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Views from the 2009 Annual Meeting!!

(clockwise from Upper Left: Maine's 2009 Beekeeper of the year, Jennifer Nedeau; Featured Speaker Ross Conrad, author of Natural Beekeeping; Junior Beekeeper of the year, Harris Plaisted; Featured Speaker Greg Hunt, bee geneticist at Purdue University; A view of our meeting—what a great bunch of beekeepers! See more photos at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/22381319@N05/with/3653491591/>

This Year's meeting was hosted by the Penquis Valley Beekeepers. Tish Dutson coordinated the effort—thank you Tish and all of the helpers! The meeting was a great hit, attendance was again at an all time high, and the presenters were engaging and informative. Next Year's meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 3, 2010. Save the Date (and watch future Beelines for confirmation and details.)



In This Issue...

SARE Grant Update	2
Club Activities	5
NewBee Outlook	6
President's Comments	7
Bee Schools	8
EAS flyer	9
Buzzings	10
Backyard Beekeeper	11

SARE Colony Update – 6/19/09

By Erin MacGregor-Forbes

The SARE grant colony project is in full swing! In my last article in April I discussed the grant proposal and project plan. At that point we had ordered our equipment and we were getting everything painted and ready, now we have our Bees!

First I want to thank all of the members of the Cumberland County Beekeepers Association who helped me paint the equipment – a coat of primer and two coats of paint needed to be put on 96 boxes, 24 hive stands, 24 bottom boards, 24 telescoping covers – it doesn't sound like all that much until you see it all piled up in the garage waiting to be painted! We painted on a perfect weather day and the help I received allowed me to get done in one day what would have certainly taken all my spare time for over a week to get done! Thanks to everyone who helped!!!

The packages arrived in Early April and the nucs came several weeks later on the first weekend of May. Each apiary location has twelve colonies, eight packages and four nucs each. Installing 8 packages all right one after another is quite stimulating! By the end of the install it felt like I was standing in the middle of a swarm. Bees were flying and orienting everywhere! Fortunately the weather was perfect and the installs all went very smoothly. The nuc install was much quieter – the bees arrived in cardboard nuc boxes and we set them on their hive stands and allowed them to fly for an evening. The following morning we set the nucs to the side, set the deep bodies on the hive stands and transferred the bees. It all went very smoothly. We have been feeding all colonies with pail feeders over the inner cover protected by a hive body until they have substantially built out their “nests” meaning the first two deep brood boxes. Additional boxes are added when the bees were working 7+ frames in the box below.

On June 16th I drew numbers of the package start colonies out of a bag and removed the queens from the colonies for requeening. We left the colonies queenless for approximately 19 hours, the following day I installed the four new Northern Raised queens from French Hill Apiaries in Vermont. The requeening process went very smoothly - hopefully the bees will accept their new queens.

My greatest fear about the project was that our colonies would all perform so similarly that no results would be found at all. Not to worry! We immediately started to see differences in the colonies performance and behaviors. From the package install when some colonies were fanning like crazy and soliciting disoriented bees, to colonies attempting supersedure and threatening swarming. As it stands now, I have one colony (#22) which has two honey supers on. I also still have three colonies which I am feeding until they finish drawing out their second box. Additionally, #13 swarmed yesterday – I caught the swarm and brought them home but have not yet looked for the queen – I am anxious to see if she is marked. I did



Larry Peiffer installs a package in the Standish SARE yard

go through the colony and remove all but one queen cell in the hopes of preventing after swarming.

We've been keeping quite meticulous records of each colony visit/inspection, but I have not compiled any of the data yet. Certainly some interesting trends will develop over time and I will report on that in future articles.

Managing 12 colonies all at the same time has proven to be quite a learning experience for myself and Larry. For instance, I learned that transporting 12 gallons of 1 to 1 sugar syrup works best when done in gas cans, rather than 5 gallon buckets. I've also realized that even a quick check of 12 colonies takes about three hours, particularly when taking photos or otherwise documenting progress.

Larry and I have both solicited help in managing the colonies. Jack Hildreth, President of the Cumberland County Beekeepers Club has been helping me with the colonies and taking notes as I go through the colonies. Ray Salmon of the York County Beekeepers club has been helping Larry. Exposure to 12 colonies at a sitting really helps to show the differences between them, especially since they are all on new equipment and were started at the same time. Jack has had bees for several years and Ray is a brand new beekeeper – both are learning a whole lot very quickly by helping Larry and I with the grant hives – another great outcome of this experience.

