



January 2007

# Rhode Island Beekeepers Association

A Newsletter of the Rhode Island Beekeepers Association, PO Box 8880, Warwick, RI 02888

## The Presidents' Report

Happy New Year everyone! I can't wait to see what this year brings! Will we have record breaking weather again, or will we get back on a more normal track? Probably not if you pay attention to the weather guru's, so get ready for another interesting year. Be ready for anything- a good motto for any beekeeper if ever there was one.

To "Be ready for anything" may also be a good New Year's resolution for anyone, beekeeper or anyone else for that matter. I remember my Mémère was always ready for the unthinkable! Whether it was an impending hurricane, the threat of a Nor Easter, the "Big One" finally dropping or even the worst of all- her grand child getting a boo boo. Mémère was ready for it. She had everything from canned goods, powdered milk, sugar and flour, to matches, first aid supplies, candles, and most importantly, her faith and resolution. Nothing was going to get the best of that woman.

I learned a lot from my Mémère, and I not only apply it to storm and disaster preparedness, but also to my beekeeping. I bring extra boxes, drawn frames, nails, and sugar water every time I leave the house. I have buckets, wire, tools, queen cages and plenty of duct tape! Not to mention my trusty smoker, fuel and long matches, as well as my gloves and jacket with hood!

Usually this is kept neat in the back of our old mini van (Diane once commented "You've turned my nice van into a truck!"). I keep most of this equipment packed in the buckets that I bring along, and the boxes keep the buckets from sliding around (mostly). A few frames fit next to the buckets in the boxes and keep them from getting to badly beat up as well.

## Next Meeting

Sunday, January 14<sup>th</sup> @ 2 PM  
Home of Vivian and Stan Peasley  
64 Division Road  
West Greenwich, RI  
884-4210

Subject: Feeding for Survival  
Bring Desserts      Directions on back

This equipment goes with me every where, I take it even in the dead of winter; you never know when you might need it. There are too many "what ifs" in life. Storms can do damage to out yards and its nice to have the equipment at the ready and not have to drag everything out from a cellar or garage. Most of the things in those buckets can be put to many uses and can potentially save the day. Not just the bees day, but your or someone else's day as well. I try to always be ready, both with materials and my way of thinking. I like to think that Mémère would be proud of me

Happy New Year, and Bee Well,  
Kit Mayers      President, R.I.B.A.

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## The Secretary's Report

*Minutes of RIBA meeting November 12, 2006*

The meeting began more or less around 2 PM at the home of Vivian and Stan Peasley.. October minutes were accepted by voice vote.

Discussion opened with David Clay speaking about the EAS Convention process and the idea being circulated of the Association hosting EAS 2009. Mark Robar had done some preliminary research on costs and facilities. The scope of the undertaking and the need for starting IMMEDIATELY with the process, organizing volunteers, forming committees was emphasized. An initial proposal to the EAS Board of Directors would have to be assembled in time for their meeting in late February 2007. A motion was made and seconded to form a steering committee and begin preparations. Motion carried by voice vote. Mark Robar will be heading up the effort.

Betty Mencucci spoke about changing needs for the Bee School. In the past, one payment would clear a family group for the school. Unfortunately, this has become unworkable. It is not a case of cost, but of fire codes. So many people are showing up that the instruction area is crowded beyond reasonable safety and is causing a problem with the school administration. Discussion centered around "first come, first served" for bee school slots, and to charge the same fee for all attendees. This could cause a hardship for families, etc. The issue was deferred to the next Executive Board meeting for further discussion.

Kit Mayer gave a report on his trip to the National Honey Board meeting. New markets and products are being developed. Some examples: the Hispanic market for honey for homeopathic remedies, Japanese markets for varietal honeys. Products under development: "dry" honey for coffee, Honey Syrup for Coffee (no, not an adulterated honey, still pure), whipped honey (to solid form), and others. Free promotional materials are available from the NHB to state organizations on request, such as recipes, tags, posters. These can be ordered in quantities up to 1,000 (this is a follow up item).

Free beginners' materials are also available to new beekeepers by request from the NHB website.

It was announced that the Spring Association Banquet is schedule for April 15, 2007 at Chelo's Restaurant in Warwick. Menu and details to follow. The floor was opened up for general discussion and questions. Some of the items:

- If you haven't used the formic acid pads (varroa control) for your hives by this time, defer until next spring. They will not be effective in low temperatures.
- There are a number of area growers, orchards, etc. looking for pollination services. This led to a discussion of contracts, providers, costs and prices, etc.
- There was an extended discussion on the need for winter feeding. Opinions and ideas ranged all across the board. The discussion ended with "if it isn't broke, don't fix it."

Mark Robar gave an excellent talk about various "issues" for every beekeeper, big or small, commercial or not. He is working on a concept (trying to get a grant as well) to over winter colonies in greenhouses. The aims of several of the activities going on include:

- The need to "keep bees in New England," that is, create, sustain and produce our own bee stocks.
- Limit or end dependence on Southern States for bee stocks to limit infestations and progress of AHB northward.
- Diversify. In order to create sustainable beekeeping, either as a small-scale moneymaker, or to at least become self-sustaining, we need to develop and market more than just honey.

