

The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers' Association

Volume 34, Number 3

April 2009



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Image above: Deb Wheelbarger and John Holderness stand to the left and right, respectively, of what remains of the bee tree described on page 1. Although the bees appear to prefer the log (as they have not yet moved up into the super), John reports that they have survived the winter and are setting aside reserves from the sugar syrup he has fed them. *How many bee trees are out there?*

Note: Opportunities to improve skills, gain in understanding, and have fun in shared experience abound in Oregon bee days. Some of what has taken place thus far this season appears on page 3.



Katharine Hunt

ADVENTURE WITH BEES IN A TREE

John Holderness

Early last November I got a call from a lady in the Reed College area of Portland. She was asking if someone in the beekeepers club could save a colony of bees in a big alder tree that had just been cut down on her property. I called my neighbor and beekeeping partner, Deb Wheelbarger, and the two of us drove over to see what we could do. We did not really expect to be able to do much for an unfortunate colony in a bee tree cut down in mid-November.

We found the owner's backyard full of big logs from the tree, which had been probably 50 or 60 feet tall. The colony had been cut across, more or less in two. The bees had all moved into one of the logs, which was about 3 feet long and 12 feet 14 inches in diameter, with a hollow of about 4 x 7 inches cross-section, lying on its side. We concluded the queen must be in that section of the log. Deb removed about 10 pounds of honeycomb from the other section, which had been abandoned except for a few bees and yellowjackets robbing honey.

We taped a piece of screen over the big hole in the end of the section with the main colony, and we did the same for a long vertical entrance hole on the side of the log. We rolled and stood up the log with the colony in it. It was very heavy, and we used a dolly to move it out to the car. At my Subaru, we lifted and shoved the log into the back.

Back at home, we got the log out of the car and stood it up on a hard piece of ground near the rest of Deb's hives. We screwed an inner cover to the top of the log, which had been cut off fairly flat and near enough to level. We put a shallow super, with some frames of honey and several drawn combs, on the inner cover, and on top of that we put a feeder and hive cover. The resulting hive looks somewhat comical, and we call it the *Dr. Seuss hive*. It seems the natural entrance hole must have been blocked by debris during the move, because the bees come and go only through a narrow gap between the top of the log and the inner cover above it.

Neither of us had intended to spend the day on beekeeping, yet we were glad we did. We had fun. It was another unusual beekeeping experience. And we were happy to have saved this colony. We hope the bees will move up into the super, so that we can replace the log in the spring with a regular deep and a bottom board. As of mid-December, the bees seemed to be doing fine. [See image and caption, this page.]

The Bee Line

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

Please send news about your bees and your experiences in keeping them, as well as corrections, letters, comments, photographs and stories (old and new), interviews, and requests for advertising to: Editor, *The Bee Line*, 4803 SE Woodstock Blvd Ste 157, Portland OR 97206; e-mail: osba.newsletter@gmail.com.

Advertising Costs Per Issue

Business Ads:	
Business card	\$10.00
Quarter page	\$25.00
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Full page	\$100.00

Classified Ads (30 words):	
Members	\$3.00
Nonmembers	\$5.00

Please submit copy by the 10th of the month prior to publication. The next issue will be the May 2009 issue. Contact the Editor with any questions or concerns.

Many thanks!

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

March 13th and I am writing this article from California. Two days ago I wiped the snow off my windshield in Portland so that my wife could take me to the airport for my journey here. What a change! A one-hour-and-ten-minute flight from Portland, and it is 68 degrees with not a cloud in the sky.

The bees are busy bringing in large quantities of pollen and nectar (the land of milk and honey). It reminds me why so many people are "snow birds." Conditions here are like working bees in the Pacific Northwest on a warm day in April when the maple flow is on. Only those who have experienced the spring hum of bees can understand that it is a real adrenaline rush for me. It inspires me to work.

