

Presidential Musings on Spring



The spring is finally here, or is it summer? The weather sometimes keeps us guessing. Packages and nucs are arriving weekly from typically Georgia or California. I hived five packages today. You just can't have too many bees, I tell myself often. My scale hive is confirming what my eyes see by indicating

that a slight honey flow is beginning. I see plants in bloom and the scale says the hive is no longer losing weight and gaining slowly. Hopefully, the warm winter followed by a couple of weeks of brutal cold didn't trick our major honey plants into making blooms early, only to freeze. I hope I haven't lost this year's black locust flow. It's too soon to tell.

I want to welcome once again all of those new to beekeeping. This is the fun time of year for beekeeping. The hives

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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!

Have you been wearing your nametag at our meetings? We all want to be able to call each other by name without the embarrassment of telling someone you don't remember their name. PLEASE WEAR YOUR NAMETAGS, PLEASE.

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MCBA Spring Calendar of Events

General Meeting @ Montgomery County 4-H Center
- Apr 27 @ 7:00 pm

2nd Year Beekeepers' Class @ Montgomery County 4-H Center - May 2 @ 7:00 pm

Beginner Beekeepers Course @ Montgomery County 4-H Center - May 11 @ 6:00 pm

General Meeting @ Montgomery County 4-H

Center- May 25 @ 7:00 pm

2nd Year Beekeepers' Class @ Montgomery County 4-H Center - Jun 6 @ 7:00 pm

Beginner Beekeepers Course @ Montgomery County 4-H Center - Jun 8 @ 6:00 pm

General Meeting @ Montgomery County 4-H Center
- Jun 22 @ 7:00 pm

MCBA Wins Again at the 2017 PA Farm Show!

By Brian Marcy

In January this year, MCBA's County Exhibit won first place, and a \$500 premium, at the 101st Pennsylvania Farm Show! Each year, for decades, a dedicated, and not-so-varying, team of MCBA volunteers bring together their imaginative and research talents to create and display a public-minded educational exhibit at the PA Farm Show Complex and Expo Center in Harrisburg. Each annual display is created to showcase some aspect of the wondrous world of honeybees, along with the qualities, benefits and uses of the several samples of hive products that get displayed each year. The theme of our 2017 exhibit focused on creating honey bee and other pollinator-friendly gardens and habitats in backyards and in public places to feed, house and support honey bees and other insect pollinators. A sampling of exhibit themes from the recent past include hive products in the kitchen; medical uses of honey & other hive products; the making of queen bees by worker bees and by beekeepers; the life cycle and 'occupations' of the honey bee; and the diseases, pests, parasites and other threats to honey bee health. Many thanks and kudos are due to this year's Farm Show team: Joe Duffy, Bruce Gibby, Harold Jenkins, Dan Boylan and Brian Marcy.

Our MCBA County Exhibit is one of up to 5 possible County Exhibits that can compete each year at the Farm Show. In the past ten years, MCBA has placed 'First' in five of those years, and never less than third place – a proud record for the Farm Show's Department 22 – Apiary Products. MCBA can be just as proud of our many members who complete - and often win -



each year in the Department's 55 other classes of Apiary-related products and crafts including comb honey, extracted honey, beeswax, honey products (i.e., breads, cakes, pies and other food stuffs), mead and miscellaneous (i.e., honey frames, gift packs and individual & county-level exhibits). Competitors vie for premiums that range from \$5 to \$500. Visit the PA Farm Show website for more details about the various competitive exhibits and the respective Department 22 results from 2017 and past Shows, at www.farmshow.state.pa.us/results.aspx

After years of exhibiting in a side hall that could be easily over-looked by even fanatical Farm Show visitors, the Apiary section is now front and center in one of the most visible and visited areas of the Farm Show Complex – in the 'Main Hall' next to the famous and annual (since 1991) Butter Sculpture! Such a worthy position of prominence just inside the Maclay Street Entrance is a recognized achievement made possible by the sacrifices, tireless planning and annual work of beekeepers from around the state, but especially by those members from the Show's home county, the Capital Area Beekeeper's Association. Also integral to the Department's annual success is the

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MCBA Wins Again at Farm Show

(continued from P. 2)



work planned, performed and overseen by the Department's Chairperson and his/her staff of volunteers, many of whom seem perennial 'fixtures' of the Farm Show. In recent years, the Apiary Department's success has been attributable to PSBA past-President and Apiary Department Chairman Charlie Vorisek, with support from his wife, Cathy, and the numerous (and needed) volunteers from the PA Department of Agriculture, Penn State and beekeepers from across the state.

