



Illinois State Beekeepers Association Bulletin

May/June 2013 Volume 96 Number 3

Letter from the President

Jim Belli

I am writing this article in mid April, more specifically, April 16th. Yesterday was tax day. April 15th is usually the first day the dandelions bloom in our area, but that was not the case this year. The weather has been unseasonably cold and wet. The bright side is that daily temperatures have been consistent, unlike last year where temperatures were dramatically higher in the early spring and were followed by freezing temperatures later which killed most of the fruit tree blooms.

This last winter Karen and I experienced the greatest colony losses ever. Actually, these losses started last August. Certainly the drought contributed to these losses and it is always comforting to have a culprit to blame, but I now believe I was at fault. I learned a great lesson from this experience. Bees operate on a natural cycle, like dandelions, not on a calendar like filing taxes. August 31st the supers come off, the first weekend in September we treat for mites, mid September we begin feeding and so on. In retrospect, I should have been more observant. Knowing we had experienced a severe drought, I should have examined my hives earlier and more carefully to see what affect the drought had on them. I now believe the majority of our losses were due to queen failures. Had I have been more observant, I could have possibly detected this and requeened, something I did only in the spring. I will also begin testing my colonies for mite populations throughout the

season. I used to only do this in early spring and in the fall after supers were removed. Mite populations must be kept in check throughout the season. Although this is not a problem, we have experienced small hive beetles. This season traps will be placed in all colonies. I am going to become a proactive beekeeper and not a reactive one. The beauty of Spring is that we start anew. We can put lessons learned into practice. Eventually the dandelions bloom, signifying that winter is officially over and that a new honey season has begun.

It is my sincere hope that all of you will attend the ISBA Summer Meeting, which will be held in Gurnee on June 29th. The meeting is being co-sponsored with the Lake County Beekeepers Association. We have a blockbuster lineup of speakers coming, including Dr. Larry Connor, Dr. Dewey Caron and Phil Craft. Seating is limited and we cannot accommodate on-site registration, so please register early. The registration form is printed here in the Bulletin, and can also be downloaded from our web site at www.ilsba.com.

Finally, both Karen and my prayers go out to the victims of the tragedy at the Boston Marathon and to the First Responders for the magnificent job they did.



Chuck And Dolores Leitner Awarded ISBA Pioneer Award

The Executive Board of the Illinois State Beekeepers Association initiated the Pioneer Award in 2011 to honor those members who, through their continued support and work, have kept the ISBA, and more importantly, its affiliated clubs strong and viable. This is the ISBA's most esteemed award and with it goes a life membership in the ISBA. Past recipients of the Pioneer Award are Udell and Norma Meyer, Charles and Karen Lorence, Edith McDonald and now Charles and Dolores Leitner. It is our way of saying thanks to those that have formed the foundation of this association.

I am asking that our affiliated Club Presidents submit the names of members who they feel are deserving of this recognition.

Jim Belli



Pioneer Award

Presented at St. Clair Beekeepers Association April Meeting
From Left: Lonnie Langley, Dolores Leitner, Chuck Leitner, Jim Belli, Ray Chapman, Rich Ramsey, and Terry Combs

APIARY INSPECTION SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

Steve Chard, Illinois Department of Agriculture

By the time you read this, we will have gone from drought to extremely wet/flooding conditions; from cool to warm and warm to cool, etc. We never know what Mother Nature has in store for us! Hopefully, she was very kind to your bees this past winter. If you experienced major colony losses, please let one of our Apiary Inspectors or me know.

Previously, I indicated that at the request of the USDA-Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the Department was participating in a national honeybee survey in an attempt to help document which bee diseases/parasites/pests of honey bees are and are not present in the US. This survey was also being conducted to investigate potential causes of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). As part of this survey, samples are collected by each participating state and analyzed by APHIS. Due to a general lack of brood late this past fall, we had to suspend sample collection for the 2012 survey. We will resume sample collection this spring as the weather allows. Thanks so much to all the beekeepers who allowed us to sample their colonies. In addition, APHIS will conduct another survey in 2013 and the Department has committed to participating in that survey as well. We'll be contacting perspective beekeepers for 2013 sample collection soon.

The Department has already issued a number of moving permits this spring. If you plan on moving bees across county or state lines, be sure to contact your local Department Apiary Inspector to do an inspection and ultimately receive the needed moving permit. Please give your Inspector ample advance notice to do the inspection so you can receive the permit in a timely manner.

