



# THE PENNSYLVANIA BEEKEEPER

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The Official Organ of the Pennsylvania State Beekeeper's Association

## A Note To My Friends...

I hope you have had a good season so far. Many around PA are having a great summer flow despite the early heavy swarming we saw this spring. The rain has not been as plentiful as last season; however, we seem to be getting just enough to fill those flowers with nectar. I have also seen a steady pollen flow this summer.

I would like to take a minute to thank the beekeepers of the Burgh Bees and Beaver Valley Beekeepers who had a very successful summer picnic a few weeks ago. We were hosted at Chatham University in Squirrel Hill. This neighborhood is not the typical neighborhood. The homes that lined the streets were like castles. They were magnificent to see. The streets were made of old brick and cobblestones. It was very quaint and reminded me of years past when my hometown of Bellefonte had brick streets. I started driving down the street with my head in the clouds reminiscing. Well, about fifty feet into the street I think I bit my tongue three times and I quickly thought of how badly this community needs some pavement. I understand the community will not allow that to happen. I don't really blame them but I am glad I don't use the street every day. Thanks Western PA beekeepers, I really enjoyed the day and was very happy to stand in the first community apiary in the United States. It is amazing how these folks are embraced by the community and even lease the ground from the city. Then on the other hand some communities are trying to ban or limit beekeeping because of one loud and ignorant citizen who has an unfounded fear of honey bees and always has someone in the family who is deathly allergic. We need to stick together and assist each other to defeat these efforts every time. Currently, Plymouth Township in Montgomery County is the latest to fall victim to creating an ordinance based on fear.

I also want to put a plug in for the Eastern Apicultural Society's (EAS) summer conference in Burlington, Vermont. This is one of the best honey bee conferences you can attend. It is a great way to spend some time listening and talking to some of the most well known beekeepers and honey bee researchers in the world. I also hear the week EAS is being held,

August 13-17, is summer in Vermont so I can't wait to see this area of the US.

One last thing I would like to share with you in the hope that my experience may help you. We have heard a lot about ticks the past several years and the disease they carry known as Lyme's disease. Well, while getting ready for work one morning a few months ago I noticed the tell-tale rash and reintroduced myself to my doctor. Of course he had to comment on how long it had been since I was there, and then he had to tell me I was overweight. Once we were done discussing the normal things doctors like to talk about I gave them a couple of tubes of blood and tested positive. I thought I was just getting very lazy, as it has been a struggle to maintain my concentration and even stay awake all day. I learned that doctors are like beekeepers when it comes to this disease as each one has their own opinion and most do not agree. I have also learned that Lyme's disease affects everyone in a different way from one extreme to the other. I am not looking for sympathy from anyone but just want everyone to be aware of the problem as we all enjoy the outdoors and need to be protected. By the way, I never saw the tick that got me; I only saw the rash.

Keep your chin up and get into your bees. We only have a few short months left.

Warren Miller,  
PSBA President

### In This Issue

Side Notes	3
Picnic Highlights	5
Apiary Products Results & ID Reader	7
Officers and Membership Information	8
Upcoming Dates	9
Plymouth Twp. Ordinance	11
What Would Bill Do	13
Jeremy's Corner	15
Penn State Online Beekeeping Course	17
Honey Queen Report	19
Nature Notes	21
Note from Craig Cella & For Sale Ads	24

## Side Notes

### Summer Picnic

I would like to sincerely thank Burgh Bees for hosting the PSBA summer picnic. I'm not a fan of driving inside Pittsburgh, but Chatham University was worth the three wrong turns it took to get there. (I should have followed the directions in the newsletter and not my old Garmin.) It is always great to speak face to face with people after many months of emails. As always, the time is too short. Never the less, Burgh Bees did an outstanding job in planning and keeping on schedule. Our meeting ran over as usual. Simply too many topics to cover. The food was excellent. The tent setting in the courtyard was very nice. And they ordered exactly the right weather. I apologize that I couldn't stay for the apiary visit. I needed to get back home to the festival where my wife, Cathy, was holding down the fort, selling honey.

Burgh Bees is a leader in working with local government to keep honeybees inside the city. They need continued strong support. They are setting a model that we would like to use all over Pennsylvania. There is no relaxing to make it successful. The education never stops.

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### EAS/ABF

The executive meeting voted to spend some money in support of both EAS (Eastern Apiculture Society ([easternapiculture.org](http://easternapiculture.org)) and ABF (American Beekeeping Federation ([abfnet.org](http://abfnet.org))). These conventions do not come often to Pennsylvania, and never in the same year. As host state, it is appropriate that PSBA offer financial support. We would expect the same from any other host state. It happens that ABF will come to Hershey in January and EAS will come to West Chester in August of next year, 2013. Both are premier events in the world of beekeeping.

PSBA will sponsor the closing banquet/dance at the ABF convention. If I'm not mistaken, this is also the evening where the new American Honey Queen will be crowned. Pennsylvania has been proud to have back-to-back American Honey Queens. (No pressure Jess) There are no losers. All these girls are outstanding ambassadors and do a remarkable job for all beekeeping.

