

Lewis County Beekeepers' Association: *February 2011 Newsletter*

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Upcoming Events:

February 9: LCBA Monthly Meeting

Where: Old Chehalis Courthouse

When: 7 - 9 p.m.

Who & What:

Darren Gordon, House of Bees, will speak on top bar hives and more. Darren is a beekeeper and gardener who operates a business providing seeds and advice to people who are interested in attracting more bees to their gardens, orchards and apiaries. He is committed to increasing habitat for honeybees and native bees, as well as sharing his knowledge about natural beekeeping, non-traditional honey bee hives and mason bee houses.

Also at this meeting:

- news of spring events
- setting the date for our 3rd annual hive building workshop
- discussing LCBA presentation at Feb. 19 Gardening for Everyone
- and . . . our traditional “Bee Q&A.”

February, Date TBA: Our Third (!) Annual Hive Building Workshop at Rose of Sharon Farm.

February 19: Gardening For Everyone, Master Gardeners, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

LCBA has a session at 2 – 3:30; Peter Glover and Susanne Weil (and anyone else from LCBA who would like to participate!)

Notes from Our January 12 Meeting: Special Guest, Paul Lundy, WSBA President

Guest: Paul Lundy, President, Washington State Beekeepers' Association (WSBA)

LCBA President Bob Harris called our meeting to order and introduced Paul Lundy, newly elected president of WSBA, who spoke to us two years ago, when he was WSBA Secretary and was teaching the Master Beekeepers' course.

Paul's history with WSBA: WSBA's past president was involved in commercial beekeeping; Paul is "like us," primarily a hobbyist. Paul and his wife Lisa have been beekeepers since 1977, when they moved to the Ravenna area. They saw local bees in an observation hive, and he "wrote up a check that night." Puget Sound Beekeepers was his first group: an enthusiastic group who "knew how to hook you." They started with a few hives, then expanded, then settled on ten hives, so that he could appreciate the bees. Paul got interested in beekeeping at the state level when he realized that there was a beekeeping research program at WSU. He'd had no idea this kind of research was done. So he wound up involved, interested in educating beekeepers. Puget Sound had a good educational program in which experienced beekeepers brought equipment and demonstrated methods at each meeting. Then he learned about the master beekeeper program, learned to teach himself, and now teaches beginning beekeeping.

WSBA'S Mission: WSBA was created to support commercial and hobbyist beekeepers, representing the industry at the state and national level. More and more, though, it's hobbyists who are supporting beekeeping. In the 1990s, there were many commercial beekeepers, but those have dropped off precipitously. Few now have multiple thousands of hives. Now WSBA's focus is mainly those interested in honeybees, what bees do, and why they are in decline. This is key to what WSBA wants to support.

State Area Representation: anyone want to represent southwest Washington? One thing WSBA has to help support beekeeping is area representation: the state is divided into six areas, with a board member from each area. Bob Smith from Olympia, who spoke at LCBA last year, is up for renewal this year. Paul would encourage one of us to think about running for this and representing southwest Washington, because we're underrepresented at the state level. There are many from Seattle, Bellingham, etc., but not Southwest WA.

Grants: WSBA awards grants of up to \$2000 for beekeeping, education, any number of things. Skagit Valley won last year to develop a queen development program. Paul asked us to think about programs that we'd like to do, but can't we do today because we lack funds. The grant money comes from dues of members, and so the more members WSBA has, the more they can do for local organizations.

Legislation: At the legislative level, WSBA works on beekeeper issues. Tax exemption for those in agriculture now applies to commercial beekeepers too. It was defined as a "service," but now is redefined as agriculture. Now we can do group purchase from say

Mann Lake in CA and get a group tax break under this classification. The tax break expires in 2013, but WSBA will be back lobbying then. All WSBA officers are volunteers, going in as citizens like us, but their power is that they represent thousands of beekeepers.

Regulating Pesticides: WSBA advocates limiting use of pesticides: bees are insects!! WSBA works with the state department of agriculture, as well as with the EPA, to regulate pesticides in agriculture. Beekeeping is regulated within agriculture, so when pesticides up for review for use in WA, they review to see if the labeling is correct. Now, there must be beekeeping warnings on these products: if they contain something bad for bees, the label is supposed to read, “don’t spray when plants in flower.” The state also regulates mitocides. For most hobbyists, getting away from chemicals, and he’d encourage us to continue that direction, but for those who feel they need mitocides, WSBA supports regulating and registering mitocides.

