



The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

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April 2013



Rosanna Mattingly

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Image above: A sure sign of spring: getting into the bees! All of the questioning and considering and learning through bee events, bee schools, and regional group meetings—as well as on one's own—will no doubt lead to better care of the bees. May all events go well and all beekeepers on the road be safe in travel.



OSBA WEBSITE: www.orsba.org
WEBKEEPER: Thom Trusewicz
ccbees@gmail.com

AN OPTION FOR REMEMBRANCES

Joann Olstrom

We started our beekeeping in 1971 (a Mother's Day gift from my husband Bob, who always wanted bees when he was a kid—but his Mom said *NO*...). Bruce Yeager and Jack Devereux mentored me, let me tag along, all of that—and eventually I started attending OSBA meetings and met Don (and Florence) Ames, and Anita and Lu Alexander, and Alan (and Marjie) Ehry. All of these folks have mentored Newbees and Wantabees, served as officers locally or for OSBA, served on committees—including the state Apiculture Advisory Board, helped at the State Fair, supported research, and who knows what else. They are truly examples for all of us and for our industry, and many of us are better folks and beekeepers for having known them. It is appropriate that they be remembered.

Did you know that little Malala from Pakistan wrote, “No scientist has produced a more powerful weapon...A teacher is the power of a nation...”? We have good examples in the above beekeepers for us to imitate. To pass on what we have been taught is the only ticket.

Yet, sometimes we just don't want to send flowers. Flowers are nice (my Mom said they are for the living), but they wilt. A donation in memory of a friend contributes to furthering certain causes like heart or cancer research, or books for the public library, or funds for the church organ; it does “more good” in the long run. So, why can't we do something like this for OSBA? Who cares if we've never done it before? For example, a donation might be made to one of the programs in honor this way:

*To honor the memories of
Anita and Lu Alexander, Alan Ehry,
Bruce Yeager, Don Ames, Jack Devereux*

I intend to make a donation for the program of Dr. Sagili. Others may want to donate for a different program and in honor of others than those I will. It all will do “more good” in the long run.

Note: Summary information from the January-February issue of *The Bee Line* is repeated here:

To donate to the **OSBA Endowment Fund**, make out your check to: The OSU Foundation. Write on the memo line: “Northwest Apiculture Fund for Honey Bee Research, Extension, and Education.” Write a cover letter explaining your donation and repeating the name of the fund you wrote on the memo line. Mail to: The OSU Foundation, 850 SW 35th St, Corvallis OR 97333.

To donate to the **OSBA Research Fund**, make out a check to: Oregon State Beekeepers Association. On the memo line, write “Research Fund.” Mail to: OSBA Treasurer (currently Paul Kowash and Kathy Kowash).

Continued on page 2

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



March is here and already the weather is warming. Daylight Savings Time just went into effect; the days are getting longer, and the hives are building up. I need to keep a close eye on my hives for starving or swarming as the weather fluctuates between warm and dry or cool and wet here in the north Willamette Valley.

As I mentioned last month, one of the benefits of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association Conference is the money we raise to help fund Dr. Sagili's research and the bee lab, which support the needs of beekeepers in Oregon. In addition, the educational opportunity is a great value to each and everyone attending. The first time I went to the OSBA conference, I was hooked; it was informative and a very enlightening experience. It helped me understand that beekeeping is very dynamic, change is constant, and keeping current is important in order to be successful. The immediate benefit to all participants is the sharing of information by networking with other beekeepers, learning what they find to be working, what kind of results they are achieving from their efforts, and what they are planning for next year.

With all the changes taking place in this industry, it becomes more and more difficult to keep up with information on pests, pesticides, disease, treatments, and a myriad of other issues. The conference provides a wealth of resources and information to educate the attendees as the presentations address many interests of both commercial beekeepers and hobbyists, providing updates on current trends and issues. This year Dr. Dewey Caron is putting together the program, and you will be hearing more about it from him in future issues of *The Bee Line*.

Lastly, the conference is the one time every year when we have an OSBA membership meeting, which is your opportunity to provide input, direction, and to participate in the decision-making process of OSBA. It is not too early to put the 2013 conference on your calendar. The dates are October 31 through November 2 in Seaside. Hope to see you there!

Paul

Donations—Continued from page 1

To donate directly to **Dr. Sagili's program**, make out a check to the Agricultural Research Foundation. On the memo line, write either "Dr. Ramesh Sagili's Program" or "Honey Bee Program." Include a cover letter reiterating that the donation is intended for support of the Honey Bee Program. Mail to: Agricultural Research Foundation, 100 Strand Agriculture Hall, Oregon State University, Corvallis OR 97331.

To donate to the **Scullen Memorial Fellowship**, make out a check to The OSU Foundation. Write "Herman A. Scullen Memorial Fellowship" on the memo line. Include a cover letter to the Foundation noting your desire to donate to the Scullen Fund. Mail to: The OSU Foundation, 850 SW 35th St, Corvallis OR 97333.

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OREGON MASTER BEEKEEPER PROGRAM



As the committee works to launch the Journey level of the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program, this year's volunteer mentors are set to work with and guide those currently enrolled at the Apprentice level of the program. Much appreciation to all mentors!

