

# THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

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July / August 2018

## What's the Buzz?

There is no regular meeting of the Marin County Beekeepers in August. Instead, please plan to join us on August 5th, starting at 6 pm, at the home of Neil and Mary Nordquist, 2072 Hatch Road, Novato, CA for the annual potluck dinner. Sign up will be online again this year. Go to: <http://marinbees.org/wp> and click on Club Resources for more information on the event and to sign up to bring a dish. Everyone should bring their own plates, utensils and drinking glasses. This is a **GREEN "ZERO WASTE" EVENT**. All items should be brought in a reusable or recyclable/compostable container. Please plan on taking your recyclables / compostables / garbage with you when you leave the event.

Directions to Neil and Mary Nordquist, 2072 Hatch Road, Novato:

Take the San Marin Drive/ Atherton Avenue exit from US101. Turn west onto San Marin Drive.

Continue on San Marin Drive to Simmons Lane, the first stop sign. Turn left onto Simmons Lane. Follow until you come to a stop light at a T-junction with Novato Boulevard. Turn right onto Novato Boulevard and then make a left turn at the next light onto Wilson Avenue. Follow Wilson for approximately 1 1/4 miles.

There will be stop signs at Center and Vineyard Roads on the way. Hatch Rd will be a right turn shortly after Wilson narrows.

The Nordquists are 1/4 mile down Hatch Road on the right. 2072 is on the mailbox just before the gate. Please park on the street and walk in through the gate.

There will be an auction (silent and live items) at the potluck to benefit bee relief efforts in the Caribbean and a pollinator habitat project in Marin. Auction items include two beautiful quilts made & donated by Diana Sammataro, retired bee researcher and author of "The Beekeepers Handbook". If you can't make it but would like an opportunity to bid on the quilts, contact Bonnie Morse: [bonniebmorse10@gmail.com](mailto:bonniebmorse10@gmail.com). See photos of the quilts on Page 5.

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## What You Missed

Our June meeting featured presentations by several of our club members of gadgets that they had built or found to make beekeeping life a little easier.

Here are highlights of the gadgets. If you have any questions about a particular gadget, seek out the club member who presented it at our next meeting.

### Tuppy Lawson

Tuppy displayed a sloped hive roof cover that she made from rigid insulation. It has tie-downs that allow you to attach it to stakes or rocks on the ground to keep it from blowing off of the hive.

### Bonnie Morse

Bonnie showed off a potato ricer that she uses to squeeze the honey out of cappings wax. She also showed storage containers that she uses to store honey frames when transporting them from the apiary to her honey house. Storage containers can be found at The Container Store, Target, or most hardware stores. Just make sure you get ones that fit the honey frames. She also showed an open frame (with no foundation) that she installs into the hive. The bees draw mostly drone comb on the frame, which can be removed as part of your mite control program.

### Gary Morse

Gary showed a plastic bucket that he uses to drain honey

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**Upcoming Meetings:**

**September 6, 2018**

Randy Oliver, [Scientific Beekeeping](#). Randy will also hold workshops on Saturday, September 8th.

**October 4, 2018**

[Elina Nino](#), UC Davis Apiculture Extension and Research, "Effects of Supplemental Forage on Honey bees"

**November 1, 2018**

[Janice Cox](#), Natural Beauty at Home, "Apiary Beauty". Janice will also hold workshops on Saturday, November 3rd.

**December 6, 2018**

Panel discussion on hive designs

**January 3, 2019**

[Ramesh Sagili](#), Oregon State University, Department of Horticulture, "Honey Bee Nutrition: What We Know, What We Need to Know"

**February 7, 2019**

[Leo Sharaskin](#), Horizontal Hives, "Natural Beekeeping". Leo will also hold workshops on Saturday, February 9th.

