



BUZZWORD



West Sound Beekeepers Association

Volume 10, Issue 4 February 2007

February 2007 Meeting

Tuesday – February 20
7:00 P.M.
St edman’s Bee Supplies
Silverdale, WA

Program

6 PM - Bee-ginner Classes start

7 PM Winter Feeding

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Refreshments:

Drinks: David Mackovjak
Snacks: Jayme Selig

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

President / Editor



Basil Gunther

Vice President/Webmaster-



George Purkett

Secretary—



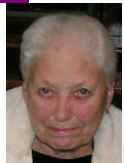
Judy Gunther

Treasurer



Dennis Heeney

Educational Materials-



Barbara Stedman

Librarian –



Roy Barton

Education Chair



Paul Lundy

Minutes from the January 16, 2007 meeting:

Basil Gunther presided.

A majority vote of the Grant Committee (one member was not present of the 3 person committee) approved a West Sound Bee Association (WSBA) Study Grant to John Mackovjak. The WSBA Study Grant includes a year's membership in WSBA and \$200 for beekeeping supplies. John will give a presentation about what he learned in a future meeting and must pass the Apprentice Beekeeper Test.



There was a discussion regarding the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) creating an Apiary Advisory Committee(AAC). One purpose of the advisory committee will be to allocate the funds (over \$70,000) that have been accumulating from the state bee colony registration fee program. The Apiary Advisory Committee will be appointed from people who have been nominated by February 15 from local Bee Associations and other interested beekeepers. Committee members will have to travel to and attend meetings and suffer the usual inconveniences.

A letter from the Washington State Beekeepers Association to the Washington State Department of Agriculture regarding the proposed AAC can be reviewed by clicking on the following link "[AAC LETTER](#)".

It was unanimously agreed to nominate Paul Lundy to represent our area, our interests, and beekeeping in general, by helping direct the funds to worthy purposes. Paul even agreed to be nominated. Basil volunteered to write an additional letter of recommendation representing WSBA to accompany the nomination form.

The Washington State Beekeepers Association (WASBA), of which we are associate members, will be holding a meeting at the BAR-14 Ranch House Restaurant in Pullman, on March 3.

Paul Lundy volunteered to write a SARES grant application to help fund our desired involvement in the Washington State University (WSU) Queen Breeding program. We would be helping develop a locally adapted bee, help maintain genetic diversity within the strain, and help local beekeepers access queens more suitable than those raised in the southern states.



Basil gave a short talk on soft candy (fondant)

Enthusiasm continues for forming a queen rearing group within our association. We can pool our resources and produce some super queens, while developing regional strategies. We will start making plans at the February meeting.

Considerable time was spent discussing getting speakers from outside our association. At the February meeting we will decide on

a protocol that will allow us to offer money to cover transportation costs of non-local speakers. Basil will find out what would be acceptable to certain members of the Mount Baker Beekeepers Association and present his findings at the meeting.

Paul Lundy thought WSU would send a speaker if we asked them.

Al Stedman thought he could get some speakers including WSU's Dr Steve Shephard, Pat Heitkam of Heitkam's honeybees, and the knowledgeable Jackie Burns.

Basil will be calling on Jo Miller, former Washington State Bee Inspector whom he met at the state convention last fall. He will also try to find "that tall guy" who used to be president of the Mount Baker Beekeepers Association.

Respectfully Submitted by *Judy Gunther, Secretary*

Message From the President:

Hello Everybody!

February is here and pollen should be rolling in abundantly as bees start to kick up the brood rearing pace. Today I saw pale yellow, gray, and bright orange pollen. One bee was covered in pale pink dust with bright pink baskets! If bees are flying, just watching the incoming pollen will tell you a lot about what's going on inside. I like to see lots of pollen going in because that means they're raising lots of bees!

