

# NEWSLETTER

## Presidential Musings on Winter 2018

Hi Everyone, 2018 is here and I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season. Your club will be holding its first 2017 meeting and I hope it will be well attended. We'll hear from Dr. Dennis vanEnglesdorp about the Bee-Informed survey and what it tells us about what works and what doesn't. I hope you got a chance to take advantage of the holiday equipment sales and are taking the time to get ready for spring. The next biggest risk to your bees is starvation when they begin brood rearing and there is no nectar source available. Keep a keen eye on hive weights until you see dandelions blooming.

The 2018 Beginners Class and Second Year class will be beginning soon.



Your club won first place at the PA Farm Show once again. We owe a big shout out to Brian Marcy, Joe Duffy, Bruce Gibby, and Harold Jenkins. Thanks as well to the members who

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MCBA Motto: "Beekeepers Helping Beekeepers"

### DUES!!

Did you send in your \$15 dues payment in January? Don't miss notices of upcoming meetings because your dues lapsed. Send your check today !

### NAMETAGS ARE HERE!

*In an effort to help everyone get to know each other (and especially for us older beekeepers who forget names), we furnish nametags at meetings. Please pickup and wear your nametag at meetings and other MCBA events.*

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## MCBA winter 2018 Calendar of Events

### Jan 25 - General Meeting - 7:00 pm 4-H Center

Mark Antunes will discuss the importance and value of the annual association irradiation program he heads and [Dr. Dennis van Englesdorp](#), internationally known honey bee entomologist will discuss « Beekeeping Practices – what works and what does not.

### Feb 10 - Philadelphia's 8th Annual Natural Beekeeping Symposium - 9:00 am – 5:45 pm Franklin Institute

### Feb 13 - Executive Board Meeting - 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm 4-H Center

### Feb 22 - General Meeting - 7:00 pm 4-H Center

Ellen Codd will share her process and tips for making substitute pollen patties, (See page 6 article)

### Mar 6 - 2nd Year Beekeepers' Class - 7:00 pm 4-H Center

### Mar 8 - Beginner Beekeepers Course - 6:00 pm 4-H Center

### Mar 10 - Chester County Beekeepers' Conference

### Mar 12 - Irradiation Sterilization Event - 10:30 am

# A Letter from Our Past President: Hive Irradiation Program

By Mark Antunes

Fellow Beekeepers,

Spring will be here before many of us are ready for it. So now is the time to make preparations for the arrival of new packages and nucs. If you have dead out hives from this season, before you put new bees in those dead out hives you should consider taking part in the hive irradiation sterilization program. The annual PSBA/MCBA hive irradiation sterilization event will be held on Monday March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at Sterigenics in Salem, NJ. Spending a little money and getting those dead out hives sterilized before putting new bees into them that cost \$110 or more would be the first step in keeping your new colony healthy.

The hive irradiation program will safely kill any disease or harmful bacteria in your dead out or used hives that you bought that could harm new bees. You can sterilize boxes, frames, honey comb, and the honey in them. Just double bag any boxes that contain honey/stores as per the instructions on the MCBA website. This program has operated successfully for years allowing

beekeepers from OH, PA, NJ, NY, and DE to sterilize second hand equipment and dead out hives and put them safely back in their operation without the threat of infecting new bees in that equipment.

Go to, <http://www.montcopabees.org/services-resources/irradiation/> for complete details about how to prepare and palletize your hive equipment. You MUST follow all of the instructions to wrap individual boxes or pallets of your equipment. Watch the video and read the instructions on bagging boxes with honey and stores in them. You can deliver your equipment already stacked and stretch wrapped on a pallet. Or you take loose hive equipment to Sterigenics and palletize it right there. If you have more than one pallet of equipment, and you have any questions about exactly how much it will cost to irradiate your equipment; there is a post office close by to purchase your money order after you find out exactly how much it

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# American Beekeeping Federation (ABF) and American Bee Research Conference (ABRC) Report

By Vincent Aloyo

Dr. Diana Cox-Foster (ARS- USDA, Logan, UT) presented important data on the toxicity of adjuvants that are added to pesticides. In particular, she showed that a common class of adjuvants called organosilicones are themselves toxic to honey bees and other pollinators. More alarmingly, she stated that 90% of all colonies have detectable levels of Black Queen Cell Virus and that organosilicones increase the virulence of this virus.

