



THE PENNSYLVANIA BEEKEEPER

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The Official Organ of the Pennsylvania State Beekeeper's Association

A note to my friends...

It seems in life we rush through things and do not stop to smell the roses. In my haste in writing the last month's article I neglected to mention one of the talks I enjoyed the most at our fall conference. I even had my agenda laying on the desk when I wrote the article and still managed to mess things up. As you may have noticed I did not mention our own Charlie Kinbar's talk on Apis Melifera Melifera, the black or dark bee as it is sometimes referred to. There is considerable discussion on the talk forums about this race of honey bees. They have a long-standing reputation for their ability to over winter and many believe they are able to better deal with the stresses currently causing problems with our bees. This race developed in Europe north and west of the Alps and also in parts of central Russia. These bees were some of the first bees to be brought to North and South America, however, as commercial beekeeping became more of the focus the traits of some of the other races of bees were favored and the black bees have been diluted with the introduction of Apis Melifera Ligustica (Italians), Apis Melifera Carnica (Carniolans), Apis Melifera Caucasia (Caucasians). Some say there are pure strains of this race left in the US as well as areas in Europe. Charlie travels each year and works these bees and is working to gain access for some of these pure genes to be re-introduced into the US from Europe where they originated. I apologize to Charlie for the oversight and remember what an ole' boy used to tell me, "If you don't make any mistakes, you are not doing anything."

It is 2012 Farm Show week and I want to thank all of those people who put in their time to make this show such a big success for the PSBA. I hope the rest of you took some time to visit the Farm Show and see what the PSBA has going on. This event is attended by more than 400,000 in the eight days it is open. The learning center has become a main attraction in the large exhibit hall and there is no shortage of questions from the public. The observation hive that Jim Pinkerton from Lancaster brings in is beautiful and the bees are on brood and actively working. I really enjoy watching these bees fly in their flyway Jim built out of an aquarium. There is no way they can see the outdoors from where they are located but

every day at dark the bees stop flying and no longer leave the colony even though the light intensity from the fluorescent does not change. The ice cream booth is always busy and the market place is moving products out the door as fast as Andy Miller and the happy beekeeper's crew can collect the money. Thank you all for your time and efforts on behalf of the PSBA.

Now it is time for us to talk a little bit of business. We are planning a conference call for March 14 at 7:00 PM to discuss ongoing Association business so please have a representative for your local club join the call and give input from your group. We are only as good as the opinions of all of us so pick up the phone and be heard.

I hope your bees are nestled in for the winter and were able to store enough carbs to keep warm and enough protein to start rearing brood. Can you imagine that as you read this, our bees are preparing to begin brood production and begin building the work force that will take advantage of this year's honey flow. I am still amazed every time I consider how bees function and the selfless effort by all for the good of the colony. It kind of makes you want to sprout wings and pollen baskets on your legs.

Warren Miller, PSBA President

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History Repeats

As far back as I can remember, I've heard the phrase, "history repeats itself" or "those who forget history are doomed to repeat it". As I was working on our County Exhibit for the Farm Show, these phrases came back to me over and over.

The theme for the Northwestern Pa Beekeepers Association exhibit was "A Glance At The Past". Our club was given a couple boxes of old American Bee Journals, Gleanings of Bee Culture and catalogs. A member's friend found them in her attic and gave them to him. He in turn donated them to the club. It is not a complete collection, but the earliest issues date 1887-1890 on up to the 1930's. In addition, about 12 years ago, while buying some old used equipment, the owner insisted I take two boxes of old magazines. I really had no interest at the time and gave her \$10 for both boxes. Some issues went into the 1920's. I was a teen-ager in the 60's and 70's, so that's not "old" to me. I've never had much time or reason to browse through any of these old magazines until now.

If you didn't get a chance to get to the Farm Show and see this display, it is a brief glimpse of articles and magazine covers. An early article titled, "How the Bees Saved America" tells how a wounded messenger was trying to warn George Washington of an enemy attack near Philadelphia. Giving aid, a Quaker maid (Miss Charity Crabtree) took the message with enemy in pursuit. As she rode through the lane lined with beehives, she swatted them all with a stick. "Realizing from experience that bees always follow the thing that hits them rather than the person who directs it, she threw the stick full force at her pursuers". She got away, while the enemy got caught in a cloud of angry bees.

It was interesting to read how it was difficult to get people to buy and use extracted honey. People didn't trust extracted honey. The leading objection was the suspicion of adulteration. Today we find ourselves explaining what comb honey is.

