

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

News Release MCBA

Vol. 93 Issue 3 - July 2011

MCBA Motto: "*Beekeepers Helping Beekeepers*"

Summer 2011 Calendar of Events

NOTE: NO GENERAL MEETING IN AUGUST

July

July 12 – Southeastern PA Honey Bee Symposium Planning Meeting and Executive Board Meeting, Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m. Beverages and refreshments are welcome.

July 13 - Beginner Beekeeping Course, 4-H Center, PA at 6 p.m.

July 16 – Annual Summer Picnic, Ft. Washington State Park, Militia Hill, PA, 11 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Bring a dish to share.

July 22-23 – PSBA Picnic York County, for information, see attachment and go to www.pastatebeekeepers.org

July 25-29 – EAS in Warwick, RI, for information, go to www.easternapiculture.org

August

August 9 - Southeastern PA Honey Bee Symposium Planning Meeting and Executive Board Meeting, Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m. Beverages and refreshments are welcome.

August 13 – GENERAL MEETING HAS BEEN CANCELLED

August 17 - Beginner Beekeeping Course, 4-H Center, PA at 6 p.m.

September

September 13 - Southeastern PA Honey Bee Symposium Planning Meeting and Executive Board Meeting, Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m.

September 14 - Beginner Beekeeping Course, 4-H Center, PA at 6 p.m.



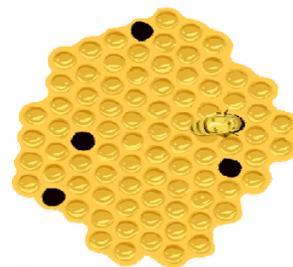
Photo by Cynthia MacFarland

September 15 – General Meeting in the Maple Room at the 4-H Center in Creamery, Wax Processing, Candle Making and Home Made Cosmetics and Soaps, Speakers Joe Duffy and Grace Crawford

SAVE THE DATE - October 1 – Southeastern PA Honey Bee Symposium, SEE ATTACHED FLYER

Observations from the Apiary

It is 9:39 p.m., June 21st, which is officially the first day of summer. Never mind those 100 degree days a couple of weeks ago - it was still spring. June 21st is also the day with the longest amount of daylight of the year. Yes, I know that means that each day from now until December 22nd we will have a shorter amount of daylight. Regardless, I celebrated the occasion as I usually do - by working outside until dark. The fireflies were like thousands of tiny yellow flashing Christmas lights.



Tonight I put my efforts into my vegetable garden. The previous few days I had devoted spare time to the honey bees. This spring has been the "great rebound" from my severe winter losses. But, as usual, I am behind with my newest overly ambitious plan . . .

Toward that goal I attended the Penn State queen rearing workshop (see article below). Other MCBA members who attended were Dr. Vincent Aloyo, who

was accompanied by his delightful wife Ellen, and Brian Marcy, who was accompanied by his delightful friend (me! - plus I drove so that made me even more delightful). Also in attendance was Jim Bobb, who is always great company. My ultimate plan is to raise my own queens from the colonies that survived last winter. I have two promising ones picked out that were reasonably strong in the spring, have not swarmed, and have been producing honey. Both also happen to be full of gentle bees. Hmm . . . if I can get that across the board in all of my hives, I will be more than delighted.

But for now I have turned to the execution of the “great rebound” and the obstacles that confront me. As we were driving back from the workshop Brian asked me, “So what is the most important thing you learned at the workshop?” Without hesitation I said, “That even with my reading glasses on, I won’t be able to see the larva I need to graft!” So I will have to resort to other strategies. Perhaps the “Karl Jenter method” (cell-plug queen rearing) will suffice for me. I have two unassembled deep boxes that I will cut grooves down the inside of from top to bottom so that I can slide a customized queen excluder into the boxes and restrict a queen to only three frames. This will assist me in locating her. (And yep, I don’t have that done so I am behind on that part of the plan). Then I can insert my Jenter frame and hopefully the restricted queen will lay into the preset queen cell cups. Of course, I have not cut the Jenter queen cell cup holding board into a good frame of comb yet, but I’ll get there.

I do have lots of sugar (445 pounds that I know of, but what is a pound here or there) and half a bag of Mega Bee Feed to jack up my finisher hive with, plus a Cloake board (invented by Harry Cloake). I am on schedule there. Good. Now I feel better.

But maybe I am getting ahead of myself. I have to consider the calendar. I need to have new queens ready - mated and laying well by the beginning of September. Let’s see . . . that takes about 30 days from the time of grafting the larva to start the queen cells. So I have to be ready to go and hope I get good results in about one month. ARGH, one month!

