



Missouri State Beekeepers Association  
PO Box 7514 Columbia, Missouri 65205  
[www.mostatebeekeepers.org](http://www.mostatebeekeepers.org)

**February 2016**

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Editor  
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## Randy Oliver to headline Fall Conference

October 14-15 at Lake of the Ozarks

Save the date! Our annual MSBA Fall Conference has been scheduled for October 14-15 at Lodge of the Four Seasons in Lake Ozark, Missouri.

This conference will be heavy on the latest research. Confirmed speakers include:

**Randy Oliver**, commercial beekeeper, long-running American Bee Journal author, field researcher and research analyst. Check out his work at [scientificbeekeeping.com](http://scientificbeekeeping.com)

**Mel Disselkoen**, independent honeybee researcher and promoter of innovative queen-rearing techniques. Read more at [mdasplitter.com](http://mdasplitter.com)  
More details to come!

photo by Mimi Higgins

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## From the President by Valerie Duever

January 19, 2016

Hello Everyone.

Hope your holidays were good and your hives have survived so far. While you are mixing up fondants for your bees and searching the supplier catalogs for good deals on woodenware, your MSBA Executive Committee has been making plans for the upcoming years.

This past weekend, we got together and discussed how beekeeping has changed, how WE need to change and what we can do to be of service to our industry. We discussed streamlining memberships, what we can do to provide better communication with our members and what other products could we offer as part of your membership package. We talked about MU's plans on having a Master Pollinator Program and a Master Certified Beekeeper Program, neither of which have been finalized yet, but both seem very interesting.

There were a couple of things we did decide. Starting in 2017, we will be adding a Spring Learning Session and we will be rotating the location of the Fall Conference so more folks can attend.

The 2016 Fall Conference will be held at the Lake of the Ozarks, so mark your calendars. Check this and upcoming newsletters for more information.

Speaking of conferences, the Great Plains Growers Conference was held in St. Joseph, MO this past January. It is an annual event that draws folks in from Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, North and South Dakota and Wyoming. This year, Dr. Larry Connors did an all-day talk on honeybees so Jim and I took turns listening to his thoughts on honeybees and queen rearing and nectar-rich plants ... very interesting.

Dr. Jaime Pinero with Lincoln University is doing some interesting research on Vegetable Integrated Pest Management. He has partnered up with Jim and me for a few beekeeping classes, so I was familiar with his research and did a class on IPM in St. Joe. During one of his discussions, he mentioned how difficult it was to control beetles, but that there were fungi that seemed promising. Clayton and I chatted with him after the meeting, and asked him his thoughts on Small Hive Beetles. He provided us with the name of a fungus that was currently being tested. I did a little researching on it this morning and found that, in 2004, Australia found this and another fungi appeared very effective, not harmful to the bees and didn't poison the honey. There is more research being done to figure out how much, when to use and how to apply, but how exciting is that! I'm going to talk with Dr. Pinero to see if we can get any Missouri research projects going with this ... in my spare time, of course.

The point I am making is three-fold; First, there is research being conducted for all types of honeybee pests but it seems like it is being underreported to the public. Second, sometimes we need to think outside the "smash and spray" box for answers to difficult problems. And finally, it is encouraging to find there are opportunities for us, as beekeepers of all levels, to get involved with these researchers to have conversations on what we are seeing in the fields.

For those of you that are new to beekeeping, the things you will get to learn will astound you. Bees are affected by so many different things and it is important you have a basic understanding of the important ones to grow. You need to know how a flower works, what is involved in pollination, the life cycle of a number of insects and fungi and a little bit of chemistry. Of course, one could say that you need this knowledge to be a good gardener or a great chef, too.

So, now is the time to expand your education. If you haven't taken a class lately ... please do so. Check the events calendar on our webpage for upcoming classes in your area. If you are hosting a class and want it to be added, send us a note and we will do that as soon as we are able.

And, watch for those MSBA newsletters and emails to keep up with the ever changing world of beekeeping. Thank you for being a member of the Missouri State Beekeepers Association.

