



# INLAND BEEEMAIL

Monthly newsletter of the Inland Empire Beekeepers Association

Volume 13, Issue 8 — August 2008 — [www.inlandbeemail.com](http://www.inlandbeemail.com)

Presidents  
Corner:

## President's Corner:

Happy 'Hot Days of Summer' to one and all. It is almost Fair season. The August picnic is our last meeting in which we can plan and coordinate all the different tasks. Also, get your entry paperwork done and sent in before the deadline. Please enter lots of the judging events. Remember to get with Roger or Linda Carney and sign up to work at the fair booths. It is always fun and you can learn a lot from the other beekeepers.

The IEBA annual picnic is the 10<sup>th</sup> of August starting around 12:00. IEBA will provide meat, buns, drinks, flatware, paper products, ice, tablecloths, etc. Please bring a side dish, salad, or treat. Rick has volunteered to bring the honey ice cream. John has agreed to bring his huge grill again. Come one, come all. Please call or email your IEBA friends and remind them about the picnic.

The honey straws for the fair should arrive next week. We need volunteers bag them either at the fair or take a case home and bring them back at the fair meeting. Ten honey straws per bag.

One last important item for the picnic, bring your folding chairs. For directions to Plantes Ferry Park Visit the website at [inlandbeemail.com](http://inlandbeemail.com). See you there.



## Keeping Bees – Past, Present, And Future

By: James E. Tew

All three time phases are equally important. Unlike last year, I presently have some live bees. The Winter season of 2006/2007 was terrible and right about now a year ago I was struggling to recover. At that time, my primary task was retrieving dead-outs. Though I still experienced something like a 25 percent loss this past Winter, I did have some colonies survive Winter reasonably well. Plus, a couple of months ago I bought 15 packages so I now have about forty colonies to manage. Though there are the usual duds, most of the surviving colonies have built up nicely. So far, so good. A rare but none-the-less distasteful task I have been assigned is to disassemble one of Ohio State's honey bee labs that has been in operation for many, many years. While I absolutely hate to toss anything, there are truckloads of bee stuff – equipment, publications, research devices, and tools. What's good stuff and what is junk stuff? What to keep and what to toss? It has been painful selection process. I tell you all of this because I was forced to take a beekeeping walk through some of our history. To fully understand, you had to be there on those quiet, cold days, looking through old filing cabinets filled with folders that were labeled with the names of bee people now long gone. Strangely, the event has made me a better beekeeper.

### *The Past*

I am not a historian, but as I grow older, I appreciate history more and more. Our beekeeping problems today are real and they are serious, but it is important to realize that we have always had pressing issues. Some of our issues are not new at all – they just seem that way. In 1944, my predecessor, Dr. Winston Dunham, wrote an Ohio beekeeping publication<sup>1</sup> in which he clearly stated the common concepts of beekeeping today. His opening sentence was, *'Fundamentally, the most important economic work of honey bees is pollinating plants. Thus, honey and beeswax must be considered by-products of pollination.'* Wait a minute! For all of my university years, I have been telling anyone who would

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listen that pollination – not honey production – was the primary reason for keeping bees. Now I read that, at least, 64 years ago, scientists were already trying to explain that fact. But it is also fact that beekeeping has changed in those same 64 years. Right? I have boldly told my audiences that beekeeping is increasingly an urban/suburban undertaking and no longer is beekeeping primarily an agricultural enterprise. But quite by accident, I stumbled onto the comment, *'The honey bee population of the country is not what it might and should be. In the old days practically every farmer owned a few hives of bees.'* The writers, Root and Deyell, in the same article<sup>2</sup> stated *'...wild bees were practically wiped out in some areas and that it will take several years for them to get re-established.'* Were they referring to feral honey bee colonies or were they referring to the loss of the native bee population? I can't tell but they were documenting *a bee loss*, of some kind, in July, 1948, 60 years ago. So 60 years ago we already had bee hives leaving the farm and declining bee populations. Those changes really sound like the situation today.