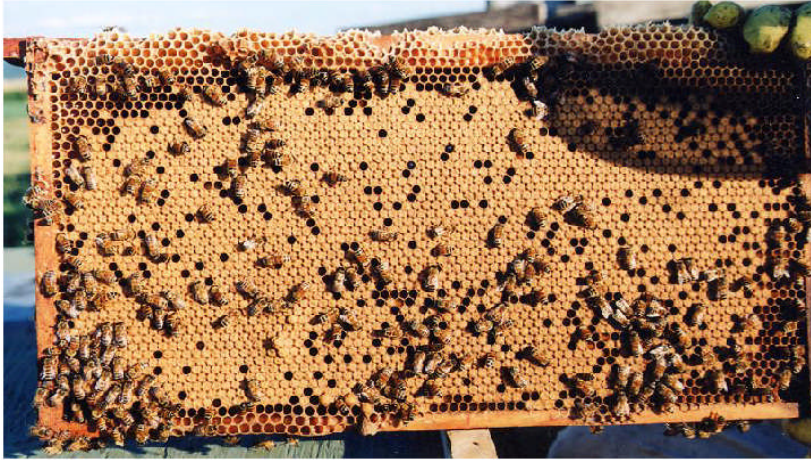
I also like to get a lot of honey, but that's trickier than getting lots of bees. They say one big colony can out produce two colonies that would be the same size as the big colony if they were joined. That's because the bigger colony has a higher percentage of active foragers than the other two combined. The two smaller colonies expend a higher percentage of their energy budget on housekeeping. In practical terms that might translate to getting 5 gallons of maple honey from the go-getter colony and 5 gallons of nothing from the little colonies!

At the risk of losing my readers, I will present a few calculations that might help a few of you in your beekeeping endeavors:

A colony of 60,000 adult worker bees is considered to be a large colony. Assuming the average life of a worker bee is six weeks, then to maintain 60,000 workers...

- The queen must lay 1430 *good, non-drone* eggs each and every day.
- That's 17,160 capped cells or 3.3 frames, 80% full, both sides
- And 12,870 cells with eggs and open brood or 2.5 frames, 80% full, both sides
- For a total of 30,030 brood cells or about 6 full frames, 80% full, both sides, at all times!

The frame below is only 80% full, yet many beekeepers would call it completely full. A major goal in the Art of Beekeeping is to have and maintain a strong population during the honey flows. Brother Adam measured a beekeeper's level of success by the amount of honey produced



divided by the number of hives kept. I suspect Brother Adam probably heard a lot of tall tales concerning honey production. Some things never change!

In our region we have two main honey flows: The maple flow starting in mid-March and continuing through the entire month of April,

and the blackberry flow which starts around the end of May and ends in mid-July. A third crop can be had by taking bees to higher elevations to forage on Fireweed and Canadian Thistle after the blackberry flow peters out.

It seems like bees like to swarm around the end of the first flow, taking half the honey with them, leaving the ones behind weakened for the second flow so you get little honey! So, of course, we try to minimize swarming. Sometimes there's no stopping them. We do what we can. A colony of 60,000 bees can make an impressive swarm!

One reason to think about swarming now is that one management technique to reduce the swarming impulse is having a young vigorous queen in the hive. A young queen, theoretically, has strong pheromones which keep the workers satisfied. These weaken as she gets older and the hive becomes more likely to swarm. In early Spring fresh queens are in high demand, so if you want to buy some this Spring, you need to make arrangements now. I would also recommend picking your supplier carefully. If you need packages this Spring, let the Stedman's know now so they can plan ahead too.

Another swarm delaying tactic is early supering, supposedly so the bees don't feel crowded. I usually put the supers on in mid-March. So if you use PDB crystals for moth control, you should think about airing out that equipment. And if you use chemicals for mite control, you better get cracking so you can be finished by the time you want to put supers on because you don't want residues in your supers. Do you have enough supers? Now's a good time to get some more if you don't have enough.

One reason I like February is that it seems like the end of Winter is in sight. If I have colonies that won't make it through winter, they're usually gone by now and I have their equipment cleaned up and standing by for another beekeeping project. I have learned the hard way that colonies at this time of year can have a population surge, consume all their stores, and starve quickly. This is sad because a timely feeding of dry sugar or fondant will save

the day. I try to keep a candy board on every hive at this time of year, until the maples get flowing. Sometimes there's a mystery flow in late February. I see lots of flowering trees at that time, but their reputation as nectar producers isn't great. Hmmm.

As far as Association prospects go, I think we can look forward to the most interesting year yet! We will be having several interesting speakers, our Association Apiary is coming through it's first Winter, we will be approaching queen rearing as a group for the first time, and of course getting another batch of beginner beekeepers off to a good start in the Bee-ginner Classes taught by Paul Lundy, just to name a few of the interesting projects that lie ahead. I urge those of you who haven't paid their annual membership dues to do so now and get it out of the way. \$24 is two dollars a month, which seems like the best way to spend money you can find anywhere! Make your checks payable to West Sound Beekeepers Association and get them to: Dennis Heeney, WSBA Treasurer, 5350 Welfare Ave. Bainbridge Island WA 98110. Thanks to everyone who has paid their dues. Without you, there is no Association!