2013 MENTORS

Robert Allen	Dan Holt	Ron Padgett
Paul Andersen	Marc Huber	Floyd Pawlowski
Glen Andresen	David Kribs	Karen Peteros
Andy Angstrom	Max Kuhn	Sarah Red-Laird
Barbara Bajec	Tom Lea	Trevor Riches
Del Barber	Seth Lee	Lynn Royce
Dewey Caron	Rebecca Lewis	Judy Scher
Jerry Carter	Jan Lohman	Andrew Schwab
Tom Chester	Damian Magista	Amy Sierzega
Chris Clement	Claire Mancha	Jim Smith
John Connelly	Joe Maresh	Randy Sturgill
David Curtis	Paul Maresh	Richard Temple
Gregg Everhart	Bruce McDonald	Karessa Torgerson
Gail Farler	Rex McIntire	Harry Vanderpool
Richard Farrier	Ken Ograin	Fred VanNatta
Alvaley Fong	Shigeo Oku	Andrew Watson
Terry Fullan	Leslie Oldenburg	Tim Wessels
Stephen Harris	Morris Ostrofsky	Heike Williams
Kerry Haskins		

In addition, many have now completed requirements for certification as Apprentice Beekeepers through the program. Congratulations, Apprentice Beekeepers!

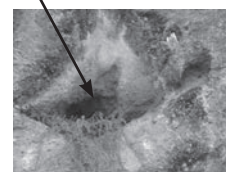
APPRENTICE BEEKEEPERS

Mary Ann Aschenbrenner	Nancy McFarlane
Todd Bartlem	Nancy Ograin
Bunny Carter	Linda Olson
Henry Condron	Ron Padgett
Canyon Davis	Cynthia Perry
Katharina Davitt	Dara Pickens
Gregg Everhart	Matthew Pickens
Jim Fanjoy	Janine Piercey
Alvaley Fong	Dan Pilver
Frank Fueille	Naomi Price
Kelly Goodwin	Amber Reese
Marianne Heater	Trevor Riches
Marc Huber	Bruce Roller
Jason Huddleston	Sheryl Russell
Paul Johnson	Stan Scotton
Maureen Kelly	Amy Sierzega
Marie Laper	Sterling Wallach
Pavel Leonchik	Tim Wessels
Greg Long	Judith Wible
Fred Mann	Douglas Youngberg

A CURIOUS FIND



Jim Meissner



A "non"beekeeping hiker in southern Oregon recently came across these honeycombs and asked the question that is this month's Question of the Month (see page 10). His photos give some perspective of the combs he found. Below the combs and to the left is a small cave that he didn't enter, but wondered why the combs weren't built there instead, as it seemed to be a better location—one that, as he says, "wouldn't get as exposed to rain and snow." I didn't have a stalactite clue (though the stalagmite site chosen does appear to have the better view). There's *always* more to learn. Please send your questions, concerns, and stories. What's happening in your world? —RM

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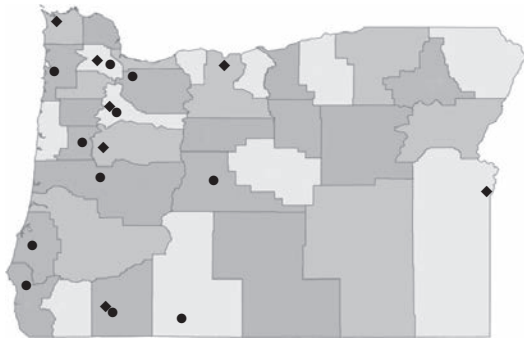
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South Willamette Valley: Jason Rowan
80881 Turkey Run Rd, Creswell 97426
541.942.6479; beetanical@q.com

• OSBA REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Cascadia Queen Breeders

Meets quarterly. Contact the group secretary for time and place.

Chair: Paul Maresh
503.283.2060; pmaresh@spiretech.com

Vice Chair: Chris Heath
503.734.7662; tafdad@ccwebster.net

Secretary: Alvalea Fong
503.742.0910; mamagoose@mac.com

Treasurer: Rex McIntire
503.720.7958; remcintire_5@msn.com

Central Oregon Beekeepers

Meets second Thursday, 63211 Service Rd, Bend
Visit www.orsba.org, Message Board, Central Oregon Branch. For information and meeting details, email: contact@cobeekeeping.org

Ring Leader: Bindy Beck-Meyer

Bookkeeper: Allen Engle

Website: www.cobeekeeping.org

Coos County Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 PM, third Saturday (except December)
Ohlsen Baxter Bldg, 631 Alder St, Myrtle Point

President: Hal Strain

Vice President: Shigeo Oku—541.396.4016

Secretary: Maureen Goettlich

Treasurer: Jane Oku
541.396.4016; janeoku1958@gmail.com

Klamath Basin Beekeepers

Meets 9:00 AM, last Saturday (except Nov/Dec)
OSU Extension, 3328 Vandenberg Rd, Klamath Falls

President: Jim Smith

541.892.5888; tulebee@gmail.com

Vice President: Chris Kerns

541.884.8664; ker664@charter.net

Secretary: Cathy Vick

541.894.8274; elliott772@aol.com

Treasurer: David Ramirez

541.892.3726; ramirez.d.m@gmail.com

Website: www.klamathbeekeepers.org

Lane County Beekeepers

Meets 7:30 PM, third Tuesday, Trinity United Methodist Church, 440 Maxwell Rd, Eugene

President: Katharine Hunt

541.607.0106; keehhunt@gmail.com

Vice President: Pam Leavitt—541.344.4228

Secretary: Rita Ostrofsky

541.685.2875; ostrofsky@pacinfo.com

Treasurer: Nancy Ograin

541.935.7065; nancy.ograin@gmail.com

Website: www.lcbaor.org

Linn-Benton Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 PM, fourth Wednesday, South First Alternative Co-op Meeting Room, 1007 SE 3rd, Corvallis

