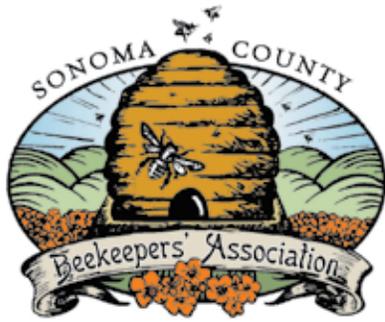


The Monthly Extractor



Volume 44, Issue 1

January 2019

This is our newsletter that reflects the various techniques, theories and art of sustainable beekeeping.

President's Message

This Month's Calendar

Fellow Beeks,

Happy New Year! Thank you for electing me as your president for the 2nd year!

As I'm writing this the sun is shining, albeit a little nippy, and I'm watching my girls swiftly moving in and out of their hives carrying a variety of colored pollen. We're starting a new year and so far my hives are seemingly doing well. But, it is still early and who knows what weather we are going to experience so I'm exercising vigilance.

I have heard that we've lost a lot of hives, possibly more than the last few years I've been in the association. There are lots of theories being discussed and I'm sure at the next few Bee Cafes you will hear and discuss some of these at length. Please make sure you are aware of when your cafes are meeting so you can take advantage of the wonderful information presented and meet other beekeepers in your area.

Speaking of Clusters (Bee Cafes!) I am excited to inform you that Christine Kurtz is going to be our Regional Cluster Leader this year. As former SCBA President and former Regional Cluster Leader and with a certification from UC Davis Master Beekeeper program, she has a wealth of knowledge and will provide tremendous support to our Cluster Coordinators. If you are looking to help with your clusters (and they always need help) please contact your cluster leader.

We had a FANTASTIC turn out for our Holiday Party and Auction. Thanks to all of you who volunteered your time to make it such a success!

Last year we made some wonderful strides in this organization. A revised Mission statement and stated values was key to being able to shape this association. As we continue to grow it is important we decide our direction as an organization. This year we are going to focus on our structure and direction. I am excited to start working with a task group to begin to discuss what the SCBA is and how we want to show up in not only Sonoma County but also the world!

Monthly Meeting: Monday, January 14

6 pm - Meet your cluster members; ask questions; bring your own cup and fill it with tea or coffee and have some goodies.

7 pm - General meeting starts.

Speaker will be Ettamarie Peterson on the history of beekeeping in California with pictures from some early days of beekeeping. Ettamarie is old but she did not take the pictures nor personally interview the first beekeepers.

Looking ahead at our future programs:

- **Saturday-Jan. 26th-Scion Exchange 9 am to 2 pm Santa Rosa Vets. Memorial Bldg. See article in this issue for more details. We do need volunteers for our information table.**

Contents

President's Message	1
This Month's Calendar.....	1
SCBA Membership 2019	2
Beekeeping To-Do List by Serge Labesque	3
Spring 2019 Beekeeping Classes at SRJC.....	5
Monthly Meeting Minutes.....	6
Scion Exchange January 26th	6
SCBA 2018 Holiday Party.....	7
Thank you Kelli!	8
Bee Plants of the Month	9
Honey Extractor Rental	11
2018 Board Members	12
Contact Information	12

Continued on Page 2



We are still in need of volunteers for the following leadership roles:

- 2nd VP - to assist current 2nd VP (Susan Kegley) with intent to fill position in 2020
- Event Manager - to oversee and manage Events and volunteers. (At this time we do not have anyone helping with events thus will not be participating in any if we cannot find someone to manage).

If you are interested in either of these roles please contact me @ president@sonomabees.org.

Looking forward to seeing you at the general meeting!

Kelli Cox
2018 President

IMPORTANT! **Read This it is important!**

SCBA Membership 2019 Renewal Reminder

SCBA membership is on a calendar year. **All 2018 memberships will expire on December 31st** and need to be renewed by January 1st for the 2019 year. Please renew now by mail or online as we will be busy at the dinner and auction on the 10th.

Please renew now and don't miss out! Renew now and don't miss out!

On **February 15, 2019 all expired memberships will be dropped from the roster**, and you will no longer receive email notices. **You will also not be able to participate in great cluster cafes, hive dives, workshops and the swarm list.**

How to renew for general and business memberships:

- 1.** The **easiest and fastest way** to renew for general and business memberships:
Online at: <http://sonomabees.org/2019-membership/join-now/>
- 2.** OR, **download** and complete a **membership application** and mail it with your payment to:

**SCBA,
P.O. Box 98
Santa Rosa, CA, 95401**
- 3.** OR, apply at the next SCBA meeting. Bring the completed application to the meeting, and payment can be made with Cash, Check, or Credit Card. Everyone (new and renewing) must complete an application with his or her payment. This is the only way we can ensure that the information we have for you is current.



