

SOARING CAPITAL BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

MISSION STATEMENT: "To educate, promote and teach beekeeping and have fun."

THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 2018 MEETING HELD AT

7:00PM AT MARANANTHA BIBLE CHURCH

Lenny announced the next meeting for Sunday, May 20th at 2:00PM at the Bee Yard off of East Franklin Street in Horseheads, between Hanover Square and Route 13. If coming from Hanover Square the gravel drive is located on the right hand side before you reach the Mill Street Pond Road. You can park in the little turn-out by the entrance driveway off of E. Franklin Street and walk in on the gravel road. There is basically no parking at the bee yard end of the road (extremely limited) – barely enough for Lenny's truck.

Lenny had some long hive tools that you can get – I think \$14.00. These are really handy for prying up frames with their hooked end. The extra length makes them a little unwieldy, but the extra leverage is occasionally useful as well. There are so many kinds of hive tools available - consider trying different ones out. It is often handy to have more than one hive tool available – especially if one is misplaced/lost.

Nuc day had been delayed from May 5th to the 12th as of the April Meeting. It was later postponed to May 19th, and postponed yet again. Check with Lenny, or at meeting for update.

The first inspections of the year is time to check hives for adequate food to carry them through until nectar becomes available. A good rule of thumb is 20 lbs. of capped honey at this time of year, since brood rearing has ramped up, and hence honey consumption, while a spell of cool/rainy weather/late frosts can shut down nectar production/availability. Colonies can actually survive most of the winter only to starve at this time. Consider feeding with patties, plain cane sugar, or frames of honey from deadouts (not killed by American Foulbrood, killed by just about anything else is OK.). In cool weather the food must be placed next to the cluster for the bees to access/use.

If your colonies are strong, consider supering early (with drawn comb). If we have good weather for maple bloom, the bees can start bringing in quite a bit of nectar early. Also early addition of extra space can help reduce the swarming impulse, and increase the bees hoarding tendencies/honey production. According to Tom Seeley, most colonies in this area store about half of the honey they need to over-winter by then end of May – so look to super early.

Lenny also has some robber screens available for \$15.00 (10% club discount). These can fit on the front of hives. Robbing can be a problem mainly for weak colonies, and at times of good weather – but little forage (early spring before flowers bloom in earnest, and fall after flowers killed off by frost). Sometimes nucs can also be susceptible to robbing, and probably should at least have a reduced entrance for a while. The robber screen provides ventilation for the colony, while reducing/preventing robbing. It can also be used to provide ventilation, yet close up a colony if it needs to be moved. There is quite a bit of adjustment available for colony entrance size to match the colony size. It can also act as mouse guard for winter.

The highly anticipated screened bottom board with a sliding bottom is now available. Lenny can retrofit existing screened bottom boards he has previously made, and even provide loaners in the meantime. This feature can be used to block off excess airflow in the winter, as well as provide a platform for a varroa drop measuring board, With-out sliding bottom = \$15.00. With sliding bottom = \$25.00. \$10.00 for retro-fit/upgrade of existing screened bottom boards.

Erica was our feature presenter, and did a wonderful presentation on soap making. She has been making soap for sometime, and shared with us her experiences and some recipes. Although soap making can seem intimidating at first, there is a limited amount of needed equipment and supplies. One can use the products of your hive – wax, honey and even propolis, to make the soap which can be not only used for personal/family use, but can make nice gifts. Selling it commercially might involve jumping through a few more hoops. Erica clearly explained the process she uses as well as the ingredients and showed how anyone with an interest in it could make some themselves. She has graciously agreed to write up a summary of her presentation to be available for club members.

Lenny had a hand-out on the life-cycle of the bees. Quite handy for “Bee Math”, which hopefully we will get to see how it can come in handy for figuring out what is going on in our colonies/at the club apiary this year.

The group then split into two groups. Lenny covered nuc installation for attendees that wanted to go over that topic – including new beekeepers that were anticipating receiving bees. Lenny demonstrated several introduction techniques for transferring nucs into full-sized equipment and answered questions. There was also a video made by Burt and posted on his excellent Youtube channel “HoneyBeeMade”. Check it out! You can see Lenny and Scott in the nuc installation video. A new video with live bees is expected soon.

The second group presentation was done by Peter, Ed, and Scott, on a piece of equipment that although available from most bee suppliers, is not that widely used – the double screen (or Snelgrove) board. Many advanced/intermediate beekeepers who like to try new (to them) equipment might consider this item. It has multiple uses, but the basic concept is that it is a rim, with two bee proof screens separated by a small space that allows for air/scent flow, but not for direct bee to bee communication between the bees above and below it. There are multiple uses for this piece of equipment. “The many uses of a Snelgrove Board” is a 10 page .pdf file available online that provides a good look at this piece of equipment. We also looked at another piece of equipment popularized by Vermont Beekeeping giant Mike Palmer – the divided 10 frame deep – with corresponding four frame nuc boxes above. A discussion was had regarding the many uses/potential uses. Lenny has made some of these boxes (and may again in the future), and Scott, Ed and Lenny have used them. They are also starting to be available from major bee suppliers in recent years, and may be worth a look for those with more than a couple of hives, especially if you want to look at adding/overwintering some nucs to your beekeeping operation.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Next Monthly Meeting: Sunday May 20th 2:00PM at Bee Yard (off of E. Franklin Street, Horseheads)

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Meybaum,
Secretary