



SCOUT BEE NEWSLETTER

A publication from the Hagerstown Valley Apian Society

www.scoutbee.org

November 2007

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At the September meeting, there was a vote that changed **HVAS's** meeting format to bi-monthly meetings instead of every month.

The new 2008 meeting schedule will be:

February, April, June, August, October and
December.

The newsletter publication schedule has been change as well. It also will be going out on alternate months but on the months that we aren't meeting.

Mark Your Calendar

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There will be no meeting in November

The Next meeting will be held on Tuesday,
December 11 at the Washington County
Extension Office 7:30 PM.

This meeting will be a Pot-luck dinner and a
Holiday get together. You will also get a chance
to meet our new Youth Partnership Scholar
Caitlyn Wilson

HVAS Youth Beekeeping Partnership Program

100 years ago, many people kept bees on their property. The honey was a valuable commodity. Beeswax was also in very high demand. Over the past few decades, there has been a steady decline in, not only the number of colonies, but also of the number of beekeepers in the US. Americans seem to take for granted that their food will just appear on their grocer's shelves in the quantity and quality that it always has. The number of domestic colonies is now about half of what it was 50 years ago. The impact on American agriculture has been tremendous but has been largely ignored by the general public up until recently (with the advent of CCD). With the increased media attention, people at large are at last beginning to open their eyes to the role honeybees play in our food supply.

Beekeepers, it seems, as a rule, tend to be a closed group that is very opinionated. Additionally, working with bees, one has to have a degree of stamina and perseverance that allows us to ignore a few stings or spending hours in a bee suit in the heat of summer. This ability to take hardship and discomfort stands in direct opposition to those characteristics of the vast majority of people in our modern society, who are constantly sheltered and protected from pain and discomfort by pharmaceutical or therapeutic interventions.

Many experienced beekeepers also tend to stick to established ways of doing things even if those particular methods have been proven to be outdated. There are even those among us who question anything new and constantly state how something is not going to work. Often, they even violently oppose creative new ideas to the point of deliberately trying to squash them and attempt make the originator of that new idea feel foolish and retract their suggestion. They will make comments like, "We always did it this way in the past", or "That won't work", etc, with derogation in their voice and a sneer on their lips. Those arcane attitudes are negative and counterproductive to the process of growth and they need to be addressed and acknowledged for the damaging impact they have on the people that hear them. It could possibly be why many people decide to get out of beekeeping altogether.

We need to try another approach, one that is more positive and creative. A fresh way of looking at things is required, perhaps maybe as a child sees the world. The young always have innocent, hopeful way of seeing the world, they don't reminisce about the "good olde days" because they are living in them. The world hasn't beaten them down and made them bitter and resentful, they take the world as it comes to them. They see beauty in even the most hidden places, rejoice in it and infect those around them with their enthusiasm and upbeat approach. That fresh look that a child possesses is precisely what needs to be nurtured and cared for. What we adults sometime regard as insurmountable problems, a child can see as an opportunity.

The seriousness of the problems that we beekeepers face is precisely why **HVAS** has initiated the **Youth Beekeeping Partnership Program**. A young person has their whole life ahead of them. With support and proper guidance by a caring mentor, their creative effort could help jump start this avocation with the intense vigor that only a child can manage. We

will choose one child between the ages of 12 and 18 that has shown a genuine interest and aptitude in agriculture and animal husbandry, and introduce him or her to the joys, rewards and existential pleasures of beekeeping. Supported by his or her parents, **HVAS** will provide the scholar with a complete hive of bees, enrollment in a beginning short course (including all educational supplies) and mentoring throughout the year.

This program is an opportunity for **HVAS** to contribute, in a small way, to the nation's growing problem with disenchantment and disillusionment in the beekeeping industry. It has the potential to reach, not only our beekeeping friends, but also the general public. Its success could be a motivating factor for more young people hearing about, and becoming interested in keeping bees themselves.

Caitlyn Wilson --- **HVAS** 2008 Youth Beekeeping Partnership Scholar

Caitlyn Wilson, a 12 year old resident of Smithsburg has been awarded this year's prestigious title of **HVAS** Youth Beekeeping Partnership Scholar. Caitlyn lives with her family on a farm in Smithsburg and is very interested in the environment. She heard about the honeybee populations decreasing one night at dinner and became worried, because she knew that they pollinated flowers, crops, trees and other plants. She met **HVAS** secretary John Britt at the Washington County AG Expo manning the observation hive. Since she was there several days showing her animals, she came back several times to ask more questions and became more and more interested in the subject of beekeeping.

