

THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

Volume 5, Issue 1

January 2013

What's the Buzz

Our next meeting will be on Thursday January 3, 2012 at the American Legion Log Cabin, 20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo, CA. starting at 7:30 pm.

Our guest speaker will be Dr. Steve Sheppard. Dr. Sheppard is Department Chair of Entomology at Washington State University. His area of interest is population genetics & evolution of honey bees, insect introductions & mechanisms of genetic differentiation.

Upcoming Meetings:

February 7, 2013

[Kirk Visscher](#). Dr. Visscher is an associate professor of entomology at UC Riverside. His research interests include the social behavior and ecology of social insects with emphasis on honey bees, which occupy a special place among the social insects because they are among the most behaviorally complex, the most amenable for study, and of the greatest benefit to man.

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What You Missed

Our last meeting featured a question and answer session moderated by Mea McNeil with author Hannah Nordhaus and commercial beekeeper John Miller. Hannah's "Beekeeper's Lament," a national bestseller, follows the life and times of migratory beekeeper John Miller during the height of CCD. This book brought the bee crisis to the mainstream, enlightening the general public to the plight of the bees and portraying the unique life of this gregarious beekeeper.

John is a fourth generation commercial beekeeper. He started out the evening talking about the state of commercial beekeeping. The last thirty years have been tough times for beekeeping because of the introduction of varroa and the many viruses affecting the bees. As a commercial beekeeper he has no choice but to manage varroa but the chemical treatments are not desirable.

John, along with several other commercial beekeepers, is involved in a study funded by Monsanto, Bayer, and others researching the use of RNAi technology to combat varroa mites. RNAi technology uses a string of part of the varroa RNA which has the potential to interrupt the mite's systems reducing the mites ability to reproduce or feed. John stated that we are losing the arms race against varroa using chemical treatments. What we have been doing doesn't work so it is time to do something else.

John said the he feels he was put on this earth to keep bees in a box and that the happiest part of his day is in the hives.

Mea started the questions and answer session with a question for Hannah.

Mea: Hanna, how did you come to write this book?

Hannah: I am an environmental journalist. I got a random assignment to write about honey stingers. I met John and

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wrote the article. I then decided to write more about John, and it eventually ended up as a book.

Hannah then read the passage from the book about being stung for the first time.

Mea: John, what changes have occurred in beekeeping since your grandfather's time?

John: My great grandfather used horses to move bees. I am amazed that horses would work around bees since the two do not usually get along. Up until the 1960s the emphasis was on honey production, so there wasn't long distance hauling of bees all around the country. Now John overwinters his bees in a potato root cellar in North Dakota. In February he brings the bees to California to pollinate the almonds, afterwards they are moved to other areas to pollinate other crops. After pollination he will try for a possible honey crop. In August he starts preparing the bees for the next year's almond pollination. In October they are fed sugar and pollen supplement and then placed into the root cellar to overwinter.

Mea: John, I have heard beekeeping described as an aristocracy. What is meant by that?

John: If it is, it is an impoverished aristocracy. Most beekeepers have agreements with various farmers for pollination contracts and places where they can keep their bees at various times of the year. They basically have the land locked up so it is very hard to start a commercial beekeeping business. That is why most commercial beekeeping businesses are generational.

Mea: John, what are some of the ups and downs of commercial beekeeping?

John: Commercial beekeeping can be

aggravating. A big problem is theft of bees in the almond orchards. Another problem is trying to get almond growers to be judicious in their use of fungicides. Almonds are susceptible to a fungus that occurs during the bloom. The fungicide is not necessarily that hard on the bees but they have found that the adjuvant, which makes the fungicide stick, can be toxic to bees. As I said earlier, I was born to keep bees in a box; but if I were in my twenties I might consider another line of work.

Mea: Hannah, you started writing this book at the beginning of the colony collapse disorder. Did that effect your decision to write about John?

Hannah: Paradoxically, CCD is the best thing that has happened to bees. It introduced mainstream America to bees, brought research money and research talent to study their plight.

Hannah then closed by reading the passage from the book about honey.

March 7, 2013

[Kirk Webster](#). Kirk Webster is a master natural Queen Breeder living near Middlebury, VT. His queens are selected for VSH (Varroa Selective Hygiene). Colonies that display this characteristic detect infested larvae and then uncap & remove them.

April 4, 2013

[Heather Mattila](#). Heather Mattila is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Wellesley College. Professor Mattila's research focuses on the role that intracolony (within-colony) genetic diversity plays in the organization of communication and division of labor in honey bee colonies.

May 2, 2013 & June 6, 2013

TBD

Spring Beekeeping Classes

This list of classes was collected from various sources for the benefit of our members, because education is a key ingredient in beekeeping. The more you know the better you'll be.

