

The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

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Peter Forrest

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Image Above: Ernie McCormick (left) and Peter Forrest (right) take time out from keeping bees as they rest on the tailgate of Ernie's pickup. Ernie's influence has been felt by many through the years—by people of all ages. Peter speaks here of Ernie's influence, and Anita Alexander shares her experience on page 3.

MY FRIEND ERNIE

Peter Forrest

I met Ernie McCormick in 1996 when my family moved into our home on SE Clinton Street. Ernie and Marge, his wife of 56 years, raised their three daughters, Rosalind, Mary, and Melba, in their house on SE 33rd Place just up the street from our house. During the first few months, it was just a friendly wave and gentle smile as Ernie drove past our home on his travels. I can't remember our first actual meeting, but I am sure it included that wonderful smile along with a firm handshake and welcome to the neighborhood.

Back then Ernie, age 75, was retired but busy—involved with helping build homes with Habitat for Humanity, fixing apartments for sponsored families for the church he and Marge belong to, and providing service as church handyman. This year marks Ernie's 46th year of beekeeping and in September his 85th birthday.

Ernie is the best neighbor anyone could ask for. During my first years in the neighborhood, if Ernie drove by and saw me working on the house, well, the next thing you knew he would be by my side giving me a hand or advice on how to do whatever it was I was trying to do. Once when a contractor did not show up to meet a cement truck with three yards of concrete to repair a half-dozen neighbors' sidewalks, one of which was Ernie's and another mine, Ernie said, "We can do it ourselves." And we did.

The first time I saw Ernie in his white suit I thought he was dressed up in painter's clothes. But when I stopped to say hi, Ernie told me he was a beekeeper. Somewhere at the end of the conversation, which no doubt included something about how many hives he had and what he had just done that afternoon with the bees, Ernie asked, "Do you want to go out to visit my hives with me sometime?" Little did I know that Ernie's invitation and subsequent events would kindle my interest in beekeeping. It was the beginning of a very special relationship with my mentor, my friend, Ernie.

Continued on page 6

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

About a year ago we learned that the Herman Scullen Memorial Fellowship Fund at Oregon State University was still on the books at the OSU Foundation, but that it had become inactive owing to the closure of the Department of Entomology at the University. Herman Scullen had been the honey bee entomologist at OSU until his retirement in the 1970s. Following his death some years later, his daughter established a fund in his memory, the proceeds from which were intended to help fund research in apiculture by a graduate student. However, the original agreement with the Foundation gave responsibility for the administration of the funds to the professor of apiculture at OSU and the chair of the Entomology Department. With both the closing of that department and the retirement of Dr. Burgett in 2002, the fund was left without proper administration. It then fell under the care of the College of Agriculture.



We were able to influence the University to continue to use the funds for research in apiculture, as intended by the donors, and to revise the agreement to create a Review Committee consisting of OSU faculty and Oregon beekeepers to review proposals by OSU graduate students who could still do research important to Oregon apiculture even in the absence of an Entomology Department. This has been accomplished, and recently Stella Coakley, Associate Dean in the College of Agriculture, invited Harry Vanderpool and myself to act as the beekeeper members on the Review Committee. We understand that a graduate student has already submitted a proposal for review. I am hoping that future collaborative efforts like this between OSBA and OSU can continue to bring good results to Oregon's community of beekeepers.

Kenny

CITY OF SALEM STOPS ISSUING CITATIONS TO BEEKEEPERS

Fred VanNatta

It recently came to the attention of the Willamette Valley Beekeepers Association that the City of Salem was ordering honey bees to be moved out of the City or the owners would be fined up to \$250 a day.

Apparently city enforcement officials did not look for beekeepers to cite, but would respond when someone called hives to their attention. The City has no specific ordinance banning honey bees, so the officials used a combination of zoning regulations that banned commercial Cat Farms, Dog Farms, and Bee Farms. They

apparently operated on the premise that a single colony of bees constituted a commercial use.

