

# Washington State Beekeepers Association

*Keep the "Bee" in Business*

Publication of Washington State Beekeepers Association

www.wasba.org

May 2007

## President's Message

We will have our next meeting, 10AM June 23 at the Bar 14 Ranch House Restaurant in Ellensburg. It will be a great meeting, so I hope you all can attend.

The big thing this year is CCD Colony Collapse Disorder. Its impact has been widespread and has affected numerous Beekeepers. It sure has affected the press. The following info is posted on the Mid-Atlantic Apiculture site. Take time to read up on what is going on.

Jerry Tate

<http://maarec.cas.psu.edu/ColonyCollapseDisorder.html>

Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) is the name that has been given to the latest, and what seems to be the most serious, die-off of honey bee colonies across the country. It is characterized by, sudden colony death with a lack of adult bees in/in front of the dead-outs. Honey and bee bread are usually present and there is often evidence of recent brood rearing. In some cases, the queen and a small number of survivor bees may be present in the brood nest. It is also characterized by delayed robbing and slower than normal invasion by common pests such as wax moth and small hive beetles.

[American Bee Journal Article - "An Estimate of Managed Colony Losses in the Winter of 2006 - 2007: A Report Commissioned by the Apiary Inspectors of America](#) by

Dennis vanEngelsdorp, Robyn Underwood, Dewey Caron, Jerry Hayes, Jr. (5/17/2007)

[Colony Collapse Disorder: Have We Seen This Before?](#) by Robyn M. Underwood & Dennis vanEngelsdorp (5/17/2007)  
[News Report - OpEdNews.com - "Please Lord, not the bees"](#) by Peter Dearman (5/17/2007)

[CCD Working Group Pathogen Sub-Group Progress Report](#) (5/12/2007)

**Information for growers of bee pollinated crops:**  
[Protecting Honey Bees from Chemical Pesticides](#) (4/23/2007)  
[Information for Growers of Bee Pollinated Crops](#) (4/23/2007)

[NPR interview with Dr. May Berenbaum](#), Head of the Entomology Department at University of Illinois (5/3/2007)

[Honeybee Die-Off Threatens Food Supply](#) by Seth Borenstein, The Associated Press (5/2/2007)

[Testimony by Diana Cox-Foster before U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Horticulture and Organic Agriculture](#) (3/28/2007)

[CRS Report for Congress - Recent Honey Bee Colony Declines](#) (3/27/2007)

[Summary of Research on the Non-target Effects of Bt Corn Pollen on Honeybees](#) (3/28/2007)

[Map of U.S. States Reporting Colony Collapse Disorder](#)  
[CCD Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) (3/2007)

[Tentative Recommendations for Hives Experiencing CCD](#) (3/9/2007)

[CCD Podcast: listen online by selecting "Browse all of Honey Bees in Crisis", and then click on "Colony Collapse Disorder".](#)

**How beekeepers can help:**

Complete the survey found at [www.beesurvey.com](http://www.beesurvey.com)

## Washington State Updates

### Program Calendar for the Association.

**June 23, 2007: 10 AM**  
WSBA Executive Board Meeting  
**Bar 14 Ranch House Restaurant**  
1800 Canyon Rd. · Ellensburg, WA 98926  
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**October 25 to 27, 2007:**  
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## Washington Beekeeper Remembered

### Alice Hansen VanWechel



Age 84, went to be with her Lord and Savior on April 26, 2007. She was born November 27, 1922, in Fords Prairie, WA to Bruce and Myrtle Haskin. In Alice's adult life Myrtle married Knud Schmidt. Alice was always very fond of her step father and called him 'Pop'. She graduated from Adna High School in Adna, WA in 1941. Tough years for young Americans.

Alice married William (Bill) Hansen on February 16, 1945. They lived on the family farm in Chehalis, WA and raised four children. Bill died as a result of heart surgery on March 31, 1960. Alice met Carl VanWechel on a blind date arranged by a mutual friend and they went to the World's Fair in Seattle in 1962 and they married December 27 of that year. Alice brought four kids and lots of determination to Carl's home and his two children in Naches. Together they raised six kids, all of whom graduated from Naches Valley High School. She and Carl and the kids took honey producing bees to Mile 24 of

the Alaska Highway each summer until number six graduated and then family members daughter Christy, husband Rick, son Dale and wife Sue joined the Canadian operation and bought it. Alice and Carl continued in the bee business in Naches with polination services in the valley and up and down the Washington coast and mountains and almonds in Fresno, CA.

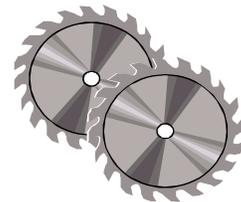
When they retired, the motor home they used in the bee operation became a great way to see the places they hadn't been. Alaska on a ferry on the inside passage and a drive down the length of the AlCan Highway. As their travels slowed down they planted Christmas trees on the family farm west of Naches. Tending those trees became one of her greatest enjoyments. She belonged to the Newaukum Grange, The Washington State Beekeeper's Association and was a long time member of the Naches Presbyterian Church. She loved cribbage, pinochle and quilting and all the friends and family associated with those pastimes. She was a wonderful mom, grandmother and great grandmother.

She is survived by a brother, Britt (Florence) Haskin of Chehalis, WA, children Dale (Sue) Hansen, Christy (Rick) Thomson all of Farmington, BC, Mike (Kendra) Hansen Chehalis, WA, Lyle (Cindy) Hansen Walla Walla, WA, Kay (Don) Kilpatrick Naches, WA and David Allen-VanWechel Yakima, WA. Ten grandchildren: Stacy Hansen, Juli Aselton, Todd Thomson, Sandi Watts, Bill Hansen, Kate Davidson, Lincoln Kilpatrick, Bradley Hansen, Brian Hansen and Amanda Kinney and 14 great grandchildren.

Alice was preceded in death by her parents and step father Knud Schmidt, her husbands, William A. Hansen and Carl VanWechel and two brothers and two sisters.

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## Washington Beekeeper Remembered

### Howard Sterling Graff

Age 95 of Bow, Washington, former owner of Silverbow Honey and former secretary of the National Honey Packers and Dealers Association died August 6, 2006.

