



2011 CLUB OFFICERS

President: Kate Morton
sabapresident@gmail.com

Vice President: Tex Winn
sabavp01@gmail.com

Secretary: Anita Winn
sabasecretary@gmail.com

Treasurer: Vacant

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

- Donations: Nancy Stewart
- Educational Classes: Tom Mock
- Hospitality: Brenda Mock
- Inventory: Paul Newman
- Library: Doug & Gail Houck
- Membership: Howard Mann
- Mentor: George Bleekman
- Webmaster: Martha Maldonado
- Newsletter: Richard Begley
sabaeditor@gmail.com

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Mission Statement:

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

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know about bee breath? We have buttoned up our hives for the winter, hoping to have provided the proper volume inside the hive and to have placed the stored honey and pollen in the correct position for the bees to have access. The bees have also done their job of getting the nest ready for winter by using propolis to seal unwanted spaces between the boxes and any cracks at the top cover. Ahh, between our efforts and their efforts, a nice cozy home for the winter!



But did you know we must also give consideration to "bee breath"? Yes, bee breath! The two primary waste products of the bees respiration (bee breath) are H₂O (water) and CO₂ (carbon dioxide). The key to allowing the bees to control the levels of these products is VENTILATION. We can clearly see the results of lack of ventilation from moisture; black moldy deposits on the wood on the inside of the supers. Visual clues to lack of carbon dioxide ventilation are not available. However, one can reasonably conclude if ventilation is lacking for one it is also lacking for the other.

In the atmosphere, the CO₂ level is about 392 ppm by volume. (This varies by time of year and to some degree by region.) When the inside of the hive gets in the range of 1% to 2% (10,000 to 20,000 ppm) the bees work to force ventilation by fanning. Studies have been done regarding the negative impacts of excess CO₂ levels, and various hypothesis resulted. But I don't believe one needs a scientific result to conclude that if the bees begin to control the air quality with 1 to 2 percent of CO₂, then as beekeepers we are obligated to follow their lead and assist as best we can. After all, we are the ones who have placed them in hive boxes designed for our convenience.

There are obviously various ways to assist the bees ability to ventilate, but it is clear it must be considered. I have chosen to foster ventilation by using screened bottom boards, a screened vent area cut into the inner cover and using spacers to assure that the top telescoping cover does not block the air flow. I also use follower boards which provide space on both outside edges of the supers.

We knew that bees control the temperature in the nest but had we ever considered that they also monitor their air quality? Aren't they just the most amazing little insects!

President's Corner

Looking back on the many accomplishments our SABA members have made this past year is truly something we can all be proud of. Great ideas for speakers at our monthly meetings, well attended classes, enthusiastic participation at the State Fair, County Fairs and numerous other events make this a wonderful organization to be a part of. With the continued support of all, 2012 will also be a memorable time to be a beekeeper in SABA.

Seasons Greetings to everyone; health, happiness and honey to sweeten your day.

Kate Morton



Business Meeting Minutes, November 15, 2011

Following announcements by George Bleekman regarding an upcoming Z-Specialty Food event in Woodland, Sun. Dec. 4th, (see www.zspecialtyfood.com/news.php), information regarding Ultra-Bee for feeding of bees, and the availability of SABA logo shirts, the business meeting was called to order at 7:20PM.

Election ballots for election of new officers were passed out to voting members. See election results elsewhere in this newsletter. New members and guests were introduced and quorum was met with 54 members present. A sign-up sheet for the Holiday dinner/meeting potluck was circulated.

Acceptance of October minutes as published was called for. Paul Buchanan moved to accept minutes as published; 2nd to the motion made by Jeremy Smyte; unanimous vote in favor, motion passed.

Treasurer report was presented by President Kate Morton who reported that SABA has \$6,585.81 in savings and \$2,628.50 in checking. Kate also stated that \$1,000.00 will be donated to the Harry Laidlaw Foundation. It was also noted that SABA is yet to be reimbursed by the State Beekeeping Association for state fair expenses incurred by SABA.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: **Classes:** Classes –Tom Mock- absent. President Kate Morton made mention of SABA's 1st class this coming Dec 18th. Randy Oliver to be doing a beginners class. See newsletter for schedule of classes Ernie Buda gave briefing and presented flyers with information regarding the Queen Propagation class **Events:** Paul Newman-absent –no information available **Scholarships** Bill Hall –absent-no information available **Event training:** Dennis Larson – Next meeting to be held Nov. 17th. -

UNFINISHED BUSINESS George Bleekman reported that 100 patches had been ordered. Patches are in transit and should be available at the Holiday potluck meeting. Also, if anyone is interested in the denim shirts they can contact George.

