

# **Lewis County Beekeepers' Association:**

## **October 2012 Newsletter**

### **In This Edition:**

- **Upcoming LCBA Events**
- **Notes from LCBA's September 12, 2012 Meeting**
  - **Tracheal Mites, Over-wintering, & LCBA elections**
- **Bees in the News**
- **WASBA News**
  - **September Newsletter Link; Invitation to Run for Open WASBA Positions**
- **LCBA Announcements & Upcoming Educational Opportunities**

*Please note: repeat announcements, like our mentor list and beekeeping supply options, are now posted on our website: visit [www.lewiscountybeekeepers.org](http://www.lewiscountybeekeepers.org). FYI: we will not post members' contact information (phone, email, address) unless individual members authorize this; the secretary's phone and email are the conduit for people who find our group via the internet.*

*If you haven't seen the website, please check it out – if you have suggestions or resources you'd like posted, please contact Susanne at 360 880 8130. (If you don't have internet access, but want mentor or supply information, please call.)*

## **UPCOMING LCBA EVENTS:**

### **September 26: LCBA Apprentice Beekeeping Class begins**

- Dates/Times: 9/26, 10/3, 10/17, & 10/24, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.
- Location: WSU Extension Classroom, Old Chehalis Courthouse.
- Content: This class follows the WASBA curriculum and will be taught by Bob Harris and Norm Switzler, LCBA past and current Presidents; graduates get the WASBA Apprentice Beekeeper certificate.
- Cost: \$30 per individual, \$45 per couple. Costs cover WASBA course book, copying expenses, and support LCBA programs; students who join LCBA at the end of the course will get the \$10 initiation fee waived.
- To register, contact the WSU Extension Office, 360 740 1214 or download the form on our website, [www.lewiscountybeekeepers.org](http://www.lewiscountybeekeepers.org); click on Upcoming Events.

**October 4-7: Joint WASBA and Western Apicultural Society Annual Conference, Embassy Suites at Tukwila, just north of the Seattle Airport, WA.** For details, see “LCBA Announcements & Upcoming Educational Opportunities,” below.

### **October 10: LCBA Monthly Meeting, 7 p.m., 103 Washington Hall, Centralia College.**

**Topic: Planting for Bees: Planning Ahead for a Bee-Friendly Garden.**

**Speakers:** Darren Gordon, House of Bees, and Charles Bennett, WASBA Area 2 Representative. Darren and Charles will share their experience about plants bees love, and Darren may have seed packets available for purchase.

October business meeting: planning for 2013. What topics would you like to see monthly meetings focus on? What hands-on beekeeping workshop topics would benefit you? Would you be willing to share contact information / photos with LCBA members in a printed directory? Do you have bee-related topics about which you'd feel confident speaking to local groups who ask us for a speaker for their meetings? Please bring ideas to the meeting and/or call/email Susanne.

### **November 14: LCBA Monthly Meeting, 7 p.m., 103 Washington Hall, Centralia College**

**Topic: Update on honey bee research.** Susanne Weil & Peter Glover will give an update from the WASBA/WAS conference on findings of interest to our group, focusing on new information about indoor overwintering (the Yakima project), a HopGuard test update, Pacific NW bee nutrition, and possibly more.

**Business meeting discussion: packages v. nucs:** how did yours do this year (so far)?

**December 12: LCBA Holiday Potluck at the Newaukum Grange, 7-9 p.m.** Details & directions will be in November's newsletter.

### **January 9, 2013: LCBA Monthly Meeting, 7 p.m., 103 Washington Hall, Centralia College.**

**Topic: Top Bar Hives: an alternative to the Langstroth standard.** LCBA VP Dave Gaston will discuss how he uses top bar hives & will have samples for members to view.

**February 13: LCBA Monthly Meeting, 7 p.m., 103 Washington Hall, Centralia College.**

**Topic: Swarm & Colony Removals: How They Work.** Norm will narrate a slideshow of how a colony was removed from a structure in Onalaska in July 2012. Discussion: what's involved & how interested LCBA members can participate.

*Do you have suggestions for 2013 Meeting Topics? Please share! Contact Secretary Susanne Weil at [susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com](mailto:susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com) or 360 880 8130.*

## **NOTES FROM OUR SEPTEMBER 12 MEETING**

**Speaker: Renzy Davenport, Olympia Beekeepers' Association, on Tracheal Mites: How to Find Out If Your Hives Are Affected – and What To Do If They Are.**

Treasurer Jon Wade introduced Renzy Davenport, who gave a presentation on Tracheal mites at Olympia Beekeepers' Association two months ago and drove down from Roy to talk to us. Renzy is also involved with the Pierce County and Lackamas Valley clubs. His work with bees began for family farm pollination purposes rather than for honey, and he noted die-out issues even then. He took over after his father died, and he started liking working the bees. Last year, he lost 5 hives and wanted to figure out why. Research led him into the various bee clubs and contact with WSU.