Speaking of moving permits, at the request of some folks representing the Illinois Queen Initiative, the Department and the ISBA have jointly developed guidelines to expedite the issuance of Department moving permits to nuc producers to assist them with their sales to potential customers.

The Department will follow the specific steps below for issuing moving permits to producers selling nucs:

- Department Apiary Inspectors will conduct a pre-moving permit inspection of nucs or parent colonies in the spring, as early as weather permits.

- As customers approach nuc producers to make a purchase, the producer will record the customer's name, address and telephone number. After that information is collected, the customer may take the nucs following the completion of the business transaction between the producer and the customer.

- Within 24 hours of the producer obtaining the detailed information from the customer, the producer shall contact the Department's Apiary Inspector and provide the needed information for a moving permit to be issued. If the Inspector cannot be reached, the producer shall call in the information to the Department's Apiary Inspection Office at 217/782-6297.

- Upon receiving the detailed customer information, the Department shall issue a moving permit to the nuc producer.

In order for this process to work effectively, producers must communicate with the Department's Apiary Inspectors often and in a timely manner.

Producers are encouraged to contact their respective IDOA Apiary Inspector early in the spring to make arrangements for the pre-moving permit inspection. As soon as the weather allows, the Inspector will conduct the inspection and the moving permit will ultimately be issued quickly as described above, unless significant disease or pest problems are detected, such as American foulbrood or significant damage from Small Hive Beetles or Varroa Mites.

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Apiary Inspection Supervisor's Report, Continued

Also keep in mind that moving permits are in effect for 90 days. A few weeks before the 90-day expiration (per the spring pre-moving permit inspection), producers should contact their Apiary Inspector for another pre-moving permit inspection. That

should put producers in good shape for the remainder of the year in working with customers.

Please also know that the IDOA turns moving permits around very quickly. Typically, once we receive the detailed information (e.g., origin, destination, etc.), we send the

moving permit out the following day. Also, if there is a high concentration of nuc producers in one area, additional Apiary Inspectors will be redirected to that particular area to serve producers quickly.

Letter from the Editor...

Working with bees is like working with mystical fairies – with poisonous barbs. Fairies, in folklore, are said to be mischeivous and elusive. If I know anything about them, it is that they'll make a fool out of me.

I was driving home, feeling proud of my two swarm day, with a couple of boxes in my trunk. I'd used ratchet straps, and plenty of duct tape to secure them. Then, one by one, they started to join me in the car. With every bee that appeared in my rearview mirror, I felt less a hero. When I got home, a good 100 were on the loose in my car, sounding like a swarm explosion, so I left them in the dark garage to duke it out in my trunk. I went to

check on my bait hives up in the deer stands. Still empty.

It's a shame about the language barrier between bees and humans. I could be such a better beekeeper if I spoke bee. I do count my blessings, however, because the bees are absolutely speaking to me when they're stinging me. Honey, and wax, are they the “rewards” of beekeeping? I've never known a bee to hand me a candle or a honey stick for “my good beekeeping”. But I have known some bees to reward me with regular lessons on etiquette when I make a mistake. That is a valuable friend, one that keeps you in check so honestly, immediately and clearly correcting your wrong moves. Apitherapy at its best.

After dinner, in the dark, with a flashlight, I was ready to face these swarms in my trunk. I was expecting to find one or two loose clusters of bees. Magically, they were all back in their boxes. I'll never know if they had actually been as loose and unruly as they sounded, or why 100 of them worked their way into the car. The fairies have me fooled again.

Beekeepers, I invite your contributions. I'll love to hear your feedback on what you'd like to read in this Bulletin. Email me at bubblebubb@gmail.com. If you have an article for the next Bulletin, please send it to me by June 15th. Thank you!

Bee Health Minute

In a cool, wet spring, some common brood diseases can turn up in a beehive. A good honey flow can help a hive manage European Foulbrood, Chalkbrood, and Sacbrood. But when bad weather lingers, and bees can't get out and forage enough, these ailments can pop up.

Helpful tips:

Having bleach water on hand will sterilize your gloves and tools. A propane torch is also good.