NEW BUSINESS: No new business at this time. President Kate Morton expressed to the members that SABA is always open for volunteers to assist on the various committees. George Bleekman moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Dennis Larson, the floor voted in favor - meeting adjourned at 7:45PM.

Election of Officers for 2012

Election Chairman George Bleekman, conducted election proceedings. He explained that current by-laws specify one vote per paid membership. Ballots were circulated amongst voting members for the following offices and candidates:

President: Kate Morton, Incumbent; Vice President: Bob Sugar, Patty Kelly; Secretary: Terri Coggeshall; Treasurer: Jim Russell.

Ballots were collected and counted with the following results:

President – Kate Morton was re-elected to a second term, unopposed.. **Vice-President** – Patty Kelly. **Secretary** – Terri Coggeshall. **Treasurer** – Jim Russell, who will assume the position of Treasurer, which has been vacant since April.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Marilyn Rittenour, Placerville - **Nick Kelly**, Orangevale - **Linda Kohler & the Kohler Family**, Sacramento

Links O' the Month

(copy and paste in your browser)

- ❖ Possible signs of progress in Varroa control
<http://www.basf.com/group/pressrelease/P-10-213>
- ❖ When store-bought honey isn't the real McCoy
<http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2011/11/tests-show-most-store-honey-isnt-honey/>

Spotted an interesting website or blogspot lately? Share it with other members at sbaeditor@gmail.com!



Lincoln couple would like one or more hives placed on their property. Contact Lee or Kay Clausen at 916.781.6655.

BOOK NOTES

On a recent perusal of our public library's "new arrivals" shelf, I found "The Beekeeper's Bible" (apparently first published in 2010 by HarperCollins and republished in 2011 by Stewart, Tabori & Chang). As the title implies, it's a collection of information on bees and beekeeping, from general history and biology to types of hives and honey and wax recipes but it's intended not just for current beekeepers but also to acquaint newcomers with bees and beekeeping in the wake of all the CCD news.

I admit I didn't have time to read it all while I had it checked out (it's over 400 pages!) but I found it generally informative and particularly enjoyed the numerous photos and illustrations--from types of bees and their pests to common flowering plants useful to honeybees, various types of bee hives (including some I'd never seen before) and even a sample hive recordkeeping form to use. So if you're looking for another good bee read, check this out, and if you know someone just getting interested in bees, this would make a great gift. -

Georgianna Pfost



The Fear Factor by Serge Labesque

[This month, instead of continuing with the second part of the story of my first bees, I decided at the last minute to write about a noteworthy facet of the 2011 Annual CSBA Convention that was held in Rohnert Park in mid-November.]

Most beekeepers and scientists say that many factors play a role in the plight of honey bees: the widespread use of numerous pesticides; loss of habitat; stressful hive management practices; malnutrition; new and not-so-new pests and diseases; the list goes on. I agree with this view. But, based on what I witnessed at the Convention, I postulate that one of the main causes of the demise of the bees that is never mentioned may simply be fear! Beekeepers are afraid of losing their colonies. Symptoms of this fear were evident in most of the presentations I attended, most of the exhibits I saw, and in many of the discussions I heard.

Fear is the worst of the diseases, and the fear of losses, which is more contagious than AFB, is endemic among beekeepers! Here is how it works: When beekeepers succumb to this affliction, they grab anything out of the arsenal of available treatments that they think might protect their bees. They shove these products along with "super queens" down into their hives, and they douse and feed their bees with unbelievable substances. This blatant interference with the process of natural selection weakens the bees by temporarily keeping alive unfit colonies, thus allowing them to spread their inept genes.

