

The Bee Line

2006—Issue 4

April 2006

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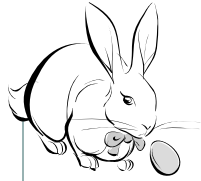
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Tips for the Month

Queens are now available so you may want to replace your queen if she's not laying good brood. If your queen is laying, then wait until May.

Upcoming Activities

Please join us for upcoming **meetings and activities** -

Tues., Apr. 18 – Dr. Eric Mussen, Extension Apiculturist, UC Davis Harry H. Laidlaw, Jr. Honey Bee Research Facility, will discuss the more important ongoing research projects and studies in the United States and elsewhere relating to the honeybee and beekeeping. Please join us for an informative evening!

Tues., May 16—Topic TBD. Ideas for programs? Please call Bob Rollins, VP.

Mid-August—Labor Day—California State Fair Beekeepers' Booth—*Volunteers* will be needed to staff the booth and share their love of bees and honey with the public. This year we also need new *co-coordinators* to work with State Fair officials to plan the booth and arrange for daily maintenance. RuthAnne Rose has served in this role for several years but has been ill* and is unable to take it on this year. Can you help? Please call Nancy Stewart at (916) 451-2337. (*Cards welcome!)

SABA's **regular meetings** are held the third Tuesday of each month (except July and August) **at 7:30 p.m.** at the Belle Cooledge 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. All are welcome!

Other 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.

Mentors Available—Members who want to learn more about beekeeping can seek mentoring from one of SABA's longer-time beekeepers. Usually the mentor finds it easiest to have you visit his or her bee yard but sometimes might be able to travel to you. If you are interested, please contact the mentor nearest you, and check out the "mentor profiles" on page 3 of this, and the March issue, of *The Bee Line*.

- * *George Bleekman*, (916) 791-0449, bleekman@surewest.net—Folsom, Folsom Lake, Roseville, Auburn
- * *Dennis Larson*, (916) 359-7864 or 481-4011, dlars@sbcglobal.net. – Arden area
- * *Howard Mann*, (916) 812-9855, hlmann@pacbell.net— North Highlands, Citrus Heights
- * *Ron Parsons*, (916) 386-1268—South Sacramento, Elk Grove
- * *Fred Stewart*, (916) 451-2337, sacbeek@cwnet.com—Sacramento city
- * *Bob Sugar*, (916) 408-2244, bobsugar@psyber.com— Lincoln, Rocklin

Bee Trivia

Answer to last month's q: It takes a bee about 8 pounds of honey to produce 1 pound of wax.

New question: Who is primarily credited for discovering "bee space"?

March Minutes & Program Notes

Program: The program phase of the Sacramento Area Beekeepers Association was called to order by President Howard Mann at 7:30 P.M., March 21, 2006, at the Belle Cooledge Community Center. A *special panel* of three of our most experienced, professional beekeepers, Ron Parsons, Fred Stewart, and Bob Sugar, were introduced by Vice-President Robert L. Rollins. The three began by reporting their hive status—number of viable hives in the fall as opposed to the number at the end of winter or beginning of spring. **Bob Sugar** reported 45 going in. Only 21 survived; most lost hives probably succumbed to mites. He stressed important measures to improve the health of hives, including the availability of sufficient pollen and nectar. **Ron Parsons** had 80 hives going in with only 8 surviving (90% loss); probably most, if not all, due to a combination of poor queens and the varroa mite. He mentioned the shifting of frames with brood from strong to weak or slow hives and the adding of young bees to the new box or weak hive. **Fred Stewart** mentioned that of the 40 hives going in, 30 survived, but they varied considerably in vigor or strength and number of bees. He uses sealed brood and introduces them in two stages over a period of a week or so. He stressed the need for sufficient brood, worker bees, pollen, and nectar. Many other tidbits of information, suggestions, and advice followed by panel members, including:

- Best queens are produced in May and June with a seven day window of opportunity for new queen.
- Swarming is natural and hard to prevent once the female worker bees begin the process.
- Putting a new box with frames at the bottom of the hive may help preventing swarming.
- Fred felt maybe we are losing many hives from tracheal mites, not varroa mites (ApaLite bar was used.)
- Old queens may be having a hard time surviving the winter.
- Feed bees at the appropriate time with sugar water and/or pollen patties.—may be critical just before winter
- Drones may be adversely affected by pesticides used for mites.
- Bob Sugar described his approach to starting a new hive with packaged bees/queen.
- Maximize efforts to improve steady building of worker populations and brood by appropriate feeding and monitoring of hive mite infestations.
- The importance of checking/managing mite populations.
- Fred Stewart urged periodic early spring hive examinations and treatments as needed.
- “Buckfast” queens appear to be more aggressive than other varieties.
- Varroa mites adversely affect drones more severely.
- Beekeepers need to train their eyes to quickly identify mites on bees when inspecting hives.
- Minnesota Hygienic Bees and SMR (“Suppressed Mite Resistance”) strains were discussed.