She has had a wide variety of experience with animals, and is interested becoming a veterinarian. Over the past 5 years her activities have included raising chickens and selling the eggs, halter braking and showing cattle, working with and showing her horse, Sadie. She is active in 4-H equestrian club and recently took 1st and 2nd place in local show. She even occasionally helps out on other farms the area, always cheerfully willing to help out with whatever needed to be done.

She is very active in church, school and community activities. In elementary school, she is an exceptional student, routinely earning straight A's, while also participating in extracurricular math, science and literary activities. As an active member of a local church, her activities regularly include Youth Alive and assisting with their Vacation Bible School. Her community involvement includes participation in CSL co-ed soccer league, the CSL All Girls Travel team. She has taken part in several residential summer camps, such as an Art camp held at Fairview Summer Center and Mar-Lu-Ridge.

The board reviewed her application and interviewed both her and her parents. While her parents are not currently beekeepers, they are extremely supportive of her decision to go through with this endeavor. Enclosed with the application were two glowing letters of recommendation; one from a physician who has known Caitlyn for ten years. The other letter was from a couple who owns a local cattle farm that Caitlyn has helped out on. They've known her for several years. With such splendid candidate, the board's decision was unanimous.

SC 2008 -Intermediate Beekeeping A Biological Approach

A new style of short course is being introduced to the area. This time, the course will be geared toward teaching the beekeeper to think for him or herself. The old method of instructing new beekeepers to follow a step by step procedure is being thrown out the window. In its place will be a method by which the beekeeper can reason out what is happening in the colony and adapt their management to suit that need.

This new intermediate course will focus on biology and behavior. Knowing what is happening in your colony. Based on how the bees are behaving and how the colony is performing will allow you to make decisions armed with knowledge rather than memorized protocols. The *WHY* something is happening will better allow you to choose a course of action that will give you a clearer picture of the outcome you can expect with regard to the type of management you choose to use.

Apis Mellifera has been around for 100 million years and they got by just fine without man's intervention. We can learn something from them if we just stop a minute and observe carefully. With all the stressors that are already present (*Varroa*, Tracheal mites, other pests and predators, viruses, disease), what can a poor beekeeper do? A new approach needs to be examined, the old days of putting a hive out in a field and leaving them alone and stealing honey from them once a year are long gone.

The Textbook will be *Honey Bee Biology and Beekeeping* by Dr Dewey M. Caron

Registration Fee \$50.00

All sessions will be held at the Boonsboro Fire Hall

Monday evenings at 7:30 PM

Beginning Monday February 11, 2008

6 St. Paul St

Boonsboro, MD

Course Outline

Session 1 - Introduction---Why biological knowledge important to Beekeeping

Anatomy & Physiology---Important Structures and their function

Session 2 -- Developmental Growth

Nutritional Requirements

Behavior and Social Dynamics

Session 3 -- Colony Evaluation ----

Colony Reproduction --- Swarming, it's motivations, strategies and control

Methods and why they're effective

Session 4- Queens - Evaluation - Queenrighting -- Re-queening

Session 5 -- Management Techniques --For honey production - for increase colonies-- for

Nucs --for pollination services--for comb honey production

Session 6 - Pest and predators--IPM-Varroa and other disease vectors - A closer look at the chemicals and methods

Honey Nut Spice Cake

½ cup shortening
½ cup sugar
½ cup rendered or liquid honey
1 egg separated
½ cup coarsely chopped nuts
2 cups sifted flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon soda
¼ teaspoon salt ¾ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon cloves
½ cup water
¼ teaspoon nutmeg

Grease and flour two 8" layer pans. Cream shortening and sugar until well blended. Add honey, egg yolk and nuts: beat 1 minute. Sift together flour, baking powder, soda, salt and spices. Add alternatively with water to creamed mixture, beating thoroughly. Beat egg white until stiff but not dry. Add to creamed mixture, folding in carefully. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes. Frost with your favorite frosting.

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