The preparations for EAS have fallen largely on the shoulders of the Montgomery County Beekeepers Association. This club has already been fundraising and putting in hundreds of hours to make Pennsylvania shine next August. With the help of PSBA, they will be able to bring leaders of the industry to speak and teach at EAS 2013.

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### FARM SHOW

The Pennsylvania Farm Show is a single week-long event that brings thousands of people into contact with the Pennsylvania State Beekeepers Association. PSBA has three

points of contact and visibility at the annual Farm Show. PSBA operates the honey ice cream stand at the Food Court, the honey sales in the commodity area and the Learning Center in the exhibit area. The ice cream and honey sales support the PA Honey Queen promotions program. Those volunteers do an outstanding job each and every year. The Learning Center is PSBA's point of contact for educating the general public. Our presentation and volunteer engagement and enthusiasm has rubbed off. Other commodities will be adding Learning Centers this year. The Farm Show committee has noticed and complimented over and over.

Two points of interest to apiary exhibitors:

1<sup>st</sup>) The Farm Show has approved a new exhibit class that will include Sauces, Beverages and Dressings made with honey. Dig up your recipes.

2<sup>nd</sup>) **Dutch Gold Honey** will sponsor the 3<sup>rd</sup> place County Exhibit with a \$500 premium. First place was previously \$275. The remaining 4 place premiums will be increased to \$300, \$250, \$225 and \$200. A huge thanks to Maryann Frazier for spearheading this premium increase.

The Farm Show Committee has given Lee Miller and Charlie Vorisek permission to take early entries for the County and Individual exhibits. More details will be posted in the next newsletters.

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**Don't extract** that really perfect frame of honey. Build a display case and enter it for judging at the farm show. The 'frame of honey' was a new exhibit class beginning in this year. Just a few were entered. They were all impressive and such a good educational piece for the public's view.

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### PA Department of Agriculture Hive Inspection Budget

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is seeking alternative ideas for hive inspections. Due to budget cuts, this season left us with one full time field inspector. Rick and Karen, out of the PDA apiary office in Harrisburg, have been doing inspections as well. This is on top of the accounting and lab work they already need to do. The question or idea from PDA is: Could the hive inspections be overseen by PDA, but conducted by the industry? This is already done within other commodities, milk inspection being one. Anyone with an idea or concept is encouraged to contact Warren Miller or myself, Charlie Vorisek. There is no question that hive inspection is critical to keep diseases under control.

I contacted my local legislator after the new budget was passed. Un-officially, I was told there is money in the budget for 6 inspectors next season. It's a step in the right direction.

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### Over Treat For Mites?

I won't claim to be the best beekeeper. It's hard to think like a bug and harder to know what stresses your pet bugs.

(Continued on Page 5)

Side Notes (Continued from Page 3)

There has been a concerted effort to move away from ‘hard’ chemicals for mite treatment. We are largely using ‘soft’ chemicals, essential oils and powdered sugar.

I have seen a scenario more than once that has troubled me. Once with a new package and another with bees removed from a tree. Both situations didn’t start with many bees. The bees are already a bit stressed from getting yanked from one home and dumped into another. Both owners wanted to insure their bees were mite-free. So one of the first things was to treat. And thoughtfully they used just powdered sugar. Another used powdered sugar and Thymol jelly. Neither situation had any brood. I saw the end result. Both appeared to be over powdered. It takes some clean bees to help clean the dusted bees. Powdered sugar also contains cornstarch, which is not one of the easiest things for bees to digest. In the package bees, the queen was killed. The other absconded without a queen. Thymol may be considered a soft treatment, but it can be very hard on bees...even capped brood. (Experience talking)

We understand that when the brood cycle of the honeybee is interrupted, it also interrupts the mite reproduction cycle. Both package bees and bee removal process interrupt the brood cycle. A lot of mites drop off when the bees get shaken up. The bees can tolerate a few mites just fine. Treating in these cases proved more fatal than the mites. Any treatment, hard or soft, is a matter of “dosage”. If the population is large or small, the dosage must be considered.

My suggestion is when starting a new hive, keep it simple. (KISS: Keep It Simple, Stupid!) Just sugar water. Let the bees get established. Before treating for mites or any disease, sample the hive. Determine if there is a reason to treat. Even ‘soft’ treatments are not ‘natural’ and are stressful. It usually takes many brood cycles (months) before mite levels are potentially high.

Charlie Vorisek  
1st Vice President

PSBA Summer Picnic

The annual PSBA summer picnic was held Saturday, July 21st, at Chatham University in Pittsburgh. It was a beautiful day – just perfect for a picnic. The grounds were beautiful. Burg Bees and Beaver Valley beekeepers did a tremendous job of making us welcome. A delicious lunch was served on the grounds with the university furnishing hotdogs and hamburgers. Burgh Bees and Beaver Valley brought covered dishes to share with all who attended. There was a good variety and plenty of food for everyone. An opportunity to win one of several baskets was available to those wishing to participate in the Chinese Auction. The winners of the honey products were announced as were the winners of the “Just for Fun” baked goods contest. The people attending got a chance to taste and then vote on the baked goods. All were very good. Those that where interested then took a tour of the Burgh Bees apiary. It was a great day with lots of good conversation, seeing old friends and making of new ones. The 2013 picnic will be hosted by Montgomery County. We are looking for a county to host the summer picnic in 2014.

