BOB RAMSEY PASSES AWAY

On July 4, 2003, veteran beekeeper Robert F. (Bob) Ramsey passed away, leaving his wife Betty of 56 years, sons Mike, Darrel, and Terry, and other family members and many good friends.

Throughout his beekeeping career, he was a friend to all who knew him. He shared his knowledge with anyone and was always willing to help his fellow beekeeper. When it came to State Fair displays, parades, bee days, workshops, giving talks to schools or showing up on the Capitol steps when there was a problem, Bob would be there.

When some other beekeepers thought there should be a bee group in the Willamette Valley, Bob and his wife, Betty, quickly joined with a few others to make it happen. The group was comprised of almost all of the commercial beekeepers in the area, along with many hobby and part-time beekeepers. Eighty people attended the first meeting in the gas plant in Keizer, and the group became known as the Willamette Valley Beekeepers Association.

Bob also served as the OSBA Vice-President and on many committees. His wife, Betty, is president of Honey Pots International. Even though Bob had been retired for 10 years, beekeeping was still a big part of his life. He was a commercial beekeeper operating in the Valley for pollination and throughout the state for honey.

Bob will be remembered as a man of many talents. He served in Europe during the war, was a builder, raised birds, restored MG’s, fished, raised Red Angus, designed jewelry, collected cast iron, raised cactus and flowers and shared his big garden with everyone.

Bob will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

Thanks to Marj Ehry for providing this information about Bob.

Fall Conference Speaker
Highlight: Dr. John Harbo

Dr. John Harbo is a research entomologist at the USDA Honey Bee Breeding, Genetics & Physiology Laboratory in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; he has held that position since 1971. His research has focused on instrumental insemination and selective breeding of honey bees. In his most recent work, he has

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Oregon State Beekeepers Association

The Bee Line is the official publication of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association and is published ten times a year. Subscriptions are included with OSBA membership.

To join the OSBA, complete the membership application in this issue and send with payment to: Phyllis Shoemake, 1702 Toucan Street NW, Salem, OR 97304

Editorial Offices: Send news, announcements, letters, comments and advertising to: Diane Varner, Editor
PO Box 123 Yamhill, OR 97148-0123
Tel. 503-662-4559 Fax 503-662-4594
e-mail Raybee@bandwidth.net

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Business Ads, per issue:
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Copy, art and payment must be submitted by the 15th of the month prior to publication. Contact the editor for any special requirements and mechanical information.

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HONEY PRICES ARE HOT TOPIC!
The August 8, 2003 issue of the WALL STREET JOURNAL carried a very interesting article in its “Money & Investing” section. It is entitled, “Pressure on Honey Prices May Sting Beekeepers in U.S.” We tried for reprint rights, but they would have cost $90. You may want to look up that article online or at the library; it carries some thought-provoking information.

President’s Message for September
By Kenny Williams

While delivering bees to a pollination account one night earlier this summer, we were approached by two police cruisers, with lights blazing, and a couple of rather large police officers who wanted to know what I was doing there. I explained that I was placing beehives for pollination of the grower’s crop and the police officer agreed that it looked as though I had legitimate business there. He went on to share that a neighbor had seen the lights of the forklift and had called the cops, suspecting a burglary in progress.

About a week later, on a dark overcast night, I was unloading several pallets of bees at a honey location I have had for over fifteen years. As usual, I had informed the owner, who is a neighbor and a friend, of my plans to bring bees that week. But as I was leaving, he and a visitor came out to meet me, and they explained that they had seen the lights moving about in the field, and their first response was fear that UFOs were landing in the back forty! And this from a neighbor who has seen me delivering bees at his place for years!

While these two incidents are good for a chuckle, they nevertheless highlight the fact that people generally know very little about agriculture and almost nothing about the keeping of bees in particular. In the first case I described, the neighbor who called the police is surrounded by farming activity, yet their first thought that night, upon seeing lights in the field, was of burglary. And in the second incident, my neighbor seems to have forgotten the numerous conversations we have had about the why and wherefore of moving bees, and that the bees would be arriving that week.

We can all do more to raise the level of awareness in the general public of the role of honeybees and of beekeepers in the production of food on their table, including honey. Whether we visit children at a school or legislators at the Capitol, we have the opportunity to educate somebody who knows nothing about what we beekeepers do, but whose life is impacted by what we do. And the next time somebody sees us at work, we won’t be mistaken for a burglar or an extra-terrestrial.

SPECIAL EDITOR’S MESSAGE
For those who haven’t heard, Ray Varner has been hospitalized with leukemia. No, your eyes aren’t playing tricks on you; it was just a little over one year ago that the Varners lost their adopted son, Ric, to the disease. Ray
recognized the symptoms and got himself to a doctor early on, and the prognosis is good. The form of leukemia he has is the “treatable” one. The courses of chemotherapy are already underway, and while they are pretty miserable to endure, Ray is hanging in there okay.

