

The Bee Line

2007—Issue 6

June 2007

2007 Club Officers

President: Bob Rollins

(916) 965-3875

Vice President: David Ogden

(916) 687-6977

Secretary: Ron Melliush

(916) 743-2703

Treasurer: Richard Cuny

(916) 971-1752

Other Committee Contacts:

Newsletter & Library:

Georgianna Pfost

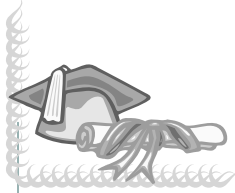
Finance: Dennis Larson

Donations: Nancy Stewart

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Mission: To promote interest in, and awareness of, the vital importance of the honeybee and beekeeping to agriculture, commerce, and the public at large.



Tips for the Month

Check to be sure you have honey coming in and that the bees are drawing out comb. As a super fills, move it up and put an empty one beneath it to encourage the bees to keep putting up honey while the nectar's flowing. Don't medicate during the honey flow.

Coming Events

Tues., June 19—7:30—SABA Meeting. Informal group discussion of summer management, almond pollination opportunities for hobbyists, and program and picnic planning. Ideas for future programs? Please call VP David Ogden.

June 24—30. 1st Annual National Pollinator Week. Take time this week to educate others about the importance of pollinators such as honey bees, and how they can help by planting bee-friendly plants, reducing use of pesticides, etc. See www.pollinator.org/pollinator_week.htm for more info.

Sat., July __ - Annual SABA Picnic date and place TBD.

Fri., Aug. 17 - Mon., Sep. 3 with Mondays closed (except Labor Day) - Calif. **State Fair Beekeeping Booth**—Volunteers are needed to educate the public about bees and beekeeping. Come Watch for sign up info in the next newsletter or call the Beekeeping Supply Store after mid-July at (916) 451-2337.

Aug. 19—23—Western Apicultural Society annual conference, Tucson. Pre-register by July 15 at <http://groups.ucanr.org/WAS>

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. All are welcome!

SABA Phone List Updates

Please add Milford & Linda Sutter of Sacramento (916) 688-7958 to your list.

More on Other Regional Bee Clubs

During your summer travels, check out some of the other beekeeping associations in our region. Use the contact info provided to confirm the current meeting place and time in case it's changed from latest info we have.

Alameda County Beekeepers meet the 2nd Tuesday each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Rotary Nature Center at Lake Merritt, 552 Bellevue, Oakland. For more info contact Stan@honeybee.com or (925) 458-3900.

Marin County Beekeepers meet the 1st Tuesday of each month (except July and August) at 7:30 p.m. at Draper Farms, 11 Sacramento Avenue, San Anselmo. See www.marincountybeekeepers.org

Mt. Diablo Beekeepers meet the 2nd Thursday of the month (except Nov, Dec) at Heather Farms Garden Center, 1540 Marchbanks, Walnut Creek. See www.diablobees.org

San Francisco Beekeepers meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, SF. See their website at www.sfbee.org for links to other regional beekeeping resources.

San Mateo Beekeepers meet the 1st Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at 751 Alameda De Las Pulgas, Belmont. Contact suzbees@aol.com for latest info.

May Minutes & Program Notes



The Meeting of the Sacramento Area Beekeepers Association was called to order by President R.L. Rollins at 7:32 p.m. on May 15, 2007 at the Belle Cooledge Community Center. The minutes of last month as printed in *The Bee Line* were approved, and the Treasurer's financial report showed over \$5,000 currently in the SABA account. A brief segment of the **business meeting** then followed in order to clear pending items from last month. This included approving (1) a donation from SABA of \$500 to the Harry H. Laidlaw, Jr., Bee Research Facility, UC Davis, and (2) a retroactive \$100 per class increase in payment for the Spring beekeeping class instructor fees effective April 1, 2007. (This action increased the payment from \$250 to \$350 per instructor per class.) Printing expenses were additional and also had already been paid. These actions were unanimously ratified by the members present.

Program: Janet Brisson of Country Rubes in Grass Valley gave us an update of their continuing efforts to avoid the use of any chemicals in hive management of the *Varroa* mite. Refinements and better timing procedures in the use of powdered sugar to dislodge mites have shown real promise as effective techniques. Secondary techniques, particularly drone management, which includes the use of special done frames to isolate more of the mites, is also proving helpful. Numerous questions, answers, and discussion during and after her presentation helped clarify specific aspects of the management techniques. [For more info on their screened bottom boards and use of powdered sugar, check their website at www.countryrubes.com.]

Business: The business meeting reconvened at 8:45 p.m. Nancy Stewart informed us of the passing of **Ruth Anne Rose** on Monday, May 14, 2007 [and **Frank Petersen** passed away a few days later]. Ruth Anne will be remembered for her devotion to beekeeping, her educational beekeeping presentations in public and private schools, and her role as SABA coordinator of the beekeeping booth with State Fair personnel. Due to the absence of Ron Parsons, the status of the use of **name tags** was deferred. Also deferred was the current status of SABA meeting **refreshments**. President Rollins will compile a list of current and past **committees**, their functions and staffing after consulting with Nancy Stewart and other members for their current or historic input. The **SABA web site** does not yet reflect necessary changes and correction of misinformation. This needs to be addressed by the webmaster. It was asked if the web site could also have a feature so members may signup to be electronically reminded of upcoming meetings and events. Vice-President David Ogden will report details of the **annual July SABA picnic** at our June 19 meeting, including the date, time, and location. Food/beverage assignments, member helpers, and related services will also be addressed. No information on participation of SABA members at the **County Fair** was available. There was considerable discussion about the possibility of sponsoring **Fall beekeeping classes** similar to last year's format (e.g., focus on Fall management of bees and basic beekeeping). Should we hold a "Becoming a Beekeeper" class after the State Fair or on the same Saturday as a "Fall Management" class before the Fair? Dennis Larsen agreed to report at the June 19 meeting on the feasibility and nature of the course (s), including the date, time, and location to be submitted for member consideration. It is hopeful that by the next meeting some information on the **State Fair bee booth** will be available. Please consider volunteering to fill Ruth Anne's role as SABA coordinator of the State Fair beekeeping booth. The local members of SABA may have an opportunity to assist a major beekeeping organization in preparing materials for their **annual meeting** in Sacramento in January 2008. More information will be forthcoming. Reminder: As the executive committee meets at 7:00 p.m. (just before the SABA meeting), agenda items for the business meeting may be submitted then, prior to the 7:30 p.m. meeting. The meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM. Respectfully submitted, *Robert L. Rollins*

Summer Reading!

Looking for a good book for your summer beach or porch reading? Or an interesting video to view? Check out the list of materials in SABA's own library (included in your April newsletter) and contact the current librarian at dugongs@sbcglobal.net or (916) 457-3113 to arrange to pick up the materials you'd like at a club meeting or other location. Learn while you lounge this summer!



For example, one of the interesting titles from our collection which I just finished is *The Art & Adventure of Beekeeping* by Ormond and Harry Aebi (1975). The book is a first person narrative of this Santa Cruz area beekeeping son and father's lifelong experiences working with and learning ever more about bees. Through the personal experiences shared, readers will also learn a lot of helpful ideas themselves, especially for capturing swarms, dividing and combining hives, and making equipment. And the authors' obvious love of bees makes the reading flow easily and lessons memorable, even when it presents fairly detailed and technical information. - *G. Pfost*

Colony Collapse Disorder theories and recent research.

Informal notes by Laura Shlien taken at a talk by Dr. Eric Mussen at the May 3, 2007 UCD Entomology Club meeting

Researchers at UCSF found that what was once known as *nosema apis* might have mutated into *nosema ceranae*, now classified as a fungus. Five years ago, this was thought to be the cause of up to 80% losses in Spain but this was during the summer. In the U.S., *nosema* losses occurred during the winter. (By the way, this *nosema* came from the same species of bee that brought us the *Varroa* mite.)



Bees have low ability to detoxify. They have an overall low immune system. Propolis kills fungi for them. And the best fed bees are the healthiest. In CCD, there were live but sluggish bees with fungi growing internally. The soil and air-borne microbes infect weak bees.

Causes of weak bees: If malnutrition occurs in August and September when the winter bees are being reared (e.g., last year there was a small honey crop, down 87%). If the lack of bloom in September causes bee malnutrition, or the soil was too hot and dry due to drought, this can affect pollen. Cold nights can interfere with meiosis, producing sterile pollen. So this pollen might have fewer than the usual proteins, vitamins, and minerals. (But no one has investigated the pollen.)

Exotic Causes of weak bees: Neonicotinoids {Imidacloprid} is used as a seed treatment, a side crop dressing, and a topical grow amendment. It is systemic in the plants. The residue is persistent in the soil.

There are some substances that are stimulating in small amounts and damaging in large amounts. For example: A small amount of nicotine increases the metabolism, heart rate, and memory retention. A little bit more nicotine and you are back to your normal rates. In excess, nicotine is damaging to all systems. This is also the case with Imidacloprid. In a laboratory experiment timing bees' ability to locate and pick up a sugar source, a tiny dose of Imidacloprid increased their learning curve, a medium dose put them back on a normal curve, and after too much, they no longer responded to this sugar scent at all, nor did they pick it up and bring it back as expected. Dr. Mussen speculated that this might not be due to poor memories so much as to a state of intoxication. Scent is recognized in a small clump of cells at the base of the antenna and hence is not a brain-mediated activity.

There is some evidence of the nectar toxicity from the red gum eucalyptus after it has been treated with Imidacloprid. There may also have been reports of toxicity in hummingbirds at the same trees. ... Last year the French banned products containing Imidacloprid and are still having high rates of CCD loss. They are claiming this is because of the residue in the soil.

Conspiracy theories: Chemtrails. These are the clouds seen behind jets. The Discovery Channel ran a program on this, titled "Best Evidence" on February 22, 2007.

Cell phones. There was an experiment where they put cell phones into hives, no phones in two hives, and then took tubes of bees away from the hive and waited to see which bees returned. There was a greater return in the phone-free hives. However, Dr. Mussen objected to the experiment design, because there was no foreign object [for example, a cell phone without a battery] in the control hives. Furthermore, it would depend on whether worker or young bees got into the tubes, and what direction they were taken from the hive. Bees navigate by polarized light and landmarks, not electromagnetic fields, so the cell phone theory has no basis in bee biology.

So far, CCD is global but only in temperate zones. It does not touch Africanized bees.

Comments and questions: A bee can drink chilled Eucalyptus nectar in the morning and get chilled inside, in which case it will drop to the ground. If it falls in the shade, it will die. If it falls in the sun, it will warm up again and go back to the hive. ... Other theories that have been put forth have to do with moisture in the hive.

Overall conclusion: Periodically, there is a combination of drought and cold nights that may interfere with pollen meiosis, leaving a pollen product that is deficient in nutrients. In other words, the bees have been eating Twinkies instead of nutritional meals. Then they get run down and produce a weak winter bee, and by the time the spring comes they simply haven't the gusto to rev up and reproduce in the normal fashion.

What is really unfortunate is that no one is studying the pollen. Dr. Mussen noted that at least six people who might have been studying this have lost their positions for some reason or other.

Honey Recipe of the Month

Frozen Honey Yogurt



2 cups 2% low-fat milk 3/4 cup honey
Dash salt 2 eggs, beaten
2 cups plain low-fat yogurt 1 Tablespoon vanilla

Heat milk in large saucepan over medium-low heat. Do not boil. Stir in honey and salt. Pour small amount of milk mixture into eggs; return to remaining milk mixture in saucepan. Cook and stir over medium-low heat 5 minutes or until mixture coats back of wooden spoon. Do not boil. Remove from heat and cool completely. Stir in yogurt and vanilla. Refrigerate until cold. Turn into 13x9x2-inch metal pan. Freeze until firm, stirring every 20 to 30 minutes or freeze in ice cream maker according to manufacturer's directions.

Reprinted from the National Honey Board's recipe collection at www.honey.com

Bee Classifieds

FOR SALE: 16 shallow boxes w/ frames & some new wax and plastic sheets, 3 deep boxes, 4 sets inner and outer covers and bottom boards, several homemade varroa screen boards, 2 wood-framed queen excluders, basic smoker, entrance reducers, frame spacing tool, wire for foundation, \$300. "Beecool" solar fan, \$50; electric uncapping knife, \$25; plastic uncapping tank w/honey gate, \$50; new Fritz extractor 3/15 and 5 gal bucket w/ honey gate, \$700.00 . Call Laura at (530) 666-9713 or email Shlien@msn.com

TREELESS NEWS: To help the club **save trees** and postage and printing costs, you can receive the newsletter text via email. Just email the editor, subject Treeless SABA News, at dugongs@sbcglobal.net Thanks!

SACRAMENTO AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

c/o Sacramento Beekeeping Supplies
2110 X Street

E-mail (newsletter editor): dugongs@sbcglobal.net

Address Correction Requested

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