Valerie



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## Local clubs, schools announce beekeeping workshops

**Beekeepers Association of the Ozarks** will conduct a class for beginning beekeepers at the MSU Darr School of Agriculture Springfield campus in The Bond Learning Center, 2401 S Kansas Expressway Feb 2, 9, 16, and March 1. 6:30-8:30. You must be pre-registered to attend due to space limitations. You can register for the classes through our website. Our annual club membership is included in the class registration fee. [www.ozarksbeekeepers.org](http://www.ozarksbeekeepers.org)

**North Central Missouri Beekeepers Association** and **Crooked Hill Beekeeping LLC** are sponsoring a **Beginner's Beekeeping Class** on February 20 from 9am to 4pm, at the Macon High School cafeteria in Macon, Missouri. Cost is \$40.00

Instructors are Jim and Valerie Duever. The Duevers were MSBA Beekeepers of the Year in 2009, and Valerie is currently MSBA President. They have together taught numerous beekeeping classes throughout the state in conjunction with UM Extension offices.

Please RSVP to Bill or Tammy George at: (660) 214-0132 or [georges@chbeekeeping.com](mailto:georges@chbeekeeping.com)

Registration is now open for **Rolla Bee Club's** second year beekeeping class Saturday, February 20, 2016 at 1341 California, Rolla, Missouri from 9am to 3pm. The class will cover what second year beekeepers need to know to manage bees during their second spring including splitting hives, preventing swarming and managing for the honey flow. Cost is \$45 and includes class materials and catered lunch. To pre-register, email [rollabees@gmail.com](mailto:rollabees@gmail.com) or call (573) 578-0561 by February 5, 2016. [#mobeekeepingclasses](https://www.facebook.com/mobeekeepingclasses)

The **Buchanan County MU Extension** office will hold a **Beginning Beekeeping Workshop** on Saturday, March 5, from 8:30 am to 5pm, at 1st Christian Church, 318 N. Pine St., Cameron MO 64429. This workshop is being taught by beekeepers from the Midwestern Beekeepers Association, as well as several area beekeepers. Cost is \$25.00 and includes lunch, refreshments, the book *First Lessons in Beekeeping*, and handouts. Checks can be made payable to University of Missouri Extension and mailed to 4125 Mitchell Ave St. Joseph, MO 64507.

Registrations are accepted at the door, but will not include the book or handouts. Call the Extension at 816-279-1691 for more information.

**Midwestern Beekeepers** holds its 21st Annual **Beginning Beekeeping Class** on Saturday March 12, 2016, 8am – 5 pm at Lakewood Oaks Golf Club in Lee's Summit.

The agenda will include: Bee Biology; Equipment; Acquiring bees; Spring, Fall, and Winter Management; Bee Diseases and Pest Management; Educational Opportunities; Hive Location; Honey Plants; Extracting Honey; Beekeeping Etiquette; Questions and Answers; Door Prizes; and a chance to win a complete colony of honey bees.

The \$65 Pre-registration Fee includes a Beekeeping Handbook, membership in the association, a monthly newsletter, refreshments, and lunch. For more info: Cathy Misko (660) 656-3485 [cathymisko@earthlink.net](mailto:cathymisko@earthlink.net) or Ezekiel Amador (816) 616-7619 [zekeamador@aol.com](mailto:zekeamador@aol.com)

Visit [www.midwesternbeekeepers.org](http://www.midwesternbeekeepers.org)

**St. Clair Beekeepers** will host a **Beginning Beekeeping Class** on March 12 at the St. Clair County Farm Bureau, 1478 Ill. Rte 15, Belleville IL. Contact club secretary Vickie Piel, at [beesrgr8@att.net](mailto:beesrgr8@att.net) or 618-978-4369 to register or for more info.

A **Natural Beekeeping Workshop** will be held March 19-20 in Rockbridge, Missouri.

