



# Illinois State Beekeepers Association Bulletin

January/February 2014 Volume 97 Number 1

## Letter from the President

Mike Mason

I hope everyone had a great Christmas and New Year and has begun 2014 with great expectations and motivation. 2014 has started off with a bang for me. I spent the first full week of January in Baton Rouge, Louisiana attending the American Bee Federation (ABF) Meeting. Rich Ramsey and I left on Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup> as the big snow storm hit and temperatures plummeted. We made it through the St. Louis area on our way south just before they closed the Interstates. We finally got to clear roads as we entered Arkansas and made it to Senatobia, Mississippi south of Memphis that night.

Day two, we were able to pull into Baton Rouge in the afternoon. The cold weather was with us so we had a truck full of snow to the delight of locals that had never seen snow before. A couple people asked for permission to take some snow to show family members to which we obliged. They scooped up snowballs to put into freezers for later presentation. The first night in Baton Rouge was 16 degrees.

The Annual Conference and Trade Show turned out to be another great experience networking with beekeepers all over the country and some from outside the United States. It was also good to sit with the many extremely knowledgeable speakers. Many were researchers from Universities or USDA labs. Many ran commercial operations. They were side-liners and hobbyists, farmers and suppliers of beekeeping wares. They all came together because of a bug we all are tied to.

My point on highlighting this organization and their annual conference is to let everyone know the importance of getting involved in many organizations. It will help you become a better beekeeper and let you get a pulse on what really is happening out there. These are where you get a better perspective on what is really going on, and what is real and what is not. A common theme in discussions among the educators at these conferences is the great amount of misinformation on the Internet and social media on bees and beekeeping. That is the last place they say one should be getting their information. That is not to say there is not any good information out there, but the good is so diluted with misinformation. The best place to learn is from the committed researchers, USDA labs, commercial operators, serious side-liners, queen breeders, and the seasoned mentor sitting among your local beekeepers association membership. All of the information coming together at these meetings, the networking, and evaluations of the latest technologies and research give

us the shape of current events in beekeeping, and give us ideas of how we can be involved and improve what we do.

The next opportunity for such an experience will be right here in Illinois! Heartland Apicultural Society (HAS) will be meeting at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale in July. If you are not familiar with HAS, it is an organization that holds an annual conference that rotates to different venues here in the Midwest. They get great speakers and put on a really good conference. Details will be coming out soon and it would be worthwhile to attend with it being in our home state. Once details are available we will post them on the ISBA website and our Bulletin.

We are setting up our first ISBA board meeting for the year and hope to have a new Central Region Director in place. Upon my request, Steve Petrilli has sent an email to the affiliated associations and at-large members requesting that any currently active ISBA member residing in one of the Central Region Counties interested in filling the position come forward. I will announce the appointment in our next Bulletin.

I am also beginning to work with individuals that have been busy preparing to host the next summer meeting in the Central Region. They have already done a lot of groundwork and we hope to present some detail in our next Bulletin.

I hope everyone is thinking about getting prepared for another season of beekeeping. It is just around the corner!

Any currently active ISBA member residing in one of the Central Region Counties who is interested in filling the position of Central Region Director, please express your interest by sending an email to Mike Mason **before 5 PM on February 20, 2014**. This will be an appointment to finish the balance of the unexpired term of the previous Central Region Director (Janet Hart). The region boundaries are depicted in a map on the Affiliate Association page tab of the ISBA website.



# Your Club Facing Changes? Just Ask for Help.

by Corky Schnadt

With the increase in numbers of beekeepers across the country, many bee clubs are experiencing a real growth spurt in membership. For many of us, the days of a few beekeepers sitting around a table at the local Farm Bureau are quickly becoming a thing of the past.

Whether your club is increasing in size, splitting into two or more clubs, or facing changing technological needs, many bee clubs are facing a situation that they haven't seen before. What is one good way to handle this situation? Simply ask others that have already gone through what you are experiencing now. Collaboration among other bee clubs or talking to individuals in other organizations is something that can prove very valuable and will keep you from reinventing the wheel that someone else put together years before.