And what about our major recent Winter kill percentages? In the Winter of 1935/1936 and 1939/1940 Winter kill percentages were 35% and 30% respectively. It's interesting that a recent report stated that we suffered a 35% Winter kill during the most recent Winter (2007/2008). High Winter kills are not a recent beekeeping event. We've had them before.

Beekeeping has a vast, well-documented history, yet beekeeping has no assigned historian. I can only guess what else is buried in the old beekeeping literature that would be apropos to today's events. Does such information make our present problems any less severe or less important? Absolutely not. A major point that cannot be ignored is that we had so many more beekeepers and bee colonies all those years ago. For instance, in 1957, I can document that Ohio beekeepers managed about 120,000 colonies but today's Ohio beekeepers are managing hardly 20,000 colonies. At least in this state, that's a dramatic decline in colony numbers. Historically, I sense that beekeepers now long gone were just as concerned about their colonies as we are. I sense that they had problems that had no immediate answers and that fact worried them. In this regard, we are no different today than beekeepers now long gone.

### **The Present**

Much of what I am as a beekeeper today is due to what others were as beekeepers before me. But while

we should respect the past, we can't live there. Mites, Africanized honey bees, pesticides, and high prices for nearly everything are our present issues that don't have immediate answers. These issues worry us. We have all been stunned by the unexpected loss of bee colonies in recent years. Some of the old, established recommendations don't seem as correct as they once did. I have felt embarrassed and threatened that I had as many bees dying as anyone else. Last year, I came up with a desperation plan for this spring that has worked so far – but not without a financial price.

### **Deep supering**

Last Spring (2007), I only supered with deeps. Happily, my bees had a reasonably good season last year and filled many of those deeps. Last Fall, I left everything on the bees – everything. So all Winter, I had aberrant-looking colonies that were too tall and had an abundance of honey on them. Still, some of them died (25%), no doubt due to mite predation. In one of the strangest events of my career I took about 500 pounds of honey off dead colonies. Many of the surviving colonies still have too much honey on them from last year. As the upcoming nectar flow nears, I will strip the honey from them and put empty equipment on the colonies and hope for a good honey crop this year, too.

Why deeps? Because I had used absolutely everything I had to give to the bees the Winter before last. I could only feed sugar or corn syrup and that has never worked well for me. Now I have abundant honey stores – in deep frames – for giving to the packages I bought or honey for giving to other needy colonies. Essentially, I have reserve food that can be used when I and my bees are once again caught short. There are down sides to supering with deeps. First, a full deep is back-breakingly heavy. Second, even though the bees had a pretty good year, I didn't get a single drop of surplus honey. If I can recover some of my hive numbers and get them back to a vigorous state it will have been worth it.

### **Old queens**

I don't mean to present the idea of re-using old queens as a recommendation, but rather suggest that we can reuse old queens as a temporary emergency procedure. In past articles I have lamented the selling price and availability of replacement queens. As have so many other beekeepers I have introduced queens only to find them dead or to find supercedure efforts a few weeks later. It is outside my discussion here to explore why

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seemingly good queens are sometimes offensive to colonies, but they are. Too often, new queens are not eagerly accepted by colonies.

Last season I began to put old queens in cages and hold them until I was (somewhat) certain that the new queen would be tolerated. While I never had to reuse a single one of them I did have them in reserve in case something went awry with the new queen. I know that some of you are itching to ask why a queen that needed replacing would be made better by removing her from a colony and confining her in a cage. Bluntly, she is not made better. In fact, she is probably made even worse for the event, but (1) she is a queen, (2) she is alive, (3) she is available, and (4) she is already mine. She could be used as a 'stop-gap' or a 'Band-Aid' queen. She could possibly help maintain the colony while I procure a new queen. Several seasons ago, following the hypothetical bee book I found the reigning queen, killed her and installed a new queen. Within a week, I found the new queen – dead – in front of the hive. I had no replacement queens so I had effectively set back the colony by making it queenless. Being able to reinstall the old queen would have been better than what I did to them. I am no longer quick to kill the old queen. She may still have some value to me.