Compounding the problem, the fear of colony losses is spread between beekeepers. This is especially striking with new beekeepers, as they heed the recommendations of their mentors. They treat their hives, whether the bees are sick or not. I have been there. I treated my colonies when I started keeping bees. Only because I was told to. Only because the same advice-threat was printed in all the books that I read, and because they instilled in me the fear of losing my bees. And no other alternative was offered. This was particularly stupid on my part, because my first bees were strong, healthy, and had been on their own, totally unmanaged, for well over ten years. Those bees were screaming at me that they were fine, that it was not necessary to place awful chemicals in their brood nests. And yet I did it, only because I did not yet have the guts or the savvy to challenge the dubious knowledge of "experienced" beekeepers.

I have fully recovered from this phobia. The bees that are in my hives are going about their bee business without any fear-inspired help from me. They depend on their own defense mechanisms to stay healthy, and I trust them to know better than I do how to fight off any of their health problems. I plainly enjoy them and their untainted honey. Don't get me wrong: I lose some colonies once in a while. But instead of being afraid of these losses, I look at them as beneficial events, as a way the species and nature have of eliminating unfit elements. I do not object.

The Convention was a barrage of presentations permeated with advice and ads for this or that treatment. Commercial beekeepers made up the vast majority of the attendees. Since their livelihood depends on bees, they are chronically afraid of losing too many of their colonies. They firmly believe that treating hives is an absolute necessity. So, they came to the Convention to hear what the latest treatment available is. For sure, they were copiously served! On their minds were truckloads of bees, tanker-truck loads of syrup, pollination contracts and honey crops. For most, that's too much stuff to allow them to also ponder the heavy blows their practices inflict on the honey bee species. Their only interest is to keep their operations going at any cost.

There were also some small-scale beekeepers present. That's what the CSBA calls those of us who do not make a living off their bees. Many were new or aspiring beekeepers. In the Q&A sessions, they frequently asked: "So, what should I treat my bees with? How should I apply this? How often?" I did not hear a single "Do I really need to treat my bees?" I can't blame them, because I've been there and done that.

But what about the speakers? Microphone in hand, they are supposed to be "the authority". Of course they have to have answers. So, they launch into long speeches that list all the treatment options they know of... and they omit the most important one: To not treat bees for pests or diseases at all. Possibly, they are the main vectors of this fear disease.

BRAINWASHED! Beekeepers are brainwashed from the very beginning. From the moment we think about having bees, we are taught to fear colony losses and to treat our hives in order to avoid these losses. It's not surprising that treatments for pests and diseases have become an integral part of having bees!

Well, not quite, not everywhere! This is no longer happening in my apiaries or in the apiaries of many others who place their trust in the bees' innate strength and who value the proven power of natural selection more than short-sighted human technologies. Better yet: There are now some beekeepers, who are questioning the validity of the methods used in conventional apiculture. Beekeeping is changing, and this is great!

As beekeepers, we owe it to the people interested in keeping bees to abandon the scare tactics and to at least offer them the option of not interfering with the process of natural selection when managing hives. For me, it is not even an option. As I see it, using no treatment whatsoever for pests or diseases is the only way to keep the bees strong and healthy, to preserve their free, self-sufficient and non-domesticated nature. This, we owe to the species.

December in the Apiaries

With the disappearance of the summer bees, the populations of our hives have rapidly dropped. Even though some bees fly and may forage for a few hours on sunny days, most of their time is spent in clusters. With little or no brood to rear, this is a period of rest for the colonies. When this is the case, our bees do not have to produce much heat and, consequently, their honey consumption is minimal. This period of broodlessness is one of the few times in the year when varroa mites have no place to hide and reproduce. It is a great opportunity for the bees that possess good grooming behavior to eliminate these parasites, or at least to reduce their population. Brood rearing will resume soon after the winter solstice.

At this time of year in the apiary, it is better to keep our curiosity in check and our interaction with our bees to the minimum necessary: an occasional inspection of the exterior condition of the hives; keeping an eye on the monitoring trays; placing an ear against the side of the hives when there is no visible activity; observing the flight paths and entrances on warm sunny days. Any disturbance or jostling of the resting hives should be avoided. Only in rare instances of emergency should we open a hive. There is in fact very little that we can do with our bees now, but we must shut down or remove any failed hives without delay so that they do not present a risk of contamination for other colonies. Yes, robbing can happen at any time of the year.

