

ILLINOIS STATE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

BULLETIN

July/August 2003 • Volume 85, Number 4

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Return of the Feral Colonies

I have always had mixed feelings about swarms, especially after the onslaught of mites that wiped out most of our feral colonies in the late 1980s. I always hate to lose a swarm, but when I do lose one, I know it will help to rebuild the feral colony population. Depletion of feral colonies due to mites became very evident in my own back yard. In years previous to the mite onslaught, honey bees in my garden were a common sight, even though I don't keep bees in my back yard nor do I know any beekeepers within three miles of my house. Obviously, the bees in my garden were visiting from one or more feral colonies. In contrast, I never saw a honey bee in my garden throughout most of the 1990s. But in recent years, not only am I starting to see bees in my garden again, both in 2002 and again this year, a swarm "moved in" to some hive equipment stored in my yard.

Further evidence of feral colonies, not only surviving but thriving, has come my way recently. Early, this past April, a man called me about bees in an old oak tree that he had felled. He said that bees had occupied the tree for many years and he was waiting for them to leave so that he could finally cut down this old hollow tree. Seeing no bees flying this Spring, he cut down the tree but soon discovered the bees were alive and well. That's when he found my name on the ISBA web site and called me. The fact that the bees had occupied the tree for several years tells me they are survivors, maybe even mite resistant. Needless to say, I retrieved a nice colony of bees and he, with his family, enjoyed some good honey.

In another instance, I received a call from the pastor of a Baptist church in a small town near the Mississippi river. The church building was built in the 1800s and its brick walls are 17 inches thick, apparently with enough hollow space at the top of the brick structure to shelter a honey bee colony. The building is currently being tuck-pointed and the

workers refused to work near the bees whose entrance is at the roofline 40 feet above the ground. I advised her to contact a local beekeeper and have him determine the exact location of the bees, and if they were accessible, he could remove them. I don't know the outcome, but one important point is that the pastor said the bees have been occupying the building since she arrived there 12 years ago, providing additional evidence of feral colony survival. Considering the vast number of swarms occurring this year, it's a safe bet that the overall feral colony population in Illinois is about to increase dramatically.

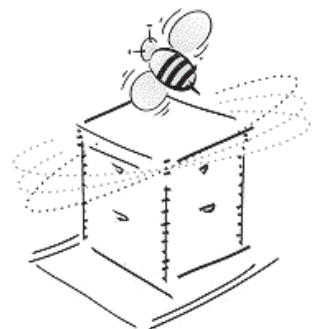
See you at our summer meeting in Edwardsville, on Saturday, June 28.

John Hansen
ISBA President

SUMMER ISBA MEETING IN EDWARDSVILLE JUNE 28TH

The St. Clair Beekeepers Association will host the ISBA summer meeting in Edwardsville, Illinois, on Saturday, June 28th. The meeting will take place at Madison County Farm Bureau, 900 Hillsboro Avenue. Registration begins at 9:00 a.m., and the program beginning at 9:30 a.m. The complete agenda, as well as two maps showing the location of the meeting, may be found on page 3 of this issue of the *ISBA Bulletin*.

Watch the ISBA web site at www.isba.ws for the most current information and any last-minute announcements. Additionally, you may contact Marlin Wagner, SCBA President, by phone at (618) 656-7593 or via e-mail at mwagner@planetnet.com.



APIARY INSPECTION SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

In case you haven't heard, Mr. Charles A. (Chuck) Hartke has been appointed as the Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA). Director Hartke previously served as State Representative of the 108th District of the Illinois General Assembly from 1985 until his appointment as IDOA Director. Throughout his tenure as a State Representative, Mr. Hartke made agricultural legislation one of his top priorities. In the past, Mr. Hartke sponsored legislation to improve "mega hog farm" standards, to open additional markets for Illinois agricultural products, and to promote value-added products. He also co-sponsored several measures aimed at increasing ethanol usage as an alternative fuel. Director Hartke looks forward to working with the agricultural industry, including beekeepers around Illinois, in his new capacity as the Director of the IDOA.

I hope you have plans for attending the ISBA Summer Meeting in Edwardsville on Saturday, June 28. Many informative presentations will be made and of course, it will be an excellent opportunity for some good old-fashioned camaraderie. The meeting will also provide me with an opportunity to update you on topics affecting the beekeeping industry in Illinois. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

By the time you receive this newsletter, the IDOA will have submitted all the necessary paperwork to the USEPA to request approval for Illinois beekeepers to use Api Life VAR in Illinois for improved varroa mite control. Apparently, Api Life VAR, which has as its main ingredient Thymol, has been used successfully in Europe for a number of years to control varroa mites. The availability of Api Life VAR will give beekeepers an additional weapon to fight varroa mite infestations. Once the IDOA receives the Section 18 permit from the USEPA for using the product in Illinois, we will notify the beekeeping industry immediately.

