Capital Area Beekeepers Association

The President's Buzz..

Happy summer to all of you.

I always consider July 4th as half way through summer - how fast seasons pass. I've been busy with my bees this spring and early summer. Several of my hives made it through this past brutal winter and now they are going gangbusters. I have a few hives that have four supers on. They're so heavy I have to take frames out to lift them off the hive so I can check the hive bodies.

To avoid swarms, I've made several splits and now have nucs standing in the ready for any problems that might arise. Also, following Dr. Deb Delaney's advice Wil and I swapped nucs to add new genetics to our apiaries.

There are some up-coming opportunities for each of you to participate in to learn and help others learn about beekeeping:

July 18- CABA meeting at 7 PM. Please Note the meeting will be held in the Department of Agriculture building, room 309, 2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg.

Jonathan tells me our July meeting will hold a Round Table discussion where our membership can discuss experiences and ask questions in an open forum. Each member will get an opportunity to speak and benefit from the combined wisdom of our membership.

July 28 - August 1, EAS to be held at Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky

September 19- CABA meeting at 7 PM at State Farm Show building, Mcclay Street entrance. Program to be announced

October 18 - CABA Banquet will be at 4:30 at Hoss's Steak Restaurant, 743 Wertzville Road, Enola. **November 14-15- PSBA Annual Conference** in Lewisburg

On Tuesday, June 24, CABA was once again privileged to be invited to Dennis Keeney's annual spring meeting. As always Dennis along with his mother Ruth, were very kind and welcoming hosts. Dennis took all who were interested to his apiary to discuss his hives and queens. We then heard a lecture from Warren Graham concerning nucs and queens. Hopefully next year more CABA members will attend. The meeting is normally held the last Tuesday of June, so mark your calendar for 2015.

Sam Garula has retired as editor of the CABA newsletter. Thanks Sam for all the work you have done with it. I'm sending thanks to Wil who agreed to serve as the editor of the CABA newsletter. Please feel free to contact Wil if you have an idea for an article.

At the April meeting it was suggested that CABA obtain an extractor for all members to use. Wil Shirey has offered to contribute a stainless steel extractor to the club. It is a motorized tangential extractor which holds four frames. I'm looking for a volunteer to take charge of the extractor, overseeing its use and care. If you are interested please contact me.

Also, I welcome the officers of CABA for the year 2014-2015. John Novinger, Vice President and Scott Plank, Treasurer, both of whom were re-elected, and Deb Buckfelder, Secretary, newly elected. I'm looking forward to working with all of you in the coming year.

Hope your 4th of July was safe and happy. I'm looking forward to seeing you at the July meeting.



Linda

IT WORKS,. BUT.....

John A Novinger

In one of my articles for the CABA newsletter many moons ago, I wrote about Novingerizing some bee equipment that I use, and for several months and several CABA meetings after, I was informed that I did not have exclusive rights to making these improvements. In fact, many of you had done the same or similar things. Well, even if I don't have right to it, at least I wrote about it!

Anyway, my latest endeavor. On the book table at the Short Course in May (by the way, a huge success and a very sincere "thanks" to Jim and all presenters that shared their time, energy, and talents with the class. Thank you!) were some *American Bee Journal* magazines, so I picked one up and brought it home.

The article that really caught my eye was "There's More Than One Way to Split a Hive" written by Peter Loring Borst. The gist of the article was the different ways to split hives, as the title suggests. Toward the end of the article he describes the "best way", by using a queen excluder. His method is to pull brood frames out that have all stages of brood on, shake all the bees off those frames and install the queen excluder on top after replacing all frames you have removed from the brood box. Then put an empty brood box on top of the excluder with the frames of brood you have selected. Replace the outer cover and come back in several hours or leave overnight; the theory being that nurse bees will come up through the excluder and cover and care for the brood. His article concludes with putting those frames into a Nuc box, adding a purchased queen or a ripe queen cell and you have a split.