Oh I almost forgot one key element – nucs. I need nucs with bees ready to receive the queen cells that should hatch into queens. Then those queens need to get mated. In the nucs I can observe how well each queen lays and if she is fertilized or a drone layer. I don’t want to replace a functioning queen with a dysfunctional queen. I’ve seen enough of them already (but that is a story for a different day).

In preparing the nucs, I have 25 assembled boxes that are primed, along with almost as many homemade bottom boards and outer covers that still need aluminum covers. I have a roll of 24 inch wide aluminum flashing and a sheet metal break I borrowed from a friend who does roofing. Lots of cutting and metal bending needed to complete those. I still need to build the inner covers.

I am kind of on schedule with the nucs. Well, maybe just on the edge of off schedule. So, now you know why I regret the oncoming loss of daylight, even if it is just a little bit each day!

Let me see . . . if I get 25 good queens each one will have probably cost me \$125 a piece in equipment, work shop fees, travel expenses, sugar, protein supplements, painting supplies, wood, nails, sheet metal, and glue. I already mentally expensed the table saw, miter saw, air guns, and compressor as well as equipment construction and assembly. Maybe I should revise my net cost upward to say \$175 per queen or more. As my daughter says if I would stop keeping bees I could retire early.

But if I really tried to cure myself of this general propensity, wouldn’t the counseling fees be just as expensive? Have I told you about my plan to trailer hives to the central part of New York and catch the fall golden rod flow? Hmmmm . . . the cost of each pound of honey I get would be . . . well, I’ll run that calculation another time. After all, the days are still long and I have lots to do. Have fun this summer everyone and enjoy your bees!

Mark Antunes

What’s going on with 4-H?



We have had quite a busy year already as a club. So far we have made native bee hives out of bamboo - thanks to our friends Scott Bartow and Jim Bobb. We have also dissected flowers with one of our newest members, Mariellen, and we can’t forget about Sydney’s meeting where we learned bee anatomy by making candy bees! This past month, we made varroa mite piñatas; please join us in the excitement of whacking these varroa mites at the MCBA summer picnic. All kids are welcome to help destroy these paper mache pests!

Our major project for the year is to replant and maintain a flower bed at the 4-H center. Our bed is at the back of the gym, facing our hives. It is anchored by a beautiful witch hazel shrub that was buzzing with bee activity on a late winter day. This garden has come a long way, when we started it was a mix of feverfew and thistle, but now it is a combination of plants from seeds we started ourselves. We have many pollinator-friendly perennials and some more established plants we purchased to attract more bees. We are eager to move our native bee hives to the garden this fall. Looking forward to the rest of the year, we will work on extracting honey from the hives, cooking with honey and celebrating our hard work with an end of year trivia competition and party.

Finally, no 4-H year is complete without the 4-H Fair. This year the Fair runs from August 11-13th at the 4-H center. **Our success as a 4-H club relies on the generosity of our adult MCBA members and we**

would love to see some of you at the fair! If you have never been there, please consider stopping by to help for a couple of hours at the 4-H beekeeping table. Make sure to leave some time to explore the fair, to see all of the great projects all of the clubs enter and the fun entertainment and competitions. We are at the fair on Thursday and Friday evenings and from morning until late afternoon on Saturday. Please contact Michaeleen (mpacholski@yahoo.com) if you can help. This fair is the county fair for Montgomery County, where all residents, regardless of age, enter art, canned goods, crafts, vegetables and fruits, and of course honey and wax products. This is a great opportunity to have your products judged before the Farm Show!

Michaeleen Pacholski

First Annual Queen Rearing Workshop at Pennsylvania State University, May 2011

The first annual Penn State Queen Rearing Workshop was held at the Chemical Ecology Lab and the Arthropod Research Facility (aka Gypsy Moth Lab) on the Main Campus in University Park, PA. The instructors were Dr. Christina Grozinger (Director of the Center for Pollinator Research), Warren Miller (President, PA State Beekeepers Assoc.), Maryann Frazier (Sr. [Apiculture] Extension Associate), Holly Holt (PhD student) and Elina Lastro Nino (PhD Candidate). The workshop consisted of lectures, demonstrations and hands-on practice. The class was limited to 12 individuals to allow full participation by all the attendees. Dr. Grozinger discussed queen rearing biology and queen selection. Warren presented information on setting up colonies for queen rearing and mating. He also discussed plans for establishing a PA Queen Rearing Program. Maryann discussed and demonstrated several queen rearing techniques that do not require grafting. Elina taught larva grafting techniques and Holly discussed nosema biology & testing/identification. Two Masters degree students made lunch-time presentations on Drone Mating Behavior (Gabe Villar) and Swarming Behavior (Jessica Richards).