President: Linda Zielinski

541.929.4856; llz50@peak.org

Vice President: Zach Welch

541.754.3069; zw@superlucidity.net

Secretary: Marie Laper

541.760.9838; mlaper@peak.org

Treasurer: Suzi Maresh

541.967.9607; sjomaresh@msn.com

Oregon South Coast Beekeepers

Meets 6:00 PM, third Thursday, OSU Extension Office, located at the Fairgrounds, Gold Beach

President: Del Barber

541.249.0160; goldcoastapiary@gmail.com

Vice President: Carla Fletcher

Secretary/Treasurer: Myrna Barber

goldcoastapiary@gmail.com

Portland Metro Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 PM, second Thursday, Clackamas Community College, Clairmont Hall, Room 118, Oregon City

President: Chris Heath

503.734.7662; tafdad@ccwebster.net

Vice President: Jim Mellis

503.890.2465; craneguy97222@yahoo.com

Secretary: Alvalea Fong

503.742.0910; mamagoose@mac.com

Treasurer: Rex McIntire

503.720.7958; remcintire_5@msn.com

Portland Urban Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 PM, first Wednesday, Calaroga Terrace Rtmt Comm, Terrace Auditorium, 1400 NE Second Ave, Portland. For information, email: officers@

portlandurbanbeekeepers.org

President: Tim Wessels

503.380.9381; mrtjwessels@gmail.com

Vice President: Melissa Kerry

785.331.8003; mkerry@cu-portland.edu

Secretary: Mike Card

503.702.9250; mikecard02@gmail.com

Treasurer: Frank Barley—fbarley@yahoo.com

Website: http://portlandurbanbeekeepers.org

Southern Oregon Beekeepers

Meets 7:30 PM, first Monday, Southern Oregon Res & Ext Ctr, 569 Hanley Rd, Central Point

President: Ron Padgett

541.592.4678; padgett25@frontiernet.net

Vice President: Glenn Intermill—541.840.1213

Secretary: Dana Rose—puckamok@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Eric McEwen—541.592.5483

Tillamook County Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 PM, second Tuesday, Art Space Hwy 101 & 5th St, Bay City

President: Bob Allen—503.322.3819

Vice President: Terry Fullan

503.368.7160; tfullan@nehalem.tel.net

Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

Meets 7:30 PM, last Tuesday

Cameron Public Svcs Bldg, 155 N First Ave, Hillsboro

President: Mike Van Dyke

503.642.5338; mvand581@gmail.com

Vice President: Andrew Schwab

503.538.7545; beesbuzzin@gmail.com

Secretary: Paul Andersen

503.332.5410; paulande@easystreet.net

Treasurer: Jerry Maasdam

503.648.7906; jmaasdam@mac.com

Willamette Valley Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 PM, fourth Monday, Chemeketa

Community College, Building 34, Room A, Salem

President: Richard Farrier—541.327.2673

Vice President: Bunny Carter

503.703.8546; dbcramer@hotmail.com

Secretary: Mike Rodia

503.364.3275; drodia@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Patricia Swenson—pkswenson@gmail.com

Website: www.wvbatoday.com

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Fairs and Exhibits: Marjie Ehry—503.434.1894

Nominations: Chuck Sowers—503.266.1740

NW Apiculture Fund for Honey Bee Research, Extension, and Education: Kenny Williams—541.456.2631

Public Relations: Paul Andersen—503.332.5410

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Dr. Lynn Royce

541.929.5337; mitebee@peak.org

Dr. Ramesh Sagili

541.737.5460; sagilir@hort.oregonstate.edu

REGIONAL NEWS

Regional Representatives

North Coast

Coos OSU Extension Service in Tillamook and the Tillamook County beekeepers are planning for an all-levels workshop with Dewey Caron on May 18. In Astoria, Thom Trusewicz expects 30 for his annual bee school to help everyone get a good start in beekeeping. Jim Fanjoy will speak on his experience with the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program for the Tillamook Beekeepers April meeting.

—Terry Fullan

South Coast

Coos and Curry beekeepers are experiencing similar losses, from 10 percent to as high as 40 percent. Bees in the inland apiaries are seeing activity with pollen being brought in from pussy willow, gorse, and acacia. Temperatures have remained cool, and there has been limited activity on the coast. Progress is being made on the apiary planned for the Myrtle Point OSU Extension office location. While members continue to seek funds, the site has been approved by the city. The 16 x 24 apiary should house a variety of from three to four hives.

The South Coast Beekeepers Association (Curry) February meeting program was a thorough presentation of top-bar and Langstroth hives by President Del Barber and Jesse Fletcher. Vice President Carla Fletcher demonstrated a unique combination styrofoam hive that extolled the benefits of both and was colorfully decorated in bee-pleasing colors (violet, yellow, orange, blue, and green). Del rounded

out the meeting with a presentation about swarm traps, and distributed plans for building them. The event was reported in all three county newspapers by Oregon Master Beekeeper Apprentice student and new South Coast member Mureen Walker. Coos/Curry students in the Apprentice-level class are preparing for the third Saturday session. Twelve students and three instructors will demonstrate proficiency using smokers. Plans are in place for the class to participate in hive building for the new apiary during the April class.

