The Buzz
Newsletter of the Iowa Honey Producers Association
April 2015

CIBA Auction April 18th pg4
Lightning Strikes Twice pg7
Summer Field Day pg6 & 9

www.ABuzzAboutBees.com
Dates to be Remembered
April 18th—CIB Annual Auction
The Central Iowa Beekeeper’s Annual Auction is being held on April 18th 2015 at 10:00 a.m. The auction located is on Hwy 141 on the north side of the road – just 1 block west of the hospital in Perry, Iowa.

FOR SALE: I will have Queens available mid-April, Carniolan or Italian.
Price: $30.00
Pick-up is in Goodell.
For more information, call Pat Ennis @ 641-444-4767 4/15

FOR SALE: Beekeeping Equipment, honey, beeswax, and bottling supplies - Goodell IA
Offering reasonably priced new and some used beekeeping supplies & equipment.
For more information, please call Pat @ 641-444-4767 4/15

FOR SALE: 3lb Carniolan packages with unmarked Italian queen
Pick-up in West Chester, IA
Load 1: March 21, 2015 --Sold Out
Load 2: Early-mid April -- Limited availability
Load 3: May 13th, 2015
Price: $110/ea (1-9); $105/ea (10-99); $100/ea (100+) (no cage deposit or refunds)
Also available: complete cypress hive kits (fully assembled) $225/ea
Pick-up only in West Chester, IA
Call Tim Wilbanks 319-321-2494 or email kalonahoneycompany@gmail.com or visit website: kalonahoney.com

FOR SALE: 3 # packages W/Italian or Carniolan queens.
Price:
1-10 - $106.00
11-99 - $100.00
100 + - $97.00
Plus cage dept of $6.00 each
Pick-up mid-April in Goodell, IA
For more information, call Pat @ 641-444-4767 4/15

FOR SALE: 5 frame Nuc and Singles W/Italian or Carniolan queens.
Nuc : $135.00
Single: $175.00
Nucs and Singles will be ready for pick-up around mid May from Goodell, Iowa
For more information, call Pat Ennis @ 641-444-4767 4/15

FOR SALE: 2 or 3 pound packages of Italian bees with queen. Picked up in Cedar Rapids or Aurora, Iowa in mid-April. Bees from Hill-Ward Apiary in California. All orders must be received by February 28.
Contact Douglas Child 319-634-3682

FOR SALE: 3lb Carniolan packages with a Carniolan Queen starting at $105 each with discounts for volume orders.
Carniolan queens available mid May for $18 each. We still have some Russian queens available for late summer re-queening of your hives for $30 each (Shipping available on queen orders).
Aromatic cedar hive kits (2 deeps, 2 mediums, cover, inner cover, bottom, reducer, all the frames, and a board feeder) starting at $278
Pine hive kits (2 deeps, 2 mediums, cover, inner cover, bottom, reducer, all the frames, and a board feeder) starting at $228
To order, visit us at www.RussianBee.com
(or orders can be placed online or print out an order form from our site)
For concerns with the website or large volume orders you call us at 515-991-4666. Otherwise please visit us on the web www.RussianBee.com

Nucs for sale: $140.00
5 frame 9 5/8 nuc includes 1 marked queen (Italian/Carniolan/Russian cross)
5 frames 9 5/8 of bees (various stages of their life) Our bees are breed for Honey production and Iowa winter hardiness. Nucs will out produce 4 or 5 lb. package bees.

For Sale - 6 5/8 9 frame wooden box with bees : $163.00
9 frame 6 5/8 box includes 1 marked queen (Italian/Carniolan/Russian cross) (no lid or no bottom board) in a 10 frame Hive.
9 frames 6 5/8 of bees (various stages of their life)
Our bees are breed for Honey production and Iowa winter hardiness. You may add a lid, inner lid, and bottom board with an entrance reducer for $47.50.

For Sale - 9 5/8 9 frame wooden box with 1 marked queen & bees : $175.00
9 frame 9 5/8 box includes (no lid or no bottom board) in a 10 frame hive.
9 frames 9 5/8 of bees (various stages of their life)
Our bees are breed for Honey production and Iowa winter hardiness. You may add a lid, inner lid, and bottom board with an entrance reducer for $47.50.

Queens for sale $37.00
1 marked queen (Italian/Carniolan/Russian cross)

New Complete assembled painted Hive Kit $350.00
Includes 2 - 9 5/8 hive bodies
20 - 9 1/8 frames with foundation Waxed Rite-Cell
2 - 6 5/8 supers
20 - 6 1/8 frames with foundation Waxed Rite-Cell
Telescoping cover with inner lid
Bottom board with reducer AND How to get started FREE
No Bees (You will want to get this so you are ready when your bees arrive.)
Bees will be available April 15th 2015 (depending on weather)
Deposit of $75.00 when you place order.
(Place order early before we’re sold out)
Curtis Barnhart
PO Box 70
Monticello, Iowa 52310
319 480-4209
autum49@yahoo.com
April President’s Message

Winter is gone for most of us and “spring is in the air”. Hopefully you’ve been out to look at your bees. I’ve talked to a good number of people who have lost their hives with no honey or pollen left in them, and with others who said the had lots of honey and pollen, but the bees still died. Most of the second group with honey and pollen left did no mite control in the fall and they think it was the mites that weakened their bees and finally killed them. Take some time to take care of your bees, now is when they need the help.