Renzy noted his surprise that well-respected scientists working on honey bee issues here in the Pacific Northwest tend not to think that Tracheal mites are as critical as Varroa mites: he sees this differently. Tracheal mites came in from Mexico in 1984. European beekeepers had Tracheal mites in hives, yet still had success with bees, so here in the U.S., little was done until large losses began: even so, attention continues to focus on Varroa, to the relative exclusion of Tracheal mites.

***What Tracheal Mites Do to Bees:*** In a diagram, Renzy illustrated how these mites infect younger bees and make it hard for them to survive winter. The mites' suckers, or tentacles, are on the top (see diagram, attached to the newsletter email and posted on our website under Resources and Links): that is what they use to chew into the bees' trachea. The mites enter the bees through their breathing openings and plug the trachea, making it hard for bees to breathe. The mites also feed on hemo lymph, further weakening the bees and putting them at greater risk for still other problems. Diagnosing these mites can be complicated because they can mirror those of other issues. Among the signs that Tracheal mites may be present in a colony are: faster honey consumption; smaller brood nest; bees crawling around aimlessly in front of the hive. They don't have shriveled wings as with Varroa or viruses like deformed wing syndrome; however, the bees climb onto blades of grass as if they want to fly, but can't. One symptom that seems easiest to detect, but which Renzy hasn't seen much of, is the so-called "K-wing" phenomenon, in which the bees' wings seem disjointed into a K-shape. He's only seen that in 6 or 7 of all the dead bees he's had. Bees often die in February or March from Tracheal mites.

***Sending Samples to WSU's Lab:*** Renzy didn't know why he was losing bees, but he sent samples to WSU after speaking to some experienced beekeepers. He found that the

submission of samples to WSU is not hard to do (see below) and yields good information. Renzy distributed the forms and directions; these are posted on our website under the “Resources and Information” link and attached to the email with this newsletter. Because Tracheal mites are an internal parasite, you must send in a sample to have them detected. There was talk about ability to tear the bees apart and discern mites with microscopes, but this is difficult to do without training. His group is considering getting members trained.

In one of the handouts, WSU explains how to send them samples. They don’t want samples sent in Tupperwares because they tend to leak, and bees must arrive in alcohol. Analysis/Specimen cups are the way to go. Renzy called around town in Tacoma: analysis cups can run a dollar per cup, but he got 25 on the Internet for under \$4.00. You can also use urine specimen cups. What you do is get a sample – at least 50 bees. Technically, the bees are supposed to be alive, but since Renzy hates to kill the bees, he scooped the freshly dead bees off bottom board, and that worked. Walgreens sells 92% rubbing alcohol: it can sit longer, so Renzy suggests that is what to do if you are a procrastinator. Usually when he gets what he needs, he mails it in right then. He warns: just be sure you don’t get your queen! WSU don’t want you to send only field bees, but a random sampling.

To prepare your sample, fill your cup about an inch and half thick with bees, then add alcohol, then fill out the information and send it with it. The piece of paper with your information actually goes right in with bees, so you must write with pencil: then the wording stays, whereas ink will run. Next, tape around the lid so there is no leakage. Next, put the cup into a Ziploc bag. Finally, include the questionnaire in the little box. He put packing peanuts around the Ziploc and didn’t use a special box.

When Renzy sent his samples to WSU, they were tested for Nosema, Varroa, and Tracheal mites. They responded within 3 to 4 weeks. For the Tracheal mites, his sample showed 56% infestation. The lab defines “acceptable” as anything under 20%, and they tell you when you get your response what is acceptable for each thing tested. WSU’s lab said that there was no question about it: Tracheal mites did in Renzy’s hives. In fact, the technicians told him that they were *thrilled* with his samples because they could use them for teaching – they just hadn’t had good enough samples before. (Thank you very little, said Renzy.) WSU does not give suggestions about what to do to treat them – they can tell you what they have heard that people do, but they do not want to be liable for results. They can also tell you if whatever is harming your bees is a prevalent issue in your area.