As the keynote presentation in the ABRC meeting, Dr. Marla Spivak presented an optimistic take on the current state of beekeeping in a talk entitled “Flipping the Perspective on Honey Bee Health”. She indicated the need to turn challenges into opportunities. For example, she emphasized that 30 to 40% winter loss meant that 60 to 70% of bees are surviving. She suggested that these surviving colonies provide breeding opportunities. She noted that everyone going treatment free would have two negative effects.: a genetic bottle neck (too shallow a gene pool) and in the short term, result in too few colonies for current pollination needs. In contrast, excessive treatment promotes the survival of genetically unfit colonies. She suggested the need to explore some compromise solution. Dr. Spivak also suggested that we question authority. For example, what is the basis for having a Varroa mite

threshold of 9 bees per ½ cup of bees. The threshold may well vary with different climates (In a separate talk, Randy Oliver stated that Canadian beekeepers have fewer Varroa issues than do Southern US beekeepers due to the shorter mite reproduction season in a Canadian summer). She also pointed out there are several ways to define ‘hygienic’ behavior: pin killed brood (commonly used in Europe); freeze killed brood (Dr. Spivak); Varroa parasitized brood. Bees exhibiting these various hygienic behaviors may be sensitive to different odors emanating from the dying/ dead larvae. More research needs to be conducted to try to explain various observations. For example, terramycin (but not other antibiotics) clears up Black Queen Cell Virus. This shouldn’t happen, why does it? She presented preliminary data suggesting that the recent outbreak of chalkbrood might be related to increased use of fungicides.

of the Bee Informed Partnership (BIP) presented some very exciting data. As you know, the BIP has conducted the winter (and now summer) loss survey for many years. One potential objection to their survey and thus their conclusions, is the non-random nature of the population of beekeepers responding

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## Hive Irradiation Program (Continued from P. 2)

will cost to irradiate your equipment.

If you are a member of the MCBA with less than a pallet of equipment you can make arrangements with Will McCartney ([neanderthal44@yahoo.com](mailto:neanderthal44@yahoo.com)) to meet him at the Ralph's Corner shopping center in Hatfield, PA on the morning of Saturday March 10<sup>th</sup> and he will deliver your hive equipment for you. Please remember Will is doing this as a favor to others and has a \$15 bridge toll and 130 miles of travel to pay for on two different days.

For those of you driving yourself we will meet at Sterigenics at 75 Tilbury Road, Salem, NJ 08078 on Monday March 12<sup>th</sup> at about 10:30 A.M.

I suggest that you talk it up among fellow beekeepers and combine equipment to make it more cost effective and economical to take part in the treatment process. If we get enough equipment for 7 pallets the cost will be only \$177.78 for a standard 40" x 48" pallet. On one pallet we can pack 42 deep boxes and 6 mediums all with frames and comb which breaks down to treatment cost of \$3.70 per box. You can pack 66 mediums on a pallet which would be \$2.70 per box to have them treated. That is certainly cheaper than the cost on new boxes, frames, and foundation plus the time, energy, and food resource bees need to build comb.

This is cheap health insurance when you are putting a new package of bees into a dead out hive. If anyone is taking part please let me know by e-mail by the beginning of March. And please pass this on to others.

Sincerely,  
Mark Antunes  
Montgomery Co. Beekeepers Association  
PA State Beekeepers Association

## ABF and ABRC Report (Continued from P. 3)

to their survey. Recently, USDA - NASS, Census of Agriculture performed a small but random survey on winter colony Dr. Geraldine Wright (Newcastle University, UK) continued to develop her research on the nutritional requirements of honey bees. She and collaborators hand collected pollen from hundreds of plant representing many genera and determined the amino acid content of each of these pollens. Although the protein content of these pollens varied widely, 88% of the genera contained all 10 essential amino acids. Dr. Wright has also began investigating the fat content of pollen. Fats, especially sterols are essential nutrients for honey bees. For example, royal jelly is composed of 12.8% fat, and developing larvae require fat to develop. Thus far, Dr. Wright has shown that plant pollens vary in their content of essential omega 6 and omega 3 fatty acids. Her recommendation for the four best plant genera for honey bees (in terms of both amino acids and fatty acids) are *Brassicaceae* (mustards, and cabbage family), *Papaveraceae* (poppy family), *Solanaceae* (nightshade, or potato, family), and *Rosaceae* (the rose family).

Randy Oliver gave three very informative talks. He gave further results on his experiments combining oxalic acid with glycerol to provide extended Varroa control. He is continuing his research to determine the best ration of these two ingredients and is waiting for results of experiments performed in different parts of the US, representing different climates. Much of his previous work is published in ABJ and on his website ([scientificbeekeeping.com](http://scientificbeekeeping.com)). Future results will also be published in ABJ. He also mentioned that he may try propylene glycol in place of glycerol. Randy's long term goal is to get a useful product registered so that it is legal for everyone to use selected mite resistance bees.

Randy's last talk was "Bee Handling Techniques." Randy stated without data that 200 stings per year prevents the development of an allergy to honey bee venom.

