

# the Forager



March 2008

Newsletter of the Tidewater Beekeepers Association  
www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net

Vol.5 No.3

**President: Joe Taylor, Vice President: Bob Montcalm, Treasurer: Judy Ferguson, Recording Secretary: Carol Watkins  
Newsletter Editor: Pam Fisher. Deadline for the newsletter is the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month**

## *A Message from our President, Joe Taylor*



Hello Fellow Beekeepers,

Do you realize that by the time that we get together for our next club meeting, it will be almost Spring? I have seen fruit trees blooming and red maples are bursting open. It's time to have some honey supers in place. I hope everyone has provided ample food supply for the bees.

I hope everyone who attended the Founder's Day Dinner enjoyed themselves. I wish to thank everyone for bringing so much delicious food. To Lisa and Steve, Rose and Curtis: Thanks for all the work you put into this dinner to make it such a great success. Also I want to thank Doris Baker and C. E. Harris for sharing their recollections of the history of our club. To all who helped in any way to make this a special day—Thank you again.

Hope to see you as the next meeting on March 10<sup>th</sup> at the Chesapeake Extension office trailer.

Respectfully,

*Joe Taylor*

**Next Meeting:** Monday, March 10, 2008 at 7:00pm

**Location:** Agricultural Extension Trailer on Holt Drive in the Chesapeake Municipal Center

**Program:** Environmentally friendly control of Varroa mites & Small Hive Beetles

**Speakers:** C.E. Harris & Paul Kist



## **TIDEWATER BEEKEEPER "YARD NOTES"**

**For**



**March**

- Order queens now. Many breeders are already sold out for spring delivery dates.
- Evaluate woodenware and replace any rotted items. Have equipment assembled and painted before you need it
- Air out drawn comb that had been stored with wax moth preventative - paradichlorobenzene (PDB) - for several days before putting it on the bees.
- Select a sunny, southeast facing spot for new yard locations. All day sun is best to discourage small hive beetles.
- Feed (1:1) sugar syrup to encourage growth and provide food as the bees' activity and population increase.
- If **medicating** with Fumidil-B, Terramycin, Apistan or anything else, STOP at least 2 weeks before honey supers for human consumption go on!
- On a warm day (60 degrees or above), check for larvae & brood. If there is no sign of a laying queen, order one ASAP or combine with a queen-right colony.
- Consider trying bait hives this year to catch swarms.
- Research and attempt spring increases (splits) this year to start new hives and prevent swarming.

## Nominating Committee

Nominations are being taken for all positions on the TBA Board. If you would like to nominate someone, or you would like to volunteer for a position, please contact one of the members on the nominating committee:

Steve Black at (757) 255-4176 or  
[sblack@exis.net](mailto:sblack@exis.net)

C.E. Harris at (757) 340-8651 or  
[ipraisethelord@cox.net](mailto:ipraisethelord@cox.net)

Floyd Watkins at (757) 563-2275 or  
[beewaspflw@aol.com](mailto:beewaspflw@aol.com)

Nominations are not closed or announced until the April meeting where nominations are also accepted from the floor. Elections will be held at the May meeting. The newly elected officers will assume their positions beginning with the June meeting.

## Beekeeping Association Events

### **NC State Beekeepers Association**

March 7-8, 2008

Ramada Inn Convention Center  
2703 Ramada Rd.

Burlington, NC 27215

[www.ncbeekeepers.org](http://www.ncbeekeepers.org)



### **VA State Beekeepers Association**

April 11-12, 2008

Loudoun, VA

[www.virginiabeekeepers.org/](http://www.virginiabeekeepers.org/)

### **Heartland Apicultural Society**

July 10-12, 2008

Marshall University

Huntington, WV

[www.heartlandbees.com](http://www.heartlandbees.com)

### **NC State Beekeepers Association**

July 10-12, 2008

Southern Pines, NC

[www.ncbeekeepers.org](http://www.ncbeekeepers.org)

### **Eastern Apicultural Society**

August 4 - 8, 2008

Murray State University

Murray, Kentucky

[www.easternapiculture.org](http://www.easternapiculture.org)



## TBA Life Memberships

Judy Ferguson has compiled comments from the membership regarding the proposed TBA Honorary Life Memberships, which she will present at the March meeting. An Honorary Life Membership would be a way of recognizing those individuals who have given of their time to the club over the years. Please plan on discussing and voting on whether to implement this a program at the March membership meeting.



