

News from Around the Hive

President's Message

By Kevin Oldenburg

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My wife and I began keeping bees 8 years ago and for the first 4 years, we lost nearly every hive over the winter. We worked hard each year to make sure that the bees had the best opportunity to survive winter, but each spring, nearly all of our hives died. Upon examining our dead hives I saw that we had plenty of honey in the hives and a large cluster of dead bees in a ball somewhere in the hive. It looked like they never moved to food that was just inches away. We live at the end of Clear Lake near Spokane and in the winter we get a lot of cold northerly wind. Was it that the hives were simply too cold for the bees to break cluster and move to food?

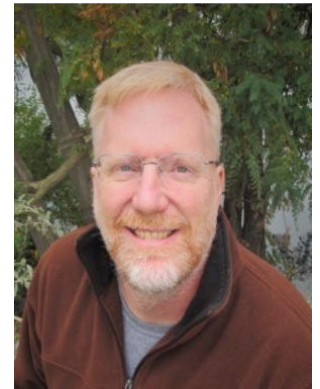
During that same time, our club promoted essential oils as the best means to control disease without the use of chemicals, but our varroa counts were still quite high.

I was tired of losing most or all of my hives each winter so, as a scientist, I put two and two together and came up with a plan. I decided that we were going to start treating our hives with Oxalic acid vapor to control varroa and we were going to start moving the hives from their summer locations to a

protected winter location. That year, we did our first Oxalic acid treatment in February, followed by a three week treatment series in August after we pulled supers, & then one in late October. I also moved the hives in October from their exposed summer position to the south side of my garage where they would be protected & would get warmed by the sun over winter.

With these 2 simple changes, our hive losses dropped from 90% to 10 %. Since then, my hives come out of winter very strong and I've had to split each one to prevent swarming.

Why do I tell you this? Because I think we are teaching our new beekeepers wrong. My personal observation is that we get lots of people taking beekeeping classes, who then go out and get bees and equipment, only to have them die the first or, if lucky, the second winter. After that they either lose interest or don't want to continue spending money on hives that don't survive. My suggestion to anyone wanting to keep bees is to take the WASBA Beginning Beekeeping class. They should be told up front that most people who begin the hobby drop out because it's hard work to keep



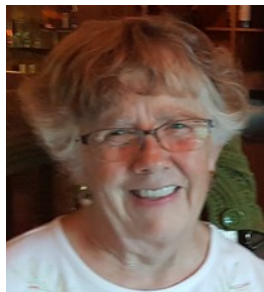
bees alive and it takes several years of experience before they become proficient enough to minimize hive losses. They should also be highly encouraged to work with an experienced mentor beekeeper who can show them the ropes and hopefully prevent some of their losses. And by all means, continue with their education, including the Apprentice class after their first year beekeeping. My hope for WASBA is that we continue to refine our curriculum in order to create a better beekeeping experience for people entering the hobby.

I would also advocate for never bringing bee packages into your geographic region as well as never treating your bees for varroa but that will be left for our next newsletter.

Cheers,
Kevin

Updated WASBA Certification Information

By Ellen Miller



Beginning August 1st WASBA is assessing new prices for the four certification levels. Additionally, sponsoring clubs or organizations can choose to print the manual themselves, or order the already-printed manual from WASBA.

The Beginning, Apprentice, and Journeyman level courses all include additional material for instructors such as

PowerPoint slides with notes that can be edited by the instructor for each chapter and questions/answers for each chapter from which instructors can select their test questions.

For each student in the **Beginning Beekeeper** course the cost is \$25 which includes the manual, one year of membership in WASBA, and upon success-

ful completion of the course a Beginning Beekeeper certificate. If the local association offering the class is printing the manual themselves, the cost to the student is \$20 payable to WASBA. All other benefits apply.

For each student in the **Apprentice Beekeeper** course the cost is \$35 which includes the manual, one (continued on page 3)

WASBA Beekeeping Manuals Available

We have had several requests for copies of our updated educational manuals from people who have already taken the course and received their certification several years ago. Manuals can be purchased as refresher and make a good beekeeping resources.

The manuals were written and edited by WASBA members throughout the state.

WASBA is happy to be able to provide this material. The cost for each manual is listed to the right. There will be an additional charge for mailing. These can be or-

dered through by contacting Jenifer Priest at Jenifer@WASBA.org

Beginning (73 pages, color photos) \$20

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Continued—Updated WASBA Certification Information

year of membership in WASBA, and upon successful completion of the course, an Apprentice Beekeeper certificate and patch. If the local association offering the class is printing the manual themselves, the cost to the student is \$25 payable to WASBA. All other benefits apply.