For bee handling, he suggested loose fitting clothing, no sun glasses and face protection (even though Randy admitted that he seldom uses a veil). He recommended working bees bare handed in order to develop good bee working habits. In bad weather, he suggested using 12 inch nitrile gloves with a cuff. He pointed out the difference between guard bees and soldier bees. The guards stand at the hive entrance and signal the soldiers (via alarm pheromone) if they feel threatened. If bees are looking up at you from between the frames, time to give a little smoke. He prefers white (not gray) smoke. Factors predisposing bees to sting are, jarring the hive, wool, dark clothing, hives in the shade, previous disturbance by skunk or beekeeper. He advocates keeping gentle bees and re-queening bees that are excessively defensive. He also discussed bees giving a warning 'bump' to the beekeeper to discourage further hive disturbance. The 'bump' is a signal that the bees are not happy with you in their nest. Slow movements are critical to working the hive with fewer stings. When a sting happens, he recommends stopping for a few minutes to allow the alarm pheromone to dissipate. When using smoke, make sure it is actually getting onto the bees and not being blown away by the



## February MCBA General Meeting Highlights

By Margaret Zittel

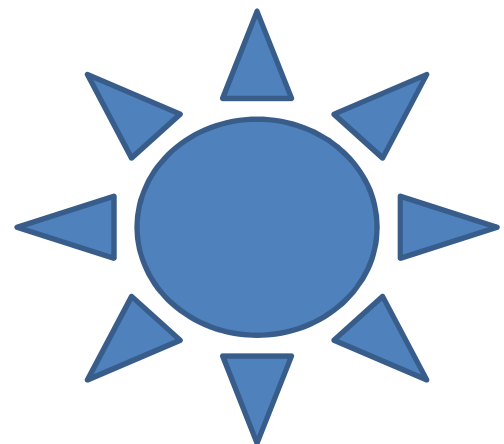
On February 22nd, long-standing MCBA member, Ellen Codd, will share her process and tips for making substitute pollen patties. Substitute pollen patties can be an important source of early protein for honey bees as they complete winter survival and begin spring build-up, as well as other times of the year when pollen is scarce and the bees need nutritional support. This will surely be a timely and informative talk and demonstration.

Next, Walter Broughton of Swarmbustin' Honey will present on his honey bee business that includes comb honey, creamed honey, liquid honey, flavored honey, propolis, royal jelly, beeswax, candles, honey vinegar, honey sticks, honey candy, pollen and much more. We have asked Walter to focus his presentation on the pollen aspect of his business, so he will discuss the importance of pollen to honey bees and humans as well as when and how to collect, process and store pollen. Swarmbustin' Honey is a family run operation located near Chatham in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Walter and his sons collectively have over ten decades of "beeing" with the bees and are passionate about every aspect of their operation. If you never have collected pollen, but entertained the thought of doing so, you will definitely want to attend this informative and interesting presentation.

## Presidential Musings (Continued from P. 1)

volunteered bee products for the display. A wide variety of quality bee products increases our chance of winning. Winning brings in \$500 to offset costs to the club. We really need some new blood in this long standing commitment we have made as a club. It does not take a lot of time, but we need some creative people. Do you paint, draw, have fancy hives, know graphics, etc.? I'll be reaching out for volunteers to bring new creative ideas and energy to the cause.

It's time to start planning for spring. What's your 2018 mite strategy? Do you have the miticides you may need if your testing indicates a need to treat? Are you planning to expand in 2018? Are your queens already ordered? Packages, or nucs, ordered? Are your boxes put together and ready to be wax dipped at one of the club's events? Ready to wrap the dreaded dead-outs for irradiation so you don't spread diseases to the new 2018 bees? A successful year in beekeeping requires you to plan ahead. I'll see you at the next meeting. Dan



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## The Reason for the Season (of Action)

by Chad Towarnicki

Recently the MCBA held an impromptu meeting spearheaded by Mr. Mark Antunes, to discuss what is on every beekeeper's agenda this time of year: successful overwintering of hives. Though it was intended more or less for first year beekeepers, the nearly 80 attendees from both Montgomery and Bucks County spoke to a greater geographic concern regarding the difficulties in emerging triumphant come spring.

When sunlight begins to decline and evening temperatures start to dip, Beekeepers should be mindful of hive location, weatherizing options for hives, stores, and general population numbers. However, the focus of the late-season meeting continually circled back to the impact that mites make in the fall that can and will prove devastating through the winter months.

As a matter of personal record, the two colonies in my home apiary have consistently produced monthly mite counts between one and two mites. Despite solid numbers, I was advised by another MCBA member to apply Mite Away Quick Strips. In a week's time two previously healthy hives

dropped hundreds of mites. The hive bottom boards looked as though the colony was shedding chili powder.

