

January to May 2010
Southern 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

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

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

MEMBER
Keegan Blignaut
Tel: 072 804 4207

Cobus Gryffenberg
082 462 9211

Rob Ashby
083 701 9829

www.beekeepers.co.za



Mike Miles on the Southern stand at Hobby X, 2010

Hello there to you all and a warm welcome to a number of new members. I hope you find beekeeping a rewarding experience, not only for the knowledge and new friends you acquire, but also financially as well.

Since December the weather has not been kind at all, well certainly not for many beekeepers in parts of Gauteng. I have kept rainfall records in Northcliff since 1988 and, for the first time since then, I recorded over 300 millimetres in January, 313mms to be exact. At the time of writing this, on 22nd April a further 326mms has fallen, bringing the total this year to 639mms. This is a lot more than normal, but it is not as bad as 2000, when 714mms were recorded during the first three months.

So why am I writing about this? The early summer, for me, and many other beekeepers provided normal honey crops, but since the New Year, there has been very little new honey in the supers in my apiaries. So much depends on the forage available within economical flying distance from your apiary. Beekeepers in some well established residential areas, where there

are many mature gardens and trees, speak about two or three full supers per hive. So, like a house, the criteria for the site of your apiary is, position, position, position. Unfortunately, you do not always know what the area is like for bees, before you take them to a new site.

Autumn is here, the equinox has passed, winter approaches. It is time to make sure that your bees have plenty of food in the hive, so that they can overwinter successfully and not die of starvation. The meeting in June will cover this issue, as Mike Miles will be talking about feeding bees. I find it is not normally necessary to feed bees, but many late swarms this year, because of the recent wet conditions, may struggle to get established and survive the winter, without being fed by the beekeepers. Come to the June meeting to learn about the different ways of feeding bees.

Contributions to our Newsletter are welcomed for consideration by the committee. If you have advice, comment or maybe humorous stories to relate, why not forward them, so our members can share your beekeeping experiences.

monthly meetings

Since our last newsletter towards the end of last year we have had enjoyed a full programme of events. At the Annual General Meeting, held on 5th November thirty four members and six guests attended. Tom Cain was re-elected as Chairman. Also re-elected were Mike Miles, as Treasurer and Hanneke van Linge, as Secretary. Committee member Dean Martin has another year to serve, Paul Edwards decided not to offer his name for reelection after his two year tenure. Thank you Paul for your thoughtful and valuable contributions at committee meetings. To assist the committee in the management of the Association, three additional members were elected. Welcome to Rob Ashby, Keegan Blignaut and Cobus Gryffenberg. There were two nominations proposed for members to be elected as Fellows of the Association. Hans Steenpoort, Tom Cain and Eddy van Zyl were proposed and elected, by a show of hands, to become Fellows.

In December we enjoyed our Year End Bash at Camdeboo Farm, Don & Juliana Gautier's, rural retreat in the heart of suburbia. An oasis of tranquility!

2010

Our year began with a meeting on 4th February with a discussion about what effect the very wet weather has had on the bees and honey production. Plenty of comment and many questions were posed and responses provided. The more interaction there is at our meetings,

the greater the value of being there. Our constitution says, amongst other things, "promoting and advancing the science of Apiculture". Our mission is to inform and advise our members about all aspects of beekeeping. We try to achieve this at our meetings. Suggestions for topics members want to know more about, are welcomed.

On 4th March, we had the team of speakers from Pretoria University, headed by eminent Professor Robin Crewe. Dr. Christian Pirk reported back on the results of the analysis of returns, made by beekeepers last year, into the causes of colony losses. He was followed by Dr Hannelie Human reminding us what the symptoms are of American Foul Brood and what the current situation is. There does not appear to be, now, a rapid spread of the disease, but that does not mean that we need not scrutinize the brood in the hive carefully. When conditions permit, check the brood regularly.

In response to greater awareness of the public here to the problems that honeybees are suffering from, in the United States and Europe, we have participated in two exhibitions in March. They were both held at the The Dome in Northgate. HobbyX was a four day event from 4th to 7th. A lot of interest was shown and we sold plenty of honey, bees wax and cosmetics, all products from the bees.



monthly meetings CONTINUED

Garden X was held three weeks later, for three days from, 26th to 28th. At this show, our stand was smaller, but had the advantage of being on a corner, which made us more visible and accessible. The layout was totally different. Congratulations to Caroline Whitehead and Liddy Born, for creating such a striking design, using empty brood chambers, placed on their sides, for the honey display and four hive roofs, for the counter! Their efforts were rewarded with a Silver Medal for the second best stand in the small stand category. An empty hive, including frames with just foundation, plus drawn out combs with both empty and full frames of honey. Meanwhile we had a mannequin fully kitted out with bee suit and veil (and dirty tackkies), watching over us, and large photographs of bees and flowers and of our beekeeping Field Days, on the walls.

The success of these events depends on members giving up their time, to come to respond to visitors' questions and assist people who want to begin beekeeping. A big thank you all the people who volunteered and made these events such a success. About forty people wrote their names down asking for further

information, so we hope to secure some new members from our participation in these events. I expect we shall be there again next year.

