

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

News Release MCBA

Vol. 93 Issue 4 - October 2011

MCBA Motto: "*Beekeepers Helping Beekeepers*"



Fall 2011 Calendar of Events

October

October 1 – Southeastern PA Honey Bee

Symposium - Attached is a photo of the PA Honey Queen with this year's raffle winners

October 11 - Executive Board Meeting, Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m.

November

November 5 – MCBA Fall Banquet, Plains Mennonite Church, 4:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. – See attached flyer

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 – See attached flyer

December

December 13 - Executive Board Meeting, Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m.

CALLING ALL NEW BEEKEEPERS (and others!) **The M.C.B.A. 2012 Beginning Beekeepers Course**

If you have wanted to raise honeybees but would like a little guidance, or have been raising honeybees and would like to learn more from long-time beekeepers – we have the perfect solution for you! For the **18th year**, the Montgomery County Beginners Beekeeping Course offers classes that are timely to your seasonal beekeeping needs. See the attached flyer for details!



Observations from the Apiary and a Farewell

If you are keeping record books, this was a season to record! Our region was deluged with over 30 inches of

rain in the months of August and September. For all of you novice beekeepers and new-bees, I can assure you that this rain was not a good thing for your bees. Due to the rain, your bees were stuck in the hives far more than they should have been during these important months. As a result, they were prevented from foraging to supply the colony during the late summer/early fall, a time when there is less of a nectar flow. Even worse, when they did manage to get out the nectar had been washed out of the blossoms.

As those in the beginner class saw with the 4-H hives in August - those hives were light and one hive required immediate feeding or it would most likely have starved. Thanks to Walt Fitzgerald and Scott Famous, the hive received four gallons of sugar syrup starting the next day and during the following two weeks. When we went back a month later during the September class, the bees were alive but still had no real reserves to show for all they had consumed. Still, that beats the cost of a new package in the spring, the effort to keep moths and beetles out of a dying hive, and the need to store unused comb.

Just to sustain my colonies, I have been feeding them since I extracted honey in early July. I ramped up my efforts in September and into early October. To date, I have mixed up over 500 pounds of sugar into syrup and fed it to about 60 colonies. At the current cost of sugar, that is about \$250 in sugar alone. I think one can safely say that any time you are feeding as much or close to as much as the amount of honey you extracted from established colonies, things are out of balance.

Aside from causing me extra effort and expense, the wet weather was disappointing because I really love the classic September weather when the sky is clear blue, the temperatures are in the mid 70s, and the humidity is low. That is the perfect time for me to prepare hive equipment for the next season. I get out my table and miter saws and set up my outdoor wood shop. I make a mess, let the saw dust fly, and then blow everything off with a leaf blower. I use my super-stylish painting and drying rack to weatherproof my wood – two 55 gallon drums with some 2x4s on top of them. It ain't exactly pretty but it sure gives the garter snakes a place to hide

during the summer. Come to think of it, maybe I should apply for a grant to study environmental micro-habitats created by beekeepers' hard work. I think I could sell the title at least. Actually, counting snakes would be easy compared to keeping my colonies strong and stable.

Beyond beekeeping, I have been thinking about our club. I would be remiss if I did not encourage all of you to come out to our annual fall banquet. The food will be provided by the same wonderful caterer we had last year! And, as usual, the desserts will be fantastic because everyone brings his or her specialty. The fall banquet is truly one of those times when it is worth eating until it hurts. In fact, I am contemplating starting my stomach stretching training regimen now. You should try it yourself - just don't eat all day and then stuff yourself in the evening. By the time the banquet is here on Saturday November 5th I should be able to eat for hours.

Another reason to attend our fall banquet is that it provides you with the opportunity to take part in the election of the new officers for the M.C.B.A. We need our members to step up and **fill these positions and help sustain our club as a worthwhile and thriving organization.** I must say that it is with mixed emotions that I write this article. This will be my last newsletter entry at the president of the M.C.B.A. My second term will end as of the evening of our fall banquet.

Over the past 3-1/2 years, my time in office has been rewarding on many levels and I am honored that you, the members, have allowed me serve as your president. Over these years, I have been privileged with the support of a working group of dedicated M.C.B.A. members who have done much to create the successes that we have experienced these past few years - from former presidents and members of the executive board, to those who currently serve on the board and on the symposium committee. These folks have given much time and energy to make our club all that it is today. I am deeply indebted to all of you. Whatever achievements and goals that have been reached are directly attributable to that core group of our membership. None of the good things that we do, from the picnic, to the banquet, to the Southeastern PA Honey Bee Symposium, to this great newsletter, could have happened without those who have served on the executive board and the Southeastern PA Honey Bee Symposium Committee during my time in office.

