

Susquehanna Beekeeper's Association

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Outgoing President's Ramblings

Here's wishing everyone a fruitful New Year!! A quick weather note: Back in mid-November, our first polar vortex wave came and went. The following week, temps were in the 70s, then snow the day before Thanksgiving. Dec 1 saw the temp again at 70 and then sleet on the 2nd. But don't these swings reflect typical seasonal shifts? Whatever the prediction, let's hope our bees survive the harshest winter winds and will be out gathering fresh pollen during milder February days.



By the time this newsletter is published, I will officially be the SBA's past president. So what has been accomplished during my newsletter editor/web master/VP/Prez tenure? Our most significant advancement has probably been transitioning to Internet-based communications, but we've also established a presence at the Harford County Farm Fair. And it is noteworthy that we get repeat fair visitors who bring their friends, all looking for those cherished honey stix! A mentor list is now included within our yearly membership directory (*I cannot thank both our beekeeping mentors and fair volunteers enough!!*). The SBA has awarded five Young Beekeeper Grants during the past two years. I am confident this program is having a posi-

tive impact on these students and their families. We have made various bee-friendly trees and plants available to members. Our membership has expanded to the point we've successfully moved the meeting location from the Extension Office, then to the Odd Fellows, to our present meeting location, Fallston United Methodist Church (*Many thanks to Claudia, our retiring Secretary for making this happen!!*). And most importantly, the club continues to operate fiscally in the black!

About four years back, a tongue-in-cheek article appeared in *Bee Culture* on "How to be a Good Club President", with the basic premise "Avoid changing the status quo within your local beekeeping organization". The author states, "Everyone will complain loudly because that's not the way we've done things in the past". Well, I'm pleased that your brand new past-president has largely ignored this advice. I do have confidence that our incoming president and board members will continue making sound decisions and work in the best interest of our general membership.

I'll end by simply saying, "Thank You" to everyone! - Dennis

Incoming President's Message



“Although Claudia will no longer be an official board member, hopefully she will continue to bring her excellent home-baked cookies to SBA meetings”

I am looking forward to a good year for the SBA. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your President. Our outgoing President has given the new board of directors and membership a great foundation on which to build. Dennis has led the SBA the last 3 years through a tremendous growth in membership and local interest in beekeeping. Through his initiatives in starting the newsletter, website, and Young Beekeeper Grant the SBA has been able to reach and teach more people about the benefits of beekeeping. Also, I would like to recognize Claudia for her 3 years serving as SBA Secretary. Her excellent record keeping and contribution of ideas and support have been a great benefit to the SBA. Although Claudia will no longer be an official board member, hopefully she will continue to bring her excellent home-baked cookies to SBA meetings.

While President, I would like the SBA to continue to pursue the goal of educating members and the public about honeybees and beekeeping. I want to ensure members have all the infor-

mation and resources they need to be successful beekeepers. I want to encourage experienced beekeepers to volunteer as mentors to other members, particularly first year beekeepers. I would like to promote the cross-pollination of ideas and information with both local and state beekeeping associations, bringing new ideas and information to the SBA. I think SBA participating at local fairs and events is important to meeting the club goals, and I would like to establish a public outreach team to promote the SBA and honeybees. Both the speakers and beekeeper panels at SBA meetings have been informative and prompted great discussion. I look forward to your suggestions for topics or speakers that would be of interest to the membership.

We all know of the challenges to keeping honeybees, with parasitic pests, diseases, pesticides, and loss of habitat. As we head into what looks like another cold winter, please feel free to share your concerns, successes, and ideas with me and the club membership.

—Harry

Incoming Vice President's Message



Hi! I'm Pam and I like bees. I like a lot of things, but honey bees are some of my favorites. As vice president, I plan to help SBA grow and continue to be a resource for beekeepers and bee lovers. We are currently in the process of compiling some electronic resources and social media pages. If anyone has any

comments, ideas, or just want to say “Hi!”, please feel free to drop me a line at our new email susquehannabeekeepers@gmail.com.

—Pam

Incoming Secretary's Message

I would like to thank the SBA Board, as well as all the club members, for the vote of confidence in my abilities as the new SBA Secretary. I know I have a wonderful role model to follow and will do everything I can to fill Claudia's shoes. My wish, as a

trained educator, is to share an ongoing love of learning about the wonderful insect we all have in common. I have set up Pinterest and Facebook pages that have advanced SBA into the social media era. We can all benefit from information

shared via the web. Here's to a great year for our bees!