Our local club, Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association (NIBA), was faced with an exponential increase in membership several years ago when we outgrew our beloved Farm Bureau building. With each meeting having over 100 members in attendance, we set about researching different locations where we could meet. With a group that size, our options were much more limited. We also discovered that along with finding a new location came the challenge of figuring out how to manage a bigger venue. For example, every place we checked into wanted liability insurance because of the size of our membership. That was fortunately taken care of by our affiliation with ISBA, which had liability coverage. But how to make a very large club feel like the small club environment was another task we needed to consider.

When faced with these circumstances, never miss an opportunity to talk with someone on the subject, even if they are from another part of the country or different hobby. I met 'Natural Beekeeping' author Ross Conrad when he was in town for a talk at the local community college. I had just become president of NIBA and knowing he was the past president of the Vermont Beekeepers Association, I asked him about his experiences with his association and told him about my concerns with our expanding population and the other issues concerning a new venue and more diverse group. He walked me through our new meeting place (a large auditorium at that local community college) giving me all kinds of advice about lighting, where to position our guest speakers and the best use of the microphones we would now need to use. Still more great advice came to me from the president of the local Labrador retriever

club that had recently faced similar circumstances.

Sometimes ideas gel after talking to several different people. I originally got the idea to have an 'open hive' meeting (where members meet at an apiary and have hands on experience with beehives) while attending a bee club meeting in Northern Wisconsin many years ago. This was the classic bee club: eighteen folks sitting around a table at the local VFW with cookies and really good cake all within reach. After that discussion, I mentioned what I learned to Rich Ramsey of Lincoln Land (and V.P. of ISBA) and he told me how his club put on this type of meeting. Later that same summer I attended the Lake County Beekeepers open hive meeting and saw firsthand how effective it can be, especially for new beekeepers. The NIBA board took this information and put together a really successful open hive meeting that fit our particular needs. We now have it as an annual event. By the way, that small club in Northern Wisconsin now has 84 members.

Great ideas can come from within your club as well. One thing we didn't want our club to lose was the small time beekeeper club we had cherished for years. I was riding home with one of our more senior members one day and casually asked him his thoughts. We talked about what he liked most about the smaller club over the years and realized it was the member's ability to talk to one another that was so special. This insight led to our ending our meetings at our new location with a 'social hour' outside our regular meeting space in the hallway and atrium at the college.

Having a board of directors that routinely meets and discusses things can make all the difference in the world. NIBA's board is that kind of board. We regularly talk and share ideas, and not just at board meetings. Anytime someone has an idea or question, a quick phone call or email will get the ball rolling. It is a joy working with like-minded folks who are all after the same thing. A diverse board with beekeepers of different backgrounds and beekeeping experience levels can be useful to help match the constituency of the membership. Many of our board members serve on numerous boards which also brings a different view to the table. That diversity and our collaborative spirit have really helped us with the changes we faced and successfully overcome.

Looking for more perspectives? Google it. Back in the day when we were researching our options, I did a web search for 'big bee clubs' and made the acquaintance of the president of the Kalamazoo Bee

Club, which had a mere 500 members (I am not kidding). He was very forthcoming with information and looking back on it now, his 'new' ideas look very much like our meetings today. But most importantly, his talks told me that what we were undertaking was doable.

Collaboration isn't just for the spine-tingling big changes that your club may be experiencing. It can also be helpful with the day-to-day items that come up. Whether it's purchasing of bee packages, sharing speakers or ideas for speakers, or anything else; sharing perspectives can be very helpful to all parties involved.

With the increase in technology, club meetings can now include Skype presentations and Webinars, among other innovations. This can bring top quality information into your club with minimal expense. Talking to clubs that have already used these formats can be helpful in learning from their experience and avoiding those terror-filled first time adventures.