To ensure that attendees had ready access to the workshop instructors and practicum supplies, attendees were split into two groups. While Group A practiced grafting with Elina, Group B practiced alternative queen rearing techniques with Maryann. Attendees also had the option to view an informative video regarding artificial insemination equipment and techniques for virgin queen bees. As we practiced grafting, Elina helped us select larva of the appropriate size (age). As Maryann said, 'if you can easily see the larva, they are too old to graft.' We also had the opportunity to test for hygienic behavior using Marla Spivak's liquid nitrogen technique. On Saturday, we sacrificed a ~100-cell block of sealed brood on selected brood frames with either liquid nitrogen or with a pin, to determine if worker bees would

remove the dead larva. On Sunday, we determined the percent removal of the dead brood as a marker of hygienic behavior. Other field-based practice included varroa mite counts using either a 'sugar roll' technique or sticky board assessment. Additionally, we were able to graft from select Penn States bee stock (VHS, Carniolan or PSU survivor stock) with the goal of having queen cells to put in our own hives. This was a truly excellent workshop which we highly recommend to anyone interested in raising their own queens. A photo of the instructors and participants is below.

Finally, please be sure to go online to see what's happening at the new Center for Pollinator Research at Penn State; the members of this Center do some pretty neat pollinator research (<http://ento.psu.edu/pollinators>). Please be sure to check out the link for a story titled, 'Queen of Green', featuring our very own Maryann Frazier, Christina Grozinger, and Warren Miller!

Vincent Aloyo & Brian Marcy



Tip and Tidbits **By Mark Antunes**

Q. What can I do if I find my hive has a capped queen cell?

A. I get this question frequently. If this happens to you, it is possible to salvage the situation and prevent losing half of your adult bees and honey. Here is what I would do: If you find a capped swarm cell low on a frame (not a supercedure cell which would be located in the middle of the frame and up), look for the queen. If you find her, remove her with whatever frame she is on and a couple extra frames of honey/pollen and capped brood and put them into a nuc. An empty nuc and spare frames will be a life saver in this situation. If you want to give the old queen and the new colony in the nuc a better chance at survival, shake a couple of frames of nurse bees into the nuc (but not the one with the queen cell you want to save). Then close up the nuc and move it to another location so the field workers do not go back to the hive from which you removed them.

Now, go back to your original hive and check it thoroughly for swarm queen cells. Make sure to hold the frames in a vertical position and in the orientation they are in the hive as you inspect for queen cells. Cell producers say rolling the frames can damage the pupa. (Rolling is rotating the vertical plane of the frame turning it over from front to back or positioning the bottom of the frame up to look down at the bottom of the frame. To look at the bottom of a queen cell, lift the frame above your head and look up). Select the best one or two queen cells to be saved and cut out all the others. It is possible for a hive to send more than one swarm if more than one queen is available; the colony that was going to swarm will think it has already swarmed and hopefully not do so. If the new queen is not suitable or does not return from a mating flight you can reintroduce the original queen back into the hive after you are sure the replacement queen is dead or is not suitable. Now that was easy!

Bees and Honey and Bears, Oh My! **(or A Story We Never Wanted to Write)**

Yes, I'll admit it publicly. Dad and I lost both our hives this past winter. But we put on brave faces, stitched up our wounded pride, and bought two new packages, each with a freshly marked Queen. That Saturday pick-up date couldn't come soon enough. Finally, driving home with the back seat buzzing, we giggled with glee as we discussed the honey we would harvest this year. Our new packages got the benefit of built out foundation and a little left over honey. We dumped them in and contentedly strolled back to the house. Our mutual delight wouldn't last long.

Early the next morning, my phone rang. Dad was jabbering on the other end of the phone. "What? What? I don't understand you!" I barked. Finally, he howled loudly and clearly, "**A bear knocked over the hives!**" Ten minutes later, in my pajamas and boots, I was peering into an upside down deep box.

We looked at each other mournfully. "This was going to be the year," I groaned. "We just got them started," Dad wailed. Together we puzzled and cried, "What will we do? What will we do?" Slowly it dawned on each of us. Dad looked at me with determination in his eye. I tied my boots a little tighter. Simultaneously we yelled, "We gotta protect these honeybees!" I swear I heard a buzzing roar come from an overturned hive.



We manipulated the overturned deeps back into place. We called everyone we could think of for advice. We

Googled as fast as our fingers would fly. We called the Game Warden. We got very, very busy. Many hours later, thanks to instructions found on-line, our hard work, and the help of two generous friends, we had a full fledged electrified bear fence surrounding the hives. We hung bacon strips on it to attract the bear's mouth to the fencing (note the bacon in the photo).



Two days later a Game Warden set up a baited bear trap. I worried that the bear might know how to read (see photo below). Dad worried that the bear would find the bait - some donuts and cookies - less enticing than our bees' honey. But overall, we each felt a tiny bit better.