Novinger says: I can improve on that. By carefully selecting the brood frames with just the right age eggs and, [yes you can see where this is going], they can make their own queen. Hence, the title of this article, "Yes it works, but......" In a nutshell, yes, they have made their own queen, but things are really moving slowly. This experiment involves two splits, but the problem is there simply are not enough bees to be effective or efficient in either box. Both queens are laying but again very small sections because there are not enough bees to care for the brood. And yes, I could shake more bees in, but this is an experiment to see what happens.

CABA Meeting Schedule for 2014				
Friday July 18	Regular Meeting 7:00 PM <u>Dept. of Agriculture Bldg., Room 309,</u> 2301 N. Cameron Street, Harrisburg			
August 12-14	Ag Progress Days, Rock Springs, PA			
Friday September 19	Regular Meeting 7:00 PM Maclay Street Farm Show Bldg, Program to be announced			
Thursday October 2	Farm-City Day Farm Show Bldg, Harrisburg, PA			
Saturday October 18	CABA Banquet Location and Time to be announced			
November 14-15	PSBA Annual Meeting Country Cupboard, Lewisburg, PA			
Friday November 21	Regular Meeting 7:00 PM Maclay Street Farm Show Bldg, Program be announced			
January 3-10, 2015	PA Farm Show, Farm Show Buildings, Harrisburg, PA			

Purpose Jonathan Daniels

Every season of beekeeping is different, but always we have the same goal: to manage our hives as well as we can to serve our particular purposes. In speaking with beekeepers about our various difficulties this season, the concept of 'What is the goal' has asserted itself repeatedly as a very helpful way of organizing my thinking about what to do when keeping bees.

When I began keeping honey bees nine years ago, my purpose was simply to try to save the lives of the bees which were living in the old building that I was tearing down. I called a friend of my parents who was a commercial orchard grower asking him if he could give me the name of a beekeeper. He did and I spoke to him, and then I spoke to the guy he referred me to and then to the guy *he* referred me to and so on. No one was interested. It was the middle of December and everyone told me the bees were likely to die anyway. Beekeeping for them was tied to their livelihoods, and they therefore had a more pragmatic perspective.

I was appalled. What kind of beekeepers were these guys? Didn't they care about saving the lives of each one of these magical creatures?

An older farmer who heard about my situa-



tion bees suggested I try putting them in a box myself. If they died anyway, at least I would have tried, he said. the also gave me an old Penn State publication on beekeeping in Pennsylvania which I eagerly read. I was

then lucky to find a fellow who not only had kept bees most of his seventy odd years, but who also cared very much about helping other people learn how to keep bees too. He had grown up in rural Pennsylvania and had almost always had a few hives for honey. He was an engineer by training and was fascinated with understanding the ways of the bees. He kept his bees to have a little honey, to tinker, and to teach others.

He was a wonderful mentor for me. He showed me how he kept his bees and extracted his honey and he shared books and the bee periodicals with me. I read as much as I could get my hands on and soon I began to want to try making comb honey and making candles and queen rearing and creamed honey and, and, and... just all of it! I dreamed of making enough money beekeeping to be able to do it full time. It made good sense to me. It was not a common career, and the fact that keeping bees frightened normal people made it all the more attractive to me. I loved working outside. It could work!

So we bought equipment. I went to old farm sales and found boxes and smokers and had a great time. My mentor had taught me well and I was lucky enough to have bees that survived that first winter very strong. I can still see the first frame I pulled out that had all these swarm cells hanging from the bottom bar and on the face of the comb. In the bee magazines I was attracted to the idea of raising new colonies and breeding Varroa resistant bees, so I practiced making nucs. I got to experience the magic of seeing a new queen on a frame of new brood that was there because I had set a frame with gueen cells and a frame with plenty of capped brood and a frame with honey and pollen into a new box a couple weeks earlier. I loved learning how to make new colonies and pretty soon I had quite a few.