A big thank you to all who made this picnic a success!

Yvonne Crimbring,  
Secretary-Treasurer

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 [pabeel@frontier.com](mailto:pabeel@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.

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James N. Griesemer  
*Owner*



### Apiary Products Results

Below are the results of the apiary products show from the PSBA summer picnic held in July.

Comb Honey:

- Blue ribbon, Gilbert Buzza
- Red ribbon, Janna Thompson

Creamed Honey:

- Blue ribbon, Jim Bruckhart

Dark Extracted:

- Blue ribbon, Lucca Zgurzynski
- Red ribbon, Roberta Jones

Medium Extracted:

- Blue ribbon, Joseph Zgurzynski
- Red ribbon, Terry Shannor
- White ribbon, Annabella Zgurzynski

Light Extracted:

- Blue ribbon, Jim Bruckhart
- Red ribbon, Stephen Moll

Beeswax Molded or Designed:

- Blue ribbon, Jennifer Wood
- Red ribbon, Annabella Zgurzynski

Beeswax Dipped:

- Blue ribbon, Jim Bruckhart

Beeswax Commercial:

- Blue ribbon, Joe Zgurzynski

Best in Show:

- Joseph Zgurzynski for medium extracted honey

Submitted by Beth Goodwin

### June-July Identification Reader

I started keeping bees as a 4-H project when I was twelve years old, producing comb honey in the little box with one hive. Later I had as many as thirty hives. I currently have eighteen hives on different bee yards in York County, PA. I also help new beekeepers get started.

I've been in the York County Beekeepers' Association for years as president. I'm 72 years old and have seen a lot of changes in beekeeping over the years.

Nelson Brenneman  
Spring Grove

### Address Changed?

If you have changed your address (mail, email or temporary) please notify secretary Yvonne Crimbring. We have been receiving newsletters returned by the post office due to "temporarily away" or "incorrect address". This costs the association .50 per returned newsletter. Also please update your email address if you have made a change. These returns prevent you from receiving information pertaining to beekeeping and our association.



June 11<sup>th</sup> PA Honey Queen, Jessica Long, was in Palmyra where she spoke to 65 students at a summer camp. The students had the chance to try 5 different types of honey; their favorites were Orange Blossom and Blueberry.

**IF THE READER WHOSE MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES 4/13** and receives the newsletter at 10589 Ferguson Valley Road, Lewistown, 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 September 20<sup>th</sup>, 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.

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Mobile: 412-445-7872

**Joe Zgurzynski, Master Beekeeper**  
Email: [Joe@CountryBarnFarm.com](mailto:Joe@CountryBarnFarm.com)  
Mobile: 412-225-0930

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(These are for PSBA members ONLY!)			
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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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**Make checks payable to: PA State Beekeepers Association**  
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## Upcoming Dates To Remember



Deadline for the September issue of *The Pennsylvania Beekeeper* is **August 26<sup>th</sup>**.

### Lehigh Valley Beekeepers

Thursday, August 16, 7:00 p.m. at the Lehigh County Ag. Center, Allentown. "Mead, From Hive to Bottle?" Speakers: Marc Johnson, Sheree Krasley. Contact Steve Finke at 610-737-7676 for more information.

### 2 C's and a Bee Beekeepers

Sunday, August 19, at Prince Gallitzin State Park, Patton. Annual Picnic and Auction. For more information, contact Helen Evans at 814-472-7637, email [secretary@ccbee.org](mailto:secretary@ccbee.org)

### York County Beekeepers

Thursday, August 23, 7:00 p.m. at the Penn State York Campus in the meeting room of the John and Judy Ruhl Student Community Center Bldg. Contact Gail Leasure at 717-968-0911, email [snewgeese@yahoo.com](mailto:snewgeese@yahoo.com) for more information.

### Montgomery County Beekeepers

Tuesday, September 4, 7:00 p.m. in the Maple Room at the 4-H Center, Creamery. "Organic Beekeeping and Bio-dynamic Beekeeping" – speaker to be announced. For more information, contact Mark Antunes at 484-955-0768 or email: [honeyhillfarm@verizon.net](mailto:honeyhillfarm@verizon.net).

### Chester County Beekeepers

Saturday, September 8, 9:00 a.m. at the Stroud Preserve. Contact Charlie Karat at 610-998-1407, email: [ckarat54@gmail.com](mailto:ckarat54@gmail.com) for more information.

### Monroe County Beekeepers

Wednesday, September 12, 7:00 p.m. at the Monroe Co. Environmental Education Center, Stroudsburg. Contact Bob Armstrong at 570-620-9421, email [RJArmstrong1@verizon.net](mailto:RJArmstrong1@verizon.net) for more information.

### Susquehanna Beekeepers of NEPA

Friday, September 14, 7:00 p.m. at the Claverack Building, Montrose. Fall maintenance and winter preparation. Contact James Wood at 570-934-1166 for more information.

### Lehigh Valley Beekeepers

Thursday, September 20, 7:00 p.m. at the Lehigh County Ag. Center, Allentown. "To treat or not to treat" Speaker: Warren Miller. Contact Steve Finke at 610-737-7676 for more information.

