



# THE

# PENNSYLVANIA BEEKEEPER

August 2011  
Volume No. 7

The Official Organ of the Pennsylvania State Beekeeper's Association

## A Note to My Friends...

I need to take a minute and thank the York County Beekeepers for a wonderful picnic this year. This group went above and beyond to provide a great weekend of activities for us to enjoy. The food was fantastic and the competition was fierce in the hive tool toss and smoker contests. And the microscope used to identify nosema spores was a big hit for all of us. The Honey Queen and Princess gave a report of their activities, and these ladies are truly busy speaking the word about beekeeping. Their knowledge and poise represents the PSBA very well. There was also a tour of David Papke's home yard and honey house, which was very enjoyable. David noticed my envy as I was stealing ideas to build in to my future honey house project. Thanks to all who put forth the effort so the rest of us could show up and enjoy the day. It takes a lot of volunteers to make this go smoothly as it does to keep the PSBA moving forward to help protect our honey bees. The efforts of these many volunteers does not go by without notice as our PSBA ranks continue to grow and many "newbees" are able to glean some of our knowledge. This mutual cooperation to help protect this vital aspect of agriculture is essential in the United States. This would not be possible without the efforts and compromise of many to help determine the path we will ultimately take. There is not any one person in the PSBA who gets it their way every time and the results of this compromise are why we continue to grow and are so successful in promoting honey bees. It has long been my philosophy in life that a good measure of a person is their willingness and ability to work with a group of diverse people to reach that common goal we all share. Thanks to the members of the YCBA and the PSBA for working so hard to ensure our organization continues for another 100 years to the benefit of our future generations.

Does time actually go by faster than it used to, or is that simply an observation that we are able to make as we gain years and experience? I always blame it on the fact that the older I get, it seems there are more things I want to get accomplished, and I just keep myself busier. This past week I gave my last beef cow a ride to the butcher for processing. Now I need to tear down the barn and fence to make room for my new honey house, WOOOOHOOOO!! I can't wait to

start! This past week I also prepared the forms and poured/finished a truck load of concrete for some new sidewalks around the house, including one pad that will be dedicated to giving several colonies a nice place to sit. One evening was dedicated to watching my youngest, Clara, perform with her high school marching band to show off their half time show. I will see this show several more times this fall at the Friday night football games. I volunteer as a member of the "chain gang" which helps me keep a little bit of my youth. Another evening was spent at the local fire company parade that could not be missed, as my daughter's band is the main attraction. I worked my mating nucs a bit another evening to begin the preparation getting them ready to winter over to spring.

This year I am also working with Jeff Berta from Slippery Rock on a SARE project to determine how well certain strains of virgin queens, when mated with northern drones, will do with leading a colony in different areas of PA. I also helped organize a shipment of New World Carnolians, NWC, from California to cooperators in our PA Queen Project. All of this while putting in 40+ hours in my "regular job" at the water/sewer Authority. I feel like I am growing into one of those old guys who I remember from my youth complaining that there are not enough hours in the day or enough days in the week. But, I don't have the time to sit around and complain.

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### A Note to My Friends (Continued from Page 1)

I was concerned this spring when the rain seemed to not stop and it appeared the honey flow would be ruined. I have yet to figure out what makes a good season as opposed to a poor season as far as honey production is concerned. There have been good years that were very dry and good years that have been very wet. I have also experienced poor years that were very dry and poor years that were very wet. This season has proven to be one of the good years in the central mountains and the nectar flow, which did not kick into full speed until mid June, seemed to be endless and continued throughout July. I guess the early torrential rains we experienced this spring helped to produce the summer weed crop that was full of nectar for our bees to work. No matter what the season or weather brings, you need to have strong colonies ready to work if you want to make a surplus honey crop. Keep them building in the spring and keep them from swarming into the trees and you never know what mother nature will bring to you, but you have to be equally prepared in both types of years.

Well it is time to go and get ready for Ag Progress Days. Stu Mathias left me a message on the answering machine and gave me my marching orders for the show this year. This is a chance for the PSBA to showcase our craft to a group of people that definitely appreciate what we are all about, farmers. They come from all over the state to see the latest improvements to farm equipment and techniques to be more efficient in their work. Many tours are given during the three day event to see various aspects of agriculture. However, there is only one tour that is booked solid for the whole show the first day, the apiary tours. Everyone is fascinated with honey bees and if it were not for the sting, I am sure everyone would have a colony or two. The ladies at the office where tours are organized are often heard saying, "if you want to go on the honey bee tour you have to sign up the first day, they are booked solid". Some folks will even walk over half a mile to join the tour when the bus is full. Maryann, Craig and Lee do a great job sharing our craft with the public. I have started a little tradition myself by escorting the honey queen to the government day luncheon. We all know how politicians are and every one of them needs to get a picture with our Honey Queen. I just need to figure out a way to get my plate full before we get overrun by the photographer's. Once the picture taking starts all I can do is watch with envy as everyone walks back to their table with full plates of food ready to dig in. Anyway, I will have to keep working on a plan.

Warren Miller, PSBA President

In order to reflect the interests of all facets of Pennsylvania beekeeping, articles submitted for publication may on occasion express ideas contrary to the philosophy of the P.S.B.A. or a majority of its members.

