



# THE HONEY POT

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb 11, 7:00pm

**MCBA Monthly Meeting**

Holiday Park Senior Center  
3950 Ferrara Drive, Silver Spring  
*Bee Informed Partnership*

Feb 14, 8:30am-4:00pm

**MD State Beekeeper Winter Meeting**

Howard County Fair Grounds  
*Dr. Reed Johnson, Ohio State University in Wooster*

Mar 11, 7:00pm

**MCBA Monthly Meeting**

Brookside Nature Center  
*Prof David Biddinger, Penn State on Effects of Pesticides on Cherry Tree Pollinators*



by Elie Rogers

### *Message from the President*

by Timothy McMahon

#### *A New Year*

ATTENTION ATTENTION: Due to a scheduling conflict at Brookside Nature Center, the next club meeting, on Wednesday February 11, 2015 will be held at the Holiday Park Senior Center at 3950 Ferrara Drive, Silver Spring 20906. This is the location of our Holiday Party and where we hold our Short Course. Our speaker for February will be Nathalie Steinhauer from the Bee Informed Partnership who will talk about the data gathered by their group on winter losses. Also from the same group will be Rachel Fahey who will speak about the Sentinel Hives we will have this year in our club bee yard.

We have some fantastic speakers this year, including March's upcoming speaker Prof. David Biddinger from Penn State University to talk about the effects of pesticides on pollinators of cherry trees; in April, Dr. Jay Evans from the USDA Bee Lab in Beltsville will be speaking about his research on the Varroa mite.

Well it's a new year and most of us have a new plan for what we want to do with the bees come warmer weather. Don't put off getting yourself set up now as the warm weather may be here before you know it. Most of us will be doing some feeding between now and when the spring bloom really starts to kick in and we think about reversing boxes. It's time to get your equipment together, order bees if you need to, and set up your yards. Billy Davis spoke at our last club meeting about how to do a split from your own bees come spring time and I hope that gave some of you ideas of what to do or, at least, something to think about. I hope that more and more of us will be doing this and trying to make our own bees instead of buying bees from the south.

With the new year, comes a new plan for our club to try some new things and bring back some old ideas. The club bee yard will be up and running this year in the meadow behind Brookside Nature Center. We plan on having two top bar hives, some 10 and 8 frame hives, both deep and mediums. We expect two of these hives to be set up with hive scales that will have data online as part of the Sentinel Hive project. We will be doing some different types of manipulations on these hives during the year with different mite treatments and management techniques. We are adding a new social event to the club calendar this year with a spring barbecue on Sunday May 17 (save the date). We are looking to update our web pages this year also, to make them more useful and user friendly. The excitement of a new year always gets the heart racing for us beekeepers!

Reminder that our next meeting will be at the Holiday Park Senior Center on February 11, (3950 Ferrara Dr., Silver Spring, MD 20906). Hope to see everyone there at the meeting. The club Short Course will be held on 7 Tuesdays in a row starting on February 3 and running through March 17. If you would like to come to the Short Course and be a Bee Ambassador to answer questions to new beekeepers during breaks, please feel free to come on out. Also, the Maryland State Beekeepers' Association (MSBA) will hold their winter meeting at the Howard County Fair Grounds on Saturday, February 14 (bring your valentine to that). The MSBA guest speaker will be Dr. Reed Johnson from Ohio State University in Wooster.

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## *EAS 2015 University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada*

by Timothy McMahon

Have you ever considered taking a “Beekeeping Vacation”? Well now is the time to go out and get your passport renewed as EAS 2015 will be taking place in Guelph, Ontario (about 1.5 hours north of Niagara Falls, New York, 8 to 10 hours away from Maryland by car). EAS (Eastern Apiculture Society) is one of the largest noncommercial beekeeping organizations in the United States and one of the largest in the world. Every summer EAS conducts its week long Annual Conference of lectures and workshops in one the 26 member states or Canadian provinces. This year’s EAS conference will be held at the University Guelph, Ontario, from August 10 through August 14. The conference usually brings in about 600 to 800 beekeepers from around the world to attend.

The conference is made up of the Short Course, running from Monday to Wednesday, and the conference proper, running from Wednesday to Friday, with

Wednesday as the overlap day. Normally about half of the attendees stay the whole week with the other half coming just for the conference. The Short Course will contain classes for beekeepers of all levels and special events such as an open apiary with Langstroth, Warre' and Top Bar Hives, a microscope workshop on bee anatomy, a Honey Show for you to enter your bee products, and classes on all aspects of beekeeping.

The conference proper will consist of over 100 different talks about all aspects of beekeeping including classes on Queen rearing, Mead and Beer brewing and on IPM (Integrated Pest Management). Along with the workshops there are many social events such as a tour of a large commercial beekeeping operation, a meadery and The Niagara Butterfly Conservatory. In one week's time, you can learn more about beekeeping than you ever possibly imagined.