It can be very helpful to attend other clubs meetings and see how they do things. I am a member of several bee clubs of various sizes, located in different states, and have learned a lot just by seeing how different clubs run their meetings. No two seem to be alike but all are growing in numbers and popularity. It seems there are a lot of different ways of being successful and getting the members what they need and want. Having regular contact with a nearby bee club can be very helpful in generating new ideas and solving old problems. If the meeting dates are similar, the two

clubs can coordinate bringing in special speakers to their individual meetings or having a joint meeting and sharing expenses.

The ISBA board has been very responsive in recent years in providing information to local clubs. Mike Mason and Rich Ramsey have traveled to help clubs get organized and to teach beekeeping classes. Ray Chapman has done the same thing in the Southern Illinois District. Steve Petrilli has mentored new clubs, helping with their administrative needs as well as helping clubs plan beekeeping classes. He is also available if any club needs any guidance with their websites. Jim Belli regularly travels to established clubs as well as to beekeepers thinking of setting up a new club. He has been instrumental in helping clubs navigate through zoning changes allowing beehives in urban and rural areas and his experience on other boards has paid dividends to those managing their clubs or organizing a new club. Rose Leedle, our new Treasurer, regularly has new beekeepers over to her house to learn everything from building hives to extracting honey. New beekeepers in her area are able to get hands-on experience in the Leedle apiary for constructive mentoring. It can be so much easier when we work on these things together.

Many times all the talent and ideas a club needs can be found within its own membership. But when circumstances warrant it, it might not be a matter of thinking "outside of the box" as much as looking outside of the club's four walls to find the answers that are needed.

## A Call for Central Region Director for ISBA

Any currently active ISBA member residing in one of the Central Region Counties who is interested in filling the position of Central Region Director, please express your interest by sending an email to Mike Mason **before 5 PM on February 20, 2014**.

This will be an appointment to finish the balance of the unexpired term of the previous Central Region Director (Janet Hart). The region boundaries are depicted in a map on the Affiliate Association page tab of the ISBA website. Email: [mike.r.mason@comcast.net](mailto:mike.r.mason@comcast.net)

## Beginner Beekeeping Class with St. Clair Beekeepers

The **St. Clair Beekeepers' Association** is hosting their 2014 Beginner's Beekeeping Class on Saturday, February 15, 2014, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the St. Clair County Farm Bureau, 1478 E. State Route 15, Belleville, IL, 62221.

Fees are \$45 per person, \$60 per couple, and/or \$20 for minors (18 & under). Included in the Fees are a morning snack and lunch. Attendance prizes as well as literature and handouts will be provided.

Topics to be covered are "History on the Honey Bee", "Obtaining Bees and Equipment", "Swarms", "Stings", "Bee Colony Management", "Hive Products", "Diseases and Pests", and "Beekeeping Regulations".

Class size is limited to 60 participants; Pre-registration is required. A Registration Form is provided on our website, [www.stclairbees.com](http://www.stclairbees.com).

# From Point A to Point Bee.

*"From Point A to Point Bee" is a new series which will talk about current events in bee health, bee research, bees in agriculture, and hopeful trends in the future of beekeeping.*

Gene E. Robinson is the Director of the Institute of Genomic Biology at the University of Illinois. One accomplishment he is most famous for, he achieved in 2006 when he led a group of biologists to publish the complete genome sequence of the honey bee, covering over 10,000 genes! Recently, Gene Robinson edited an important scientific study that occurred in Italy, and was published this past fall. This study observed a couple of neonicotinoid pesticides applied to bees at different concentrations. It found that specific immune responses of the honey bee were suppressed by both imidacloprid and clothianidin. Then it was observed that in these bees with weakened immune responses, the Deformed Wing Virus replicated more quickly and killed more bees than in bees fed a different pesticide, or no pesticide at all.

This study observed the relationship between LLR, a protein, and NF-kB, a signaling response. This relationship, which occurs at the cellular level, directly controls the immune reaction of a honey bee. Scientists fed two neonicotinoid insecticides (clothianidin and imidacloprid) to laboratory honey bees and found that these pesticides actively promoted viral replication of Deformed Wing Virus. In other words, it was observed that the LLR/NF-kB relationship doesn't function normally when certain levels of imidacloprid and clothianidin come into the picture, and the honey bee's immune system doesn't function properly, leaving it not only defenseless against the Deformed Wing Virus but even transforms the bee's body into a viral-replicating ground.

