
THE BEE LINE



The Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

Volume 29, Number 4

May 2004

OSBA MEMBERS COME TO RESCUE IN BIG BEE SPILL

When the going gets tough, count on Oregon beekeepers to come to the rescue!

At 10:30 p.m. on February 3, 2004, drivers on Highway 20 between Sweet Home and Lebanon had a different kind of traffic snarl to deal with. A Freightliner truck loaded with 480 colonies of bee had crashed at milepost 22. The bees, belonging to George Hansen of Foothills Honey, were on their way to the Modesto area in California to pollinate almond trees. That particular truck was one of seven loads destined for the almond orchards, and George was already in California with the first load when the accident happened.

The truck tipped on its side, and many of the hives were smashed, killing many bees and releasing millions more into the night air. Randy Hill Trucking, the contractor transporting the bees, contacted one of the firm's other bee customers, Dirk Olsen of Albany, and asked for his help.

Dirk said his telephone rang at about 11:00 p.m. that evening. The driver of the tow truck responding to the wreck didn't know whose bees they were. Dirk replied that he would help. He telephoned another Albany beekeeper, John Mespelt, and swung by to pick him up around midnight.

When they arrived on the scene at 1:00 a.m., the semi-truck lay on its side and "it was a real mess," as Dirk described it. Dirk and John assessed the situation and gave the tow truck driver a suggested approach that differed from his, but was quickly adopted. Rather than drag the truck and tear things up more than they already were, they elected to unload the bees first, cutting the straps and pulling the boxes free.

Clouds of bees hovered in the air at the side of the road and many quickly found resting spots on the backs of their rescuers. However, many of those bees probably did not survive the cold weather.

In order to salvage such a situation, Dirk said, "it was essential for beekeepers to be on the scene." Other beekeepers soon responded to help as well, including several from Sweet Home and more from Albany.

As daylight approached, Dirk went home to get a forklift. He and the others pieced together the salvageable hives, and took them to one of Dirk's nearby holding yards for more complete reassembly and salvage. The towing company brought in a couple of dumpsters, and by afternoon, the beekeepers had things pretty well cleaned up.

The truck was completely totaled out. Brian George of Sweet Home, the driver, was cited and released on charges of driving under the influence of intoxicants and careless driving.

Dirk commented, "It was a preventable accident. You always need to know who's hauling your bees. It takes some know-how to transport those loads, and isn't appropriate for an amateur truck driver. Of course, in that case, we all did know him—he was one of our regular drivers."

But, Dirk added, nobody knew that driver was going to use a controlled substance when he was driving a load of bees. Apparently, it has been confirmed that Brian George had been smoking marijuana.

"That shows me that 'pot' is not a harmless drug—in this case, it could have killed many people instead of bees," said Dirk. "I felt so bad for George Hansen, it's a terrible loss."

"The only thing we had going in our favor," Dirk finished, "was the weather. It was a cool day, as often is the case in February. It happened on a four lane highway and so it wasn't too hard to close down a couple of the lanes while we handled the cleanup. It was probably as good as you're going to get for such a situation."

At the time of the accident, it was estimated that about 30 percent of the (salvaged) hives ended up queenless. That's a lot of queens to replace!

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Our thanks to Dirk Olsen of Olsen Honey and Graham Kislingbury, Managing Editor of the *Albany Democrat-Herald* newspaper for sharing their information for this story.

WHAT'S INSIDE:

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Oregon State Beekeepers Association

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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.

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| OSBA members | \$3.00 |
| Non-members | \$5.00 |

The next OSBA Board meeting will be held on April 28. Please call Harry Vanderpool or any of the OSBA Officers listed on the “Who’s Who in the OSBA” page in this newsletter for more information.



President's Message

In just two months, Kenny Williams has suffered the loss of both of his parents. We fully understand that he has many matters at hand to deal with just now. Our sympathies go out to Kenny and his family as they go through this difficult time.

We look forward to the return of Kenny's comments and thoughts in the near future.



