



The Norfolk Bee

Norfolk County, Massachusetts • www.norfolkbees.org

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Letter from the Editor

I wasn't sure I was going to be able to get a newsletter out this summer, hoping to be much busier. But the weather has put a damper on everything, from inspecting the beehives, weeding the garden (way too many weeds what with all this rain), extracting, and even mowing the lawn. When you only have a couple of days a week that you can do all this stuff and it rains, you're stuck.

The good news is that I've heard from several people already that they have been extracting. Judi Hindman told me she already got 40 lbs off of one hive. Otherwise I hear that the honey flow is slow and that a lot of plants are late this year. I'm hoping that August picks up and the bees can make up all the lost time.

Glassware will be ready this week and I will let everyone know. If you haven't placed your order, there is chance you still can, so let me know.

Well I won't ramble on here as I have a good story to tell this month for the main article.

Tony Lulek

Summer Hive Dive
Sunday, August 20th.
12 Noon
Howard's Farm

Club Extractor

Does anyone need to borrow the club extractor? Please let me know. It is available right now. Thanks Tony

IN THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER

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Capturing Bees . . . or so you think!

I want to share with everyone an experience that I had this summer. I was put in contact with Tom Porter, a Wellesley resident, by a friend of mine. Tom told my friend that he had a hive of bees living in the wall of his carport. He thought they had been there since the previous year. We talked on the phone several times to see if I could help him. I was most interested in doing this for the experience, since I had heard lots of stories about hives in walls, trees, etc. I asked a fellow beekeeper, Miguel, to join us. The three of us were going to attempt to remove the bees and hive from the wall.

My interested was several-fold. First, I wanted to see what a feral hive in a wall looked like. Second, I was also interested in how this could be done, and third, I was interested in getting a free colony.

I needed to find out what to do. I had sent out an email to all of the club members asking for advice. I got some wonderful ideas, from using Tyvek suits bought at HomeDepot to putting the bees in containers and sorting it all out at home. I was able to talk to Howard and get his advice as well.

It was a very warm day on June 30th when we had arranged to meet at Tom's place. Miguel arrived before me and was already talking with Tom. Once I arrived, we all stood around for a bit, deciding what the best course of action would be. Since the wall was not part of the house but a stand-alone wall of the carport, Tom decided it would be okay to take the whole thing apart. We started by ripping off the shingles. Through some trial and error, we purposely started at the end away from where we thought the colony might be. We took off all of the shingles, and underneath were 2 x 8s running horizontally across the entire wall. We slowly started prying them off. We were ever-so-mindful of the bees, which seemed to be taking this all in stride. They were not that excited or agitated and we only smoked them a bit.

As we ripped off the boards, we discovered that the bees had been in the wall for a while, and had built their first home in the middle section. We found a lot of comb, but it was completely abandoned. The comb was rotting with mold and



mildew. It just crumbled when we touched it. As we uncovered the rest of the wall we exposed the main colony on the left side. It was quite large and made up of about 5 different layers of comb.

The bees still seemed quite calm. I had fitted a couple of bins with screen mesh tops into which we could put the comb and secure them for the ride home in the car. I took a serrated knife and we started cutting the comb and placing the sheets in the bins. Once we had all of the comb cut out, our job was to put as many bees into the bins as possible. They were quite agitated at this point, but still clustering where the comb had been.



Tom and I were drenched with sweat in our Tyvek suits and leather gloves. Miguel was wearing his regular bee suit, but was just as sweaty. It took us several tries to get the remaining bees into the bins. We took turns scooping them up with our gloved hands. It wasn't until much later that we discovered that our gloves were covered with stingers and that our hands had been stung quite a bit. Over all though, we received very few stings anywhere else.

Within a short period of time we had the entire comb removed and the majority of the bees in the bins. At this point, amongst the sweat and buzzing of the bees, sadness came over us. We knew that we would not be able to capture all of the bees and that we would have get rid of them another way. The goal was to take the bees away from Tom's house, and we had to kill those left. Not a pleasant task, albeit a necessary one. Once we were done, we loaded up my car with the two bins of bees and cleaned up.