***Treatment Options:*** Now that Renzy knew his bees had Tracheal mites, what to do about it? He didn’t want to disturb the cluster during cold weather by putting in strips – this was in winter, and he was seeing lots of dead bees. He distributed a helpful handout of treatment options (posted on our website under “Resources and Information” and attached to the newsletter email). You must take honey supers off before applying any of these treatments, he emphasized.

WSU recommended the simple grease patty (see below), so he tried it, thinking that doing something better than doing nothing. The next sample that he sent to WSU following this treatment after this showed much higher Nosema, well above the acceptable limit, but his Tracheal and Varroa mite infestation went down. He did wind up losing the hive because he got

to it too late, and it just kept dwindling. In the end, Nosema probably finished off these bees – but Tracheal mites weakened them, paving the way for that fatal onslaught of Nosema.

Renzy was asked how much time passed before he started treating: he isn't sure because he wasn't keeping good records then. He does now. WSU wanted to verify where he lived because they had not seen Tracheal mite infestation like that in our area. He suspects that's because people haven't reported them.

Renzy is not a fan of formic acid. The time he tried it, he didn't use a respirator because he had a slight breeze behind him, and the nose full "set him back." He would prefer to use the least amount of chemicals possible. He had put on the formic acid in packages of mite-away Quick-Strips (the container gives directions about the temperature range for application). Using formic acid can cause issues with queens and cause bee losses. If you do choose to use it, one key is good ventilation. The strength of the pad itself tends to die down within a few days, but still, he prefers a softer chemical, such as the simple grease patty (see handout).

Renzy was asked how his hives were situated. He has them in an open field with pasture in back, near Fort Lewis property, with no one behind him or across the street, just woods and fields, continual breeze, not a lot of moisture, and winter breezes are his major concern. He also uses screened bottom boards.

Menthol treatment: Menthol kills mites by dehydrating them. Menthol crystals are available through Harvard Robbins (see our beekeeping supply options link under Resources and Links on our website); also, Dadant sells them. Renzy reported that it doesn't take much heat to mix the ingredients effectively. He commented that it is almost like smelling Vicks if you get up close. He sits the can on top of the hive and ladles the mixture on top of napkins that then get saturated, and use it as needed. You can tell if you need it again because you don't smell it when you open up. He administered this treatment in the winter. Harvard wasn't as keen on menthol crystals because we don't get hot enough weather long enough – if it is warm enough long enough, the straight menthol alone will clear out the mites, but he didn't see this as an effective treatment because oil getting on bees disorients them. He was told it lessens the mites' gripping ability and masks the bees' smell. Norm noted that you have to be careful of the menthol b/c of the fumes – glove up, mask, etc.

Renzy was asked whether he knows of anyone who has tried fresh mint as a preventative. Renzy had not heard of this, but he has heard of trying essential oils. Susanne noted that Dewey Caron, speaking to us this spring, had warned against using essential oils in strong doses; Norm said the problem was with emulsifiers. Gary Stelzner noted that he uses Honey-B-Healthy in the sugar water and asked whether its strong smell permeating the hive might have the same effect? Renzy said that he thought that too, and he tries to convince himself, but it did not work for him in treating for Tracheal mites. He still uses Honey-B-Healthy in conjunction with the grease patties, though. Renzy noted that a member of another club who had only lost one hive puts in both a pollen patty and a grease patty, then follows up with the menthol treatment, and rotates it throughout the winter months. Two winters in a row, this man's bees have done well.

Grease patties are also a good attack on Varroa: they eat it because of the sugar, and then it coats their bodies (for the Varroa). The Tracheal mites focus on young bees. For both Tracheal and Varroa mites, the theory is that the coating makes it harder for the mites to discern the younger bees, so they get fooled into going to the older, stronger bees.

Bob Harris asked whether Renzy has used mineral salt; Renzy said that he had not, but that a few in his club have used it. Bob was asking because he has dairy cows and gives them salt with high mineral content: whenever it gets wet, bees flock to it. It makes sense that there is something there that they crave. Renzy hasn't heard what the expectation is that the salt will do to the Tracheal mites. Bob wondered: does salt hurt mites, or encourage bees to feed and strengthen them that way? Renzy said that he does not know. He uses Honey-B-Healthy (he comments that it "just basically gives me a warm fuzzy"), but notes it could be just that it makes him feel good.