Reflecting on the past season keeps us thinking about our bees. For this purpose, our notes are invaluable sources of information. This year again, the cool and wet spring almost entirely eliminated the spring honey flow. It was followed by a rather cold summer that brought only dearth for hives that depend on natural nectar flows. If measured in terms of honey production, this year was probably the worst I've seen since I started keeping bees. However, on the bright side, there were few cases of disease. The mite populations remained low and the hives went into winter with adequate stores. It was interesting to note that most hives shut down brood rearing early in the fall.

One of the lessons that I am drawing from this past season was administered by the unexpected November 1st strong winds. They did some spectacular damage in my main apiary. Next year, I will definitely have my hives secured for winter before the end of October.

Now is the time to clean, assemble and prepare frames and equipment for next season.

This month:

- ❖ Inspect the exterior condition of the hives:
- ❖ Hive tops should be properly set and secured.
- ❖ Observe the landing boards and the ground in front of the hives.
- ❖ Verify that the hive entrances remain unobstructed.
- ❖ On nice days, observe the flight paths and the bee activity at the entrances.
- ❖ Observe monitoring trays. The clusters should remain centered in order to maintain access to their stores.
- ❖ Ensure that hives are adequately ventilated.
- ❖ Verify that mice have not entered hives (telltale clues of their presence are visible on the monitoring trays, as coarse pieces of comb, mouse feces, etc.).
- ❖ Keep an eye on the colonies that still carry large brood nests (lots of finely chewed up pieces of brood cappings are visible on the trays), and make a note of this. The risk for these colonies is that they may run short of stores at the end of winter or in early spring.

At home:

- ❖ Clean and scorch tools and equipment.
- ❖ Scrub your smoker.
- ❖ Build and repair beekeeping equipment for next season.
- ❖ Review notes from the year.
- ❖ Plan next season (evaluate the need for equipment and bees).
- ❖ Read and learn more about bees and beekeeping.

Happy Holidays to all of you from the Labesques!

Serge Labesque © 2011



Winter Preparation / Ready for Spring by George Bleekman

O.K, so you didn't get everything done on your beekeeping "To Do" list. You're not alone. This is a problem facing all beekeepers, but there is hope!

As I sit at the word processor, computer to most of us, I can look out at the Tuff Shed I call my Honey House and see over 200 empty and cleaned wooden frames hanging on racks on both sides of the outside walls and another 50 to 70 not-yet-cleaned frames in a pile on a stand. This pile calls to me each day and says, "Clean me, clean me": spring is on its way. I know what I must accomplish before spring. Do you know what you might want to accomplish before spring?

Do your bees have protection? Now that you have experienced this winter, you should know. Have you given them the best living conditions for our winter months? Winters here are generally mild compared to northern, eastern and mid-western states, but when we do get storms they can place undue stress on our bees and their homes. Even prolonged periods of low temperatures, overcast skies, and mild winds keep our bees from flying. As far as moving your hives now, you can't, or shouldn't even consider moving to a new site location. Here are some considerations for next summer in preparation for the winter months.

SITE LOCATION:

The hive bodies used today are simply boxes with wooden sides/tops/bottoms which allow temperatures outside the hive to be almost as cold (or hot) as the inside. The bees can help moderate the cluster temperatures but they are only insects with limited capacity to cool/warm their immediate cluster space. Coupled with water (rain) and wind, the inhabitants may suffer undue stress and the wind chill can be enough to endanger all of the bees within. You may insulate (wrap) your hives which, if done correctly, will reduce wide swings in ambient internal temperatures. With applying a wrap a new problem arises. Internal moisture, brought about by the breathing (respiration) of the bees, if contained within the hive, transforms the interior into a cool, dripping RAIN FOREST. Most of us in the valley do not insulate our hives so an alternative strategy might be valuable. Building a wind break on the side of the hive most prone to chilling winds during our winter could be effective. Many urban hobby beekeepers in the Sacramento Valley have fences surrounding their property. You can make use of this valuable wind break if the fence is solid. A lean-to with an open side, a three-sided shed, space behind a barn if it provides protection, garage, shed, etc. might provide the protection the bees need while you take into account your neighbors privacy/safely and the bee's general flight path.¹

- ❖ Cleansing flights can occur regularly here in our winter climate and reducing the winter winds will encourage the bees to take these flights. Winds in the range of 11 to 14 mph will usually "ground" most of the bees in your hives. Prolonged low temperatures can also keep your bees inside the hive, which prevents cleansing flights.
- ❖ Can you make changes this season? No, it's far too late this far into the season, but consider these important site projects for next year.