Fritz Skirvin, President of the Willamette Valley Beekeepers, teamed with members Mike Rodia and Fred VanNatta to present arguments to city staff that the use of the zoning ordinance simply made no sense.

With internal prodding from Councilman Dan Clem, whose constituent had received the citation, city legal counsel concluded that honey bees should be regulated by the nuisance ordinance and not by zoning ordinances.

The citation issued to the West Salem beekeeper was withdrawn.

Continued on page 3

ERNIE—ONE OF OREGON'S BEST BEEKEEPERS

Anita Alexander

Lu and I started “keeping bees” in 1957 with one hived swarm. We explored a Portland meeting, where we found that lots could be learned from knowledgeable, friendly Marge and Ernie McCormick. We soon became good friends. Lu and Ernie enjoyed searching for the most efficient, accurate way to meet the needs of those complex insects. For years, bee meetings were followed by a social hour in the McCormicks’ home. In the mid-1990s, when Sheryl and Torey Johnson, Marge and Alan Ehry, and Rosemary Marshall met to reorganize the Portland group, it was the McCormicks who hosted the meeting.

Ernie is renowned for his generous show-and-tell teaching skills—in bee meetings, public schools, exhibits, and fairs. Perhaps another generation will use the little hive and other tools Ernie created to enliven a classroom of interested kids. Years ago, we toured Alan

Ehry’s warehouse. It was filled with many of his inventive ways to build hives accurately and faster, and to improve honey extraction. Ernie and Lu, good woodworkers themselves, had a happy day. Ernie said, “No matter how big a beekeeper we are—or how little, there is always something we can learn from each other.”

I think Ernie’s bees were happy because they were so well taken care of, so understood, so appreciated. He advertised their value far and wide, at regional and state fairs, at OMSI, and in schools. He saw to it that their honey production was a source of income. His extraction was clean, and his containers were attractive. Many of us have copied his liquefying box—insulated wood and light globes and heat control. No overheated honey there.

Our local beekeeping has been better for more than half a century thanks to Ernie.

More fun, too.

SALEM—*continued from page 2*

Member Fred VanNatta, who has been an active beekeeper in the City of Salem for nearly 40 years, noted that the last time honey bees were a major topic of discussion in city hall was when the city adopted its exotic pet ordinance in the early 1970s. The definition of exotic pet prepared for the ordinance included individual honey bees. The city council, sympathetic to Fred’s reluctance to pay several million dollars in registration fees (\$50 a pet), modified the ordinance—thereby leaving honey bees unaffected.

Note: Fritz Skirvin suggests that *The Bee Line* solicit input from folks in other Oregon cities about any ordinances or policies favoring or opposing hobbyist beekeeping inside city limits. What are the regulations in your area? Please let us know!



SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

From Todd Balsiger: I think scheduling the first day of our conferences on Friday discriminates against beekeepers with regular jobs and kids. This certainly is the case for my family. I would strongly favor a change such that the conferences take place on the weekends entirely.

OSBA RESOURCES

OSBA REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Columbia Basin: Debbie Morgan
3800 Benson Rd, The Dalles; (541) 298-5719

Eastern Oregon: Jordan Dimock
2635 Mitchell Butte Rd, Nyssa; (541) 372-2726

Metropolitan Area: Chuck Sowers
26730 S Hwy 170, Canby; (503) 266-1740

North Coast/Webmaster: Thom Trusewicz
90041 Logan Rd, Astoria
(503) 325-7966; ccbee@intergate.com

South Coast: Joann Olstrom
3164 Maple Ct, Reedsport; (541) 271-4726

Southern Oregon: Pat Morris
1333 Rogue River Hwy, Gold Hills
(541) 855-1402

Willamette Valley: Fritz Skirvin
6694 Rippling Brook Dr SE, Salem
(503) 581-9372

OSBA REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS



Central Oregon Beekeepers
Meets 6:30 pm, third Tuesday, Bend
Deschutes Public Library, Hutch Rm
President: Dennis Gallagher
(541) 389-4776; haymakerooo@yahoo.com
Secretary/Treasurer: Glenda Galaba
(541) 383-1775; galaba@msn.com