—Del Barber

North Willamette Valley


It's beekeeping school season, and interest in bees runs high again this year. The Willamette Valley Beekeepers Association had approximately 80 in attendance this year. Linn-Benton Beekeepers Association reports approximately 60 attending their classes. More schools are scheduled.

While bees wintered far better in Oregon on average than most other locations across the nation, there were problems around. Localized spray kill, drought conditions, and pest/disease issues took their toll in the fall, which curtailed hives available for almond pollination for some. Most agree that the hives delivered in almonds look really good.

As usual, the cell phone network between beekeepers is buzzing with resolute policy changes for 2013.

“Every year is another opportunity to get things right.”

Several years ago, I was involved with the automation of a manufacturing plant. One morning, the president of the company and I walked through the plant when all of a sudden he stopped and asked me, “You know what I love about manufacturing?”



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| Spence Everson | Nancy McFarlane & Steve Stash | Craig Thronton |
| Dan Farrin | Michael Meador | Karessa Torgerso |
| Terry Fullan | Michael Medina | Ted Winters |
| Shane Galloway | | Tim Wydronek |
| Doug Gillum | | |

Then he said, “Every day is another chance to get things right!!”

What a great attitude! And his admonition holds so true for beekeeping; don't you agree?

Beyond that, in beekeeping, I have also found value in the motto: “Every year is another opportunity to get things right” Let's just put our best foot forward, keep in touch, and have a really good year in 2013!—*Harry Vanderpool*

South Willamette Valley

Spring is here again in the south valley. All it takes is a few days of sun to remind you of the seasons past and the season come. April is a very important time for the bees and the beekeeper. The bees are starting to brood heavily and honey/pollen stores are being consumed. A diligent keeper of bees should be aware of this and be prepared for adverse weather conditions that would lessen the availability of maple, wild cherry, and other nectar flows around. For the beekeeper, remember all that you have learned in the season past and try to put in place new techniques that will make you a better beekeeper. Hopefully, you find your bees in good health this spring and have few surprises, and remember always to stay ahead of your bees. Thanks.

—*Jason Rowan*

Regional Associations

Lane County Beekeepers

LCBA held its 29th Annual Bee School on Saturday, March 9, with over 70 people in attendance. During the day-long school, club members Chuck Hunt, Judy Scher, Ken Ograin, Jonathan Loftin, Morris Ostrofsky, Max Kuhn, and Brandt Weaver introduced those present to the basics of backyard beekeeping. Also, two workshops were given in the afternoon. These covered “Feeding Bees” and “Woodenware Assembly.”



Max Kuhn (left) discusses feeding bees and Ken Ograin (right) discusses woodenware assembly during the Lane County group's recent bee school. Ramesh Sagili (center) presents at one of the group's monthly meetings.

The topic for our April meeting will be covered by Dr. C.W. Hunt. His presentation will cover “Hive Evaluation and Swarming.” Our monthly meeting starts at 7:30 PM, and takes place at Trinity United Methodist Church, 440 Maxwell Road, Eugene.

—*Katharine Hunt*

Linn-Benton Beekeepers

The LBBA group held our first bee school on Saturday, March 2, and it was a huge success. We had 40 people attend. The feedback that the presenters got was that they all did a great job. The majority of those attending were new to beekeeping or had just one year of hive experience.

—*Linda Zielinski*

Portland Metro Beekeepers

Our Secretary Alvalea Fong brought many samples of methods of feeding bees, some that she had made herself. She provided many examples of innovative ways of supplemental feeding. She also mentioned that she puts an eighth teaspoon of salt in her quart Boardman feeder in each hive, so each one has its own water supply. Regarding the salt, “The bees seem to like it.”

Most of the entire two hours was a talk by Dr. Ramesh Sagili from OSU. The material was so interesting that many members hoped it would have lasted longer—and he had more information to provide. He talked about diploid and haploid drones, and what that might look like in the hive. He listed many factors inducing swarming. The most important one was reduced queen bee pheromone transmission, which can occur as the hive grows in size so that the queen's total pheromone production becomes inadequate. He talked about the process and signs of swarming. He noted that while a small beekeeper may be disheartened by a swarm, over all, the swarming behavior is a good thing for the total bee survival environment. He had a video that he had taken of a queen “spraying” in combat with another queen. This is a rare and somewhat unknown event.

While discussing selection and breeding of queens, he encouraged us to try to buy local bees. The United States has a “bottleneck” of queen genetic diversity. Out of the 26 subspecies of *Apis mellifera*, the US has only six or seven. This, plus many other factors, may be contributing to generally acknowledged “queen issues.” Many beekeepers believe a poorer quality of queens is a major player in hive problems, such as premature supersedure, early drone laying, and failures in requeening—among others. Lastly, he summarized seasonal issues in hive management with details for each season. With a picture of the Varroa life cycle, he encouraged us to track mite load and what to look for in a high mite load. It was an excellent presentation, and he was able to get across some complicated issues in a very short time!

—*Paul Jarrett*

Portland Urban Beekeepers

The PUB meeting invitation touted the March meeting as the “Unofficial Kickoff to the 2013 Beekeeping Season,” and the enthusiastic members in attendance were treated to multiple presentations for new and experienced beekeepers.