After the program ended 8:37 P.M., the **Business Meeting** was called to order by President Mann at 8:45 P.M. A guest visitor, Kate Washington, from *Sacramento News and Review* was introduced and welcomed. Ray Marler moved and Dennis Larsen seconded a motion to approve the minutes of February 21, 2006, as printed in the *Bee Line*. It was unanimously approved. The treasurer, Richard Cuny, reported a balance of \$6,989.00. This includes fees collected from recent beekeeping classes of February 25 (\$1,025), March 4 (\$730), and March 11 (\$800). Attendance at each class was 33, 21, and 23 individuals respectively. **Old Business:** We need to compensate the guest instructors for teaching the beekeeping classes. Dr. Eric Mussen paid for his own materials and Randy Oliver had his printed. It was determined that Randy Oliver would be paid \$300 including printing costs for the one class. Dr. Eric Mussen will be paid \$500 for teaching two classes. Some monies resulting from the beekeeping classes were used to help pay for the State Fair Bee Booth in prior years but the California State Beekeepers Association paid last year's fee in full. ...The volunteer beekeeping presentation at schools is still ongoing. ... One source of revenue is the SABA dues at \$15 annually. **New Business:** Preparations are being made to participate in the *Sacramento County Fair* to be held in May. Plans include a beekeeping booth and coordinated efforts to man it. Dennis Larson reported on the SABA proposed web site. We need to proceed with the acquisition of a name and 10 year domain registry. The monthly fee and other pertinent information are needed. Discussion followed on the site name. Ray Marler moved and Dennis Larson seconded a motion to acquire the domain name “beeline.org”. It was approved unanimously. Barney Merrill or his son may host the site and/or serve as webmaster. Members need to offer suggestions as to format and content—what they want included on the site. Dennis Larson moved and Cathy Schantz seconded a motion to identify and lock in important dates and sites for beekeeping events (e.g., beekeeping classes) for all of 2007. The motion was approved. **Information Items:** Russel Dalske will participate at the Sacramento Zoo event with an observation hive *if* it is not raining. Dennis Larson will study the need for a summer beekeeping class and report back in April. The WAS annual meeting (July 24-27) and the annual SABA July picnic (either Sat., 15 **or** 22 July) will not conflict. Meeting adjourned at 9:14 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, *Robert L. Rollins*, Acting Secretary

Raffle winners were Bob Sugar, Fred Stewart, Howard Mann, and Barney & Larue Merrill, each with a dozen eggs donated by Laura Shlien.

Bee Reading



Robbing the Bees: A Biography of Honey by Holley Bishop. Simon & Schuster, 2005.

Did you know that it takes eight pounds of nectar to produce one pound of wax, which is then used to build up to 35,000 cells? Or that honey has been used as an antiseptic for thousands of years and was an ingredient of many pharmaceuticals of the ancient Greeks and Egyptians? Or that the average pound of pollen has 100 grams of protein, 1000 mg of calcium and 150 mg of vitamin C? Or that early human military strategy often incorporated bees, in the form of small bombs (made of containers of bees) or poisonous honeys?

These are just a few of the fascinating bits of information on honey and honeybees Ms. Bishop has gathered since she became a beekeeper in suburban Connecticut several years ago. Her book intertwines honey and beekeeping history with a story of modern operations as she trails commercial beekeeper Don Smiley through a year in his bee yards of swampy northwest Florida. In the process we learn about the ups and downs of the honey economy, and how keepers gather such specialized products as tupelo honey. Ms. Bishop even shares some of the ancient honey recipes she's found along with her own "NYC blackout pasta" and Don Smiley's honey-based marinade (see below).

So for a fun and educational read about honey and bees – from the backyard to ancient Rome and modern commercial endeavors – this is a great read. Take it out in the yard this summer and enjoy while listening to your own bees.