The discussions in the bee periodicals often raised the issue of "chemical free beekeeping." There was a "brotherhood of new beekeepers" who were committed to foreswearing the use of manmade chemicals for varroa treatment and were breeding varroa resistant "Survivors." Some guy in France practiced the James Bond method of beekeeping: Live and Let Die. If they didn't survive, let them die and breed from the survivors! "Yeah! Alright! I'm with you,

Continued on next page

Brothers!" I called out as I pounded the arm of my reading chair. I had used some of the plant based essential oil treatments for varroa as well as sort of practicing Integrated Pest Management strategies while I built up to about fifty hives during the first years. But the treatment stuff was not free and checking sticky boards took a lot of time. (After a while the mites and all the other hive debris on the boards starts to blur and start swirling around!) So I resolved to see how my colonies would hold up to 'Live and Let Die.'

The first winter was fine. Two seasons later I lost 80% of my overwintered hives.

Shortly after that I read an article that suggested there might be a more considered approach. Withhold treatment, but monitor for varroa mites in our colonies through the course of the season. Breed from the colonies that maintain lower mite counts under equal conditions and requeen those that don't do as well with the daughters of the more resistant queens. As I ventured more into gueen rearing I began to realize that there is a profound distinction between Producing and Breeding. Anyone can stimulate a colony of bees to produce queens by taking away the laying gueen, but the hive will end up with only one eventually and then she might not be as good as the original. With a little more care and effort, anyone can produce multiple queens that have been given the best possible nurturing by abundant healthy well fed nurse bees. But to Breed a better strain of bees takes a remarkable effort: good production plus consistent record keeping and maintenance of many colonies to select from and many years of keeping up this consistent demanding effort.



Eventually I realized that I was not a monk, disciplined and willing to dedicate my life's work to such a monumental task. But I also realized that that does not make me any less worthy a beekeeper. We all have our own unique relationship with honey bees. Just as there is in the challenge of trying to manage bees, there is depth and complexity

to the many different purposes we may have in keeping bees.

I confess that it has been easy for me to vilify the big commercial beekeepers. "They abuse the bees to serve the monster of Agribusiness and spread their pests and diseases all over the country!" I rail in my mind. But in my study of queen rearing and breeding I realized that if you want to produce bees that can gather a lot of honey or ones that can build up fast and produce a strong pollen gathering colony for a pollination contract, you have to know how to manage colonies for those purposes. And once you can do that, you need to have worked with enough colonies to be able to recognize which particular colonies are doing a better than others. And the fact that these beekeepers are dependent on the bees for income pushes them to be as efficient at keeping their bees strong and healthy as possible. To be successful they must be good beekeepers and good business people and many other things as well I suspect. I try to consider them in the context of their purpose. (I still like to hate Agribusiness, but I also like to eat cheap so who knows where that is going to end).

I remember very well opening my hive as a new bee keeper, picking up a frame, seeing the brood and nectar and pollen packed cells, watching the bees moving around and wondering "OK. So what does all this mean? What am I supposed to do now?" I hope that it can be an encouragement to newer bee keepers reading this to hear that after nine years I <u>feel</u> like I have a little better idea about the answers to those questions. I am still often confused and befuddled by the bees of course, but I think that lack of certainty is also part of the magic of keeping bees.

I have kept track of my local bloom times on calendars over the years and have recorded what time of year my bees seem to produce the main surplus of honey. I have benefitted as a beekeeper tremendously by the study of queen rearing and new colony production

Continued on next page

and growth. As a result there have been years when I have been able to sell bees in the spring instead of buy them. (Whether I would have been further ahead financially if I had not spent time making and caring for bees instead of spending that time in my landscaping business is another issue!) I am still working on the honey production part. I can tell you that if you sell most of your bees in April when people around here want to buy bees, you will not be making much honey that season! But what is exciting to me is to get a better sense, as each year and season passes, of how a colony builds up and how long that takes and how they perform under different conditions. And I know having more than one colony makes it a lot easier to end up with at least some that will perform close to how you had hoped.

Whether you are an A.D.D. bee-tinker like me or a top commercial beekeeper, striving to understand the biology of the bee colony and how they behave will allow you to make better decisions in the way you manage your honey bees for whatever purpose you determine. I believe we must also learn as much as we can about varroa biology and management in order to keep our bees healthy enough to survive. Building the perspective takes time, so be patient and diligent as you can. Remember to enjoy the ride and if you stop to smell the flowers, make sure to check to see if there are bees on them!