### A View From Honesdale

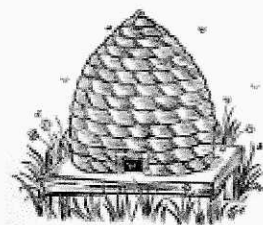
Hi Fellow Beekeepers,

In my continuing quest for trying to establish a bee suitable for the northeast, let me once again extol the virtues of my favorite bee. First of all she is still in the Ferrel population after more than one hundred years. Shouldn't that make you pause and wonder why?? In deep forests and remote areas, give this a try. Put a small vessel of honey on a rock or ledge and watch what happens. Within a short time a black bee will find the honey and after she reports back to the hive (as you know if its for free, its for me) you will have in no time a plethora of little black bees. These my friends are the survivor stock of the largest of the races of honey bees, Apis Mellifera -Mellifera. That is the German black bee that has a bad rap as being aggressive, quick to swarm and not very great to work with.

Let me give you my experiences with AMM over the last 12 years. Every summer I travel to Germany in two distinct locals Schwerin in Mecklenburg Vorpommern on the Baltic and Eisenach in Thuringen. Two friends of mine have AMM and I work them each year. They are uniformly black and have hairs all over their bodies. They forage in 40-degree temperatures. They over winter in small clusters and subsist on meager stores. In the spring they blow out and in a short time are ready for the Haupt Tracht-main honey flow rapeseed. They can put away 150 lbs of honey just from that flow. In Germany, the honey season is over by July. Unless you are bringing your bees to heather, which starts in late August or September, AMM is virtually impossible to obtain unless you capture a hive in a remote bee tree. I would like to bring genetic material here and breed from there. The process is very costly, time consuming and unless you have backers that are willing to work with you its mission impossible. I plan on talking in November at our state meeting on this subject. I hope I have planted a seed that will germinate and you will look into AMM. There is a great book on AMM written by an eminent scientist. It's on the black bee by Beowulf Cooper. I believe it is obtainable either through Amazon or BIBBA, The English organization that promotes AMM throughout the British Isles where it was the native species. In the event you wish to talk about this subject please don't hesitate to write.

Take care,

Charlie Kinbar



## Nature Notes

Early **signs of autumn**: Long lines of **swallows** rest shoulder to shoulder on utility wires. With nesting season over, they have become sociable again, no longer competing to find nesting space and food for hatchlings. They will travel south and spend the winter together. The chorus of **katydid**s sings us into cold weather, slowing to a mutter as the nights become frosty.

**Ragweed** flowers spread wind-carried pollen to allergy sufferers. Tall ragweed, up to five feet tall, has leaves shaped like a pointed, two-thumb mitten. Small ragweed, up to 18 inches tall, has feathery leaves. Flick a flower with a finger to see a cloud of pollen.

**Asters** were named for their small, star-shaped flowers. As other flowers fade, asters get noticed along sunny edges. **Goldenrods** are asters, too. Their tiny, star-shaped flowers erupt into frothy, yellow bloom all over North America. Goldenrod flowers clusters can be simple thin stalks or feathery mops. The flower shape helps determine the species. Goldenrod **pollen** is sticky and a menagerie of insects crawls over the blooms, collecting a pollen-rich food. Some species of **crab spiders** are yellow, a chance adaptation that helps the spiders catch insects on goldenrod flowers. Sharp eyes may find them lurking with "arms" spread wide, waiting for a meal.

In mid-August, a powerful **cold front** will sweep across Pennsylvania from the northwest, bringing wind, rain, and then a few days of dry, cool weather and deep blue skies. This is the first in a series of high-pressure systems that, by December, will have us bundled in coats and mittens. These huge pancakes of cool, dry air form near the top of our planet and slide south and east. (Hurricanes are warm, moist air masses that form over tropical oceans.)

**Tiger swallowtails** have been cruising the garden since summer began. Their huge size and bright yellow wings with black lines make them easy to identify. Some tiger swallowtails have black wings: same outline, same black stripes, same flight pattern, just a different background color.

Smaller black butterflies could be **red-spotted purples** with iridescent blue on their wings, no tails, and red-orange spots on the underside edge of the wing. The **white admiral**, a black butterfly with a broad white stripe, is a form of the red-spotted purple. Both are attracted to grape vines. The black swallowtail out in the open, cruising the garden, is likely a **black swallowtail butterfly**. The black swallowtail in the woods is likely a **spicebush swallowtail** butterfly.

Three cheers for **dragonflies**. They are harmless to us and eat mosquitoes.

Plants that our bees like but we might not: **purple loosestrife** has magenta flowers massed along a stalk. Purple loosestrife is an invasive alien, crowding out desirable, native species and reducing the food supply of native insects. In SE Pennsylvania, purple loosestrife is just moving in, appearing in small clusters in wetlands. **Japanese knotweed** has

heart-shaped leaves and feathery, cream-colored flowers on tall, succulent (juicy) stalks. Another invasive alien, it, too, crowds out other plants.

Wait a minute. If these plants are not attractive to native insects, why do our bees swarm over them? The answer is that our bees are not native insects. For more on the (bad) role that invasive plants play in the life of native insects and the health of our web of life, watch for a copy of Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens by Doug Tallamy, University of Delaware biology professor. Try his website by Googling "**bringing nature home**." Or listen to him when he speaks to a bird, beekeeping, or garden club; Doug Tallamy gives a fascinating, illustrated talk.