We continue to be on the lookout for new cases of small hive beetle in Illinois in conjunction with our apiary inspections. To our knowledge, the beetles have not spread from the five counties where the beetles have been found over the last 2 years to other counties. We are also not aware of additional beekeepers (beyond those in 2002) who are experiencing problems with the beetle. However, as you know, this situation can change at any time and definitely will change. Please be watchful for the small hive beetle in your colonies and keep us informed. If you suspect that the beetles have invaded your hives, please contact your IDOA Apiary Inspector or me (217/785-4233) as soon as possible.

See you at the ISBA Summer Meeting. As usual, feel free to contact me or any of the Department's Apiary Inspectors if you need an inspection or any other assistance.



Steve Chard



ISBA BEEKEEPER OF THE YEAR PROGRAM

The *ISBA Beekeeper of the Year* program is designed to recognize, on a yearly basis, an Illinois beekeeper who most embodies, illustrates and exemplifies the key objectives of the ISBA. That is, to promote:

- interest in honey bees and beekeeping by encouraging good beekeeping practices in Illinois,
- the utilization of honey bees for pollination of agricultural crops, and
- the dissemination of information about honey bees and beekeeping.

If you know a beekeeper who exemplifies these objectives, is a member of the ISBA and a resident of the state of Illinois, we want to hear from you! The initial selection of *ISBA Beekeeper of the Year* candidates relies upon you, the ISBA membership! If you would like to nominate someone for this prestigious award, please send your nomination (following official guidelines) to the *ISBA Beekeeper of the Year* chairperson via mail or e-mail no later than September 1, 2003. See the last issue of the *ISBA Bulletin* or the ISBA web site at www.isba.ws for complete information about the award and for nomination guidelines.

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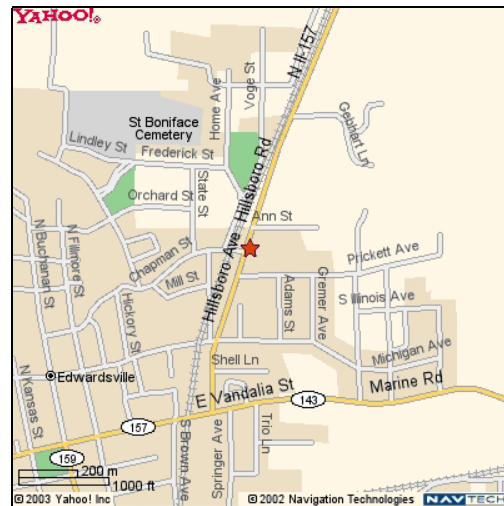
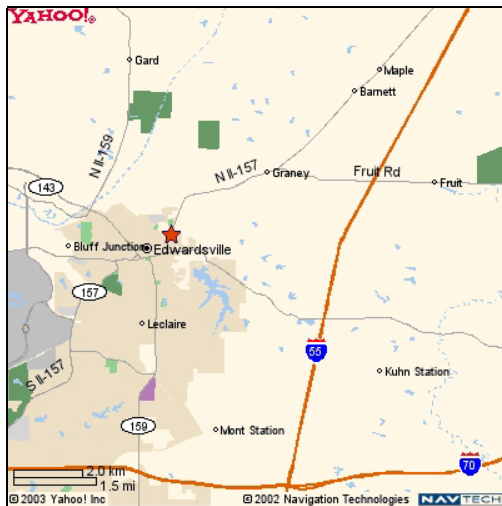
Agenda for ISBA Summer Meeting

Illinois State Beekeepers Association

Madison County Farm Bureau Building (*enter through rear door*)
900 Hillsboro Avenue (State Route 157)
Edwardsville, IL 62025

Saturday, June 28, 2003

- 9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. Registration
- 9:30 a.m. - 9:35 a.m. Welcome, Marlin Wagner, President, St. Clair Beekeepers Association
- 9:35 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. Welcome, John Hansen, President, Illinois State Beekeepers Association
- 9:45 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. **Gene Killion** – *The Good Old Days of Being a Beekeeper*
- 10:45 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Break
- 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. **Dr. Robert Orth**, Analytic Chemist – *A New Formic Acid Delivery System for Control of Varroa Destructor in Honey Bee Colonies.*
- 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. Lunch on your own
- 1:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m. Door Prizes
- 1:15 p.m. - 2:15 p.m. **Jack Smith** – *Apitherapy*
- 2:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Break and Drawing for 50/50
- 2:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. **Steve Chard**, Chief Apiary Inspector – *Industry Update*
- 3:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. Association Reports
- 3:15 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Door Prizes
- 3:30 p.m. Adjournment



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 for 2003 are \$6 for the calendar year, **January 1 through December 31 only**. Dues include a subscription to this newsletter, the *ISBA Bulletin*. 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 for 2003 (members only)

	1 Yr.	2 Yr.	3 Yr.
<i>American Bee Journal</i>	\$16.45	\$31.30	\$44.05
<i>Bee Culture</i>	\$17.00	\$32.00	N/A
<i>The Speedy Bee</i>	\$13.25	\$25.25	\$34.00

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