



# THE PENNSYLVANIA BEEKEEPER

April 2014  
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The Official Organ of the Pennsylvania State Beekeeper's Association

## News 'n Views...

March only allowed a few hive visits in northern sections of the state. With the Great Lakes freezing very well this winter, they will keep us cool a little longer. The ice-breakers were working to open some lanes in and out of Erie. Some growers are finding the brutally cold winter has killed some branches. The refrigerator effect of the frozen lake keeps the Erie coast orchards dormant a little longer. This usually holds off blossoms until after early frosts. Once the lake opens up, the water temperature and gentle air movement helps prevent frost from settling as well. 'Usual' seasons seem to be more in our mind than reality. A couple years ago when I placed hives for cherry pollination it was a gale of wind and rain. I wore a rain suit. A few weeks later, when I picked them up, it was rain again. I asked the grower if the bees ever got out? He said, 'oh yeah. They were all over the place'. There's a lot to be said for what honey bees can do in a few hours of a few days. There's no way the magic of all this produce can happen without the honey bee.

I was right not to predict my winter losses last month. Some withered away as spring got closer. I am hoping my losses stop at 45%. Once brood rearing starts, they can use food very fast and still starve.

It must be noted that I did not get a late summer or fall mite treatment done. I got busy and the time got by me. I did not treat for nosema either. I have decided not to feed syrup in the fall. My experience is our fall temperatures are too cold and the bees can't dry or cap it. It remains too wet and increases dysentery without needed cleansing flights. Even

late honey does not get capped and picks up more moisture, creating the same dysentery problems. I have some uncapped frames that shake out like water.

So, what have I've been seeing in my dead-outs? Primarily starvation. Some got separated from honey and couldn't/wouldn't move sideways. Some bees never slowed brood production and ate everything. (I see that as a genetic trait) Some went queenless...evidence of late queen cells or only drone brood. Some withered away...perhaps due to mites.

On the positive side are colonies with great populations and enough honey to get into April blooms. And I've found eggs in drone cells. Drone cells seem to be a sign that the colony is flourishing and not stressed.

Myself, Don Shump and Steve Repasky have been diligently preparing a presentation for the annual PSATS (Pa State Association of Township Supervisors) convention for April 14<sup>th</sup>, at Hershey Lodge. This has been in process since last August when the application was made. Our presentation was accepted and confirmed in November. The focus of our workshop will be urban beekeeping. We will bring working examples of urban beekeeping to the program. Don, from Philadelphia, operates Philadelphia Bee Company with all his hive locations within the city. Steve, president of Burgh Bees, utilized the voluntary Best Management Practices to help townships around Pittsburgh develop bee-friendly ordinances.

Township to township may be our most realistic option to work with local governments. As I have worked with legislators and law writers, I have learned it would be very difficult to establish state preemption similar to West Virginia bee law. As a rule, Pennsylvania local governments are very reluctant to give up authority. I was told from the House Ag Committee any such law to override would be met with much opposition from the townships.

Our hope would be to establish a number of bee-friendly working models ordinances as examples. It's a lot more work and will have failures.

I always get the question, 'Why do you want to create bee regulations'? Currently, the regulation for urban/suburban beekeeping is either not allowed or so suppressive that it's

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not realistic. Some are written without honey bee knowledge, based in fears and myths. We are trying to create an opportunity in places that it doesn't exist. It would be great to have NO regulation. As I understand it, that is Philadelphia. That is a model to be copied too. The Philadelphia beekeepers have done a remarkable job of being responsible beekeepers and working with the city. I like that model.

Hopefully by the time this newsletter is published, a winter loss survey for Pennsylvania will be available. Something simple and painless to help us know how everyone fared. Most likely an Internet survey.

Charlie Vorisek  
President PSBA

**PSBA Summer Picnic**  
**August 9th**  
**Wade Fisher Bee Farm, McVeytown**  
A pig for roasting will be provided, and everyone is asked to bring a side and/or dessert to share. Watch for additional information

**IF THE READER WHOSE MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES** 8/15 and receives the newsletter at PO Box 342, Milroy, 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 May 20, he/she will receive a years free subscription to either *Gleaning in Bee Culture*, *American Bee Journal*, or *The Small Beekeepers Journal*. When you respond, please specify your choice of magazine.

**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 [pabee1@frontier.com](mailto:pabee1@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.

