

Lewis County Beekeepers' Association: *September 2010 Newsletter*

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Upcoming Events:

Wednesday, September 8, 7 p.m.: LCBA Monthly Meeting at the Sherwood's—our 2nd annual Honey Extraction Workshop! Also: Get Ready to Over-Winter Your Bees: Q&A. Got honey to extract, but no extractor to do it with? Come on down to Debra Road in Onalaska (directions removed from online edition) and use the Sherwood's gear. BYOB: Bring Your Own Bucket—and your own chair!

FYI: Jason and Heather ask that folks bring only one super box worth of frames to this workshop so no one has to stand in line too long. If you have more supers to extract from, though, please call the Sherwoods and set up a time to finish 'em off.

FYI—Want cheap honey buckets? Sharette Geise reports: Safeway and Wal-Mart both will give away—or sell for \$1—buckets they use for frosting. Safeway's are food-grade buckets. Call ahead to be sure that they have buckets on hand; be sure to ask for lids, too. Caution: avoid the garlic butter buckets, because the smell never goes away!

Wednesday, October 13: LCBA Monthly Meeting at the WSU Extension Classroom, Old Chehalis Courthouse. Topic: Honey Products—Making Soap, Lotion, and Candles. Speakers: Jamie Allwine, Hannah Sherwood, and Sharette Giese. Jamie, Hannah, and Sharette will give a how-to overview. We can't do complete demonstrations in the classroom: for that, we need a kitchen. If you're interested, please email Susanne at Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com or call 360 880 8130: we can set up a weekend workshop and/or open up early at the Grange for our Christmas party.

October 14 & 15: Want an excuse to visit the great state of Montana? Fran Bach reports that the **Montana State Beekeepers Annual Meeting** for 2010 will be at the Hilton Garden Inn, Kalispell, Montana. For information, call 406.756.4500.

October 28-30: “Honeybee Losses: How to Keep Our Bees Alive”: Northwest Corner Beekeeping Conference, Hood River, Oregon (a joint conference of the Oregon and Washington Beekeepers Associations). WSBA and ORSBA say: “Join us for three days of learning from some of the most respected people in beekeeping, and networking with other beekeepers in the NW. This is your opportunity to learn about the

latest products, treatments, and techniques available to keep your bees healthy and ready for early spring pollination and nectar flows!” The full program is not yet available online, but I picked up a hard copy at the WAS meeting, so call 360 880 8130 if you’d like more details. For information on accommodations, see: www.hoodriverinn.com/mainsite/index.html, or call 800 828 7873.

November 10: LCBA Monthly Meeting at the WSU Extension Classroom, Old Chehalis Courthouse: Topic TBA.

December 8: LCBA’s 2nd Annual Holiday Potluck at the Newaukum Grange, 7 to 9 p.m.. After dinner: brief monthly meeting & our usual Beekeeping Q&A.

Bring: a dish of food to share & a plate, cutlery, and cup to eat/drink from. The Grange has tables and chairs, 3 ranges, a refrigerator, and plug-ins for hot pots. LCBA will provide coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and napkins.

Directions to Newaukum Grange, 104 Browns Road East, Chehalis, WA from I-5, Exit 77:

- **Left onto Hwy 6 West.**
- **Left onto Riverside Rd.**
- **Riverside Road turns into Shorey Rd.**
- **Continue on Shorey Road until stop sign at Hwy. 603: The Grange is across the street.**

Questions? Contact Susanne Weil, LCBA Secretary, at Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com or by phone: 360 880 8130.

Notes on our August 2010 Speaker’s Talk

Dr. Tim Lawrence, the County Director, WSU Extension, Island County spoke to us about “Human Dimensions of Colony Collapse Disorder & Their Impact On Honeybees.” I will send out the notes from Tim’s very detailed and informative talk next week: he will review my summary after the WAS conference is over, then help me fill in the gaps.

Minutes from our August 2010 Meeting

LCBA Board Elections:

Our current slate of officers ran unopposed and were thus re-elected. Many thanks to our nominating committee members, Roy Schaafsma and Dave Smith, for their willingness to vet nominations, and thanks to Peter Glover, whom Bob called on to run the elections in his role as “Past President” on the Board.

2010-11 officers:

President: Bob Harris
Vice President: Norm Switzler
Secretary: Susanne Weil
Treasurer: Sarah Roebas

Membership Coordinator: Brandy DeMelt

Terms are officially two years, but the Bylaws provide for putting officers' terms on a staggered schedule, to help preserve institutional history and stability. Thus, starting next year, the President, Treasurer, and Membership Coordinator will be voted on in odd-numbered years, and the Vice President and Secretary will be voted on in even-numbered years. That means that in 2011, President, Treasurer, and Membership Coordinator will be up for re-election again.