On the 21st March, there were eighteen members at Kevin & Glynis Armitage's farm, near Standerton. It is always a fascinating and informative visit. Apart from examining the cosmos, which was in full bloom, but not so dramatic as last year, we looked at some of the colonies, including a top bar hive. This was a disappointment, as it had not expanded, as had been anticipated. After looking in usual Langstroth hives, we went to another part of the farm to remove a colony of bees that had made their home in quite a large wooden chest. The bees were very docile and were successfully transferred into a hive.

To assist us in selling our honey Paul Mangussen and his wife Elize spoke to us, at our meeting on 8th April, with their ideas of marketing honey and related products. It was a thought provoking exercise. Thank you to the members who supplied samples of their honey and cosmetics, for comment by the speakers.

future meetings

Please make a note of the following Southern activity dates:-

Meetings at Bryanston Sports Club:

May 6th - Tony Aimer is quite new to beekeeping, just two summers, but his enthusiasm is infectious and he wants to share his fascination with you. He has volunteered to present a short talk to us. The theme of which will be "The thoughts of a new beekeeper". To keep the experienced beekeepers awake he is offering a R100 prize for the person who spots the three deliberate mistakes, that he plans to make. It will make for a fun evening. The whole tone of this meeting is for new beekeepers to ask what ever they want to, no matter how basic it is. We all had to begin with no knowledge,

so come and join us at this meeting, to find out what you want to know. There is always something to ask about your bees when you are a novice, so this is an opportunity to find out what YOU want to know. There are hundreds of years experience available, amongst our members, for you to tap into! The more participation the better!!

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| June 3rd - | Mike Miles. Feeding bees |
| July 1st - | Spring Management.
Southern "A" Team |
| August 5th - | To be advised |
| September 2nd - | To be advised |
| October 7th - | To be advised |
| November 4th - | Annual General Meeting |

field days

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| May | None |
| June 27th | Hans Steenpoort.
Repairs and maintenance. Preparation for the new season. |
| July 25th | Hendrik Kelly.
Visit to the Aloes, north of Pretoria, venue to be advised. |
| August 19th | Keegan Blignaut.
Visit to apiary. Details later. |
| September 23rd | Dean Martin, Rhenosterspruit Nature Reserve.
Bee removals from various containers. |
| October 21st | Don & Juliana Gautier.
Camdeboo Farm, off Witkoppen Road. |



south african bee industry organisation

The Annual General Meeting of the SABIO took place on 10th April at the Agricultural Research Council premises at the engineering faculty in Pretoria.

The main issue concerned which body would be responsible for the registration of beekeepers. It is currently SABIO's task to do this, but with outbreak of American Foul Brood, last year, here in South Africa, SABIO, representing all beekeepers, registered or not, began talks, a year ago, with the Directorate Plant Health, Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries, about new regulations dealing with the management of American foul Brood.

The deadline for the final draft was deferred until just after the AGM so that the final draft could be discussed at SABIO's AGM.

There was a split decision when members present voted either for the government to assume responsibility, for registering beekeepers, or for SABIO to retain that role. If the twelve proxy votes that there were from Southern, were considered, then the vote was in favour of SABIO retaining the job. The decision, it seems, does not rest with SABIO, but the government. It remains to be seen what transpires.

*The problems of CCD
(Colony Collapse Disorder)
have brought the honey bee
to the attention of the public*

chairman's report – 2009

Whilst this was read out at the Annual General Meeting last November, it is included here as record of the Association's activities for the period.

I am pleased to report that we have had a very successful year. Quite a number of new members joined, mostly people new to beekeeping. Thank you for joining us. We try to provide a programme of monthly meetings here, which cover a wide range of beekeeping topics, and of field days, when practical beekeeping is undertaken to demonstrate some aspect of beekeeping. Please let the committee know if there is any particular aspect that you would like to be the subject for one of our meetings. We cannot always anticipate your needs. Help us to arrange programme that YOU want.

I have been remiss in only producing two newsletters this year, so far. The latest issue contains a summary of the year's events, so I will not repeat now what you have no doubt read already.

We have not organized a major event this year. In 2007 we organized BEECON for SABIO and last year Mike Miles organised a three day visit to Douglas Bee Farms. Despite there being no major events, I believe we still have provided you with an active, interesting and varied programme.

The problems of CCD (Colony Collapse Disorder) have brought the honey bee to the attention of the public, on a scale not seen in my lifetime, and I think for some time longer than that. It has been good for beekeeping as the industry has had the opportunity of explaining the role that the honeybee plays in the food chain and the environment.

As Chairman I quite often am contacted by the media and only yesterday had two calls. The first from Radio 2000 resulted in me talking, on their Conservation program yesterday evening, just after seven, for about ten minutes. The questions were about CCD and how does it effect the bees here. I was able to tell them it

is not a problem in South Africa.

The second call was from the Mail & Guardian weekly newspaper. They are doing an article about beekeeping in this coming weekend's issue. They wanted to take photos of bees yesterday, so I told them the weather did not allow that, so I sent them some of my photos instead. We will have to see what they say. If necessary we may need to respond, if their research is not quite correct.

