



The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

Volume 42

Number 5

June 2017

2016–2017 Winter Colony Loss Survey

Dewey M. Caron and Ramesh Sagili

We have conducted PNW colony loss surveys, now for several years. Our 2016–2017 colony loss survey included survey returns from 9 Oregon commercial beekeepers (managing 28,219 colonies in the fall (simple average = 3,135 colonies/individual). These 9 respondents reported losing 8,148 colonies for a weighted average loss of 29%. This colony loss percentage is almost double the level compared to previous winter loss (15.7%) and nearly three times higher than the 2014–2015 colony loss level of 12.4% (see reports in June 2015 & 2016 *Bee Line*). Highest individual winter loss rate reported was 44% and the lowest was 5%. Summer colony loss rate for four of the nine Oregon beekeeper respondents was 18% (range from 7 to 33%); three of the respondents did not know summer loss rate and one reported zero summer loss.

Six semi-commercial Oregon beekeepers (ranging from 50 to 500 colonies) with 417 colonies (70 simple average/individual) in the fall lost 151 colonies accounting to a colony loss rate of 36%. The total 15 commercial/semi-commercial beekeepers responding to our survey owned 39% of the total USDA-NASS estimated colonies in Oregon. Total number of colonies owned by last year's respondents accounted for 50% of the estimated Oregon colonies. We caution that the 15 responses that we have received so far may not be true representation of the colony losses this past winter, as it appears that there is lot of variability in colony losses among beekeepers (some have reported heavy losses and others have reported lower losses).

We have yet to receive colony loss data from Idaho beekeepers. So far we have received only 2 responses from Washington commercial beekeepers (25% colony loss) and 12 semi-commercials (32% loss rate). Last year the 28 respondent commercial beekeepers from the 3-state PNW (116,881 fall colonies = simple average of 4,174 colonies/individual) region reported an overwintering loss rate of 18.2%, and 17 semi-commercial beekeeper respondents (3,836 fall colonies = simple average 226 colonies/individual) reported a loss rate was 20.7%. The 120,717 total colonies owned by those respondents represented just over 50% of the 238,000 colonies maintained by beekeepers in the 3-state PNW region.

The survey also asked for an acceptable overwintering loss rate. Ten–fifteen percent was the most common response; hence, the actual losses during 2016–2017 were nearly double the acceptable loss rate indicated by the respondents. Among all the commercial beekeeper respondents, one beekeeper managed colonies in 5 states, but the majority (7 of 11 respondents) kept bees in two states (California and Oregon or Washington).

For understanding potential reasons for colony losses, 120 responses (from 14 individuals) were tallied (most individuals listed more than a single response). The most commonly cited factors for colony losses were Queen failure (11 of 14), Varroa and Starvation (9 each), colony weak in fall (7 respondents). Other factors listed

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Mureen Walker

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www.orsba.org

OREGON STATE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
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www.oregonmasterbeekeeper.org

OREGON MASTER BEEKEEPER PROGRAM
A Joint Venture of OSBA and the Oregon State University Extension Service
info@oregonmasterbeekeeper.org

Image above: At an Oregon Master Beekeeper Program class in Gold Beach, Dr. Bill Fitts explains use of the microscope for viewing the multitude of Varroa mites on the white board to student Julie Hawthorne while the class looks on.

May all individual efforts for the bees go well even as you disband, Cascadia Queen Breeders.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



At one point in the 1950s, Oliver Petty saw a need for outreach to the general public about honey bees and beekeeping. His solution was to set up a honey bee informational booth at the Oregon State Fair.

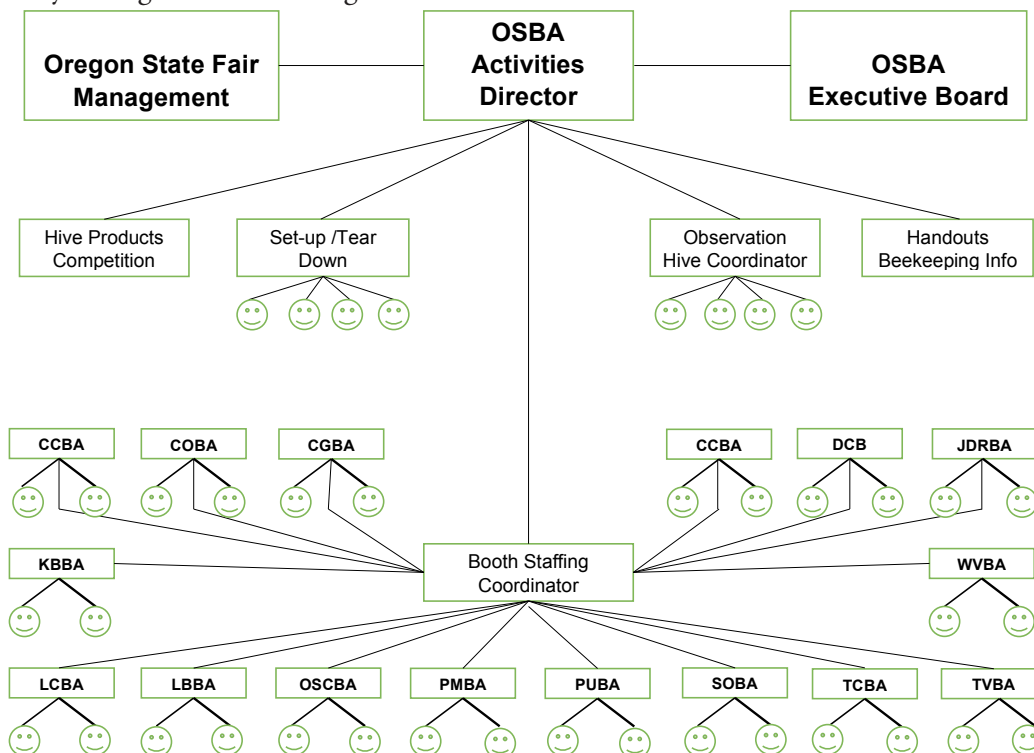
Oliver, serving as OSBA secretary at the time, set up, decorated, stocked the booth, and took it down single-handedly. The booth was informational only and was not staffed with beekeepers for a number of years.

