
THE COMMONWEALTH BUZZ

Volume 15, Issue 4

A PUBLICATION OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

September 2014

View from the President

Hello Fellow Beekeepers. Hard to believe that the beekeeper's New Year is upon us - time to concentrate on reducing pest levels and building up food stores to provide a good foundation for overwintering colonies. Usually by this time of year the meadows and roadsides of Virginia are parched dry from months of drought. This year, vegetation is lush and green across most of the state thanks to ample rain. Rain is a double-edged sword for bees and beekeepers. Yes, moisture extends the nectar flow and improves honey yield, but it also supports Small Hive Beetle development. So what's a beekeeper to do? As luck would have it, one of our speakers at the upcoming VSBA conference will present a DIY approach to rearing and using beneficial nematodes for Small Hive Beetle control, a nontoxic alternative to organophosphates.

September is National Honey Month, a great reason for beekeepers to promote honey bees and the liquid gold they produce. Many farmers markets and harvest fairs would love to have a beekeeping display with an observation hive, a surefire way to engage citizens in discussions not only about varietal and seasonal honey, but also to share good gardening practices that promote healthy bee populations. As Virginia beekeepers face increasing pressure from development, citizen education becomes vitally important to the successful integration of beekeeping and urbanization.

And don't forget our state's biggest harvest festival of all – the State Fair of Virginia (Sept. 26 to Oct. 5). Good luck to all entrants in the Open Honey Competition - can't wait to see who takes home bragging rights for the year!

See you at the VSBA Fall Conference! 🐝

Sincerely, Pam Fisher
VSBA President

At a Glance...

VSBA Fall Meeting

When: Saturday, November 8, 2014

Where: Blue Ridge Community College,
Weyers Cave, VA (just south of Harrisonburg)

Directions: <http://www.brcc.edu/maps/>

Advance registration: Postmarked by 15 Oct

Registration: See Page 3 and inside back page

Lunch Saturday: Available onsite \$10

Hotel Special Rates: Reserve early! See Page 3

More Info: <http://www.virginiabeekeepers.org/>

Spring Meeting 2014—Details

We have engaged a group of interesting speakers for the VSBA Fall Meeting. The agenda for the meeting appears on page 2 and any updates or changes will be listed on the VSBA website.

In our July newsletter featured an article on the Federal Government's ELAP program. Heather Trobaugh, of the USDA Farm Services Agency, will provide more details on the program and answering your questions.

We will also feature two researchers with Bugonia, an online database where beekeepers can participate in a variety of research projects: Katy Evans, graduate student at the University of Delaware, and Izzy Hill, Director of the Center for Urban Bee Research and affiliated with the Mid-Atlantic Apicultural Research and Education Consortium (MAREC).

A brief business meeting will include a vote on a donation request from Brenna Traver, Virginia Tech, for research on the tobacco ringspot virus in hives in Virginia. You can review the donation request in this newsletter (Page 5) and also on the VSBA website. 🐝

Deb Parker
VSBA Meeting Chair

VSBA Fall Meeting 2014

Agenda

- 8:00 Registration opens (1 hour)
- 9:00 Opening Remarks
- 9:15 ELAP –Heather Trobaugh
- 9:45 Overview of Bugonia and Citizen Science –Izzy Hill
- 10:00 Break
- 10:30 Door Prize Drawings
- 10:45 Beekeepers Using Nematodes to Control Hive Beetles–Izzy Hill
- 11:30 State Apiarist’s Report
- 12:00 Lunch–Shanandoah Beekeepers offer “box” lunch (signup for lunch at registration)
- 1:00 Door Prize Drawings
- 1:15 Business Meeting – Vote on Donation Request
- 1:30 Testing the Efficacy of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Programs for Controlling Varroa Destructor–Katy Evans
- 2:15 Break
- 2:45 Door Prize Drawings (last one of the day)
- 3:00 DIY Nematode Rearing for Small Hive Beetle Control–Izzy Hill
- 3:45 Master Beekeeper Program Update

Vendors will be open for business during breaks and lunch. 🍄

Benefits Attendee Comfort and Safety

Please Pre-register

Please pre-register for the VSBA Fall Meeting. YOUR advance registration helps organizers predict attendance, which is important as this meeting has been growing every year.

