First Ever MSBA Field Day a Success

The first ever MSBA Field Day was held on Saturday, May 4th at Brian & Candy Seibert’s Bee About, The Beekeepers Choice in Eldredge, Missouri.

There was a great turnout with lots of beekeepers from all over the state and Mountain Home, Arkansas! It was overcast in the morning, and after lunch the sun showed up once all were suited up and ready to learn.

This is the current state of beekeeping according to Jerry Hayes, our featured speaker, at MSBA May 4, 2019 field day. “Anybody who says they know everything about beekeeping is a liar” and “wild bees are gone, today beekeeping is like managing livestock and pets, they require regular care.” He spoke about the Varroa Mites and ways to eliminate them from our hive... test, treat, test. Jerry also had one of the best tips of the day, dubbed ‘that magic bee-roll.’ It is the easiest and quickest way to get about 100 bees into a pint jar for an alcohol wash. Link to a video posted on the MSBA Facebook page by Charlotte Wiggins, check it out, https://bit.ly/2PZX4D6

There were five stations where attendees learned how to do a hive inspection, mark queens (with drones), do a split, do an alcohol wash, and raise queens. There were lots of questions flying around along with the bees. Everyone came

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First MSBA Field Day

away with a bit more knowledge and enthusiasm to apply what was learned to their beekeeping practices.

Thank you to all volunteers who helped make the day possible including Ray Shadow and Candy Seibert for organizing and hosting the event; Wes Johnston who made sure we were fed; Dan Lake who matched us up to our name tags when we checked in; Wes Johnston, Clayton Lee, Bruce Snavely, Cory Stevens and Jerry Hayes for manning the stations and sharing your tips and experience; Jeania Schmalhorst for the extra tables to place the handouts and lunch toppings on.

From the President

by Cory Stevens

I absolutely love this time of year. After being cooped up all winter and having a break from the bees, I’m always ready to see them. I have to admit though, my back hurts a bit from all the apiary work. I do enjoy it immensely, even though there isn’t much that is easy about it. There are a few things in particular that I really love about beekeeping in the Spring. I love seeing nectar and pollen in abundance, and big solid brood patterns. I love pulling frames of grafted queen cells after worrying how they will turn out. I love being out in the sun and hearing the spring peepers, birds, and the busy hum of the hives. I love hearing the incubators hum, seeing new queens emerge from their cells, and hearing them piping as they’re held in their candy cages awaiting introduction to their kingdom. Seeing all the trees wake up after their winter slumber is revitalizing to my soul.

MSBA board members are as busy as our bees planning this year’s events. We had a great day in the apiary on May 4th in Eldridge, MO for our first field day. Jerry Hayes spoke and inspected colonies. We covered methods for making up nucs, marking queens, and a segment on queen rearing. If you have an interest in raising your own queens, or have started and have questions, this would have been a good event to watch. It was an enjoyable and informative day in the apiary with practical hands on instruction. Keep checking on our website for future field days.

We are also preparing in advance for our Fall conference October 18-19 in Moberly, MO. Be sure to mark your calendars, you won’t want to miss it. We have Krispn Given from Purdue University talking about selecting bees for varroa mite resistance. I’m pretty excited to hear that one. Krispn will also be speaking on Queen rearing. Peter Borst will also be headlining. He was the Senior Apiarist at the Dyce Bee lab at Cornell University, and has been around bees since the mid 1970’s. He will be speaking on sustainability, and keeping the hive alive. He also has a segment on pollen make up and diversity. Casey Berthoud is coming to us from Quail Forever and Pheasant Forever. He is also involved with Missourians for Monarchs, which is recently collaborating with MSBA. If you are interested in rehabilitating property to benefit wildlife and pollinators, this is the guy to listen to. I’m looking forward to hearing from Casey, as I am actively improving our small farm for pollinator and wildlife habitat. This should be a great conference.

I hope you can make it to our fall conference. I believe they will be worth your time. With all the hard work in the apiary, be sure to stop, relax a bit, and enjoy the amazing spring weather. See you soon.