**PA Honey Queen Report**

Hello beekeepers!

My name is Kaylee Kilgore, and I am honored to be your 2014 Pennsylvania Honey Queen. I am from Hershey, Pa., and I am currently pursuing a Global Studies degree at Lehigh University. I was crowned at the Western Pennsylvania Beekeeping Seminar in Mars on Saturday, February 15th. While I was there, I met a ton of fantastic beekeepers. I also received some great advice from 2014 American Honey Princess Elena Hoffman, and had the chance to watch her give her year in review to the Western PA Beekeepers. It was a wonderful opportunity to see what being a Honey Queen is like.

The next event I attended was the Philadelphia Beekeepers Guild's short course. There I learned some intriguing things about beekeeping that I had not known before. I got to meet lots of new and aspiring beekeepers, as well as some students and teachers hoping to establish hives at their school. It was inspiring to see young people so passionate about beekeeping.

After that, I had Honey Queen Training, also known as "bootcamp"! Over the course of the weekend, I prepared school presentations, practiced media interviews, and learned how to do cooking demonstrations. I left training prepared to represent the beekeeping industry and the PSBA all over Pennsylvania.

My goals for this year include –

- Increasing the likes on the PAHQ Facebook page to 350 or more.
- To give 50 educational presentations
- To secure two candidates to compete for the 2015 title

I look forward to meeting you all this year. As promotion requests continue to flow in for 2014, don't miss out on your chance to invite me to your event. To invite me to an event, contact Rachel Bryson, queen program chair, at [honeyqueen@pastatebeekeepers.org](mailto:honeyqueen@pastatebeekeepers.org) or 717-300-0146.

Kaylee Kilgore

**Attention Counties:** Please submit your 2014 list of officers and meeting dates to Yvonne as soon as possible. Her mailing address and email are listed on Page 8.



## Nature Notes

The roller coaster of the four seasons has been slowly clank-clank-clanking to the top of the snowy hill at the end of winter. Then we go over the top and green April will pass in a rush.

Spring **wildflowers** bloom in order: early, middle, and late. **Hepatica's** dime-size sky-blue flowers are early. **Bloodroot**, with half dollar-size rayed white flowers, appears soon after. The banks of road cuts along wood edges may have bloodroot blooming. Ag fields are dressed-up by **Yellow rocket** which can yield a water-white, tasteless honey. **Red trillium** has three red petals and a fragrance that attracts flies. (Bees see flowers at the blue end of the spectrum better than they see red flowers.) In the middle are pink **wild geraniums**, and **bluebells** with nodding clusters of bell-shaped flowers. The yellow flower with three names ( **dog-toothed violet, trout lily, and adder's tongue**) blooms at the end of spring wild-flower season.

What is the bright yellow flower that blankets stream valleys and even appears in our lawns? This is **lesser celandine**, a tough invasive alien. The leaves of lesser celandine lie on the ground to shade out competing plants.

In Chester County (SE corner of Pennsylvania), honeybee **swarm season** starts when white petals fall from apple blossoms. And swarms are more likely on the day following a wet or cold spell of weather. Maybe swarms and the end of apple bloom are linked in other parts of our commonwealth.

The flowers of **tulip poplar trees** (which are neither tulips nor poplars) are loaded with sugary nectar. Tear off a petal from a flower on a low branch or from a newly fallen flower and taste the sugar.

**Juncos** and **white-throated sparrows** migrate north. **Phoebes** return from the South. Phoebes are flycatchers, nest not far from water, and bob their tails while perched.

**Robins** are known for singing in the silence before a spring afternoon **rain**. The robin's song has been described as "Cheer-up, cheerily, cheer-up, cheerily!" **Chipping sparrows** with unstreaked breasts and rusty crowns forage on lawns and sing a trilled, single-note song.

Who built that **nest** the **birdhouse** in the yard?

- bluebirds** - a neat grass or pine needle nest,
- house wrens** - a twig nest,
- house sparrows** - a messy nest with a few feathers,
- tree swallows** - a nest with a lot of feathers,
- chickadees** - a nest made of moss.

Who built a **messy nest** of leaves on a shelf in the garage?

**Carolina wrens.**

In the wreath left on the front door or at the base of a plant in a hanging flowerpot? **House finches.**

A twig nest in a bush against the house?

