

the Forager



July 2009

Newsletter of the Tidewater Beekeepers Association
www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net

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The media reported that on June 21 nearly 35,000 celebrating people greeted the sunrise at ancient Stonehenge, about eighty miles from London, England.

Beekeepers living in Virginia can relate to that June 21 event on several levels. It is the longest day of the year and the bees get to forage less each succeeding day thereafter. Although beekeepers have a history of only 400 years in Virginia, they practice an agricultural art that dates back thousands of years to before Stonehenge was erected. Because of our particular climate, flora, and location along the coast there is a narrow open-window of time for our major nectar flow. Once June 21 rolls around that window closes down and, for better or worse, the long hot summer is upon us and our bees. Now, it is time to harvest your spring crop of honey before the bees begin to use it up themselves.

Therefore, please read about the extraction-picnic day planned at the Deep Creek Ruritan Club on July 11. See the “**Extract-a-Ganza 2009**” heading below.

Stories:

Many beekeepers develop funny stories. This is one of how a new beekeeper was born. Send your favorite funny or interesting story to be published in a future issue.

On a chilly rainy afternoon, the phone rang and the male voice on the other end said he had captured a swarm of honey bees from inside a fighter jet on the Oceana Naval Base. Further, the voice said he was a fighter pilot and had the captured swarm inside a candy jar with the lid duck-taped on for safety. OK, I thought, someone has had a few extra beers and is having some telephone fun with me. How plausible is this info? Anyway, I played along with the caller!

After a series of questions trying to determine how long this prank call would go on, it began to seem it was a legitimate call and the man needed help with a cold wet gang of bees.

So, I told this “navy officer and fighter pilot” that he could bring the bees and I would help him. In the meantime, I got an old homemade Nuc box with foundation and took it to my outside front porch thinking it is really best to play it safe with prank callers these days. Show him old equipment and keep him outside. Soon, a man in an officer’s uniform drove up and had a counter-top type, candy jar with a metal lid covering a cold, nearly inert, mess of honey bees. He explained they had been chilled by his air conditioning on the way over. He told how he had put on his full flight suit with helmet to be protected from stings while reaching inside the engine air intake to get the bees.

By now, it dawned on me, this situation was real and help was needed. I quickly got a copy of the Forager (We all need to keep an emergency copy on hand.) and pointed out that Andy W. sold woodenware in Hampton. Also, advice was given about the need to warm the bees up soon, lest they expire from hypothermia. He implied a fighter pilot is trained in these things in case he has to ditch into the ocean. With more information the pilot left telling me he would persuade his wife to keep the bees in their kitchen that night. Oh, sure, she will really love that. My personal assessment of the whole affair was the bees would all be dead within two hours.

Silence encompassed the bees and pilot until the next TBA meeting night, May 14, when Andy W. said he had my foundation from the pilot. Andy explained the pilot had brought the bees to him that cold night asking for more help. Andy had taken the bees in like orphans off the street and clothed, fed, and housed them. Later, Andy gave a queen and some brood to the orphans. Thanks Andy for all the help. After a few more adventures, the bees now reside on the second floor balcony of a proud new beekeeper in VA Beach. Quite a different way to get started as a beekeeper!

Next Meeting: Tuesday, July 14, 2009 at 7:00 PM.

Dues are due July 1. Bring payment to the meeting or mail it to TBA at PO Box 7403, Chesapeake, VA 23324.

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

Program: **Varroa Mites** video & treatment discussion.

TIDEWATER BEEKEEPER “YARD NOTES”

For



July

Beekeeping Events

NCSBSA

Summer Meeting

July 9 - 11, 2009

Wilkes Comm. 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 was TBA organizer for any member beekeepers interested in volunteering as ‘First Responders’ to bee spills, Africanized bee reports or other bee emergencies.

The training was held at Tidewater Agricultural Research and Extension Center (TAREC) in Suffolk. Bob will give his report at the July meeting.

June Meeting Minutes

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

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

- When taking honey from your bees, remember that colonies need between 40 and 60 lbs. of honey to make it through the winter. Also, remember you can feed them cheap sugar syrup and sell your pure local honey for \$7 per pound!
- You may not get honey from package bees their first year...JUST ENJOYMENT!
- Place wet extracted supers back on the beehives in preparation for the fall nectar flow if you are fortunate enough to live in areas with cotton or soybean fields.
- Allow the bees to clean the wet supers for storage by placing them above the inner cover for one week. Don't forget to use a wax moth preventative on any drawn comb stored off of the hive.
- Drone production is slowing down, so watch closely for increased mite production in the worker bee cells. Use your sticky board to determine a mite drop count. Treat with powdered sugar any time or with an approved chemical mite treatment, only **after removing all honey for human consumption**. Remember to treat for mites starting by AUGUST first. The mite count needs to be below about 50-60 per 24 hrs to ensure a healthy winter bee population.
- As the nighttime temperatures rise, bees will begin to ‘beard’ on the landing board and front of the hive. It's not unusual to see large numbers of bees covering the front of the hive on hot summer nights. Reduce this hive heat by using full screen inner covers.
- Water is especially important to the hive during the heat of the summer. Provide a water source nearby to keep bees out of neighbor's pools, birdbaths and air conditioners.
- Encourage package bees to continue drawing comb on foundation by feeding 1 to 1 ratio sugar syrup to them.
- Use a ground drench (Gardstar) to kill small hive beetle larvae.

Extract-a-Ganza 2009

TBA has reserved the Ruritan Club, at 200 Luray St. in the Deep Creek section of Chesapeake, for an extracting field day and picnic on Saturday, July 11, 2009. Starting about 10 AM with demonstrations on uncapping frames and using an extractor, honey can be spun out until all is done. Club members may bring their full honey supers and either receive instruction on how to spin the honey out 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 and are doing the same thing again this year. We will break near noon to set the tables and eat. Bob Montcalm is bringing fried chicken, pizza, drinks and paper plates. Everyone else can bring a dish or dessert to share.

Bob needs to know how many refreshments to buy. We need to know how many honey supers are coming. Please, RSVP to Nick Delphia at 536-1354 or delfi99@cox.net. See a link to a map on the TBA web site:

www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net/members/extractaganza2009.html

Thank you, Nick 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 various kinds of woodenware at his place in Hampton. If you need something in a hurry, Andy may have it. Andy asks that club members call or email him with their order. You can call at 513-2467 or use jandy618@juno.com. Price list and order forms are available on the TBA web site at:

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