

the Forager



August 2008

Newsletter of the Tidewater Beekeepers Association
www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net

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**President: Joe Taylor, Vice President: Bob Montcalm, Treasurer: Rick Fisher, Recording Secretary: Vacant
Webmaster & Newsletter Editor: Pam Fisher. Deadline for the newsletter is the 25th of each month**

A Message from our President, Joe Taylor

Dear Fellow Beekeepers,



It was great to be back with all of you last month. It was also great to see so many first timers at our meeting. I believe that most of them joined the club. With all the new members and so many people interested in beekeeping, I think that a short course is needed soon. Rex Cotton here in Suffolk is willing to assist us with mailings and a place to have it. So be thinking about it. If we are going to do it we need to decide at our August meeting so that we can get things going to assist our new beekeepers to be ready to order new bees for the spring.

Mike, we are glad to see you back in the States after being in Germany for some time. We all missed you.

Keith Tignor gave us a great program last month. I was glad to hear the questions that you had for Keith. Thank you Bob for such good programs this past year and a half. It is no easy task to have interesting programs each and every month. It is a task that you have done outstandingly well. All the club members and I thank you.

Kathy and I will be on a nine-day Caribbean cruise from July 24th thru August 2nd. I hope to rest and recover from my hospital stay. I'll see each of you at our August club meeting. Bring a friend or a new beekeeper.

Respectfully,



Joe Taylor

Next Meeting: Monday, August 11, 2008 at 7:00pm

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

Program: Hive Inspection Checklist

Speaker: Bob Schwartz

TIDEWATER BEEKEEPER "YARD NOTES"

For



August

There are still a few nectar and pollen sources such as *Vitex*, gardens, and even crepe myrtles. However, the bees sense that the primary nectar flow is over so you should begin to see less brood production and slightly more defensive behavior during hive inspections.

If you are fortunate enough to live in an area with cotton fields, they should be in bloom now. Otherwise, August is a good time to remove any surplus honey that is on the hive.

Check your hives for mites and treat if you have high levels of infestation. Mite treatments should be completed in August to produce healthy winter bees. Remove all honey for human consumption before applying any pesticide or chemical treatment and apply only in strict accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

When pulling honey or returning wet supers to the bees, keep an eye out for robbing activity and install entrance reducers as needed.

If your bees are from swarms or the queen is over two years old, consider requeening in the fall so that the new queen is ready for spring work.

July Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the July membership meeting will be available to TBA members, when published, on our website at:

http://www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net/members/meeting_minutes.html

TBA Memberships Past Due

If you haven't already renewed your TBA membership, please do so. We will have to drop anyone who hasn't paid by the November monthly meeting. *All memberships expire on June 30 of each year per our bylaws.* Dues are \$20.00 for an annual family membership that includes a joint \$10.00 Virginia State Beekeeper's Association membership and access to the 'Members' section of the TBA website. Please pay the club treasurer, Rick Fisher, at a meeting or mail a check made payable to **TBA** to:

Tidewater Beekeepers Association
P.O. Box 7403
Chesapeake, VA 23324

TBA Cookbooks

The TBA Honey Cookbooks, *Honeylicious Recipes from the Hive*, are now available for \$10 each from Nina Calvano. Nina solicited recipes, original artwork, and bee trivia that she then combined into an enjoyable format highlighting the wonderful liquid gold provided by our bees. TBA members hosting a public beekeeping display may check out the cookbooks and offer them for sale to the public. If you would like to purchase or check out cookbooks, please contact Nina Calvano at 482-0851 or philandnina@verizon.net. A big club THANK YOU goes out to Nina for not only suggesting a honey cookbook, but also seeing it through to a finished product!



Bee Movie at Mt. Trashmore

The Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation Department has invited the Tidewater Beekeepers Association to Movie Night on August 15th at Mount Trashmore Park. They will be screening "Bee Movie" and they have asked us to set up an educational display to teach the public about honeybees and beekeeping. Members may sell honey and hive products.

At Movie Nights, movies are shown on a 17' screen at the base of the hillside; people come with beach chairs & blankets and claim a space from which they view the movie. Attendance ranges from 1000-2000

Set up begins at 5:00 pm to be ready for the public by 6:30 pm. Breakdown time is when the movie begins around sunset. TBA members are encouraged to stay for the movie, which is free to the public. If you would like to participate, please contact Pam Fisher at 757-620-0945 or bqrrl@cox.net.

