

**NEXT MEETING:** Monday May 11th at 6:30 PM at the Blount County Public Library, Sharon Lawson Room, on Cusick Street.

**PROGRAM:** Our program for Monday evening will include seasonal management for May, looking into June, presented by Reuben Payne. Then the rest of our program will be dedicated to our guest speaker, Phil Craft, state apiarist for Kentucky. Phil will be presenting a program on races of bees, and how bees make honey. I'm sure we will also have some time for questions, so we hope to see everyone there!

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:**

Things are moving along fast in the world of beekeeping from swarms, queenless colony's, to supering it is a busy time. I never feel more excited than when I catch the first swarm of the season, but that is met with equal relief when I catch what I believe to be the last. And so it goes year in year out in the life of a beekeeper.

What or who is a beekeeper? Well it's someone who despite past failures and discouragements continues to look to next year to be (pardon the pun) better. A beekeeper is a man or woman who is constantly trying new things, getting fresh ideas from someone who seems to be successful at the art of beekeeping. They are someone who is constantly learning and never thinking they know it all. I truly believe that beekeeping is an art, and some people including the late Richard Taylor spoke of it as the gentle craft.

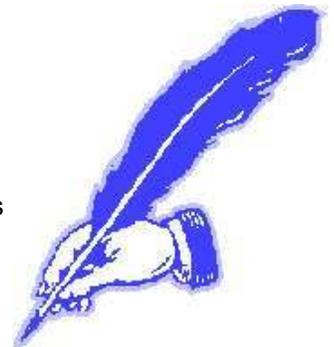
So no matter what the level of experience you find yourself you are a beekeeper so be proud of it and continue to hone your craft.

See you at the meeting

*Charlie Parton*

**EXCITING NEWS!!!!**

Plan to attend the BCBA November 9th meeting this fall. We are delighted to have Kim Flottum coming as our guest speaker, and we would love to have a full house! Kim is editor of Bee Culture Magazine, and has authored and co-authored many books on beekeeping. We are looking forward to his comments! Thanks to Dale Hinkle for arranging this for our club!



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## SEASONAL MANAGEMENT:

In reviewing the things we need to be considering at this time of year, I wanted to remind everyone that with this unseasonably wet spring we are having, swarms are most likely to issue after a few days of continual rain because the bees have been more crowded into the hive instead of foraging, and also with the addition of new brood hatching. Swarms usually issue between 9 am and 3 PM on days suitable for flight. When the weather clears a little, I would encourage everyone to get into their brood areas and check to see if swarming has occurred. If the bees are showing intent to swarm, you can refer back to the April issue to help with ideas on how to deal with the swarming instinct, hopefully preserving a large portion of your bees for honey production.

Seasonal management for May and June continues to deal with swarm control, and supering for honey. We should also be thinking ahead to how we plan to remove the honey once capped, and also to consider what types of treatment for parasites or disease we plan to use if needed. I will review medications a little closer to time of their use, but this month will discuss a little about supering for our new beekeepers.

The best thing for our new beekeepers is that we have had a great spring (except for the rain!) and quite a good honey flow already. The locust had a good long bloom period, as well as the wild cherry, and now clover, blackberries and other nectar sources are coming on strong. It will take a day or two for the nectar to dry a little to be appealing to the bees, but once they lock onto a nectar source it's fun to watch the flight patterns originating from the bee yard. If you watch the direction they take after their orientation flight, you can then get into your car and drive in the approximate direction the bees took to try to identify some of their floral sources.

With a strong honey flow on, if your nucs have drawn out all the brood foundation and your queen is laying well, it's time to super. Place the super of foundation over the brood area so the bees can start coming up into the super. After you see some drawing of comb started in your honey super, you can go back and place a queen excluder between the honey super and brood box. This will keep the queen from traveling up to the super to lay. There has been an ongoing argument about whether or not to use queen excluders. Many beekeepers feel that excluders significantly slow down nectar depositing in the supers. But other beekeepers don't want brood mixed in their honey supers, because of the staining of the comb that occurs from brood rearing, so they use excluders all the time. One suggestion would be to try supering without an excluder to try to get the comb drawn a little quicker, plus some nectar filling in a few frames, then if the queen has moved up, find her, gently move her back down to the brood area, and put the excluder on. The bees will hatch out in 21 days, and the bees will fill the hatched area with honey afterward. It will not harm the flavor of the honey out back into the stained comb! If drone are hatched above the excluder, remember that they will die because they cannot pass back through the excluder to get down to the brood area where they are cared for by the nurse bees.