It includes a full two days of in-depth information on natural beekeeping plus a visit to a treatment-free apiary. This comprehensive workshop is hosted by Dr Leo Sharashkin - regular contributor to American Bee Journal, Bee Culture, and other major publications. He is editor of "Keeping Bees With a Smile", a definitive resource on natural beekeeping and horizontal hives. His apiary of 20 hives is composed of resilient survivor stock obtained from Ozark feral colonies. Dr Leo has given over 300 presentations on four continents, and his course attracts participants from all over the US and abroad. For complete program and registration (as well as free plans and natural beekeeping information) visit [www.HorizontalHive.com](http://www.HorizontalHive.com)

MSBA members enjoy a \$100 registration discount if you register by February 14 - use coupon code: SHOWMEBEES when you register at [www.HorizontalHive.com](http://www.HorizontalHive.com) This discount can be combined with another \$100 off per person for 2 or more people registering together.

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# Report from the 2016 American Honey Producers Conference

January 5-9 in Albuquerque, New Mexico

by Phil Ebert

In a nutshell, the main focus of this meeting was Varroa mites and insecticides. Dennis Van Englesdorp characterized the fall increase in Varroa population as the “Varroa Bomb.” Every time he mentioned this, he showed a slide depicting a nuclear explosion. They are blaming the high mite counts on mite-carrying bees migrating in from colonies that are crashing, because it doesn’t meet the model they have on population development. This may be but we have been seeing this fall mite jump for years. Most of our yards are in areas where there are no other beekeepers. Whatever the cause, the mite load will jump exponentially in the fall. If you do not control this, your bees will die. The rule of thumb for some years has been that half of the mites are in the brood. It can be much higher than that. Researchers now acknowledge this. If you hit a cycle where 80% of the mites are in the brood, your mite count can jump from 3% to 15% in the time it takes for the brood to emerge. That’s from day 9 to day 24 if you include the drone brood. The likelihood of saving that colony is pretty remote.

Conventional wisdom now says that your bees will die if the mite load gets over 5%. While it has been my goal for some years to stay below that level, it didn’t happen this year. Our load ran 5% to 6% through the fall. We got the mites knocked down but it took three treatments. We fed syrup and protein supplement and they brooded up after the final mite treatment but we don’t know if we have enough young healthy bees to get through the winter. We will know when we tally the death loss in the spring. It has been found that high levels of CO<sub>2</sub> can be detrimental to mites. Confined winter clusters can raise the CO<sub>2</sub> level to 6% or 7%. Bees can withstand 8% but may die at 12%. There was a story about a beekeeper driving his loader into a winter storage building to take the bees out. The loader died because there was not enough oxygen left in the air. The bees were okay, though.

A researcher at BYU is looking at phages as a possible solution to American Foulbrood. AFB is caused by bacteria. A phage is the worst enemy that bacteria has. It was described as looking like a microscopic lunar lander. It attaches itself to the bacteria and kills it. Each phage will only attach itself to specific bacteria. The research is in the early stage but it does work. Honeybees have a proventriculus behind their honey stomach that can filter out some of the

foulbrood spores. When the spores become too numerous, they wind up getting fed to the larvae and foulbrood results. There were reports of neonics being found in surface water. This was no big surprise since they are water soluble and move with the ground water. At the present time, insecticides are not my major problem. Down the road, it is my fear that we are creating a toxic cocktail in the ground. I am not against insecticides but I think we need to be lot smarter about how we use them.

Jonathan Lungren was a presenter at the meeting. He worked for the USDA in South Dakota (note past tense). His research suggested that neonics posed a threat to pollinators. He gave interviews to this effect. This made him a bad boy in the eyes of the USDA. Harassment began. In the end, he walked away from his job as a lead scientist. He has instigated a whistle blower case against the USDA. This was all covered in an article in the Washington Post.

Jonathan also worked with farmers to produce an environment favorable to pollinators and improve soil health. These farmers were able to increase their revenue per acre. He is now trying to raise funds to continue his work on a private basis. Check him out at [www.bluedasher.farm](http://www.bluedasher.farm) or [www.ecdysis.bio](http://www.ecdysis.bio). He is a very dynamic guy. I sent him a few bucks. Jonathan’s fate is similar to what befell Jeff Pettis. Jeff was asked to resign as the head of the Beltsville lab. It was another case of getting the “wrong” results.