Cory
Welcome New Board Members

Vice President

Randy Ewart has graciously excepted the Vice President position for the MSBA. Randy lives in Wayland, MO and has been involved in beekeeping for the past ten years. Randy is one of the founding member of the Northeast Missouri Beekeepers Association (NEMOBA) that was founded in April of 2011. He has served the local association as founding president and has continued as such in all but two years of its existence. He is the current president for 2019. Randy continues his own beekeeping journey, currently as a hobbyist, but desires to develop into a sideliner beekeeper, and perhaps produce queens for local beekeepers.

He is the owner/operator of Honey Creek Apiaries, along with his sister, Lori Ewart, and his daughters. Hobbies include: beekeeping; gardening, home orcharding, hand tool woodworking, fly fishing and fly tying.

Southeast Director

I’d like to introduce our new Southeast Director for MSBA, Jeff Mayfield. Jeff lives in Cape Girardeau, MO, and has taken the lead with the famed Jackson Beekeepers club formerly led by past MSBA president Grant Gillard. Jeff is a passionate beekeeper that got in the bee business when his father in law Peewee Erbacher bought 40 or so hives to start a beekeeping side gig. He owns and operates Riverbend Honey, supplying honey to Cape Girardeau area retailers. He is currently serving on the committee started by Gregg Hitchings, working to improve relations with local clubs. Please join me in welcoming Jeff to the team. I feel he will be a great asset to MSBA. Thanks Jeff! — Cory

East Central Director

Hello, My name is Mike Wagner and I am addicted to Beekeeping. My wife, Diana, and I been beekeepers for about 10 years. We currently have Seven colonies and we think that beekeeping is the best thing ever. Before beekeeping I spent 36 years working for AT&T, retired in 2005.

We both attended the 2018 HAS conference here in St. Louis, MO. And we had the privilege in working with Charlotte Wiggins and Clayton Lee.

It is my honor to accept the office of MSBA East Central Director.

MSBA Membership

Membership dues remain at $10 per individual. You may renew your membership by going to the MSBA website and utilizing PayPal or mail your check to me with your first and last names, address, telephone number, and email address. I gladly accept batch memberships if given the information on a typewritten list and either a check from the local club’s treasurer or secretary.

With the change of the website some folks have renewed well in advance of their membership expiration. You should now receive notice the month preceding your membership expiration. While the website is going through growth spurts please contact me if you have questions regarding your membership. Some of you have paid until 2019! Thank you for supporting MSBA!

Wanda Johnston
MSBA Membership
401 NW Heady Avenue
Ferrelview, MO 64163
mail to: bees@kc.rr.com
Beekeeper Day of Appreciation

By Cathy Misko, MSBA Legislative Liaison, Heartland Beekeeping Partnership, cathymisko@earthlink.net

2019 Beekeeper Appreciation Day @ the Missouri Capital was a Buzzin’ Honor!

Beekeepers buzzed into the State Capital’s elegant historic 3rd Floor Pershing Gallery which also shares the doorway to the majestic Senate Floor. Here is a peek into the formalities for all to enjoy!

Cathy Misko, Mo State Beekeepers Assn. Legislative Liaison, Heartland Beekeeping Partnership, as Master of Ceremonies presented the initial declaration reading:

“We, the friends of the bees, with the royalty of our Queen Bee, First Lady Teresa Parson, have buzzed to the Missouri Capitol on this eighth day of April, in the year of two thousand and nineteen, to honor Senator Denny Hoskins.

WHEREAS, Senator Denny Hoskins, serving District 21 and beyond, kindly accepted the call to help the Honey Bee and their Keepers; and

WHEREAS, The Senator sent out an investigative team to research how to decrease the Missouri State Sales Tax burden pertaining to Missouri Beekeepers; and

WHEREAS, Senator Denny Hoskins sponsored SB 472 describing honey bees as “livestock” within the Missouri Department of Revenue Tax Codes; and

WHEREAS, The Senator saw the bill through a five-month long sausage making process; and

WHEREAS, The Senator strategically folded the deceased bill May 12, 2017 and placed it in his pocket when SB 472 failed to be read by the end of the Legislative Session; and

WHEREAS, The Senator continued to remember The Beekeepers’ plight; and

WHEREAS, Senator Denny Hoskins, like a magician a year later, pulled the bill out of his pocket, and magically attached it to SB 627 as an amendment.

