



The Beeline

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rlcrouse@qis.net and tell us your name
and email address!*



President's Message

by Allen Hayes

We are experiencing a mild winter so far. While this allows our bees to make more cleansing flights, your bees may be consuming their winter stores faster than you expected! I suggest you peek in and see where they are clustered. If the cluster is not in direct contact with honey, they may starve.

February is starvation month, so either move a frame of honey over next to them, or slide a patty of fondant or some granulated sugar on wax paper just above them. Putting emergency feed on the top bars of the top box does no good if they are still lower in the brood chamber. Keep your eyes peeled for bees coming back on warm days with green pollen on their corbiculae. It is likely pollen from skunk cabbage, usually the first source we see in central Maryland.

Again this year, MSBA will be partnering with the folks at Brookside Nature Center and Brookside Gardens, 1400 Glenallan Ave., Silver Spring for our Honey Harvest Festival, MSBA's only public outreach event of the year. The Festival is held in conjunction with Brookside's annual Children's Day. The date is Saturday September 16, 2017, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The day really is a lot of fun, I go every year.

Last year the weather cooperated and there were tons of people on the grounds. Brookside does most of the advertising, and families come out of the woodwork to learn about bees, pollination, producing honey and many other related topics. Marc Hoffman, MSBA's Montgomery County Second Vice President, has stepped forward to chair this activity. Thanks, Marc! He'll be working with Brookside staff who do a lot of the legwork, and plan many of the activities that will continue from past years. Lindsay Barranco did a fantastic job chairing this event for several years and she will also be advising on this task. MSBA wants to offer her our sincere thanks for a job superbly done. Please contact Allen Hayes if you, too, are available to volunteer for this richly rewarding experience.

I have updated the four club trophies that are awarded each Fall with name plates identifying the winners, but I need your help with something. I cannot locate the information for who won the John V. Lindner "Best in Show" Award in 2011 and 2014. If you won or know who did please notify Allen Hayes.

Finally, we often consider different locations to hold our general meetings. They need to meet some critical criteria, not the least of which, they must either be free or reasonably priced. Remember, unlike most state bee associations, our meetings are **free!** We would like to keep it that way. If you have a connection with a location that is suitable for an MSBA general meeting please notify Jim Fraser or Allen Hayes.

News from the Apiary Inspectors

From Cybil Preston, State Apiary Inspector, MDA: Phone (410) 841-5920, Fax (410) 841-5835, Cell (41) 562-3464

Bee Informed Partnership: We seek volunteers to let us sample their hives for the BIP/National Honeybee survey. Qualifiers must have 8 hives in one apiary. This survey monitors for the presence/absence of invasive threats to honey bee colony health, such as *Tropilaelaps clareae*, *Apis cerana*, and Slow Bee Paralysis Virus. An additional objective is colony pesticide analysis to assess the variety and quantity of pesticides present in hives. Please think about volunteering to help this survey!

K-9 Training and Certification: In 2017 we got funding to acquire, train, and certify a second disease detector dog to detect AFB in honey bee colonies.

Nuc/Hive Sales: Anyone selling nucleus colonies or selling beehives that will leave Maryland is required to have them inspected before leaving the state. Anyone buying nucleus colonies or hives from outside of

EAS 2017: University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware

Make your plans: EAS 2017 will be at the University of Delaware in Newark! The Eastern Apiculture Society is one of the largest noncommercial beekeeping organizations in the US and the world. Each summer, EAS offers a week-long Annual Conference of lectures and workshops in one of 26 member states or Canadian provinces. 2017's conference will be held at the UDel from July 31-August 4. 600-800 beekeepers from around the world attend each year! The conference includes the Short Course from Mon. to Wed., and the conference itself from Wed. to Fri. The Short Course has classes for all levels and special events such as an open apiary with Lang, Warré and Top Bar Hives, a bee anatomy microscope workshop, a Honey Show, and many classes. The conference offers over 100 different talks from queen rearing to mead and beer brewing, to IPM and more. I first attended several years ago in Boone NC, and the experience was so great that I am now a life member. I've not missed one since. Each year I go with a set of questions in mind for the best minds in Beekeeping, and they get answered. You can't get better than that. Maybe the best thing about the week is that I get to talk "bees" all day long and no one says that they had heard enough! You can find out about specific topics and how to sign up at the EAS webpage <http://www.easternapiculture.org/>. I hope to see you there. EAS 2018 is scheduled for Virginia. Come and join the fun!