By Tim Sterrett

A small sample of the Silent Auction items and door prizes that were donated. A big thank you to all who participated.



## State Picnic

A small group enjoyed David Papke's apiary on the afternoon of Friday, July 22, not least his uncapping and extracting system, and then made their way to join some 70 others at Mary and Tom Chronister's charming farm for the barbecue, mead tasting and sharing of stories, made even more enjoyable by an evening breeze which brought some relief from the heat and humidity.

The highlight of the picnic on Saturday was the Inaugural International Hive Tool Toss Championship (oops, sorry Warren, that should read the Scintillating PSBA Executive meeting) which was won by Corey Metz in a fierce toss-off with Dr. Eliud Muli of Kenya, followed by the impeccable David Papke's victory (at least we think it was him behind that cloud of smoke) in the Smoker Lighting competition (75 minutes) with Christina Seldemridge in hot pursuit (pun intended.)

Linda Hackenburg appropriately held the winning ticket for the Bee Cozy quilt made by Mary Barnes specifically for the picnic, and the proceeds of the 50/50 and the Silent Auction will swell the coffers of the PA Honey Queen fund.

116 people attended the picnic itself, which was less than the 139 who had pre-registered and was explainable in part by the unusually severe weather that week. Photographs of the event can be found on the PSBA website (follow the link on the home page.) As Warren Miller wrote "This was a fantastic weekend and I really appreciate the hard work it took to make it so successful."

Jeremy Barnes



## Farm Show Topics

I attended a meeting in early April with Lee Miller and the Pa Farm Show Committee. This meeting was to review and discuss any changes to the Apiary Dept exhibits. Each year members attending and working the Farm Show discuss randomly what worked good and what needs improvement or changed. At the Western Pa seminar in February, a number of those people met briefly to discuss some topics. Lee and I presented those topics to the Farm Show Committee.

Regarding exhibits: The class under Miscellaneous called "Gadgets" has been removed. Although it has merit, it is rarely entered and basically a non-issue. We proposed that another class be added under Comb Honey. This will be a full shallow frame of comb honey. The exhibitor will need to have a case in which to display it. So, get your wood working skills going. And save that excellent frame of comb honey. This change has been approved.

A change will be made to the scorecard for Individual Exhibits. This is simply for clarity and help direct the judges in criteria that must be considered during points scoring.

We will be working on a set of honey color standards to be used when accepting entries. This is always subjective, but can be greatly improved with better standards. Last year we had honeys entered into the wrong colors and took hours to correct.

Another point of discussion, to help the judging process move faster, is eliminating the scorecard that the exhibitor receives. The Apiary dept is the only department that does that. That is still open for discussion and comments/opinions are welcome from exhibitors.

With other Farm Show baked good departments, the recipes of the top 3 places are compiled by the Farm Show to give to the public. This next year, the Farm Show Committee would like the honey baked goods to participate. This would simply mean the recipe be typed on an 8.5 x 11 sheet.

We repeated our satisfaction with the new exhibit area and Learning Center. The Farm Show Committee was extremely pleased with our Learning Center.

In the exhibit area, we plan to include a "Tools of the Trade" display, very similar to what the girls from PDA did with the vacant county display this year. This will not be judged. This will serve as our 'Bee Emergency Kit' or 'Plan of Action'. In the event of observation hive vandalism or breakage, items from this display could be used to control the situation. Items would include 2 suits, 2 pr gloves, smoker, spray water bottles, bee net, duct tape, screen, stapler, hand tools and bee vacuum.

Lastly, we hope to expand the observation hive 'fly-way' concept that Jim Pinkerton has wonderfully done the last 3 years. This concept has proven to be the stress and waste relief the bees need to stay healthy and stress-free for the entire week. Those bees leave the Farm Show as healthy as they arrived, nine days earlier. The expansion will include a very large atrium, big enough to fill an 8ft table. Hopefully, we can have an observation hive on either side. I know the large atrium works. I will experiment with 2 O-hives attached this summer to see if they fight or get along. The Farm Show Committee is already excited and wants to include it in advertising, as a 'new' feature to the 2012 Farm Show.

Sharon McDonald has volunteered to take charge of the volunteer list for the Learning Center. If that is something you would like to do or did in past years and want to do again, contact Sharon at [sailor.mac.bruce@gmail.com](mailto:sailor.mac.bruce@gmail.com) and get signed up. It's not that far away. Two people at all times is about minimum. Much of the time 4 volunteers are in constant conversation with the public.

Charlie Vorisek, Vice President

## 2011 Honey Queen Brochures

The 2011 PSBA Honey Queen Brochures have arrived! They feature PSBA Honey Queen Alyssa Fine and Princess Emily Bruckart along with honey recipes, tips and facts. Cost is \$10.00 per hundred (plus shipping). Please purchase the brochures to help you increase your honey sales and support the honey queen program. The brochures are available for pick-up at Glenn & Yvonne Crimbring's home, Canton, (570) 673-8201; or Stu Mathias's home. To order, contact Stewart Mathias, 514 Early's Mill Road, Hummelstown, PA 17036, phone 717-533-2231.

## Mail vs. Email

The Pennsylvania State Beekeeper's Association is sending out the newsletter via email instead of through the USPS to those members who are interested. If you would like to receive "The Pennsylvania Beekeeper" by email, please contact Yvonne Crimbring at [pabec@epix.net](mailto:pabec@epix.net) and include your name, mailing address, phone number along with current email address stating that you'd like to receive the PSBA newsletter via email.