### Capital Area Beekeepers

Friday, September 21, 7:00 p.m. at the Farm Show Building, Harrisburg. For more information, contact Linda Purcell at 717-566-6327, email [linda.sweetbee@gmail.com](mailto:linda.sweetbee@gmail.com)

### Beaver Valley Beekeepers

Monday, September 24, 7:00 p.m. at the Wetlands, Beaver Co. Conservation District Ed. Center, Aliquippa. For more information, contact Pattie Zyroll at 412-848-3506, email [pattie.zyroll@elkem.com](mailto:pattie.zyroll@elkem.com)

### York County Beekeepers

Thursday, September 27, 7:00 p.m. at the Penn State York Campus in the meeting room of the John and Judy Ruhl Student Community Center Bldg. Jennifer Berry, University of Georgia, will be the speaker for the evening. Contact Gail Leasure at 717-968-0911, email [snewgeese@yahoo.com](mailto:snewgeese@yahoo.com) for more information.

### PSBA Annual Conference

Friday and Saturday, November 9 & 10 at the Best Western Inn/Country Cupboard, Lewisburg. More information in next month's newsletter.

### Pennsylvania Farm Show

January 5-12, 2013, at the Farm Show Complex and Expo Center, Harrisburg. More information on volunteering your time and sharing your knowledge will be in future newsletters.

### 2013 North American Beekeeping

#### Conference & Tradeshow

January 8-12, 2013, at the Hershey Lodge, Hershey, Pennsylvania. [Read the announcement](#), then watch for upcoming details on the [ABF website](#)

### 2013 EAS Conference and Short Course

Monday-Friday, August 5-9, 2013, at the West Chester University, West Chester, Pa. (Currently in planning - visit [EAS website](#))



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## Plymouth Township Proposes Ordinance to Limit Beekeeping

By Jim Bobb, Past President of PSBA

We need your help! **Please write a letter of support for our fellow beekeepers!**

In Montgomery County, the Plymouth Township Council has proposed limiting beekeeping to lot sizes of more than 30,000 sq ft. Hives must be located 50' from property lines and 75' from any other residence. This will restrict beekeeping from 92% of the properties in the township. A requirement of a six foot high enclosure installed along the entire property line makes beekeeping financially prohibitive on the larger properties that do meet the setback requirements. The proposed ordinance is the result of safety concerns by a neighbor on the same block as a new beekeeper, who installed a pair of hives this past spring on a second story, rear deck of their house. See [http://articles.philly.com/2012-04-23/news/31387310\\_1\\_bee-stings-beekeeping-bee-journal](http://articles.philly.com/2012-04-23/news/31387310_1_bee-stings-beekeeping-bee-journal).

The safety concerns and good neighbor policies of beekeeping are addressed in the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's *Best Management Practices (BMP)* <http://www.pastatebeekeepers.org/pdf/BestManagementPractices.pdf>. Other townships in Pennsylvania, when enacting bee ordinances, have simply required beekeepers to sign the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's BMP before keeping bees. Shaler Township, home to Governor Corbett, enacted such an ordinance in 2006.

To this end, the PSBA passed the following resolution:

- WHEREAS**, the proposed bee ordinance for Plymouth Township in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania restricts beekeeping from 92% of the properties due to lot size and setback requirements; and
- WHEREAS**, a six foot barrier at the property line, completely enclosing the property, financially prohibits beekeeping in farms and larger properties; and
- WHEREAS**, the proposed bee ordinance does not allow for proper pollination of crops, as two hives per acre is the Penn State University recommendation for pollination of many crops and the proposed ordinance limits the number of hives to a maximum of two hives per property, regardless of the size of the property; and
- WHEREAS**, the setbacks and barrier restrictions are not based on science and do not increase the safety of neighboring properties beyond the safety measures provided by the *Best Management Practices* developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture; and
- WHEREAS**, intentionally or not, the proposed bee ordinance will restrict almost all beekeeping activity in the township; and
- WHEREAS**, bees are the only pollinators for apples and other early blooming orchard crops, and restriction of bees will prevent fruit set for these trees inside of the township;
- NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Pennsylvania State Beekeepers' Association and all beekeepers in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania raise their voice in objection to the proposed Plymouth Township Bee Ordinance and recommend that the township adopt an ordinance based solely on the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's *Best Management Practices*.
- RESOLVED**, this the 21<sup>st</sup> day July of 2012, at a semi-annual meeting of the Pennsylvania State Beekeepers' Association.

Visit [www.saveourgardens.org](http://www.saveourgardens.org) for contact addresses and more information.

