



NEWSLETTER

Presidential Musings on Winter



I just returned from the Pennsylvania State Beekeepers Association Annual Conference in State College last night. An especially deep contingent of speakers presented at this year's conference. I highly recommend that you become, or remain, a PSBA member and attend the conference. You will always learn something.

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MCBA winter Calendar of Events

Holiday Potluck Party @ Ann and Charlie Breinig's House - Dec 11, 6pm -

1115 Camp Hill Avenue, Dresher, PA 19025. Please COME!! A-D, bring main dishes, F-K, bring salad or side dish, L-P, bring appetizers, Q-Z, bring desserts

Executive Board Meeting @ Montgomery County 4-H Center, Dec 13 @ 7:00 pm - 9:30 pm

Executive Board Meeting @ Montgomery County 4-H Center, Jan 10 @ 7:00 pm - 9:30 pm

General Meeting @ Montgomery County 4-H Center - Jan 26 @ 7:00 pm

MCBA Motto: "Beekeepers Helping Beekeepers"

DUES!!

Did you send in your \$15 dues payment (\$20 for families) in January? Don't miss notices of upcoming meetings because your dues lapsed.

Send your check today !

NAMETAGS ARE HERE!

In an effort to help everyone get to know each other (and especially for us older beekeepers who forget names), we will be furnishing nametags at meetings. Please pickup and wear your nametag at meetings and other MCBA events.

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MCBA Fall Banquet Extravaganza

by Ann Breinig

November wouldn't be November without our wonderful MCBA Fall Banquet! This year, as in years past, many of us gathered at the Plains Mennonite Church in Hatfield Township on Saturday, November 5 at 4 pm to socialize with our fellow beekeepers, eat a great meal, conduct some business, raise some money for the club and just have a great time together.



It all began with socializing and buying raffle tickets. The photos were up for the Beekeeper photo contest and Mark Antunes was preparing his voice for being master of ceremonies and auctioneer.

Then we all gladly dug into the honey inspired appetizers, the delicious main courses and, the fait de complit, the incredible desserts. Wow! What a wonderful feast!



The business meeting breezed by voting in new board members for 2017 and new officers. The new board members are: Don George, Geoff Anders, Regina Rhoa, Mike Newby, and Margaret Zittel.

Our officers for 2017 are : Dan Boylan, President; Kimberly Baccari, Vice President; Regina Rhoa, Secretary; and Geoff Anders, Treasurer.

We will now have a new membership family level of \$20.

Awards were given to the following people:

- Smoker Champion – Rachel Newby
- Door prizes – Margaret Zittel, Lynn Lopresti, and Greg Lehman.

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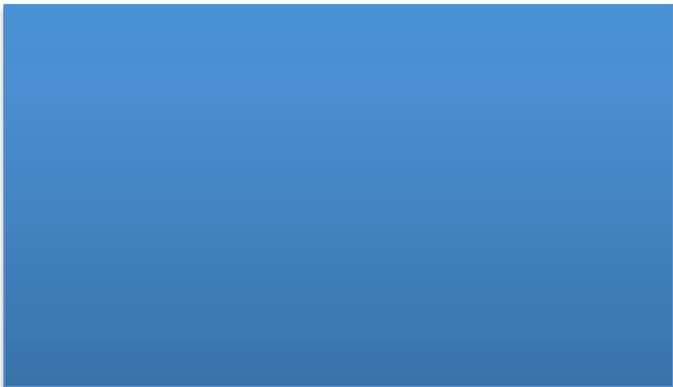
Banquet (Continued from P. 2)

- Photo contest - Jessica Gerani, who works with Con McNutt with 10 hives at Pennypack Farm.

PHOTO CONTEST WINNER

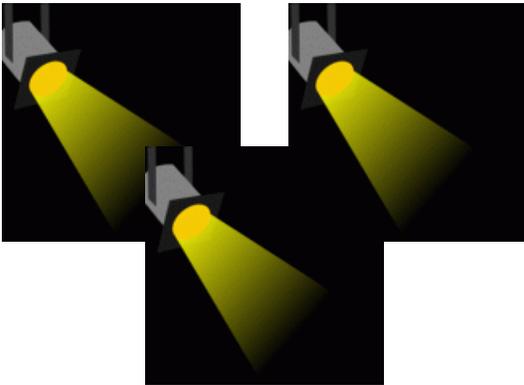


Then the excitement began! Mark Antunes, former MCBA president and auctioneer extraordinaire, inspired everyone for the club banquet auction. We had three wonderful items offered for auction, a beautiful nuc made by Don George, a stack of antique American Bee Journals and an incredible one-of-a-kind 8 frame cedar hive made by Tom Gamble.