The last session of the final day covered what was happening with honey prices and the flood of imported “honey” coming into the US. Annual US consumption is somewhere north of 400,000,000 pounds. Imports will probably exceed that amount in 2016 if the present rate continues. This is in addition to a US crop of somewhere around 140,000,000 pounds. If you are a big producer with a warehouse full of honey, you have a problem. Good local honey can still bring top dollar, though.

Think Spring. It will be here before we know it!!



photo by Grant Gillard



# BeeSpeakSTL

Beekeeping Speaker Series

**Dr. Tom Seeley**  
Author of Honeybee Democracy



**Saturday, February 27th**  
Shoenberg Theater  
Missouri Botanical Garden

Spend an afternoon with Dr. Tom Seeley, a world authority on honey bees on Saturday, February 27th from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Dr. Seeley will present on several fascinating topics, including research for a new book in the works titled "Following The Wild Bees".

Registration is \$22.00 in advance. For more information and tickets, please visit [www.beespeakstl.com](http://www.beespeakstl.com).



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# Local Beekeeping Associations in Missouri

- 1 Beekeepers Association of the Ozarks**  
4th Tuesday of each month, 6-9 p.m.  
Seminole Baptist Church, 4221 S. National Ave.  
Springfield MO 65810  
Jeffrey Maddox, President [maddox65804@yahoo.com](mailto:maddox65804@yahoo.com)  
[www.ozarksbeekeepers.org](http://www.ozarksbeekeepers.org)
- 2 Boone Regional Beekeepers Association**  
3rd Sunday of month, 3:00 p.m., Columbia Insurance Group, 2102 Whitegate Dr. (back door), Columbia  
President Jim Duever, 573-254-3373 [www.boonebees.org](http://www.boonebees.org)
- 3 Busy Bee Club**  
4th Tuesday of each month, 7:00 p.m., Cedar County Health Center, Owens Mill Road, Stockton  
Neal Lee 417-276-3090, Neil Brunner 314-276-4252
- 4 Eastern Missouri Beekeepers Association**  
2nd Wednesday of each month, 7:00 p.m., location changes. Bob Sears, President 314-479-9517  
[www.easternmobeekeepers.com](http://www.easternmobeekeepers.com)
- 5 Golden Valley Beekeepers**  
2nd Monday of each month, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.  
Golden Corral, Clinton MO. Tom McCormick, President  
[tomm@goldenvalleybeekeepers.com](mailto:tomm@goldenvalleybeekeepers.com)  
[www.goldenvalleybeekeepers.com](http://www.goldenvalleybeekeepers.com)
- 6 Jackson Area Beekeepers**  
4th Tuesday of each month, 7:00 p.m.  
First Presb. of Jackson, 206 E. Washington  
Contact Grant Gillard, [gillard5@charter.net](mailto:gillard5@charter.net), 573-243-6568
- 7 Jefferson County Beekeepers Association**  
2nd Tuesday of each month, 7:30 p.m., Hwy B & 21  
Jefferson County Extension Center, Hillsboro  
Contact Marvin Hook 636-274-1759
- 8 Joplin Area Beekeepers Association**  
Last Tue. of each month, 7 pm, SM Bank Community Building (7th and Duquesne Rd), Joplin  
Contact Dale Foley 417-850-0285
- 9 Mid Missouri Beekeepers**  
3rd Sunday, 2 pm, Old Train Depot, St. James.  
Contact Don Moore, [dmoore2@centurytel.net](mailto:dmoore2@centurytel.net)  
573-265-8706
- 10 Midwestern Beekeepers Association**  
Most meetings: Fellowship Hall at Graceway, 5460 Blue Ridge Cutoff, Kansas City, MO 64133  
Visit [midwesternbeekeepers.org](http://midwesternbeekeepers.org) for meeting calendar  
President Bob Williams, [thebeltonbee@gmail.com](mailto:thebeltonbee@gmail.com)
- 11 Mississippi Valley Beekeepers Association**  
Last Tuesday of Month in Quincy, IL  
Contact Bernie Andrew 217-938-4975
- 12 Missouri Valley Beekeepers Association**  
3rd Monday, 7pm, Union, location varies  
