

## The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

Volume 45 Number 6 July 2020

# Enhancing Urban and Suburban Landscapes to Protect Pollinators A. Materian Mark B. M. Davie, A.J. Dramater, I. Kamura, C. Languiste, N. Sandari, G. Sandari, and H. Sandari. Oregon State University Oregon State University

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orsba.org

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

**Image above**: A publication to ground and support us all as we provide for pollinators throughout the region! As noted in the front story, it's now available for download at: beav.es/forthebees.

Stay safe, everyone. Stay well.

#### **HOW CAN I HELP THE BEES?**

#### **New Resources from OSU Extension**

Andony Melathopoulos

It's a wonderful point in history when you can run into a perfect stranger and they ask you, "Thank you for being a beekeeper, how can I help?" It's gotten so easy! But it wasn't always this way. I am old enough to remember the public hysteria around the approaching "killer bees" from South America. Let's not forget the closing sequence of the epic 1978 feature *Swarm* starring Michael Caine (aka "Batman's butler" for you, millennial beekeepers). How did they deal with the hoard of invading stinging vermin? Why, they lured them into the ocean, where they promptly ignited an oil slick with a missile, thus incinerating the bees! You won't that see that in a 2020 film. Perhaps with the "Murder Hornet," we are trending back towards general panic. But we are not there yet and, as my dad always used to say, "Best to get out front of this one, son."

I need to put my cards on the table at this point. Oregon State University Extension has been eyeing you beekeepers. We know you talk to a lot of people. We know you have endless passion for bees. But we also know you could use some help. So, we are very pleased to offer you a brand new publication aimed at helping people in urban and suburban areas who ask you, "How can I help?"

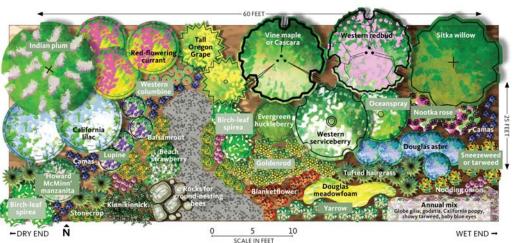
**Warning**: The publication title does not roll off your tongue: *Enhancing Urban and Suburban Landscapes to Protect Pollinators*. But we do have a great custom url that's snappier: beav.es/forthebees. One way to describe this publication is that it's *robust*: 41 pages long, drawing on the immense experience of our Master Gardener faculty on both sides of the Cascades. We are not talking 41 pages of tiny text written in painful academic-ese. No. We break complicated ideas like pesticide exposure or

## Pollinator garden designs

NATIVE PLANT GARDEN | West of the Cascades

Spring through fall

One of four garden designs, each specific to regions in Oregon, available in the publication.



keeping mason bees into infographics.

The publication includes four stunning garden designs, with plants generated through an extensive literature of heavy-hitting nectar and pollen plants as well as plants that are easy to find at big box and local nurseries. We also flag the plants that will invariably end in perpetual pest problems and offer great alternatives that draw bees in without the need for routine pest or disease control. We also have a section on getting into beekeeping that, well, delicately breaks it to the reader that beekeeping is not easy and he or she needs to take a class, join a bee association, or find a mentor. And we have a great section at the back for professional landscapers to help them select better pesticides around bee-attractive plants. As soon as we have physical copies, we will send a few to each bee association.

I also wanted to let you know the Oregon Bee Project had big plans this summer to provide OSBA members with seed packs for outreach events. We had high hopes of getting these to you by the state fair. Obviously, COVID-19 has put a damper on these plans, but it has given us an opportunity to plant plots with these seed mixes at OSU. We are hoping the images and data we collect will help entice people to push-and-shove to get these seeds at your outreach events next year.

that they continue, as consumers, incentivize commercial Oregon land managers to increase pollinator habitat, and that we across come virtuous circle where there more nectar coming in than you can handle. That won't happen automatically. have had a good ride, but now we might need to get out and push

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Apis mellifera
Cool bee image courtesey of Oregon Department of Agriculture
An easy-to-grow annual mix that attracts honey bees... and native bees too!
Seeds generosly donated by:
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get out and push New seed packs to be made available to OSBA members doing outreach in 2021. OSU is testing this a little. Sorry to break it to you, Oregon Bee Project social media channels.

but we may be coming into some lean years here, folks. Yet, with some new tools and your endless bee-enthusiasm, I am confident we can keep this current moving for decades.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

My dream is that 10 years from now people still love bees,

**Obstacles and Opportunities** 

Greetings, fellow beekeepers.

The more of these messages I write, the more I am impressed with how fast things can change month to month. The year 2020 has been very challenging for most of us, with uncertainty and change heavy in the air. Many of these changes are long overdue, and I am confident we beekeepers can rise to the occasion. I could not even dare to imagine what circumstances and headlines will exist from the time of writing this to weeks later when this message is published. With that in mind, I will endeavor to focus mostly on relevant beekeeping topics for our group and hope that weeks from now anything I say here still has some degree of salience.

For starters, many of you may have heard by now that at the May board meeting, in an abundance of caution, we voted to cancel the in-person fall conference. The overlap of COVID-19 and flu season, coupled with travel, just seemed to invite too much risk and complicate planning. Instead of meeting on the coast, we are planning a virtual conference and figuring out new ways to coordinate with speakers and vendors. While this is indeed not a complete replacement for our annual gathering, it will offer us a chance to raise some funds for the OSU Honey Bee Lab, hone some new

meeting skills, and learn some new things.

Speaking of new things, I have recently learned about some exciting new research described simply as symbiont mediated RNA inhibition or RNAi technology. Doesn't that just roll right off the tongue? There was a good write up about this in the *American Bee Journal* a couple months ago, and the original research was published here for those of you who would like to dig a little deeper: *Science*, issue 6477, Volume 367, page 573. In a nutshell, scientists have discovered a way to alter an obligate bacterium of the bee gut to interfere with viral and mite genes through RNAi, thus conferring on the honey bee resistance to mites and some viruses.

