



BEELINE

May 2014
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Issue 3

Newsletter of the Southern Adirondack Beekeepers Association (SABA)
www.adirondackbees.org



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Warren - VACANT !!!

(Warren Co. Beeks: SABA needs you)

Washington -

Tom Wells 746-1662

Notable Volunteers

Linda Armour and Jen Ford,
who organize 30 great Saratoga
County Fair volunteers,.

2014 Membership Survey Results - Part One by David Wood

The survey results are in! Fifty-three completed questionnaires provide us with lots of information. This information will help direct the Board in planning for the club's future. Your comments do count! Now let's take a look at what you are saying.

Who we are: How did members learn about SABA? Almost half (45%) were introduced to SABA by a friend. Our website was the next highest (21%), followed by Cooperative Extension (10%) and a County Fair visit (6%). Of the survey respondents, 50% have been SABA members for 2 years or less.

The numbers show that we are a club of mostly "backyard beekeepers": 50% of us have 2 hives or less. At the other end of the spectrum, 12% reported having 20 or more hives. I suspect that these numbers would be significantly more if a count was made later this year. As an aside, 75% of us wish to increase in the next few years.

Almost half state that they know the basics of how to keep their bees healthy. 15% state that they know basically "ziltch", and almost 40% state that they are familiar with the more sophisticated aspects of beekeeping. We have a lot of talent and experience in our ranks!

Membership Meetings:

Our general membership meetings are held 5 times a year. 70% would keep that number as is, 30% want more meetings. Allowing ½ hour for the pre-program component has an 85% approval rating, as does the 15 minute business component. 54% of you want to have 3-4 guest speakers per year, and 42% want more speakers. Two requested fewer speakers. "Hands on" demonstrations are popular: 68% wanted more (no one wanted fewer).

Program Suggestions:

Suggesting program ideas for future consideration was a popular topic.

(Continued on page 3)

SABA Calendar

Use This to Mark Yours!

SABA's general membership meetings are in odd months, except July. Board meetings (all are welcome) occur in every even month.

Meetings are at Saratoga County Cooperative Extension, 50 West High St., Ballston Spa. (885-8995)

May 19, general membership meeting, 7:30 pm start. Also with 7:00-7:30 pm sign-in / beginner Ask a Beek /snack / library time.

June 16, 7 pm Board Meeting

July 22—27, 10 am—10 pm Saratoga County Fair. See page 6 for all details.

August 18 and October 20, 7 pm Board Mtgs

September 15, Annual Potluck Dinner, 6:30 pm, general membership meeting start at 7:30pm

November 17, Elections, Youth Awards and general membership meeting, 7:30 pm start. Also with 7:00-7:30 pm sign-in / beginner Ask a Beek /snack / library time.

About the May 19 Program

from Mike Blendell, 1st Vice President

Lloyd Spear will be the guest speaker for May 19. Lloyd will talk about how to sell honey.

There will be a meet and greet at Augie's Restaurant 17 Low St. in Ballston Spa at 5:30.

Al Lounsbury Honored

by David Wood

Without question every SABA member has benefitted from Al Lounsbury's vision.

In recognition of his lifelong advocacy for beekeeping, the SABA membership voted unanimously on March 17 to make a donation of \$200 in honor of Al Lounsbury, and the Board was directed to select the recipient of this donation. At its April meeting the board decided to send this donation to the Saratoga County 4-H.

(* SABA History Notes *)

by Anne Frey with help from Fred Ludewig

Before SABA formed in 1983, beekeepers in the area could go to a series of informal classes starting in 1975, taught by Al Lounsbury and Fred & Eric Ludewig. The classes were held first at the old Cooperative Extension in Saratoga Springs, then at Shenendehowa Middle School.

Art Holmwood, Jim O'Brien and Bob Stevens were the original driving force behind organizing people in the form of an association. The first meetings were at Art's home in 1983. Jane Paulovicks was the President, James O'Brien & Walter Crawford the VPs, Nancy O'Brien the Secretary, Don Tooker the Treasurer, Al Lounsbury the Promotions Officer, Legislative Coordinator was W. Stavenhagen, and membership coordinators were F&D Ludewig, Bob Stevens & Bill Noble.

Current members who were members in 1989 included Roberta Glatz, Peter & Betty Gregory, James Hirst, Bob Hyney, Albert Lounsbury, Fred & Doris Ludewig, Theron MacFee, Jim & Nancy O'Brien, Bob Stevens, Ron & Carolyn Tweedie and the VanSchaicks.