Combining weak hives with a strong hives runs the risk of infecting the strong hive. Bees can hide their symptoms by being hygienic and cleaning out dead brood, so it can be tricky to pinpoint the cause of the weakness.

The Illinois Apiary Inspectors are here to help. Don't hesitate to call an inspector if you have a problem - that's what we're here for.



ISBA Summer Meeting Registration Form

Summer Meeting registration fee:

\$60.00 per person for ISBA members & Spouse (lunch included)

\$75.00 per person for non-ISBA members (lunch included)

To register: Complete the form below and return with your check or money order payable to the Illinois State Beekeepers Association. Mail completed form to:

Illinois State Beekeepers Association

P.O. Box 21094

Springfield IL 62703

Illinois State Beekeepers Association Summer Meeting Registration Form for Saturday, June 29, 2013

Return this portion with payment by June 20, 2013. We cannot accept walk-in registrations. You may fill out the ISBA \$10.00 annual membership application (available on the ISBA website www.ilsba.com) and include it with your registration to register at ISBA member rates.

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone(____) _____ Email _____

Additional attendees _____

Affiliated ISBA Chapter (or indicate member at large) _____

_____ Total

Number of ISBA member & Spouse attendees (lunch included) _____ at \$60.00 ea _____

Number of non-ISBA member attendees (lunch included) _____ at \$75.00 ea _____

Total payment enclosed: _____

Vegetarian lunches are available.

Please indicate the number of vegetarian lunches required. _____

Summer Meeting Program

7:30 AM Check-In

11:25 AM ISBA Awards

8:30 AM Call to Order
Pledge of Allegiance

11:40 AM LUNCH

8:35 AM Welcoming Remarks
*David Bergman - President,
Lake County Beekeepers
Association*

12:55 PM Dr. Larry Connor
*Value-Added Beekeeping for
Small Operators
(\$500 per hive per year income)*

8:40 AM Opening Remarks
Jim Belli - President, ISBA

1:50 PM Dr. Dewey Caron
*Reading the Frame:
What the Bees are Telling You*

8:45 AM Illinois Apiary Report
*Steve Chard - Supervisor
Illinois Department of Agriculture*

3:05 PM Phil Craft
*Using a Double Screen to Re-Queen
Hives and as a Temporary Double
Queening Method to Build Up Hives*

9:05 AM Dr. Larry Connor
*Keynote Speaker
Setting Up and Running Two
And A Half Hives*

4:00 PM Raffle Drawing

4:25 PM Closing Remarks

10:05 AM BREAK

4:30 PM Adjournment

10:25 AM Dr. Dewey Caron
Controlling Varroa Populations

WANTED: ISBA Board Members by Janet Hart

The 2013 Bee Season is just underway and already it is time to think about the fall. The Illinois State Beekeepers Association will be looking for people to fill the open positions on the executive board at the November meeting. Positions which will be open are President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and the Northern Director. Before you decide to pass on this, at least read the rest of our plea. Experience as a beekeeper is not a requirement to participate on the board! While you more than likely have some time under your belt at keeping bees, that is not what the board needs. If you are competent at organizing, passionate about beekeeping, a self starter, highly motivated or have good leadership skills, then you meet all the requirements.

The President is the representative for all of the ISBA members, and as such should be outgoing and personable. The ability to organize and delegate are qualities strongly desired. The president also moderates the two annual meetings held by the ISBA.

The Vice President is the back-up guy, stepping up to take the reins in the absence of the President and also working with the Board on projects.

The Secretary has the most labor intensive job on the Board, responsible for taking minutes of meetings and fielding mail. A person with basic computer skills can do this job well.

The treasurer keeps the coins, handling the financial aspects of the organization.

All of the above positions are elected annually, and therefore, more candidates are needed to rise to the

challenge.

Directors are a little different, the front line of each of the three regions. They hold their post for a period of three years, with one being elected each year. This year, the Northern Director is up for election. Directors visit their affiliated organizations and keep them up to date on current issues within the ISBA, also handling issues and questions in each of their regions. Directors can also assist in developing new associations in their area as well as participate in ongoing projects of the ISBA.

While all of this may sound overwhelming, it is very rewarding to be a part of an organization such as the ISBA. Without members volunteering to fill these positions, the ISBA will become stagnant. Beekeeping is not the biggest requirement to participate, nor is being well known or even popular. The biggest requirement is the desire to participate and help the beekeepers of Illinois step into the future. So before you just say "no, that's not for me," give some thought to helping, or think about your beekeeping friends who have the qualities needed to help out the ISBA. In this dynamic era of beekeeping, it is an exciting time to be involved to in ISBA - be a part of it!