Although the competitive exhibits have been and continue to be a significant part of the Apiary Department's *raison d'être*, it is the educational displays, demonstrations and giveaways that now define the primary mission of the Apiary Department, of the other commodity-based departments, and indeed, of the Farm Show itself. In addition to County and Individual Educational Exhibits, the Apiary Department sets-up, maintains and staffs a week-long collection of displays, demonstrations and workshops with topics that are everything *Apis mellifera*, including honey extraction, cooking with honey, honey tasting, hive equipment, hive products, pollination and other bee-matters. A recently added display includes multiple observation hives with a large connected honey bee flyway to allow 'the girls' to get proboscis-to-nose with the thousands of interested visitors who pass through the Main Hall of the

Show each day. Another recent addition is the educational Farm Show AgExplorers program, a unique program that teaches visitors of all ages about Pennsylvania agriculture through fun, interactive and hands-on learning. Maps help to guide 'explorers' throughout the Farm Show complex to interactive stations. All stations are identified by an AgExplorer logo. In the Apiary Department, a child might use a stethoscope to listen to the 'music' made by worker bees or the queen in an observation hive or might assist in the assembly of a hive frame.

If the Main Hall Apiary exhibits are not reason enough to visit the Farm Show, then surely visitors come to the Farm Show's Food Court in the Weis Exhibition Hall where each year the PA State Beekeepers Association serves up more than 1,250 gallons of 3 or more different flavors of honey ice cream atop more than 680 pounds of honey waffles – yum! Yet another sweet reason to visit the Farm Show is the PSBA Honey and Hive Product Marketplace in the Main Hall where visitors can purchase honey, beeswax, pollen, royal jelly, propolis and any of a wide variety of value-added products that have been produced and provided by Pennsylvania beekeepers for sale.

The Farm Show began as a three-day exhibition in January 1917 in the 3-story brick building of the

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Swarm Prevention and Control

By Vincent Aloyo, PhD, Master Beekeeper

Congratulations if your bees survived the winter. The main honey flow will be upon us in several weeks. To obtain a good honey crop, a honey bee colony must have many bees (about 50,000). However, a populous colony is also more likely to swarm, leaving you with little or no surplus honey.

Swarming is colony reproduction; all organisms have the urge to reproduce. For a honey bee colony making more workers is not reproduction. To reproduce, they need to make a new queen; then the colony divides. The portion having the old queen leaves for a new home, whereas the other portion remains at the original location and has a new queen, whose development was begun before the swarm left. This division process is called swarming.

We don't completely understand the factors that initiate swarming, but crowding of the brood nest and diminished levels of queen pheromone certainly contribute to the swarming process. Thus, to mitigate swarming, prevent crowding of the brood nest. A simple procedure is to insert drawn frames into the brood nest (foundation also helps but use fewer frames of foundation than you would of drawn comb, as it takes work on the part of the bees to be able to use foundation). Caution: do not insert frames within the brood nest if cold weather is predicted. If the bees cannot maintain 93° F over the entire brood area, the uncovered brood will be chilled and die. Repeating this comb insertion procedure may prevent the development of the swarm urge.