Beekeeping Association Events

Eastern Apicultural Society

August 4 - 8, 2008

Murray State University

Murray, Kentucky

www.easternapiculture.org



VA State Beekeepers Association

November 3, 2008

Blue Ridge Community College

Weyers Cave, Virginia

www.virginiabeekeepers.org

Think you have the best honey in the state? It's time to consider entering the State Fair of Virginia's Open Honey Competition. Winners take home a ribbon and prize money as well as bragging rights! Awards range from \$15 for 1st place to \$4 for 6th place. The deadline for entry forms is September 5th. On-line entries are charged \$0.20 per class and mail-in entries must be accompanied by a \$5.00 check or money order per exhibitor. Faxed entries are no longer accepted.



Classes include:

- Light extracted honey
- Light amber extracted honey
- Amber extracted honey
- Dark extracted honey
- Frame of honey for extracting
- Light or light amber cut-comb honey
- Amber or dark cut-comb honey
- Light or light amber chunk honey
- Amber or dark chunk honey
- Comb honey - round section or cassette
- Creamed honey
- Beeswax mold
- Beeswax candles
- Fancy beeswax molds
- Observation hive
- Gadgets

More information as well as the competition handbook and entry form can be found at the State Fair web site:

<http://www.statefair.com/competitions.asp>
Color photos of the different honey classes are available in the competition guide on the web site to help exhibitors enter the proper class.

Entries must be delivered to Richmond between 9:00 am and noon on September 24th for the judging and picked up when the fair closes. If you are planning on entering the competition, please consider volunteering to transport entries for other TBA members in addition your own.



Holiday Social



Steve Black has proposed that TBA's annual Holiday Social be held at the Grate Steak in Norfolk this year. The restaurant has banquet facilities and a menu with something to please everyone. Known for their beef, Grate Steak also offers appetizers, a 40-item salad bar (included with each entrée), seafood, chicken and vegetable side dishes. Prices range from \$12.99 to \$29.99 for entrees, which you may grill yourself or have the chef prepare for you. Most bills average about \$20 and alcohol is available. Children's meals are also offered. More information is available at their web site: <http://thegratesteak.com/index.html> If you have an alternate venue you would like to suggest for our holiday party, please contact Steve at 255-4176. Plan on a discussion and vote at the August TBA membership meeting.



TBA Secretary Needed



Due to vision problems, Carol Watkins has had to resign as TBA's Recording Secretary. A volunteer is needed to serve the remainder of her term through June 2009. The Secretary records and files the minutes of each TBA membership meeting and also provides them to the Webmaster and Newsletter Editor for dissemination to the club's members. It is the responsibility of the Secretary to notify the public of upcoming meetings as well. If you are interested in serving as Recording Secretary, please call Bob Montcalm at 487-2143.

“Thank You” Carol for your exemplary service as Secretary – we all wish you a speedy recovery!



Research Project Request

Received via Email

I am a student at Penn State working with Dr. Nancy Ostiguy on a research project testing honey from all over the country for pesticides. If you or any other beekeepers would be willing to help us, we're looking to collect honey the bees store to eat over winter and new honey (not nectar). We'll be comparing them to see if pesticide levels are higher in honey that bees eat over the winter.

If anyone would be willing to help us, at this time we need between 1/8 - 1/4 of a cup of surplus honey you harvested from your supers this year and the same amount of honey from a brood chamber [all from the same apiary or hive if possible - ed]. It does not matter if this honey is from a hive where the colony has died. In fact, if you have a dead out, a sample from this colony could be very interesting.

If you send us honey samples we would, of course, keep any information about you completely confidential. Also, we will send you the results of our research. You will find out if any pesticides are in your honey, along with which ones and how much, if any are present.*

Please send the honey in leak-proof plastic containers to:

Reagan Furbish
501 ASI,
Department of Entomology
Penn State
University Park PA 16802



If you have any questions please email me (rmf5058@psu.edu) or Dr. Ostiguy (nxo3@psu.edu). You may also call 814-863-2872 with questions.

* It is possible that we will receive more samples than we have the funds to analyze. If this happens we will randomly select the honey samples. For any honey that is not chosen, we will let you know and ask if you mind if we can hold onto the samples in case we find additional funding and are able to analyze more honey. For

any honey that is chosen we will send you the results.