If you are interested, or have questions, or would like to nominate someone for any of the open positions please contact the 2013 ISBA nominating committee:

Janet Hart, harthoney@msn.com, 309 446-3004

Ray Chapman, honey.1@frontier.com, 618 585-4506

Tony Gedritis, tonskius@gmail.com, 312-213-9963

We look forward to hearing from all of you!!! Let's make it happen!!!!

Spend a Day at the Illinois State Fair!

As you know, The ISBA sells honey ice cream at the Illinois State Fair as its major fun-raising activity. Last year's cooperation of ISBA's affiliated associations in manning the booth was very successful. This year's dates are August 8-18, 2013. Once again we will be located with the Honey Show in the air-conditioned Illinois Building which is open 9am - 5pm daily. Besides selling honey and ice cream, there is also the popular observation hive and the honey show with a beautiful display of honey bee products from throughout the state. It is a great reason to take a day off from work and spend it at the state fair!

Associations are encouraged to schedule a day to man the booth. A minimum of 5-6 people are needed to allow plenty of free time. The associations are encouraged

to sell honey and hive products to the public. To schedule your time or for more details, contact Janet Hart, harthoney@msn.com

Here is a report from last year:
"Everytime I attend any beekeeping related event, even our own CEIBA meetings, I mumble and grumble that I should be home taking care of my own bees! Working at the ISBA honey ice cream booth was an unexpected pleasure that I won't soon forget. It has been years since I was last there (20 or 30!). One forgets the fellowship among beekeepers and the pleasure of sharing our enthusiasm for honeybee culture with those who are unfamiliar with our favorite insect!"

~Karen Pruiett - Central Eastern Illinois Beekeepers' Association

Measure Twice, Cut Once

A Journey Towards Sustainability by Larry Studer

"Every beekeeper who does not migrate his bees, should be on a conscious journey that contributes to locally sustainable honeybees." ~from the round table of L. L. Studer and Farmer Fred (sometimes)

Last time, Fred and I sat across from each other at a large round oak table to share our thoughts for the ISBA Bulletin, it was May/June 2012. We shared the strategies we were considering to keep our honeybees alive during the possible extreme summer weather.

Since then, It was hot and dry and the challenges were great. Fred's voice echoed, "If you do not do the right things for your bees, at the right time, you will be replacing your bees in the spring". I believe, that came true!

In late June, Scott Drabicki joined Farmer Fred and myself to present a program at Jim and Karen Belli's barn and property. "Our Overwintering Preparation is Ongoing", was the message and it included a hands on workshop, printed notes, and several live outdoor demonstrations. The information we shared was well received by everyone who participated in this very unique opportunity.

Our workshop programs share the techniques we use. In late March, The Studer Farms hosted a "Show and Tell" field trip to one of our apiary sites, showcasing the results of the overwintering system we shared at our June workshop. Of the 18 prepared colonies, 16 were alive and active, and 2 colonies had failed.

An often overlooked component of successfully overwintering is acquiring and managing favorable honeybee genetics. Faulty honeybee genetics can block your success - you need capable bees!

I think, "There are times a beekeeper does the right things, at the right times and falls short of success, because he is managing the wrong bees." However, I also think, "There are times a beekeeper fails, when he had capable bees."

Our overwintering success at The Studer Farms is encouraging. We annually evaluate our survivor stock to make selections and create new colonies for replacements, apiary expansion, and local sales. If you find it difficult to obtain healthy, hardy, and dependable honeybee stock, I would encourage you to consider local survivor stock.

To Fred and I, local and sustainable honeybee husbandry involves producing colonies from our local survivor stock. Then maintaining that stock locally over the winter so it is tested and available to produce from again, for the following year. This commitment requires an ongoing investment of time, knowledge, skills, and

resources. (Fred notes that we have not introduced packaged bees to our survivor stock for the past five years.) It is truly an apicultural experience.

A minimum of three hives, can enable a knowledgeable and skilled beekeeper enough basic resources to maintain and restock their bees using their home grown resources.