After 2 weeks a Game Warden told us that the bear had moved further north, so he removed the trap. But, a week later, at 8:30 on a sunny Sunday morning, Dad watched a black bear playing near the hives. It looked peaceful and beautiful.

Regardless, Dad shot into the air to scare it off. It ran. That night, as dad slept, it ambled back. No playing this time. It ignored the bacon. It nosed through the wires of the electric fence and tore them apart. It mashed up one of the hives (and I do mean mashed, long gone, *finito!*). It ate . . . and ate . . . and ate. Then it threw around the second hive. Now that was one big, sweaty, honey covered, bee-mania clean-up, and too traumatizing to photograph. So . . . the bear trap was set up once again, but baited with honey this time. Who can resist honey? Not the bear, and the next morning the poor thing was crashing against the trap's door, trying to get out. The Game Warden sedated her and toted her away to release her into the deep woods. We figure that somewhere in the wilds of the Poconos, a bear is frolicking with a little of our bees' hard work - in the form of honey - in its belly. While she has her fun, Dad and I are knee-deep in articles about bear prevention. Bees and honey and bears, Oh My (aching head)!



MARKETPLACE



If you have beekeeping-related products to sell or services to offer,
please send your advertisement to the newsletter editor at:

News@montcobeekeepers.org

In order to promote or advertise beekeeping classes or products and services in the MCBA newsletter or on the MCBA website, you must be a member in good standing.

Get a jump start on your new colony or split

I have 40 drawn out deep frames that are 2 years old, half with food stores/pollen. All have been frozen more than 4 days. Offered at @ \$5.00 each, OBO. Contact Margaret Zittel 215-534-6503

Free!

Several issues of ABJ and Bee Culture from 2003 and 2004. Free to a loving home. Contact Vincent Aloyo at vincent.aloyo@gmail.com

MCBA Beekeeping Course Calendar
Fall 2011

October 2011

October 1 – Southeastern PA Honey Bee Symposium, SEE ATTACHED FLYER

October 11 - Executive Board Meeting

Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m.

November 2011

November 5 – MCBA Fall Banquet

Plains Mennonite Church, 4:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

November 8 - Executive Board Meeting

Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m.

November 11-12 – PSBA Fall Meeting

Country Cupboard, Lewisburg, PA

December 2011

December 10 – Holiday Gathering (to be determined)

December 13 - Executive Board Meeting

Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m.

**News Release MCBA VOLUME 93 ISSUE 3
July 2011**

MCBA Motto: "Beekeepers Helping Beekeepers"

MCBA OFFICERS and Executive Committee Members – 2011

President	Mark Antunes	honeyhillfarm@verizon.net		
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Exec Comm Mem	Harold Jenkins			
Exec Comm Mem	Vince Aloyo	Vincent.aloyo@gmail.com		
PSBA Rep	Harold Jenkins			

MCBA WEBSITE!

www.montcobeekeepers.org

Check out the MCBA website for news updates and items of interest. Pass the address to anyone you know that may be interested. Email addresses have also been set up so you can communicate with the board.

Contact the Newsletter Editor at News@montcobeekeepers.org

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association Membership Form

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email Address _____

Phone Number _____

Dues are applied on a calendar year basis. January 1st to December 31st

New membership _____ Renewing membership _____

MCBA DUES \$10.00 per *household per year \$ _____

**PSBA DUES \$20.00 for one person per year or \$25.00 per household per year \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

*Household = 2 adults and all children living at one address.

**PA State Beekeepers Dues are recommended in order to encourage research on bee health, and promote efforts to dissuade local township and boroughs from restricting beekeeping. You will also benefit from the 10 annual state newsletters and information sharing.

Mail to: MCBA PO Box 203, Hatfield, PA 19440 or renew online at www.montcobeekkeepers.org

**MCBA
PO BOX 203
HATFIELD, PA 19440**

**3rd
Annual**



Southeastern PA Honey Bee Symposium



**Registration
includes:**

Featured Seminar

*All-Day Beginner
Beekeeping
Course*

Workshops

Garden Tours

Lunch

Honey Tasting

**Visit Our
Vendors**

- *Books*
- *T-Shirts*
- *Beeswax Candles*
- *Apiary Supplies*
- *Honey Sales*
- *Hive Products*
- *More....*

Saturday, October 1, 2011

8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Registration starts at 7:30 am

Temple University/Ambler Campus

Student Center Auditorium

580 Meetinghouse Road, Ambler, PA

Featured Seminar Speakers:

- **Tammy Horn, PhD**
- **Randy Oliver, MS**
- **David Tarpy, PhD**

\$50 at the door; \$45 with early registration

\$40 Students

Registration includes lunch

Find registration details on the MCBA website

www.montcobeekeepers.org