

## ILLINOIS STATE BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

# BULLETIN

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### *PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE*

Hello Beekeepers;

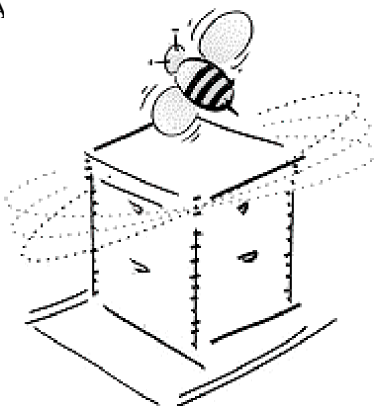
I hope the New Year will be happy and productive. We have had an adequate amount of snow here in central Illinois and are looking forward to spring. The month of December might have been tough on your bees if they were short on stores. It's been too cold to even check on them, but if they were heavy in the fall, things should be okay.

It's time to order packages for replacement and for the new beekeepers in your organizations. Help the new beekeepers out by ordering a few extra packages. Someone will always take them for expansion or replacement.

Winter is a good time to clean that wax from last summer's solar melting. I heat it in the basement in a double boiler, strain it, and pour tapered candles or 1-oz. bars. Once the wax is melted, you might as well mold it into something you can sell. Winter is also a good time to assemble equipment for replacement of those hive bodies we tried to make last "one more year". Replacing old equipment will help the inspectors have a happier new year.

Have a happy and prosperous New Year.

Rich Ramsey  
President ISBA



### *A WORD FROM ILLINOIS' NEW CHIEF APIARY INSPECTOR*

Hello! My name is Steve Chard and I'm the new State Apiary Inspector Supervisor for the Illinois Department of Agriculture's Apiary Program. I assumed this new position in April of 2000 and I'm excited to be part of this very important program. I succeeded Scott Frank, who has been appointed Bureau Chief of the Bureau of Environmental Programs within the Department. Since Scott's office is right next door, I can tap into his broad knowledge of apiary issues at any time.

I'd like to offer a little background information on myself. I have been employed by the Department since 1980 and previously acted as a program administrator working with several natural resource conservation programs (e.g., farmland protection, soil and water conservation). I grew up on a grain and livestock farm near Dawson, Illinois and participated in farming with my father until his retirement in the fall of 1999. As a matter of fact, a beekeeper from Centralia kept a number of hives on our farm when I was in grade school. I vividly remember the "sweet" rewards (honey, comb) of our friendship with the gentleman from Centralia. I currently reside in Springfield with my wife, two daughters and my greyhound. In addition to acting as State Apiary Inspector Supervisor, I also serve as Deputy Administrator of the Division of Natural Resources within the Department.

Of course, with all the new jobs, it's good to gain as much practical experience as soon as possible. I accompanied two of our Department Apiary Inspectors on numerous apiary inspections during 2000. I have really enjoyed meeting many beekeepers across the state and have hopefully gained some good knowledge on the many facets of beekeeping. I have even been stung, so I am starting to pay my dues! I plan to participate in many inspections in the future. I truly believe that's the best method for a person to become familiar with beekeeping in general and with the issues each of you face day in day out. Speaking of apiary inspections, I hope that you are pleased with the efforts of our five Department Apiary Inspectors. They are very dedicated to providing beekeepers with the best possible service. Unfortunately, we are undermanned at the present time and need to increase our workforce, if possible. I'm currently coordinating with our Department leaders on the possibility of expanding our inspection team. I hope we can correct this deficiency in the near future.

In case you didn't have the opportunity to attend the ISBA annual meeting last November, where I had the pleasure of meeting and visiting with many of you, I thought it would be of benefit to provide the highlights of the Department's Annual Inspection Report for state fiscal year 2000 (July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2000). The number of beekeepers around Illinois continues to diminish. There were 1142 registered beekeepers for fiscal year 2000 as compared to 1208 beekeepers in fiscal year 1999. There were 1975 apiaries and 18,504 colonies during the reporting period. The average number of colonies per beekeeper was 16.2 and the average number of colonies per apiary was 9.4. In addition, 58.9% of the beekeepers throughout Illinois maintain 1-5 colonies, whereas 0.4% maintain 4001-500 colonies, and an additional 0.4% manage more than 500 colonies. There were 57 new beekeepers registered during the fiscal year. Jo Daviess County has the highest concentration of beekeepers who manage 2114 colonies within a total of 86 apiaries. During the reporting period, 1731 colonies were visited with 855 actually opened and inspected. American Foulbrood Disease was detected in 2.4% of the colonies opened. Those colonies were destroyed. No cases of European Foulbrood were found and only 4 cases of Chalkbrood were discovered.

I very much look forward to working with beekeepers across Illinois and welcome your input on ways the Department can improve service to you, our customers. I wish you a very successful new year.