Your advanced registration helps us arrange the available meeting rooms appropriately and ensures that space will be available for YOU to attend! 🍄

Coming to Wyers Cave

Vendors at Fall Meeting

New this meeting: Mann Lake will be attending as a vendor! You can place an order for small items (not extractors, etc) to be delivered at the meeting. You must place your order no later than October 31st.

We have also received confirmation that Dadant will be attending the meeting. If you would like to place an order with them and have it delivered to the meeting, please make sure you submit your order no later than November 1st.

Haywood Honey & Supply and Unisom Pottery will be attending the meeting as well.

Additional vendors attending the meeting will be posted on the VSBA website along with any program changes:

<http://www.virginiabeekeepers.org> 🍄

*Deb Parker
VSBA Meeting Chair*

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Meeting Comm. Chair Deb Parker	540-222-5430 brokenpost.farm@gmail.com
Legislative Chair Lannie Ballard	540-291-2538 lballard@ntelos.net
Nominating Comm. Chair	Pending
State Apiarist Keith Tignor	804-786-3515 keith.tignor@vdacs.virginia.gov
Newsletter Editor Whitney Long	703-447-4985 whitneylong@earthlink.net
DEADLINE for next VSBA newsletter: December 27, 2014 Submit to the editor; add “VSBA” to the subject line	

VSBA Fall Meeting 2014

Hotel Group Rates

The Meeting Committee has arranged group rates at two hotels:

Country Inn & Suites, 27 Covenant Drive, Harrisonburg, VA, 540-433-2400, has rooms available at the group rate of \$74 per night plus tax for rooms with a king bed and \$79 per night plus tax for a rooms with two queen beds. Please note that is group rate is available until October 28th. Please remember to mention that you are with the Virginia Beekeepers Association.

Microtel, 200 Frontier Drive, Staunton, VA 24401, 540-887-0200 has rooms available at the rate of \$83.20 plus tax per night. You must mention the reservation is with the Virginia State Beekeepers Association to get this rate. The group rate expires October 8th. 🍄

VSBA Members Receive Major Awards

EAS Honey Show

Karla Eisen, of Prince William Regional Beekeepers, and Ann Zudekoff, of Piedmont Beekeepers Association, were awarded blue ribbons, (huge) silver platters and a cash prize for their Best-in-Class entries at the Eastern Apiculture Society honey show in Kentucky last month.

Karla won the “Black Jar” contest for best tasting honey (in this category, contestants enter a sample of their honey in a jar that has been pray-painted black, to ensure that flavor is the only criteria the judge considers). Ann won for Best-in-Class Wax presentation. Congratulations to you both!

This large annual honey show features entries in a wide array of categories, such as extracted and comb honey, photography, candles, wax-crafting, and mead. 🍄



[Photo: Mike Palmer, Honey Show Chairman, presents the silver platter to Ann Zudekoff]

From the Treasurer's Desk

Meeting Pre-Registration

We offered two registration options for the June 2014 meeting and these seemed to work well overall, so these same two options are available again for the Fall 2014 meeting:

Online Registration is offered through Brown Paper Tickets to current VSBA members and expired/non-members. Prices are the same as for mail-in registrations, with a discount for current members. Note that the late registration cut-off date is a little different. You may pay through Brown Paper Tickets using a credit card (sorry, no PayPal or debit cards). Early online registration will be available from September 30 2014 through October 15, 2014. Late online registration will cut off November 2, 2014. Access at:

<http://www.brownpapertickets.com/>

Find the traditional **Mail-In** registration form at the end of this newsletter. Prices for current members are discounted from prices for expired members and non-members. A check must be included with your registration form for the mail-in method (sorry, a check is the **ONLY** option for mail-in registrations).

Payment for early registration must be post-marked by October 15, 2014. Late registration by mail must be post-marked by October 30, 2014. 🍄

*Thanks! Barbara Ruslander,
VSBA Treasurer*

Legislative Update

Have an idea to help Virginia Beekeepers that you think our state legislatures should consider? Have you been developing information for a piece of legislation related to beekeeping?

