



# Illinois State Beekeepers Association Bulletin

March/April 2014 Volume 97 Number 2

## Letter from the President

Mike Mason

Time seems to be flying now and so are the bees today, or what is left of them. Trying to stay on top of maintenance and care of colonies is hard to fit into your schedule, not to mention teaching bee classes, attending meetings, visiting other associations, giving talks, putting together hive bodies, wiring frames, and refurbishing dead outs. Not sure how we accomplish all of these things or where we find all the time to get this done, but somehow we do. It won't be long before we are installing packages, mixing sugar water, making pollen patties, and getting supers ready! Lastly, don't forget the coming swarm season will be here before we know it. There is no time for procrastination now.

Reports are coming in that there are a lot of colony losses throughout the state due to the very cold winter combined with a lack of fall nectar flow. Some individuals have used three sugar boards on some of their colonies this winter! Here in central Illinois, losses are quite varied but average around 40% to 50%, and those numbers may still increase. Hopefully everyone is getting out there early to mitigate any further losses. I am going to take advantage of the welcome warm weather coming in to get an early mite treatment of Apivar applied. I am hoping this new "tool" added to my integrated pest management plan will work out with the ongoing mite control I have been doing.

The Illinois State Beekeepers Association Board recently met with the coordinators in the central region who are hosting the summer meeting on June 7<sup>th</sup>. It will be at Illinois Valley Community College. This is just off Interstate 39 in Oglesby. Preliminary information is here in the Bulletin.

As you begin to plan for your honey production this year, you might want to think about participating in the state fair in August. There is the open class



which is a lot of fun for individuals. Last year, premium money was not utilized due to lack of participation in the open class. It only costs \$1.00 to enter each class, and almost everyone who entered last year took home some ribbons and money. If you have wanted to try producing Ross rounds, basswood boxes, or cut comb, or if you want to try your hand at one pound chunk honey or making candles, participating in the state fair could be your motivation. The other option is to work with several individuals in your association to put together a commercial display. It can be a lot of fun, and working with other beekeepers is a rewarding experience. Another option for participation in the state fair is competing in the "Cooking with Honey" competition. If I have piqued your interest, go to the state fair website (<https://www.agr.state.il.us/isf/premium/>) and get the 2014 General Premium book, it will be posted soon (2013 is still up). The instructions are there for you to get involved and have a great time.

Enjoy the Bulletin and get ready for the 2014 bee season!

## 2014 ISBA Summer Meeting

The date and location for 2014 ISBA Annual Summer Meeting has been set for June 7, 2014 and is being hosted by the Illinois Valley Beekeepers and the Heart of Illinois Beekeepers.

The location will be Illinois Valley Community College in Oglesby, IL. Complete details (agenda, registration form & fee) will be posted as they are finalized.

"On the Spot (OTS) Queen Rearing and Miticide Free Beekeeping" will be presented by Melvin Disselkoen,

Master Beekeeper from the Eastern Apicultural Society. Also planned is a presentation on Habitat Restoration for Pollinators.

As in the past, there will be vendor displays available and we are making arrangements for meeting attendees to be able to order from the vendors and have orders delivered to the meeting site (to save on shipping costs). Lunch will be included in the cost of the attendance price.

More details to come in future posts here, on the ISBA website, and ISBA notifications.

# Wax Imprinting on Easter Eggs

by Astrid Sabo

Looking for a new spin for your Easter eggs, or just looking for a new project?  
Wax Imprinted Eggs are for you!

*The tools and the art  
of wax imprinting Easter Eggs*



The first thing you will need to do is hollow out the eggs (For younger kids, you can use hard boiled. They are less fragile). Spread out your newspaper on a table or hard floor. You can use a pencil to make designs on your egg. This makes it easier to draw your designs with wax, giving you something to follow.

To hollow the eggs, take 2 pieces of tape, about a 1 ½ inch long, and put 1 piece on the egg. Draw a circle about ¼ inch on the tape at the “top” of the egg, and a ½ inch circle at the “bottom” of the egg. Taking the hammer and nail, tap a hole in the top of the egg following your circle lines. Repeat at the bottom. Turn the egg bottom-side-down over the bowl and position the straw over the top hole and blow gently. If you are having trouble getting the yolk

## *Items you will need:*

- ~ Drinking Straw
- ~ Eggs
- ~ Bees Wax
- ~ Vinegar
- ~ Dye Bath
- ~ Bowl
- ~ Pencil
- ~ Thick Tape
- ~ Small Nail (or Large Needle)
- ~ Regular Needle
- ~ Cork
- ~ Small Hammer
- ~ Small Jar
- ~ Small Pot
- ~ Newspaper

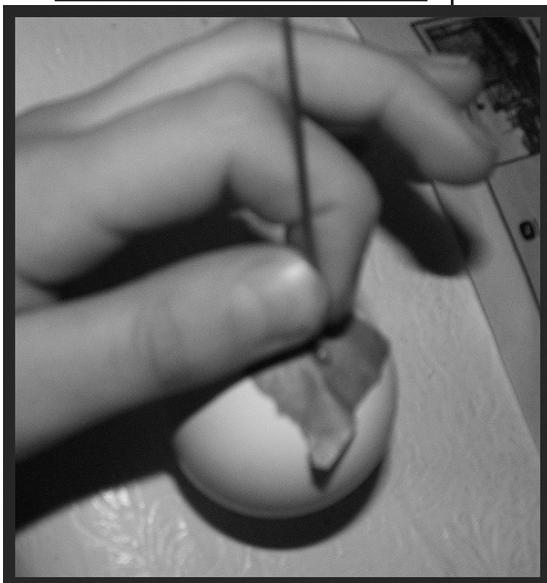
out, use your nail and push it around in the egg. Once all of the contents are out, turn your faucet on a small stream and rinse out the egg thoroughly. Drain eggs by blowing with straw and placing on paper to dry.