Beekeeping Items For Sale

The following items are for sale by Robert Patrick. His phone number is 717-957-4440. His address is 428 Susquehanna Street, Marysville, PA 17053.

New Items: 100 12oz. Honey Bears with lids 4 cases 6-5# jars 2 cases 12-2# jars 1084 48mm lids (He paid \$.25 each)

Used Items: The Hive and Honey Bee Book Smoker and unused fuel Bee Coveralls Bee Veil 2 Helmets Lifetime of Bee Culture and American Bee Journal Air powered 3/16 inch Bostic Stapler and lots of staples

Contact Robert by phone or at his home address

WOW!!!

One day in late June my wife and I went through Zoo America in Hershey Park. While looking for the resident animal in one of the enclosures we noticed a sign stuck in the ground pointing out the location of Honey Bees that made a home in one of the enclosure walls. The sign said that the bees had been living there since the 1980's. This fascinated me and I asked one of the Zoo Keepers if there was any human intervention at any time. Her response was "no, they have been on their own all these years". How would you like to get some genetics from that bunch?

Thanks to Scott Plank for this tidbit.

MY WINTER HIVE PREPARATION Scott Plank

From the day early this spring that I realized that 3 of my 5 hives were deadouts, I began thinking of winter 2014 & 2015. My bees had died from starvation. Unable to break cluster because of the extreme cold, they ate their way to the top of the hive and starved.

I am determined not to let this happen again. Here are some of the things I will do differently:

- 1. After talking with other beekeepers, I believe screened bottoms, left open, did better than closed, even though temperatures were brutally cold for long periods of time. This will take a lot of courage on my part because in the past when temperatures hit the 20s, I closed my screens. It's more a feel good thing for me, but apparently not so good for the bees.
- 2. Something else I use is a <u>Temperature Humidity Self Control Unit</u> (THSCU). This is not my invention and can be found on the internet. These boxes are built from 2 x 6 pine boards and offer direct and indirect ventilation for both summer and winter. A pillow of wood chips and wool scraps are inserted for insulation and condensation control. I believe these lids, which take the place of the inner cover, are worth the effort it takes to build them. The only drawback is that they are very heavy. I am going to experiment with building them from 1 x 6 instead of 2 x 6 pine.
- 3. This next gimmick is my own: it's a feeding shim. I have already built 3 of them and will have one on each hive by winter. It's built from 2 x 3 or 2 x 4, the same dimension as a 10 frame super and will be put on the hives right below the THSCU lid in late fall and stay there until spring. What's different about this shim is it will have a removable panel held on by two fasteners. This will give me a way to insert hard or soft candy to the bees at any time or any temperature without the worry of opening the hive in the middle of winter. Also, you can remove the panel and at a glance see if the cluster is at the top of the brood nest, which would signal the need for supplemental feeding.
- 4. Another option is the BeeMax Hives from Betterbee. They are polystyrene boxes that are thick walled, fit together very tightly and offer very good insulation and draft control. I have used one of these for three years and just bought another one. These hives are great for backyard beekeepers, although I would not suggest them for hives that you would be moving frequently.
- 5. Also, check out the BeeMax Polystyrene Outer Covers, made to fit wood hives. I highly recommend these. They have a good insulation R value and I leave mine on all year long.

Around the middle of August I will treat for mites with Mite Away Quick Strips, feed with 2 to 1 sugar syrup if they need it, combine weak hives with strong, and know that I have done everything I could to help my bees get through the winter. One thing is for sure: |I will never stop thinking about the welfare of my bees!