### ***Preparing for next Winter***

We are barely through the spring season of 2008 and I am talking about the next Winter. In just a few more weeks, I will have a good idea of how well this honey production season has been. Again, so far, so good. As I did last year, I plan to leave an oversupply of honey as stores. Such a surplus does not guarantee anything, but it certainly seemed to help last year. I have been more conscientious about mite and disease control but outbreaks will seemingly always be a problem. But I do plan some changes for the upcoming Winter.

1. Three deeps. I hope to be able to overwinter everything in three deeps. While some of the colonies were in triple equipment last Winter, not all were. I couldn't see any difference in survival rates in three deeps compared to two, but I want to be as certain as possible that honey shortages are not the problem.

2. Winter insulation. Just because a bee colony can survive the cold season does not mean that it is best for the colony to withstand cold weather. Winter packing colonies was very common years ago; yet now it is essentially never practiced. If any of you insulate your wintering colonies, I would like hear about it.

3. Protein substitute. I have acquired enough protein substitute to feed colonies a longer time than just the early Spring. Normally, such materials are only fed in early Spring, but I want to see if pollen shortages during the Summer dearth are helped by an additional protein source.

Very simply, as have beekeepers throughout our beekeeping history, I am trying to have my colonies as healthy and prepared as possible for the upcoming Winter. As strange as it seems, I must work on that now in preparation for the future.

### ***The Future***

What is 'the future?' The upcoming Winter of 2008/2009 is the future or 300 years from now is 'the future.' The future is truly a vague time frame. In my opening comments I wrote that all time phases are important to us. We need to know our past and we must have a plan for the present, but what about the future? My short-term future plans are to keep colonies as healthy as possible. By keeping colonies vibrant and surviving – year after future year – I will do my part to impart a healthy, vibrant industry to future beekeepers. As I write this, since it will take about eight weeks for it to be published, as a reader, you are in my future. It seems to me some aspects of the future can be manipulated while other aspects of the future are completely beyond my control. I have no interest in taking a stab at what the more distance future holds. Bees that don't sting? Mystical pest control procedures? Alternative uses for honey? Better pollination techniques? I have no clue what the distant future holds, but I do know that if we don't have a positive future in beekeeping, then nothing in the past and present is terribly important either.

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## *IEBA - Meeting Minutes July*

### Linda Carney, Secretary

July 11, 2008

President Swenson called our July meeting to order.

The Secretary's minutes were accepted as written in the Inland Beemail.

Our Treasurer, Julie Watts, reported \$8,445.89 in savings and \$1,879.06 in checking.

**WSB Report-** WSU has new lab techs and a new lady in charge of the lab. The University received \$100,000 for research, including a large amount from Eric Olsen. WSU also received \$40,000 in grant money from the US government for next year. Government and people are beginning to see the critical role of bees and the problems they are having. Also, the WSBA was able to get the B&O tax exempt for the wholesale beekeepers. The great work that the WSBA has been doing recently needs to be supported by each beekeeper joining the State Association. The more beekeepers the WSBA can show they represent then the more interest the State of Washington committees have in our problems and interests. Dues can be as little as \$10 and your voice can count.

#### 4 Corners Report

**North** – The knapweed is looking beautiful.

Sandy Marletto and Diane Burnham have had an adventurous first year. Here is their story. On June 15<sup>th</sup> they split their one hive because it had become so very large. The next Friday the original hive swarmed. Then it swarmed again. They were able to establish only 3 hives because they lost one swarm. But no-- the story was not over. It swarmed again! Now they are back to the original two hives. (Boy, the fun of a beekeeper never stops)

**West-** Jim Miller says the nectar is tremendous. He does have supersedures and swarm cells in the hives near his home. It has been a good year. All the queens have hatched and he had no swarms.

**South-** Bill Watts had 40 hives brought back from CA. He killed 3 hives suffering from Foul Brood. Then, a bear took out all but 12 frames from 80. He lost equipment, bees and honey. He experienced terrible results with the queens he had purchased. He has

had to start again and has been installing new queens. (Boy, the fun and variety of a beekeeper never stops) Bill also mentioned *Tylan* works on chaulk brood. It can be purchased thru a Vet store. *Tylan* is registered for AFB but Bill says it will treat chaulk brood also.