Maryland and having them shipped here must have an inspection report or permit from the state of origin and any state where they were off loaded onto the ground. In-state nucleus/beehive sales should be inspected.

Veterinary Feed Directive for Antimicrobial use in Bee Hives: The FDA has mandated that a Veterinary feed directive be written by a licensed veterinarian in order to acquire one of the 3 antibiotics that are allowable for use in beehives. You need to establish a patient/veterinarian relationship now. They should know about your operation/hobby before you need to use the antimicrobial. The MDA held a seminar to educate veterinarians on AFB and European Foulbrood along with some other stress issues. We have a list of veterinarians who are willing to work with beekeepers.

UPCOMING LOCAL EVENTS

Western Pennsylvania Beekeepers Conference, Monroeville, PA. February 17, 7:00 PM to February 18, 4:30 PM. Registration Deadline: February 12. <http://tinyurl.com/halcjij>

6th MidAtlantic Organic Honey Bee Convention, Spring 2017 date TBA but registration open, 21 J.B. Finley Rd Sandston, VA. \$50/one, \$90/two, info: maohbc.com

Delaware Beekeepers Association Annual Meeting, March 25, 2017, St. Jones Reserve, Dover. <http://www.delawarebeekeepers.com/>, debeekeepers@gmail.com

VA State Beekeepers Assoc. Spring Conference, June 16-17, Ferrum College, Ferrum, VA, www.virginiabeekeepers.org

Maryland State Beekeepers Assoc. Summer Meeting, June 17, 8 AM to 3 PM, UMD/College Park. Free.

Maryland State Beekeepers Assoc. Fall Meeting and Honey Show, November 4, 8 AM to 3 PM MD Dept of Ag, Annapolis. Free.

Other Upcoming Events:

10th Annual Organic Beekeepers Meeting, March 3-5, Oracle, Arizona. \$225 per person including accommodation, meals, refreshments. www.treatmentfreebeekeeping.org

Pollinator Week 2017, June 19-25, events around the country, details <http://pollinator.org>

Heartland Apicultural Society Conference, July 13-15, 2017, Evansville, IN. www.heartlandbees.org

EAS Conference and Short Course, July 31-August 4, University of Delaware, Newark, DE. www.easternapiculture.org

Maryland State Beekeepers' Association Winter Meeting
February 11, 2017
Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD

8:00 am	Refreshments, Coffee, Donuts, etc.	
9:00 am	Opening and Welcome	Allen Hayes, President
9:15 am	Maryland Apiary Inspector's Report	Cybil Preston, Maryland State Inspector
9:30 am	The Pennsylvania Queen Improvement Project: The "Leg Chewer," and the Heartland Honey Bee Breeders Co-Operative	Mark Gingrich, Second Vice President, PA State Beekeepers and Co-Chair, PA Queen Improvement Program
10:30 am	EAS Update	Tim McMahon, MSBA EAS Director and Master Beekeeper
10:40 am	Bee Sex Essentials: Queen and Drone Biology	Dr. Larry Connor, Wicwas Press
11:40 a	The Human Side of Urban Beekeeping, or "I Fought the Law and Bee Law Won"	Toni Burnham, Secretary, Maryland State Beekeepers Association
12:30 am	Lunch	
1:30 pm	Best Management Practices for Backyard Beekeepers in the North-East US	Nathalie Steinhauer, BeeInformed Partnership
2:15 pm	Mating Biology of Honey Bees	Dr. Larry Connor, Wicwas Press
3:15 pm	Ask Expert Beekeepers Your Anonymous Questions	Panel Discussion
4:00 pm	Adjourn	Allen Hayes, President

Directions to the Howard County Fairgrounds

Via I-70: Get off I-70 at Exit 80 (Rt. 32 Exit); go south on MD Rt. 32 for 1/8 mile to first traffic light; turn right (west) onto Rt. 144; turn right at crest of hill onto Fairgrounds Road; turn into second entrance; meeting is in the Dining Hall, second building on left