Mt Holly Musings

By Wil Shirey

I seldom spend time in my hives without seeing something new. And that's after having kept bees for thirty-two years. My latest discovery has to do with a swarm from my own bees that took up residence in two surplus honey supers in the pole barn where I store my equipment. The supers were on top of each other and the lower one had a corner that had split off leaving an entrance hole about one-half inch high. My son asked me to move the bees so I put them back in the apiary from which they had probably come. About ten days later, I opened the two-medium super hive to take a look. I first looked at some drone comb and was surprised to see each cell with 10 to 15 eggs in it. I wondered why, so soon after swarming, would the hive develop laying workers? About five days later, I decided to combine the swarm hive with a queenright hive when I discovered in the worker cells, there was a single egg in most and in some, the larva had already emerged from the egg. There was royal jelly in the bottom of the cells with larva but no food in the drone cells where the larva had not emerged. Were there laying workers in the swarm? I've never heard of that. It often takes a few days for the laying queen leading the swarm to get back to laying eggs but both a queen and laying workers in the same hive? What do you think?

I have one more hopelessly queenless story. One of my hives that survived the winter gave me their queen and three frames of brood to make up a nuc in April. A week later I checked the mother hive and found five emergency queen cells so I was happy that there would be a replacement queen. After 25 days from taking the queen, I went back hoping to find eggs. Well I found lots of eggs but they were in cells in groups of 10 or 12 stuck to the cell bottoms, sides and even draped over the cell edges. So I decided to try to eliminate the laying workers by taking the hive 150 yards away and brushing all the bees off the frames. The theory is that the laying workers will be too weak to fly back to the hive but the rest of the bees will be able to. In the meantime, I put the hive back on the stand and found a neighboring hive with a frame of open brood and an open swarm cell attached and put it in the hive. I checked the hive three weeks later and found single eggs and larva in the cells. In the meantime, the hive has grown and is busy finishing a Ross round super that was started by the previous queen and her clan before I took her for the nuc. Somewhere in the process I found the emergency cells had been opened, but it had been cold and the surviving queen never made it back to the hive. I tell this story because it's the second time I have saved a hopelessly queenless hive by taking them some distance away and brushing the bees off the frames and adding open brood and a queen cell to the hive. Hopelessly queenless does not have to mean what it says.

I have a reminder for those of you who have gone to medium supers to escape the heavy lifting of deep supers. More and more of our members have done this to protect backs and aging muscles. Also, more and more of our members are ladies who simply don't have the upper body strength to lift heavy deep supers. One requirement of the medium super strategy is that you somehow distinguish between brood supers and surplus honey supers. If you treat for mites in your brood supers, you should not use those as surplus honey supers as most treatments will leave a residue in the wax. If you feed sugar syrup, the bees will store the syrup in the supers and if it is not all consumed, there is a risk of mixing honey with sugar syrup. So, I recommend you paint honey supers a different color than brood supers.

I hope your new bees are healthy and your old bees heavy.

Volunteering, and Loving It! Deborah Buckfelder

I've been officially retired for one year, and the phrase, "When did I ever have time to work?" has come to mind more than once. I am now being approached by friends of friends to share my hobby of beekeeping. And who are these "friends of friends"? They are people associated with organizations such as the Mohler Center in Hershey, and community garden clubs. Yes, it's where the old people hang out during the daylight hours, and now that includes me!!

Recently, I was asked to speak about beekeeping at Country Meadows in Hershey. Being a former teacher, the opportunity of sharing basic beekeeping skills, along with funny, and sometimes embarrassing, experiences in the bee yard is a natural extension for me. So, with my well prepared lesson plan and "show and tell" items I headed off to hang out with fellow retirees.



Upon being buzzed in, I was greeted by Frank, an elderly gentleman who had been patiently waiting for my arrival. He eagerly offered his assistance in helping with my materials. Grabbing my hive tool bucket while clutching a soft, dark green, cloth bag in his other hand, we entered an elevator to be transported up to the third floor dining room. During our short journey, he told me he wanted to show me his "bee trap". After a quick peek into the bag, I immediately asked him if he would join me and share the history and purpose of the trap with the group.

Slowly and meticulously, Frank loosened the drawstrings on the bag, and took out an old, well-worn, wooden rectangular box, about 6 inches by 3 inches, and approximately 4 inches high. The box had been given to him by his grandfather when he was a young boy. Upon sliding up the front end cover, three separate compartments could be seen. First there was a sliding drawer on the bottom which held a piece of old comb. Above the drawer was a quarter inch thick sliding piece of wood upon which he carved his initials and year, 1937. And finally at the top was an old piece of sliding glass, closing the top of the box.