With spring here, it’s time to think about the Central Iowa Beekeepers Auction. If you’re looking to find a home for some of your beekeeping supplies give me a call and I’ll add it to the list. If you’re just looking for more supplies, come on down to Perry and check out the auction. It’s a good time to meet new beekeepers and catch up with older acquaintances. It’s a lot of fun. See add in this Buzz issue (page 4).

You may think the Iowa State Fair is a long way off, but it’s coming up faster than you think. The last couple of years at the fair, we have had a shortage of comb honey. Last year we sold close to 800 sections boxes, as there was times when we had to wait for the producers to bring it in as the shelf was empty, it sells that fast! If you produce comb honey, and would like to sell it at the fair, we are always looking for more producers to keep up with the demand. As you prepare this spring for the upcoming producing comb season, please keep the State Fair in mind. The comb honey is a non bid item, which means you don’t have to bid to sell your comb honey at the fair. We’ll take any amount you can supply the IHPA at the fair.

For a “heads up” for entering into the State Fair competition, the State Fair has asked Andy Joseph, our state fair supervisor, to move the competition entry deadline forward to July 14th to be in line with all the other groups. This allows the fair time to mail all the entry tags with less walk ins during their busy days prior to the fair. I think this would give Andy a better idea of
what will be exhibited as well. So as you’re making your plans to enter, (and I hope you are) please keep in mind the updated entry deadline, so you can show off your blue ribbon honey, or I can show off my blue ribbon honey!!

The IHPA will be holding two Advanced Beekeeping Classes. One is held at Spring Valley Honey farms in Perry and the other in Oskaloosa. You must have two years beekeeping experience to attend and must be pre-register, no walk-ins. These classes will have a class size limit to 25 people per class, hope to see you there. To register, please contact Rhonda Heston @ 515-724-2124 or r.heston@yahoo.com. Also see the ad in this Buzz issue for dates and more information.

Take care of your bees and enjoy the pleasant spring weather.

Pat

April Trivia: When raising your own queens, what are four characteristics you may want to look for?

Answer on page 13.

Mark Your Calendar for the CIB Annual Beekeeping Auction!

The Central Iowa Beekeeper’s Annual Auction is being held on April 18th 2015 at 10:00 a.m. The auction located is on Hwy 141 on the north side of the road – just 1 block west of the hospital in Perry, Iowa.

Curt and Connie Bronnenberg have graciously offered the Central Iowa Beekeepers the use of their “in town honey house” again this year. There will be a restroom available, as well as hot coffee, hot chocolate, bars, and rolls.

WE ARE IN NEED OF CONSIGNERS AND BUYERS!!

Now is the perfect time to clean, sort, and sell your extra beekeeping equipment, or to purchase good beekeeping equipment! Please e-mail me your list of items you would like to consign.

All items consigned will be advertised in the March and April Buzz Newsletter. (Please have your list to me by February 10 or March 10 to make the Buzz printing deadline)

To have an updated listing of the items being consigned, please e-mail me after April 1st and I will have one sent to you.

Consignment fee for members of the Central Iowa Beekeepers is 10% Consignment fee for non members of the Central Iowa Beekeepers is 15%

All drawn comb will be inspected by our State Bee Inspectors
Central Iowa Beekeepers Auction

Early consignment listing:

- 6 deep supers, handmade of Ash wood
- Misc bee stuff
- bee blower
- 9 frame deep box with frames
- 5 smokers
- video "Keeping Bees"
- 10 books
- 3 lg bee suits
- 3 veils
- misc be stuff
- fine sieve/filter that fits over a five gallon bucket

Advanced Beekeeping Class

Through many requests, the IHPA is offering Advanced Beekeeping Classes. Requirements are having a minimum of at least two years’ beekeeping experience. These classes will be ‘hands on’. Please bring your bee suit and veil.

There will be 2 classes offered both on “Splitting Hives and Diseases”. The first class will be May 2nd, at Spring Valley Honey Farms in Perry. The second class will be May 9th, at the Mahaska county extension Office in Oskaloosa. The time is 9:00-4:30 for each class. For noon break, we will have a pot-luck.

Registration will be limited to 25 people. Pre-registration is required. No walk-ins please. The cost is $75 per class.

