

May 2015

OLYMPIA BEEKEEPERS



REPORTS, NEWS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

June Program

Pests and Treatments

President's Message

We are in the full swing of the blackberry bloom it seems, and a bit ahead of schedule. What this means for forage later in the summer remains to be seen and I've already heard a bit of discussion in this regard.

Thanks to those of you that provided your overwinter colony loss information. Our club's reported loss was just slightly over 40%, consistent with the national average and higher than last year. This statistic underscores the importance of outreach and advocacy to bring this issue to a wider audience and change the tide. Everywhere you read, from Kim Flottum's column in Bee Culture to other journals and reports across a wide swath of science, the descriptives used are "unsustainable" and "dire". We hope to shine a light on this at the upcoming launch of our Thurston County Pollinator Awareness Campaign, featuring information on pesticides as well as approachable, actionable steps anyone can take to make a difference. On June 24th, we'll be dedicating the newly installed pollinator garden at Panorama in Lacey. We anticipate a good crowd for the 5:30 pm start of the program. If you'd like to attend, please RSVP to me at LMPCarl@gmail.com as we need give a count to the folks at Panorama so proper accommodations can be made. We'll be formally recognizing the parties that signed on to the county Neonicotinoid MOU, Nikki McClure will be unveiling her sign and there will be other surprises, too. Once we've launched, we'll be reaching out to other beekeeping associations and groups across the counties to help spread the word and encourage people to feed bees by providing forage and pesticide free habitat.

We'll also be taking nominations for our two annual OBA awards: Beekeeper of the Year and the Mark Savage Award, given for lifetime achievement in beekeeping. Feel free to email your nominations to me ahead of the meeting if you'd like. We'll take nominations during the meeting as well.

This will be our last meeting at Chinook for the summer. In July and August we'll be meeting at the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd which is located at 1601 North Street SE, Olympia, WA 98501. Beekeeper and biodynamic farmer Jacqueline Freeman will be our featured speaker this month. We're excited to welcome Jacqueline, the author of the book "The Song of Increase", who has lots of wonderful information to share with us. You can visit her website here: <http://spiritbee.com/home/>

The Olympia Airport bees are off to a good start; the Airport Bee Team is making sure they're well-tended. I had the opportunity to attend the last Port Commissioners meeting last week and talk about the project and its importance. The Commissioners were very interested, asked great questions and look forward to further updates. Information on the project can be found on our website including the link to the Port's blog post on the project.

Looking forward to seeing everyone Monday evening.

Happy beekeeping,

Laurie

Secretary's Report Olympia Beekeepers Association

May 11, 2015 Meeting

Old Business

April minutes approved as written.

March minutes approved as written.

The Olympia Beekeepers board met for a productive session this month. Among other activities we will be reviewing our bylaws to better reflect the clubs goals and procedures; the new website is up and we will be continuing the build-out. Thank you to Nathan Allan for donating his time and web skills to the project.

A sign-up sheet will be available during the break, at the front table, to sign up for swarm gathering (there are plenty of calls coming in and we could use more people) and a separate list if you're interested in being called to join a member as a mentor on a swarm call to learn the process.

The Olympia Airport now has hives installed and running. The Airport Bee Team reports things are going well.

We also have business cards introducing our swarm catching services and numbers to call for help.

Please remember to fill out the over winter colony loss forms at the front table.

New Business

A plan is in the works to help make our honey competition at the fair easier, keep you eyes peeled!

On June 4 the OBA will be participating in the STEAM event for kids at East Olympia Elementary. This is a full day event. Two additional folks offered to help.

At our June meeting, Jacqueline Freeman will be doing our program. Jacqueline, a beekeeper and organic farmer has written a book entitled " Song

of Increase". She will bring her experience and perspective to our association. Laurie and Jacqueline were co-speakers at the Thurston County Commissioner meeting on Earth Day.

The Grays Harbor County Fair is seeking members to man a display from August 5th to 9th. Mary Haynes volunteered to contact the fairgrounds and organize the event.

Mark Emrich and Laurie Pyne continue to meet with the Thurston County Commissioners on county-wide bee and pollinator issues. The approach to the campaign is two-armed; the neonicotinoid Memorandum of Understanding to focus on the pesticide issue and the second arm on educating the public.

