

# the Forager



April 2008

Newsletter of the Tidewater Beekeepers Association  
www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net

Vol.5 No.4

**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,

It's an exciting time to be a member of Virginia's largest local beekeeping organization. The club has just purchased an electric radial honey extractor for use by our members. We also acquired an electric uncapping knife, an uncapping tank and a bottling bucket – everything to take your honey harvest from the super to the bottle!

Tom & Vivian French are picking up package bees this month for the club and Bob & Judy Ferguson are hosting a field day on how to install the package bees in the hive. Combined with our April educational program on Spring Management, we should have something for everybody, the novice and experienced beekeeper alike.

We have new people coming into the club because they want to learn about bees and beekeeping plus we have visitors coming for the same reason and it is our duty as a club to assist these people in learning about beekeeping. Become a mentor and share your love of the bees with a beginning beekeeper; you will rediscover the wonder of beekeeping through their enthusiasm.

I hope as many of you as possible have taken advantage of the symposium on honeybees to be held at the Suffolk Armory. I hope to see you all there.

By now everyone should have honey supers on their hives and the colonies should be building up. The weather is getting warmer so we can now go into our hives and have fun. Enjoy your bees and I hope to see everyone at our April meeting.

Respectfully,



*Joe Taylor*

## TIDEWATER BEEKEEPER “YARD NOTES”

For



April

- **Reverse** upper and lower hive bodies if the queen's laying pattern is all in the upper brood box. Check for a good (solid) brood pattern to assess queen quality.
- Remove entrance reducers and mouse guards.
- Feed any light hives until the nectar flow begins, especially if weather inhibits foraging. Make sugar syrup in a 1:1 ratio (5 lbs. sugar to 10 cups water) at this time of year.
- Replace 2 of 10 old dark brood combs each year to reduce disease and pesticide loads in the hive.
- You should have your honey supers on already! A queen excluder may be placed under the first honey super.
- If installing package bees in a hive, DO NOT open the hive for at least five days. After one week, check queen cage & release the queen if the bees have not done so already. Disturb the hive as little as possible during the first two weeks while they settle into their new home with the queen.
- Install a bait hive with one frame of drawn comb in a nearby tree to catch swarms.
- Make splits with queen cells to start new hives and prevent swarming.

**Next Meeting:** Monday, April 14, 2008 at 7:00pm

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

**Program:** DVD & open forum on Spring Management of Honeybee Colonies.



## **March Program Review**

March's educational program was a two-part presentation about controlling hive pests without chemicals.

C.E. Harris presented the first part on using the powdered sugar, or Dowda method, of Varroa mite control. C.E. demonstrated a wooden frame with an aluminum window screen insert, which he had built to fit over the brood box. Onto the frame, the beekeeper dumps one cup of confectioner's sugar for each brood box and then brushes the sugar through the screen and onto the brood frames. C.E. recommended doing this once a week for four weeks in the spring, and then once a month for the rest of the active beekeeping season.

Paul Kist presented the second part on using slim-line jewel cases as traps for Small Hive Beetles. Paul demonstrated how one can snap the tabs out of the center of the jewel case and bait it with a pollen substitute in order to lure the beetles into the case. The cases are placed on top of the brood frames and the beetles congregate inside them to get to the bait and also to escape harassment by the bees, which cannot fit inside the cases. The beekeeper then dunks the cases with the enclosed beetles into a bucket of ice water to drown them and rebaits the hive with new jewel cases.

These chemical-free methods of pest control are suitable for use any time the weather permits the beekeeper to safely open the hive, even when honey supers for human consumption are in place. They both take only a few minutes of time and can be combined during one trip into the hive.

Thank you C.E and Paul for taking the time to share your knowledge and equipment designs with TBA club members!



## **Honorary TBA Memberships**

Judy Ferguson presented suggested criteria for awarding Honorary TBA Memberships at the March meeting. The criteria are similar to that of the VSBA LL Langstroth award. Members voted to implement the TBA Life Membership as well as an annual Beekeeper of the Year Award and a Rookie Beekeeper of the Year Award. The annual awards will include one year of free TBA & VSBA membership. The Lifetime Award will include free TBA & VSBA membership for as long as the member is active with TBA. Awards will be decided by the Membership Committee. Any member in good standing may nominate another member in good standing for the awards by submitting an application in resume format to the committee. Rookies are eligible during their first year of TBA membership whether they are new to beekeeping or not. These memberships are a way of recognizing individuals who have given of their time to the club.