To register please contact:
Rhonda Heston
515-724-2124
52735 187th Ave
Chariton, IA 50049
r.heston@yahoo.com

The Buzz Quilt

The quilt blocks are back from our AWE-SOME seamstresses. The production of the quilt is underway and will be sent to the quilter shortly. If you would like to have the 2015 version of the BUZZ Quilt at your event to sell raffle tickets, please let Rhonda Heston know so arrangements can be made. Please provide the date of your event, delivery method and when you would be sending it back.

Please remember, I will try to accommodate everyone’s requests, but sometimes this might not be able to be accomplished.

Rhonda 515-724-2124 or R.Heston@yahoo.com

IHPA Membership

Did you expire in December 2014? If you’re not sure, please check the back of this newsletter. Membership dues run from January 1 through December 31 each year. If your newsletter says “BUZZ expires: 12/31/2014” it’s time to renew.

Membership dues are $20 for the first beekeeper in the house and $5 for each additional beekeeper. One BUZZ newsletter will be sent each address listed on the membership form.

Please send your check to Iowa Honey Producer’s Association, Rhonda Heston, 52735 187th Ave, Chariton IA 50049-8616. At this time we do not have the capability to accept credit cards for membership dues through the mail or over the phone.

All renewals received, have been processed as of March 15th and the expiry date on the back is correct. If you expiration date is not correct per your records, please call Rhonda at 515-724-2124 or send her an e-mail at R.Heston@yahoo.com

Buzz Newsletters

If you have been a warmer part of the country this winter, please let Rhonda know you are home so your Buzz newsletters can again appear in your mailbox. We have had several this year that have been returned as “Temporarily Away”. Rhonda has been keeping them in a safe place awaiting your return. We want you to have a “full set” of The Buzz Newsletter. Rhonda 515-724-2124 or R.Heston@yahoo.com

BEE HAPPY!!

Pat Ennis
Vice President’s Message

Hello one and all!
The date is March 8, and what a weather for cast I am looking at! WOW. I will be looking at hives starting today and doing some spring cleaning and pollen feeding etc.

I have great speaker in store for our summer field day as Dr. Leo Sharashkin from Missouri we be our featured speaker. He will be talking about top bar hives. I cant wait to meet this man as the more I research him the more I want to here what he does and is doing! (Go to [www.horizontalhive.com](http://www.horizontalhive.com))

We will be starting at the Lynnville bank and then weather permitting go to Phil Ebert’s residents for some hands on with the bees. Bring your suits! I have a few surprises along the way. I’m looking forward to seeing you all and hope you can make it. [Registration form is on page 9]

I also want to say I have some great people lined up for our annual meeting. Its a challenge to get them as 11 to 12 months out is just not enough time to get top speaking people, however with board approval I have speakers booked for 2016. My 2015 speakers are booked and I feel very good about what we will be doing at 2015 annual meeting.

The state fair will happen before that so let’s not forget the fair! I want to challenge all members to volunteer for a shift at the fair. I use this time to promote and educate Iowa state fair goers to beekeeping as well as shake a few hands and say thank you to customers. I always meet several customers of mine at the booth it really can be a small world. Even if you don’t want to be in front and directly work with people there are places we can use your assistance. The booth makes things happen for IHPA. I want to see this stay strong and be fun for all.

Check out Dr. Sharashkin at [www.horizontalhive.com](http://www.horizontalhive.com). even if topbar hives are not for you this man has alot to offer to the world of beekeeping. He has a article in this month’s American bee journal as well. See you at summer field day!

Roy Kraft

Apimondia USA Bid for 2019

Many factors are affecting our bees and their population. Pesticides, Varroa and colony collapse disorder (CCD) are more than headlines to us; they are a reality that we as beekeepers must address every day. From Africa to Alaska, from Russia to Rhode Island, beekeepers across the globe face similar issues. And while we may differ in how we raise or manage our bees (some treat, some don’t; some feed, some don’t,) we all have one thing in common - love of the honey bee.

Discussions on these and other related topics are the focus of the Apimondia Congress. This is why the United States has chosen to bid for hosting the Apimondia Worldwide Beekeeping Congress in 2019. Apimondia is the bi-annual congress of the International Federation of Beekeepers’ Associations. The federation was founded in 1949, and has a mission of promoting the scientific, technical, ecological, social, and economic apiculture development in all countries.

One of Apimondia’s main objectives is to provide a meeting for exchanging information, and engaging in discussions between beekeepers, scientists, honey producers, government agencies, technicians and those working for apiculture development. The most productive aspects of any scientific meeting are the conversations that take place between sessions, and the new professional connections and friendships that are formed. The United States Apimondia Scientific Program is engineered not only to provide forums for experts to share knowledge, but also to create opportunities for beekeepers from around the world to meet and exchange ideas, and return home with satisfying and unique memories.

