

# SKAGIT VALLEY BEEKEEPERS



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February 2011

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Our Association meeting is Thursday, February 9th at 7:00 PM. in Burlington, WA at CENEX Administration. 1833 Park Lane. It is over the railroad tracks and kind of behind Camping World.. Turn in at the KIA dealer just north of Burlington on Old Highway 99 and turn right on Park..

Our speaker will be (**Woo Hoo!**) Sue Coby, well known and much appreciated New World Carniolan queen breeder.. It would be most presumptuous to say "Our Own" but it sure feels good! What a shot of world class talent and knowledge for our area!! I cannot use enough exclamation points.

President Bill says she will talk to us about last years queen rearing, her ideas for next year and cheerlead for the Association's continued solid participation. We know too she is helping out with AI in British Columbia, gathering Caucasian semen on the Republic of Georgia along with Dr. Steve Sheppard and who knows what else. We have a nexus of opportunity, resources and manpower plus a desire to develop wonderful local bee stocks for Puget Sound. Right now resources may be the biggest challenge as we all understand.



I want to share my own experience yesterday here at the house with the 3 deep hives I thought were killed by yellowjackets and bald face hornets.. They held lovely locally raised NWC queens from Sue's queen stock along with queens reared at home. It made me sick . They were flying! SAY WHAT? I went out and gave all my hives a scientific wake-up boot with my foot/fist and they ALL came out wondering 'what the heck". The hives above Big Lake were also going nuts in the bird feeders, hauling crushed corn powder.

Now what? Do I start with pollen patties? If I do I cannot stop. Two Springs ago I did and they built up enough to split but you could not beg a new queen much less buy one. Two hives took off for the apple trees and the next day it started to rain for months. Dang!

I found eggs yesterday too, when I looked in the hives I thought were weakest. The double stacked nucs over screen boards

Cookies A—L

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were both flying well. I guess that worked so far.

Last Fall I worked hard on feeding and mite control AND I went with Sue Cobey's queens locally raised by beginners. I did not have any other ideas. I frankly tried to imitated Bruce Bowen because I know he pays attention and his income depends on bees.

Folks, when all the experts are done pontificating and the dust and feathers settle, this bee business STILL seems to come down to solid stock, good mite control, feed and winter ventilation. Except that does not always work either. Do your best.

You may know we have a new crud showing up in the form of a parasitic fly that attacks and kills adult bees. Someone scientific in California finally noticed it by accident. The issue is all the bees in the California almonds possibly spreading it continent wide.

Several experts including Randy Oliver, have given up on screened bottom boards for mite control. All my bees are over screens for ventilation and are partially blocked to cut down on wind/air flow for winter. They sit on a dedicated bee trailer open to the ground. I also have hives sitting over empty old deep boxes, open to a drained concrete slab but sealed from wind. Debris drops out to the concrete. And great top TOP ventilation..

If you treat your bees you may wish to keep an eye on a product from New Zealand that the Canadian folks have approved but the US has not, called

Apivar. It is a strip containing amitraz. I believe North Dakota is trying for a Section 18 on this product. Who knows. You can read about it on BeeSource.com .

You can use drone comb removal for mite reduction. It is low tech and it works. I bought plastic drone comb the bees do not like much. It can be easier adding a couple medium frames toward the edges of deep boxes and remove the new built sealed drone comb in three weeks or so. Don't let the drones hatch though. Put the frames back immediately and let the bees do it again. You have to remember or it makes things worse!

TO DO: It is time

- Clean out the collected crud/dead bees at the entrances and bottoms. Make sure your bees can fly and are not trying to live in mushy winter slop.
- Lift the back of your hives a bit. They should feel like about 50 pounds. Add frames of stores if you have them. You can feed light syrup or drivert sugar if necessary. It beats starving and bees can quickly do that.
- If you plan to order packages or queens, get to it. I have people calling me and I do not have good answers for them yet.
- Plan mite control before the honey season. If you treat you must decide when and often build lead time into your thinking. Do your home work. There are safer products now like Hop Guard which can help but are not perfect.
- It is time to renew our memberships.

I hope to see everyone at the meeting.

# SKAGIT VALLEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION



## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION or MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to subscribe to: Check choice -Circle a price/year

- American Beekeeping Journal 1/yr \$19.50 2/y 37.00 3/y 52.15  
Online—\$16.00
- Bee Culture Magazine 1/yr \$21.00 2/yr 38.00

**Annual Membership**      **Total** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Dues**      **\$12.00**

Checks to: Skagit Valley Beekeepers Association  
c/o Scott Rhodes PO Box 341  
Clear Lake, WA 98235