The naturally occurring bee gut bacteria is called *Snodgrassella alvi*, which is native to the bee gut and can only live inside a bee. Under laboratory conditions, the modified bacteria seem to thrive, are persistent, and are transferable between bees. While there is much field work yet to be done, this has the potential to completely transform beekeeping as we know it. The only beekeeping world that most of us have known is one in which the aptly named *Varroa destructor* has been a constant menace. It is very difficult to imagine a world where this is not the case. A disruptive technology like this would most certainly upend beekeeping economics by dramatically altering the supply and demand relationship. One year without industrywide 40+ percent losses could

result in a similar problem as the almond growers are currently having with overplanting and oversupply of nuts accompanied by a steep drop in prices. It will be interesting to see if reduced colony mortality can offset a drop in prices for pollination services. In other words, will beekeepers ever win? Only if we recognize that every challenge creates opportunities and every opportunity creates challenges.

This technology is very far from deployment, so we probably won't know for a while if it can work at scale without harsh unintended consequences, not unlike vaccine development. What happens when a swarm escapes with the modified bacteria into the wild? Even if the bacteria prove to be harmless to beneficial, it could be very difficult to regulate and, once the genie is out of the bottle and if the modified bacteria become endemic in honey bee populations, it could pose problems from proprietary and regulatory standpoints. Clearly, there still is much research to be done.

Directing time and resources to supporting research during these periods of rapid and unprecedented change comes with the usual pairing of obstacles and opportunities. Given the vital roles that pollinators serve, it is just as important now, as ever was, to continue to support honey bee research. Bees make food, and we are going to need a lot of that for the foreseeable future. I really look forward to working with you all in finding new ways to support honey bee research.

In that effort, we started a committee at our May virtual board meeting to explore a few different fundraising opportunities, including crowdfunding and other ideas. A digital campaign can give us a big platform if we execute properly. Beekeepers are a resourceful lot, and we are all learning new ways to do outreach and meetings. I can only hope that by stretching our imaginations a little we can find new ways to combine our collective efforts and get some great things done. The OSBA has its centennial to look forward to next year, and by then 2020 will be well in the rearview mirror. Hopefully, by then we can all look back and say we survived, grew stronger, and found great new ways to fund honey bee research. If you have ideas to share, do not hesitate to reach out.

I hope this message finds you, your loved ones, and your bees well. It's hot out, so be careful with that smoker and kill lots of mites. Happy July Beekeeping.

John Jacob

#### Oregon State Beekeepers Association EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES May 16, 2020 \* via Zoom

The OSBA Executive Committee met on May 16, 2020, using Zoom. Eighteen people were remotely present: Charlie Vanden Heuvel, Joe Maresh, Mike Rodia, Rebecca Fain, Pam Leavitt, Polly Hobliston, Eric McEwen, John Jacob, Karen Finley, Harry Vanderpool, Cheryl Wright, Mike France, Jan Lohman, Ramesh Sagili, Jordan Dimock, Risa Halprin, Rosanna Mattingly, and Joe Hansen.

It took us about 25 minutes to get going on the new format! Many of us had our first Zoom meeting and were grateful for the patience of people more experienced with the format.

The meeting was called to order by president John Jacob. Minutes of our January meeting as published in *The Bee Line* were accepted and approved without changes.

Joe Hansen presented the treasurer's report. The treasurer business has been pretty quiet, with just some ad revenue and new memberships coming into the account. OSBA's gross income for the year through May is pretty close to 2019; expenses are higher by about \$3500, mostly this is due to the increase made to Rosanna's stipend and payment to Bonnie King for her educational/fair planning needs. Balance sheet equity is \$69,462. Overall, OSBA is looking good and strong. Charlie motioned, Becca Fain seconded, to approve the treasurer's report. This passed unanimously.

#### 2020 Conference Cancelled

Vice president Joe Maresh initiated discussion of the planned 2020 conference at Florence, Oregon, in October. Many details and speakers had been lined up after considerable effort and planning on the part of Joe and his conference planning helpers. The "limbo" of the conference taking place or not was resolved by the executive committee: A decision was made to cancel the physical conference in Florence in October. Due to current and likely future restrictions surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a strong possibility of speakers and conference goers being reluctant/unable to travel. Late October is a predicted time for rebound of virus and associated restrictions; even now the governor has ordered no gatherings of this size until at least September 15.

#### **Virtual Conference To Be Explored**

Joe Maresh and Cheryl Wright proposed a virtual conference be held with speakers making recorded presentations and opportunities for Q and A and interaction from attendees. Dr. Sagili said OSU has a Zoom-type conference capability that supports at least 300 attendees that can be used by OSBA. A committee was formed to research the potential of a Zoom conference. Motion was made by Charlie Vanden Heuvel/Pam Leavitt to have a committee explore the possibility of having a virtual conference on the same October dates and report details to the executive committee at our next meeting in early July. Joe Maresh, Cheryl Wright, Jan Lohman, and Carolyn Breece will start the ball rolling. Likely the deposit

on the Florence Events Center will be used to hold space for a 2021 conference at the site.

#### **Regional and Bee Association Reports**

Eric McEwen (Southwestern Oregon): Southern Oregon has been in drought with the warmer drier weather, and the bees are on fire: Bloom is two weeks ahead and lots of honey is being made, bees are swarmy, some folks are drawing a lot of foundation, and beekeepers are excited that current rain may mean a good blackberry flow.

Jordan Dimock (Eastern Oregon): They've had a cool and damp spring, nice conditions for moving bees in and out of fruit; his outfit is finishing up making nucs, good spring as far as he knows from the region.

Polly Hobliston (from Eugene) explained that the LCBA group cancelled their March meeting, cancelled their bee school, and lost money refunded to attendees. They did send out the bee school booklet to some people for half price. Just prior to the pandemic shutdown, the group got together and made queen containment cages, which they will sell in the future. They are planning on trying Zoom meetings. So far there has been normal bloom. Mike France (Lane County Beekeepers) reported that LCBA has updated their website. He said 25 percent fewer packages were sold by GloryBee this year; he is not certain if this reflects better survival of colonies overwinter. GloryBee used a drive-thru system to distribute packages and liked it.

