

NMBKA



New Mexico Beekeepers
Association

NEWSLETTER

June 2015



PHOTO: John Denne

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**NAT'L POLLINATOR WEEK
KICKOFF EVENT
w/special guest
LES CROWDER**

June 12-13, 2015

Albuquerque, NM
Las Cruces, NM
Santa Fe, NM

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The New Mexico
Beekeepers Association
is dedicated to informing
and inspiring persons
interested in beekeeping,
and educating the
general public.

THE BROOD SQUAD EVEN IN THE CITY, IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Melanie Kirby

"Is it possible to breed healthy and resilient bees in an urban center?"

That was the question the spunky beek with the snazzy glasses asked me after the lecture. We were standing outside the Otero County extension office. I had escorted Dr. Juliana Posada-Rangel to southern NM, where she had just delivered a most excellent talk on queen health and reproduction.

Hoping that the tiny seed of inspiration that Dr. Rangel and I were trying to plant among beekeepers just might take root, I responded emphatically: "Yes! But it will take a community to raise them."

The snazzy glasses fellow's name turned out to be Carlos Aragon. He had driven all the way from Albuquerque to come to the lecture in Alamogordo. What a trooper! Carlos's question got me thinking: "What if there were barrio-based breeding exchanges? Would urban beekeepers be interested? Would they be motivated to establish a local gene pool through proactive management, and could they help promote localized honeybee production for a more sustainable approach?"

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NM Beekeepers Association Invites Grant Applications

The New Mexico Beekeepers Association's Grant Program seeks to assist individuals and organizations whose work can better the beekeeping industry in New Mexico and can help raise public consciousness toward the importance and rewards of beekeeping. For details about what types of projects are funded, and how to apply, please visit our website at <http://nmbeekeepers.org>



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear New Mexico Beekeepers,

Happy summer! We have been incredibly busy getting ready for the year ahead. Here are some highlights...

National Pollinator Week: It gives me great pleasure to announce that the NM Beekeepers Association will be celebrating National Pollinator Week by hosting a series of talks by internationally renowned top bar beekeeper Les Crowder, co-author of *Top-Bar Beekeeping*. Les is well known for teaching through stories, so to make sure everyone gets a chance to hear him speak, we will be traveling with Les around New Mexico on June 12 and 13. Be sure to check our events calendar (<http://nmbeekeepers.org/events/>) to find out when and where Les will be speaking in Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Las Cruces!

Non-Profit Status: After two years of work, we have just received our 501(c)(3) non-profit designation. If you or someone you know would like to help support the work we do at the NM Beekeepers Association, just go to our website (www.nmbeekeepers.org) and click Donate! A huge thank you to our Treasurers past and present, DJ Nickles and Tom Day, for their exhaustive work in making this happen.

Extension Outreach and Beekeeping Educational Series: Our Chair of Education, Outreach and Advocacy, Christina Allday-Bondy, has received a grant for the NM Beekeepers Association to create an Extension Outreach and Beekeeping Educational Series. Because New Mexico is a large state with many communities, the NM Beekeepers Association will travel to different regions, building communities of educated beekeepers and bee advocates over a two-year period. While visiting these regions, we will also involve policy makers and County Extension Agents in supporting beekeeping and highlighting the importance of bees. Extension Agents are often the first stop for information on bees, and assisting them with education and materials will help us leverage our efforts most effectively. We will also be supporting ongoing educational efforts through the creation of educational pamphlets, sharing video of beekeeping educational events, and distributing our newsletter to help support new and experienced beekeepers.

Congratulations: Due to time constraints, our wonderful Secretary, Sam Lopez stepped down from the Board of Directors. At the NMBKA Board Meeting on May 5, 2015, the Board elected Raymond Espinoza to fill the roll of Secretary for the remainder of 2015, and Anita Amstutz, co-chair of the Abq Beeks, to serve as Board Member at Large for the remainder of 2015. Hearty congratulations to Raymond and Anita.

Kindly,

Jessie Brown
President
New Mexico Beekeepers Association

Have an idea for an article or feature that you would like to see in the NM Beekeepers Association Newsletter? Please get in touch! editor@nmbeekeepers.org

NEW MEXICO BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

PO Box 7188
Albuquerque, NM 87194
info@nmbeekeepers.org
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2015 NM BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

President: Jessie Brown president@nmbeekeepers.org
Vice President: Kate Whealen vicepresident@nmbeekeepers.org
Secretary: Raymond Espinoza secretary@nmbeekeepers.org
Treasurer: Tom Day treasurer@nmbeekeepers.org

BOARD MEMBERS:

Anita Amstutz memberatlarge1@nmbeekeepers.org
Kent Huisigh memberatlarge2@nmbeekeepers.org

MAKE MONEY FROM YOUR BEEKEEPING!

