

THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

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FROM THE EDITOR

Happy New Year!

Next month's meeting of the Marin County Beekeepers Club will be at the **American Legion Log Cabin, 20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo. We start at 7:00, Thursday February 6th.** Feel free to come a little early and hang out with fellow beeks in the downstairs bar.

Although it seems it's been unseasonably cold this January, and winter is still with us, we have noticed lots of recent activity in our sunlit hive, and we've heard of swarm reports already this year. If you haven't checked your hives, the next warm day would be a good time to do so. We had one hive crash due to small hive beetles last spring. We cleaned up the top boxes as best we could, but left the bottom three boxes alone. We were quite depressed at the loss of the hive due to our poor beekeeping skills, but the next weekend, a swarm moved into the bottom boxes we'd left on the hive, and they seem to have survived the winter. Now it's time to give them more room and start putting those cleaned up boxes back in use. When we went into the hive this week, we saw plenty of foragers bringing in pollen, so they're taking advantage of any warm days they get. If you attended this month's meeting, you heard Robert talk about building equipment. His talk was timely since we'll be needing to check on those hives that made it through the winter, and be prepared to add more frames to capture the increasing flow.

BEE TALKS

**February 6, 2025, 7pm, General Meeting
20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo**

Phil Stob - "Bait Hives and Practical Swarm-Trapping"

Many beekeepers become competent at overall beekeeping, and then focus their enthusiasm on some of the more magical aspects of working with bees: making queens or building specialized equipment for specific bee functions. Phil Stob, after more than 10 years of beekeeping in the Bay Area's East Bay, has become one of the smoothest conveyers of the preferences, configurations, and behaviors of Springtime swarming honeybees. Phil provides the most useful information which makes up the important social responsibilities of being a beekeeper: setting up bait hives for trapping swarms, keeping neighborhoods calm, and making many richer as bee magnates.

Knowing the size preference of the swarm traps, where to place traps for maximum attraction, which lures and scent-driven compounds work best, and how quickly you need to reconfigure the captured colonies, are all covered by Phil's insightful years of perfecting some of the most effective swarm capture methods. We are on the cusp of an early arriving Spring, with the first swarms already cast out. Learn the simple things you can do to make attracting and capturing Springtime swarms an easy addition to your fascinating bee year.

**March 6, 2025, 7pm, General Meeting
20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo**

Spencer Marshall, Marshall's Farm - "Springtime Beekeeping, and How Beekeeping Has Changed"

Spencer Marshall is typical, yet unique in beekeeping. He has farming in his DNA, but came to beekeeping as an adult seeking his own specialty, an addition to his work managing the family farm. Spencer is a gentle and insightful person, and in learning to manage bees, he flourished in gaining critical information about how honey bees function, and for many decades has deployed significant numbers of hives in the unique landscapes surrounding the Bay Area, focusing on Marin, Napa, and Sonoma Counties. His honeys are popular throughout Bay Area stores and farmers' markets, and yet, his most remarkable qualities are the ease and beauty of his beekeeping insights. Where many people take on labels of being a bee whisperer or bee charmer, Spencer Marshall IS bees, and he knows bees deeply in his soul. Join us in March for an insightful chat with one of the truest bee stewards in the Bay Area.

Spencer Marshall was born in Oregon to a multi-generational farm family. His first exposure to bees came from the beehives his grandmother kept. Much later, after several moves in California, and after college, Spencer spent time in the Bay Area doing carpentry, eventually rejoining the family farm in the Valley at a critical time. Reviving his grandmother's bee habits, Spencer started beekeeping to have something of his own while managing the family farm. After solidifying his bee operation, he moved bees to Marin County, forming the basis of his current bee business.

OTHER NEWS

Upcoming VSH (Varroa Sensitive Hygiene) Varroa-Resistant Queen Bee Program may expand in Bay Area.

Robert MacKimmie, Marin Beekeeper's Director of Beekeeper Education, visited the Alameda County Beekeeper Association's LBI (Local Bee Initiative) meeting in late January, prompted by VSH bees, and the UbeeO testing protocol being on the agenda for discussion. More than twenty people, from first year beekeepers to significant players, discussed a number of topics, with the primary discussion focused on how to improve bee health and survival after a year with massive bee losses nationwide. Requirements for making bee stock improvements are based on consistent and ongoing testing for mite levels in individual beehives. By replicating standardized sugar-roll or alcohol mite washes, good record keeping can determine if colonies are managing or controlling mite numbers in their hive, and at the same time, hives that exhibit a weakness, or lack of control, regarding varroa mites breeding in the colony will become obvious. By identifying any hives exhibiting mite control traits, those queens can be flagged for queen breeding programs, and those 'better' queens can be used as replacements for the queen bees who are matriarchs of high mite load colonies. Daughters from verified VSH Breeder Queens will be available in a VSH program. Organizing regularly scheduled mite testing, and subsequent record keeping, will determine if a mite-resistant queen program can become a bigger initiative in Bay Area Beekeeping.

Veteran and long-term beekeepers sought for teaching, hive dives, and special subject workshops.

The recent member survey conducted by the Marin Beekeepers' Organization pointed out that more than 30% of our membership have been keeping bees for ten years or more. We would like those members to help by sharing their expertise, and comprehensive knowledge, by joining our teaching initiatives. If you would like to provide your knowledge to others on general beekeeping, or focus on specific aspects of

beekeeping, please contact Robert MacKimmie, "beekeepereducation@marinbees.org", to join the ranks of the educators. We have plenty of subject areas which need to be shared and disseminated. Thanks.

