



# Rhode Island Beekeepers Association

The Newsletter of the Rhode Island Beekeepers Association  
PO Box 31, Ashaway, RI 02804. <http://www.ribeekeeper.org>

## 2008 Harvest Dinner

A glorious day at The Grange in Richmond and a good member turnout for the 2008 Harvest Dinner - prepared excellently by Bertha Tanner and the Grange staff. Dinner was served at 5.30pm and as usual everybody ate well. The Johnnycakes remain State Champions.

After dinner we had a very short members meeting, with a quick check for any business, and an announcement of the Honey Contest and Silent Auction winners. The auction successes are too numerous to mention but the honey contest was won by the following:

### Light honey

- 1 Tony DiGuilio
- 2 Alison Davies
- 3 Jeff McGuire

### Medium

- 1 Jeff McGuire
- 2 Gary Slater
- 3 Sue Chien

### Dark

- 1 Tony DiGuilio
- 2 Jeff McGuire
- 3 Clare Stone.

The judges were Jason Kerr, Jeff McGuire and Bill Jones.

The highlights of the evening were sessions with Jeff Pettis and Kim Flottum. Kim talked about EAS next year in which the theme is "Moving towards chemical-free beekeeping". A great subject, and it was noted that the speakers will tend to be beekeepers rather than researchers. Jeff talked at length - and answered questions - about the current research into CCD. This newsletter is not a complete account of the discussion but some of the things mentioned were a noticeable effect shown by one of the common in-hive treatments. He showed

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data that bees exposed to the pesticide - in a lab environment - had four times the nosema than those not exposed. He also said that they looked at some old samples from 1985, and found that 30% of these bees were infected with nosema ceranae, indicating that this isn't a new strain. Using the treatments is really - and just one way to keep bees - but that it is entirely possible to keep bees without them, let the weak die off, and work with the survivors. He suggested that this works better if you start with a number of colonies.

Jeff and Kim had driven south from WCBA where they had also spoken that day. I know that several members there took videos of the talk and I will try to obtain links to them for our website.

## Things to do

Tip your hive forward so that when the cold air hits the warm air inside hive, the condensation will not drip into hive. Raise hive from rear and check its weight. In New England the recommendation is for 80 pounds of honey. Add in the weight of the woodware and it should weigh approximately 100 pounds.

Mouse guards should be in place. Usually put in place when the nights get cold, mid September or early October.

Bees should be fed 2 gal/hive with 2:1 sugar and water. If you are using chemical treatments you can mix with two rounded teaspoons of Fumagilin-B.

Stored honey supers with foundation piled 4 high should be treated with a screen over the top one to hold Para dichlorobenzene moth flakes (not

Naptha). This will kill the ever present wax moth. Please check stored supers periodically. Ken Warchol (Massachusetts bee inspector, Worcester County) recommends putting supers (honey and brood) in contractors trash bag; remember to check for rodents making a home in the bags and also remember that bags of leaves can contain all sorts of other things harmful to bees - snakes, fungi, insects etc. Good results have been had with this but even more secure - although more costly - are big transparent plastic storage boxes from Walmart. 19 inch frames fit neatly into the largest size. Leave them outside and the winter freeze will take care of any "squatters".

To get the bees through the winter, you can fill trash bags with leaves, cover three sides of hive and tie them to the hive. You can also get plastic sheeting tied to three stakes and make a windbreak in a V form in front of the hive to divert the strong winds. This has had good results.

Mite in brood medication should be completed by October 30th if you are using chemicals.

## Package survey

Bernie gives a report about the bee packages ordered. The following results are from the Barnstable Beekeepers:

275 packages purchased by 118 members. There was a 68% response - 48 veteran beekeepers and 32 new beekeepers for 196 packages. Seven queens arrived dead - 136 queens or 69% were laying within 7 to 14 days. 4 - 6 weeks later only 48% had a full brood pattern. 21 hives had drone layers. 53 hives had spotty brood patterns.

In July, 100 hives (50% of original packages in survey) 34 Queens had to be replaced. Dead hives amounted to 10 - only one of these a new beekeeper. Balance of hives just so-so.

If you purchased packages, please let Bernie know your results. [beeman704@verizon.net](mailto:beeman704@verizon.net)

Perhaps we can have a roundtable discussion focusing on what you should have done to get good results. This depends on your response.

## Screened bottom boards

Are we all using them? Anyway, what to do with them during the winter? It's the opinion of many that the board should not be blocked, allowing the air circulation in the hive. An interesting article in

September's Bee Culture discusses completely open borrom boards (OBB's). This is a hive design where there is no landing board and the entire bottom of the lowest box is left open and fitted with half inch hardware cloth screen. The article is too long to fairly summarize here but it makes interesting reading. Page 44 - and you can also try googling for COBB, "open bottom board", or "commercial open botom board".

## Catch the buzz

An enhanced-line honeybee stock developed by University of California, Davis bee breeder-geneticist Susan Colby, that crosses her bee line "New World Carniolans" with "Old World" Carniolans from Germany, shows genetic promise in aiding the troubled bee industry, research reveals.

"I'm really pleased with the stock," said Colby, project leader of a honeybee stock improvement grant, funded by the California State Beekeepers Association and the California Almond Board. "The bees are very gentle, very hygienic and very productive, and hopefully will confer increased resistance to pests and disease."

