

The Bee Line

Volume 15
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Newsletter of the
Oregon State Beekeepers Association

March
1991

PROFILES IN BEEKEEPING

With this issue the BEE LINE will begin a series of interviews of people who are involved in beekeeping in ways that impact many others beyond themselves. Our first subject is Dick Turanski, owner/operator of Glorybee in Eugene and recently elected Vice President of OSBA. This interview took place in January 1991 in a Salem pizza parlor.

BL: Tell us how you got started in bees and about your business.

Seventeen years ago I had graduated from college in Economics and was in business trading gold and silver, but I wasn't very happy with it. One beautiful summer day I helped a friend take honey off his hives. We didn't wear protective gear and I really got into it. There was something about the warm, fresh, poison oak honey that was completely fascinating and enticing, and it was captivating.

I began to look at beekeeping as a survivalist would, as a means to generate food and income during the economic upheavals that appeared to be coming in those days. But while I was building up my numbers of colonies, people were telling me it just was not going to work financially. So I arranged, in 1976, with Bill Ruhl to buy bee supplies and sell them out of my garage to supplement income from

the bees. We were in competition with Quackenbush Hardware which had been selling bee equipment for decades. Before long a guy with access to pine mill ends offered to make woodenware for me, so that was added.



Dick Turanski

Somebody else suggested I teach a course in beekeeping and when I approached the community college about it, they immediately set up a course. I was not really qualified to teach it, but 80 students showed up so I got help from Herman Larson and Orval Bassett in teaching. There was no beekeeping club in the area then, so I helped organize the Lane County group.

I kept bees for seven years or so, got up to 325 colonies, then sold them in '82 or '83. We sold \$20,000 of bee equipment plus \$16,000 of honey from the garage that first year, and felt

Continued on Page 3

COMING EVENTS

OSBA SPRING MEETING

May 5th
Shilo Inn
Tillamook

OSBA ANNUAL PICNIC

August 11th
Orchard Point
Eugene

HONEY QUEEN CHOSEN

Terri Fenn of Portland was crowned the 1991 Oregon Honey Queen during ceremonies at the Red Lion Columbia River Inn on January 29th. The new Queen is 21 years of age and is a student of apparel design at OSU.

Other contestants were Cindy Seeley, 21, a student at Linn-Benton Community College and Bekki Terpack, 17, a Senior at North Bend High School. The three aspirants were judged during an interview and a speech each gave on a topic related to the beekeeping industry.

Judges for the contest were Carolyn Homan of the Capital Press, Jerry Haukes of the Agri-Business Council and Jeanna Davis of Academy Modeling.

The Honey Queen's activities are concentrated mainly during the summer months, but at present Terri and program organizer Joan Heater are putting together the HQ brochure and lining up radio interviews. Queen Terri will gladly appear at beekeeping schools or short courses this spring if asked.

WINTERING LOSS SITUATION REPORT

Conversations with beekeepers and pollination brokers indicate that many commercial outfits had difficulty delivering adequate colonies to the almonds this year. It is risky to draw conclusions from anecdotes, but in general the loss of bees and the frustration of beekeepers appear greater than last year and comparable to that of two years ago.

Frustration abounds where beekeepers completed their favored practices in the fall, had very little winter kill, then saw clusters dwindle and dwindle in January and early February when bees could fly but could not return to their hives.

Everyone is looking for a pattern to the losses, searching for treatments or histories that consistently bring favorable results in February. Practices that seemed to work in 1989 often did not deliver in 1990. No clear solution is evident and we don't even begin to understand the causative agent.

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Romeo and Juliet
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...Turanski, Continued from Page 1

good about our business. We moved to larger facilities on Arrowsmith in '84, and then bought our present property on Seneca in 1988. Now we have 15 employees and annual sales of three million dollars. Our primary business is providing sweeteners to bakeries, but specialty honeys are also important.

BL: You took a trip to Poland some years ago. What was that about?

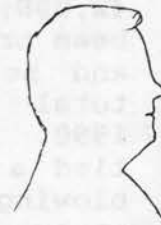
I wanted to make contact with my roots; I'm 3/4 Polish and 1/4 Czech. I visited a relative that kept bees and found out that bee-keeping goes back four generations in my family. It was a wonderful experience. My three children will go along on the next trip in 1992.