Thank you!

Ann Jereb
SCBA 1st VP Membership
1stVP@sonomabees.org

My January

Beekeeping To-Do List by Serge Labesque

© 2019

Beautiful hives

Skeps are familiar beekeeping symbols. Quaint renderings of those old-fashioned straw or wicker basket beehives can be seen in books, advertisements, cartoons, on honey jar labels, and on beekeepers' association logos. They are cute reminiscences of the "good old days", aren't they? Well, maybe to some people. But I personally fail to see what is nice about fixed-comb hives that were often death sentences for the colonies they held. The beekeepers that used such hives drowned or asphyxiated the bees in order to harvest the honey. How could this be a form of beekeeping to revere or revive?

My first two hives were Langstroths; not by choice; only because that was all that was available to me when I stumbled into beekeeping. I built them from commercially produced kits. After a few days of gluing, nailing, sanding and painting, I was the proud owner of several impeccable shiny white boxes. I had no doubt that they were the epitome of beekeeping technology. But I soon found out that they were far from perfect, as much moisture and mold accumulated inside during the winter. A common fix was to tilt the hives forward to let the water out. However, doing this was hiding the signs of a problem more than actually correcting inherent flaws of the hive design.

Over the years I've occasionally considered using different types of equipment, but decided instead to improve upon what I started with. I modified, abandoned or rejected several of the elements of my original hives, such as the solid bottom boards, queen excluders and sheets of foundation. Screened hive bottoms with monitoring trays were quickly adopted. I later eliminated their landing boards and essentially stopped painting the supers. Awnings were added to protect the hive entrances from the weather. Follower boards became indispensable elements, as well as large double-screened upper ventilation slots and insulation in the upper part of the hives. In recent years, the brood chambers received only a few very large frames in place of the many standard frames that had previously been necessary.

Although some of the changes I tried with my hives did not function well, every experiment was instructive and ultimately helpful. Granted, the modifications I've retained may not work well under different climatic conditions, or for beekeepers that have different beekeeping goals and methods than mine, but they seem to benefit the bees here.

Choosing a type of hive remains one of the most important decisions a beekeeper has to make. But how can beginners critically weigh the real pros and cons of different hives? Without help, their selection is most often based on aesthetics, on what is new or trending, on hype, if not on unproven claims or pure fallacies.

Nowadays, beekeepers have access to many

alternative types of hives. In fact, just visit a few apiaries, and you are likely to see a wide assortment. Some beekeepers even have collections that are so diverse that they must be cumbersome to manage. At times, the hives are stunning demonstrations of the artistic talents, craftsmanship or technological know-how of their owners.

Although I leave my beekeeping equipment essentially unpainted, I'll admit that displaying nice artwork on a hive, as some beekeepers do, can be quite pleasing. But for me, a really beautiful hive is one that works well for the bees all year round, regardless of its type.

January in the apiaries

The bee colonies' yearly life cycle follows a fairly predictable sequence of phases and events. Since sound hive management is based on this typical pattern, the beekeepers observe how their colonies are progressing, and they act in anticipation of what might be expected next. However, enough differences frequently exist between individual colonies, apiary locations, and from year to year to keep us on our toes even during the winter, when our colonies often seem to be inactive.

In this geographic area, the queens resume or increase their egg production shortly after the winter solstice. It is a significant event for the colonies; one that remains most often unseen by the beekeepers. However, telltale clues such as pollen pellets, debris of brood cell capping and bee bread, greater density of chewed honey capping and water condensation, for example, may be noticed on the monitoring trays and at the hive entrances. Over the following weeks and regardless of the weather, the brood nests grow steadily from tiny patches of brood to masses that may occupy large areas of comb. This progression is necessary, because the colonies need to gain strength in preparation for the next most likely phase in their lives: colony reproduction. Therefore, the adult bees feed the young and keep them warm. This is hard work for the small overwintering populations.