He is presently at St. Vincent’s Hospital, and hopes to be discharged by the time you read this. Cards and other greetings should be directed to Ray’s home address, in order to avoid any mix-ups. Also, telephone calls will be welcome, should you wish to say “hello” and let Ray know you’re in his corner in this fight for his life.

Meanwhile, I am once again sitting in as editor of this newsletter so that Diane can devote her energies to looking after Ray. Please feel free to contact me at (503) 357-4782 with any concerns or questions you may have.

Mary Moss

Northwest Beekeeping, September
By Harry Vanderpool, WVBA

Crops in bloom producing nectar and/or pollen: various herbs, white clover, peppermint, pumpkin, squash, gourds.
Others: aster, borage, hollyhock, sagebrush, thistle.

- Provide water continuously. Summer isn’t over yet.
- Don’t tempt robber bees by exposing honey, cappings or wet comb.
- Install mouse guards on all hives. Use galvanized hardware cloth with ½ inch holes.
- As humidity increases, make sure hives have ventilation or some route of air flow. This will reduce the onset of fungal problems later on when the rains start.
- Yellow jackets are living the high life this month. Be a party-pooper! Set out traps baited with ham or turkey slices. Three traps properly managed will protect one acre of ground in an average year.
- Check your stored comb for possible wax moth infestation.
- Stored supers with frames of comb should be protected by placing paradichlorobenzene (PDB) crystals on a small piece of paper on every fifth super in the stack, which should then be covered. PDB kills adult and immature wax moths, but not eggs. The continuous presence of crystals within the stack not only repels moths and prohibits egg laying, but also kills any young larvae that hatch after the combs are placed in storage. Untreated combs should be inspected regularly for signs of infestation, especially if temperatures rise above 60 degrees F and permit wax moth activity. Naphthalene, or old-fashioned moth balls should not be used!
- Check colonies for stores and feed light ones heavy syrup if needed. Each gallon of heavy syrup will increase hive weight by seven pounds. Hives should have at least 50 lbs of feed at Thanksgiving time as a general rule.
- Consider medicating your bees with Fumidil-B® to control nosema disease especially if your bees were stressed in late summer. Add 100 mg to 2:1 heavy syrup. 2 gallons of this medicated syrup is recommended per hive. (Note to cheapskates: Yes it is expensive, but hives with nosema will go nowhere next year. Do the math.)
- As the temperature drops slightly, order menthol for fall tracheal-mite fumigation. Your favorite supply house will advise you on temperatures ideal for shipping.
- Hive parts treated with copper naphthenate should be treated in September at the latest and set out to cure as long as possible. Follow the instructions on the container label for application. Make sure to have good air circulation, and always wear gloves when applying this stuff.
- Think for a minute; what part of beekeeping do you enjoy the most? What ideas or methods have you developed that are you are confident in? Contact your regional association’s officers and schedule a segment in an upcoming meeting to present your thoughts.
Nutritious "Smoothie" Mix May Energize Honey Bees

By Marcia Wood
From the USDA
July 29, 2003

Just like people, honey bees need nutritious food to stay strong and healthy. Now, more than two dozen beekeepers throughout the United States are giving their bees a chance to taste-test a new, high-energy drink formulated especially for hardworking honey bees.

The new beverage formulation may bolster the pollination prowess of domesticated honey bees, *Apis mellifera*. Honey bees are the primary pollinators of dozens of fruit, nut, seed and fiber crops.

The smoothie mix is a light-tan powder, about the texture of wheat flour. The formula provides protein and carbohydrate needed to keep adult honey bees well nourished when their regular foods--pollen and nectar from flowers--aren't readily available.

The powdered formula is the work of entomologist Gordon I. Wardell of Arizona-based SAFE Research and Development LLC and ARS colleague Gloria DeGrand-Hoffman, research leader and entomologist at the ARS Carl Hayden Bee Research Center in Tucson, Ariz. Wardell is collaborating with ARS colleagues under terms of a new Cooperative Research and Development Agreement.

The dry mix is less expensive to produce, and less cumbersome to store, than liquid formulas. According to the scientists, beekeepers should be able to mix the powder with corn syrup or other sugary syrup. Then, using conventional equipment already on hand, they could easily pump the high-energy drink into hives for hungry adult bees to sip.

Supplemental foods for honey bees aren't new. But the formulas that the Arizona researchers are creating should sidestep a key problem of some of supplemental foods, developed earlier. Those older foods didn't provide the nutrients essential to worker bees. As a result, worker bees raised on those formulas would eventually stop producing a royal jelly for feeding to developing bees. The result? Production of new bees could soon stop, meaning that the colony could no longer flourish.

Vigorous colonies are especially important today, since numerous honey bee hives in the United States have been hit hard in recent years by mites and other enemies. ARS is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's chief scientific research agency.
The OSBA SPECIALTY CROPS GRANT: An Update

The honeybee pests and diseases workshops sponsored in part by the Oregon Department of Agriculture through the Specialty Crops Grant to OSBA through George Hansen are well underway. As many beekeepers know, information for the updates was garnered during the all-day session designed as part of the 2002 OSBA Annual Conference in Salem. Nationally-recognized researchers shared their findings, concerns, and recommendations for the management of major diseases and pests of the honeybee.