Mel Grigorich asked about Hop Guard; he had read that it had a negative effect on queens. Renzy has tried it: he put a grease patty out in bees in a different yard and added Hop Guard, then treated 5 hives. By the time he got to the last hive, he saw a white object at the entrance of first hive he had treated; it was a chunk of the grease patty, and he saw 25 Varroa mites on that patty – he counted – so the Hop Guard had knocked down that many mites just in the time that he had been treating the other four hives. He attributes this result to the Hop Guard because the patties had gotten soft in the warmth and fallen down through the frames – the patties don't act that fast.

Pat Swinth has tried using a fogging machine with white vinegar, cutting 100 percent white vinegar down to 20 percent. He used it for two winters and never lost any bees, but it was cumbersome, because he had to bring a generator out to the hives once a month. He treated for three minutes per hive – the bees came out with tongues hanging out. Renzy had heard of negative effects from vinegar, but Pat has not experienced that. Renzy thought possibly the issue had been strength of the vinegar that caused negative effects.

***To Treat or Try to Create Resistance?*** One reason why WSU does not recommend treatment is that bees seem to be adapting to Tracheal mites, so if we treat them, we may interfere with the process by which bees develop resistance; Steve Sheppard believes that we need to try to propagate resistant bees. Bob noted the difference between eastern and western bees, the moisture issues, and suggested that that may make a difference for our choices. Renzy noted that Sue Cobey takes the same stand that Steve Sheppard does. Renzy had Italians and Carniolans from different merchandisers (in Auburn and also from Harvard in Tacoma), yet still, Tracheal mites were an issue. There are some bees that are showing ability to live with the Tracheal mites – especially the Buckfast bees from England – and there are now efforts to cross-breed them. Dr. Sheppard suggested that the main thing is do your best to send bees into winter well fed with real pollen, as opposed to pollen patties, and with honey, as opposed to sugar water: that more natural diet seems to have a good effect. He's heard 5 to 15 percent reduction on Varroa by using screened bottom boards; powdered sugar can also be helpful in treating for Varroa mites.

Norm asked if Renzy knows where the Tracheal mites are originating; Renzy said that they probably had them when you got them because no one pays attention and monitors the bees. Norm asked how sensitive the mites are – how tough or durable. Renzy said that he is not sure: he can attest that it does not take much menthol to affect them, so based on his limited sample, he thinks it does seem to help. All these treatments are aids, not cures. It just gives an advantage trying to get them through the winter. Bob noted it's about balance – we may never get rid of all these parasites, but possibly could maintain a symbiotic relationship.

As Norm commented, we may do best to focus on genetic mediation - breeding a better bee. This is one reason he favors keeping feral bees from removals from structures. Renzy sees the point, but hates losing so many bees, so he treats. He noted, though, that WSU's perspective is like Norm's: let the stronger bees survive to breed.

We thanked Renzy for his extremely interesting and informative presentation, then took a break before our business meeting.

## **September Business Meeting:**

***Proposed LCBA Bylaws changes:*** Susanne reviewed the proposed bylaws changes, which had been sent to current members (only dues paying members are eligible to vote) and were distributed in hard copy at this meeting. Proposed changes were:

- Changing the “dues year” to match the calendar year. Dues would now be payable at the January meeting of the year, starting this year with dues payable in January 2013 instead of October 2012. This was proposed to eliminate confusion and coordinate with package bee orders, for which members get discounts.
- Changing the election calendar, effective 2013, such that Board elections would take place in December, with new officers to assume duties the following January.
- Updating the “job descriptions” of the Vice President, Secretary, and Past President's positions to match the work required to meet LCBA's needs.
- Also proposed: splitting the large job of the Membership Coordinator into two positions: Membership Coordinator and Mentorship Coordinator. The latter office would focus on linking bee mentors to new beekeepers and organizing hands-on workshops on key topics like hive building, hive inspections, honey extraction, etc.

President Norm Switzler asked for questions or comments; there were none. It was moved and seconded to approve the bylaw changes as a group; the motion passed with no objections.

***LCBA Board Elections:*** The LCBA Vice President and Secretary positions were up for election this year [President, Treasurer, and Membership Coordinator are elected in odd numbered years].

**Membership Coordinator:** Susanne announced that Brandy DeMelt, who has served as Membership Coordinator of LCBA since its inception, has resigned as Membership Coordinator to fulfill family care-giving responsibilities. The board greatly appreciates her efforts and warmth in this position since the beginning of LCBA. On advice of the Board, President Norm

has appointed Steve Howard to fill out the remaining year of her term, which will be up for election in 2013. Many thanks to Steve for his willingness to serve!