President Calvin Brandt [cvbrandt@landolakes.com](mailto:cvbrandt@landolakes.com)
- 13 Parkland Beekeepers**  
3rd Tuesday of month, 7pm, North College Center, Mineral Area College, Park Hills. Pres. Ray Politte  
573-631-8336 [PBA\\_President@mineralarea.edu](mailto:PBA_President@mineralarea.edu)
- 14 Pomme de Terre Beekeepers**  
2nd Thursday 7 pm, Missouri Extension Office, Hermitage  
Contact Rebekah Huddleston [Rebekah\\_421@yahoo.com](mailto:Rebekah_421@yahoo.com)
- 15 SEMO Honey Producers**  
2nd Thursday of month, Church of Christ, Poplar Bluff  
Contact Cory Stevens 573-225-6935  
[wells.ernie@gmail.com](mailto:wells.ernie@gmail.com)
- 16 South Central Missouri Beekeepers Association**  
1st Friday of month, Howell Electric Coop, West Plains  
Monty Wiens, President 417 257-3994
- 17 Southern MO Beekeepers of Monett "MOBees")**  
3rd Tuesday of each month, 7:00 p.m.  
United Methodist Church, Hwy 37 NW of Monett  
Kevin Young, President 417-847-5464
- 18 Southwest Missouri Beekeepers Assn. of Neosho**  
1st Tuesday of month, Neosho High School FFA Bldg  
Contact Thelma Ross 417-472-3504  
[rtross@jscomm.net](mailto:rtross@jscomm.net)
- 19 Three Rivers Beekeepers**  
3rd Monday, 7pm, University of Missouri Extension, 260 Brown Rd, St. Peters, [info@threeriversbeekeepers.com](mailto:info@threeriversbeekeepers.com)  
President Eugene Makovec 314-703-7650
- 20 Northwest Missouri Bee Busters**  
2nd Monday of month, location varies  
[nwmobeebusters.blogspot.com](http://nwmobeebusters.blogspot.com)  
[beebusters2012@gmail.com](mailto:beebusters2012@gmail.com)  
Gerald Auffert, President 660-944-2535
- 21 Lake of the Ozarks Beekeepers**  
3rd Saturday of month, 1:00 p.m.  
Square Deals Ice Cream Shop, Versailles  
Contact Garrett Blackwell 573-374-7402
- 22 Northeast Missouri Beekeepers Association**  
1st Friday of month, 7 pm, Clark County Courthouse, Lower level, Kahoka (location may vary)  
(3 miles south of Wayland) Contact Randy Ewart 573-248-5561 [rewart@centurytel.net](mailto:rewart@centurytel.net)
- 23 Gasconade Region Beekeepers**  
2nd Tuesday 7:00, First State Comm. Bank, Owensville  
Pres. Chris Bilbrey 573-692-0698 [twaaace01@fidnet.com](mailto:twaaace01@fidnet.com)  
[gasconaderegionbeekeepers@hotmail.com](mailto:gasconaderegionbeekeepers@hotmail.com)
- 24 St. Louis Beekeepers**  
4th Tuesday 6:30, Schlafly Bottleworks  
[contact@saintlouisbeekeepers.com](mailto:contact@saintlouisbeekeepers.com)  
[www.saintlouisbeekeepers.com](http://www.saintlouisbeekeepers.com)
- 25 Western Missouri Beekeepers**  
2nd Tuesday 6:30, Moor-View Community Room, Nevada  
Caroline Phillips, President 417-321-3587  
[bcphillips81@gmail.com](mailto:bcphillips81@gmail.com)
- 26 Meramec Valley Beekeepers**  
First Sunday 2 pm, Peace Lutheran Church in Sullivan  
Contact Sam Elia 573-732-5597 [samnoral@gmail.com](mailto:samnoral@gmail.com), or Laurie Rose at [laurierose1219@yahoo.com](mailto:laurierose1219@yahoo.com)
- 27 Quad County Beekeepers**  
1st Tuesday, 7:00 pm, Missouri Extension Office, Troy  
President Eric Reid  
[quadcountybeekeepers.com](http://quadcountybeekeepers.com)
- 28 North Central MO Beekeepers Association**  
1st Monday, Area Career Center, Macon, 7:00 pm  
Contact Bill George (660) 646-3354, [www.ncmobees.org](http://www.ncmobees.org)
- 29 Bees Alive**  
(Springfield area) [www.beesaliveclub.org](http://www.beesaliveclub.org)  
1st Thursday, 7-9pm, Central Bank of the Ozarks, 502 W. Mt. Vernon St., Nixa MO 65714  
Dan Barton, [dannyohboy@hotmail.com](mailto:dannyohboy@hotmail.com)
- 30 Wright County Beekeepers**  
2nd Thursday, Laclede Electric building, Hartville, 7 pm  
Rick Bledsoe, Contact 417-741-7466  
[wrightcountybeekeepers@gmail.com](mailto:wrightcountybeekeepers@gmail.com)