For each student in the **Journeyman Beekeeper**

course, the cost is \$50 which includes the manual, one year of membership in WASBA, and upon successful completion of the course and all other requirements for Journeyman level, a Journeyman Beekeeper certificate and patch. If the local association offering the class is printing the manual themselves, the cost to the student is \$35 payable to

WASBA. All other benefits apply.

For each student in the **Master Beekeeper** program the price is still the same, \$50 if successfully completing a pre-approved research-oriented program. The other option is to successfully complete the University of Montana, Master Level Beekeeping Course. WASBA is offering recipro-

cal recognition to successful students of that program granting Master Beekeeper certificate and patch upon payment of \$20 to WASBA.

Please contact either Jennifer@WASBA.ORG or miller.elm@gmail.com

Do You Need a Place to Sell your Honey?

Do you need a little income to help pay for your bee habit? Do you harvest enough honey to fill a 55 gallon drum? Then you may want to talk to Nancy Burnett of Local Hive Honey (formerly L.R. Rice.)

Local Hive Honey collects honey and sells under its own brand—but only close to where the honey was

made. Each bottle has a map of the state where the honey was harvested.

Nancy hopes to find beekeepers who want to make a regular commitment. She says, “I have been out visiting beekeepers at their facilities as well as going to state meetings and I truly love to see and hear about what

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You can reach Nancy by email at: nancy@riceshoney.com.



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Splitting Hives with Mr. Snelgrove

By Michael Jaross

I've been splitting hives every spring since I started beekeeping. This prevents swarms, and creates new queens to keep hives robust, productive, and winter-hardy. Since 2011, I've been using the Englishman L. E. Snelgrove's splitting method as described in his well-known book, *Swarming: Its Control and Prevention*, first published in 1934. Snelgrove worked to refine this method for the rest of his long life [he was 87 when he died in 1965], and his book has been published in 15 editions, the latest in 2014.

This method of splitting requires only the double-screened Snelgrove Board and is accomplished in the same space as the original hive, the split being stacked "over and under" rather than in a separately located hive body. The intention is to keep a strong spring hive from swarming, provide a new queen to replace the old, and to create a new colony.

During the eight years I've been "Snelgroving" my hives and the hives of many of my clients, I've found it more reliable and less risky than standard splitting methods. The queens produced have been generally robust and productive with excellent overwintering records. Of course, one has to start with good stock, but over the last ten years I have selected carefully for traits that are beneficial in Whatcom County conditions. Good stock I have! And Mr. Snelgrove's book.

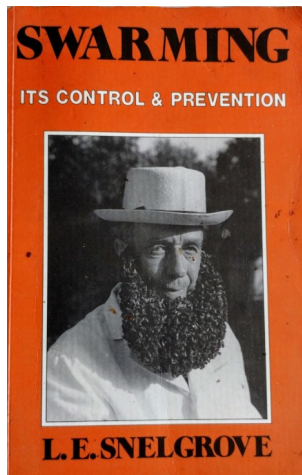
This method of controlling swarms, rearing new queens, and increasing hives is particularly well suited for backyard hobby beekeepers who have in mind only one hive, or a few hives, in limited space. The extra colonies produced can be sold, combined for strong winter hives, or put to work in small-job pollination or honey production. I'm always glad to field questions about

Mr. Snelgrove and his handy method of swarm control, queen rearing, and increase. Just ask!

If you would like to learn more about the Snelgrove Method, Michael has a complete article on the topic that he is happy to share. Reach out to him by email : michaeljaross@gmail.com



The Snelgrove Double-screen Board



As noted in an obituary from the Royal Entomological society, Louis Edward Snelgrove served for 30 years as County Inspector of Schools for Somerset. He was also "an amateur beekeeper and student of apiculture of great repute, gaining his M.Sc. at the age of 42 for research on bee disease, and his M.A. two years later for research on beekeeping in Roman times" (*British Bee Journal*, Volume 93, 1965).



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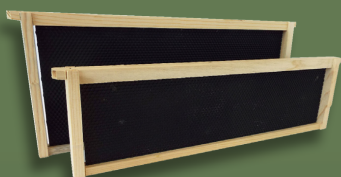
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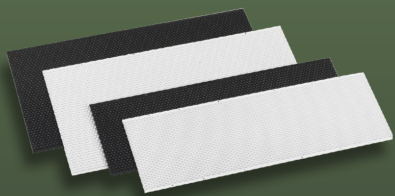
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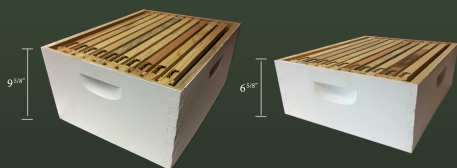
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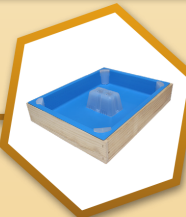
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Report from the Western Apiary Society Conference

By Margo Buckles

Over the course of the July 12-14th weekend, I attended the Western Apicultural Society (WAS) conference, held this year in Ashland, Oregon. The “Bee Girl,” Sarah Red-Laird, as WAS president, organized this year’s conference.