In the spirit of "citing sources" for current debates around causes for honey bee decline, I wanted to share the findings of this study with Illinois beekeepers. I put together some questions which take a look at the details of the study and presented them to Gene Robison.

**Bulletin:** Why did these scientists choose to study clothianidin and imidacloprid?

**Gene R.:** They are among the most widely used neonics.

**Bulletin:** Organophosphate chlorpyrifos was also tested in the study. What is Organophosphate chlorpyrifos, and why was it used?

**Gene R.:** Its another insecticide, with an entirely different chemistry. It was used to explore whether the effects are general to insecticides or specific to neonics.

The results suggest it's more specific than general.

**Bulletin:** Why did they choose to study Deformed Wing Virus?

**Gene R.:** It's the most common honey bee virus.

**Bulletin:** One of the tests performed in the study was a "glow test". Fly larva were exposed to varying levels of clothianidin, and it was observed that these larva "didn't glow". What made the control group glow, while the exposed larva didn't?

**Gene R.:** The glow test was a way of using fly genetics to get a relatively easy measure of gene activity. By making transgenic flies that glow when the gene is more active, they could just look at the flies rather than extract their RNA.

**Bulletin:** It is mentioned several times that these lab observations could apply to future observations in honey bee gut health, that the protein and signaling interaction is something that is also seen in the delicate and complex microbial balance in a honey bee's gut. What do you imagine will be found when the focus is shifted to the gut of the honey bee?

**Gene R.:** Good question. We need to see someone do this experiment!

**Bulletin:** While a virus replicates more rapidly under the influence of the neonicotinoids, could the same thing be going on simultaneously in the gut of the honey bee, influencing levels of Nosema infections or European Foulbrood?

**Gene R.:** Possible. The idea of looking for negative synergistic effects is relatively new and I'm sure we will see lots more research in this area.

**Bulletin:** How soon might we see a study like this that tests the different neonicotinoid pesticides on the honey bee gut complex?

**Gene R.:** I don't know. I know of nothing in the pipeline but that's just anecdotal.

**Bulletin:** When you think of a honey bee in the wild, or in an apiary, are you amazed at their survivability, now that you have observed how they are affected by some

# A Look at a Recent Neonicotinoid Study by Eleanor Schumacher

of these field pesticides?

**Gene R.:** Honey bees, like all creatures, have evolved a variety of defense mechanisms to deal with pests, parasites, pathogens, and nutritional challenges. The species that are alive today are those that have successfully evolved and adapted to changes in their environment.

**Bulletin:** What do you attribute their survivability to? Simply that the survivors haven't been exposed to enough pesticides? Or could there be other factors?

**Gene R.:** Differential exposure to anthropogenic factors can partially explain why honey bees in some places are doing better than others.

**Bulletin:** Your study mentions several times that the specific reactions you are studying between the immune-responding proteins and immune signaling could have several applications in mammals. How similar are mammal immune-responses to those of insects?

**Gene R.:** There are strong similarities and strong differences in the immune responses of insects and mammals. These results do suggest it would be prudent to check effects in mammals.

*Editor's note:* When I read about the affects this study found clothianidin and imidacloprid had on laboratory bees, I thought of the many apiaries I've visited that are surrounded by corn and soy. I know that some of the beekeepers experience great success – few losses and thriving hives in the corn fields, while other beekeepers have had steep losses. If I took a stab in the dark, I'd say that the beekeepers who have some kind of mite treatment, be it letting the bees swarm for a break in the brood cycle, or applying a miticide, aren't as hurt by pesticides as beekeepers who allow their mite loads to peak. With fewer mites spreading less disease, there would be less of a problem if a bee encountered something that weakened its immune system. But obviously, it's still all debatable. I'm grateful for the resources and time that have gone into these studies, and I'm looking forward to reading more.

