



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

April 2016

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Editor
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From the President by Valerie Duever

From the President...

Last year around late Spring, Jim and I went to the National Hardware Show in Las Vegas. This is normally a typical company buying trip to see what is the latest and greatest in the world of gardening and landscaping. Except this time, we came across two or three vendors that were selling beekeeping supplies. We stopped and chatted with them and pretty much talked about bees and how the beekeeping industry is really taking off.

I didn't think too much about this event until yesterday, when we were in a national chain farm supply retail outlet in the metro St. Louis area...we needed chicken feed, and guess what we found? Yeap, beekeeping supplies. Not just a little four-foot display, but a pretty sizable presentation of ready-to-go hives and bee suits. Really took us by surprise.

Of course, my first reaction was, "Hey, this is kind of cool!" Beekeeping is finally becoming mainstream. No longer does a newbie have to secretly hunt down suppliers to purchase their supplies, it is now in their own backyard.

But then I started to think about the impact of a larger national chain offering supplies to new beekeepers. Did this retail outlet also offer training for their employees or are they just out there making money on the latest agriculture craze? I truly don't know. I don't fault them for seeing an opportunity to service their customers, but it is concerning to think that there probably isn't someone qualified to answer even basic questions when it comes to beekeeping supplies. I could be wrong. There very well could be someone that has been managing hives for a number of years that is their go-to person.

I am old enough to remember when "big box stores" started carrying bedding plants on a consistent basis. They didn't have educated folks to help with the decision making process because they didn't feel it was necessary. It took a number of years but eventually they understood that it is the education that sells the products, not the other way around. As one of our excellent suppliers mentioned during a previous conversation, "... you can get woodenware anywhere, but you can't buy the education we have to offer... at any price." They are so right. All things being equal, I prefer to choose a supplier that really understands the industry, someone that has kept hives and can relate to the experiences of keeping managed bees over someone that has not. The suppliers that advertise in our newsletter are just that; experienced beekeepers. What they have to offer in the way of observation and advice is invaluable.

Remember that when you are shopping for your needed supplies and services.

With any emerging market comes excitement and creative thinking. We, as an industry, are going through growing pains as there seems to be more and more folks interested in keeping bees but there are fewer qualified folks to mentor and teach about managing hives. Remember to ask questions before purchasing products or attending classes. Make sure you are getting the best value in goods and services from an experienced beekeeping professional.

It used to be that the MSBA had two meetings a year, but the logistics of organizing these two events became overwhelming. The Board has had many discussions on this topic and we are pleased to announce that we are going to, again, start having two meetings a year; a Fall Awards Conference and Banquet, and a one-day Spring educational program. We want to provide a good platform of quality educational opportunities for our members by beekeepers recognized as specialists in their field of study. Program Director Jim has provided "hold-the-date" information concerning these two events in this newsletter, so mark your calendars.

Keep an eye on those hives as it seems like Spring build-up is happening early this year. There are already rumors that the girls are starting to swarm in warmer areas of the state. Make sure your equipment is assembled and ready to go. And, if you are in need of quality products and expert advice, please see one of our newsletter sponsors.

Thank you for being a member of the MO State Beekeepers Association.

Valerie





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U.S. Honey Production Down 12 Percent for Operations with Five or More Colonies Production from fewer than five colonies counted for the first time in 2015

Released March 22, 2016, by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Special Note: Beginning with this publication, a new table has been added with estimates for operations with less than five colonies. Estimates published for these operations are: Number of honey producing colonies, yield per colony, and production. This is new data, and does not alter any of the Honey report's existing data series. Please contact the Livestock Branch at (202) 720-3570 or email at HQ_SD_LB@nass.usda.gov with any questions or concerns.

United States honey production in 2015 from producers with five or more colonies totaled 157 million pounds, down 12 percent [after rising 19 percent in 2014]. There were 2.66 million colonies from which honey was harvested in 2015, down 3 percent from 2.74 million [again, following a 2014 increase of 4 percent]. Yield of honey harvested per colony averaged 58.9 pounds, down 10 percent from the 65.1 pounds in 2014. Colonies which produced honey in more than one State were counted in each State where the honey was produced. Therefore, at the United States level yield per colony may be understated, but total production would not be impacted. Colonies were not included if honey was not harvested. Producer honey stocks were 42.2 million pounds on December 15, 2015, up 2 percent from a year earlier. Stocks held by producers exclude those held under the commodity loan program.

