

THE CARROLL BEE

<http://www.carrollcountybeekeepers.org/>

FEBRUARY 2013

Adventures and Discoveries

The weather was rather warm for January and our bees were flying. The forecast said the temperature would be in the 60s, so it was time to make my first mid-winter dive into a beehive. And while I may have listened closely and read about how to do this, one of the truest lessons I have learned so far is that beekeeping is local. No matter what Steve or Bill or Richard says, our bees are going to be different. In fact, they will be different in ways that are completely unique to our property, and they will behave in ways never before seen by humans, or so it will seem to us.

We are letting the hive overwinter with a screen inner cover, and there were bees on the screen. I removed the screen and the hive beetle traps and pried off the top super. I pried off the next super and it was heavy with honey and had a fair number of bees on it. The third box was crowded with bees and I pried it off, too. The bottom brood box was jammed with bees! We did not harvest last summer as this was a new hive and we wanted it to settle in with a well-provisioned larder. But I'm wondering, what have these bees been eating since November? The books say a hive needs 60 pounds of honey to overwinter, but it appears these bees are on a very strict diet.

I pulled each frame out and examined it, even though I have a hard time with this. I am at the age where a combination of near-sightedness, cataracts, and difficulty seeing through the black bee veil combine to make it nearly impossible for me to focus on the comb. But I persevered, moving the frames this way and that, using a small but powerful LED flashlight to illuminate the bees, calling softly to the queen who once again eludes my "queen eye." Everything looked good. Lots of bees on the frames, lots of bees on my bee suit, lots of bees in the air, and mud pulling at my shoes every time I move. I used a little smoke to get the girls to move out of the way so I could reassemble the hive, and deemed it a success.

Our goal is to successfully get this one hive through winter. Yes, I know we should have started with two hives, but that was not my decision. Beekeeping was not my idea; it was my wife's idea. She got me to go to the lecture at the Westminster Library where Allen Hayes spoke about beekeeping. She signed us up for the Short Course. She said we should go to the meetings at Bear Branch.

So why am I standing out in the mud in January breathing smoke and counting bees? I'm in love with honeybees, and with any new romance there are adventures and discoveries.

Now, about the CCBA. Pete Kazaras, Larry Fritz and Stella Fouts are revising the website so it will become our main source for distributing information about the club and its activities. We are considering how best to distribute the newsletter - whether we should notify you by email that the newsletter is available for viewing or keep sending it to you directly. Kristi Denning is getting the Short Course lined up with help from Jim Arnold and Brad Criddle.

There is some discussion about having some of our meetings at a place such as the Ag Center, so beekeepers in the southern portion of the county can occasionally have easier access. We are lining up a Master Gardener to educate us about bee-friendly plants in Carroll County. We also want to have a class on how to turn beekeepers into mentors. Let us know what you think. There's a lot going on, so I encourage you to attend your club meetings.

Fred Sypher

FEBRUARY 20TH CCBA MEETING AGENDA

At BEAR BRANCH (*not* at Carroll Community College)

- Old/new business
- Guest Speaker Bill Troup to continue his presentation on swarms, splits and dividing colonies

Please consider mentoring new beekeepers from the Carroll Community College Short Course whether you started keeping bees recently or many years ago. You are a valuable asset to the club and to new beekeepers, and we'd like you to help them as they start their own beekeeping adventure. Those of you with less experience can tap into the knowledge and experience of older CCBA members as you mentor the newer people – a win-win situation for everyone! Sign up as a mentor at the meeting. If you have any questions, call Fred Sypher at 410-857-9876 or e-mail him at frsy4@starpower.com.



Dateline: Hershey, Pennsylvania

Bee Conference Held at the Sweetest Place on Earth

by Allen Hayes

The Fabulous Hershey Lodge in Hershey, PA was host for the 70th annual North American Beekeeping Conference and Tradeshow on January 9 -12, 2013. One of the largest gatherings for beekeepers in the US, this event is presented by The American Beekeeping Federation (ABF). It is typically held in early January when the commercial beekeepers have a break in their schedules from moving bees all around the country for pollination and from doing other chores. Many of the country's largest beekeepers were there as were a lot of Maryland beekeepers. I was able to talk to old friends and make some new ones. I was told there were 670 people in attendance, but I never saw any crowds and there was never any congestion even in the vendor area or during break times, which is typically when one can hardly move through the crowd at a bee conference.

One thing that can confuse first time attendees is that there are three programs running at the same time. One was the American Bee Research Conference organized by the American Association of Professional Apiculturists. Then there was the Serious Sideline Symposium (SSS) and finally the ABF General Conference. You are free to move from one to the other. The SSS is mainly for beekeepers who have 100 to 250 colonies. But a large number of beekeepers with considerably fewer than 100 colonies were there. In fact the SSS was clearly the most attended session. ABF said that their membership has grown the most in the area of backyard beekeepers. There are actually only 750 to 1000 commercial beekeepers in the US. Many well-known researchers, writers and contributors came to make presentations and co-mingle. Talks included Making Nucs, Beeswax, Russian Bees, Drones, Pesticides and just about every other topic relating to bees. This is where the Honey Queen is crowned each year and there is a honey show, too. Also included one evening was a banquet and another evening of entertainment if you wished to pay extra.