It is time to add another super when the honey super on a colony is one-half to two-thirds filled (6-7 frames). You can either top super or bottom super. To bottom super, raise the partially filled super and place the empty super on top of the brood chamber. Place the partially filled super on top of the empty super. The advantage of this technique is that there is always open space directly above the brood chamber. Bees tend to try and fill the open space. Once open space is filled with honey, honey production will decrease or the colony may swarm. By keeping the space open directly above the brood chamber you trick the bees into thinking they have space they need to fill. Another advantage is that bees do not have to travel over filled frames, thus dragging dirt over the comb. The big disadvantage of under-supering is having to lift filled supers. This is not so bad with 1-2 supers, but with 3 or more it can be labor intensive. The next option is to top super. This means placing an empty super directly on top of the partially filled super. You can offset each super by about three-eighths of an inch to allow the bees another entry and exit. If you have stacked many supers of drawn comb on the hives. Supers of cut comb honey foundation should be added on top of the first honey super, which is on top of the brood chamber, to reduce the amount of pollen in the cut comb honey. Once the super is capped, it should be moved up to prevent traveling stains across the capped honey. Traveling stains can effect judging at honey shows, and can effect the price you get for your cut comb if heavily stained.

For more established beekeepers who have some drawn comb, and want to increase their drawn comb supply without significantly reducing their honey production, you may place one frame of foundation in the center of each super. The bees like to work in the center of the supers, and will draw out foundation and use it for honey storage. If you re-



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place the center frame in 9 supers, you will increase the number of honey supers by at least one for each 9 you use this procedure with. I have also put whole supers of foundation above drawn comb, and as the drawn comb is filled, have interchanged drawn comb in the lower super with foundation from the upper super, in an alternate pattern. This gets the bees up into the foundation as well as working the drawn comb, and is referred to as checker boarding. This type of practice is also effective in the brood chamber to help alleviate overcrowding and congestion of the brood chamber. Frames in the brood area that have been filled with honey can be removed and stored by freezing for feeding back to the bees at a later date. The foundation that replaces it gives the bees more room, and once drawn hopefully gets used for brood rearing rather than honey storage again!

There are many opinions out there for how to super, whether or not to use queen excluders, and so on. I suggest you talk with beekeepers in our club and see what works best for them, then try those practices in your own bee yard. Also ask questions at the meetings during our seasonal management portion of the meeting, and if you have found a technique that works well or you, please share with the group. We are always eager to hear of new techniques to increase or production, or to decrease swarming. I look forward to seeing everyone at the meeting and hearing how things are going in your bee yards!

*Stacey*

## 2009 Heartland Apicultural Society Conference



The Heartland Apicultural Society (HAS) will host its annual summer conference July 9-11 (Thursday – Saturday) at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio (west of Cleveland). This annual event is a three-day beekeeping educational conference with some of the top speakers from the United States. This event will include keynote talks by leading apiculture researchers and educators, classroom sessions, lab sessions, and hands-on sessions in the apiary. This year a queen rearing mini-course will be part of the program. In addition there will be many classes of interest for all levels of beekeeping expertise, including basic beginning beekeeping sessions for those new to beekeeping.



Apiary sessions will include queen rearing mini-course sessions, beginning beekeeping sessions & many other sessions to build your beekeeping skill level & knowledge.

And as in past years, there will be a trade show with many of the nation's beekeeping supply companies and regional vendors present. In the evenings there will be entertainment and opportunities to get to know your fellow beekeepers better.

Some of the speakers who will be with us are: **Dr. Jim Tew** - Ohio State University, **Dr. Thomas Webster** - Kentucky State University, **Dr. Larry Connor** - Wicwas Press, **Kim Flottum** - Bee Culture Magazine, **Dr. Zachary Huang** – Michigan State University, **Dana Stahlman** – Stahlman Apiaries **and more.**

More information including pre-registration forms, dining information (on campus), on campus housing information, and a listing of local hotels will be available on their webpage SOON!

Feel free to contact Phil Craft at [phil.craft@ky.gov](mailto:phil.craft@ky.gov) or at (502) 564-3956 for more details.