Coos County Beekeepers
Meets 6:30 pm, third Saturday (except Dec)
Ohlsen Baxter Bldg, 631 Alder St, Myrtle Pt
President: Thomas Kyelberg
(541) 297-4017; usvi@charter.net
Vice Pres: Spike Richardson; (541) 267-4725
Secretary: Marcia Burgdorff; (541) 888-5695
Treasurer: Jane Oku; (541) 396-4016
jane_oku@hotmail.com

Lane County Beekeepers
Meets 7:30 pm, third Tuesday, Eugene
EWEB Meeting Rooms, 500 E 4th Ave
President: Mike Harrington
(541) 689-8705; beekeeper@comcast.net
Vice Pres: Morris Ostrofsky
(541) 685-2875; ostrofsky@pacinfo.com
Secretary: Barbara Bajec
(541) 767-9086; mbartels@bbastrodesigns.com
Treasurer: Nancy Ograin
(541) 935-7065; woodrt@pacinfo.com

Portland Metro Beekeepers
Meets 7 pm, second Thursday, Oregon City
Hous Auth Clackamas Bldg, 13930 S Gain
President: Sam Hutchinson
(503) 829-7744; samh@molalla.net
Secretary: Paul Hardzinski; (503) 631-3927
Treasurer: John Keeley
(503) 632-3682; keeley81@bctonline.com

Southern Oregon Beekeepers
Meets 7:30 pm, first Monday, Central Pt
So Or Res & Ext Ctr, 569 Hanley Rd
President: John Jacob
(541) 582-BEES; oldsobees@msn.com
Vice Pres: Brian Bolstad
(541) 512-2364; bolstad815@hotmail.com
Secretary: Suzanne Davis; suzanne@mighty.net
Treasurer: Laurie Boyce
(541) 846-0133; leanira@hotmail.com

Tillamook County Beekeepers
Meets 7 pm, first Thursday, Tillamook
Forestry Building, 5005 Third St
President: Bob Allen; (503) 322-3819
Vice Pres: Terry Fullan
(503) 368-7160; tfullan@nehalem.tel.net
Secretary/Treasurer: Wayne Auble

Tualatin Valley Beekeepers
Meets 7:30 pm, last Friday, Beaverton
OSU Ext, #1400, 18640 SW Walker Rd
President: Todd Balsiger
(503) 357-8938; toddbalsiger@comcast.net
Vice Pres: Andrew Schwab
(503) 537-0506; Pyr4ausi@verizon.net
Secretary: Preston Gabel
(503) 530-1436; preston@gabelhaven.com
Co-Treasurers: Michael & Brigette Hendrickson
hendricm@ece.pdx.edu

Willamette Valley Beekeepers
Meets 7:30 pm, fourth Monday, Salem
Chemeketa Comm College, Bldg 34, Rm A
President: Fritz Skirvin; (503) 581-9372
Vice Pres: Mike Rodia
(503) 364-3275; drodia@yahoo.com
Secretary: Evan Burroughs
(503) 585-5924; n7ifj@qwest.net
Treasurer: Susan Rauchfuss
(503) 391-5600; smokfoot@cyberis.net

NATIONAL HONEY BOARD RFP

Production Research Proposals for Studying Colony Health

Longmont, Colorado

The National Honey Board (NHB) announces a request for research proposals regarding honey bee colony production. The goal of this research area is to help honey producers maintain colony health, while preserving honey quality. Control of such pests as the *Varroa destructor*, *Acarapis woodi* and the small hive beetle is the primary objective of this research area; however, other projects will be considered, including research outside the United States. In addition, NHB will consider proposals that research new methods, as well as combinations of existing methods, to increase efficacy rates. Approximately \$90,000

has been earmarked for this study. However, the amount of funds available will depend on the number and merit of proposals accepted. Project funds will be available in 2007 and may be carried into early 2008 if necessary. The duration of the project should generally not exceed twelve months. In 2004, NHB began exploring research opportunities to help beekeepers maintain colony health without adversely affecting the production of quality honey. During the past few years, NHB has funded twelve such projects. Send research proposals to NHB on or before December 31, 2006. For more information, visit <http://www.honey.com/media/currentnews.asp>, or contact Project Manager Charlotte Jordan at (800) 553-7162.