He emphasized the need to interact with other beekeepers, communicate and share information and ideas.

The meeting adjourned for refreshments and informal discussion around 3.30 PM.

*-In the past, beeswax served as a medium of exchange and taxation; it was exacted as tribute*

*from conquered nations and was used in writing, painting, sculpturing, and protecting works of art, as well as for illumination.*

## **Miscellaneous**

Even though we have slowed down with our beekeeping tasks, and have been busy with the post holiday season, many things are on the front burner.

I have a new form of a honey jar (they are now in some supermarkets), which is like the ketchup and jelly jars. It is plastic and the cap is on the bottom. Flip the cap open, squeeze the jar, and out comes the honey. . . and no drip of mess. I tried it out this past fall at farmers' markets, and it works very well.

Some may object because it is a plastic jar, but I think the convenience of pouring honey outweighs the drip and mess with the present jar form. Surveys have shown that honey has been poorly packaged. This may be the answer.

The RI Flower show is Feb 22-25 at the Convention Center. We have a booth to sell the honey of the association, candy, and related products.

We need workers for 4 to 6 hour shifts. It is a nice experience, and a lot of fun meeting people and talking about bees. You get to see the show, and save \$14 per person fee. The hours are 10 AM to 9 PM Thursday through Saturday and 10 AM to 6 PM on Sunday. We would like to see new members participate. Call Bernie at 463-8654.

We are in contact with Dana Stahlman (thanks to the Barnstable Beekeepers) who is a 50 year beekeeper in Ohio. He has been raising his own queens for many years and would like to work with us in order that we can raise our own queens.

For the past few years a great deal has been written in our trade magazines about the poor quality of queens shipped by the southern breeders. While we don't know too much about Dana's plans at this writing, the board feels that members have overlooked queen rearing, and

this might be a good opportunity to start. We will have more in the February newsletter.

Our annual dinner is April 15<sup>th</sup> at Chelo's Restaurant on Post Road in Warwick. You can assist the board by suggesting what you would like our guest speaker to talk about. As yet we have no invited anyone, but plan to very soon. We'd appreciate your input. Please mark the date.

I didn't know if this should have been first in the listing or last. Kit has decided that he will not run for President in '07. Your secretary will accept nominations for the office of president to be voted on at our April 15 Annual Dinner. All other officers will remain in place unless they are challenged.

The weather has been milder than usual. This gives the bees a chance to exit the hives. Flying increases their need for honey. They may need additional feeding. Try the following recipes, and put on the top bar of the hive.

*-Honey bees are one of the oldest forms of animal life still in existence from the Neolithic Age. The earliest record of humans gathering honey from wild colonies is from 7000 B.C. Man first kept bees about 3000 to 4000 B.C., perhaps as early as 5000 B.C.*

## **Fondant Candy Recipes**

### Microwave Recipe

In a 1 quart or larger microwave dish, thoroughly mix 1 ½ cups granulated sugar and ½ cup light corn syrup. No water.

Microwave on high, stirring every few minutes until the mixture is clear and bubbles become thumbnail size (about 10 min.). Stop immediately if mixture starts to brown. A wooden spoon is very effect for stirring as it can be left in the dish during cooking.

Pour into lidded baking sheet lined with wzx paper to cool. Candy will become brittle and can be chopped on top of frames where bees will consume it.

### Stove Top Recipe

Mix 5# granulated sugar, 1 pt corn syrup, ½ cup water in a large pot. Hold over medium heat to 240 degrees on a candy thermostat, Very important to hold at 240 degrees F.

Stir only occasionally as it takes a while. At 240 degrees, place pot in a sink of cold water – change water a few times. Beat with a mixer, cooling mixture to 190 degrees F. Pour onto greased cookie sheet to ¼” thick. Cool and slice into patties

*Thanks to Claire Desilets  
Barnstable County Beekeepers*

### **Good News**

Susan Chien, a charming young lady and one of our newer beekeepers, gave birth to a daughter in late December named Clara. We wish them good health and happiness...and I might add...getting an exemption for '06 helps.

### **Our Thanks to :**

The Peasleys for hosting the indoor meetings, and first outdoor one also.

The Malmborgs, Mayers, Clays, and Whewells for hosting the others.

Special thanks to Don Ruggieri for deciphering my errant handwriting and organizing it in our newsletters.

*-The scientific name, Apis mellifera, was given the honey bee by Carolus Linnaeus in 1758. It liter- ally means "the honey-carrying bee \* " A more descriptive name, A. mellifica, or "the honey-making bee ' " was proposed in 1761. While this second name more accurately describes honey bees (which carry nectar but make honey), the rules governing precedence in scientific nomenclature dictate that the earlier name be retained.*

### **Directions to the Peasley's**

From the North - take route 95 south to exit #7, then turn left.

From the South - take route 95 north to exit #7, then turn right.

Go to the stop sign, turn left, first house on right. There is a V.S. P. Plumbing sign at driveway.

-Q: What's more dangerous than being with a fool?  
A: Fooling with a bee!

#### ***RI Beekeepers Association***

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