## **Swarm List**

Carol Watkins circulated a Swarm List at the last TBA membership meeting. If you would like to receive calls to collect swarms, please phone Carol at 757-563-2275 and indicate to which cities you are willing to travel. Pam Fisher has also compiled a list of beekeepers willing to retrieve swarms which is available to the public on the TBA website. If you would like to be added to the swarm list on the website, please e-mail [webmaster@tidewaterbeekeepers.net](mailto:webmaster@tidewaterbeekeepers.net) with your contact information. Please indicate if you want your telephone number, e-mail address or both published on the web for the public to contact you.

## Package Bee Field Day

Bob & Judy Ferguson have offered to hold a demonstration in their beeyard on hiving package bees. Weather permitting; they will hive 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 from Judy Ferguson, club property manager.



## Virginia Beekeeping Legislation

By Lannie Ballard,  
VSBA Legislative Liaison

March 12, 2008

Virginia State Beekeepers Association Members:

Yesterday I attended a meeting with Delegate Ben Cline and he told me the language to protect the funds appropriated last year by the General Assembly were put back in the House budget recommended to the Governor. So this means that both the House and the Senate are asking that the funds be protected and carried over to the next budget year. I asked Ben what his feeling was about the Governor leaving the funds in the final budget. Ben said that he thought the Governor would leave the funding alone.

**First, I want to thank each of you who took the time to e-mail, write or call the members of the House Appropriations Committee.** Ben told me that all the calls and e-mails are what got the job done. He had members of the Appropriations Committee coming to him about all of the messages they were getting from the public on the bee funding.

Last year, the funding was left out of the Governor's budget request but with VSBA members working together with help from Senator Blevins and others in Richmond we were able to get the money appropriated. This year, because of the financial situation in Virginia, we were about to lose the unused portion and not have it carried over to the next year's budget. Again, with VSBA members doing what needed to be done, we were able to get the job done! Remember, Civics class lesson 101 (the squeaky wheel gets the grease). Another way of saying it is Virginia Beekeepers who feel strongly enough about saving beekeeping in Virginia who are willing to take the time to fight and voice their opinions to save this beautiful insect that we call a honeybee that is so critical to our environment.

Please now take the time as you have done so faithfully in the past to e-mail Delegate Ben Cline at [DelBCline@house.state.va.us](mailto:DelBCline@house.state.va.us), Senator Emmett W. Hanger, Jr. at [district24@sov.state.va.us](mailto:district24@sov.state.va.us) and Senator Harry B. Blevins at [district14@sov.state.va.us](mailto:district14@sov.state.va.us) and thank them and their staffs for all of the help they have given to us in saving these much needed funds.

This may be the last e-mail I need to send to you for a while. But, please remember, as I know some of you have already done to invite your state Delegate or Senator to some of your monthly meetings so they become better acquainted with you and our needs as beekeepers. This will help tremendously.

Again, my deepest appreciation and thanks to all of you for your help,

Lannie D. Ballard  
Legislative Chairperson, VSBA



## March Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the March membership meeting are available to TBA members on our website at:

[http://www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net/members/meeting\\_minutes.html](http://www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net/members/meeting_minutes.html)



## TBA Roster Policy

Member privacy is important to the Tidewater Beekeepers Association. When you become a member of TBA, you supply us with the following information:

- Name
- Mailing address
- E-mail address
- Phone number



TBA provides this information to the Virginia State Beekeepers Association to initiate your joint VSBA membership. TBA never shares your personal information with the public or other members of TBA without your written consent. **If you want to have any contact information included on the club's printed roster, you must authorize it in writing. To be included on the club's public or private web roster, you may e-mail the Webmaster at [webmaster@tidewaterbeekeepers.net](mailto:webmaster@tidewaterbeekeepers.net). Please remember to indicate which information you wish to share and where it may be published.** Once you have authorized the release of your contact information, TBA is not responsible for how it is used by others.

TBA uses the contact information you provide to contact you concerning club news or beekeeping issues of interest to club members. You may opt out of this service by notifying us in writing or via return e-mail.

VSBA uses the contact information you provided to contact you concerning VSBA news or beekeeping legislative updates. VSBA never shares the information provided to them with the public or other members of VSBA. **If you have changed your e-mail or mailing address since you originally joined TBA, please contact Ann Harmon at [AHworkerB@aol.com](mailto:AHworkerB@aol.com) with your new contact information in order to continue to receive VSBA news.**

Club members use the contact information you authorize to be published to contact you and to facilitate communication within the club.