—Rita

“My wish, as a trained educator, is to share an ongoing love of learning “

SBA Financial Report

- Our net income with 3 weeks left in the fiscal year (FY) is \$747.
- Our FY14 budgeted revenue was \$2,124. Our actual is \$3,228 due to higher than projected donations, raffle and short course revenue.
- Our FY4 budgeted expenses were \$2,235, our actual expenses are \$2,481.
- We enrolled 167 members this year vs. 125 last year.
- We currently have 2 CDs, a checking account and saving account that total \$8,432.
- The yearend balance sheet, profit and loss statement and comparison of budget vs. actual costs will be available at the January meeting.
- We enter 2015 in a strong financial position.



Claudia's Corner

“Handle a book as a bee does a flower, extract its sweetness but do not damage it.”

—John Muir, Scottish naturalist and preservationist

Notes from the Apiary: December



*"I enjoyed seeing
all of you at the 10
December
potluck"*



Well, here it is the beginning of December already and I have not needed to go into my hives. With the strong west winds that we have had I did not have to gather up leaves from the oak trees in my lawn like last year as they were blown away. Thanks to the cold weather, I have little to report on in the apiary. Unlike last year's warm 50 to 60 degree days that had the bees out and about, therefore using up stores, this cold weather is good for keeping the bees at home. I would like to remind you that now is the time to do a quick check on your bees if it should warm up some. If you find that bees are at the top of the hive you should consider reversing the hive box to get the bees down below

BY ROBERT CROUSE

some stores. This is about as good a time as we will have before the queen starts laying again soon. At mild temperatures the bees will be able to reform if the cluster is disturbed.

If you haven't purchased sugar for feeding your bees yet, this may be a good time to do so when holiday sales on baking items may lower the price. I like to go to BJ's and get several of the 25 pound bags so I am ready for feeding any time the weather will allow. I enjoyed seeing all of you at the 10 December potluck and general meeting with some nice food and conversation.

Notes from the Apiary: January

As soon as you can, you need to get into the hive and if needed move the bees down to the bottom deep. This is usually done by switching the boxes with the most bees downward, rearrange the frames with stores back over the top of the cluster and leave the empty frames from the bottom on each side of the cluster. In my case my bees are fine and nothing needed moving.

If the bees are at the top of the hive now and it is too cold to open the hive, then use fondant or sugar cake. Put a hive top feeder on as soon as possible and feed 2:1 sugar syrup (2 parts sugar to 1 part water by weight).

BY ROBERT CROUSE

You should plan on changing the feed to 1:1 syrup by early March for early build-up of the colonies.

I ordered some frames and foundation from Pristine Valley Farms in mid-December to get them ready for nuc replacement when I sell my nuc bees and frames in the spring. You have also done an inventory of needed equipment haven't you? Now is the time to assemble stuff before the spring rush arrives and suddenly time gets scarce. I hope you all had a good holiday and I will see you at the January meeting.

MD State Beekeepers' Association (MSBA) Winners



Honey Cookery Show! John was award blue ribbons for his amber honey, dark honey, and pecan pie. Chris took home the Honey Cookery Division Champion ribbon. Harry won 2nd place for extracted amber honey, 3rd place for frame

both his quinoa peanut butter cookies and persimmon muffins and third place for his dipped candles. Additionally, they won 2nd place for the Best Club Showing category. Congrats to our winners!

Congratulations to Harry Dutcher of honey, 2nd place for sweet (left), Chis Hash, John Knapstein, bread, and 2nd place for his honey Ted Moran, and Bob Crouse (not pictured) for their winning entries the first place ribbon for his chunk in the MSBA Annual Honey and honey. Ted won first place for



January General Meeting

January's general meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 14th, 2015 at 7 pm. It will again be held in the Providence Hall of the Fallston United Methodist Church on MD-152. Tom from Flying Plow Farm will be speaking at the Jan 15 SBA meeting about chemi-

cal-free farming. Flying Plow Farm is located in Northeast, MD, and grow vegetables, produce eggs, and raise chickens and beef. For additional information please visit <http://www.flyingplowfarm.com/>



“Tom from Flying Plow Farm will be speaking ... about chemical-free farming.”

Renew your Membership!

Now's the time of year to renew your membership! The renewal form is posted on our website at <http://susquehannabeekeepers.com/styled-6/files/page6-sba-member-renewal-form-2015.pdf> Single membership is still \$8, fam-

ily memberships are \$15 and we are now offering a life membership for \$100. Forms must be submitted by 31 March 15 in order to be included in the 2015 SBA directory. A beekeeping mentor list will be distributed with the directory.

Please contact Harry Dutcher at bspa-boy@comcast.net if you wish to add your name to the mentor list.