BL: Why did you take the job of OSBA Vice President, in line for the presidency?

I took the job because I'm excited about our industry and I feel I have a different perspective on things. I have a goal or desire to see the industry work together as a team. One of the things I'm excited about is the Honey Board, and I believe it's providing a catalyst for people throughout the industry to work together. I certainly believe teamwork is essential in getting things done. I know we are not all going to agree, but we can agree to disagree and then decide on how we can best accomplish certain goals that will benefit the most people.

I believe this industry is full of very neat people to be amongst. They are extremely intelligent in every aspect. Ours is an industry with unlimited potential for growth in marketing its products. If the products from the beehive are properly marketed, everyone will be more successful, and I think it takes a whole team to do that. Each person in the industry has to have respect for one another in order to do that.

It's going to take an effort on everybody's part to achieve teamwork so we can find ourselves on higher ground at the end of the '90's. We will need teamwork to survive, let alone grow.



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CONFERENCE NOTES AT LINCOLN CITY

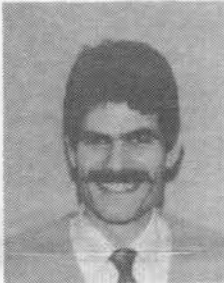
2. Non-Technical Presentations

Contributed by Marshall Dunham and Bill Rufener

Photography by Marshall Dunham

Glen Stonebrink, The Oregon Director of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, discussed his organization and how it works. He reported that federal benefits paid to Oregon beekeepers through his agency totalled \$376,000 in 1989.

Glen Peters, Salem inventor of Honey Stix, reported that some 42,000,000 sticks have been produced so far, and nearly half the total was made in 1990. He also whistled a happy tune by blowing across empty straws and presented plaques to Joann Olstrom and Dick Turanski for their notable efforts in promoting Honeystix sales.



ODA Assistant Director Lorna Youngs discussed the Department's policy and problems in service to the bee industry. While noting the need to educate the public regarding AHB and the worth of bees, she pointed out that people generally are not concerned about the details of food production; they instead simply want cheap and safe food.



A surprise session featured Bruce Pope-Blakley, an award-winning school teacher from Sheridan reading cherished letters, telling stories about his children and singing an inspirational song.

Bob Smith, the new Director of the National Honey Board, reported that the 1991 NHB budget totals \$3,700,000 with 9% of it to be spent on administration. In 1990, NHB articles, recipes and advertisements reached 19,000,000 readers. Seventy products have been approved for use of the NHB logo.



Joan Heater, who with Leslie Kuenzi had been planning and organizing a renewed Honey Queen Program, reported that pledges of \$1000 had been received. Additional funding will come from charging Queen contestants a \$100 entry fee and holding a raffle. She expressed confidence the program can be funded entirely separate from the OSBA treasury.



Bill Rufener reviewed activities of OSBA's African Honey Bee Committee, said that Bertie Stringer will be Chairperson in 1991 and asked that concerns and suggestions of the membership regarding AHB be voiced to the committee.

Continued on Page 6

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...Lincoln City, Continued from Page 4

3. Business Meeting and Banquet
From the Notes of Phyllis Shoemake and others

The Treasurer reported a bank balance of \$3137.

By vote of the members, the 1991 Annual Meeting will be in the Salem area, and Spring Meeting will be in Tillamook.

Marshall Dunham and Bertie Stringer received an award of appreciation for their work on the BEE LINE.

Volunteers were solicited to work on the 1992 joint conference with WSBA. Those interested should contact George Hansen, Chairman of the organizing committee.

OSU apiary research will receive proceeds (\$442) from the research luncheon at the Lincoln City Conference plus \$250 from the OSBA treasury.

Following brief but impassioned discussion, a motion carried by 15 to 13 votes to accept a proposed Honey Queen Program.

A resolution supporting the June referendum on the NHB was voted on and passed, but a separate motion in support of eliminating the opportunity of producers to get a refund of their forced contributions to NHB did not pass.

A slate of nominated officers and regional representatives was voted in unanimously. These people are listed on page 10.