Howard was born in Bay View Hill, Washington January 6, 1911. During World War II, Howard Graff contributed to the war effort as a shipyard worker in Anacortes. Since sugar was rationed, honey was in demand in the place of sugar. Howard would bring a small portion of the harvest from his bees to the yard every two weeks. After the war, Howard began to expand his operation.

He bought additional colonies of bees to meet the demand for his honey. The Silver Bow County, Montana bees were one of his acquisitions. When Howard purchased the bees, the owner offered him the honey labels, too. Recognizing an opportunity, Howard began using the Silverbow Country labels.

Howard sold the Silverbow packing plant in 1973 and still kept honey bees tending several hives at his home in Bow into his 90's.

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## WSU Update, Steve Sheppard

In late April, I traveled to Beltsville, MD to participate in a meeting to set research priorities relative to colony collapse disorder (CCD). The group included various beekeepers, researchers, administrators and granting agency personnel who were invited by USDA-ARS. The purpose of the meeting (from the standpoint of the USDA) was to better define research priorities.

Topics discussed in “break out” sessions including 1) migratory management and stress, 2) pathogens and parasites, 3) in-hive and environmental pesticides, 4) genetics and breeding. An expanded list of research priorities were developed that will be used by USDA programs and newly planned “area-wide” programs among states

This summer at WSU we will conduct experiments to determine whether combs from colonies with CCD negatively affect honey bees compared to control combs. The experiment will include a large set of CCD combs from multiple beekeepers supplied by Jeff Pettis and Ben Horwath. The USDA-ARS lab in Beltsville will contract the chemical residue work.

The 2007-2008 USDA-SARE grant was funded, which provides 2 years of support to further the selection, distribution and evaluation of WSU honey bee stocks. In addition to data showing measurable increases in hygienic behavior, WSU MS student Ben Horwath’s research showed a significantly lower level of tracheal mite infestation in WSU stocks compared to a commercial line of bees. WSU MS student, Sam Hapke, will set up a large-scale IPM experiment in Puyallup in June, similar to the work we have already done in eastern Washington. However, in addition to providing basic IPM information for western WA beekeepers, Sam’s work will compare WSU stocks and unselected commercial bees as well.

The past few weeks have been part of a full plate for us as we conducted extensive field work needed to inspect, assess, and test the colonies in the breeding program and the associated work to set up for queen production. We currently are running 250 mating nucs at our isolated mating site at Smoot Hill and plan to conduct another production run in early June. A number of these queens will be provided to the WSBA collaborative apiary program for shared use by a number of local associations.

In collaboration with Sue Cobey, we submitted a permit application to APHIS to import semen from Italian and Caucasian honey bees from Europe. This semen will be used in breeding and selection efforts and will also provide a source of sex allele diversity that can benefit the current US “Italian” honey bee population.

Upcoming events. On June 9 and 16, we will give workshops on grafting and queen production in Puyallup and Mt. Vernon, respectively. The June 9 session will be at farm 5 and will also include colony manipulation and inspection. For further information contact the respective local associations or WSBA.

Best regards and even better beekeeping

Steve Sheppard

Thurber Professor of Apiculture, Department of Entomology, WSU



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# Why Do We Lose Colonies in Winter?

By Phil Craft, State Apiarist as excerpted from Phil's Newsletter THE BUZZ  
Kentucky Department of Agriculture

Before concluding that those deadouts (hives where the bees have died) in our bees yards suffered from a new bee disease or malady, let's examine the issue of why we lose colonies during the winter.

When preparing hives for winter, a process that begins as early as July in Kentucky, there are three considerations that we keep in mind in helping a colony of honeybees get through the winter: 1 – sufficient food stores in the hive; 2 – a sufficient number of bees for a winter cluster, and 3 – making sure that these bees are healthy. The first two are pretty quantitative; the third is more complicated.

**Food stores:** The amount of food stores needed to get a colony through the winter is determined by where the hive is located geographically, how severe (cold) winter is, and the length of the winter. Here in Kentucky we say that a hive needs 50-60 pounds of honey (or stored sugar syrup) for the bees to feed on through the winter. A deep hive body full of honey will contain more than enough, though most beekeepers in Kentucky will winter bees in two boxes, a deep hive body on the bottom – full of bees and containing some stored honey – and a full or nearly full super (or a second deep or medium box) on top. If you have bees north of Kentucky, they need more stored honey, and further south, less. Throughout the mid-summer and fall of last year, as I looked into hives with beekeepers, I saw a serious lack of food stores – many hives with virtually no stored honey. Many beekeepers were feeding hives from July through fall and into winter. After warning beekeepers to check hives for food stores, I heard more reports of hives low on stored honey. At that time I began predicting heavy hive losses due to starvation this winter and early spring in Kentucky.

**Number of bees:** The minimum late fall hive population that is required for the colony to make it through the winter is about 25,000-30,000 bees. This number of bees will cover eight or nine deep frames, so the minimum is roughly a deep hive body full of bees. By spring this 25,000-30,000 bees will be greatly reduced – see next paragraph on healthy bees. The bees cluster together and consume honey to keep warm during the cold winter months (when the temperature is below about 55°F). The colder the outside temperatures, the tighter the cluster. The more bees in the cluster, the easier it is for them to maintain the cluster temperature. Furthermore, the number of bees in any hive decreases throughout the winter as the older bees die. (An “average” hive will lose half its bees during the winter.) So as the winter goes on there are fewer bees available for the cluster. Smaller clusters are less efficient at maintaining the cluster temperature (around 90°F), plus the cluster must move to additional stored honey during the winter, a more difficult task for smaller clusters. I always say that as the number of bees decreases in a hive through the winter, the hive may reach a critical cluster size – below which survival of the bees is unlikely. Small clusters very often fail to move to stored honey and will starve inches away from food, sometimes even inches from a full super of honey.