However, many times the bees will decide to



swarm despite our best efforts to prevent crowding. A queen cup is the beginning of a queen cell and usually occurs along the bottom of the comb. An empty queen cup does not indicate swarming will occur. However, once there is an egg or larvae in what was formerly a queen cup, the structure becomes a queen cell, indicating that the colony will swarm. A queen develops more rapidly than a worker, taking only about 16 days for a queen to develop from an egg. The egg hatches 3 days after laying, the larvae is fed copious amounts of royal jelly for 4 days and the queen cell is capped at about 8 days. The prime swarm (one with the old queen) usually departs at about 8 days. Once a queen cell is discovered, the colony will swarm very soon but in less than 8 days. If the cup has a larva, the colony will swarm in 4 days or less (depending upon the age of the larvae and weather conditions). There are several procedures that usually (but not always) prevent swarming as detailed in the links below.

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Swarm Prevention and Control

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Pick a procedure and BEE prepared.

During swarming season (mid-April through May) I suggest that you check your colony for swarm preparation every 7 days. Controlling and preventing swarming requires a lot of time and effort but your work will reward you with a large honey crop.

Update April 9, 2017. Caught my first swarm today. Bee prepared!

Pagden method

<http://barnsleybeekeepers.org.uk/pagden.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCReKLV6CB4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-GD0oKQSB-c>

Snelgrove method

<http://barnsleybeekeepers.org.uk/snelgrove.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ky0nTQfyPSs>

Demaree method

<http://barnsleybeekeepers.org.uk/demaree.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQ6CE8nCvHQ>

General Information

<http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/swarmcontrol.html>



Spring at the MCBA of Pennsylvania

By Charlie Breinig



Matilda, a new beekeeper, holding a honeybee in her hand, at spring package delivery day at Worcester Honey Farms in Lansdale



Charlie Breinig, installing his new bee package which he purchased from Worcester Honey Farms in Lansdale



Wax dipping at the club's wax dipping event in Dresher, Pa. If you want to wax dip your boxes, be sure to sign up for the fall wax dipping event of MCBA of Pennsylvania.

MCBA Wins Again

(continued from P. 3)

Emerson-Brantingham Implement Company in Harrisburg, PA, known then as "The Pennsylvania Corn, Fruit, Vegetable, Dairy Products and Wool Show". Five thousand visitors were greeted by 44 commercial vendors (on the 1st floor) and were presented with 440 competitive exhibits ("mostly seed displays", on the 2nd floor) that paid out a total of \$1430 in premiums. Except for a 3-year period during World War II when the Farm Show complex served as a facility to train aviation mechanics and as a production line for building aircraft engines for the Army Air Force, the Farm Show has operated continuously during its 101-year history. Today, the PA Farm Show has grown and transformed into an eight-day celebration with 300 commercial exhibits, 6,000 animals, 10,000 competitive exhibits and one-half million annual visitors – the largest indoor agricultural event in the United States. Per Russell Redding, PA's Secretary of Agriculture, "The Farm Show remains the Commonwealth's premier opportunity for farmers

and agribusinesses to display the best of what they have to offer, to exhibit the latest technology, and given its timing in early January, to help our farmers plan for the year ahead. This show has become an annual tradition for families, giving those who are not involved in production agriculture a chance to learn just how much agriculture touches their lives." Admission to the PA Farm Show is, and always has been, free of charge!

The annual PA Farm Show also provides MCBA members the opportunity to share their knowledge, experience and respect for honey bees and apiculture with a public who is anxious to know more about honey bees, beekeepers and beekeeping. To that end, please consider volunteering some of your greatly needed and appreciated time and talents to support our annual Farm Show County Exhibit or any of the other Show activities that make the Apiary Department THE premier exhibit at THE premier agricultural event in the United States, and perhaps in the World!

Presidential Musings (Continued from P. 1)

are starting to boom and I hope you made it to our last meeting to hear about swarm prevention from your board member, Dr. Vincent Aloyo. Like he said, those frames of brood are thousands of bees waiting to fill your boxes.

If you haven't done it yet, get out there and inspect and see what you have. Swarms are only fun to catch when they are not your own. Scott Famous gave you an update on the cell program. Once again we will have cells from superior performing hives/queens to add to your apiary or to replace a poorly performing queen. Margaret Zittel has taken the lead to setup a great lineup for our general meetings and Mark is busy educating the 2017 new beekeepers.