Hop Guard and beekeeper input into product approval: Bob asked how beekeepers have input into approving products. Paul told us that Steve Shepherd, WSU Extension, is the head of the program, and he is the person to contact; we can also contact our WSBA area representative. Hopguard is one product that WSU Extension has looked into, and while there are not conclusive results and still some skepticism, it looks like HG has some value, according to Steve Shepherd. It is not a true pesticide, organophosphide—it could be an alternative to cumaphos, which is a long lived substance, much like Apistan, which people used for years until bees became resistant. Hop Guard may be marketed by Mann Lake—still waiting on EPA go-ahead.

Mite-Away: Paul was asked about Mite-Away quick strips: Paul says that these are also not traditional pesticides and have some value, but also some danger. Still, he thinks that it is better than the “blast method,” so he is supporting registration. An older pad is still on the market, but the manufacturer did not ask to be de-registered before stopping manufacture, and EPA won’t register new version while the older one is still on the registry.

Beekeeping Conferences: Some state meetings are too commercial and/or too purely science-oriented: the Hood River meeting was more user friendly. This year WSBA and OSBA could not afford to do individual state conventions. But one down side of this was that folks along I-5 corridor stopped coming. So this year, to attract more hobbyists, the conference will be in late October, near Tacoma, and can attract some major researchers. It may attract some Californians as well. Some major suppliers are out of Chico—where CA queens & packages come from. They love to come up to our convention to get more exposure to us, but also contribute a lot. They write checks for Shepard’s research programs and help WSBA get resources for projects.

Queen Rearing Program: WSBA works closely with WSU. They didn’t always have a close working relationship, but Jerry Tate, WSBA past president, worked to forge closer ties. As a result, there is now a queen rearing program for use in our region, and any local association with a queen rearing program can get FREE queens from WSU

program. They got queen mothers from all of the bee breeders in the U.S., culled the ones that didn't work, and now for almost 8 years have been growing about 200 queens per year, most for their own research, but rest are made available to WSBA. They want us to help determine queens who are adaptable for our region. Three groups are now getting queens from WSU—they must do record keeping of queen daughters, etc. This year was tough because of the weather, with fewer queens available to share, but everyone involved is hoping this coming year will be better. If LCBA could set up our own apiary, get people interested in queen rearing, we could participate. Larry Connor's *Bee Sex Essentials* is a good book for learning to breed and rear queens. It discusses how many drones you need to mate with a queen, how many colonies you have to have for successful fertilization of the queen. What they found about queen rearing and grafting: young people do it well (nimble fingers, young eyes!).

Scholarships: WSBA also provides scholarships for students in WSU entomology program. \$2 to \$3,000 in grants are awarded each year. The entomology program is small: not many are interested in entomology. Sheila noted that they now sell honey on WSU campuses.

WSU Extension Field Day: WSU graduate students put on exhibitions of technical aspects of bee research: last year, they opened up their lab, and visitors could see tracheal mites through microscopes, etc. If you can visit Pullman in June, it is a great opportunity to learn more about this research and honeybees in general, work hands on with Steve Sheppard and others. It happens after graduation, when campus is quiet. Paul learned how to dissect a bee and get it ready for microscopic inspection. It got Paul enthused about gloveless beekeeping: he learned how to manipulate a colony with his bare hands. People will come to appreciate bees more if they interact with bees that way: there is less crushing because bees are more gentle when you are not squishing them, and it is hard to accomplish with gloves. Bob commented that his mentor, when he was a newbie, was told bees couldn't sting through yellow Rubbermaid gloves. . . . Bob learned this wasn't true. . . .

Honey bee diagnostic lab: The commercial beekeepers were able to influence tree fruit growers, etc., to help fund bee programs at WSU. One program started a few years ago was the honeybee diagnostic lab. Depending on the season, it was a crap shoot when you could get your results. But the apiary registration fee that we pay annually for our colonies goes toward the honeybee diagnostic lab. We are in fact a regulated industry, and there is a beekeeper registration each year. \$5 per beekeeper if 1 to 5 hives (see handout for rates). You can also send in bee samples for diagnosis if you fear you have, say, tracheal mites. Tell them what you suspect (e.g., Nosema) and they will do that test first. Jason noted that he has many sample jars. Also, if you have a WSBA registration and remember your number, you are tax exempt when you buy bees. Also, you are eligible with apiary ID number to put your bees on state land. But you must have that ID number. It can be cheaper than going to Weyerhaeuser, etc. Tracheal mites are more a coastal, western phenomenon: less prevalent east of Cascades. Nosema, though, is everywhere.

