



# EJ'S NEWS

EJ is East Jefferson Beekeepers Association's Mascot.

Volume 10

Gloria Neal, Editor

January, 2021

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**East Jefferson Beekeepers' Meetings cancelled until further notice**

**For information on club activities or schedule changes, please check the club website for updates.**

[Ejbees.org](http://Ejbees.org)

**Our thanks to Mike Edwards for keeping our website current**

## THE PREZ SEZ

Dear Fellow Beekeepers,

Thank you all for participating in our required annual election of officers and trustees. Our annual officer and trustee elections were accomplished remotely and efficiently thanks to Susi. The following were reelected:

Rich Thomas	Vice President
Harry Prather	Treasure
Susi Thomas	Secretary
Mike Kelley	Trustee
Gloria Neal	Ex-Officio Trustee
Dave Morris	President

Welcome to our two new trustees:

Catherine Slaton  
Tony Weller

Catherine has taken on the responsibility of managing club assets. She will soon provide the membership a list of equipment available to members. Tony has volunteered to be the Swarm Coordinator and will soon be seeking volunteers to assist.

Your Board met January 9<sup>th</sup> and received the proposed 2021 budget from Harry. Normally the membership must approve the annual budget in our January meeting. For the most part we did not spend money budgeted. Our By-Laws provide that there is no requirement to reapprove the budget if expenditures have already been approved but not spent, as was the case in 2020.

While there is uncertainty with respect to when regular meetings resume, I am cautiously optimistic that with the vaccine now being administered, meetings should resume sometime in the next 3-6 months. Of more certainty, thanks in large part to Mike Kelley, is that apprentice beekeeping classes will commence in March. Educating new beekeepers is one EJBA's essential purposes. This will mostly be accomplished remotely through our new blog at EJBees.com, which is linked to our official website EJBees.org. Mike, with help from Rich, has done a superb job developing an on-line format for the lessons. This will be explained briefly later in this Newsletter, and more fully in a separate communication.

The blog is also a great resource and an effective way for all of us to communicate and seek guidance when required. I urge all our members to go to the site and explore the abundance of offerings.

We remain in partial lockdown, meaning no large gatherings. This is frustrating for all of us, but as soon as the library allows, we'll resume our monthly meetings.

Susi Thomas will assist in handing both membership and class registration. To facilitate secure payment of dues and other fees, especially while neither the club nor classes can meet in person, she set up a post office box for the group where checks can be sent. Our new address is as follows:

EJBA, P.O. Box 1984, Port Townsend, WA 98368-8011.

Sincerely,  
David Morris

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

**President:** David Morris

**Vice President:** Rich Thomas

**Secretary:** Susi Thomas

**Treasurer:** Harry Prather

**Trustees:**

Mike Kelley

Tony Weller

Catherine Slaton

## EJ BEES' WORKERS

**APPRENTICE CLASSES:** Harry Prather

**NEWSLETTER:** Gloria Neal

**ACTIVITIES-EVENTS:** Rich Thomas

**EJBEEs.org WEBSITE:** Mike Edwards

**EJBEEs.com BLOG:** Mike Kelley

**SWARM COORDINATOR:** Tony Weller

**ASSETS MANAGER:** Catherine Slaton

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Susi Thomas



**OUR NEW  
EJBees.com  
BLOG IS UP!**

...and it's packed with information on bees and beekeeping---plus great photos, videos, practical advice, and so much more. Learn! Enjoy! Contribute!

Check it out at EJBees.com !!!

## Beekeeping Classes Begin in March!

The apprentice beekeeping class series will be presented *on line* this year through the ejbees.com blog site, accessible only to registered participants who are paid members of East Jefferson Beekeepers Association. There is no charge for the class, but if you want a Washington State Beekeepers certificate upon completion, there is a \$10 fee. Some hands-on, practical components of the class are planned for early April. More detailed information will be sent out soon! Meanwhile.....

**Pay your 2021 EJBees Membership Dues by Mail !** Membership for an individual is \$24 per year, or for a family, it's \$36. Dues paid for 2020 are carried over to 2021; likewise for class fees. In this unusual year, we'll handle dues via US Post. New and continuing members who have not yet paid dues can send checks made out to *EJBees* to our new address: EJBA, PO Box 1984, Port Townsend, WA 98368-8011.

Please include your *name, phone number, email address & street address* for our contact roster. For information call Susi: 360-774-2351.

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

EJ Beekeepers...

**2021! A new year for us all! With it comes the hope of good things to come. At the top of most beekeepers' list iss is the hope of having strong colonies come through the winter, healthy and with low mite loads.**

We still have many of the restrictions on meeting as a club, and having beekeeping classes as we have in the past, but the board is actively working on feasible ways to supply our members with class access to help in learning more about beekeeping.

There is so much about beekeeping on the web. Thanks to some of our club members, they have shared their favorite websites and links in this newsletter. We are hoping to all of you will do the same! Check out page 5 and get some great continuing bee education. And send us your favorite links on beekeeping.