Cheryl Wright (Portland Urban Beekeepers) reported that PUB had a March meeting. The PUB bee school was reorganized this year—split into several events for each part of the bee season. They had a February bee school and have another scheduled for May. Their June meeting will be held remotely with Ramesh Sagili as a speaker. They are having tons of swarm calls, earlier bloom, and strong buildup in the bees. The group has used Zoom for meetings following the lead of the Tualatin Valley Beekeepers.

Rebecca Fain (Oregon Central Coast Beekeepers) reported that trailing blackberries bloom well with good weather conditions, and many association members already have a super full of honey. Zoom meetings are working; they miss the in-person meetings though. Lots of swarming is happening; Charlie will talk to the group about this topic at their next meeting.

Charlie Vanden Heuvel (Columbia Gorge Beekeepers) said the group began holding Zoom meetings in March; it has been going really well. The group is in its third year and has had lots of great speakers travel a long way to make presentations. He sees a useful opportunity to have speakers deliver talks by Zoom while the group is gathered to listen. Gorge hives are super strong. They have had good sunny weather, have seen 50–60 swarms in the area.

#### **Grants and Foundations**

The Scullen Fund has \$7600+ available; those funds may go to Ramesh's two current graduate students. Scullen Fund endowment is \$58,000. The OSU Apiculture Fund created by COSI has \$25,000 expendable and \$59,473 in endowment, and the OSBA-created Northwest Apiculture Fund has \$79,507 in endowment and \$18,156 in liquid use. Jan Lohman has been working on fundraising for OSU's Honey Bee Lab. Jan asks association presidents to support the research funds by talking about research funding at their meetings. Because of pandemic effects on university budgets, Jan noted that OSU's honey bee research needs our support more than ever. There is great need to build the endowment funds that support the Honey Bee Lab. She volunteered to work on the virtual meeting committee with an eye towards the fundraising we can do for honey bee research.

#### **Legislative Liaison Report**

Mike Rodia reprinted 4,000 copies of *Residential Beekeeping: Best-practice guidelines for nuisance-free beekeeping in Oregon.* He has most of them available; they didn't distribute many this spring due to cancelled bee schools. Bee associations are encouraged to contact him for copies.

At the early stage of pandemic closures in March, he and Harry Vanderpool scrambled to use Department of Ag registrations and a few other sources to create a mailing list to reach Oregon beekeepers with employees. This explained how to handle COVID-19 restrictions and worker safety during the initial days of the pandemic shutdown in Oregon and clarified that beekeepers are essential.

#### **Website-Communications**

Rosanna thanked the group for their contributions to the newsletter. She still asks for photos from the state conference. She reported that the prorated membership dues worked well as a step to changing the dues schedule. With about 20 new members since the new year, OSBA membership is inching upward to the highest she can remember. Only Lane County has their swarm call listing on the OSBA website; other groups are invited to submit theirs. Rosanna reminded everyone of the free online classified ads for members.

She wants the board to revise the decision to keep the presenters list private on the OSBA website, to make it public so schools and other groups can find presenters. She worked with Jan to get a link from the OSU Foundation so people could donate to the Northwest Apiculture Fund online through the website, yet the link they provided made it more likely that the donation would go to the foundation itself rather than to the apiculture fund. For now, donations can be made as posted under *Donations* on the website.

Rosanna said a navigation part of the website has stopped functioning for mobile access and she is closing in on a fix. She has started scanning old OSBA newsletters. They should all be scanned by the centennial conference. Rosanna also said that Diana Sammataro is working on another quilt that may be used for fundraising, such as in an online auction or raffle.

#### **OSBA Centennial 2021**

The OSBA centennial meeting will be in 2021. Charlie Vanden Heuvel asked if there was a committee looking ahead to the centennial conference and wonders if the committee could put together some ideas by July. Joe Maresh, Karen Finley, Charlie, and John Jacob will meet and make some initial plans to get that oriented.

#### **Replacing Conference Auction Income**

The OSBA Conference serves an educational, fundraising, and social role. Over \$20,000 were raised for bee research during the last conference, mostly at the banquet auction. John suggested setting a goal of raising the same with the virtual conference. Mike Rodia suggested that OSBA charge a registration fee to the virtual conference and dedicate it towards the research fund. Typically, the physical conference itself doesn't generate much revenue as it's basically designed to break even after paying caterers, some travel expenses, and hall rental. Cheryl Wright suggested the auction at the conference banquet could be replaced by an online auction/ raffle. Jan Lohman said things like paintings and Diana's quilt could be photographed, displayed, and advertised prior to the conference. Jan asked Joe Hansen to put together a report of financials for the year projecting estimated expenses to help figure out what to charge for a virtual conference and financial needs.

#### **Long-Term Fundraising Planning**

The board, with John's initiative, is exploring raising funds for bee research from a wider audience than just beekeepers. John and Rebecca announced formation of a committee to explore ways to cast a broader net and raise money for honey bee research. Ramesh Sagili said videos can be made about the OSU research program with OSU's extension/marketing departments. He intends to ask for a 2-minute video profiling how the Honey Bee Lab helps beekeepers and farmers. This could be used for a fundraising campaign. John has asked GloryBee if they might help with fulfillment of a prize/thank you gift for a crowdfunding campaign.

Rebecca Fain discussed the value of making a fundraising plan that is consistent and coordinated and organized. We have the skills and opportunity to work out an ongoing organizational fundraising plan that extends beyond immediate needs, one that will last through history, making a significant long-term contribution to bee research in the future. John, Rebecca, Jan, Joe Maresh, and Charlie Vanden Heuvel agreed to become a fundraising committee.

#### **Murder Hornet**

The new Gorge extension agent has a facial recognition camera set up to detect hornets and others coming and going from a hive. Harry Vanderpool will continue to follow the issue of murder hornets.

#### **Robotic Pollinators**

The Washington Department of Ag/USDA Ag Marketing Service has put up a significant amount of money to fund research on robotic pollinators. Most of the group do not see this as a research priority while beekeeping research funding is limited. Dr. Sagili said he will keep OSBA apprised of the program funding process and any opportunity to comment on funding priorities with USDA.