If your Beekeeper Association wants to help us increase the number of samples we are able to test, we would be happy to accept donations (to Penn State). All funds received will be used to test as much honey as possible.

Our cost of analysis per honey sample is between \$200-\$1000 depending upon the number of pesticides we look for. We are planning to look for a limited number (including at least the neonicotinoids and the miticides) so the cost is approximately \$250 per sample.

Farm Days



The Virginia Dare Soil & Water Conservation District hosts Farm Days annually in both Chesapeake & Virginia Beach in cooperation with each city's Agriculture Department. During Farm Days, classrooms of children cycle through agricultural exhibits at 15-minute intervals from 9:00 am until noon. TBA usually sets up a beekeeping display to teach the children about the vital role that honeybees play in the pollination of crops.

Farm Days in Chesapeake is scheduled for September 19th at the Chesapeake City Park on the day prior to the Heritage Arts Festival. 400 school children are expected. Farm Days in Virginia Beach will be held at the Virginia Beach Farmers Market on October 16th & 17th prior to the opening of the Harvest Fair. 800 school children are expected to attend. The Harvest Fair opens the following day and TBA normally staffs a booth selling honey and hive products during the fair.

Goodie bags for both the children and their teachers are prepared by the VDSWCD staff and distributed at Farm Days. In the past, TBA has provided a honey straw and a bee coloring book for each child's bag.

Farm Days provides an excellent opportunity for the club to promote its mission of "Preserve, Protect & Educate", but volunteers are needed to make the events successful. Please help!



HAS 2008 Review

By Kate Rogers

The Heartland Apiculture Society (HAS) held their conference at Marshall University in Huntington, WVA on July 10-12. The conference was very well organized with six different strands of classes running an hour each for five hours Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Most classes were held more than one time throughout the weekend.

Each day a common morning session was held. On Thursday, Dennis VanEnglesdorp gave an update on CCD. Afterwards, everyone was free to attend the morning session of their choice. I attended "American Foulbrood: Identification, Eradication and Control. Phil Kraft, a state apiarist from Kentucky, discussed the signs of AFB and the use of the toothpick method for detection. He emphasized the fact that antibiotics should not be used as preventative but only as treatment once AFB is confirmed. He also suggested that beekeepers be careful when buying used equipment and/or nucs. He suggested that burning infected hives/equipment was the most effective means of getting rid of AFB.

Next, I attended "Raising your own queens: All You Need to Know" by Gordon Vernon, President of the Kentucky State Beekeeping Association. Being a newbie, I found the class a little over my head but Mr. Vernon was a great speaker and explained the process in detail so that I could understand. He talked about preparation, the breeder colony, the necessary tools, the cell starter set-up, the cell builder set-up and mating nucs. The best idea I carried away from this class is to buy a push-in queen cage to trap the queen while you are working your hive. Lunch break was an hour and the university cafeteria had great food.

I attended my first class with Michael Bush next. "Swarm Control and Splits" This class took place in one of two apiaries set up exclusively for the conference. Each hive had a deep and a medium super. Veils were provided for those of us who didn't bring them. This was a great class. My only regret was that I couldn't take notes fast enough. Michael Bush emphasized that you

shouldn't panic if you find your hive queenless. Just introduce a frame of brood and the bees will raise their own queen. Bush is a proponent of raising your own queens, using all the same size equipment (He uses 8 frame medium supers for interchangeability), foundationless frames and no chemicals. I found his classes extremely helpful. He has a great website too www.bushfarms.com. I attended "IPM for Varroa Mite Control" by Ed Levi, a board member of HAS from Arkansas. He said overuse of chemicals

- 1) Causes confusion in bee pheromones,
- 2) Hurts queens, drones and workers,
- 3) Leaves residue in the wax and
- 4) Causes resistance. "We are breeding a better bug!"

He suggested using Minnesota Hygienic Queens as a genetic control. Also, he explained the drone brood "scratching" exam, the sugar shake and sticky board methods of detection. Using one cup of powdered sugar per hive has shown to be an effective treatment.

The "We Are Marshall" movie was shown Thursday night.

On Friday, the morning session was "Where are the African Bees Now? Following this, an excellent movie - especially for female beekeepers - was shown called "Sister Bee". It followed the experiences of a group of women beekeepers of various ages and experiences. It had all the attendees chuckling as we all identified with the women and their thoughts about beekeeping.