Next year we are already committed to participate in two big shows. Firstly Hobby X at the Dome, Northgate, in early March. Then later the same month we will be at Garden X, also at the Dome.

In anticipation of these events we have had 5000 flyers printed to advertise Southern and hopefully will attract new members to us. I hope so as the treasurer is anxious that we recover the considerable printing expense incurred. Twenty five new members would cover the expense. I trust we will be able to have your assistance in manning the stands. Personally I enjoy meeting the public and answering their questions about beekeeping.

The big news this year is the discovery of American Foul Brood in the country. I have given John Moody, chairman of SABIO, our support on the way the crisis has been handled so far. We are waiting for the government to implement the appropriate legislation. You will be advised as soon as we have news.

To run an Association you need a competent committee. I have been very ably supported by Mike Miles, who keeps a very watchful eye on our finances and updates the web page from time to time, and organizes events. It was his initiative, that got us a stand at next year's exhibitions, for next to nothing expense. To Dean Martin for being there to welcoming you at these meetings and to Paul Edwards for contributing very meaningfully to the long discussions we had, when editing the new constitution that Mike Miles had written. The



chairmans report CONTINUED

final version was adopted at our July meeting. Paul also supervised the Yebo Gogga event at Wits. To Hanneke van Linge for stepping in last year, when nobody else volunteered to undertake the Secretary's role.

Andrew Etzinger played a very helpful supportive role, but due to other pressing demands on his time, he tendered his resignation to me a couple of months ago. He is giving up beekeeping for now. It will be something he can take up again, when it suits him.

To other members who have helped at Wits and at our stand at the Bio Diversity Expo at the Walter Sisulu Gardens, thank you. For the first time we appointed an auditor to verify are

finances have been managed correctly. Thank you, Gavin Stewart for undertaking this task for us.

Finally, communication is the key to a prosperous Association. Please advise us of any changes in your contact details. You should hear from us every month. If you don't please contact any committee member so that we can make sure our systems are working as they should. To you, our members, thank you for your continuing support.

Tom Cain
Chairman
5/11/2009

*Communication
is the key to a
prosperous Association.*

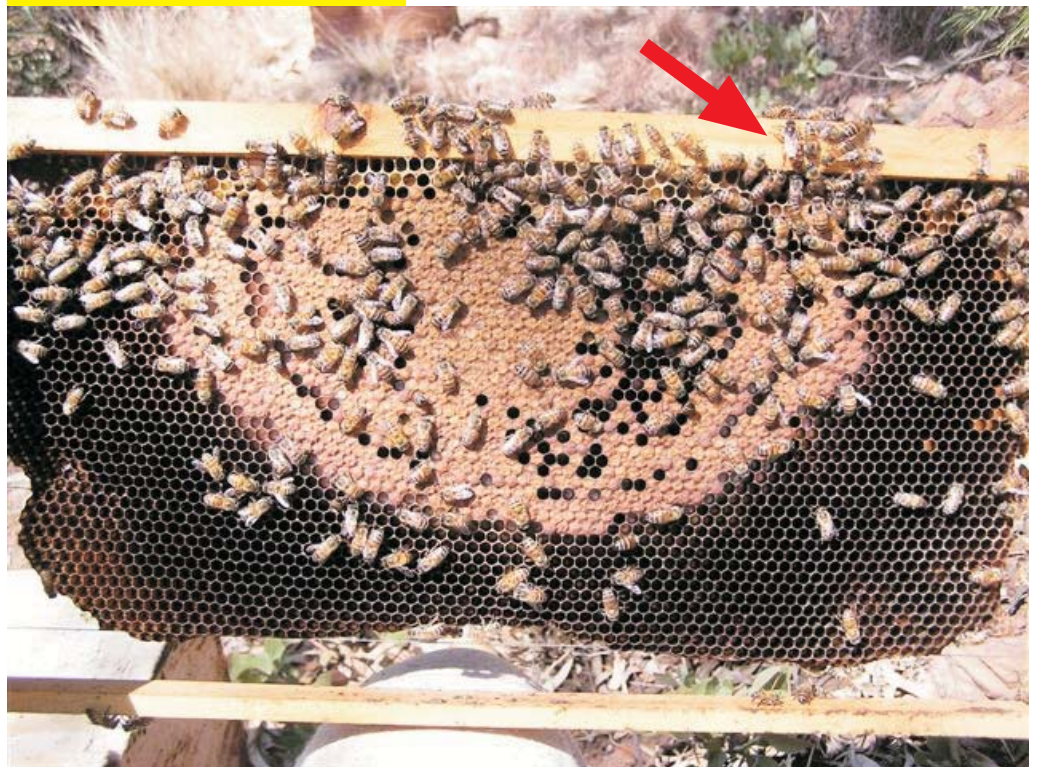
The committee would appreciate the members to contribute to the newsletter. Send us an interesting article, letter or even ask a question.

The more input we have from the members the more interesting the newsletters will be!

Send your correspondence to tom@fma.co.za.



This is what happens if you stand in front of a hive entrance



Can you spot the Queen? Clue: look on the top bar, towards the right, just before a small group of workers