WATER IN THE HIVE:

If you use a screened bottom board, water entering the hive from the outside landing board/entrance may not be a problem because the excess water can exit through the screen. If you have a solid hive bottom, consider raising the back end of the hive box enough so that water will not accumulate inside the bottom area. Water on inside the hive will eventually cause numerous unwanted side effects including the initiation of mold/fungus growth, issuing a death sentence for the bees in an otherwise normally dry internal environment. Capillary action will occur as rain water drains from the top cover and enters the hive through the space between the top cover and the hive sides unless procolized. Keep your bees dry!!

NEW AND OLD FRAMES:

Although beekeepers are often slow to be proactive on an issue, this is one you may wish to tackle BEFORE the need for fully functional frames arises. It takes me one hour to completely remove the old comb (trying to save the wires), clean the wax and debris from the top and bottom grooves, remove the burr comb and gently torch the wood, at the joints and in the grooves, of five to six frames. Then I may have to rewire and then replace the wax foundation. Yes it's time consuming, but why continue to throw money at your hobby with always buying new?

Good News (and not such good news). If you have lots of money you can simply toss the old frames and buy new. For large operations this may be cost effective. For the hobby beekeeper it may be wise to attempt to reduce the outflow of cash as well as having fun with the "little things". 1. Construct your own simple embedding and wiring board². 2. Buy disassembled wooden frames and assemble them. 3. Buy the appropriate foundation and embed it in the frames. (You can also buy wooden frames and embed them with plastic foundation....if you find plastic more to your liking). Somehow I believe that the art of beekeeping involves the satisfaction of building simple pieces of equipment. It is not rocket science and generally does not require sophisticated equipment. However this philosophy does impact your time and to many of us, "time is money". Being retired means I enjoy taking the time to save money and experience the joy of accomplishment. The bottom line is, are you ready for frames when you need them, either by purchasing them or partly building them? If you use plastic frames and foundation you are in another world of management. You can read about the advantages and disadvantages of plastic frames/foundation in most intermediate beekeeping books. Although I have used plastic, I no longer subscribe to this equipment. On the other hand, I know commercial beekeepers who use only plastic or a combination of wood and plastic.

Winter Preparation / Ready for Spring

When do you change out (retire) your frames/foundation? One of the major sources of disease and infection comes from "old" foundation filled with debris, dead bees and beeswax that has outlived its value. Some research indicates that old wax may contain accumulated amounts of pesticides, which in sub-lethal amounts may not be troublesome, but when accumulated over a few years of use may reach concentrations harmful to bees and perhaps to those who consume the honey stored in that wax. Yes, the bees may clean up old frames, but at what cost? For new beekeepers the first season comb is a healthy and clean looking yellow light-orange color and when the cells are filled with honey and capped, an almost off white color indicates the honey is ripe. This condition is certainly encouraging to all beekeepers and it should be. With each passing year the comb is used, it becomes darker and darker and in some cases almost approaching black. When the comb becomes dark brown, or even before, and is over two years old, consideration should be given to remove and replace it with new foundation. Old wax comb can build up hard chemicals and antibiotics along with "vermin" of all sorts and that environment is not one in which you would live, so why provide it for your bees? In my hives I have a two year rotation system (based upon observation) and I replace the comb with fresh foundation on a regular basis. If you have the opportunity to purchase "old and used" equipment, even if you KNOW the beekeeper, you are gambling that the equipment is "clean". It isn't. An investment of new (package or other) bees may result in a large loss of your own making. There are methods of sanitizing *formerly used* equipment, but that is another story.