**March 7, 2019**

[Billy Synk](#), Director of Pollination Programs, Project Apis m, "Supporting Pollinator Habitat"

**April 4, 2019**

[Rachael Bonoan](#), Post doctoral researcher, Tufts University and Washington State University, "Why Bees Like Dirty Water"

**May 2, 2019**

[Mark Winston](#), Professor and Senior Fellow, Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

**June 6, 2019**

[Tom Seeley](#), Department of Neurobiology and Behavior, Cornell University, "Darwinian Beekeeping"

**July**

No meeting – Marin County Fair

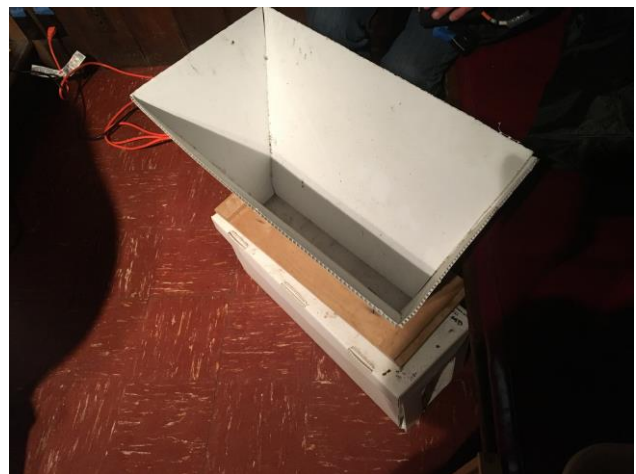
from cappings. The bucket has a series of holes drilled in the bottom. Gary then nests the bucket with holes into a bucket with a solid bottom. Next he places the cappings wax into the bucket with holes and allows the honey to drain over a period of time. You capture more honey and the cappings are much drier, making it easier to process the wax.



**Cappings Straining Bucket**

**Jennifer Barry**

Jennifer displayed the mini nucs that she built for her queen rearing operation. The nucs share a hive body, which allows them to share warmth. A smaller amount of bees can then be used to develop the queens. She also displayed a funnel that she made from foam board that she uses to install bulk bees into her nucs. The funnel fits on top of the nuc. She pours the bees into the funnel. The sides of the funnel are slippery so the bees fall to the bottom and enter the nuc.



**Bulk Bee Funnel**

Jim Dowling

Jim talked about using an oxalic acid vaporizer and the success he has had using the vaporizer for mite control. He also showed how you can take a block of wax and, using a drill, create wax shavings; which can be placed on the inner cover of your hive. The bees can then recycle the wax.

Dave Peterson

Dave showed some wooden shims that he uses to help break the seal when he finds hive boxes stuck together. Using a hive tool he breaks the seal along one side and installs the shims between the boxes. He then moves to the other side and, using his hive tool, breaks the seal on that side; separating the two boxes.

Cone for extracting bees. Create a screen cone that is placed over the opening. Bees can get out but not back in. Place a catch hive with comb and a frame with some young larvae and eggs nearby. The bees that can't get back into their home will end up in the catch hive where they will start to raise a new queen from the available eggs/larvae.

Make a cone using plastic window screen. You can make a big circle by folding a piece of newspaper in half, over and over again. Then trim the end. When you open it up it is pretty close to a circle. Place circle over the screen. Cut out screen circle. Create a cone. Staple bottom together and then sew it up into a cone. Attach the cone to a piece of cardboard in order to create a base.

Dave also brought his beevac to show to those interested in building their own beevac for extractions.

Doug Fairclough

Doug showed his method of building a cone in the field for using in a cone extraction. Doug uses #8 hardware cloth to make his cone. He shapes it into a funnel and then fastens it together using sheet metal screws. Using tin snips he then trims it to fit.

## Fair News



County Fair Bee Booth

Another July 4<sup>th</sup> and another successful fair. Thanks to everyone who volunteered at the booth and answered questions. As usual, there are quite a few misconceptions about honey bees that we were hopefully able to dispel. A special thanks to Dave Peterson and Bonnie and Gary Morse for supplying the observation hives this year. West End Nursery in San Rafael for supplying bee-friendly plants and Wendy Lee and Tim Ezekiel for arranging for the plants, Mary and Neil Norquist, Marina Wright and Judy Stralka for the booth set up. Contact Dan Stralka if you have any thoughts on what worked well and any suggestions for improvements for next year.