After the Banquet, another outstanding auction was put together by Fritz Skirvin and George Hansen and performed by Alan Ehry. OSBA coffers were enriched by \$1924, and a reasonably good time was had by all.



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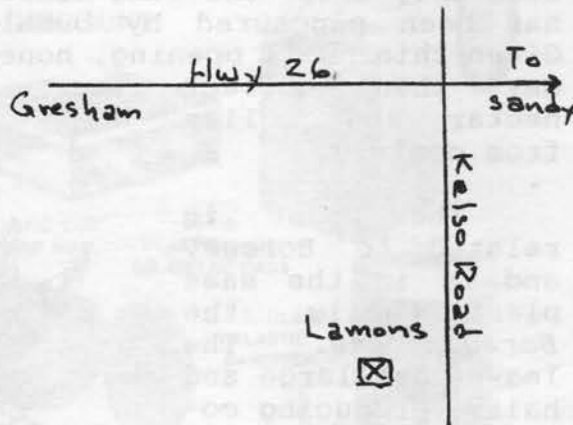
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BEE PLANTS IN THE GARDEN

by
B.A. Stringer

Comfrey is a clump-forming perennial plant which produces flowers from June onwards. The flowers are usually used by honey bees only after the long flower base has been punctured by bumblebees. Given this small opening, honey bees may then collect nectar and pollen from comfrey.

The plant is related to Borage, and is in the same plant Family, the *Boraginaceae*. The leaves are large and hairy, producing copious quantities of green forage, and comfrey has been grown both as a fodder plant and as an ornamental. In Australia during the 1930's, comfrey was recommended for naturalizing along stream banks and swamp margins.

Comfrey flowers are about 1/2 inch long with a slim tubular base flaring to curved petals. Colors range from white through pink to blue and purple, and several shades may be seen

on the same plant. Other species of comfrey have yellow flowers.

The commonly grown comfrey is *Symphytum officinale*. Its name is derived from the Greek words meaning "to grow together", probably a reference to the plant's wound-healing properties when used as a poultice. The roots have also been used medicinally. Dried leaves have been brewed into a medicinal tea, but internal use of the plant is no longer recommended as the leaves contain small amounts of a toxin, pyrrolizidine.



Comfrey

Comfrey is native to Iran and the Caucasus region. It is hardy and tolerates drought and cold once established. The plant dies back to roots in winter but in spring will spread again, so place it

in a spot with room to expand. Because the deep roots tap into lower soil layers, the leaves are rich in minerals and make excellent compost.

Thanks to Trudy LeFore of Hillsboro, who brought this plant to my attention.

Bertie Stringer's writings of bee plants appear regularly in *Gleanings in Bee Culture*, also.

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Honey Queen:

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Local Group Meetings

Tillamook

The Tillamook group meets the third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM at the Department of Fish and Wildlife, 4909 Third Street, Tillamook.

Klamath

Meeting places and dates vary. Call either of the officers for particulars on the next meeting.

Willamette

Beekeepers cluster in Room 32B at Chemeketa Community College on the fourth Monday of each month from 7:30 to 9:00 PM.

Tualatin

Meetings are the first Wednesday of each month during the school year at Rock Creek Campus of Portland Community College, at 7:30 PM in Building #3.

Portland

The Portland group meets in the Oregon City branch of Far West Federal Bank on McLoughlin Boulevard, 7:30 PM on the fourth Monday of each month.

Southern Oregon

Meetings are held the first Monday of the month at 7:30 PM in the Ag Extension Auditorium on Maple Park Drive in Medford.

Lane

Lane County meetings are the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM in the Public Employees Credit Union Building at 1155 Chambers Street in Eugene.

Coos

Beekeepers gather at the Coquille annex, next to the Extension Service Office, at 7:30 PM on the third Friday of each month except December.

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Membership and Publications

Membership in the Oregon State Beekeepers Association is open to anyone who has an interest in bees and beekeeping. You do not need to own bees or reside in Oregon to join.

OSBA membership: \$15 per person. Includes 10 issues of the BEE LINE and a vote in all OSBA elections
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See page 11 for renewal form.