FOUR LEGGED FRIENDS

House guests you would rather not encounter are our four-legged friends which, although they can make our lives miserable, are simply doing their job and that is to forage for food where ever they can. Proactive strategies to prevent/reduce damage by the opportunists appear to be an ongoing problem for some of us. Numerous publications provide advice regarding the prevention/reduction of critter damage which can annoy the beekeeper and impact valuable time spent in and out of the apiary, not to mention the cost of repairing or replacing bees and equipment. (*Have you noticed that this hobby is NOT inexpensive?*) One of the best sources for advice on this issue are those descriptions in Ross Conrad's 2007 book entitled, NATURAL BEEKEEPING, Chapter 7.³ Winter months provide some "down time" which can be effectively utilized by constructing simple devices which can be deployed year after year without reinventing the wheel. Conrad describes a raccoon/skunk board which operates to discourage these animals. Predation on hive bees is accomplished by nocturnal trips to the apiary, standing in front of the hive and scratching the brood box or entrance platform which results in curious bees exiting the hive. As the bees emerge the animal swats or in some way stuns the bees and enjoys a late night snack.....or more. The key to prevention is at the point of attack. A plywood board 12" X 18" in size can be constructed with nails hammered into one flat surface so that they protrude through the opposing surface to the height of approximately 1/2 inch. When placed on the ground directly below the hive entrance and with the sharp ends of the protruding nails facing up, only the most persistent raccoon or skunk will try to defeat the device. These critters are fast learners and will, after trying to compromise the barrier, likely return. They will "play" with the nail board and try to move it aside, but you, the wily beekeeper, have staked the board to the soil. A less labor intensive strategy is to purchase carpet tack strips and attach them to the hive landing board or entrance in appropriate positions.

An excellent winter project is the construction of hive stands. Pallets (free) or cinder blocks require only their purchase and placement as needed. If you feel raising the hive on a three foot stand would serve your purposes, and those of your bees, NOW is the time to construct them in your own style. The appropriate 2" X 4" boards, construction grade, along with deck screws make very nice stands. The day you will need to put them into service is NOT the day you need to be buying the lumber for construction. Carefully consider your justification for stands including the pros and cons.

Some *advantages* would be:

- ❖ Hives on 3ft. stands are elevated for potential pest control.
- ❖ Bottom boards are not as subject to water damage during winter months.
- ❖ Debris falls far from the bottom of the hive with screened bottom boards.
- ❖ The potential for high growing weeds to block the bee's flight path is reduced.
- ❖ Skunks and raccoons may be deterred from predation.
- ❖ With one deep and one medium super, less bending over when lifting.

Some *disadvantages* would be:

- ❖ Hive management becomes awkward and unmanageable when additional supers reach a height where they are too heavy to lift comfortably.
- ❖ Inspecting a hive/super when you must stand on a step stool to perform the inspection. If the ground is soft, the step stool/ladder may be unstable.



Winter Preparation / Ready for Spring

SMALL ITEMS: These are easy and not so time-consuming projects.

SMOKER: Have you ever cleaned your smoker? I don't mean just dumping out the ashes! Each smoker has a removable, perforated disc barrier in the base that can fall out when removing ashes. Remove this barrier and clean the air vent at the bottom of the unit. Rub the interior sides with a brush.

HIVE TOOL: Owning two different types is a "good thing". The one with the turned up end is excellent for scraping propolis, burr and bridge comb as well as opening a hive. The one with the "hook" is invaluable for lifting/removing frames without damaging them as well as opening the hive. Are your tools visible when lost in the "field". Paint yours now - bright red. I must have 12 of them somewhere in the apiary and I usually find them when the riding mower runs across one and slings it into the wooden fence like a Bowie Knife - not a good thing. Weeds have a habit of hiding these tools.

VEIL and or SUIT. Have you ever had "bees in your bonnet?" It's a bit unnerving. Sew up those openings that bees always seem to find - don't say, "I should have".