And as for colony health, so far we've found a few hive beetles in the packages and we've seen Varroa in all of the colonies, but we have not done our first official mite counts yet. All of the colonies are acting healthy and strong, their morale is fantastic. They've been extremely gentle to work, and are a pleasure to be around.

The bees have also gotten some great press / media attention. They've been featured in a SALT documentary and they've even been on Bill Green's Maine! (Watch for a link to the Bill Green episode, soon to be posted on my website www.overlandhoney.com) I've included a few photos of the SARE yard and the bees. We'll keep you posted on the project progress!



Erin Forbes checks a brood frame in the Biddeford SARE yard

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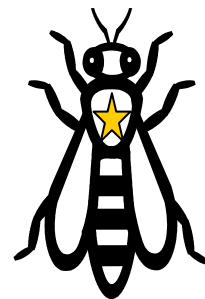
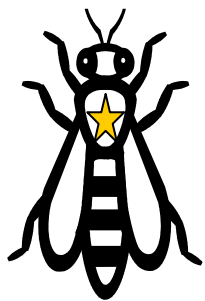
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CLUB ACTIVITIES

Western Maine Beekeeper's Association

Spring and Summer Schedule

Open Hives: All open hives will be held on Saturdays at 10 am. In case of rain the open hive will be held the following day (Sunday) at the same time. If you are unsure of the weather status please call either the person hosting the open hive or Carol Cottrill (364-0917 or cell 441-1492).

Please remember to bring a veil to all open hives!!

Open Hive – June 27, 2009, 10:00 am: Harold and Nancy Rowley's, 300 Ride Road, Peru (562-8731).

Directions: From North (Rumford area): South on Route 108 to the flashing yellow light in Peru and turn right onto Main Street (Peru fire station will be on right). Go 0.5 mile and turn left on the Ridge Road. 1.4 miles to Brown house on the left - 300 on the mail box. Roadside parking unless walking is an issue – if so drive in the driveway for limited parking.

From South: North on Route 108 to the flashing yellow light, then left onto Main Street and follow directions above.

From Farmington: Route 2 through Dixfield then left across bridge to flashing light in Peru at Route 108. Straight across Route 108 to Main Street and follow directions above.

Annual Picnic - July 25, 2009, 10 a.m.: Kineowartha Park, Wilton in the Senior Citizen building. Cost is \$1.00 per person (13 and older).

Directions: From West (Rumford): Route 2 to Wilton. Left at the Dutch Treat on Route 156 (the Weld Road). Go to the Wiles Funeral Home and then take a sharp left – the park is a short distance from there on the right.

From Farmington: Route 2 to Wilton and take a right on 156 at the Dutch Treat. Follow directions above.

We will have deep fried chicken and fried potatoes, hamburgers, hot dogs and buns.

Please Bring: Plates and silverware, your beverage (non-alcoholic – no alcohol allowed in the park), a salad or desert to share and lawn chairs. You may also want sun screen and bug repellent! We will also have a raffle – donations for the raffle would be greatly appreciated!

Open Hive – August 15, 2009 10 am: Charlie Merrill's, 57 Cozy Cove Road, Livermore (897-6128)

Directions: From Farmington or Route 2 take Route 4 turning right at the traffic lights in Livermore Falls and then go south 3 miles, across the bridge and turn right on Hathaway Hill Rd. Go 0.1 mile and cross Crash Rd, continue 0.25 mile and turn left on Cozy Cove Rd. Third house on the right – brown gambrel.

From route 108 take Route 4 5.3 miles north and turn left on Crash Rd (by the Livermore Town Office). Go 0.1 mile to Hathaway Hill Rd and follow directions above.

Wednesday, September 2, 2009, Region 9 School cafeteria 6:30 - 9 pm: Slide Show and presentation by Tony Jadcak on getting ready for winter.

York County Chapter Open Hive: Saturday, June 27, 2009 10 am–2pm at the home of Ellen McAdam and Brian Howard. 202 Hanson Ridge Road, Springvale, ME 04083 mcdorch@gwi.net ALL ARE WELCOME! Please bring something to share for a pot luck lunch, a chair and a veil. See you there!

Event: Knox Lincoln County Beekeepers Fall Management Workshop

Date: Saturday, August 29 (rain date Sunday, August 30)

Time: 11:30 a.m.