WHEREAS, The Senator confirms the signing of the “Honey Bee Bill” into law June 1, 2018; and

WHEREAS, Senator Denny Hoskins’ “Honey Bee Law” took effect August 28, 2018; and

WHEREAS, Senator Denny Hoskins is before us today to received heartfelt appreciation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Beekeepers of Missouri do hereby honor and applaud Senator Denny Hoskins on this eighth day of April, 2019, for rising to the call, extending his hand to decrease tax burden to beekeepers, and giving support to Missouri State Insect, The Honey Bee.”

The lovely Missouri Queen Bee, First Lady Teresa Parson, on behalf of herself, the Governor, and Mr. Buzzaround, graced all of us with her presentation. Our First lady bragged of the Missouri State Insect’s vital importance to humanity, the beekeeping industry, and gave great appreciation to Senator Hoskins.

Hannah Gephardt, Missouri State Beekeepers Assn. 2018 MO Honey Youth Ambassador, who amazingly manages 6 hives, thanked the First Lady on behalf of all Missouri Beekeepers and the MSBA, presented a gift of “products of the hive” including skin products, a jar of Apple Blossom Honey, and a Queen Bee Wine glass.

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Beekeeper Day of Appreciation

Missouri State Beekeepers Assn. West Central Regional Director, Kyle Day, Owner of Sunny Day Beekeeping Supplies presented a Missouri State engraved plaque reading: “From Missouri Beekeepers & Heartland Beekeeping Partnership, On behalf of Beekeepers, the Beekeeping Industry, and the Missouri State Insect – The Honey Bee, This award is presented to Senator Denny Hoskins in recognition for the advancement of the Beekeeping Endeavor, and the Beekeeping Industry in the State of Missouri. We greatly appreciate your support...2018-2019. The plaque sported a dancing beekeeper (donated by Crooked Hill Beekeeping) in the “boot hill”. Hmm, it kind of looked like the MSBA President, Cory Stevens!

President Debra Maier and Founding Officer Gail Severance, Jefferson City area Show Me Beekeepers Assn., presented the Beekeepers Appreciation Award stating, “Senator Denny Hoskins, It is with immeasurable gratitude that Missouri Beekeepers applaud your example of commitment and service on behalf of the Missouri State Insect, The Honey Bee. You have set a standard of kind dedicated service and excellence in the State of Missouri for all to follow. Encompassed in the sponsorship and passage of SB 472 and amending SB 627, your knowledge, skill in legislation, and your passion to assist even the smallest of us all is known. We thank you for promoting the vitally important beekeeping industry and for being a true friend to the Honey Bee and their Keepers. You have our deepest appreciation. Congratulations, signed by: Heartland Beekeeping Partnership, MSBA President, Crooked Hill Beekeeping, and Isabees Beekeeping Supplies.”

Lastly, Eugene Makovec, Editor of The American Beekeeping Journal, Past President of St. Louis Three Rivers Beekeepers Assn., and Beekeeping Co-Sponsor of the 2015 “Honey Bill”, awarded the Senator “The Tastes of Missouri Honey” from across the State including the cities of: Bloomfield, Centerview, Chesterfield, Clinton, Foley, Harrisonville, Jefferson City, Lowery City, Pittsville, and Rolla! (Cory Stevens, Stormie Burr, Corinne’s Honey Farm, Paul Landsberg, Eugene Makovec, Cathy Misko, Gail Severance, Charla Hinkle, James McClure, and Charlotte Ekker Wiggins, “You all rock for sharing your harvest”!) Eugene shared how the 2015 Honey Law made it possible for beekeepers to now provide excellent varietal local Missouri Honey without the legal mandate and burden to bottle in a professional kitchen. To show our appreciation, he also shared that there were honey products to be awarded to all the Senate and House of Representative Agriculture Committee Members. Photos were taken, hugs were given, and we all can say that the Senator received the sweetest appreciation ceremony of his career!