**Healthy bees:** Even in a disease- and pest-free colony of bees with sufficient food and enough bees for a good cluster, half of the bees in a hive will not survive into the spring. Only the bees that develop in the late fall will live that long. Honeybees that have been weakened by mites or disease will die even sooner. If monitoring and control of mites or disease are not performed, you can't tell whether your bees are actually as healthy as they appear to be.

Nosema disease and mites (both varroa mites and tracheal mites) are common causes of reduced lifespan for bees. Since a laboratory test is required to diagnose both Nosema and tracheal mites, many beekeepers use grease patties (for control of tracheal mites) and the antibiotic fumagillin (for the control of Nosema disease) in the fall as part of their routine winter preparation. While I am not a proponent of preventative disease and pest control (there is really no such thing), these are two very worthwhile management routines that may enable your bees to get through the winter.

Young bees that develop in the presence of varroa mites are usually weakened and have reduced life spans. If varroa mites are not controlled, we can expect losses of 30-60 percent of wintered colonies. Thus, control of varroa mites is critical in helping hives get through the winter. While we have a number of varroa control products on the market today, monitoring for the presence and level of varroa infestations is still very important. Varroa mites may be resistant to some of the control products (Apistan and CheckMitePlus), other varroa control products have specific temperature requirements when used, and may require multiple applications for effective control. So carefully following the label requirements is of the highest importance, and monitoring varroa numbers after the products have been applied is still a good idea (to make sure that the product worked).

Furthermore, healthy bees are bees that are well-fed throughout their development. Lack of food, particularly pollen, will cause a decrease in the ability of nurse bees to produce royal jelly (which is fed to all larvae). Larvae that are fed the mere minimum of nutrients will be smaller, less healthy, and have a shorter life span than bees receiving optimum nutrition.

Very often when we discover hives in which the bees died during the winter, we find a small cluster of dead bees (the size of a baseball or softball) on comb that contains no honey. We'll find some of the bees headfirst in the cells – also dead. These bees have starved to death. We sometimes find honey near the dead bees; this is not unusual. What occurred was that the small clusters

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## Why Do We Lose Colonies in Winter?, continued

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of bees were not able to move to additional honey stores during cold weather. Extended periods of extremely cold weather, like what we experienced in February, make the movement of bees in a cluster especially difficult. I think a lot of hives in Kentucky were lost during this cold snap. Periods of warm weather in winter followed by cold weather is also hard on bees. They'll become more active, consume more honey, and then must re-cluster. Sometimes they will fail to re-cluster completely and will end up in multiple small clusters. I've had reports of this occurring this winter, and the result is dead bees in multiple small clusters. When we find empty hives with a very small number of dead bees or occasionally no dead bees at all, we ask, "Where have they gone?" Some bees will die in winter, as in summer, when they fly during periods of warm weather and fail to make it back to the hive. We often have these periods of warm then cold weather in Kentucky. Bees weakened by disease, pests, or poor nutrition are even more likely to fail to make it back. Also, survivors will remove dead bees in the winter (again, during warm periods), and the dead bees may not collect in front of the hive either because they have been carried several feet away or because predators such as raccoons and skunks have eaten them. Also, bees may, either individually or as an entire small cluster, migrate to an adjacent hive during winter. Finding deadouts with few or no dead bees is not unusual here in Kentucky.

This spring, when examining that deadout in our beeyard we should ask ourselves, "Is there an explainable, though unknown, cause for the loss?" Most of the time there is, especially in the winter after a very poor nectar flow. Unfortunately, these days we consider a loss of 20-25 percent of our colonies each winter acceptable. Also, unfortunately, it is common to lose one or two hives – which means that beekeepers with only a few hives can lose all or most of them. Beekeepers with larger numbers of hives, be it 20 hives or 200, routinely make plans in the spring to replace lost colonies by making divides or purchasing package bees. Still, these losses are much lower than among feral (wild) colonies. In the wild, a majority (as much as 75 percent) of first-year honeybee colonies fails to survive through winter. The difference between the high losses in nature and in our managed colonies is good beekeeper management and good preparation of hives for winter. Unfortunately, last year's honey flow made this preparation especially difficult for Kentucky's beekeepers. That's why beekeepers who failed to feed their bees heavily last fall may find starved bees this spring.

### **Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD)**

Last fall, reports began coming in from migratory beekeepers around the country, but especially from Florida and the eastern U.S., of the discovery of many hives that were empty of bees. These losses were not winter losses but fall losses during periods while bees were still raising brood. This phenomenon is now being called CCD (short for Colony Collapse Disorder) and has received a great deal of coverage in the national media. The cause of these still-unexplained losses is being called a disorder instead of a disease because, at this time, no disease-causing agent or pest has been identified. A sampling of the beekeepers reporting these losses owned from 200 to 3,000 hives, and colony losses were between 30 percent and 90 percent. A number of these migratory beekeepers also reported heavy losses of newly made nucs last fall, which is very unusual. Normally, the survival rate for new nucs is very high. One beekeeper made up and moved 400 nucs to Florida last fall. A few weeks later, all but one of them were empty of bees.

Characteristics of hives said to be hit by this disorder are: 1) Hives that started out full of seemingly healthy bees and brood were found a short time later with no adult bees and few if any dead bees in or around the colonies. 2) The hives still contained brood, pollen, and honey. 3) There was a delay in other bees robbing these deadout colonies and in wax moths attacking them. Hives in decline with this condition have mostly very young bees, brood, food stores, and a queen. The weakened hives seem reluctant to consume provided food, such as sugar syrup or pollen patties.

While earlier reports said that only migratory beekeepers with large operations were affected, late in February some larger non-migratory beekeepers, particularly from Pennsylvania and the mid-Atlantic region, reported losses of greater than 50 percent. Soon after the initial reports, other migratory beekeepers announced heavy losses of colonies under similar circumstances. A number of large beekeepers across the country are discovering higher than normal losses compared to the past few years (although heavy over-wintering losses were reported in 2003-2004 for many northern beekeepers). Losses attributed to CCD are now reported to have occurred in about 25 states, but CDC might or might not have been a real factor in all of these cases. I recently spoke with a Pennsylvania beekeeper who owns about 200 hives (many of the reports of CCD are from Pennsylvania), and this beekeeper has had no known losses from CCD. And reports from some of the large beekeeping operations in Georgia, which provide package bees to Kentucky beekeepers every spring, were that these Georgia hives were thriving. Losses reported here in Kentucky seem to be more related to starvation and poor condition of bees than to CCD.