PART ONE OF THREE

CUSTOMERS & COMBS

Joe Wesbrook

Okay, you've plunked down hundreds of dollars for bees, hives and equipment. Now what? "Wait a second, I want these bees to start making me some money!" Yes, it's possible. You may not earn your investment back in a season, a year or even two, but you can make money from your bees. While honey is what most people think of, there are other products you should consider harvesting from your hives. I will be talking about several of these in this three-part series – but the first step in growing your new "business" is *building your customer base*.

Have you told your neighbors you keep bees? (You absolutely must!) Have you told your friends? Do your kids brag about your bees at school? Have you told their teachers? What about the neighborhood association? I live a block from a church, and every summer, I give every child going to that church a four-ounce jar of my honey, labeled with my name, address, and phone number. The kids don't care that the honey is "local" or "raw," but the parents come knocking on my door. The principal at the school next door knows I keep bees, and I've made lots of presentations to grade school classes. Those kids go home and tell their parents about "the beekeeper next door." Do you give neighbors jars of honey every summer or Christmas? Let them know you've got extra honey for sale. Do you give co-workers jars of honey on their birthdays? Tell them too. You've got honey. Spread the word!

Most people think of liquid honey as the primary moneymaker in beekeeping, but if you keep Langstroth hives, you should really be thinking about comb honey. It takes more energy for the

bees to make comb honey, and more care on your part as the beekeeper, but comb honey is far more profitable than liquid honey. There are some upfront costs: comb supers and frames, foundation for the frames (called "cut comb"), containers for the harvested comb (often referred to as "clamshells") and you'll need some labels. The comb supers, frames, and cut comb will add \$30-\$50 to your out-of-pocket expenses, and a carton of 50 clamshells will add approximately \$15-\$20, but an eight-frame comb super, completely filled, can bring in \$300-\$500, depending on the size of the chunk of comb you harvest, and what the comb is selling for at market. Currently a four inch by four inch piece of comb, labeled and in a clamshell, sells for anywhere from \$8-\$14. If you cut five pieces of comb from each frame, times eight frames, and

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PHOTO: John Denne



FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER: JOHN DENNE

In this issue, we are happy to be featuring the work of photographer and beekeeper John Denne. John has been a photographer for decades, and a beekeeper since about five years ago. That's when Rio Lucio beekeepers Les Crowder and Heather Harrell were looking for someone to take pictures for their book, *Top-Bar Beekeeping: Organic Practices For Honeybee Health*. John began photographing their beekeeping classes, and also some hives they had placed on the land owned by John and his wife, Lael Hagen. After catching a swarm from one of their hives, John built his first hive and soon started adapting Crowder's design to build more top-bar hives for his own use and to sell.

Wandering his property, looking at what plants are blooming and which insects are tending those plants, has become a favorite summer pastime for John and Lael. At the moment they have five hives, and are happy to report that they all made it through the winter: "We live at an elevation of 8100 feet, and the winters



are long up here. We were encouraged by Les and Heather to try to keep the bees up here all year around, and establish some high altitude stock, so that is part of our beekeeping goals."

John favors Nikon equipment, and most of the images in this issue were made using a 105mm Micro lens. His advice for anyone photographing bees and other insects: "You have to get close, which means you run the risk of scaring them off before you can get an image. So move slowly, work your way in gently, and start photographing when things look good in the viewfinder. If you spook the insect off, just start over. Patience is a key ingredient! You never know what you will come away with, but it is almost always a worthwhile pursuit."