To accomplish this, our program will use diverse approaches to engage attendees with internationally renowned experts and researchers.

The program will feature:
- Symposia, platforms, plenaries and keynote speakers.
- Lunch events to facilitate small groups to interact with speakers and experts.
- Roundtables, fishbowls and chat shows that encourage experts to interact with attendees on hot topics.
- Poster sessions to allow attendees to talk in person with presenters.
- Knowledge fairs to demonstrate new ideas, products, and methods.
- Hands-on workshops.

They selected Minneapolis as the host city for the Apimondia USA 2019 bid. Minneapolis falls in the heartland of the United States, and the heartland of its beekeeping operations. Commercial beekeepers travel to Minnesota each year to process their honey production, and prepare thousands of colonies for transportation across the United States. One highlight of the program is the opportunity to visit the University of Minnesota, which has maintained an internationally recognized research, teaching and outreach program on honey bees since 1918. The University of Minnesota is located in the heart of the top honey-producing region of the United States. The university’s honey bee program is currently expanding with the creation of a Bee and Pollinator Research Lab and a Bee and Pollinator Discovery Center at the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.


Many thanks Eli Kalke, Fieldstone
Lightning Strikes Twice

By Shannon Bardole

Well, actually it is more like a single lightning strike and a soft rumble of thunder after it. As many of you know by now, our Gabrielle Hemesath won the American Honey Queen title from Florida’s Susannah Austin. This was the initial lightning strike, and now Mr. Jason Foley, owner of the Des Moines, Iowa based Foley’s Russian Bees, has also been awarded the title of “Beekeeper of the Year” in his class from the University of Florida’s Master Beekeeper Program. That’s twice in one year that Florida has felt the sting of defeat from Iowa.

Many of you have seen Mr. Foley this last year working different events such as the Iowa State Fair Honey Booth or different organic gardening shows, appearing on Iowa Public Television, or even partook in a beginning beekeeping class he instructed. What you may not have known is that he was in his 2nd year of a master beekeeper program. Mr. Foley’s determination in taking part in public service events coupled with his test scores this year allowed him to clobber his way to the top of the pack at UF. “It was pretty nerve wracking really. I’d kinda gone crazy trying to put myself out there at every event possible, that when it came time for the announcement; I would have been utterly disappointed if I didn’t get it.” says Mr. Foley. As it turned out, moments before announcing his win, they awarded the first two people ever the title of “Master Craftsman Beekeeper” (a title taking a minimum of 5 years to complete). Jason remembers, “When I saw that their PSC’s (Public Service Credit) for the 5 to 7 years they had been working on them were close to what I totaled in just 1 year, I got even more hopeful, but almost sick to my stomach at how much of a letdown it would be to lose at this point.” Moments later an elated Mr. Foley leaped out of his chair with his fist pumped high in the air and the word “YEAH” called out across the room. The American Honey Queen and Dr. Jamie Ellis along with other esteemed colleges couldn’t help but chuckle as they congratulated the energetic Mr. Foley and presented him with a plaque for his achievements. Mr. Foley admits, “I kinda got choked up on stage. Everything just fell into place for once, and it was like all the work and reward hit me at once. I didn’t cry or anything, but I sure was fighting to keep my voice from cracking as I accepted the award.”

The University of Florida sponsors a 5 year certification and training program to become a “Master Craftsman Beekeeper”. It is considered to be the most difficult and prestigious program offered in the United States currently. The program has been going on for 15 years now and in that entire time they have only awarded 2 people the spot of “Master Craftsman Beekeeper”. This is mainly due to the program being progressively difficult as each level is attained, coupled with requiring constant progress towards serving local communities. Most beekeepers with a couple years in their apiaries can pass the first level of the program. It’s comprised of basic bee biology, diseases, pests, and knowing the equipment. Once the written and practical tests are passed an individual is awarded that status of “Apprentice Beekeeper”. The second year students study advanced bee biology, history, the effects of chemicals, and other members of the apis family. Students are also required to pass 6 online training modules and complete a minimum of 5 “Public Service Credits” (basically activities that benefit and educate the general public). At the end of the year of studies, students again are tested at this new higher level with a written and practical exam to earn the level of “Advanced Beekeeper”. For year 3 students are given a list of even more complex readings, the 5 public service credits are raised to 10,
and students have to choose a “major” to study in. This major is further broken down into various academic steps that have to be completed and documented throughout the year. Finally, students have to complete 5 “Core Credits”. Core Credits in this program are similar to the ones the typical college student is required to take when earning any degree, but in this program they have a list of activities to choose from that are bee related such as taking an instrumental insemination course or documenting culture/maintenance of other bee species (bumble bees, halictids, etc). If you complete all of this and pass a written test for this third year of studies, you are awarded the title of “Master Beekeeper”. The final level of studies requires participants to hold the rank of Master Beekeeper for a minimum of 2 years. Hopefuls will have to also complete 15 Public Service Credits, satisfy 5 additional credits toward their major, demonstrate expertise in 8 additional new credits outside of their major, pass an oral examination by a review board, and finally develop and execute a University, FDACS-DPI, or USDA-affiliated research project or county extension-affiliated program relating to bees. Conquer all of this, and you are awarded the title of “Master Craftsman Beekeeper”.