Occasionally, good weather allows the bees to perform cleansing flights and somehow manage to find plants that are in bloom. The foragers return with loads of brightly colored fresh pollen that further stimulates brood rearing. Some of them may also bring nectar, which has to be placed in the combs if it is not immediately consumed. At times though, rain, wind or cold temperatures keep the bees inside for several consecutive days. Then, the colonies depend exclusively on the bee bread and honey they had accumulated months earlier. Minimal until early winter, the consumption of stores therefore accelerates to satisfy the demands of the growing brood nests.

Three weeks after egg deposition, adult worker bees emerge from their cells and join their sisters in performing the series of tasks that ensure good colony development. With more young bees coming out of their cells every day, the clusters swell and occupy more volume inside the hives.

As a result of these activities (increased brood production, nectar accumulation, and growth of the clusters), the colonies need to use more space. If it is not available, their development may be hindered or the congestion of the brood nests will force them to swarm very early, sometimes even before the end of winter. And yet, at this time of year the bees will not establish their brood nests in the combs of the lower parts of the hives, which they vacated in late fall. Knowing this, we can manage our hives in such a way that they can develop well before spring and are not driven to swarm prematurely, meaning before they have gained enough strength and the weather has become favorable and reasonably stable. To this end, I provide the bees with the space they need, which only takes a quick manipulation of the upper part of the hives. This is done on a mild sunny day around the end of the month or in early February, and without breaking into the brood nests, as they are fragile at this point in time. The hive tops and lids are lifted. By peeking through the open slots of the hive top feeders, one can tell whether the clusters have reached the top of the combs or not.

Large numbers of bees indicate that the brood nests are established in the upper part of the hive. In such cases, supers with a few frames and two follower boards are quickly inserted under the hive top feeders. If possible, I like to place a frame or two alongside the upper brood nests by sliding the follower boards away from the clusters to make some space for them. If, on the contrary, few bees are seen on the top bars, this may indicate that the cold mass of honey that is directly above the center of the brood nest is too large for the colony at hand. It is good to open a "chimney" in the center of the stores by sliding the frames apart and inserting an empty frame. Alternatively, one or two of the centermost frames of honey may be removed and replaced by empty frames. This manipulation often requires breaking the tough bond of cold propolis at the ends of the frames, but, if this is not done, the colony will very likely not develop well before spring. As soon as this is done, the upper elements of the hives are placed back and secured against the wind. The colonies will not need any more attention until late winter other than a glance during occasional walks through the apiary.

As usual, the entrances are kept free from obstructions, the monitoring trays are examined, and the bee activity is observed. Sometimes, a hive is found to be lifeless. It is closed immediately, removed from the apiary as soon as possible, and inspected to determine the cause of the failure. The equipment is then appropriately discarded or sanitized, as warranted.

Spring will arrive soon, and the colonies need to build up for it. In mid-winter, we make sure that nothing stands in the way of our colonies' development.

In summary, this month:

- Inspect the exterior condition of the hives:
 - Hive tops should remain properly set and secured.
 - Observe the entrances and the ground in front of the hives.
 - Verify that the hive entrances are not obstructed.
 - Maintain adequate and safe ventilation through the hives.
- Examine the monitoring trays.
- Watch for the appearance of drone brood cappings, and make a note of the date.
- Verify that mice have not entered the hives. Telltale clues of their presence, such as coarse pieces of comb and mouse feces, etc. are visible on the monitoring trays.
- In the latter part of the month and weather permitting, quickly peek into the top of the hives to assess the location of the clusters.
- Place supers or additional frames where and when warranted.
- When no activity is observed, place your ear against the side of the hive, and listen for bee noises. If the colony is dead, close the hive, remove it from the apiary, diagnose the problem, and discard or clean the equipment, as appropriate.
- Clean and torch tools and equipment.
- Plan next season. Evaluate the need for equipment and bees.
- Procure, build and repair beekeeping equipment.
- Plant bee forage!
- Read and learn more about bees and beekeeping.

May your bee colonies bring you joy in 2019!

Serge Labesque
© 2019



Spring 2019 Beekeeping Classes at SRJC

Spring Classes at Santa Rosa Junior College with Serge Labesque. Website: <https://srjcce.augusoft.net/>

Class Name: Introduction to Beekeeping

Class Date(s): 02/05/2019 to 02/26/2019

Weekly - Tues 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM

4 sessions starting 2/5/2019, ending 2/26/2019

Lark Hall, 2009

Number of Sessions: 4

Number of Weeks: 4

Class Web Description: This short course will introduce students to beekeeping with a strong emphasis on beehive management techniques as practiced in Sonoma County 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.