You may have noticed that this Beeline issue is Volume 26, though the last one in March 2014 was Volume 24. I was recently given care of the archives of Beelines that the late Al Lounsbury kept. I added these to issues Fred Ludewig and Jim O'Brien previously gave me, and saw that at some point, the volume numbers got out of count. The Beeline as we know it, the official newsletter of SABA, began in Fall 1983 with sporadic issues, but volume numbers weren't on the front page until 1989 and it began to have 6 issues a year.

(**Survey** , continued from page 1)

Program suggestions that fall under hive management received the most interest. 32% gave program suggestions such as making splits, making nucs, installing packages, record keeping, hive inspections, planning, natural hive management, and alternative hive management. Disease prevention was also a popular topic: 25% want programs on mites, hive beetles, viruses, *Nosema*, other pests, and the use of I.P.M. A program on requeening was suggested by 16%. Swarm control (prevention, trapping, management) was requested by 10% of the respondents.

A "laundry list" of program ideas was submitted. Clearly members see SABA as a valuable educational resource. Our interests include hive products (candle making, beeswax products, soap making, honey for health), beekeeping equipment (types of set-ups, equipment care and maintenance, Warre and top bar hives, small cell hives, innovative equipment), beekeeper support (all about mentoring, shared beekeeper experiences, liability issues, growing a bee business), education (how to present to schools and groups, featuring our library holdings), nutrition education (pollen collecting, spring nutrition, NYS nectar flows, homemade bee food, honey plants). Again – thank you for your ideas!

What you like most:

Our membership clearly values the club's greatest asset: our members. Many of you remarked that you like the camaraderie among members. This included comments such as

"friendly folks, welcoming, sense of community, and kindness." When beekeepers get together, they like to visit. You state that you like the exchange of ideas that takes place, the discussions, sharing information, talking to other beekeepers, gaining contacts, meeting new beeks, and you value the diversity of our membership.

You also identified lots of specific "likes": being part of a simple, no-nonsense hobbyist group, low cost membership, bee yard visits. Actually, you collectively singled out every benefit of SABA membership in the "what I like most" section of the survey. More than one of you simply said, "happy with everything." And finally, thanks for the remark "enthusiasm of leadership!"

What you would like to change?

This answer received fewer responses, some of which would be hard to act on ("have meetings closer to my house," "move south!"). Other specific comments involve the business meeting (keep as short as possible, take care of business at board meetings). There were some policy suggestions (spend more of the club's money or collect less, get more volunteers). Many commented that no changes were needed.

The last part of the survey asked you to rate how important 12 selected SABA initiatives are to you, and it provided you an opportunity to comment on each one. And you did! The next Beeline issue will report your ratings and suggestions.

More meetings and Events:

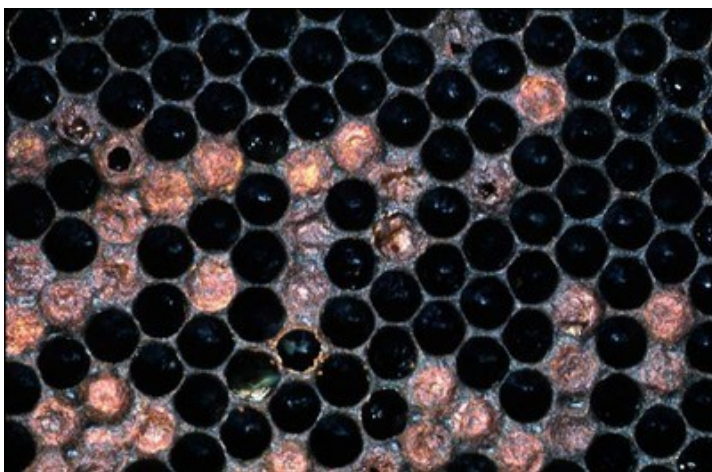
For those of you in SABA's eastern area, you may enjoy meetings of the **Bennington Beekeepers Club**. The Grace Christian School, 104 Kocher Drive, Bennington VT is the location for the Vermont Beekeepers Association summer meeting, hosted by the Bennington County Beekeepers Club Ltd on **Saturday, July 12, 2014**. Guest is to be Tom Seeley, of Cornell University.