Mr. Foley’s plans for the future are to plow straight through the training over the next 3 additional years and become one of the very few to ever earn “Master Craftsman Beekeeper” through the University of Florida. He is very confident that if he puts forth the heart and dedication that it’s a very attainable goal in the near future. He also is hopeful that talk about Iowa developing its own Master’s program will come true, and that he might later play a part in training others on a similar path as himself. We wish you luck Mr. Foley!

I presented 258 of the 12 oz honey bears to local, state, and national dignitaries. The dignitaries expressed appreciation for my sweet Iowa Honey promotions. Life is sweeter with Iowa Honey.
— Jeralyn Westercamp

Jeralyn continues to promote honey and beekeeping on her own even after her reign as the 2014 Iowa Honey Princess.

To all readers of the Buzz Newsletter:
We need your input!!!
Our editor, Alex, fills our Buzz Newsletter with your articles, pictures, recipes, and upcoming beekeeping events. Thank you to all who submit an article each month or periodically, your contributions is very much appreciated. I was attending an Iowa Honey Producers board meeting with Pat and the subject of the Buzz Newsletter came up and how to keep it coming in a timely manner to the membership. Computer crashing and sometimes articles coming in late affects the timing, but a bigger issue is that some months, Alex just does not have enough articles to fill the pages of the Buzz. That’s where we have to rely on re-print information from other sources to fill up the pages. We are grateful for the information, but would like to see articles and information from you!!

~Do you have a great recipe you like to use and are willing to share it with the Buzz readers?
~Maybe a funny happening in the bee yard or a bit of advice you wish to share with us?
~A great beekeeping related picture caught on your smart phone or camera?
~Or perhaps you would be willing to submit a small monthly bit from a beginning beekeeper perspective, a beekeepers wife perspective, a youth’s perspective, or even a season veteran’s advice!! Even a bi-monthly or tri-monthly article would be welcomed!!

We have many beekeeping clubs in Iowa and Alex has received articles from some, thank you!! Please keep sending them to Alex. I as a reader, I enjoy reading what you have to say, and have gleaned beekeeping ideas and hopefully others have also. Hearing from our local clubs also encourage others, maybe your club had an interesting speaker, event, an upcoming field day or a bit of advice for our many newer beekeepers to use. We have a great number of new beekeepers in our state; please let them know what is happening in your area. Local beekeeping clubs are a rich source of beekeeping information.

In closing, please help Alex fill up the Buzz by sending Alex your articles. He would like to have your articles by the 10th of the month. You can send them to: thebuzz@abuzzaboutbees.com

I look forward to reading what you have to say,

Best regards,
Peggy Ennis
2015 IOWA HONEY PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION
SUMMER FIELD DAY
Saturday, July 11th, 2015
at Lynnville Bank (Lynnville, Iowa) & Phil Ebert’s residence (weather permitting)
Registration at 8:30 a.m., Field day 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Field day topics: Dr. Leo Sharashkin will speak on top-bar hives. Andy Joseph will give his summer bee report. 2015 American Honey Queen, Gabrielle Hemesath will speak and a few surprises.

Field sessions: Weather permitting, field day afternoon activities will be at Phil Ebert’s, bring your bee suit. Roy Kraft will be talking on finding and marking queens. Phil Ebert will be showing his bottling facility.

Please bring a potluck dish to share, IHPA will be providing the chicken, tableware, bottled water and coffee.

NAME:______________________________________________
ADDRESS:___________________________________________
CITY:___________________________ZIP:_________________
PHONE:(___)_______________CELL:(___)_______________
EMAIL:______________________________________________
Registration:                              Amount
Single (member): $25.00 before June 25, 2015
Number of people:_______ x $25.00=  ____________
Walk-in on July 11, 2015 $35.00
Number of people:_______ x $35.00=  ____________
Single (non-member): $35.00 before June 25, 2015
Number of people:_______ x $35.00=  ____________
Walk-in on July 11, 2015 $45.00
Number of people:_______ x $45.00=  ____________

***No refunds after June 25, 2015***
TOTAL:  ____________

Return this completed form together with your payment to:
Make checks payable to:   IHPA (Rhonda Heston)
                          52735 187th Avenue
                          Chariton, IA 50049

Any questions about the Summer Field Day,
please contact Roy Kraft at 515-293-2458 or at kroyster.rk@gmail.com
When to Add Another Box
By Gary S. Reuter, Apiculture Technician
Department of Entomology, University of Minnesota

This procedure applies to both existing and package colonies. When the bees are using more than 80% of the first box add a second box. We find it best if you take a frame with some nectar on it and move it up to the middle of the new box. This will draw the bees up there. Be sure not to move brood up there because it will make it difficult for the bees to keep it warm. When the bees are using more than 80% of the second box add a third box. Again, we find it best if you take a frame with some nectar on it and move it up to the middle of the new box. This will draw the bees up there. Do you get the idea I think this is important? This will draw the bees up there.