In the early 1960s, Oliver expanded the booth to include volunteers to greet booth visitors and answer questions. A honey competition was added, which revved up enthusiasm for the annual event greatly. In 1967, the Willamette Valley Beekeepers Association was established. Soon after formation, the WVBA assumed management of the Oregon State Fair honey bee booth, with sponsorship of the OSBA. The WVBA did a stellar job in managing the booth for nearly 40 years!!!

In 2006, the WVBA returned management of the booth to the OSBA. A number of good things came out of this. One improvement was to make individual days reserved for our regional associations to staff. Later on, the OSBA was blessed with an Activities Chair, who, along with a large cast of dedicated volunteers, for a few years produced the finest State Fair Booth ever produced in Oregon. You can find pictures on www.orsba.org. The OSBA took a break from the fair in 2016.

It is now very important that we turn our attention to returning to the Oregon State Fair. There is no venue that can come close to the hands-on, one-on-one, good-will benefits that the booth provides for bees, beekeeping, beekeepers, and our industry.

The OSBA has an open position for Activities Director who would jump start this event. This is a very fun and manageable position. Check out the activities flowchart, and notice how each aspect of the effort is very manageable. It is manageable and fun!



If you are interested in giving back to beekeeping and the industry by serving as Activities Director please shoot me an e-mail. I directed and co-directed the Oregon State Fair bee booth for many years alongside many great beekeepers, and will be happy to coach, support, and advise.

Harry Vanderpool

OSBA Executive Board Meeting April 22, 2017 ❖ Canby, Oregon

The OSBA meeting called to order by President Harry Vanderpool at 4:00 PM.

In Attendance: Paul Andersen, Tom Cinquini, Mary Edwards, Becca Fain, Debby Garman, Everett Kaser, Max Kuhn, Rosanna Mattingly, Rex McIntire, Claire Moody, Rick Olson, Rita Ostrofsky, Sarah Red-Laird, Mike Rodia, William Roll, Jason Rowan, Harry Vanderpool, and Mureen Walker.

Minutes: Mike Rodia moved to accept the minutes from the October board meeting, as read by Secretary Mary Edwards. Seconded by Rex McIntire. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Joe Hansen reviewed verbally our accounts, explaining he is in process of getting everything in QuickBooks and an extension has been filed for the 2016 tax year. By an online vote, board approval was given to purchase a new laptop, printer, and to acquire a credit card for OSBA use. By the October board meeting, he'll have a profit-and-loss report. Claire Moody moved to accept the treasurer's report. Seconded by Everett Kaser. Motion passed.

Regional & Association Reports: The following groups/regions represented today: **Portland Metro, Lane County, Southern Oregon, Linn-Benton, Tualatin Valley, Portland Urban, South Coast, Tillamook County, Central Coast, and South Willamette Valley.** All groups had similar reports for winter losses—due to mites and moisture. Busy with spring activities, groups are holding field days, bee schools, adding new members, ordering queens and nucs, and having lots of exciting speakers giving classes or talks at group meetings. One request made was for a list of available speakers and topics—with contact information—for new groups. Harry asked for groups to talk to their members about bee kill situations, and to call regional groups first for help and guidance. Honey bee safety was discussed in regards to land use management practices/pesticides use and educational outreach. Sarah Red-Laird said she'd share more information on this topic as it is available.

Bee Line / Website: Digital version of *The Bee Line* is up and running. Rosanna asked what is to be listed on our website area that's "for members only" beyond the swarm list and current/back issues of the newsletter. In addition to the swarm call list, she would like to add bee removal services contact information and a list of presenters who can speak at schools, group meetings, or libraries on our website because of the requests for these services. Rosanna asked about a

disclaimer in regards to OSBA expectations/best practices for offered services and also a disclaimer for what is listed on our website. Everyone agreed that disclaimers and best practices procedures are necessary. We also discussed compiling a current list of city ordinances and codes regulations for Oregon to have available for beekeepers. Groups were asked to find what is already posted/readily available for their particular areas and send for the OSBA website.

Rosanna brought it to our attention that some wording in our Constitution/Bylaws regarding officers and honorary life members has caused some confusion. Amendments must be proposed and in writing for a membership vote, and she will provide suggested wording for review at the next meeting.

Paul Andersen made a motion to remove the wording from our general policies and procedures which currently reads, whenever possible, the annual OSBA conference will be held at the Oregon Coast. Seconded by Harry Vanderpool. OSBA executive board voted and the motion to remove this from the policies and procedures passed.

Grants & Fellowships: Jan Lohman was unable to attend. Report to be presented at our next board meeting.

Agricultural Liaison: Mike Rodia was called away from the meeting so Harry Vanderpool read his notes in regards to providing testimony and/or following four proposed bills concerning beekeeping during the current legislative session.

- ❖ HB 2533A adds the definition for a nucleus colony to ORS 602 and then exempts nucleus colonies from the Department of Agricultural hive registration fees. The bill has passed the House of Representatives and favorably heard by the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.
- ❖ HB 3280-I never saw a public meeting.
- ❖ SB 785 died in Committee after a public hearing.
- ❖ SB 929 died in Committee after two public hearings.

Old Business

OSBA Events Coordinator / Oregon State Fair: Harry shared a flow chart for a Fair Coordinator. We agreed that the

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coordinator really should live close to the North Willamette Valley area, as some fair board meeting attendance is required. Please reach out to your groups for volunteers, as all the props are available. Also maybe we could have Co-Chairs to help with the Oregon State Fair booth.

