



# NEWSLETTER

**January 2011**  
**Southerns Beekeeping Association**  
P O Box 912, Randpark Ridge, 2156,  
**GAUTENG**  
Tel: 011 678 2996  
Fax: 011 476 6308

**MEETING VENUE**  
**Bryanston Sports Club**  
Payne Road, Bryanston

## **COMMITTEE:**

**CHAIRMAN**  
**Dean Martin**  
Cell: 082 893 1590  
dedo@netactive.co.za

**IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIRMAN**  
**Tom Cain - Tel 011 678 2996**  
Cell: 083 262 2047  
tom@fma.co.za

**TREASURER & WEB PAGE**  
**Mike Miles - Tel: 011 476 5626**  
Cell: 082 456 4177  
bees.mikem@mweb.co.za

**SECRETARY**  
**Rob Ashby**  
083 701 9829

**MEMBER**  
**Keegan Blignaut**  
Tel: 072 804 4207

[www.beekeepers.co.za](http://www.beekeepers.co.za)

*Sometimes life is a matter of contrasts. In the last Newsletter issued last May, I commented that we had just experienced the wettest start of the year for ten years. Once the summer rains stopped there was a five month period when there was no measurable rainfall at all from the tenth of May until the seventh of October, but I only recorded thirty four mms that month, but November was wetter and then the heavens opened in December as I measured 289mms, the most for any December since 1988! No wonder all the dams are overflowing and the Orange River is flooding downstream, drowning Upington and other communities.*

*Beekeeping is a branch of farming. Water is the lifeblood regulating the fortunes of those depending upon the uncontrollable supple from the sky. Honey yields for the early summer harvesting appear to be average or better. The sogging wet December, together with ongoing overcast weather and continuing rains may reduce the later summer honey flows. We shall soon see!*

*Our membership continues to grow. To cater for the needs of new beekeepers we offer a varied programme both to meets the needs of novices and to provide more advanced topics for the more experienced beekeepers. The first meeting in 2011 will be specifically for new beekeepers, followed during the year with a varied programme.*

*In addition to the monthly meetings, we are planning a number of Field days, which provide new beekeepers with the opportunity of watching experienced people opening hives and explaining what they are doing and why. Make use of these outings! A selection of photos taken at Field Days last year shows you what missed.*

*The discovery of American Foul Brood in the Western Cape, two years ago created consternation in the beekeeping world here. Fortunately the outbreak has not spread rapidly. Numerous meetings have taken place between the South African Bee Industry Organisation (SABIO) and government about managing the disease and are on going.*

*In addition the recommendations of the National Agricultural Marketing Councils report into the beekeeping industry, have been discussed with government and recommendations made. We will keep you informed as and when changes, effecting our beekeeping, are to be implemented.*

*The monthly meetings will continue to be held on the first Thursday of every month at 7.30pm at the Bryanston Sports Club, from February to November. There will be a monthly draw, for a selection of very useful items for beekeepers to use.*

**Tom Cain.**  
**Editor.**

## **CHANGES ON THE COMMITTEE.**

In accordance with the Association's Constitution, Tom Cain, chairman for the past four years, had to stand down at the AGM in November. Dean Martin, already a committee member for quite a number of years, is now Chairman. Dean has been a beekeeper for seven years and initially built up to fifty hives. As a result of a change in career path, he has reduced the number considerably.

Mike Miles continues as Treasurer and web site manager, Rob Ashby is now Secretary. Keegan Blignaut is the remaining committee member.

## **HOBBY X SHOW - The Dome, Northgate.**

*In March we are following up our successful participation in this event a year ago. This year the dates are from Thursday 3rd March to Sunday 6th. The target is to sell 1000 jars of honey but primarily to inform the public about beekeeping and hopefully recruit new members. Mike Miles is organising our participation. We will need members to help, to be there to respond to enquiries from visitors. Please volunteer to assist. I am sure you will enjoy talking about bees. You meet all kinds of interesting people.*

## **SABIO**

*The annual BEECON is this year being organised by Western Cape Bee Industry Association. It will be held in Stellenbosch from 23rd to 25th June. Mark the dates in you diary now. We will keep you advised once details are released. SABIO will no doubt circulate paid up members. If you have not yet registered with SABIO then do so, as the law requires, that if you keep bees, you must be registered.*

## **APIMONDIA**

*This Bi annual international event will take place in Argentina in September. A party will be going from South Africa, so if you have never been to South America, you now have an excuse to do so. Details will be made available in our monthly notices of meetings. See the link to the SABIO website from our own [www.beekeepers.co.za](http://www.beekeepers.co.za)*