Article head-lines from the 1880's were much the same as in today's magazines, "Poor Prospect for Honey Crop", "Heavy Losses in Wintering", "Experience with a Laying Worker", "Buckwheat – The Japanese Variety – It's Seed, Flower and Honey", "How to Feed Sugar to Bees" and "Bees Dying Without Apparent Cause".

A 'Gleanings' from 1943 featured an article of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, where a Hawaiian beekeeper had bombs dropped in his apiary. Dadant ran full-page ads for the uses of beeswax from boots and bullets to airplanes.

Did you know bees were once taxed as personal property. There was a beekeepers Union. Cardboard containers, similar

to milk cartoons, were once produced for extracted honey. It was bad practice to overlap someone else's apiary. (I think that still applies.)

An article from 1926 reported that adulterated honey was offered for sale in Crawford County, Pa. (MY COUNTY!!) No names. But he was fined \$60. That would be equivalent to over \$700 today. I thought my county was pure and clean. Good grief!

My most coveted cover is the October 1961 Bee Culture with Dick Clark and the Michigan Honey Queen. The 1960's seemed to have more frequent celebrities and honey queens featured on the covers.

What I gathered the most from these old journals is that beekeeping has had much the same challenges for the last 140 years. Ideas didn't get exchanged much prior to the magazines, so problems could include all of beekeeping history. This has given me encouragement that we will work our way through today's problems as well.

Charlie V
1st Vice-President

Beginning Beekeeping Workshops

Penn State Extension in conjunction with the Beaver Valley Area Beekeepers, Westmoreland County Beekeepers, Armstrong/Indiana County Beekeepers and the Central Western PA Beekeepers are pleased to offer the Beginning Beekeeping Workshop at two locations again this year – Wexford and Greensburg. (The same information will be presented at each location.)

If you've been thinking about keeping bees but you're not sure how to get started, then this is the workshop for you! The first workshop will be held Saturday, February 4 at the Soergel Orchards, 2573 Brandt School Road, Wexford, PA (Deadline to register: January 27). The second workshop will be held Saturday, February 11 at the Westmoreland County Extension, 214 Donohoe Rd., Greensburg, PA (Deadline to register: February 3). Both workshops will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The registration fee for attending one of the workshops is \$50.00 per participant, \$30.00 per guest/child under 18 (Only "participants" will receive a workshop packet.) The cost includes a catered lunch.

For more information or to register for these events, contact the Beaver Valley Extension at 724-774-3003 or visit the website: <http://extension.psu.edu/beaver>.

2012 Beginner Beekeeping Course - Space still available!

New Beekeepers and Beekeeper Wanna' Bees – Sign up NOW for the MCBA Beginner Beekeeper course!

The Montgomery County Beekeepers Association still has openings for additional students in the 2012 Beginner Beekeeper Course. This 8-class course will take you from start to finish of your first year of beekeeping and beyond. If you have never kept bees or started but are not sure about how to do it right, come join us.

The course starting in February and running to September will teach you what you need to know as the season progresses and your hives develop. Take part in a class that is fun and packed with knowledge. It is both hands-on and classroom oriented. You will have the opportunity to open hives, handle the bees, and see how these amazing insects work collectively in a harmonious society and ultimately produce a sweet crop of honey that you will get to extract.

Your registration fee provides you a one-year membership in both the MCBA and the Pennsylvania State Beekeepers Association, a textbook, course syllabus, and a seat at the table for the 2012 MCBA sumptuous fall banquet.

The course is held at Montgomery County 4-H Center, 1015 Bridge Rd (Rt 113), Skippack, PA 19426. Visit our website www.montcobeekkeepers.org for full course information and to register on line or by mail.



Beekeeping For Beginners – Virtual Webinar Series

Penn State Cooperative Extension is conducting a virtual Beginner Beekeeping Class starting in March 2012. The webinar course is designed to create a foundation of beekeeping knowledge in order to confidently help beginners manage honeybees.

Webinars are web-based seminars which delivers training through the Internet directly to your computer. You are able to view the presentation via your home/office computer and listen to the audio portion of the presentation through your computer's speakers. These are interactive and will allow the participants to ask questions and communicate with the presenters. If you can't join the session or would like to review a certain topic, sessions will be recorded and available to participants until the end of the year

The Beekeeping for Beginners is a two month course that will include the following:

1. An eight part live webinar series (all sessions will be recorded and available until December 31, 2012)
2. Virtual Beekeeping Field Day
3. Accessibility to instructors through:
 - Virtual office hours
 - Discussion forums

Registration and agenda information can be found at: <http://agsci.psu.edu/beekeeping-for-beginners>

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James N. Griesemer

Owner



Jeremy's Corner

There are an estimated 20-30 million species of insects on the earth at present, which is about 85% of all of the world's species. Many have not yet been given scientific names - in a good year taxonomists describe at most 2,000 species of insects, meaning it will take 10,000 years to name 20 million species.