Hosts: Trisha Badger & Kevin Carney, Whitefoot Farm 484 East Pond Road, Jefferson 701-1069 or 832-7922

CHECK THE MSBA WEBSITE www.mainebeekeepers.org FOR CURRENT INFORMATION ON CLUB ACTIVITIES!!!!!!

A "NewBee" Outlook

What happened when I wanted to get involved with bees? Over a year ago I started asking a commercial beekeeper questions about bees. Questions like, "what do I need to get started?" "How much does it cost to get started?" Well he moved on, so when a bee class opened up in York county I jumped in. By the end of the course I had purchased everything needed for three hives. Then I found out that nucs come in deep frames. My hives being mediums caused me to go out and buy enough deeps for all my soon to arrive nucs.

So while I sat home nailing all these boxes and frames together someone invited me to a of beekeepers in York county. Unlike climbing a mountain were one starts at the bottom, the meeting seemed to start at the top with the election of President. After a long pause of silence I stepped up. Now I'm president of York County Beekeepers Association.

Being in association with active beekeepers has taught me a lot in a few months. And sent me to places that I thought I would never go.

I am learning about bee handling with the help of Larry Peiffer and the SARE grant.

With the help of Erin Forbes I recently had the opportunity to catch what I called the perfect swarm.

It started with a call from Erin; I was told "Oh its easy! just take a box that paper comes in, use it to put the bees in, then take them home and put them in an empty hive". That's what I heard anyway. I replied "I've never done this before and I do not have that type of box." With more encouragement and a promise of help I forged forward. Finding a makeshift box I called the homeowner for directions. After getting lost and two more calls I found the house. Yes there was a huge swarm of bees. Twice the size of a football. They were knee high off the ground on a low branch of the only tree on the front lawn. The homeowner allowed me to borrow a pair of clippers, and cut the branch. I shook them into my box, took them home and put them into an empty hive that night. It seemed all so simple.

My latest adventure was to stand in as a substitute speaker for a class of middle school master gardeners in Wells. I spoke on bees, plants, the environment and the relationship between each.

It seems that when getting into the pool it is better to jump in rather than wade in.

Ray Salmon/President /York County Beekeepers Ass.



Another Proud new York County beekeeper, Jeff Sargent

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President's Comments June 2009

Hello fellow MSBA members:

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank the attendees of the recent Annual Meeting for electing me as your president, for it is an honor for me to serve the MSBA membership in a new capacity.

Have you ever been asked difficult questions about MSBA? On several occasions I have had questions put to me like, "What do I get from MSBA for my money?" or "I'm an experienced beekeeper, so why should I join? What's in it for me?" or "I know how to keep bees and if I have a question, I can get the answer from the State Bee Inspector." These are basic and perhaps predictable questions, but at times they can be a little unnerving for me to answer.

I will tell them that they should join because it's a wonderful beekeeping organization full of sincere and caring people. Some of the most talented and hard-working members are on or have served on the Board of Directors. We offer an excellent annual meeting with guest speakers who talk about current topics, a fantastic newsletter containing information from the State Apiarist and articles from beekeepers, a super website with a huge amount of information, and a library which offers materials in print, film, and DVD, and the support of other beekeepers.

Unfortunately, that's not enough for some people because of the way that they value money or their own abilities. It would be easy to label the people, asking the hard questions, as very demanding and dismiss them. A bit too easy, I think, for there are some areas that we could improve upon.

Now that every active chapter has hosted the annual meeting it is time to set up a rotating host schedule so that we have an opportunity to think ahead of who will be the host, where the meeting will be held, what the theme of the meeting might be and schedule speakers in advance.

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Master Beekeeper: Rick Cooper

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The Board of Directors will have a meeting scheduled every month of the year instead of taking seasonal holidays. This is to keep items moving and to stimulate communication.

The Newsletter Editor still does not receive enough articles so each board member has been asked to submit at least two articles per year. I would encourage any MSBA member, regardless of experience, to submit material for the newsletter.

The communication between MSBA and the Chapters can be improved. What might MSBA do to assist the Chapters? Do the Chapters encourage their members to also join MSBA?

A committee will be formed to explore other possibilities to enhance our website.

MSBA sponsored field days or intermediate level bee schools.

I encourage everyone to be thinking of ways that we might improve the quality and quantity of our offerings and forward this information to myself or other members of the board for consideration.

Thank you, all. I look forward to hearing from you. - Roy Cronkhite.

BEE SCHOLS—SIGN UP EARLY!

Please encourage prospective new beekeepers to sign up for Bee School! Bee School is the best way for us to ensure that new beekeepers don't become "bee havers!" Pass the word! There is always something new to learn!