### FOR SALE:

Kelley double boiler/bottling tank, cover, stand, screens, mixing paddles, brass bottling valve, 220v. connections = \$295.00

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The Pennsylvania State Beekeepers' Association represents the interests of the members of Pennsylvania. State dues of \$20.00 per year entitle members to the newsletter published ten times per year at Canton, PA, plus other benefits. Anyone 17 and under may become a junior member @ \$1.00 per year state dues.

All correspondence should be addressed to: Mrs. Yvonne Crimbring, 2565 Southside Rd., Canton, PA 17724. Phone: 570-673-8201.

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**Application for New and Renewal Membership  
Pennsylvania State Beekeepers' Association**

4

☐ \$1.00 Junior Membership (under 17) annual dues☐ \$20.00 annual dues☐ \$25.00 family dues☐ \$200.00 Lifetime Membership

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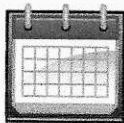
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Send to: Yvonne Crimbring, 2565 Southside Road, Canton, PA 17724**

## Upcoming Dates To Remember



Deadline for the September issue of  
*The Pennsylvania Beekeeper* is **August 27<sup>th</sup>**.

### Lancaster County Beekeepers

Tuesday, August 16, 5:00 p.m. Picnic at Strickler's Farm, Mountville. For more information, contact Jim Pinkerton at 717-653-5911, email: [jim@gatheringplacemj.com](mailto:jim@gatheringplacemj.com).

### Lehigh Valley Beekeepers

Thursday, August 18, 7:00 p.m. at the Lehigh County Ag. Center, Allentown. There will be a panel discussion on Hive Treatments. Contact Pete Thomson at 610-346-7875 for more information

### National Honey Bee Awareness Day

August 20

### Philadelphia Beekeepers Guild

Saturday, August 20, 2:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Society of Germantown, Philadelphia. Annual Picnic. For more information, email [info@phillybeekeepers.com](mailto:info@phillybeekeepers.com)

### Franklin Co. Beekeepers

Tuesday, August 23, 6:00 p.m. till dusk at Richard Paine's Apiary, Chambersburg. Fall Apiary Management Workshop. For more information, contact George Hurd at 717-263-9226, email: [grh5@psu.edu](mailto:grh5@psu.edu)

### York Co. Beekeepers

Thursday, August 25 at 7:00 p.m. at the Penn State Community room, York. Dr. Debra Delaney will be speaking on Feral Hives. Email Gail Leasure: [snewgeese@yahoo.com](mailto:snewgeese@yahoo.com) or contact Jeremy Barnes at 717-428-1144 for more information.

### Susquehanna Beekeepers of NEPA

Friday, September 9, 7:00 p.m. at the Claverack Bldg., Montrose. Topic: Round Table Discussion on Fall Management and Winter Prep for survival. Contact James Wood at 570-934-1166 for more information.

### Philadelphia Honey Fest 2011

Friday and Saturday, September 9 & 10. See their website at [www.phillybeekeepers.org](http://www.phillybeekeepers.org) for more information.

### Chester County Beekeepers

Saturday, September 10, 9:00 a.m. at the Stroud Preserve. Contact Charlie Karat at 610-998-1407, email: [ckarat54@gmail.com](mailto:ckarat54@gmail.com) for more information.

### Lehigh Valley Beekeepers

Saturday, September 10, 2:00 p.m. at the Club Apiary, LCCC, Schnecksville. Contact Pete Thomson at 610-346-7875 for more information.

### Wayne County Beekeepers

Monday, September 12, 7:30 p.m. at the Park Street Complex, Honesdale. Contact Dolores Motichka at 570-253-2203, email: [dmotich@ptd.net](mailto:dmotich@ptd.net) for more information.

### Monroe County Beekeepers

Wednesday, September 14, 7:00 p.m. at the Monroe Co. Environmental Education Center, Stroudsburg. Contact Glenn Bachman at 570-722-3671, email: [bkeeper@ptd.net](mailto:bkeeper@ptd.net) for more information.

### Lehigh Valley Beekeepers

Thursday, September 15, 7:00 p.m. at the Lehigh County Ag. Center, Allentown. Topic: Making Creamed Honey. Speaker: Bill Mondjack. Contact Pete Thomson at 610-346-7875 for more information

### Montgomery Co. Beekeepers

Thursday, September 15, 7:00 p.m. at the Maple Room, 4-H Center, Skippack. Wax Processing, Candle Making and Home Made Cosmetics and Soaps - speakers Joe Duffy and Grace Crawford. For more information, contact Mark Antunes at [honeyhillfarm@verizon.net](mailto:honeyhillfarm@verizon.net).

### Lancaster County Beekeepers

Tuesday, September 20, 7:00 p.m. at Strickler's Farm, Mountville. Topic: Using those hive products. For more information, contact Jim Pinkerton at 717-653-5911, email: [jim@gatheringplacemj.com](mailto:jim@gatheringplacemj.com).