Now prepare dye bath and add about 1 tablespoon of vinegar to the dye bath (this makes the dye not rub off of the egg). Cut the wax into pieces and put them in the jar for melting. Placing it in the pot, add water until it reaches the middle of the jar. Set on heat.

Push the smaller needle into the cork. This makes a tool, which you can use to apply the wax (when applying wax, dip the metal part of the tool into hot water to keep the wax from immediately hardening. Repeat as necessary). I would suggest practicing on a spare piece of paper to get used to drawing with wax.

Take the dry egg and close up the hole. Now, working fast, draw on your egg using the cork tool. The wax is waterproof, so it will save the white color of the egg. The dyes baths I used were yellow, orange, and green. Yellow was the lightest color, so after I put the wax on the white egg, I put it in the yellow bath. If I had used the darkest color first (Green), when I came to put the yellow or orange, it would not show. So start with a lighter color. When you put the egg in the dye bath, because it is hollow, you will have to turn it. Once the desired color is reached, take out and let dry. Add more wax drawings. This protects the yellow. Dye in next dye bath (orange was what I used). Add more wax to save the color. Now dip in the darkest color (mine was green). Let dry. Now dip a paper towel in hot water and rub the wax off. Or you can place in 200 degree F oven for 3 minutes until wax is melted. Pat again with paper towel to absorb melted wax. Now all of the wax that was protecting the colors is off, you can enjoy your masterpiece.

Now you can cut a piece of ribbon or string. Tie a knot in one end and thread the other end though the egg. Tie a loop knot. And now you have an ornament you can keep forever or give to a friend. Not only can you use this for Easter but for other holidays too.



*Gently punching a hole through the tape on the "bottom" of the egg*

# Restoring Prairielands in Northwestern Illinois

by Karin and Ed Strenski

Take a ride down the back roads in northwest Illinois and you'll find prairies tucked among the broad expanse of cornfields. Few of these prairies were here twenty years ago except for the rare remnant. Illinois is called the "Prairie State", yet only one percent of original prairie remnants are intact.

Over 20 years ago the Northwest Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts began restoring prairie and savanna lands. In the past, few prairie remnants were available as a seed source. Our group found and harvested native plants along country roads, in small patches surviving on the edge of crop fields. We planted small restorations, which grew into larger prairies, becoming a seed source for current projects.

As more fence lines are removed to allow for additional rows of corn, fewer native plants remain. As these plants and grasses disappear, so do the number and varieties of insects and songbirds. Frogs and other amphibians begin to disappear. The need for prairie restoration is imperative for a world filled with indigenous plants, insects, animals and birds.

A high quality prairie may contain 250 plant species. Many insects can pollinate flowers, but bees are by far the most important because they visit many flowers while collecting pollen. This increases the chances that a bee will transfer pollen between flowers of the same species. The most widely known is the honey bee, but there are 3,500 native bee species in North America.

Unfortunately, bees are sensitive to habitat fragmentation because of their limited foraging range. Bees travel to collect food from spring through fall, and need a consistent supply of nectar and pollen. Each wildflower species blooms only for a short time, so bees need a diverse group of flowering plants available within a small area (often a few square miles) surrounding their nest. They are unable to collect pollen from every type of flower. The decreased diversity of flowering plants and the lack of dependable pollen and nectar supplies have negatively affected their population.

Many prairies in our area were planted with seeds collected by the Northwest Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts. Last year we harvested seed from 125 species of native prairie plants and planted 65 acres. We developed a seeding package that is ideal for attracting bees to the meadow or pastures, and sell to area beekeepers to plant near their hives. The pollinator mix sells for \$20, and covers about 2000 square feet.

The Northwest Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts has grown from small projects on privately owned properties to a major project at Lost Mound at the former Savanna Army Depot. We also supply seed to the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation for projects at Casper Bluff in Galena and Wapello Land and Water Reserve in Hanover. We also assist private landowners with restorations.



*Karin and Ed Strenski*

We encourage readers to find out more by joining our group, or learn more about prairies by contacting Ed ([ed@strenski.com](mailto:ed@strenski.com)). He will gladly provide instructions about preparing the ground. The Prairie Enthusiasts (the main organization) will add chapters to their group if there is enough interest in a particular geographical area. Seeds are available in the fall, but should be ordered by mid-summer, so we can plan orders.

We know that creating habitat is a worthwhile effort. But, it's one of those things that takes someone with knowledge to get it started. Utilizing native plants is a great way to help pollinators. Companies such as Prairie Moon Nursery offer a wide variety of native plants, plugs or seeds.

We've restored, own and manage a large prairie with over two hundred acres at Hanley-Savanna, and have spotted meadowlarks, bluebirds, bobolinks, and even the bald eagle.

The prairies we have re-established are a major source of seed for new restoration projects of any size. We're just as happy to help with a small backyard prairie garden as we are restoring a prairie on acres of land. Prairies are our passion!