MAKING SUMMER NUCS WORKSHOP—The Cumberland County Beekeepers Association will be hosting a hands-on workshop on making summer nucs. Instructors will be Master Beekeeper Erin MacGregor-Forbes and Larry Peiffer. Thursday, June 25, 2-4 pm in Windham, ME. Cost is \$110 and includes divided hive body and two queens from French Hill Apiaries in Vermont. Please contact Erin MacGregor-Forbes for more information, queenbee@overlandhoney.com or 772-3380

CUMBERLAND COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION INTERMEDIATE LEVEL BEE SCHOOL!

The Cumberland County cooperative extension will be hosting an intermediate level bee school this winter, instructor will be Erin MacGregor-Forbes. Focus of this school will be continuing education for beekeepers who have at least one season of experience. This will be a multi week bee school, held one night per week in winter. Dates to be determined. Please contact the Cumberland County Cooperative Extension for details. 780-4205 or cecmb@umext@maine.edu

York County Beginning Bee School in the FALL!!!!

The York County Cooperative Extension will be offering TWO Beginner Bee Schools this year. The first Bee School will be held Wednesday nights, October 21–November 18, 2009. 6:00pm–8:30pm. The second Bee School will be held in February–March, 2010, dates to be determined. Please contact the York County Cooperative Extension for more details. 324-2814 or ceyrk@umext.maine.edu



Checking for swarm cells during the CCBA Open Hive at the apiary of Kyle Rich, June 2009

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WEDNESDAY IS OVERLAP DAY, WITH EVERYBODY ATTENDING THE TALKS AND THE VENDORS!

EAS CONFERENCE & WORKSHOPS Towards Nonchemical Beekeeping

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday August 5, 6 and 7, 2009

Special Events include a visit to a Russian Bee Queen Breeding Yard, Andy Card's Commercial Extracting Facility, A Pig Roast on Wednesday night, a 20 Colony On-Site Beeyard, Queen Grafting Workshops, Local Flavor BBQ on Thursday and a Friday Night Banquet

Conference Speakers Include Tom Seeley, Cornell; Dave Tarpy, NC State; Nick Calderone, Cornell; Maryann Frazier, Penn State; Kent Williams, Commercial Beekeeper, KY; Alison vanAlten and the Tech Transfer Team, Guelph, Ontario; Tom Rinderer USDA Baton Rouge; Jennifer Berry, Research Coord. UGA; Paul Kozak, Honey Bee IPM Extension, Cornell; Larry Connor, Author, MI; Adam Finkelstein, Commercial Queen Producer, Maryland; Andy Card, Commercial Beekeeper, NY; Gary Shilling, Sideliner & Forbes Magazine Author; Gary Rueter, Univ MN; Kirk Webster, Commercial Beekeeper, VT; Ross Conrad, Author, VT; Bob Brachmann, Russian Queen Breeder, NY; Our Special Guests the Hambleton Research & Student Award Winners.

Workshops

Thursday and Friday Afternoons
Beeswax Demos of candles, waxes, polishes and more, Marketing, Cooking w/Honey, Honey Judging, Making Splits and Nucs, Swarm Management, Kids 'n Bees, Honey Plants, Woodworking, Swarm Biology, Queen Rearing and Queen Evaluation, honey bee health, and beekeeper health, finding mites, and Lots and lots on Russian Bees, plus lots more.

Register for the conference at: <http://www.easternapiculture.org/programs/2009/>

Buzzings

All MSBA members are invited to submit announcements and news for this newsletter at least two weeks before publication date. *THE BEE LINE* is usually mailed on: February 1, April 1, June 1, August 1, October 1, and December 1.

**Golden Rule Honey, LLC Presents:
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http://www.bushfarms.com/organic_beekeeping_meeting.htm

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See Page 9 for flyer.

Registration on the web through June 30, 2009

<http://www.easternapiculture.org/programs/2009/reg.shtml>

New Hampshire Beekeepers Association Fall Meeting

The New Hampshire Beekeepers Association hosts two meetings annually, one in March and one in October. October dates and program have not yet been finalized, but keep an eye on their website for information as it becomes available. <http://www.nhbeekeepers.org>

Vermont Beekeepers Association Workshop Schedule: Workshops are held on **Saturdays from Noon - 2pm** weather permitting. Rain days are the following day. Workshops go into the bees and open colonies, so you are encouraged to bring a veil, and bee suit if necessary. **Workshops are free and open to the public. Find more information on their website, www.vtbeekeepers.org**

July 11 - Re-queening and Making nucs to winter over

July 25 - VBA Summer Meeting

Aug. 8 - Harvesting the crop; Removing honey from the bees. Tips on extracting, packaging, and marketing your crop; Fall Mite treatments

Sept. 12 - Preparing Your Colony for Winter; Feeding light colonies; Medications and miticides; Winter wrapping materials

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The Bee Line requests and welcomes your contributions!