The 900,000 known insect species, which is three times as many as all other animal species together, are grouped in about 30 orders, depending upon the classification used. The largest order is *Coleoptera* (beetles) followed by *Lepidoptera* (moths and butterflies) and *Hymenoptera* (wasps, ants and bees)

In the United States, the number of described species is 11% of the global total.

Insects have the largest biomass of the terrestrial animals. At any time there are an estimated 10 quintillion individual insects alive. Recent figures indicate that there are more than 200 million insects for each human on the planet and an article in *The New York Times* claimed that the world holds 300 pounds of insects for every pound of humans.

By comparison, only about 4,000 of the known animal species are mammals, mankind being one of them. There are more species of dragonflies than mammals and almost as many species of cockroaches, 9,000 species of birds and almost twice as many species of butterflies.

In Pennsylvania the number of individual insects in a given area is estimated at 425 million insects per acre. We step on thousands of insects every time we walk outdoors. Researchers found that in an oak forest the number of arthropods* in leaf litter averages 9,759 per square foot. Based on these counts there are more than 425 million soil and litter arthropods per acre in our state.

Nor are they confined to the soil. The number of insects floating and flying through the air is phenomenal. P. A. Glick calculated that a cubic mile of air, starting 50 feet above the ground, contains an average of 25 million insects and other arthropods.

As one wag observed, "If God loves anything (S)he loves insects!"

There are about 20 000 species of bees across the globe, of which 900 are found in North America. In the harsher northern climes most insects die in the fall, leaving either a queen or eggs to continue the species in the spring. Honey bees however, although they originated in the warmth of the tropics, have learned to survive the winter by clustering around stored food sources, maintaining a steady temperature by vibrating their thorax muscles. This gives them a significant advantage in that fully developed adults emerge in the spring ready to take advantage of the first pollen and nectar sources.

I too cluster over winter, not so much physically as mentally. As Gunther Hauk described so beautifully, "(Winter) is a time to go inward, to study, reflect and contemplate, deepening our understanding of the Earth's wonders and our mission on it. This inwardness, trained and practiced at mid-winter's beckoning, will show its harvest in the months to come, when outward activity challenges our strengthened will, our heightened understanding."

Strength comes in the quietness and the stillness, light is found in the darkness, renewal is nurtured in the tranquility and energy is stored ready to explode (like the bees) in the spring. It is a time to reflect back, to plan ahead and to begin to access those myriad of ideas that have yet to be named and described.

Jeremy Barnes

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(These are for PSBA members ONLY!)

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2 years 37.00	2 years 38.00
3 years 52.15	

The Small Beekeeper's Journal	The Speedy Bee
\$12.95	1 year \$17.25
(Regular Rate)	Quarterly Issues

**Please send 6 weeks before subscription runs out
as we send them in once a month.**

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6 Months		One Year	
Full Page	\$75.00	Full Page	\$ 150.00
1/2 Page	40.00	1/2 Page	75.00
1/4 Page	23.00	1/4 Page	50.00
1/8 Page	12.00	1/8 Page	26.00

2012 PSBA Officers

President: N. Warren Miller
P.O.Box 64, Mongoville, PA 16856
(814) 383-4331 superbee22@hotmail.com

1st V Pres.: Charlie Vorisek
15834 Linesville Rd., Linesville, PA 16424
(814) 683-5888 vbeefarm@windstream.net

2nd V Pres: Charlie Kinbar
PO Box 1678, Milford, PA 18337
(570) 497-6402 purepahoney@gmail.com

Sec.-Treas.: Yvonne Crimbring
2565 Southside Rd., Canton, PA 17724
(570) 673-8201 pabee1@frontier.com



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.

----- ✂ ----- Clip here ----- ✂ -----

Application for New and Renewal Membership Pennsylvania State Beekeepers' Association

\$1.00 Junior Membership (under 17) annual dues
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 I understand the dues entitle me to the Newsletter and all other benefits of membership.

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

Second Annual "Natural Beekeeping" Symposium

The Philadelphia Beekeepers Guild (PBG) is proud to bring organic beekeepers Sam Comfort and John Seaborn to The William Penn Charter School on February 5, 2012, for a day-long event that's sure to please both beekeepers and the general public alike. The bargain of a ticket price includes presentations on "Small-Cell Beekeeping" and "Using Top Bar Hives", a box lunch, and moderated panel discussion with the speakers. Adults: \$25; students with ID and members of PBG: \$20. The event is free to Penn Charter students, faculty and staff with school ID.

