

# the Forager



June 2009

Newsletter of the Tidewater Beekeepers Association  
www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net

Vol.6 No.6

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

Hello TBA members. As the new Editor I am following in the footsteps of the very talented and hard working Pam Fisher who has set high standards for this publication. Kudos to Pam for her years of hard work. With this first issue I am not likely to reach such high standards, and as a matter of fact, I am not even placing that kind of stress on myself. This issue contains only the essential items needed to keep you informed for June. As the months move along, I will reach higher and add to the basics.

On purpose, I have kept Pam's farewell message to end this issue. It portrays her in a frazzled state which editors are traditionally supposed to always be in. I am now in that state as I compose my first Forager, however, I have no hair left to get frazzled or to pull out. Some of the stress is due to my steep learning curve with brand new software and an unfamiliar format and some is due to queen failures in my own hives.

TBA is a family beekeeping club and you will find an article representative of family beekeeping following the monthly calendar. More family articles are planned for the months ahead. Please read on for all the positive news and happenings in the balance of this issue.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, June 9, 2009 at 7:00 PM

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

**Program:** Varroa mites video & discussion

## TIDEWATER BEEKEEPER "YARD NOTES"

For



June

The Tidewater nectar flow is here and going strong!

- ▶ Add honey supers ahead of the bees' needs - additional supers should be placed below a partially filled super if possible. You may have two to five supers on by now.
- ▶ Prop up the outer cover to improve airflow during the hot weather. Good air circulation improves both honey production and hive health.
- ▶ Honey may be removed when more than 3/4 of the cells are capped and liquid doesn't drip from the cells when the frame is held upside down and shaken. This indicates that the nectar has been evaporated to the correct moisture content and is now honey. When in doubt, use a refractometer to measure moisture content. Anything above 18.6% may ferment if extracted.
- ▶ Medications may not be used while the bees are making honey for human consumption. Follow all treatment plans in accordance with the manufacturer's application instructions...NO EXCEPTIONS!
- ▶ Add an additional brood box or super of foundation when package bees have built comb in seven of the ten frames in the first brood box. Continue to feed the package until they will not take syrup.
- ▶ Monitor hives for swarm cells. If a hive swarms, check it after a week to ensure that the new queen is mated and laying. If not, you will need to order and install a new queen or combine the hive with a queenright colony.

## **Nominations & Elections**

The official slate of TBA officers for 2009-2010 is as follows:

President	Bob Montcalm
Vice President & Webmaster	Pam Fisher
Secretary & Newsletter Editor	Paul Kist
Treasurer	Rick Fisher

As stated in the By-Laws: *The officers shall be elected by a majority vote when a quorum of members is present at the May meeting of each year, and shall serve in that capacity for the next 12 months.*

## **FAMILY BEEKEEPING**

*This is a real father daughter feel good family story. Enjoy.*

Down in the country where the sweet summer honeysuckle proudly pokes its flowers up this time of year, there dwells a happy TBA family. The family farmhouse sits at the end of a driveway so long that you have to ride a horse or a bicycle to check the mailbox. And you better keep a sharp eye on the ground to avoid what might slither up out of the creek. Bees can sting you on the nose but those critters can bite you on the heel...and there is a world of difference!

Back when kids used to sing "Old MacDonald had a farm..." this was the place they were singing about. And when I was a Future Farmer at PAHS these were the types of farms we went out to study on field trips. What a great joy to visit with the Cumming's family and look into Connie and Dean's hives. Connie and her dad each started a package in late March. The bees have been building out comb on full plastic frames and foundation. So far, they have been doing great!

Connie's hive was easy to see sitting a few feet from the grape arbor. Do they make wine to sell? Didn't ask, sorry. The bees were busy bringing in four or five colors of pollen and plenty of nectar. Her bees were already working on some queen cells after less than two months. She may need to requeen this hive this summer or let the

bees do it. Connie's mother, Lou, asked plenty of questions and that was a big help in making sure I kept giving lots of information to them. Connie did not use gloves but she could not get me to follow her leadership. Four H, or is it 4H, teaches leadership but there was no way I was going to follow Connie this time.

When it was time to see Dean's hive I could have used their canoe and paddled the four or five hundred yards down the creek to it. But they walked and so did I. Did I mention you should bring a lunch if you think you will walk all around their land while you are there? Lunch was finished when we reached the hive and we pulled it apart and looked through it. This hive seemed happy with their queen and had built up most of two deep boxes. Connie rotated the top deep to the bottom and put a honey super on with an excluder. Perhaps they will get some honey which may encourage all the other family members to start hives. And that would be a big happy ending for a TBA beekeeping family. Thank you Cummings family.

## **May Meeting Minutes**

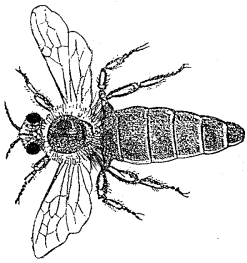
The minutes of the May membership meeting are available to TBA members for viewing at:

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



## **Nosema Test Kits**

Dr. Rick Fell, PhD, of Virginia Tech is conducting research on the incidence of *Nosema* across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Dr. Fell has provided TBA with sample kits and asked us to send samples of bees from suspect hives to him for testing. Dr. Fell will be testing for the presence of *Nosema*. If the sample tests positive, it will undergo further testing to differentiate between *Nosema Apis* and *Nosema ceranae*. Test kits will be available at the next TBA membership meeting and all results will be kept confidential.