Regular meetings are in the Crispe Room of the Bennington Veteran's Home, 325 North Street, US Rte. 7, Bennington VT. After entering the main drive off North St., turn right to get to the Crispe Room in back. **October 16, 2014**, their guest is Jack Rath of Betterbee and the Southern VBA.

January 8, 2015 Guest speaker is Mike Palmer of French Hill Apiary, queen breeder and nuc producer. For details contact www.vermontbeekeepers.org and www.benningtonbees.blogspot.com.

OR: Jacob Esh, President 802-447-0198

Meetings of the **Catskill Mountain Beekeepers Club** will be on May 13, June 10, July 8, August 12, September 9, October 14 at 7 pm at the *Cornell Cooperative Extension's Agroforestry Resource Center*, 6055 Route 23, in Acra, NY 12405. Please visit www.catskillbees.org.



Here are two photos showing evidence of American Foul Brood, AFB. Above is a generally unhealthy brood comb. The caps are sunken and there are holes chewed in some caps. Now observe the close-up photo below. Looking at the lowest surface of the cells (toward the ground when in a hive), a black residue is seen in some cells. It appears to be at the top in the photo only because of the angle of view. Beware of gifts or deals of old beekeeping equipment, and also inspect the brood nest thoroughly twice a year for this residue, called scale. It is bacteria=filled dead bee pupae (brood).



Burning equipment with AFB is the best way to get rid of the infection, which can linger in brood comb indefinitely, and probably forever. Antibiotic treatment will cure the bees, but the equipment will always have AFB.



This worker will never fly. She has deformed wing virus, which is vectored by *Varroa* mites. This is strong evidence your hive has *Varroa*.



You also can see mites on an insert on your bottom board, usually under a screened bottom board. They are each about 1-1.8 mm wide, the size of the head of a shirt pin.



Mite Away Quick Strips (MAQS), a formic acid gel, are a way to combat mites. The formic acid kills mites even if they are in capped brood, and it will not persist in wax, as some other chemical miticides will.

Photo Pages

Please send in your interesting beekeeping photographs to the Editor.

Photo by Keith Freeman



Bee Yard Visits: Join One. Host One

by Amy Carman

We have several bee yard visits on the 2014 Calendar – click to it using the link on the home page of our website. www.adirondackbees.org

The first one is May 18 with Walt in Schenectady County. Details are on the calendar. Two more are scheduled in June.

Do not be afraid to host a bee yard visit on the same day as another beekeeper. Our member region is so big, that it's quite helpful to have more than one location to choose from. Email Amy Carman to be a host or to update any information on your planned event.

smallbluehouse@gmail.com If you don't email/internet, please call her at 518-229-1434 and she'll get your event on the calendar or tell you about the events already planned.

Hosting a potluck is always optional. If you want to keep to bee business only, we'll post it that way.

Honey Bee Swarm Project

by David Wood

The Town of Clifton Park is looking for bee swarms. Saturday, April 26 was pick-up day for 29 bee swarm traps. The traps, donated by Lloyd Spear and David Wood and consisting of 5-frame nuc boxes, have been set out on public property and town park land. "Bait frames" were donated by Anne Frey, and are used to help lure scout bees to the bee boxes. Tree mounts were also provided to place the swarm boxes above ground level. SABA member Joanne Coons, assisted by Bob Sheedy and David Wood, donated time and materials to help construct 35 tree mounts.

Throughout this spring and early summer a group of citizen scientist volunteers will regularly check the traps for signs of swarm activity. Community volunteers Frank Berlin and Open Space Coordinator Jennifer Viggiani recruited residents to sponsor swarm traps on their property. Boy scout Jacob Bianconi from Troop 246 helped with Saturday's trap distribution and demonstrated how to set up the tree mount and attach the swarm trap.

Beekeepers have volunteered to hive any swarms that are caught. Perhaps a caught swarm would be suitable for display in an observation beehive at the Saratoga and Washington County fairs later this year!

FROM THE SABA LIBRARY

by Ken Hughes, Librarian

adk1tacoma@gmail.com or 798-5064

Four new library books are available for some great reading.

BUZZWORDS: A Scientist Muses on Sex, Bugs, and Rock 'n' Roll. Author: May R. Berenbaum,

BUGS IN THE SYSTEM: Insects And Their Impact On Human Affairs. Author: May R. Berenbaum,

MAN EATING BUGS: The Art and Science of Eating Insects. Author: Peter Menzel

BIOLOGISTS IN THE FIELD: Stories, Tales, and Anecdotes from 150 years of Field Biology. Author: May R. Berenbaum

If anyone has any suggestions for some great reading material or DVDs, and would like to share your findings, please let the librarian know so that it can be ordered and placed in circulation. SABA's LIBRARY has a great collection of books and videos for beekeepers of all levels. Stop by and check them out.