#### **HIGHLIGHTS FROM WEBSTER ADDRESS**

In speaking about "Beekeeping with Fewer Chemicals," Dr. Tom Webster provided a host of useful information at the autumn ISBA meeting held in Springfield on November 11th. Highlights from Dr. Webster's morning talk include the following.

There are four methods that might we used in fighting off varroa mites.

1. Using chemicals such as fluvalinate, coumaphos, and formic acid. The problem with chemical controls is that mites can and will develop resistance to the pesticide.

2. Using bees with specific genetic behaviors. Some bees exhibit hygienic behaviors that include workers uncapping cells to remove *Varroa* (the work of Dr. Marla Spivak) or developing strains of bees with shorter pupal phases or smaller cells (the work of Dr. John Harbot). Another factor could possibly include honey bee grooming behavior, but this behavior might not be genetically determined.

3. Using physical controls. This includes drone brood removal, mite traps, or open bottom boards. Mite traps on the bottom board would take advantage of the natural fall of *Varroa* mites from their apian hosts. Open bottom boards would allow the mites to fall out of the hive with very little chance of return.

4. Using biological controls. There might be vectors that could control mites themselves or pass on viruses that would kill the mites.

In Kentucky efforts are being undertaken to find "survivor colonies" that seem to have developed some form of resistance to *Varroa*, not unlike the work done in recent years with the Yugo and Russian bees. Tom is now collecting feral colonies believed by beekeepers to have survived for at least three years. Queens pro-



*Newly elected ISBA Executive Board members. From left to right we have Rich Ramsey, President; Udell Meyer, Treasurer; Rita Taylor, Secretary; Ray Chapman, Southern Region Director; and John Hansen, Vice President.*

duced from survivor colony stock will be distributed soon (only within Kentucky) for controlled experiments to determine if any form of natural resistance is beginning to show after more than a decade of infestation. He encouraged Illinois beekeepers to consider such a program for themselves.

#### **BEEKEEPERS FEATURED IN THE ILLINOIS STEWARD MAGAZINE**

Four prominent Illinois beekeepers were spotlighted in a quarterly magazine published by the Cooperative Extension Service (CES) at the University of Illinois and distributed to thousands of readers around the state. Dr. Gene Robinson, Scott Frank, and Rebecca and Carl Wenning were interviewed by CES's Tina Prow. The article, "Finding Nature's Gold," appeared in the Winter 2001 issue of *The Illinois Steward* magazine. A brief review follows...

Dr. Robinson leads a research team at the University of Illinois that examines behavioral changes resulting from the maturation of honey bee brains. "We're gaining valuable insights on what honey bees are capable of doing. The molecular connection between the biological clock and division of labor is especially amazing. [Research] shows the potential of molecular genetics to uncover previously undiscovered mechanisms." Robinson's research takes advantage of techniques designed for and unitized in the Human Genome Project.

Mr. Frank, former Chief Apiary Inspector for Illinois and now Chief of the Bureau of Environmental Programs, explained how beekeeping is changing in Illinois, citing statistics for December 1999 that showed 17,800 Illinois colonies kept by 1,200 beekeepers. Similar data for December 1988 showed 37,000 colonies and 3,000 beekeepers. According to Mr. Frank, the honey bee decline in Illinois has bottomed out and is on the rebound. The number of registered colonies has climbed in recent years lending support to the claim. The average number of colonies per apiary has increased from 6.6 in 1995 to 24 in 1999. The average number of colonies per beekeeper has also increased from 10.7 in 1995 to 14 in 1999.

The Wennings, Rebecca and Carl, are well-known hobbyist beekeepers who in 1997 began a bees and beekeeping course now sponsored annually by the Heart of Illinois Beekeepers' Association. Rebecca was only 12 years old at the first class, but still presented to an all-adult audience for fully half the day. Rebecca is best known in central Illinois as a promoter of honey, honey bees, and beekeeping, and has given 33 presentations to schools and social groups since 1998. She explains, "I love sharing beekeeping with other people. It's something that people don't seem to know about. Kids have fun dressing up, and the observation hive is a real attraction."

Carl, a beekeeper of only four years experience, is a well-known writer of beekeeping articles. Since July 1999 he has had 20 feature articles published in *American Bee Journal*, with more to follow. Carl also has had a feature article appear in *Apitec*, a Spanish language journal published in Mexico City. Carl is quoted in the CES article as saying, "It's hard work sometimes, no question, but we feel like we're doing something important for the environment and for the food system. Also, for us, it provides a common interest that contributes to family integrity and unity. That's a great dividend."