Max Class Size: TBD

Class Fee: \$78.00 Materials Fee: \$16.00 Registration Fee: \$2.00

Class Name: Intermediate Beekeeping for Spring & Summer

Class Date(s): 03/05/2019 to 03/12/2019

Weekly - Tues 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM;

2 sessions starting 3/5/2019, ending 3/12/2019

Lark Hall, 2009

Number of Sessions: 2

Number of Weeks: 2

Class Web Description: 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.

Max Class Size: TBD

Class Fee: \$60.00 Materials Fee: \$8.00 Registration Fee: \$2.00



SCBA

Monthly Meeting Minutes

Date: December 10, 2018

Location: Holy Ghost Society Hall, Sebastopol

Meeting started: 6:00 PM Approx. attendance: ~ 250

Items covered

- This meeting was the annual SCBA Holiday Party! This year held in a new location in Sebastopol.
- Over 250+ silent auction items were on display for members to place their bids.
- Some high profile items were auctioned off via a live auctioneer.
- 2019 Board Member Election Results - 104 ballots cast
 1. President - Kelli Cox wins election with 102 out of 104 votes. No write ins.
 2. 1st VP/Membership - Ann Jereb wins election 101 out of 104 votes. No write ins.
 3. 2nd VP/Events - Susan Kegley wins election with 102 out of 104 votes. No write ins.
 4. Treasurer - Julie Gugel wins election with 101 out of 104 votes. No write ins.
 5. Secretary - Peter Jones wins election with 100 out of 104 votes. One write in for Ettamarie Peterson.
 6. SCBA Mission Statement approved by 99 out of 104 votes. 2 votes disagreeing.
 7. SCBA Values approved, by 101 out of 104 votes. 1 vote disagreeing.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Jones,
Secretary

Scion Exchange January 26th

By Ettamarie Peterson

Please Volunteer!

If you have ever grafted or wanted to graft on to your fruit trees, this is the event you do not want to miss especially if you have any fruit trees that can be enhanced! Every year the Redwood Empire Chapter of the Rare Fruit Growers Association gathers thousands of scions of hundreds of heirloom varieties of plums, apples, peaches, cherries and other fruits we can grow here in Sonoma County. They organize the scions on tables that almost fill the main hall of the Santa Rosa Vets' Memorial building. You can cruise around with your bags, masking tape & marking pen and a list of what you hope to find and take samples to graft as soon as the sap begins to flow. I always take some newspaper to dampen to wrap around the scions too. There are grafting experts there demonstrating their tried and trusted techniques. You can also buy rootstock and have these experts graft for you for a very small price.

SCBA has had an information table at this event for years. People who are interested in grafting are usually interested in honey bees so we have a chance to recruit them into SCBA. Ettamarie Peterson has volunteered to be in charge of the SCBA table and would love to have help so she can have time to look for her own scion choices.

Please call her at (707) 479-1613
or email editor@sonomabees.org to sign up for a shift.

This event is open for five hours so it would be great to have six volunteers if possible. The details follow. You can sign up at the January meeting as well.

The annual scion exchange will be held on:

Saturday, January 26, 2019
Santa Rosa Veterans' Memorial
1351 Maple Ave, Santa Rosa, CA.

Full info at <http://cfrg-redwood.org/events/scion-exchanges/>

Members-only early access: 9:00 a.m – 10:00 a.m
General public access: 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
\$5 for members and non-members, kids free, nobody turned away for lack of funds.

SCBA 2018 Holiday Party

Photos Were Taken by Peter Wiley



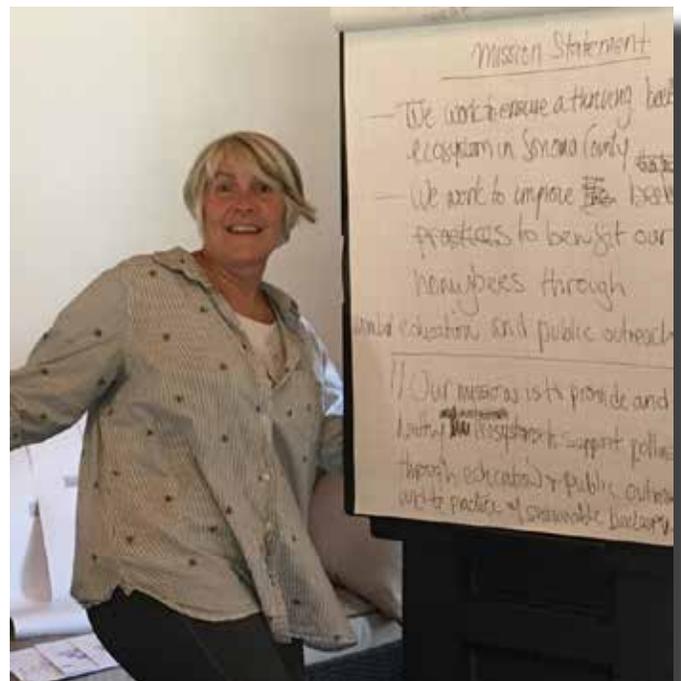
Darlene McGinnis was in charge of the auction. Her husband John was a big help to her!