# From Point A to Point Bee: The Ag In Progress Partnership

By James Theuri and Susan Kivikko

Ag In Progress Partnership (AIPP) is an organization with a mission: to establish sustainable beekeeping and preservation of bee colonies in Illinois. Concerned with the decline of honey bee populations, AIPP proposes a solution with an early start – with Illinois youth, some of whom will become future beekeepers and future agriculture professionals. With this vision, AIPP applied for a grant from the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) to develop a curriculum and teach about honeybee biology and behavior to Illinois FFA. The project, named Training Future Agriculture Professionals was funded to teach agriculture students about honey bee biology and behavior. The project strategy was to get youth interested in beekeeping, and inspired to promote the well being of bees and pollinators. Increasing the population of young, bee-educated Illinoisans would potentially leave a lasting impression on how communities can better sustain their pollinators for long-term preservation.

Throughout America, you can find people worried about the future of agriculture, especially those invested in specialty crops that are highly dependent on pollinators. Of the pollinator insects, honey bees are the most efficient. Without them, a third of the fruits and specialty crops that we eat would be jeopardized. Additionally, honey is a priceless, nutritious food. Honey is even revered for its medicinal properties, as well as propolis and wax. The value of the precious by-products that come from honey bees are beyond estimating.

To attain the goal of increasing populations of bees, AIPP looks for a way to help the public gain a basic understanding about honey bees in general. By putting basic knowledge of honey bees in the spotlight, rather than the sensationalist media themes that we usually see on the news, the public understanding of bees can have a huge impact when it comes to consumer choices, and gardening and farming practices.

Founding directors Steve and Susan Kivikko began working in 2010 with the development of Illinoisbees.com, an awareness campaign that worked with Driftwatch.org to help make it easier for pesticide applicators to locate and notify beekeepers about local spraying. With the support of the Illinois State Beekeepers Association, the awareness poster became available for commercial applicators in their licensing classes. The following year, a short power point was included as well. Since then, many people worked voluntarily to advocate the cooperative partnership between beekeepers and users of pesticides, logging hours of active awareness-raising to the public.

Currently AIPP is working through a Specialty Crop Block Grant to work with The University of Illinois Department of Entomology personnel and graduate students to develop an education curriculum for Illinois high school agriculture classes. Last year, in the school season of 2012-2013, a pilot program began in North Boone and Somonauk High Schools. Student groups in both high schools grew specialty crops for their agricultural science projects. It was a natural fit to introduce a segment on bees as pollinators. Now AIPP looks forward to the school season of 2014-2015.

A year-long plan for 2014-2015 was created, and shared at a planning meeting held in January 2014 in Morris, IL. AIPP aims to expand the number of schools involved, hoping to have 5 schools participating simultaneously. One objective is to insert a segment on honey bee biology and behavior into the high school curriculum. A draft curriculum has been created and introduced to teachers, some of whom have been supportive of the idea, and AIPP considers them “enlisted stakeholders”, contributing their support to the project. High school mentors have come aboard, and FFA Chapter pilot schools have been selected.

AIPP has grown in numbers of participants, and also in vision. A community is expanding, made up of beekeepers, educators, agriculturists, and students. The student involvement is one of the most inspiring facets of this project, because the youth involved are some of the most capable you would find. Most of these students have worked with animal husbandry since early youth. They are already in tune with the needs and stresses that can afflict an animal. Applying the same rules to honey bees is not a giant leap, but instead relates the honey bees and their impact on communities in a natural and logical way.

Illinois, a leader in pumpkin yields, has always had a mind for maximizing the specialty crop potential. On the grandest scale, AIPP aims to achieve the long-term goal of benefiting Illinois residents with increased economic benefits brought about by an increase of fresh food, not to mention better conditions for bees and beekeeping.

Acknowledgment goes to: Lesley Deem, PhD UIUC, Pollinarium Director for curriculum development; Tara McGill, MAS, MAT UIUC for curriculum development; Gene Robinson, PhD, Dept of Entomology for support; Wes Nelson, President Stateline Beekeepers, ag manager; Eric Stahlheber, grant writer and project manager; Toni Saso, President Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers; and Jennifer Waters – FCAE (Illinois Agricultural Education), Program Coordinator, UIC Extension.

# The State Fair Is For You!

By Rich Ramsey and Steve Petrilli, Assistant Superintendants, Bee Culture Exhibit

Hi Ho! Come to the fair! The Illinois State Fair, that is.

Come enjoy the fun and share a sense of pride with your kids or grand kids when you enter your honey entries for competition.

It is getting harder to fill the shelves of the Illinois Bee Culture Exhibit with Illinois honey so that all the classes are full. Too many beekeepers mistakenly think entering honey and wax isn't worth the effort because the classifications are too difficult to meet.

The reality is that most people who enter do place! There are 9 places where your entry may qualify, and each of these has a cash reward that comes out of the premium moneys used for the Bee Culture Exhibit. Even a 9<sup>th</sup> place finish returns more than the \$1.00 entry fee a person paid to submit the entry.

Not to mention the 1<sup>st</sup> Place entry in the 2 ½ pound chunk honey class qualifies to be in the Sale of Champions. The 2 ½ pound chunk honey winner will walk away with no less than \$600 for it at the Sale of Champions auction and in some years has sold for much more.

Currently, the premium money for the Bee Culture Exhibit entries totals \$3,568.00. When there are entries in every class, the full allotment will be expended in giving awards. If for some reason there is a poor showing (not enough entries in each class to award cash premiums to), then there is a possibility the total premium money would be reduced for the following year.