Dominican University
Institute for Leadership Studies
and the Women, Leadership and Philanthropy Council
and Book Passage present



about the bees:

A conversation

Dr. Marla Spivak, Distinguished McKnight Professor of Entomology, University of Minnesota
MacArthur Fellow

Mea McNeil, Journalist and Master Beekeeper, author of *Bee Club*, a novel

February 26, 2025, 6:00 PM
at Dominican University
Creekside Room

Tickets at Book Passage/Events About the Bees - A Conversation

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Marin Bees at Agriculture Farm Day and Marin County Fair

Coming soon! The Marin County Agriculture Farm Day (March 20th) and the Marin County Fair (July 2-6th). Marin Beekeepers is a major highlight at both of these events. Not only do we bring a fantastic booth set up, educational material, and observation hives, but we bring awesome beekeepers (YOU!). You don't have to be an expert to volunteer. Everyone is welcome! These are fun, community engaging volunteer opportunities. Please fill out the below form or contact, Kristine Erving, Director of Community Engagement at 415-516-3358 or communityengagement@marinbees.org

Farm Day Details:

March 20th, 2025, 9:00-12:00pm
Marin County Exhibition Hall, San Rafael
Please click here to sign up to volunteer at Farm Day: <https://forms.gle/bjkhdpWQ5qpnqqds8>

Marin County Fair details and sign ups coming soon!

Community Engagement Opportunities

We receive numerous calls each year for Marin Beekeepers to provide educational presentations throughout Marin County. These range from events like the Petaluma Herbal Fair, Library talks, Earth Day events and elementary school science class presentations.

We would like to educate as many people in our communities as possible about our amazing bees. Marin Beekeepers has all the educational materials needed- framed posters, bee stickers, observation hives, etc. We even have a basic educational template anyone can use. And you don't have to do it alone! Present with another beekeeper if you'd prefer. This is a great way to give back to the community without taking a lot of time. We will only support as many events as we have beekeepers willing. Most events are about an hour.

Please sign up below or contact, Kristine Erving, Director of Community Engagement at

415-516-3358 or email
communityengagement@marinbees.org

We will give you a call to discuss where and when you'd like to participate. Thank you!

<https://forms.gle/HM7ZD2fAA4FsBbCs5>

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

It's time to Renew Your Membership !
Membership Dues are now \$25.00 for the year for single members, \$40.00 for families.

We need to hear from you. Please renew your membership Online at www.marinbeekeepers.org. As of now we have several new members, and many more regular club members have renewed their membership in the last couple of weeks. There are many benefits from being a member, aside our monthly meetings, where you can chat with guest speakers from all over the beekeeping world:

- Use of the Club's extractors, electric uncapping knives, wax-melter, hive carrier, embedding tool, and other beekeeping equipment;
- Free subscription to the Marin Beekeepers Newsletter (11 issues a year). Back issues on the website are available for background information and beekeeping tips;
- Preferred registration for beekeeping workshops (usually 4 or 5 per year) and special events;
- We have a great library that includes books, magazines and catalogs on everything from starting your first hive or baking with honey to raising your own queens.
- Free admission to our monthly meetings, where we have speakers among the foremost bee experts in the world (normally a \$10 donation);
- Subscription to our "BUZZ" email listserv which is where we converse online about beekeeping in Marin;
- Subscription to our "SWARMS" email listserv which is where we notify members of any swarms that need hiving;
- Subscription to our "Event List" email listserv which is our general notification list of events and workshops.

The best and easiest way to pay your 2025 dues is online at www.marinbeekeepers.org. You do not need to sign in or use a password. Just click

on "become a member", fill out the form and submit. Be sure to complete the payment section at the end, which is via PayPal. You do not need to have a PayPal account to pay using a credit card. There is a small transaction fee added to your dues that is assessed by PayPal.

Or... you can mail a check payable to Marin Beekeepers to our Treasurer:
Malcolm Goldsmith 105 Molino Ave, Mill Valley, CA 94941.

CLUB FINANCIALS

Ending December 2024, Marin Beekeepers had \$20,749 in the bank account. During COVID we accumulated a surplus when we weren't renting the Log Cabin for meetings, paying for speaker's travel and presentation fees and not spending money on other normal expenses.

When the Marin Beekeepers switched over from a social club to a non-profit, we changed the way we are taxed, so instead of being incentivized to zero out our finances every year, we can hold more in reserve for projects like education, community outreach, and support local beekeeping initiatives.

So with that goal in mind, we have set aside \$10k in a CD to earn interest and have an operating budget of \$10,749. To date we have received \$2,300 in membership dues. This year's expenses are projected at \$5,850. Last year the club spent over \$5,000 solely for community events, marketing and equipment. This year the club is not expecting to receive any grant funding, so we will most likely be tapping into that surplus from COVID years to support our regular programming.

Our cost for renting the Log Cabin is \$150 per month, plus guest speaker fees of \$200 for experts who aren't members of the club. We haven't paid any airfare expenses but in the past the limit on spending for that was \$500. Ticket prices have gone up since then!

We reserve funds for the ongoing maintenance/repair of the club's shared equipment. In addition, we will be incurring costs for improving our website to improve security and make the site more useful for members.

Thank you all who have sent in your membership dues for 2025, and if you haven't yet, please support us by renewing today!

ABOUT THE MARIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB

We are people who share an avid interest in honey and native bees. We are a mix of hobbyists as well as professional beekeepers. We have a wide range of interests, covering bee biology, pollination, survivor stock bee breeding, health aspects of bee products, international beekeeping, and other bee-related topics. We welcome you to attend our meetings and to become a member. <https://marinbeekeepers.org/become-a-member/> Monthly meetings are typically on the first Thursday of the month and usually feature a knowledgeable speaker and/or project and includes informal sharing of information by members throughout the meeting (\$10 donation for non-members). Meetings are a good way to learn about beekeeping. Please consider becoming a member whether you have bees or not.