

Beekeeper shares interest

George Woodward talks all about bees at Polk County Fair display

By **Jolene Guzman**
The Itemizer-Observer

RICKREALL — George Woodward likes Oregon honeybees.

OK, so technically, honeybees aren't native to Oregon or the United States, but they have been beneficial since being introduced.

Woodward, a master beekeeper, speculates bees imported from states like Hawaii and California react to Oregon the way people do — thinking it's beautiful and plant-filled, but what's with all the dreary rain?

"I figure they are beach bums," he said. "They are used to warm weather."

He gets his bees from people who raise them in the Willamette Valley. Woodward talked about his "more than hobby" at the Polk County Fair on Friday and Saturday at the Polk Soil & Water Conservation District booth.

He picked up beekeeping out of curiosity. Members of his family had been beekeepers, so he decided to give it a go.

Woodward found a mentor while picking up his Christmas tree several years ago. He noticed a bee box at the tree farm.

Woodward asked the owner about the bees, but the tree farmer said: "Ah. You don't want to do bees" and walked away. The next year, the farmer did the same thing.

Finally, on his third try, Woodward got the tree farmer to talk about bees.

"He said, 'You want to do bees, come back after Christmas,' so I came back after Christmas," he said.

Woodward said the farmer sat down with him and helped him pick out equipment and gear from supply house Mann Lake.

Woodward bought two hives and was off and running. During the first year, some of his queen bees fell victim to what could be described as



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Polk County Fair attendees check out a hive of George Woodward's bees on Saturday. Woodward gave an "intro to beekeeping" presentation on Friday and Saturday.

helicopter parenting.

"I was in my bees all the time," he said. "Sometimes every other day or at least once a week, I would get in there to check them out to see how they were doing."

It was too much. He ended up killing a few of his queens.

He learned a few more lessons on the way, such as how easy it is to turn two hives into eight without meaning to.

Early in his beekeeping days, his backyard hives were getting out of hand. One was about to swarm, meaning half the hive was getting ready to fly off with the queen and find a new home. At that point, he was limited to five hives.

"I'm in West Salem with a backyard beekeeping permit," he said. "They actually have laws about this stuff."

He and his mentor rearranged his hives before the bees swarmed, but then they had another problem. After moving the bees around, he had eight hives,

more than allowed in a backyard.

"My wife's like, 'umm, that's illegal,'" Woodward recalled.

Four years into his hobby, he spends two days each week working with his bees — he's also a full-time electrician — and maintains a bee yard on a 41-acre property off Kings Valley Highway.

As a DIY kind of guy, he's quite happy with his honey-making hobby.

Those who are interested can order equipment and bees from supply houses. He recommends getting a suit, smoker, hive tool, hive box and feeder to start out with. You can customize your equipment as much as you want from there.

He said keepers can find more bees by putting themselves on a list to collect swarms when people call to have them removed from their property.

His advice is to find a local beekeeper who is selling what are called nucleus

colonies or "nucs" that have hive and queen that are already compatible. Packaged bees can sometimes reject the queens placed with them — and local nucs come with another benefit.

"They know what they are getting into with the rain and what we've got for weather," Woodward said.

Most important, Woodward said would-be beekeepers should attend "bee school."

Most beekeeping clubs offer it in some fashion. Chemeketa Community College has a three-night course to teach you about what you are in for.

"Excellent head start," Woodward said. "They really give you a hand up. ... They cover everything under the sun."

For more information about beekeeping: Willamette Valley Beekeepers Association: wvbahive.org/. For more on pollinators, see next week's *I-O*. For bee trivia go to www.polkio.com.



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Dash McNett won three ribbons for his photos.

Young photographer shines at Polk fair

By **Emily Mentzer**
The Itemizer-Observer

RICKREALL — Dasheill "Dash" McNett, 7, enjoys taking photos with his Canon Rebel — and, if the number of ribbons on his Polk County Fair submissions suggests anything, he has an eye for photography.

"I just do it because it's fun," he said.

His repertoire includes animals, people, landscapes and other various projects organized by the Dallas Photography Club. In one club-led experiment in water photography, you can barely make out a Lego Batman figure. The piece is titled "The Dark Knight Sinks."

Strolling through the photography exhibits at the fair, Dash's name can be found in each category.

Here, a panoramic shot of Oregon's Painted Hills. There, a collage of his soccer team playing a match. "My mom and I decided

which one was the best picture and put the rest around it," Dash said. "It was my soccer team."

Fortunately, his coach didn't mind him sitting that match out to practice his photography skills, Dash said.

His mom, Marita Barth, said she gave Dash his Rebel when she upgraded her own camera. Both using Canons, they can share lenses.

Dash won a first-place award at the fair for a portrait of his friend's dog.

"They said they would pay me for taking a picture," he said. So far, it's been his only paying job.

With his skills, it likely won't be his last.

Dash is pleased with how well he did at the fair — three ribbons, so far. He said he wasn't sure "participant" ribbons should count.

Barth said her son's work is very different from what she sees.

"I tend to dampen things, he's, 'Brighter! Louder!'" she said. "Both can still be good."

FCC rule affects Dallas' decision on meeting recordings

Itemizer-Observer staff report

DALLAS — The city of Dallas recently began looking into making videos of its council meetings, but a proposed Federal Communication Commission rule may prevent that.

The proposal would require closed captioning on videos, greatly increasing the cost of providing the service, said Dallas City Manager Ron Fogglin.

Councilor Micky Garus in July suggested the city investigate ways to take video of meetings.

"No sooner had we started looking into that that the FCC has decided that it's going to require every agency that offers any kind of public hearing or public video of their meetings to require them to do closed captioning," Fogglin said at the council's Aug. 7 meeting. "We are actually having to slow down on that idea because until the FCC decides that, that would be extremely, extremely expensive."

He said government agencies that already provide the service are weighing in on the potential rule, saying it would force them to stop because of the expense.

"We want to do it. We are anxious to do it, but this rule might change that," Fogglin said.

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