HELP NMBKA KICK OFF

NATIONAL POLLINATOR WEEK WITH SPECIAL EVENTS ON JUNE 12 & 13, 2015

Albuquerque, NM Cruces, NM Santa Fe, NM

Special Guest: LES CROWDER

In celebration of National Pollinator Week, the NM Beekeepers Association will be presenting a series of talks by Les Crowder, internationally renowned top-bar beekeeper and co-author, with Heather Harrell, of *Top-Bar Beekeeping*. Les Crowder will be giving two-hour talks in Las Cruces, Albuquerque and Santa Fe on June 12-13, 2015. There will be pollinator-friendly seeds and plants as door prizes. Admission is \$15 but NM Beekeepers Association members get in free to all of our events! Please check our events calendar for times and locations: <http://nmbeekeepers.org/events/>

MORE UPCOMING EVENTS

Join the Four Corners Beekeepers for a Beekeeping Seminar with Dewey Caron in Durango, CO on June 6, 2015.
<http://nmbeekeepers.org/events/dewey-caron-four-corners-beekeepers-durango-co/>

The Western Apicultural Society, in conjunction with the Colorado Beekeepers Association, will be holding their 2015 Conference in Boulder, CO, October 1-3, 2015.
<http://www.westernapiculturalsociety.org>

The American Honey Producers Association will be holding its 2016 Annual Convention and Trade show at the Embassy Suites in Albuquerque, NM. January 5-9, 2016. <http://www.ahpanet.com>

USDA/NMDA HONEYBEE SURVEY

Do you have eight or more Langstroth hives on a single property? If so, we want to be sure to include you in the 2015 Honeybee Survey. The NM Beekeepers Association has been contracted to work with the US Department of Agriculture and the NM Department of Agriculture to conduct the 2015 Honeybee Pests and Diseases Sampling Survey in New Mexico this summer. Our inspectors will gather samples for analysis and anyone who participates gets a free lab analysis of their hives. For more information, please contact us at survey@nmbeekeepers.org.

CUSTOMERS & COMBS

Continued from page 3

charge \$10 apiece, that's \$400 from one super. Add one more frame to that comb super and that's another \$50.

If you're a top-bar beekeeper, you can still produce comb honey, but the size and shape of the comb will dictate how many pieces you'll be able to cut from each top-bar. (Gotta love that trapezoidal shape.) Plus, your comb may be darker than the comb from a Langstroth hive, due to travel stain. And while you may be able to combine two, three, or more pieces of comb in a container, most customers are looking for that single square of comb. As a top-bar comb producer, you may have more success with "chunk" honey—adding a piece of comb to a bottle or jar of liquid honey. You can charge a premium for the bottled combination. It will make your comb honey go further, and if you're selling your honey as "local" or "neighborhood" honey, a twelve ounce jar of chunk honey could retail for \$10-\$15, with a quart going for \$20-\$25. Two cautions when it comes to comb honey: First, make sure your comb sections don't have any brood cells in them. You've really got to check closely if your comb has any sort of travel stain on it. That comb may also contain eggs, cocoons, and fecal matter, which could damage your comb. Secondly, in order to kill any bacteria or wax moth larva that may be in the comb, place it in the freezer overnight. That'll take care of those problems.

Next time we'll talk about propolis and wax. Stay tuned!

Joe Wesbrook started beekeeping in Albuquerque, in 1978. He stopped counting stings after the first million.



BROOD SQUAD

Continued from page 1

That was about a year ago. Not long afterwards, I received an email from Carlos. He was interested in this concept of a local exchange and promotion of acclimated Burque Bees, and wanted to try and make it work.

We all know that it is hard to find bees – and even harder to find locally produced bees. The reason for this is that demand exceeds supply. Supply is dictated by circumstances mostly beyond the control of stewards, such as climate, topography, plant index and ability. That is why I knew this had to be a cooperative effort.

I wasn't disappointed. Carlos and more than a dozen other urban beekeepers stepped up to form The Brood Squad – a community of enthusiastic, concerned, and proactive urban beeks willing and motivated to take the next step into honeybee husbandry by supporting each other. They have been working to establish a localized queen and nucleus production program for sharing hardy stock, and to help create a locally-based resource for beekeepers.

My own small farm has struggled to keep up with local demand so it is very encouraging to know that others are motivated to kick it up a notch in their honeybee husbandry efforts. It has been thrilling to see their camaraderie and to help them build capacity

as this program launches. The Brood Squad seeks to select breeding stock from area beekeepers, and to propagate queens and potentially nucleus hives to share with local enthusiasts. These efforts may be small drops in a very large bucket, but those drops are badly needed.

The cooperative effort has since expanded beyond the immediate group. Thanks to DJ Nickles for establishing the Brood Squad website, and for donating boxes and some frames to create their first queen rearing hives. NM Beekeeper Association president Jessie Brown has offered some potential breeding apiaries, as has my own Zia Queenbees; we will also help to graft and rear the queen cells and virgin queens for placement in local nucs, where they will then mate out with area drones.