Via Rt. 32: Stay on Rt. 32 to West Friendship; turn west (left, if coming from the south) onto Rt. 144, at the traffic light within sight of I-70; turn right at crest of hill onto Fairgrounds Road; turn into second entrance; meeting is in the Dining Hall, second building on left

From Eastern Shore & Annapolis Area: From Rt. 50, just west of Annapolis, take I-97 North toward Baltimore; exit onto Rt. 32 toward Columbia; follow directions above, via Rt. 32

From NE MD: Proceed to Baltimore Beltway (I- 695); take I-70 west toward Frederick; follow directions above, via I-70 Lunch / Refreshments at the Winter Meeting:

MSBA will provide Coffee and Donuts, Sodas and Water as refreshments during the winter meeting.

There will be an opportunity to order a Subway sandwich on a cash-only basis for those who register before 10:00 AM for this meeting. Members/attendees are welcome to order upon registration or are advised to bring their own lunch or to make plans to dine at a local establishment.

MSBA WINTER MEETING WEATHER POLICY

In the event of a major winter storm, please listen to WBAL (AM 1090) or WTOP (FM 103.5) for announcements. If a Snow Emergency Plan is in effect for Howard County, the meeting is cancelled.

Winter 2017 Meeting to Feature Dr. Larry Connor



In our first keynote of the year, MSBA is honored to present renowned beekeeper, entomologist, teacher, photographer and writer, **Dr. Larry Connor**. It has been more than a decade since our members have heard from Dr. Connor, who is also

the owner and publisher at Wicwas Press. Larry Connor was born in Kalamazoo and graduated from Richland High School in 1963. He earned three degrees in entomology from Michigan State University and was hired as Extension Entomologist in Apiculture at The Ohio State University in 1972. In 1976 he was hired by Chuck Dadant of Dadant and Sons to run a new bee breeding program located in Labelle, Florida. Called Genetic Systems, Inc. This firm had two missions: to produce breeder queens for the Starline and Midnite hybrid bee programs (established by Dr. G.H. "Bud" Cale, Jr), and to mass produce instrumentally inseminated three-line hybrid bees called the Cale 876 Hybrid. Dr. Connor is also a monthly columnist for *BeeCulture* and *The American Bee Journal*. He also conducts workshops on queen rearing and bee breeding, honey bee microscopy and related topics. Since childhood Connor has a strong interest in photography. He continues to expand his collection of images of bees, beekeepers and bee flora.

Mark Gingrich is Second Vice President of the Pennsylvania State Beekeepers Association, and Co-Chair of the Pennsylvania Queen Improvement Program (www.pastatebeekeepers.org/project.htm). The goal of the Pennsylvania Queen Bee Improvement Program is to develop and breed honeybees that are resistant to varroa mites and brood disease, requiring little or no treatment, hardy with at least an 80% overwintering survival rate,



gentle, and produce honey. The project received a 2016 SARE Grant for its work developing stock with mite-biting behavior (mysare.sare.org/sare_project/fne15-819/). The project has depended on wide beekeeper



participation and enthusiastic outreach, from which we are pleased to benefit! **Tim McMahon** is MSBA's Eastern Apicultural Society Director. Tim is an avid beekeeper and student of native and non-managed pollinators, including those in Latin America. Tim was the 2015 recipient of MSBA's George Imirie Award for Beekeeper Education.

Toni Burnham is a past president of MSBA, founder of the DC Beekeepers Alliance, and a columnist for *BeeCulture*. Despite being generally noisy and bossy, this is her first MSBA talk, and she hopes that you will be nice to her. Burnham became a beekeeper on April 9, 2005, when Lloyd Snyder had the poor judgment of putting two packages of Italians in her hands. Toni took the Montgomery County short course, and has gone on to misinform beginners there and in Prince Georges County, DC and Northern Virginia. She runs 20 hives in apiaries across DC, including community gardens, a cemetery, a monastery, an arboretum and the occasional embassy, as well as her roof deck.