BEEKEEPING IN WESTERN OREGON

Harry Vanderpool

November/December

Take a walk in your apiary weekly. Conduct a visual inspection of hive entrances. Watch for signs of mice and other animal vandalism.

Spend a cool, clear day gathering up rotten, broken-down hive parts, pallets, and other burnables. Build a small fire and keep it burning until your place sparkles.

Disturb the bees as little as possible. As the weather cools down, the bees will cluster into a tight unit centered in the brood area. They keep the brood warm regardless of outside temperature.

December 21st/22nd is the first day of spring in the bee world. Are you ready for your next year in beekeeping? It could be the best year ever! It's "New Year's Resolution" time, folks! Settle on a resolution that will improve yourself as a beekeeper and your operation as well.

Sit down and make a winter to-do list. Hang it where you can see it for a few days and add to it as things pop into your head. Then make a final copy and hang it where you can't miss it.

Pull your bee trucks into your shop and set aside time to inspect each one. Take care to change fluids, bleed and adjust brakes, pack wheel bearings, and check lights. Don't put this one off.

Make a point to contact a fellow beekeeper every once in a while to exchange notes.

Order supplies for next year. Compare prices by phone before ordering. By all means, feed your beekeeper disease. Shoot for the quantity discount!

Consider looking into an accounting program if the thought of getting your books up to date depresses you. These programs make bookkeeping fast, fun, and informative. They also help you look at your operation from a statistical point of view. Ask an association member to show you their favorite program.

Purchase all of the seasonal supplies you will need in advance.

Take time for a little winter PR with farmers, growers, and customers. They will remember your thoughtfulness.

Adapted from: *The Bee Line* 30 (10): 7-8.



Ernie takes the opportunity to talk with Ellie, Bella, and Nancy Forrest about package bees.

Fortunately for me, before I went out to Ernie's hives, Marge had gone out and picked up a used bee suit and Ernie, a new veil so that my first visit to the hives would be an enjoyable one. As Ernie would say later, it wasn't the best day for visiting the hives. That spring afternoon was cool and windy with off-and-on clouds. I remember trying to be not too anxious as I approached the hives for the first time. But it wasn't long before Ernie had me holding frames, switching deeps, and looking for how the queen was doing.

While bent over to reverse the deeps that day, I realized that the suit Marge had picked up for me was a little short. I saw that my ankles were exposed and felt bees making their way up my lower leg. This was followed by stings and no doubt a few words coming from my mouth. It was then that Ernie said, "Just walk away from the hives." It must have been quite a sight as I walked away bent over and holding my pant leg with both hands—all the while crushing bees and getting stung.

That day Ernie also said, "Don't let them go up your leg" as he made a hand gesture that said, *Don't let them go to where your pant legs meet.* After a few minutes, I secured my pant leg and made it back to the hives. During the next week,

whenever Ernie asked about the leg, I would show him my many large black-and-blue welts. His response, "Yup, gotcha good. After a few years, the stings won't even bother you. All you'll do when you get stung is scrape across the sting with your fingernail. In fact, the stings are good for you—especially if you have arthritis."

For the next three years, whenever possible, I went out with Ernie to visit his hives and to the Portland Metro Beekeeping Association meetings as Ernie's guest. I remember a few meetings at the telephone company building in Redland and then the Grange across the street. It was back then that I met another beekeeper and friend of Ernie's, Jim Barlean. Ernie also took me to my first bee field day at Foothills Honey in Colton, where I listened to George Hansen, Dr. Lynn Royce, Bill Ruhl, and other interesting and knowledgeable beekeepers talk about beekeeping. I was getting hooked.