Coiled Straw Basket Workshop by Charlie Kennard

Saturday, January 19, 2013

9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Laguna Environmental Center of the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, Sebastopol.

We will use a roadside grass, or rush (*Juncus*), to make a bowl-shaped basket, using a skep (bee-hive)-making technique. In several European traditions, large straw bowls are used as dough-rising baskets, while some deep straw baskets were used as beehives and swarm-catchers. This workshop demands fairly strenuous hand work. We will demonstrate the use of a dough basket in the morning to make sourdough bread for all.

To Register: visit www.lagunafoundation.org

Introduction to Beekeeping with Serge Labesque

Tuesdays starting February 5th

6:30 pm – 9:00 pm

2009 Lark Hall, Santa Rosa Campus, Santa Rosa JC

This short course will introduce students to beekeeping with a strong emphasis on beehive management techniques as practiced in Sonoma County and without reliance on any treatment whatsoever for pests or diseases. Topics include: overview of the honey bee colony; beekeeping tools and equipment; how to start with honey bees; swarming; honey flow and harvesting of hive products; diseases, pests and enemies; hive and queen management; and beekeeping throughout the year.

Fees: \$88 (includes \$13.00 of materials) 4 sessions.

To Register: Online at
<https://busapp02.santarosa.edu/CommunityEducation>

Beekeeping for Experienced Beekeepers with Alan Hawkins

Saturday, February 16, 2013

9 am - 3 pm

Green Gulch Farm, Muir Beach

This workshop is for beekeepers with at least one year of beekeeping experience.

The honeybees are saying that spring is near. Blooms are appearing and the queens are laying lots of eggs. We will meet together and discuss what happened last year and explore the challenges that lay ahead for us this bee season. The following topics will be emphasized: What is our intention; what happened this winter; what to anticipate each season; being proactive about bee hive health; the requiring process; the swarming instinct ; hive splitting, mite management; and latest updates on bee behavior and bee health.

Wear light colored clothing and bring a veil if you have one. A vegetarian lunch is included in the cost of registration.

Maximum workshop size: 30

Fees: \$80, \$65 current SFZC members, \$40 limited income

To Register: Register online at:

<http://www.sfzc.org/zc/display.asp?catid=3,128&pageid=3497>. Or call the toll free number 888.743.9362.

Introduction to Honey Bees and the Cycles of a Colony with Bonnie Bollengier

Saturday February 23rd

location and times to be confirmed soon

Whether you're interested in beekeeping or simply learning about bees, this class teaches you about the duties of the queen, workers and drones that populate a colony and how the cycles of the hive interrelate with cycles of plants and the seasons. This is a good class to help you determine whether beekeeping as a hobby is right for you.

To Register: email Bonnie:

bonnie@bonniebeecompany.com

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Bee 201: Everything You Need To Know About Swarms!
with Robert MacKimmie of City Bees

Saturday, March 2,
2 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Sticky Art Lab, 1682 University Ave (at McGee), Berkeley

If you master how to manage swarms and varroa mites, your bee hives will live long and stay healthy. This class focuses on early spring management—how to prevent your bees from swarming and instead focus their energy on honey production. It will also cover what signs to look out for that your bees might swarm soon, what to do to prevent them last minute, and finally, if they swarm, how to catch them gracefully and efficiently with the proper equipment and technique. The instructor will bring one of his hives; we'll open it up in the class and demo what to look for.

Fees: \$35

To Register: Register online at:
<http://biofueloasis.com/workshops/>

Intermediate Beekeeping for Spring and Summer with Serge Labesque

Tuesdays starting March 5th
6:30 pm – 9:00 pm
2009 Lark Hall, Santa Rosa Campus, Santa Rosa JC

This class will expand on the beehive management techniques that were explored during the Introduction to Beekeeping course. The focus of the class will be spring and summer management of beehives in Sonoma County. Detailed explanations of techniques that are used in apiary expansion, swarm prevention and capture, queen management, and hive division will be given.

Fees: \$53 (includes \$5.00 of materials) 2 sessions.

To Register: Online at
<https://busapp02.santarosa.edu/CommunityEducation>

Backyard Beekeeping with Bonnie Bollengier

Saturday, March 16th
location and times to be confirmed soon

Decided you want to keep bees? This class will help you get started: Where to place hive(s), equipment options and sources, and how to get bees. Also, basic information on cycles of colonies and what you will need to be doing with your hive at different times of the year.