Chris Fisher spoke on the joy of going to schools and introducing beekeeping to the children. She is willing to help and assist anyone else who may be interested in doing the same. Please contact Chris or any officer of the association if you are interested in helping.

#### Picnic

*What day?* Sunday August 10, 2008

*Where?* Plante's Ferry Park (Dex phonebook map page 37 highlighted in green, 30-31, T-U)

*When?* Set up will begin at noon. (The meat for hot dogs and hamburgers, buns, drinks, ice cream, condiments, ice, plates & flatware provided by IEBA.

*What will we do?* Stuff honey straws in little plastic bags. Oh, and eat a lot. Then eat some more and have ice cream. And, have a quick meeting.

#### Fair Reports

Idaho Fair -A sign up sheet was passed around for volunteers for the CDA Fair, August 20-24, 2008. Kelly still has a few times that need to be filled. Spokane County Fair – A sign up sheet was also passed around for the Spokane Fair which runs from Friday Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> thru Sunday Sept. 14, 2008.

Spokane Interstate Fair - Roger Carney or his co-chair, Linda Carney, would greatly appreciate additional volunteers for the large booth we will have at the Fair. You may contact Roger or Linda at anytime. (He's a day person, she's a night person) The theme for this year is "We've got a good thing Growing"

Our meeting was adjourned.

## *Fall Preparations*

*By Bob Arnold - August 6, 2006*

The honey flows have been reduced to just a dribble and the bees are beginning to make ready for winter. It is time to get your honey removed and the miticides on the bees. Bees that are reared now must be healthy and vigorous if your hives are to survive to build up for the honey to come next spring.

Years ago we could wait until September or even October to remove the honey crop. This was the rule that was changed with the advent of mites. We could wait until all of the honey was nicely capped and the brood had all hatched out of our supers and then remove the honey. These days are gone. If our bees are to be strong and healthy we must get our miticides on before the end of August to reduce the mite load on the bees that must take the hives through winter.

Removing honey now does take some extra effort. If the queen has been laying up in the supers you must separate the brood from the honey and put it back on the hive to let it hatch out. Place a queen excluder on top of the two brood chambers and the supers with the brood above the excluder. The bees will stop working above the excluder and start filling the upper brood chamber with honey while the brood hatches out of the super. Within a few weeks the super will be clean of brood and you should be able to get it off before the middle of August. Some of the honey in the super will not be capped. In our dry climate the honey will be of low enough moisture content that it will be quite satisfactory to add it to the other honey that has been fully ripened and capped. Once the honey is all removed from the hive you should determine the mite load on the bees. This can be done most accurately using the screened bottom board. Simply put some paper with cooking oil spread on it below the screen board. Leave it for at least one day and then count the mites. Divide by the number of days to get your mite drop per day. Once you have the

natural fall put another sheet of oiled paper below the screen board and apply your miticide. Check the mite drop again after a number of days. If there is not a huge increase i.e. from 10 mites/day to 300 mites/day then your miticide is not working. This is essential as some of the miticides are ineffective and will not reduce the mite load enough to make any difference. Your bees will be dead within 1 year and may die before next spring.

There are a number of new materials available for controlling the mites. There are several formulations of thymol which are effective. Apistan and Checkmite may or may not be effective. If you have installed package bees in the last few years it is likely that Checkmite will not be effective. Apistan may work. In any case check the effectiveness of the miticide do not assume it will work.

I recommend that you treat for tracheal mites and for nosema. Tracheal mites are easily treated using menthol by dissolving the menthol in hot cooking oil and soaking the solution in some of the blue mechanics rags. Simply purchase the menthol in the little bags and dissolve the menthol in one bag in ¼ cup of cooking oil. Put the warm oil in a zip lock bag with two blue mechanics towels letting them absorb all of the solution. Put one towel on the top brood chamber and one between the two brood chambers. Make the lid tight and block the screen board if you have one on the hive. Wait until the hot days of August are over for this treatment. Usually the month of September is not too hot. If the towels drive the bees completely out of the hive take them off and store them in the zip lock bag and put them back on after it cools down a bit.