I first attended EAS several years ago in Boone NC, and the experience was so great that I became a life time member. I've not missed an EAS conference since. Every year I go with a set of questions in mind and try to find the answers from the best minds in Beekeeping. Can't get much better than that! Maybe the best thing about the week-long EAS is that I get to talk "bees" all week long and no one says that they had heard enough (normally my family asks me to shut-up after the first 2 minutes or so). You can find out all about the specific topics covered and how to sign up at the EAS webpage here <http://www.easternapiculture.org/>. I hope to see you there. EAS 2016 is scheduled for New Jersey, 2017 in Delaware and 2018 in Virginia. Come and join the fun!

## PLEASE CONTRIBUTE!

The Honey Pot is always looking for articles, memoirs, photographs, poems, and drawings related to beekeeping.

If you **attend an interesting lecture**, please send a summary to share with your fellow beekeepers.

If you are **marveling over your photo of bees or hives**, please send it over.

If you have an **amazing beekeeping epiphany**, we'd like to know.

## ***TRANSFIGURATION OF THE BEEKEEPER'S DAUGHTER***

by Todd Davis

Because the bees flew toward light the color of honey, she couldn't see them but heard their hum, deep thrum of the colony come out of the hive, comb dripping with loss and the smoke her father used to subdue, to pacify the fear that might spur an attack. It wasn't until her brother began to cry that she noticed her hair was moving, undulating like water easing from a rapids, alive with an energy she recognized as the gentle buzzing of hundreds and hundreds of bees.

They swelled along the strands of her hair, remaking the small world that floated in front of her eyes, as even more bees curled around her face.

She'd seen the woman at the fair who made a beard of bees for the crowd of farmers and their families. She read about the love and patience the woman told the newsman was necessary as their legs and translucent wings crept and fluttered across the tender flesh under the chin, fanning cheekbones, slipping over the helix of the outer ear. Like earrings cut into the loveliest shapes, with colors of burnished gold and copper, the bees poured over the girl's scalp, some finding their way down the collarbone, onto arms and breasts, abdomens pulsing in time to the electricity along the hind legs that captured the pollen for the journey back to the hive. She found it impossible to hold still, unless she thought of that bearded-bee woman, the affection that transfixes the body while even more bees conceal the feet and shins, the knees and thighs, until a girl vanishes, and in her place a glistening, winged seraph takes to the sky.

## *Letter from the South*

by Bill Miller

Active bee season is starting to get going here in Alabama, and to start it off we had the annual Alabama Cooperative Extension Service's Beekeeping Symposium. When I first started attending this symposium some 9 years ago, it drew about 200 attendees and parking wasn't a problem. Last year's symposium drew just over 600 people and parking was almost impossible. In addition, the crowd attracted the attention of the local fire marshal, who correctly pointed out that the symposium had reached its attendance limit at the location then being used (Auburn University). This year, the program was held at a larger conference center, and drew 710 paid participants. Even though parking was still a problem, I take the larger attendance as demonstrating the growth of beekeeping in Alabama.

Conferences like this are there for beekeepers to learn the latest information and to get new ideas. What were my biggest take-aways? Well, for me as a teacher of beekeeping there were three big ones that I will bring to all the beginners in this year's class:

- Start with at least two colonies, if at all possible, and then make a nuc from one of those colonies. Save the extractor purchase for another year.
- Colonies that are started with nucs have a much better chance of success than those started with packages. Something like 60% of colonies started from packages fail to make it through the first year.
- Most importantly, new beekeepers need mentors to actively help them through the first year.

Now, I'll confess that when I started with bees back in the early 1980's I started with one colony, a package, and I didn't know any other beekeepers (or even how you registered your colony). Looking back, how my bees survived those first few years is beyond me. I suppose I got beginner's luck.

However, now I know better than to leave my students off on their own or try to diagnose problems over the phone. While my schedule won't let me go everywhere in the county for personal consultations, one of the things I do is before our regular Wiregrass Beekeepers meetings, I go down to the Extension Service's apiary and have an open hive session. Everyone with appropriate protective gear is welcome to attend, ask questions, and get some practice working with hives.

I'll get off my soapbox now and talk about some of the symposium programs. Dr. Larry Connor (of Wicwas Press) did "The Sustainable Hive", and gave the following tips:

1. Raise your own queens (or buy local queens).
2. Have a good location. Full sun is recommended these days.
3. Make splits (nucs) and keep them for emergencies like finding a queenless colony.
4. Drones aren't entirely useless, make sure your area has a decent drone population.
5. Don't treat because the calendar says so, always sample first.
6. Enjoy your bees.

We also had a video presentation by Kim Flottum (editor of Bee Culture), titled "Ten Rules for Modern Beekeeping." I won't go into the details of that presentation, instead I'll give you a link to the presentation so you can watch it at your leisure from [here](#).

So get ready for the new season armed with new knowledge and some good beekeeping common sense. I'll write again next month.

<b><u><a href="http://www.MontgomeryCountyBeekeepers.com">www.MontgomeryCountyBeekeepers.com</a></u></b>		
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