**Vice President:** At our August meeting, Ted Saari announced his wish to step down as Vice President for health reasons; however, if no one felt willing to serve, Ted was willing to continue. Norm announced that Dave Gaston was willing; he asked if there were further nominations. Hearing none, Norm asked for a show of hands and Dave was made vice president by acclamation. We thanked Ted for his service and welcomed Dave to the job.

**Secretary:** Norm announced that Susanne was willing to run again and called for any additional nominations; hearing none, he asked for a vote, and Susanne was re-elected as secretary by acclamation.

**Mentorship Coordinator:** Norm announced that Gary Stelzner was willing to serve in the newly created role of mentorship coordinator and asked for further nominations; hearing none, he asked for a vote, and Gary was elected mentorship coordinator by acclamation.

(Post meeting follow-up: to see the revised bylaws or find officers' contact information, visit our website, [www.lewiscountybeekeepers.org](http://www.lewiscountybeekeepers.org), and click on the "officers and bylaws" link.)

**Southwest Washington Fair:** Brandy announced that 36 LCBA volunteers provided a total 126 hours of service. This was our first time in the Education building. In discussion, it was agreed that there were pros and cons to this location. Our exhibit got a fair amount of foot traffic, given that fair attendance was down this year. However, some suggested that the Conservation building would be a more appropriate venue, given the endangered situation of honey bees. We also received requests from fair-goers to display an observation hive, a feature that drew many to our booth, co-located with Sherwoods' apiary, in past years. Norm and the board will take this up as we plan for next year.

**Website:** Susanne displayed the new LCBA website: [www.lewiscountybeekeepers.org](http://www.lewiscountybeekeepers.org). She thanked L.J. Wallin for helping her start the process with excellent ideas about layout drawn from his experience in information technology, Debbie Burris of Lewis County Extension for showing her how to use Yahoo! tools to build the site, and Peter Glover for the reminder that her characteristic long paragraphs would not play nicely online. The site includes our mission statement and pages for upcoming events, monthly meetings, newsletters (all past newsletters from 2008 on are archived now), mentors, swarm & colony removals, and officers & bylaws. There is a "join us" page, as well as a "contact us" page, with Susanne as the contact. Finally, the resources & links page, still in development, has sub-pages devoted to links to helpful websites, bees in the news, suppliers, soap & beeswax, cooking with honey, and buying local honey. Resource sub-pages under construction include FAQs, an annotated bibliography of books & films, and a photo gallery. Although Yahoo's template won't allow LCBA's logo to be incorporated in the banner in Yahoo's system, it is embedded on every page. Members liked the color scheme, layout, and photos.

Susanne noted that she would be contacting mentors and bee team members about whether they wish to have their contact information on the Internet. The board will discuss how

to manage contacts (through our secretary, Extension, or a combination of both?) and bring options back to the membership. This is particularly important for bee team members: Norm was inundated with calls over the summer, and only about 7 LCBA members were active in removals. Also, we need to manage public perception: some callers were under the impression that bee team members do this for a living rather than as volunteers. Susanne noted that the board will be working on building up the bee team over the coming year: less experienced beekeepers can help by visiting a site and taking photos to help bee team members plan a removal, as well as by providing support on a removal day. Another issue: many callers mistake yellow jackets and wasps for honey bees, and though there is a link to ‘how to tell the difference’ pages on our website, many may not check this. Mel noted that a beekeeper in Longview removes yellow jackets and gives them to labs to have their venom converted into medicine (see “Bees in the News,” below).

Another suggestion was that the website have a “swap meet” link where the secretary could post information about items that members would like to sell or give away. For example, Norm got a call from someone moving away who wants to sell hives, equipment (unfortunately, this person has already unloaded his gear on Craigslist, but there’ll be future opportunities).

Susanne asked members to send her pictures, links, and information for our new site.

*Post Meeting Note: LCBA’s board has decided not to post address and phone information for workshop hosts, mentors, or bee team members on our website to protect members’ privacy and safety. The emailed version of our newsletter will have addresses and directions, as that is accessed only by those on our mailing list; however, those who find the workshops or mentor / swarm & colony removal online will be directed to call the secretary, who will pass on their phone number to workshop hosts, mentors, or bee team members.*

**Honey extraction workshop:** Gary Stelzner, host for our Sept. 15 honey extraction workshop, asked for a show of hands of members planning to attend. We discussed who would bring what equipment (at least 4 extractors would be available). As for buckets to catch the honey, Safeway has these (though there was a question of whether they were free or cost a few dollars – ditto WalMart). It was noted that it’s important to get food grade buckets that do not have a strong odor from previous use. Gary and Norm suggested that folks bring snacks.