What is causing these colony losses?

There are several possible causes under investigation by researchers. These include, but are not limited to:

- Chemical residue/contamination in the wax, food stores and bees.
- Known and unknown pathogens in the bees and brood.
- Parasite load in the bees and brood.

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## Why Do We Lose Colonies in Winter?, continued

(Continued from page 6)

- Nutritional fitness of the adult bees.
- Level of stress in adult bees as indicated by stress-induced proteins.
- Lack of genetic diversity and lineage of bees.

One common factor in the colonies of many of the beekeepers (again, mostly migratory beekeepers) experiencing this disorder was stressed colonies, usually due to movement of the colonies (colonies moved at least twice and some as many as five times). Heavy re-use of brood comb is also a common practice of migratory beekeepers, so buildup of pathogens or other contaminants (chemicals used to control mites?) could be related to this problem.

Could this be occurring in Kentucky?

So far, most reports of colony losses in Kentucky appear to be related to last year's poor honey crop. The lack of laboratory confirmation for CCD makes it difficult to say whether a hive has lost its bees due to CCD or to some other cause such as being weakened by poor nutrition, mites, or disease, especially in winter when hives are not raising brood. But, if you have unexplained colony losses, you can go to the following site to fill out a questionnaire:

<http://beealert.blackfoot.net/~beealert/surveys/index.php>. I think we'll really not know until later in the spring as we get warm weather, spring pollen, and nectar flows.

What can I do to protect my hives? – Cull old brood comb

One of the areas of investigation by researchers for CCD is the buildup of contaminants or disease causing pathogens in brood comb. Culling of older brood comb has long been advocated as a sound beekeeping practice and is one of the best things we can do to promote a healthy environment in our hives. I often observe slow buildup in hives that contain a great amount of old brood comb. Some experts advocate using brood comb no more than five years, some as few as three years. Older brood comb, deformed comb, or comb with holes is not as effective for raising brood as newer comb. Older brood comb may even provide a better environment for varroa to reproduce in than fresher comb. See this abstract:

<http://www.edpsciences.org/articles/apido/abs/2004/04/M4012/M4012.html>

(Continued on page 9)

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## Master Beekeepers Meeting Minutes

Master Beekeepers Certification Program Committee meeting March 3, 2007

Meeting was called to order by Chair Paul Lundy.

Attended by the following committee members:

|                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Chair- Paul Lundy       | Co-chair- Jo Miller   |
| Treasurer- Robert Smith | Secretary- Tim Bueler |
| Van & Barb Sherod       | Jody Pilarski         |
| Louis Matej             | Jim Bach              |
|                         | Visitor Scott Jenrich |

Minutes were published in the last newsletter. Lundy called for approval of minutes as printed. The motion was made and seconded. The motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Smith reported the current account balance is \$2483.99.

Old Business;

There are currently two people pursuing the Master certificate. They are Louis Matej and Ted Swenson.

Louis Matej has agreed to join Master Beekeeper's committee.

There has been no change in the level of participation from Dr. Sheppard or WSU extension.

There was much general discussion on encouraging participation in the MBCP at the local association level. There are numerous techniques being used by various members to encourage participation and membership. There are Apprentice and Journeyman level brochures available on the CD that Lundy passed out last meeting.

Van & Barb Sherod will proctor testing at the upcoming fall convention. They will coordinate planning and timing with the convention committee and get the schedule put into the convention syllabus.

Bueler asked for reimbursement for mailing expenses in the amount of \$54.18. A motion was made and seconded for approval. The motion carried.

New Business;

Discussion on the level of participation from WSU, the unreliable maintenance of the MBCP database and the connection between WSU and the MBCP. Various committee members report lost information. It was generally agreed by committee members that communication with WSU is important but direct involvement on WSU's behalf was not necessary for the continuance of the MBCP. WSU can still act in an advisory capacity but doesn't need to have direct, day-to-day involvement. It was discussed that database maintenance and certificate issuance should fall under the secretary's responsibility. Lundy agreed to update the existing database. Bueler agreed to maintain the database and issue certificates.

Bueler reported that, his attendance at meetings will probably be limited to one meeting per year.

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## Master Beekeepers Meeting Minutes, continued

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Bueler will still be able to perform his duties otherwise. Miller agreed to take meeting minutes, for the meetings she attends, in his absence.

Lundy reported that, due to changing responsibilities, he may need additional help in the chair position. This help would most likely be requested from the co-chair but other people may be asked to help out.

Discussion on revising the Apprentice level test to more accurately reflect fact and the text.

Many members report inconsistencies and have made allowances. Miller said she is willing to revise the test and ask that committee members send their revisions to her.

It was reported that John deGroot, PSBA, is teaching a class and using MBCP materials. The question posed, to any committee member who may have knowledge of this, was if he was doing so with the cooperation of the Master Beekeepers and if the MBCP is being paid for usage of the book. Sherod agreed to talk to deGroot and, if he is not already, to get him on board with MBCP. Lundy officially apologized to Matej for prematurely publishing Matej's last Master's paper in the last newsletter. The paper was published before Matej had a chance to address committee member questions and make any appropriate revisions.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted; Tim Bueler, Secretary MBCP

## Why Do We Lose Colonies in Winter?, continued

*(Continued from page 7)*

Old brood comb also can soak up pesticides that we use to control varroa and may affect drone and/or new queen viability, thus its possible implication as a contributing factor in the loss of hives to CCD. When examining your hives this spring, plan to replace old brood comb or poor quality brood comb with new foundation. Once the bees start bringing lots of nectar, they will quickly draw out the new foundation. A good tip is to mark each frame with the year that new foundation is placed in it, then plan on a regular rotation of brood comb every four or five years at the maximum.