Penn Charter's Performing Arts Center is located at 3000 W. School House Lane, Philadelphia.

The PBG will raffle a garden-sized hive perfect for urban beekeeping & other prizes.

Come taste some local honey and meet the beekeepers in your community. Perhaps this is the year you will become one yourself!

Reservation before January 31, 2011 will ensure enough lunches. For more information, to make reservations or to learn about our other events, visit www.phillybeekeepers.org



Sam Comfort, the proprietor of Anarchy Apiaries in West Chester, NY spent time as a commercial beekeeper before stepping aside to raise stronger bees – on the bees' terms.

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Introduction to Beekeeping for Beginners

The Lehigh Valley Beekeepers Association is sponsoring a beginner's beekeeping course to be taught over four Wednesday evenings.

When: February 1, 15, 29, and March 14, 2012

Time: All Classes 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM.

Where: Lehigh Carbon Community College, 4525 Education Park Dr., Schnecksville, PA Building and Classroom number to be announced before the first class!

Cost: \$45 per person. Books and Reference Guides are included in the cost of the class.

The class will be taught by members of the Lehigh Valley Beekeepers Association, some of whom are Certified Master Beekeepers! Field trip dates to visit the club hives located at L.C.C.C. for hands on experience, will be announced at one of the classes!

For more information and to register please visit the Lehigh Valley Beekeepers Association website:

<http://www.lehighvalleybeekeepers.org> **Email:** Lee Fleischman, Class Coordinator at lee@fleischmanfamily.com.

Western Pennsylvania Beekeeping Seminar

The 2012 Western Pennsylvania Beekeeping Seminar will be held February 17 & 18 at the Four Points by Sheraton, Pittsburgh North in Cranberry Township, PA. This seminar will present the most up-to-date information about managing honey bees. A trade show featuring many major beekeeping supply companies will be held on site in conjunction with the seminar.

Featured speakers include: Jerry Hayes, author and Florida State Apiary Inspector; Dan O'Hanlon, 2011 West Virginia Beekeeper of the Year; and Diana Cox-Foster, Ph.D.; Professor of Entomology, Penn State.

Confirmed list of Trade Show vendors: Blue Sky Bee Supply, Betterbee, Brushy Mountain Bee Farm, Walter T. Kelley Company, Dadant and Sons - NY Office, Simpsons Bee Supply and Beeline Apiaries and Woodenware.

Registration fee is \$50.00 per person and \$30 for spouses and children under 18. Registration forms are available at <http://extension.psu.edu/beaver> or by calling Penn State Extension of Beaver County at 724-774-3003.

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

January, 2012

By: Bill Mondjack,

Master Beekeeper, Lehigh Valley, PA.

As one of our 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 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's a question I received & answered, Nov. 28, 2011:

Q:

Hi Bill,

I have a question about Fall feeding and your assistance would be appreciated:

I started Fall Feeding in early October and by the end of October my 5 colonies had adequate storage (15 full medium frames) and so I stopped feeding.

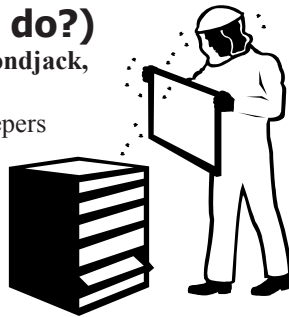
Cold weather followed, however the last 3 weeks have been quite mild.

I am concerned that they may be eating up their stores and wondered if I should resume feeding the heavy syrup.

*Thank you in advance,
Margaret*

A: Hi Margaret,

The same thing has been happening to all of us. Don't be afraid to go into the hives and assess their stores. With this continued warm weather I believe they are consuming their stores more rapidly than normal and they may need more feed, BUT if you feed syrup now I don't think there will be enough warm weather for them to cure it. It has been recommended to feed dry sugar on the inner cover in an emergency, but I like to feed fondant, it is a heavy, moist concentrated food that they don't have to evaporate down & cure like they would with sugar syrup and they don't need additional moisture as they would with dry granulated sugar. There are recipes to make it yourself but I buy it in 50 lb. blocks, cut off a slice about a half-inch thick, place it in a 1 gal. zip-lock storage



bag (this keeps it from drying out and becoming hard) then I tear a hole in the bottom of the bag and lay it right over the top bars, under the inner cover. The bees can access the moist fondant through the hole in the bag, store it in the cells of the frames below and use it throughout the winter months as they are clustered. It's hard to say how much they will need so check on them throughout the winter months by quickly lifting the outer & inner covers and replacing the empty bag with a full one when needed. You will find there's enough room to fit two bags on the top bars.