If so, please provide information to the VSBA Legislative Chairperson by mid-November (contact information in the VSBA officers block, page 2). That is when legislators start working on the bills that they are going to introduce. 🍄

*Lannie Ballard
Legislative Chairperson*

State Apiarist's Report

The past few years I took a couple of days leave in early August for camping with Boy Scouts. This gives me time away from electricity and phones to catch up on back issues of journals. The last two years these trips were replaced by family weddings, my daughter last summer and my nephew this year. The former did not offer much free time. But, the latter consisted of a cross country journey to the Puget Sound. Two days of mind numbing flights bracketing blackberry picking, rock climbing, trailblazing, and family celebration. The flights gave me time to read a few issues of American Bee Journal and American Entomologist piled up on my desk.

Tanging...and research in beekeeping: An article in ABJ on 'tanging' caught my eye. The author reported on the origin of the activity as well as his efforts to disprove this controversial bee-lore. For those unfamiliar with tanging (also called tinning), let me briefly summarize the activity. Swarms are believed to respond to loud noise by alighting on the nearest branch or fence post. Beekeepers running over hill and dale, vaulting hedge rows and streams while banging tin pans together or ringing bells in pursuit of swarms from their hives are a result of this belief.

I do not want to get into whether tanging works or not – it doesn't. Nor, do I want to argue the origin of the practice – I was taught it started in ancient Roman times, the author claims 9th century England. What caught my eye was the experimental design, or, more accurately, experimental flaws. The author established a swarm, let it choose a home, and began tanging after the swarm once it took flight.

There are two phases in the flight of a swarm – hive to cluster and cluster to nest site. Having watched my wife's grandfather and uncles running after swarms with pans in hand I realized years ago that newly emerged swarms are the target of tanging. Once a new nest site is selected a swarm is motivated to reach that site. A swarm is understandably less responsive to any stimulus to land before reaching its new home; and, less likely to be recoverable once it reaches this objective. This was the first observed flaw. The author only looked at half of the swarm flight

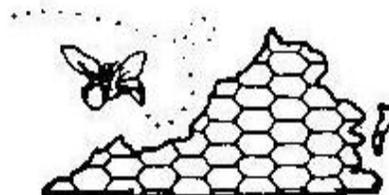
–the half that is empirically less responsive to alternative stimuli.

A second issue was the limited number of replicates, three artificial and one natural swarm. In total these swarms were chased just under 23 minutes or less than 6 minutes per swarm. It is hard to accurately analyze data from so few replications. Yet, the author concluded that tanging does not work and applied this conclusion to both the first and second flights of a swarm.

It is easy to criticize others while failing to notice the plank in one's own eye. And, I know how hard it can be to fit all 'what ifs' into an experimental design. Of particular concern when working with multi-faceted behavior occurring in a small time frame, such as swarming, are accessible resources and replicates to statistically analyze data. This brings me to the point of this article. There is an opportunity for beekeepers to help researchers increase the numbers of hives and event replicates in a study – Bugonia.com.

Bugonia...an opportunity to improve the science of beekeeping: Bugonia is a newly created online database where beekeepers can participate in a variety of research projects. There are two projects posted for 2014 and more to come. To participate merely create an account at www.bugonia.com and select a project or projects to join. Once you join a study, an experimental protocol is provided. It is detailed – intended to provide sufficient information to execute your part of the study and enter your findings into the Bugonia online database. Beekeepers can track their results and even compare their findings against results in their area. Study results are published in beekeeping and peer-review journals. In other words participants are immortalized in the journals of science. 🐝

*Keith Tignor, State Apiarist
VA Dept. Agriculture & Consumer Affairs*



Request for Research Donation

VSBA has received the following donation request from Brenna Traver (Virginia Tech), which will be the subject of a vote by VSBA members at the fall meeting. This request will also be posted on the VSBA website.

Tobacco Ringspot Virus – Is it Present in Virginia?

The exact cause(s) of increased colony losses still remain to be determined. A recent study reported that a new virus was found in honeybees: the tobacco ringspot virus (Li et al., 2014). Since the virus detection is so new, we do not have much background data to report on the effect on honey bee colonies.

We have extensively sampled our colonies over the course of a 2 year period. Samples are from both colonies treated and not treated with pesticides. Some of these colonies were part of a study that the VSBA previously helped fund.

In the current project, our objective is to determine whether tobacco ringspot virus is present in our colonies. If we find this virus, then we can start to formulate follow up questions regarding its role in the colony.