What can I do to protect my hives? – Treat with fumagillin

Another suggestion is to treat all hives this spring with fumagillin. Another complication of the CCD issue is the discovery of a new species of Nosema disease (see next article in this newsletter). The good news is that this strain of Nosema, like the old strain, responds to treatment with fumagillin. Due to the possibility of the presence of these two forms of Nosema, it may be especially helpful to treat your hives with fumagillin when feeding with sugar syrup this spring. This antibiotic is available from all beekeeping supply companies. Add one rounded teaspoon of fumagillin to each of the first two gallons of sugar syrup fed to each colony.

You can go to the Mid-Atlantic Apiculture Research and Extension Consortium (MAAREC) Web site for more information about the current CCD situation: <http://maarec.cas.psu.edu/pressReleases/ColonyCollapseDisorderWG.html>.

Also, go to <http://www.entm.purdue.edu/entomology/research/bee/ccd.html> to read Dr. Greg Hunt's take on CCD, and the Indiana situation. Their experience appears similar to the one here in Kentucky (poor nectar flow in 2006).

### **To have THE BUZZ! sent directly to you!**

If you would like to have THE BUZZ! sent directly to you via e-mail, send me an e-mail at [\\_phil.craft@ky.gov](mailto:phil.craft@ky.gov) and ask to be added to my list. I organize my e-mail list by name, so make sure you sign your e-mail with first and last name. This e-mail newsletter is not restricted to Kentucky residents. Many subscribers are from our surrounding states, especially Tennessee and Indiana. If you're from out of state, I need only your full name and home state; any other information is optional.

# UC Davis Rebuilding Honey Bee Program

## Bee Breeder and Geneticist Susan Cobey Joins UC Davis Team May 10, 2007

Intent on meeting the needs of California's multibillion dollar agriculture industry, the University of California, Davis, is revitalizing its honey-bee research program, the oldest such program in the nation.

Once a powerhouse in bee biology research, the UC Davis program declined during the 1990s as faculty retirements and budget shortages collided. With California's honey-bee industry now facing challenges ranging from mites to small hive beetles to colony collapse disorder, rebuilding the 65-year-old program has become critical.

California agriculture produces almonds, alfalfa, sunflowers, tree fruit and many other crops that rely on bees for pollination each spring.

"The honey-bee industry plays a key role in the success of California agriculture, and it is imperative that UC Davis provide the research necessary to help solve some of the pressing problems related to bee health, breeding and pollination," said Neal Van Alfen, dean of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. "During the coming years we will be adding new staff and faculty to our bee biology program and renovating the Harry Laidlaw Jr. Honey Bee Research Facility here on campus." One of the first steps toward rebuilding the research program is the hiring of accomplished bee breeder and geneticist Susan Cobey, who has been at The Ohio State University. Cobey arrives this week as full-time manager of the Laidlaw bee biology facility and plans to begin offering specialized classes to bee breeders in May and June.

"It is a huge honor to help revive UC Davis' bee biology laboratory," said Cobey, who worked in the Laidlaw lab during the late 1970s and early 1980s. She was mentored by its namesake, the late Professor Harry Laidlaw, who inspired her career choice. She has gone on to become a leading expert in instrumental insemination of bees and practical bee breeding.

"California is the center for the bee industry and home to some of the nation's best beekeepers," Cobey said. "I look forward to working with them, with an emphasis on stock improvement."

In addition to hiring Cobey, the bee biology program will be further bolstered by:

- The addition of a new professor in UC Davis' entomology department who will specialize in the biology of bee pollination. That position is expected to be filled by late fall, according to Walter Leal, who chairs the entomology department.

*(Continued on page 11)*

## Special CCD Subject

As reported in the Honey Chronicles, Mount Baker  
Beekeepers Association Newsletter  
By Jim La Hatt

### Special Subject

Cell phone towers? Well, my question to those who believe that one is, where were the cell phone towers in 1960 and in '63 when something very similar to CCD occurred? "Disappearing Disease", as it was termed then, according to ABC & XYZ of Bee Culture, was first reported in Texas in 1960, then again in California in 1963. The reported symptoms match CCD very closely. Unfortunately the article is too short to give sufficient detail for further study. But let's get back to today's headlines.

If one starts from known points that are founded on solid data and projects from those points into areas where there is no data, it's called extrapolation. When one begins from areas of speculation and projects into the unknown, it's called fabrication. That, it seems, is what the news media is in the process of doing now. In order to fill airtime they are reporting on the most outlandish of rumors. In order to illustrate just how absurd this whole process has become, let's you and I have a little fun and fabricate some headlines of our own.

If the current trend toward irresponsible journalism continues, we could conceivably be seeing headlines in the Midnight Tattler such as:

"CCD LINKED TO MAD COW",  
"Bee Expert Says, SALT & MOLASSES – NEW  
TREATMENT FOR CCD",  
"POOR HIVE FENG-SHEI LINKED TO CCD",  
"NEW OZONE GENERATOR STALLS CCD",  
"HIGHER GAS PRICES LINKED TO CCD",  
"EINSTEIN QUOTED RE: CCD"

Oh, sorry, that one's already been used. Well, you get the point. It doesn't take much imagination to foment a rumor. And, it seems especially easy when there is no factual basis what-so-ever, or a source document never has to be cited.

No matter how it is reported, one thing is for sure, we as beekeepers, need to be prepared with factual, documented and easily digested nuggets of truth to give to the public concerning Honey, Honeybees, Pollination and Beekeeping in general. We, as beekeepers, can't let the Midnite Tattlers of this world define how the public views beekeeping

## UC Davis Rebuilding Honey Bee Program, continued

(Continued from page 10)

- A \$500,000 renovation of the 8,200 square foot Laidlaw bee biology facility, which is home to laboratories, offices, an apiarium with glass-walled observation hives, a honey-bee food processing room and shop. The building is being remodeled to include a larger multipurpose room, a walk-in freezer and other facility improvements.
- The establishment of a \$1 million endowment fund that will directly support research efforts in the areas of honey-bee genetics and pollination biology. Through the generous support of the estate of Harry and Ruth Laidlaw and contributions from the beekeeping industry, the endowment has already surpassed the \$400,000 mark. All of the earnings from this endowment will support graduate students and research projects directly related to honey bees.