Lastly, Mike Rodia informed the group that Dick Temple died in March of heart failure and probably from COVID-19. A ceremony for him will be held in June or July.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 4 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Fínley

#### **QUESTION OF THE MONTH**

**Question**: New 5-frame nuc installed mid-April. Achieved thermoregulation on May 4, but then suddenly lost it again on May 20 for approximately 6 days after which it regained it. What are reasons for this type of short-term thermoregulation loss? Temperature, weight, and humidity data can be seen at: map.beecounted.org/hive/summary/4Cr4. Other data: Feeder added from May 4 to May 22. Hive inspection May 22 showed queen, capped and uncapped brood present, but it was raining and my glasses and magnifying glass were wet and I couldn't see eggs.

\*\*Rick Michaux\*\*

**Response**: I have seen this repeatedly this spring in the Portland area. Spring colonies are always unbalanced—too few adults, too much brood (new queen), and up and down weather. This year Oregon (Portland area) nucs expanded rapidly in April (there was nuc distribution first week of April, more mid-month) with great weather, low amount rain, lots of forage in good shape. Then May had a couple cold spells (nights into 30s, day highs low 60s, with off and on rain), and there were too few adult bees to cover the brood. Lots of brood chilling at frame extremes, bee cannibalism of eggs. House bees overwhelmed with work, and they condense to smaller area. Reasons: temperature, humidity, imbalance of adults, heavy brood amount, perhaps also too few (close-by) honey stores. Did see it frequently this spring. *Dewey Caron* 



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#### **KEEPING BEES in JULY**

#### Todd Balsiger

Late July brings the end of the nectar flow and the beginning of dearth for most areas.

- ❖ Typically by late July or early August all supers should be off and hives configured for winter.
- \* Removing supers during dearth can elicit robbing behavior. It is probably better to skip a tiny increase, if that, in honey yield and remove supers before full-blown dearth to avoid the hooligans.
- ❖ Reduce entrances, especially on weak hives and ones being fed. This will allow them to adequately defend themselves against robbing and reduce yellowjacket predation. For example, instead of 16 inches of opening, make it 3 or 4 inches.
- At this time of year, I am looking at consolidation and addressing underperforming hives. Folding up hives and allocating their resources to better prospects probably isn't a bad idea.

#### **European Foulbrood**

I took note of comments from Andony Melathopoulos in the April Bee Line regarding European Foulbrood. He mentioned that 2019 was an especially bad year for EFB. I subsequently listened to one of his podcasts about this very issue (podcast #132). The takeaway was that in 2019 EFB had spread extensively in Oregon and indeed anywhere in North America where blueberries are grown. It was stressed not to take EFB lightly, that it can lead to zero honey crop and even colony death. Andony said that the OSU Honey Bee Lab put out a warning about EFB last year. I missed it. I wish we had stressed the dangers of EFB in our first quarter tips. I recently spoke to OSBA regional representative Tom Cinquini who said he has seen EFB in some of his hives that were placed in blueberries this summer. This matches my observations, too. Tom treated all of his hives in the spring and plans to spot treat for EFB postharvest.

The other main point from the podcast was that, if your bees will be in blueberries or if you have known cases of EFB in your apiary, then a prophylactic treatment of all colonies may be warranted. They have found that, if it is identified in one hive within an apiary, then typically it is found in others, too. The same rationale to treat for EFB in the spring may exist postharvest? Maybe Ramesh can share his thoughts on this issue in the August *Bee Line*?

You can visit the OSU Honey Bee Lab website to learn more about how to obtain a Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) to make a purchase of antibiotics.

#### **Varroa**

I wrote the following in December for the January-February *Bee Line*, although I've changed some of the wording: I liken the growth of Varroa to a tsunami wave. During the early months the tsunami wave is crossing open waters, you hardly notice. Come late July or early August this tsunami wave is approaching landfall, and eventually—without intervention—will make landfall and reign destruction. Of course, in this story the initial wave is followed by aftershock waves that represent drifting and robbing which causes the reinfestation of previously mite-controlled hives. Keep this imaginary tsunami wave of Varroa in your mind. Prepare for it. Don't be caught off guard. Know how to deal with it. Be prepared for the aftershock waves.

I'm talking about honey bees . . . Social distancing, wearing PPEs, reducing initial exposure are things that our honey bees simply do not do—just the opposite. We have longer summers now, more brood cycles, and more mites. We've kind of run out of silver bullets.

I'm struck by the question, What percent colony loss do you find acceptable—30, 40, 50 percent? An occasional loss of this magnitude is painful, but consecutive losses of these magnitudes are just physically and monetarily exhausting. I have not been immune; I need to do a better job, too. It has been a boon for the nuc business. Each spring now OSBA members purchase hundreds of nucleus hives.

Are you ready to get off this merry go round? Now is your chance. I believe how well you take care of your bees in the third quarter (July, August, September/early October) to a great extent decides the fate of your hives.

Keep Varroa in check until fall rains come and the robbing season ends. I know it is not easy. I've heard stories of extremely competent beekeepers—even our bee scientists—who've struggled and had to use multiple treatments and were still unsuccessful in getting Varroa below threshold levels. They tried.

As Carolyn Breece reports, "I treat our OSU hives immediately after honey harvest (late July). Some years, our post-treatment mite counts reveal that we still have a mite problem and we need to treat again. So, we treat again in August/early September, but our options are usually limited due to high temperatures. Some years, we have had to treat yet again in late September/October because our mite levels STILL were not in our comfort zone. Why? Was it an ineffective product? Do we have rogue neighbors that don't treat their bees? I don't know the answer, but what I do know for sure is that if I hadn't taken post-treatment samples, I would have thought the bees were just



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fine after the first round in late July. I would have relaxed all autumn thinking my bees are OK. And then, without a doubt, I would be devastated to find that my hives crashed in winter. Post-treatment sampling is everything!"

I am not going to tell you what to do, or how to do it. I struggle, too. You've got to make a serious attempt though. Maybe the August *Bee Line* will offer some useful tips on how to treat Varroa effectively without adverse effects to your queens and bees. Meanwhile, I asked Harry Vanderpool to write about the concept of queen sequestration, forcing the mites to become phoretic and hence very vulnerable to an application like oxalic acid. If you only have a few

hives—and Harry has hundreds—I'd take a long look at this option or permutations of it.