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EDITOR'S NOTES

Recently, I've had inquiries about the propriety of reprinting previously-published cartoons and other pieces in this newsletter. Apparently, some readers are concerned that we could be in violation of U.S. Copyright laws.

Since I'm a well-published freelance writer and desktop publisher, and have been for many years, I do keep up with the "intellectual property" laws. For those who are concerned, here is a synopsis of them with regard to reproduction of artwork, including cartoons, both from private artists as well as syndicated publications:

—As soon as text or artwork is printed or published, it is considered to be copyrighted. There is a "fair use" provision which extends specifically to use of the artwork in a limited way, such as with a non-profit organization that is not using the artwork in a commercial manner or offering it for sale. The OSBA fully qualifies as a non-profit organization and, with a limited circulation of its newsletter containing the printed matter solely to our members whose membership fees includes a subscription to the newsletter, we would not be considered in violation. In other words, we are not selling our newsletter and/or making money on it. However, were we to be charging a fee per copy that included such artwork, or reproducing copyrighted artwork on T-shirts or other items and offering them for sale, we would be in deliberate violation.—

Anytime I borrow and/or reprint text from online articles or other publications, I provide an attribution as to its source, which is required by law.

I hope that this clarifies and puts to rest the concerns of our readers. Anyone wishing more information can find it easily on the Internet, using keywords such as United States Copyright Law. Be prepared, though, as it's very lengthy and complex stuff to wade through.

—Mary Moss

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KIM GLYNN'S GIFT TO ME AND TO THE OSBA

by Mary Moss

One man may not be able to keep bees anymore, but he's hoping to help someone else get started doing it, via his gifts to the OSBA.

Almost all of his life, Kim had wanted to keep bees. When he was a youngster, he'd had the opportunity of assisting a local beekeeper. Together, they caught a swarm and Kim got to keep the bees. He learned all the ins and outs of caring for them, and couldn't have been happier. Eventually, though, he moved to Alaska, and that was the end of his beekeeping experience. However, over the next several years, beekeeping was always in the back of his mind and he was determined to someday have at least one hive of honeybees to care for.

Life, however, kept intervening—and so did a near death experience. When he was 30, Kim was driving his van across the Arizona desert. He was smoking an unfiltered Pall Mall cigarette, and when he attempted to pull it from his mouth to take a drag, it stuck to his lip. Then it fell to the floor of the van. Frantically, Kim reached down and felt around, trying to find the burning cigarette. The van swerved, with one tire sliding into the sand on the shoulder of the road. Then the van went down into the wide median ditch separating the double-lane highway, flipped and landed upside down. Kim had been thrown through the windshield and was pinned between its right front wheel and the road.

An Arizona Highway Patrolman found Kim, and pronounced him dead at the scene as he radioed the accident in to headquarters. The officer had to wade through Kim's blood to try to find his pulse, which was undetectable.

But, Kim wasn't dead! When he awoke in the trauma ward of a hospital, the patrolman was sitting by Kim's bed, staring at him in disbelief. "Man, I thought you were dead!" He told Kim. "I couldn't find your pulse and told my supervisor you had died."

While it was true that he had survived, Kim discovered that it was only due to a miracle of some sort. He had been scalped when he went through the windshield, and five of his ribs had collapsed, with one also puncturing his lung. Five of his vital organs had been ruptured, some in three places, and he had a triple compound fracture of his

right femur. Kim's intestines had to be removed and replaced, then partially removed again. His stomach was damaged and he developed bleeding ulcers. It is hard to imagine how he lived through all that.

It took many years and surgeries to put Kim "back together" again. Last year, he felt like it was finally the right time to fulfill his passion for beekeeping, and guess who he called? Me! He wanted to buy a colony, but first he had some questions about how and where best to set it up in his backyard in Forest Grove. After quite a bit of consulting and a look-see, we determined where it should be placed, and I went home to pick out a colony. I'd just successfully hived several good swarms, which had subsequently set up housekeeping in my apiary and were doing very well. So, I selected the strongest of the bunch, and a few evenings later, my husband, Dan, and I loaded it up and took it over to Kim's house.