## Founders Day Dinner

Our annual Founder Day Dinner was held February 10<sup>th</sup> at the Kings Fork Community House. Steve Black proudly demonstrated his brand new cooker by barbequing chicken for all of us while Rose Nichols provided all of the paper goods and drinks. The tables were festively decorated for Valentine's Day with hearts and candy roses. TBA members brought quite a spread of side dishes and desserts, enough that Joe Taylor implored the group to please have second helpings.

Senior club members, Doris Baker and C.E. Harris recounted the early days of the club, who founded it and why. Floyd Watkins expounded on the implementation of the club's bylaws and Bob Schwartz brought us up to date by recalling our conversion to electronic communication. Bob invited younger club members to carry on the mission of the club and actively participate in Virginia's new Master Beekeeper program. Awards of appreciation were presented to Club President, Joe Taylor, and Newsletter Editor & Webmaster, Pam Fisher.

It was an evening of much camaraderie, humor and good cheer among friends and family.

Thank you Steve and Rose for working so hard behind the scenes to make this an enjoyable event!





## Bee Labs Unite to Fight CCD

In response to Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) that's striking honeybees nationwide, scientists at the four Agricultural Research Service (ARS) bee laboratories across the country are pooling their expertise. This is the first such initiative to bring various components of all of the federal bee laboratories together to solve a single problem. This nationwide approach will bring together recent improvements in mite-resistant bee stocks, nutrition, and pest/disease-management in a comprehensive management strategy.

Researchers at **Beltsville** are attempting to improve the longevity of honeybee queens, find effective controls for *Nosema* protozoa and varroa mites, and reduce migratory colony stress.

In **Weslaco**, work also focuses on controlling varroa mites and *Nosema*, reducing migratory stress and developing disease-control measures.

At the ARS Honey Bee Breeding, Genetics and Physiology Research Laboratory in **Baton Rouge**, researchers are looking into bee stock evaluation and improvement, with a view toward using genetic selection and colony size to improve early spring buildup.

In **Tucson**, scientists at the ARS Carl Hayden Bee Research Center are studying carbohydrate and protein supplements, Africanized bee stock improvements and varroa mite controls.

The new program will also incorporate university partners, apiculturists and many others. By the end of this coordinated five-year effort, researchers hope to have specific recommendations ready for beekeepers to use to solve problems caused by parasitic mites and other pests, diseases, and colony collapse disorder.



## L.L. Langstroth Award

Once again the Virginia State Beekeepers Association is soliciting nominations for the L.L. Langstroth Achievement Award (formerly Beekeeper of the Year Award). The award recognizes the achievements and contributions of a Virginia beekeeper and the advancement of beekeeping in the State. Local associations and individuals are encouraged to submit nominations for the L.L. Langstroth Award of beekeepers who have served as a mentor, ambassador, and innovator to fellow beekeepers and their community. TBA member, Art Halstead, was the 2005 recipient of this prestigious award.

A list of criteria the Awards Committee uses in determining the recipient of this award is available to TBA members on our website at:

<http://www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net/members/lllangstroth.html>

Nominations must be received by VSBA on or before March 14, 2008, to be eligible for consideration. The recipient of the 2008 L.L. Langstroth Achievement Award will be announced on April 11-12, 2008 at the spring VSBA meeting in Loudoun, VA.

## Package Bee Field Day

Bob & Judy Ferguson have graciously offered to hold a demonstration in their beeyard on hiving package bees. Weather permitting; they will have three packages of bees on Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup> at approximately 1:00pm. Those interested in attending should contact Judy at 547-2338 or [mulemad@earthlink.net](mailto:mulemad@earthlink.net)

A DVD demonstrating the hiving of package bees is also available to TBA members. DVDs will be available at the March membership meeting or from Judy Ferguson, club property manager.





## New Bacterium Toxic to Small Hive Beetle

A bacterium discovered by Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists that is toxic to Colorado potato beetle also has been found to be toxic in varying degrees to gypsy moth, **small hive beetle** and tobacco hornworm. The findings were published in the May 2007 issue of the International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology. Now, ARS has licensed the technology to Marrone Organic Innovations, Inc., of Davis, Calif., and Natural Industries, Inc., of Houston, Texas.

Fifty percent of small hive beetles died within five days when fed a pollen-based diet containing the bacteria, and the survivors weighed only 10 percent as much as small hive beetles that weren't exposed to the bacteria.