After we said our “goodbyes” we all raced down the stairwell to the Senate Agriculture Committee Chamber where we learned that a new “bee related bill” SB 517, was being introduced by Senator Jeanie Riddle. As we entered and took our seats, we arrived just in time to hear a vote of adjournment. Information of the bill involving pollinator habitat partnering with solar panels “seems” to be legislation mirroring the pollinator score cards encouraged by support of Marla Spivak, Rob Davis https://fresh-energy.org/pollinator-friendly-solar-everybody-loves-it/, and MN Governor Dayton’s 2016 Pollinator Proclamation. Solar Panel Pollinator Habitat/Forage Scorecard Legislation have been adopted or is being researched in the States of: MN, MI, IL, NY, VT, DEL, VA, MO, MD, SC. Expect updates as more information unfolds!

Finally, we did have the privilege to deliver 25 small honey bears filled with Apple Blossom Honey for the members of the Senate Agriculture Committee and 25 honey tubs with creamed, raw, and comb Wildflower Honey to be given to the House of Representative Ag Committee as Rep. Knight introduces his HB 1209 “Missouri Solar Pollinator Habitat Act” covering Solar/Pollinator Forage Legislation. May our Representatives, Senators, and all in our State hum and sing, “How sweet it is to be loved by bees”... and their Keepers!
Hello MSBA Members,

I wanted to invite you to come spend a day with us, as a volunteer, at the Missouri State Fair. The MSBA has had a booth at the Missouri State Fair for many years where we promote the honeybee and sell honey and other bee products such as lotion, soap, wax, honey ice cream, and more. The state fair is a key event that helps the MSBA fund our conferences and field days.

The Missouri State Fair runs for 11 days in August in Sedalia, Missouri. The dates for 2019 are **August 8-18**. The MSBA’s booth is open for business all 11 days and so we ask, each year, for volunteers to help man the booth those 11 days. We break each day into 2 shifts 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Some local bee clubs pick a day and have volunteers from their club fill an entire day. If your club would be interested, we could help you find a day that works, if you want to come as an individual or with your spouse that would be great as well.

We often get asked what the duties of a volunteer are at the fair.

- Answer questions that the public has about honeybees and bee products.
- Man the observation hive.
- Restocking Items
- Guard the products.
- Interact with Children.
- HAVE FUN!!!!

Each volunteer who signs up to work a shift at the booth will receive a free admission ticket into the fair. The admission ticket can be picked up at the hospitality building on the east side of the fairground next to the conservation building on HWY 65. **You must be signed up before the day you are to work to receive your ticket.** Your name will be on a list we submit each day with the tickets to the hospitality building. You also get 1 free container of honey ice cream!!

If this is something you would be interested in and would like to sign up or if you have questions, please contact:

Erin Mullins (660) 254-3471 emullins93@gmail.com or Wes Johnston (816) 392-4960 2bees@kc.rr.com

We hope to see you there!!

By Erin Mullins, MSBA State Fair Chair, emullins93@gmail.com

Missouri State Fair
In memoriam of
Dean Lewis Sanders

It was about 7 years ago I heard the name Dean Sanders for the first time. I was attending a MSBA spring conference and although Dean wasn’t in attendance everyone I met said “Oh, you have to meet Dean, he’s great!” It was later that fall at the next conference that I came to know this larger than life Crazy Bee Man. For me he was a staple at every MSBA event and local bee club meeting in the Northwest region. You couldn’t be around Dean and not feel happy! He was always cracking off jokes or giving someone a hard time, all in good fun.

For nearly 20 years Dean served diligently on the executive committee as the State Fair Chairman. Each August for 2 weeks you found Dean working hard behind the MSBA booth making sure things ran smoothly. There was also months of behind the scenes work that happened before the fair even started that people rarely saw. You could walk around the fairgrounds with Dean and almost everyone you’d meet would greet Dean with a big smile and a cheerful greeting. It was hard to find a person who didn’t enjoy spending time with Dean.