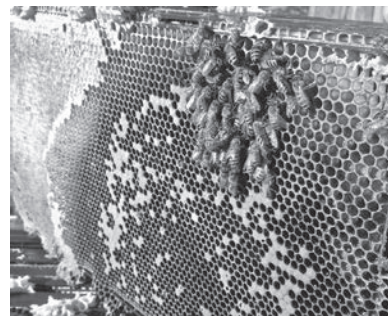
Portland Urban Beekeepers gathered for the group's monthly meeting in March, when they also "kicked off" the 2013 beekeeping year.

Glen Andresen and Tim Wessels from Bridgetown Bees started off with, "From Bees to Bottom Boards," a primer on beekeeping essentials for the Langstroth hive, and Matt Reed of Bee Thinking provided members with tips for catching swarms with bait hives and beekeeping with Warré and top-bar hives. In upcoming events, PUB is currently in discussion with the Zenger organic demonstration farm in SE Portland to take over management of their existing bee colonies. The advantage to Zenger is relief from the recurring maintenance duties, which they have found difficult to staff, and the continuation of bees on site, which they feel adds to their educational mission. The advantage to PUB is access to a set of established hives in a publicly accessible site for mentoring and education days for our members and/or public.

On Saturday, July 13, PUB will organize a "Bee Fest" component for the established Beaver Creek Kraft Fair. While our dream is to establish a bee festival in the Portland area,

our immediate goal is to further our mission of encouraging responsible and successful beekeeping in the greater Portland area. We will set up a table and possibly an observation hive, and we welcome participation of other area clubs and vendors of bee-related products. Cost is very minimal. Please contact Frank at officers@portlandurbanbeekeepers.org.

Portland urban beekeepers have been reporting winter losses with typical and consistently similar symptoms. Here is a report from one of our members for their winter loss: "We got our first hive of honey bees last spring, and we went to check on them yesterday and the entire hive is gone except for a cluster of a few dozen dead bees. There is a lot of honey still in the hive. There did not appear to be the presence of foulbrood in the fall or yesterday either." This is nearly identical to the vast majority of winter loss reports from PUB



A dead-out with only a cluster of dead bees remaining.

Our next meeting is scheduled for April 3, 2013. Find us at our new web page <http://portlandurbanbeekeepers.org> or come join the discussion at our Facebook group, Portland Urban Beekeepers. —*Tim Wessels*

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Tillamook County Beekeepers

March's meeting was very well attended and we enjoyed welcoming an enthusiastic group of beginning beekeepers. Club members are anxious for arrivals of our bee packages and nucs in a few short weeks. We listened to a presentation from Lauren Sorg and Taylor Larson from FoodRoots. This nonprofit's mission is food security for the North Coast region. They work and assist small food producers with funding and support.

Club member Sharon Frantz brought a 2-pound block of beeswax found on the beach from the Beeswax Ship, a wrecked Spanish galleon. The sample was whitish in color, yet still had a rich honey aroma. —*Terry Fullan*

Note: For those who may not be familiar with the shipwreck Terry refers to here, a short program about it can be viewed at: www.opb.org/programs/ofg/segments/view/1685.

KEEPING BEES IN APRIL

Todd Balsiger

Each spring we need to verify that colonies are queenright, healthy, and well fed so they can build up to maximum populations to capitalize on the summer's nectar flow. In that endeavor, consider the following:

- ❖ Check for weight by hefting hives. Colonies can starve quickly at this time of year. Feed light colonies with heavy sugar syrup.
- ❖ Sample for Varroa infestation; treat if thresholds are exceeded. I've learned that the sugar shake can be fatiguing to the arm and the alcohol wash may be preferred. The procedure is the same as the sugar shake, albeit the bees and mites don't walk away. Whatever method you choose, take care to be consistent in use so you can make comparisons of mite counts in colonies over time.

This is some of what Randy Oliver writes about the alcohol wash: "It meets all my criteria for simplicity and quickness in the field, requires a minimal amount of equipment, and does not require sharp eyes nor much counting. Best of all, the alcohol wash gives an immediate and suitably accurate assessment of mite levels in a yard within a few minutes. Many in the research community have gone to using the alcohol wash of 300 bees from the broodnest as their standard method of mite assessment. The suitability of the alcohol wash is supported by extensive sampling and statistical analysis by Katie Lee for her doctoral research."

I recommend visiting Randy's website at <http://scientificbeekeeping.com> to see how he makes his sampling kit and how he samples. Whatever procedure you use, continue to sample so you know your estimated

infestation rate and whether or not treatment is necessary.

Randy's treatment thresholds are much lower than others I have read. In the summer, he treats anything above 2 percent infestation (6 mites out of 300 bees). Most other sources recommend treatment at 10 percent infestation. I do not know what threshold is appropriate for us.

❖ Do some "hive house cleaning" activities on a nice spring day. This allows a variety of tasks to be accomplished based on your objectives. With all hive manipulations, have a plan before starting and try to combine tasks to minimize hive intrusions. At the minimum, at least clean or swap out the bottom board for a dry one (a new pair of underwear, as Dr. Burgett would say), and make sure the colony is queenright. From there, the sky is the limit: reversing, making divisions, equalizing, and so forth. Many beekeepers systematically go through their hives and remove burr comb, poor-quality comb, and old brood comb; clean bottom boards; replace queens if necessary; check brood frames for foulbrood; and create uniform strength hives.