*That's the buzz for January.*

*Gloria* 360- 301-1850 [eastjeffbees@gmail.com](mailto:eastjeffbees@gmail.com)  
or [gloria@tarboovalleywoodenware.com](mailto:gloria@tarboovalleywoodenware.com)

### BEEZWAX



## TIPS & TRICKS

January 2021: a monthly offering of useful hints for beekeepers

- Check all stored wax comb for wax moths. To kill the moths, put infested frames into a freezer for 2 days.
- Order queens in January for delivery in April/May
- Check and replace quilt board shavings at 1 month intervals. Dry damp shavings in a paper grocery bag placed near a woodstove, then reuse shavings.

If you would like to submit your own tip or trick, please send it to [richandsusi@cablespeed.com](mailto:richandsusi@cablespeed.com).

East Jefferson Beekeepers Association

By Catherine Slaton

### There's beginner's luck . . .

. . . and there's *If at first you don't succeed, try, try again*. My first year of beekeeping fell into the latter category. The failure of both hives didn't come as a complete surprise. With each weekly inspection my hopes for success slid a little further downward. By March I was singing *Pick yourself off, dust yourself off, start all over again*. I threw myself back into bees, anxiously awaiting three nucs this time. The nucs went gangbusters, with the exception of one that did a little too well and swarmed in mid-July. But I learned how to build a swarm box, and chalked the swarm up to experience. When I started thinking about winterizing the hives I made a key decision to not use hemp chips. The chips were too dense to absorb hive humidity in winter. I also made the decision to *listen* to experienced beekeepers such as those who advised using wood shavings. I read *a lot* about absorbency in fabrics and then dove into my fabric scraps box. My goal was to experiment strategically with different woven unbleached fabrics: linen, cotton, burlap, and hemp, weighing each scrap before arranging equal weights inside the quilt box, and then weighing after removal. It dawned on me as I walked away from the hives with my clipboard and quilt board spreadsheet after the first installation: I had only an *estimate* of the number of bees in each hive, so the experiment would only give me an approximation of how well each fabric absorbed moisture in the hive. So, no, Randy Oliver won't be publishing my work. I can tell you that all three fabrics worked really well. The burlap not quite as well as the other fabrics.

What the burlap *did* work really well for was as a wind block. I ran a four foot high burlap wall on T-posts on the south and east borders of the hive, while my greenhouse and yurt protect the apiary from the north and west. Will it make a difference? Maybe, maybe not. But it lets me sleep better at night knowing there's something between the wind and the hive openings. Which brings me to the question: Why don't people ever say: What were you—born in a bee hive?

Will my hives survive the winter of 2021? We'll find out in a few months. So far the outlook looks good. In addition to using more absorbent materials in the quilt box, I added popsicle sticks in between the top of the quilt box and the lid. I also implemented a more aggressive approach to varroa fogging on a monthly basis post mite-away strips. I see lots of bees in the sugar board, so that's a good indicator. Last year all I experienced were crickets, if you catch my drift.

Hats off to Gloria, Blake, and Tony for all their input and their patience with my incessant questions, which brings me to my final observation: Where would we be/bee without E. Jefferson Beekeepers Association? As a second year beginner, I am still overwhelmed at the amount of information out there! And not all of it sage (just because it's on the internet . . .)

**EJBEEES HAS BEEN A FANTASTIC COMMUNITY TO BE PART OF. HERE'S TO Y'ALL,  
AND HERE'S TO THE 2021 BEEKEEPING SEASON!**

## Disrupting the Varroa Mite's Life Cycle

It finally became clear to me after much reading, study and discussion, how we can disrupt the varroa mite's life cycle, which will lead to less chemical usage and healthier winter bees.

The foundress mite must enter the larval cell and remains for a time in the bee milk prior to capping. After she is sealed in with the larva, she begins her reproductive life cycle by laying first a male and then one or more female eggs, which are then fertilized by that male. However, the time is so short that usually only one other mature female mite can develop in the 21 days that a *worker* bee brood cell is capped. It is possible for 2 female mites to develop in the 24 days that a *drone* brood cell is capped.

But now this is the key: she must exit the cell and feed upon the fat bodies of a nurse bee--not a newly emerged bee or a forager--for 7 to 10 days, and during this time she is highly susceptible to chemical destruction. In addition, if the life cycle is disrupted by hygienic behavior of the bees, such as uncapping, she must again feed on fat body proteins before starting the cycle over again. She cannot just re-enter a cell, because it will not have a male mite and she will not have the body reserves to produce the very large eggs of the female mites. This allows the beekeeper to destroy the timing of the egg laying cycle and production of mites by queen caging (the use of trapping frames, and total brood removal -- i.e., the artificial swarm procedure) along with well-timed organic acid treatment.

In his major 2019 publication on varroa and honey bees (<https://www.pnas.org/content/116/5/1792>), Dr. Samuel Ramsey observed: "Both newly emerged bees and foragers have depleted fat body tissue (from the demands of metamorphosis in the former and changes associated with task shifting from feeding larvae in the latter), likely contributing to both life stages functioning as nutrient-poor host resources. Nurse bees have substantially larger and, ostensibly, more nutritionally dense fat body than other stages of the worker bee caste."