There is a lot of gloom and doom now, e.g., John Jacob's warning about mechanized pollination replacing pollinators, the establishment of the "Murder Hornet" in North America, and the potential reduction of funding for bee research at OSU. I certainly hope that these storm clouds pass and that things become more predictable and nice again, and that OSBA members can resume meeting in person.

Take care.



#### BEE CLASSES, BEE DAYS, AND OTHER BEE EVENTS

#### ~ 2020 ~

**August 8**: Klamath Basin Intermediate Beekeeping Class. KBREC, 6923 Washburn Way.

**August 15–30**: Mite-A-Thon. *Sign up and participate*: www.pollinator.org/miteathon.

**September 12**: Game Changer Virtual Conference. *Registration*: bg-bees.com.

**October 3–4**: Washington State Beekeepers Association Conference. Central Washington Univ. Ellensburg.

October 23–25: Oregon State Beekeepers Association

2020 Virtual Conference. Information soon at: orsba.org.

**November 17–19**: California State Beekeepers Association Convention. *Information*: www.californiastatebeekeepers.com/annual-convention.

#### ~ 2021 ~

**July 8–10**: Annual Western Apicultural Society Conference, and **July 11 & 12–13**: Technology Demonstration Field Camp & 4th International Conference on Bee and Hive Monitoring. Missoula, Montana. *Information and updates*: westernapiculturalsociety.org.

#### **REGIONAL NEWS**

#### **Regional Representative**

#### **North Coast**

Rain, rain, rain... frustrating for us, but giving the bees a chance to rest up a bit after all the swarming they did this last month. Beekeepers are reporting lots of hive activity. Forage is great with home gardens exploding, lots of wild flowers in the hills, and blackberries budding out. Zoom meetings have filled an information and communication gap for many association members, but as much as beekeepers enjoy communing with their bees, I think everyone is looking forward to the time they can safely work with one another again.

\*\*Kathy Cope\*\*

#### **Regional Associations**

#### **Central Oregon Beekeepers**

Wow, this spring has been very frustrating and very satisfying. In Central Oregon, according to the BIP poll, we've had quite a low winter loss count from last year. We're hoping it's because our members were particularly fastidious in their mite mitigation and not that just the successful beekeepers responded. We'll be polling our

members to help differentiate. In June, we continued the combination of nice warm days interspersed with weeks of relatively cold weather (there were 3 days in June with freezing temperatures). Now, we should have wonderful warm days until the end of summer (crossing our fingers). For forage, after the sulfur buckwheat and Oregon sunshine in June, the next bloom of native plants is the sagebrush in late June/early July. In town, of course, there are plants continually blooming. One of the areas that we in Central Oregon are trying to figure out is which of the plants are actually honey bee forage and not just growable. One of our members made a calendar of when the various plants in the area bloom, and we have anecdotal reports of nectar flows and seeing honey bees visiting various flowers. However, we currently have no definitive list of forage plants.

In Central Oregon, beekeepers (of the *Apis mellifera* variety) have had a great amount of public support. One of the areas where we are concerned in the longer term is in the area of competition with other native pollinators. We are currently (COVID-19 allowing) working on educating ourselves as well as the general community on how both to mitigate any competition between honey bees and native

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pollinators and to promote native pollinators.

Central Oregon as well as all the other associations in Oregon are still working on how to conduct association meetings. Zoom meetings work fine; however, they aren't quite the same as having meetings together in a room. Also, they *don't* provide the capability to socialize and network with other beekeepers.

All the negatives aside, this is stacking up to be a great summer for beekeeping in Central Oregon. YAY! Please accept our invitation to attend any of our meetings (in person or online) the fourth Tuesday of each month at The Environmental Center in Bend from 6 to 7:30 PM (or so).

Allen Engle

#### **Columbia Gorge Beekeepers**

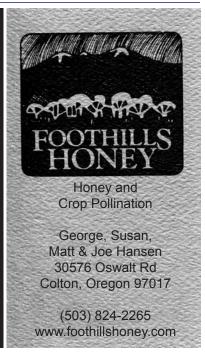
What a bee season this has been. If one had not looked at the calendar, would have thought February was in full spring mode. The terrific early weather has resulted in evidence of mites, but also an abundance of swarms. In fact, several nucs installed in April have already swarmed from a singular hive box with several frames yet to be filled out. So, apparently the wisdom of "space management" did not apply for these girls. There has also been a few incidences of Chalkbrood and the annual presentation of European Foulbrood. For the novitiate, a great time of learning. Unfortunately, the hives witnessing outbreaks of disease may not feel their education opportunities so lucky. All evidence pointed to an early nectar flow this year, but apiaries west of The Dalles patiently waited for June to appear before the blooms of the blackberry found strength and, yes, weather to open offering their abundance of nectar. Properties east of Mosier, the transition from the green belt to desert, thrived off of the wildflowers which have since passed. The Oregon Master Beekeeper Program classroom has shifted from in person to Zoom meetings. Amazing how eager each is to learn. Dr. Ramesh Sagili blessed our association with his presence, well, at least from the comfort of his home via

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Zoom, regaling our membership with a plethora of information. How fortunate Oregon State University and beekeepers throughout our state are to have such an energetic entomologist thirsting to support us through himself and his awesome staff.

Jerry Frazier

#### **Linn Benton Beekeepers**

Here we are again, the month that our bees have the most fun and the greatest amount of work! All mite treatments should be completed and your bees are mite free, right?

I have seen white comb on the tops of some of my supers and added a second super on my hives and a third super on two of my special hives. Like most in the valley, we are looking forward to letting the bees do what they do best—that is, "Bring in the bacon, oops, honey!" Whether your honey is for medical purposes, to sell, or to put on top of your favorite waffles, we all benefit and enjoy what the bees bring us.