Regional Association Affiliation: Regional Associations fees thru an online vote are as follows: \$1.00 per person for each regional association's group member, with a \$50.00 maximum fee requirement per association. An e-mailed billing was sent out to each regional association, reminding groups of this fee and the required 5 current OSBA members' names and addresses in the association, including the president. Harry brought it to our attention



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that some regional associations may not be registered as a nonprofit organization with the state. He asked each group to look into this matter and be sure they are currently registered. We would like to send a letter out to each regional association asking for proof of current nonprofit Business license registration. It is vital for each group to have this, and for the OSBA be able to provide them with insurance coverage for qualified events.

OSBA Fall Conference 2016: At this time Jeff was unable to attend. Report to be presented at our next board meeting.

New Business

Oxalic Acid Delivery Registration: Harry informed us this OA/glycerin extended release method of treatment for mites is still in its trial and testing stages and not registered for use in the U.S.

Harry called Dr. Ramesh Sagili on this subject to confirm where he stands. Ramesh cares deeply about honey bee health and beekeepers. He'd like for researchers to continue to study this new prolonged exposure treatment and methods. We encourage your patience in this area to allow the scientists to complete trials.

Randy Oliver is testing this treatment. For more information you can read about this subject on his website: <http://scientificbeekeeping.com/beyond-takic/>. For latest trial information and updates at <http://scientificbeekeeping.com/oxalic-shop-towel-updates/>.

Cascadia Queen Breeders: Due to an inability to recruit candidates for open board positions, it is time to dissolve Cascadia Queen Breeders. The Executive Committee voted to dispose of treasury funds by donating five hundred dollars (\$500.00) to the WSU Queen Breeding Program with the remainder of the funds contributed to the OSU Foundation, specifically The Northwest Apiculture Fund for Honey Bee Research, Extension, and Education.

OSBA Fall Conference 2017: Jason presented the 2017 tentative fall conference agenda, to be held at the Oregon Garden Resort on October 27th, 28th, and 29th. One request, if possible, was to try and have more breakout session choices. Jason asked for ideas to be directed to him.

OSBA Conference Expansion: Harry informed us of upcoming possibilities concerning future conferences. As we already have three-day conferences, he'd like to see more Friday breakout sessions, where individual groups could schedule a meeting. For example, the regional associations or officers/presidents could reserve a room and time for a special meeting. Harry added that this could be included in registration fees or at an additional charge, with reservations required.

OSBA Fall Conference 2018: Harry and Jason have already been researching areas. They found the Salem Convention Center, which appears to be a nice location, with all the qualities we are looking for. Claire Moody made a motion to reserve the date for our OSBA fall conference 2018, to be held at the Salem Convention Center. Seconded by Paul Andersen. Motion passed.

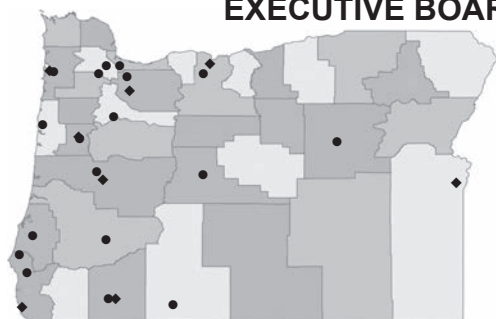
The next Oregon State Beekeepers Association Board Meeting will be held on July 15, 2017 @ 1:00 PM. Location to be announced.

Jason Rowan made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Paul Andersen. Meeting adjourned at 6:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Edwards

Oregon State Beekeepers Association

EXECUTIVE BOARD AND REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS



OSBA OFFICERS

President: Harry Vanderpool
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503.399.3675; shallotman@yahoo.com

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541.354.2223

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PO Box 10, Aurora 97002
503.824.2265; osba.treasurer@gmail.com

Past President: Paul Andersen
19255 SW Prospect St, Aloha 97007
503.332.5410; paulkandersen@frontier.com

♦ OSBA REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

North Coast

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503.232.4945; 4scotton@gmail.com

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97444; 541.373.7010; mureen98@gmail.com

Columbia Basin

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541.354.2223

Eastern Oregon

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541.372.2726

Portland Metro

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503.547.5386; tomcinquini@gmail.com

Southern Oregon

Sarah Red-Laird, PO Box 3257, Ashland 97520
541.708.1127; sarah@beegirl.org

North Willamette Valley

Steven Coffman, 2540 Greenwood Rd S, Independence
97351; 503.838.2981

South Willamette Valley

Rita Ostrofsky, 541.685.2875; ostrofsky@pacinfo.com

• REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Central Coast Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 PM, fourth Wednesday
Newport Library, 35 NW Nye St, Newport
Information: centralcoastbeekeepers@gmail.com
President: Rick Olson
541.997.3792; rolson2@attglobal.net
Co-Vice Presidents: Anne Schatz, Kathy Cope
Secretary: Becky Fain
Treasurer: Stan Scotton
Website: www.ccbaor.org; www.facebook.com/Central-CoastBeeKeepersAssociation

Central Oregon Beekeepers

Meets 6:00–7:30 PM (5:30 PM beginners' corner), fourth Tuesday (except November)
The Environmental Center, 16 NW Kansas Ave, Bend
Information: contact@cobeekeeping.org
President: Allen Engle—aengle@bendbroadband.com
Vice President: Patricia Moreland—oregonpat@gmail.com
Secretary: Misty Lee
Treasurer: Steve Crawford
Website: www.cobeekeeping.org

Columbia Gorge Beekeepers

Meets 6:30–8:30 PM, third Wednesday, Rockford Grange,
4520 Barrett Rd, Hood River
President: Zip Krummel—541.490.0587, zipk@gorge.net
Vice President: James Lombardo
james.lombardo@gmail.com
Secretary: Pat Case
541.806.3052, patcase@gorge.net
Treasurer: Ramona Tamiyasu
541.490.8746, ramona@gorge.net
gorgebeekeepers@org