The estimated cost for just the supplies for the project is about \$8,000. We are asking for a donation of \$3,000 from VSBA to help cover a portion of these expenses. 🍄

Reference Cited

Li, J.L., R.S. Cornman, J.D. Evans, J.S. Pettis, Y. Zhao, C. Murphy, W.J. Peng, J. Wu, M. Hamilton, H.F. Boncristiani, L. Zhou, J. Hammond, and Y.P. Chen, Systemic spread and propagation of a plant-pathogenic virus in European honeybees, *Apis mellifera*. *mBio*, 2014. 5(1): p. e00898-00813.

Brenna E. Traver
Virginia Tech

Virginia Honey Month

Before there was a Pollinator Week, and prior to a proclamation for a Honey Bee Day, there was a Honey Month.

September is the traditional end to the harvest season for beekeepers. Excess spring and summer stocks from tulip poplar, thistle, clover, holly and other honeys as well as fall stocks from golden rod and nectar from other plants are removed at this time to be consumed at the dinner table or sold at state fairs, fall festivals and Christmas bazaars. In recognition of the value of honey Governor McAuliffe issued a proclamation declaring September Virginia Honey Month.

More than ever, people are looking for natural ingredients and it's hard to imagine anything more pure and natural than one-ingredient honey. Honey is a back-to-basic ingredient that people can feel good about using in both culinary applications, as well as finding new and innovative ways in beauty and sports products. There are more than 300 varietals of honey in the United States, each with a distinct flavor and color based on the floral source where the bees collect the nectar. 🍄

Changing Hands

Walter T. Kelley Company

The Frandsen Corporation announced August 22, 2014 that it has entered into an agreement to acquire the Walter T Kelley Company, which has been supplying beekeepers since 1924. After close of the acquisition, the company will be known as Kelley Beekeeping Company (KBC).

According to a Frandsen press release, Kelley will join the Frandsen Corporation family of companies and become a "sister company" to Miller Manufacturing Company (Miller). Kelley is a current supplier to Miller, which manufactures, distributes and markets farm, ranch and pet products. 🍄

EAS 2014 Highlights

Eastern Apicultural Society (EAS) held its annual conference at Eastern Kentucky University, in Richmond, Kentucky, July 28 through Aug 1, 2014. Since attending my first conference in 2010, I have been astounded at how much content EAS can pack into 5 days.

Founded in 1955, Eastern Apicultural Society is a nonprofit institution dedicated to education of beekeepers, certification of Master Beekeepers, excellence in bee research and widespread promotion of apiculture. Representing 26 states and Canadian provinces, it's the largest noncommercial beekeeping organization in the U.S.

The EAS Annual Conference, variously held in rotating member states, affords an opportunity for beekeepers of all levels to meet, network, and further their education and skills. EAS also sponsors awards and research grants to deserving bee researchers and graduate students; and offers grants for applied research projects.

The conference offers a large range of programs, applicable to anyone from new-bees to seasoned veterans; from one-hive hobbyists to the serious sideliners. The week-long meeting consists of a densely packed "short course" of lectures and presentations, followed by a 3-day conference--packed with plenary sessions, more seminars, hands-on demos, and a huge trade show featuring beekeeping vendors, large and small.

This year, beginners had an opportunity to learn about seasonal hive management, overwintering, top-bar hives, and honey bee nutrition, while advanced beeks heard about pesticide management, maximizing honey production, new hybrid plants for bee forage, and many more topics.

One of the things I hear from many beekeepers is they are not "classroom" people; that they learn from visual and hands-on practice. EAS has that covered, as well – if you never want to spend a minute lecture room, there is a wealth of hands-on activities in the bee-yard. Examples of presentations offered in the on-site teaching apiary this year include instruction on smoker basics, colony inspection techniques, disease identification, setting up and managing nucs, and

moving hives with forklifts. Weather permitting, you could spend the entire five days hands-on with live bees. Or you could attend practical labs with microscopes, to gain experience identifying bee anatomy, diseases, parasites, and pollen.

This year, Jennifer Berry of the University of Georgia Honey Bee Lab conducted a 3-day queen-rearing class, covering the gamut from basic reproductive biology, grafting, starter and finisher colonies, and queen evaluation. This class was offered at no extra charge to conference attendees who registered in advance.