As a young boy growing up on a farm, he would put sugar water in the comb and remove the sliding pieces of wood and glass. He knew when one honeybee found the sugar water, other honeybees would come by shortly. When he had a few bees feeding, he would trap them by sliding in the wood and glass. Upon releasing the bees, he would try to follow them back to their hive, knowing he would be rewarded with honey. The obvious follow-up question was, "Did you ever have success"? He never said yes, or no, but with a twinkle in his eye he said he had some nice hikes.

I felt so fortunate in having Frank teach me about something I never knew existed.

Amazing what those old people know!



Capital Area Beekeepers Association

All CABA members,
including their spouse and children, are
invited to attend the
ANNUAL CABA BANQUET
Saturday, October 18, 2014
4:30 PM
HOSS'S FAMILY STEAK & SEA RESTAURANT
743 Wertzville Road
Enola, PA 17025
 We will order from the menu at our tables in the Banquet Room
and will receive individual/family checks.
Entertainment TBA
RSVP TO:
Deb Buckfelder, Secretary, 731 Gravel Hill Road, Palmyra 17078
Phone: 717 838-6934 Email: deb.bee.caba@gmail.com
We are looking for DOOR PRIZE DONATIONS,
if you plan to make a donation please bring the donation to the banquet



CABA SHIRTS & HATS ORDER NOW

Shirts- 100% combed cotton, no-pill, no-fade, no-shrinkage, no-wrinkle performance Ladies Shirts- gently shaped for woman's body, narrower more feminine placket Ladies Sizes- S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL Men's Shirts- relaxed fit, side vents Men's Sizes- - S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL COLOR CHOICES- men's & ladies' shirts: marigold, stone, true royal COLOR CHOICES- hats: navy/khaki, putty/navy

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Please mail this completed form along with payment to:

Deb Buckfelder 731 Gravel Hill Rd. Palmyra, PA 17078



BEEKEEPERS
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CAPITAL AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

2014 Membership Application Membership term: May 1 through April 30

Checks should <u>Please print or</u>	d be made payable to <u>"Cap</u> <u>r type:</u>	ital Area Beekee	pers' Association"		
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	IF YOU PLAN TO PAY YOU	TR DHES AT TH	EMEETING		
	PLEASE BRING THIS CO				

CABA Officers

President-Linda Purcell 717-566-6327

V. President-John Novinger 717-365-3215

Secretary-Deborah Buckfelder 717-838-6934

Treasurer-Scott Plank 717-657-0236

Members at Large:

Jonathan Daniels

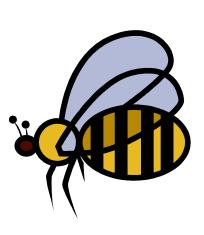
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Executive Board: Present Officers and Members at Large

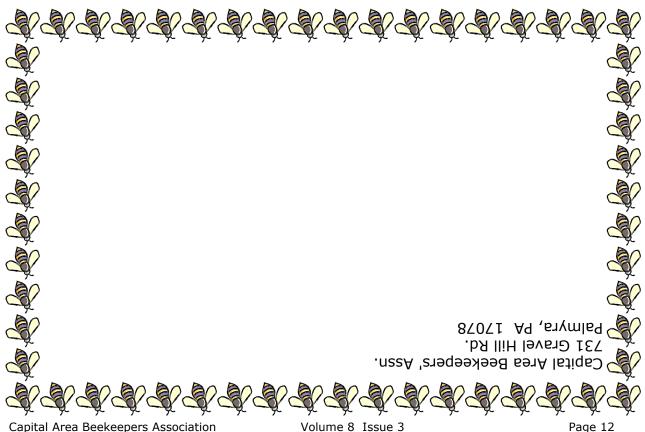


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Article Deadline For Next Newsletter

Share your experience! We're always looking for articles. Articles for the September edition of the CABA newsletter are due September 1st. All beekeeping topics are welcome. Send your submissions to wshirey@pa.net



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