### North East PA Beekeepers

Tuesday, September 20 at 7:30 p.m. at the Wayne Co. Chamber of Commerce, Honesdale. Contact Charles Kinbar at 570-497-6402, email: [purepahoney@gmail.com](mailto:purepahoney@gmail.com)

### York Co. Beekeepers

Thursday, September 22, 7:00 p.m. at the Penn State Community room, York. Speaker: Karen Roccensecca, Harrisburg. Topic: to be announced. Email Gail Leasure: [snewgeese@yahoo.com](mailto:snewgeese@yahoo.com) or contact Jeremy Barnes at 717-428-1144 for more information.

### Beaver Valley Area Beekeepers

Monday, September 26, 7:00 p.m. at the Beaver County Conservation District Ed. Center (Wetlands), Aliquippa. Contact Lyn Szymkiewicz at 724-869-2151, email: [Lynszym3@verizon.net](mailto:Lynszym3@verizon.net) for more information.

### Southeastern PA Honey Bee Symposium

Saturday, October 1, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. at the Temple University, Ambler Campus. See Page 21 for more details.

### PSBA Annual Conference

Friday and Saturday, November 11 & 12 at the Best Western Inn/Country Cupboard, Lewisburg. Watch for more information in September's newsletter.

If you have an event happening in your area that you would like Queen Alyssa or Princess Emily to attend, contact Rachel Bryson at [brysonrachel@yahoo.com](mailto:brysonrachel@yahoo.com) or 717-643-0010. Please do not contact Alyssa or Emily.

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## Jeremy's Corner

Sitting across the kitchen table one morning in March, replete with breakfast, Jerry Hayes observed that beekeeping is not so much a hobby as a journey – an intellectual, emotional and spiritual journey. Intellectual in that increasingly one has to be a well informed, well read apiarist for a colony to survive successfully; emotional in that honey bees allow us to participate in their lives, which is amazing for an insect; and spiritual in terms of the sense of wonder and awe that arise as one begins to understand the interactions and complexity of a living hive.

Dr. Wayne Esaias, with his work on nectar flows and climate change, points out that the honey bee was introduced from Europe, where it was superbly adapted, to the Americas in the C17th. The 390 years since that introduction are but a drop in the bucket of evolutionary time.

*Apis mellifera* has not yet acclimatized to our conditions, and is thus reliant on the beekeeper to feed and nurture it through the dearth in return for its precious gifts of honey and pollination. Increasingly the successful management of honey bees requires an intellectual commitment, an emotional connection with their predicament and a sense of awe at how they function and what they achieve.

“Age-old wisdom and beauty” writes Gunther Hauk, “come together in the honey bee.” We talk easily about compassion and love but they are more difficult to find in action; instead our egotistical selves lead to the exploitation of nature as we stumble from one calamity to the other, whether in Tripoli in Libya, Fukushima Daiichi in Japan, or the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. In the face of both our successes and failures to create man-made wisdom and beauty, the bees are there as an inspiration as to how we can solve the problems facing both them and ourselves.

A colony of honey bees, for example, has a long term view on life, despite the short life of the worker and drone bees. Everything is designed to assure the survival of the colony. It is surmised that honey bees ‘think’ several generations ahead, for example, swarming on the basis that two colonies have a better chance of allowing the bees to survive than just one (a kind of prehistoric insurance policy,) and the devotion they give to the queen, knowing that their future literally rests in her hands (or her ovipositor.)

So the question arises, what is our ‘queen’? What is it that we must protect at all costs if we are to survive as a healthy, prosperous society? What is it that lives longer than any of us as individuals, that gives birth to new life and without which we shall all surely perish? For me it is best described as ‘beauty,’ those qualities that please our intellectual, emotional and spiritual senses, those attributes that fill us with awe, a state in which love, compassion, empathy, brotherhood and peace combine with industry and commitment and enable us to find joy both in the chores of daily life and in the challenges of long term survival.

This, I think, is what Paulann Petersen describes in her poem, A Sacrament, if one declines to take literally her reference to the drone.

Become that high priest,  
the bee. Drone your way  
from one fragrant  
temple to another, nosing  
into each altar. Drink  
what's divine—  
and while you're there,  
let some of the sacred  
cling to your limbs.  
Wherever you go  
leave a small trail  
of its golden crumbs.

In your wake  
the world unfolds  
its rapture, the fruit  
of its blooming.  
Rooms in your house  
fill with that sweetness  
your body both  
makes and eats.



Alyssa Fine, PA Honey Queen, is pictured above with a group of kids from summer camp at Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens in Pittsburgh. They are fascinated with the observation bee hive.

**IF THE READER WHOSE MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES** 9/11 and receives the newsletter at 1430 Green Lane, Reedsville, PA will send his/her name and an account of his/her beekeeping operation to the editor at 2565 Southside Road, Canton, PA 17724 by September 18<sup>th</sup>, he/she will receive a years free subscription to either *Gleaning in Bee Culture*, *American Bee Journal*, *The Speedy Bee* or *The Small Beekeepers Journal*. When you respond, please specify your choice of magazine.



## Beekeeping In Our Family (June/July Identification Reader)

By Linde Lauff

I am writing this article in behalf of my parents; my mother, Maria Lauff 88, and step-father, Josef Koller 87, who have been keeping bees for the past 15+ years in Rockledge, PA, a small borough just outside of Philadelphia. For both of them the story begins in Austria, their birthplace.