**Cardinals.**

A flimsy nest of twigs on a head-high branch of an evergreen?

**Mourning doves.**

In the forsythia bush?

**Mockingbirds.**

Inside a corner of a building or in the dryer vent?

**Starlings or house sparrows.**

**Jupiter** is still brilliant in the up high after dark. **Big Dipper** is in the north, standing on its handle. Late in the evening, follow the arc of the Dipper's handle to bright **Arcturus**. Then speed on to **Spica**. Next to Spica is **Saturn**, which often looks creamy or golden. Spica twinkles; Saturn does not. We bid farewell to **Orion** as an evening constellation.

By Tim Sterrett



## Address Changed?

If you have changed your address (mail, email or temporarily away) 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 .57 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.

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

We regret that there is no article this month. If you have a question you would like to send to Bill Mondjack, Master Beekeeper, please email it to him at: billzbeez@mondjackapiaries.com with the subject line being WWBD, and he will respond with an opinion as 'what he would do' if the problem or situation was his.

## Identification Reader

My name is Jim Pinkerton and I belong to the Lancaster County Beekeepers Society. My interest in honey bees goes back to the 1980's when we would visit my uncle, Bob Singer, who lived in the Catskill Mountains of New York State. Bob taught high school math and began keeping bees as a sideline. When we would visit, I enjoyed watching the bees he had near his home and on a few occasions went along to one of his out yards to watch him remove honey. I had an interest in bees but never acted on getting bees. In 2000, Bob and his wife Meryl moved to a retirement village in Lititz. He had sold his 200+ hives in New York but wanted to continue keeping some bees. He brought 6 hives to Lancaster County and 2 were placed behind my business here in Mount Joy. Now I had 2 hives to watch just outside my kitchen door and a mentor too. That first summer I watched and helped work those hives.

The next spring there was a swarm from one of the hives. My mentor allowed me to capture it in equipment my wife bought for my birthday. I had my first hive... I have been completely hooked on beekeeping ever since.

Over the years, I have increased the number of hives in my apiaries to an average of 25 hives. The learning curve has had its ups and downs; the worst was losing 9 out of 10 hives in one winter. About 6 years ago I made a queen castle (a single hive body, divided into 4 two frame hives) and began raising my own queens. I think every beekeeper needs to raise some of their own queens. You learn so much just observing the process, and when you see those first eggs from a queen you raised... well you just want to hand out cigars (or maybe just some smoker fuel).

I have been registered with the state to sell queens for the last 3 years. This has been the biggest challenge in my beekeeping experience. Trying to produce more than a few queens requires tending the hives that are producing the virgin queens and the small mating hives, on a specific time schedule. If you miscalculate or are a day late, it can set you back several weeks. Last summer I had a mating hive (divided into 3 three frame hives). There were 3 beautiful virgin queens in them. It was midsummer and I had plans for those queens after they were mated. My plans got delayed for a week or maybe a little more than a week. In that time they had all swarmed leaving me with queen cells and not the mated, laying queens I was expecting.

I still have a lot to learn in beekeeping. Working with honey bees is always a challenge. No matter what I think I am going to do when I open a hive, the bees often have other plans and I must "read" the frames to decide how to adjust my plans to coincide with what is happening in that particular hive.

That is what continues to make beekeeping interesting and a constant learning experience.

The bees always have something to teach us, so pay attention and enjoy your bees!

Jim Pinkerton

## Upcoming Dates To Remember

**Deadline for the May issue of *The Pennsylvania Beekeeper* is April 29<sup>th</sup>.**

### **Burgh Bees**

Tuesday, April 8, 7:30 p.m. at 802 Brookline Blvd., Pittsburgh. Monthly Board Meeting – All members welcome. For additional information, contact Steve Repasky at 412-445-7872, email:

[srepasky@gmail.com](mailto:srepasky@gmail.com)

### **Lycoming County Beekeepers**

Tuesday, April 8, 7:00 p.m. at the Montoursville Borough Hall, Montoursville. Discussion on winter losses. Bring your questions and ideas. Contact Aaron Kolb at 570-323-8670 for more information.

### **Monroe County Beekeepers**

Wednesday, April 9, at the Monroe County Environmental Center. For more information, contact Bob Armstrong at 570-620-9421 or email [RJArmstrong1@verizon.net](mailto:RJArmstrong1@verizon.net)

### **Susquehanna Beekeepers of NEPA**

Friday, April 11, 7:00 p.m. at the Claverack Bldg., Montrose. Contact James Wood at 570-934-1166 for additional information.