For her part, Cobey will focus on strengthening ties between the university research community and the honey-bee industry. She maintains a breeding line of bees known as New World Carniolans, which she developed during the early 1980s, when she was a professional bee breeder and co-owner of Vaca Valley Apiaries in Northern California.

She will collaborate with Cooperative Extension apiculturist Eric Mussen, who has anchored the bee biology program's research and industry education efforts during the lean years. His bee industry leadership and research in the areas of colony management, pollination, mite control and insecticide damage, were recently recognized by the American Association of Professional Apiculturists, which awarded Mussen its Apicultural Excellence Award. Mussen was also the first noncommercial bee producer to receive the prestigious Beekeeper of the Year Award at the 2006 California State Beekeepers Association Conference.

Contact(s):

Eric Mussen, Bee Biology, (530) 752-0472, [ecmussen@ucdavis.edu](mailto:ecmussen@ucdavis.edu)

Susan Cobey, Bee Biology, (530) 752-0475, [scobey@mac.com](mailto:scobey@mac.com)

## Pesticide Update: Section 18 Issued for Hivastan

EPA has issued a Section 18, [07-WA-03](#), that provides for the use of Wellmark's product Hivastan in beehives to control varroa mites. Use under this Section 18 expires 2/28/08.

**Crop / Usage Sites:** bee, **Product:** Hivastan, **Types:** Insecticide, **Ingredients:** fenpyroximate

**Manufacturer:** Wellmark International

**HIVASTAN™** is a contact miticide which controls the *Varroa* mite when placed into the colony. The product is a thick, pliable formulation that bees find attractive and it is easily formed into a patty. **HIVASTAN** is applied directly into the colony where bees find it and begin removing it. In the process of removing the product from the hive, the bees transfer the product to other bees within the colony thereby controlling mites.

Effective control may be achieved by treating hives in the spring or fall prior to or after honey flow. Do not apply **HIVASTAN** during periods of honey flow. The treatment is most effective when the colonies are brood free or when brood rearing is lowest. Remove or destroy weak and queenless colonies prior to application. Treat all hives within each bee yard or apiary at the same time. Do not treat more than twice a year for *Varroa* mite control.

The link to product information can be found here: <http://www.pnn.wsu.edu/sect18/wa07sect18spdf/07-WA-03.pdf>

## Classified Ads

FOR SALE: Maxant 50-frame extractor, \$1000. Better Way 40F wax melter, \$750. Cowen 120-frame stainless steel radial extractor, please call me for price. 2000+ lbs. pure beeswax foundation made from my own cappings wax. Deep and medium size, some with wires, some without. Call me for pricing.

David Johann, 208-661-0364 (cell)

(3/07)

Northwest Beekeeper has retired & sold the honey bees!

FOR SALE:

Complete honey extracting system that includes; Cowen 36 frame extractor w/de-boxer, sump, and pump. 500 gallon stainless milk tank & stand, Cowen wax spinner. All sold as a unit only. Also; pallet jack, barrel jack & electronic scales. Call Jim @ 360-422-7323

(5/07)

## Proposed Honey Bee Laboratory Projects, USDA—ARS

USDA Agricultural Research Service  
Honey Bee Laboratory Projects

Tucson, AZ

1. Improving crop pollination rates by increasing colony populations and defining pollination mechanisms
2. The use of 2-heptanone to control Varroa mites in honey bee colonies
3. Control Varroa mites through the systemic application of essential oils in a liquid diet
4. The role of volatile chemicals in usurpation of European honey bee colonies by African honey bee swarms
5. Honey bee applied genomics and development of a whole genome array
6. Testing oxalic acid for Varroa control in dry vs. humid climates
7. New methodology for the application of plant essential oils to control Varroa mites infestations

Weslaco, TX

1. Pests, parasites, diseases and stress of honey bees used in honey production and pollination
2. Development of the database for honey bee genome and honey pathogen genome
3. Sequencing of the honey bee bacterial pathogen, *Paenibacillus larvae* (EFB) and *Ascosphaera apis* – fungal genomes

Baton Rouge, LA

1. Performance of resistant honey bee stocks in Alabama beekeeping operations
2. Breeding, genetics, stock improvement and management of Russian honey bees for mite control and pollination
3. Development and use of mite resistance traits in honey bee breeding
4. Enhancement of bioinformatics of the honey bee genome in support of Dna-marker-assisted breeding

Beltsville, MD

1. Managing diseases and pests of honey bees to improve queen and colony health
2. Preservation of honey bee germplasm
3. Applied genomics add complete genome micro-array for honey bees

Taken from USDA ARS web site: [http://www.ars.usda.gov/research/programs/programs.htm?NP\\_CODE=305](http://www.ars.usda.gov/research/programs/programs.htm?NP_CODE=305)

Contributed by Jim Bach

## Your Congressman is Important to Beekeeping

**YOUR CONGRESSMAN IS IMPORTANT TO BEEKEEPING;  
YOU ARE IMPORTANT TO YOUR CONGRESSMAN -- YOU ARE A VOTER!  
PLEASE LET YOUR CONGRESSMAN KNOW THAT BEEKEEPING IS IMPORTANT TO YOU!**

Two Congressional Committees are most important to beekeepers -- Agriculture and Appropriations. Agriculture sets up the programs; Appropriations votes the money for the programs.

Beekeepers are facing a tough battle on several fronts — keeping colonies alive, staying abreast of imported honey, securing a spot in the Farm Bill. Tell your Congressman that funds are needed for more beekeeping research; ask him/her to support the inclusion of honey bees in the farm disaster bill, and to watch for honey bee provisions in the farm bill. The publicity about CCD will help our legislative efforts, but it will take each of us making these contacts to achieve the level of success we want. The federal budget is very tight; only those who squeak the loudest will get the dollars for their problems.

### HOW TO REACH YOUR CONGRESSMAN

Call the Capitol Switchboard (202-224-3121 or 202-225-3121) and ask for your Representative's or Senator's office. Then ask for the person who handles Agricultural Issues.

