



BEE LINES

Regularly scheduled meetings are on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 pm at [1305 Pine Avenue in Snohomish](#) in the Christ the King Lutheran Church building.

August 09

Next Mtg

We will be discussing and making plans for the bee information booth at this years Evergreen State Fair. Please plan on attending and even volunteering, more hands make it much easier to support.

July 14, 2009

NWDBA MONTHLY MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Scott Jenrich at 7:05, there was no treasures report as John was not present.

The minutes were approved as typed.

Old Business: Remember that we are getting a group to man the table at the Evergreen State Fair, which opens on the 27th of August and runs through the Labor Day weekend. Anyone who would sign with Carol Kalina at carol_kalina@hotmail.com. For a 6 hour shift, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm or 4:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Thanks. It is not necessary to be a member of the group, just interested in bees and talking to strangers about it.

New Business: There was no new business

Program: A former honey judge from the fair brought samples of what honey should look like when presented for judging at the fair. Rick brought a refract meter and a polar scope to teach the importance of moisture content in honey and how it is graded. The perfection of the jars (sometimes you need to look through quite a few

cases to find perfect jars) and the amount of honey inside, clean lids on the inside, all factors in competition. Three jars of honey are the most that you can enter into the judging.

The discussion about summer swarms ensued and the meeting was adjourned at 9:00, next meeting to be August 11th, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Wirt, Recording secretary

Club Picnic.

The club picnic was held at flowing lake on July 18th. The weather was perfect, food was great, and we had some really nice things donated for the silent auction.

What was missing were the members. Basically attendees were all board members with just 2 regular members. The auction was postponed to a future regular mtg. If the membership does not want a club picnic maybe we need to do something different, we pay to reserve the covered area and we don't want to spend money if we do not need to. A club is only as good as the membership makes it.

Web Site update.

Here is a way to help the club raise some funds. At the bottom of our home page (www.nwdba.org) just below the hit counter you will see a link titled "host your web site with fatcow". This is the host that we are currently



BEE LINES

Regularly scheduled meetings are on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 pm at [1305 Pine Avenue in Snohomish](#) in the Christ the King Lutheran Church building.

August 09

using for the club site. If you click on that link and sign up for an account they will send the club \$100 (for each new account). The account must be created through that link in order for the club to get the money.

Benefits, fatcow is rated #1 in the industry in several areas, they offer outstanding live tech support, you get unlimited server space for your website, unlimited emails accounts can be created, they also offer many free upgrades, hundreds of pre designed web templates even a really easy to use shopping cart that you can add to your website for selling your honey. I should also mention that they are very cheap at only \$66 per year. You can host as many different sites as you want on just one account. If you already have an account elsewhere you can easily transfer it to fatcow. It's a great way to raise funds for the club and possibly reduce your own current hosting costs.

In the news.

Britain seeks backyard beekeepers to fight decline

What's the well-dressed urbanite wearing this summer? Baggy white coveralls and a beekeeping helmet.

By [JILL LAWLESS](#)
Associated Press Writer

LONDON —

What's the well-dressed urbanite wearing this summer? Baggy white coveralls and a beekeeping helmet.

That, at least, is the hope of a British government conservation agency, which is urging city-dwellers to become backyard beekeepers to combat the declining apian population.

Natural England on Wednesday gave its backing to a "new, contemporary beehive for the urban beekeeper" known as the Beehaus, which it hopes will help convince urbanites that honeybees are hot.

"(The Beehaus is) a great example of how easy it is for anyone to bring the natural world closer to their doorstep," Natural England chief scientist Tom Tew said. "There's no reason why our towns and cities should exist as wildlife deserts."

Britain has 250 species of bees, but - as in other countries - most are in decline. Scientists say pesticides, disappearing habitat, wet weather and a parasite called the varroa mite are among the culprits.

The makers of the Beehaus - a brightly colored plastic box, roughly the size of a backyard barbecue - say it has twice the room of a traditional hive, is designed to reduce swarming and can yield up to 20 kilograms (44 pounds) of honey in a year.

It sells for 495 pounds (\$840) - bees not included.

The company behind the Beehaus is Omlet, whose previous inventions include Eglu, an urban chicken coop that has brought poultry-keeping to backyards across Britain.



BEE LINES

Regularly scheduled meetings are on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 pm at [1305 Pine Avenue in Snohomish](#) in the Christ the King Lutheran Church building.

August 09

Co-founder Johannes Paul said the Beehaus was designed to show that beekeeping is a "low-maintenance hobby."

"Keeping a hive doesn't take much space, so you can even keep them on balconies, rooftops and obviously gardens," he said.

Longstanding beekeepers welcome the new recruits, but worry some may not realize what they're getting into.

"Like puppies, bees are not just for Christmas," said Tim Lovett of the British Beekeepers' Association. "There is a certain commitment to this."