Nosema is present in most of our hives. Some of the hives will die during April and May from the virus. It is the biggest reason why bees that have made it through winter but will not build up in the spring and make a crop of honey. The cost of the medication is a maximum of \$7 per hive for the

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smallest purchased quantity. The cost of the sugar feed is about \$6 per hive. So for less than \$13 / hive you can almost guarantee that they will not have the problem. You need to feed a 2:1 mixture of sugar and water (either by weight or volume) with the Fumagilin. Mix the Fumagilin in the warm water first then put the sugar in. You must heat (110 to 120°F and stir the water to make the solution. Put this feed on mid to late September. They will not take the feed properly when the daily temperature is in the 50's. Do not wait much later than the beginning of October.

Now is critical for your bees if you want to make honey next year. Make certain that all of these medications are on in a timely way. If your queen has been through two honey flows she should be replaced. The best way to do this is to make up a nuc with brood and bees from the hive you want to replace the queen in. Take 4 frames: one of honey, one of brood and bees and two of bees and add a feeder. Take these to a new location and introduce a mated queen. Once the queen is laying and has sealed brood you can take the nuc and place it back into the colony you took it out of---once that you have found and killed the old queen.

Now is the time to get these fall preparations started: get your honey off, check for mites, decide on replacing the queen, put your miticides on, check their effectiveness, treat for nosema and then finish off with making sure they have plenty of winter stores. Do it now and you will have a winner of a hive next spring.



# Agenda

8/10/08

## Welcome!

### Primary Focus – Picnic

Short meeting at end

## Reports:

Fair Reports

Spokane – Roger and Linda Carney

N Idaho - Kelly McSheehy and Jack Knox

Inland Beemail Report - Dave

Four Corner Bee Reports – All!!

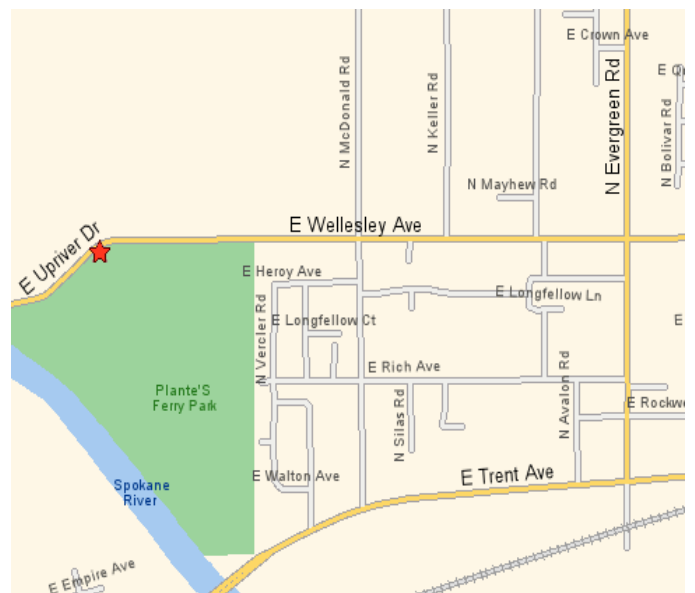
## Old Business:

Idaho and Spokane Fairs

## New Business:

WSU Sample Testing Facility

## Meeting Adjourned - ICE CRÈME



# Classified Ads

**Tate's Honey Farm** has all of your extracting and packaging needs as well as spring packages and queens. Woodenware for all your winter projects and spring needs. Shop hours are 8:30—2:00 every Saturday at E. 8900 Maringo, Millwood. Contact us at 509-924-6669 or online at [www.tateshoneyfarm.com](http://www.tateshoneyfarm.com)