## Queen-Rearing Course

The Colonial Beekeepers Association is hosting a two-day course on queen rearing, making splits and raising nucs. These classes will be geared for the hobby beekeeper. New beekeepers are encouraged to attend. The dates for the classes are the 10th and 11th of June. That is a Wednesday and Thursday from 6:00 to 8:30 PM. The location will be the Northampton Community Center on Todds Lane in Hampton. Registration for the course will start on the 18th of May. Classroom hours will count toward 5 credit hours of the educational requirements for the Virginia Master Beekeeper designation. For more information or to register, please call Andy Westrich after 4:00 PM at 825-8843 or email him at [jandy618@juno.com](mailto:jandy618@juno.com). The course syllabus is available on the TBA website at:

[www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net/Queen%20and%20Nuc%20course%20syllabus.pdf](http://www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net/Queen%20and%20Nuc%20course%20syllabus.pdf)

## Beekeeping Events

### **NCSBSA**

Summer Meeting

July 9 - 11, 2009

Wilkes Community College in Wilkesboro, NC

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

### **Heartland Apicultural Society**

HAS 2009

July 9 - 11, 2009

Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio

<http://www.heartlandbees.com/index.htm>

### **Eastern Apicultural Society**

August 3-7, 2009

EAS 2009

Holiday Valley Resort in Ellicottville, NY

<http://www.easternapiculture.org/programs/>



## Bee Emergency Responders

Bob Schwartz is coordinating training for TBA beekeepers interested in volunteering as 'First Responders' to bee spills, Africanized bee reports or other bee emergencies.

The date for training is Saturday, June 27, 2009 at Tidewater Agricultural Research and Extension Center (TAREC) located in the City of Suffolk on Highway 58, near the village of Holland.

The tentative schedule is from 9:00 AM until lunch in the classroom and outside field training until 4:00 PM.

A sign-up sheet was circulated at past meetings for members wishing to participate. If you would like to receive training on bee spill response procedures as well as volunteer to assist the Commonwealth with bee emergencies, please contact Bob Schwartz at [moonlightbeekeeper@hotmail.com](mailto:moonlightbeekeeper@hotmail.com) or 757-357-7829 to be added to the list of interested beekeepers.



## Strawberry Festival

A big thank you to Kerry Bass, Connie Cummings, Jim Doubler and Paul Kist. These members spent hours showing an observation hive with a ripe queen cell to all who came by our educational exhibit. The public asked hundreds of questions and as usual the bees were the stars of our exhibit. TBA had a wonderfully successful educational exhibit!





## Extract-a-ganza 2009

TBA has reserved the Ruritan Club in the Deep Creek section of Chesapeake for an extracting field day on Saturday, July 11, 2009. The club's electric extractor will be set up for member use. Demonstrations on uncapping frames and using the extractor will be ongoing during the day. Club members may bring their full honey supers and either receive instruction on how to spin the honey or demonstrate to new beekeepers how it's done. Television station WCTV-48 has expressed an interest in filming the extracting process for an educational news segment on beekeeping & honey.

In the past, we have combined the field day with a summer picnic for members and their families. The suggestion was made to do the same thing again this year.

More information will be available on the web site and in the newsletter as the event nears. Thank you, Nick Delphia for securing the Ruritan Club with its commercial kitchen for Extract-a-ganza 2009!

## Beekeeping Books for Sale

TBA made a bulk purchase of the texts used for our Beekeeping Short Course for Beginners. In response to member requests, we are now offering them for sale at monthly membership meetings for \$10 each. The available books are:

***First Lessons in Beekeeping*** by Keith Delaplane basics of beekeeping through easy-to-understand text and numerous color photos on honey bee biology, beekeeping equipment, management, honey production and processing, as well as disease diagnosis and treatment.

***Beekeeping Basics*** from Penn State (Formerly *Fundamentals of Beekeeping*) - Text covers the basics of beginning beekeeping as well as information on managing parasites, pests and diseases; honey production and processing; pollination; handling beeswax; pollen trapping; and a guide to important floral sources.



## Woodenware Offer

TBA member and Beeline Woodenware Distributor, Andy Westrich has recently received a new order of woodenware. If you need something in a hurry, Andy may have it at his place in Hampton. Andy asks that club members call or email him with their order. You can reach Andy on his cell phone at 513-2467 or [jandy618@juno.com](mailto:jandy618@juno.com). Price list and order forms are available on the TBA web site at:

[http://www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net/equip\\_exchange.html](http://www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net/equip_exchange.html)



## **From the Editor**

It has been my pleasure to serve as your TBA newsletter editor for the past six years. Our club has grown and changed tremendously during that time and I have enjoyed sharing the news with you on a monthly basis. Many thanks go out to the members who were kind enough to forward bee news to me for inclusion in the newsletter; your assistance was very much appreciated. To those of you who took the time to send a positive email or make an appreciative comment regarding the newsletter – you made my day! Please join me in welcoming our new newsletter editor, Paul Kist. Paul will take over as newsletter editor in June and I know that everybody shares my anticipation of the New & Improved *Forager*!

Sincerely,  
Pam Fisher