Both emigrated from Austria, my mother in 1950 and my stepfather in 1955. They both were raised in the rich farm region of northern (upper) Austria where beekeeping was a common sight. Josef's father was a beekeeper before him, and his brother as well, until recent years. Maria's sister also kept bees. One of my own personal honey memories was during my first visit to Austria at the age of 11. My aunt took her honeycombs to be extracted. In the "honey store" was a shelf of maybe 100 jars of honey, ranging from the dark opaque shades of amber to almost clear shades of topaz! I was truly amazed and asked how honey could be so varied in color. I was told it depended upon which flowers the honey bees had collected the pollen. This was my first introduction in learning all the interesting details about beekeeping. And of course the honey tasted good, regardless of the color!

And the family interest in beekeeping continued. My sister also dabbled in beekeeping when she was first married. She found it very interesting, but the demands of raising her young family caused her to put the hobby aside. Today she is the coordinator of one of the largest and best farmers' market in Belmont, MA. And of course she has a beekeeper as one of her regular vendors at this weekly event.

After Josef's retirement from running his own bricklaying company, he was ready to resume his former hobby. He first began with a few hives in his backyard. Then, after I connected him with our local educational farm, Fox Case Farm, he became their regular beekeeper. He and mom keep about 30 hives at various locations in our local community. Throughout the year at different festivals held at "the farm", Joe and Mitzi can be seen selling their honey and wax candles, answering questions about their bees and educating the public about the importance of bees in the food chain. At a recent summer farm event, "An Evening with the Bees", there were as many as 75 people who came to learn about bees and beekeeping, see a hive and taste some honey. Children and people from many different cultural backgrounds come to see the bees and learn. Often we hear wonderful stories about kids learning the importance of bees in the classroom or hear stories about beekeeping in another country! It is delightful that people are more aware of the valuable role of bees as pollinators. Still others ask about the impact of the Colony Collapse on our hives.

My parents have really spread the word on the benefits of bees and honey and inspired new or potential beekeepers with this great hobby, freely offering their advice. Joe and Mitzi can be found responding to the sighting of a bee swarm,

or invited to have a honey table at local festivals. Gifts from family or friends include something with "bees or honey". One of their special bee/honey gifts was presented to them a few years ago by their grandson. It was a hand-made wooden sign, declaring "Joe Koller and Maria Lauff, beekeepers, Honey for Sale". This same grandson has now begun beekeeping, continuing the family tradition to the next generation. So I can rest knowing that when my dad stops beekeeping (he plans not to do so until he's 90 he claims), I can get a regular supply of honey!

You see I'm very allergic to bee stings and really cannot continue the family tradition! Even though there are hives by my garden and doctors ask me why I keep bees by my house, I believe it is well worth it. Watching the bees fly about, visiting my flowers and trees lets me know I am supporting the bees' hard work. And I get the best reward, the taste of honey!

## W.W.B.D. (What would Bill do?)

August, 2011

By: Bill Mondjack, Master Beekeeper, Lehigh Valley, PA.

As one of our 19 EAS Certified Master Beekeepers in Pennsylvania, I was approached by President Warren Miller to write a column in the P.S.B.A. monthly newsletter with the topic being a timely issue of concern or any question that may arise in beekeeping. The idea being to help fellow beekeepers become more proficient in our craft.

First let me say, I am NOT a scientist; I am a beekeeper just like you. As all of us know, if you ask 3 beekeepers the same question you will most probably get 5 different answers, so I would like to approach this matter as a Q & A posting as I do with many of our members in the Lehigh Valley Beekeepers Assn., unless I decide to write about a timely issue.

If you have a question you would like to send in, please email it to me at: [billzbeez@mondjackapiaries.com](mailto:billzbeez@mondjackapiaries.com) with the subject line being WWBD, and I will respond with my opinion as 'what I would do' if the problem or situation was mine.

Here are a few questions I received by email:

**Q:** Hi Bill, I have 2 colonies with a lot of bees clustering on the outside of the hive. Usually they do this at night which I thought was because of heat in the colony or perhaps a large population, but they're doing it now at 3 in the afternoon. Any ideas?

Paul

**A:** Hi Paul,

You are correct with your diagnosis. When it is hot and humid, as it has been for the past few weeks, it is just too hot for them (bees) inside the hive. They must keep the air temperature and humidity controlled to properly raise brood

(Continued on Page 15)



**W.W.B.D.** (Continued from Page 13)

and ripen honey and at this time of year with the population being at peak numbers, many of the bees will 'sit out on the front porch' so to speak.

I wish I would have taken a photo of a couple of mine the other day....same as yours. I had quite a few colonies with a huge beard of bees hanging off the bottom boards.

Good luck with your bees Paul,

Bill

**Received: July 13, 2011**

**Q:** Mr. Mondjack: I am new to beekeeping having gotten my first hive this spring. I have some concerns with my bees. In late June they were very active bringing in heavy loads of pollen which I could see on them from several feet away. Some of the bees were so laden with pollen they would miss the landing board on the hive and circle back to attempt a second landing, or land on other objects and rest for a couple of minutes then proceed to land on the board. I installed the bees the first week of May and have been feeding the bees with a 1:1 syrup ever since. In late June early July I added the second deep super as the bees were becoming very agitated and massing outside of the hive entrance. That seemed to resolve the problem, for a time. Now, while the bees are very active, flying out and returning to the hive continuously, I don't see any pollen on the bees, and they are now emptying the hive-top feeder faster than before. I had been having to refill the feeder once a week, using 5 pounds of sugar per feeding, now in the last couple of weeks, the bees have increased the amount of food they take so that I have to refill the feeder twice a week. Granted the number of bees in the hive has increased greatly. Once the feeder gets low or empty early in the day (I refill the feeder in the evening after I get home from work, or when it is a bit cooler to work with the bees) the bees start coming out of the hive in mass as if they are going to swarm. Is this normal? Do you normally have to feed the bees (or a new hive at least) all spring, summer and fall?