Smiley's Marinade for Chicken or Fish: Combine in a glass or stainless steel bowl: 1/4 c. honey, juice of one lemon, pinch of black pepper, minced garlic, and hot sauce (optional). Smear onto chicken or fish while grilling, or let marinate meat for a few hours before roasting. Makes about 1/2 cup. - Review by Georgianna Pfof

More Mentor Profiles *See the front page for a complete list of mentors and how to contact them*

Ron Parsons, a construction contractor, began beekeeping as a boy when he and his brother (known as the "bee kids" of Wilton) collected a swarm in a box. Since then Ron has kept many bees, accumulated lots of practical bee knowledge, and now tends from 10 to 50 hives at a time. Ron served as SABA president in 2003 and 2004, and regularly participates in the Western Apiculture Society (WAS) conferences with his wife, MaryEllen, as well as volunteering time and demonstration and observation hives for SABA's classes and the State Fair bee booth.

Howard Mann, a retired engineer from the California Department of Water Resources, also became interested in beekeeping while a boy but didn't take it up until about 15 years ago when a neighbor offered him some equipment, and a swarm conveniently landed on one of his grape vines so he could hive it. Presently he tends four hives and is serving a second year as SABA's president, besides volunteering as a mentor and helping staff various fairs' bee booths coordinated by SABA.

Bob Sugar, a chemical testing engineer for CalTrans as well as a commercial beekeeper, began keeping bees in 1976 when he needed pollinators for his cucumbers. Bob currently keeps about 50 hives but has had as many as 200, and eagerly expands and shares his bee knowledge by participating in SABA, WAS and the California State Beekeepers Association (CSBA), and by serving as SABA's bee class coordinator (and other offices) for many years.

Fred Stewart, retired from CalTrans, keeps 75 to 100 hives for orchard pollination, and along with his wife, Nancy, owns and operates the Sacramento Beekeeping Supply. Fred has experience with queen rearing, and is active in the Northern California Queen Breeders Association as well as being a long-time active participant in SABA, WAS, and the CSBA, and providing observation hives for every occasion.

George Bleekman, a retired biology professor, also started beekeeping for the pollination benefits (for his fruit orchard in the mid-1980's), and now keeps up to 15 hives, specializing in cut comb honey. George enjoys sharing his bee know-how via classroom presentations to school children [see *volunteer opportunities on front page!*] and helping to organize some of the local fairs' bee booths, as well as coordinating SABA's mentoring program. He also enjoys touring beekeeping operations during his travels abroad and shares his photos with fellow SABA members.

Food Safety and Honey—item from the March 5, 2006 *Parade Magazine*

Q. You recently wrote about bees making honey. Germs must accumulate during this "handling." But I thought honey was sterile, meaning safe to eat. Does this mean my jar of honey contains dead germs?

A. Ah...well...yes. ... all foods contain bacteria. If a food has been sterilized and sealed (for example, in a can), the bacteria are dead. In contrast, the bacteria in milk are alive and well. That's why it needs refrigeration - to slow them down. If you leave milk on your kitchen counter, the bacteria will spoil it within hours. Even canned foods, once opened, must be refrigerated because bacteria in the environment quickly convene. When we freeze food, we stop bacteria in their tracks - but they don't die. As soon as they're thawed, they go right back to work. Honey, however, is its own preservative. Bacteria cannot thrive in such a sweet environment, so you can keep honey in the cupboard, alongside the cooked jams and jellies. - Contributed by George Bleekman

Honey Recipe of the Month

Honey Lemon Poke Cake

3/4 c. honey	2/3 c. cooking oil
2 c. sifted flour	3/4 c. fresh squeezed lemon juice
2-1/2 tsp. baking powder	2 c. powdered sugar, sifted
3 large eggs	Juice of two more lemons



Preheat oven to 350'. Blend together honey, eggs, and oil. Beat in flour, baking powder and lemon juice until have a smooth cake batter. Pour into approx. 9 x 9" or slightly larger baking pan and bake about 30 minutes (or until edges of cake begin to brown). While cake is baking, prepare lemon topping by mixing until smooth the powdered sugar and the juice of two more lemons. When cake is done, remove from oven and immediately poke holes all over cake through to the bottom with a large dinner fork or 2-tined meat fork. Then spread the topping evenly over the hot cake. Let it cool in the pan before cutting or serving. For a sharper lemon flavor, cut and freeze the cake overnight before serving (the juice in the topping "crystallizes" in the cake). - G. Pfost

Bee Classifieds

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? Please call Jerry Kimbro at (916) 803-0303.

ALWAYS WANTED: Your contributions of bee-related articles, tips, trivia, recipes and reviews for future newsletters. Email them to the editor at dugongs@msn.com or mail to 3517 57th St, Sacramento, 95820. Thanks!

TREELESS OPTION: Want to help the club save some printing and postage costs (and a few trees)? Sign up to receive the newsletter text via email. Email the editor at dugongs@msn.com—subject line "SABA Treeless."

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—
April 2006

Next Meeting -
Apr. 18 at 7:30 p.m.