Hope your bees winter well,
Bill Mondjack

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 pabee1@frontier.com 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.

Spring Bee Packages

Spring bee packages to be picked up
April 20th.

3 lb. package w/queen - \$80.50
3 lb. package w/marked queen - \$83.50

Packages can be picked up at
307 Valley Drive, Rochester, PA 15074

**To order packages,
please call Tom Johnson at:
724-312-7584 (cell) or
724-728-6826 (home)**

PA Honey Queen Report

By Alyssa Fine

Greetings, beekeepers! December came and passed very quickly. The month was relatively quiet, save for a busy weekend of promotions.

I spent the first weekend of December in the Harrisburg area for training with 2012 Pennsylvania Honey Queen Jessica Long. During those two days, Rachel and Teresa Bryson and I covered the exhaustive official Honey Queen Training Manual, teaching Jessica everything she needs to know for her own travels in the upcoming year. Jessica learned how to dress, act, and speak like a queen while also practicing for presentations, speeches, and media interviews. Of course, we also had some fun learning to bake and give cooking demonstrations, as well. Those chocolate no-bake cookies were so yummy! I know Jessica is fully prepared to issue forth as our new Honey Queen, and I am quite anxious to see what she accomplishes this year. Be sure to see her in action at her first official promotion- the upcoming 2012 PA Farm Show!

The following day, December 4th, I traveled to Glen Mills to visit the Maris Grove senior living community. Thanks to John and Toni Kaufman, the community was hosting Honey Bee Day in celebration of its first full year of having managed hives on the property. The program for the day included a Nova

film about honey bees as well as a presentation by New Jersey state bee inspector Tim Schuler, whom I was fortunate enough to meet and speak with about beekeeping and honey in New Jersey. I spoke to the audience of 150 people for an hour and answered the many questions which followed. Afterwards, I gave a quick cooking demonstration which was very well received. Everyone loved my honey vinaigrette dressing! Overall, it was a fantastic day at Maris Grove. Thank you again to John and Toni Kaufman and all the residents for their immense hospitality throughout the day. Hopefully this will not be the last Honey Bee Day in Glen Mills.

The rest of the month has been relatively slow. I have been spending my time learning details of the diseases of the hive and cramming national honey production statistics in preparation for the American Beekeeping Federation's annual convention to be held in Las Vegas, Nevada January 10th-14th, 2012. I am more anxious than nervous. Although I have picked Rachel's and Teresa's brains many times, I still am not fully sure of what to expect. But I will do my best to represent the state of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania State Beekeepers Association, and hopefully I will make you all proud, no matter the outcome. If you would like to support me at this event, please consider purchasing a raffle ticket for a queen-sized quilt. The tickets are \$5 and you do not have to be present to win. I will be at the PA Farm Show January 5th-8th, and I will be more than happy to provide you with a raffle ticket at that time.

We are on the verge of a New Year. I would like to take this time to wish you all health and happiness, both at home and in your hearts as well as in your hives. As we look forward to a new calendar year, there are a thousand different opportunities to invite 2012 PA Honey Queen Jessica Long to your next community event. Jessica is ready and willing to promote beekeeping and honey production throughout the state, so please make use of her that she may provide this service for us. Contact Rachel Bryson at brysonrachel@yahoo.com or (717) 643-0010 today to invite Queen Jessica to your next event.

Thank you again, and I hope to see you at the 2012 PA Farm Show!

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Nature Notes

The arc of the **Sun** across the sky is a bit **longer** each day. Low-angle, midday sunlight reaches across the floor of our cozy south-facing rooms. In June, the higher midday Sun leaves the far side of the room in shadow. Dairy farmers, school bus riders, commuters, and anyone who is out at sunrise or sunset can watch the points on the horizon where the Sun rises and sets slowly moving apart week by week. Who else notices this? Birds do; **titmice** are singing their “Peter, Peter, Peter” spring song. Our bees do; they start raising brood in January.

Snow drop stems are already poking out of the ground in the garden. **Skunk cabbage** spathes are obvious in wetlands. Flowers in winter? Sure. **Dandelions** bloom all year along with **veronica** (1/4” blue and white flowers in lawns) and **dead nettle** (tiny magenta, orchid-shaped flowers grouped on a stalk in weedy edges).