Club members should endeavor to protect the privacy of others by never sharing e-mail addresses with anyone outside the club and by blind copying e-mail addresses when sending a message to a group of club members.

TBA Treasurer, Judy Ferguson, has only received about 20 authorizations to publish contact information to date. If you are coming to the April membership meeting and would like to be included on the printed roster, please bring a signed statement authorizing what contact information you want included on the published roster. If you cannot attend the meeting, you may mail (no e-mails or phone calls) your authorization to Judy at:

Judy Ferguson  
508 Albemarle Drive  
Chesapeake, VA 23320.



## Virginia Beach Spring Craft Market

*April 18-20, 2008*

TBA has been offered a booth at the Virginia Beach Spring Craft Market where we may sell honey and hive products while educating the public about the importance of honeybees. This is an excellent opportunity to create a positive image of bees and emphasize their vital role as pollinators. We will be located in the guild section where we plan to offer educational demonstrations on rolling beeswax candles.

Carol Watkins will be coordinating volunteers. Please call her with the day and time that you can help staff the booth. If you have products to sell, please let Carol know that also. You can reach her at 757-563-2275.



## TBA Cookbook

Nina Calvano gave the club an update on the status of the TBA cookbook at the March membership meeting. Members have contributed enough recipes to begin assembling the cookbook. We voted on a spiral bound format, which will run approximately \$4 per book. Nina is still looking for original bee-themed artwork for the cover. Plans are to include some club history and bee trivia as well as a traditional folklore section on the use of hive products for health. Please contact Nina if you can offer assistance with the cookbook compilation. Thank you Nina for all of your effort on this club project; it is so exciting to see it coming to fruition!

## Club Extractor

TBA has purchased an electric radial extractor for club member use. The extractor is capable of spinning six shallow or medium frames of honey at a time. We also purchased an electric uncapping knife, an uncapping tub and a bottling bucket. A big club THANK YOU to Kerry Bass & Paul Kist for their effort in making the acquisition! The items will be available from club property manager, Judy Ferguson, by appointment only for three-day periods. A deposit of \$25 will be required when checking out the extractor. Your deposit will be refunded to you upon return of the extractor in clean condition. To reserve the extractor, please call (547-2338) or e-mail ([mulemade@earthlink.net](mailto:mulemade@earthlink.net)) Judy in advance of your planned extraction date.

## Raffle Items

### Wanted

TBA President, Joe Taylor, asked members to please consider bringing a bee-themed item for donation to the raffle table. Raffle items raise funds for the club and it's always a lot of fun to see who leaves with a new treasure!



## Honey Processing

Many beekeepers have avidly followed the progress of SB272 through Virginia's General Assembly in the hopes of being able to sell their own honey without state inspection. Unfortunately, the wording of the final bill was amended to include only specific foods and honey is not one of them.



### **Original language:**

Exempts food preparations in private homes from inspections by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services if the food: (i) is sold to an individual for his own consumption; (ii) carries the label "NOT FOR RESALE—PROCESSED AND PREPARED WITHOUT STATE INSPECTION"; and (iii) does not require a license for production or sale.

### **As passed:**

This section shall not apply to: Private homes where the resident processes, prepares, and sells **candies, jams, and jellies not considered to be low-acid or acidified low-acid food products and baked goods that do not require time or temperature control after preparation, including cream pies**, if such products: (i) are sold to an individual for his own consumption and not for resale and (ii) are labeled "NOT FOR RESALE—PROCESSED AND PREPARED WITHOUT STATE INSPECTION." Nothing in this subdivision shall create or diminish the authority of the Commissioner under § 3.1-399





## **NCSBA Spring Meeting Review**

By Carol Watkins

The North Carolina State Beekeepers Association held their Spring Convention in Burlington, NC. Kim Flottum was the main speaker. He is the Editor of Bee Culture Magazine. He was a very personable man. Floyd & I had a chance to speak to him during one of the breaks. One of our questions of concern was, "did he think the honeybee would ever be declared an endangered species?" His answer was an abrupt "NO," and then he added, "Only because we (the beekeeping industry) do not have enough money to fight those people who do not want to see chemicals regulated just because of the honeybee." During one of his talks, he brought up the subject of Senator Hatch of Utah (the BEEHIVE STATE) who is defending one of the chemicals that may possibly be pulled off the market. Senator Hatch is fighting for the chemical company.

