

The Bee Line

2006—Issue 3

March 2006

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Tips for the Month

With the sunnier days, watch your bees to be sure they have plenty of room in the hive. As they fill the frames (with brood, pollen, honey), add another hive box (“super”) so they won’t get overcrowded and have more tendency to swarm.



Upcoming Activities

Please join us for upcoming **meetings and classes:** -

Tues., Mar. 21— Panel discussion of current beekeeping concerns, with local beekeepers Frank Lienert, Ron Parsons, and Fred Stewart. Got a burning bee question? Bring it and ask!

Tues., Apr. 18-Topic TBD. Ideas for programs? Please call Bob Rollins, VP.

Sat., Mar. 11—*Intermediate Beekeeping class* taught by Dr. Eric Mussen, UC Extension apiculturalist. Space is still available, so call Sacramento Beekeeping Supply at (916) 451-2337 to register. The class will be held in the Sacramento County Coop Ag Extension auditorium, 4145 Branch Center Road (1 block west of Bradshaw Road at Keifer Blvd.), from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a break for lunch. The **cost** is \$35 per adult or \$60 per couple (married or family) and \$15 per child under 18 accompanied by a paying parent or legal guardian. If you have a beekeeping hat and veil, please bring them to the class.

Wed’s., Mar. 22 & 29— *Intermediate Beekeeping for Spring and Summer class* taught by Serge Labesque, at Santa Rosa Community College, 6:30—9 p.m. \$45. For more info or to register call (707) 527-4372 or go online at www.santarosa.edu/communityed

Local Events—The Club may have a table at the Sacramento Zoo’s **Earth Fest**, Saturday, April 1. Can you volunteer to talk about bees? Call Nancy Stewart at (916) 451-2337 for more info.

Update on other regional club meetings (listed in February newsletter)— Sonoma County Beekeepers has a new meeting location beginning March 13— New College at 6th and Wilson Streets, Santa Rosa (near the Old Railroad Square).

SABA’s **regular meetings** are held the third Tuesday of each month **at 7:30 p.m.** at the Belle Coolidge Community Center, 5699 South Land Park Drive (on the southeast corner of Fruitridge Road and South Land Park) in Sacramento.

From I-5, take the Seamas exit and go east (or from Hwy 99 take Fruitridge exit and go west) then turn south on South Land Park Drive. Community Center is the first building on left (east side of street), and parking is available behind the building. Join us!

Annual Dues Due: If you have a highlighted mailing label, we had not received your dues as of March 3 and this will be your last newsletter. So if you haven’t yet done so, please **renew your membership** for calendar year 2006 (only \$15) today, and keep supporting your local honeybees! (see form in your December or February newsletter).

Volunteer Opportunities: If you can help with club publicity, membership, fairs and events, or school presentations please contact Nancy Stewart, (916)451-2337, or Howard Mann, (916) 812-9855. Thanks!



February Minutes & Program Notes

The Business Meeting of the Sacramento Area Beekeepers Association was called to order by Vice President Robert Rollins at 7:30 p.m. on February 21, 2006, at the Belle Coolidge Community Center. President Howard Mann was excused. The minutes for 1/17/06 and 12/20/05 were approved. (Moved Ruth Anne Rose, 2nd Dennis Larson). **Treasurer's Report** by Richard Cuny indicated current balance of \$4,072.50, not including receipts received at the meeting.

Old Business The following members volunteered to help as needed to set up the Beekeeping classes on March 4th and 11th: Ron Parsons, Bob Sugar, George Bleekman, Georgianna Pfof, and Ruth Anne Rose (11th only.) ... **Newsletters** were made available from the Calif. State Beekeepers Assoc. and Apiculture Society of North America. ... Nancy Stewart reported on the status of the **Beekeeping Classes**: 30 enrolled and paid for February 25th with others to pay at the door; for March 4th eight are paid with 1 paying at door; and 5 enrolled for March 11th with interest expressed by 10 more participants from a bee club in the Napa area. Instructor Eric Mussen has a family emergency which *may* require him to reschedule the March 4th class; if so, he will reschedule the class at the UC Davis apiary lab. Bob Sugar asked that anyone come forward who can supply a hive for either of the March classes. ... Laura Shlien presented a "**show & tell**" of a "Bee Cool" solar hive fan, a very interesting, high end piece of hive equipment that takes some of the cooling and moisture control chores off the bees (and maybe leaving more energy available to gather nectar and make honey).