I started keeping bees 35 years ago, and my mentor was a man named Vic Palmrose. Vic was a retired chemical engineer in his eighties. For some reason, he felt sorry for a young school teacher from Scappoose and spent literally hundreds of hours patiently answering questions and helping me design my honey house, water system, and the like.

On a day just like today when I was a neophyte beekeeper and feeling the rush of spring bees, I asked Vic's wife how many years it took for this feeling to wear off. She told me that Vic had kept bees for over 50 years and it still had not worn off. It is just one of those things you can't explain. Only another beekeeper can understand. It's all part of why we keep bees.

Enough rambling about the spring hum you will experience next month during the maple flow. I hope your bees have wintered well. If not, it is time to clean up the dead equipment, order your packages or nucs, and get ready for a record-breaking year that I am sure the bees are going to have.

I am also looking forward to again having a bee researcher at Oregon State University. It has been too many years since our last bee researcher (Dr. Burgett) retired and was not replaced.

The economy is what seems to make the news, yet the bees do not care about the economy. Fortunately, there is always work for the beekeeper.

—Mark

UPCOMING LOCAL EVENTS

✿ April 4, 2009

Southern Oregon Beekeepers Short Course: OSU Extension Center, near Jacksonville. Dewey Caron will speak, and there will be bees. For more information, contact Marty Scala at (541) 944-5101 or sobaemail@gmail.com.

✿ April 8, 16, and 22, 2009

Tualatin Valley Beekeepers school for new and early beekeepers: Capital Center, Beaverton/Hillsboro. Events take place 7–9 PM. Click the link to *Bee Schools* on the OSBA Web site (www.orsba.org) for details. [Also see form, this page.]

✿ April 11, 2009

Willamette Valley Beekeepers Bee Day: at the home of Susan Rauchfuss. Event will take place 9:00 AM–approximately NOON. Although we highly recommend the Bill Ruhl Memorial Bee Day on April 25, it will likely occur AFTER many Bee School students have received bees. This event is to provide hands-on experience. Both students and older beekeepers are invited. There will be no charge and no lunch. For directions, contact Mike Rodia at (503) 364-3275.

✿ April 25, 2009

Bill Ruhl Memorial Bee Day: Colton. Details and registration form appear on page 8.

✿ November 19-21, 2009

Northwest Corner Beekeepers Conference: Seaside Convention Center, Seaside.

...AND HOW SOME HAVE GONE

✿ Lane County Beekeepers Association Annual Bee School took place on Saturday, March 7th with over 70 people registered. It was a full day of PowerPoint talks, lectures, question-and-answer periods, great snacks [for example, see cake, page 1] supplied by club members, and new this year—workshops. Following a talk about Fall Management in the early afternoon, everyone broke up into groups of 18 and attended a hands-on discussion of either Extracting or Wood-Ware Assembly. This format was well received. The registrant who traveled the farthest this year was from Colorado! —*Katharine Hunt*

✿ Between 30 and 40 students and a few *really* old bees attended the Willamette Valley Bee School. Topics were similar to those covered last year, but the order was changed somewhat to protect the innocent. In general, the presentations were more polished, yet more to the level of new beekeepers and without as much straying into all the exceptions and alternate ways to raise bees. There were more projected visuals and also frames that pictured comb, brood, stores, and diseases so students could see what was being talked about. Harry Vanderpool covered Starting with Bees: setting up the hive, installing packages, and checking for a laying queen. Andy Dumblestrom described how he prepares his nucs and covered the pros and cons of their use. Mike Rodia talked about the various disease treatments and nutritional needs of bees. Because he ran out of time, as usual, students are advised to study his handouts.