In November of 1999 Ernie suffered a stroke that caused aphasia, limiting his ability to understand and to communicate. He would lose all twelve of his hives to mites before spring the following year. Marge said that it was visits from Jim Barlean, Chuck Snider, other friends from the club, and his brother Ivan that helped Ernie so much during the first year after his stroke. It was around that time that I told Marge I would help Ernie keep his bees.

The next season, Jim Barlean helped Ernie get a site in Milwaukie for his hives. Jim also got Ernie out of the house and kept him busy working on bee equipment at his place—the best therapy of all for Ernie. Then Ernie and I got started at the new apiary, where we have kept bees for the past seven years. With his normal enthusiasm, Ernie continues to bring everyone who shows interest in learning about beekeeping out to visit our bees. He is always ready to hook the next beekeeper.

I have known Ernie only for the last ten years and recently sat down with Marge to help me write about Ernie's early years in beekeeping and how he got started. Ernie took over his Father's two hives when he died in 1960. Until then, Ernie had been involved only enough to drive his Father to and from his bees. Ernie's mentor then was Rex Bundage, who helped Ernie learn about beekeeping in the early years.

Beekeeping in those days was a family affair for the McCormicks. Quite often the whole family would go to visit the hives. Marge and the girls would go on country walks down dirt roads and through fields while Ernie checked out the hives. In addition, Marge often went to bee meetings with Ernie. For a few years, when the club met at the Glencoe School in SE Portland, about 12–20 of the crowd would come over to their house after the meeting for refreshments and more bee talk. Marge said that over the years the meetings have been held at many places, including several area banks, Eastmoreland Manor, and the Milwaukie Library. There were even school cabin days in Carver. The entire family was also involved in the annual summer club picnic; two of these were weekend camping trips—one at Wallowa Lake and the other near Suttle Lake.

It was during this time that Ernie got his start in giving talks about bees and beekeeping to Portland-area school children, something he has done for many years. He began by going to his girls' schools to give demonstrations on and talk about beekeeping. On one occasion, Marge went to pick up an observation hive that Ernie had left for a few days only to discover it sitting in the middle of the hallway with the going-home locker crowd milling around both sides. After that, Ernie was more cautious about leaving the observation hive.

Ernie also helped with maintaining an observation hive at the old OMSI location and with special OMSI shows in which he and

others would give beekeeping demonstrations with live bees inside a tent. Again, the family was involved. Melba did simple cooking demonstrations, and Marge would set up a display of grade school art in connection with bee units in primary grades. In addition, Ernie was active in setting up and signing up to volunteer at bee booths for the club at local fairs, the Portland Nursery *Apple Harvest Day* events, and the Clackamas County Fair. Marge said that one year at the Clackamas County Fair Ernie won ribbons in every category in which his honey was entered as well as overall top ribbon winner. Bill Ruhl was one of the judges, and I am sure there was no conflict of interest.

In the early years, Ernie was often President of the Portland Beekeeping Association. Ernie and Lu Alexander, Anita Alexander's late husband, would alternate as president and vice president, helping plan, discuss, and present topics at each monthly meeting. Topics ranged from the beekeepers seasonal calendar, to bear traps, to the Alexanders' trip to Russia. Bee meetings back then waxed and waned—sometimes only a dozen or so would show up and sometimes there was standing room only with 40–60 people present.

Ernie, a lifetime member, stopped attending the meetings after his stroke because it was difficult for him to understand conversation. As he said,



Ron and Stephanie Barnes

Ernie McCormick at the Milwaukie site Jim Barlean found for him and his hives of honey bees.

Continued on page 8

ERNIE—continued from page 7

“It’s just a lot of noise.” He was excited when I became an active member and last year served as vice president of the club. A few years ago, during our second-Thursday-of-the-month meeting, we had a discussion about honoring club member service with the Gold Hive Tool. When Ernie’s name was mentioned, the late Bill Kruger said, “Ernie for years was the backbone of this club.”