The tradeshow was the location for all of the country's biggest beekeeping supply houses. Dadant, Mann Lake, Brushy Mountain, Walter T. Kelley Co. and Betterbee all had booths. All three of the new owners of Betterbee staffed their booth to help us put a face on who now runs Betterbee. There was also a smattering of grossly overpriced and equally under needed gizmos to behold. One vendor was even selling a product that is guaranteed to prevent

CCD! I find this particularly interesting since the cause of CCD is still unknown. It seems that if you are trying to sell something to beekeepers, don't let the facts stand in your way.

Dutch Gold Honey and Gamber Container, which are owned by the Gamber family from nearby Lancaster, PA, provided a free breakfast one morning for all of those registered. It was a catered affair, with anything you could ever want for breakfast, and it was held in the Lodge's fancy eating room. Every table had two different flavors of Dutch Gold Honey on it to sweeten your pancakes or toast. When there is free food to be had, beekeepers of all shapes and sizes come out of the woodenware. Mr. Gamber, who founded these two companies, is the one who invented the plastic squeeze honey bear, an iconic symbol known all over the world.

So when you hear the word Hershey, what do you think of? Yeah, me too, and we were not disappointed by the sweetest place on earth. Chocolate was everywhere. Kisses, Krackle Bars, Mr. Good Bars, Hershey Bars and even more Kisses. Big bowls of Hershey Kisses were in each meeting room. I swear there were more kisses to be had than at Grandma's house.

The Hershey Lodge is a great place for such a convention. There are lots of spacious meeting halls and smaller meeting rooms. ABF was not the only group holding meetings there that week and there were still meeting rooms not being used. The Lodge houses several eating establishments where you can have your favorite dish or even an adult beverage and no, I don't mean prune juice.

Do I have you interested in attending a bee conference yet? Visit the presenting organization's website for more information. In the meantime, here is a list of conferences coming up:

- **Heartland Apicultural Society (HAS)** conference July 11-13, 2013. Tennessee Tech University, Cookeville, TN. This group goes out of their way to keep costs low!
- **Eastern Apicultural Society (EAS)** short course and conference August 5-9, 2013 West Chester University, West Chester, PA.
- **American Beekeeping Federation (ABF)** conference and trade show to be held at the Baton Rouge River Center, Baton Rouge, Louisiana on January 7-11, 2014.

As we all strive to become better beekeepers, attending bee conferences will help put us on the fast track.



BEEKEEPING NEWS OF NOTE

The Maryland State Beekeepers Association winter meeting is February 16th from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM @ Howard County Fairground. Speaker: Dr. David Golden, Johns Hopkins, world expert on insect sting allergy.

The Carroll Community College Short Course *Beekeeping Basics* will be taught by CCBA at the CCC Washington Road campus from February 20th to March 20th in room K100A – four Wednesday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30 PM – and will include a hands-on lab at the Hashawha Apiary on Saturday, March 9th, from 9 to noon. Volunteers are needed.

Mt. Airy branch of the Carroll County Public Library presentation by Allen Hayes – *Is Beekeeping Right for Me?* – March 4th @ 7 PM.

CCBA Meeting – January 16th 2013

Fred called the meeting to order for his first time as president at our January meeting. He updated members on Rich's status and then got down to bee business. Larry is currently updating the membership list. At each meeting there will be a sign-up sheet so members can update their contact information. Any questions or changes can be sent to Larry at lfritz44@gmail.com. Dues are also due to Jody, so make sure you get them in!

Fred also let us know about the Short Course, which begins February 20, 2013, at Carroll Community College. **Our CCBA 3/20 meeting will overlap with the Short Course, so the current plan is to have the meeting at the college at 7 PM rather than at the usual Bear Branch location.** There is a misprint in the flyer printed by the college; the Saturday session of the course will be held on March 9th, not March 10th as printed.

We discussed two websites at the meeting, broodmapper.com and the Carroll County Beekeepers Association website. www.broodmapper.com is an interactive website that allows users to practice identifying various phases of bee development. Users get the opportunity to identify phases of bee development to help them better understand what is happening in their own hives. The website for our organization is www.carrollcountybeekeepers.org. Members discussed different ways we could get more visitors to our site such as posting newsletters, having a discussion forum or posting a map of local apiaries. Any suggestions would be greatly appreciated!

This month's speaker was Bill Troup. He stressed the importance of registering your bees with the state and following the laws that are in place pertaining to beekeeping along with the benefits of attending the various beekeeping conferences in the area. August 5-9 will bring the Eastern Apiculture Society's Conference to West Chester Pennsylvania, located about 25 miles west of Philadelphia. There will be a Short Course offered as well as various local and national speakers, workshops and beekeeping activities. For more information, visit the EAS's website at www.easternapiculture.org. There is a "Conferences" tab towards the top of the site that will give you much more information on the upcoming conference.

Bill then discussed winter management for spring buildup with the aid of some wonderful handouts, which included a variety of recipes for bee candy. Bill stressed the importance of feeding solids to your bees in the winter months as they cannot always get out of the hive to cleanse any liquid they ingest. In February the queen will start laying a lot of eggs, so you should be paying close attention to your hive's food supplies. Mid-February is the time to starvation feed your bees so you don't lose the hive. If you are going to order new queens, now is the time to do it as reputable queen breeders will sell out quickly. You should also be focusing on mite control between now and April 1.

Stephanie Krome

To help keep costs down, and keep *The Carroll Bee* green, please sign up for e-mail delivery/notification of the newsletter. Also, please share your beekeeping experiences with the club by submitting articles/pictures by the last day of each month (for the upcoming month's newsletter) to Stella Fouts at mfouts@carr.org or contacting Fred Sypher at frsy4@starpower.net.

Stella Fouts, editor

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