Microbiologist Phyllis Martin, molecular biologist Dawn Gundersen-Rindal, and entomologist Michael Blackburn at the ARS Insect Biocontrol Laboratory, Beltsville, Maryland, and chemist Jeffrey Buyer at the Sustainable Agricultural Systems Laboratory in Beltsville found and described the new bacterial species, *Chromobacterium suttsuga*, now called *Chromobacterium subtsugae* sp. Nov. Scientists say they will next work to isolate the toxin from the bacteria. Additional studies will be conducted to determine potential toxicity to non-target insects.

the hillsides are all big. Visiting the world's biggest cheese factory is big. When you are told that because of all the currently planted almond trees CA will need 80% of all the bee hives in the USA for the pollination month of February, 2010, that is big. Snowcapped cliffs in Yosemite jutting straight up for 3 or 4 thousand feet is big. Even driving over the Golden Gate Bridge is still big. Governor Schwarzenegger stating that the CA recession is causing a 14 BILLION shortfall in 2008 state revenue is big. The biggest beekeeping conference ever held with dozens of hands-on beekeepers and Ph.D.'s from around the world talking for days to nearly 1000 attendees is BIG.

Yes, we thought it was a really big deal! Carolyn and I, along with a handful of other interested people from VA, attended as many workshops and lectures as we could fit into a tightly packed schedule of 4 days. We talked with beekeepers from all over the USA and Canada. We listened to speakers with just a few hives and others with thousands of hives. We talked to beekeeping equipment suppliers who had set up large honey processing centers and others with just one or a few items to sell. When you get all the facets of the beekeeping business gathered together in one large conference center, the picture presented is very Big!

On the other side of the picture, we hobbyist, sideliners, and small commercials located in Virginia don't deal in BIG. We deal in small and wanted to gather information that can make an immediate change for the better in our modest bee operations. And there were plenty of workshops devoted to just that. The ones on powdered sugar varroa treatment, on the evil slime of the small hive beetle, and on chemical residues in the wax of brood cells are the ones I can touch on in this report. Next month we will publish part two and cover other important topics.

Chemical residue is the easiest to report on as it seems to involve the tipping point in beehive health. Since the CCD incidents many state, federal, and private labs have been analyzing everything found in more than 1200 selected hives. To date, over 171 chemical residues have been found in the wax of the hives. They represent most every chemical that beekeepers have ever put into their hives plus most of the chemicals that farmers use to control



## National Beekeepers Conference

Sacramento CA, January 2008

By Paul Kist

So, was the big conference in big California a Really Big Deal?

And just how big is Big? Try these on for size. California farmers feeding 25 % of the USA population is big! The San Joaquin Valley farmland producing 80% of the world's almonds is big. 15,000 working beehives owned by one CA beekeeper is big. Driving for two miles through one Almond grove or one mile through 1200 acres of Pistachio trees or up to sixty miles through Sonoma vineyards and wineries and another 100 miles of various fruit trees covering



all kinds of pests. As you would expect, the bees bring these farm chemicals back to the hive from their foraging trips and the wax absorbs and holds them. On average, there are 5 pesticides brought back to the hives in each pollen sample. Over time, they build up to a deadly level in the cell wax. The only cure for the problem of contaminated wax, which causes weakened bees and even birth defects in the brood chamber, is to replace the old combs. For vigorous hive health, you must make brood comb replacement a priority. Begin to replace some this spring and tip the health of your hives back toward normal.

Next easiest for reporting is the powdered sugar varroa treatment as it is already well known. What is new is one method that speeds up the process and improves sugar coverage. Randy Oliver, who runs over 500 hives and has an information packed web site ([www.scientificbeekeeping.com/](http://www.scientificbeekeeping.com/), see the web site for pictures of sugar and drone brood varroa methods), has a method that uses a flat screen made of a hive sized wooden frame (like the frame around an inner cover) covered with metal mosquito screening. You place the screen flat on the top hive body of a two deep hive, pour two cups of sifted powdered sugar on the screen over the most bees, quickly brush the sugar so it spreads over the frames, remove the screen and brush the sugar down between the frames, replace the cover and move to the next hive. This is intended to be a one or two minute job per hive. There will be a heavy mite drop within an hour. The bees will groom themselves for three or four more days afterward resulting in a heavy mite drop during that time. You may want to catch all that sugar on a dry sticky board so it won't pile up under the hive. Also empty the board each day to get rid of the mites. Because the sugar is harmless to the bees and the hive wax you can do this as often as you need to. The suggested timing is three treatments spaced 7 days apart, which may reduce adult varroa to 300 to 1000 per hive. It is most effective when there is little brood because the adult mites are then out of the cells. This method combined with the drone brood removal method can reduce varroa to under 300 per hive which is about one mite per 100 bees.