LCBA's Future: Open Board Meeting for Discussion: Bob had some post-election reflections: he has been reading about how/why clubs like LCBA thrive or fail. Small ones like ours generally peak in their 2nd and 3rd years, but after that, many deflate. In many cases it appears that early enthusiasm can wane if there is a lack of vision or a dedicated purpose for being. (Susanne asked: do we need a reason for bee – ing?)(sorry, couldn't resist). Bob proposed that we hold a board meeting open to LCBA members to discuss where we want LCBA to be ten years down the road. What kind of organization are we? What is our purpose? What are our goals and plans? This open board meeting will also tackle membership issues—are we reaching everyone well enough for email? Should we send hard copies for less email-savvy members? How about getting more exposure at the county level through the newspaper, radio, etc.? The Sherwoods noted that they are going to fairs and distributing fliers.

Members agreed that Susanne would coordinate the meeting date with the Board members, then send out the date, place, and time to the membership. As for location, Spiffy's and the new Ribeye were suggested, as both have catering rooms. (Post-meeting note: Susanne tried, but could not get Ribeye management on the phone. Spiffy's and Country Cousins both would charge if we could not bring in a set number of people (40 or more for Spiffy's). Kit Carson's was able to offer a meeting room with no extra charge regardless of how many attended, and its central location, just off the 76 I-5 exit in Chehalis, made it the chosen venue.)

FYI: The minutes from the August 25, 2010 open Board Meeting will be sent in a separate email. Meanwhile, are you interested in being more involved with LCBA, but would rather not be an official Board member? Please contact any current board member (see list above) and let us know! Also, if you have ideas about speakers for LCBA meetings, initiatives that we could undertake as a group, ways we could get the word out to local beekeepers who are not yet connected with us, or other ideas, please bring these up, either at a meeting or to a board member.

Bee Colony Raffle & LCBA Fundraiser! Norm Switzler and Pat Swinth raffled off a colony of bees that they captured out of a wall on one of their many removal visits this summer for one lucky dollar per ticket. We held the drawing at this meeting: Robert Covington won the hive, and LCBA gathered \$135 in funds raised! Many thanks to those who bid on the hive, and especially to Norm and Pat for making the raffle possible.

Treasurer's Report: Including the funds raised, above, and after reimbursing a board member for expenses, as of this September Newsletter, our balance is \$1360.27.

LCBA Website update: WSU Extension already has a basic LCBA page (thanks, Sheila!), and Heather Sherwood will link to it and maintain a more comprehensive LCBA page. Heather and Susanne will get together in August and get this started. We discussed briefly what should and what shouldn't be publicly available, and we will need to discuss this further. We may want to keep things like our minutes in a password-protected part of the website. Other things, like information on how to attend our monthly meeting and join the club, how to contact bee mentors, how to call for a swarm removal, some nice photos, we will want to make publicly available. What about PowerPoints from our monthly meeting speakers: should we make these publicly available (good advertising?) or keep these password-protected for club members to access? Please email Susanne (Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com) with ideas about our website, or call 360 880 8130.

Southwest Washington Fair: The Sherwoods had 10 volunteers as of this meeting. They reported that because, this year, the Fair is cash strapped, no free permits were being offered, so even volunteers must pay to park and to get in. Heather had access to some half price admissions tickets: first come, first served for LCBA volunteers. One member asked whether LCBA could pay admission for volunteers who keep and present their ticket stubs, given that we pay our own parking? This led to the question of whether we pay our volunteers to work in the booth. Sheila Gray reported that with WSU-Extension liaison organizations, in general, volunteers have gotten an admission ticket in exchange for time. One member noted a concern: in some organizations, that practice has encouraged people to do two mediocre hours in exchange for a free day at fair. Heather noted that in LCBA's case, that is not likely to be a problem, since most people volunteered for longer stints (8 hours each in several cases). Brandy suggested that if a volunteer brings Treasurer Sarah a receipt, LCBA could reimburse them, and those who want to donate their time completely could do that. It was then moved to leave it up to members to decide if they want to be reimbursed, and the members voted to do it this way. **See announcements, below, for a Fair update!**

Speaking of the Fair . . . Through a comedy of errors, the Paneskos ended up with 28 tickets to the Doobie Brothers' concert for Thursday night of the Fair, and they were offering tickets for those interested. Bob asked the existential question: "What better place to plug the Doobie Brothers than with a bunch of people who enjoy a good buzz?" Bob himself regretfully declined, as he would be arresting people that night.

Western Apicultural Society: Gary Stelzner announced that he would drive down for the Wednesday, 9/1 program, and invited any LCBA members who'd like to go to ride along: if you're interested, please call Gary [contact information removed from online edition]. Bob added that if we have enough demand, he might be able to get a van. We'll hear an update on what LCBA member learned from WAS at our September meeting. [Just after Tim Lawrence's talk, Dewey Caron invited us to attend WAS and shared information on the one-day attendance options, as well as fliers.]

Got Honey? Want Mead? A visitor announced that a Lewis County winery is looking for honey to make mead; several members expressed interest in helping them out. Susanne asked whether LCBA members might enjoy a mead making workshop. People were interested, and Sarah Roebas has made mead in the past. She noted that mead takes time to set up; it is not like a fruit wine that can be drunk within a couple of month. Mead takes a couple of years. We will look into the possibility of having a mead making workshop, possibly in conjunction with our holiday potluck.