Question of used boxes: should they be bleached? A newbie washed down frames and all with hydrogen peroxide and wanted to know if this was right or wrong: he didn't want to use bleach because of its lingering smell. Paul said that is fine. Example: foulbrood, a spore endemic in environment. You don't want to destroy all your equipment; nothing wrong with reducing the number of spores with cleaning methods. With foulbrood, reducing number of spores is key.

Education programs: what got Paul fired up about the state association was its education program for beekeepers. There are three levels: apprentice, journeyman and master. The goal is to help bees survive the winter if beekeepers follow the recommendations. The booklet is updated annually, with help of Steve Shepherd. Many bee researchers have published highly relevant new materials. Journeyman level prepares you to become a commercial beekeepers, with focus on honey standards, transportation, laws of beekeeping; but also many details re: beekeeping itself. The journeyman level involves more self study. Once you pass this, you are eligible to teach in the program. The master level is for enthusiasts who want to share the craft. Few get there, but when they do, they know the craft. Louis Mattei has taken over running this teaching program from Paul when Paul became president of WSBA.

Bee Books at Timberland: Are any of these books available through Timberland? YES—Jamie Allwine knew of it, and also, inter library loan is a helpful resource. Finally, there are many materials available online. Paul noted that the courses can be done in traditional correspondence way, but also online. *The Hive and the Honeybee* and *ABC/XYZ of Beekeeping* are books Paul recommends: encyclopedic reference books. Compiling research from many experts, and you can almost always find the answer you are looking for. Just before spring, read sections on honeybee behavior: we're not going to change their behavior, just like in marriage, Paul quipped. You might modify that behavior via some of your actions, but change it, no. Still, you will become a better beekeeper if you work with the bees rather than against them.

Paul drove all the way from Kingston to meet with us! We thanked him for his time and his informative, entertaining presentation. Kim from the *Chronicle* sat in on Paul's talk and talked with many of us about beekeeping for an upcoming article.

LCBA Business Meeting:

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Sarah Roebas reported that we have \$2030 in our treasury with a few outstanding dues still to come in.

Gardening For Everyone: Saturday, February 19, with WSU Extension and Master Gardeners, at Centralia College, Washington Hall. There will be an all-day (9 to 3:30) series of presentations. Peter Glover will give a presentation on "the first year of beekeeping," with a slideshow: he is hoping some of the experienced members will be on hand to help field questions. We'll also have an informational table set up in the lobby all day. Jim Thielges will be there with his mason bees. The Master Food Preservers, Recyclers, Composters will also be there. The Master Gardener group as a

whole is trying to help more people grow their own food, and beekeeping is a natural fit with this effort. There will be presentations on seed saving, breaking ground for the first time, etc. drip irrigation.

Sherwood Bees: Order Your Bees Now! April 25 will be the target pickup date for those buying bees from Sherwoods. Last year they pushed it earlier, but in our climate, the later you wait, the better, and the quality of queen you get will be better. They will only have Italians and Carniolans, since the Russians were a failure. They have 400 packages reserved, including nucs that will be available, and Heather is sure they will sell out fast. Supply is an issue this year.

How to reserve your bees: People can call Heather at [contact information removed from web edition of newsletter since the Sherwoods are no longer in the bee business – 2012 note], and Heather will send an invoice: then you can send a check, but they are not reserved until Heather gets your check. A package is 3 pounds with queen in cage, and a nuc box is smaller.

Nucs: However, for beginners, you do yourselves no favors by getting a nuc. Nucs are a month further along, and are good for those who want to get bees but don't want to go through hassle of feeding them so much: nucs come with honey frames on outside and brood in the middle; they are more self sufficient and can be ignored more.

More advantages of package bees: You interrupt a mite production cycle when you get a package: you are not getting frames that may already be infested. The experience and training of getting a package is the best overall experience for new beekeepers.

