

the Forager



February 2009

Newsletter of the Tidewater Beekeepers Association
www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net

Vol.6 No.2

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

A Message from our Vice President, Bob Montcalm



As you have heard, our president is recovering nicely from his recent illness and might be back with us for the February meeting. That's great news. Way to go Joe!

Well, here we are in the depths of winter. January, February and March are the hardest months of the year for me, personally, to get past. I hate cold weather. I suspect that the bees feel the same way. It's a good thing they don't fly to Florida for the winter. The other day when it was 50+ degrees, my bees were in and out of the hives in fair numbers. If they hang in there for 4-5 more weeks, my dandelion 'crop' will be blooming and ready for them.

Hopefully, our collective winter losses will be minimal but looking at the size of our club's bee package order (90 pkgs), we either have a lot of losses or a lot of new startup beekeepers. Hopefully it's the latter.

We do have a number of educational activities planned. Both the TBA Beekeeping Short Course for Beginners and the Virginia state-sponsored Advanced Beekeeping workshop should provide educational opportunities for most if not all members. Bob Ferguson is also presenting a 'Beekeeping Equipment for Beginners' workshop immediately prior to our February meeting at 6:00 PM. TBA encourages everyone to take advantage of these programs.

Bob Montcalm

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 10, 2009
at 7:00 PM

Location: Towne Bank Hall, 137 Mt. Pleasant Rd., Chesapeake, VA 23322

Program: Spring Hive Management

Speaker: C.E. Harris, Jr.

Special Workshop: Beekeeping
Equipment for Beginners at 6:00 PM by Bob
Ferguson

TIDEWATER BEEKEEPER "YARD NOTES"

For



February

February is typically the coldest winter month in Tidewater. The bees are usually clustered in their hives waiting for warm spring weather to arrive.

Make sure that your hive entrances are open and not blocked by dead bees in case we get a few days of 50°F or warmer for cleansing flights.

Continue to check the colonies for adequate winter stores by lifting them from the rear; you should be lifting 45 to 50 pounds at this time of year. Feed any light hives to prevent starvation. You can feed granulated sugar over the winter cluster in an emergency.

Place your orders for package bees or queens as soon as possible to ensure timely spring delivery. Take inventory of your equipment and order any new woodenware to allow time for assembly and painting.

Consider subscribing to the American Bee Journal and/or Bee Culture. These monthly magazines are excellent resources and your TBA membership entitles you to a discounted subscription.





Founders' Day



Our annual Founders' Day dinner was postponed at the January meeting and no plans have been made to reschedule it. The Founder's Day dinner is a potluck meal where we traditionally recognize those club members who have volunteered their time to the club during the past year. It is open to TBA members, their spouse or guest and family members. Please give some consideration to holding the Founders' Day celebration in March in order to formally honor the members who give so much to our club. You will enjoy the camaraderie and the buffet too!



Beekeeper Study Group

Bob Schwartz and Pam

Fisher are assembling a study group of club members interested in participating in the Virginia Master Beekeeper Program or those just wanting to learn more about beekeeping. A sign-up sheet was circulated at the January monthly meeting and 17 members signed up. The group will use the study guide provided by the state to research and discuss the topics covered on the first, or Qualified Level, exam. The study guide is available on the VSBA website at:

http://www.virginiabeekeepers.org/Master/MBStudyGuide_Qualified.pdf

The first meeting of the group will be held at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, February 17, 2009 at Major Hillard Library, 824 Old George Washington Highway, N., Chesapeake, VA 23323. Major Hillard is located in the Deep Creek section of Chesapeake. If you have not signed up but you would like to participate in the study group, please feel free to attend.



January Meeting Minutes

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

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

Beekeeping Events

North Carolina State Beekeepers Association

March 6 & 7, 2009

Joint spring meeting of NCSBA and The South Carolina Beekeepers Association
Baxter Hood Conference Center at York Technical College in Rock Hill, SC

<http://www.ncbeekeepers.org/meetings.htm>

Virginia State Beekeepers Association

April 17 & 18, 2009

VSBA Spring Meeting

Northampton Community Center in Hampton, VA

<http://www.virginiabeekeepers.org/meetings/meetings.htm>



The Mid-Atlantic Home & Flower Show will be held February 13 – 15, 2009 at the Virginia Beach Convention Center. TBA will have a booth where we will sell honey and hive products in the lobby with the other associations and societies. This is a wonderful opportunity to educate the public about protecting honeybees with good gardening practices while stressing the bees' role as pollinators in our food supply. Exhibit hours are Friday and Saturday from 10:00 AM to 9:00 PM and Sunday from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. For more information:

<http://www.vafgs.org/>

Raffle Items Needed

Lisa Wiggins is in need of prizes for the raffle table.