Coos County Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 PM, third Saturday (except December)
Ohlsen Baxter Bldg, 631 Alder St, Myrtle Point
President: John Gardner—541.572.3847
Vice President: Shigeo Oku—541.396.4016
Secretary: Betsy Fleming
Treasurer: Jane Oku
541.396.4016; janeoku1958@gmail.com

Douglas County Bees

Meets 7:00–8:00 PM, first Wednesday, Douglas County
Courthouse, 1036 SE Douglas Ave, third floor, Roseburg
Information: douglascountybees@gmail.com
President: Phil Moulton—503.349.8463
Secretary/Treasurer: Ivory Los Bonos
www.douglascountybees.org; www.facebook.com/DCBeekeepers

John Day River Beekeepers

Meets quarterly
President: Matt Allen
541.934.9101; apricotapiaries@gmail.com
Education Coordinator/Secretary: Liz Lovelock

Klamath Basin Beekeepers

Meets 9:00 AM, last Saturday (except Nov/Dec)
OSU Extension, 6923 Washburn Way, Klamath Falls
President: Paul Davitt
president@klamathbeekeepers.org
Vice President: John Wilda
vicepresident@klamathbeekeepers.org
Secretary: Robert Clements
secretary@klamathbeekeepers.org
Treasurer: Ray Rutler, treasurer@klamathbeekeepers.org
Website: www.klamathbeekeepers.org

Lane County Beekeepers

Meets 7:30/6:00 PM early session, third Tuesday (except Dec)
Trinity United Methodist Church, 440 Maxwell Rd, Eugene
President: Max Kuhn
541.999.0744; t.maxkuhn@gmail.com
Vice President: Deb Elder
541.854.5336; dgdeb.elder@gmail.com
Secretary: Tamara Andreas
541.406.0244; tandreas6@gmail.com
Treasurer: Polly Habliston
541.461.0339; polly@uoregon.edu
Website: www.lcbaor.org

Linn-Benton Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 PM, third Wednesday
Corvallis Waldorf School, 3855 NE Highway 20, Corvallis
President: Everett Kaser
541.924.9214; everett@kaser.com
Vice President: Tim Wydronek
Secretary: Laurie Bowman
541.250.1006; secretary@lbba.us
Treasurer: Suzi Maresh
541.967.9607; suzi@lbba.us
Website: www.lbba.us

Oregon Prison Beekeepers

Sustainability Program Manager: Chad Naugle
503.373.7544; Chad.E.Naugle@doc.state.or.us

Oregon South Coast Beekeepers

Meets 6:00 PM, third Tuesday
OSU Extension Office, Fairgrounds in Gold Beach
President: Brad Remsey
330.980.6125; bradleeremsey79@aim.com
Vice President: Harvey Young
541.661.0031; fishhawk51@hotmail.com
Secretary: Shelley Pottmeyer
shelleypottmeyer@yahoo.com
Treasurer: Barbara Fitts
541.698.0300; bgfitts@gmail.com

Portland Metro Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 PM, second Thursday
Gladstone Senior Center, 1050 Portland Ave, Gladstone
President: Rex McIntire
503.720.7958; remcintire_5@msn.com
Vice President: Doug Sieckmann
503.804.5417; forty2chev@aol.com
Secretary: Gary Barnard
503.898.0301; gary@dranrab.com

Treasurer: Mike Hainley
503.341.0344; hainleyfam@gmail.com
Website: portlandmetro.org

Portland Urban Beekeepers

Meets 7:00–9:00 PM, first Wednesday
Rose City Park United Methodist, 5830 NE Alameda, Portland
For information, e-mail: officers@portlandurbanbeekeepers.org
President: Bill Catherall—503.572.6467
president@portlandurbanbeekeepers.org
Vice President: William Roll
vice-president@portlandurbanbeekeepers.org
Secretary: Simone Miller
secretary@portlandurbanbeekeepers.org
Treasurer: Amanda Shaw
treasurer@portlandurbanbeekeepers.org
Website: portlandurbanbeekeepers.org

Southern Oregon Beekeepers

Meets 7:30–9:00 PM, first Monday (demos, 6:30 PM), Southern Oregon Res & Ext Ctr, 569 Hanley Rd, Central Point
President: John Jacob
541.582.BEES; john@oldsolenterprises.com
Vice President: Risa Halpin—rhalpin906@aol.com
Secretary: Kate Womack
602.321.6901; k8womack@gmail.com
Treasurer: Cheryl Housden
541.659.6654; chousden@earthlink.net
Website: southernoregonbeekeepers.org

Tillamook County Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 PM, second Tuesday (except December)
Fresh Cafe, 9120 5th Street, Bay City
President: Claire Moody
503.318.9149; claire@vanirmail.com
Vice President: Rick Stelzig—rstelzig@charter.net
Secretary: Kathy Cope
541.264.9222; beachwalkinlady@hotmail.com
Treasurer: Terry Fullan
503.368.9149; tfullan@nehalem.tel.net

Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

Meets 6:00–8:00 PM, last Tuesday, Jessie Mays Comm Hall, 30975 NW Hillcrest Street, North Plains (except Jul & Dec)
Contact: tualatinvalleybeekeepers@gmail.com
President: Debby Garman
503.318.5227
Vice President: Yvonne Shaw
Secretary: Laura Stein-Weidner
Treasurer: Julie Schmidkofer
Web: http://tvba.weebly.com/

Willamette Valley Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 PM, fourth Monday, Chemeketa Community College, Building 8, Room 201, Salem
President: Richard Farrier
541.327.2673; rfarrierfarms@gmail.com
Vice President: Mona Kanner
Secretary: Shelley Growell
Treasurer: Laura Evans
Website: http://wvbahive.org