The marketplace has trained many beekeepers to be yearly consumers of warm weather nucs and packaged bees. These are transported great distances, often from unidentified origins, and without much concern other than price.

This annual practice restocks and redistributes honeybee stock across the United States at an accelerated rate. Unfortunately, if packages carry mites and viruses, package buyers can import these ailments directly into their apiary populations, at that same accelerated rate.

Fred and I agree, this creates a perfect pipeline that could quickly introduce new health challenges directly into our honeybee investment. We have stepped away from accepting the risks associated with that restocking model and embraced a more preventive attitude. Our method of producing local sustainable bees, greatly reduces the amount of imported honeybees we introduce to our apiary populations. This also eliminates a source that could possibly introduce a future bio-clash event in our local native pollinator community.

Now is the time to become more effective stewards of our honeybees. Many of us have shifted our thinking to include the support of local food sources, local restaurants using local food, and local honey. Why not also shift our support to the production of local honeybees that can survive our northern winters and produce the local honey?

I believe these survivor honeybees are a cornerstone to the production of a high-value, local honeybee stock. If more non-migratory apiaries would embrace this sustainable practice and increase the production from their local survivor bee stock, they could shift from being a consumer of honeybees to a producer of honeybees.

A person who is securing honeybees for a first time start-up or for a restocking-do-over, has two basic categories from which to select stock.

The first category simply contains all honeybee stock that survived the local conditions including overwintering. This is called 'survivor stock'.

The second category contains all honeybee stock that does not survive the local conditions including overwintering. These I call 'temporary colonies' (until

deceased or they get a ride south to over winter).

A northern producer working with survivor stock, may be a good source to purchase your stock. They have already invested in the accumulation of hardy stock and although, this is agriculture and there are no guarantees, your chances should favor success if the stock you get is his and truly his northern.

If you have survivor stock that you can build from, this is even better, you have a start! If you maintain three or more strong colonies within your apiary with a well managed nuc, you have access to resources that can keep your quest underway. Young well mated local survivor stock queens, produced during our natural summer mating season, contribute to your overwintering success if your colonies are healthy and have the essentials to overwinter.

Are you ready to get started doing the right things? Develop a plan to get off the marketing treadmill that has you purchasing replacement bees every spring.

Highly value your local survivor stock. Invest in its stewardship by using the survivor's genetics as a base to

create capable colonies.

Adapt a preventive attitude. Learn defensive beekeeping practices that support your local survivor's genetics. Use timely, effective, and safe health care practices.

Learn to manage a healthy nucleus colony and how to effectively use the resources it offers.

Prepare your bees to be local survivors using timely and effective honeybee husbandry practices that includes available winter food and nutrition for overwintering at your location.

Think about it! Are your honeybee losses due to faulty husbandry skills or practices, imported health issues that were left untreated, or faulty genetics for your conditions?

Have fun and enjoy your bees!

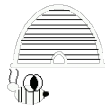
We have offered you our way of sorting out the bees. It may or may not work for you.

When all is said and done, Fred and I agree, "The best bees are alive tomorrow"!

The brood

Chamber

Come and see what all the buzz is about!



Hello!

I would like to welcome you to the Brood Chamber! My name is Astrid Sabo. I'm 12 years old, and I have worked with bees for 7 years. I live in Prairie Du Rocher IL. My father and I have 8 hives of bees. Here at the Brood Chamber, we learn new things about bees and you can help!

We welcome your pictures, articles and photos. We all can learn lots of new things and we will have lots of fun! I always have liked learning lots of new things and I cannot wait to see your work!

The best size would be a half or 1 page long with good spelling and grammar.

Please carefully check your spelling and grammar before sending it in. I will double check again, but this will help save time.

Your drawings and article needs to be completely original and not copied off of the internet or from magazines or books, but you can use quotes as "sources of information", and please include the source in the article so people can go read the article/see the website

The Brood Chamber – Young Beekeepers Column ~a call for submissions and writer's guidelines

for themselves. Thanks.

Try out new ideas for your articles like "colors of honey" or "how you work with your bees." If you need any ideas contact me at AlienBuds@Gmail.com.

You can make art work (drawings, poetry). Please make things such as black and white drawings on white paper, not pencil drawings on lined paper. Pastel colors will not show up in the printed Bulletin. Please try to spend at least an half an hour or more on a good drawing, not a simple sketch made in a few minutes.