To Register: email Bonnie:
bonnie@bonniebeecompany.com

Make Your Own Mead! with Robert MacKimmie of City Bees

Date in April/May TBA
Sticky Art Lab, 1682 University Ave (at McGee), Berkeley

Learn the secrets to making mead—and take home your own gallon to ferment at home—at this hands-on class taught by apiarist, Robert MacKimmie of City Bees. Speculated to be mankind's first fermented beverage, mead is easy to make at home, yet fine enough to serve at special occasions (read: no better way to impress guests at your next party). Participants will mix their gallon of mead under Robert's ever-watchful eye, ensuring delicious results. The class will also discuss and review more advanced recipes for Cyser (apple and honey wine) and Melome! (fruit and honey). Best of all, plenty of tasty samples will be provided. Each participant goes home with a gallon jug of mead and recipes, ready to ferment!

Fees: \$60 (all ingredients & equipment provided for a gallon jug of mead)

To Register: Register online at:
<http://biofueloasis.com/workshops/>

Beekeeping Basics with Bonnie Bollengier

Saturday, May 18th
location and times to be confirmed soon

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You have your bees, now what?? Learn tips and techniques for using smoker, bee brush and hive tool. We will look into how to work your frames and what to be looking for to determine health of your queen and the colony as a whole. As urban beekeepers, it is important to prevent swarming (to the best of our ability), so you'll learn what causes swarming, how to prevent, and how to recognize early warnings that a colony is making preparations to swarm.

To Register: email Bonnie:
bonnie@bonniebeecompany.com

Fall Hive Management & Harvesting Honey with Bonnie Bollingier

Saturday, JULY 27TH
location and times to be confirmed soon

Late summer can bring a variety of problems including increasing mite counts, yellow jacket problems, and lack of forage. Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms and how you can assist the colony during difficult times. Your bees will have already begun winter hive preparation. You should be thinking ahead, too: how much to reduce the hive, timing for doing so, simple things you can do to help bees during winter, signs you should recognize that your colony is in trouble. Fall is also the time of year to determine how much excess honey you can extract. We will review this as well as methods of removing frames, extracting honey, bottling honey and cleaning the wet frames.

To Register: email Bonnie:
bonnie@bonniebeecompany.com

Dues are Due

A reminder that annual dues for 2013 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.

Membership includes free admission to all meetings, access to the Club's honey extracting equipment, and subscription to the Club's "MarinBuzz" listserv, which serves as an online discussion forum and a way to notify Club members of local bee swarm information.

Fair Exhibit Prep Workshop



Marin Beekeepers Association

County Fair Exhibit Preparations: APRIL 20TH, 10:30am – 2:30pm, Novato (location TBD), \$30. Registration will be available soon on the association website. In the meantime, you can get on the list by emailing rh@hyderanches.com.

Have you ever wanted to enter your hive products in the fair but didn't know how to prepare your entries?

Join previous fair award members of the Marin Beekeepers Association to learn how to prepare your hive products for entry in the fair. Three different time slots so you can pick the workshops in which you are most interested. Choices include: preparing your honey to be award winning, processing your wax, tapered wax candle making, molded wax, how to build a simple stand for your frame honey, and more!

Half fees from this workshop will go to the Marin Beekeeper's Association.

Recipes for Success

This is a recipe for pollen substitute that was obtained from Mark & Melanie of Zia Bees and shared by Philip Lau

40 lb recipe	4 lb recipe	8 lb recipe	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>
<u>Qty</u>	<u>Alt Qty</u>	<u>Alt Qty</u>		
5 lb	8oz	1 lb	Brewers Yeast	
5 lb	8 oz	1 lb	Mega Bee	protein mix?
10 lb	1 lb	2 lb	sugar/ drivert sugar	See d)
18 lb	1 lb-12 oz	3 lb - 10 oz	2/1 syrup	16lbs to 1 gal water
1 lb	1.6 oz	3.2 oz	coconut oil	anti-fungal/viral
1/2 lb	0.8 oz	1.6 oz	canola oil	disrupts tracheal mites
1/2 lb	0.8 oz	1.6 oz	garlic powder**	fight's Varroa mites
20 cc	2 cc	4cc (.136 oz)	lemon grass oil	attractive to bees
20 cc	2 cc	4cc (.136 oz)	spearmint oil	effective element against Varroa
10 cc	1 cc	2cc (.07 oz)	grapefruit seed oil	

Here were a couple more notes from Mark on the pollen cakes:

- a) Mix syrup with protein (yeast, megabee, garlic). Let soak awhile. 30 min - 3 hr.
 - b) warm coconut oil, mix in canola, cool down, mix in essential oils (side note: 1 oz e.o. = 29.3 cc)
 - c) mix in oils, mix in sugar. makes 40 lbs.
 - d) I (aka Mark) am about to start mixing 5 lb pollen in each batch and eliminate some sugar.
- ** Garlic powder may not be necessary if your mite count is low

5cc = 1 tsp
 4cc = .8 tsp
 2cc = .4tsp

e) I (Phil) got good results when I made sure the mixture was not too wet and the patties could be formed easily and mashed down with wax paper