Spotlight

A new Column by **Ann Breinig**



Our club has many interesting members. I'm sure you don't know all of them. So I thought I'd introduce you to some NEW and some VETERAN beekeepers in our club.

You all have probably seen this face at our meetings. He was in charge of food and drinks for our club meetings for many years.



For those of you who don't know this veteran beekeeper, he is Harold Jenkins. Harold lives in Landsdale and has kept bees since 1967.

Harold was reading Organic Gardening by Rodale Press is those days. Natural eating was very in vogue, no white flour or sugar, etc. One day Harold thought, "Wow! No white sugar. I could eat honey instead. He saw an ad in the newspaper inviting people to the Montgomery County Beekeepers. He called the number and got involved immediately. Since then he has varied from 2 to 13 hives and has always been surprised by all the honey his bees produce.

He best memory was when he was awarded Beekeeper of the Year by the PA State Beekeepers last year. He was shocked and totally delighted by the honor. If you see Harold at the meetings, say Hi.

Our New MCBA Secretary

by Ann Breinig



Our new club secretary for 2017 is Regina Rhoa. She is a new beekeeper, having kept bees for only 10 months. She saw an ad in the Inquirer and enrolled in the beginning beekeeping class. She lives in Collegeville and now has 4 hives.

She is enthusiastic about helping with the club and proud to be secretary. She has enjoyed beekeeping, watching larva grow into young bees. She has experienced problems, as all of us have, with hive beetles and hives that won't accept a queen, but she knows that these experiences are just part of the never ending learning process of being a beekeeper. We all wish her well in her new and important position.

Making Mead

by Adam from Haymaker Meadery

Mead is an amazing beverage. It's neither beer nor wine, but somehow falls in the middle of both. It's an ancient beverage, too, and in fact some people believe it's actually the oldest fermented alcoholic beverage on Earth. Fermented Honey dates back as early as 2000 BC based on chemical signatures found in Asian pottery. The ancient Greeks also drank Ambrosia, a delicacy made of honey and believed to be the drink of the gods. So what is mead exactly?

All alcohol is derived from the conversion of sugar by yeast. Whereas beer derives its alcohol from malted barley, and wine derives its alcohol from grape juice, mead is primarily made up of fermented honey. Although mead hasn't enjoyed the popularity that beer and cider has in the craft revolution, it finally seems to be getting some rightful attention, showing up in homebrew circles as well as being commercially produced. The best part about this resurgence is the quality of the mead being made: no longer is mead a cloyingly sweet beverage that takes years to mature. A drinkable mead can be made in under two months with only a minimal amount of time, effort, and money. So, if you have been thinking about making your first batch of mead, this article will help you to take that leap.

Prep

Mead making is a bit different than homebrewing. There is no boil involved and the attention and activity needed is spread out over a few weeks rather than a 6-hour brew day. [B:S editing note - Adam, you really need to let me take a look at your brew day. We can cut that thing down

substantially!] There is also less equipment involved, which means less to buy and less to clean.

The first thing you need to locate is honey. The better the quality of the honey, the better your final

product will be, but really any honey will do. I prefer to use honey from a local apiary, and they can be found by searching sites like honeylocator.com. Farmers markets are also great places to meet bee keepers from your area to score some good local honey.

If you have homebrewed before then no extra equipment is necessary. If, however, this will be your first time making mead then I would suggest speaking with your local homebrew shop about what you'll need to get.