**Blount County Beekeepers Association Inspectors**  
**Please call on us if you have questions or need an inspection**  
**This service is provided at no charge to the beekeeper**

**Jim Galo**  
**983-0290**

**Joe Tarwater**  
**274-6160**

**Stephanie Tarwater**  
**806-1994**

**John Gee**  
**995-2347**

**Stacey Adair**  
**983-6223**

**\*\* Attention inspectors–** please bring your inspection sheets to the meeting for Stacey to send to the state. There has been a delay in getting our grant money from the state, but Mike Studer assures us the paperwork is in progress.

## Monroe County School Kids and a Beekeeper Who Is A Kid at Heart!

Our treasurer Dale Hinkle recently attended an Ag event for school kids as a speaker on behalf of beekeeping. I asked him to share some of his experiences with us from that great day! Enjoy!

### *From Dale:*

As beekeepers it is our duty to educate the public about bees. Thursday April 30th was Farm-City Day at Sequoyah High School for the 3rd graders of Monroe County. Armed with 2 observation hives and plenty of props, my wife and I set up our table to introduce the kids to the joys of beekeeping, who only know that bees sting. It was exciting to hear "My grandpa keeps bees!" or "My Dad keeps bees!" and "Can I take 'em home? I like 'em!"

We explained about how protective equipment is worn, how the smoker works and what we put in it, such as pine needles, tobacco leaves and old socks. We also talked about how we get the honey out of the hive. Then we explained what bees collect - pollen, for protein, - nectar, for making honey, - water, to drink, - propolis - to glue everything together.

It is important for the kids to have something to touch so we took honeycomb (not the cereal, like one kid asked), for them to hold, old black comb and new comb for them to see the difference, and candles to show them what is done with it.

Take every opportunity you can to teach these kids. They are our future beekeepers.



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## AND SPEAKING OF THE FUTURE OF BEEKEEPING...

When I start planning the next newsletter for BCBA, I like to get on the internet and search some of the sources for things that are currently happening in beekeeping, or for articles that were written on things that are pertinent to what we have going on in our region. I came across an article which I did not save about the 3 most important principles of beekeeping. I can't remember the source, or what the first 2 principles were because the third struck me so personally. The third most important principle is MENTORING. And this is true for beekeepers who have been beekeeping for years, to offer guidance to those who are new to it, and especially important to new beekeepers who are looking for help and reassurance as they partake in the art of beekeeping.

I am writing about this from the perspective of a new beekeeper who was blessed to have the help of a mentor. As a new beekeeper, there is an overwhelming amount of information available to us, and as many opinions on each aspect of beekeeping as there are beekeepers in our association. I read as much literature as I could, attended as many meetings as I could, but there were always unanswered questions I had, and my mentor was always happy to try to help me figure out the best thing to do for my situation. Do you remember how overwhelming it all seemed when you first started, and now how comfortable it is to walk into the bee yard and have a look at your bees? The reason I am bringing all this up is that we have MANY new beekeepers, and unfortunately only a few people who have volunteered to mentor. I want to encourage you to think about adding your name to the bee buddy list we have so I can help these new beekeepers who have requested assistance. Not only was I blessed as a new beekeeper by having a mentor, but I have continued to be blessed by mentoring new beekeepers. You DO NOT have to be an expert beekeeper, believe me. If you have kept bees for 2-3 years, you are qualified to mentor a new beekeeper. Too busy you think? It does not take a lot of time, because I know many of us don't have the privilege of lots of extra free time, but I have still been able to work at my veterinary practice, keep bees, garden, farm, take care of my husband and home, write newsletters AND mentor new beekeepers. Catch my drift? Most of the mentoring can be handled by phone calls and emailing, but sometimes you just have to meet your bee buddy in their apiary and have a look.

And for those of you who might consider mentoring, you also have the support chain of the entire BCBA organization and all its directors. Most of the questions or problems our new beekeepers encounter have simple answers that you probably know by having dealt with the same issues. If you have a situation you and your bee buddy are uncertain of, you can call on your directors, other beekeepers or your local inspectors. The most important thing is to give these new beekeepers someone they feel comfortable speaking with about things they may perceive as problems. Most of them will not be comfortable asking the entire group at a meeting, and may actually have a problem that can quickly undermine all the hard work they have put into the bees. Then we have a discouraged beekeeper, and someone who is less likely to continue in the hobby of beekeeping, and less likely to encourage other to do so too.

So, please consider offering your services as mentor. You will be blessed, I promise you!!!! Thank you in advance!

*Stacey*



### Mentoring New Beekeepers in April 08

Ben Shaver (top left) and Owen Frank (lower left) look on as I show them a frame of brood from a colony. We were looking for the queen. Steve was also mentoring Owen's dad, Nick Frank. The whole Frank family eventually joined in after swapping bee suits.