Neonicotinoid Bill Could Reduce Honeybee Exposure in Maryland

BY BONNIE RAINDROP

As beekeepers struggle to keep our bees alive across our state, we are poised to get help from a coalition of 50 Maryland public interest groups. The Smart on Pesticides Maryland Campaign coalition is putting the pieces in place for a Maryland bill that would (1) restrict the sale of neonicotinoid (neonic for short) pesticides to homeowners and (2) require plants that are treated with neonics to be labeled as treated with neonicotinoids and linked to being toxic to bees.

Why do we need it? Studies show that homeowners are most likely to apply pesticides without reading product labels, resulting in unsafe applications greater than recommended rates. In the past few years, home gardens have become killing fields for honeybees as products that contain neonics have flooded store shelves. This is occurring because patents are expiring on neonics and a new generation of neonic producers are staking their claim in the homeowner market. The result: scores of “new and improved” bee-killing neonic products are compounding the already heavy agricultural use.

How bad are neonics? Neonics are the world’s most widely used pesticide and now make up 25% of the pesticide market. They have been recently dubbed “the new DDT” as evidence mounts—over 200 studies—confirming neonic toxicity to pollinators, birds and aquatic life.

These studies are proving neonics contribute to honey bee declines in a startling number of ways. While deadly when bees come in direct contact,

a mounting body of research shows that minute sub-lethal exposures:

- impair honey bees’ navigation and motor functions,
- interfere with honey bees’ winterization and contribute to CCD,
- impair immune function,
- cause viruses and pathogens to thrive in bees,
- increase brood mortality,
- delay the brood development cycle, resulting in higher Varroa mite populations, and
- impede the queen and workers’ ability to meet the demand of brood production.

This is just a sampling of toxic impacts. (For a compilation of neonic research links: <http://tinyurl.com/obwdgu8>)

“A 2013 poll showed that 90% of Marylanders say that they are concerned about honey bee hive deaths”

A fight worth winning

We need you, as a Maryland Beekeeper, to help!

Ask your board to sign Susquehanna Beekeepers Association on to the Smart on Pesticides Campaign (SOPC). Current SOPC members include Central Maryland Beekeepers Association, Bowie-Upper Marlboro Beekeepers Association, Howard County Beekeepers Association, Anne Arundel County Beekeepers Association, and Carroll County Beekeepers Association. Sign the petition at the SOPC website, www.smartonpesticides.org

Once the bill is introduced in the 2015 legislative session (Jan. 8-Apr. 7), write letters, make phone calls, and email your representatives to tell them why you, as a Maryland beekeeper, want their help in passing this bill. The campaign staff will

Neonicotinoid Bill Could Reduce Honeybee Exposure in Maryland (continued)

send you action alerts to participate in.

A 2013 poll showed that 90% of Marylanders say they are concerned about honey bee hive deaths—that's a huge groundswell! When the debate about neonics begins in January, Maryland beekeepers will be an important stakeholder in the discussions. We need many beekeeper voices speaking out for our honey bees. It will be an important determiner in whether we win or lose.

Last session, in response to the pesticide funding bill, a frequent refrain was, "If it's so im-

portant for honey bee research, where are the beekeepers?"

We now have 50 organizations who are leveraging their memberships, their fundraising and their staff to pass a neonics bill in Maryland. We need all the beekeeper groups in Maryland and hundreds of beekeepers supporting this bill. This is a fight we can win—together.

For more information, contact SOPC member & CMBA legislative chair, Bonnie Raindrop at br@bonnieraindrop.com or 410-404-3808.

Reminders

- Be sure to visit TED talks (www.ted.com) for interesting discussions on a variety of topics, including bees! A few examples: Marla Spivak "Why Bees are Disappearing" (http://www.ted.com/talks/marla_spivak_why_bees_are_disappearing?language=en) or Noah Wilson-Rich "Why Every City Needs Healthy Honey Bees" (http://www.ted.com/talks/noah_wilson_rich_every_city_needs_healthy_honey_bees?language=en)
- The SBA is again sponsoring its Young Beekeeper grant for 2015. All applications must be post-marked by January 15, 2015. Complete info can be found at: <http://susquehannabeekeepers.com/styled-7/index.html>
- The Susquehanna Beekeepers Association is again sponsoring its "Beekeeping Short Course" through Harford Community College. Fridays 7-9 pm, 3/6/15 – 4/17/15. The registration link is: http://www2.harford.edu/schedule/U_noncrweb_search.asp?FA=&Search='beekeeping' for the complete information.
- Susquehanna Beekeepers Association has now entered the Social Media Age! Check out our Pinterest Page- "SBA" as well as our FaceBook Page- "Susquehanna Beekeepers Association".

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