What motivated me to assume this role was my feeling that it was my turn to give something back to the organization that had provided me with the opportunities and knowledge that have helped me out so much. It is with that in mind that I say to all of you (from beginners to those with years of experience) - if you like what the M.C.B.A. is doing and want to see it continue to grow and thrive, **step up, join in, and help move our efforts forward.**

This organization will soon celebrate its 100 birthday! That in itself speaks volumes about the attitude and generosity of this trans-generational group and the ties that bind together people from all walks of life of varied social and political persuasions to the common interest of beekeeping. And I, as those who have come before me and will come after me, am part of the stream of people who have maintained and exemplify our club's motto - "Beekeepers Helping Beekeepers". I am looking forward to the energy and vision a new president will bring to our group. Now it is time for one of you to follow me and continue that tradition. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your president!

Mark Antunes



MCBA's Treasurer In the News

As reported in North Penn's The Reporter (see <http://www.thereporteronline.com/articles/2011/09/12/news/doc4e6e96d7308a5397833369.txt>) on September 12, 2011, M.C.B.A.'s Treasurer Priscilla Bonsell and her husband Ed captured a large swarm of honey bees from a tree overhanging the sidewalk along Susquehanna Avenue in Landsdale. Copy and paste the link above into your browser and check out the great photos of Priscilla in action. Priscilla made sure M.C.B.A., and the Honey Bee Symposium, got a mention!



Tip and Tidbits By Mark Antunes

Q. Have any seasonal tips?

A. Tip your hive! Yes, I mean that you should literally tip your hive. Why? To see how much you need to feed your bees. One does not have to do an elaborate inspection of every hive to get a good idea how much of a winter food supply has been stored by a colony. Just step behind your hive and lift it slightly forward from the hand hold on the bottom box. Of course, this method requires that you know your own strength and what a hive with lots of honey feels like. I can tell you, it will not lift easily if the bees are storing serious amounts of honey or syrup you are providing to them.

This does not mean that you will be able to forgo a good top to bottom inspection very soon this fall. That is always a good idea before it gets cold. But your approach should be when in doubt, feed early and feed often. Unless you are sure every colony has at least one full deep or two mediums of stores on hand before it really gets cold, feed as much as they will take now. Oh

and don't forget to put on mouse guards and to treat with Fumagilin-B.

Mark

SEEKING VOLUNTEERS!

Pennsylvania Farm Show January 7-14, 2012
<http://www.farmshow.state.pa.us>

M.C.B.A. has entered the organization display contest at the farm show for several years. Check out our 2011 first place entry on the MBCA website! We are looking for volunteers to help design and create our 2012 display. Displays must promote honey and are judged on the following:

Organization Display

Public appeal.	10 points
Attractiveness, grammar and Professional appearance	10 points
Educational value.	20 points
Variety and quality of bee products.	20 points
Originality.	20 points
Time and effort of exhibitor.	<u>20 points</u>
TOTAL.	100 points

We usually meet twice in December to work on the display. The first time we brainstorm and come up with a theme. The second time, usually during Christmas break, we put the display together. Then a few people will go out to Harrisburg to set everything up. This is a fun way to get involved with the club. No skills are necessary just bring your enthusiasm. Contact Priscilla at cillab@earthlink.net to sign up.

Chester County Beekeepers Association's Vice President Cindy Faulkner Provides a Report on the MCBA's October 1st Southeastern PA Honey Bee Symposium

(Reprinted with permission)

We issued a number of reminders about this symposium in the CCBA newsletters and at our monthly meetings over the past several months, but I didn't see many familiar faces at this meeting. Too bad, because this was a REALLY good symposium organized by the Montgomery County Beekeepers Association! I carpoled to Ambler with a fellow CCBA member, Don Coats, chatting about bee this and bee that during what seemed like a very short 50 minute drive from Kennett Square. I offer this short sampling of my notes from the day's excellent speakers:

Tammy Horn, PhD, reviewed the surface coalmine reclamation work she has been helping to spearhead in eastern Kentucky since 2008. Through a unique (though often fraught) partnership with coal companies, environmentalists and government agencies, Tammy and her colleagues at Eastern Kentucky University have convincingly demonstrated to everyone that bees can

play an extremely important role in increasing the seed set rate of plantings and thereby speed the establishment of a forest under story on reclaimed surface mining land. Coal companies are required to post reclamation bonds, so they are pretty motivated to listen to any ideas that will speed up the process and get their bond money back sooner. As part of the current reclamation projects, the group has been able to include plantings of sourwood and blight-resistant American Chestnut seedlings on the reclamation sites. Wouldn't it be fabulous to see these 'redwoods of the east' thriving again?