## Introduction to Beekeeping Class with Lake County Beekeepers

The Lake County Beekeepers Association is announcing it's first Introduction to Beekeeping Class. With the recent changes to Lake County's UDO rules allowing placement of hives in incorporated areas, this is the perfect opportunity to put yourself on the path of becoming a beekeeper. Timing is also good.

Attendees can learn exactly what they need to buy and get ready to start their first hive in April and start beekeeping in 2014.

**Topics covered will be:** setting up your hive, choosing equipment, where and what kind of bees to procure, learning what you are seeing in the hive, actions to take in order to keep the hive on track, integrated pest management, types of equipment, honey production and overwintering. There will also be plenty of Q&A time to ask questions and clarify what was learned.

Registration for this Introductory Class is \$25 per person, \$35 per family. Send a check to Lake County Beekeepers Association, P.O. Box 195, Grayslake, IL

60030. Please include: Name, phone number, email address, number of people, registration total.

The workshop will be held in Grayslake at the State Bank of the Lakes (Center Street) in the community room from 1pm to 5pm.

### About the Instructors:

Wil Pilipauskas has a B.S. in Environmental Ecology and recently became vice president of the LCBA. He is a commercial beekeeper in the Lake/McHenry county areas producing local queens, nucs, and honey. In addition he teaches, consults and does bee removal in his spare time. With his 10 years of experience he hopes to help beginners avoid the common pitfalls that often drive people away from beekeeping.

Perry Plescia of Bright Springs Farms is an Illinois beekeeper with over 18 years of experience keeping bees in Lake County.

# Illinois Takes Honor for Increase in Membership by Karen Lorence

At the 2014 American Beekeeping Federation annual convention held at the River Center Convention Center in Baton Rouge, Illinois was one of six states that had double figure membership gain in the ABF. Twenty-five ISBA members attended and represented YOU at the convention. Ron Fischer and Charles Lorence were your official delegates and attended a delegate luncheon where elections took place, budget and expenditures were reviewed, memberships were listed by states, and general information was shared.

Most Illinois residents left home in the midst of the Arctic Vortex hovering over the midwest. -16 temps with -47 wind chills made driving treacherous and many of our people turned around and returned home. We were very visible in 69 degree Baton Rouge with our white cars encrusted in salt.

There were many highlights of the convention. Some of the noteworthy topics of the presentations included Dr. Marla Spivak's (from the University of Minnesota) talk on the importance of propolis in the hive. She noted that some people even go to the trouble of painting the inside of their hives with propolis. Why not just let the bees propolize it themselves?

Pete Berthelsen from Elba, Nebraska had a fantastic talk about the interdependency of all pollinators and birds which thrive on native flowers including honey bees, butterflies, quail, pheasants, and songbirds. We were urged to get our local garden clubs, Audubon Society, and homeowners on board to plant flowers that are attractive to all pollinators. He suggested that the common milkweed is the gem of the pollinator world. He told a disheartening story about the drive to turn native habitat into cornfields because of the guaranteed profit through crop insurance. One of the greatest detriments of our current agricultural system is taking land out of CRP and planting it to corn and soybeans, therefore destroying much of the natural habitat needed for all wildlife species to survive.

Many of us loved the idea of nuc boxes placed side by side, sharing the warmth of each other. Two of our vendors were offering

these for sale.

The pharmaceutical and agricultural chemical companies are an integral part of beekeeping today and they will not disappear. This means we must learn to live side by side, grateful for the \$5 million dollars that is being pledged to bee research. Most agreed that the less treatment we do to our bees, the better we will all be. There are new treatments for mites and small hive beetles on the horizon as well as organic and soft chemicals for treating our bees.

Another impressive break out session featured Blake Shook, a 23 year old from Texas who has been keeping bees for ten years. He now has 1500 of his own hives and leases another 1500 from other beekeepers, moving bees to almonds and then to canola. Keep your eye on him. He is going to be one of the premier beekeepers in the country!

We learned that this spring's loss of queens was at an all time high of 50%. I think that tells us that you were not alone! Why? Poor weather for mating, fragile queens, and a sensitivity to chemical exposure surely added to the queen demise. In the most recent studies, it was noted that the bees memory was affected, there was an altered sucrose sensitivity and of course the synergy with the pathogens was profound.

