

Missouri State Beekeepers Association
PO Box 7514 Columbia, Missouri 65205
www.mostatebeekeepers.org

April 2014

Eugene Makovec
Editor
editor@mostatebeekeepers.org

Spring Membership Conference draws 150 to Lake of the Ozarks

Steve Moeller named 2013 Beekeeper of the Year

If any beekeeper in Missouri still thinks the state association is run by and for commercial beekeepers using conventional methods, then they haven't been to an MSBA Membership Conference lately.

While we will always discuss universal topics like swarm prevention and queen rearing, last month's agenda should have proven once and for all that we are not afraid of new ideas. Our Program Committee sought out speakers with alternative philosophies, while balancing them with conventional voices.

Dr. Leo Sharashkin made a splash as a vendor at the 2013 Fall Conference, with his oversized horizontal hive and books on "natural beekeeping". So we invited him to speak this Spring, and we were not disappointed! *Natural Beekeeping in Horizontal Hives* was both illuminating and very entertaining. Leo kept the audience laughing with his tales of big-box swarm collecting, while offering an alternative to the modern beekeeping methods he believes are responsible for many of our troubles today. Here are some of his more salient points:

- Bees prefer 1.5" spacing between frames to the 1.375" in modern hives. In fact, early editions of *ABC & XYZ of Bee Culture* recommended this wider spacing, which results in less congestion and less swarming.
- By eliminating gaps between frame tops, you can open the lid without any bees flying up to meet you. You can also pull a frame from one end without disturbing any but the adjacent bees, and without exposing the rest of the brood nest to hot or cold outside temperatures.



Leo Sharashkin explains his horizontal hive at last year's Fall Conference.



Trevor Qualls

- The ideal nest cavity is about 15 gallons, which is plenty of room for honey storage and generally prevents swarming.
- The 6" entrance on Leo's hive is plenty wide, and the bees reduce it with propolis when they need to.
- Leo normally forces swarming in the third year by restricting space with a solid board. This creates a healthy break in the brood cycle, and the swarm then supersedes the old queen in most cases.

While Dr. Leo started us thinking seriously about alternatives to the traditional Langstroth hives that most of us use, Tennessee's **Trevor Qualls** and **John Seaborn** promoted new methods of using our existing equipment. The pair have worked together to develop organic beekeeping methods in that state, and shared their ideas with us on healthy queen production and organic pest control.

Qualls, owner of Bon Aqua Springs Apiaries and Woodenware (www.basprings.com), was young, confident and very laid back. Wearing a brown corduroy John Deere cap, he spoke with a deep but understated Tennessee drawl, often leaning with one elbow on the podium.

He started us off with pure science, with *Bee Math - How Bee Biology Can Enhance Your Operation*. But his most controversial contribution was *An Introduction to Small Cell Beekeeping for the Large Cell Skeptic*. Among his continued on page 4

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Take the Survey!



Your input is needed!
Details on page 13.



From the President by John Timmons

Every other month, when I settle at my desk to write this letter, I almost always begin with a glance out the window towards the hives in my back yard. Even from this distance, I can usually determine if my bees are active and flying. The calendar reports that it is now springtime. My bees have another opinion. The cold, moist air has them safely tucked away deep in the hive for warmth.

I've lost half my hives this winter. I'm getting similar reports from most beekeepers I speak with across the region - it's been a tough winter. It may be a tough spring and challenging summer for beekeepers throughout the Midwest.

It's going to be particularly tough for all the starting beekeepers newly graduated from beginning classes. They were assured there would be plenty of local packages and nucs available from local beekeepers. Most of the local nuc providers are withholding sales commitments until much later in the spring after they've replenished their own losses. Some may eliminate nuc sales for this season entirely. Yikes!

I just returned from the MSBA Spring Membership Conference at Lake of the Ozarks. For those not able to attend, I regret that you missed another great event. For those in attendance, thanks for making the Spring, 2014 Conference a wonderful experience for all. In addition to all the friendly faces and cheerful vendors, we all received great presentations. Trevor Qualls, John Seaborn, Jon Zawislak, Leo Sharashkin, Jane Sueme and Bruce Snively - they all treated us to some eye opening and thought provoking talks. Thanks to all for making this another successful event. The MSBA website will soon be updated with information and pictures, so keep a sharp lookout at www.MOStateBeekeepers.org.