In the effort to promote education, Laurie has been working on a project that will start at Panorama Village. The proposed project will include signs explaining the purpose of gardens and wild areas in yards as well as pamphlets that explain the importance of forage, naturalizing gardens and not spraying. Nikki McClure has designed signs that will be silk screened on brushed aluminum. There will also be a webpage dedicated to the campaign. It is hoped to include Pierce and Lewis Counties and other counties in the project. Laurie requested seed money to print signs and pamphlets. \$1000.00 would get the project started with 100 signs in two sizes, 12" x 8" and one somewhat smaller.

Marjorie Smith made a motion to use \$1000.00 to kick-start the sign purchase and print pamphlets. The motion was seconded, However, some discussion was entertained before a vote was taken. It was clarified that the pollinator garden at Panorama will be the point of launch and the unveiling of the signs that will be produced in couple of weeks. Our club will be selling the signs to the general public; the sign manufacturers money will self-generate once the program gets rolling.

The motion was unanimously approved by the membership.

Chair Reports

Gail Booth - We need more volunteers on the swarm list! Please contact Gail at gail30@msn.com. There have been 23 swarm calls since mid April!!! There were a lot of no answers on phone calls or people were busy with their own swarms. Please, when you do get to capture remember to share a jar of honey if you can.

Bert Lewis - Becky gave teh news for the Apiary. There are new boxes and frames courtesy of Bert Lewis. The Sue Cobey hive is quennless. The new queen left. So, two of the hives have been combined. This Saturday (the Saturday after the meeting, May 16th) at 1:00 pm there will be a demonstration at the Kiwanis Garden. They will be counting bees and considering the next steps in caring for the hives.

Dixon Fellows - has two observation hives for club use. You can contact Dixon via email if you want to show your hives. Please give him at least 2 days notice.

David Richie - asked for the clubs assistance. He recently found out that his Home Owners Association does not allow beekeeping. He has several hives. He will sell or give them away. If you have property he can use that would be helpful too.

Elections

Dana Smith made a motion that the slate of officers as presented, which included: President, Laurie Pyne; Vice-President, Mechele Linehan; Secretary, Mary Haynes; Treasurer, Andrea Broyles; and Membership Chair, Duane McBride be accepted by unanimous consent of the membership. The motion was seconded by Frank Scolaro. The question was put to the membership and the slate was passed as presented.

Laurie asked all seated chairpersons including: Paul Longwell, Library; David Bruun, Program Chair; Jim Rieck, Mentor Chair (in absentia) if

they accepted their positions for another year. All said, Yes.

Mike Carrington asked for the floor. He is getting out of the business of beekeeping and has equipment for sale. \$100 for Carniolan package that will be arriving. All of his equipment including 2 hives, with supers, 2 empty supers, frames, suit, hood, smoker, gloves for \$500 or best offer.

Break

Speaker Paul Longwell on swarms.

Teaching Children to Love Bees, Not Fear Them

Photo



Bees on a honeycomb pulled from a hive at Big Sky Honey. Credit Jim Wilson/The New York Times

Several years ago, [reports of the declining bee population](#) inspired my partner to keep bees in our yard. Her reasons were mainly practical—not only did she want to support the vanishing bees, she hoped our plum trees might increase their yield. But it took less than one season for my partner to fall in love, and over time the number of hives in our backyard has multiplied from two to 10. At my house this week we know that spring has arrived because my 2-year-old points out the window and yells excitedly: “Bees!”

I consider both of my children lucky to know the honeybees so well. Living with a beekeeper has afforded me a chance to observe how children interact with bees. From what I’ve seen so far, they fall into two distinct camps: those who are fascinated, and those who are afraid. There are kids who watch in wonder as the honeybees land on the stones in our

birdbath and drink water through their delicate tongues, and there are kids who cover their hair with their hands and run away screaming. There are kids who knock on our door to buy a jar of honey and ask to see our bees, and there are kids who will poke a long stick through our fence and bang it against the roof of a hive.

I worry that the child who runs from bees in fear will grow up to be the adult who spots a healthy swarm in her backyard and sprays it with insecticide. I worry that the child who bangs on a hive roof will grow up to be the teenager who knocks over a neighbor’s hive in the middle of the night. These are two kinds of transgressions that happen often in my community, and they are undeserved. Unlike the many varieties of wasps, bees are gentle creatures. They pollinate our crops, make honey, and rarely sting unless provoked.