BEE EVENTS

June 17 (10 AM–4 PM): Annual Blooms and Butterflies, Elkton Community Education Center, featuring Local Art and Crafts, Live Music, Book and Art Sales, and BEES! *Information:* <http://elktonbutterflies.com/blooms-and-butterflies>

June 24: Ruhl Bee Supply/Brushy Mountain Bee Farm 2017 Field Day. *Information:* <http://ruhlbeesupply.homestead.com/RBS-Workshop2017.html>

Jun 24–25: Tour de Hives. *Information:* <https://tourdehives.com>

July 14 (10 AM–12 PM): Epi-pen training class at Zenger Farm. \$30 per person. *Information:* andy@zengerfarm.org

August 19: Oregon Honey Festival. Ashland. Honey/Mead Producers/Vendors Wanted. *Information:* www.oregonhoneyfestival.com

September 5–8: Western Apicultural Society of North America 2017 40th Anniversary Conference, UC-Davis. *Information:* www.westernapiculturalsociety.org

October 27–29: OSBA Fall Conference. The Oregon Garden.

November 14–16: CSBA Annual Convention. Lake Tahoe. *Information:* www.californiastatebeekeepers.com/events.html

REGIONAL NEWS

Note: For all groups, see pages 5–6 for meeting time and place, website, and/or contact information. All groups invite and welcome visitors to join them at meetings! In addition, regional associations often offer opportunities for learning, many of which are posted on their websites as well as on this page.

Regional Representatives

North Coast

One of my favorite parts of *The Bee Line* is the Regional News section. In the May issue, I was reading the report from the Linn-Benton Beekeepers activities in which Laurie Bowman wrote about having Kenny Williams at their March meeting and discussing queen evaluation and introduction. She wrote, “He reminded us that our top management goal is not honey production or pollination, but to have a hive next year.”

I always got good information by going to the Forum on the OSBA website and reading the comments and the answers to questions. One thing I noticed was answers or comments from Harry Vanderpool, often with stuff he said he learned from Kenny Williams.

Well, after reading what Laurie wrote, Kenny Williams’s words finally made sense to me. For two years, I have tried to nurse a marginal queen through winter in hopes of getting a daughter from that queen next year, and both times the queen died without leaving me a daughter queen. I have learned my lesson finally.

Last night at the Tillamook County Beekeepers meeting, Glen Andresen, Bridgetown Bees, gave us a report on his and Tim Wessels queen breeding project using the Cloake Board method. The meeting was very well attended, for us, with over forty people in attendance.

At the last Central Coast Beekeepers meeting we were privileged to have Dr. Ramesh Sagili as our speaker. His topic was honey bee health and nutrition, which of course included some talk on *Varroa destructor*. Thank you to Dr. Sagili for your presentation.

Stan Scotton

South Coast

Bee Day at Foothills Honey Farm, via Portland Metro Beekeepers Association, was a wonderful opportunity for backyard and small-scale commercial beekeepers to consider the challenges and solutions of large-scale beekeeping operations. Among several outstanding differences, it becomes evident that having a tidy screened bottom board is a luxury for those with less hives, and then top that off by the white boards for monitoring activity and trapping Varroa mites. Then there are all the variations in hive boxes for those who don’t have the larger responsibility of production.

Foothills Honey Farm makes their own hive boxes and will no longer be painting them. “The wood just isn’t as good as it used to be and it absorbs too much moisture from the inside and actually bubbles the paint off the outside.” Now they are dipping the woodenware in hot wax baths before assembling so that the wood is entirely coated. When someone asked why not just dip the entire box after it is assembled, “Because the metal nails get so hot at 300 degrees that they burn into the wood,” says George. It was delightful to hear George Hansen say that they use liquid smoke, something that seemed to be passing as a current buzz for experimentation at beekeeper meetings.

It was reassuringly familiar to see all those hives and nucs strapped securely to pallets, since tie downs can be so important on the south coast during some of the big windstorms that blast the hives with rain and hail at more than 50 mph.

“We have to use frame feeders,” George Hansen explained during the morning class, “but top feeders are better.” They make their own frame feeders of wood. The hives that have the deeps on top of the shallows are prepared for feeding, since the feeders are all for deeps. While most ventured outside in the weather that was frequently punctuated by heavy rainfall, others went with George Hansen to his studio for a demonstration of the encaustic painting that he does, melting beeswax combined with pigment and blending,

layering, and cutting with a variety of tools. Out in the bee yard, it was a beauty to watch the bare hands so artfully lifting the frames out of the beehives to examine and show at several of the sixteen stations.



George Hansen demonstrates use of an artisan's torch for color blending pigmented beeswax.

At South Coast Oregon, North Coast California, sometimes referred to as “The State of Jefferson,” was Spring Bee School at Lucky 7 Casino. Barbara Fitts, OMB Instructor at Oregon South Coast Beekeepers kicked off the event with an introduction to beekeeping. Russ Rose, of My Honey's Produce, gave a presentation also.

Our main nectar flow, blackberries, the honey bee forage, began to open first blossoms during the second week of May, with most of the buds holding off against the blasting rain, sleet, and hail that separates the few fine spring days. All are eager for the dry season!

Mureen Walker

Regional Associations

Central Coast Beekeepers

We've finally gotten a few days of sun on the coast! There are lots of bee-friendly plants in bloom (borage, big leaf maple, cherry laurel, dandelion, evergreen huckleberry, pussy willow, elderberry, rosemary, scotch broom, skunk cabbage, thimble berry, trailing blackberry, wild cherry, and salmon berry), and the bees are taking in the season with gusto. We've done a full check of all hives finding some strong and some not so much. A few new queens should fix the weak ones. Our nucs and packages are flourishing in the sun and the explosion of floral sources.