Past judges for the Bee Culture Exhibit have advised us Illinois has one of the best Honey Exhibits in the Midwest, if not the entire USA. We need to remain vigilant to keep it that way and to make it even better in every succeeding year. You can contact your ISBA Region Director and they will steer you in the right direction.

If you would like to know how to prepare entries for the Bee Culture Exhibit, that information is in the General Premium Book, which you can view at this link: <https://www.agr.state.il.us/isf/premium/>

The 2014 book is not available yet. So keep checking every so often. If you scroll down, you will also see links for two forms.

- General Entry Form
- General Exhibitor Card Form

Both forms need to be filled out. Ignore the July 15 deadline date. It applies to everything else except Bee

Culture Exhibits. For Bee Culture Exhibit entries you can enter up to the day before the start of the Fair (Thursday). However, if you are entering a pie, cake, craft, etc... the July 15 deadline will apply.

While the **2014** General Premium book is not available, we have placed a copy of the **2013** General Premium Book on the ISBA website at the Downloads page tab at [www.ilsba.com/downloads.html](http://www.ilsba.com/downloads.html).

The premium book enables you to complete the general entry form. You can look up the Department, Division, and Class Number. Though it may not change for **2014**, it is better to wait until the Department of Agriculture/Illinois State Fair publishes the information at least in electronic form. In the **2013** General Premium Book, Bee Culture, Department U, starts at page 144. You can look through it to see all of the Entry Classes for the Professional and Open Divisions.

The entry fee is \$1 per class. If a person entered in the 3 Classes of extracted honey (light, amber and dark), the total fee would be \$3. A person can enter in as few or as many classes as they have product to enter for, but they are only permitted one entry in each entry Class. For example, a person could not enter more than once in the Light Extracted Class. The online forms are also available in paper form. So if you are in Springfield before the Fair, stop by the Emmerson Building on the Fairgrounds and you can pick up not only the forms, but a few of the printed premium books (once they are printed).

It would be great if there were entries in the Open Division from all of the Affiliated Associations. There was a time in the not-too-distant past when Beekeepers Association displays would fill one entire wall of the Illinois Building. Side-by-side, each Beekeepers Associations display stood tall and colorful, showing off different hues of honey, beautifully molded and sculpted wax, displays of white-capped honey frames, and comb designs, competing to win a ribbon for their Association.

They would arrive the day before the honey show, spending the day designing and re-arranging the contributions of all of their Association members. It provided the opportunity to catch up with distant friends, talk bees, and proudly represent your bee club. It has always been a highlight and a fun tradition. We need newer beekeepers to give it a try, and find out why this tradition has always been the backbone event of so many of our long-time beekeepers associations, and of course, a great way to add some money to the treasury.

Take pride in your golden product of the hive. Good luck at the fair!

# APIARY INSPECTION SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

## Steve Chard, Illinois Department of Agriculture

Greetings! It appears that our unwelcome brutal winter is finally losing steam and Spring is on its way, and none too soon. We're sure hoping that your bees made it through these extreme conditions. If your apiary experienced significant losses, please let your Department Apiary Inspector or me know. It's important that we be in possession of that information to help keep Governor Quinn, IDOA Director Bob Flider, legislators and others well informed on what's happening in Illinois' Apiary Industry. Speaking of Inspectors, the Department's annual apiary inspection season will be starting soon. Thankfully, all of our Inspectors have new contracts in place and are ready to assist you. We're also very fortunate to again have a full inspection team so we can really hit the ground running with inspections this year. The list of the Department's Apiary Inspectors and their contact information, can be obtained from the Department's website at [www.agr.state.il.us](http://www.agr.state.il.us) or the ISBA's website shown in this Bulletin.

Previously, I indicated that at the request of the USDA-Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the Department has been participating in the multi-year National Honey Bee Survey in an attempt to help document which bee diseases/parasites/pests of honey bees are and are not present in the US. This Survey is also being conducted to investigate potential causes of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). As part of this survey, samples are collected by each participating state and analyzed by APHIS. A big thank you goes to Illinois' beekeepers who have participated in the Survey. Your contribution really helps add a great deal of value to APHIS' efforts. If you have questions about your Survey (inspection) results, please feel free to contact Ms. Grace Kunkel at [USDA.HoneybeeSurvey@gmail.com](mailto:USDA.HoneybeeSurvey@gmail.com) or at 301-405-3799. Grace is a pleasure to work with and would be happy to assist. Also, it's unknown at this time if the Department will be able to participate in a 2014 Survey. The passage and signing of the new Farm Bill may have affected APHIS' ability to carry out a widespread Survey as in the past. Additionally, for you participating beekeepers, please remember to fill out the winter loss survey for the researchers to help connect what they find in their labs, as well as their views on other contributing factors to bee losses. The website is: [usbeesurvey@gmail.com](mailto:usbeesurvey@gmail.com)

The Department recently learned of a presentation at a local beekeepers association meeting promoting the use of Boric Acid as a means of controlling the Small Hive Beetle. Boric Acid is not registered with the IDOA or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a product that can be used for the purpose of controlling the SHB and use of an unregistered product in that manner would be in violation of the Illinois Pesticide Act and the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, plus it could result in penalties for the beekeeper. Experimentation with unregistered products such as Boric Acid could endanger beekeepers, honeybees and possibly the honey that could be exposed to the chemical. Please keep all of these things in mind to protect yourself, your bees and the general public that consumes your products.