## BEEBOXES BY LEE

Woodenware, standard or custom orders, IPM bottom boards, Hive top feeders, etc, select lumber. Order now to be ready for spring. Lee Berchtold  
(208) 687-1300

## NUC's - For Sale

Now taking orders for 08 Nucs 4.9mm and standard cell sizes available please call for prices. Contact Travis Sammons at 509-928-4326 / 509-991-3758

## Miller's Homestead

### Jim and Jenine Miller

Cheney, WA 1-509-299-9085  
14606 Stangland Rd., Cheney. Look at our web site for prices on all available items.  
[www.millershomestead.com](http://www.millershomestead.com)

## NUC's For Sale

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You Get:

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- ◆ 3 frames brood
- ◆ 1 frame honey
- ◆ 1 frame honey/empty comb
- ◆ 3 lbs. of bees

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Available: 21 or 28 April

Limited #, First Come First Serve



## Beeboxes, frames, foundation, tools and equipment

open M-S 9-5:30

### East Farms Feed

21518 E. Gilbert  
Otis Orchards, Wash. 99027  
509.928.3616

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[www.inlandbeemail.com](http://www.inlandbeemail.com)

### WSBA Website

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

# Hive Care August

## The Bees.

Nectar flows are slowing down. In some areas, the honey flow is over. Bees can be found curing the honey and capping it. Other areas can still have a flow, especially after a good rain.

## The Beekeeper.

For most of us, this is extracting month. Get your supers off, extract, or cut comb. As you survey your crop, ready some of your efforts for fair entries.

If you are expecting some more flow, you can put some of the wet supers back on.

This is also the time that you need to take stock of your hives in terms of overall health, varroa infestation, and queen vitality. For a good article on fall (that means August here) requeening, please give Bob Arnold's suggestions a read.

Be sure that no honey supers are on when you start medicating. Treatments such as Apilife Var™ are very temperature dependant, and need to be administered when the weather is warm. You may also wish to consider alternatives to Checkmite™ and Apistan™ by trying Sucrose Octoanoate this fall. Again, you need three weeks of decent weather to apply it.

*adapted from  
[www.backyardbeekeepers.com](http://www.backyardbeekeepers.com)*



**Inland Empire  
Beekeepers  
Association**

**Next Meeting:  
Friday August 10th**

**BBQ— Plantes Ferry Park**

**T**he Inland Empire Beekeepers Association (IEBA) meets every month at the Spokane County Fairgrounds. IEBA is affiliated with the Washington Beekeepers Association (WSBA). IEBA dues are \$5.00 for an individual or \$10.00 for the family. This includes your receiving the *Inland Beemagazine* which is published by the association every month.

**AUGUST PICNIC  
See details on Page 1**

## *INLAND BEEMAIL*

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## **IEBA**

### **Birthdays & Anniversaries**

#### **AUGUST BIRTHDAYS**

- 12 -- Cindy Lundberg
- 14 -- Bob Arnold
- 17 -- Ann Bearden
- 18 -- Allen Bremner
- 24 -- Lee Berchtold
- 25 -- Jill Spock
- 28 -- Joan Nolan

#### **AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES**

- 5 -- Jerry & Kathryn Gray
- 14 -- Dave & Ann Bearden
- 23 -- Jerry & Rita Tate
- 26 -- Allen & Lois Bremner
- 27 -- Boyd & Cindy Lundberg

## ***Beekeeping Calendar - Bob Arnold***

### **August**

Remove honey supers if the flow has ended. Mark production on each colony. Mark colonies that need to have new queens. Keep feed on nucs. Move stronger nucs into single hive bodies and keep feeding. On colonies with supers removed check for AFB and do natural mite fall counts. Get mite controls on as soon as temperatures permit. For years with poor honey flow conditions watch carefully for pollen and nectar availability. If conditions are poor prepare to feed both pollen and syrup starting in August. Remove all supers before the end of August in order to get mite counts and controls on before September. Introduce mated queens or nucs for those hives that need requeening. Put feed on the hive during introduction. Extract honey while it is hot outside—get it done in August.