With the COVID-19 situation here, we will be having our first meeting via Zoom. Our fearless leader Everett Kaser is working hard to help make this happen for our members. Where would we be without Everett? Thank you, Everett, for all the hard work you put into our association. Ray Juhaszy

#### **Oregon Central Coast Beekeepers**

May's great weather has kept our members busy with catching swarms, making splits, and installing new queens. We had a large swarm fly off from a hive we had recently made several splits from. We trailed it until it landed about 40 feet up in a Douglas-fir on a steep slope in the middle of our tree farm, so we gave it up for lost. Imagine our surprise when we found it in one of our catch hives 2 days later. Seems that a lot of our folks are having similar good luck. This might turn out to be a record swarm season on the Central Coast with the trifecta of great weather, a profuse early trailing blackberry bloom, and a large number of strong overwintered hives. We are all looking forward to a bumper crop of honey this year as the evergreen and Himalayan blackberries are starting to bloom as the trailing berry bloom subsides.

COVID-19 has changed how we meet and educate ourselves with two Zoom meetings under our belt and more to come. We are looking forward to the time when we can actually get together in person, but the Newport Library has not yet determined their plans to reopen so, for the time being, we continue to meet by Zoom.

\*\*Becca Fain\*\*



#### **Portland Metro Beekeepers**

It is early June and, as I sit writing this article, I'm appreciating the warmth of a fire in the woodstove. It was a cool 49 degrees outside this morning. A little over one week ago, we were in the midst of temps in the mid and high 80s. Oh, how quirky late spring can be in our area. But the promise of healthy hives and an abundance of flowering plants keeps our spirits high. I spotted my first blackberry blossom on May 23. With those 80-degree temperatures, they were in full blossom a few days later. Not only blackberries, but California poppies, Gilia capitata, and other pollinator-friendly plants are all making a show and providing our bees with the nectar and pollen they need. Our fingers are crossed for an abundant nectar flow for our bees and their honey stores. In anticipation of the nectar flow, many of us in the PMBA put our supers on hives and wait for the magic to begin.

Our monthly association meetings continue to be virtual, and attendance remains strong. In May, approximately 65 members got a rich and fact-filled presentation by Dr. Dewey Caron on "Bee Stings: Should We Fear Them?" I personally took away some useful information about them. I am certain others did as well. Dr. Caron also presented a quick overview of results of the 2019–2020 Winter Loss Survey (pnwhoneybeesurvey.com).

We were able to raffle off two 10-frame colonies that were from nucs ordered in April that did not get picked up. Doug Sieckmann nurtured them from 5-frame nucs to healthy colonies with 2 deep brood chambers. I wish I were one of the two lucky winners of those hives. We also raffled off five lots of 200 pounds of sugar for other lucky PMBA members. Additionally, we have been selling mite treatments (Formic Pro) at cost. By purchasing larger quantities, we can provide more affordable treatments to beekeepers who can't justify purchasing large quantities of treatments on their own. Speaking of mites, our July meeting will have John Edwards of Hive and Garden (hiveandgarden.com) presenting on mite control. That will be a timely presentation.

Lastly, we continue to monitor "re-opening" of Oregon at the state and local levels. While we desire a return to face-to-face meetings, patience and diligence are in order for the time being. We wish all Oregon beekeepers an abundant (and safe) nectar flow.

\*\*David Schwartz\*\*

#### **Portland Urban Beekeepers**

Like most associations, PUB's June meeting was held online, and we expect to do so for many months to come. There are pros and cons to this, but one benefit is the wide variety of speakers who are available to speak remotely and we're looking forward to wonderful talks in the upcoming

months from Priya Chakrabarti, Laura Bee, and others. Folks are now deep into their bee season and are watching for our large blackberry bloom, a large source of the Portland area's nectar flow. Although our association apiary work parties are on hold, our bee school has been able to visit the apiary and conduct some socially distanced work time inside the hives.

Due to the significant workload of our association apiary manager, PUB is seeking to change the apiary position from an adjunct to a full officer position. We're taking comments and questions regarding this change and will vote on it as a membership at our September meeting.

As a follow up to Dewey Caron's presentation last month on PUB's Northwest honey bee survey results (PUB had a much improved 38 percent hive loss), he provided management trends gleaned from the survey which helped surviving hives. These include feeding protein (patties or dry), dry sugar or fondant, winterizing methods, avoiding/reducing drifting, mite control with monitoring/alcohol washes. Total results can be found at: www.pnwhoneybeesurvey.com. He also reinforced efforts at flattening the mite curve in May and not letting the numbers build to August.

Our botanical expert Glen Andresen provided an overview of what's in bloom in June: Oriental and California poppies are "popping" and sunflowers will start blooming this month. In our area, cosmos are out and can bloom for half of the year. Globe thistles are just starting to show color as is the red creeping thyme. Sage, spiderwort, and milkweed are out or close to opening. Our linden trees are not yet open but will be very shortly, and our black locust is nearly done.

Our wonderful keynote speaker was Dr. Ramesh Sagili of the Oregon State University Honey Bee Lab, and his focus was on Varroa management and emerging problems, though he started off with a great dive into the now notorious Asian Giant Hornet and American and European Foulbrood symptoms. Thankfully, the hornet, Vespa mandarinia, is not in our region, and OSU does not think it is at all established in North America. He encouraged folks to look for it—in particular, its 3-inch wingspan and distinctive orange head. This hornet generally preys on different types of insects: Beetles, dragonflies, praying mantis; they may seek honey bee hives in summer and fall due to protein needs and, working in groups, can certainly decimate a hive of 40k bees in a couple of hours. He encouraged vigilance, though he was wary of traps that can kill other good pollinators, and to report suspected hornets to the Oregon Department of Agriculture/OSU.

In his overview of European and American Foulbrood symptoms, he noted that EFB incidence was unusually high in 2019 but thankfully is less this year. Of note, the bee lab is working with some veterinarians on bee and foulbrood education so they might be in a better position to prescribe medications to treat foulbrood. Canadian scientists are studying EFB, and there is some speculation there might be a new strain of EFB that is lasting longer in the season; OSU is providing samples to this effort.