Dean was honored just last fall at the 2018 Fall Conference with the Lifetime Membership for his many years of dedication to the MSBA. In 2007 Dean was awarded Beekeeper of the Year for the MSBA. Dean was a member of the Midwestern & Northland bee clubs. His love of beekeeping was great and he loved sharing his passion with everyone. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

~ Erin Mullins

Here is a poem that I wrote for Dean Sanders harvested seeds from his bee loving Vitex and shared them with everyone!

Vitex and Bee by Cathy Misko

“Gaze at the Vitex tree,
Gracefully dancing with the Honey Bee.
Gentle and tender at best,
It cradles a newly woven nest.
It stands big and tall, wide and strong.
Listen and you may hear,
the story of a good man in a little bird’s song.
A friend wraps another with care
like the fragrance of a flower permeating the air.
This flower shares beauty while dancing in the wind,
It blooms across the land
because of the kindheartedness of a sharing man.
With a legacy shining bright for all to see,
We honor Dean Sanders and his Honey Bee.”

The following was taken from the article in the May 2008 Newsletter by Scott Moser.

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“Dean Sanders was named 2007 Beekeeper of the Year. Dean was recognized for his hard work and dedication to the Missouri State Beekeepers Association booth at the Missouri State Fair. Dean has worked for several years at the State Fair, but after the passing of Don Reinkemeyer, Dean found himself totally in charge of the booth.

Dean did an outstanding job with the fair last year considering the adversities he faced. Hot weather, poor attendance, a shortage of help, and freezer problems were just some of the obstacles he had to overcome. He spent countless hours at the booth, selling products and discussing bees. In his characteristic fashion, Dean took all of the problems in stride, and still managed to have a wonderful presence at the State Fair. Throughout the fair, he kept a positive and upbeat mood, despite the problems that arose. For his dedication to the Missouri State Fair, and his work with the Missouri State Beekeepers, Dean earned the honor 2007 Beekeeper of the Year.”
Fall Conference Is On Its Way
By Bruce Snively, MSBA Program Chair, brucesnavely@hotmail.com

I’m in the middle of my Spring beekeeping chores. There are tons of things to think about with hive management, splits, queen production and replacement, swarm control, mite monitoring….the list seems endless some days in this beekeeping adventure! One thing most Missouri beekeepers are not thinking that much about is the MSBA Fall Conference, but I am because I get to plan it with the help of our committee members! So please SAVE THE DATE on your calendar for October 18 & 19 in Moberly, Missouri.

Our Fall Conference will take place at Moberly Community College, which is a beautiful campus! I made a recent stop in Moberly to check it out and boy was I surprised at such a large building in a smaller town. The town is just shy of the 14,000 population mark and sits conveniently just 28 miles north of Columbia off a 4-lane divided Hwy 63 or 20 miles south of Macon. The campus of Moberly Community College presents a beautiful, architecturally designed renovated high school building. In some ways, it still feels like a large high school with lockers still in the hallway walls, but it’s has a very spacious auditorium able to seat 400 comfortably at tables with plenty room to perfect larger rooms for break-out classes. Their class schedule entails only a 4-day, Monday through Thursday time slot, so there will be no students on campus during our Friday-Saturday conference. There is plenty of parking in front and behind the school, with handicap accessible sidewalks for people wanting to avoid the steps and elevators inside as well.

In this newsletter I want to highlight one of our keynote speakers, Peter Borst from New York. Peter L Borst has worked in the beekeeping industry since his first job working as beekeeper’s helper in Wolcott NY, in 1974. In the late 1970s he helped run a beekeeping supply store in the San Diego area, where he served beekeepers of all levels of expertise. In addition to selling equipment and supplies, he was able to get an especially broad viewpoint of their problems and concerns.

Peter was Senior Apiarist at Cornell’s Dyce Lab for Honey Bee Studies for seven years, and worked as an apiary inspector for New York State from 2006 to 2008. Mr. Borst is currently President of the Finger Lakes Bee Club, and has retired from Cornell University.

Peter has published over 40 articles on topics as diverse as beekeeping technique, the composition and value of pollen for bees, and the history of bee breeding. He regularly writes articles for The American Bee Journal and Bee Culture. He enjoys presenting on these topics for venues ranging from local elementary schools to organizations in many states.

