** January 10, 2021**

**CLUB INFORMATION**

President-Doug Rush

Vice President- Richard Ratigan

Secretary-April Johnson

Treasurer-Kip Davis

Meetings are the second Sunday of each month at 1 pm.  Place to be determined.

For information about becoming a member, please write to [jeffcohoneybee@gmail.com](mailto:jeffcohoneybee@gmail.com)

Dues include membership to Colorado State Colorado Beekeepers Association.

Website <https://www.jeffcobeekeepers.org/>

Facebook: Jefferson County Beekeeper Association Group

**LAST MEETING NOTES**

October 11, 2020 – Discussion about club becoming a non-profit, ideas for next year agenda. Main topic was a presentation from Bryan Zavada on products from the hive. Different ways to present honey, ways to clean and render wax and products he makes.

November 8, 2020-Discussion on winter feeding. Discussed goals for next year; establish bee buddy/mentor program, offer queen rearing class and grafting class by Seth C. More discussion about becoming 501 C 3 non-profit. We put candy boards on apiary hives, did an autopsy on hive #1, visual evidence of mites.

**COLORADO STATE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**

Winter meeting was held 11-14-2020 by Zoom. 9am-3pm. It started with the President’s welcome by Ed Colby. Then North Carolina State entomologist and professor Dr. David Tarpy explained the biology of overwintered bees and how to be supportive of them in this critical season. He discussed in winter bees need 1 frame of honey to 1 frame of bees. The need to combine weaker colonies with strong ones, or younger strong queens with weaker colonies. He went on to discuss Early spring, and mid-spring, and late spring duties.

Tina Sebestyen talked about the developments of the Master Beekeeper training program. There are 3 levels in the program. Apprentice, Journeyman, and Master Level. Currently there are 19 students in the journeyman level. At the beginner level 1 year, experience is necessary and a Field exam plus a written exam. The Journeyman Level has been expanded to 3 years for completion. Bee camps winter and summer, plus 12 guided studies must be completed, other requirements are listed on the CSBA website. At the Master level students propose and set-up and execute a study in their own hives. Please see the CSBA website for more information.

CSBA advisor Joe Komperda explained how the swarm hotline works.

Dave Tarpy gave another talk about “Honeybees, mythology, religion, warfare and politics” An historical perspective on humanity’s relationship with bees.

An, ask the experts with a panel comprised of experts Dave Tarpy, Dewey Caron, and Jim Tew held a wealth of information.

Election of new officers’ results: President- Eric Smith, Vice-president Dr. Ted Ning.

Advisors- Joe Komperda elected for 2 years, Dan McConnell for 2 years, Seth Charbonneau for 1 year.

**Mentoring**

There are many reasons why beekeepers are beekeepers. What are yours? If you want to mentor someone or need a mentor, let us know and we will help.

**WHAT DO YOU KNOW?**

1. \_\_\_\_ Female Varroa mites lay their eggs in brood cells containing larvae just after the cells are capped? (True False).

2. \_\_\_\_Queens suffer from all the diseases that affect workers and drones? (True or False).

3. \_\_\_\_ Varroa mite population build up rapidly within the colony during winter confinement. (True or False).

The answers are in this newsletter.

**ARTICLE Winter Beekeeping**

by Bryan Zavada

My views of winter as a beekeeper have changed over the years. As a prospective and new beekeeper winter was maddening. Having to wait until May to get bees my first year, and then my second year, too, after those died, left me impatient. I was eager to improve upon what I had done wrong before. Now, with more success, and more bees, winter has become a time to rest, regroup, reflect, and look forward. Here are some things you can do overwinter as a beekeeper.

**First, your bees**. There should not be much to do right now, ideally, you have already prepared your bees for winter in the fall. You have addressed your mite load, fed up if need be, and done any colony winterizing/insulation you choose to do. Occasionally, you can pull out any dead bees near the entrance, using a j hook tool, screwdriver, etc. Colorado often has nice days in the winter months, so spend some time observing your bees’ cleansing flights on these days.

Winter is also a great time to do an oxalic vapor treatment. Oxalic vaporization is most effective during broodless or nearly broodless periods, and winter is one of them. The colony does not have to be opened for the treatment to be administered. Hopefully, mites have been addressed in late summer and fall, too. This treatment is meant to clean up any leftover or mites from drifting/robbing in the fall.

Checking on hive weight can help determine a colony in need of emergency feeding. Ideally bees have all the food they need going into winter, but that is not always the case. Keep an eye on any colonies that you know were light going into winter. You can lift them from the back to get a sense of their weight. Taking the outer and sometimes inner cover off on a nice day, you can quickly check where the cluster is. If you see bees in the top box, just under the inner cover, they have moved up through their food stores and are running out. There are different preferences for winter feeding methods, most commonly a mountain camp feeder or sugar brick with a shim. Want techno-gadgetry? Look into some of the latest products that can gather and record various types of data, like temperature and weight, or a Flir camera to track the cluster by its heat pattern.

**Education:** The winter lull also provides a great opportunity to further your beekeeping education. Buy a book, renew your magazine subscription, order a catalog, dig into some (valid, reliable) internet sources. As you grow as a beekeeper, choose specific topics or management strategies you want to research and implement into your beekeeping practices. Education can often be linked to the next topic, goal setting.