As for the Honey Competition, here are the final results.

### Honey

#### Eucalyptus Blend

1st Bonnie & Gary Morse, San Rafael, CA

#### Floral

1st Will Ackley, Sonoma, CA  
2nd Julie Pritchard Wright, San Rafael, CA

#### Wild Flower

1st Bill Papendick, San Rafael, CA  
2nd Richard Hyde, Tiburon, CA  
3rd Bonnie & Gary Morse, San Rafael, CA  
4th Clare Carden, Novato, CA  
5th Beth Renneisen, Fairfax, CA

#### Crystallized

1st Dan Stralka, Mill Valley, CA  
2nd Jeff Kent, San Rafael, CA  
3rd Bill Papendick, San Rafael, CA  
4th Orla Meehan, Tiburon, CA  
5th Bill Papendick, San Rafael, CA

#### Chunk

1st Daniel Stralka, Mill Valley, CA

#### Comb

1st Daniel Stralka, Mill Valley, CA

#### Hive Products

#### Natural Beeswax

1st Rob Tysinger, Novato, CA  
2nd Bonnie & Gary Morse, San Rafael, CA  
3rd Richard & Karen Hyde, Tiburon, CA  
4th Daniel Stralka, Mill Valley, CA  
5th Bill Papendick, San Rafael, CA

#### Molded Beeswax

1st Bonnie & Gary Morse, San Rafael, CA  
2nd Rob Tysinger, Novato, CA

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3rd Bonnie & Gary Morse, San Rafael, CA  
4th Will Ackley, Sonoma, CA  
5th Will Ackley, Sonoma, CA

### Hand Dipped Beeswax Candles

1st Daniel Stralka, Mill Valley, CA  
2nd Rob Tysinger, Novato, CA

### Full Frame

1st Orla Meehan, Tiburon, CA  
2nd Orla Meehan, Tiburon, CA  
3rd Richard & Karen Hyde, Tiburon, CA  
4th Daniel Stralka, Mill Valley, CA  
5th Bill Papendick, San Rafael, CA

### Special Awards

Best of Show – Honey “Marin Beekeepers Award”  
Daniel Stralka, Mill Valley, CA

Best of Show – Beeswax  
Bonnie & Gary Morse, San Rafael, CA

Best of Show – Full Frame  
Orla Meehan, Tiburon, CA

Salvisberg Award  
Will Ackley, Sonoma, CA

## Hive Tips

By Bonnie Morse, [Bonnie Bee & Company](#)

### Yellow jackets are becoming a bigger nuisance around hives.

So far, we seem to have had a reprieve from the overwhelming yellow jacket populations of the last few years that relentlessly assaulted colonies in many areas. Nonetheless, this is the time of year when their populations will peak.

They can be seen around many apiaries now hauling off dead and weak bees around hives. While this activity can be beneficial, it is prudent to keep an eye out. If you see yellow jackets entering healthy hives, it would be a good time to reduce entrances (or add a robber screen) to help make it easier for the colony to protect itself. If the population (and cluster size) of your colony is already reducing in preparation for winter, it may be time to consider harvesting excess honey or removing unneeded boxes to reduce amount of space the bees need to defend.

Do NOT hang yellowjacket traps on or near your hives. The pheromones that help lure the yellowjackets into the trap may actually be attracting more yellowjackets to your apiary. A fake hornets nest can be hung nearby to try to discourage them. This can be in the form of a paper bag. We've had mixed results with this, but hey – it's just a crumbled up

paper bag so it's inexpensive and worth a try if you're having trouble. You can also pick up a “wasp scarer”....a slightly more impressive looking fake hornet's nest....from the Fairfax Backyard Farmer. A plate or bowl with balsamic vinegar may also help to deter.