I would describe Ernie as a person with a strong character and will. Ernie is clever, always thinking for a way to build something he needs—a solar wax heater, a dual honey pail heater, patterns to make tin corner supports for deeps and tin frame ears to fix those needing support. Ernie is a make-it-yourself kind of beekeeper. Do not waste or throw away anything that can be fixed. His collection of equipment contains not much that was brand new or that has not been used over many years.

Last year we lost ten out of eleven hives, and Ernie was ready to call it quits. But, after a couple of weekends working together to paint all of his hive equipment, the flowers started to bloom, nectar started to flow, and the bees were flying. Ernie smiled, ready *again* for a season of beekeeping. It also helped that he caught six swarms with bait hives in his backyard. With each swarm, his smile grew bigger.

This September, after a short illness complicated by a fall at home, Ernie had surgery to repair a broken bone in his neck. After a month between hospital and rehabilitation facility, Ernie is back home now with his wife Marge. We have been walking together to build up his strength. And, though he thinks beekeeping is behind him now, I hope that, when spring comes, as flowers start to bloom, nectar starts to flow, and the bees fly, my mentor, my friend, Ernie will be able to visit his bees again.



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HONEY PUMPKIN PIE

INGREDIENTS

- * 2 eggs
- * 1/2 cup honey
- * 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- * 1/2 tsp. salt
- * 3/4 tsp. nutmeg
- * 1/4 tsp. ginger
- * 1 1/2 cup prepared pumpkin
- * 3/4 cup hot milk
- * 1 tbsp. butter

INSTRUCTIONS: Beat eggs just until yolks and whites are well blended. Gradually beat in honey. Add cinnamon, salt, nutmeg, and ginger. Stir in pumpkin. Add milk with butter melted in. Pour into pie shell. Bake at 450 degrees Fahrenheit for 10 minutes. Reduce temperature to 350 degrees Fahrenheit and continue baking for 20-25 minutes or until filling is firm.

Courtesy: The Canadian Honey Council

The Bee Line is the official publication of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association. The newsletter is published ten times a year and subscriptions are included with OSBA membership. Send news about your bees and beekeeping, as well as corrections, letters, comments, photographs (old and new), stories, interviews, and advertising to the Editor, *The Bee Line*, PO Box 42363, Portland OR 97242; thebeeline@comcast.net.

Size of Ad	Cost
Business Ads , per issue:	
Business-card	\$10.00
Quarter-page	\$25.00
Half-page	\$50.00
Full-page	\$100.00
Classified Ads (30 words), per issue:	
OSBA members	\$3.00
OSBA members—for items given away at no charge (as long as space is available)	FREE
Non-members	\$5.00

Note: Please submit all copy and art by the 15th of the month prior to publication. Copy for the next issue is due December 15, 2006. For advertising, send payment to Co-Secretary/Treasurer, Phyllis Shoemake. Contact the Editor for additional information.

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MEMBERSHIP AND PUBLICATIONS FORM

Membership in the Oregon State Beekeepers Association is open to anyone with an interest in bees and beekeeping. You do not need to own bees or reside in Oregon to join. OSBA membership includes a vote in OSBA elections, discounts on publications, and ten issues of *The Bee Line*.

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone number: _____ **e-mail address:** _____

Regional Association (if applicable): _____

Discounted Publications:

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*Outside the US, add \$15 per year for postage.

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Membership: \$20 per person (\$29 per person outside the US) \$ _____

Publication(s): Indicate journal(s) and period(s) of subscription \$ _____

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Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Members of an OSBA Regional Association: Make check payable to the Regional Association and attach form. The Regional Association Treasurer will submit the form and a check for the amount less \$1, which goes to support the Regional Association.

Regional Association Treasurers and others: Make check payable to OSBA and send with form to: Phyllis Shoemake, 1702 Toucan St NW, Salem OR 97304.

The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association
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Please check your mailing label. If the date on the label is near 1-November-06, your membership is due to expire. This is your friendly renewal notice.

Best of wishes for good health and warm gatherings this winter season!

Oregon State Beekeepers Association is a nonprofit organization representing and supporting all who have an interest in bees and beekeeping.

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