This next step is a very important in preparation for winter. When the bees are using more than 80% of the third box do a full reversal. When bees bring in pollen they tend to put it in the box closest to the entrance, in this case the bottom box. We want them to have some pollen available at the end of the coming winter. By doing the full reversal the bottom box (they were putting a lot of the pollen into) will now go on the top. They will use some of it but they will put honey on top of a lot of it. At the end of next winter (like now) they will have eaten the honey and exposed the pollen and then can use it to raise brood. Natural pollen is way better than pollen patties for nutrition.

Once the bees have about 2” of sealed honey in the third box we add honey supers. This usually assures that they fill that third box with honey for themselves for winter. So by doing this manipulation throughout spring and summer we have assured the bees have sufficient stores for winter.

Entomology website: www.entomology.umn.edu
Gary’s website: www.tc.umn.edu/~reute001
Lab website: www.BeeLab.umn.edu

Source & reprint permission: Kelly Beekeeping
May 30, 2013

The first part of this article titled Springtime Activities for Bee Health was reprinted in the March 2015 issue of the Buzz Newsletter.

East Central Iowa Beekeepers Association
Notes from 3/9/2015 Meeting

[The East Central Iowa Beekeepers Association have submitted their meeting notes to show some of what they have been discussing in their club these days. All other bee clubs are encouraged to submit articles to the Buzz to share what you have been discussing, activities, or upcoming events. Share the fun!]

59 members attended. Dues collected from 51 families. New members: Paul Baker, Janet McKee, James Miller, Mickey Motyko, Terri O’Berry, Claudia Ternes, Max Trimpe.

Announcements:
(a) Thanks to those who paid this year’s ECIBA dues, $5 per family. (**Family**=all those at the same address.) New members should note that belonging to ECIBA does NOT automatically enroll them in Iowa Honey Producers Association. To join IHPA check out www.ABuzzAboutBees.com. IHPA dues are $20/year. (b) IHPA Conference this fall (Nov 12-14) will be held at Clarion Inn, Cedar Rapids. This is a change—up to now we met in Marshalltown. (c) Central Iowa Beekeepers auction—April 18 in Perry IA. Submit or buy cleaned-up used equipment. (d) Tri-State (IA-WI-MN) beekeepers meeting is being planned for summer 2016 in Minneapolis. (e) One-time ECIBA member Jeralyn Westercamp is 2014 IHPA Honey Princess. Jeralyn is available to promote honey at fairs and meetings. (f) Jim Clark has stopped beekeeping, and has 28 hives worth of equipment to sell. Contact Bob Wolff at Indian Creek Nature Center. (g) Dave Hayes is starting a new beekeepers club for folks in the Maquoketa area. Another new club may be starting in the Quad Cities. (h) Practical Farmers of Iowa is holding a webinar on spray drift, March 24, 7:00 p.m., led by the folks at Grinnell Organic Farm.

ECIBA business: we voted to offer a $25 prize again this year
to the best beekeeping project at the Johnson County 4-Fair.

**Winter Survival Rates:** More of our colonies seemed to have survived this winter than last: a rough count among members present suggested a survival rate perhaps as high as 75%.

**Swarm Catching:** Floyd Otdofer pointed out that we must expect colonies to swarm late April through mid-June. To inhibit swarming, be sure colonies have enough space (supers with some drawn foundation) for egg laying. Nevertheless, hives may start new queens in preparation for swarming. Every 10 days or so, check for that by tipping up the lower hive body to inspect for queen cells hanging down. You can scrape off the queen cells to keep new queens from hatching; in this case, be sure to add more foundation space immediately. (As old ECIBA member Myron Sorensen used to say, “Always give your bees something to do. Keep them busy!”) Alternately, use frames with queen cells to put in splits. A good time to make splits: first week in May. Despite these precautions, there may be swarms anyway. New swarms sometimes settle in an empty hive body left near your apiary. Bait the lure trap with frames of comb. It may help to drip a few drops of lemon grass essential oil inside. Another possibility is to mount lure traps in shaded locations beside a bee flyway (along the edge of a woodlot, ideally ~8-12’ above ground). The March 2015 issue of *American Bee Journal* discusses this, giving plans for building bee trap boxes. The author says optimal size/shape seems to be similar to 5-frame nuc boxes stacked two-high. Only a few frames are needed to lure in the scout bees; use old frames with lots of propolis, including at least one old frame with dark wax if you have it. In any case, check lure boxes frequently. Wax moths will take over unattended frames with wax.

