



SEACOAST BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

President: Amy Robinson 642-3526 Vice President: Amy Antonucci 664-2796

Treasurer: Don Powers 394-7306 Sec. /Editor: Karen Johnson 436-874

President's Notes February 2010

Next meeting: Thursday February 18, 7-9 Jeremiah Smith Grange, Lee NH

Dear Fellow Beekeepers:

Happy New Year! Those of us who came to January's meeting/potluck had a jolly time and sampled delicious food which was in great abundance. Thank you to all who came out on that cold night for fellowship and warmth, both from the Grange wood stoves and from our friends.

We had the annual elections and the group of officers will remain the same. I want to take this moment to thank my fellow officers for their continued loyal service. Don Powers has been a very diligent treasurer, making payments and deposits in a most timely fashion, and keeping our organization fiscally intact. Karen Johnson not only puts out a monthly newsletter to keep us all in good communication, but she frequently travels and puts in extra time to interview beekeepers--interviews that are interesting and lively. Karen considers it a "privilege" to be allowed to do the newsletter, and I don't know too many volunteers who feel this way. Amy Antonucci is our vice president, which years ago didn't always mean much, but she jumps right in and does things without being asked. Amy does all the publicity for Bee school, has made up flyers to

advertise our club, and has been very willing to take over meetings when I am traveling. I think I speak for the entire membership when I express my sincere appreciation for all these folks do.

Speaking of volunteers, I told the membership at January's meeting that I am not going to run Bee school this year. It is much healthier for an organization to spread out the responsibilities, and with this in mind, we need to have a leader(s) to take this responsibility. Bear in mind that I would be happy to provide a list of things that need to be done, and also a list of those who generally are willing to teach, do publicity, make up the binders, etc... So nobody has to reinvent the wheel here...just a willing person with good follow-through who can organize in summer and attend the bee school sessions in the fall. I hope one or more of you will consider this "privilege", which helps to continue beekeeping education in our area.

So...February. Skip the Conversation Hearts and dopey cards and think of your sweethearts in the hive. Valentine's Day is a great reminder to go out and make sure the girls are not low on food. If they have all made it up to the top through their honey, or when you gently heft the supers and they seem light, consider feeding some dry sugar or nougat. Bill and Wendy Booth have offered to bring some nougat, and I know Ben and Bev frequently have some as well. If you have questions about winter feeding, come to February's meeting.

Lastly, you might want to check out the February issue of "National Geographic" from your local library. There is an article about a group of chimps in the Congo that have been undisturbed by humans and are being observed using tools never before seen. One of the behaviors is called "honey pounding" where the chimp uses a stick to poke at a beehive and eventually extract honey. This can take the chimp almost an hour, but we know why it is worth the effort!!

Stay warm, *Amy Robinson*

(Editor's Note: In honor of the month celebrating Love, here's a poem, with many apologies to Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and a special dedication to Paul Gamelin.)

How do I love bees? Let me count the ways...

I love bees

For the honey in the hive,

Not just for me to eat,

But for keeping them alive

As they cluster,

Even thrive

~sunlight lingering 'til five~

Could it be that Spring's arrived?

I love bees

For their funny little dances

That certainly enhances

All the blooms

On stems

And branches.

I love bees
For the world that they give~
Without all of them,
I doubt that we could live.
You've heard it said,
(And it's certainly quite true)
No 'birds and bees'
No me, no you!

Here's an interesting article sent in to us by V.P. Amy Antonucci:

If You Swat, Watch Out: Bees Remember Faces

By SINDYA N. BHANOO

Published: February 1, 2010 - New York Times

A honeybee brain has a million neurons, compared with the 100 billion in a human brain. But, researchers report, bees can recognize faces, and they even do it the same way we do.

Bees and humans both use a technique called configural processing, piecing together the components of a face — eyes, ears, nose and mouth — to form a recognizable pattern, a team of researchers report in the Feb. 15 issue of *The Journal of Experimental Biology*.

“It’s a kind of gluing,” said Martin Giurfa, a professor of neural biology at the University de Toulouse, France, and one of the study’s authors.

It is the same ability, Dr. Giurfa said, that helps humans realize that a Chinese pagoda and a Swiss chalet are both abodes, based on their components.

“We know two vertical lines, with a hutlike top,” he said. “It’s a house.”

In their research, Dr. Giurfa and his colleagues created a display of hand-drawn images, some faces and some not.

The faces had bowls of sugar water in front of them, while the nonfaces were placed behind bowls containing plain water. After a few failed trips to the bowls without sugar water, the bees kept returning to the sugar-filled bowls in front of the faces, the scientists found.

The images and the bowls were cleaned after every visit, to ensure that the bees were using visual cues to find the sugar and not leaving scent marks.

The researchers found that bees could also distinguish a face that provided sugar water from one that did not.

After several hours’ training, the bees picked the right faces about 75 percent of the time, said Adrian Dyer, another author of the study and a vision scientist at Monash University in Australia.

The researchers said that while they were biologists and not computer scientists, they hoped their work could be more widely used, including by face recognition experts. “If somebody else finds it interesting and it improves airport security, that’s great,” Dr. Dyer said. “The potential mechanisms can be made available to the wider facial recognition community.”

Dr. Giurfa said that the benefit of studying a creature as simple as the bee was in knowing that it did not take a complex neural network to distinguish objects. This could offer hope to technologists, he said. “We could imagine that through repeat exposure, we may be able to train machines to extract a configuration and know that ‘This a motorbike’ or no, ‘This is rather a dog,’ ” he said.

But while the research on bees is interesting, it does not help with the most difficult problem technologists are having, said David Forsyth, a computer science professor at the University of Illinois, whose research focuses on computer vision.

That challenging problem is to build systems that can recognize the same people over a period of time, Dr. Forsyth said, after their hair has grown, or when they have sunglasses on, or after they have aged. These are all tasks that humans can usually perform but that computers struggle

to replicate.

“I highly doubt that bees can tell the difference,” Dr. Forsyth said, adding, “If bees did that, I’d fall off my chair.”

Nonetheless, he said, it is important to add to the body of research on face recognition by studying animals.

While computers have become very capable at detecting faces, dependable face recognition by machines continues to be elusive.

“We know almost nothing about recognition, but it is really useful and really hard, and it helps us make decisions about the world,” Dr. Forsyth said. “Research into anything about identifying and recognizing seems to be a good thing.”

Did you know?

Tea made with honey and cinnamon powder, when taken regularly arrests the ravages of old age. Take 4 spoons of honey, 1 spoon of cinnamon powder and 3 cups of water and boil to make tea. Drink 1/4 cup 3 to 4 times a day. It keeps the skin fresh and soft and arrests old age. Life spans also increases and even if a person is 100 years old will start performing the chores of a 20 years old. (Quoted from Al-Islaah publications.)

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