❖ Consider stimulative sugar water feeding about 6 weeks prior to the onset of the major nectar flow. Discontinue stimulative sugar feeding before supering. For more on this topic, I am going to share what John Jacob wrote on the OSBA web page. From John: "An old timer once told me anybody can grow bees on a flow, but a good beekeeper will grow the bees before the flow in order to maximize honey production. I have found this to be very true for maximizing honey production. The key is to keep the bees from hanging in the trees before or during the flow. This can be accomplished several ways through better brood nest management. Several thoughts come to mind here:

1. Super early and often.
2. Checkerboard and keep the brood nest open.
3. Monitor for signs of swarm impulse and take appropriate action.

Number three is very important and there will be many opinions on this. Personally I like to model my management on the bees' natural life history. In other words, help the bees do what they want to do. When there are signs of the urge to swarm I like to take the old queen off in a small nuc with a couple frames of brood and some food (much like how a swarm leaves with the old queen to establish a new hive). This way the parent hive is left strong for gathering nectar and rearing a new queen. A break in brood rearing during the flow actually can increase honey production because there will be less brood for workers to tend to during this period and the colony will naturally allocate more workers to foraging. If the new queen fails to mate or is marginal in any way, she can be dispatched and the

old queen with her nuc combined back to the parent hive. Explosive growth before the flow is actually a good thing if one can manage the swarm impulse productively.”

Other things to consider:

- ❖ Be prepared to catch swarms. The beginning of swarm season is marked by the flush of new growth on plants. It begins in earnest in April, peaks in May, and continues into June. Requeening, reversing, checkerboarding, equalizing, and making divisions are all strategies to reduce swarming.
- ❖ Maple trees bloom around the beginning of the month, which is a major nectar source for honey bees. If the weather cooperates, it is possible to fill supers with honey. Some beekeepers super now; others feel that their bees need the maple honey to ward off starvation. Only you know how well provisioned your hives are and the typical weather in your area. I personally do not super until May.
- ❖ Heed your super withdrawal times based on your pest and disease treatments. Also, if you use paradichlorobenzene for wax moth control, then before supering place supers out on a warm day to allow the paradichlorobenzene residues to vaporize.
- ❖ Divisions in April are ideal if a robust honey crop is desired. However, well-mated queens are not always available, and well-balanced divisions (ratio of adults to brood) are necessary to prevent chilled brood. Making divisions is a form of Varroa control as it disrupts the brood cycle. (Swarming does the same thing, but to a greater extent.)
- ❖ Keep the front of hives clear of grass to promote ventilation and forager access.
- ❖ Mouse guards can be removed.

Adapted from: April 2012 issue of *The Bee Line*.

TREATMENT-FREE BEEKEEPING

Lynn Royce

What do I mean by *treatment-free beekeeping*? There have been so many new buzz words: organic beekeeping, natural beekeeping, chemical-free beekeeping, and now treatment-free beekeeping, it gets a bit difficult to find the meaning. *Organic* to me was always about the chemistry, that is, any compound with carbon. For *natural*—well, any time you observe something, never mind keep it captive, you change everything. So, what has been called natural beekeeping has nothing to do with natural. Bees live in caves and tree hollows naturally. Then, there is *chemical free*, and that does not work well either. Bees communicate

with chemicals; we call them *pheromones*. Finally, what is a *treatment*? Is feeding your bees a treatment? While the wording is difficult, I think what many want is to get away from hard pesticides to reduce mite populations. How do we do that and keep our bees healthy? What I want to do with this series of short messages over the months is to give some thought to how can we keep bees healthy without pesticides and antibiotics.

For early spring, into April: Hive Placement

I watched the sun rise across a frosty landscape the past few mornings, and the cold reminded me how important it is for our bees to be warm and dry. We can help them by paying attention to the sun in winter as it crosses the sky. Even a few hours of sunshine on the hives can make a difference in winter, and placement of the colony so that this happens requires attention to the how low the sun travels in the south sky and what obstacles will block it. I have seen high fences, tall hedges, buildings, and trees as the most common blockers of a winter sun. In the spring and early summer, when we are getting new bees for the first time or to replace ones we lost, the sun has a different path across the sky, and days are warm or even hot. This makes it hard to think about winter and what spot will be in continuous shade during that time of year. A dry colony is less likely to get dysentery, will be warmer, will have honey and pollen stores that will keep better—and you have a better chance of healthy bees still alive when spring arrives.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Question

I live in southern Oregon. During a hike recently, I discovered what appeared to be strange exposed honey combs out in a remote area of the Cascade foothills. I have never seen anything like



it. Could you shed any light on what it might be? Later, I wondered why some sugar-loving animal or bird hadn't started chewing on them. They looked totally untouched. I estimate the tallest comb (?) was 9 or 10 inches tall. There seems to be a reddish residue in the niche behind the combs.

Thanks,

Jim Meissner

Response

Dewey Caron: You found a wild honey bee nest in the cliff opening. The red material is propolis—the bees were attempting to sanitize and eventually reduce the opening with propolis (they collect it as resin/gums from trees, flower buds, etc.—i.e., pine pitch). The combs appear empty (no stored honey) and pretty inaccessible so animals/birds, etc., have not yet found it—few organisms can benefit from the beeswax or digest it so there isn't much left to feed on. They probably died this winter, and cooler temperatures have helped preserve the five beeswax combs. Selection of a rock cave over a tree hollow is not unusual in the foothills. The nest was likely established from a swarm dividing from a beekeeper's hive or other wild (feral) nest in the area. Less than one in five such nests successfully establish and survive their first winter.

READY TO SURVEY?