California Secretary of Agriculture A. G. Kawamura admired the stock during the State Apiary Board meeting October 3 at the Harry H. Little Jr. honeybee research facility on the UC Davis campus.

Holding a frame of bees, Kawamura correctly singled out the queen and praised the bees' elegance and gentle temperament. In his youth, he reared honeybees for several years, tending the hives and selling the honey.

The gentleness of her bees did not escape the State Apiary Board, led by newly elected chair Jackie Park-Burriss of Palo Cedro, who also serves as president of the California State Beekeepers Association. They toured Cobey's colonies without protective bee suits, as did Kawamura.

"Sue's bees are polite," said beekeeper Steve Godlin of the Visalia, vice chair of the California State apiary board

## Newsletter

### Newsletter content

Here is your opportunity to unleash your "inner journalist"! I am looking for newsletter contributions of any and all kinds - related to bees and/or RIBA of

course. I'd like personal stories, diary anecdotes, hints and tips, meeting notices, workshops and classes dates and information, and - for the website version - photos. There is a great opportunity to share experiences here.

## Newsletter online

The printed Newsletter is published monthly but the online newsletter is updated whenever new information becomes available. One of the great features of the online version is that for many of the articles you can add your own comments. Try it! Look for a link called "leave a comment" at the bottom of some articles.

There are several other features online that you might use. The articles are organized by month and by category, and the most recent entries are listed at the side of the page. You can also set the site to send you an email whenever I update an article.

Your contributions - and especially your photos with captions will continue to make this a dynamic and interesting website.

## The BeeBoy Winter Cover

*Dave Hemendinger is a member of the Association. In this issue he writes about a winter cover that he has designed, made, and uses on his hives.*

I am known around my house as BeeBoy. I have been a hobbyist beekeeper for 5 years; I started with one hive and have grown to 3. For most hobbyist beekeepers this may not sound too far from the ordinary, for the newbie's, the thought of 3 hives might seem daunting. What's different about my bee experience has been my research focus, attention to their details, and my applied techniques. Now I claim to be no expert and god knows every trip to the hives is a new learning experience for me; but what I have found through my research is for bees to be productive they need certain things. The techniques I currently employ have provided me with exceptional hive populations every year, bountiful harvests of 100+ lbs per hive most seasons, and healthy, thriving, no disease/low mite hives. I have spent many hours in my hives and from that I've gained some productive insight, I've lost 1 hive to overwintering since I've started and that was due to an unsuccessful queen replacement. Many have asked me about the techniques and some have actually seen them in action, I have decided to pass this knowledge on to anyone interested; they've all worked well for me

and have kept the "girls" happy. I'll try to provide monthly techniques I use and hopefully some will find them as useful as I have, just look for BeeBoy.

## BeeBoys' Winter Cover

With winter approaching, I decided for my first technique to show you my solution to inner/outer cover winter ventilation and feeding. I have found that ventilation and "air buffering" is the key to helping to maintain consistent temperatures in the hive during winter months. This cover technique provides enough ventilation and warmth containment to allow the bees to constantly move the cluster throughout the winter within the upper deep of the hive. With this method they have to work less to maintain internal hive temperatures and subsequently easily make it into springtime with minimal honey stores. The cover design also provides an "air chamber" which acts like the twin-door system in most commercial buildings. Within this buffer I've modified the inner cover to provide a pivoting panel to provide access for positioning of candy or pollen without opening up the hive. I then add an intermediate inner cover made of particle board and foam. This second inner cover allows condensation to dissipate in the air chamber as well as some moisture is absorbed by the particle board. This air chamber keeps the candy and pollen moist, one look inside the ventilation holes of these hives in late December and it's a bustle of activity; by March I have bees pouring out the holes.

*There are pictures of the cover online, and steps showing it in use. Check the website!*



# Next Meeting

## Sunday, Nov 9th at 2 pm

The next meeting will be at the home of Tony Marro at 49 Danielson Pike North Scituate RI 02857-1801 (phone 401 764-0386).

The subject of the meeting will be *winter preparation and emergency feeding* and I will also have a nearly-complete list of 2009 events and meeting dates and hope to discuss how we can be more effective at organizing these events to the benefit of RIBA and its members.

449 Danielson Pike in north Scituate, exactly half mile west of the State Police Headquarters. It's a white house with a green roof. If anyone gets lost and needs directions, please call.

The easiest thing for most people coming from the east is to get on Route 6 and follow it to the edge of Scituate village. That's where the road divides. The signs show Route 6 veering off to the right towards Hartford and Danielson Pike veering off to the left.

Take the left, go through the village and past the State Police Headquarters. The house is on the right hand side of the road.

Some people coming from the southwest also could come up route 102 and then turn right onto Danielson pike. There's no sign at the intersection saying Danielson Pike, but is easy to spot because there's a traffic light at the intersection and a Dunkin' Donuts on the northwest corner. We're 2.9 miles from the intersection.

## The Burr Box

\* For Sale: Sugar, Table Grade, 25 cents/lb Tom Dalton 497-3822 bring your own container

\* RIBA has a honey bottler. Mike Carpenter oversees its rental. Contact him directly about availability and charges

\* Check the website for woodware supplies from Mike, Lou Chasse, and Mark Robar

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