The reasons for the decline in bee numbers are still not fully understood. The Beekeepers' Association says almost a third of the country's honey bee colonies were lost in 2007-2008, due in part to an exceptionally wet summer.

This year's decline is expected to be less severe, thanks largely to better weather.

Farmers have warned that the disappearance of bees could devastate food crops and the environment because about three-quarters of flowering plants rely on birds, bees and other pollinators to help them reproduce.

Beekeeping's geeky image may be changing as the eco-conscious and affluent take up the cause. The British Beekeepers' Association says its membership has grown by 20 percent in the last 18 months, to almost 20,000.

In the United States, a hive was installed earlier this year on the south lawn of the White House.

Upmarket London department store Fortnum & Mason sells honey produced by bees in its rooftop hives, and claims the wide variety of plants in the store's affluent urban environs - from backyard flowers to chestnut and lime trees - makes for a more complex flavor.

The British government has set up a National Bee Unit and increased research funding to try to stop the insects from disappearing - though beekeepers say more must be done, and faster.

"There's no need for panic," said Lovett. "But I think there is need for a little urgency."

On the Net:

Beehaus: <http://www.omlet.co.uk>

Natural England: <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk>

British Beekeepers' Association:
<http://www.britishbee.org.uk>

Bees keep Mary's Woods abuzz

By Clarice Keating



BEE LINES

Regularly scheduled meetings are on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 pm at [1305 Pine Avenue in Snohomish](#) in the Christ the King Lutheran Church building.

August 09



John Skeelee maintains hives near his Mary's Woods apartment.

Sentinel photo by Clarice Keating

Bees are a blessing in John Skeelee's life.

Having spent most of his adult years living on a small farm and wandering the wilds of Washington's forests as a timber appraiser, he found that moving to a suburban retirement community was a difficult adjustment.

In 2007, Skeelee and his wife, Mitzi, decided it was time to sell their acreage and relocate from rural Battle Ground to Mary's Woods in Lake Oswego.

One hobby from Skeelee's bucolic past life, however, came with him — beekeeping.

"Some days I like to go out and sit in a chair and watch the bees," he said of the three hives that currently sit in a serene, unused field adjacent to the retirement community.

Occasionally, on fair days, Skeelee walks the 20 minutes to the field where he dons a protective veil, lights a few strips of burlap on fire in the smoker, and pulls out a few frames from the hive to check on his flying flock.

But, mostly, he leaves them alone.

"Bees thrive on benign neglect," Skeelee said. "They don't care to be disturbed."

Other residents in the community have taken interest in Skeelee's hobby. Especially curious are residents who tend community garden plots at



BEE LINES

Regularly scheduled meetings are on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 pm at [1305 Pine Avenue in Snohomish](#) in the Christ the King Lutheran Church building.

August 09

Mary's Woods. Honeybees are in charge of pollinating 90 percent of the flowering crops here in the United States.

Skeele's neighbors comment often when they see his bees, hard at work, near the villas and apartments, and enquire as to their well-being.

Holy Names Sister Katherine O'Neill said the Mary's Woods leadership encourages and supports residents in pursuing these types of pastimes.

"Our community is committed to the full development of the human person; we've always responded to people's needs," she said. "These people not only share our land; they also share that commitment to the fullest development of the person. All of the individual things that residents are able to do enables them to age very well, and they make the whole place more interesting."

Today, Sister O'Neill is a resident at Mary's Woods, but she came to the facility in 2001 when it opened, to serve in the pastoral services department.

Mary's Woods was founded by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary to provide housing and health services in a community that includes their own retired sisters. Apartment complexes and the health center are built around the provincial house, which has been on the sisters' property since 1932.

Many of the features of the community are there because of people like Skeele. Golfers worked to install a putting green. Green thumbs petitioned for the raised beds.

While beekeeping is more of a solitary hobby, Skeele is always happy to share information — and honey — when asked.

Although, as yet, there has been no extra honey.

These swarms are the most gentle he's ever owned in 40 years of beekeeping, but so far they're not big producers, Skeele said.

Honey production can vary from year to year depending on the weather, or the politics of the hive, or for no apparent reason at all.



BEE LINES

Regularly scheduled meetings are on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 pm at [1305 Pine Avenue in Snohomish](#) in the Christ the King Lutheran Church building.

August 09

Back in Battle Ground, Skeele's hives at the farm produced 28 gallons of honey one year. Another year, they only yielded 3 gallons.

These small hives of 10,000 or so bees have had a rough start since Skeele set them up last year. They made it through the winter, but a queen died, and one swarm keeps mysteriously losing members, perhaps due to pesticides used somewhere nearby, he said. They produce enough to sustain the hive, but not enough excess for extraction.

Skeele hopes for enough honey to share come harvest time next year.