In recent years, beekeepers have continued to report high annual losses. An annual survey of beekeepers conducted by a partnership that includes the United States Department of Agriculture, released Wednesday, [suggested](#) both that significant losses in colonies continue, and that the loss rate in summer has increased. We compensate for this by breeding and replacing our lost colonies year after year. Scientists are [no longer concerned that the honeybee’s extinction is imminent](#), but we are not yet off the hook. The disappearing bees have reminded us that our survival is interdependent. We live in collaboration with other species. A child who squashes bees or runs from them is a child who hasn’t yet learned their value, and it’s our job to teach them.

This might begin by teaching our children what a honeybee looks like. Before my partner brought home our first colony of bees, I was like many adults in that I could not distinguish a honeybee from a bumblebee, and had only the vaguest notion that wasps were a different species entirely. The yellow jacket who is harassing you at the end of summer, trying to take a bite of your ham sandwich, has little in common with the honeybee who is gathering pollen and nectar. Children are capable of making this distinction; like adults, they just need a little guidance.

Teaching children to value the honeybee might also include explaining the phenomenon of swarming, which, contrary to popular belief, is not an angry behavior. Honeybees swarm when their colony has grown healthy enough to divide in two. One half of them remain in the hive to welcome a new queen, while the other half leaves in search of a new home. They fill their bellies with nectar and travel in a cluster to shelter their old queen. The sight of a cluster of bees on a branch in a yard or a park is an opportunity for observation, a lesson about the intelligence of the insect world. And that is the real lesson the bees offer: as smart as we humans are, we don't know everything. At my house we can dance to Beyoncé in the living room, but we can't wiggle our butts in a sequence so precise that it communicates the location of a nectar source three miles away. Bees can.

My partner has a practice that many beekeepers would find silly. Though a typical worker bee lives for only six weeks, in the evening my partner often picks up bees who have grown cold and fallen just outside the entrance to their hive. She collects them in a jar, brings

them inside our house to warm them up and later, once they are restored, she returns them to their home. I used to tease her about this. Bees are members of a complex system. They are not individuals, and it struck me as foolish to attend to them as such. But then last week I saw my 6-year-old son crouch in front of a hive at dusk to gather languishing bees in his small hand. In that moment I realized what the bees had taught him — it's the very lesson we all need to learn: that every small part of the system counts for something.

[From New York Times article provided my member]

Invitation: To All who attend the OBA meetings:

Please consider presenting a short (about 5 minute) show-and-tell topic at an OBA meeting. For example, you may:

- * review a piece of beekeeping equipment you either constructed or purchased
- * recommend a book or video from the club library, or elsewhere
- * describe a new twist on an old process for doing something related to bees
- * show something you, or someone else, made from a hive product (wax, honey, propolis, royal jelly)
- * introduce us to an educational web-resource related to beekeeping
- * talk about something else bee-related that our members would find interesting--Bee Creative! Share your Knowledge, Help make our meetings interesting and useful.

Please contact David to get on the agenda (Davidbruun98@hotmail.com)

Reminder:

Plants, books, seeds, and other artifacts are always appreciated for the meeting raffle.

And, if you have a tasty snack to share, everyone enjoys something sweet.

January: Jason Long, WSU, speaking on cold winter storage.

August: TBA

February: Megan Taylor, WSU speaking on Old World Bee Genetics

September: Time to renew membership.

March: Tim Lawrence, WSU

October: TBA

April: Package Introduction

November: TBA

May: Preventing Swarms and Splits

December: Christmas Party

June: Pests and Treatments

July: TBA

Monthly Meetings: held the second Monday of each month.

Place: Chinook Middle School, 4301 6th Ave NE, Lacey, WA

Time: 6:00 pm for Beginning Beekeeper's Certification Program, 7:00 pm for the association meeting. Meetings are held in the Cafeteria. Beekeeping class meets in the central hall Science Room.

Agenda: Each meeting is conducted with old and new business, and a program related to beekeeping. Attendees, if they choose, donate a gift for the raffle table. The Treasurer and Membership Chair sell tickets for \$1.00 and at the break there is refreshments available.