*The Illinois Steward* is an international award-winning magazine about Illinois' precious natural resources and heritage, and efforts currently underway to protect and steward these resources by organizations, agencies, private industry, and individuals. The purpose of the magazine is to educate about and foster stewardship of Illinois' natural resources. Informative articles and stories will help to develop and further sharpen personal stewardship philosophies. If you would like to obtain a copy of *The Illinois Steward* magazine, visit their web site at the following URL: <http://ilsteward.nres.uiuc.edu/>

### **2001 ISBA SUMMER MEETING**

The ISBA Summer Meeting for 2001 will be held in conjunction with Indiana beekeepers. Cook DuPage Beekeepers' Association will be the Illinois co-host. The joint meeting will be held on June 29-30, at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. There will be an evening session on June 29 and an all-day session on June 30. It is not required to attend the Friday night session. More details will be published in the *ISBA Bulletin* as soon as they become available. Mark your calendar now so that you don't miss this meeting.

### **NBH ANNOUNCES WINNING RECIPE**

Holiday Honey Punch, submitted by the Cook DuPage Beekeepers Association, was selected as the grand prize winning recipe in the National Honey Board's Beekeepers' Favorite Recipe Contest. "This punch has been served at the Cook DuPage Beekeepers Association annual holiday party for almost 40 years," said Ron Fischer, president of the association. "This is a great drink for your holiday guests or at any party." The Cook DuPage Beekeepers Association received a gift certificate for \$300 in National Honey Board merchandise, and the recipe will be featured in the NHB's upcoming publicity. Congratulations to all Cook DuPage Beekeepers Association members!

"Nobody knows cooking with honey better than beekeepers and their families," said Annette Laber, fulfillment coordinator for the National Honey Board. "We invited local, state and national beekeeping associations to submit recipes to the contest to find the best of the best." In addition to the Cook DuPage grand prize winning recipe, an additional five "best of the best" honey recipes are featured on the NHB's web site [www.honey.com](http://www.honey.com). The grand prize winning recipe follows.

#### Holiday Honey Punch

3/4 cup honey	2 cups orange juice
2 cups boiling water	1 cup lemon juice
4 cups cranberry juice cocktail	1 quart ginger ale

Dissolve honey in boiling water and chill. Combine with cranberry, orange and lemon juice and chill. Before serving, add ginger ale. Makes 20 servings.

### **SLIGHT INCREASE IN ABJ SUBSCRIPTION RATES**

Association subscription rates for *American Bee Journal* in 2001 have increased slightly over last year's rates. The new rates are accurately reflected in the subscription information found on the back page of the *ISBA Bulletin* newsletter.

### **DATE SET FOR BEEKEEPING COURSE**

The Heart of Illinois Beekeepers' Association (HIBA) will sponsor their fourth annual Beekeeping Course at the McLean County Farm Bureau Building, 402 North Hershey Road, in Bloomington on Saturday, February 10, 2001. The all-day course is designed to help members of Illinois' general public become involved in beekeeping, and will provide the basic information and skills to do so.

The course runs from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. There is a \$20 materials fee per household, and pre-registration is required. Registrants will receive the book *First Lessons in Beekeeping* (or another suitable book) as well as numerous handouts.

The course will focus on four main themes: beekeeping equipment, honey bees, managing a colony, and getting started in beekeeping. Participants will assemble a beehive from bottom board to telescoping cover. The finished hive — along with many other items — will be given away in a door prize drawing.

To pre-register, send the names of all participants from your household who will be attending, your mailing address, phone number, and a check for \$20 made payable to HIBA to: Carl J. Wenning, HIBA Beekeeping Course, 21 Grandview Drive, Normal, IL 61761-4071. Pre-registration deadline is January 27, 2001, though additional applicants will be accepted after that date so far as resources allow. Confirmation, map, and agenda will be sent by return mail after the deadline date.

A complete tentative agenda may be found on the HIBA Web site at the following URL: <http://www.phy.ilstu.edu/~wenning/HIBA/HIBA.html>. For additional course information, phone (309) 454-4164. You may also e-mail the course director at [wenning@phy.ilstu.edu](mailto:wenning@phy.ilstu.edu).

Membership in the Illinois State Beekeepers' Association is open to all persons interested in bees and beekeeping. Beekeepers are urged to join through their local associations. Dues are \$2.00 per year, **good only January 1st through December 31st each year**, and includes subscription to this newsletter. Beekeeping journals are available at about 25% discount to members as listed below; rates are subject to change without prior notice. **Make checks payable to: Illinois State Beekeepers' Association and mail to: Rita Taylor, Secretary, 4274 Taylor Homestead Road, Pleasant Plains, IL 62677-4024.**

**Please indicate new or renewal subscription when ordering journals.**

**ADDRESS CHANGES:** Send old and new address six weeks prior to date of change when practical to: Rita Taylor, Secretary, 4274 Taylor Homestead Road, Pleasant Plains, IL 62677-4024.

**Reduced Journal Rates (members only)**

	<b>1 Yr.</b>	<b>2 Yr.</b>	<b>3 Yr.</b>
<i>American Bee Journal</i>	\$14.96	\$28.46	\$40.13
<i>Bee Culture</i>	\$16.00	\$31.00	N/A
<i>The Speedy Bee</i>	\$13.25	\$25.25	\$34.00

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