Ramesh also discussed his work in the comparative studies of reproductive and phoretic mites. His studies involve 6 colonies and, while that may not seem like a lot, researchers have to ultimately count all mites on every bee and in every brood cell for each hive, quite a task. Their initial findings were that mites were in more than 50 percent of the capped brood cells during brood rearing season. This is important data to keep in mind as you select mite treatments.

Regarding mite treatments, researchers determined amitraz (Apivar®) to be largely effective but suboptimal for some hives, for reasons unknown to the researchers. It also appeared to be more effective when used in the spring than the fall. Additional studies of OAV and Formic Pro on brood mortality found Formic Pro had a larger negative effect on egg mortality and older larvae mortality. The negative effect was higher for eggs than older brood, indicating it may be worth paying attention to when you treat with Formic Pro as some parts of the season may be more appropriate than others. The OAV and the control samples had lower, more similar mortality profiles. The big takeaways were how important it is to continuously monitor and to not let mite numbers get too high; a two-week delay in applying treatment can cause significant damage, even in robust bee populations.

We continue to look for people to join our PUB pollinator planting program, headed by Tim Wessels. The focus of this project is growing plants for pollinators from seed and preparing starts for sale. We consider this a long-term project, and we're fortunate to have use of Tim's beautiful greenhouse. If you're interested in helping to plant, contact PUB at president@portlandurbanbeekeepers.org!

Jessica Anderson

#### **Tillamook Beekeepers**

Zoomed out. Tillamook Beekeepers greatly miss the old way of getting together to talk about bees and beekeeping. Zoom meetings are better than not meeting at all, but it just does not meet our needs. Just like our bees, we are social creatures, and we all want to get out of our homes and see each other in person. Our June meeting (Zoomed, of course) was with Marjorie Ehry. Marjorie talked to us about honey judging and entries for fairs and such. The meeting was informative and added to the basic desire to compete our own honey against other beekeepers. Nothing like a little competition to build camaraderie. For July, we are thinking of sneaking in an in-person meeting in the parking lot or our Honey House at the Port of Tillamook Bay. Bring

your own lawn chair and a tape measure to ensure 6 feet of Social Distancing. To be announced.

The good news is that many of us are claiming a good spring and early summer so far for our bees. Finicky weather irrespective, our honey bees are thriving. Several beekeepers have reported adding multiple supers already. Soon, the honey will be flowing. Can't wait to taste the sweetness of success. Swarming is hot and heavy also. Many calls have come in over the last couple weeks of swarm sightings.

One way to fill the time while being quarantined is to build a new shed for all my bee keeping paraphernalia. It turned



out very nice (IMHO), but perhaps the cost of it was too much in the end. It seems my taste for fancy and my need for only the best construction methods took the simple shed idea and turned it into something a bit extravagant for just a shed. So, I am looking for a new name. Any ideas? If you look closely, you can see

my hives in the reflection of the door window. It has made organizing my equipment amazingly easy, I must say.

Brad York

#### **Tualatin Valley Beekeepers**

Tualatin Valley board and member meetings continue to take place online due to the pandemic. Our bees don't seem to have changed their social distancing, and we sincerely hope that populations in apiaries around Oregon are happily increasing to take advantage of all of the wonderful blossoms brought on by plentiful rain and sporadic sunshine. June has been full of abundant blackberry bloom in our area, although ODOT has chosen to spray herbicide on some roadside blackberries in full bloom near Hillsboro. Conversations have begun about how to reduce this in future. The concepts of pollinator preserves and pollinator corridors have been mentioned, as well as "Adopt a Highway" projects. Food for thought and possibly action in our part of the world.

In June we have been keeping busy fielding a good number of swarm calls and the occasional request to remove bumble bees. We are doing our best to mentor newbee beekeepers via our website forum, Facebook conversations, and email and phone calls. We continue to be mighty grateful for the support and knowledge of Dr. Dewey Caron, who is such a knowledgeable and generous resource.

A salute to bees and beekeepers everywhere in challenging times!

\*\*Debby Garman\*\*

#### **OREGON PRISON BEEKEEPERS**

#### Coffee Creek Correctional Facility

Chad Naugle

With the start of a new year, we started Bee Team 7 at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. Each member of the team is to write an article to share with others about the bees. Here are some of their stories.

A few years ago, I had planted a vegetable garden and, while other gardens were seeing growth, my plants didn't seem to be producing. I spoke to my daughter for advice regarding my issues and she asked me about bees. She said if I wasn't seeing bees then pollination wasn't happening. I would have to pollinate them myself. She walked me through the process, female-male flowers and having to join them to pollinate. It was quite difficult for only 4 plants and my size is considerably larger. What an amazing job the bees do. These furry, docile creatures are so important for the earth to continue to flourish. They are imperative to our survival.

F. Escutia

When I signed up for the bee program, I didn't know anything about bees except for that they made honey! I had no idea how essential one little bee was to a big, huge world. When I started to read about them, I was very fascinated. I loved how each one of them had their very own job and that every job was important to their hive. I also love how they dance to communicate with one another.

My first time going to the hive was both terrifying and exciting at the same time. I didn't really know what to expect. When we were putting on all the protective gear, I started thinking is this really going to keep them from getting to me. Then when you get out there and you have them buzz in all around you, even landing all over your body, you must stay calm. Bees can sense your fear, even mood, so I had to tell myself they are just checking you out as well. It was an introduction for the both of us. I got my nerves under control, and it was a great experience. Getting to see them hard at work in their hive being busy little bees was so cool. Knowing what I now know about bees gives me new perspective on them. No more wasting or stepping on them. I am very excited to go back out to the hive and see what round two with the bees will be like. C. Mayse

I first entered the bee keeping program for one reason and one reason only: To impress my children. This was an opportunity to wear a suit that resembled one of an astronaut and work with bees, to be "coolest mom ever." What more to know? How about a ton, starting with a question to yourself, "Are you scared of bees?"