Nathalie Steinhauer is a PhD student in the vanEngelsdorp Lab and part of the BeeInformed Partnership team based at the University of Maryland. She has a Masters in Biology from Université Libre de Bruxelles and a Masters in Research in Ecology, Evolution and Conservation from Imperial College London. She conducts statistical and epidemiological studies based on the management surveys of the Bee Informed Partnership and analyzing the results for the use of BIP and beekeepers everywhere.

As of Presstime: Vendors Attending the MSBA Winter Meeting

As a convenience to members, several national and local vendors will be available at the February 11th meeting. Please contact them directly regarding interest in possible pre-orders:

Dadant, VA: Patrick Ferrer, pferrer@dadant.com

Mann Lake, PA, order by 2/8 for meeting delivery: Paul

Medina, paul.medina@mannlakeltd.com, (877) 829-4077

Maryland Honey Co.: Jim Fraser/Brushy Mountain, marylandhoneycompany2011@gmail.com

Wicwas Press, orders@wicwas.com

MSBA T-shirt sales, beeline@mdbeekeepers.org

What is the Honey Bee Health Coalition?

Local beekeepers ask, get answers

By Larry Truchon, EAS Master Beekeeper

In the January Carroll County newsletter, we included an article on the Honey Bee Health Coalition (HBHC). The following day we received an email from one of our members with concerns about the HBHC's intentions and members. To clear up any misconceptions about the HBHC's purpose, I contacted Dr. Dewey Caron. If you are unfamiliar with Dr. Caron, he holds a PhD in Entomology, and has spent 40+ years researching and teaching at Cornell, UMD and UDel. He is the Master Beekeeper Program advisor for EAS, and a respected author.

Here's the inquiry:

The Honey Bee Health Coalition is a front group for the chemical companies that make pesticides. If you check their website and look at the list of members, you will find Dow, BASF, Monsanto, Bayer, and Syngenta among the other members, and they supply most of the money (according to Dewey Caron). The purpose of the HBHC is to deflect attention from neonics and other pesticides, instead blaming all the bee losses on Varroa mites, which have been shown to increase their populations in colonies subject to tiny amounts of imidacloprid.

Following in the footsteps of the Tobacco Institute, which spent decades questioning clear-cut science implicating tobacco in health problems while millions of people died, the Honey Bee Health Coalition is very successfully clouding the issue of bee losses. Their representatives, such as Dennis van Englesdorp of the University of Maryland, are very active on the speaker circuit, and they never blame pesticides for bee losses. It is no accident that these pesticides are made from nicotine. Our bees are being poisoned, and these companies refuse to take responsibility for doing it.

Dr. Caron's response:

I have a different opinion as to whether the Honey Bee Health Coalition is a "front group for the chemical companies" or that the coalition is "clouding the issue of bee losses." Everyone is certainly entitled to their opinion. As the representative of WAS, I am volunteering a considerable amount of my time and what talents I might possess to further the Coalition goals.

I am but one Coalition individual. I do very strongly believe that if we are ever to solve the many issues around improving bee health, we need to have all the parties that might have an interest at the table expressing their opinions. I am reminded that when I am pointing a finger at someone/some group, there are three fingers pointing back at me (rest of my hand). Of the several groups working to improve bee health, the Honey Bee Health Coalition does have representation of ALL the major

groups that might potentially be of help.

It is correct that pesticide companies Bayer, Syngenta, Monsanto are part of the coalition and do contribute financially more than other partners. But I suggest that the letter writer look at who else is part of the coalition. EAS, WAS, Pollination Stewardship Council, American Beekeeping Federation, American Honey Producers all have equal opportunities to express opinion and contribute to our Coalition mission which, broadly, is to improve bee health.

There is no question that there are many issues negatively impacting honey bee health. The letter writer focuses on one, pesticides. There is no question pesticides impact bee health. Just recently Dorchester Co in SC sprayed Naled for Zika virus (seeking to control the mosquito vector) and there was a bee kill. I did research on Naled back in the 70's while at UMD along the Chesapeake, and showed it was harmful initially to honey bees following spraying but it loses its toxic effect rapidly.