Operations with Less than Five Colonies Produced 720 Thousand Pounds of Honey in 2015

United States honey production in 2015 from producers with less than five colonies totaled 720 thousand pounds.

There were 23 thousand colonies from which honey was harvested in 2015, with an average yield of 31.3 pounds harvested per colony. This yield is 27.6 pounds less than what was pulled per colony on operations with five or more colonies. Comparisons to 2014 are unavailable because no data prior to 2015 was collected for operations with less than five colonies.

Honey Prices Down 4 Percent for Operations with Five or More Colonies

United States honey prices decreased during 2015 to 209.0 cents per pound, down 4 percent from a record high of 217.3 cents per pound in 2014. United States and State level prices reflect the portions of honey sold through cooperatives, private, and retail channels. Prices for each color class are derived by weighting the quantities sold for each marketing channel. Prices for the 2014 crop reflect honey sold in 2014 and 2015. Some 2014 honey was sold in 2015, which caused some revisions to the 2014 honey prices. Price data was not collected for operations with less than five colonies.

Editor's Note:

Missouri colonies decrease by 17 percent, honey prices by 4 percent

The entire report, found at <http://www.usda.gov/nass/PUBS/TODAYRPT/hony0316.pdf>, also provides statistical breakdown per state, though only for operations with five or more colonies. Missouri is shown to have approximately 10,000 managed hives, dropping back to 2013 levels after rising to 12,000 in 2014. Honey production per hive rose to 52 pounds per hive (from 47 in 2014), but the average selling price dropped from \$3.63 to \$3.50 per pound. All told, our state produced 520,000 pounds of honey, worth \$1,820,000!

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Randy Oliver to headline Fall Conference

October 14-15 at Lake of the Ozarks

by Jim Duever, Program Director

We are excited to announce the headline speaker for the 2016 Missouri State Beekeepers Association Fall Conference! **Randy Oliver**, owner of the web page scientificbeekeeping.com, will be discussing a variety of subjects, including current research.

Additional sessions will be presented by **Mel Disselkoen** and regional beekeepers on topics ranging from small hive beetle to getting ready for your second year. You can visit Mel's website at www.mdasplitter.com.

The 2016 conference will be at the Lodge of the Four Seasons in the Lake of the Ozarks. Many improvements have been made since we last held the event at this location. We secured the main ballroom, which will be divided into 3 large meeting rooms. We are planning a dual track conference with something of interest for all levels of beekeepers.

More details will be announced in the June newsletter and posted on Facebook.



Does my forehead feel warm to you? Workers use the fronts of their heads to pack pollen into cells, but it's rare - and kind of funny - for it to stick like this. I don't know what this colony was working, but I saw numerous bees with red pollen stuck to their faces, even their eyes, while there were none in the adjoining hives.

photo by Eugene Makovec

Bee Informed Partnership ... National Loss Survey Underway

Dear Beekeeper,

We need you! We know it is one of the busiest times of the year for beekeepers and we thank you for taking valuable time from your colonies to participate in the National Colony Loss and Management Survey created 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=BIP2016> 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 conducted 10 years ago. Now we monitor summer losses as well. Last year, for the first time in the history of this survey, beekeepers reported higher losses in the summer than in the winter. The

National Management Survey is conducted annually in conjunction with the Colony Loss Survey. The two 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. We are also thrilled to release our Best Management Practices in the next few months. Please check back on our website soon for those exciting results!

Some of you may be contacted independently by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) of the USDA to participate in their first quarterly colony loss survey. We encourage all beekeepers contacted by NASS to answer both BIP and NASS surveys. But we need your responses!

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

Dr. Dennis vanEngelsdorp

President, Bee Informed Partnership, Inc.

University of Maryland

Karen Rennich

Executive Director, Bee Informed Partnership, Inc.