Mr. Flottum spoke on "Reducing Stress in the Hive". Spring tends to be when there is more stress on the hive. Protein supplements can be helpful - pollen & honey. Control your chemicals carefully. Only use those that are legal. Use only when they are necessary. Eliminate them if possible.

Mr. Flottum also reminded us to pull frames at least every two years or when they start getting dark. We can be better managers of our hives. We have to focus on stressless beekeeping.

Dr. David Tarpy, Asst. Professor of Entomology at NCSU, gave us an update on CCD. It has been proposed that it could be from genetically modified crops, environmental contaminations, or nutritional stresses. There are about eight different viruses being screened. Dr. Tarpy stated that most of the hobbyists' hives that had been tested did not meet the criteria involved with CCD. The majority of those hives tested positive for other diseases that we (and our bees) already have to deal with.

Other speakers included Dr. John Ambrose, Assoc. Dean, NC State University; Dr. Joe Zublena, NCSU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; Joe Flowers, Apiculture Technician, NCSU Apiculture Program; Don Hopkins, NCDA, Apiary Inspection Supervisor; and Dr. Alonso Suazo-Calix, Research Associate, NCSU Entomology Department who spoke about small hive beetle research and also talked about beekeeping in the Honduras; and an "appearance" by the famous Reverend L.L. Langstroth who revolutionized the beekeeping industry by his hive inventions and who also published the *Hive and the Honey-Bee* in 1853. After more than 40 editions, it is still in use today. Rev. Langstroth (played by John Ambrose) has made appearances at many of the NC meetings.

We were also honored with several vendors - Brushy Mountain, Better Bee, Dadant, Kelly's Bee Supply & many other local vendors who are usually at most of the conventions.

We have a lot of fun at the conventions. North Carolina does have some very good programs at each meeting. Many of TBA's current or past members are members of the NCSBA. Dues are \$15 each year. They provide you with a yearly calendar with many bee related ideas throughout and quarterly issues of their newsletter *Bee Buzz*. For information, visit the NCSBA website at <http://www.ncbeekeepers.org/index.htm> or telephone Carol or Floyd Watkins at 757-563-2275.

The next NCSBA meeting will be in Southern Pines, NC (near Fayetteville, NC) July 10-12. We would love to have more TBA members join us at the next meeting.



## **Website Advertising**

If you are planning a beekeeping exhibit which is open to the public, our website is the perfect place to advertise your program. Just e-mail the webmaster with the pertinent information, including any links, for posting on TBA's home page.



## National Beekeepers Conference

Part Two  
Sacramento CA, January 2008  
By Paul Kist



In the March newsletter, I reported on treatments for Varroa and the SHB along with the gigantic size of the agriculture complex in California including the unbelievable demand for enormous numbers of beehives for optimal pollination of all the California crops. It is projected that 80% of all hives in the USA will need to be in the San Joaquin Valley for pollination during February-March of 2010. Why truck so many beehives there? To help produce enough nutritious food to feed 25% of the USA population and to keep the agricultural businesses and our fellow commercial beekeepers profitable.

As Virginia beekeepers living in Tidewater, we are not going to be trucking thousands or hundreds or even dozens of hives all over creation for pollination. However, for a little mental fun think about shipping one truckload of 500 hives out to California. I was told the going rentals were \$165.00 to \$210.00 per hive for 45 days. I'll not be greedy and just take the lesser money. Yeah, don't I wish? If arithmetic is still working, I think 500 times \$165 equals \$82,500. You can take the greater money. Yeah, don't you wish? 500 times \$210.00 equals \$105,000! Interesting arithmetic, huh?? Too bad for us it is only on paper and we cannot spend it. However, some Missouri beekeepers do this and one west Texas man said he does this each year for a quick shot of cash, with his bees living in Texas the rest of the year.

Putting all our day dreams aside, we are still faced with thinking of our own level of profitability in order to stay in the honey business. To harvest the most honey, we need 15,000 housekeeping bees plus 30-50,000 foragers in each hive. Tightly managed, healthy, well-fed bees are essential. This report will cover nutritional factors, which will help our bees stay vigorous. Then with timely management actions our hives will stay highly populated. In turn, this will keep us happy with the largest honey production possible!