The hive was unloaded without incident and placed in the corner of Kim's backyard. He'd carefully selected a spot that would get optimum morning sun and sufficient shade on hot afternoons. I felt good about the bees being under his loving care, and knew he'd call me if anything was questionable.

Having been a woodworker all of his adult life, Kim energetically went to work making all of his own woodenware. He even made his own smoker! I sold him enough mite control strips for the hive—no sense in buying a whole package when all he needed was four strips. He'd already been through the medication cycles before with his former mentor, and did everything exactly as it should be done. He also purchased two books on beekeeping and delved into the process wholeheartedly. His efforts were rewarded by the hive growing exponentially in a short time. For the next eight months, Kim had all the fun he wanted being a beekeeper, except that there wasn't enough spare honey to harvest, it being the colony's first year. But that didn't bother him; he just loved watching and caring for the bees.

Then came the heartbreaker, just a few weeks ago. After all the years since his accident, Kim found that his pelvic and spinal injuries were coming back to haunt him. Another surgical procedure was needed, but the surgeon found that Kim's bones had deteriorated due to the hardware used to reattach his pelvis to his spine. So, the doctor could only replace half of the needed hardware. The result: Kim could no longer lift anything weighing more than 10 lbs. His beekeeping days were over!

After hearing that bad news, Kim telephoned me, and asked if I would take the hive back. I went over to take a look. Wow, what a hive! It was four deeps tall, and the lower three boxes were completely full of bees and brood. Fresh larvae meant that more were on the way, soon. The size and volume of the colony was staggering—every beekeeper's dream—or nightmare, depending on how one looks at it.

I suggested that we first create a split to relieve overcrowding and lighten it up a bit, so I went in and pulled out several frames of brood, put them into the top super, and stuck a queen excluder between the third and top box. Meanwhile, Kim was trying to figure out if it would work for him to actually keep the bees on his property, with the arrangement that I would come over to take care of them. At last, though, Kim and his mother, with whom he lives, decided that it just wouldn't be a viable arrangement. So, Dan and I geared up and went over one night to retrieve the bees. Even with the split having been pulled off, that was the heaviest, strongest colony I've ever had to move!

Now, they are thriving back in my apiary. I gave that first split we'd made to a queenless hive that needed help. Then, I was able to create a second, new split with some more of the brood from Kim's hive and a few frames from my strongest ones. With Kim's hive and the purchase of two new queens (one for the queenless hive), I was able to ultimately add two additional "new" colonies that are now going strong, and the requeened bunch is growing again, too.

Naturally, I paid Kim for the hive, as it has considerable obvious value!

While Kim's beekeeping days may have be over, his story has a special ending for us. Kim has donated his smoker, books, and other assorted beekeeping paraphernalia to the OSBA! His hope is that the items can be used by the Association to help a new beekeeper get started, or for classes or anywhere the items are needed.

Kim's contributions are very much appreciated. Giving up his dream of keeping bees was sad and difficult, and Kim said it would make him feel good if his contributions could help another beekeeper.

Kim's gifts will be put to use, and very soon, I expect. Thanks, Kim!

#####

2004 O.S.B.A. Fall Conference Update

provided by Harry Vanderpool

The 2004 fall conference will be held on October 28, 29, and 30 at the beautiful Agate Beach Inn in Newport, Oregon.

Speakers confirmed to date include:

- Dr. Marla Spivak, University of Minnesota**
- Dr. Dewey Caron, University of Delaware**
- Dr. Michael Burgett, Oregon State University**
- Dr. James Tew**
- Mr George Hansen, Foothills Honey Company, Colton Oregon**
- Ms. Brenda Kellar, Graduate Student, O.S.U.**
- Mr. Brent Barkman, Barkmans Honey, Kansas**

Mark your calendar, and don't miss the bonfire on the beach!

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2004 O.S.B.A. Fall Conference Volunteers Needed!

It takes a lot of small efforts by O.S.B.A. members to make the fall conference a big success. Your help is needed, and will be appreciated by your fellow members.