### **Chester County Beekeepers Seminar**

Saturday, April 12, 9:00 a.m. at the Stroud Preserve, West Chester. Visit the Association's website [www.ChescoBees.org](http://www.ChescoBees.org) for more information.

### **Beekeepers of the Susquehanna Valley**

Tuesday, April 15, 7:00 p.m. at the Union County Government Center, Lewisburg. For more information, email: [info@thebeeyard.org](mailto:info@thebeeyard.org) or visit [www.thebeeyard.org](http://www.thebeeyard.org)

### **Lancaster County Beekeepers**

Tuesday, April 15, 6:00 p.m. at the North Museum of Science and Natural History, Lancaster. Topics to include swarm prevention and making splits. Contact Jim Pinkerton at [jim@gatheringplacemj.com](mailto:jim@gatheringplacemj.com) for more information.

### **Lehigh Valley Beekeepers**

Thursday, April 17, 7:00 p.m. at the Lehigh County Ag Center, Allentown. Panel Discussion: New Hive start-up. Contact Steve Finke at 610-737-7676 or email [sjfinke@msn.com](mailto:sjfinke@msn.com) for more information.

### **Capital Area Beekeepers**

Friday, April 18, 7:00 p.m. at the Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg. Election of officers, program to be announced.

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**Upcoming Dates** (Continued from Page 9)

For more information, Jim Hoover at 717-691-1413, email [hooverdron@aol.com](mailto:hooverdron@aol.com) for more information.

**York County Beekeepers**

Thursday, April 24, 7:00 p.m. in the Rhul Community Room, Penn State York Campus. Guest speaker, Dr. Richard Lobban: "Beekeeping in Ancient Egypt and modern Africa". Contact [honeybeewhisperer@gmail.com](mailto:honeybeewhisperer@gmail.com) for more information.

**Burgh Bees**

Sunday, April 27, at the Burgh Bees Community Apiary, Pittsburgh. "Brews and Bees." For additional information, contact Steve Repasky at 412-445-7872, email: [srepasky@gmail.com](mailto:srepasky@gmail.com)

**2 C's and a Bee Beekeepers**

Sunday, April 27, 2:00 p.m. at the Pleasant Valley United Methodist Church, Woodland. Contact Helen Evans at [sec-retary@ccbee.org](mailto:sec-retary@ccbee.org) or phone: 814-472-7637.

**Beaver Valley Area Beekeepers**

Monday, April 28, 7:00 p.m. at the Gander Mountain Store, off Montour Run exit, Parkway West (I-376). Topic: "Queen Rearing". For more information, contact Pattie Zyroll at 412-848-3506, email: [pattie.zyroll@elkem.com](mailto:pattie.zyroll@elkem.com)

**Beaver Valley Area Beekeepers**

Saturday, May 3, Outyard Demonstration at the PA RR Supervisor's Club, Freedom. For time and more information, contact Pattie Zyroll at 412-848-3506, email: [pattie.zyroll@elkem.com](mailto:pattie.zyroll@elkem.com)

**Susquehanna Beekeepers of NEPA**

Saturday, May 3, 1:00 p.m. at the James Wood Apiary, Lawton. Field Day: Splitting a Hive. Contact James Wood at 570-934-1166 for additional information.

**North East PA Beekeepers**

Wednesday, May 7, at 7:30 p.m. at 32 Comm St., Honesdale. Contact Charles Kinbar at 570-497-6402, email: [purepa-honey@gmail.com](mailto:purepa-honey@gmail.com) for more information.

**Chester County Beekeepers Seminar**

Saturday, May 10, 9:00 a.m. at the Stroud Preserve, West Chester. Visit the Association's website [www.ChescoBees.org](http://www.ChescoBees.org) for more information.

**Lancaster County Beekeepers**

Tuesday, May 13, 6:00 p.m. at the Southeast Ag Research and Extension Center, Manheim. Contact Jim Pinkerton at [jim@gatheringplacemj.com](mailto:jim@gatheringplacemj.com) for more information.