Our board meetings have been productive, and we're looking forward to a year of community outreach and activities for our club. We have also set up a full schedule of exciting presentations for the year. Ramesh Sagili spoke at our April meeting. He covered the major challenges of beekeepers—pests / parasites / pathogens, poor nutrition, pesticides, genetic diversity, and transportation stress. We're lucky to have such knowledgeable educators just up the road in Corvallis. Speakers for the rest of the year will cover all aspects of beekeeping. Some of the topics include nutrition, Varroa and integrated pest management, swarming, reading frames, and “natural” beekeeping.

Even with the inclement weather, we were able to get some of our apprentices through their first worksheets. We only

got a quick peek into the hives, but it was a good chance for apprentices to experience the hardships of working bees on the Oregon coast. We finished our apprentice classes in March and plan to have a follow-up session in May.

We will be staffing booths in May at both the Florence Garden Club plant sale and the Lincoln County Master Gardener's plant sale to share information about beekeeping and general pollinator education.

Rick Olson

Central Oregon Beekeepers

We finally warmed up. At least for a few days. Most folks were able to inspect during one or two nice days. It continues to be a weird spring with the possibility of snow this weekend. Our members are mentioning that purchased nucs and packages are dribbling in quite sporadically. Apparently the spring weather has been a challenge for most of our commercial suppliers as well. Several of our members helped a young woman in Sunriver with funding her Mitzvah project of planning, installing, and maintaining an observation hive at the Sunriver Nature Center.

In April, one of our members, OMB Journey student Ron Lane, talked to us about natural beekeeping followed by a great discussion on what folks are going to do next year to mitigate the great winter losses this year. We're also wondering when the swarm season will start. Another member pointed out that most of the feral hives that he's been tracking died out this winter.

For the next couple of month's meetings, we are planning talks about the efficacy of the various Varroa treatments, and when to and not to requeen. We also have a honey bee anatomy seminar coming up at the local college during the summer.

Allen Engle

Columbia Gorge Beekeepers

The Columbia River Gorge is finally seeing the snow where it should be—on the mountains and not around our hives. A slow-starting Spring has finally evolved and we are seeing our ladies become very active, enjoying the sudden burst of bloom. As a new association, we are busy getting things up and running. We've started a membership library, assisted by local OSU Extension. Our mentoring program has started up, our new web page is going online, we are focusing on community outreach teaming with the Grange, Extension, Master Gardeners, flower/plant clubs, etc., and we had 40 people show up at our first meeting. In May our first presenter will be Dr. Andony Melathopoulos (OSU), talking about Honey Bee Biology. Then on May 20th we are hosting a special day with Randy Oliver and Morris Ostrofsky (<http://bg-bees.com/randy-oliver/>). Columbia Gorge Beekeepers Association is up and running!

Zip Krummel

John Day River Beekeepers

It has been a long, wet, and cool spring out here on the John Day River. Finally we are seeing some warm weather and clear skies. It's been a flurry of activity for our beekeepers. We had a great open hive day back in April. In between hail and rain, there were patches of beautiful sunny weather, letting the bees fly and the beekeepers work. Beekeepers attended from across the region and even some of our neighbors in Central Oregon. Attendees got to work through basic inspections, as well as equalize some dinks by adding brood from stronger colonies. It was a great learning experience for everyone.

A lot of folks lost bees this winter, mostly blaming the extreme cold this winter, but those who took care of mites in the fall and ensured plenty of food reported big booming colonies and were eager to split. Typically the swarm season starts mid April. Cooler weather slowed things down, but by early May, swarm season was in full effect. The cool, wet spring turned the fields yellow with dandelions. Bitterbrush, balsam daisies, and mustard have been the primary nectar and pollen sources so far.

Matt Allen

Klamath Basin Beekeepers

Spring is still in full swing in Klamath Falls and we have just begun swarming season. This spring was wetter than usual, and we hope to get additional blooms this year with all the snow pack. Of course, here in the mountains, spring means 80°F and sunny today and 50°F and possible snow two days from now.

Our club order of packages and nucs arrived on the 29th of April from Dennis Hintz down in Lincoln, CA. The club received 109 packages and 108 nucs. In addition, we acquired some Saskatraz queens from Olivarez Honey Bees and hope they will be ideal for our mountain climate.

Our education and public outreach officer, Katharina Davitt, started a school program last year, and this year we are visiting one elementary school each week for the next month as well as having a school field trip to Davitt Apiaries where the children will get to examine a hive (thanks to a children clothing donation from GloryBee) and will extract some honey. Our public educational outreach program is a major component of the bee club. We are visiting street fairs and children events to name a few, including the Migratory Bird Day event this Saturday.

Paul Davitt

Linn-Benton Beekeepers

The Beekeepers Lament of winter hive loss has been particularly cacophonous this spring. Fortunately, as happens every year, an upbeat ditty of hope drowns out lament as new packages, nucs, and splits return life to

depleted apiaries. Swarming season launches beekeepers into welcomed activity.

At our April meeting, Morris Ostrofsky gave a detailed talk about swarms: their physiology and how to help them come to you. He shared his innovative design for a cardboard swarm-catching hive. As well, Morris gave a case (and a method) for actively testing hives for hygienic behavior because, "It would take 500 years to change genetics to have Varroa resistance and hygienic behavior, so let's start now." Those hives exhibiting resistance could be chosen to breed queens from, and also perhaps not treated for mites. There was loads of great information in this PowerPoint presentation. Thank you, Morris!

Swarms began in our area around May 1st, later than the last two years because of the wetter spring. We will not have a member meeting this month since we'll be meeting twice in June. We are joining LCBA at OSU for a field day on June 3rd. Then later in the month, on our usual Wednesday evening, Karen Finley of Queen Bee Apiaries will discuss how summer solstice marks a change in the beehive. Carolyn Breece from OSU will be July's speaker.

May your hopeful whistling resound throughout your bee yard this year!