## chairmans report 2010

**Once again it is my duty to report to you today the activities of the Association this year.**

**There has been a continued flow of new members into our ranks. It is encouraging for the committee that there is an increasing membership. The numbers attending monthly meetings have been exceeding fifty. Thank you for supporting us. We endeavour to arrange a varied, seasonal related programme of events to illustrate various aspects of beekeeping from the basics to more involved manipulations.**

New beekeepers want to see action beekeeping. Field days provide that opportunity. You can watch experienced people opening hives and explaining what they are doing. This year we have had six Field Days. In March we travelled to Kevin & Glynis Armitages farm near Standerton to see the cosmos in full flower. We opened several hives, but we did not take off any supers, like we did the year before. Last year the supers were very full. This year it was a disappointment, but that is beekeeping, every year is different. We are a branch of farming, very dependent on the weather. In addition we rehoused a large docile colony from a big wooden box and into a hive. This was followed by a visit to the honey extracting unit, housed in a converted container, followed by a braai.

A small group visited Eddy Lear's smallholding on the south side of town at Alewynspoor in April, where we harvested honey from a top bar hive. By contrast there was a large crowd at Hans Steenpoort's place in Midrand in June where we witnessed his skills with maintenance of hives and equipment. I wish I had some of the tools he has available!



Hans Steenpoort demonstrating the renovation of hives at his home in President Ridge. There were more than twenty people there.

In July a good number travelled one Saturday to Hendrik Kelly's commercial bee operation on the north west side of Pretoria. From there we travelled to the Tswaing Meteorite Crater reserve, where Hendrik had moved quite a number of colonies, so that they could benefit

from the aloe davyana, which grows profusely there and is an excellent source of both nectar and pollen, which enables colonies to expand rapidly. We witnessed the splitting of a hive and the setting up of a nucleus with a queen cell, so that a new queen could be raised, and a new colony established.

A walk down into the crater provided an interesting diversion, after we had finished looking at the bees. Then we enjoyed a braai and plenty of bee talk. This was a joint outing with members of Northern's Beekeepers' Association. They suggested that we should arrange a similar event next year, when the aloes are in flower.

The Blignaut KID team, (Keegan, Ian and Dad) took us to one of their apiary sites down south, where we transferred eight colonies into new hives. It was a very useful exercise to witness, the bees were well behaved, so I hope they do well there. Most of the colonies were quite strong, so they should produce good crops, weather permitting.



Field day at the Blignaut's apiary near Fochville. Eight colonies were transferred into new hives. All in good shape, ready for the honey flow.

Lastly last month we visited the Rhenosterspruit reserve where Dean Martin had four colonies living in a variety of containers, which were successfully transferred into hives.

Article 4 of our Constitution, the Aims and Objectives, requires that the committee promote and advance the science of Apiculture and goes on to say that we should stimulate in the establishment and maintenance of educational and training facilities and also to liaise with other beekeeping Associations to achieve these goals.

Whilst we do not at present run beekeeping courses, we endeavour to provide each month a speaker talking about some aspect of beekeeping, or like tonight a question and answer session, where you can ask whatever you want to know. You are quite likely to get more than one answer, but you learn about possible variable options.





Splitting a hive to make up a new colony at the end of July Field Day on the aloes, with Hendrik Kelly

Our programme began in February with a debate about the problems created early this year with the exceptionally heavy rainfall experienced. In March we were visited by the BEE team from University of Pretoria, lead by Professor Robin Crewe, but he sat by as Dr Christian Pirk gave us a summary of the results of a survey of beekeepers that the university had undertaken. Dr. Hannelie Human updated us on the situation regarding the outbreak of American Foul brood that had been found in hives in the Western Cape.

In April, the husband and wife team of Paul Mangussen and Elize Lundall Mangussen delivered a stimulating presentation about the marketing of honey and bee related products. They also commented on samples of members honey that were on display.

At our May meeting, Tony Aimer, one of our newer members, spoke about his experiences and thoughts after two seasons as a beekeeper. Like all of us, he finds bees just fascinating. We enjoyed listening to him. His enthusiasm is infectious.

The late summer rains persisted long after our February meeting and in June Mike Miles gave a power point presentation about feeding bees and a number of ways you can achieve this.

In July Paul Petersen, a beekeeper from Vancouver Island, Canada, who was here for the football world cup, came to tell us about beekeeping where he lives. Their main honey is from fireweed, which I knew in England as rosebay willow herb. It flowers in July and August and provides the bulk of Paul's harvest. We have honey badgers to worry about. Their problem is bears, a much larger problem!