Volunteers are needed to:

- 1) Staff the registration desk. This is fun! You greet and sign people in as they arrive. Sometimes you get to take their money! That's really fun!
- 2) Pick up a speaker at the Portland Airport and transport them to the conference. Also, drive them back to the airport after the conference ends. You will really enjoy the conversation, and get to know the world-class speakers on a first-name basis.
- 3) Organize items for the oral and banquet auction.
- 4) There are other little details to be handled as well.

Please consider giving a little bit of your time at this year's fall conference.

Contact Harry Vanderpool at 503-399-3675

E-mail: shallotman@yahoo.com

MICROCHIPS DETER BEEHIVE THIEVES

Last season, Montana commercial beekeeper Wade Anderson was stung when a bee thief made off with 250 of his hives. As with many Oregon beekeepers, Anderson trucks bees to California for the almond pollination, and can't be around all of his hives every minute to prevent theft. While many beekeepers mark their hives, it's easy to paint it over or rebrand it or that sort of thing. So, Anderson was in a quandry about preventing more thefts.

But now, there's a high-tech solution to that problem. A few California beekeepers have started using microchips to identify their hives. They're the same chips veterinarians use to track dogs and cats and are about the size of a grain of rice. The beekeeper simply drills a small hole in a hive body super and then inserts the chip into that hole and covers it with wood seal so it cannot be seen.

The hives then have a permanent form of ID that is virtually undetectable from the exterior of the hive.

To check for chips, a scanner is pointed over the area of the chip from a foot or so away. It shows a number which identifies the chip and who the bees belong to. This way, the beekeepers can prove that the hives are rightfully theirs.

While it may not be practical for all beekeepers to do this, even posting a warning sign that their hives are marked thusly is proving to be effective; Anderson has done this, and says none of his hives have been stolen this year.

For more information on this story, please visit <http://www.npr.org>. Click on their Archives section. The story was broadcast on April 3, 2004 and was hosted by Linda Wertheimer.

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SUCROSE OCTANOATE

Synthetic sugar esters, also known as acyl sugars or polyol esters, are a relatively new class of insecticidal compounds. They are combinations of sugars and fatty acids. A paper by Gary Puterka et al. (2003) *J. Econ. Entomol.* 96(3):636-644 describes some tests that they ran with many related sugar esters. Sucrose octanoate, being sold by the Dadant & Sons Beekeeping Supply Company, turned out to be the most effective against phytophagous mites. It has a detergent or soap-like effect, so it was compared to M-Pede (equivalent to a 2X dose of Safer Soap). The sucrose octanoate won the contest. That ester already is used in human food preparation, so it is likely considered GRAS (Generally Regarded As Safe) around food. If you have the time and the patience, apparently spraying the chemical on combs of bees does a very good job of controlling exposed *Varroa* mites.

YOUR OWN HONEY STRAWS

Did you ever wish that you could fill your own honey straws and not have to worry about minimum-sized orders, etc.? Well, the machine is available to you. Called the Personal Bench-Top Honey Straw Machine, you simply attach a pail of honey, turn on the machine and let it do the rest. The honey is heated automatically, the straws filled and sealed and the machine shuts itself off when any supply runs out. If you wish to learn more about this \$2,500 machine, you can visit the Web site: www.busybeefarm.com/Stickflyer2-01-02.htm or call toll-free 1-866-HNY-STYX (469-7889), or e-mail: Kate@BusyBeeFarm.com. The mailing address is Busy Bee Farm, 140 Langford Road, Raymond, NH 03077.

THE BIOLOGY OF VARROA (article abridged)

This is the title of Stefan Fuchs review of what is known about the life and death of *Varroa* mites gleaned from 100 research papers mostly from Europe.

In his review, Fuchs states the *Varroa* mites switch from one adult bee to another quite often. They are most likely found on nurse bees, not on newly emerged bees, when they are out of the cells in the hive. Brood nest temperature and chemoreception may be involved.

European researchers have noticed the same immigration peak that we saw at Bee Biology--a big increase in mites at the end of the nectar flow, we still don't know whether this is due to drifting or robbing.