—*Mike Rodia*

TUALATIN VALLEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION BEE SCHOOL REGISTRATION

The Tualatin Valley Beekeepers Association will be conducting a school from 7-9 PM on April 8, 16, and 22 at the Capital Center at the intersection of NW Walker Rd and NW 185th Ave in Beaverton. Sessions will include: What to Expect from Beekeeping, Lifecycle of Honey Bees, Beekeeping Equipment, Safety, Working with Bees, Products of the Hive, Getting Started in Bees, Pests & Diseases, and Nutrition. Students will be encouraged to attend the Bill Ruhl Memorial Bee Day on April 25th for hands-on work with bees. Dr Dewey Caron will be teaching some of the sessions. The cost for the course is \$25.00, which includes all materials and a complimentary membership in TVBA for one year. Make check payable to TVBA and mail it with the following information to: Treasurer, TVBA, 16718 SW Travis Ct, Sherwood OR 97140. **Note: Deadline to register is April 2.**

Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ e-mail: _____

OREGON STATE BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION RESOURCES

OSBA REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Columbia Basin: Deb Morgan
3800 Benson Rd, The Dalles; (541) 298-5719

Eastern Oregon: Jordan Dimock
2635 Mitchell Butte Rd, Nyssa; (541) 372-2726

Portland Metro Area: Herb Brasington
1881 NE Ashberry Dr, Hillsboro; (503) 701-4180
herb@hwbsystems.com

North Coast: Thom Trusewicz
90041 Logan Rd, Astoria; (503) 325-7966
ccbees@gmail.com

South Coast: Open

Southern Oregon: Floyd Pawloski
415 Pompadour Dr, Ashland; (541) 482-4797

Willamette Valley: Harry Vanderpool
7128 Skyline Rd S, Salem; (503) 399-3675
shallotman@yahoo.com

OSBA REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS



Central Oregon Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 PM, third Tuesday, Bend
Deschutes Public Library, Hutch Rm

President: Dennis Gallagher
(541) 389-4776

Secretary/Treasurer: Glenda Galaba
(541) 383-1775

Coos County Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 PM, third Saturday (except Dec)
Olsen Baxter Bldg, 631 Alder St, Myrtle Pt

President: Shigeo Oku; (541) 396-4016

Vice President: John Gardner; (541) 572-3847

Secretary: Bobbi Gardner; (541) 572-3847

Treasurer: Jane Oku; (541) 396-4016
jane_oku@hotmail.com

Lane County Beekeepers

Meets 7:30 PM, third Tuesday, Eugene
EWEB Meeting Rooms, 500 E 4th Ave

President: Katharine Hunt; (541) 607-0106
cwhunt@uoregon.edu

Vice President: Judy Scher; (541) 344-2114
judy_scher@catdreams.com

Secretary: Chuck and Katharine Hunt
(541) 607-0106; cwhunt@uoregon.edu

Treasurer: Nancy Ograin; (541) 935-7065
woodrt@pacinfo.com

Web site: www.lcbaor.org

Portland-Metro Beekeepers

Meets 7 PM, second Thursday, Oregon City
Clackamas Comm College, Clairmont Hall, Room 118

President: Kerry Haskins
(503) 632-8448; kh251@aol.com

Vice President: Jim Mellis; (503) 631-4622

Secretary: Paul Hardzinski; (503) 631-3927

Treasurer: Barbara Derkacht; (503) 631-3063
bderkacht@yahoo.com

Southern Oregon Beekeepers

Meets 7:30 PM, first Monday, Central Pt
So Or Res & Ext Ctr, 569 Hanley Rd

President: John Jacob; (541) 582-BEES
john@oldsolenterprises.com

Vice President: Floyd Pawloski

415 Pompadour Dr, Ashland; (541) 482-4797

Secretary/Treasurer: Julian Lewis
(541) 535-5817; lewis_adams_00@yahoo.com

Web site: www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org

Tillamook County Beekeepers

For meeting and other information about the group,
please contact:

President: Bob Allen; (503) 322-3819

Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

Meets 7:30 PM, last Friday, Beaverton
OSU Ext, #1400, 18640 SW Walker Rd

President: Herb Brasington; (503) 701-4180
herb@hwbsystems.com

Vice President: Paul Anderson
paulanderson@tritektsolutions.com

Secretary: Jerry Maasdam; jmaasdam@mac.com

Co-Treasurers: Brigitte and Michael Hendrickson
hendricm@ece.pdx.edu

Willamette Valley Beekeepers

Meets 7:30 PM, fourth Monday, Salem
Chemeketa Comm College, Bldg 34, Rm A

President: Richard Farrier; (541) 327-2673

Vice President: Harry Vanderpool; (503) 399-3675
shallotman@yahoo.com

Secretary: Mike Rodia; (503) 364-3275
drodia@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Gordon Kroemer; (503) 538-2307
kroemer2@verizon.net

REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Lane County Beekeepers

The topic of the February meeting was Equipment: Maintenance, Storage, and Organization, presented by Morris Ostrofsky. Morris gave a great talk on bee equipment, and Rita put together a wonderful slide show. Morris said that one of the most-valuable pieces of equipment is drawn frames. It takes a lot of energy to set up new hives in the spring, and drawn frames can save both time and energy. Morris also talked about protecting hives from mice and gave the group ideas for cleaning and maintenance of equipment—from bee brushes to hive scales.

—*Nancy Ograin*

The next meeting of Lane County beekeepers will be held on Tuesday, March 17th. Jonathan Loftin will lead a discussion on Packages, Installation, and First Check. The club is also busy hosting tables at spring events. The first event will be the Plant Propagation Fair to be held March 14th at Lane Community College.

—*Katharine Hunt*

Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

Dan Hiscoe led a discussion about the six types of queens during the January meeting. Dan spent several weeks one summer in Hawaii working for Kona Queens to learn all he could about queens. The six types he discussed were queens raised in or from supercedure cells, swarm cells, swarms, grafted and planted in a hive, purchased, and breeder queens. Dan taught us that all queens are not equal, and there is quite a difference in performance, depending on the conditions under which a queen is raised. He discussed the differences in the level of quality that can be expected from each of these types of queens and why performance can be significant.

Dan then shared the advantages of raising your own local queens and what it can mean in saved expense, improved quality, and satisfaction in doing it yourself. He also shared the process and procedures he uses to raise queens for his own operation. This was very informative and encouraging to those of us who are considering raising our own queens!

In February, Mark Johnson discussed nucs and splits along with the happenings in California with bees among the almonds. As a commercial beekeeper,

Mark uses very efficient ways of splitting hives and creating nucs. His method of shaking the bees from four frames of brood, adding an excluder, and then placing the brood in a box above the excluder eliminates the need to find the queen when creating a nuc from an existing hive.

At our next meeting, scheduled for March 27th, John Edwards of Ruhl Bee Supply will present the latest in beekeeping equipment. —*Herb Brasington*

LINKS OF POSSIBLE INTEREST

GM Beet Sugar—Lists over 70 companies that have signed a registry set up by food safety, environmental, and corporate watchdog organizations not to use or sell genetically modified beet sugar. See: www.seedsofdeception.com/includes/services/nongm_sugar_beet_registry_display.cfm

Corrugated Plastic for Wild Bees—Overviews briefly the use of plastic totes as durable, movable nesting shelters for wild bees, including blue orchard bees. See: www.ars.usda.gov/is/pr/2009/090320.htm

Honey and Healing—Provides an overview of the long-standing therapeutic use of honey. Go to: www.jaas.org.uk/articles/20090203_3?month=3&year=2009. Click on *Click here for pdf*.

Varroa—Shows Eric Mussen with the tiny mite that is “so dangerous to bees.” See: news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/7925591.stm

Note: These last three entries are reports that also are available at no charge by phone at (503) 986-4550.