So on those sunny days of February, get out and see what's going on in the beeyard. Scrape some bottom boards, stay on top of things, be ahead of the game, and don't forget to watch the beautiful colors of pollen as they come rollin' on in...

See you at the meeting,

-Basil

The Need for Late Winter Examination

Adapted from an article written by Doug Colter in March 1998 for the Alberta Beekeepers Association

Each year, you try to do your best to assure the presence of a healthy, young queen of preferred beestock, to provide adequate food reserves, to maintain disease-free colony conditions and to provide winter protection for all of your colonies. At this time of year, it is important to check on your colonies during a late winter colony inspection.

The purpose of a Late Winter Inspection is to answer several important questions

1. Is a colony alive or dead?
2. How available are the food reserves to the cluster?
3. What is the health status of the colony?

Quite simply, a dead or severely dwindled colony should be dismantled and moved out of the apiary to a bee-tight storage area or closed up until it can be moved out. This will effectively eliminate the dead or weak colony from becoming a potential source of diseases or pests to neighboring colonies due

to robbing or drifting behavior. Later examination of the hive equipment may allow for determination of the cause(s) of the colony's demise.

Queens generally begin egg-laying in mid- to late January and brood rearing will expand if sufficient pollen stores are available within the cluster - even when outside temperatures are below freezing. Winter survival problems can arise, even with adequate food reserves, when the cluster cannot maintain contact with its food reserves. Generally, the cluster will not leave the brood to maintain contact with its food reserves. This is especially the case with small clusters that can cover only a few frames.

Sometimes, the cluster will simply eat its way in one direction, lose contact with its food reserves and starve in one corner of the brood chamber. The cluster may be able to expand during mild weather breaks, but due to a sudden return of cold temperatures, cannot move quickly enough to get into contact again with its food reserves. As a result, a large number of small colonies can die in January and February. This can even happen in more populous colonies if food reserves are inadequate or improperly positioned in the hive.

Prior to the actual examination, you should assemble everything you may need beforehand. You must be able to assess each colony quickly and respond accordingly to each situation observed. With your smoker ready, gently pry up the inner cover. Use a little smoke to calm the honeybees. Leave any adhering honeybees on the cover and put them aside, exposed side up.

Look down between the frames in the top box to check for adequate honey reserves in contact with the cluster. A fully capped frame of honey equals about 6.5 pounds of food reserves. The colony, in a standard hive, should have from four to six frames of honey in contact with the cluster. Such a colony should be secure for another three to four weeks.

Colonies that have sufficient but improperly positioned food reserves can be quickly adjusted. Move combs of honey to the cluster, rather than the other way around. If you need to centre the entire cluster to surround it with food reserves, you must move the frames as a single unit. Do this as carefully as possible so as not to break up or disturb the cluster.

Do not remove frames that contain pollen. If you need to feed a colony, honey is best at this time of year. A frame of honey, saved during the harvest, for each colony is an ideal source of food. You can also use granulated honey. However, in both choices, disease free sources must be used.

Placing an inside frame feeder filled with granulated honey or dry granulated sugar, in position adjacent to the cluster, is an effective way to feed bees. Feeding sugar syrup at this time can cause excessive moisture, and possibly dysentery problems, especially in small colonies. It can also chill the bees, cause the cluster to become restless and can stimulate food consumption. Any sugar syrup that you feed should be warm and as concentrated as possible (2:1 sugar-water) and limited in volume initially.

If you determine there is a shortage of pollen near the cluster, a pollen substitute or a pollen supplement should be provided.

Sometimes you may find a colony that is near starvation. The whole cluster appears restless and shivering. If the colony is worth saving (considering labor and time involved versus expected results), there are a few alternative methods you can use to try to salvage the bees. Use of a frame feeder may not be effective as the bees may be too weak to move to the feeder.

You can also provide a frame with warm syrup or honey poured into the cells. When the bees appear to have recovered, you can then place a frame feeder filled with honey or dry sugar next to the cluster. Another quick-fix remedy is to use frames of honey. If the honey is capped, you may have to remove the cappings to allow the cluster quick access to the honey.