**Monroe County Beekeepers**

Wednesday, May 14, at the Monroe County Environmental Center. For more information, contact Bob Armstrong at 570-620-9421 or email [RJArmstrong1@verizon.net](mailto:RJArmstrong1@verizon.net)

**Lehigh Valley Beekeepers**

Thursday, May 15, 7:00 p.m. at the Lehigh County Ag Center, Allentown. Steve Finke will speak on "Cloake-Board Queen Rearing". Contact Steve Finke at 610-737-7676 or email [sjfinke@msn.com](mailto:sjfinke@msn.com) for more information.

**Beekeepers of the Susquehanna Valley**

Tuesday, May 20, 6:00 p.m. at the Aucker's Apiaries, Millville. For more information, email: [info@thebeeyard.org](mailto:info@thebeeyard.org) or visit [www.thebeeyard.org](http://www.thebeeyard.org)

**York County Beekeepers**

Thursday, May 22, 7:00 p.m. in the Rhul Community Room, Penn State York Campus. Guest speaker, Dr. Vince Aloyo: "Pheromones in the Hive". Contact [honeybeewhisperer@gmail.com](mailto:honeybeewhisperer@gmail.com) for more information.

**Susquehanna Beekeepers of NEPA**

Saturday, May 24, 1:00 p.m. at the James Wood Apiary, Lawton. Checking Split Hive. Contact James Wood at 570-934-1166 for additional information.

**North East PA Beekeepers**

Wednesday, June 4, at 7:30 p.m. at 32 Comm St., Honesdale. Contact Charles Kinbar at 570-497-6402, email: [purepa-honey@gmail.com](mailto:purepa-honey@gmail.com) for more information.

**Monroe County Beekeepers**

Wednesday, June 11, at the Monroe County Environmental Center. For more information, contact Bob Armstrong at 570-620-9421 or email [RJArmstrong1@verizon.net](mailto:RJArmstrong1@verizon.net)

**Susquehanna Beekeepers of NEPA**

Friday, June 13, 7:00 p.m. at the Claverack Bldg., Montrose. Contact James Wood at 570-934-1166 for additional information.

**Lancaster County Beekeepers**

Tuesday, June 17, 6:00 p.m. at the Southeast Ag Research and Extension Center, Manheim. Contact Jim Pinkerton at [jim@gatheringplacemj.com](mailto:jim@gatheringplacemj.com) for more information.

**Lehigh Valley Beekeepers**

Thursday, June 19, 7:00 p.m. at the Lehigh County Ag Center, Allentown. Guest speaker: "Introduction to CSA's". Contact Steve Finke at 610-737-7676 or email [sjfinke@msn.com](mailto:sjfinke@msn.com) for more information.

**Beekeepers of the Susquehanna Valley**

Saturday, June 21, 12:00 noon in Middleburg. Summer Picnic. For more information, email: [info@thebeeyard.org](mailto:info@thebeeyard.org) or visit [www.thebeeyard.org](http://www.thebeeyard.org)

**Beaver Valley Area Beekeepers**

Monday, June 30, 7:00 p.m. at the Beaver County Conservation Wetlands, Aliquippa. "Making Splits for Overwintering." For more information, contact Pattie Zyroll at 412-848-3506, email: [pattie.zyroll@elkem.com](mailto:pattie.zyroll@elkem.com)

**PSBA Summer Picnic**

Saturday, August 9, 2014 at the Wade Fisher Bee Farm, McVeytown. Additional information will be posted on the [PSBA website](#) and printed in the newsletter as it becomes available.

**Ag Progress Days**

August 13 through August 15, 2014 at Rock Springs. See ad on page 13 for contact information to volunteer at the PSBA Booth.

**PSBA Annual Conference**

Friday and Saturday, November 14 & 15, at the Country Cupboard/Best Western Inn, Lewisburg.

### Jeremy's Corner

It is intriguing how one sentence or paragraph in a book can stimulate a series of thoughts, which invariably invite comparisons with honey bees.

In *The Botany of Desire*, for example, Michael Pollan chooses four plants (apples, tulips, marijuana and potatoes) to suggest that not only do humans act on nature to get the results we want, but that plants too evolve to gratify certain human desires so that we in turn help those plants to spread and proliferate.

In the chapter on marijuana he describes how different cultures have reacted to substances that have the power to alter our thoughts and feelings, citing as an example the different reactions to alcohol in European and Muslim societies. And he notes that, until the Industrial Revolution, alcohol and tobacco were confined to a small, privileged elite in Europe who eventually shared them with the burgeoning proletariat to help them tolerate the monotony and drudgery of industrial urban life.