I will review the submitted work and articles and if I need anything changed, I'll send it back to you for re-typed before it goes to print.

Because the Brood Chamber is only one page in the Bulletin, we might only be able to print one article per issue. Please do not be discouraged if it takes several months to appear in the Bulletin. We would love for you to send in a picture and a short description of yourself that tells how old you are, where you live, how long you've been keeping bees, and anything else about you that you would like people to know - that's called a "bio". If you want an example contact me.

Please join your local ISBA affiliate beekeeper's association. Anyone under 18 years old gets free membership to the ISBA if they are a member of an ISBA affiliate association.

Please send your work to me AlienBuds@Gmail.com And Mrs. Eleanor Schumacher bubblebubb@gmail.com

What's Happening on the Local Level?

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Phone: 630.557.6233
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Come and participate in a week long beekeeping session on beekeeping at **LONG LANE HONEY BEE FARMS**, located between Champaign and Danville, IL Off I-74, taught by Certified Master Beekeeper David Burns (www.honeybeesonline.com) with special guest Alex Wild, Illinois biologist who studies and photographs insects (www.alexanderwild.com)

Mon., June 17 - Beginning Beekeeping

Tues., June 18 - Practical Beekeeping

Wed., June 19 - Advanced Beekeeping

Thurs., June 20 - Queen Rearing Course

Fri., June 21 - Insect Photography

Students can take the entire course or choose any individual course offering. There is a fee. For more information and to register, go online at: www.honeybeesonline.com.

SPEEDY BEE has suspended publication and will no longer take new subscriptions.

Heartland Apicultural Society holds 12th Annual Conference

The 2013 Heartland Apicultural Society Conference will be held July 11– 13th on the Tennessee Tech University campus in Cookeville, about 150 miles west of Smoky Mountains National Park in central Tennessee.

This premier regional conference will be swarming with instructional programs in the classroom and “hands-on” classes in the apiary. Class programs are designed for beekeepers at all levels of beekeeping skill development from beginners to seasoned veterans. Classroom sessions include: Basic bee biology, beekeeping equipment for new beekeepers--what you really need, urban beekeeping, producing comb honey, setting up a small scale pollination business, setting up an online beekeeping business, removing colonies from buildings and trees, pollen sources for honey bees, introducing queens, Varroa mite biology and their migration between honey bee colonies, Africanized bees what to expect in the future, collecting and selling pollen, small hive beetle biology and management and more.

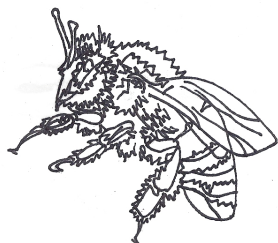
There will be a Queen Rearing Short Course that includes topics such as honey bee genetics, drone and queen mating and biology, setting up starter and finisher hives, grafting and non-grafting methods for raising queens, how to start a breeding program and selecting good traits.

Apiary sessions include, making and using nucs, understanding what you're seeing in a hive during colony inspection, honey bee behavior, and using a double screen. In the Bee Lab sessions will include Nosema diagnosis, candle and soap making, making lotion bars, lip balms and salves and cooking with honey. Sustainable beekeeping topics include: a “survivor” panel of experienced beekeepers who keep bees without mite or other treatments, how to set up a regional queen and nuc project, state “queen projects” and more.

Speakers presenting at HAS this year include: Jennifer Berry, Phil Craft, Debra Delaney, Kim Flottum, Jim Garrison, Jeff Harris, Jerry Hayes, Zach Huang, Greg Hunt, Wyatt Mangum, Tony Prettyman, Juliana Rangel-Posada, John Skinner, Jim Tew, John Timmons and others.

There will be a large vendor show, evening social events, and sightseeing tours in the Cookeville area.

Special rates for HAS guests will be offered at nearby hotels, with meals available on-campus. Pre-registration forms and program details will be available for downloading at <http://www.heartlandbees.com>. Forms will need to be returned by mail only (no on-line submission) to HAS Treasurer, 15275 Meacham Road, Bluff Spings, KY 42240-8484.



Waxing Philosophical ~ the Beekeeping Puzzle

"Honey Bee Employment Opportunities"

Question: How do worker bees learn to do their jobs?