Help us stop the proposed bee ordinance, or at the very least, refrain the council from passing an ordinance that all but bans beekeeping in the township. We do not want other boroughs and townships to use this ordinance as the basis for their bee ordinance. Specifically we ask you to please email or write a letter of support for:

- Bees, bee pollination, and beekeeping
- Ordinances based on the PDA Best Management Practices
- Ordinances based on rational thought and bee science

**The contact information is:**

Plymouth Township Council

Plymouth Township Municipal Building, 700 Belvoir Road, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462

**Or email the members directly:**

Sheldon Simpson, Chairman, [sjsimpson@comcast.net](mailto:sjsimpson@comcast.net)

Lenore Bruno, Vice Chair, [lvb844@yahoo.com](mailto:lvb844@yahoo.com)

Dean Eisenberger, [dnetme@msn.com](mailto:dnetme@msn.com)

Vince Gillen, [vincegillen@gmail.com](mailto:vincegillen@gmail.com)

Maria Weidinger, [mariaweidinger@comcast.net](mailto:mariaweidinger@comcast.net)

And also the Plymouth Township Planning Commission: c/o Dave Conroy, [dconroy@plymouthtownship.org](mailto:dconroy@plymouthtownship.org)

Please forward a copy of your correspondence to [SaveTheBeekeeper@gmail.com](mailto:SaveTheBeekeeper@gmail.com)

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

August, 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](mailto: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.

*Bill Mondjack, Master Beekeeper*

**Received: July 25, 2012 Answered by phone.**

**Q:** *Hiya Bill,*

*You have become my go-to source for awesome information. I hope you don't mind me bothering you again...*

*One of my hives split back in the Spring. I captured the swarm, a feat I'm pretty dang proud of. I shook the cluster of bees into/onto a hive body (with all its frames) that had two empty supers on top of it. Then I put a lid on it. Then it rained for about a week.*

*This caused two problems:*

*1.) The split hive continued about their business. Since their size had diminished, I did not put on any honey supers as the nectar flow started (they had room in the two hive bodies). Well, the new queen starting putting brood in the bottom hive body, and the workers filled the top hive body with honey. I waited too long, so now I have a hive body entirely full of honey.*

*Is it okay to harvest honey out of old brood comb? I'm picturing all those old varroa mite carcasses and bee pupa moltings, etc. floating around in my honey...*

*(And I do intend to be as gentle as possible harvesting that honey to retain that good old dirty comb.)*

*2.) The captured swarm, having been left to their own devices for a week in the large cavity of two empty supers*

*over a hive body, started building their new hive—on the makeshift lid (a pine board) I put on it! Fast forward to today, months later, and I now have this radical "natural" beehive hanging from a hive lid over two empty honey supers with a hive body/frames on the bottom. It's actually really amazing—the comb is truly beautiful, and the bees seem healthy and happy. But it's totally unmanageable. The bees have finally made their way into the hive body at the bottom, too. I'm thinking I have three choices:*

*a.) Build some kind of custom observation hive body and put this lid-hive into it. Then watch the bees do their magic.*

*b.) Cut the lid comb off, one sheet at a time, and wire the comb into empty frames (like a top-bar or foundation-less hive).*

*c.) Do nothing.*

*What do you think?*

*Thanks in advance for any help you can offer!*

*Keegan*

**Answer:** *Hi Keegan,*

*As you know, this year our spring season arrived approximately 2-3 weeks earlier and there were many swarms to deal with. I'm pleased to hear you were able to capture your swarm and hive them. Your decision to add the two empty supers (without frames) on top of the hive body was a mistake, as you discovered. Bees will not hesitate to fill any space given to them and you now have a somewhat natural hive to contend with.*

*As for the parent colony that swarmed and now has a new queen; you mentioned: you waited too long, and the new queen put brood in the bottom deep and the workers filled the top deep with honey. You did not add any honey supers and therefore you have no excess honey to extract at this time. Well in my personal opinion, I would be satisfied with the condition of this hive at this time of year. I would be hesitant to extract the honey from the top deep during the draught conditions we are presently experiencing. IF you experience a very good fall nectar flow in your area you may have the possibility of supering up for that flow and harvesting a fall crop for yourself. You also asked if it is okay to harvest honey from old brood combs. Yes, you can harvest honey from old brood combs Keegan and you don't have to worry about Varroa mite carcasses or pupae molts left behind as the bees clean the cells after each brood cycle. They can't remove the molts left behind from the*

*(Continued on Page 15)*

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.

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**W.W.B.D.** (Continued from Page 13)

pupa as it transformed but the cell is clean. I would suggest, if and when you extract honey you at least run it through a stainless sieve to remove any foreign matter such as capping wax, etc.

It's unfortunate that so much time passed from hiving the new swarm to the present, and now you have what you call "this radical natural beehive". When bees build natural comb without frames it is truly a beautiful work of art but we can't manage the combs as we do in a Langstroth hive. My suggestion is not to build a 'custom observation hive', as the combs are not removable and you won't be able to examine them for any brood diseases. I would recommend you carefully cut the combs from the lid and place them into frames, making sure the cells are correctly oriented. They can be temporarily attached with small rubber bands which the bees will remove after they secure the loose combs to the frames with beeswax.

Good luck with your bees Keegan,  
*Bill Mondjack*

## **Jeremy's Corner**

Most of mankind's noble endeavors have a patron saint, a man or woman who lived a long time ago and achieved notoriety often by torture and death. St. Barbara, for example, lived in Egypt in the fourth century AD and was decapitated by her father when she refused to denounce Christianity, after which daddy, sword and all, was laid waste by a bolt of lightning. Barbara, naturally, became the patron saint of explosions involving gun powder, of which, in the early days of firearms, there were many, presumably keeping her very busy.