*Post workshop update:* about 25 people attended, much honey was spun, and a good time was had by all. A few photos are already on the website – check the Upcoming Events page – and more will eventually be posted on the Photo Gallery link. Thanks to Gary for hosting and to Gary, Norm, Dave Gaston, Kent Yates, Bob Harris, and others for loaning equipment!

**Over-Wintering Overview:** Norm led discussion of best practices for over-wintering our bees.

**Timing of super removal:** Norm urged taking off honey supers now, if you have not already, so the bees can get last of natural forage as opposed to sugar water. Pat has heard a lot of people urge getting supers off in August, but Pat is a firm believer in doing so in September, as, given our climate, our season starts so late. The advantage of removing the supers now that it is colder: bees cluster down low in the hive bodies and supers, so he hardly had to blow out any bees. Norm likes the idea of pulling the supers and letting them replenish their brood boxes from

natural feed (ideally, 2 brood boxes). If you don't have to have the supers for honey, you can leave them on for bees to feed on, as long as you don't have a queen excluder – in winter, the bees will move as a cluster consuming their storage, moving up in the stack, and if they hit the excluder, the queen could die left alone, or they might all die staying with her. Long story short: be sure to yank your queen excluders now, unless you are leaving a super of recently spun frames for the bees to clean out. Don't leave a partial super over the winter: if you do, bees will waste energy trying to heat that box.

***Sheltering hives?*** You can help your bees manage internal hive temperature by blocking off the entryway down to only 2 inches; if you have no entrance restrictor, use a stick. You can wrap tar paper around your hive boxes to cut off wind that could chill them: if you do so, be sure not to cover the opening so that bees can continue to do cleansing flights. Some like the extra protection. Tar paper is an inexpensive material for this purpose.

Another option is to put a roof over your bees' heads by placing covers over the hives: Norm centers a big cover sheet of plastic or metal on the top, overhanging the hive so that moisture doesn't get in, but bees can get out to do cleansing flights. Sheltering this way may help mitigate Nosema problems. Of course, that creates a wind resistance issue, so you must weight it down carefully. Cinder blocks work well.

***Feeding Issues:*** If your bees have enough honey, you don't need to feed them, but if you inspect and discover that they do not, many opt to feed a sugar/water mix (see below for 2:1 fall feed mix). There are bucket feeders, entrance feeders – problem with that one is that they can't break cluster after about November to get down to entrance feeder. A top feeder can be fed all winter but they can grow fungus if they are not being used and regularly maintained, cleaned, refilled. Also that is a lot of dead air space that can lead to condensation – any time you put moisture inside the hive. Ted noted that if anyone wants top feeders, he has a few to give away that he no longer wants to use b/c of precisely the moisture/fungus problem.

Norm doesn't feed any kind of sugar – just honey – but if you use sugar, use cane sugar, not beet sugar. Bob noted that invert sugar is sometimes suggested: it may be easier for bees to break down chemically because it is partly digested already. (Your scribe had no idea what invert sugar is, so: according to the medical edition of the Free Online Dictionary, it is “a mixture of equal amounts of dextrose and fructose, obtained by hydrolyzing sucrose; used in solution as a parenteral [i.e., injected rather than ingested] nutrient.”) Gary noted it's best to beware of labels, encouraging people to go with C&H – if the label doesn't say pure cane sugar, it will not be. Gary noted, though, that it would be interesting to experiment with different kinds of sugar. If you're going to give them fumagillin as a preventive, Bob notes, then you do have to use some sugar water. Pat urged avoiding corn syrup: it can come from anywhere, and, as Norm noted, not necessarily from a good place, so that pesticide risks are implicated. Corn syrup that comes into the U.S. may well be less than healthy, coming in through a middleman nation, but originating from a nation we don't deal with because of health standards here. Other feeding supplements noted included pollen patties, available for purchase at most bee supply stores. Candy boards are an option.

Norm noted that he is not advocating that everyone do what he does – his observation has been that the more he tried to intervene, the less the bees' survival. He never feeds sugar water and only feeds honey when he does a removal and puts comb for his own bees to eat. He noted that many will say not to feed honey from one colony to another for fear of contamination, but he hasn't seen it yet, despite all the times he has put out comb from removals for his bees to clean.