Beekeepers may have a new malady to be concerned about. **Tobacco ringspot virus (TRSV)**, a pollen-borne pathogen that causes blight in soy crops, has been found in commercial honeybees during a routine examination at the U.S.D.A. Agriculture Research Laboratory in Beltsville, Maryland. This is the first discovery of honeybees becoming infected by a pollen-borne virus. Researchers are unsure as to whether the virus is a major contributor to Colony Collapse Disorder. Researchers also believe that TRSV combined with other viruses may have a large adverse impact on colony survival. Certainly,

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# In Remembrance of Colleen Pierce

## Created by her family

Colleen Rose Pierce, beekeeper, down-to-Earth nature enthusiast, and beloved wife of Arvin Pierce, passed away peacefully on March 7, 2014 at Memorial Medical Center in Springfield, IL. She is survived by their 8 children, and 15 grandchildren.

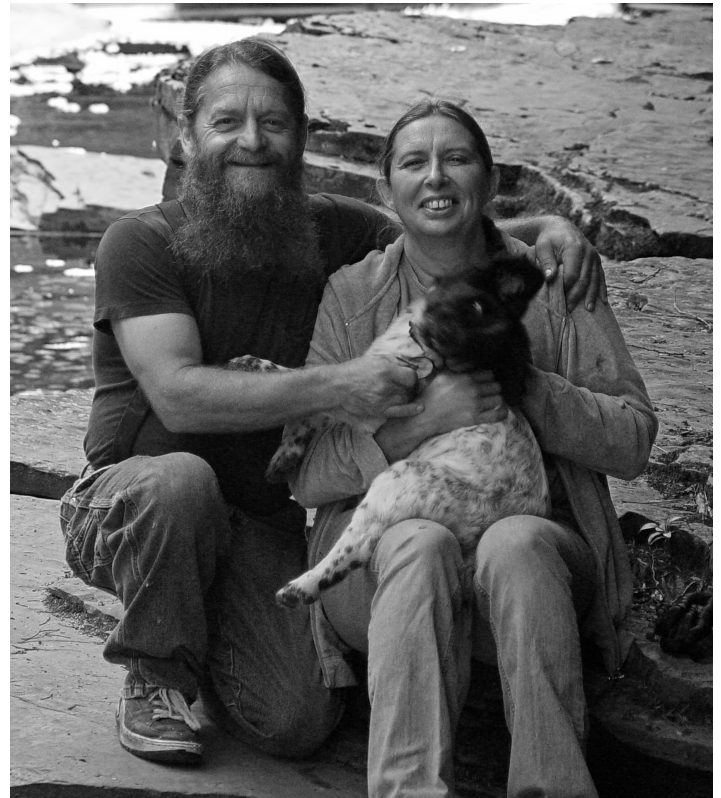
Colleen was the third oldest of her five sisters, Connie, Cathy, Candee, Carol and Christine. Growing up she was a tomboy, working hard at everything she did, always giving 150%. She regularly brought stray animals home to nurture. She didn't always get to keep them, but she loved them all.

She taught herself volumes of knowledge about plants. To Colleen, there were no weeds. "Oh, do you know what you can use those for?" she would say, and provide a tea recipe for almost any ailment.

Arvin and Colleen began beekeeping 12 years ago. They chose to start out with Russian bees, which at that time, were thought to be more aggressive. Colleen told Arvin "if we survived our teenagers, we can handle Russian bees!"

Colleen was an advocate for saving the bees. Prior to going on dialysis, she enjoyed helping Arvin with his hives, and his beekeeping presentations. Her knowledge of bees, the benefits of natural honey, and the importance of preserving the environment for bees were topics Colleen could teach well. She loved having a stand at the local Farmers Market with Arvin, especially for the opportunity it gave them to meet new people and tell them about their beekeeping operation, AC Bees. Even when she became unable to help, she always gave her full support to their beekeeping.

A true lover of life, a devoted wife and mother, Colleen had a heart of gold. You could see her face brighten as she talked about her children with a sheer Mother's pride. And when she spoke about her



Grandchildren, her face brightened even more. There wasn't anything she wouldn't do for someone in need, even if it meant putting her own wants and needs aside. She was always there for her family, who was in turn, always touched by her boundlessly caring love. Her last compassionate act was when she went in the hospital and insisted that her mother not come up, because she didn't want her to catch something from the hospital to compromise her own health.

She was a wonderful person of integrity, seeing the good in everyone. Little did she know how many lives she touched and the void that is left. She is in Heaven, joining her father and those who have gone on before her, looking down with a watchful eye. A Celebration of Life was held for Colleen Pierce on the 23rd of March.

## Illinois Queen Initiative Queen Rearing Class in Vandalia

**IQI Queen Rearing Class: Saturday, May 3, 2014; 9:00 am – 4:00 pm, at the Overcup Baptist Church, Vandalia, IL.** This course is a hands-on class and will cover various queen rearing techniques including the Miller method, Nicot method, cell punch method, Cloake board method, and cell grafting. Other topics will be bee biology and mite load testing. Meals are included in the registration price; both lunch and breakfast from 8:00 am to 9:00 am. Cost is \$60 to non-members, \$50 for IQI members, and \$35 for students.

Cost to join the IQI and become a member is \$25 annually. Questions about the course should be directed to: Lonnie Langley, [dlangley41@yahoo.com](mailto:dlangley41@yahoo.com) (618) 283-4493. Questions about registration should be directed to: Carolyn Gerberding, [cboy8307@aol.com](mailto:cboy8307@aol.com) (217) 498-8307. Make checks payable to: IQI and mail to: IQI Treasurer, Carolyn Gerberding, 1 Vernon Drive, Rochester, IL 62563.