If you prefer email, go to [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and/or [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) for links to the offices.

*This article was extracted from a congressional update sent March 24, 2007 by Troy Fore, Executive Director, American Beekeeping Federation.*

## WSBA Beekeeper Classified Ads

Classified ads are \$5 per insertion, for a maximum of 30 words. (**FREE for WSBA Members**).

To place an ad, please mail your ad, with payment, made out to:

Washington State Beekeepers Association  
c/o Newsletter Editor  
P.O. Box 1331  
Kingston, WA 98346-9301  
Fax: (425) 527-4251

Please **CLEARLY PRINT** your ad. Don't forget to include your contact information (phone, fax, e-mail).

Your ad will run in the next printing of the Newsletter when received by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication. **The ad will run for two (2) newsletters.** (You may email your submission to editor@wasba.org and mail your payment to the P.O. Box.)

## You're invited .....



## WESTERN APICULTURAL SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE WINDMILL INN CONFERENCE CENTER TUCSON, ARIZONA AUGUST 19 - 23, 2007

\$100 full 4-day conference package  
(includes Bee Buzz snacks & Banquet)

~ Optional tour packages additional (see registration) ~  
\$69 per night accommodation at Windmill Inn

For reservations, call the hotel at 1-800-547-4747  
(conference rates do NOT apply if you book online).

Please register by July 15th as tours and meals  
must be booked well in advance.

MAKE CHECKS OUT TO WESTERN  
APICULTURAL SOCIETY &  
MAIL TO PO BOX 956, GRANT'S PASS OR  
97528, USA

For more info, call Diana Sammataro, Jennifer  
Finley or Diana Medley at the Bee Lab:  
520-670-6380, extensions 121, 116, or 103, or check  
the website  
at "<http://groups.ucanr.org/WAS/>"

## WSBA Officers & Exec. Committee

### President:

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509-924-6669, [President@wasba.org](mailto:President@wasba.org)

### Vice President:

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### Secretary:

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### Treasurer:

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360-297-6743, [Treasurer@wasba.org](mailto:Treasurer@wasba.org)

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### Area #2 Representative:

Robert Smith (2008), 15525 Castle SE, Yelm, WA 98597  
360-894-2159, [Area2@wasba.org](mailto:Area2@wasba.org)

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James Bach (2008), 21 N. 1st Ave. Suite 236, Yakima, WA  
98902

### Area #3 Lower Valley Representative:

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WA 98006, 509-276-2399, [Area6@wasba.org](mailto:Area6@wasba.org)

For more information,  
please visit us at:

[www.wasba.org](http://www.wasba.org)

# Western Apicultural Society Conference Schedule

## 2007 Conference Schedule

### S u n d a y, August 19th

- 1:00 pm Exhibitors (& silent auction) set up in exhibits room  
**Registration** (open all afternoon)  
3:00 Exhibits open to the members and the general public  
3:30 D e l e g a t e s ' / D i r e c t o r s ' Meeting  
5:00 **Dinner** on your own  
7:00 "Bee Buzz" (Social) in Exhibits Room  
Honey Tasting sponsored by Beekeepers Association of Central A r i z o n a  
Greeters: Ericksons, Lopers,

### M o n d a y, August 20th

- 7:30 am **Registration**  
8:00 Welcome to the Conference – President Sammataro  
Exhibits open  
8:20 Door prizes  
**Current Topics in Honey Bee Research**  
8:30 Nancy Ositguy, Penn State University: CCD update  
9:00 Rob Page, Arizona State University: Honey bee division of labor: the ovaries rule.  
9:30 Blaise LeBlanc: High antioxidant activity of desert bee pollen  
10:00 **Beverage break**  
10:45 Gordon Wardell, S.A.F.E. LLC: Honey Bee Nutrition: Links to CCD?  
11:15 Eric Mussen T B A  
11:45 **Lunch** – on your own  
1:00 Door prizes  
1:15 **What's New in A Z ?**  
Robert Page: New lab in A r i z o n a  
1:45 Gloria DeGrandi-Hoffman, Carl Hayden Honey Bee Lab: Differences between European and African honey bees: More than just nest defense behavior.  
2:45 **Beverage break**  
3:15 Fabiana Segura: Essential oils and V a r r o a  
4:30 Judy Hooper, Pima Research: T B A  
5:00 **Dinner** on your own. Slide show/movie night??  
BRING YOUR FAVORITE MOVIE, DVD

### T u e s d a y, August 21th

- 7:30 am Registration (until 8:20 am)  
8:00 Exhibits open  
8:20 Door prizes  
8:30 **Beekeeping in the Desert**  
Managing our Bees: Fred T e r r y  
9:00 Unique Problems in the Desert: AZ beekeepers  
9:30 NRCS Don Breckenfeld: What soils tell us about honey plants?  
10:00 **Beverage break**  
10:45 Carl Olson, U of A: Urban Wildlife in AZ, or how to live with bugs  
11:15 Ruben Alarcon: Pollination work at the Lab  
12:00 Botanical Gardens T o u r / l u n c h  
Possible workshops at the Garden?AZ beekeepers?  
**Dinner** on your own (Conference room locked for the night)

### W e d n e s d a y, August 22th

- 7:30 am Registration (until 8:20)  
8:00 Exhibits open  
8:20 Door prizes  
8:30 Visit the Carl Hayden Bee Research Center  
9:15 **Rotating Tours of the Lab**  
AHB identification (Chambers)  
Beekeeping in AZ (Deeby)  
Wardell, Segura  
H o f f m a n  
Nancy/Samm: How to look for virus? Hands on experiment.  
10:00 **Beverage break**  
10:45 Continuing Tour of lab: Finley, Ruben, Blaise, Mona  
11:45 **Lunch** – on your own  
1:00 pm Spouse Tour: Sabino Canyon & DeGrazia's Art Gallery  
End of Silent Auction  
1:15 Fred Terry : T B A  
2 - 4:00 Workshops by local bee groups, place T B A  
2:30 WAS Annual Business Meeting  
3:30 D e l e g a t e s ' / D i r e c t o r s ' Meeting  
6:00 Social gathering  
6:45 **Awards Banquet and Auction, Windmill Inn**  
**Th u r s d a y, August 23th**  
7:30 am Registration (until 8:20)  
8:00 Exhibits open  
8:20 Door prizes  
8:30 Dan Cummings: Project Apis m.  
9:15 Chris Heintz: Update on Almond Pollination  
OR P. Ellsworth: Update on new pesticides  
10:00 **Beverage break**  
10:45 R. Hoopingarner: Looking back at all the new ideas  
11:15 Jim Bach: Funding for WA Bee Research?  
11:45 Closing remarks  
Adjourn until Next Ye a r