Floyd showed his rig to catch a swarm that has settled in a tree. This consists of a big hoop net on the end of a long telescoping pole. Using that, he seldom has to climb up ladders. Instead, he baits the net with a fresh frame of brood, and jiggles it under the swarm. The brood frame lures the swarm down into the net. The queen will usually be low in the swarm cluster, and if you can jiggle her into the net the whole swarm will soon follow.

**General Discussions:** (a) What about these Australian flow hives, with self-draining comb foundation? Interesting, but can they handle cold and propolis build-up? (b) Now is time to start feeding protein, so queens will lay eggs. If colonies are low on honey, start feeding heavy syrup (2:1 sugar:water), too. But once started, don’t stop. Hungry bees will cannibalize brood. Leave insulation on top of hives until cold weather is clearly over. (c) FDA will soon approve oxalic acid (wood bleach) in USA for killing varroa mites. There will have to be strict guidelines to keep honey safe. An alternative is formic acid, the only mite-killer generally considered to be “organic”. (Note, however, that there are no clear rules for organic honey. There are suggested guidelines only, not yet included in official National Organic Program regulations.) To apply either oxalic or formic acid, you need a vaporizer with good temperature controls: expensive!

**BBKA Record Cards:** I gave out samples of my version of the British Beekeepers record cards described in the Feb 2015 issue of *Bee Culture*. I printed them on 5”x8” cards that can be taped on the inner cover of each hive to keep track of feeding, honey harvested, and other useful observations. The cards should have had an extensive legend printed on the back suggesting abbreviations to use in filling them out, but some did not. I have asked our webmaster, Jim Davis, to post the Excel file for these cards (which includes the complete legend) on our website (http://eastcentraliowabeekeepers.blogspot.com/) for those who may want to print up more copies for themselves.

==Dave Campbell, ECIBA Secretary

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**IHPA Gift Basket**

Megan Grandgeorge with the gift basket donated by the Iowa Honey Producers.

The Iowa State Fair sponsored, the International Association of Fairs and Exposition Zone 5 meeting. The meeting was March 6-8th in Des Moines.

The theme of their door prizes is Celebrate Iowa. We put an Iowa Honey Producers gift basket together with donated items from some of the producers who provided product to the 2014 Iowa State Fair.

I would like to "Thank" all of you who donated items for the gift basket; the basket was delivered on February 25th.

Connie Bronnenberg
HOW BEES MAKE HOUSE HUNTING DECISIONS

By James Makinson, a biologist at the Queen Mary University of London in Cosmos Magazine

When honey bees go house-hunting, how does the whole colony agree on where they should live? You might think the queen rules but actually colonies are more like a democracy. My research shows different species vote in different ways.

We’re all familiar with the Western honey bee (Apis mellifera), but you’d be less familiar with its 10 Asian sister-species. For my PhD I chose to study two: the red dwarf honey bee (Apis florea) and the giant Asian honey bee (Apis dorsata). The Western honey bee is a settled sort, with nesting cavities occupied for many years. But the two Asian species are vagabonds, following the blooming flowers. That’s reflected in the different types of nests they build. The Western honey bee goes for an elaborate affair consisting of densely packed arrays of hexagonal cells stacked on end, layer by layer, to form multiple colonies about the size of a milk crate.

By contrast the red dwarf honey bee constructs small, single-comb, dinner plate-sized colonies, which they’ll hang from a horizontal branch or rock surface. The giant Asian honey bee constructs huge single colonies up to two metres wide. They are so heavy they can only be built on large branches or rocky outcrops.

When it’s time for Western honey bees to start a new colony, a single queen plus thousands of her workers issue forth from the hive and cluster on nearby plants. Scouts head out in search of a large dry cavity. On their return they dance, waggling their abdomens in a stylised figure-eight movement that is code for the distance, direction and quality of the potential nest site. The dancer’s goal is to excite other scouts to visit the site, who may then return and add their own dance of approval. Through this vote, Western honey bee swarms select the best available nesting location.

Biologist James Makinson has been inspired by the decision making style of Asian bees. Asian bees are not so picky. While the scouts do evaluate and dance for nesting locations, their audience often doesn’t take the trouble to do its own evaluation. The process is less rigorous, but it avoids a tied vote. Decisions get made fast.

The behavioural rules that honey bees use to reach collective decisions are inspiring algorithms to solve big data problems. The solution to many of humanity’s problems can be found by studying the natural world, if we know where to look.

KEEPING YOUR BEES!

Glen L. Stanley, State Apiarist (emeritus)
908 N. Hwy 69, Huxley, Iowa 50124.