This and other announcements about Queen Rearing Classes can be found at [www.illinoisqueeninitiative.com](http://www.illinoisqueeninitiative.com)

“What killed my bees?” If I had really been on-the-ball as an editor, I would have made this the “Waxing Philosophical” question for this issue. But back when I started this issue, I still had all of my hives. February took me up to 40% losses.

From talk I've heard, anywhere between 40% to 60% seems to be the going average for losses this year. What was interesting to me was which hives I lost. Interesting, and obvious! I lost almost every swarm and split I made last summer. The only swarm that survived this winter was the first swarm I caught, one that had plenty of honey flow time left to build their home. Had I been aggressive about feeding these hives, they might have stood a chance.

It's tempting to stop feeding new hives during the honey flow, when algae and mold accumulates in the feeder, while the bees work linden, clover, and other spring blooms. The problem is, deciding when to begin feeding again. Noticing that the clover was still in bloom, and alfalfa flowers were open in the field gave me a false sense of security that my bees had enough to eat. Though a couple of days, I could hear the lawn buzzing with activity, other days, these flowers seemed to sit alone and unnoticed by my bees.

When I noticed that the goldenrod was sitting untouched, unable to produce nectar in the dry August and September months, it was too late to expect that my hives would be able to store sufficient nectar and honey for the winter. Even though I fed heavily through the fall flow, all the way until the cold weather came in, this year's swarms and splits had nothing in the pantry when winter arrived, so they all got dry sugar and blankets.

Blankets are a last resort. This winter, I had to use several. The blankets did not always do trick. In some

cases, my blankets were not moisture wicking enough, and seemed to trap moisture. That seems to me to be “What killed my bees”, aside from the one that starved, and the one that tipped over twice. All of the hives capped with “blankets that didn't breathe right” died. There isn't much else I can say about that, other than “This year, no slacking when it comes to feeding my splits and swarms”, because that was the root of my problem.

On another subject I want to thank two people for all of their help in making this Bulletin what it is today. First, a gigantic “Thanks!” to Steve Petrilli, our Membership Director and Webmaster. He is never too busy to offer assistance, and never too shy to lend a good idea. Where Steve Petrilli is involved, he can always be counted on to do an amazing job.

Second, great thanks to Astrid Sabo. Astrid is always eager to take on more responsibility with her column, *The Brood Chamber*, and her passion for bees translates into lively reports and projects for us, issue after issue. Readers, please urge the young beekeepers that you know to submit any creative piece to our *ISBA Bulletin*, and Astrid will be glad to include it in her fantastic column.

Now it's time to stop lamenting over our “could have's” and “should have's” with our bees. This spring gives us a great opportunity to dive into our queen rearing, and to work our hives during swarm season, so we can makes splits. Have you got some great ideas for expanding your apiary this season? Plans for planting more forage? I'd love to hear about it! Please put your ideas to paper and let us all know what you are working on – submit an article to our *ISBA Bulletin!*

~Eleanor Schumacher, bubblebubb@gmail.com

## Queen Rearing with the IQI in Chicago

The IQI will hold two one-day queen rearing workshops in Chicago, designed to provide information and hands-on instruction needed to rear high-quality queens. **The Chicago Queen Honey Bee Rearing Workshop** at the **Peggy Notebaert Museum in Lincoln Park** will be held on **Saturday, April 19, 2014, 9:00 am-4:00 pm**. **The Chicago Queen Rearing Workshop** at the **North Park Village Nature Center** will be held on **Saturday, May 17, 2014; 9:00am-4:00pm**, at 5801 North Pulaski Rd., Chicago, IL 60646.

Beekeepers will learn about the biology and concepts of queen rearing and about the steps of the

process, including setting up cell bars, grafting, setting up cell starters and finishers, handling queen cells, and establishing mating nuclei. Each participant will take home a grafting tool, cell bar, queen cups, and hand-outs. Participants should have a minimum of two years beekeeping experience and should be conversant with queen rearing concepts and terms; such as found in Laidlaw and Page's *Queen Rearing and Bee Breeding* or similar books, or at [www.bushfarms.com/beesqueenrearing.htm](http://www.bushfarms.com/beesqueenrearing.htm)  
Cost: \$90 non-members, \$75 for IQI members.

For more information, contact Garry Grube at: [garrygrube@gmail.com](mailto:garrygrube@gmail.com) or (312) 497-6407.



# A Look at the Many Improvements to you ISBA Website

Have you visited the ISBA website recently? Our website continues to grow, as we initiate our ISBA blog.

The blog is a great venue for posting materials about your upcoming events, or sharing reviews and pictures of your club activities. We are looking for blog articles or ideas for a blog topic. It can be about studies, books, management practices or virtually anything related to beekeeping. If you have an idea, topic, or an article to blog about, send it to Tim Moore at [lowell1500@gmail.com](mailto:lowell1500@gmail.com) who is the current resident blog author.

While anyone can post comments for existing blog entries, only authorized “authors” can create and post new blog topics. If you would like to join Tim as a regular author to our blog, contact our webmaster, Steve Petrilli, at [s.petrilli@comcast.net](mailto:s.petrilli@comcast.net).

If you have a beekeeping related video which you created and would like to share it on the ISBA website, contact Steve Petrilli. The videos should be short in

duration (no more than 5 minutes). If you have several 30 second to 2 minute shorts of video in your bee yard and think they should all be one video before it is posted to the website, we can accommodate it.