Laurie Bowman

Portland Metro Beekeepers

We enjoyed a full house at our May meeting. Troy Gooding, a member in the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program, shared three ways to do splits. This is a useful and timely subject as many of our members are experiencing big growth in their hives—in spite of spring's slow arrival and very wet weather. Kendal Smucker gave a brief overview of what to think about when setting out to find the queen. Rex McIntire told the group how to get and keep a smoker going. Finally, there was a question/answer session. The club is looking into having t-shirts made with an identifying logo stenciled on front and back; members and interested friends are encouraged to get and wear club shirts.

Barbara Derkacht

Portland Urban Beekeepers

Dewey Caron shared information on swarms in May. He also shared an important link about the impact of pesticides

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on our bees. Go to <http://pesticideimpacts.org> for more information. Glen Andresen shared his monthly Pollen & Nectar report. We're seeing annual flowers such as the Hybrid Poppy and bulbs like the crocus bellflower (*campanula*), as well as the usual suspects like the sweet cherry and the Asian pear starting to bud and flower. For a more-detailed report, check out bridgetownbees.com. There's no better time to catch swarms than right now! For information on how to catch swarms and to download swarm trap plans check out PUB's website. If you don't want to build your own bait hives, we still have a few still available for purchase. Contact Lauren Smith to order.

Rebekah Golden gave a wonderful presentation about her experiences working with native bees. Rebekah loves talking about all types of pollinators and is the education coordinator over at Bee Thinking. She was nice enough to allow us to post it on our blog so head over and check it out. We are so grateful to Rebekah for taking the time to share with our group.

Scott Macdonald

Southern Oregon Beekeepers

Ramesh Sagili will be our speaker at the next SOBA meeting!

Cheryl Housden

Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

The TVBA Bee School 2017 is finishing up with a student field day led by Dr. Dewey Caron on June 3. All of our members, friends, and neighbors are welcome at our June membership meeting for questions, updates, and a good guest speaker presentation (TBD). Our members really appreciated Karessa Torgerson's excellent May meeting presentation on 10 Mistakes Beginning Beekeepers Make. We are excited about our two new Youth programs: TVBA is now sponsoring and mentoring FFA and 4H students learning beekeeping.

Debby Garman

KEEPING BEES IN JUNE

Jan Lohman

I hope by the time that you read this there will be beautiful bee weather abounding! Today I had a customer that picked up nucs by driving through snow in the Blue Mountains.

It is important to remember that if your bees are not overcrowded, have a productive queen, and have plenty of food, they are amazing at surviving anything that Mother Nature throws their way.

Summer Hive Inspections:

Have your equipment easily available by bringing what you will need to the bee yard. You can use an empty nuc box or

a tool box or a wagon . . . just be sure to be prepared with hive tools, a smoker, smoker fuel, frames of foundation, your protective garments, a Varroa mite sampling kit, etc., so that you do not have to go back for your supplies.

Do not over inspect your hives . . . check between the boxes for queen cells to see if the hive is swarming, check for eggs in the hive and be aware of the brood pattern of the queen and how many stores are available for the hive. When you find a hive that is in need of care, watch for supersedure cells, no eggs, or a spotty brood pattern, because they will tell you that the queen needs to be replaced. Emergency cells tell you that she has already failed and is no longer present in the hive. If you have a queen available or a nuc on hand, you can easily remedy the problem.

It is always wise to rotate your comb out of the hive by pulling old comb and adding a frame or two of foundation . . . depending on the honey flow and the size of the hive.

Building a Nuc:

If you have a hive that is large enough to split, or is showing signs of swarming, you can start a nuc with a traditional honey bee queen, or you can either place queen cells from a swarming hive or young eggs from a robust hive into a nuc box, add several shakes of bees, a frame with pollen on it and one with honey, and finally two frames with young eggs and larvae for a queenless nuc—or add two frames of capped brood and a queen for a traditional nuc. The secret is to have plenty of bees in the nuc because before the nuc begins to grow, it will decline somewhat.

Our Never-Ending Pest, Varroa Mites:

Finally, last but not least . . . In the scheme of beekeeping . . . Varroa mites are the #1 enemy. Yes, there is queen failure and starvation, but most of the damage to overwintering hives is from Varroa. We think of August as the time to be getting ready for winter bees, so make sure that your Varroa levels are low throughout the summer by doing sugar shakes or alcohol washes. Know your levels of infestation and treat accordingly. By mid August you need to be thinking about fall treatment . . . pollen supplements are excellent for helping to raise FAT BEES, begin to help the hive achieve winter weight and treat with a registered product to treat your hive for Varroa.

MITE KEEPING 101

Morris Ostrofsky

We are all beekeepers. We also all keep mites. As the Honey Bee Coalition states, "We all need to accept the fact that we have an extra member of the family – the mite – and it's here to stay."

We may understand bees well, but now we need to do the same with regard to the Varroa mite. Without action on our part, beekeeping can quickly morph into mite keeping. Mites are in all of the hives; you'll never get rid of them all. The question is, will the mite population take control turning you into a mite keeper rather than a bee keeper?

This presentation provides tools you can use to keep you and your bees in control of your hives. The focus is a practical approach to managing Varroa mites over the course of the year. Recognizing mite indicators both inside and outside the hive is important.

Some indicators outside the hive:

- Bees crawling in front of the hive
- Evidence of viruses like deformed wings
- Discarded larvae on landing board
- Mites visible on a sticky board

Some indicators inside the hive:

- Perforated caps
- Spotty brood pattern
- Phoretic mites visible on bees
- Quanine visible on the sides of the cells

The only way mites can sneak up on you is if you are not watching. How to avoid a sneak attack:

- Know the signs of Varroa
- Determine your mite numbers
- Look at number trends
- Make a treatment decision based on the numbers.