A century earlier, also in Egypt, a mob seized Apollonia because of her position as a Christian Deaconess. She was tortured, had all her teeth pulled out one by one with pincers, and when given the choice of renouncing her faith or being burned alive, leapt into the fire and was burnt to death. Predictably she is the patron saint of dentistry.

I will never be a candidate for sainthood, either willingly or unwillingly, even if bees are frequently associated with such posthumous honors. In C15th Italy, for example, the day after baby Rita was baptized her family noticed a swarm of white bees flying around her as she slept in her crib. The bees peacefully entered and exited her mouth without causing either harm or injury, which left her family understandably mystified. This did not prevent them from arranging her marriage to an abusive nobleman when she was 12 years old. St. Rita is the patron saint of impossible causes.

Beekeepers have several saints to watch over us and to whom we can appeal. The legend in Milan, Italy, is that in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, when Ambrose was an infant, a swarm of

bees settled on his face while he was lying in his cradle and rather than stinging him, they left behind a drop of honey. His father declared this to be a sign that Ambrose would become a sweet-tongued preacher of great significance; indeed he was to gain the title "Honey Tongued Doctor" because of his speaking and preaching ability and bees and a beehive became his symbols. Perhaps it was from this that bees are often associated with wisdom and learning.

The Catholic Encyclopedia describes him as having an "enthusiastic love of virginity which became his distinguishing trait." Indeed he wrote, "Let, then, your work be as it were a honeycomb, for virginity is fit to be compared to bees, so laborious is it, so modest, so continent. The bee feeds on dew, it knows no marriage couch, it makes honey...."

This was at a time when the mating procedure of the 'king bee' (as the queen was known) was unknown. Indeed baby bees seemed to be the result of some form of mysterious virgin birth, which gave them a spiritual significance. At the time it was believed that bees were the smallest of birds, born either from the bodies of oxen or from the decaying flesh of slaughtered calves in the form of worms which formed in the flesh and turned into bees.

St. Ambrose is also the patron of candle makers, chandlers, domestic animals, learning, school children, wax melters, wax refiners, but not virgins, and unlike many of his fellow saints, died peacefully in his old age.

Interestingly, in eastern Europe, there are many beautifully carved life sized hives in the shape of St. Ambrose, with a cavity in the middle for the bees, entrances via a small hole in the front, and access via a door in the back. Brightly painted, they formed an inviting avenue as one approached the venue for Apimondia in Montpellier, France, in 2009.

Gobnait, by comparison, was born in County Clare, Ireland, sometime in the 5th or 6th century. Gobnait is Irish for Abigail (meaning "Brings Joy") and has been anglicized as Deborah, meaning "Honey Bee."

One of the miracles attributed to Saint Gobnait was that she protected a parish by unleashing a swarm of bees, and she was known for her care of the sick, using the properties of honey in the treatment of illness and the healing of wounds. She founded a convent and was reputed to be a skilled bee-keeper and, according to local tradition and history, she cured the ailments of her own monastic community and the people of West Cork. Reputedly she kept a terrible plague away from Coolea and Ballyvourney and changed a colony of bees into an army to drive away a local marauding chieftain. Now there's a talent I could use.

(Continued on Page 17)

Jeremy's Corner (Continued from Page 15)

Interestingly, on the island of Mont St. Michel off of the west coast of Ireland, the small stone huts in which monks lived for several hundreds of years while vandals invaded Britain, were build in the shape of skeps. I was able to visit them some years ago and it is one of those places that makes the hairs on the nape of one's neck stand on end.

Other saints are well represented. In France, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, a C12th abbot, is listed as a patron of beekeeping and workers of wax, again for no apparent reason. Maybe he just wanted a candle discount. St. Gregory was responsible for opening the flowers on 12th March and a few weeks later, on 21st March, St. Benedict summoned the bees to search for nectar. According to legend, St. Bartholomew was martyred by being flayed alive and because of this fate he became the patron saint of tanners. But for many Brits he is also patron saint of beekeepers, probably because his feast day, 24th August, coincides with the gathering of the honey crop. Indeed, until the 1950s, the village of Gulval in Cornwall celebrated St. Bartholomew's Day with a ceremony for Blessing the Mead, while the annual St. Bartholomew's Fair in London was famous for its honey-coated apples.

The Catholic Church has strong links with bees. The monks were fine beekeepers, providing honey for sweetening, especially to make herbal remedies more palatable, wax for smokeless candles for the altar, mead for communion wine, and propolis for use in the sanatorium. The late Brother Adam of Buckfast Abbey is one such example.

And bees were believed to be the souls of the dead returning to earth or on their way to the next world. This probably led to the widespread custom of "telling the bees" when the beekeeper died, a tradition that was prevalent in Pennsylvania. If the bees were not asked to stay with their new master or mistress it was believed that they would abscond.

Beekeepers seem to have as many patron saints as they do answers to questions concerning the bees.

Jeremy Barnes

## New Penn State Course Encourages Backyard Beekeeping

On July 1 Penn State Extension rolled out an online beekeeping course for beginner and experienced beekeepers and those thinking about taking up backyard beekeeping.