One of the reactions to the Industrial Revolution in Europe was social and political unrest. 1848 brought the first practical experiments in socialism, which argued that it was the responsibility of the state to share corporate and national profits with those who labored to produce those earnings. Profit was shared as benefits (subsidized housing, health, education and unemployment insurance) rather than income. Whereas Social Democrats believed this could be achieved peacefully through the democratic process, in 1867 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels argued in *Das Kapital* that the financially privileged would not voluntarily share the benefits of their positions and that it was the duty of the workers (or 'proletariat') to seize by force what the authors saw as their just rights.

Across the Atlantic it was feared that when Europe sneezed, America would catch a cold.

Watching the spectacle that is the Oscars I began to wonder about the emphasis placed, and the money spent, on these extravaganzas, and postulated that perhaps the emphasis on sport and entertainment, which seems to me to be more prolific in the US than anywhere else in the world, was initially another way of providing the working classes with either relief or distraction from their industrialized working conditions.

The first theme park, for example, was built on Coney Island in 1896. The North American Baseball League and the American Baseball Association were started in 1876 and 1882 respectively. The first professional basketball league

was formed in 1898, the NHL in 1917 and the NFL in the 1920's. This was the same period of the first black-and-white movies while the first feature film presented as a talkie was *The Jazz Singer*, released in 1927.

Nor was this confined to the USA. In England the National Football (i.e. soccer) League was founded in 1888.

In other words organized mass entertainment evolved as the bleak social consequences of the Industrial Revolution became increasingly evident. Coincidence? Perhaps.

And then there is the question of financial rewards as a reflection of societal values. For example, the contract signed by Joe Flacco after the Baltimore Ravens won the Super Bowl in 2012 is more than 300 times greater than the President of the United States earns in the same period, and 2400 times greater than the income of the average teacher, policeman or fireman, whom in my opinion are the real heroes. We no longer question a typical movie budget of \$200 million while myriads of American children live in poverty.

(Continued on Page 13)

**Walter T. Kelley Co.**

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Jeremy's Corner (Continued from Page 11)

Listening to the interviews with movie stars on the 'red carpet' of the Oscars provoked the question as to why we give their pronouncements so much weight - after all they are very good at reading and performing lines and roles written by somebody else, so is it surprising that what many say is inane? - And why we place so much emphasis on what they wear, considering that they are invariably dressed by someone else.

I'm not a late night owl but stayed up one night to watch the late night talk shows, all in the interests of research, you understand! The overwhelming majority of guests are actors, musicians, and athletes. Is that all we have to talk about?

My experience in local classrooms (for many years I observed and mentored college students who were doing their 'student practice semester' as the last requirement before graduation) stressed the emphasis on obedience and compliance. There is a game that we learn to play in school - "What does teacher want?" One route to a good grade is figuring out what sir or ma'am likes, and students are very good at responding appropriately. In other words, they are satisfying an external authority who will tell them how good their work is and ideas are, rather than referring to their own judgments and satisfaction.

In my college classes I would offer the students a choice at the beginning of the semester. There is much evidence to suggest that stress promotes short term memorization at the expense of long term learning, and what causes the most stress? Quizzes, tests and exams. So the choice was either regular quizzes and tests with a final exam, or a major, open-ended project in which the students were required to apply the material we were covering in class. (I should say that I was teaching a class on western civilization - the second option would not work in say a math or language class where constant reinforcement is necessary. And I would not want my doctor or airplane pilot to have classes taught only by me!) Eventually every class chose the project option but there was always a group of nay-sayers who argued for tests and exams because it was a game they knew how to play and they could track their grade as the months progressed - stress and a grade trumped higher order thinking skills and long term learning.

So, how does this apply to beekeepers? Professional sports and entertainment set unrealistic expectations. We know that less than 1% of those who set out to make football or baseball or music their career will succeed. Rather we become passive spectators of TV or the movies - our involvement is vicarious, experienced second hand.

Beekeeping is not a passive activity. An estimated 50% of new beekeepers do not continue after the first year, primarily because it was not as easy as they had expected. It requires a combination of knowledge and action, and even then things might not go well. Nor is it an activity of compliance; ultimately every successful beekeeper has to take responsibility for the management of his or her hives, has to take the data and develop a personal management style. It is similar to an open, on-going project rather than a series of quizzes and tests. And of course the ultimate satisfaction comes from goals that one sets for oneself, not from pleasing the President of the local bee club.