There are many others behind the scenes trying to make your club an enjoyable educational experience. Please BEE a part of it. We get frequent requests this time of year to bring the magic of honeybees to events throughout the area. If you've taken Mark's course, you are definitely light years ahead of the public and can man/woman a stand with ease. These are typically low key events where people just want to

ask questions and no presentation is required. I did one today at an Agway and It was just me with a few beekeeping items and a little honey. Join along with others or visit one where your club members are to see what it is like. We'll start to get the info out as to where your members are presenting so you can help and learn at the same time. It will be included in the appropriate emails sent to all members.

The warm winter once again makes us likely to experience high mite loads, so stay vigilant. Make your plans for treating with supers on, if need be (Mite Away Quick Strips/ HopGuard II). Get out there and test for mites. We'll be focusing on this in the bee yard and beginning at the May meeting you can join us there and see it for yourself. Don't let not knowing how to do a sugar shake get in the way. We'll show you. Keep your veil sealed tight, hive tool sharp, smoker lit, and always think about what's next. You didn't choose to have as many as 60,000 stinging insects in a box in the back yard to get the best of you Did you? See you at the next meeting.

Beekeepers Helping Bees

By Pricilla Bonsell and Margaret Zittel and edited by Ann Breinig

We as beekeepers can help our bees survive and thrive in many ways. One important way to help them is to provide food and water.

- **Provide a water source** such as a birdbath, fishpond or other water feature. There are lots of low maintenance water features on the market now such as pond-less waterfalls. These can also be connected to your downspouts to help cut down on run off. Always be careful to provide a way for the bees to drink the water provided without drowning by including rocks or other objects, which protrude from the water, so that bees can be safe when drinking.
- **Plant native plants.** The animals, insects and plants have evolved together over thousands of years. These plants provide pollinators with food and shelter. Take your time to select the right plants for your location and conditions. Consider soil type, moisture and sunlight exposure. Plant large patches so the pollinators can find them. Beware of wild flower mixes. They often contain non-native fast growing species. Also avoid hybrids and cultivars. These have been bred for their uniformity, color, or flower color and type. Often their good qualities like high nectar and pollen have been bred out of them. True natives are genetically diverse.

The following is a limited list you could ponder or plant now: **Native Plants for Pollinators**

Trees

Red Maple – <i>Acer Rubrum</i>	March	50-70'
Sugar Maple – <i>Acer saccharum</i>	April	60-70'
Redbud – <i>Cercis Canadensis</i>	April	20-30'
Chokecherry – <i>Prunus virginiana</i>	April-May	20-30'
Black Locust – <i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	May	30-60'
Ilex opaca – American Holly	May	30-40'
Tulip Poplar – <i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	May-June	80-100'
American Linden – <i>Tilia americana</i>	June	60-80'

Shrubs

Pussy Willow – <i>Salix discolor</i>	April-May	15-20'
Oakleaf Hydrangea – <i>Hydrangea quercifolia</i>	May	5-8'
Highbush Blueberry – <i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>	June	5-10'
Winterberry Holly – <i>Ilex verticillata</i>	June	3-10'
Bottlebrush Buckeye – <i>Aesculus parviflora</i>	June-July	8-12'
Buttonbush – <i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	August	3-6'
New Jersey Tea Bush – <i>Ceanothus americanus</i>	Sept.	3-4'
Witch hazel – <i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	Sept.	15-20'

Perennials

Virginia Bluebells – <i>Mertensia virginica</i>	April	1*2'
Mountain Mint – <i>Pycnanthemum muticum</i>	July-Aug.	2-3'
Lance-leaf Coreopsis – <i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i>	June - July	2'
Anise Hyssop – <i>Agastache foeniculum</i>	June - Sept.	3'
Culver's Root – <i>Veronicastrum virginicum</i>	July - Aug.	5'
Helianthus – Perennial Sunflower	Aug.	5-6'
Swamp Milkweed – <i>Asclepias incarnate</i>	August	3-4'
New York Ironweed – <i>Vernonia noveboracensis</i>	Aug. - Oct.	5-7'
New England Aster – <i>Symphyotrichum novae-angliae</i>	Sept. - Oct.	4-5'