It was truly a pleasure at our Friday night banquet to present awards to a couple of people who have been instrumental in keeping the lights on and wheels turning at the MSBA. Although we'd like to have lots of people pitching in to handle all the varied chores of the organization, in truth, it's a small group that does all the work. We like to acknowledge those that make the contribution.

My first award of the evening went to Dolores Vivian for her many years of tireless work in support of the MSBA. In addition to her years as Auxiliary Treasurer, she assists in so many different ways. She's a valued source for consultation on a variety of organization issues. She is easily one of the first to arrive at membership conferences to get things



organized. And, as the wife of our past MSBA Treasurer and current Membership Chair, she has always been available to lend a helping hand. Thanks again, Dolores, for an award well deserved.

Every year we award a beekeeper for his or her contribution to the MSBA. This year the MSBA was pleased to award Beekeeper of the Year to Steve Moeller. Steve is an active beekeeper in the Columbia area, has served many years as MSBA Secretary and has recently stepped in to serve as our new Treasurer. Steve has provided valuable advice to the MSBA Board as we work through a host of problems, and is one of the first I call when I need advice on some organizational issue. The next time you see Steve at one of the many beekeeping events he attends, give him a friendly pat on the back for a job well done. Congratulations, Steve, and thanks!

On another note, the MSBA is growing! Thanks to our new free membership program for new beekeepers graduating from beginning beekeeping classes across the state, our membership rolls have doubled. Local clubs from across the state who have offered beginning beekeeping classes have responded with free membership submissions that, frankly, were surprising to us. I think all the new business caught our Membership Chair, Ron Vivian, by surprise as he scrambled to update his lists. However, Ron always prevails, no matter the challenge. Thanks, Ron. We look forward to a continuation of the program next year as new classes get underway.

As our membership roster continues to soar, so does the necessity for us to have a sound membership tracking and management system in place. Many of the membership management systems and policies currently in use by the MSBA will struggle supporting the demands of the anticipated future membership rolls. As a result, we recently formed the MSBA Membership Services Committee to study current systems and policies and make recommendations to the MSBA Board for consideration. Some of the changes being discussed include web-based membership management services and a twelve-month rolling membership to replace the current calendar year policy. Whatever we eventually decide, we must make becoming a member of the MSBA easier for all. We'll keep everyone informed about new procedures and policies as decisions are made.

I think I just saw a flicker of sunshine sneak through the clouds. Maybe there's still hope for a decent spring.

John



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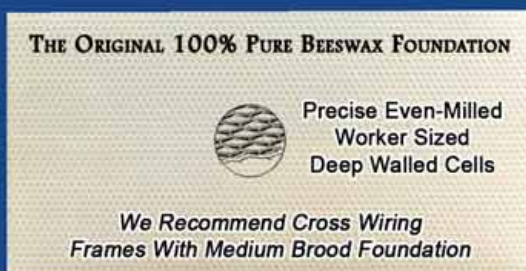


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Spring Conference puts the emphasis on natural alternatives

Attendees get a strong flavor of alternative hives, natural methods

continued from page 1

arguments for a reduced brood cell philosophy were the following:

- Worker cells were 4.9mm in diameter prior to 1893, when the A.I. Root Company made the first successful milling machine for 5.4mm cells - the idea being that larger bees could carry more nectar and thus produce more honey.
- This larger size worked for close to a century, until introduction of tracheal mites in 1984 and varroa mites in 1987.
- Tracheal mites can access the larger breathing tubes of 5.4 bees, but not those of 4.9 bees.
- Varroa can breed in both drone and worker cells of 5.4 bees, but only the drone cells of 4.9 bees. (The 4.9 workers are capped a day earlier and emerge two days earlier.)
- Africanized bees out-breed European bees because their drones are smaller and thus faster. Switching to 4.9 bees would cancel that advantage, as their more compact size would make them faster.