Other speakers will include Dr. Krispn Given, entolomogist from Purdue University, who along with Dr Greg Hunt developed the Purdue Mite Biters genetic behavior. Also speaking from the state of Missouri, Collin Wamsley, Chief Entomologist/Program Administrator.

Currently there are rooms reserved with MSBA’s name at the Comfort Inn in Moberly. I am seeking other hotels in the area and hope to have those announced soon. If you have any questions please contact me at brucesnavely@hotmail.com.
Great Plains Master Beekeeping

By Charlotte Ekker Wiggins, MSBA Partnership Liaison, msbacharlotte@gmail.com

Missouri State Beekeepers Association (MSBA) is now working with the Great Plains Master Beekeeping Program out of University of Nebraska at Lincoln to bring resources as well as classes to Missouri beekeepers. Started under the direction of Dr. Judy Wu-Smart, assistant professor and extension specialist, who some of you may have met at a past MSBA conference, the program is designed to collaborate with state associations not only to certify beekeepers but also provide program material and other resources to participating members.

The Great Plains Master Beekeeping program was started this year and includes the states of Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska and Wyoming.

“The program is highly dependent on extension professionals and experienced beekeepers to bring their expertise and knowledge to both new and advanced beekeepers,” said Dr. Wu-Smart. “The program focuses on incorporating already existing classes that can easily be accessed by beekeepers while providing updated research and scientific information.

Great Plains Master Beekeeping Program Coordinator Sheldon Brummel said the program is designed to help both beginning and experienced beekeepers.

“The Great Plains Master Beekeeping Program will provide training, education, outreach, and mentoring for beginning and advanced beekeepers that will improve colony survival and drive economic success. This program will focus on colony management, bee biology, pests, pathogens and other stressors, as well as land stewardship, business and marketing, and professional development.”

If you are a beekeeping instructor and have written curriculum and power points for your classes, you can submit them for review and accreditation through the program. The curriculum and power point presentations will only be used for review; they won’t be shared outside of the program. There is no cost and participation will give you feedback on your class materials and access to updated information as well as course marketing (https://gpmb.unl.edu/course-certification)

The Great Plains Master Beekeeping Program is structured with multiple tiers including exploratory, apprentice, journeyman and master. Participants may advance to higher levels at their own pace to refine their knowledge and management skills. To advance levels, beekeepers must meet a set of educational, field training and volunteer or mentoring service. The flexibility of this system addresses state-specific needs and demands and will also make it easier to expand and be adapted to other states. (https://gpmb.unl.edu/learning-objectives)

“We want this to be something that is sustainable,” said Dr. Wu-Smart. “We are providing the umbrella organization but it will be local beekeepers who will help each other and make this a success.”

You can register to get program updates at https://gpmb.unl.edu/about-master-beekeeping-program.

For further details and to answer questions, contact Sheldon Brummel at sbrummel2@unl.edu.

~bzzz~
Honey Bee Health Coalition Offers More Help in Fighting Varroa

By Gregg Hitchings, MSBA Local Club Liaison, MSBAgregg@gmail.com

Ever feel a little overwhelmed when researching what are the appropriate mite treatment recommendations for your particular situation? Would you like some help? The Honey Bee Health Coalition (HBHC) has unveiled an app to do just that.

Just this January HBHC released its free Varroa Management Decision Tool. This cell phone app, intended to be used right in the apiary during mite sampling, leads you through a few simple questions to identify the approved methods of varroa mite treatment appropriate for your particular set of circumstances. It appears very convenient to use and I believe it holds great potential, particularly for those new beekeepers who may not be well versed on all the possible treatments out there.

To find a link to the Varroa Management Tool check out the RESOURCES tab at: mostatebeekeepers.org

Download the app on your cell phone and show it around at your next local bee meeting. Start a good discussion with it. This thing is too good not to share.

Missouri State Beekeepers Association was established in 1889!!!!!

By Clayton Lee, MSBA Past President

After a series of searches on the web, I found an article in “The American Bee Journal” that documents the formal organization of MSBA on November 14, 1889 in Higginsville, Missouri (https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uma.ark:/13960/t1tf0434x;view=1up;seq=589).