It had always been said that nurse bees were used because they were close to the cells being capped, but Dr. Ramsey's statement makes it clear that *nurse bees are the most acceptable hosts* for the emerged foundress mite, as well as for the newly emerged female mite, because of the robust pollen feeding that the nurse bees undergo after hatching. According to Dr. Ralph Buechler, ". . . young bees increase in weight 50% in the first week mainly because of high pollen intake."

*Rich Thomas*

## Bee Biology .....Rich and Susi Thomas

This is the first of a new series on bee biology that we'll be writing for the newsletter from time to time. These are not intended to be scientific papers with references, illustrations, etc., but rather, just brief notes that are readable and informative for the hobby-beekeeper.

### *What are "fat bodies" of honey bees?*

Fat bodies are organs that contain a conglomeration of protein and fat, and act as the liver does in mammals. They perform many diverse tasks in the bee's body, including pesticide detoxification and immune function. Because they store large amounts of protein, fat bodies are also essential to long-lived, healthy bees, because older workers rarely consume additional protein; those that are foragers almost never do. The role of this biological structure was not fully elucidated until Dr. Samuel Ramsey's vital experiments (first reported in 2018) proved that varroa mites feed almost exclusively on fat bodies instead of bee blood (hemolymph). The inability of colonies to produce a long-living (diutinus) winter bee population can be directly attributed to fat body destruction by varroa in young autumn bees. Consequently, the mites *must* be controlled in early fall if a colony is to survive the winter.

## Do you have a favorite link you would like to share?

Although we are still unable to meet, there are a lot of links about beekeeping on the internet. Some good, some not so good. So each month we hope you will share your favorite links with the rest of us. They will be added to the club newsletter.

Since one of our objectives as beekeepers is a pure and unadulterated honey, this should be an interesting article.

Rich

<https://returntonow.net/2019/04/21/fake-honey-up-to-half-of-honey-is-not-honey-new-testing-technology-reveals/>

Here is a comprehensive study done 7 years ago as to the effectiveness of various varroa treatments. This video was recommended on Randy Oliver's Scientific Beekeeping site. Many of the treatments studied were shown to be ineffective in controlling varroa mites.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4bm3Y4t1NwQ>



## EVERYONE HAS A GREAT BEE STORY!

We would like to share your bee stories from this year with everyone. If you have a story or something that you learned this year about your bees, please send it to our club email...

Eastjeffbees@gmail.com

THANKS TO TONY GOLDENBERG FOR SHARING THIS WEBSITE:

THE BEES MASTER ACADEMY

(Nurturing the craft of Beekeeping)

<https://abcbees.ca/master-academy-webinar-series/>

CHECK IT OUT!

Here is a video by Randy Oliver showing a mite wash done in just 3 minutes. He recommends doing one of these counts before the first honey supers go on. This short video should really inspire us to keep his quick monitoring technique solidly in mind for our use in the spring.

~~Rich

<http://scientificbeekeeping.com/how-to-perform-an-alcohol-wash/>

One of the new things I learned this year was using sugar cubes to feed my bees, instead of the work of sugar cakes. Susi shared this on her TIPS AND TRICKS and since I was running short on time, I bought some and added them to the hives that needed supplementing.

We checked our colonies a week ago, and the sugar cubes seem to be a success!

Thanks Susi for sharing your tips and tricks!  
Gloria



# **BUZZING WITH**



# **Blake**

## **Bee-lieve me. It's a fact!**

**BEEKEEPERS!**

**MEDICATE AGAINST VARROA DESTRUCTOR MITES, NOW, OR CHANCE LOSING YOUR BEES THIS SPRING.**

**IS IT WORTH THE RISK?.....Blake**



## **KEEP BUZZING WITH BLAKE**

**Oxalic Acid treatments for your bees....**

**Treat against varroa during the winter, when there are no brood cells...(No place for the varroa to hide.)**

**I AM SETTING UP APPOINTMENTS TO TREAT COLONIES. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR WOULD LIKE TO SCHEDULE A TREATMENT, PLEASE CALL THE PHONE NUMBER BELOW OR EMAIL ME...**

**Thanks, BLAKE.**

**[buzzingwithblake@gmail.com](mailto:buzzingwithblake@gmail.com)**

**Tarboo Valley Woodenware....360-301-1850**

## **TARBOO VALLEY WOODENWARE & HONEYBEES**

**Frank Neal- Ph. # 360-301-1850...**

**5% discount for EJB club members for bee supplies**

**NEW WEBSITE: [tarboovalleywoodenware.com](http://tarboovalleywoodenware.com)**

**NEW EMAIL: [gloria@tarboovalleywoodenware.com](mailto:gloria@tarboovalleywoodenware.com)**

**PLEASE CALL AHEAD!**

**If you would prefer not to receive this newsletter, please email us at [Eastjeffbees@gmail.com](mailto:Eastjeffbees@gmail.com)**