Not surprisingly, there were a number of "large cell skeptics" in the audience, including one of our other speakers, **Jon Zawislak**! Several questioned the claim that bees prefer small cells, especially given Qualls' statement that bees won't revert to 4.9 unless put on drawn 4.9 comb (4.9 foundation will be over-written to 5.4 if that's what they're used to). Qualls clearly expected and welcomed the

continued on page 5



Jon Zawislak

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Horizontal hives and small cell comb among featured Conference topics

continued from page 4

opportunity to defend and clarify his positions, though he deferred to Seaborn often enough that he finally asked him to join him at the front of the room.

Zawislak, a Master Beekeeper and Apiculture Instructor at the University of Arkansas, declared himself a skeptic, in particular challenging the Tennesseans' claim that Africanized drones are faster than their European counterparts for the simple reason that they are more compact and so their muscles are denser. Zawislak asked how it could be that the 5.4 bee, which received an extra day of food and two extra days of development, did not in fact have *more* muscle mass, rather than just being more spread out? Do the smaller bees really have the same mass, he asked? Seaborn replied that research is planned in that area.

For his part, Seaborn, of Wolf Creek Apiaries LLC (www.wolfcreekbees.com), gave a separate queen-rearing talk entitled, "Drones - The Forgotten Step to Better Queens". As it turns out, he says, there's nothing magical about raising good queens - one needs only to watch nature and copy it.

To that end, he said, we see the colony raising drones shortly before raising queens for swarming. Therefore, about 3-5 weeks prior to grafting queen cells, the queen breeder should ADD DRONE COMB to the edges of the hive. But keep in mind that varroa prefer to breed in drone cells, so drone combs should be moved (along with accompanying workers) before capping to a separate hive about 200 yards away. Then, dust weekly with powdered sugar to reduce the mite population. But do not use store-bought sugar containing corn starch, and be sure the bees cannot get to the powdered sugar that falls out of the hive, or the mites will just hitch a ride back upstairs.

Seaborn and Qualls gave a joint talk late Saturday on *Natural Treatments for Hive Pests*. Their simple, sensible remedies, along with instructions for grinding your own powdered sugar, were well-received, and many can be found at www.wolfcreekbees.com

Zawislak gave a Friday talk on control of small hive beetles, but saved his best for Saturday morning, when he treated us to a highly scientific, though thoroughly entertaining lecture entitled *The ABCs of Bee DNA: Understanding Honey Bee Genetics*. Among other things, he described the many mechanisms in place to avoid inbreeding among bees. For one, drones usually stay between 1.5 miles of the hive, while queens travel twice that far to mate. While she mates with an average of 13 drones, and up to 40, it is rare that she will mate with one of her brothers; when she does, workers can sense the genetic anomaly and pull the problem larvae before they can develop. Hence, a spotty brood pattern can sometimes be a sign of a poorly mated queen.

Other lecture topics included **Bruce Snavelly's** *Hive Management for Swarm Control*, and *Pollen as the Perfect Food* by **Jane Sueme**.

In other business, **Steve Moeller** of Columbia was named **2013 Beekeeper of the Year**, and **Dolores Vivian** was given a "Service and Dedication" award for her many years of assistance to our organization. See the President's Letter on page 2 for explanations from John Timmons and photos of these beautiful awards.



Bruce Snavelly

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Page 6, clockwise from top left: Princess Erin displays a blanket for auction; Joe Burns shows off the ornate carved hive facings of KB Farms; Bob Verslues (left) makes some points to speakers John Seaborn and Trevor Qualls; auctioneer extraordinaire Bernie Andrew enlists the help of Queen Lauren and Princess Erin; Nancy Blackwell exhibits her Andy the Ant children's books.



Page 7, clockwise from top left: Scott Kline of Isabees demonstrates a bee veil; Carl Korschgen explains some of his beekeeping inventions; Bernie and Lauren have fun with a sugar duster up for auction; Princess Erin and Queen Lauren do their "Price is Right" routine with the grand prize in our end-of-meeting raffle.

All photos by Eugene Makovec





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From the Honey Queen

Spring is officially here! However, that's a little bit hard to believe since there's been snow falling to the ground all afternoon on this late March day. I know that bees and beekeepers alike were thankful for the warm spells that we've had and will be looking forward to the time when the sunshine is here to stay!