The article can be found on pages 775-776 of the December 7, 1889 issue (Volume XXV, No. 49), Thomas G. Newman, editor.

For those of you that are history buffs, officers that were elected were:

R. B. Leahy, President; J. W. Rouse, Secretary; R. G. Robertson, Treasurer; with five vice-Presidents as follows: G. P. Morton, Central Missouri; J. S. Atkins, Northwest Missouri; M. V. B. Page, Southwest Missouri; A. Singer, Southeast Missouri; and P. P. Collier, Northeast Missouri.
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

MSBA Member Chris Deines

By Jeania Schmalhorst, MSBA Communications & Marketing Chair, jeania@doublessfarm.com

A call went out from Benton Elementary school in Nevada, MO for someone to do a presentation focused on symbiotic relationships for their week-long science standard studies on April 11th. Chris Deines, MSBA member, answered that call. He has giving presentations to kindergarteners and 4th graders in the past, but this was his first entire school with approximately 175 students, plus the staff and faculty. He spoke about pollen distribution and the symbiotic relationships between bees, plants, and food and about the different ways of pollen distribution, including from animals, which is called zoophily. (A form of pollination whereby pollen is transferred by animals, usually vertebrates but may include invertebrates, particularly by hummingbirds and other birds, and bats, but also by monkeys, marsupials, lemurs, bears, rabbits, deer, rodents, lizards, and other animals. Wikipedia)

Chris gave two presentations with the help of a couple teachers in each presentation to model what a beekeeper looked like and the tools of the trade, and what pollen pants would look like on a bee. Chris took two pairs of pants and lined them with filler to show the puffy yellow pollen sacks stored on the back legs of a bee. “The kids thought it was really funny to see their teachers dressed up, especially the pollen pants. The way bees make honey also got a big reaction out of the kiddos, some were grossed out, others thought it was funny, but I encouraged them to think about what all it took for the bees to make the honey in the sticks they got to eat,” said Chris. The students were very inquisitive and asked lots of questions and got a taste of real honey from a donation of honey straws just for the presentations, along with a few colorings sheets about honey bees.

Chris is going into his 6th year in keeping bees after a member of his church showed him how to catch a swarm. “I was intrigued about beekeeping and wanted to get into it. She has been my mentor and helped me get started with catching a swarm from the property of another church member. She has taught me a lot about beekeeping and has also gotten two other church members into beekeeping, so there will often be a brief meeting after worship; checking in with one another about our bee yards, activity, tips, tricks, and advice,” he said. Later he went to the store where there were several kids who stopped, and he talked about bees with them. Parents were confused that this stranger was talking to their kids about bees. Hopefully the kiddos explained this to their parents!

The Tale of Two Queens

By Sandy McMurry-Richey, MSBA Member

This is a story about two queens who lived in the same castle – or so to speak. Against my better judgment and personal preferences, I have one of those towers of deeps and supers. It started with a hive that early on filled its space of two deeps which I use to overwinter. I did an inspection on one of the beautiful sunny days we have enjoyed between rains this spring, and I found ten frames full of solid beautiful capped brood. In great excitement I grouped most in the lower hive body and pulled a couple of frames of brood up to the next box into the plentiful stores they had brought in with early pollen flows from Weeping Willow, Apple, Dandelion, etc. Then I switched out a few empty frames in between the stores and added the third deep.

I do not like towers, but I played the split game last year and got very little honey for my Honey. I was too busy feeding it back to the bees. This is my year for honey! A week later on another clear day I came back with my first honey super and stacked it on. Now the tower was almost my height. Next chance I inspected the honey super hoping to run inside with a frame of capped honey from the clover and other wildflowers blooming now. Oh no! Someone was laying eggs in my honey super. (Nope, no queen excluder.) To make it worse they looked rather bullet shaped if you know what I mean.