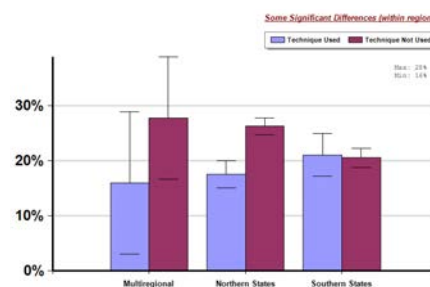
Dewey M. Caron

The Bee Informed Partnership (BIP) is a USDA/NIFA (US Department of Agriculture/National Institute of Food and Agriculture) funded project with the stated goal of reducing colony losses. The program is a collaboration of research institutions, universities, and beekeepers in the US. BIP, with the cooperation of the nation's beekeepers, cooperatively seeks solutions to reduce colony losses. While some beekeepers are experiencing near normal loss levels, others are experiencing devastating losses. BIP seeks a collective approach to gather and share information on what works and what doesn't work. We need participation of OSBA members on two electronic surveys covering both annual colony losses and management strategies. The information you provide, after compilation and analysis, is displayed graphically on the BIP website in a way that is easy to understand.

Beekeepers can find out which management techniques correlate to lower colony loss when beekeepers anonymously share data. More data are always more accurate than less data. Last year's survey included over 5,000 participating beekeepers sharing information. 2013 will be the third year of these surveys. This third year of data will enable us to conduct multi-factorial analysis and report results on a more regional basis. Commercial beekeeper data will be separated to highlight this group's special needs and concerns.

The cost for participating is free. It will take less than 20 minutes to take both surveys. In return, you will have access to the compiled data from all aspects of bee management. The information you enter into the survey is completely anonymous, designed to improve beekeeping success.

Go to <http://beeinformed.org> to see what we have gathered so far and sign up for this year's survey. More beekeeper participation means more information and more answers. We want you to BEE INFORMED. The 2013 survey will be available beginning March 29 until April 15. IT IS VERY EASY AND FREE. Go to the site and click on the "Sign Up, Participate" button to sign up with your email now. You will get a reminder to fill out a survey during the two-week survey period. I hope you will visit the site often to see what beekeepers are doing to help reduce losses. An example of the type of data and analysis available from such survey data and how we present the analysis is provided here (to the right):



We asked beekeepers if they were using drone brood removal as a management tool to reduce bee losses. When we separated the responses for those beekeepers living in the northern states (Oregon, for example) and compared the data to those keeping bees in southern states or a smaller number of beekeepers who moved between northern and southern regions, we found the 363 northern beekeepers (18 percent of respondents) who did use drone brood removal lost 8.7 fewer colony deaths per 100 managed colonies than those 1,637 who did not report using drone brood removal. In our analysis, beekeepers who reported removing drone comb lost 33.3 percent fewer colonies overwinter. We do not imply cause and effect—merely those northern beekeepers who reported doing drone brood removal also said they had fewer overwintering losses as a group compared to those who did nothing or did something else. Drone brood removal is labor intensive, but it appears to be an effective IPM technique to reduce Varroa and have better colony survival for at least beekeepers in the northern US. Have you tried it? Did it work? Our website offers other possible solutions, based on our surveys of beekeepers. Have you signed up to tell us what you are doing? We need Oregon participation. Sign up now and be counted!

Note: In addition to Dewey's encouragement here, Eric Mussen likens BIP involvement to being in "the country's largest beekeeping coffee shop that can bring the experiences of thousands of beekeepers to you." He, too, encourages participation, and notes that anonymity of the surveys is "covered by federal and state laws." He also states that "some of us are allowed to comment when we think that the results could be a bit misleading, based on small sample sizes or specific biases in the respondent group." Such review can only add to the potential for real learning from the data (and from one another).

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 6, 10 AM–4 PM: Southern Oregon Beekeepers Association Beginner's Bee School. The Science and Art of Beekeeping in the Rogue Valley, for the beginner or novice with lectures and hands-on demonstrations. Southern Oregon Research and Extension Office, 569 Hanley Rd, Medford. \$35 members; \$45 nonmembers (includes 2013 dues). Bring a sack lunch. *Registration or information:* Marianne Heater at mkheater@msn.com or Carl Lorenz at 541.944.8995. **Pre-registration required.**

April 8 (7–9 PM), April 10 (7–9 PM), and April 13 (9 AM–1 PM): Tualatin Valley Beekeepers Association Bee School. For newer and beginning beekeepers at the Washington Street Conference Center, 225 South First Ave, Hillsboro. Sessions will include: What to Expect from Beekeeping, Life Cycle of Honey Bees, Beekeeping Equipment, Safety, Working with Bees, Products of the Hive, Getting Started in Bees, Pests & Diseases, and Nutrition. \$50.00 (includes all materials and 2013 dues). *Registration:* Send name, address, phone, and email with a check made payable to TVBA **by March 31** to: Jerry Massdam Treasurer, TVBA, 1769 SE Alder, Hillsboro OR 97123.

Friday, April 12 from 8:30 AM to 6:00 PM and Saturday, April 13 from 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM: GloryBee's Annual Bee Weekend. The event will take place in Eugene, Oregon, at 29548 B Airport Road off of Highway 99. Come and join

us for demonstrations on how to install packaged bees in hives. The American Bee Federation's Honey Queen will be on site, and there will be other fun and educational activities for adults and children alike. While you're here, visit the Factory Store for honey tastings and access to many other GloryBee products. For more information, visit: www.glorybee.com. *Be sure to pre-order your packaged bees for pickup on Bee Weekend!*

April 20, 8:00 AM–3:30 PM (Registration: 8:00–9:00 AM): Portland Metro Bee Day. To be held at George Hansen's Foothills Honey Farm, 30576 S Oswalt Rd, Colton. This is a hands-on event with experienced beekeepers. Bring your own protection gear, bee veils, gloves, bee suit, or wear long pants and long-sleeved shirt. Dress for the weather, layered clothing recommended, and bring your own camp chairs. *Information:* Nancy McFarlane at 503.260.3030; Chris Heath at 503.734.7662. [Registration form, page 13.]

