



# BUZZWORD



WEST SOUND BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

<http://www.westsoundbees.org>

Proudly serving bees, their keepers, and the public in Kitsap County, WA and beyond!  
FEBRUARY 2014

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\*Reprinted due to important & timely information



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### WEST SOUND BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION APIARY ACTIVITIES

Date: **Tuesday, 2/18/2014**  
 Time: 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm  
 Location: Stedman's Bee Supplies  
 3763 NW Anderson Hill Rd  
 Silverdale, WA

### WEST SOUND BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Date: **Tuesday, 2/18/2014**  
 Time: 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm  
 Location: Stedman's Bee Supplies  
 3763 NW Anderson Hill Rd  
 Silverdale, WA

### WEST SOUND BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION BEGINNER CLASS #1

Date: **Monday, 2/24/2014**  
 Time: 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm  
 Location: Silverdale Community Center, Evergreen Room  
 9729 Silverdale Way NW  
 Silverdale, WA

# TREASURER'S REPORT

February 2014

(Bank statement dated 1/31/2014)

Money Market Reserve account: \$4505.51

Savings account: \$3888.57

Checking account: \$6304.42

## Activity for the month of January

Dues paid 168.00

**Deposit 01/13/14** **168.00**

Refund Christmas party room refund 200.00

**Deposit 01/24/14** **200.00**

Dues and class registration class 841.00

**Deposit 12/19/13** **841.00**

**Total Deposits for Jan** **\$1209.00**

Checks Cleared in Jan:

Library/Apiary 278.55

**Total Checks cleared** **\$278.55**

Total membership Dues paid for 2014 = 49

New members = 14

Paid class registration

5 Beginner Class

2 Queen Rearing Class

Elizabeth Bianchi  
WSBA Treasurer

# FEBRUARY 2014 HIVE NOTES

Jean Ball, WSBA Apiary Manager

We are down to 6 colonies. We moved them to the new swath today and fed granulated. Pollen patties are holding out well and being consumed.

I really like having the bees in the new location, I hope everyone else does, too.

It was cold and windy when we were at Stedman's so I did not do full inspections today. I judged each colony's stores as we carried them, intact, to their new spot. We assessed their grade by the activity at the top when we took the lids off to feed.

These are the notes I took today with grades:

**J2 (5 frame) alive...C**

**B2 almost dead ...F**

**F3 (Warre) ...A**

**A2 ...A**

**Shook Swarm ...A+**

**A3 dead ...F**

**No tag... Superb A+**

**B1... A+ small bees**

**Zero stings today, making near freezing an ideal time to work grumpy bees!**



# SUCCESSFUL BEEKEEPER - SUCCESSFUL BEES

George Purkett

Are you a successful beekeeper? Do you have successful bees?

To be successful at anything you must set a goal. Some goals are clearly defined and some are more notional goals. We often refine our goals as we go along. If you meet the goal, you are successful. If the goal was poorly defined or unreasonable, setting a different goal can get you set back onto a successful path. Before you decide whether you have successful bees and you are or are not a successful beekeeper, lets discuss some common goals you may have for you and your bees.

Each beekeeper gets to define their goals and what being successful means for them and for their bees.

If your primary interest is in pollinating your fruit trees, then a large fruit harvest may be your goal and you can weigh your harvest to determine your success. If your interest is surplus honey to consume or sell then set your target and weigh your harvest. If your interest is more about hive management, then your individual successes at splitting hives, catching swarms, growing queens, and overwintering hives can be counted to determine your success. And for the true bee fanatics, just the process of spending time with hands in the hives and sharing knowledge and skills with other beekeepers is enough to satisfy you.

Most of us have many goals we set for ourselves in our beekeeping practices and some work out while others don't. Keeping score of individual successes and failures may not be practical. However, if you find yourself keeping bees year after year and looking forward to it again year after year, then I am guessing you are a successful beekeeper.

Determining if your bees are successful can be a much more difficult thing to assess. All beekeepers want their bees to survive, thrive, produce buckets of honey, pollinate everything in sight, and sting only the obnoxious neighbors. These are really the beekeepers goals. The actual goals of the bees are much more basic. The individual bees are working to support the colony. They accomplish this by a myriad of tasks based on the colony needs at the time. The colony is working toward both surviving and propagating the colony by producing swarms. The longer term goal is to keep propagating the genetics of the hive by sending off swarms and providing drones for aerial mating with neighboring queens.

Some beekeepers look at a hive that dies in the winter as an unsuccessful hive. However, if they successfully swarmed the previous spring and sent out drones to successfully mate queens in the area, it was possibly a partially successful hive. It just did not live up to the beekeepers goals. On the other hand, if the hive did not thrive, produce any swarm, nor produce any drones that successfully mated area queens, and failed during the winter the hive would be looked at as an unsuccessful hive. We will always find hives like this and they may fail due to poor compatibility with the local environment or susceptibility to disease, or poor compatibility with the beekeeper's practices.

## SUCCESSFUL BEEKEEPER – SUCCESSFUL BEES (continued)

One way to determine if your bees were successful is to look at the longer term survival of bees in your area. Your colony is a source for drones to mate with virgin queens in the spring and summer to both feral colonies and managed colonies. Swarms sent out of your hive have a chance of establishing a feral colony spreading the genetics of your colony to future feral colonies. Your successfully overwintered colonies will also propagate their genetics to your future hives. Hives that fail to survive will no longer provide their genetics to bees in the area, which may be a good thing since they failed to thrive in the local conditions. In this view, we can even say that the failed hives are successful at protecting the long term survival of the local bee population.