Les Eiklor

**A:** Hi Les,

Sounds like you are doing everything correctly. I don't know what volume your feeder holds. I use 'hive-top' feeders that will hold upwards of 3.5 gals. As you know when you have a pkg. on foundation you have to feed continuously. After they draw out the middle 8 frames of foundation I usually move frames #1 & #10 into the middle, spreading the remaining frames out. As you know the bees usually work from the middle and the two end frames are the last to be drawn into comb, so moving them into the middle helps for uniformity. At this point I would have added the second deep hive body and kept feeding until all of the frames of foundation are drawn into comb. USUALLY, with continuous feeding they can draw a 10 frame box into comb in a month or so. Hanging outside the hive is normal during very hot/humid weather

and giving them room to expand is a must if they are only in one box. Don't be afraid to open the hive and pull frames to see exactly what is going on. You can't examine a colony from the outside.

Here in the Lehigh Valley area the main nectar flow is May and June. We usually experience a nectar drought, along with a rain drought, during July & August, so, YES it is very important to continue feeding during these months IF all of the frames are not drawn. Do a check inside to make sure the queen is alive and there is brood, because it is only the young workers that produce beeswax which is needed for the production of comb. Like I mentioned I don't know what kind of feeder you are using...I really can't tell you why the bees would start coming out of the hive in mass if you are just re-filling the feeder.

Every hive/colony may act a little differently, but usually by this time, with continuous feeding they should have both hive bodies drawn into comb with some food stores accumulated, and plenty of brood. Do an inside check and tell me what you see.

Good luck Les,

Bill Mondjack

**Received July 14, 2011**

**Q:** Bill, a large swarm (approximately 4 lbs.) landed in my trap today. My question is: "Should I keep the queen that came with the swarm or should I re-queen it?"

Bob Welty, Nazareth, PA

**A:** Hi Bob,

It's always nice when a swarm finds you instead of having to climb a ladder and risk injuring yourself. So...to keep the queen or re-queen, that's the question! You tell me the swarm was a 'Large One', so I'm thinking it is a primary swarm, which usually has the old queen. If you would have told me it was a small swarm, maybe the size of a cantaloupe, then I would think it was an after-swarm, or secondary swarm, and most probably would have a new virgin queen. If this swarm was mine, receiving it this late in the year, I would hive it on drawn comb, (knowing I'm supposed to hive it on foundation in case it is carrying any AFB spores) only because it is so late in the season and the main nectar flow is over. If hived on foundation they would use many gallons of sugar syrup to draw foundation and store enough honey for the upcoming winter. I'm sure you've heard the old saying: "A swarm of bees in May is worth a load of hay, A swarm of bees in June is worth a silver spoon, A swarm of bees in July is worth not a fly" I would watch them closely for any signs of brood diseases, check the mite level, REQUEEN, and apply a mite treatment if necessary. If you re-queen the swarm now you will have a young, strong queen, a good population going into winter, and a first year queen heading your colony next spring.

Good luck with your swarm Bob,

Bill Mondjack

## 2010/2011 WINTER LOSS SURVEY RESULTS

Several months ago I sent an email around the PSBA to document winter loss for this past winter. I know it has taken me some time to get the results to you. If you are wondering what took me so long please refer to my article "A note to my friends" this month for the answer. I was able to discuss this at the picnic briefly so those that attended were the first to hear. It was very interesting to hear from so many of you but the responses were anything but favorable. With almost two thirds of the counties reporting we lost 49% of the reported colonies. 290 beekeepers managing 2,279 colonies within the Commonwealth lost 1,126 during the fall and winter months. This news is devastating to our industry. Over 90% of those reporting had less than 10 colonies and many of those began as southern packages in the spring of 2010. Although this was not a question on the survey many offered this as how they obtained their colonies. Almost two thirds of the counties were represented.

It appears as though the beekeepers treating with hard chemicals are far fewer than they once were, and there are a few who threw everything at their hives but the kitchen sink. 73% of those reporting did not treat with anything. There were mixed results of those that treated, some did not loose any hives and some lost them all. But there appeared to be a trend develop that those who did treat early had better success wintering their hives. The most common varroa treatment used was Api life VAR, Thymol. Of those that treated most had at least some colonies alive this spring. This part of the survey causes me to conclude that many of the package bees brought in from the south are no longer surviving the northern winters. Why? Could it be that the industry has relied on the use of chemicals, both legal and not, to keep the bees and thus the livelihood of these commercial beekeeper alive. No one asks the question when these packages are shipped north and purchased what has kept them alive thus far. But 73% of those packages will no longer be given these chemicals they have been relying on to sustain life. COLD TURKEY. This seems like taking a drug addict off the street and making them quit using drugs and expect them to act like a normal citizen immediately. Even those addicts that are addicted to the nicotine-laced cigarettes are given a "patch" to allow them to slowly learn to live without the addiction. We need to be more cautious when helping our bees break the chemical treadmill.

