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 [scientificbeeking.com](http://scientificbeeking.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!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- From the President ............ 2
- Local club workshops ........... 5
- Report from Albuquerque 6
- AHPA Annual Conference
- Tom Seeley coming to STL 7
- BeeSpeakSTL Speaker Series
- Confessions of a beginner ... 9
- Twenty years later
- Local associations .......... 8-9
- Is there a club near you?
- Membership application .... 10
- Directory of Officers ......... 11
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

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 or call (573) 578-0561 by February 5, 2016. [mobeekeepingclasses](http://mobeekeepingclasses)

**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 or Ezekiel Amador (816) 616-7619 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 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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In a nutshell, the main focus of this meeting was Varroa mites and insecticides. Dennis Van Engelsdorp 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 form 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 CO2 can be detrimental to mites. Confined winter clusters can raise the CO2 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 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 or 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!!
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Sunday, February 27th
Shoenberg Theater
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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.
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, icy!’ And Tony [our two-year-old] said, ‘Ooh, icy!’ 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 do 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 bees. I set her cage on top of frames and watched her crawl out, then set - like Dad had said - that allowed the workers to release her later.)

Anyway, she crawled out and several workers crawled around her. 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
**MSBA Membership Application**

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A beginner’s confessions

continued from page 9

filled frames and a few empty frames, 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 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!

Directory of Officers

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2362 County Road 185, Auxvasse MO 65231
president@mostatebeekeepers.org

Vice President: Clayton Lee 573-864-5172
90 E. Pope Lane, Smithville, MO 64089
vicepresident@mostatebeekeepers.org

Secretary: Charlotte Wiggins 573-426-3510
secretary@mostatebeekeepers.org
1001 Bluebird Ln, Rolla, MO 65401

Treasurer: Steve Moeller 573-886-0662
PO Box 7514, Columbia MO 65205
treasurer@mostatebeekeepers.org

Membership Chair: VACANT
membership@mostatebeekeepers.org

Past-President: John Timmons 636-940-8202
952 Greenleaf Drive, St. Charles MO 63303
pastpresident@mostatebeekeepers.org

Northwestern Director: Roger Nichols cell 816-456-6983
northwestdir@mostatebeekeepers.org

Northeastern Director: Dan Lake 636-724-5937
48 Sterling Pointe Dr., St. Charles MO 63301
northeastdir@mostatebeekeepers.org

Southeastern Director: Gregg Hitchings southeastdir@mostatebeekeepers.org

Southwestern Director: Bruce Snavely 417-732-5219
508 Casady, Republic, MO 65738
southwestdir@mostatebeekeepers.org

Central Director: Bob Brammer 660-415-6480
31649 Lake St., Macon MO 63552
centraldir@mostatebeekeepers.org

Program Chairperson: Jim Duever
2362 County Road 185, Auxvasse MO 65231
program@mostatebeekeepers.org

Vendor Liaison: Tim Hyde
tim.hyde@yahoo.com

Newsletter Editor: Eugene Makovec 314-703-7650
135 Alex Dr., Foley MO 63347
tim.hyde@yahoo.com

Queen Chairperson: VACANT
queenchair@mostatebeekeepers.org

State Fair Chairman: Dean Sanders 816-456-4683 cell
37804 Old Pink Hill Road, Oak Grove MO 64075
This newsletter is published six times per year, in even months. Submissions are due by the 15th of the month prior to publication.
The email edition is in color, and contains hyperlinks and bonus back-page material, while the print version is in black-and-white. If you are a member currently receiving the printed newsletter and you wish to upgrade, just send an email to editor@mostatebeekeepers.org with “email newsletter” in the subject line. I'll reply with confirmation, and add you to my list.

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