In winter, **lakes** are cooled from the top, but the cooled water sinks to the bottom, so all of the water has to cool to almost thirty-two degrees before anyone can skate. By a quirk of nature, ice is **less dense** than water, so ice forms not from the bottom of the lake but across the top of the cold water. Fish, frogs, turtles, and many more of our cousins spend the winter protected by ice. A layer of ice acts as **insulation**, shielding the water below from winter’s chill.

Some of us remember hearing bee-researcher **Heather Mattila** describe her surprising discovery that her honeybee study subjects were following her around whenever she entered the flight cage. They had learned that only Heather, among the researchers, was the source of their sugar syrup. And she described her tagged and numbered bees’ individual approaches to the food dish: landing (smooth or rough) and approach to the food (land and feed or land and wander). Honeybees seemed to have **personalities**.

A recent Internet news release from *Scientific American* magazine, “**Bees Appear to Experience Moods**,” reports, “provocative experiments suggest that insects have something resembling emotions.” On-line comments following the article point out, with a chuckle, that, of course, bees are moody because the colony is made up of frustrated males who will never find a female and frustrated females who will never lay an egg.

By Tim Sterrett

IF THE READER WHOSE MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES 4/12 and receives the newsletter at 2459 Colonial Drake Hwy, Ashville, 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 February 20th, 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.



Honey Queen Alyssa Fine is shown pouring samples of her honey vinaigrette dressing to some of the people attending the Honey Bee Day celebration at the Maris Grove senior living community in Glen Mills.

Italian Package Bees and Queens for Sale:

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3 lb. Package w/Queen - \$86
Queens - \$20

Add \$3.00 for marked queens

Available for pickup on or about April 15
(actual date may change due to weather)

Contact

Bill Mondjack: 610-751-4483
billzbeez@mondjackapiaries.com)

or

Steve Finke: 610-737-7676
sjfinke@msn.com)

Are Honey Bees pollinators and beneficial insects? Or insect pests to be exterminated and destroyed?

By: Charles Breinig

Editors Note: This article will run in 2 parts. Following is Part 1 and the article will conclude with Part 2 in February's issue.

Plymouth Township, Montgomery County, PA has contemplated this question like many local governments. Fortunately for homeowners with vegetable gardeners, flower gardeners, and people concerned about the environment, reason and science outweighed fear and anxiety.

Generally this issue begins when a beekeeper's neighbor learns that a beekeeper lives next door (or in the neighborhood). They don't understand the difference between Honey Bees and yellow jackets/wasps, and they are concerned for the safety of their kids. They complain to the local code enforcement officer, who then issues a notice to the Beekeeper to remove the hive. The code enforcement officer will cite the health and safety code, which forbids homeowners from providing harborage (a home) to insect pests and vermin (rats). The

notice will threaten a fine if the hive is not removed within 5 days (or similar short period of time).

Since many municipalities in PA use common templates for their health codes, it is helpful if you understand what health codes say.

Sec. 10-84. Elimination of harborages.

All buildings, lots or premises in the township shall be kept free from any condition conducive to rodents, insects and other pest-life.

Harborage shall mean any condition which provides shelter or protection for rodents, insects or other pest-life. Eradication shall mean the elimination of rodents or insects and other pest-life from any building, lot or premises through the use of traps, baiting, fumigation or any other method of extermination approved by the health officer and subject to applicable laws relating to poisonous substances and fumigants.

The Township health code which regulates pests, defines harborage as shelter for "insects OR **other pest life**", clearly indicating that the code is referring to **insect pests**; not all insects (like lady bugs, praying mantis, butterflies and Honey Bees), which are beneficial insects. The key words are "**or other pest life**". Are all bees pests? What makes a bee a pest? Their stinger?

Even myself, before I was educated to the plight of Honey Bees (four years ago), I was scared of bees. As a kid I cut lawns, and was stung by yellow jackets on numerous occasions. I did not understand the difference between Honey Bees, Yellow Jackets and Wasps. Now that I have seen Honey Bees and handled them, I find them sweet, gentle, stinging only when you disturb their hive or crush them. They are not like yellow jackets or wasps, which will sting you multiple times. **When a Honey Bee stings, they die. So they are genetically predisposed to only sting as a matter of last resort.**

Although a yellow jacket may be a pest, her cousin the Honey Bee is not. My wife and I often spend time in the summer taking the roof off our hives and watching our Honey Bees (in T-shirts and shorts, without veils), because they are so fascinating. We have 3-6 hives, and generally lose 50-60% of our hives over the winter. We split the hives in the summer, so we can have at least two hives for the spring pollination of our garden and our neighbor's apple tree, and the nectar flow. Since the Queen starts laying eggs in early January, we need 2-3 strong hives in March when they start foraging for pollen and nectar.