# WELCOME

**Welcome New Beekeepers!**

As membership in BCBA grows, we would like to officially welcome all our new members! Please feel free to ask any of our members for advice in your beekeeping endeavors! That is how we all learn!

David and Susan Bonham  
Taylor Coada  
Brett Vananda  
Tim Kobler

**FYI:** Another article which drives home the importance of being a member of a state organization and knowing the local laws regarding beekeeping in your area. Stay informed!

## **CATCH THE BUZZ**

Minneapolis takes a step towards ending a 34-year ban and allowing beekeeping within city limits.

The council's Public Safety and Regulatory Services Committee voted unanimously for a city ordinance allowing anyone living on 1/2 acre or less to have up to two bee colonies. A lot larger than 1/2 acre but smaller than 3/4 acre can have four colonies; larger than 3/4 acre lot but smaller than one acre six colonies; one acre but smaller than five acres eight colonies;

For lots larger than five acres the number will be decided by the MACC manager.

Consent from all abutting property owners would be required, plus 80% of owners within 100 feet of the keeper's lot. The bee area would have to be fenced, with flyways devised with barriers of at least six feet to get bees to altitude quickly when the hive is less than 25 feet from a property line.

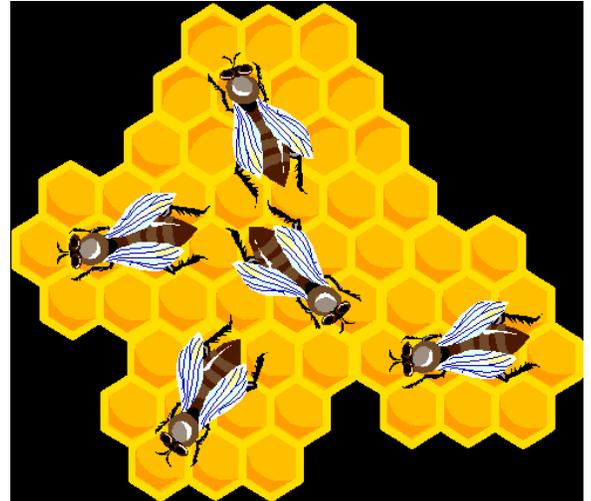
The ordinance requires would-be beekeepers to pay \$100 for a permit and then \$50 a year for a license. Applicants would have to meet an educational requirement before getting the permit. Minneapolis Animal Care and Control (MACC) will inspect the premises at least annually.

The committee vote came after MACC spent eight months researching the topic and spoke with a number of individuals. In particular, University of Minnesota Prof. Marla Spivak provided significant information and feedback on the proposed ordinance. Spivak is nationally recognized for her work with honeybees.

MACC also spoke to Bill Stephenson from St. Paul Animal Control. Beekeeping is permitted in St. Paul and Stephenson says the greatest investment of time is the initial permit, but after that they have seen few issues.

Beekeepers serving the community by removing a swarm or swarms of honeybees from locations where they are not desired will not be considered in violation of the law limiting the number of colonies while housing the swarm on the apiary lot for no more than 30 days.

The full council will vote on the proposal April 25.  
This message brought to you by *Bee Culture*, The Magazine Of American Beekeeping



*A special thank you to Charlie Parton for hosting the Field Day for new beekeepers. Although only lightly attended, we appreciate his time and efforts in allowing our new members to open hives and learn a few things about the makeup of the bee society. On behalf of the Board and the members of BCBA, thanks again Charlie!!!*

We look forward to seeing everyone at the meeting. Please call on us if you questions or comments!

Charlie Parton  
President  
776-1875

Mayford Lloyd  
Vice President  
423-295-2680

Dale Hinkle  
Treasurer  
423-420-9376

Stacey Adair  
Secretary  
983-6223

Dennis Barry  
Alt. Officer/PR  
414-2116

## Afterswarms and Piping

I received an SOS call from one of our members a few weeks ago regarding multiple swarming from a colony they had in their apiary. Despite heroic efforts to prevent congestion, etc., many of their colonies swarmed this spring, and one continued to have multiple afterswarms. I had experienced this a few years back with one of my bee buddies, and had called Stephanie Tarwater to help us work out the problem. We went into the now depleted colony and removed 3 virgin queens which were still in the hive (no telling how many there were originally), and ended up papering the remaining bees over on to a stronger colony. The reason was that so few bees were left that it would have taken nearly all summer to build the colony up to enough strength to over winter. It just simply was not worth the effort for my friend, so we papered them to another colony. If you catch the colony early on in the swarming time, you can remove the extra virgin queens, and the hive can rebuild with the remaining bees. Away, I thought I would reprint a portion of Honey Bee Biology and Beekeeping that addresses bee sounds, which is heard most often after swarming, and can be a way to help locate those virgin queens to be removed to prevent detrimental afterswarming.