In August Dermot Cassidy, who works for the United States Department of Agriculture came to talk to us about his work in the rural African environment. In September, one of our younger members Marc Hannekom, spoke about his work at University, investigating the invasion of the Cape bee into the heart of where we are and of the ongoing problems that are still here some twenty years later.

Last month, Kim Morgado spoke about the medicinal properties of honeys and other products of the beehives. Some of his statements were contentious but he is knowledgeable and we will follow his liaison with Wits University, into the medicinal properties of honeys with interest.

Apart from our programme of meetings we have participated in four events promoting beekeeping. Indeed some of you may be here tonight because we decided to participate in these events. In March we were at the HobbyX and then three weeks later the GardenX shows

at The Dome in Northgate. The first event was far busier than the Garden show, but we won the second prize for small stands at the Garden X event. Thanks to Caroline Whitehead and Liddy Born for that. In addition Paul Edwards again organized our participation at the Yebo Gogga exhibition at Wits University last month. We also had a stand for two days at an open Garden in Mountain View.

At national level there has been much debate about beekeeping in South Africa. The National Agricultural Marketing Councils (NAMC) report into the beekeeping industry was accepted by the government, but the implementation has yet to happen. We are awaiting further progress reports from the South African Beekeeping Organization (SABIO). Once these are available, members will be informed.

I have only produced two Newsletters this year, but will distribute another one shortly, complete with photos of Field Days.

Our web site seems to be well used. I receive phone calls everyday. Some of these are from the media, either newspapers, radio or television stations. I have been on Radio 702, Radio Today, Radio Chai, and Radio 2000. Last Thursday 28th October I was on the 6.00pm ENews news live, and earlier in the year a four person Japanese TV crew came to my home, interviewed me for four hours for a thirty second take, to be included in a programme for Japanese TV!

I have also given nine power point presentations about beekeeping to various senior citizens groups and some gardening clubs.

Finally I am standing down as Chairman today, as the Constitution does not allow any one to occupy any one position for more than four years. My four years have passed, so the role passes on.

The Association owes its success to the committee. My thanks to Mike Miles for keeping a very tight control on our finances and being the source of many ideas of what to do, to Dean Martin and Keegan for welcoming members at our meetings and to Rob Ashby for taking over the secretarial role after Hanneke decided that her priorities were not with beekeeping. Kobus Gryffenberg was elected at the last AGM, but work commitments have prevented him from being able to fulfill his role as a committee member.

Thank you all for your support. It is very pleasing to see that membership now is more than twice what it was when I began my term as Chairman.

**Tom Cain**  
**3 November 2010**



## field days

*Whilst all the plans are not yet finalized some of the dates that have been allocated for Field days this year are as follows:-*

<b>20<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	tba
<b>20<sup>th</sup> March</b>	visit to Kevin & Glynis Armitage's near Standerton
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> May</b>	Hans Steenpoort, President Park, Mid Rand
<b>July</b>	(TBA) Hendrik Kelly visiting the aloes
<b>August</b>	spring management
<b>18 September</b>	new beepers day
<b>27-30 October</b>	three day trip to Douglas Bee Farms, Northern Cape.

## OBITUARIES

*Our oldest member Basil Barr died on 14<sup>th</sup> November last year aged 88. He began to keep bees in 1953 and continued to do so until quite recently. Indeed, the last time he came to a meeting, was not so many months ago, when he brought samples of eucalyptus branches, to demonstrate how the flowers were nearly ready to open.*

*He was so willing to pass on his knowledge and most meetings would see him make some kind of contribution. He was well known for 'fixing' things, or designing gadgets to assist with some aspect of bee management.*

*Basil was the only current Honorary Life Member of Southerners at the time of his death. In addition he was Honorary Life member of Northern Transvaal Beekeepers Association and the Federation of SA Beekeepers Association. For his services over many years, helping to manage honey exhibits, at the Easter Rand Show, the Witwatersrand Agricultural Society also bestowed him with the same honour.*

*We shall miss his presence at our meetings. May his soul rest in peace.*

## Thank you

*A big "Thank You" to Kevin Gibb for letting us enjoy our year end function at his lovely venue, "The Lazy Lion Lodge" in Kyalami. There were nearly fifty people there and a very pleasant time was enjoyed by all.*



*Lee Allen, Tom Cain, Hans Steenport, and our host Hendrik Kelly on their way to Tswaing Crater*



*At the bottom of Tswaing Crater*