It would appear that early spring packages are not a very good investment, as many will not survive the first winter. However, I would not go as far to say there are not any good genetics in our southern bees, I do believe they have developed some very good strains over the years. Although they do ship a lot of drug addicts north in the early spring only to meet the demand we, the northern beekeeping community, place on this industry. Perhaps it is time to recognize that it may be far better to get new beekeepers started later in the

season with a split from another local beekeeper who made the split to avoid a swarm. Local clubs could work together to find those that have a few extra nucs to sell to other beekeepers in the area. Then if you want a southern queen in your colony get them later in the summer to re-queen a hive or make your own splits. Later in the summer there is less pressure on the southern producers to ship queens and they are given more time to mature before shipping. I do believe that a true northern-bred SURVIVOR queen will thrive better than any stock brought into this area of the northeast. This is to say daughters that were raised from a northern surviving queen will perform better in our PA colonies. I do not include purchasing a breeder queen from outside our area and raising daughters, this only produces northern bred and not true northern survivor stock. That is until she is able to prove her vigor during our winter months. This is simply northern bred. However, there are many benefits to using these queens to produce daughters as their lineage is very pure and can certainly add to our genetic diversity.

This was by no means a scientific study and the conclusions are only my opinion. However, next season Rick and Karen from the PDA have offered to step up and take over this survey to make it an annual event that will be further developed and over the years should start to show certain trends for colony loss. We hope to develop the survey and use the seven established agricultural districts in the state so we are comparing loss within certain geographic areas.

If you have any questions or comments please let me know.

Warren Miller

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## August Honey Queen Report

By Alyssa Fine

Greetings beekeepers! Another month has passed and I've been very busy promoting the industry through visits to libraries and festivals.

I finished up the last week of June with two events. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, I traveled to Montgomery to take part in Schuylkill Canal Days, which attracted 3,000 people. I spent the afternoon providing information to the public and answering their many questions. On June 30<sup>th</sup>, I spent the day at a summer camp at Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens in Pittsburgh. I used to visit Phipps often as a child, so I was happy to be able to speak with two groups of 50 inner-city children about the importance of honeybees and their role in food production.

July 7<sup>th</sup> I spoke with a group called Pretty Up Beechview, which aims to use gardening to make their community located in the Pittsburgh suburbs look and feel better. I spoke with 15 people who were extremely interested in honeybees. I also visited the Bloomfield Farmers Market where I passed out brochures and answered questions for the nearly 250 people in attendance that afternoon.

July 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> I was in the Scranton area touring many of the local libraries. During those two days, I visited 6 libraries and spoke to 170 people. The kids were especially excited to look right inside of the observation hive and see what the bees were up to. On July 10<sup>th</sup> I visited Triple B Farms in Bunola to take part in their raspberry festival and answer questions for the 250 people who stopped by.

July 12<sup>th</sup> I traveled to Gladwyne Public Library to speak to 35 people. Although it was advertised mainly to children, the overwhelming majority were adults who were interested in beginning beekeeping. July 13<sup>th</sup> I visited Allentown Public Library to speak with a group of 35 people. One little girl works in the hives with her father, so she brought her own bee suit to model for the group. On the 14<sup>th</sup> through the 16<sup>th</sup>, I was in Zelienople for Horse Trading Days, a street festival that attracts 40,000 people annually. I helped to sell local honey and of course answered questions for the visitors, who were curious about the observation hive I had brought.

July 19<sup>th</sup> I traveled to Penn State University Park in State College to participate in Honey Day. I actually helped to organize this event with a friend who works in the dining commons. Many meals prepared in Redifer Dining Commons that day were made with local honey donated by Centre County Beekeepers. The final numbers indicate that 1,500 students and staff stopped by to try a taste of honey that day. I also visited Way Fruit Farm in Port Matilda to speak at Ag in the Classroom. I briefly spoke to two groups of 25 educators about the Honey Queen Program and provided information to them in order to request a visit by the Queen or Princess during the upcoming school year.

July 20<sup>th</sup> I visited Camp Anderson in Tyrone to speak

to ten groups of Boy Scouts, totaling 200 people. I also attended a meeting of the Centre County Beekeepers where we learned some curious new ways to apply household items to beekeeping. Who knew a copy paper box could become a swarm catching unit?

July 21<sup>st</sup> I made a second trip to Phipps Conservatory to speak with another group of 25 kids during their summer camp. That evening I visited Holt Memorial Library in Philipsburg to speak with 25 people. I had visited Holt in March, and during that brief time, one family returned to tell me that they had successfully started two colonies of their own!

I hope to have run into you during our summer picnic either on the 22<sup>nd</sup> at Tom and Mary Chronister's farm in Dover, or on the 23<sup>rd</sup> at Lower Allen Community Park in Mechanicsburg. Princess Emily and I were given the opportunity to give an update on our activities so far this year. In addition to the picnic, I also attended Read Across the Valley on July 23<sup>rd</sup> in Northumberland to provide information and crafts for nearly 50 children and adults.

It has been a busy summer so far, but as always, if you have an event happening in your area that you would like myself or Princess Emily to attend, **please contact Rachel Bryson** at [brysonrachel@yahoo.com](mailto:brysonrachel@yahoo.com) or 717-643-0010.

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