New Business David Ogden spoke of contact with the Elk Grove Citizen regarding interest in an article on **swarms**. Discussion followed of where to get good photos of swarms and so forth. Bob Sugar wondered when the earliest swarm in memory was, and February was the answer from those present. ... Dennis Larson brought up the idea of getting the **SABA online**, even with a very basic informational website to begin with. Discussion of cost and effort needed to set up and maintain; idea voiced to post newsletter online. Moved and passed that Dennis explore possibilities of website and report back. Barney Merrill will help. (Moved Dennis Larson; 2nd Ron Melliush.) [*Anyone with web skills and interest in supporting this project, please contact Dennis.*] ... **Aerial spraying** by the Vector Control District was bought up by Georgianna Pfof. Should we make the District more aware of the needs (and existence) of urban beekeepers who may be affected? George Bleekman quoted the District as saying in interviews that the spray will not affect bees; yet there are anecdotal accounts of bees being hurt. Good discussion of various reported losses--big and small--during the recent spraying. The Secretary will draft a letter to the District offering our input and asking for coordination and information on any future aerial spraying. ... General discussion of an unusual number of reports of **honeybees congregating** in pools, ponds, or other water sources at this time of year. Theories presented included the unseasonably cool weather, poor chemical maintenance in pools and spas, and fragrance additives in spas.

Vice President Rollins adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m. Respectfully submitted, *Ronald Melliush*, Secretary

The Program that followed was presented by George Bleekman. George presented beautiful slides and interesting narrative about his 2005 visits to German Christmas Markets, with emphasis on the marketing of honey and bee products (with some quick forays into trips to Egypt and Romania as well.) The organization of the Markets, with the booths looking for all the world like rustic Alpine huts, and the number and quality of the bee products (honey, comb, mead [wine], pollen, and all things apiary,) were impressive to see.

Plants for the Bees

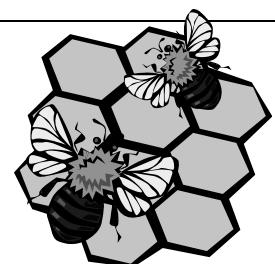
Reprinted from *The Monthly Extractor*, March 2006, newsletter of the Sonoma County Beekeepers.

If you are going to the nursery or ordering plants or seeds, the following are good sources of nectar or pollen, or both. Try any of these for a more bee-friendly garden. Anise Hyssop, Borage, Buddleia (yellow), Crocus, Canterbury Bells, Catmint, Citrus trees, Cotoneaster, Echinops, Hollyhocks, Helenium, Holly, Ice Plant Japonica, Lavendar, Mock Orange, Marjoram, Michaelmas Daisy, Rosemary, Scilla, Snowdrop, Thyme, Wallflower, Willows.

Bee Trivia

Answer to last month's question: The State Insect of *North Carolina* is the honey bee.

New Question: About how many pounds of honey (for energy) does it take a bee to make a pound of wax? (*answer in next issue*)



Bee Reading



Bees Beseiged—One Beekeeper's Bittersweet Journey to Understanding by Bill Mares. A.I. Root Co. 2005.

Mares articulately translates his observations over an extended period of travels throughout the U.S. observing bees, beekeepers, beekeeping operations, sideline beekeepers and commercial beekeepers, the politics of beekeeping, and the subtle influence of foreign beekeeping and subsequent honey imports on the U.S. industry and its internal economics. Mares begins with his personal introduction to beekeeping and the trials and tribulations associated with his "hobby" up until the present. After losing all of his hives in the middle eighties, he begins to travel the width and breadth of the U.S. trying to make sense of the complexities of beekeeping, especially as these impact the hobby beekeeper and in the larger sense, the commercial end of the industry. American beekeeping is not what it was 20 years or more ago and he is adept in identifying the reasons for its evolution including the introduction of non-native pests, honey dumping, low honey prices, increased labor costs, and an aging population of beekeepers. The National Honey Board, Honey Packers Association, etc., are reviewed in such a manner as to illuminate the lack of coordination and cooperation at the highest levels of the industry. The majority of beekeepers—the hobby types—are independent to the point of not even belonging to a local club or subscribing to the two major bee journals, hence creating an entire group who have almost zero input to decisions that directly affect them.

This book is not technical; it is practical and sensible. The text is full of fascinating facts and figures as these relate to beekeeping. For example, Mares describes the relationship between the U.S. almond industry and commercial beekeepers, and China and its importation of almonds from California. The Chinese are planting almond trees as fast as they can so they do not have to depend on California almonds. When the Chinese begin to harvest the almonds from their plantings they will need fewer almond imports from California. Almond growers here may then experience a drop in sales, revenue and the need to produce, and hence commercial beekeepers who make a major portion of their income from almond pollination will experience a reduction in pollination contracts and reduced income. This domino effect could—will—affect our entire beekeeping industry in the time it takes Chinese almond trees to mature and produce nuts of the same quantity/quality as those now imported from California. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize what is on the horizon for this fragile, inter-linked, industry.