All ISBA affiliated associations can get the most out of your ISBA Affiliation by taking advantage of the Web Space offered on our Association website, [www.ilsba.com](http://www.ilsba.com). If you're wishing you had a club website of your own, but aren't ready to invest, or aren't sure how to proceed with the details, you can count on the ISBA to give you a web presence on [www.ilsba.com](http://www.ilsba.com). Our membership director and webmaster Steve Petrilli is available to help you create a page, which you will be able to edit and update, and your beekeepers association can enjoy our free webhosting. There's no reason not to exist on the World Wide Web. Contact Steve Petrilli at [s.petrilli@comcast.net](mailto:s.petrilli@comcast.net) and he can assist your association in establishing a presence in “cyberspace”.

## The Ins and Outs of Yard Expansion by David Moechnig

This will be my third year as a beekeeper. I've had some successes, and some failures, but everything has been a learning experience.

I started this hobby with two hives: one package from Dadant and another nuc from Florida. During my first season, I expanded to 9 colonies by catching swarms (Free bees, right? Why not?). That first winter, I lost the hives I'd bought, with their Southern queens, while the hives led by queens from feral swarms wintered well and produced a good honey crop the second year.

This past summer, my hive count got as high as 25 before I started combining a few, and one late season queen failure from my remaining sunbelt queen, leaving me with 21 colonies in November. At the time of writing this (March 13) I've lost 4 colonies this winter while I hear stories of beekeepers with many years experience losing 50% or much more of their colonies. I'm not a better beekeeper by any stretch of the imagination; I may have just gotten lucky. I do think that genetics has a large role to play in the ability for colonies to overwinter, especially in brutal winters like

we've had. I'm also a member of the Illinois Queen Initiative and took the queen rearing class that the IQI offered in Peoria last spring. I wasn't ready to try raising my own queens last summer. I didn't have the equipment in place to get queens mated, but this winter was spent making lots of nuc boxes in anticipation of trying my hand at raising some queens from my hearty “survivor stock”. Jim Wellwood (Illinois Apiary Inspector) has been urging me in this direction since last summer. With any luck, I'll have some ripe queen cells ready to make nucs in June that will have the remainder of the summer to build up to overwinter strength. Those overwintered nucs will keep me from having to buy bees again and provide a source of a little extra income selling nucs locally.

Where am I going with all this? Catch some swarms, or if you're real ambitious and like hard work for little pay, cut some bees out of trees and houses. The colonies that can survive on their own will do the same in your apiary. Secondly, don't think for a minute that a new beekeeper can't raise good queens. Take an IQI Queen Rearing class and pick up some queen rearing books. You'll never know if you don't try.



## The Buzz About Town

<b>BIG RIVERS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION</b> Dave Feltes ~ Morrison, IL Phone: 815.772.3413 dfeltes@thewisp.net
<b>CENTRAL EASTERN ILLINOIS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION</b> Joan Jach ~ Champaign, IL yjach@gmail.com
<b>COOK-DUPAGE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION</b> Marilyn Ellison ~ Homer Glen, IL Phone: 815.931.4389 marilynell@aol.com
<b>CROSSROADS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION</b> David Dhom ~ Newton, IL Phone: 618.562.8503 davidandlisadhom@gmail.com
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<b>HEART OF ILLINOIS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION</b> Janet Hart ~ Brimfield, IL Phone: 309.446.3004 harthoney@msn.com
<b>HISTORIC PULLMAN DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION</b> Edie McDonald ~ Chicago, IL 773.259.1295 vilmaebell@gmail.com
<b>ILLIANA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION</b> Dan Wright ~ Kansas, IL 217.232.5354 dwrightkbc@mchsi.com
<b>ILLINOIS VALLEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION</b> Warren Norris ~ Ottawa, IL 815.228.3330 stateboyw@hotmail.com
<b>KANKAKEE RIVER VALLEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION</b> John Bailey ~ Bourbonnais, IL bailey9263@gmail.com

Over the course of the last year, **Heart of Illinois Beekeepers Association** has been working with management at **Wildlife Prairie Park**, west of Peoria, to secure a place in the "**Hazel Hill**" area of the park to set up a **Club Apiary**. Our association will maintain 3 hives on the property to promote beekeeping and provide hives to inspect during our annual **Field Day** event. In addition, we are opening up the apiary to club members to locate their hives, so some individuals may have a place to keep bees if their city ordinances do not allow beekeeping. We look forward to using this location to promote more education on beekeeping to the public in the future.

Contact **Steve Manzke, Apiary Manager** at **sjmanzke@telstar-online.com** for more information.

**Affiliate Associations:**  
**Publicize your bee events here!**  
Contact **Eleanor Schumacher** with your club news at **bubblebubb@gmail.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:

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.