2008 Oregon Agripedia—Combines information from the Oregon Agricultural Statistics Bulletin, the Oregon Farmer’s Handbook, and the Oregon Agricultural Resources Directory into a reference of Oregon facts, laws, and resources. (Also on CD.) Visit: oregon.gov/ODA/pub_agripedia.shtml

The State of Oregon Agriculture, January 2009—Introduces current State Board of Agriculture members and highlights some major policy issues. Visit: oregon.gov/ODA/pub_bd_rpt.shtml

Oregon Department of Agriculture 2007–2009 Biennial Report (Published January 2009)—Provides a summary of ODA activities, accomplishments, and goals. Visit: oregon.gov/ODA/pub_br.shtml

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:

- ❖ Mouse guards can be removed.
 - ❖ Spring is usually when starvation occurs. Find light colonies by lifting (tilt one side up) and feeling the relative weight. Feed light colonies—syrup is okay now. If they're starving, make it a thick syrup; for stimulation, make it thinner. You can also transfer excess frames of honey from overly heavy colonies to lighter colonies.
 - ❖ On a calm, warm day, go through hives and clean them. By *clean* I mean to make your hive easy to work again: free and unbind frames from the clutch of wax and propolis. And remove burr comb. Poor-quality frames or brood frames older than 5 years can be replaced with new comb or foundation. At the least, move the poor-quality frames to the sides of the brood boxes and center the best-quality frames in the middle. In practice, it is best to separate the brood boxes to isolate the queen, and to work one brood box at a time.
 - ❖ Change out (or at least clean) the bottom boards that the bees have been using since last summer. If possible, exchange them for clean, dry bottom boards. Screen bottom boards should be okay.
 - ❖ When reassembling the hive, if the lower brood box is mostly empty (which is often the case), reverse its location so that it is on top. This will relieve congestion and provide expansion room for the queen and the brood nest. There are times when reversing is not advised, based on the brood nest configuration. For example, if brood is located in both boxes and it is still early in spring with cold temperatures, reversing may result in chilled and dead brood. This happens because a portion of the brood is separated from the main, and the colony does not have enough adult bees to cover both areas of brood. In another example, if the queen is already working in the lower box and the upper box is still mostly food stores, then reversing
- would not increase space for the queen. In this case, it would be better to pull excess frames of honey and replace them with empty frames.
- ❖ You may want to requeen weak colonies and make divisions out of strong ones. The assessment of whether a colony is weak or strong is based on the colony's population. A large adult population, lots of brood, and a solid brood pattern are indicators of a good queen and a strong colony. A queenright colony has eggs and brood. Unless you want to requeen or make a division at this time, you do not need to find the queen. Always scan brood frames for the presence of foulbroods, particularly American foulbrood.
 - ❖ Although some beekeepers start in March, April is the best time to make divisions that lead to a robust honey crop for the current year. Making divisions is also a form of Varroa control, as it disrupts the brood cycle and sets the mites back. (Swarming does the same thing, and to a greater extent.) Keep in mind that well-mated queens are not always available early in spring. In addition, feeding and making well-balanced divisions (ratio of adults to brood) may be necessary to prevent chilled brood.
 - ❖ Consider adding disease-free, dead-out brood boxes to your booming two-story colonies in anticipation of making divisions with them when your queens arrive. It will relieve congestion and give these overly populous colonies something to do, i.e., clean and refurbish frames. It will produce an excellent division later.
 - ❖ Continue to look for signs of Nosema infection. Provide Fumagilin-B medicated sugar syrup to suspected cases. Effects of Nosema include reduced bee life spans, increased supercedure and colony death, slow spring buildup, and reduced honey yield.
 - ❖ According to the *OSBA Honey Bee Pests and Diseases Update*, April is an ideal month to test for Nosema infestation levels.
 - ❖ Keep the front of hives clear of grass to promote ventilation and forager access.
 - ❖ If you believe that tracheal mites are a problem in your apiary, consider the use of plain extender patties (two parts sugar to one part vegetable shortening). Place the patty between the two boxes

of two-story colonies, or on the top of colonies with a single story.