2014 Saratoga County Fair Trifecta!

by Linda Armour

WORK THE SABA BOOTH!

The 2014 Saratoga County Fair will be July 22nd to 27th. We need volunteers to help set up our educational booth before the fair (Sunday the 20th, 1-3 pm), to help break down after the fair (Monday the 28th, 9-11am) and to work the booth during the fair.

As in the past, we need 2 people for each 4 hour shift (10am-2pm, 2-6pm, 6-10pm) each day of the fair. It's a great opportunity to get involved with the club, sell honey, and talk to the public about bees and beekeeping. Don't worry if you're new to beekeeping. Just let us know, and we'll see that you are paired up with a veteran. The sign-up sheets started to fill up at our last meeting in March, and will be available at our meeting in May (last call before the fair!). Bring your date book, and pick a date and time to help.

We are also in need 3 observation hives for 2 days each. As a thank you to our volunteers who work the booth, help set up or break down or bring in their observation hives, there will be a drawing for four \$10 gift certificates to Betterbee. Volunteers also get free fair entry and free parking. Get in the running and sign up at the May meeting! If you want to sign up before the meeting, just email Linda Armour at larmour1@nycap.rr.com or 895-2962.

PS Don't forget to bring your old beekeeping magazines (in a bag or box for easy carrying) to the May meeting. We will use them as give-aways at the fair booth.

SELL YOUR BEE PRODUCTS!

SABA members are encouraged to sell their honey and other hive products at the booth. To sell your honey, it should be presented in new, clean containers, which are labeled with the beekeeper's name and address (or name and phone number) and the net weight. Honey prices TBD. Members who work a shift at the booth pay SABA a 15% commission. To sell without volunteering, a 25% commission is charged.

Contact Linda Armour, larmour1@nycap.rr.com or 895-2962 to sign up now to sell your honey or other products, such as candles, lotions, balms, etc. Knowing how much member honey is available for sale will help us plan how much additional honey we need to purchase for the booth.

Honey and other products need to be dropped off at the booth Sunday between 2-4 pm or Tue. morning between 9-10 am.

EXHIBIT YOUR BEE PRODUCTS!

The fair also has a competition for bees, honey & hive products, which is open to all residents. Enter your honey, observation hive, baked goods, candles or artistic items made with beeswax. There are specific dates and deadlines to be observed. General rules and entry forms can be downloaded at: <http://www.saratogacountyfair.org/index.php/rules-and-entry-forms>

Entry rules and descriptions can be found at:

<http://www.saratogacountyfair.org/index.php/exhibitor-departments>

An old joke is if you ask three beekeepers a question, you will get six answers. An analogy is if you ask three chefs how to cook an egg you will also get six answers: boiled, fried, scrambled, poached, shirred, or an omelet. Why? Their answers are based on personal taste, their skill, and available equipment. Are they cooking in a kitchen on a Wolf range or outside on a campfire? It is not because the chefs or the beekeepers are foolish as the joke implies. Thinking critically, our situation is that we have an egg. We wish to cook and eat it. We want to do so before the egg spoils, or we starve. Critical thinking is that simple.

The ability to think critically is essential for success in all things, no less so in beekeeping, yet it has seldom been mentioned in the literature. The purpose of this article is to encourage us to start thinking about thinking. Like beekeeping, it is the beginning of a journey that lasts a lifetime and is a perfect companion to it. Not meant to be about hive management, it will use beekeeping examples as illustrations we can all understand.

The process of critical thinking begins when we recognize that a problem exists that has no obvious or immediate answer. We process data, including our observations, past experiences and advice we have heard or read. We must consider alternatives and their risks and consequences. We may look for an original solution, one that fits our individual and specific problem. Almost everything we do is derived from what we have been taught, read, or saw. Originality is their combination in a new way. We can employ trial and error by physically manipulating the elements of our situation to get closer to a solution. We can rearrange elements mentally, sorting into possible answers. Insight can present an answer in a flash. We center our attention on the problem to understand what is needed. Our actions may be wrong, partially correct or correct. The process continues until either the correct solution is reached or we decide to do nothing. The thinker guides his steps according to a plan with the flexibility to modify it according to conditions. For example, I planned to install my packages today, but it is snowing. We need flexibility, originality, and inventiveness. A person set in his ways will have greater difficulty solving a problem. Simplify the problem, look for the answer in it. The key is hidden in the lock. As Sherlock Holmes observed, "When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth."