I would urge hobby beekeepers to read this book to learn more about the beekeeping industry of which they are already a part but generally know little about.
- *Review by George Bleekman*

Mentoring Update!

SABA member Dennis Larson has joined the SABA Mentor program to replace Oakley Gack (who's retiring from active beekeeping and moving to Carmichael—see ads on back page) and serve the Arden/Arden Arcade area of Sacramento County. Dennis, a Certified Financial Advisor and Tax Accountant by day, first became interested in beekeeping through a client and now has several years' experience as a backyard beekeeper. He currently has two hives, and usually plenty of honey (due to the floral abundance of his suburban neighborhood), and has been an active member of SABA since 2002. If you're in his vicinity and would like mentoring, you can call him at (916) 359-7864 or 481-4011, or email dlars@sbcglobal.net.

And watch for additional mentor and member profiles in future *Bee Lines*!

Honey Prices Up?

This week I was in a Whole Foods store to review honey prices (sample listed below). I found it illuminating and realize I may not be asking enough for my honey on the retail market, or maybe these folks are asking too much? [Ed. Note: Others' recent info on area honey prices? Is this a trend or what are you finding?] - *George Bleekman*

Miller Honey Bear, Clover (Colton, CA) 12 oz. - \$3.99
 Strathdale Organic Honey (New Zealand) 8 oz.- \$4.19
 Organic White Honey Rare Hawaiian Volcano Honey (Hawaii) 8 oz.- \$4.19
 Rita Miller's Comb Honey (Colton, CA) 10 oz. \$5.99
 Comvita Multifloral (New Zealand) 1 lb - \$7.99
 100% Certified Organic Honey, Organic Bee Farms (Brazil) 12 oz - \$8.99
 Essence of Lavendar Honey (San Francisco) 9 oz. - \$8.99
 White Gold (Canada) 23 oz - \$12.49
 Gipson's Golden Chunk Comb (?) 16 oz. - \$15.29
 Original Manuka Honey (New Zealand) 18 oz - \$25.99



Honey Recipe of the Month

Donuts

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| 1/2 c. honey | 1/2 tsp. nutmeg |
| 2 T. butter | 1/2 tsp. cinnamon |
| 3 eggs, beaten | 1/4 tsp. mace |
| 1 c. buttermilk | 1/2 tsp. cream of tartar |
| 4 to 5 c. flour | 1 tsp. baking soda |
| 1 tsp. salt | 1-1/2 to 2 qts cooking oil, and powdered sugar |



Cream together butter and honey. Mix in eggs and buttermilk. Sift 4 cups flour and other dry ingredients together and add to mixture. Blend until smooth. Add more flour and blend until dough is smooth and not sticky. Roll out on a floured board to 1/2-inch thickness and let stand 20 minutes. Cut with doughnut cutter (or a small biscuit cutter for extra “holes”). Fry in oil that’s at 350 - 375°F until brown, turning once to brown evenly. Drain on absorbent paper. Dust with powdered or cinnamon sugar, or ice, if desired. Makes about 2 dozen large donuts plus lots of holes. (A 2-qt glass saucepan and a candy thermometer works for frying them.) - *G. Pfost*

Bee Classifieds *(free beekeeping-related ads for members)*

WANTED: Beekeeping **clothing** and/or any **equipment** for use by a new group of 4H kids. We mostly need basic items such as veils, hats, and gloves so they can suit up enough to get a little taste of beekeeping. (Note: 4H donations are tax deductible.) Got stuff you can spare? Call Jerry Kimbro at (916) 803-0303.

FOR SALE: **Hive** of honeybees with two standard-sized hive boxes, lid, bottom board & queen excluder— \$75. Stainless steel **uncapping tank** (60” l x 18”w x 14” d), never used, fits inside a movable steel stand, v-shaped bottom with drain, & stainless steel baskets to catch cappings. \$150. Call Oakley Gack at (916) 489-0340.

FOR SALE: New, never used, Fritz 3-15 Frame Hand Tangential **Extractor** - Holds 3 deep or 15 super frames. Powerful, manual freewheeling drive. See-through acrylic lid. Stainless steel body and basket. Soldered, chromed honey gate with direct flow so no honey sits on bottom. Easy to remove drive and basket for cleaning. Motor kit available from BetterBee. Pickup in Woodland. \$600. Call Laura at (530) 666-0713 or email Shlien@msn.com

SACRAMENTO AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

c/o Sacramento Beekeeping Supplies
2110 X Street

E-mail (newsletter editor): dugongs@msn.com

Address Correction Requested

—The Bee Line—
March 2006

Next Meeting -
Mar. 21 at 7:30 p.m.