Supplies for Sale: Heather and Jason can also sell some supplies, but these are limited, so let Heather know before March 1. If you have a box from last year, please bring it back when you pick up this year's order. Jason and Heather would love to have a few LCBA experienced members to help give information to those buying bees about getting started; there could also be a table with information from LCBA.

Hive Building Workshop: We will have a hive building workshop at Rose of Sharon Farm: about half a dozen members present are interested. Date TBA.

Nametags? Our club is growing, and it would help to have these and would cost only a couple hundred to get them for dues paying members from Aldersons, with our logo. Member Steve Howard volunteered to put together nametags at cost, and Bob will talk to him. Members agreed that nametags would be helpful.

Hive Removal Team: Norm is getting ready to do hive removals and is looking for volunteers. A new visitor has a six foot man lifter and is volunteering to help Norm.

4H club for bees? Heather organized one for her son and one of his friends: they won a prize at the Fair for building their observation hive. Heather and Jason guided the group,

but the boys are done now after having done it once (now more interested in woodworking!). Another difficulty is that there is no one to judge: so they entered in woodworking and entomology. Bob can think of 5 or 6 home school children who would like to start keeping bees: also, Sharette does a beekeeping class for home school, though not for 4H. Heather found that unless there is more interest at the state level, and more expertise to judge, then there is no point.

Bob pointed this out to Paul Lundy: possibly WSBA might be interested in helping launch 4H beekeeping? Bob noted that the 4H group here is interested in having a program, but need leaders with expertise and time. Jason noted that an observation hive is a good way to display the bees: safe and portable.

How are our bees faring? Cecelia has reduced the entrance on her hives: as she did this, the bees came out and let her know they didn't appreciate the disturbance, but now they have less chill exposure. But Cecelia wanted to know how she could know if her bees have enough food: Norm and Bob suggested lifting the box and estimating weight. They can be fed honey in frames, but otherwise, double thickness sugar (1:1). Peter noted that *Bee Culture* reported candy as best because there is no fanning issue: it's important not to tax bees' energy with fanning off excess moisture. The thinner (2:1 sugar: water) mix can encourage brood production, which is not a good idea in winter.

Mossyrock Blueberry Festival: Wilma Sofranko took the beginning beekeeping course: she works with the Mossyrock Action League and is working to organize the blueberry festival. They sell ads in their brochure, and LCBA could have a good price to advertise and do some PR. Possibly we might get a booth as a group and sell some honey. The MAL raises funds to donate to local groups trying to do good works locally.

LCBA Equipment Purchase? It was suggested: that the club buy some items that individual members would have a hard time affording (like a honey grading spectrometer/ refractor/moisture meter). An extractor is another possibility. The question is whether we need to spend money on buying one if there are members willing to loan equipment. For immediacy, Bob noted that there is no shortage of equipment. Jason has a spectrometer that cost about \$60.

February Recipes

Gearing up for the Super Bowl? Try some tailgating food:

Honey-BBQ Ribs (from delish.com)

Ingredients: 4 pork spare-ribs
1 can(s) Campbell's® Condensed French Onion Soup
3/4 cup(s) ketchup
1/3 cup(s) honey
1/2 teaspoon(s) garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon(s) ground black pepper

Process: Place the ribs into a 6-quart saucepot; add water to cover
Heat over medium-high heat to a boil.
Reduce the heat to low; cover & cook, 30 minutes
or till meat is tender.
Drain the ribs well in a colander.

Heat soup, ketchup, honey, garlic powder & black pepper
in 2-quart saucepan, medium-high heat;
Heat to a boil, then reduce the heat to low & cook 5 min.

Lightly oil grill rack; heat the grill to medium.
Grill ribs for 20 minutes or till cooked through—
Turn & brush them often with the soup mixture.

Serve & enjoy!

Red-Skin Potato Salad with Honey Dill Dressing (6 servings) – from National Honey Board

Ingredients: 1 & ½ lbs. small red new potatoes
4 strips bacon
1 medium red onion
6 Tbs HONEY
6 Tbs apple cider vinegar
½ tsp cornstarch
½ tsp water
2 Tb chopped fresh dill OR 1 TB dried dill weed
1 bunch watercress, chopped

Process: In large pot, boil whole potatoes in salted water till
tender, but firm
Drain & cool potatoes
While potatoes cool, sauté bacon till crisp in large fry pan
Remove bacon & set aside
Add onion to bacon drippings; cook until soft, about 3 min
Add honey & vinegar to pan; stir, combine, & bring to boil
Blend cornstarch with water & stir into honey mixture
Cook till mixture thickens, then remove from heat
Crumble bacon; stir bacon & dill into dressing
Cut cooled potatoes in half, leave skins on
In large bowl, combine potatoes & watercress
Pour dressing over salad & toss gently
Serve & enjoy!