My second class with Michael Bush was "Over-Wintering Nucs". He explained the reasons to keep nucs are: to provide local queens, make up for winter losses (strengthen hives) and to sell them in spring. He said to keep in mind that beekeeping is regional and what works in one area may not in another. Bush emphasized the need to keep nucs dry, to keep them from starving and to keep them from freezing. To keep them dry, he suggested top entrances and using sugar misted with water instead of sugar syrup, which causes condensation in the nuc. To keep them from starving, he reminded us that bees

cannot drink sugar syrup when the temperature is below 50 degrees. He emphasized that sufficient honey supplies should be provided. Supplying honey is better and easier than sugar syrup. If you must feed them, he suggested the misted dry sugar or candy boards. He said that he would avoid giving them sugar syrup during winter, putting them on top of a double screen over a strong hive or wrapping them in tarpaper. Once again I couldn't keep up with my notes; there was so much important information given.

I opted out of the afternoon classes for a side trip to Blenko Glass Factory in nearby Milton, WVA. Thursday's side-trip had been to the Heritage Farm Museum and Village, a recreation of pioneer life in WVA. I couldn't miss out on this second opportunity! HAS arranged these side trips for conference goers. It was fascinating to see the glassblowers take molten blobs of glass and blow them into beautiful works of art. The gift shop was great.

Friday night's entertainment was a homemade honey ice cream social with a bluegrass band!

Saturday's morning session started with the movie, "Pollen Nation" about the families who do migratory beekeeping from the east to west coast of the US. It was really interesting to see their lifestyle and the challenges they face.

Afterwards, Clarence Collision of the Entomology Department at Mississippi State University gave a talk on "Queen Quality". He said a good queen is reflected in the brood pattern, the behavior of the queen on the comb, the temperament of the workers and the production record of the hive. He mentioned that the more sculpturing on the queen cell and the larger the queen cell, the better the queen quality. The first session found me in the apiary for a hands-on class entitled, "Laying Workers in the Hive" by Michael Bush. I wasn't able to take notes and had decided to try and remember what he said...BAD IDEA! He gives so much information not only on the topic at hand but also invites questions from the class.

Next, I attended, "Making Splits to Increase Numbers" by Paul Poling, a bee inspector for the WVA Department of Agriculture. He showed us how to even out the frames during a split so that each new hive has relatively equal frames of brood, pollen and honey. He reminded us to keep the brood together in the middle of the deep hive body and put the pollen next to the brood and the

honey toward the outer frames. After flowers stop blooming, do not make splits and don't take more than 2 frames of brood from any hive body to make a split.

The most enjoyable class I attended was Michael Bush's "Lazy Beekeeping". His website explains in detail so I'll just give you the topics discussed and you can look up the details on the website if you're interested. He uses uniform size supers and frames: 8 frame mediums. He even has information on his website to help you cut down your deep boxes and frames to mediums. Foundationless frames. Because of chemical residue in commercial foundation, he lets the bees make their own foundation. The top bars of his frames are cut at a 45° angle to guide the bees to draw foundation. Natural cell size, which he contends, helps prevent varroa mites. Leave honey for the bees over the winter instead of cooking sugar syrup. The pH of sugar syrup is great for disease development. Stop cutting out swarm cells and do a split or make a nuc instead. Feed dry sugar instead of syrup. It helps lower the humidity in the hive; the dry sugar absorbs the excess moisture. Don't look for the queen, look for eggs or open brood. Don't wait: Do it now while you have the hive open. Stop switching deep hive bodies because the bees have to keep rearranging their brood nest and it's disruptive. All of his ideas are explained in more detail and justifications are given on his website www.bushfarms.com.

The last session was "Why Nucs?" by Walter Watson, a WVA State Beekeeping Association member. He was such a knowledgeable yet humble presenter. He reminded us that the best nuc is 5 frames. They are easy to maintain and enable you to make splits to avoid swarming from strong hives. You can house a swarm in a nuc or keep spare queens and bees in them. You can use them to raise your own queens or just to make extra drawn comb to have on hand. After his presentation, I felt a beekeeper would be crazy NOT to have nucs!

The next HAS conference will be July 2009 in Ohio. The specific venue has not been confirmed yet. The WVA conference set the bar high for any future conferences. The wide range of topics for classes, the knowledgeable speakers, the movies, the side trips and the beautiful Marshall University Campus, all came together to make for a great weekend.