(To read this complete article, contact Dr. Mussen or visit the UC Davis Web site address listed earlier in this story.)



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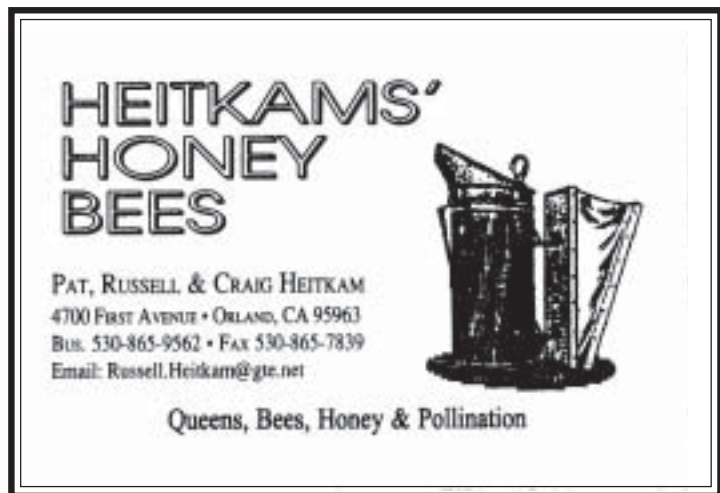
You may wish to go onto the Internet and check out Dr. Mussen's entire newsletters at entomology.ucdavis.edu/faculty/mussen.cfm, or you can e-mail him at: ecmussen@ucdavis.edu.

HONEY ANALYSIS

Honey refractometers (for moisture content) are pretty easy to find, but not Pfund Graders (for honey color), probably because of the expense and expertise needed to use one well.

That has changed. Hanna Instruments, Agricultural Division, is producing the C 221 Honey Color Analyzer. It measures light transmittance of honey compared to analytical grade glycerol. It has a digital readout that shows the color scale in mm, which is the basis of the Pfund scale. It has a range of 0 to 150 mm, a resolution of 1 mm, and a precision of 2 mm. You simply place the glycerol in a cuvette, calibrate the machine, then put in a different cuvette of honey and read the results.

(continued next column)



NORTHWEST BEEKEEPING TIPS - May

By Harry Vanderpool, WVBA

■ Don't let colony stores get below two or three full frames of honey. Depending on your location, elevation, and the weather, you can still have periods of dearth.

■ Supply water in apiaries and out yards. Small wading pools for toddlers made out of hard plastic make a cheap water supply. Dump a bucket of water in and toss in some rocks or boards for the bees to land on.

■ Inspect colonies at least every other week. Replace as many crummy frames as you can muster up replacements for. Toss them into the burn barrel and light a match before you change your mind. Don't be cheap!

■ Keep an eye out for American Foulbrood. If you do not know what Foulbrood looks like, ask a senior beekeeper to accompany you in your next hive inspections. Your favorite bee supply establishment has a book available with excellent pictures for about five bucks. (Honey Bee Diseases & Pests, C.A.P.A.)

■ Check the calendar and remove varroa mite strips in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

■ Place honey supers on your hives only after spring medications have ended, varroa strips are out, and after the prescribed rest period if you used Coumaphos or Apilife-VAR. Read the label.

■ Stay a step ahead of the swarming tendency with thoughtful timing of your annual requeening program and making your splits and nucs. Supering ahead for honey, and increasing ventilation through the hive, seems to help, also.

■ Set out some extra hives with empty frames for swarm decoys. Do this in order to catch swarms from those other beekeepers who have swarms issue from time to time.

■ This life is not a dress rehearsal, dear friends. Make this year a meaningful year to remember. This is the season to try all of those cool procedures that you have always wanted to attempt. Whether it's raising queens, Demeree-ing a colony, starting a 2-queen colony, or whatever; roll up your sleeves and get started. Enjoy your life with the bees!

■ Don't miss your regional beekeepers association meeting. You are truly missed when you do not attend.