I can't imagine that there is anyone, who has not heard the alarms surrounding the disappearance of Honey Bees. School

(Continued on Page 19)

Attention SE PA beekeepers and clubs: **Bee Packages / Queens**

Orders are now being taken
for early **April** delivery/pickup
(dates contingent on conditions: weather, bee population)
Quantities are very limited – order soon

NOW is the time to reserve fresh 3lb package(s)
of proven quality bees
(choose **Italian** and/or **Russian**).

You get them within **hours** (not days), delivered
directly from pickup to a location near you.

*Thus, yield and health is much higher than
having them shipped.*

Certified Inspected Freshest

Beginners welcome – we are happy to help!

For more info or to reserve your package(s):

Online: <http://chescobees.net/Packages.shtml>

Phone: 215-591-9933

Email: MartinBee@ChesCoBees.net

Martin Billingsley Frazer, PA 19355

Are Honey Bees Pollinators... (Continued from Page 17)

children are urging their parents to “help the honey bees” <http://www.helpthehoneybees.com/> They are not only critical to our nation’s agriculture, they are critical to local gardens as well. There are many supporters of the Honey Bees including local gardening clubs, and environmental groups. This is because most people understand that Honey Bees are beneficial insects and not pests. **Otherwise, who would care?**

Honey Bees differ from Yellow Jackets and Wasps, just as a Seeing-Eye Dog differs from a Wolf. Same species, but entirely different in temperament, and benefit to society.

Who else thinks Honey Bees are beneficial insects?

There are Honey Bees on roof tops in Paris, in the city of Philadelphia, in small boroughs like Jenkintown and Ambler. Even the White House has Honey Bee hives. New York City overturned its ban on beekeeping, because of their increased awareness of the importance of Honey Bees <http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/03/16/bring-on-the-bees/>

The State of PA (and the U.S. Government) consider Honey Bees to be beneficial insects, critical to our state’s and nation’s agriculture. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are being spent in Pennsylvania (Penn State) and at other Universities, researching the causes of CCD (Colony Collapse Disorder). These funds are earmarked to help the Honey Bee because it

is such a beneficial insect. There are **no** experts that consider the Honey Bee to be a pest to be eradicated.

Honey Bees are beneficial and critical to local community gardens and fruit trees. Local Garden clubs, realize that without the Honey Bee, many flowers will not be pollinated, and the diversity of our flowers, and vegetables would diminish. My neighbor, who was initially concerned about my hives, now recounts what a wonderful bounty his apple tree produces, now that I have hives. Honey Bees are not just beneficial, they are critical to local vegetable gardens, fruit trees, and flowers. However, many members of the public are not aware how important they are, plus they are fearful of being stung. If only we could educate them as to how un-dangerous Honey Bees are!

Four years ago, I too was unaware and fearful of Honey Bees. But now that I understand that I will not be stung unless I crush them or disturb their hive, I have learned to love and appreciate them. I also know that if I use a smoker, I can even disturb their hives and not get stung. I often do so without a veil or any protective clothing (in a T-shirt and shorts). Now that I have had Honey Bees land on my arm, and watched them lick salt from my arm, I am not fearful. I have even had a local cub-scout troop come to look at my hives. The kids were fascinated and not fearful.

Parents want to protect their kids. We understand that. Seeing pictures of a beekeeper and their kids, at their hive, pulling a frame in their normal summer garb can demonstrate how docile Honey Bees are. Showing pictures of hives on small lots in local boroughs and in cities, where the lots are 25’ wide will demonstrate you don’t need to have 1-acre lots. As we all know, bees will leave the hive, flying out 10’ and then zoom up to the tree line, flying up to 2-3 miles to get nectar and pollen. So neighbors should have little fear of the bees congregating in their yard.

Maintaining a healthy diverse population of Honey Bees in our neighborhoods is important not only for their survival, but also for their genetic diversity as a species. There are many more Beekeepers in our communities, than the public knows about, because beekeepers understand the unfounded fear and reaction that many people have concerning bees. Thus hives are in inconspicuous places.

(Continued in February's issue)

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570-725-3682

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. Email: pabee1@frontier.com

Upcoming Dates To Remember



**Deadline for the February issue of
The Pennsylvania Beekeeper is January 2nd,
2012 Pennsylvania Farm Show**

January 7-14 at the Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg.