July 13: Bee Fest (component of Beaver Creek Kraft Fair). PUB will set up a table and possibly an observation hive, and welcomes participation of other area clubs and vendors of bee-related products. Cost is very minimal. *Information:* Frank at officers@portlandurbanbeekeepers.org.

July 26–28: Pacific Northwest Treatment-Free Beekeeping Conference. Science meets earth-friendly beekeeping. *Information and registration:* www.blissoneybees.org/events.html.

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Portland Metro Beekeeping Association Bee Day 2013

Saturday, April 20th from 9 AM - 3:00 PM
Check-in 8:30-9:00 AM



Attendance limited to 150 people.
Mail-in registration for first 150 people by April 14th deadline
\$25/person or \$35/family



NO DAY-OF-EVENT REGISTRATION

GEAR: If you don't have a bee suit, bring or wear long pants, long sleeves, "hoody" to hide hair, and garden or dishwashing gloves for protection. Consider rain gear and warm clothes, sun hat, umbrella. There will be a limited number of bee veils and suits to check out.

Bring a lawn chair or camp chair. It is a long day of standing.

Complimentary morning beverage provided. Soda available for purchase.



9:00 AM WELCOME
1st Session 9:30 -10:30 AM
Beekeeping Equipment (recommended for new beekeepers)
Current State of the Bees

2nd Session 10:30 -11:30
Hive Inspection (everybody out to the hives)
LUNCH (This year this will be catered)
3rd Session 12:30 - 1:30
Natural Beekeeping
Diagnosis and Managing Honey Bee Diseases

4th Session 1:30 -2:30
Hive Inspection (everybody out to the hives)
2:30 CLOSING & RAFFLE

LOCATION:
George Hansen's
Foothills Honey Farm
30576 South Oswalt Rd
Colton, OR 97017
Mapquest for detailed directions.



For More Information:
Chris Heath 503-734-7662
Rex McIntire 503-720-7958

Please NO SMOKING

Registration includes 1 lunch. Family registration includes 2 lunches. Additional lunches, at \$8 each, and must be ordered and paid at this time. Form must be received by April 14th for pre-registration. Make checks payable to PMBA. Thank you. Please check here for vegetarian lunch

Mail registration with check to: Name _____
Rex McIntire Address _____
15133 S. Curtis Ct. City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Oregon City, OR 97045 Telephone _____ E-Mail _____

August 5–9: Eastern Apicultural Society. West Chester, Pennsylvania. *Information:* www.easternapiculture.org.

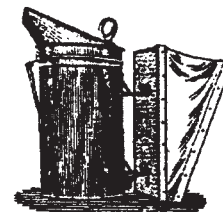
September 29–October 4: XXXXIII International Apimondia Congress. Kyiv, Ukraine. *Information:* apimondia2013.org.ua/en.

October 16–19: Western Apicultural Society. Sante Fe, New Mexico. *Information:* ucanr.edu/sites/was2.

October 31–November 2: OSBA Fall Conference. Seaside, Oregon. *Information:* www.orsba.org.

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Oregon State Beekeepers Association Membership Form

The **Oregon State Beekeepers Association** is a nonprofit organization representing and supporting all who have an interest in honey bees and beekeeping. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in bees and beekeeping. You do not need to own bees or reside in Oregon to join. Membership includes the ongoing work of the organization on behalf of the honey bee and beekeeping, a vote in OSBA elections, discounts on publications, placement on the swarm call list, and an annual directory and subscription to *The Bee Line*. For new memberships and renewals, please send check made payable to *OSBA* with this completed form to:

Paul Kowash, 5959 SW Taylors Ferry Rd, Portland OR 97219

Name: _____ **New** ___ **Renewing** ___

Additional name(s) for added memberships at the same address:

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Telephone number: _____ **email address:** _____

Contact information: The OSBA respects the privacy of members. Please check if you do not want your contact information included in a membership directory sent to OSBA members only: **Do not include contact information** _____

Please also check if you want to share only a portion of your contact information:

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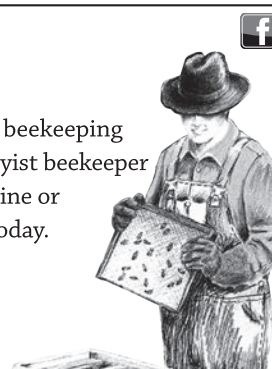
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The Bee Line

The Bee Line is the official publication of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association. Annual subscriptions to the newsletter are included with membership in OSBA.

Please send news about your bees and your experiences in keeping them, as well as events, corrections, comments, questions, photographs and stories (both from “old” times and “new”), interviews, recipes, and points of view to: Rosanna Mattingly, *The Bee Line*, 4207 SE Woodstock Blvd Ste 517, Portland OR 97206; email: osba.newsletter@gmail.com.

The next issue to be printed will be the May 2013 issue. The deadline for submitting copy is April 10, 2013.

Thank you!

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