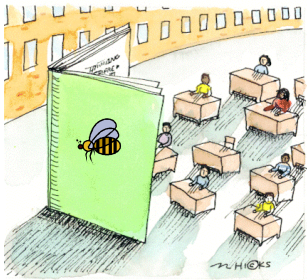
Please consider donating a bee-themed item occasionally; proceeds from the raffle go into the club treasury to help offset TBA expenses. Plus, the raffle is just plain fun for all of us!





Package Bee Orders Last Chance !!!

If you missed the first two package bee orders TBA Vice President, Bob Montcalm has offered to go to Brushy Mountain to pick up additional packages for club members. Club members may then retrieve their packages from Bob's home in Chesapeake. If you would like Bob to pick up bees for you, please call Brushy Mountain on February 2nd at 1-800-233-7929 and place your order for the first delivery date, which is March 28, 2009. You must pay at the time you order and tell the operator that Bob Montcalm will pick up your bees for you. Then Email Bob at montcalm@verizon.net with the details of your order. Brushy Mountain will start taking package bee orders on February 2nd and they encourage early orders for delivery on the first distribution date. The supplier will be Gardner's Apiaries/Spell Bee LLC out of Georgia again this year. Package prices for 1-10 packages are: 2-lb. packages - \$55.00 and 3-lb. packages - \$65.00 including the \$5.00 handling fee. A discount of \$2.00 per package is offered for orders over 10 packages. Marked queens will cost \$2 extra and clipped and marked an additional \$3.50. Please consider throwing in a little extra to cover Bob's expenses related to the trip. Thank you, Bob for helping out the club!



Beekeeping Short Course

Plans are shaping up nicely for the TBA Beekeeping Short Course for Beginners thanks to

the hard work of Kerry Bass, Paul Kist, Bob Montcalm and Bob Schwartz. The committee members have worked diligently to update the course for 2009. They have scheduled facilities at Virginia Wesleyan College in Norfolk for March 6 & 7, 2009. More information on the course as well as the opportunity to register will be offered at the February membership meeting. The syllabus and registration will also be available on our club's web site at:

http://www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net/short_course.html



Telling the Bees

TBA member, Michael S. Huffman, 62, a native of Hampton and 25 year resident of Smithfield, VA, passed away Wednesday night, Jan. 14, 2009, in Hampton.

He was a graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University. He served honorably in the U.S. Army and the Coast Guard Reserves. He retired from customer service at Lowes' Home Improvement. Mike truly loved all animals, especially his beloved horses, his dog, Tally and his cats. Club members will remember Mike for his selfless act of picking up bee equipment for others from Dadant in Lynchburg even though he was gravely ill.

Our sympathy and prayers go out to Mike's widow, Cindy and his family.



Advanced Beekeeping Workshop

Good news for those club members wishing to get started on the Virginia Master Beekeeper designation – An Advanced Beekeeping workshop will be held at Hampton Roads Agricultural Research & Extension Center on February 28th. Virginia State Apiarist, Keith Tignor and Dr. Rick Fell, professor of entomology at VA Tech, will teach the class which is geared to beekeepers with a couple of years experience. Class starts at 8:00 AM and runs until 5:00 PM. The morning session will consist of classroom instruction on diseases, pests, and IPM for the honeybee. During the afternoon participants will receive hands-on experience with laboratory and field diagnosis of common honeybee diseases and pests. The laboratory portion will include working with microscopes and dissection equipment; previous experience is helpful but not required. The class size is limited to 24. The workshop will be credited to individuals participating in the Master Beekeeper program.

The fee, if any, for the class has not been determined yet. Anyone interested should contact Keith Tignor by email at Keith.Tignor@vdacs.virginia.gov, or by phone at 804-786-3515 for further details.