Three ways to monitor:

1. “Jar” samples—ether roll or powdered sugar shake; alcohol or detergent wash
2. Brood sampling with a cappings fork
3. Natural mite fall caught on a sticky board

While genetics is the vehicle to reach the gold standard of Treatment Free, it is not a short-term answer to mites. As Jerry Hayes said, “Genetics will work if you have about 500 years.” There are several reasons for this, including drifting, no control of drones a queen mates with, and Varroa mites on flowers waiting for a ride.

The impact of mites on the colony's ability to raise “fat” winter bees is critical to their survival. Winter bees have lots of Vitellogenin, a molecule made by the bees that contains proteins, fats, and carbohydrates. This food storage reservoir makes it possible for the bees going into to winter to survive for months rather than weeks. It allows the bees to come out of metabolic retirement

and switch roles back to nurse bees to raise the next generation. The bees getting ready for winter need to store energy (Vitellogenin). Bees infected with Varroa mites do not produce this critical survival tool.

I only treat if the numbers indicate the necessity and if I treat one colony, I treat all in the apiary. Using the *Tools for Varroa Management* publication, treatment strategies that have worked for me over the course of the four population phases of the honey bee and Varroa life cycles are as follows:

- Population Increase—Api Life Var
- Population Peak—Mite-Away Quick Strips
- Population Decrease—Mite-Away Quick Strips
- Dormant—Oxalic acid

It is important to take a count after any treatment to verify its efficacy and to know whether or not you have to do something more.

The importance of starting fall treatment plans as soon as honey supers are removed is a vital step in helping the bees' successful overwintering. Starting early and monitoring mite drops after treatment allows a beekeeper to go to Plan B should the first treatment fall short.

The take home message:

- Know your mite loads whether you plan to treat or not
- Know your mite load at the time you treat & post treatment
- Follow the product directions EXACTLY
- Talk to experienced, successful beekeepers to learn what has worked for them
- Ultimately, it is your decision

Note: In addition to all that Morris provides here, authors of an article soon to be published in the Entomological Society of America's *Environmental Entomology* note that Varroa mites take advantage of current beekeeping practices. Because the mite has made use of honey bee behaviors that allow for its wide dispersal, the researchers cite the need for *new* integrated pest management strategies to treat *Varroa destructor* as a migratory pest, as well as for further research into the specifics of Varroa dispersal. Until the article is available, see more at: www.morningagclips.com/how-varroa-mites-grow-and-spread/#sthash.9m1C9GQH.dpuf.

Also of interest may be “Ecology, Life History, and Management of Tropiclaelaps Mites” by Lilia I. de Guzman et al., who note the similarity of the life history and the food requirements of this parasite to those of the Varroa mite. The paper can be found at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jee/tow304>.



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AGRICULTURE LIAISON REPORT

Mike Rodia

HB 2533A, which we initiated, adds the definition for a nucleus colony to ORS 602 and then exempts nucleus colonies from the Oregon Department of Agriculture hive registration fees. The bill has passed the House of Representatives without a negative vote. On April 26 it was passed by the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. It has passed the Senate with a yes vote of 27, and nary a no vote and with three Senators excused. It was carried by Senator Prozanski. The Governor has now signed HB 2533A into law.

HB 3280 proposed to eliminate registration fees for the first year that hives are established. It was intended to apply primarily to hobby or backyard beekeepers. Since it is not necessary to register less than five hives it would not be of any benefit to most beginning hobbyist or backyard beekeepers. In addition the wording was confusing and the Department of Agriculture advised it would be very difficult to implement. I never saw a public hearing.

SB 785 essentially copied and added to the federal law that restricts the use of antibiotics for prophylactic use on livestock. We initially testified against the bill because the definition of livestock included honey bees and the Oregon Health Department was the designated enforcement agency. After proposed amendment changes, we took a neutral stand on the bill. It died in Committee after a public hearing.

SB 929 would have banned the use of neonics by anyone other than licensed pesticide applicators, except in a few limited circumstances. The bill's sponsors argued that it was necessary to protect honey bees and other pollinators. From the start, we took a neutral position. It died in Committee after two public hearings.

Losses—Continued from page 1

by fewer than one-half of respondents were Poor wintering (5 respondents) and CCD (4 respondents), pesticides (3 respondents), Nosema (2 respondents), and viruses, yellow jackets, and SHB (1 respondent each).

An electronic survey of small-scale beekeepers (283 Oregon beekeepers—owning from 1 to 48 colonies) had a 52% loss rate (12 percentage points higher than the previous winter). Winter colony loss rate nationally for 2016–2017 is estimated (according to preliminary report) to be 20.4%, which is lower than the colony loss rate reported in Oregon. In the previous two national surveys, PNW beekeepers had reported loss rates below the national average.

We will be preparing a full report on this year's survey comparing responses to our previous sampling years and the losses reported by the small-scale beekeepers (under 50%) as soon as data analysis is completed. We appreciate the time and effort of all beekeepers that participated in the survey.

HIVE THEFT ALERT

It's not happening just in California. A recent attempted hive theft in the Damascus area serves as a reminder to take extra care in siting hives whenever possible here as well. These particular hives were in a beekeeper's backyard, opened to view from a highway when blackberries were removed. As Joe Maresh, Portland Metro Beekeepers Association president, writes, "To help prevent hive theft it may be a good idea to shield your bees from public view and if you are a victim of theft report it to the proper authority and [your regional association], be aware and vigilant."



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The Bee Line

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Please send news about your bees and your experiences in keeping them, as well as events, corrections, comments, questions, photographs and stories, interviews, recipes, points of view—and ads/advertising—to: Rosanna Mattingly, *The Bee Line*, 4207 SE Woodstock Blvd Ste 517, Portland OR 97206; e-mail: osba.newsletter@gmail.com. It's *your* newsletter—we want to hear from you!

The next issue to be printed will be the July issue, 2017. The deadline for submitting copy is **June 10, 2017**. Please let me know if you find difficulties with the deadline so we can work out the space and timing for the material.

Thank you!

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