On March 8th, I had the opportunity to attend the Midwestern Beekeepers' Beginner Beekeeping Class at Burr Oak Woods in Blue Springs. This was such a fun event for me, because it was the same class that got me started in beekeeping three years ago when I was given a youth beekeeping scholarship. It's amazing how the interest in beekeeping has grown. About 200 people filled the class, and many more had been interested in coming.

The Missouri State Beekeepers' spring meeting in Ozark was a great weekend! The speakers were very knowledgeable, and I learned a lot over the course of the weekend. It was a pleasure to speak at the Queen's Banquet, to give an update on my year so far, and to help with the auction. I also enjoyed teaming up with Erin, our Honey Princess, to give a patriotic presentation on Saturday morning. Erin created a slide show to coincide with the poem that I read, which was "America: Why I Love Her", by John Wayne. I am so thankful for all of those who put in so many hours, weeks and months of hard work to make our state meetings a success. From the hospitality and vendor rooms, to the auctions, speakers and banquets: everything always turns out so well! As always, I think that my favorite part about the event was the beekeepers. So many of you have become my friends, and I always enjoy spending time talking with all of you! I'm very thankful for the support and encouragement that our club members show to me and everyone involved in the Honey Queen Program!

As we head into Spring, I hope that everyone enjoys getting outdoors and has great success with their hives!

Lauren Collins, 2014 Missouri State Honey Queen



Queen Lauren

From the Honey Princess

Hello everyone!! I hope everyone's hives have survived winter. So far I am 100% successful!!! A few weeks ago I went out and checked them and all three were thriving. My swarm catch from last spring was feistier than ever!! I got stung numerous times. Here's

a hint for new and veteran beekeepers alike. When you go out to check your hives and you're wearing your bee suit remember to zip up the front of your jacket!! I had opened mine up before I went down there and then forgot to zip it up. I found my mistake quickly and unfortunately the bees did too!!

I hope you all had the opportunity to go to the state meeting in March. It was a great weekend and I came back with so much knowledge and new ideas that I want to try out this year! They had great speakers and everything went smoothly. I also want to say thank you to all who donated items to both the silent and banquet auctions and then the people who bought stuff. That money will go to fund travel for Lauren and me for the rest of this year.

Although I didn't buy packages this year I am looking forward to trying my luck at setting bait hives. I have decided to try my luck with wild bees. I had so much fun catching my swarm last year that I wanted to try that again. So here's to new adventures!