<b>LAKE COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION</b> David Bergman ~ Grayslake, IL bergda@ipc.org www.lakecobeekeepers.com
<b>LINCOLN LAND BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION</b> Steve Petrilli ~ Springfield, IL Phone: 217.638.7891 s.petrilli@comcast.net
<b>LITTLE EGYPT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION</b> Beverly Tanner ~ Fairfield, IL Phone: 618.842.6016 ffpro2@frontier.com
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<b>WESTERN ILLINOIS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION</b> Rick Camp ~ Roseville, IL Phone: 309.255.2195 campgroveorchard@winco.net
<b>WILL COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION</b> Darien Kruss ~ Joliet, IL Phone: 630.557.6233 info@willbees.org

### **Central Illinois IQI Workshop, Saturday, May 3, 2014, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm, at Sommer Park , 6329 N. Koerner Road, Edwards, IL**

Topics include: genetics, selection of breeding stock, hands-on instruction needed to rear high-quality queens, biology and concepts of queen rearing, steps of the process, including setting up cell bars, grafting, setting up cell starters and finishers, handling queen cells, and establishing mating nuclei. Participants will take home a grafting tool, cell bar, queen cups, and hand-outs. Participants should have a minimum 2 years beekeeping experience.

Cost: \$75 for non-members, \$60 for IQI members. (Includes lunch) IQI membership is \$25 annually and is optional. Questions about the course should be directed to: Mark Kilty at [midwestcarpet@prodigy.net](mailto:midwestcarpet@prodigy.net) or call (309) 699-7001.

The **Lake County Beekeepers Association** will host a workshop on making nucs/splits of hives on **May 17**. We will hold this workshop in **Grayslake, Illinois** and we will do live demonstration with working hives. For more information, contact David Bergman at [bergda@ipc.org](mailto:bergda@ipc.org).

Did you know that the **ISBA has a Google group**? If you have a Google account, you can join the conversation. Stay up-to-date on state and local bee events, news-worthy current events, and share tips and techniques of good beekeeping.

Another advantage of an ISBA membership.

# Waxing Philosophical ~ the Beekeeping Puzzle

## "The First Sign of Spring?"

**This issue's puzzling question: "Is it possible to know when the overwintering colony is starting to raise brood." ~ Dale Cooney, Chicago, IL**

1. Since there is no pollen coming in at this time of year, there's no real external way of determining interest in brood rearing by the bees. I believe the only way to tell would be to tear into the cluster and look at the frames, which essentially in this weather would potentially kill the colony. More importantly at this point would be to evaluate winter stores which can be evaluated by hiking the back of the hive up to get a feel for how heavy it is. If one wants to stimulate brood rearing, pollen patties or pollen substitute would need to be added. But remember, baby bees need to eat and the more mouths to feed, the shorter the winter stores last.

~ David Bergman, Grayslake, IL ~ **4 votes**

2. I think for me its a lot like playing the Lottery. I'm only guessing at this point that she's already awake for sure with 62" of snow on the ground and minus temps for the last 6 weeks. Even if I could get to them (I can't)

I dare not open the hives.

~ Bob McDonell, Winfield, IL ~ **2 votes**

3. You see teeny-tiny cloth diapers hanging on their clothes lines.

~ Larry Quicksall, Effingham, IL ~ **7 votes**

4. The queen begins to lay in January when the days become longer. The mating cycles of all things are triggered by light.

~ Lonnie Langley, Vandalia, IL ~ **6 votes**

5. We had a high of almost 60 degrees last weekend (February 22). I took apart the brood chamber and found a nice pattern with capped brood, a little larger than the size of a softball, on three frames. That would tell me that my queens have been laying at least since January, in spite of the cold.

~ John Accornero, Millersburg, IL ~ **7 votes**

**Next issue's question: Can honey bees eat and digest pollen before converting it into bee bread? ~ Jerry Hayes, St. Louis, MO**

## Apiary Inspection Supervisor's Report, Continued

additional study is needed. All of us need to stay tuned...

Also, for you beginning beekeepers, please know that you are to register your honeybee colony or colonies with the Department per the requirements of the Illinois Bees and Apiaries Act. You can obtain a copy of the registration form from the Department's website by going to [www.agr.state.il.us](http://www.agr.state.il.us) or by contacting me or my executive assistant Dee Clark, at 217/782-6297. Once we receive your completed form,

a registration certificate will be forwarded to you.

Finally, as a reminder, if you plan on moving bees across county or state lines, be sure to contact your local Department Apiary Inspector to do an inspection and ultimately receive the needed moving permit. Please give your Inspector ample advance notice to do the inspection so you can receive the permit in a timely manner.

As usual, the Department very much looks forward to working with you this year!

## Important Note About Your Membership

If you have not renewed your ISBA membership for 2014 through your ISBA Affiliated Association or as a member at large, this will be the last issue of the

bulletin you will receive. If you see a 12/31/2013 expiration date on the address label, it means a renewal has not been received and processed by the ISBA.



# Illinois State Beekeepers Association

P.O. Box 21094

Springfield IL 62708

**Honey bees in  
your spray area?  
illinoisbees.com**



Membership in the Illinois State Beekeepers Association is open to all persons interested in bees and beekeeping. Beekeepers are urged to join through their local Associations or individually if no local Associations are available. Dues are \$10 for the calendar year January 1 through December 31 only. Dues include a subscription to this newsletter, the ISBA Bulletin. Beekeeping journals are available to ISBA members at about 25% discount. Mention membership in ISBA when sending your subscription payment to the publishers. Rates are subject to change without prior notice.

Make checks for membership payable to: Illinois State Beekeepers Association and mail to: Rose Leedle, Treasurer, P.O. Box 21094, Springfield, IL 62708.

Address Changes: Send old and new address six weeks prior to date of change when practical to the Association Secretary. At large members can send the changes to the ISBA Membership Director via email.

Reduced Journal Rates for 2014 (members only)

	<u>1 yr</u>	<u>2 yr</u>	<u>3 yr</u>
<u>American Bee Journal</u>	19.50	37.00	52.15

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