ABF Conference

January 10-14, 2012. Make your plans now for the 2012 North American Beekeeping Conference, which will be held at the **Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino** in Las Vegas, Nevada. Conference details are available on the ABF Web site, www.abfnet.org

Monroe County Beekeepers

Wednesday, January 11, 7:00 p.m. at the Monroe Co. Environmental Education Center, Stroudsburg. Contact Bob Armstrong at 570-620-9421, email: RJArmstrong1@verizon.net for more information.

Chester County Beekeepers

Thursday, January 12, 7:00 p.m. at the West Chester Borough Hall. Contact Charlie Karat at 610-998-1407, email: ckarat54@gmail.com for more information.

Beekeepers of the Susquehanna Valley

Tuesday, January 17, 7 p.m. at the Christ Memorial Episcopal Church, Danville. Email info@thebeeyard.org for more information.

Lehigh Valley Beekeepers

Thursday, January 19, 7:00 p.m. at the Lehigh County Ag. Center, Allentown. Topic: Thinking of keeping Bees? – Preparing for 2012. How to start... what you will need. Contact Steve Finke at 610-737-7676 for more information.

Basic Beginning Beekeeping Seminar

January 28, 2012, 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at the Chicora Volunteer Fire Department, Chicora, PA. For more information, call 724-445-2471.

Introduction to Beekeeping for Beginners

Four Wednesdays, February 1, 15, 29 and March 14, 7:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. at the Lehigh Carbon Community College, Schnecksville. For more information, visit the Lehigh Valley Beekeepers Association website :

<http://www.lehighvalleybeekeepers.org>.

Beginning Beekeeping Workshop

Saturday, February 4, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Soergel Orchards, Wexford. Contact Beaver County Extension at 724-774-3003, website: <http://extension.psu.edu/beaver>, for more information.

2nd Annual “Natural Beekeeping” Symposium

Sunday, February 5, day-long event held at The William Penn Charter School, Philadelphia. For further information, visit www.phillybeekeepers.org

Montgomery Co. Beekeepers

Tuesday, February 7, 7:00 p.m. in the Maple Room at the 4-H Center, Creamery. “Integrated Pest Management” – Speaker: Vince Aloyo. For more information, contact Mark Antunes at honeyhillfarm@verizon.net.

Chester County Beekeepers

Thursday, February 9, 7:00 p.m. at the West Chester Borough Hall. Contact Charlie Karat at 610-998-1407, email: ckarat54@gmail.com for more information.

Beginning Beekeeping Workshop

Saturday, February 11, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Westmoreland County Extension, Greensburg. Contact Beaver County Extension at 724-774-3003, website: <http://extension.psu.edu/beaver>, for more information.

Susquehanna Beekeepers of NEPA

Friday, February 10, 6:00 p.m. at the home of James and Ginny Wood. Planning meeting. Contact James Wood at 570-934-1166 for more information.

2012 Western PA Beekeeping Seminar

February 17 & 18 at the Four Points by Sheraton, Pittsburgh North, Cranberry Township, PA. Featured speakers to include: Jerry Hayes, Dan O’Hanion and Diana Cox-Foster, Ph.D. For more information, contact Penn State Extension of Beaver County at 724-774-3003.

Beekeepers of the Susquehanna Valley

Tuesday, February 21, 7 p.m. at the Christ Memorial Episcopal Church, Danville. Email info@thebeeyard.org for more information.

Lehigh Valley Beekeepers

Thursday, February 23, 7:00 p.m. at the Lehigh County Ag. Center, Allentown. Contact Steve Finke at 610-737-7676 for more information.

Berks-Schuylkill Beekeepers

Basic Beginners Beekeeping Seminar

Saturday, February 25, 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Schuylkill Ag. Center. For more information, contact Bill Clements at 610-678-7630.

Basic Beekeeping Workshop

Saturday, February 25, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at The Gathering Place, Mt. Joy. For more information or to register, contact Jim Pinkerton at 717-653-5911

Chester County Beekeepers Annual Seminar

Saturday, March 3, 2012 at the Westtown School. Ross Conrad and Mike Thomas will be the speakers for the advanced seminar and Mark Antunes will conduct the beginner’s seminar. Contact Charlie Karat at 610-998-1407, email: ckarat54@gmail.com for more information.

2012 PSBA Summer Picnic

Hosted by Burgh Bees (new Pittsburgh area association) Date and location to be announced.

PSBA Annual Conference

Friday and Saturday, November 9 & 10 at the Best Western Inn/Country Cupboard, Lewisburg. More information at a later date.

Attention Counties: Please submit your 2012 list of officers and meeting dates to Yvonne as soon as possible. Her mailing address and email are listed on Page 8.