Once you have your honey and equipment it's time to get started. To start, combine the honey and the water to make "must" (the meadmaking equivalent of wort). I prefer not to boil my must. The non-boil method better preserves the delicate honey character in the final product, in my experience. Also, honey has antiseptic properties which will keep your mead from any bacterial or wild yeast infection, so there's not much risk involved. Mix your honey using a wine whip or a large spoon, adding enough 80-90F water to bring your total volume to 5 gallons. Next, take a gravity reading. If you are happy with your gravity (mead comes in all strengths, so it's up to you!) then it's time to add your yeast nutrient. Yeast nutrients are necessary because, unlike beer, honey doesn't have enough nutrients on its own for a healthy fermentation. For nutrients, I prefer Fermaid-K but any wine yeast nutrient will work.

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Making Mead

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Sprinkle 4 grams of Fermaid -K into a water solution and stir it into your must. Don't worry about oxidation: whether you are using a wine whip or spoon, you want to introduce oxygen into your mead by splashing the must. The only thing left to do is add your yeast, so rehydrate it or sprinkle it on top (or, if you're using a liquid yeast, just pour it in), then close up your fermenter.

Fermentation

Like beer yeast, mead yeast likes and needs oxygen during the adaptation and growth stages of fermentation, but unlike beer for the first three days you want to open up your fermenter and stir out the CO₂ and introduce more oxygen. This is because CO₂ is toxic to yeast and can impart undesired flavors that take a while to age out. Degassing the CO₂ will lead to a mead that is drinkable faster. To degas, simply take your spoon or stir whip and agitate the must. Be careful and make sure everything is cleaned properly, and be sure to avoid a volcano-effect overflow when you are stirring out the CO₂ (the off-gassing may cause a head to form!).

By day 3 you should have a good fermentation going and it's now time to add the second addition of your yeast nutrients. Again, sprinkle 4 grams of Fermaid-K into your mead and stir. Once you have made this second nutrient addition, stirred out the CO₂, and introduced oxygen, it's time to leave your mead alone until it's done fermenting. Fermentation time can vary depending on honey variety, fermentation temp, and the original gravity, but a good average is about one month.

Post-Fermentation

After a month, take a gravity reading then wait three days and take another gravity reading. If the gravity is the same, you're done fermenting. Once Fermentation is complete you want to remove your mead from the inactive yeast, proteins, and heavy fats on the bottom of the fermenter and rack it into a new carboy. This will help you start the clearing process of your mead and start the bulk aging process as well. This is a great time to do a few minor flavor adjustments to your fermented mead. You might like to adjust the acid levels with an acid blend, back sweeten if your mead is not sweet enough with more honey (be sure to add potassium sorbate so fermentation doesn't restart) or add more spice or oak. I prefer to age my mead in a 5-gallon carboy rather than bottle right away, since I believe this gives the final product a more complete and rounded flavor. During the bulk aging process you will want to rack your mead at least one more time after about 2 months. If your mead cleared on its own after bulk aging consider yourself lucky: if not you will want to pick up a clarifying agent like Super-Kleer. Follow the directions and after it has cleared, rack it again into a clean carboy or your bottling bucket. Your mead is now ready to bottle. A 5 gallon batch will give you around 24 bottles (750ml) or two cases of mead.

Thinking outside the box

Meads can be as simple as honey, water, yeast, and nutrient or as complicated as you can imagine. Don't be afraid to try something new like barrel aging, adding a

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Making Mead

(Continued from P. 6)

funky or sour yeast, using the whey after making cheese instead of water, or even using an unconventional ingredient like peanuts. Also, meads don't always have to be 12% or more; I enjoy making low gravity meads in the 8% range. This way you can enjoy a few glasses with friends and not have to age your product for extended periods of time. Anything you can imagine for a beer is just as capable for mead, so go out there and get creative!

Some Recipes to Get your Started

This is a recipe for a simple mead that will give you a good sense of what your selected honey variety tastes like – you can build future recipes off of this one and get as crazy as you like:

Traditional Mead (Follow directions given in article)

15# Orange Blossom honey (or any variety you want to use)

Add water to achieve 5 gallons

Lalvin 71b yeast

8 grams Fermaid-K yeast nutrient

Here is my recipe for a pyment (a mead-wine hybrid) that recently won a first place ribbon at a massive local competition (nearly 1,000 entries):

Petit Syrah Pyment

36# Petit Syrah Grapes

9# Wildflower honey

Add water to achieve 5 gallons

Lalvin D47 yeast

8 grams Fermaid-K yeast nutrient

Have your local homebrew shop crush the grapes for you, add this must to your honey water solution. Stir and introduce oxygen for the first three days, after that punch down the grape skins everyday for a week. After a week remove the grape skins and matter from your mead and let fermentation complete.