# Local Beekeeping Associations in Missouri

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## 31 Rolla Bee Club

4th Sunday 2pm, Brownwood Estates Clubhouse, 1341 California, Rolla  
Contact David Draker (573) 578-0561  
rollabees@gmail.com www.rollabeeclub.com

## 32 Swarm Chasers

% MO Dept. of Conservation,  
701 McCarthy Dr., St. Joseph  
Contact Jason Seetin  
swarmchasers@gmail.com

## 33 EZ Beekeeping

3rd Sunday, 2 pm, Peace Lutheran Church in Sullivan  
No dues, focus on Horizontal Hives. Contact Jim Roe  
636-357-7658 or email [jim.roe@asemonline.org](mailto:jim.roe@asemonline.org). This group has an open group on Yahoo to exchange information. (Yahoo account needed.)

## 34 Mark Twain Beekeepers

3rd Monday, 6-8 p.m. No dues. February meeting at Gregg Tivnan's workshop near Bunker; call for other months. Contacts: Terry Phelps 573-729-3333

Gregg Tivnan (573) 689-2254 or [greggtivnan@yahoo.com](mailto:greggtivnan@yahoo.com)

## 35 West Central Beekeeping Association

Second Wednesday, 6:30 pm  
State Fair Community College, Potter-Ewing Ag Ctr, Sedalia  
Contact Mike Conroy (573) 301-1394  
[conroythegeek@gmail.com](mailto:conroythegeek@gmail.com)

## 36 West Plains Bee Group

3rd Thursday, 6:00 pm Hirsch Feed & Farm Supply, 789 Worley Dr., West Plains  
Call Carl Fry 417-247-0708 or Dan Cropper 417-372-2602

## 37 Caldwell County Beekeepers

4th Monday, 7pm, American Legion Hall in Braymer  
J.R. Hess. 660-233-9577 or [jrhess11@gmail.com](mailto:jrhess11@gmail.com)

## 38 Dexter Bee Club

1st Tuesday, 7pm, Scott Laden's house in Dexter  
Contact Dorothy at [djhooten@yahoo.com](mailto:djhooten@yahoo.com), or Cory Stevens at [corystevens00@yahoo.com](mailto:corystevens00@yahoo.com)

See our interactive club map on the website at: <http://batchgeo.com/map/e64a9d35b439c5309794fbae8516f333>

## Confessions of a beginning beekeeper - 20 years later

by Eugene Makovec

*I recently ran across the old notebook in which I kept copious notes of my first couple of years as a beekeeper. As I told attendees of our Three Rivers Beginning Beekeeping Workshop last weekend, my first season was a comedy of errors. But enough time has passed that I am willing to share the story with you.*

*My father kept bees for over 50 years, but I had little interest when I was growing up. After moving to Missouri in the early '80s, I made a habit of returning from every trek home to Wisconsin with a supply of crystallized honey, usually scooped from one of two galvanized milk cans stored at the top of the stairs. (Why he lugged them up there I'll never understand.)*

*After poor health and mites cut Dad's hobby short, I decided that buying my honey at the grocery store was just not the same. So in April of 1996 I drove with a friend up to Wisconsin and picked up a 1941 Dadant four-frame extractor and a stack of miscellaneous boxes and frames from Dad. With that equipment, and a beginner's class at Jefferson County Beekeepers, I felt ready to begin my own new hobby. As you will see from the following story, I was not.*

[Changes and additions to the original notes appear in bracketed text.]