Our President Kelli Cox encouraged everyone to bid at the live auction.



Thank you Kelli!

The members of the SCBA Board would like to extend a special thanks to our President, Kelli Cox for all of her hard work and perseverance leading the organization over the last year. Her energy and enthusiasm are contagious and serve to bring us all together in service of the bees. From dealing with the day-to-day of running the SCBA to instigating a strategic planning process that will take SCBA into the future to pulling off an amazing holiday party, Kelli does it all.



Bee Plants of the Month

By Alice Ford-Sala

Greetings for the New Year! As the earth continues its journey around the sun, we look towards Spring, Summer and Fall, always considering the most benefit we can provide for our beloved honeybees and the host of native pollinators, birds and other wildlife that share our space on this blue-green planet.

This year, I am writing about hedgerow plants. So many people who suffered in the devastating fires of 2017 lost not only houses, but also treasured plantings that are now surviving (hopefully) or need to be replaced. Hedgerows can be a great place to start replanting. They are generally living fences that border lands, or fields. The purpose can be for a windbreak, a privacy screen, to provide forage for pollinators or all three.

Sometimes hedgerows are all one plant, such as a row of privet, arborvitae or other boring/invasive plants. But why not plant one that is beautiful, beneficial and exciting with flowers and fruits that provide sustenance year-round? In the next year, I hope to explore some plants that would fit in nicely with hedgerow plantings. By the way, you don't have to have acres and acres to plant a hedgerow. It can be a border around a lawn area, a hedge along a walkway, or provide a secluded outdoor "room" to relax in.

Note: I have been writing this column for 8 years! If I have already written about a plant, I may re-run some of my previous columns, or parts of them.

**Plant of the Month : Hedgerow-Bee
Species: Manzanitas Arctostaphylos
Family: Ericaceae**

What an amazing native plant to form the backbone of a hedgerow planting. Evergreen, ever-gorgeous, manzanitas are amongst the first of our native plants to bloom. I heard years ago that Anna's hummingbirds evolved to be able to over-winter here instead of migrating south due to the nectar abundance that manzanitas provide. And of course, honeybees, bumblebees and other native pollinators also appreciate the sweet bounty in the cold winter months.

***A. bakeri* 'Louis Edmunds'**

This Manzanita is native to Sonoma County, usually growing upright to about 5 or 6 feet tall and wide. The pink flowers charm us in late winter or early spring. You can plant it alone against a fence or other focal spot, or plant a hedge of companions for an informal fence or barrier. You can plant other natives around it, such as California poppies, sages, and native bulbs or mix it with ceanothus. Wherever you plant Manzanita, don't give it summer water. As a native Californian, no summer water is needed. Plant in fall or winter to take advantage of our rainy season to get it established.

***A. densiflora* 'Howard McMinn'**

This is a shrubbier plant, growing 3 to 4 feet tall and wide. Very hardy, and more forgiving of garden con-



ditions- some water in the summer, heavy soil, Howard McMinn is nonetheless a very attractive plant, with light pink flowers, shiny green leaves that contrast nicely with the deep red bark.

Howard McMinn can take quite a bit of pruning, so you can trim them to show off the interesting branches that twist and gnarl.

A. 'Sunset'

Is a Manzanita that has shaggy instead of smooth bark. Very good looking, 'Sunset' can grow up to 6 feet tall, and wide, and can accept pruning to show off the interesting bark. White to pink flowers are borne in late winter to early spring. Go up close to them and you can smell the sweet fragrance of the nectar. 'Sunset' will tolerate some occasional water in summer, though it can also survive well with normal rainfall.

