

Lewis County Beekeepers' Association: *October 2009 Newsletter*

IN THIS EDITION:

- Notes from our September 9, 2009 meeting (follows News & Events), including tips on honey extraction & ways to shelter bees in winter.
- Upcoming Events -- Mark Your Calendars!
 - October 14 meeting, 7 p.m. at Centralia College, Corbet Theatre – Jim Bach, former Washington State Apiarist, will share new discoveries re: Colony Collapse Disorder in honeybees. Jim's making a special slideshow just for us. . . .
 - *N.b.:* We will not have an October business meeting so as to give plenty of time for Jim's talk plus Q&A.
 - October 28: WSU Extension Apprentice Beekeeping Course begins, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the WSU Extension classroom (Old Courthouse Building, Chehalis); Instructor, Norm Switzler. Class continues 11/4, 11/18, & 11/25. \$40/individual; \$60/couple; materials are included in the fee.
 - November 11 meeting—7 p.m., back at the WSU Extension classroom, Old Chehalis Courthouse. *Speaker: Harvard Robbins, longtime Tacoma beekeeper—bring your questions for Harvard!*
 - December 9 – Christmas Potluck & Meeting at the Newaukum Grange – for details, stay tuned for November's newsletter.
- *Got Questions?* Let Susanne know what topics and speakers you'd like to see at 2010 LCBA meetings.
- *Need Help with Your Bees?* Call LCBA Secretary Susanne at 360 880 8130 or email Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com, and she will put you in touch with a mentor in your area.
- *Curious about hive/swarm extractions? Want to ride along and watch this in action? Call Susanne (see above).*
- *LCBA Swap Meet—real or virtual!* Got bee equipment to sell, swap, or give away? Call or email Susanne (see above). Have a "bee wish list"? Email that, too.
- *Got a great honey-related recipe?* If you'd like to share it with Susanne, she'll include it with an upcoming newsletter.

- **Notes from our September Meeting at Sherwood Apiaries.**

- Jason and Heather Sherwood opened their home & garage to LCBA members, who brought comb from which to extract honey. Jason's electric-powered extractor was ready for action, as was Dave Smith's hand-cranked extractor: many members experimented with each. We learned to use hot knives to uncap the frames, then to use combs to brush open what the knife couldn't get. Dave and Jason demonstrated how the extractors spun. Dave's manual extractor takes 4 supers at a time and Jason's electric one about a dozen. For both, once spun, the honey then flowed through a sieve into a bucket. Once the honey was extracted, they put 9 frames back into each super.
- ***Some tips on bottling honey*** were shared. First, it's important to have 17% or lower moisture level before you bottle, or the honey will ferment. It's helpful to let the honey sit in the bucket, covered by the sieve: the moisture will evaporate. A refractometer is a helpful tool for gauging moisture levels: Jason had one on hand for members to try.
- Jason and Heather had two observation hives set up in the garage, one permanent and open to the outside. This was a great opportunity to observe the inner workings of hives, which most of us see only when we do hive inspections.

- ***Overwintering your bees—Troubleshooting Q&A***

If you did not get Jason's PDF file with over-wintering directions, email Susanne and she'll send it to you. Also, members are welcome to contact Bob and Norm with questions (contact information omitted from online edition).

- ***Should we build shelters for our hives?*** This is really up to the individual beekeeper. Norm does shelter his bees and gave details in a phone interview with the LCBA secretary after the meeting.
 - Norm notes that though photos you see in catalogs show bees surviving in all weathers, here in southwest Washington, with our very wet winters and recent snowy ones, he likes to give them some protection.
 - First, to shelter the top of the hive, Norm uses corrugated plastic and cuts it to overhang the hive by at least a foot on each side. This way, the bees can take a cleansing flight in cold or rain, yet stay dry and duck right back into the hive. Corrugated material is good because the rain will run off and not just pool on top of the hive. Norm uses plastic, but tin or fiberglass will work, too. Norm

noted that these materials can be bought at the Farm Store for about \$4 to \$6 per foot.