On the surface, the nutritional aspects of honeybees seem to be quite simple. After all, wild bees gathered wild flower nectar and pollen and survived for thousands of years without our help. Right? Simple enough, you say. But not so fast my friends. Have you taken a careful look beneath the surface? Below the surface is a tangled mass of newer details that began affecting bee nutrition and hive health about 25-45 years ago. The workshop on bee nutrition was standing room only with lots of questions such as, "what the devil is happening?" You probably have heard that the devil often hides in the details. Well, he tried his best to hide but several beekeepers said they could catch a glimpse when they looked closely.

Here are a few of those devilish details. The first detail is we expect our farmed bees to perform in a factory type setting, which is almost akin to a sweatshop atmosphere, and live in crowded tenement buildings in a type of ghetto. Wild bees refuse to do sweatshops or ghettos. Another detail, when we put our hives near fields of one kind of plant this results in a very restricted variety of flowers that may have all kinds of poisonous chemicals on them (over 171 chemicals found in hive wax to date). A detail, in the wild 10 to 50 hives would not be concentrated in one tiny place, which sets up a competition for any forage and a sharing of pests and illnesses. Another detail, we may take too much natural food (honey) from them and then give them just plain sugar water to keep them alive. Another detail, they now must live in their tenement homes with multiple pests and diseases which were not in their native environment, plus we put exotic chemicals right inside near their babies.

A detail, their babies (larvae) have no anus so if we feed them indigestibles in substitute food, the babies die of indigestion and the adults develop dysentery. Another detail, with only a few pollen sources the beebread and royal jelly may not have a complete nutritional range of protein, vitamins, minerals and micronutrients, this weakens the overall health of the bees, reduces their immune responses and shortens their lives. Finally, there are many details involved in polluted water sources which you have little control over but from which your bees will gather water. On 3/10/08 a newspaper headline noted the number of prescription drugs

that have now been found in municipal water supplies, which we drink. Of course, we remember the recalled meats, vegetables, and toys with lead paint all of which threaten humans. Well, the bees are threatened also.

Here is another long term unknown nutritional issue and a good place for the devil to hang out. There are dozens, even hundreds, and in some cases thousands of ENGINEERED plants now growing out in fields all over the world. Just to name a few, for example, I learned that there are dozens of cotton and soybean varieties, over 600 hybrid corn plants, over 3,500 types of potatoes, and hundreds of apple varieties now being grown. Many of these plants have been genetically altered for a specific purpose with more being developed as you read this. We now know that corn pollen is deficient, as it is incomplete in amino acids as a protein source, and apple orchards offer a little pollen and nectar amid a nightmare of sprayed pesticides. Any pesticide that is systemic passes into the nectar and maybe into the pollen and is taken back to the hive. A minimum of five chemicals were found in each pollen sample in the CDC sampled hives along with 171 chemicals in the wax. Fifty years ago very few of these issues existed. As of this writing, the total effect on plants, animals, and humans, due to the worldwide switch to engineered plants appears to be years away from having any definitive answers.

Now, let me clamor up on my soap box (or bee box as it were) and give an editorial view. My opinion is that there is another devilish consideration for discussion. If all these engineered plants, along with the pesticides, are not particularly good for our honeybee's nutritional needs, what are they doing to our nutritional needs? If engineered plants are not good for bees why would they be good for us? Both bees and humans cannot evolve as fast as we are changing the plant and animal worlds. Only time will tell if a devil is really lurking in all those murky details.

In the meantime, what is the bottom line for you and your bees? For now, let us leave the nutritional issues on a high note, which is that, you can directly modify your beekeeping endeavors. You have the power to change the world your bees live in. You can put your bees where they have access to the best variety of

safe, healthy pollen and nectar. To keep them in optimum health, sufficient natural healthy forage is a key element. Be proactive like some Texas and Maryland beekeepers who go out along ditches, roadsides and fields and plant white Dutch clover, alfalfa, buckwheat and other honey plants, even some trees, for their bees. This provides nectar of a highly desirable type, which helps the bees make a better grade of honey and more of it! This is a beekeeper's worthy goal, isn't it? Consider using this guerilla tactic around your lot or neighborhood or bee yards. Be your own 'Johnny Appleseed', even if you must sow the seeds without fanfare and when no one is looking.

## Location Change

**The VCE Beekeeping Seminars scheduled for April 8<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> have been moved from Bunny's Restaurant to the Suffolk National Guard Armory due to the large number of participants. The Armory is located at 2761 Godwin Blvd., Suffolk, VA 23434.**

**Dinner will still be served at 6:00 pm with approximately 1½ hours of instruction to follow.**

**For further information, please contact the Suffolk Extension Office at 514-4330 or 514-4331.**