To put a colony loss in perspective, if we lived on an isolated island populated with feral colonies the number of colonies would stabilize. But each year, each colony would swarm and double the number of colonies. And then to get back to the stable number of colonies, half of the colonies would perish. This means half of the colonies need to perish every year to keep the island stable.

Let's twist this a couple ways for our back yard. If I normally have 10 colonies in my yard and 5 typically die off then maybe my area will not support 10 colonies. Would I have better survivability with only 5 hives? Maybe the better bet is to establish multiple apiaries with fewer hives in each location. Feral colonies establish themselves a half mile apart rather than in clusters of 5 or 10. Or twisting the other way, should I build up to 20 hives and expect fifty percent losses and be happy with 10 survivors. And then would the 10 survivors be truly the survivors of the fittest, or would they be also weakened by fighting with many neighbors for limited resources. And then propagating disease by robbing from the weaker hives. If it is truly a resource issue or disease issue, the loss rate will likely increase. If this is what you find, sounds like you can declare success for the bees. And by the way, you may also want to change your beekeeping practices if you are losing half of your colonies year after year.

Hope you and your bees have a successful year.

## WSBA QUEEN-REARING GROUP



The Queen-Rearing group is open to all members who are interested in learning about the art of Queen-Rearing or would just like to learn more about bee keeping. To be included in Queen-Rearing correspondence please send me your name, phone number and email address.

David Mackovjak, Queen-Rearing Chairman  
[trimack@prodigy.net](mailto:trimack@prodigy.net)  
360-340-0381

# LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AT THE WEST SOUND BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION 2014

Beginning Beekeeping Class – Beginner beekeeping course following the Washington State Apprentice Beekeeper curriculum. We are presenting in 5 (2hr) sessions this year to give better continuity of information and improve the delivery of information.

Hands-on Classes – In addition to the basic hive inspection class, we are adding classes for swarm control, summer hive assessment, and natural hive beekeeping. We are also trying to refine the queen rearing group events into more of a class like structure for better learning as we try to incorporate the instrumental insemination tools into the queen rearing activities.

All Day Classes – We will also teach the popular 'Beekeeping in the Pacific Northwest' and 'Queen Rearing in the Pacific Northwest' classes. These are not only fundraisers for the association, they are premier classes in the area not only attended by our local membership, but they also attract beekeepers from around the state.

Public events – Another great way to learn is by sharing what you know, and in the process, confirm what you know and maybe identify what you have yet to learn. Helping to staff the fair booth, assisting in hands-on classes, helping teach some of the classes, or even visiting a school classroom or other event to talk about bees are all great ways to learn more about beekeeping.

Socializing with beekeepers – At all beekeeping events, you will always see groups of beekeepers talking before, after and sometimes during events about their latest beekeeping problem or experience. I know I have shown up to a meeting and become so distracted with the discussions, that I never made it into the room for the meeting.

Association Apiary – Before many of the meetings this year we will be staffing the apiary and have it available for members to come and work with others at the apiary and share what they know and learn what others know. We may get some maintenance done or we may just have a good time waiting for the meeting to start. Either way is good.

As you can see, there will be many learning opportunities at the West Sound Beekeepers Association this year. Hope to see you there.





# WEST SOUND BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION'S 2013 CHRISTMAS PARTY

David Mackovjak

Once again WSBA hosted a fantastic Christmas Party! This year we met at Island Lake Park. There was great food, fellowship, silent auction, honey tasting, recognitions, etc. Kim was recognized as the WSBA Beekeeper of the Year! Frank's honey took 1st place for 2013 bragging rights! Thank you to everyone who donated all the great gifts for the silent auction. There were some great bargains and WSBA appreciated the fund raiser. A special thanks to all the folks that helped set up and tear down; especially to Kim who out did herself with the fantastic table decorations!! See you all next year!!







# ONE WAY TO OVERWINTER A BEEKEEPER

Kim Redmond

When I was a kid the Sears catalog would appear sometime around November and offer up hours of dreaming about which of the many toys might end up under the Christmas tree. It was a great way to pass the time and the anticipation was almost as much fun as opening gifts. Sprawled out on my belly on the living room floor, feet in the air, crayon in hand, dog-eared pages, searching for and eventually circling my very favorite toy (well, maybe more than one.) That catalog was an important part of getting through the long and dreary winter.

Years later comes the discovery that winter can be long and dreary for beekeepers too, while we endlessly wait for weather warm enough to peek into the hives. As it turns out, a catalog is still an important part of getting through the winter. (Actually, MANY catalogs!) Glory Bee, Brushy Mountain Bee Farm, Mann Lake, Dadant, Kelley Bees – oh the catalogs – oh the many, many choices. Just looking at those pretty white bee suits, the propolis-free hive tools, bright yellow foundation, new tools and gadgets – kind of makes me want to grab a crayon and stretch out on the floor.

Just one way to overwinter a beekeeper.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Now is a great time to send in your 2014 dues. Member dues support the Association's goals of promoting better understanding and appreciation for honey bees and beekeeping by providing community awareness of the positive effects of beekeeping.

Being a paid member of West Sound Beekeepers Association also puts the Association's extensive library at your disposal, allows you the use of the Association's extractor, gives you the opportunity to have input on the direction the Association takes, makes you eligible to be an officer of the Association and puts you in touch with a lot of fun beekeepers! For only \$24 every member of your household becomes a member – what a great deal!

To join or renew your membership simply fill out the following form and bring it, along with your payment, to the next monthly meeting. Or you can mail the form with your payment to the WSBA Treasurer (address below.)

**\*\*PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO WSBA\*\***

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE & EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form along with your check to: Elizabeth Bianchi, WSBA Treasurer  
15017 118<sup>th</sup> Ave NW  
Gig Harbor, WA 98329