University of Maryland





Around the state ...

by Eugene Makovec

In addition to the usual late-winter workshops, local clubs have featured some exciting extra-curricular activity over the past couple of months:

Saint Louis Beekeepers held its fourth annual **Honey, Mead and Wine Tasting** on Friday, February 26th, at the Culinary Institute at Hickey College. The event featured a wide range of wines, meads and beers, paired with complementary varietal honeys from around the world. Hors d'oeuvres were presented by the Institute's students and staff.

BeeSpeak STL drew beekeepers from around the state and beyond to see renowned honeybee researcher and author **Tom Seeley** on Saturday, February 26th, at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis. Dr. Seeley signed copies of *Honeybee Democracy*, his seminal work on the bee swarm mechanism, and gave several talks, including "The Wisdom of the Hive", "The Bee Colony as a Honey Factory" and "The Thirst of the Hive - Colony Water Intake".

I learned several interesting things from Dr. Seeley, including:

- The number of wild colonies in the Arnot Forest in New York is roughly the same now as when Seeley studied them in 1978 (an estimated 18 total), but DNA analysis indicates that the number of queen lineages dropped from 23 then to only four now. This suggests a drastic genetic bottleneck due to massive genetic mortality (think varroa).
- Comb analysis shows that the survivor colonies build cells measuring ever-so-slightly smaller now than in 1978, but nowhere near the "small cell" dimensions promoted by some for mite control.
- Honeybees appear to prefer nesting sites about the size of one deep hive body, with a bottom entrance measuring 3-4 square inches.
- Winter condensation is widely considered a cause of colony mortality, but Tom cast some doubt on this theory. Wild colonies tend to seal the upper cracks in the hive, he said, while leaving lower cracks open. Not only does the colony need water during winter as in summer, but due to the warmth of the colony, surplus condensation tends to drip down the side walls of the hive rather than raining down upon the bees as is often suggested.

The **Eastern Missouri Beekeepers Association** hosted another giant in the industry, **Dewey Caron**, on Saturday, March 19 at Maritz in Fenton. Dr. Caron signed copies of his classic text *Honey Bee Biology and Beekeeping*. He began with a discussion of various methods of swarm control. Later, he gave a great instructional lecture on "Resource Hives" - the use of nucleus colonies in the management of the apiary.

The event concluded with Dewey moderating an extended question-and-answer session featuring an all-star trio of Beekeeper Bobs: Bob Sears, Bob Finck and Bob Graham - who between them probably have close to a century of experience.



Dewey Caron, left, presides over a wide-ranging question-and-answer session with the help of Bob Sears, Bob Finck and Bob Graham. Topics were not limited to Dewey's lecture subjects, but covered everything from relative dangers of household pesticides to the nutritional value of overwintered pollen stores.

photo by Ray Marklin



Around the state ...

Upcoming Events

Three Rivers Beekeepers holds its annual **Queen Rearing Class**, featuring **Cory Stevens**, in St. Peters on May 14th, from 8am to 6pm. Cost is \$85.00. More information and registration are available at <http://threeriversbeekeepers.com/qrw/>.

Boone Regional Beekeepers holds a **Queen Rearing Class**, also featuring **Cory Stevens**, in Columbia on June 4th, from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Cost is \$90.00 individual or \$155.00 couple. More information is available at boonebees.org, or by emailing Marty Comstock at treasurer@boonebees.org.

North Central Missouri Beekeepers, along with Adair County MU Extension Center and Crooked Hill Beekeeping, are sponsoring a **Year Two Beekeeping Class**. Instructed by **Jim and Valerie Duever**, this event will be held Wednesday, June 1st from 9am to 3:30pm in Macon. For more information contact Jennifer Schutter at schutterjl@missouri.edu.

State Fair is just around the corner

Honey entries due a day earlier this year

by Wanda Johnston

It's time to start thinking about your Missouri State Fair entries. There is a change this year that everyone entering items in the competition needs to know. All contest items will need to be brought to the Agriculture Building by 5pm on Monday, August 8. The judge will complete the competition judging on Tuesday, August 9.

The Fair begins on Thursday, August 11 and will run through Sunday, August 21. Please contact Dean Sanders at 816-456-4683 to sign up to work the MSBA booth. Your club may volunteer as a group for a full day; please contact Dean to secure your day.