- To keep the shelter on top of the hive, Norm recommends anchoring with rocks—big ones.
 - Norm shelters his hives on two sides, leaving the two sides LEAST exposed to wind unsheltered for air circulation. Usually the wind & weather come in from the west/southwest, though the situation of people's hives may differ.
 - To construct the shelters, you can use natural vegetation. Alternatively, you can pound posts into the ground and run a tarp across the top and around the sides.
 - Bob does not put up shelters for his hives, but if he were going to, he would use piled-up bales of hay for windbreaks, leaving two sides unsheltered for air circulation.
- ***LCBA mugs & tiles:*** Susanne has mugs and tiles, made from Sharette's logo and Susanne's and Bob's photos by Copy Depot/Precision printing, available for sale to benefit LCBA. Mugs are \$15 and tiles are \$5: 4 different designs are available.

LCBA t-shirts & caps: Bob announced that t-shirts and hats sporting the LCBA logo are now available to order online from <http://www.queensboro.com> in North Carolina. We can order online using an LCBA logo number: **11342127**. **About ordering, Bob suggests:**

“Perhaps the best approach is for interested members to access the website and cruise around to see what's offered. If they find something to their liking they should call the toll free number and ask for help from a real live person the first time ordering. Queensboro has a four piece minimum order so combining with a fellow member might make sense too. I've ordered some shirts and should have one to model at the Lyceum and LCBA talks. I have no vested interest in Queensboro - so I'm not “pushing” them, though we have all our farm embroidery and screen printing done by them; have for years and I'm 1000% satisfied. All their products have a rock solid 10 year guarantee. I'm still happily wearing shirts I have made over 15 years ago while still in the Army.”

- ***WSU Extension Apprentice Beekeeping Course:*** Bob gave us an update: Sheila Gray has sent him a flyer about the course and Norm is looking it over to ok it. Dates and times are set: October 28, November 4, November 18, and November 25 (the 11th was skipped because it is a LCBA monthly meeting night). Each class session will run 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. cost will be \$40 per person, \$60 per couple, and fees include class materials. This will not be an LCBA event, but a

WSU-Extension event: we (Norm) will teach the class for them using WASBA materials. Snohomish County did this and got 40 non-beekeepers signed up, after which almost all joined the county beekeeping association. Preregistration will take place in late October and details on the cost will be forthcoming.

- ***4H Beekeeping Group:*** Bob reported on this latest LCBA outreach and education venture, which may start as soon as November. 12 4-H children have signed up, ages 8 to 13 years old, and Bob and Norm will teach them basic bee biology, explain how colonies work, and help the kids build equipment to get ready for when they will do their own beekeeping. The classes will probably be at Bob's Rose of Sharon Farm; Bob is exploring whether local farmers would let the kids keep hives on their farms (a win-win for all involved).
- ***LCBA Hive at Borst Park Master Gardeners' Demonstration Garden?*** Bob pitched this idea to Sheila and a decision will be made after the new Master Gardener coordinator is hired. The demonstration garden has suffered from vandalism, making it essential that any beehive would be in a caged enclosure (liability reasons dictate this, too). More news as it happens. . . .
- ***3 Day Beekeeping Seminar in Portland this November – Dr. Dewey Caron.*** Dr. Caron retired after teaching bee science for 40 years at the University of Delaware and has settled in Portland. His seminar will run one evening a week for 3 successive weeks and will cover colony collapse disorder, but also genetics, bee genome project, and more. Possibly interested LCBA members could carpool to the class. Dr. Caron was going to attend our September meeting but had a conflict; however, he is planning to attend Jim Bach's 10/14/09 LCBA talk at Centralia College, and more details will be available then.
- ***WASBA Apprentice Beekeeping Course:*** If you have completed test sheets, give them to Bob for scoring.

Respectfully submitted,
Susanne Weil, LCBA Secretary