200 school children in grades K-6 attend the event. It is an excellent opportunity to educate children about bees and we have been told that our table (with an observation hive, wax samples, beekeeping equipment, etc.) is very popular.

The event will be taking place on Thursday, March 24 at the Marin County Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall from 9am - noon.

If you are available to assist, please contact Anna Taylor Gravely, [annaclub@gmail.com](mailto:annaclub@gmail.com).