**May 21, 1996 (Tuesday) - Package of Italians shipped** from Rossman Apiaries in Georgia.

**May 24 - Post office called about 7:30am.** I was at work (my first week on days), but [my father-in-law] picked them up for me.

[My wife] called me around noon and told me. I asked, "Well, how do they look? What are they doing?"

She said, "I don't know - I didn't really look at them. They're on the front porch, and I just walked past them and said, 'Ooh, icky!' And Tony [our two-year-old] said, 'Ooh, icky!' and we walked into the house."

[My ex-wife would not mind me saying that she was not a fan of the bees.]

Bees were milling around in box - sprayed down a couple times with

sugar water.

Left on front porch overnight. Checked on around 10pm - they were all pushed up against screen and more or less immobile - this worried me so I fed with sugar water again for good measure.

In the morning they were bustling with activity again.

**May 25 - Installed** - Set up hive at Ray's [a co-worker who live about an hour away in Troy]. Per Dad's instructions, I sprayed down bees with sugar water and set into bottom brood chamber, displacing three frames. Pulled top closure off and lifted syrup can out - it was still about one-third full. Most of the bees stayed inside but a few dozen were buzzing around me - it was rather exhilarating! Plus, I had an audience - Ray and Denise, a couple kids and neighbors - I kept busy explaining things as I was working - it's amazing how much I know about bees, yet how much I need to learn.

The queen case was setting, unattached, down in the midst of the workers, and I reached in with gloved hand and pulled it out. She was marked with a blue dot on her back. She was also clipped, which was lucky, because I pulled the wrong cork out of her cage. (I didn't really even think about it, but there was a block of candy inside one cork - like Dad had said - that allowed the workers to release her later.) Anyway, she crawled out and several workers crawled around her. I set her cage on top of frames and watched her crawl out, then set next brood chamber on top with three missing frames in the middle, and set the syrup can upside down on top of bee shipping box so they could eat the rest.

The queen had disappeared for a couple minutes, but there she was again. I grabbed my camera [a Canon Ftb] with closeup filter, but she was gone again. I closed up hive and left. I didn't feed anything else, since Dad had given me several frames with honey in them. I left hive with two brood boxes (including 5-6 honey-

continued on page 11



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## A beginner's confessions

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filled frames and a few empty frames, and 2-3 foundations) and one super of empty frames, with queen excluder [below it]. I closed off only about one-third of entrance with a piece of wood.

**May 28 - This is where the education begins.** Per Dad's advice, I went back after three days to pull shipping container out and replace with frames. He said if I waited too long they might cement it in with propolis. Well, that wasn't a problem, but what they did was start building honeycomb down from the queen excluder within the space of missing frames in second brood chamber - they had three irregular sections built down from the top, and between two of these sections, 3-4 bees had waxed themselves together to form a bridge (presumably for structural support) while dozens of other bees were building honeycomb. Denise took some pictures of this.

The other thing that amazed me was how incredibly docile these creatures are. Only once, when I physically tried to push a bunch of bees off outer box edges (to avoid crushing them with the next box), did they seem perturbed at my efforts, and a dozen or so



**Filling a vacuum:** The bees suspend comb from a queen excluder, taking advantage of the space left by missing combs. photo by Denise Phipps

started dive-bombing me and bouncing off my veil. Otherwise, the bees just went about their business as if I wasn't even there.

The only other indication of stress was the raised volume of buzzing whenever I'd smoke the entrance or top of hive.

I looked around a little but couldn't locate queen.