Presidential Musings

(continued from p. 1)

Now that it is almost Thanksgiving it is time to begin thinking about a final varroa cleanup and to ensure that your hives are up to weight. Oxalic acid vapor and dribble are the preferred methods for varroa control this time of year when brood levels are low. See Randy Oliver's website for instructions on how to do an oxalic acid dribble. His website is :

<http://scientificbeekeeping.com/>.

Make sure the mice guards are installed. The window is quickly closing for feeding liquid food but we may be able to get away with it a little longer as the forecast still has flying weather for the next few weeks. Fondant, or winter patties, are the preferred food once flying is out of the question. Here's a link to a no cook sugar brick recipe if you prefer to make you own:

<http://www.beesource.com/forums/showthread.php?290641-My-recipe-method-for-sugar-blocks&highlight=Lauri+miller>.

MCBA Marketplace

Would you like to advertise in marketplace? If you have beekeeping-related products to sell or services to offer, please send your advertisement to the newsletter editor at: annbreinig@me.com

Southeast Pennsylvania

SPRING PACKAGES



Available for Pickup Saturday, April 1* or Saturday, April 29*.

(* Actual date depends on weather.)

Order your packages now for pickup after 12:00pm on Saturday, April 1* or Saturday, April 29*. At 2:00 P.M. on the day of pickup, see a demonstration on installing package bees. Conveniently located in the exact center of Montgomery County near Valley Forge, Norristown, and Lansdale turnpike exits. Package includes 3-pound workers with Italian queen. For more information or to download a package order form, visit www.pabeekeeper.com, email packages@pabeekeeper.com, or call 610-584-6778.

Worcester Honey Farms, 2011 Shearer Road, Lansdale, PA 19446

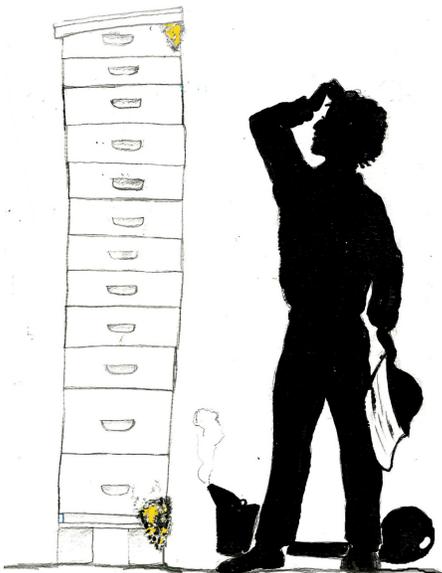
Southeast Pennsylvania

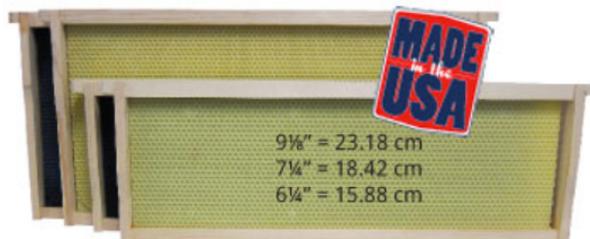
Hands-on Beekeeping Class

This course is scheduled for five Sunday sessions from February thru July at Worcester Honey Farm. Only 25 people for each group of classes will be accepted and advance registration is required.

The instructor is committed to present a knowledgeable and enjoyable, interactive, and intensively hands-on workshop. We are friendly and encourage you to contact us throughout the course for advice, help, or a sympathetic ear.

To reserve a spot or get more information, visit www.pabeekeeper.com and download a registration form, email HandsOn@pabeekeeper.com, or call 610-584-6778.





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MCBA LEADERSHIP TEAM 2015-2017

MCBA Leadership Team 2015-2017

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Vice President	Tim Cherry	zendiver4@gmail.com
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Send in your Dues today for Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

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 \$15.00 per household* per year \$ _____

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

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

**** We recommend:** that you also pay dues for PA State Beekeepers 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. (*household = 2 adults and all children living at one address.)



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