I pulled that frame and replaced it with another and stuck the suspicious one in the freezer. Now to digest a bit, last fall I had a weak hive which I combined with this particular hive. I used the newspaper method and did not see a queen. {Do you see it coming?} Yep, yesterday, I inspected again and there was a very plump Russian queen with three more frames of brood and honey in the super. She now has her own split, and suddenly I am up to nine hives. If I can’t get any honey this year, I am going back to goat raising!
My Observation Hive

By Henry Long, MSBA Member

I was just a kid when I bought my first bee hive in the early 1980’s and beekeeping was another one of the various interesting hobbies I decided to get into. Today, I’m a preacher by trade so beekeeping remains a hobby. Whenever I have been anywhere that had a public observation hive, I was eager to see it. My eagerness always turned to disappointment though. The only thing I ever saw in those public observation hives was workers on frames of honey. The real action was always hidden from view sandwiched between the frames. I wanted to watch the bees rearing brood, the queen laying eggs, all of the interesting things that take place in the brood area without disturbing their activities by blowing smoke on them and taking the hive apart.

We had a bad drought in 2017 and one of my hives was robbed out, but the queen and a few bees were still alive. My oldest daughter was 6 at the time and she really wanted to be able to watch bees make honey. So, I ordered a 2 frame observation hive from Betterbee and used that queen to get it going. Both of my daughters absolutely loved it. They had to watch the bees every day. My youngest daughter wasn’t even 2 yet. Every morning she would get up and say, “Me wanna see bees! Me wanna see bees!” So, I would pick her up and carry upstairs to the study so she could watch the bees. Then, on the morning of New Year’s Eve, we went upstairs to find the queen dead on the bottom of the hive. There was no way to save the hive at that point and my girls were devastated.

I assured them that I would get more bees in the house for them to watch in the Spring. But, I wanted a better observation hive that would be less work in the long term. I didn’t want to have to constantly remove frames of brood to keep them from swarming, or have to put frames of brood in to keep them from dying off. So, it needed to hold at least 10 deep frames. I wanted one where we could see everything going on inside any time we wanted. So, it had to be one frame thick. Unfortunately, there wasn’t anything commercially available that fit the bill. The commercially available observation hives were either too small or they were 2 frames thick rendering much of the hive hidden from sight. I had already read everything I could find on observation hives at that point and my experience with the Betterbee hive had given me ideas for improvements, so the wheels in my head started turning and I decided to build one myself. The design my mind dreamt up was shaped by the location it had to be kept in. The only practical place in my house for an observation hive is upstairs in the study in a narrow dormer window. I knew I couldn’t carry a large observation hive up and down those extremely steep stairs by myself when it was full. So, I had to be able to take it outside to work it in pieces and be able to do it without the bees getting out inside the house. The dormer window was also too narrow to put the hive right in the center. So, I would have to make it so it could be moved from one wall to the other so that both sides could be viewed, which meant it had to be sturdy enough to move without cracking or breaking.

What I came up with and built is a 21 deep frame observation hive. It has 3 columns with 7 frames in each column. The columns can be covered with insulated panels when not being viewed. It’s over 6 feet wide and over 7 and a half feet tall. It’s mounted on a decorative barn door track and has wheels on the bottom so I can roll it from one wall to the other. Each frame is in its own box. The boxes can be isolated from each other by inserting dividers which allow them to be removed without releasing the bees. It has a screened bottom board with an oil tray underneath, a feeder area, an entrance disc that can be used to close it off easily. I can also insert queen excluders and escape boards.

My wife only had one request—that it look pretty. She was very pleased with the results. The removable boxes are made of furniture grade pine, but the rest of it is made of fine red oak with a cherry stain.

Having the observation hive has been a very enjoyable and educational experience for everyone. I’ve gained a better understanding of exactly what and why things take place in the hive. I’ve watched as the queen lays a frame full of eggs and been able to see why she skips cells. We have seen behavior that the beekeeping books don’t typically write about and things many beekeepers go a lifetime without ever seeing. My 3-year-old can find the queen, point out queen cells, tell you which bees are “boy bees” and “girl bees” – as she calls them. She gets excited every time she sees them bringing pollen in and yells for her sister to come look. My eight-year-old is like an expert tour guide pointing everything out when we have visitors. It was a lot of work and took 3 months for me to build it, but I think it was worth it.
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