Please contact the Editor: with your comments, photos and contributions :

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THE BACKYARD BEEKEEPER

My Hive Swarmed

By Master Beekeeper Rick Cooper

I am suspecting that many of you would never know your hive swarmed unless you see it swarm or see the swarm hanging in a tree. One day the bees are flying furiously and the next they calm down a bit and the next they are right back to where they were before the swarm. Many of you super your hives and then do not enter the brood chambers again until fall. Whatever the case may be the swarm has emerged and you missed it or better yet captured it. Now what to do.

First let me discuss swarming at least superficially. Most often the swarm emerges very soon after the swarm queen cells are capped. About 7 days before your due to get a new queen. Although we do not know all the mechanics of swarming we feel that brood nest congestion is a prime motivator. If this is truly the case then adding supers will not solve the problem. Remember this is the time of year when the colony is approaching peak strength. Lots of brood is hatching and the queen is laying as fast as she can.

My strongest urge is to tell you to leave well enough alone for 10 to 15 days. Beekeepers for the most part do more damage than good when looking into a hive that has swarmed. Queen cells are very fragile at this time and are easily damaged. Bees have been swarming for many centuries and I believe they have the process down pretty well. If you have more than one hive in your apiary and you just have to know which one swarmed then look with extreme caution.

Well you figured out which hive swarmed and now you want to do something. I wouldn't. The process of removing most of the queen cells is subjective and who are you to tell the bees that you prefer the queen hatched from "that" cell versus the one next to it. Yes, most likely the queens in the larger cells are likely to

be the best but that may not always be the case. I cannot tell by looking at a cell or even by looking at many cells which queen will be the best. At this time there are way too many unanswered questions. How will the mating weather be when she heads out to mate? Will a bird eat her? Is the drone population in my area sufficient to properly mate a new queen? I think you might get better answers in late July once you have seen her laying pattern for awhile. If she is not up to snuff then requeen with a commercially raised queen and get into fall with a good colony.

Once the mating process is over and the bees have their new queen. Say 15 days after the swarm emerged then we can go into the hive with our normal handling techniques and check for eggs and perhaps even see the new queen. The eggs tell us that at least she is laying. It will be 8 more days before we know if she is laying drone eggs or worker eggs. Just because there are eggs in worker cells does not mean we have a "good" queen she might be a drone layer. Once cells are capped then we will know.

Certainly swarming is going to set your production back a bit but there is not much that can be done about that. If you have reached your apiaries maximum number of hives then letting the swarming process take place, capturing the swarm, then reuniting the swarm after the queen rearing process is over can put your bee numbers

in the hive back to max. My thoughts are to kill the new queen and let the old queen reign again. The mating questions above would still apply and the old queen was strong enough to cast out a swarm in the first place.

Rick Cooper

Master Beekeeper

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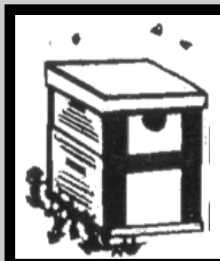
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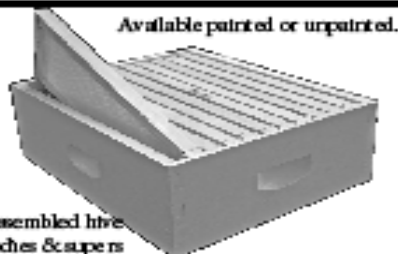
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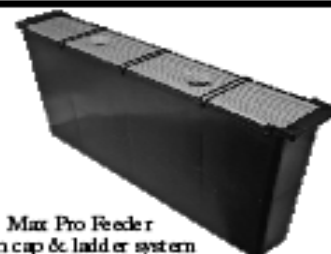
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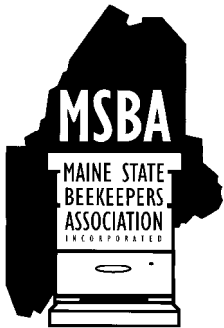
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