The honey show was well represented by the state of Illinois. The Bellis, Lorences, and Gene Killion walked away with ribbons but Gene's honey REALLY brought in the money which, by the way, goes to the queen fund. The Killion chunk jars (4 1# chunk pack) won a blue ribbon and sold for \$140 a jar. His four blue ribbon section boxes of honey also garnered \$90 a piece and his 3rd place water white honey sold for \$300 a jar for a total of \$2080 for the fund that finances the honey queen's travel and lodging around the country.

The week was concluded with the annual banquet where several awards were given and the 2013 honey queen and princess were honored for their year of work. Florida's queen, Susannah Austin was crowned the 2014 American Honey Queen. The 2013

honey queen and princess were honored for their year of work. Florida's queen, Susannah Austin was crowned the 2014 American Honey Queen. The 2013 Pennsylvania honey queen, Elena Hoffman, was chosen as our 2014 American Honey Princess.

And the news for the 2015 American Beekeeping Federation Convention? It will be held in Anaheim, California from January 6 to the 10th at the Disneyland Hotel. Put this date on your calendar and plan to join your Illinois delegation and enjoy a nice break from the winter snow and cold in Illinois.



Illinois Beekeepers Represent at the ABF Conference

## University of Illinois Short Course ~ Bees and Beekeeping Saturday, April 5th, 2014

### LECTURES, HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS, AND INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS ON:

- \*Pesticides & Bees
- \*Bee Anatomy
- \*Bee Diseases, Parasites and Pests
- \*Colony Collapse Disorder
- \*Bee Nutrition
- \*Bee Health
- \*Breeding & Genetics
- \*Swarm control
- \*Sting allergies
- \*Wintering in the Midwest
- \*Pollination
- \*Beginners Track: introduction to beekeeping and colony management
- \*Advanced Track: queen rearing

### INSTRUCTORS:

Prof. Gene Robinson, Prof. May Berenbaum, and Members of the University of Illinois Bee Research Facility staff

### GUEST INSTRUCTOR:

Randy Oliver, owner and operator of Golden West Apiaries and frequent contributor to American Bee Journal.

### LOCATION:

Bee Research Facility and Institute for Genomic Biology—both new, state-of-the-art buildings. Includes specially designed environmental chambers for hands-on bee work indoors! Those choosing to participate in the hands-on work must bring and wear their own protective veils, suits, or gloves. Non-participants can view from outside the flight cage.

**FEE:** \$100 includes course materials and refreshments

**DATES & TIMES:** April 5, 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM

### REGISTRATION:

Phone: (217) 265-7614

Email: [lcundiff@illinois.edu](mailto:lcundiff@illinois.edu)

Or write/send your name, address, phone number, email, and check to:

c/o Tish Cundiff  
University of Illinois  
Institute for Genomic Biology  
1206 W. Gregory, Room 2414  
Urbana, IL 61801

**LIMITED TO 50 PARTICIPANTS, SO REGISTER EARLY!**

Sponsored by:

Dept. of Entomology, University of Illinois  
School of Integrative Biology, University of Illinois  
Institute for Genomic Biology, University of Illinois  
Dadant and Sons

## The Buzz About Town

BIG RIVERS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Dave Feltes ~ Morrison, IL Phone: 815.772.3413 dfeltes@thewisp.net
CENTRAL EASTERN ILLINOIS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Lorraine Wirges ~ Rantoul, IL momwirges@aol.com
COOK-DUPAGE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Marilyn Ellison ~ Homer Glen, IL Phone: 815.931.4389 marilynell@aol.com
CROSSROADS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION David Dhom ~ Newton, IL Phone: 618.562.8503 davidandlisadhom@gmail.com
FOX VALLEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Kim Luppino ~ St. Charles, IL Phone: 630.584.6419 foxvalleybeekeepers@gmail.com
HEART OF ILLINOIS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Janet Hart ~ Brimfield, IL Phone: 309.446.3004 harthoney@msn.com
HISTORIC PULLMAN DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Edie McDonald ~ Chicago, IL 773.259.1295 vilmaebell@gmail.com
ILLIANA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Dan Wright ~ Kansas, IL 217.232.5354 dwrightkbc@mchsi.com
ILLINOIS VALLEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Susan Calhoun ~ Ottawa, IL 815.228.6466 raven929@hauntershangout.com
KANKAKEE RIVER VALLEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Mike Rusnak www.krvba.blogspot.com