Best Wishes,

Erin Mullins, 2014 Missouri Honey Princess



Princess Erin

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Bruce Snavelly, President 417-732-5219
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
- 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
- 5 Golden Valley Beekeepers**
2nd Monday of each month, 7:00 p.m. (but varies)
Henry County Courthouse, Clinton MO
Tom McCormick, President 417-644-7507
tlmccormick@mccormickcos.com
- 6 Jackson Area Beekeepers**
4th Tuesday of each month, 7:00 p.m.
First Pres. of Jackson, 206 E. Washington
Contact Grant Gillard 573-243-6568
gillard5@charter.net
- 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 of each month, 2 pm, Old Train Depot, St. James.
President Mat Woessner 573.308.7006
matt@inv-rel.com
- 10 Midwestern Beekeepers Association**
Nov-March, 3rd Sunday of each month, 2:30 p.m.
April-Oct, 3rd Thursday of month, 7:00 p.m.
Visit midwesternbeekeepers.org for calendar
Bass Pro Shop, Independence, Conservation Room
Cathy Misko, President 660-656-3485
cathymisko@earthlink.net
- 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 of each month, 7:00 pm, Union
Location varies, contact below if unsure
President Calvin Brandt cvbrandt@landolakes.com
- 13 Parkland Beekeepers**
3rd Tuesday of month, 7pm, Ozark Federal Savings
President Gregg Hitchings glhitch@hotmail.com
- 14 Pomme de Terre Beekeepers**
2nd Thursday of each month, 7 pm
Missouri Extension Office, Hermitage
Contact Bessi Shryer 417-745-2527
- 15 SEMO Honey Producers**
2nd Thursday of month, Church of Christ, Poplar Bluff
Contact Cory Stevens 573-225-6935
- 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
President Roger Ross 417-472-3504
- 19 Three Rivers Beekeepers**
3rd Monday of month, University of Missouri Extension, 260 Brown Road, St. Peters, Missouri, 7:00 p.m.
For info: Eugene Makovec 314-703-7650
info@threeriversbeekeepers.com
- 20 Northwest Missouri Bee Busters**
1st Monday of odd months, 7:00 p.m.
511 4th Street, Conception Junction, MO 64434
Gerald Auffert, President 660-944-2535
- 21 Lake of the Ozarks Beekeepers**
3rd Saturday of month, 1:00 p.m.
UMC Extension Office, 100 E. Newton, Versailles MO
Contact Garrett Blackwell 573-374-7402
- 22 Northeast Missouri Beekeepers Association**
1st Friday of month, 6:30 pm Running Fox Elementary (3 miles south of Wayland) Acting President
Randy Ewart 573-248-5561 rewart@centurytel.net
- 23 Gasconade Region Bee Keepers**
2nd Tuesday 7:00, First State Comm. Bank, Owensville
President Rod Weakley 573-746-0383
gasconaderegionbeekeepers@hotmail.com
- 24 St. Louis Beekeepers**
4th Tuesday 6:30, Schlafly Bottleworks
contact@saintlouisbeekeepers.com
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
- 26 Meramec Valley Beekeepers**
First Sunday 2:30 pm Bourbon, MO American Legion Hall
Contact Sam Elia 573-732-5597
- 27 Quad County Beekeepers**
1st Tuesday, 7:00 pm, Missouri Extension Office, Troy
Contact Fred Meder (573) 760-2574
quadcountybeekeepers.com
- 28 North Central Missouri Beekeepers Association**
1st Monday, Area Career Center, Macon, 7:00 pm
Contact Dan West (660) 651-7582, www.ncmobees.org
- 29 Bees Alive**
Springfield Contact Kristi Mitchuson (417) 886-8585
- 30 Wright County Beekeepers**
2nd Thursday, Laclede Electric building, Hartville, 6:30 pm
Rick Bledsoe, President 417-350-2257
wrightcountybeekeepers@gmail.com
- 31 Rolla Bee Club**
4th Tuesday, Rolla Public Library, Rolla, 6 pm
Contact Charlotte Wiggins 573-364-1908 evenings
chargardens@gmail.com

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Bee Informed Partnership

National Loss Survey Underway

Beekeepers needed! Thank you for your interest in participating in the National Colony Loss Management Survey organized by the Bee Informed Partnership and sponsored by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

Please go to our online survey at <http://10.selectsurvey.net/beeinformed/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=BIP2014> and complete the survey there. **It will be live on April 1st and close on April 30th.** Please do not complete the survey more than once. Information about past Winter Loss and National Management Surveys and the annual reports can be found online at <http://beeinformed.org/>.

The Colony Loss Survey has evolved from our winter loss survey because last year we found that commercial beekeepers lost 25% of their colonies over the summer, and so we are now starting to monitor and report annual, in addition to winter losses. The National Management Survey is conducted annually in conjunction with the Colony Loss Survey. Designed to take about 30 minutes, the 2 surveys are aimed at looking for relationships between colony losses and colony management (including disease treatment strategies, supplemental feeding, etc.) and/or other factors that may influence colony health (such as colony location, honey production, and forage type). Your participation in this research is voluntary and your responses will be kept confidential. In any publication or presentation resulting from this research, no personally identifiable information will be disclosed.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact us at askbeeinformed@gmail.com. Once again thank you for your participation.

Dr. Dennis vanEngelsdorp

Project Director, Bee Informed Partnership

University of Maryland

Karen Rennich

Project Manager, Bee Informed Partnership

University of Maryland



The Bee Informed Partnership (BIP) is a USDA/NIFA (U.S. Department of Agriculture/National Institute of Food and Agriculture) funded project with the stated goal of reducing colony losses. The program is a collaboration of research institutions,

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Spring Apiary Day: Tim Scheer, left, and Tim Fredricks, of Three Rivers Beekeepers, take a small group of beginners through the club's hives at the University of Missouri Extension office in St. Charles County. Both colonies were doing well this first week of April, and the club hopes to split both to make nucs for beginning beekeepers.

photo by Eugene Makovec

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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