Beginning with an open mind, we must be willing to see honestly what our situation is; not what we wish it to be. We may think that our package bees don't have *Varroa* mites, so we don't need to bother testing or treating for them. But hoping doesn't make it so. Observation will show us what they need. We must take action when they require it. Otherwise they will not wait for our convenience, and may move in a direction (like dying) that we do not want. Our focus is both macro, and micro. This gives us knowledge and meaning and their interaction is what we call experience. But there is a world of difference between ten years' experience, and one years' experience

repeated ten times. One is learning to progress from point A to point B, with the goal of reaching point C. The other is restarting dead outs with packages in the Spring every year.

Our awareness in macro should start before we leave home. What is the weather? How will it effect the colony's mood and any nectar flow that may be on ? Can we call a hive defensive if we open it before/after a storm? As we approach the apiary, we look for signs of other visitors, both human and animal. People, skunks, or even ants will affect a colony's mood and disrupt its harvest. Even our presence is a disturbance. Our methods when examining a hive should also be considered for their effect on the bees. In a dark hive, vibrations and smells are primary methods of

communication. With more than one colony on a common stand, they all are alerted to our presence. Starting at one end, our bangs and bumps will cause increasing irritability to cascade down the line. This will make our work more difficult. We should work bees with beekeepers that we respect, to learn their techniques. Smoke contains toxins. Natural materials without additives like pine needles or punky wood

will contain less harmful side effects. A small puff will work best and disrupt least.

When we open a hive, do we see only a lot of insects moving about, or do we see what is happening in detail? Is the Queen stately moving as she continues laying, or is she frantically trying to escape? Looking at the cells, do we see eggs, and open and capped brood ? Is the open brood pearly white? Looking closer, we turn a frame to see into the cells for the white dots of feces left by *Varroa destructor*. Is there a pleasant and warm odor or one pungent with decay? All this valuable information is available to our senses to evaluate the hive's condition, progress and needs. If we don't observe these things, we must train ourselves until they become automatic. We must train ourselves to know what to observe and what each detail means separately and collectively. We must record our observations to know the results of our actions. Most actions will be simple. For example, the hive is crowded and populous. Nectar is coming in so fast that the brood nest is being filled with it. Therefore, we move empty frames to the brood nest, and add supers.

Apis mellifera is a superior life form that lives in a complex society that interacts with an infinitely varied environment. Multiple drone fathers create sister castes with many different alleles which strengthen their super-organism, the colony as a whole. Thousands of flora and fauna, macro and micro, live in a colony. All of

this makes beekeeping incredibly local and specific. I am surprised that the three beekeepers we began with only gave six answers!

Using the tools of critical thinking to recognize that a problem or need exists, we make honest observations and review our records, experiences, and knowledge about it. We process this data and consider alternatives and their consequences to make a flexible plan to do what is required. No one else can do it for us.

*Thinking
about
thinking*

*A person set in his
ways will have
greater difficulty
solving a problem.*



Treasurer Mike Coppola
123 Edie Rd.
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

Reminders, Notes

Help! SABA Secretary Needed

SABA is in search of a volunteer to complete Aaren Harris' term as secretary. Aaren is "weeks away" from taking on her new assignment as Mommy. She plans to continue with beekeeping following her child's birth and also to participate in SABA activities as her time and energy allow.

Would you help? Please contact David Wood for more information (882-9759/ woodmarr@nycap.rr.com).

Aaren, thanks for all your help as a SABA officer and best wishes from all of us!



Beeline Deadline for the July issue will be June 26. Please submit your articles, photos, announcements, etc. to the Editor via email at annef@capital.net. Photos should be reduced in size before emailing. Or mail to 4808 Skyline Dr. Delanson NY 12053. Questions? Call 518-895-8744 and speak with Anne.

SWARMS : Remember to let President David Wood know if you are willing to pick up swarms. 518-882-9759 or woodmarr@nycap.rr.com .

If you have trouble with a swarm or don't know what to do, the swarm hotline can help you: 518-38-SWARM. Also, let your non-beekeeper friends and relatives know the swarm hotline number.

Happy Mother's Day