Where colonies are populous, many beekeepers provide extra feed by using a division board or frame feeder filled with granulated honey or warm sugar syrup. Some fill empty brood combs with syrup using a sprayer. Others prefer to feed granulated sugar placed onto the inner cover, leaving the feed hole open to allow the honeybees access to the sugar. However, feeding sugar - dry or syrup - at this time of the year is stressful for the colony. When you provide supplemental feed, you should limit the amounts initially, gradually increasing the quantity on your next visits. Feeding large amounts at one time will usually have a negative effect on colony build-up. The colony has to divert energy to handle the sugar rather than to rear brood and maintain hive temperatures. The brood nest may also become "plugged" with excess syrup, interfering with egg-laying by the queen.

Another method that has been used to feed a colony until other forms of supplement can be applied is the "candy-board." If you do use this method, it is recommended to use the soft or fondant formulation. One problem of the candy board is the same as when granulated honey or dry sugar is used to feed colonies. The honeybees do need some moisture to allow them to liquefy the sugar. There may be sufficient moisture in the hive from the condensed water vapor produced by the cluster as they respire. If you would like to try fondant, a recipe is found in the January 2006 newsletter on the WSBA website.

There is a need to monitor your colonies for the presence of bee diseases and parasitic mites. The best time to monitor and to sample your colonies is now. For information on sampling and detection methods, consult IPM recommendations under 'beekeeping articles' at the WSBA website.

The late winter inspection with its necessary adjustments and/or supplemental feedings of honey, sugar, pollen substitutes or supplements will generally assure the survival and normal development of your colonies until natural sources of pollen and nectar are available. When winters are severe, you may have to inspect your colonies every two to three weeks and apply additional food reserves.

Mid-winter to late winter checks, if done quickly and carefully, will not greatly stress your colonies. Removing the hive cover will not cause problems but disturbing the cluster can. Winter losses due to inadequate

food reserves can be prevented by your inspection of each colony as early as possible. However, if many colonies require feeding at this time of year, you may have to re-examine your winter preparation schedule to ensure adequate food reserves in future years.

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Need For Pollen

Roy Thurber, PSBKA Newsletter March, 1982

Again someone called wanting to talk about trapping pollen. Should they or should they not, etc... OK I think a person can probably make as much or more trapping pollen as they can off honey. Possibly one cannot only get pollen but also some surplus honey, but if pollen is trapped extensively, I am sure honey production will suffer and more management is necessary. Mr. John Corner, head of the apiculture branch of B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, turned my head around. I used to think that any day a bee could fly, she could and probably would bring in pollen (water carriers excepted) so they have no need of trapped pollen for the pollen supplement mixture. Johnny said quite often we have periods of bad weather during the spring build up and if, as it often happens, the bees run out of pollen, brood rearing stops. As a result you do not have the maximum field force flyers available to maximize the honey flow. So, if you want to get as much honey as you can out of a hive, you should have pollen cakes made up and frozen to put on after a week of rain. Anyone with 5 or more hives probably should have a pollen trap and put it on –accumulate a gallon of pollen and freeze it each year (even frozen pollen deteriorates, so it is an each year proposition). Now if you do not need to use the frozen pollen patties in a year, no problem –The next year you thaw them, add new pollen to the mix and refreeze. I find a gallon of pollen mixed into the other ingredients is plenty for twenty hives.

Yes! I want to be a member of West Sound Beekeepers' Association during 2007. I have enclosed \$24, payable to West Sound Beekeepers Association, to cover my annual dues. (household members are included in membership)

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

I would prefer to receive **email** / **snail mail** version of the newsletter (**circle preference**)

Please return to:

Dennis Heeney, WSBA Treasurer, 5350 Welfair Av, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

Recipe Corner:

Baked Honeyed Squash

A fine accompaniment to poultry and other dishes, using ingredients that reflect local reality rather than imports from tropical or southern hemisphere countries. I like long storing, dry, sweet, fine-grained Red Kuri squash best because you don't have to peel its bright orange skin and it's never stringy!

- Slice deseeded Red Kuri, peeled Butternut, or one of the other orange – fleshed Winter Squashes into ¼ inch slices (Butternuts can be cut into circles, then half circles for an attractive presentation.
- Toss the slices in warmed honey till coated, about 1 tbs per pound of squash.
- Arrange and overlap pieces in a roasting pan or shallow baking dish and drizzle leftover honey and dot with butter. Use about twice as much butter as you used for the honey.
- Sprinkle with a small amount of chopped fresh dried rosemary (dried OK).
- Bake in preheated oven at 350 degrees about 30-35 minutes until golden brown and caramelized. Enjoy!

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 20, 7PM