Again, Tuesday is judging day, so no entries will be accepted after 5pm on Monday, August 8.



Too young for mead or wine, this youngster has his work cut out for him sampling the many types of honey available at February's Honey, Mead and Wine Tasting in St. Louis. photo by Scott Klein



Dr. Tom Seeley expounds on "The Wisdom of the Hive" at a recent event held by BeeSpeak STL. photo by Ray Marklin

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
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 - 8:30 p.m.
Golden Corral, Clinton MO. Tom McCormick, President
tomm@goldenvalleymobeekeepers.com
www.goldenvalleymobeekeepers.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, 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
573-265-8706
- 10 Midwestern Beekeepers Association**
Most meetings: Fellowship Hall at Graceway, 5460 Blue Ridge Cutoff, Kansas City, MO 64133
Visit midwesternbeekeepers.org for meeting calendar
President Bob Williams, 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
- 13 Parkland Beekeepers**
3rd Tuesday of month, 7pm, North College Center, Mineral Area College, Park Hills. Pres. Ray Politte
573-631-8236 PBA_President@mineralarea.edu
- 14 Pomme de Terre Beekeepers**
2nd Thursday 7 pm, Missouri Extension Office, Hermitage
Contact Rebekah Huddleston 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
- 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
- 19 Three Rivers Beekeepers**
3rd Monday, 7pm, University of Missouri Extension, 260 Brown Rd, St. Peters, info@threeriversbeekeepers.com
President Eugene Makovec 314-703-7650
- 20 Northwest Missouri Bee Busters**
2nd Monday of month, location varies
nwmobeebusters.blogspot.com
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
- 23 Gasconade Region Beekeepers**
2nd Tuesday 7:00, First State Comm. Bank, Owensville
Pres. Rodney Angell (573) 259-5811 bee143@fidnet.com
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 pm, Peace Lutheran Church in Sullivan
Contact Sam Elia 573-732-5597 samnoral@gmail.com, or
Laurie Rose at laurierose1219@yahoo.com
- 27 Quad County Beekeepers**
1st Tuesday, 7:00 pm, Missouri Extension Office, Troy
President Eric Reid
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
- 29 Bees Alive**
(Springfield area) 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
- 30 Wright County Beekeepers**
2nd Thursday, Laclede Electric building, Hartville, 7 pm
Rick Bledsoe, Contact 417-741-7466
wrightcountybeekeepers@gmail.com

Local Beekeeping Associations in Missouri

(continued next page)

(continued from previous page)

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. 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

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
hunnyhillfarms@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 Greenhills Bee Club

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

38 Dexter Bee Club

1st Tuesday, 7pm, Scott Laden's house in Dexter
Contact Dorothy at djhooten@yahoo.com, or Cory Stevens at 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 (second installment)

by Eugene Makovec

Continued from February

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

June 14, 1996 (Tuesday) - Boy, did I make a mistake! I was so fascinated by my bees' architecture that I left it in place and packed the other frames around it. I went to a Jefferson County Beekeepers' meeting on the 9th, and was told I should have pulled it out: "The queen won't lay eggs in there; it won't have the proper "bee space"" - or something like that.

So I went back to check it out. When I picked up the queen excluder, the homemade section broke off about 2-3 inches down - it was filled with larvae and nectar. I set it aside and all I could see below was bees, bees, bees.

But when I picked up the top brood box, THUNK! The full-sized, perfectly shaped homemade honeycomb fell out on the ground. It was chock full of larvae and weighed 5-10 lbs.

Upon further investigation, I found that not only was the queen willing to work in the homemade portion, but that was the only place she had worked. They had barely touched one of my foundations, had put a touch of nectar in a couple of the other empties, and I couldn't find larvae anywhere else.

I felt like I'd just destroyed all their work to date. Not knowing what else to do, I took a couple of photos of some larvae I'd exposed via my destruction, and in a desperate attempt at salvaging something I shifted a bunch of frames around, picked up the homemade one (very carefully - it was quite pliable) and kind of leaned it up in the bottom brood box with one frame to the outside. Hopefully, I thought, they'll be able to save some of these brood.