Beekeeping 101 was created by Penn State Public Broadcasting's media professionals and Penn State Extension's horticulture expert Tom Butzler, and entomology expert Maryann Tomasko Frazier as an interactive approach to online learning that can be taken anywhere anytime.

"The Beekeeping 101 online format opens up Penn State Extension's ability to broaden the access to the course internationally," says Dennis Calvin, director of Penn State Extension and associate dean in the College of Agricultural Sciences. "Whether you're in Pennsylvania or another country you can participate in a global learning community of beekeepers helping to strengthen the honeybee population."

The 10-module course combines video, multimedia, and interactive activities that participants can take at their own pace. The modules provide the knowledge needed to keep and manage a healthy beehive as well as produce honey and beeswax. Modules cover bee biology, bee behavior, hive management, diseases and pests, swarming and more. "While there are some online resources and beekeeping courses, we felt the time was right to develop this kind of highly interactive beekeeping course that can be taken at the learner's convenience" says Maryann Tomasko Frazier. "We hope to support the growing number of new beekeepers and beekeeper association members hungry for additional education."

Penn State also hopes to broaden the audience and motivate people from all walks of life to learn more about the importance of bees. "We can see school teachers using the course for professional development, and gardeners starting beekeeping as a natural extension of their hobby," says Extension educator Tom Butzler. "Whether someone is new to beekeeping or wants to add to their beekeeping knowledge, Beekeeping 101 is a fun and interactive way to learn. And don't forget about the honey you can harvest right in your backyard."

For information about Penn State's online Beekeeping 101 course, visit <http://beekeeping101.psu.edu>.



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## PA Honey Queen Report

By Jessica Long

Hello Beekeepers!! Another month has gone by with promoting a great industry. I hope everyone has made it through this hot and dry month.

To finish out the month of May, I attended the Country Memories Day in downtown McVeytown. I had a chance to walk through the street fair in the cute little town that welcomed around 2,000 visitors that day. At the beekeeper's area, we talked to the visitors about the observation hive and the importance of honey bees. We also displayed beekeeping equipment, educational information, and recipe brochures. During the day, I was able to go on air six different times with WJUN 92.5 FM, which reaches 50,000 listeners.

On May 31, I went to Bellwood-Antis Elementary School, a local elementary school in my area, where I spoke to 100 first graders. The students just finished learning about Garden Helpers, and we all know that honey bees are one of the most important Garden Helpers. All of the students had lots of great questions about how they can help the honey bees in our area.

To start the month of June and to end the 2012 school promotion season, on the 4<sup>th</sup> I went to Moshannon Valley High School in Houtzdale. I spoke to 150 students in seventh through eleventh grades about the benefits of honey. Congratulations to all 2012 seniors, and I wish you the best of luck!

On June 6, I attended the Belleville Farmers' Market. I helped sell local honey along with answering questions. The gentleman and his mother that I worked with have been selling honey in the same location for the past 40 years!

June 11<sup>th</sup>, I spoke to 50 parents and members of the Buffalo Creek 4-H Club, in Meyersdale. I talked to them about the different types of honey bees and why are they so important. After I gave my presentation, I made Honey Raspberry Whipped Cream topping for the ice cream party they had after their meeting.

I spent the next day in Bucks County. To start the day I went to the Doylestown Library where I spoke to 35 parents and children. I would like to thank Gary Schongalla-Bowman for taking me out for lunch and helped fill my free time. That evening I went to the Bucks County Beekeepers Picnic. Even though it rained, the weather did not alter the great evening. We enjoyed a fantastic dinner and listened to live music; then I had a chance to address the club members. I spoke about the many things I have learned while being your Honey Queen, my personal goals, and an overview of my promotions so far. In addition to Gary, I would like to thank Jim and Betty Diamond for being such a great host family for me.

On June 17<sup>th</sup>, I attended my local association's monthly meeting where we learned that some counties are having some problems with townships regulating beekeeping. I would like to let you know that you have my total support and if you need anything I would love to come to your area and help to educate the public.

June 18<sup>th</sup>, I started my day at the Roaring Springs Area Library. I spoke to 10 people about the types of honey and parts of the hive. Since it was a small group I was able to answer everyone's questions. That night I attended the Schnecksville Community Fair, where I gave a short speech at the opening ceremonies about the importance of honey bees and I also brought awareness on the loss honey bees could have on our food supply. Once the ceremony was over, I took a tour of the fair with the 2012 PA State Fair Queen and the 2011 Allentown Fair Queen. While touring the fair that welcomes 4,000 each day of the fair, I handed out recipe brochures and stickers as well as answered some interesting questions.

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, I spent my day at the Schuylkill Canal Day in Mont Clare. With 1,000 visitors in attendance, the honey sticks seemed to be the perfect gift for winners of "Honey Bee Trivia". When I had down time I walked through the event and handed out more recipe brochures and the famous "I Love You Honey" stickers.

To start out the month of July, I attended the Laurel Hill 4-H Club, in Rockwood, on the second. I spoke to eleven 4-H members about how they could help the honey bees, by planting different pollinator flowers. Once I was finished speaking to the members, the local Boy Scouts leader asked if I could speak to his pack and troop. I was able to speak to 15 Boy Scout Members.