**Fake Hornet's Nest to deter Yellow Jackets**

### Robbing by other bees

Robbing tends to become more problematic at this time of year. If you have a smaller colony, keep an eye out and perhaps consider reducing the entrance (if you haven't done so already) to help make it easier for the colony to protect itself. If robbing starts, you need to stop it immediately. Some good suggestions for options on how to do so are available on the website of Michael Bush: <http://www.bushfarms.com/beesrobbing.htm>

### Comb building is done for the season

While there are places in the county where some bees seem to be finding the nectar resources to build a little new comb, in general, comb building is done for the season by this time of year. Don't expect bees to be able to build out on new frames.

If your bees have a lot of honey, you might consider extracting some now and returning the wet frames to them so they can refill with more nectar.

### Varroa mites.

Now is the time to start monitoring your mite levels, if you haven't started already. As fall approaches, we tend to see decreasing colony populations and increasing varroa mite populations. This can be a deadly combination for your

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colonies. “But we’re hardly into summer!” you might be saying. While that may be true, mite numbers are building up now – or may be building up now in your colony. By regularly monitoring the levels of mite infestations in your colonies, you’ll have a better idea if high mite levels are due to your bees inability to deal with mites in the colony (which some bees do through hygienic behavior (often observed as uncapped pupae), grooming, broodless periods, etc.) or whether a sudden spike this fall might be due to your colony finding and robbing out a nearby crashing hive.

Information on [how to do a sugar roll to determine varroa infestation % is available from the University of Minnesota](#)

There are passionate voices on both sides of the debate on whether to treat or not to treat. There is logical reasoning on the pros and cons on both sides. Keep in mind that your bees’ problems could quickly become another hives problem. And because of the increasing number of beekeepers – and increasing hive density, particularly in some neighborhoods – a moderate approach to consider would be to treat if mite levels go above a certain threshold. If your bees have shown no method of resistance (you should be looking for it every time you inspect), you might consider requeening the colony with more resistant stock when that option next becomes available. If you have been monitoring your bees and they have shown mite resistance, you might consider a treatment as a way to help them reduce the number of introduced mites, but consider giving their queen another chance.

Visit [www.scientificbeekeeping.com](http://www.scientificbeekeeping.com) for information from Randy Oliver on treatment options and application information. Get as much information as possible on the pros/cons of different approaches before/if you decide to treat for mites.

## QUILT AUCTION PHOTOS



## Beekeeping Classes

### Upcoming Classes

#### **Summer and Fall Hive Management Class Series** (July & August, 9 hours, \$99, course code 2334)

Late summer can bring a variety of problems including increasing mite counts, yellow jacket attacks and lack of forage. Learn to identify the signs and symptoms and how you can assist the colony during difficult times. Your bees have already started getting ready for winter and so should you: how and when to reduce colony size, determining how much honey to remove, how to extract the honey and more.

Field day will include sugar rolls for mite testing, identifying food stores & colony needs, and how to “read” your monitoring board.

Register through [San Rafael Community Center](#)

Class room sessions: Wed. July 18, 25, & August 1, 6:30pm – 8:30pm, San Rafael Community Center, 618 B St., San Rafael

Field Day: Sat. August 4, 9:00am – 12:00pm, location TBD

Drop in for classroom sessions only = \$30/each, drop in for field day = \$50

Class 1: Common summer and fall problems including varroa mites, food issues, yellow jackets, and other pests & diseases

Class 2: The hows of honey: how much you can harvest, how to collect from hive, how to extract, how to clean up, how to process cappings

Class 3: Preparing for winter, how to handle common winter problems, how to clean up / store equipment

**The Hows of Honey** (Sat., August 25, 9am – 12pm, \$50)

How much you can harvest, how to collect from hive, how to extract, how to clean up, and how to process cappings.

Location: The Fairfax Backyard Farmer, 135 Bolinas Rd, Fairfax.

Register through [The Fairfax Backyard Farmer](#)