Who's Who in the OSBA Resource Guide

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(See North Coast Information)

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503-325-7966

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Coos County

Meets 7:30 pm third Friday (except Dec.) Coquille Annex, Coquille
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Treas: Chuck Howard 541-267-3063

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Cty., 13930 S. Gain, Oregon City
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503-829-7744
samh@molalla.net
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keeley@bctonline.com
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Southern Oregon

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S.O. Research & Extension Center
569 Hanley Rd., Central Point
President: Stan Kee 541-664-3238
VP: Brian Bolstad
541-512-2364

Tillamook County

Meets 7 pm first Thursday
5005 Third Street, Tillamook
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tfullan@nehalem.tel.net
Sec/Treas: Wayne Auble

Tualatin Valley

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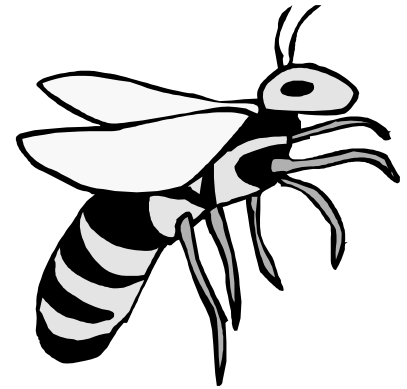
AMERICAN BEEKEEPING FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

The Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees, Inc. is a charitable research and education foundation sponsored by the American Beekeeping Federation, Inc. The ABF recently gave the Foundation a grant of \$50,000 from funds the ABF received from the estate of Glenn and Gertrude Overturf. The Foundation Trustees have chosen to use a portion of the grant to offer five \$2,000 scholarships to graduate students in apiculture with the stipulation that a portion of the funds be used to attend the 2005 American Beekeeping Federation meeting in Reno, Nevada, to present their research. The Board of Trustees hopes that the scholarships will encourage young apicultural scientists and looks forward to their contributions to the 2005 ABF meeting.

Applications for the scholarships will be accepted until June 1, 2004. Applicants should submit a cover letter from their advisor, a curriculum vitae and a research summary (not to exceed 3 pages) to the Board for consideration. The research summary can cover research completed within the past 12 months or proposed research that will be completed prior to the American Beekeeping Federation meeting. Recipients will be selected in June of 2004.

Send scholarship applications to:

Dr. Marion Ellis
University of Nebraska
Department of Entomology
202 Plant Industries Building
Lincoln, NE 68583-0816
Phone: 402-472-8696
Email: mellis3@unl.edu



Membership and Publications

Membership in the Oregon State Beekeepers Association is open to anyone who has an interest in bees and beekeeping. You do not need to own bees or reside in Oregon to join. OSBA membership is \$20 per person and includes a vote in OSBA elections, discounts on other publications and ten issues of *The Bee Line*. Membership outside the US is \$29.

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Additional Voluntary Contribution \$ _____ (indicate if for Research or General Fund)

Please note: May we include your name/address in a membership list that will be given to members only? Yes / No

If you circled Yes, please circle any information on the above form that you do not want included on the list. The OSBA respects the privacy of their members and will never sell any information supplied.

Start your savings now! Get a discount on the following subscriptions through the OSBA:

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| <i>The Speedy Bee</i> | _____ 1 yr. \$13.25 | _____ 2 yrs. \$25.25 | |

***If you are a member of an OSBA Branch Association, make your check payable to that Branch and attach this form. The Branch Association Treasurer should submit this form and a check to OSBA, retaining \$1 for the Branch Association. If you are not a member of a Branch Association, make checks payable to OSBA and send this form with payment to:**

Phyllis Shoemake, 1702 Toucan Street NW, Salem, OR 97304.

Classified Ads

Classified advertising rates per issue: 30 words, per issue: OSBA members, \$3.00, non-members \$5.00. Copy and payment must be received by editor by the 15th of the month prior to publication.

Supers: 80 plus drawn Westerns, semi-deeps, deeps, \$12.00. Metal-covered lids \$6, frames \$20 per box. Some stainless equipment, 4 hive pallets, make offer. Evenings: (360) 891-0035.

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