**The Mississippi Valley Beekeepers Association** will be having their annual **Beginning Beekeepers Class on Saturday, March 1, 2014, 9am to 3 pm, in Quincy.** Cost is \$30, which includes membership to our club, one year membership in the ISBA, and a copy of First Lessons in Beekeeping from Dadant. Coffee and donuts provided in the morning, lunch break will be on your own.

The **Crossroads Beekeepers Association** will be holding **Bee School 2014 February 1, 2014 from 8am to 4pm** at the Stewardson Community Building on **108 Pine Street in Stewardson.**  
Attendance will cost \$30 per person.

### Topics:

- Understanding the Honey Bee – Larry Quicksall
  - Hive Components and Equipment – Michelle Barnick
  - Getting and Feeding Your First Bees – Lisa Dhom
  - Your First Year of Beekeeping – Dave Dhom
  - Troubleshooting Your Bees – Eleanor Schumacher
- <http://crossroadsbeekeepers.blogspot.com/>

### LONG LANE HONEY BEE FARMS

Basic Beekeeping One-Day classes, taught by Master Beekeeper **David Burns and Sheri Burns**, will be held in our Education Facility this year on the following

### Saturdays:

February 8, February 15, March 22, and April 12  
We will hold an Advanced Beekeeping Course on Friday, May 23 - Saturday, May 24.

Our popular Beekeeping Institute this year will run from June 9 - 13 and features Master Beekeepers David Burns and Jon Zawislak along with Charley Nye, Bee Lab Manager from the University of Illinois and Alex Wild, Illinois Biologist and Insect Photographer.

To register for classes and for more info, go to [www.honeybeesonline.com](http://www.honeybeesonline.com) or call us at 217-427-2678.

LAKE COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION David Bergman ~ Grayslake, IL bergda@ipc.org www.lakecobekeepers.com
LINCOLN LAND BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Steve Petrilli ~ Springfield, IL Phone: 217.638.7891 s.petrilli@comcast.net
MISSISSIPPI VALLEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Guy Spoonmore ~ Quincy, IL Phone: 217.653.9804 gespoon79@hotmail.com www.mvbees.com
NORTHERN ILLINOIS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Corky Schnadt ~ Hainesville, IL corkyhilary@sbcglobal.net
ST. CLAIR BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Vickie Piel ~ Edwardsville, IL Phone: 618.978.4369 beesrgr8@att.net
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Rose Leedle ~ Mulkeytown, IL Phone: 618.724.2786 r.leedle@hotmail.com
TRI COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Tim Lindley ~ Greenville, IL Phone: 618.780.3772 timlhoney2@yahoo.com
WESTERN ILLINOIS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Rick Camp ~ Roseville, IL Phone: 309.255.2195 campgroveorchard@winco.net
WILL COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION Darien Kruss ~ Joliet, IL Phone: 630.557.6233 info@willbees.org

**Will County Beekeepers Association** presents a six week **Comprehensive Course in Beginning Beekeeping.**

### Topics Covered:

- Beekeeping Equipment
- Bee Biology
- Acquiring Bees
- Getting Started
- Diseases and Pests
- Honey Harvesting

**Where:** Will County Farm Bureau, 100 Manhattan Rd, Joliet, IL

**When:** Tuesday evenings on Jan 21, Jan 28, Feb 4, Feb 11, Feb 18, Feb 25

**Times:** 7-9pm. Complimentary coffee.

**Cost:** \$80 per person. \$60 for WillBees or Will County Farm Bureau members.

**The Heart of Illinois Beekeepers Association**

presents a full day **Beginning Beekeepers Class** Saturday, February 22, 2014 from 9am to 4pm at the United Presbyterian Church  
2400 W Northmoor Rd. Peoria, IL