The Brood Squad is now gearing up to begin rearing some batches of local queens this summer. Since spring has been a little on the wet side (much needed, no doubt!) the weather has pushed the calendar back a little and so they are waiting for their bees to build up in order to make splits for stocking queen mating nuclei.

The Brood Squad is still an evolving project, but I have no doubt that each step will lead to a more profound sense of

reverence and applicability for those participating, to the benefit of the entire community of beekeepers in the Duke City. Additional beekeepers are pitching in... will you be one of them?

To join the Brood Squad, contact Carlos Aragon at: the.crafty.goats@gmail.com, and watch for the launch of the new Brood Squad website at broodsquad.org.

A native New Mexican, Melanie Kirby has been keeping bees professionally for 19 years. She and partner Mark Spitzig established Zia Queenbees, which specializes in treatment-free, survivor stock queen honeybee breeding, exquisite hive products and apiceuticals, and sustainable beekeeping management research. A decade later, Zia Queenbees remains a two-person operation helping to train the next generation of bee farmers. Melanie can be reached at ziaqueenbees@hotmail.com.

Did you miss the NMBKA Annual Meeting featuring Marla Spivak and Beth Conrey? Watch their talks on our website under VIDEOS & WEBINARS: <http://nmbeekeepers.org/>



JUNE 2015

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NMBKA

New Mexico Beekeepers Association

Join us! Members receive perks like free admission to events, website listings and newsletters...

MEMBERSHIP FORM

CONTACT INFORMATION (PRIVATE)

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE:

EMAIL:

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

☐

FULL-YEAR
\$30

☐

JULY-DECEMBER
\$15

NEWSLETTER

☐

EMAIL
(FREE)

☐

PAPER
(\$5.00/YEAR)

LISTING (PUBLIC)

Members can advertise for free! If you wish to have your information added to the Bee Services section of our website, please fill out this section:

NAME OR COMPANY

PHONE

EMAIL

WEBSITE

CITY OR AREA

List for swarm capture? ☐ YES ☐ NO

List as a bee educator? ☐ YES ☐ NO

List for selling honey? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Do you sell queens or bees? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Do you sell wax/pollen/propolis? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Do you sell hive equipment? ☐ YES ☐ NO
If yes, what kind?

MAIL COMPLETED FORM & PAYMENT TO:

NM BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 7188
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87194

MAKE CHECKS OUT TO:

NM BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

QUESTIONS? EMAIL: info@nmbeekeepers.org



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PHOTO: John Denne

**NM BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 7188
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87194**

COME CELEBRATE THE 10 YR. ANNIVERSARY OF **ZIA QUEENBEES FARM & FIELD INSTITUTE**

JUNE 16, 2015: BEEKEEPING IN THE LAND OF ENCHANTMENT SLIDE SHOW
& HONEY TASTING- PAJARITO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER-
LOS ALAMOS WWW.PEECNATURE.ORG

JUNE 28, 2015: QUEEN REARING FIELD DAY FOR
NM BEE CERTIFICATION LEVEL II & BROOD SQUAD PARTICIPANTS
ZQB- TRUCHAS WWW.ZIAQUEENBEES.COM/ZIA

JULY 11-12, 2015: IN HER MAJESTY'S CHAMBERS
INTRODUCTION TO QUEEN REARING INTENSIVE
ZQB- TRUCHAS WWW.ZIAQUEENBEES.COM/ZIA

JULY 26, 2015: POLLINATING LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION
SUSTAINABLE SUNDAY SERIES DINNER PRESENTATION

@ THE BAVARIAN LODGE & RESTAURANT*

6PM TAOS SKI VALLEY WWW.THEBAVARIAN.COM

call (575) 776-8020 or (888) 205-8020 for dinner reservations.

VISIT WWW.ZIAQUEENBEES.COM/ZIA FOR MORE EVENT LISTINGS!

IN HONOR OF OUR 10TH ANNIVERSARY, ZIA QUEENBEES THANKS
EVERYONE WHO HAS SUPPORTED US. WE LOOK FORWARD TO
SUPPORTING FARMERS, BEEKEEPERS AND COMMUNITIES FOR
ANOTHER DECADE. *SOMOS AGRADECIDOS* - WE ARE THANKFUL!