I observed that they had already put some honey into some combs in one empty frame.

*To be continued ...*

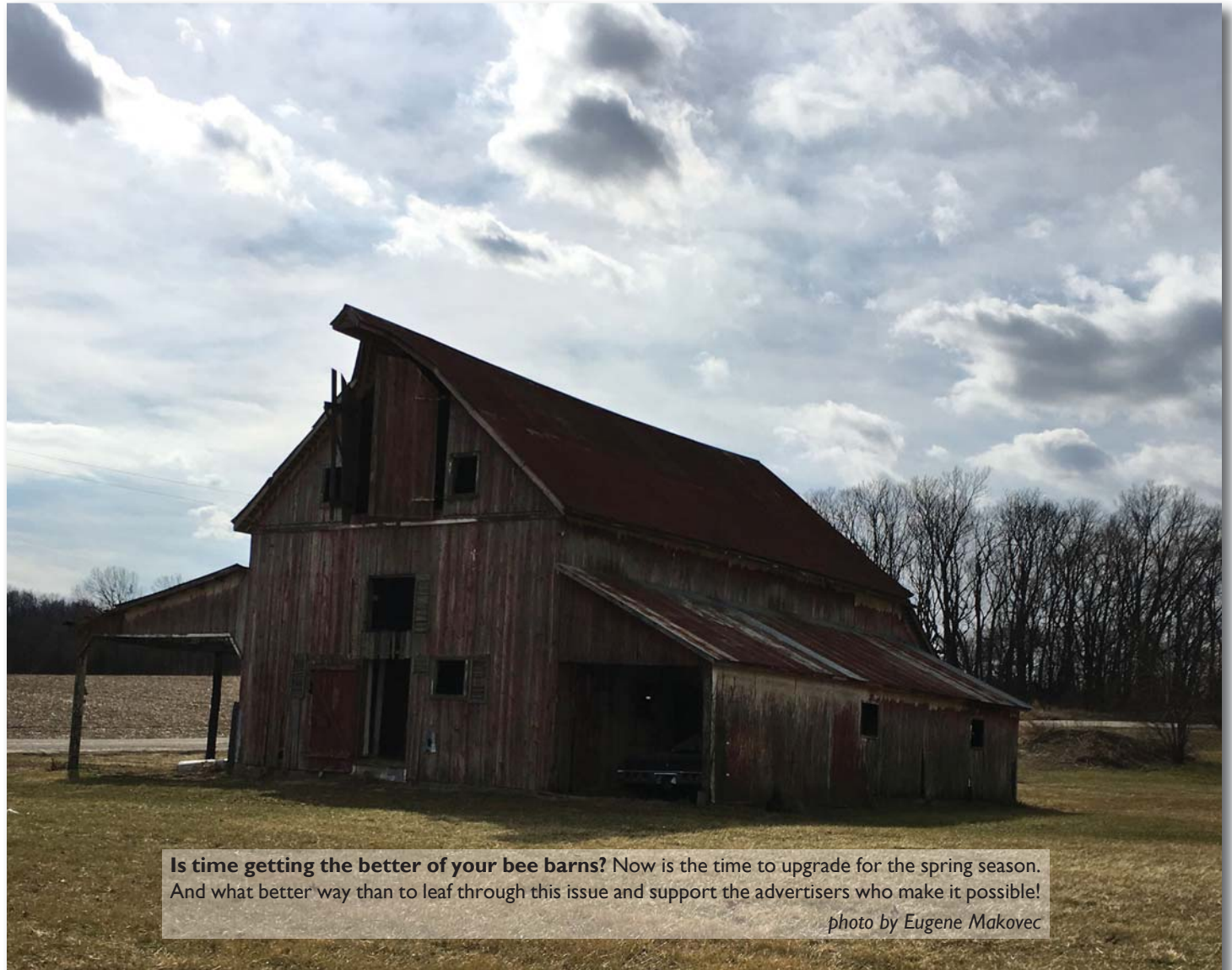
Next issue: **June 14 - Boy, did I make a mistake!**

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*photo by Eugene Makovec*

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