As we seek to improve bee health, excluding the very companies that make and distribute those same chemicals, makes no sense. If pesticides were the only reason we have elevated honey bee deaths, the bee health issue could be solved tomorrow. No responsible company specifically produces products to kill pollinators or contaminate soil or water sources (an irony in this whole pesticide issue is that of the top 5 pesticides that are major bee killers, the beekeeper applies 4 of the top 5 directly to his/her hive.)

Bee losses over the past 10 years have gone up and down, while pesticides, including neonicotinoids, have "substantially" increased in usage (for a very graphic presentation of the increase in neonicotinoid usage go to *How Neonicotinoids Can Kill Bees*, a free, downloadable 56 page publication available from Xerces Society, <http://www.xerces.org/neonicotinoids-and-bees/> [Xerces is] a unique, Portland based international non-profit established in 1971 dedicated to conservation of invertebrates). If they were the major bee killers we should expect bee losses to be increasing, not staying at the same level.

In addition to pesticides, what are the other major negative factors? The coalition, with its wide representation, is seeking to address all the bee health issues via three working groups, i.e. forage and nutrition, bee management and crop pest management. We have an outreach task force, as well, to help us distribute and disseminate information (such as the materials we and others have that seek to promote honey bee health).

Continued on Page 7: HBHC, What is It?

Charm City Meadworks: Meadmakers, Beekeepers, and Neighbors!

by Toni Burnham, Secretary

As founder of the DC Beekeepers Alliance, one of the first decisions I made was to meet in locations where adult beverages could be poured (fyi: our main competition for attendance is downtown happy hours). One of my *best* decisions (actually made at a younger member's request), was to invite Andrew Geffken of Charm City Meadworks (charmcitymeadworks.com) to speak to one of our late Fall meetings. Andrew is a beekeeper *and* a meadmaker, and Charm City is committed to our community.

Mead is truly another universe to beekeepers—one of the dozens, if not hundreds, of doors that the bees open to us—and it was interesting to learn how old and new, adherence to tradition and experimentation, and a love affair with the bees factor into both.

And, if you are programming for your club, Charm City is a committed neighbor to and supporter of Maryland beekeeping. They also bring samples. Really yummy samples.

The Charm City founders faced a challenge getting started, too. The classic and established mead consumer

probably has years, if not decades, of experience with the traditional product, which is a big step away from most modern palates. Charm City did not want to turn its back on folks who were long term allies through venues like the Renaissance Faire, but it wanted to open up mead to a whole new audience. They have not turned their backs on these long term supporters, but have managed to expand into flavorings like Lemongrass (oh my goodness, if you like Thai food...), strawberries, pumpkin, and more.

Andrew Geffken shared with us that he tends about 20 colonies of bees on the Eastern Shore, but the volume of honey they purchase to provide enough product stream of mead is staggering. They have considered a number of approaches to sourcing and creating a Maryland honey mead. Anyone else in?



2016 Free State, Imirie and Honey Show* Award Winners

Each year MSBA presents two major club awards, in beekeeping education and citizenship, to members. The 2016 George Imirie Award for Beekeeper Education went to David Morris for decades of work within the Bowie-Upper Marlboro Beekeepers Association, the Board and leadership of the MSBA, as an EAS Master Beekeeper, and as the curriculum head for the recent Honey Judging Class. The Imirie Award has been presented since 2003 to encourage continuing education for active beekeepers, the general public, and for young people.

James Naurot received The Free State Beekeeper Citizenship Award for his tireless support of MSBA's General Membership Meetings going back ten years. He helped make meetings practical, comfortable, and attractive to members, and acquired, prepared, and presented refreshments, while caring for and storing all the tools and accessories necessary to offer them: arriving first and leaving last. James, everyone on the Board slept better knowing that you were on the job!

There are also award winners from our annual Honey Show! Debbie Hewitt of Anne Arundel won the John V. Lindner Best in Show Award, and the Association of Southern Maryland Beekeepers once again won the I. Barton Smith Award for Best Club Showing.

Dr. Deborah Delaney to Stay on at the University of Delaware

Great news for Maryland beekeepers! Dr. Deborah Delaney will continue at the University of Delaware as a continuing track Associate Professor with a 60% focus on teaching and a 40% service. In the e-edition of this newsletter, you can read the full text of her letter.