Answer #1: I suspect there is a class of bees we haven't yet recognized. The "teacher bees". They spend their days in the classroom, teaching the bees their respective duties. There are the "class clown" bees.....the ones that head butt the beekeeper, and like to play in our hair. The "engineer bees" are the ones building comb everywhere they aren't supposed to. When you inspect a hive, and see many bees in the corners of the boxes and not on frames.....well, these must be the "class clown" bees and the teacher has them in time out! Or otherwise, as science and research suggests, the bees learn their different duties as they are guided by an "inner clock". As they age, their duties change to serve the needs of the colony. ~Kevin Gerstenecker, Troy, IL ~3 votes

Answer #2: Certainly honey bees can learn by association, such as "I do something and get food" or "if I do this, I get shocked" etc. But early hive activities, such as feeding by nurse bees and hygienic behavior and dancing etc. are pre-programmed. These duties are gene signal based and age and pheromone signal dependent. ~Jerry Hayes, St. Louis, MO ~4 votes

Answer #3: On the Job training. Learning by example. ~Beverly Tanner, Fairfield, IL ~2 votes

Answer #4: They go to a beginning beekeeping class! ~Fred Gerberding, Rochester, IL ~2 votes

Answer #5: I was just amazed to learn that the house bees are "recruited" by forages when nectar flow hits and they need more carriers. Or, the forages will return to being house bees when there aren't enough in the hive to "take the load" when they return with a full honey crop. ~Jane Sueme, St. Louis, MO ~2 votes

Answer #6: Honey bee workers change their jobs as they age in a predictable manner, moving from tasks such as nursing when they are young adults to tasks such as foraging when they are older. How this works has long fascinated researchers, and we now have some interesting answers. As bees age, the level of juvenile hormone in the body changes. This is correlated with the tasks that they perform. Some bees are able to switch jobs and move backwards or forwards in time, taking on tasks that would normally be performed by younger or older bees, if needed by the colony. Gene Robinson and his colleagues showed that when this occurs, there are a host of changes, including >40% changes in the level of

gene activation.

Imagine a scenario in which you have a bright sunny day in Spring in which many of the colony foragers are out and collecting food far from the colony. If there is a sudden, severe storm, many of these foragers could die and the colony would therefore have fewer foragers. It is true that bees are adapted to detect changes in weather and to resist storms, but I am describing a potential scenario that would result in widespread forager loss. In response to the need for foragers, the older nurse bees will begin to change. Their levels of gene expression and the genes that are expressed will change and their levels of juvenile hormone will change. This will start a whole cascade of events that can include changes in their brains. As a result, some of these older nurse bees will take on foraging tasks.

If you would like to learn more about this research, I suggest looking at the following website for papers:

<http://www.life.illinois.edu/robinson/Publications.html>
~James Nieh, UC San Diego, CA ~9 votes

Answer #7: Since there would not be room in the Bulletin for the response I would give, and because it has been answered so thoroughly and beautifully by Dr. N. E. Gray, Professor of Entomology, UC, Davis, CA; I refer to his answer which is Chapter 7, Activities and Behavior of Honey Bees in my 1978 copy of The Hive and the Honey Bee. I advise all beekeepers to read this chapter in its entirety and pay particular attention to the chapter introduction as it sets up Dr. Gray's excellent answer to the question. Have fun, because Chapter 7 consists of 71 pages; but it should provide a comprehensive answer to this million dollar question! ~Terry Combs, Keyesport, IL ~6 votes

Answer #8: Operant Conditioning: If they don't do their jobs well, the boy bees will drone on and on. ~Mark Jusko, Highland Park, IL ~2 votes

Answer #9: It seems to be "hard wired" in them, that is they just seem to know how to do the right thing. I suspect they are getting a lot of chemical signals from their bodies to guide them. There is still a lot of mystery involved that we just don't know. How can a bee exist when you begin to understand how complex a system it is? ~W. Frank Gordon, Princeton, IL ~5 votes

Next Issue's Question: "How do you cultivate Blue Ribbon honey?"

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 or individually if no local associations are available. Dues for 2012 are \$10 for the calendar year January 1 through December 31 only. Dues include a subscription to this newsletter, the ISBA Bulletin. Beekeeping journals are available to ISBA members at about 25% discount. Mention membership in ISBA when sending your subscription payment to the publishers. Rates are subject to change without prior notice.

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