***Ventilation v. warmth:*** Bees need ventilation through the winter; the challenge is to provide it without chilling them or risking excessive carbon dioxide buildup. Since carbon dioxide is heavier than air, it can gather at the bottom of the colony, and with the bees in the middle, their air supply could be compromised. Norm suggests that those with telescoping covers who have solid bottom boards can put a small spacer, like a nickel or pebble, under the covers to allow air to circulate. The elevation shouldn't be too much – about a sixteenth of an inch. If it's very cold, the spacer can be removed. If you have screened bottom boards, though, this is a non-issue.

Should we leave screened bottom boards open or close them by inserting sliders? Some swear by closing them to help bees maintain hive temperature, whereas others swear by leaving screens open for ventilation, aiding evaporation of moisture. Norm just started with screened bottom boards this year and will put in sliders to keep the bees from having to expend more energy keeping warm.

Norm has even over-wintered colonies that he removed late in the season in honey supers, with different colonies stacked on top of each other for warmth, but separated and thus isolated from each other by bottom boards. Dave Gaston noted that overwintering nucs is also possible. Since many of us bought both packages and nucs this year, Steve Howard suggested that we keep notes for comparison of over-wintering success.

***Fall Feeding Mixture [start in late August/early September]:***

- 2 parts sugar to 1 part water; for 2 pounds of sugar, add 1 pint of water. This thicker mixture does not require as much energy expenditure on the bees' part to fan down and dry before capping than does the spring mixture.
- To make the sugar dissolve, heat water to boiling, move pot off burner, then stir in sugar and stir till it dissolves.
- Let it cool before feeding to bees or adding supplements (like Honey-B-Healthy) or medications.
- Some beekeepers also favor supplementing their bees' diet at this time of the year with pollen patties: break them up into one to two inch square chunks and place them on top of the frames in your top brood box.
- It's best to stop feeding this mix to the bees around mid-October; otherwise, the bees may not be able to dehydrate it enough to cap it, and then it can get rancid in the hive.

## **BEES IN THE NEWS:**

### *Cold Storage Keeps Bees Buzzing*

Sept 6: King 5 News reported that Yakima beekeeper Eric Olson, who over-wintered his bees in his fruit warehouse last winter, suffered fewer losses and is hoping for a repeat performance this winter. For the full story, visit this URL: <http://www.king5.com/news/environment/Cold-storage-keeps-honey-bees-buzzing-168854076.html>. WSU is working with Olson to determine what aspects of his experiments were key to his success: for WSU's story, visit: <http://wsunews.wsu.edu/pages/publications.asp?Action=Release&PublicationID=30026>

### *Collectors Move Yellow Jackets for a Good Purpose*

July 17: This story is not about bees, but rather yellow jackets - insects which many people call our Bee Team members about, thinking that they are bees. The *Chronicle* reported on Carl Roush, a Longview entomologist, who removes yellow jackets from structures and sends them to a lab, where their venom is converted into medicine for allergy sufferers. Thanks to LCBA member Mel Grigorich for this lead! To read the complete story, visit: <http://m.spokesman.com/stories/2012/jul/17/collectors-remove-insects-good-purpose/>.

### *Hygenic Bee Breeding on the Olympic Peninsula*

A very interesting February 2012 article from Onearth Magazine profiles Dan Harvey and his work breeding disease-resistant bees at the Olympic Wilderness Apiary. Dan's idea is to breed from feral bees already adapted to our wet, cold climate. He sells his queens, too. To read the complete story, visit <http://www.onearth.org/article/the-green-beret-beekeeper>.

*If you see a news flash that other LCBA members might find interesting, please send it to [Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com](mailto:Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com) for inclusion in our newsletters!*

## **WASBA News:**

**WASBA's September newsletter is now available online at:**

[www.wasba.org/newsletters.htm](http://www.wasba.org/newsletters.htm).

**Want to get involved with beekeeping issues state-wide? WASBA elections take place in October, and all positions are open for (re)election.** WASBA board members are volunteers; the board meets twice a year (once at the annual conference and once in Ellensburg). Below is WASBA President Paul Lundy's open invitation suggesting the benefits of participating on WASBA's board:

“Hi everyone! I've been President of the State Association for two years and a firm believer that volunteer organizations need leadership changes as often as a baby needs new

diapers...very often! This creates a dynamic and creative organization that actually get stuff done!

“I'm going to steal some lines from Kees Kolff over at East Jefferson Beekeepers Association because I think he really got it right:

“Dear fellow bee lovers,  
WANT TO JOIN THE BOARD?  
1. Bees need beekeepers as landlords,  
2. Beekeepers need clubs so we can learn from each other,  
3. Clubs need officers and a board of trustees in order to run well,  
4. Journeymen need service credits to become certified,  
5. Being a trustee gives you credits,  
Therefore,  
WE NEED YOU AND YOU NEED US.”