To quote one paragraph: "[T]his new appointment will allow me to grow the apiary and my teaching presence within Delaware. I also will now have a research tech to help with all the projects I want to start and continue... This new appointment will also allow me more time to devote to short courses, MAAREC and a local queen program."

With EAS 2017 coming to Delaware this summer (see article on Page 2 of this newsletter), this is also terrific news on yet another level of deep importance to beekeeper education and practice in the Free State.

MSBA wants to join Dr. Delaney in thanking the clubs, beekeepers, and community members who helped make this new appointment and future of collaboration possible.



The Honey Bee Health Coalition: What Is It?

(Continued from Page 5) I will not list our considerable accomplishments in these three areas since our establishment in 2014. The reader should consult the Coalition website to evaluate for themselves the progress of our multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional approach to improving bee health. www.honeybeehealthcoalition.org/varroa There are a couple of statements [that are] offered as fact in the writer's statement of opinion that I feel need be addressed. The Coalition does not "blame" all bee losses on varroa mites and neither should any beekeeper. It is a major factor, as the Bee Informed (under leadership of Dennis vanEngelsdorp, specifically mentioned in the opinion letter), and my PNW survey of beekeeper-provided "reasons" for colony losses has pointed out year after year of our surveying. Research seems to indicate that varroa may be as significant to be a factor in 70% of bee colony losses.

I am in agreement with Dennis, based on our bee science, that varroa is a major factor. The reason I am working on varroa (but by no means ignoring pesticides) is because varroa is a solveable negative to bee health. I personally, as principle author with lots of input from the coalition itself, have developed a *Tools Guide to Varroa Control* and recently added how-to-do-it varroa control and sampling videos, [distributed free to anyone who wishes to download them](#). It is a useful tool on how to accurately sample to know mite numbers, and offers basic information on the various (chemical and non-chemical) alternatives to keeping varroa levels low so the virus associated with varroa can be better controlled. We currently lack anything to directly attack the virus.

The statement that pesticides increase the damage varroa and virus might cause to colonies is interesting. I am not aware of any research that shows this relationship. But if this is the case, it is further argument that we need to control varroa. Pesticides, as has happened for years and will continue into the future, can cause damage to bees. We have few effective ways for beekeepers to prevent pesticide damage to bees (Naled, the organophosphate chemical that killed the bees in SC, has been around since 1949 and a (minor) bee killer all those years).

The letter seems to state that pesticides have a base in nicotine, a natural plant product. There is little question it is a powerful killer, not just to insects that might feed on tobacco but to humans as well. It took a while to show that relationship when humans smoked/chewed tobacco. Yep the tobacco companies fought to keep their profit margin, just as pesticide companies seek to stay in business today. Some pesticides, such as the neonicotinoids, have a plant product base but a great difference is that the chemically derived neonicotinoid products are

not human killers. They are however great killers of insects, unfortunately including pollinators like our honey bees. The neonicotinoids are far safer to humans than the nerve poison based organophosphates (such as Naled). The poor honey bee health we are witnessing may be that "canary in the gold mine," an early warning that all is not well with our continued dependence on ever increasing usage of pesticides to feed the hungry planet. Working together—rather than blaming one group—is, I suggest, a more sane approach to making our bees healthier and our planet safer. The Coalition is striving to be one of the groups working on the bees' behalf.

I would like to continue the dialogue but am unable to remain on the East Coast until the regular CCBA March meeting. I would like to invite any/all Carroll Co beekeepers who would like to further discuss pesticides (and the neonicotinoids) to two close-by meetings in March. I will be the speaker at the Susquehanna Beekeepers (Fallston, Thursday March 9th and at Central MD (Oregon Ridge, Tuesday March 14). The topic is "good news:" one of the "good" items I include is the Honey Bee Health Coalition. Email me (dmcaron@udel.edu) so we can try to get together at these meetings. Also come to EAS at University of Delaware July 31-Aug 4 and we can continue the discussion.



Milkweed is not just for Monarch Butterflies: it is a honey plant, too. Milkweed blooms are sticky, however, and honey bees may fly away with pollen grains along for the ride! More at www.beeculture.com/milkweeds-honey-plants. Photo by Clint Thayer, Focal Flame Photography, www.focalflame.com

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