The main presentations included the following:

Marion Ellis: Integrated management practices for reducing Varroa mite populations.

Mark Feldlaufer: Detection and control of American and European Foulbrood diseases.

Eric Mussen: Nosema disease of honeybees.

Diana Sammataro: Tracheal mites and their management.

That conference session made clear to all attending that change has occurred in recommended practices, and that beekeepers, now more than ever before, need to know their bees—what their bees are doing and how this relates to the biology of the organism(s) being treated. About eighty beekeepers participated in the session.

Materials, both visual and written, were adapted from these presentations for use in the workshops now in process. The workshops are set up as a two-hour Friday evening lecture/discussion segment,

with a similar two hour segment on Saturday morning, followed by lunch and field stations to demonstrate recommended practices and techniques. The field stations are approximately forty-five minutes in length and focus on American foulbrood, Nosema disease, tracheal mites, and Varroa mites. An additional set of stations for novice beekeepers is included when possible to demonstrate effective hive management practices. Researchers from Oregon State University and local beekeepers present the information and host the field stations.

Nearly 100 beekeepers participated in the first of the workshops, held in the Portland area in April 2003. Another two dozen beekeepers attended a second workshop in the Central Point area in southern Oregon in May 2003. Additional workshops are scheduled for Astoria and Hermiston in August and September, respectively. In addition to information gleaned from the workshops, participants receive reference materials to take home for review. When possible, materials are sent to beekeepers who register for workshops but are unable to attend.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture grant helps with both the workshops and the development of a database. The database comprises names and contact information for beekeepers who are registered with the state, most of those who belong to OSBA regional groups, and those who request information. All regional groups have provided information. One group distributed information for the project because members don’t want their names on a list, and several groups have provided partial information, i.e., they’ve queried their members and have provided names of those who’ve responded that it’s okay to include their names. Although the database is set up solely to inform beekeepers of recommendations and changes advocated in management practice, many beekeepers are concerned that the list will be “sold”—and concerns have been raised that it already has (e.g., from a beekeeper who received a catalog from a bee supply company in the mail). This is understandable, as we live in a society beset by mass mailings and telemarketers—not to mention privacy concerns. In the end, the database may prove to be less effective than it might otherwise, but it will serve its purpose for those names included. To date, nearly 18 percent of beekeepers whose names are listed in the database have participated in either the 2002 OSBA Annual Conference in Salem or one of the hands-on workshops—and some have participated in both!

For information on upcoming workshops, please contact: honeybeeworkshop@comcast.net

Fall Conference Speaker
Dr. Rick Fell is Director of social insect programs at Virginia Tech. A graduate of Cornell University, Dr. Fell studied beekeeping under Dr. Roger Morse. He has been at Va. Tech since obtaining his PhD. in 1979. Recognized by Va. Tech and the Entomological Society of America for teaching excellence, Dr. Fell instructs on a variety of insect related topics including beekeeping, insect behavior and insect biology. Currently, the research group consists of Dr. Fell, a half-time technician, and 3 graduate students. Members are involved in teaching, extension, and research, with interests ranging from beekeeping to ant biology.

Under the direction of Dr. Fell, members of the Apiculture Studies group at Virginia Tech are devoted to providing assistance to beekeepers and citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia for insect related problems. In addition to providing personal assistance to inquiries about honeybees, wasps, ants, and other social insects, the group interacts with local extension offices to distribute needed information for the management of honey bee hives and control of social insects. Group members are available to state and local special interest groups and schools for lectures and demonstrations on honeybees and other social insects. Also, an annual summer beekeeping course is held at Va. Tech's Blacksburg Campus on a variety of topics including management, disease control, and queen rearing.

Dr. Fell is a well-known speaker. There are a lot of current beekeepers and beekeeping leaders who are his former students. An engaging speaker, he never disappoints his audience. His presentations will cover "Queen Pheromones, and Their Role in Hive Management", and "Effects of Miticides on Queen and Drone Viability".

FAREWELL TO A FAVORITE HIVE
By Mary Moss

It’s finally happened, but it took a while. My favorite hive, officially recognized as #1, is gone.

Ten long years ago, I started beekeeping with three packages of bees. Determined to make a success of my endeavors, I numbered each hive and kept a journal for a while, tracking the progress of the hives as my apiary grew. Every year, I’d check all hives and requeen as necessary. However . . . #1 was always healthy and chock full of fresh brood and bees, with no requeening help from me. Hmmm. I thought, let it go and see what happens, i.e., conduct “A Grand Experiment.” Year after year went by, and still #1 kept going. Naturally, I fed, medicated, supered, reversed boxes and all that good stuff right on time and kept an eye on that hive with a slight bias of pride. The bees just kept chugging right along. You go, Girls, I urged.

Alas, the end finally came this summer. Apparently, in the interval between adding honey supers and removing them, Yellow Jackets moved in without my noticing. My #1 hive is empty and devoid of life. But it sure was something while it lasted. Now what will I have to brag about?