David Tarpy, PhD, a native Pennsylvanian now at North Carolina State University, gave two excellent talks. The first was an exploration of the mating habits of queens, including consideration of why it makes evolutionary sense for queens to have multiple mates. He had amazing video footage, and presented a wealth of research comparing attributes of queens that had been mated with a single drone versus queens mated with multiple drones in the laboratory. A few tidbits from his talk:

- Queens typically mate with an average of 12 drones (with a range from 1-45)
- Drones normally develop from unfertilized eggs (as you probably know already!), but 'diploid drones' can result from a fertilized egg. It would take too much space in this newsletter for me to explain how this works, but suffice it to say that nurse bees recognize that these are unviable creatures and they are cannibalized, leading to the creation of 'shot brood'.
- Experiments showed that workers preferred pheromone extracted from multiple-mated queens to that of single-mated queens.
- Honeybees have more disease problems than any other social insect.

Dr. Tarpy's second presentation focused on the quality of commercial queens and his research on how attributes of queens have changed over the past 40+ years. He gave some handy tips on identifying a 'good' queen just by looking at her and observing clues within the hive.

Randy Olliver, who runs a small commercial beekeeping operation (700 colonies) in Grass Valley, California, was a very engaging, dynamic speaker whose first talk covered bee nutrition – what bees need when - and a wealth of information on how to identify a healthy hive. His second talk, equally energetic, covered natural treatments for mite & disease control and his rigorous approach to breeding as a means to select the 'best of the best' queens to build varroa and disease resistance within his apiary. He had numerous graphs showing the rise in varroa populations within the hive and the effect of various treatments at specific times over the course of the year. He provided far too much information to relay here - including a quite thorough review of easily spotted

symptoms of specific diseases - so just a few headline points:

- He views inadequate nutrition, toxins, parasites, and an unexpected spring or fall cold snap as the “Four Horsemen of Bee Apocalypse”, and stressed the critical importance of ensuring adequate – but not excessive – availability of protein in the spring.
- Spotty brood can be a sign of excessive hygienic behavior by nurse bees trying to decrease varroa burden.
- Varroa mites change the “bee/virus” dynamics within the hive. In addition to inflicting wounds in the bee’s exoskeleton, the mites also produce a wound healing suppressant. The open wounds invite bacteria and viruses to become established and some viruses can attack the bee’s immune system, predisposing them to further viral infections.
- He advocates the use of a sacrificial drone comb frame, thymol (Apiguard), formic acid, and powdered sugar as options for varroa control, but is strongly against the use of residual miticides (such as cumifos or fluvalinate) that can get into the wax. To optimize effectiveness of powdered sugar, dust at least once a month – preferably weekly during the spring, summer and fall – and remember that high humidity decreases the effectiveness of this treatment.
- Finding more than 15 mites in sugar roll or alcohol wash using ½ cup of bees is a clear

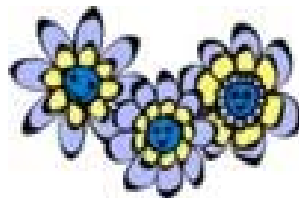
danger sign and varroa should be treated at once.

The symposium participants were treated to a quick tour of the Ambler campus arboretum, and we were given a list of plants that bees find yummy. Also, there were a few vendors at the meeting, which made the break times fun. I picked up some soap, lip balm, hand cream and candles made from hive products. I passed by the table of honey for sale, but I did buy a pretty cool long-sleeved T-shirt from the Mont Co Beekeepers to support their club. Ike from Forest Hill had a table full of wares there and had made a generous donation to the raffle, but I had just been out to his workshop to purchase some hive parts so I just stood nearby and talked loudly about how well-made his equipment is.

I strongly encourage each of you to look for the announcement for the 2012 meeting and hope you will attend. Our neighbors in Montgomery County really did a great job with this conference – excellent speakers, a great facility, and it was really well run. I can’t wait to go back again; hope to see you there!

Cindy Faulkner, VP Chester County Beekeepers

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.

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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.montcobeekkeepers.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@montcobeekkeepers.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 \$ _____

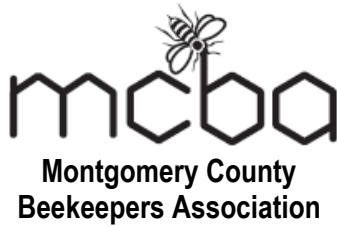
*Household = 2 adults and all children living at one address.

**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