In the meantime, I had searched everywhere for the queen, to no avail.

Oh, and they were anything but docile today! Boy, did I make them mad! They obviously are protective of their young - at least when someone throws them around the way I did. They also seem to hate the bee brush. Ray was standing 12-15 feet away and a couple bees started harassing him and wouldn't leave him alone, so he left. And thank heavens for my bee suit - I was being dive-bombed by scores of them for the last 10 minutes or so, but none found their way in. (Of course, whenever I put my smoker down, it goes out.)

When I put it all back together, there were a dozen or two bees clustered on the side of the hive, and I was afraid I'd dumped out the queen, but I couldn't see her. There were also 20-30 bees clustered around the entrance.

I walked back there about 20 minutes later and they were still there - they were also still upset - a couple came to harass me about 10 feet away and I finally had to trot off to shake them.

Dad's advice was that he'd have told me the same as Jim Buxton and friends at JeffCo Beekeepers. He was surprised she had done all her work in the homemade section, but upon reflection observed, "They always do seem to like their own construction." He also said he'd have done the same as me in trying to salvage it.

June 23 - Ray and I went to the [Eastern Missouri Beekeepers] picnic - He brought Joey and Sam along. We had a blast. I got to suit up and check out a dozen hives there (Little Creek Wildlife Area, off Dunn Road) with Sharon

continued on page 11

**MSBA Membership Application**

Name _____ Spouse's Name _____
 My local association is _____
 Address _____
 City/State/Zip _____
 Phone Number _____ Email _____

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A beginner's confessions

continued from page 9

Gibbons (the owner) and a few others. She said the clustering was probably just from the heat, and if the queen did get dumped out she should find her way back in. (I didn't say anything else about my fiasco.)

They also had a smoker lighting contest - the longest burner was Marshall Creech, with burlap, so I decided to try blue jean denim - I'd already begun to cut up a pair I had thrown out. [I still use blue jean denim to this day.] I also won a \$5.00 gift certificate, by guessing the weight of a nuc box. It was 34# lbs. - I guessed 33 lbs, 12 oz.

June 29 - The bees seem to be doing okay. The homemade section is still in place where I left it - kind of attached to the outside frame but not really. (When I tried to lift the outside one, it was obvious that the homemade one would break free, so I left well enough alone.)

They had drawn out two of my three foundations, and had a few larvae and nectar (and about one-fourth honey on one side) in each. But they hadn't touched the 3rd, or the super. Nor had they done much else in the super - there were maybe a half dozen bees crawling around on each frame, and small amounts of nectar here and there, but that was all.

I couldn't find the queen again - though I couldn't really check the homemade construction.

I did get to see baby bees cutting out of their cells - I watched about four of them working with their little antennae poking out, and saw one dig out altogether. I had noticed some smaller looking bees working around the combs, and this brand new one was about two-thirds the size of a full-grown bee. It was really neat - just like I'd seen in bee movies!

I also ran across 6-7 queen cells, and destroyed them, since that's what I kept hearing and reading to do. (I sure hope my queen is alright - I'm not sure just how fast she's supposed to be working, but if she's spent much of her time working the remade portion that I half-destroyed, then I guess she's doing okay. Only time will tell.

The good news today is my smoker worked great - I lit it with a wrap of cardboard and a couple pieces of denim and it smoked for a half hour - it was just dying down as I was finishing up.

One more observation: For the first time, when I lifted the outer cover off it was not crawling with little black ants - apparently the colony has gained enough strength to keep them away.

To be continued ...

Next issue: **July 1 - Well, I goofed again!**

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Well, isn't that just peachy? Peach blossoms are a welcome early-Spring nectar source. This happy bee is head-first in the anthers of a dwarf Elberta peach tree in my Foley garden, while the front page shows its companion, a dwarf red haven. Both trees hit full bloom the last week of March and, despite gusty winds that made photography a challenge, were buzzing with honeybees and several other pollinators. Nectar appeared to be the main attraction, as my bees did not appear to be collecting much in the way of pollen from this source.

photo by Eugene Makovec



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