Friday’s first speaker, Dr. Marla Spivak, is the Distinguished McKnight University Professor Apiculture / Social Insects at the University of Minnesota. She began by raising several questions about current practices in beekeeping, including, we should be encouraging so many people to keep bees. Is our effort to “save” bees actually detrimental to these insects? Should we be focusing more on good husbandry rather than on increasing numbers? While she didn’t have an answer, her question is something clubs and associations dedicated to honey bees may want to ponder.

Dr. Spivak’s introduction was followed by a presentation by Katrina Klett of Elevated Honey Company. Ms. Klett, who worked in her family beekeeping business, has taken her skills to China. There she works with minority groups in southwestern China on economic development projects designed to take *apis cerana* honey to market. Later during the conference, Ms. Klett spoke about making urban space more bee-friendly and taught a seminar about raising queens.

Friday also included an open session where conference participants shared their stories of beekeeping gone wrong. Some described instances when they were stung in unexpected ways or how they were locked out of bee yards and had to improvise. About a dozen people shared their experience with an appreciative and sympathetic audience.

Saturday started with a presentation by Dr. Meghan Milbrath of Michigan State University. and owner of Sand Hill Bees. Dr. Milbrath talked about how the current wisdom of allowing bees to die off as a way of increasing good genetics may not be the best way to deal with pathogens, disease or pests attacking honey bees. She encouraged beekeepers to both treat and isolate bees. According to Dr. Milbrath, treatment is necessary because by allowing bees to die, beekeepers may be impeding necessary genetic change. However, she also believed that beekeepers should not introduce packages into their apiaries because they introduce pathogens, diseases and pests, decreasing beekeepers’ abilities to control pests and diseases.

On Sunday, for an additional charge, conference at-

tendees could participate in various hands-on workshops, including “Never Buy Bees Again,” with Dr. Milbrath, “Introduction to Bumble Bee Diversity,” with Dr. Jamie Strange, and “Troubleshooting Hive Problems” with Dr. Judy Wu-Smart. If attendees didn’t wish to attend one of these workshops, they could participate in a farm tour and/or tour the “Seeds for Pollinators Project” at Southern Oregon University as well as visit a demonstration of the Flow Hive.

The day ended with a tour of the Irvine & Roberts Winery where Ms. Red-Laird is working with the winery to become bee friendly. And the wine wasn’t bad either.

The WAS conference attracted participants from Hawaii to Texas. Next year’s conference will be held July 10-12, 2020 in Missoula, Montana.



Dr. Judy Wu-Smart

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Activities of the West Plains Beekeeping Association (Medical Lake, WA)

About 25 new and not-so-new beekeepers turned out for the education program at the July meeting of the West Plains Beekeepers Association. Beekeepers gathered at the club's new apiary to watch and learn, as club member Jack Miller opened a hive and demonstrated how to do an alcohol wash to determine *varroa* mite load in a hive.

Jack started by dumping bees from a frame into a tub and using a 1/2 cup measuring cup to collect nurse bees – guards and foragers are quicker to fly away. He then put the bees into an alcohol

wash cup that he had made by nesting two plastic cups, one inside the other. Jack had removed the bottom of the interior cup and had covered the opening with screen small enough to keep the bees out but large enough to allow mites to fall through to the bottom of the exterior cup. The 300 bees went into the interior cup, followed by alcohol to cover. The cap was placed on the cups, and the bees were shaken in the alcohol.

Gravity pulled mites down into the well between the exterior and interior cups revealing 5-6 mites (or 2/

one hundred bees). A decision was made to treat the hive with oxalic acid vapors in the near future.

In addition to the hive demonstration, the West Plains Beekeepers have been reaching out to the community to educate others about honey bees. The West Plains Beekeepers hosted booths at MayFest in Cheney, WA in May, Founders' Day in Medical Lake, WA in June, and will be present at Airway Heights Days in August. Members of the club also taught day campers about bees at the Fairchild Air Force Base Day at the Farm event in June.



Jack Miller and members of the West Plains Beekeeping Association

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Northwest District Beekeepers Association Honey Bee Conference

There's still time to register for this conference—but hurry, there is limited seating. Speakers include commercial beekeeper and researcher Randy Oliver and Andony Melathopoulos, Assistant Professor of Pollinator Health Extension in the Department of Horticulture at Oregon State University.

September 21, 2019

9 AM—5 PM

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[https://wasba.org/local-
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2020 WASBA Conference

Remember, the next WASBA Conference will be
held at the Three Rivers Convention in the Tri
Cities.

October 20, 2020

If you have speakers to recommend or other
activities, please let us know and send us an email:

Jenifer@wasba.org