But perhaps the greatest part of EAS week is its outstanding Master Beekeeping (MB) program. Since inception, EAS has certified over 150 Master Beekeepers as part of a program that is a model for many of the other MB programs offered across the nation. A four-part exam is administered during the week, and the successful candidates are honored at the awards banquet. These MBs can subsequently be found in their respective communities as teachers, authors, publicists and beekeeping ambassadors, sharing their knowledge and expertise to the general and beekeeping public.

Don't get the idea that EAS is all education and hard work. Even beekeepers (*especially beekeepers!*) need to have fun, so this year's planners included a morning "Zum-bee" fitness program; catered dinner; award banquet and square dance; mead tasting; as well as an insect art exhibit and a book signing by Abigail Keam, author of *Death by a Honeybee* (an amusing mystery tale and finalist in the *USA Book News* Best Book List of 2011). Beekeepers also showcased their abilities at EAS's international honey show.

Next year's conference is scheduled August 10-15 at the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada. Quite a trek, to be sure, but an extraordinary cultural destination. Combine some beekeeping activity and a vacation: plan to *Bee There* in 2015. For more information about EAS, go to <http://www.easternapiculture.org/> or contact me, at Annzee@aol.com or 434-660-6063. 🐝

*Ann Zudekoff,
EAS Director for Virginia*

VIRGINIA STATE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Fall Meeting November 8, 2014

Hosted by Shenandoah Valley Beekeepers Association
Blue Ridge Community College Weyers Cave, VA 24486

~ ~ **EARLY REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 15, 2014** ~ ~

Please use separate registration forms for different individuals at different addresses

Name(s): _____ (PLEASE PRINT)

If Vendor, Business Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (_____) _____ Email: _____

Local Club Membership: _____

} *Make
checks
payable
to VSBA* }

~ Vendors & Children 18 years and under MUST Register but attendance is Free ~

EARLY REGISTRATION: must be postmarked by October 15, 2014

<p>CURRENT Members (including members' spouses):</p> <p>You MUST be current before submitting registration at this rate.</p> <table style="width: 100%; margin-left: 40px;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">NUMBER</th> <th style="text-align: center;">AMOUNT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>MEETING per person \$20 x _____ = \$ _____</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>LUNCH per person \$ 8 x _____ = \$ _____</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">TOTAL</td> <td></td> <td>\$ _____</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		NUMBER	AMOUNT	MEETING per person \$20 x _____ = \$ _____			LUNCH per person \$ 8 x _____ = \$ _____			TOTAL		\$ _____	<p>EXPIRED Members / NON-Members:</p> <p>Want to become a member? See VSBA website for member form.</p> <table style="width: 100%; margin-left: 40px;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">NUMBER</th> <th style="text-align: center;">AMOUNT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>MEETING per person \$30 x _____ = \$ _____</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>LUNCH per person \$ 8 x _____ = \$ _____</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">TOTAL</td> <td></td> <td>\$ _____</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		NUMBER	AMOUNT	MEETING per person \$30 x _____ = \$ _____			LUNCH per person \$ 8 x _____ = \$ _____			TOTAL		\$ _____
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LATE REGISTRATION: postmarked between Oct 16, 2014 and Oct 30, 2014, or walk-ins

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Mail to: Barbara Ruslander, 2949 Pocahontas Trail, Quinton, VA 23141
Questions? Ruslander.barbara@yahoo.com or 804-572-5956

Received a Notice from VSBA?

Renew an Expiring Membership

If the email that delivered this VSBA newsletter said your membership has expired, and if you are interested in renewing, please see your local Treasurer soon to pay your dues (a good value at \$10 per year).

You don't want your membership to expire and miss the opportunity to register for the Fall 2014 meeting as a ***Current Member***.

...And you don't want to stop these VSBA newsletters coming, right? 🐝

VSBA Fall Meeting

Lunch Options

The Fall Meeting campus is not convenient to other dining establishments, so a lunch option is available through either online or mail-in registration. The Shenandoah Valley Beekeepers Association is providing the lunch, which consists of pork barbecue sandwich, side dishes, and a drink. Lunch is \$8 with Early Registration, or \$10 with Late Registration or at the door. You are also welcome to bring a sack lunch. 🐝

Changing your address?

Whether you receive your Commonwealth Buzz by postal mail or email,
Please notify VSBA when your address changes

Barbara Ruslander
2949 Pocahontas Trail
Quinton, VA 23141

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED