

## DID YOU KNOW

- There are 20,000 different species of bees.
- The stinger is called the ovipositor, part of the female reproductive design.
- Bees see all colors except for red.

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# THE BEELINE

JANUARY 2012

## President's Note

Dear Members,

I hope that you have all had a wonderful holiday season! Time with friend and family is one of the best gifts we can share with each other at this special time of the year. Being from the east coast, I would have loved a light dusting of snow. Maybe next year will bring some snow. With the weather in mind, we have had quite a bit of warm and dry weather. It is nice to have the dry weather, but I am wondering about the warm part. I have seen many of my hives taking flight. I don't know if all this flying is burning up their honey stores? I "tilt" my hives, and they seem to have enough food for this time of year. I have lost one hive this winter with 50 pounds of

honey. Found five wet dead bees in the center of the lower box, with honey on the frames just 2 frames away on either side? I wish I could say that I learned something off of this, but right now I have a hard time seeing it.

Well on to another subject. elections are coming up. We need people to step up and help plot the course for the coming years. I know that this is a sacrifice of your time, and you will need to make some time in the evenings for a few board meetings. With the five years I have been in the organization we have gone from a small group of about 20 to an average of 60. Currently we have over 130 members. With all the press that beekeeping is still getting our club keeps growing. We will be asking

for volunteers for board positions. Elections will be in March. Please take some time to think over if you can help. Ask others in the association if they may want to run.

Well I am now off my soapbox, and hope to see you at the next meeting. Please remember to check with Becky Emrich to update your membership dues. Remember to feed the bees, and take care of each other.

Mark

## Fly parasite turns honeybees into zom-bees

Article by Joseph Casto, Live Science. "If deadly viruses and fungi weren't enough, honeybees in North America now must also deal with a fly parasite that causes them to leave their hive and die after wandering about in a zombie-like stupor, a new study shows. Scientists previously found that the parasitic fly, *Apocephalus borealis*, infects and ultimately kills bumblebees and paper wasps, while

the "decapitating fly," an insect in the same genus, implants its eggs in ants, whose heads then pop off after the fly larvae devour the ants' brains and dissolve their connective tissues. Now researchers have discovered honeybees parasitized by *A. borealis* in 24 of 31 sites across the San Francisco Bay area, as well as other commercial hives in California and South Dakota. Genetic tests re-

vealed that some of the bees and flies were infected with deformed wing virus and the fungus *Nosema ceranae*, both of which have been implicated in colony collapse disorder (CCD). The scientists believe that more research into the parasitized bees and their behavior could yield new insights into the devastating disorder." Article: [http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/45862883/ns/technology\\_and\\_science-science/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/45862883/ns/technology_and_science-science/)



Marion Juhl, fall 2010. Photo by Roger McMaster

It is with great sadness that I inform you of the passing of our club member and past president Marion Juhl. Marion passed away peacefully in his sleep on December, 22, 2011. His wife Lilla Juhl mentioned that even though he had some health issues during the last few years, his quality of life was good. Lilla is well known by many, as she used to be the supplier of the club's food and drinks and organizer during the county fair for countless years. A memorial service to honor Marion will take place at the Grange Hall located on Steamboat Island road on January 29, 2012, at 1:00 pm.

Marion, you will be missed.



Lilla and Marion Juhl, fall 2010. Photo by Roger McMaster



## Announcements for Washington State Beekeepers Association

### Honey Bee Diagnostics Lab

Washington State beekeepers now have a honey bee diagnostic lab. For more information, go to their website at: [wasba.org](http://wasba.org)

*Remember to fill out the forms as completely as possible. Please print, if possible and make sure your phone # and email address is current.*

### Time to Register Your Hives

Please register your hives with the Washington State Department of Agriculture to take advantage of new state tax exemptions. Link to the registration form is found on their website.

## How Are the Bees of Winter? Doing Fine, Sticking Together

*"Don't forget to bring an item for the raffle."*

*"Time for membership dues"*

Article by Gerri Hirshey Published in January 27, 2008. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/27/nyregion/nyregionspecial2/27colct.html?pagewanted=all>

New York Times "THE mercury had plunged to 12 degrees, abetted by a vicious wind. I raised the flap on my wool hat and did something I wouldn't dare try in warm weather. I put my ear up against the white wooden beehive that stands in our field, now wrapped against the gales in an unlovely shawl of black tarpaper. Waiting out the loud plaint of human hibernation — the shrill eek-eek-eek of an oil truck backing down our narrow lane — I knocked gently on the hive and listened. Nada. Nary a buzz.

I had never considered the bee in winter not until this mean season, six months after we gave over a sunny spot behind the vegetable garden to a hive of gentle, purpose-driven Italian honeybees. We are merely foster folk; the hive is owned and tended by a married pair of Norwalk beekeepers in need of more space. Sometimes their 8-year-

old son assists in his own pint-sized beekeeping suit.

To our relief, the 30,000 honeybees were welcomed by our neighbors, who, like us, took to calling them "the girls." It may be that recent news stories about the mysterious colony collapse disorder imperiling bees around the world raised consciousness about honeybees' essential contributions. But there seems to be a deeper, innate goodwill toward a species so resolutely cooperative, persistent and selfless.

Distinct from the fat black bees so common here, these small, elegant, honey-colored newcomers were easily recognizable. Down the hill from us, Franc, an accomplished octogenarian gardener, reported approvingly, "I saw your girls on my rugosa." A pair of men mowing our field stopped the tractor and stood in deep conversation near the hive, which was shooting out pollen seekers in wide arcs. One of them had raised bees in Ecuador. He pointed to a row of eggplants abuzz with pollinators and told me: "Bees make me happy. I think of home." Even our teenagers' friends raise the mantle of cool long enough to ask, "How are the girls?" -continued next page

As landlords, our part has been easy; keep some clean water nearby in a galvanized pan, and marvel at the astonishing improvements in blossoms and veggie yield. But now, in these cold, still months, I fret. Are they all right in there?

I have read up on their astonishing winter habits. Bees metabolize the dense carbs in honey ferociously, generating heat, which they further augment by flexing their flight muscles, without moving their wings. Clustering around their queen to retain the heat is their means of climate control. Deep in the hive, the cluster expands and contracts with the temperature; the colder it gets, the tighter the huddle.

But can these cluster physics really maintain a constant central temperature of 70 degrees in a pelting snowstorm? “You bet they can,” said Leslie Huston, a Newtown beekeeper. “And in late January, if they have begun producing brood for the spring, the activity can raise the temperature to 90.” Ms. Huston is a member and past president of the Back Yard Beekeepers Association, which draws from all over southwestern Connecticut and meets monthly here in Weston at Norfield Church Hall. She has been keeping bees for nearly a decade. “Connecticut is hard on bees,” she acknowledged. “The weather changes can be so extreme, like last year. They can get caught off guard, flying out in a mild spell, then getting chilled by landing on a patch of snow. I’ve made a lot of rescues.”

She admits it can be a wacky sight, a grown woman slip-sliding across the icy yard to return a tiny hypothermic flier to the hive entrance. “We do get sentimental about it,” she said. “You have to root for these creatures who defy the odds so brilliantly, season after season.”

I know. The more you learn, the more protective you feel. Out before dawn to fetch the newspaper, I have had to chuck rocks at a fat raccoon nosing around the hive. Ms. Huston says they are given to shoving a paw into a hive

entrance, riling the defending guard bees, which fly out and end up a tasty snack. Field mice can creep into a hive, feasting on liquid gold and making nests. In extreme cold, the thieving house pests aren’t stung for their trespasses; the guard bees can’t risk leaving the warmth of the cluster to fend them off. The mice winter well, but the damage to a colony’s honey stores can be fatal.

With other keepers in the area, Ms. Huston is engaged in a queen-rearing project dedicated to breeding bees better suited to our winters. “Lots of the mail-order bees that people stock hives with are bred farther south,” she explained. “And we’re working to develop hardier queens. We select for good qualities — gentleness, productivity, disease and mite tolerance. It’s going well. But raising queens is kind of tricky.” Just marking them for identification — with a tiny paintbrush — is a dicey business.

The queen in our hive, if she’s still with us, may be laying eggs already. “They are awake all the time, and very aware of day length,” Ms. Huston said. “They know when it is time to begin. It takes so much of their energy and honey, you just hope they don’t get caught by a long cold spell.” Maintaining the cluster at all costs, bees carry and pass honey from the perimeter to the center. But they cannot leave its warmth to seek out stores farther away in the hive. “They can starve to death,” Ms. Huston said, “just inches from honey.” Dedicated unconditionally to colony welfare, a starving bee will pass the last drop of honey forward rather than consume it — a fact I have chastised my children with when they tussle over the last slice of pizza.

Even veteran keepers can get anxious during the long, cold wait. Ms. Huston says she sometimes knocks, as I did, and is reassured with a low buzz. January thaws, when the temperature is between 40 and 50, may send bees zipping out of the hive on what are daintily called “cleansing flights.” Fastidious honeybees will not soil a hive; they wait un-

til it is warm enough to fly out and jettison waste. “I am always overjoyed to find little brown spots all over my car, which is about 20 yards from some of the hives,” Ms. Huston said. “

After the cold snap, and that chilly silence in the hive, I went back out in the sunniest hours of one rogue 60-degree day and stood amid withered asparagus fronds, waiting. I saw dead bees on the ground, generally a good sign. This means the colony is strong enough for routine maintenance. Finally, I spotted some bees, a bit sluggish, but aloft.

This weekend, the Back Yard Beekeepers are holding “Mead Madness,” a tasting and workshop dedicated to brewing that ancient honey wine, at the Weston home of the group’s former president, Howland Blackiston, who is also on its advisory board. I think that’s a capital idea. Whether you down a cup of this heady elixir, or stir a spiral of honey into steaming tea, a winter’s toast to our steadfast cohabitants must be, simply, “To life!”

Article by Gerri Hirshey Published in January 27, 2008  
New York Times :<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/27/nyregion/nyregionspecial2/27colct.html?pagewanted=all>



**Yvonne Dettlaff**

**Newsletter Editor**

**360.868.4596**

**Don't Forget the  
Next Meeting is  
January 9**

**Class and meeting are  
located at:  
Chinook Middle School  
4301 6th Ave.  
Lacey, WA 98516**

**Class starts at 6:00 pm  
Meeting starts at 7:00 pm**



**OLYMPIA BEEKEEPERS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2012**

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

**RETURN IN PERSON AT MEETING OR MAIL TO :**

**Becky Emrich**

**PO Box 1039 Rochester, WA 98579**

**NAME \_\_\_\_\_**

**ANY CHANGES TO PREVIOUS INFORMATION ? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_**

**IF YES PLEASE LIST CHANGES (new member include address, email, and phone number).**

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**DUES ARE \$ 20.00/YEAR CHECK OR CASH.**

**AS A CLUB WE HAVE MANY ACTIVITIES THAT NEED VOLUNTEERS PLEASE LIST WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO OFFER YOURSELF TO ASSIST WITH. ie : THURSTON CO. FAIR, COMMITTEE, NEWSLETTER BEELINE, ETC**

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