WOODEN WARE: If each year you paint your wooden ware with exterior latex paint you will save money in the long run and your wooden ware will outlast wood that has not been protected in some manner. Beginning beekeepers who don't treat the exterior with some sort of seal are, in time, valued customers of beekeeping resellers in our area. Chris Harp of BeesLive in New Paltz, NY paints his exterior wooden ware with a concoction of bee propolis dissolved in Isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol in a 50/50 ratio. I visited his apiary in 2007 and again in early January 2010. His 5 year-old hives look like new. He paints this solution on the hive exterior and in a short time the alcohol evaporates leaving the propolis as a seal. The bees naturally "varnish" the interior of their hives with propolis and so can you on the outside. Chris then "paints" beeswax over the dried propolis seal. Some commercial beekeepers dip their woodenware in vats of beeswax or paraffin. Where do you get propolis? I save all of my scrapings each season and in time build up a small supply. My beeswax comes from old foundation placed in my solar melter (a summer project only). Propolis can be purchased from sales@draperbee.com, a Millerton, PA supplier.

HIVE BODY, SUPERS or NUCS: Will you need one for enlarging a split or hiving a swarm? Buy them "broken down" and assemble them yourself. Don't wait until you need one.....and you will need one or more at some time. Compare buying the lumber and milling your own parts to purchasing ready made. For the small hobbyist ready-made may be the way to go.

FEEDING: Entering your brood box or where ever the "cluster" is located when the temperatures are low is not recommended management. I will not open the hive in less than 60 to 65 degree F. temperature on a quiet (no wind), sunlit early afternoon. Once I put the bees to "sleep" for the winter, I resist looking in the hive for several months. You should be aware that as we enter spring the winter colony may be using the last of its honey stores. This is a critical period for your bees because the colony is initiating its build up of the spring workforce. Some pollen may be available with early bloom (trees in particular) but may not be adequate to support the colony. The queen begins laying early as spring approaches (January/February) and the new brood will require lots of protein (pollen) if the developing bees are to remain healthy. Consider feeding protein patties, the same regimen you followed in the fall. Failure to determine food availability will be starkly evident when you pull a frame and find all dead bees with their heads in cells and their posterior ends facing you. Not a pretty sight and one that should give you a chill knowing you may have been able to prevent this tragedy. In the healthy bee's diet, pollen is essential for its protein supplement. Carbohydrates are derived from honey or the sugar water you provide. Both nutrients are absolutely essential with protein at the head of the line in spring.

Yes, there are more tasks to perform and you will tackle those you consider most imminent. The bottom line in beekeeping management is, "I did", rather than, "I should have". Err on the side of looking to future needs and addressing them as soon as possible. Beekeeping can come at you FAST!

1. Flight paths will change during the season as the bees alter their foraging pattern.
2. Best source here is **Fred Stewart** at Sacramento Beekeeping Supplies, 2110- X St, Sacramento. Phone: 451-237. He has a simple unit, relatively inexpensive and easy to operate. He is willing to demonstrate the unit. Also see: <http://dave-cushman.net/bee/framewiring.html>
3. Ross Conrad, "Natural Beekeeping", 2007, Chapter 7. Chelsea Green Publishing, White River Junction, Vermont.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

Preserving Woodenware: Jerry Hayes, THE CLASSROOM, Dadant & Sons Publication, page 89 ISBN Number 0-915698-10-2

How To Wire Frames: Richard Taylor, THE HOW-TO-DO-IT BOOK OF BEEKEEPING, 1977, 4TH Ed., Linden Books, Box 352, Interlaken. N.Y. 14847

Construction & Assembly of Bee Hives: HOW TO KEEP BEES AND SELL HONEY, Walter T. Kelley, 1993. The Walter T. Kelley Co., Clarkson, Kentucky

Construction of electrical embedder & embedding board: Elbert R. Jaycox, BEEKEEPING IN THE MIDWEST, 1973, Page 43. Univ. of Illinois, Coop Extension Service, Circular #1125

Cheers for a healthy spring and an abundant honey flow in the 2012 season. Send an e-mail with your questions to me or any other mentor. We're committed to help.

George Bleekman, SABA Mentor Coordinator

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ❖ **December 13th at 6:30 p.m., Annual SABA Pot-luck Dinner** at Town & Country Lutheran Church gymnasium.



Nota Bene: Annual membership renewals for 2012 are due on or before the beginning of the new year. Earn extra miles by renewing yours early! See page 9 for all the exciting details.

**SACRAMENTO AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
2110 X STREET
SACRAMENTO, CA 95818**



Website: www.sacbeekeepers.org
E-mail: info@sacbeekeepers.org
Newsletter Editor: sabaeditor@gmail.com

Address Correction Requested