Alice Ford-Sala



***A. bakeri* 'Louis Edmunds'**



Providing Quality Hives and Components at an Affordable Price

- ~ Complete Hives ~ Screened Bottom Boards ~
- ~ Supers with Frames and Follower Boards ~
- ~ Top Feeders ~ Vented Top Covers ~
- ~ Wired Frames ~ Follower Boards ~
- ~ Telescoping Top Covers ~ Hive Stands ~
- ~ Wooden Swarm Traps ~ Solar Wax Melters ~

*Designed and endorsed by Serge Labesque
Recommended by Christine Kurtz*

John McGinnis

(707) 478-9787

803 Lynch Rd, Petaluma, CA 94954

By appointment only

goahwayranch@gmail.com

Bee Conscious Removal

www.Beeconsciousremoval.com



---LIVE BEE REMOVAL---

We specialize in removing bees alive from
walls, barns, sheds, and trees.

“Difficult” extractions are our specialty.

Beekeeping lessons offered at reasonable prices.

Wild bee colonies for sale.

We have been doing wall extractions for 10 years and have done over 450 to date.

Call Chris Conrad at 415-350-5700

Santa Rosa

Free Bee Colony For Successful Referral.

Honey Extractor Rental

Members have use of the association's honey extracting equipment, as available. Rental fee is \$5 per day. Extractors must be returned clean.

Email or call to reserve:

South

Kelli Cox
707 280-4376

president@sonomabees.org

Central

Paul Quistgard
425-877-5123

PaulQuistgard@aol.com

West

Gina Brown
415-828-8359

Boragelane@comcast.net

East

Susan Simmons
925-408-4529

Susanjsimmons@gmail.com

The Alternative Hives (formerly Top Bar Hive) group has a fruit press available for use in honeycomb crushing.

Contact Jim Spencer at:

alternativehives@sonomabees.org



Bee Hive Management & Local Honey Sales

Michael Turner
Owner/Beekeeper
415/871-4662

info@marincoastalbee.com



R Honey Pots
Pottery, Beekeeping & Metalwork

Liz Russell & Joey Romo R
Forestville, Ca

www.RHoneyPots.com
@RHoneyPots
email: RHoneyPots@gmail.com
cell: (707) 696-0861/540-2551

Swarms & Live Honey Bee Extraction
Dishwasher, Microwave & Oven Safe Functional Original Artwork

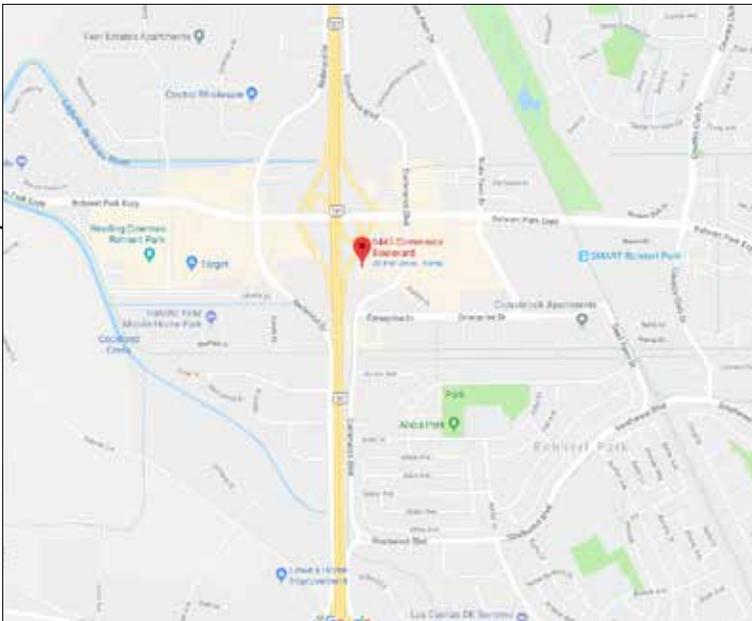


2018 Board Members and Other Helpful People

Click Here
for the Up-to-Date
Roster of SCBA Resources

Contact Information

Regular monthly meetings of the Sonoma County Beekeepers' Association are held on the second Monday of each month, at 7 pm at the Rohnert Park 4-H Building. The meetings cover a wide range of topics of interest to beekeepers. Everyone wanting to learn about honeybees is cordially invited to attend. You do not need to be a member nor a beekeeper to attend these meetings. Dues can be paid online at our website sonomabees.org, at our monthly meetings or by mail. Please see our Website for the application and various kinds of memberships available.



Our mailing address is:
Sonoma County Beekeepers' Assoc.
P.O. Box 98
Santa Rosa, CA 95402-0098

Click Google Map for Driving
Directions