- ❖ Determine your Varroa mite load and whether or not its population should be reduced. This is a good time (and maybe your last window of opportunity) to use controls that require higher daily high temperatures for use and shorter withdrawal times before supering. Mite Away II can be used between 50°F and 79°F and Apiguard, between 60°F and 105°F.
- ❖ When planning to super, keep in mind the withdrawal time requirements for medications and mite treatments. Also, if you use paradichlorobenzene for moth control, air out supers on a warm day to vaporize its residues.
- ❖ If you want to give your colonies a boost, begin stimulating feeding (equal parts sugar and water by weight) 6 weeks prior to the major nectar flow (start about mid-April). Be sure to discontinue stimulative sugar feeding before supering.
- ❖ Swarm season starts with the flush of new growth on plants and trees, and will continue into June. Nuc boxes containing one frame that has had brood, one frame of honey and pollen, and the balance of foundation are ideal for catching swarms. Consider pouring sugar water or honey all over the frames to increase their attractiveness and to provide additional resources for the bees in drawing out foundation.
- ❖ Wax moth activity dramatically picks up when the temperatures rise, so keep an eye on your stored supers—especially supers that contain pollen and have housed brood. Moth crystals (paradichlorobenzene), as well as freezing the frames, can be used for control. Exposing the frames to light can inhibit the moths, too.

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The Portland-Metro Beekeepers Association
presents the
BILL RUHL MEMORIAL BEE DAY
Saturday, April 25, 2009

PLACE: George Hansen's Foothills Honey Farm
30576 S Oswalt Road
Colton OR 97017

TIME: Registration: 9:00 AM
Presentations:
10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

COST: \$15 per person/\$25 per family*, pre-registered
\$20 per person/\$30 per family*, day of the event
*Individual registrations include lunch. Family registrations include two lunches; additional lunches may be purchased for \$6 each.

GEAR: Bring your "bee protection equipment" (veils, gloves, suit, etc.)

PRESENTATIONS (about 45 minutes each):

- A. Beekeeping Equipment
- B. Basic Hive Inspection
- C. Nuc installation/Package installation
- D. Finding the Queen
- E. Diagnosis and Management of Honey Bee Diseases

For more information, contact: **Kerry Haskins, PMBA President (503-632-8448)**
Jim Mellis, PMBA Vice-President (503-631-4622)

Complimentary morning beverage provided. Soda available for purchase. Great Oregon water available free. Cups will be provided, but save a tree: bring your own cup or water bottle!



To **pre-register**, return this form by April 18 with \$15 per person/\$25 per family to:

PMBA c/o Barbara Derkacht,
17130 S Seal Court
Oregon City OR 97045

Make checks payable to **Portland-Metro Beekeepers Association** (or "PMBA").

Families: Additional lunches should be ordered and paid for at this time, too, to ensure your sandwich choices. Please mail this form by April 18. Thank you.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ e-mail _____

No. attending _____ Lunch Preference: _____ veg; _____ ham; _____ turkey; _____ beef

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FOR DONATIONS TO THE NORTHWEST APICULTURE FUND FOR HONEY BEE RESEARCH, EXTENSION AND EDUCATION

- Make your check out to: **OSU FOUNDATION**
- On the memo line, take care to write:
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- Mail your donation to: Oregon State University
Foundation at 850 SW 35th St, Corvallis OR 97333-4015

If you have any questions regarding details of the fund or how to donate, please contact Kenny Williams, Chairman of the OSBA's Endowment Fund, at (541) 456-2631.

IMPORTANT: Making your check out only as described above ensures that your donation is correctly applied to the appropriate Endowment and not to any other program.



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Membership in the Oregon State Beekeepers' Association 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 a vote in OSBA elections, discounts on publications, and ten issues of *The Bee Line*. To become a member, send check made payable to OSBA with completed form to: Patricia Swenson, OSBA Co-Secretary/Treasurer, 11665 SE Webfoot Rd, Dayton OR 97114.

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The Bee Line

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*Once upon a time, in a land far away, honey bees taught mandarin growers the Tango,
and two colonies went to live near a garden on the lawn of the White House...*

The **Oregon State Beekeepers' Association** is a nonprofit organization representing and supporting all who have an interest in honey bees and beekeeping.

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