### Topics to include:

- Beekeeping Equipment
- Honeybee Biology
- Obtaining Bees
- Hive Inspections
- Diseases and Pests

Lunch and snacks are provided

**Class Fee** With HIBA Membership: \$30

Non Members: \$50

Full details and registration at

[www.hoibeas.org](http://www.hoibeas.org)



# Waxing Philosophical ~ the Beekeeping Puzzle

## "Drone Puberty"

### Question:

What's the most appropriate age for a drone to mate?  
~ Lonnie Langley, Vandalia, IL

**Answer #1:** I've read at 46 days or the equivalent of a 17 year old teenager!

~ Larry Quicksall, Effingham, IL ~ **2 votes**

**Answer #2:** As long as he isn't pushing up daisies.... He should be able to do the deed. I think more important is the quantity of drones available and a variety of stock is most important since the queen will mate with multiple drones.

A google search turned up a Journal of Apicultural Science on this topic

<http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/jas.2013.57.issue-1/jas-2013-0007/jas-2013-0007.xml> . They tested drones up to 35 days. Drones appeared to get better with age, but had decreasing volume of semen.

~ David Bergman, Grayslake, IL ~ **3 votes**

**Answer # 3:** About 45 days. Drones need to be started about 45 days before you anticipate virgin queens will be seeking mates. Beautiful virgin queens can be raised early or late in the season but absent or immature drones will cause her failure as a laying queen. Drone brood needs to be at the purple eye stage before queen rearing begins.

~ David Dhom, Newton, IL ~ **3 votes**

**Answer # 4:** Do you really have to ask? They are guys - any time is good. Since they only have about 6 months to live, anything between just born and able to fly to about 6 months should just about do it.

~ Jesse Will, Vergennes, IL ~ **2 votes**

**Answer # 5:** Being male myself I have collegial... maybe defensive feelings about the drone bee. Each time I watch my wife clean the kitchen, I reflexively think of the drones out in my bee yard. We are brothers of sorts. I would not want to present my thoughts on the drone as being scientifically substantiated. They are just mine. They make sense to me. They represent my anthropomorphized observation made over many years of experiences shared with the bees in their hives.

As with any bee emergence, the appearance of a drone leaving his metamorphical cell seems to be a nonevent. There is no joy in the hive. Not a bee seems to notice. Brothers and sisters step on his face as he struggles to join the swarm. No one thinks to extend a leg of help. Not even so much as a gentle antenna of friendship. To human sensibilities it seems mean-spirited. A human child would be scarred for life.

As a preteen, the young drone eats and sits on the front porch watching the girls fly by – with no interest. He makes numerous play flights within a safe few feet of the hive entrance – much like my childhood adventure in the tree in my parents' backyard. The beekeeper knows the immature drone is not ready for service to a virgin queen.

At a point, thought to be around two weeks after emergence, the prepubescent drone begins to feel those raging hormones. Suddenly the safety of the front porch is traded for the excitement of flight to the drone congregation area – the boys club. It is like getting the keys to the family car. The search for queen pheromone is out of control. "I am Drone!"

As with human males, the drone's pursuit of adventure in the DCA can shorten his existence. That seems of little consequence to the zestful drone and ultimately may complete the purposeful call of the siren, Mother Nature.

Should the drone survive to the conclusion of the prime swarm season they may well continue their forays in the DCA, yet their virility wains. It is likely that a queen emerging late in the season will not find the former quality of potential mates in the aging drones.

For the purpose of a successful mating, there is a window of opportunity that will please both the beekeeper and Mother Nature. The observant and successful beekeeper will find it. The bees will be unimpressed that he has.

~Larry Kregel, Marengo, IL ~ **6 votes**

### Next issue's puzzling question:

Is it possible to know when the Over-Wintering colony is starting to raise brood?

~Dale Cooney, Chicago, IL



# Illinois State Beekeepers Association

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