Pg 99.109 Honey bee Biology and Beekeeping Dewey M. Caron 1999

### Swarm Basics

Swarming begins when the mated queen lays fertilized eggs in queen cups leading to developing queen cells. Such behavior is natural for a queen receiving too little queen substance. A few days later, shortly before emergence of a new virgin queen, the old mated queen (with a proportion of the adult worker population) leaves the parent colony and clusters nearby. The leaving is swarming and the cluster is termed a swarm. Scout bees from the swarm find a new home. Once a suitable location has been identified, the bees that swarmed move *en masse* from the temporary swarm cluster location into a new cavity and establish a new nest.

The parent colony may then yield additional swarms (**afterswarms**) containing one or more virgin queens and a further proportion of the remaining adult worker population. Eventually the parent colony stops swarming, one virgin queen becomes the monarch and, after she mates, the original colony returns to a normal existence. The issuing swarm contains 41-80% of the adult workers of the original hive (average 66%). The first swarm to leave (**primary swarm**) usually contains only the old mated queen but it may contain virgin queens if weather conditions have delayed swarm departure. Afterswarms often contain several virgin queens and are smaller in size. Swarms as small as 2,400 bees to as large as 41,000 individuals have been reported. Mean populations were 11,800 bees in one study and calculated at 14,000 bees in another.

Pg 9.108 Box 17 Honey Bee Biology and Beekeeping Dewey M. Caron 1999

### Bee sounds

There are many sounds we can hear in a bee hive— do bees hear them too? Bees lack ears but they do hear! Bees communicate with sounds both in queen rearing and in dance language communications.

In swarming and supercedure, “piping” is a high-pitched sound produced by queen muscle contractions without unfolding of the wings. The thorax vibrates faster with wings folded than when unfolded so the sound is not the usual bee “buzz” but a high pitched “piping” sound.

The queen, as she pipes, presses her thorax against the beeswax comb. Adult queens pipe on or close to the queen cell of developing queens. Worker bees pick up the sound, probably via vibrations, and may be observed to stop or freeze movements in the vicinity of queen piping. The adult queen pipes for a two-second pulse followed by a series of quarter-second toots. If there are virgin queens within the queen cells, they respond with a series of ten short pulses.

Piping is more frequently heard in swarming than in supercedure behavior and is more commonly heard after the primary swarm leaves. We do not know what precise role it plays but it is believed piping may help time swarm departure, particularly for afterswarms. Also, it may help the virgin queen locate her potential rivals so she can eliminate them.

The ordinary buzzing sound made by bees when flying may or may not be perceived by bees. If we hold a worker bee in our fingers she too will make a high pitched sound somewhat similar to queen piping. Worker bees will also emit this sound in the hive—perhaps as a warning or alarm sound.

Sound production is vital in dance language communication behavior. Worker bees must precisely time the length of wagging since it encodes the distance to food source portion of the message. The unique noise of the “breaking” dance, signaling swarm departure, may also be a sound the bees can hear.

The perception of substrate “noise” may be via touch receptors rather than airborne sound wave perception. Beekeepers know that jolts and vibrations to the hive serve to alert a bee colony and may result in more stings during colony inspections. The ordinary background hum of bees may likewise be a touch stimulus transmitted through the beeswax comb.

AND THIS IS THE REAL REASON WHY BEES HUM!

## Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program

Producer Diversification Cost Share Program

Application deadlines : June 1– July 1, 2009

**SHORTER APPLICATION ACCEPTANCE TIME!**

Anticipated Approval Announcements: Sept. 1, 2009

**\*\* 50% Cost Share Program Available\*\***

A 50% cost share program with \$15,000 maximum is available for beekeepers who have completed the UT Extension Master Bee Course.

A copy of the certificate must be included with the application.

Please visit the website for details and applications

<http://tn.gov/agriculture/enhancement/bees.html>

Blount County Beekeepers Association  
c/o Stacey Adair  
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Maryville, TN 37803