Honey Popcorn Balls (from www.dadant.com)

Ingredients: ¾ cup HONEY
¾ cup sugar
1 tsp salt
½ cup water
3 quarts popcorn

Process: Cook sugar, salt, & water: stir till sugar dissolves, and cook to very brittle stage: 300 degrees F.
Add honey slowly, stirring till blended
Cook again till thermometer registers 240 degrees F— about 1 minute
Pour over popcorn & form into balls
Wrap in heavy waxed paper & serve!

Holiday Party Punch (12 servings: from National Honey Board)

Ingredients: ¾ cup HONEY
2 cups boiling water
4 cups cranberry juice
2 cups orange juice
1 cup lemon juice
1 quart ginger ale
Ice cubes
Optional: sliced lemons, limes, oranges, or strawberries

Process: Combine boiling water & honey; stir to dissolve
Chill
In large punch bowl, combine cranberry, orange, & lemon juices
Stir in honey mixture
Just before serving, add ginger ale, ice cubes, & fruit garnish if desired. Adult beverage add-ons also optional.

(For more recipes, visit “Home Is Where Your Honey Is: A Collection of Recipes” from the National Honey Board at www.honey.com!)

Enjoy!

LCBA NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Want Bees? Call Heather Sherwood: for details, see Business Meeting notes, above. Heather is based in Onalaska and has hive building materials and pre-assembled hives, as well as smokers, wax and plastic foundation boards, and, of course, bees!

Washington State Beekeeping Association Beekeeper courses: a new Apprentice course will be coming in early spring 2011. Our LCBA President, Bob Harris (he of many hats, including the “Beekeeping Hat of Authority”!), is the contact person for this and all our WSBA classes: if you are interested, email Robert@Roseofsharonfarm.com. The apprentice class is not hard or long; the Journeyman and Master Beekeeper courses, however, are much more involved. WSBA hasn’t given a master beekeeper certificate for years. 5 years experience and 30 service points are required, and the prospective Master Beekeeper must write a paper; since WSBA added that requirement, no one has done it. Also, students need some lab experience.

Want Bees & Equipment? Tim and Sharette Geise have used equipment to donate to newbees, and Bob Harris has some donated materials from a gentleman in Napavine. If you would like to find out more, please contact the Geises at woogieb@compprime.com or Bob at Robert@roseofsharonfarm.com.

Need Help With Your Bees? Don’t Bee Shy – Contact a Bee Mentor:

- If you’d like to be connected with a honey bee mentor in your area, call Susanne at 360 880 8130 or email Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com.
- If you need help with Mason Bees, check with Kimo Thielges (kimosabe@compprime.com), or Ted Saari (KNT98632@q.com).

Would You Like to Volunteer as a Bee Mentor? Bee mentors take calls, answer questions, and may visit members’ bee yards. If you’re interested in serving this way, please call Susanne at 360 880 8130 or email her at Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com.

Free Swarm & Colony Removals by our “Bee Team.” If you – or someone you know – has bees in a structure and wants them removed but not killed, please call a member of the Bee Team (during winter, we would not remove bees, but we can get you on our calendar for spring). This service is free, though we accept donations to support our educational programs.

Can You Help? Want to ride along on a removal? It’s fun, free, educational, and saves bees from the exterminator! Call us (360 880 8130) or email Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com – it’s a great experience!

LCBA Swap Meet—real or virtual! Got bee equipment to sell, swap, or give away? Email or call Susanne—see above. Have a “bee wish list”? Email that, too.

LCBA T-shirts and caps: Queensboro has lowered their prices on LCBA T-shirts, long-sleeved shirts, caps, etc. They offer an unconditional 10 year guarantee and will replace items if they get torn or broken. To order online, visit <http://www.queensboro.com> and use our LCBA logo number: **11342127**.

Respectfully reported—bee happy!

Susanne Weil, LCBA Secretary: Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com; 360 880 8130