“Every fall we have an opportunity to elect officers and trustees, and we are looking for folks who might be interested. Each officer position is open every year (hint hint).

“Please consider this wonderful opportunity. The board meets twice a year, and our focus is helping other beekeepers.

“At the October meeting at the annual conference at the Embassy Suites in Tukwila, we will select volunteers for the open positions. If you cannot come but are interested, please contact me at [president@wasba.org](mailto:president@wasba.org) or at 360-297-6743. Either way, call or email if interested. It is not a large time commitment and you do much to support the local associations.

“Please share this message with others you think may benefit. Well really, I'd like you to recommend someone yes even if it is you, to help out for a year.

“Thanks for considering this opportunity to serve the bees, the club and yourself.

--Paul Lundy, President, Washington State Beekeepers Association.”

## **LCBA Announcements & Upcoming Educational Opportunities:**

### ***LCBA Apprentice Beekeeping Class begins in September!***

Dates: 9/26, 10/3, 10/17, 10/24, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., WSU Extension Classroom, Old Chehalis Courthouse. This class follows the WASBA curriculum and will be taught by Bob Harris and Norm Switzler, LCBA Past and current Presidents; graduates get the WASBA Apprentice Beekeeper certificate. Cost: \$30 per individual, \$45 per couple. Costs cover WASBA course book, copying expenses, and support LCBA programs; students who join LCBA at the end of the course will get the \$10 initiation fee waived. To register, contact the WSU

Extension Office, 360 740 1214. The registration form is available on our website: visit [www.lewiscountybeekeepers.org](http://www.lewiscountybeekeepers.org) and click on the upcoming events link.

***Last Month for the Chehalis Farmers' Market!*** Once again, Bob & Sharon Harris have the LCBA banner flying at their Rose of Sharon Farm booth at the Farmers' Market. They're selling eggs – and they have the Gieses' Woogie Bee Honey (multiple flavors, including orange blossom & wildflower). The Farmers' Market is Tuesdays on Boistfort St. in Chehalis, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. through October 23. The market features many other local growers, so come on down and support Lewis County!

***Interested in the WASBA Journeyman or Master Beekeepers' Classes?*** Visit <http://www.wasba.org/master.htm> for the basics – for more detailed information, you can contact Louis Matej at [journeyman@wasba.org](mailto:journeyman@wasba.org) or 253-921-5612 for the syllabus. Jon Wade reports that the Olympia and Pierce County groups both conduct Journeyman level classes.

***Joint WASBA / Western Apicultural Society Annual Conference, Oct. 4 - 7, 2012, Embassy Suites at Tukwila, just north of the Seattle Airport, WA.***

For the detailed conference schedule, visit: <http://www.wasba.org/Conference%20schedule.pdf>. Among many exciting topics to be covered: indoor over-wintering; nuc issues; bee nutrition issues in the Pacific NW; updates on CCD research; master beekeeping programs in WA & OR; queen rearing projects; update on HopGuard trials; new developments in bee genetic research; and more. (In your scribe's experience, the experts who present at WASBA/WAS do a good job of explaining things in terms you don't have to be a Ph.D. entomologist to understand.)

For registration information, visit: [http://groups.ucanr.org/WAS/Conference\\_Information](http://groups.ucanr.org/WAS/Conference_Information). Registration is \$155 per person and includes lunch on Friday and Saturday, as well as morning and afternoon beverage breaks; banquet (6:30-9:30 Saturday) is \$42 per person.

***American Apitherapy Society: 17th annual Charles Mraz Apitherapy Course & Conference, October 5-7, 2012, Portland, Oregon (Governor Hotel, 614 Southwest 11th Avenue, Portland, 97205).*** Contact: American Apitherapy Society, 631-470-9446; [aasoffice@apitherapy.org](mailto:aasoffice@apitherapy.org)

This conference focuses on apitherapy, therapeutic use of products from the beehive: honey, pollen, royal jelly, propolis, and bee venom therapy. Attendees will receive basic training in the therapeutic properties of each of the hive products. Examples of material covered in these presentations are allergic reactions, techniques of BVT, informed consent and legal issues, propolis and cancer, veterinary apitherapy, wound healing, and more. The AAS is a nonprofit membership organization for the purpose of education in the advancement of apitherapy.

***Respectfully reported—bee happy!***

***Susanne Weil, LCBA Secretary: [Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com](mailto:Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com); 360 880 8130***