This is a hands-on program. Have you ever had a pesky bee buzzing around your personal bubble longer than your comfort level would like? You swat at it or even maybe run, yell at it to go away out of fear of being stung? Well, remember the astronaut suit I mentioned? It's actually only made of cloth. I guess you don't need the same level of protection as a woman traveling to space. And it's not just one bee buzzing around, it's a whole team of them flying, crawling, and searching for a way to get into your suit to protect the colony and show you who's boss. I personally froze like a deer in headlights, forgot how to breathe even. I closed my eyes and repeated to myself that this is just the sound of 100s of fans to cool me off. I was the one lone person in the bee team that day to not touch the hives. Not so cool after all to tell my kids and impress them. To make matters worse, Olivia, my 7-year-old, said, "Mom! You mean after the bees work all day to make the honey, you steal it, that's terrible." I personally was not expecting that reaction. All I could say was, "Ya, I guess so." Another bee keeping expectation laid to shame. By the end of this day, I was ready to quit. It's what I do when something feels too hard, is a little scary, not as easy as I hoped, but it is that same thinking that helped me end up here at Coffee Creek. So, I decided to do the unexpected and keep showing up and challenging myself to go outside of my comfort zone. I'm currently still on the bee team building up my confidence. Bees are some of the most amazing insects, fearless and smart beyond their size. They all have a job, but only one queen per colony, and all the others work to serve the queen. This is where and why the term Queen Bee came from. Being the queen bee has its perks, such as young worker bees to groom and feed her. That is, I guess if the colony does not reject her, kill her, and replace her with a new queen. In the bee colony, every one of them has a purpose, a job to do, and when a job has run its course the life of the bee dies and a new one is born. C. Antonuccio

I have to say this is the coolest thing I have been a part of since coming to Coffee Creek. I am on Bee Team 6, and I just love the bees. I first started to learn about the importance of bees on our planet when I lived in Utah, which is the bee state. Our neighbors had hives and shared honey with my family. They told us how without bees there would be no people. So, living there I learned a lot about the bees. When I learned I could become a bee keeper at Coffee Creek, I jumped at the chance. It is so much fun. The girls are great, the teachers are good, and we all have a really good time together learning and checking our hives. I have 3.5 years left here. So, I plan on becoming a journey man bee keeper. If you have a positive personality, you will fit in. The bees can sense negativity, so come with a good attitude and not have your fears because it will agitate the bees. Hope to see you out there. J. Hansen Fisher



## 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, swarm call listing, four free online classified ads per year, discounts on publications, and an annual directory and subscription to *The Bee Line*.

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### Oregon State Beekeepers Association

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Steven Coffman-503.838.2981

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Tim Wydronek—541.740.4127; tim@aldercreekhoney.com

#### • AFFILIATED REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

#### **Central Coast Beekeepers**

Meets 6:00 PM, fourth Wednesday, Newport President: Becca Fain—rfain18@gmail.com

Website: www.ccbaor.org

#### **Central Oregon Beekeepers**

Meets 6:00-7:30 PM, fourth Tuesday, Bend

President: Allen Engle—aengle@bendbroadband.com

Website: www.cobeekeeping.org

#### **Columbia County Oregon Beekeepers**

Meets 6:00 PM, first Thursday, Deer Island President: Linda Zahl—503.799.7073

Facebook Page: ColumbiaCountyOregonBeekeepers

#### **Columbia Gorge Beekeepers**

Meets 6:15–8:15 PM, third Wednesday, Hood River President: Jerry Frazier—jerry1.frazier@gmail.com

Website: gorgebeekeepers.org

#### **Coos County Beekeepers**

Meets 6:30 PM, third Saturday, Myrtle Point

President: Randy Sturgill—541.430.4095; randys@rfpco.com

#### **Douglas County Bees**

Meets 7:00–8:30 PM, first Wednesday, Roseburg President: Jack Reilly—douglascountybees@gmail.com

Website: www.douglascountybees.org

#### Klamath Basin Beekeepers

Meets 9:00 AM, third/fourth Saturday, Klamath Falls President: Paul Davitt—president@klamathbeekeepers.org

Website: www.klamathbeekeepers.org

#### **Lane County Beekeepers**

Meets 7:30 PM, third Tuesday, Eugene

President: Mike France—michaelj62@gmail.com

Website: www.lcbaor.org

#### **Linn Benton Beekeepers**

Meets 6:30 PM, third Wednesday, Corvallis President: Everett Kaser—everett@lbba.us

Website: www.lbba.us

#### **Oregon Prison Beekeepers**

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

#### **Oregon South Coast Beekeepers**

Meets 6:00 PM, third Tuesday, Gold Beach

President: Jesse Fletcher—jesse.l.fletcher@gmail.com

#### **Portland Metro Beekeepers**

Meets 7:00 PM, second Thursday, Gladstone President: Doug Sieckmann— 503.804.5417 Website: portlandmetrobeekeepers.org

#### **Portland Urban Beekeepers**

Meets 7:00–9:00 PM, first Wednesday, Portland President: Cheryl Wright—cwright80@hotmail.com

Website: portlandurbanbeekeepers.org

#### **Southern Oregon Beekeepers**

Meets 6:30–9:00 PM, first Monday, Central Point President: Risa Halpin—rhalpin906@gmail.com Website: southernoregonbeekeepers.org

#### **Tillamook Beekeepers**

Meets 6:30–8:00 PM, second Tuesday, Tillamook President: Brad York—dbradleyyork@gmail.com Website: www.tillamookbeekeepers.org.

#### **Tualatin Valley Beekeepers**

Meets 6:00 PM, last Tuesday, North Plains

President: Debby Garman—debbygarman@gmail.com

Website: tvbabees.org

#### Willamette Valley Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 PM, fourth Monday, Salem

President: Richard Farrier—rfarrierfarms@gmail.com

Website: wvbahive.org



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Eugene, OR – June 16, 2020 – GloryBee has made the decision to permanently close their Factory Store at Highway 99 and Airport Road in Eugene. A difficult decision, yet GloryBee wants "to celebrate this as a positive change which will allow the company to continue to streamline business operations and focus on paving the way to a profitable future."

#### 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.

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 **August** issue, 2020. The deadline for submitting copy is **July 10**, **2020**. Please let me know if you find difficulties with the deadline so we can work out the space and timing for the material.

May all be well!

#### **Advertising**

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