## Food for Thought

This is a short excerpt from Eric Mussen's article *Food for Thought*

March/April 2007 Newsletter  
*Eric Mussen, Entomology Extension*  
*University of California*

Like other animals, honey bees require adequate shelter and food in order to survive. Food for honey bees is made up of water, nectar, and pollens. Water is as essential to honey bees as it is to us, for the same reasons. Nectar provides a good deal of water and sugar. The sugar can be used immediately by the bees for energy or brood rearing, or stored as honey for later consumption when sugar is needed and nectar is no longer available.

Pollens make up the nutritionally most important food in the hive. They provide the proteins, lipids, vitamins, minerals and micronutrients that support adult bee physiological equilibrium and brood development. Similar to humans, honey bees require the same ten essential amino acids in their

(Continued on page 15)

## Boy Scout Beekeeping with Troup 1506

On October 22, 2006, 27 Boy Scouts and adult leaders from Troop 1506 of Tracyton, WA “swarmed” upon Al Stedman Bee Supplies in Silverdale, WA to participate in the Bee Keeping merit badge taught by Paul Lundy of the West Sound Beekeeping Association (WSBA).



Paul Lundy (WSBA) providing both classroom and in the field training instruction on the use of bee keeping equipment and what to inspect when you open a hive.

This was a great opportunity for the scouts to have hands-on training with several of WSBA honey bee hives which are maintained at the Stedman's. Officially, the Bee Keeping merit badge was cancelled back in 1995; however it was discussed with both the BSA Orca District and the WSBA; that by offering this merit badge it would give the scouts a unique opportunity to better understanding the importance of bee keeping and the agricultural and honey industry. Paul Lundy volunteered to teach the course in two parts.

A classroom session was held during one Troop 1506 normal scout meeting and followed it up the following weekend with the scouts actually working with the bees, donning the bee keeping equipment and working with their hives. This program was a huge success with the troop presenting Paul a certificate of Thanks and a special edition “beekeeping merit badge.”



Life scout John Mackovjak showing several scouts a drone bee and that they can be handled without worrying about being stung.



Troop 1506 (and families) of Tracyton, WA

## Food for Thought, continued

*(Continued from page 14)*

food to be healthy. Honey bees cannot synthesize cholesterol, an essential compound for their lives, so they obtain that as 24-methylene cholesterol from the pollens they eat.

From a honey bee nutritional standpoint, not all pollens are the same. Various researchers have determined that pollens can be grouped into categories, based mostly on crude protein content (but also on amino acid composition).

Honey bees rear two physiologically distinct types of worker bees. Summer bees, reared from late December through July, progress through the classical textbook series of jobs, beginning with various duties in the hive during the first three weeks. Then, they become foragers for the final three weeks of their lives.

Winter bees, reared from August into October, do not immediately begin hive work, including brood rearing. It might be that brood rearing or beginning to forage may start a six week clock similar to summer bees. During winter, winter bees should do little other than participate in the winter cluster until it is time to begin rearing brood toward spring. Healthy winter bees have a life expectancy of about six months. Winter bees comprise the colony population that survives the winter, when fresh food is not available. Winter bees are still supposed to be in the hive in February and March to be our “almond bees” in California, long after the previous season's summer bees have died off.

As adult bees reach the final days of life, they fly from the hive and die in the field, weather permitting. The few bees that die in or around the hive (five to twenty-five of the daily thousand or so in the summer) are picked up and carried away by under-taker bees to some distance from the hives. Normally, very few bee bodies are found around a hive containing a healthy honey bee colony.

Eric has established a ListProc mailing list that subscribers can join simply by e-mailing [listproc@ucdavis.edu](mailto:listproc@ucdavis.edu) and signing up. In the body of your message (not the Subject line) put in the following: sub ucdavisbeenews <your first name (without these “brackets” around it)> <your last name>. If Eric were subscribing, it would be: **sub ucdavisbeenews Eric Mussen.**

## Beekeeper's Calendar

**JUNE 23:** WSBA BOARD MEETING 10AM

**Bar 14 Ranch House Restaurant**

1800 Canyon Rd. · Ellensburg, WA 98926  
(509) 962-6222

**AUG 6 - 10:** EASTERN APICULTURAL SOCIETY

2007 SHORT COURSE & CONFERENCE, University of  
Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

Info secretary@easternapiculture.org

**AUG 19 - 23:** WESTERN APICULTURAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Tucson, Arizona.

Info DianaSammataro, mellisam2003@yahoo.com

**SEPT. 9 - 14:** APIMONDIA 2007, Melbourne Australia.

Info www.apimondia2007.com or queenbee@gil.com.au

## Executive Board Meeting Agenda

6/23/07

10-11 will be committee meetings

11-1 will be general executive board meeting with lunch for 1  
hour.

### Reports:

The Secretary's Report-minutes from newsletter

The Treasurer's Report-

Membership Report

Individual Membership

Association Membership

Master Beekeepers Certification Committee Report

Area Reps

Bee yard Reports

### Old Business:

WSU Report-Steve Sheppard

Report on Apiary Board Formation-Eric and Jim

Status of Joint Convention-Jerry-tabled to next meet-  
ing

Speakers for the convention and the agenda-Steve/  
Jerry/Miriam

### New Business:

CCD Report by Steve and Eric

Grant approval for WSU (SAR)-Steve Sheppard

Bee yard reports-Tim, Bob and Louis

Goals for 2007 WSBA-local club support

P. Lundy

Washington State Beekeepers Association

Newsletter Editor

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