Tom was left with a huge pile of wood, shingles, dead bees, some old comb and a destroyed car port, but he was glad that the bees were gone. Miguel soon left us; onto another adventure I'm sure. For those of you that know Miguel, he is always off on some wonderful adventure. Tom and I hung out for a bit and chatted. He was genuinely interested in the learning about bees. We might just see him at a meeting sometime or even bee school.



President's Perspective

I would like to have a board meeting on August 19 or 20 at my house. For all of you that are on the board that was set up last fall, please let me know if you can make it. There is a lot to do this coming year and I want to get a start on it before the fall

comes. Please email me at rhennessy1@earthlink.net and let me know.

Regards,

Ray

You might think that is the end of the story, but this adventure was not even half done. It was about 7:30 when I got home. I was planning on letting the bees rest overnight in the containers and then to take care of them on Friday, but my sense of adventure got the better of me. The next thing you know, I donned my sweaty bee gear again and decided to put the bees in a hive. I had learned through email, research, and talking to Howard that I had to cut the comb and strap it in some empty frames. I figured this would be fairly easy, and for the most part it was. I was able to load 9 frames of comb. I had no idea at this point if the queen was even amongst the bees. There were a lot of dead bees, honey everywhere and a lot of brood. My hope was that they would accept the new hive and make it their home. Only time would tell. I figured I would leave them alone for a couple of days and then check on them.



It was Saturday late morning and I was outside doing yard work. It was a beautiful day, perfect weather. It was my plan to inspect all of my hives (I am now up to 4), but nature had other plans in store. My neighbor Sandy was out hanging laundry and she called over to me. She said that a lot of the bees were in her yard. My neighbors have been great about the bees and I couldn't really figure out what she was talking about. Then she pointed to the sky. There were bees everywhere. At first I wasn't sure what was going on as I had never seen a swarm before. But one of my hives was swarming. I wasn't sure at first which one. My four hives are in the back and their activity seemed normal. I glanced at the new hive which was by the driveway and things were weird. The energy in the air had certainly changed as well. I looked up again and the swarm was huge, taking up most of my side yard and reaching way up into the sky. It was getting bigger. Sandy and I

just stood there and watched. They were swirling everywhere. As the swarm grew, it started to move toward the back of the yard. I watched for about 10 minutes, thinking this would be a good photo op, but not wanting to miss anything, I decided against running for the camera. Within another 5 minutes the swarm had gathered in a cedar tree in my back yard, about 30 feet up. As I stood there the air became calm again and very still. I figured I would let the bees rest for a bit then go get them and put them in a nuc. It was my understanding that the swarm could stay up to a couple of days until they had found a new home.

It was hot out and my kids wanted me to go for a swim in the pool, so I did, thinking that when my neighbor got back home, I would borrow his ladder and go get the bees. When I was done swimming, after about an hour, I came back into the yard and looked up at the tree and the bees had flown. I was very disappointed. I was so hoping for another hive, especially with a story like this behind it. I looked around but they were gone.

The rest of the hive just slowly disappeared over the course of the next couple of days. I was sad to see the swarm go, but I wouldn't have traded a single moment of this experience for anything; from the beginning, ripping the shingling off of Tom's carport, cutting the comb and strapping it in the frames, to watching the swarm. It was truly an amazing thing to watch and experience.

I am now on to my other hives as they need my care and attention. Soon there will be honey to extract, wax to refine and creams to make. All in all, what a wonderful experience of nature at it's finest. One of nature's most amazing creatures doing exactly what they are supposed to be doing.



Fair Committee News

The Fair Committee of the NCBA has been designing and working on a new exhibit. This year's theme is, "Honeybees Help Everyone, Everywhere" and will feature some information about beekeeping around the world and how this greatly helps many people. We were not able to get the exhibit ready in time for the Brockton Fair, however we will be ready for the Marshfield Fair. This fair is held August 18-27. See their website for more details www.marshfieldfair.org

Fair Committee members: Jeanette Ruyle, Miguel Lessing, Norm Shaw, Sue Simmons, Irene Gorczyca.

Stevens, Robert Allen, 63, of 40 Meader Road, Greenwich, New York, founder and President of **Betterbee, Inc.**, died peacefully at home on Wednesday, July 19, 2006 after a two year illness.