We have witnessed that in Iowa there are areas of variation of honey production by the bees, from almost no surplus to fair production. It seems that the areas of Iowa that in the past produced excellent crops are now few to nonexistent.

OXALIC ACID - FINAL STEPS TO REGISTRATION

A report from the EPA’s Office of Pesticide Programs (see www.epa.gov/pesticides) says it has approved oxalic acid as a varoa mite control"

"EPA is registering a new miticide, oxalic acid, to combat the devastating effects of the Varroa mite on honey bee colonies. Oxalic acid is currently registered for this use in Canada and Europe. Recognizing beekeepers’ need for additional registered tools to combat the Varroa mite in U.S. honey bee colonies, the EPA collaborated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture on the registration.

"Consistent with President Obama’s 2014 initiative on pollinator health, which instructed the EPA to expedite review of registration applications for new products targeting pests harmful to pollinators, OPP expedited the review of the application. EPA was able to expedite its evaluation in part due to a NAFTA “work share” agreement, which allowed Health Canada’s Pest Management Regulatory Agency to share their data reviews with EPA risk assessors and risk managers. Oxalic acid was registered in Canada for in-hive control of Varroa mites in 2010. EPA also had an established database of oxalic acid studies from its previous registration as an antimicrobial pesticide.

"EPA used the existing data and information from PMRA, including updated reviews of toxicity, dietary exposure, environmental fate and transport, and product chemistry data. After a thorough evaluation of all the data, EPA concurred with the conclusions and registration decision made by our Canadian colleagues."

But don’t get in too big a hurry. It still isn’t legal for beekeepers to buy the product.

Erik Johansen, who is Policy Assistant for Registration Services for Washington State Department of Agriculture says EPA has taken only the first step in the process. The second step is registration in individual states, and that happens will depend on how soon the registrant (USDA) submits an application for registration. Applications for registration of pesticides in Washington state are submitted to (and reviewed by) the WSDA Pesticide Management Division (http://agr.wa.gov/PestFert/Pesticides/ProductRegistration.aspx).

Check with the equivalent office in your state before embarking on an oxalic acid program.
Once the honey is produced, in whatever amounts, now comes the decision as to how much honey must be left with the bees for their survival through the long months of dearth and into April when few nectar plants again begin to appear.

A rough estimate of the amount of honey it takes is 60 pounds. That in essence is equivalent to a standard 10 frame chamber filled with honey. That is a measurement but not the proper way to arrange the honey prior to cold weather. Just simply place three combs of open brood in the upper chamber that’s where the bees prefer to cluster where it is warmer.

The most accurate way to determine the amount of honey provided is to weigh each colony then year after year the proper amount can be left for the bees.

Looking at the present prices of bees and queens makes it even more challenging to make sure every maneuver is made to protect and get the best survival possible.

Other problems keep facing the beekeepers so one cannot afford to let starvation be any problem at all. Depending on any day throughout the winter to feed bees is a gamble and near impossibility, so why take that risk?

**LATVIAN HONEY?**

The word “Latvia” put up a red flag for Richard Halvorsen. The 660 barrels of honey shipped into the port of Houston bore labels stating they came from the Baltic country of about 2.1 million people that produces almost no honey.

“Latvia imports most of its honey. That honey was probably from China, which has had anti-dumping restrictions from the U.S. for years,” said Halvorsen, assistant special agent in charge of Homeland Security investigations in Houston, where federal agents last month seized nearly 37,000 gallons of frozen “Latvian” honey from a warehouse.

A growing demand for honey, dwindling production due, in large part, to the collapse of domestic bee colonies, and rising prices have given rise to a practice industry experts call “honey laundering.” What's labeled as pure honey in fact may be a honey blend or honey syrup — honey adulterated with cane sugar or corn syrup — or product that contains antibiotic residue, the Food and Drug Administration said.

Though it’s not illegal to sell honey blends, the product must be labeled that way, and often that does not happen, said the trade group True Source Honey LLC.

Honey laundering frustrates domestic honey producers. The industry wants a national purity standard for honey, much like standards for maple syrup and grape jelly, said Jill Clark, vice president of Dutch Gold Honey in Lancaster, Pennsylvania’s largest honey packer and one of the biggest in the country.

“People want to know what they are buying. We want them to know what we are selling is really honey. That’s gotten harder with tainted honey imports,” Clark said.

Full article at triblive.com/news/editorspicks/7579824-74/honey-standard-million

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**Trivia Answer:** 1 – Wintering ability. You will need to balance genetic behavior with production needs.

2 – Honey and pollen production.

3- Defensive behavior. Eliminate colonies with bees that string a great deal. Seek quiet, passive bees.

4 – Hygienic behavior. Your goal is to select your best colonies, ones that are strong, productive and quiet.

Source: ‘Queen Rearing Essentials” by Lawrence John Conner Pg 15
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