Lastly, we report on the small hive beetle, which can destroy a hive in a short time. The January 2008 issue of the ABJ has about 8

pages on the SHB and AJ's trap for them. That article should alert you to the little beasts bad habits of eating bee eggs, larvae, brood, pollen and honey while ruining your hives. David Westervelt and Laurence Cutts both from the FL Dept of Agriculture presented data showing the beetles have now wintered over up in Ontario, Canada. In our meeting, beekeepers from around the country reported them in most states. Because they can easily fly for miles and have highly developed sensors, it has been easy for them to search out hives far from the one they are now living in. They can live 1.5 years and lay up to 500 eggs per day for up to 60 days in a cycle. Hives in FL have been examined which had up to 6000 adult beetles and 30,000 beetle larvae in them. The hive was slimy and stinking by then. The bees had absconded long before it got this bad and the hive became a breeding ground for the beetles, which then have to go out and find other hives to live in. Like the old time cotton boll weevil's song said they are "just a looking for a home." and..... Your hives will do!

Once you get them you must set up a control method or they will take over as soon as your hive becomes weak or they will move into the weakest hive in your apiary and destroy it. There are at least four kinds of traps on the market, and Dr Hood spoke about his trap. AJ's trap is in the ABJ. However, the one recommended by the FL Dept of Agriculture is cheap and simple to use. Buy two to four slim jewel CD cases per hive. Put a thumbnail size pollen patty bait in the case, poke out 3 of the center tabs and put the cases flat on the frames face down, with the hole over the bee space. Hundreds of beetles will be trapped in each case. To remove the trapped beetles drop the entire case into a bucket of ice water. In minutes (the beetles become immobile under 68 degrees) you can empty them into the water to drown. Put fresh traps into the hive and move on. This is a completely safe method of control and only requires removing the inner cover for a moment to put in fresh cases after taking out the used ones. Do this and sugar dusting as a time saving idea. Lift the inner lid, remove cases, dust sugar, put in new cases, replace lid, and move on. As always, any questions or comments come to Paul Kist





## Home & Flower Show

The Home & Flower exhibit got off to a rocky start when we arrived to set up only to find our corner booth reduced to an inside section with half of the anticipated table space. Unfortunately, the planned children's activity of rolled candles was canceled due to lack of room. Carol Watkins quickly got on the phone and juggled schedules to allow all TBA members with hive products to sell some time at the show. It was quite a feat since a maximum of three people could comfortably fit inside the booth at one time. Luckily, one of the other exhibitors did not need their table and moved it into the aisle across from our booth. Floyd Watkins quickly commandeered it for educational literature and the observation hive provided by C.E. Harris. A club member was there at all times to point out the queen bee and explain the wonders of comb building using C.E.'s nuc featuring frames from empty foundation to capped honey. Hundreds, if not thousands, of visitors stopped by our booth to talk bees, sample honey and view the queen and her attendants. There was much interest in the plight of the honeybee and what is being done to help our pollinators. We had so many inquiries from potential beekeepers that we ran out of TBA applications by the show's end. It was a very successful exhibit; actually *a hive of activity* as another exhibitor remarked. Many thanks to TBA members Floyd & Carol Watkins, Rick & Pam Fisher, Jim Doubler, Paul Kist & Carolyn Copeland, Hugh Taylor, Kurt Fuge, Karen Zablocki, and C.E. Harris for all their help.



## Eat Ice Cream – Help Honeybees

Häagen-Dazs, which is a brand owned by Nestle S.A. of Vevey, Switzerland, has launched a national campaign to create awareness for the plight of the honeybee. The company says nearly 40 percent of its ice cream flavors are linked to fruits and nuts pollinated by bees.

As part of the “Häagen-Dazs Loves Honey Bees” campaign, the company created a new flavor of ice cream; committed a total of \$250,000 for bee research to UC Davis and Penn State University; formed a seven-member scientific advisory board; and launched a Website,

[www.helpthehoneybees.com](http://www.helpthehoneybees.com) to offer more information on honeybees as pollinators.

The Haagen-Dazs campaign will also include print, television and online advertising dedicated to educating Americans about the problem and seeking their help to spread the word and join the campaign. Information will be available in retail stores and Haagen-Dazs Shops along with a full public relations campaign.

To further spotlight the issue, the Haagen-Dazs brand is launching a new honey bee-dedicated flavor in February 2008 - Vanilla Honey Bee. The brand is also tagging all of its honey bee-dependent flavors with a HD loves HB™ icon. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of the new flavor and all HD loves HB™ tagged flavors will be used to help the honeybees through university research.