To get a more complete listing, BEE sure to **attend the club's general meeting on April 27** where:

- Peter Lindtner, accomplished horticulturist, photographer, and beekeeper, will present slides and information on Garden Plants for Honey Bees. With the recent decrease in available honeybee forage, and increased honey bee stressors as a result of varroa mites and viruses, there has been more focus on honeybee nutrition. Which flowering plants are better sources of nectar and pollen? Peter Lindtner has conducted extensive research on this subject, studying the plants and taking numerous samples and photographs, which culminated in his book "**Garden Plants for Honey Bees**". He will present photographs and information from his studies in an informative and entertaining program. You may want to consider purchasing a copy of his nationally recognized book to aide you in your endeavors to support honeybee nutrition.

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



Hands-On Beekeeping Class

Scheduled for five Saturdays/Sundays from January through July, maximum 25 students/class. The instructor is committed to presenting a knowledgeable & enjoyable, interactive, & intensely hands-on workshop. We encourage contact throughout the course for advice, help, or a sympathetic ear.

Spots still available. To get more info visit www.pabeekeeper.com.

Worcester Honey Farms,
HandsOn@pabeekeeper.com,
Lansdale, PA 610-584-6778.

Spring Nucs April ~8 & ~22 Packages

Sat, April 1* & 29*



The 23rd year working with package producers in same location—queen pedigree from overwintered feral colonies in PA & Michigan. Nucs are 5 deep frames. Pickup is five miles from Valley Forge, Norristown, and Lansdale.

**Join us for a package
installation demo at 2:00pm.*

Download a reservation form or get more info at www.pabeekeeper.com.

Worcester Honey Farms,
Packages@pabeekeeper.com,
Lansdale, PA 610-584-6778.



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Don't buy queens: Raise you own!

Queen Rearing Course at Delaware Valley University

Taught by

Master Beekeeper, Vincent Aloyo, PhD

Make daughter queens from your best colony. Use your new queens to requeen nonproducing colonies or to make splits or nucs for overwintering. This two-day course will include both lectures on why and how to raise queens using the Cloake Board method. Hands on experience with grafting will complement lectures on queen rearing and queen breeding. Additional lectures will include how to setup a mating nuc and how to overwinter a nuc. Each student will receive a queen bar frame, plastic queen cell cups, and a grafting tool; if successful, the student may have queen cells to take home nine days later.

Intensive weekend May 20-21, 2017: Saturday 9am-4pm, Sunday 9am-3pm. Queen cell pickup: Monday May 30, 2017, 6-8pm. Delaware Valley University is located just outside of Doylestown, PA.

For further information or to register, see:

<http://vincemasterbeekeeper.com/courses/>

MCBA LEADERSHIP TEAM 2015-2017

MCBA Leadership Team 2015-2017

President	Dan Boylan	dpboylan@comcast.net
Vice President	Tim Cherry	zendiver4@gmail.com
Secretary	Kimberly Baccari	kimberly@baccariprowriters.com
Treasurer	Cindy Yaskowski	cindy@yaskowski.com

MCBA Board of Directors 2015-2017

Queen Rearing Project	Scott Famous	famous55@verizon.net
Hive Steward	Walt Fitzgerald	fitzgerald106@comcast.net
Website Liason	Elinor Spring	T5Springer@aol.com
Queen Rearing Project	Dr. Vince Aloyo	vincent.aloya@gmail.com
2014 PA Beekeeper of Year	Harold Jenkins	no e-mail
Communications	Rachel Newby	buchanan.1978@gmail.com
Others on the Board:	Chris Mancinelli	mancinc@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor	Ann Breinig	annbreinig@me.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.)



NEWSLETTER

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association
PO Box 903
Skippack, PA 19474

[Recipient]

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

Address Line 3

Address Line 4