**Goals:** You do want to be a better beekeeper, right? Me, too. Always. Winter is a great time to reflect on your beekeeping season and practices, what went well, what did not, and what you would have done differently, if only you could do it again. Review your records. (You keep records, right? If not, maybe that would be a good goal!) Do not beat yourself up. Every failure or struggle is a lesson if you choose to frame it that way.

Now look forward to next year. How can you build on your successes, and learn from your mistakes? How can you become a better beekeeper? Set **specific** goals, outcome based if possible. It could be a specific management practice. You could set a goal to make a split as a spring management practice of an overwintering colony. Or master packing and lighting a smoker. Or perform and record monthly mite counts on your colonies. Or build a top bar hive. Or finally try grafting queens. Be specific. Be realistic but challenge yourself. Wanting to become a better beekeeper is something to always strive for. Setting goals in the winter helps you to plan, prepare, initiate, and attempt them, and puts you square on the path of improvement. Successful completion is not necessary. Simply having a direction to strive for drives you forward and will help you grow as a beekeeper.

**Bees and Equipment:** The winter is also the ideal time to plan purchasing bees and equipment. Big suppliers usually start taking orders for packages and nucs in December. Look around for local suppliers, too. There are often hobbyist or sideliner beeks selling their own splits. Pay attention to people doing queen rearing and raising bees from their own, best stock.

Purchasing equipment now allows time for it to arrive (if ordered), assemble, and paint, if necessary. Certain common products may be sold out during those heavy use times, so plan. Consider purchasing from a local bee store, as well. You will probably pay more (though shipping can often balance out the cost). The biggest benefit is the relationship you can establish with local bee experts who can help you along your journey. Be sure to consider your goals, and what equipment you need to accomplish them. Need that double screen board for a vertical split you are planning? Order or make one now!

Repairing and cleaning used equipment can be done in winter, too. It is important to scrape propolis off the frame rests for easy frame manipulation, and the side bars of frames (save your propolis for future use). Generally, I like to keep propolis in the hive when I can but cleaning off these two places is essential to the beekeeper. Paint boxes, reinforce corners, and do any other repairs now, so your equipment is ready to go when you need it.

**Products of the Hive:** And finally, winter is a great time to create with your bounties from the hive. Make a honey- based recipe. Created a spiced or flavored honey. Make some mead. Process your wax. Try pouring candles. Use the propolis you saved to make a tincture. These make great holiday gifts. And on the coldest days, when you are cooped up inside, do not worry about how your bees are handling the weather. Sit in front of the fire, have a glass of mead, or tea with honey, read a good beekeeping book, and occasionally, look outside at the snowing falling, and dream about that Flir camera.

**#1** True- Only adult female Varroa mites can survive outside of brood cells on adult bees. Female mites enter the cells containing young larvae just before they are sealed. They go to the bottom of the cell and immerse themselves in the larval food. After the cell is capped, she starts feeding on the larva and begins laying eggs approximately two days later.

**BOOK REVIEW**

The Lives of Bees by Thomas D. Seeley, 2019. Princeton University Press

This is a book about the research Thomas Seeley and others learned about the behavior, social life, and survival strategies of honeybees living outside the beekeeper’s hive. They studied groups of wild bees and how they differ from under the management of beekeepers. Their research was conducted in New York State. He also references other, research done in southern England and Sweden.

He presents his new approach to beekeeping, “This the goal of what I have called Darwinian beekeeping and others have called natural beekeeping, apicentric beekeeping, and bee-friendly beekeeping”. Darwinian beekeeping, which combines respecting the bees and using them for practical purposes, seems to me to be a good way for us to be responsible stewards of the honeybee, Apis mellifera, our greatest friend among the insects.”

The author recommends 14 ways to manage hives using his research. I encourage you to read this fascinating and informative book. It has my vote for one of the top books I have read this year.

By Kathy Gill

**#2** True -Queens suffer from all the diseases that affect workers and drones even though the diseases are most prevalent and usually diagnosed with the worker caste.

**Beekeeper Best Management Practice**

The Integrated Hive Management for Colorado Beekeepers, 2nd, Edition, December 2019 is an educational guide developed by Colorado State University Extension Office. It gives strategies for monitoring hives, and controlling pests using the Integrated Hive Management continuum.

It goes into specific pests, monitoring options, and great pictures. You can access it at <https://arapahoe.extension.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2020/01/CO-IHM-Book-for-Print-2020.pdf>

Check out the Bee informed Partnership (BIP) site which has the latest loss and management survey for 2019-2020. You can access it at [www.beeinformed.org](http://www.beeinformed.org) or their Facebook page.

**#3** False- Varroa mites begin to reproduce with the onset of brood rearing in the spring and continue until autumn. Reproduction of mites is limited only by the availability of brood. During winter confinement, female mites survive by attaching themselves to adult bees in the cluster.

**Is it Honey Bee or HoneyBee?**

This question was on one of the facebook pages. I got a chuckle from it. So, wanted to share it. What does it matter? The dictionary says it should be “honeybee”. However according to the ESA, Entomological Society Association it should be honey bee. For more information see this article, and you decide which one you will use. <https://entomologytoday.org/2014/05/06/is-it-honey-bee-or-honeybee-bed-bug-or-bedbug-house-fly-or-housefly>

#3 False- Varroa mites begin to reproduce with the onset of brood rearing in the spring and continue until autumn. Reproduction of mites is limited only by the availability of brood. During winter confinement, female mites survive by attaching themselves to adult bees in the cluster.

Kathy Gill