Which in turn begs the question, how do we make new beekeepers aware of the realities, the commitment and knowledge required to succeed, without dampening their enthusiasm? One doesn't fear the rain once one is wet. We need to be clear up front. Those who are truly committed will accept the challenge gladly and be excited by the passion exhibited by successful beekeepers; the others will shy away from something they should not have started in the first place, which is fortunate for the health of the honey bees.

Jeremy Barnes

Previous copies of Jeremy's Corner can be found at [honeybeewhisperer@simplesite.com](mailto:honeybeewhisperer@simplesite.com)

**The PSBA needs your Help!**

**WE WANT YOU**



Volunteers needed to scoop and serve honey ice cream at our 2 annual events, Farm Show and Ag Progress. The proceeds from the events go directly to support the Pennsylvania Honey Queen program.

Pennsylvania State University  
Ag Progress Days  
State College PA  
August 12 – 14, 2014

The 99<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Farm Show  
Harrisburg PA  
Watch for 2015 Dates

For more information please contact  
Aaron Fisher  
[aaron@fisherbeefarm.com](mailto:aaron@fisherbeefarm.com)  
717-242-4373



**Below is the Pennsylvania State Winner of the 2014 American Beekeeping Federation's Essay Contest.**

## Honey Bees in Colonial America

Have you ever imagined a world without honey bees? Well, if you lived four hundred years ago in the New World, you wouldn't have to imagine. Honey bees aren't native to America. They are from Europe, just like the early Americans.

Before honey bees arrived in America, wasps, butterflies and other insects pollinated the plants. <sup>1</sup> But when the colonist brought strange new plants from Europe, the native bees couldn't pollinate them as well as the honey bees back home. So the honey bees sailed to North America with the colonists. They arrived ready to escape their skeps and fly. The journey was long, usually lasting six to eight weeks. <sup>2</sup> Sadly, most of the hives died on the journey.

It is interesting to note that not everyone was thrilled with the arrival of the honey bees. The Native Americans even referred to them as the "white man's flies" Surprisingly, honey bees are considered to be one of the first invasive species in North America.<sup>4</sup>

Most historians agree the Virginia colony had honey bees by 1622.<sup>5</sup> William Bradford was the Governor of Virginia at that time. <sup>6</sup> He received a letter from the Council of the Virginia Company. The letter, written in December of 1621, mentioned bee hives being shipped to the colony from England.<sup>7</sup> Assuming the ship arrived safely with at least one live hive, honey bees would have been flying in the American colonies by 1622.

George Pelton kept bees at his home in the Virginia Colony. His neighbor wrote to a friend in England in March 1648 and mentioned that Pelton made a profit of thirty pounds per year from the bees. His neighbor also wrote "...If men would endeavour to increase this kind of creature, there would be here in a short time abundance of wax and honey, for there is all the country over delicate food for bees, and there is also bees naturally in the land, though we account not of them."<sup>8</sup> This letter suggests not only that honey bees were prospering in the American colonies but that honey bee propagation was news worthy enough to share with people in England.

For the next hundred years, starting in 1622, shipping records were incomplete. No one is certain if honey bees were imported although we can assume that shipments continued. However, we do know the bee population increased greatly and honey bees spread throughout the colonies. Early records reveal the Massachusetts Colony had domesticated honey bee hives in 1638,<sup>9</sup> followed by the Connecticut Colony in 1644<sup>9</sup> In 1670, the New York Colony, had reports of honey bees as well.<sup>11</sup> Pennsylvania had recorded honey bee hives by 1698. The North Carolina Colony followed with reports in 1730.<sup>12</sup> Fourteen years later, in 1744, Georgia also had reports of thriving domesticated honey bee colonies.<sup>13</sup>

The colonists were a hardy people. If they couldn't make or produce it, they didn't need it. Like many other animals imported to the colonies, honey bees provided a means of living. But, honey bees also provided many much needed and appreciated items. In other words, honey bees were practically a necessity! Wax was commonly used to make candles, bind wounds, waterproof leather and smooth sewing thread<sup>4</sup> It was also an early chewing gum. <sup>15</sup> In the North Carolina Colony, beeswax was even used to pay taxes!<sup>16</sup> Honey was commonly used as a sweetener. It was also used to make mead and preserve food.<sup>17</sup> Colonists would even mix it with rue and hyssop to make an expectorant.<sup>18</sup>