Born in Cambridge, New York on June 2, 1943, Bob was the son of the late Robert B. and Leona (Gaskin) Stevens, owners of the former Stevens & Tompkins Paper Mill of Greenwich. He leaves behind his loving wife of 34 years, Margaret (Kanauss) Stevens.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by a sister, Alicia Stevens, of Peru, New York, three children: son Nick and his wife Kathryn of Kyiv, Ukraine, daughter Alexandra and her husband Jeff Cooper of Greenwich, Connecticut, and son Justin, a Peace Corps volunteer in San Martin, Guatemala. He had two grandsons, four-year old Quinton Stevens and year and a half year old Benjamin Cooper, both of whom brought much joy to him during his illness, as did numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Bob was a graduate of The Williston Northampton School and received a degree in American Studies from Brown University. After graduating from Brown in 1966, he served two years in Bilimora, Gujarat, India as a Peace Corps volunteer, where he co-authored a book on chicken farming. After the Peace Corps, he earned a Masters Degree in English from Brown University and taught English and Asian Studies for nine years at Shea High School in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. There he met his wife Margaret, a fellow English teacher. During that time, Bob and his family resided in Seekonk, Massachusetts, a town of which his seventh great-grandfather, Walter Palmer, was one of the founding fathers. Continuing his education during that time, Bob received a fellowship from New York University, leading to a Masters Degree in Asian Studies, and later completed coursework towards a doctoral degree in International Studies at the University of Massachusetts. He was also among the first group of American teachers to study in China in 1973.

In 1979, Bob returned to Hartshorn Farm in Greenwich, New York, where he was raised, and established Betterbee, Inc., a wholesale and retail bee supply business. Ten years later, Bob opened The Meadery at Greenwich, the first meadery in the United States, where he produced honey wine made from honey produced by his own bees. Throughout his lifetime, Bob received many academic and business honors, but he was especially proud of his reception of the New York State Beekeeper of the Year Award that was bestowed upon him in 1994 by the Empire State Honey Producers Association. Bob also was an avid hiker and camper and his family, friends, and former students fondly remember hiking with him in the Adirondack, White, Rocky, and Himalayan Mountains. He leaves behind a legacy of a passion for family and friends, a love and exceptional skill in the use of the written word, and an abounding interest in the natural and international worlds.

Calling hours will be held from 2-4 and 7-9 p.m. on Friday, July 21, 2006 at Flynn Bros., Inc. Funeral Home, 80 Main Street, Greenwich, New York. A Funeral Mass will be celebrated at 10 a.m. on Saturday at St. Joseph's Church in Greenwich, New York. The Rite of Committal will follow at Greenwich Cemetery. To honor Bob's love of honeybees and his profound interest in the international community, individuals wishing to make a donation in Bob's memory may purchase beehives for third world countries through Heifer International at www.heifer.org/myregis try/bobstevens. Betterbee will provide matching funds for all donations. Published in The Providence Journal on 7/21/2006

Norfolk County Beekeepers Association

Administrative Page

The Norfolk County Beekeeper's Association (NCBA), is dedicated to apiculture education and promotion of the art and science of beekeeping among beekeepers, agriculture and the general public. This is a "Not-for-Profit" organization, meeting the first Monday of every month, at 7:30 PM (second Monday if the first Monday is a holiday). The meetings are held at the Norfolk Agricultural High School (Media Center Cafeteria) in Walpole, MA. Meetings in June-August will be held at members' bee yards as announced.

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2006 Monthly Meeting Schedule

September 11, 2006, October 2, 2006,
November 6, 2006, December 4, 2006

Swap N' Sell N' Wanted Classifieds

Here's a column where you can sell, swap, or give away just about anything. If you are a paid member, advertising is free for as many issues as you wish. If you are not a member, the cost is \$8.00/ad/issue (so, it pays to become a member for just \$15!)

FOR SALE: I have 20 shallow honey supers with drawn foundation, about 4 deeps without frames, and 2 queen excluders. Please call Annie Birman at (401) 333-3251, or email: akdab1@cox.net

WANTED: Leo Waters was wondering if there is a local source for pollen. This is for human consumption. Please contact Leo Waters by phone 781-793-9145 or by email leoandamy@gmail.com

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Glassware Orders

Orders can now be picked up on August 2nd at the Aggie School.

Thanks,

Tony