Forest Owners Field Day: Sheila Gray announced that this would take place on Saturday, August 28th, with a full day of outreach education in area of forestry planned. Sheila had brought brochures to share.

Bee Team Swarm Removals: Robert & other LCBA members did extraction on North Fork Road from a milking house: they got the swarm but need a queen and are working on that. They got good batch of bees working out of it. Also, Jason called him with a bunch of bees up a tree: “everyone needs to experience this!” They got 2 frames from a felled maple tree that was 4 feet in diameter: a good adventure for a first time.

Bee Q&A: Bob says this has been an extremely odd season. What should we be thinking about as we prepare to over winter? Here are some responses:

Late summer feeding to prepare for over-wintering: Dave Smith urged members to start feeding now if there is no blossom in your area. Blooms are ending soon. Jason added that if you feed now, be careful to prevent robbing: if you have a weak colony, it could be a good idea to limit entrance space. Bob asked: if you feed now, what should you feed, sugar or honey? Dave suggested feeding what you have on hand to build them up. Dave thinks that 2:1 sugar to water, the winter mix, is ok now. If you have 1:1 mix on hand, just add sugar. The 2:1 mix is hearty winter food. Jason thinks that thicker syrup is best in winter: since it has less water, it is easier for bees to dehydrate it and store it as honey. Also, for some reason, lower sugar content nectar seems to stimulate bees to raise brood, which you want them to do now, but not in winter. If you don't want more brood now, use 2:1. Pollen is important too—if you are a believer in pollen patty or want to experiment with it, maybe when September starts, give them pollen patties to help them fortify for winter. Jason and Heather will have pollen patties for sale.

How can you tell whether your bees have enough food supply to over-winter? Pat Swinth reported that last year, he didn't take off supers till September, then just had to smoke the bees a little, blow a few off with leaf blower, and the bees went right down into the hive. Pat wanted to know, though, how he could know that his hive has enough for a winter supply? Dave said that he should lift it and estimate the weight: 60 pounds for one box, 100 pounds for 2 boxes should be adequate for whole winter—though you may have to supplement in early spring. Of course, we don't know what to expect, given the strange season we have had. Jason says that if we have a dry fall without nectar available, then as bees shrink their brood nest down, they will have a bunch of wasted space with no nectar stored: this means that box could be heavy, but still not sufficient in

food supplies, so it's important to inspect the hives and then judge about feeding in fall. Bees could starve 3 or 4 inches from where there is honey stored. Jason thinks it's best to feed when can feed liquid so they can store it as honey. Don't put feeder in center of box because doing that splits the cluster.

Combining hives: Bob asked whether anyone has had to combine hives. A few have b/c of smaller colonies captured. One member joined a captured hive to a single box and had good results. Now is the time to do it, and it will still be do-able for a few more weeks. The queens will fight it out, and the stronger queen will survive. Bob had box on bottom with weaker box on top, with newspaper between with just a few tears. In a couple of days, the colonies were together. Another member asked: if 3 boxes need to be combined, and the 3rd one is 2 or 3 feet away, will the moved bees try to move out/go home? How should we select which box to make the basis of new combined colony? Robert Covington and another member plan to combine 2 with Robert's one. Norm suggested that whichever one is going to be the permanent location for winter is the one to pick. Norm says that we can also blend frames that are active as an alternative to stacking boxes.

LCBA NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: *First up, new announcements; next, our regular announcement items. . .*

September Announcements:

Sherwood Apiaries/LCBA: First Prize for Educational Exhibit at the Southwest Washington Fair, 2nd year in a row! Thanks to Jason, Heather, Hannah, and David Sherwood for co-hosting LCBA in the Sherwood Apiary booth; thanks, too, to all of our LCBA members who turned out to help answer the public's questions. Special congratulations to David Sherwood, whose woodworking—showcased in the observation hive that drew so many fair visitors to our booth—won a special 4-H prize.

Honeybees in the News!

Steve Howard found this interesting article about British beekeepers' research on the Varroa Mite: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1305695/British-beekeeper-breeds-bee-protect-deadly-mite-wiping-colonies.html>.

Latest WAS Newsletter Available Online: Fran Bach, WAS Journal editor (febach@fairpoint.net), has posted the August issue of the WAS Journal on the WAS website. To read it, go to 'groups.ucanr.org/WAS/' and click on 'WAS Journal' and then click on August 2010. Don't forget to click on 'Refresh' or 'Reload' in your menu bar if only the old edition comes up.

Our standing announcements, available in every newsletter:

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.

Free Swarm & Colony Removals: Swarm/colony removal is a free service that LCBA, as a nonprofit educational organization, offers the public. See list of beekeepers, above, to call if you—or someone you know—needs help removing a swarm of honeybees. Also, if you're interested in riding along on a removal to observe and learn more, give Susanne a call (see # above): it's free, fun, & educational.

Want Bees & Equipment? [2012 note: see our website link to beekeeping supply options]

Washington State Beekeeping Association Beekeeper courses: Bob Harris, our president, is the contact person for this and all 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. WASBA 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 WASBA added that requirement, no one has done it. Also, students need some lab 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,
Susanne Weil, LCBA Secretary