On the 6<sup>th</sup>, I attended the Whole Foods Market in Philadelphia. The super market was hosting a honey bee theme month. I was able to speak to around 200 people and hand out samples of local honey.

July 10, I attended the National Association of Agricultural Educators Regional Conference, in Grantsville. During their lunch break I spoke to 300 teachers about the Honey Queen program and how they can invite me to their school. If they were not from Pennsylvania, I informed them about the American Honey Queen Program.

The next day, I was in Palmyra where I spoke to 65 students at a summer camp. I spoke to the students about the importance of honey bees and the foods that we depend on for their pollination. They also had the chance to try 5 different types of honey; their favorites were Orange Blossom and Blueberry.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of July, I began my day in Dauphin where I spoke to 35 children that attended the Master Gardener Kids Camp. When I arrived, I went with the students to their pollinator garden and looked for all of the different pollinator insects that we could find. After we talked about the different types of honey bees, they also were able to try the different types of honey. Their favorite type was Tupelo and Blueberry.

That evening I attended the Milksquirt 4-H Club in Berlin. I spoke to 80 people about the different types of honey and the products of the hive. I answered a lot of questions about the different foods honey bees pollinate that we depend on.

(Continued on Page 21)

Honey Queen Report (Continued from Page 19)

July 17, I was in Somerset, where I talked to A Cut Above 4-H Club. As the members of the club were preparing for round-up, I spoke to them about how the cooking club can use honey in their items for the fair.

On the 21<sup>st</sup>, I attended the PSBA Annual Summer Picnic. I updated everyone in attendance about what I have done as the Honey Queen so far and my goals. I informed them that I have traveled 11,000 miles, spoke to around 95,000 people, have done 147 presentations, done promotions in 29 counties, and have increased our facebook fans to 80 people. It was really great to see new faces and familiar ones as well. I hope everyone enjoyed themselves!

July 24 through the 26<sup>th</sup>, I attended the Boy Scout Camp, at Camp Anderson in Tyrone. The first day I spoke to the boys about the different types of bees and the different products. On the second day, they had a chance to try the different types of honey. Once they were finished trying the honey, we went down to the pond to identify different flowers that honey bees like. The first scout to find a honey bee won a "special" honey stick (aka, a flavored honey stick). The last day of the camp we made a fruit dip then had a chance to try another honey type. After everyone was finished, we played "Honey Bee Trivia". The boys had to run to a true or false base after hearing a statement of something that we covered during the week. Thank you to all of the scouts that helped out!

Please be sure to like the "PENNSYLVANIA HONEY QUEEN PROGRAM" facebook page to get up-to-date on my most recent promotions. If you have an event coming up that you would like me to attend please contact Rachel Bryson at 717-643-0010 or [brysonrachel@yahoo.com](mailto:brysonrachel@yahoo.com). Thank you for all of your continued support throughout my year!

Nature Notes

In the first half of August, Pennsylvania is a **greenhouse**, lush with foliage and hot, hot, hot. **Sweet corn, peaches, and tomatoes**, signature crops of our summer, are on the table now. Maize corn was domesticated in the Americas. (In much of the world, the word corn means any grain crop.) Peaches came from China. Tomatoes were first grown in South America.

**Butterflies** are decorating gardens. Yellow (or black) **tiger swallowtails** are our largest butterflies. Skippers that dash from spot to spot are our smallest. The **silver-spotted skipper** has a bold white patch on the under wing that makes this skipper easy to identify. The orange and black **monarchs** floating through the garden are headed south. **White cabbage butterflies** are the starlings of our butterfly world: introduced from Europe and found everywhere.

Day-flying **hummingbird moths** are in the garden. They look like small hummingbirds and even have tufts of hair that look like tail feathers. Hummingbird moths hover and feed on the flowers hummingbirds prefer. Nature tries everything: a bird whose wings buzz like an insect and a moth that flies in

the daytime with a tail that mimics feathers. Nature's strangest (most intelligent and most dangerous) production **ihumans!** Walt Kelly's cartoon character Pogo said, "We have met the enemy and he is us."

Two weeds dominate waste places: **ragweed** and **goldenrod**. Only one is a favorite; flick a finger against a ragweed flower to see why. Ragweed is **wind-pollinated** and spreads clouds of pollen to sensitive human nasal passages. The feathery yellow flowers of goldenrod are covered with bees and wasps harvesting its sticky, protein-rich pollen.

**Purple loosestrife** (narrow magenta flower stalks) and **Japanese knotweed** (fluffy white flowers) are introduced pest plants that produce summer nectar for our bees. Japanese knotweed and purple loosestrife crowd out native wetland plants.

In the middle of August, a powerful **cold front** will sweep across Pennsylvania bringing thunderstorms and cooler weather, the first of a series of cool, high-pressure air masses that will usher us into autumn. In the evening, **katydids** are debating about Katy's behavior. Some are saying that she didn't.

At the beginning of summer, **Arcturus** was overhead as darkness fell. Now **Vega** is overhead. In the south, early in the evening, **Antares**, the red heart of Scorpio is visible. The big W of **Cassiopeia** is rising in the east.

Tim Sterrett

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