Honey bees were very valuable. According to records from the Virginia Colony in 1745, a hive of honey bees was comparable to the cost of calves and sheep.<sup>19</sup> Surprisingly, a hive was worth more than a hog!<sup>20</sup>

By 1730, honey bees had prospered so much that they not only provided for the needs of the colonists (an estimated 629,445 people<sup>21</sup>) but there was a surplus of beeswax to export! In that same year, Virginia exported 343,900 pounds of beeswax.<sup>22</sup> A colonist, at that time, claimed that each hive produced approximately twenty pounds of honey and two pounds of wax per year<sup>23</sup> If accurate, there would have been approximately 171,950 hives used just for export purposes in Virginia alone! Imagine how many additional feral and domesticated hives must have existed just to meet the needs of the colonial population!

Those aren't the only records that show the exports of bee products. In 1767, thirty-five barrels (approximately 8,800 pounds) of beeswax were exported from Philadelphia. Twenty-two years later, 14,500 pounds of beeswax were shipped from Charleston, South Carolina. Sir William Gooch, who was the Governor of Virginia, mentioned beeswax when describing the commerce of the colony. <sup>26</sup> In a report to the Board of Trade in 1743, he wrote that beeswax was being exported to Portugal and the Island of Madeira.<sup>27</sup>

The colonists exported an amazing amount of beeswax. But, what's even more amazing is that the population of Virginia in 1730 was approximately 114,000 people. <sup>28</sup> There were approximately 172,000 honey bee hives. So, for every person there was one and a half hives in Virginia alone. Amazing, right? Especially when you compare that to today. The population of Virginia is currently just over 8 million people.<sup>29</sup> Sadly, there are only about 35,000 hives in the state!<sup>30</sup> That means that there is only one hive for every 228.5 people!

When you hear someone mention honey bees, remember the long journey across the ocean. Remember the crucial part bees played in the colonization of America. The art and science of beekeeping is fading, along with the bees. Learn from senior beekeepers and hold tight to what they teach you. Beekeeping is a part of American history and we need to make it part of America's future!

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## Endnotes

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### Biographical Sketch

My name is Natalie Shimo, I am a ninth grade home-school student and live in Mercer, PA. I am now fifteen years old. I have three cats and twenty-four chickens. I help my father take care of fifteen bee hives. I have been a 4-H member for six years. Besides beekeeping, I enjoy completing textile, cooking, scrapbooking and first aid projects. I volunteer at a therapeutic horse riding program in the summer and with the special needs program at my church.

## Recipe

### Banana Smoothie

- 1-1/2 cups - milk
- 1 cup - plain or vanilla yogurt
- 1/4 cup - honey
- 1 tsp. - vanilla nutmeg
- 2 medium - ripe bananas
- 1/2 tsp. - ground cinnamon
- 5 - ice cubes

In a blender, combine all ingredients except ice cubes and blend until smooth. Add up to 5 ice cubes, one at a time, and blend until smooth.

From the National Honey Board  
[www.honey.com](http://www.honey.com)

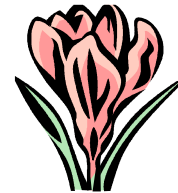
### Pork Loin with Zesty Honey Sauce

- 1 cup - chili sauce
- 1/4 cup - minced onion
- 1 Tbls. - Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp. - Dijon mustard
- 1 (3 lbs.) - lean pork loin
- 3/4 cup - honey
- 2 Tbls. - dry red wine

Combine all ingredients except pork in large saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and keep warm. Grill pork, covered, over medium-hot coals, turning and basting frequently with honey sauce about 1 hour or until meat thermometer registers 155° to 160°F. Remove from grill; cover and keep warm 15 minutes. Serve sliced with additional honey sauce.

Nutritional Information: **Calories:** 235, **Carbohydrates:** 18 g, **Cholesterol:** 66 mg, **Fat Total:** 7 g, **Sodium:** 188 mg, **Protein:** 25 g, **Dietary Fiber:** <1g, **Calories from Fat:**25%

From the National Honey Board  
[www.honey.com](http://www.honey.com)



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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