In September and October mite populations can overrun neglected hives or uneducated keepers. As those hives collapse due to mite infestation, their bees abscond and can come into contact with neighboring colonies. With that being said, fall mite inspection and intervention is paramount for spring survival. For continued success of the hives a year-round mite intervention plan is a must. There simply is no "off-season" when it comes to monitoring the health of a hive. Even if a beekeeper is meticulous in mite management, the neighboring unknown puts all colonies at risk.

Beyond the plague of mites, it is necessary to feed colonies in late fall while the bees can still break cluster. Relying on stores alone could spell danger if low temps drag into February and March. Simple windbreaks and insulation of hives can only serve to increase the survival percentages. Southern exposure can supplement the heat of the cluster, with simple tar paper wrapped around the exterior of the boxes to help fight the wind. Any insulation on the exterior of the boxes will help recreate the natural buffer that honey bees would have enjoyed. Consider the R-value of several inches of wood that a hollow branch or stump would provide,

## The Reason For the Season

(Continued from P. 7)

compared to the thin pine construction of the standard woodenware.

With hives wrapped and positioned, draft and internal moisture need to be taken into consideration. A reduced opening (with mice prevention) at the bottom board coupled with a small top entrance allows for necessary draft within the hive boxes. Custom inner covers making use of wood shavings and foam board insulation can minimize moisture while providing secondary insulation.

With all that being said, there is no sure bet with overwintering. The mites present in every colony carry disease with them, weakening the population regardless of active intervention. If a colony is lost, do not reuse the woodenware without taking advantage of the irradiation program available @ montcopabees.com.

The unfortunate reality is that the pervasive impact of mites have compromised the colonies' independent ability to survive. The old adage rings true: "it takes a village".



Many of those concerned village members convened to share experiences, concerns, and techniques that can help fight against the rippling impact of mites. As always, lean on the support that the MCBA provides whether it be through social media outlets (Facebook forum or Instagram), or through direct contact with active members. It is not as simple as having bees; we keep bees!



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## MCBA Wins First Place at 2018 Pennsylvania Farm Show

By Elinor Spring

Congratulations to MCBA's design team- Brian Marcy, Joe Duffy, Bruce Gibby, Harold Jenkins, and Dan Boylan- for winning the coveted first place with their beekeeping exhibit at the 102nd Pennsylvania Farm Show! The eye-catching winning entry, entitled "A Spoonful a Day Keeps the Doctor Away," was created with both public education and artistic detail in mind with topics including the medicinal uses of honey, beeswax, honeybee venom, pollen, and propolis accented with a display of a variety of honeys and wax products. The team met on three occasions at the 4-H Center in Skippack to design the display and plan for its installation. Not only was the display clearly appreciated by the judges but also by the Farm Show attendees, as one of our members overheard these comments:

"I love the smell of those candles and the wax! Isn't it amazing you can smell it from here?"

"I didn't know there were so many actual medical uses for honey, did you?  
I'm going to look more into that."

"See that, I'm supposed to eat more honey!"

Congratulations again, Team, and thank you for representing our club so well!





# Our 2018 Winning Pennsylvania Farm Show Display



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# MCBA Marketplace

Would you like to advertise in marketplace? If you have beekeeping-related products to sell or services to offer, please send your advertisement to the newsletter editor at: [annbreinig@me.com](mailto:annbreinig@me.com)

## Spring Packages

**Sat, March 31  
& Sat, May 5  
after noon**



This is 24th year working with package producers in same location—queen pedigree from overwintered feral colonies in PA and Michigan. Includes 3-lb workers and Italian queen. Pickup is five miles from Valley Forge, Norristown, and Lansdale. Join us for a package installation demo at 2:00pm. Download a reservation form at [www.pabeekeeper.com](http://www.pabeekeeper.com).  
[Packages@pabeekeeper.com](mailto:Packages@pabeekeeper.com)

## April Nucs



Reserve your nuc now. Pickup dates are around 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> weeks of April. Be sure to include email or phone so that we can call to arrange pickup. Location is five miles from Valley Forge, Norristown, and Lansdale.

Download a reservation form or get more information at [www.pabeekeeper.com](http://www.pabeekeeper.com)  
Worcester Honey Farms  
[HandsOn@pabeekeeper.com](mailto:HandsOn@pabeekeeper.com)  
Lansdale, PA 610-584-6778

## MCBA LEADERSHIP TEAM 2017-2018

### MCBA Leadership Team

President	Dan Boylan	<a href="mailto:dboyolan@comcast.net">dboyolan@comcast.net</a>
Vice President	Kimberly Baccari	<a href="mailto:kimberly@baccariprowriters.com">kimberly@baccariprowriters.com</a>
Secretary	Regina Rhoa	<a href="mailto:rrhoa1033@verizon.net">rrhoa1033@verizon.net</a>
Treasurer	Geoff Anders	<a href="mailto:geof.anders@gmail.com">geof.anders@gmail.com</a>

### MCBA Board of Directors

Past President	Mark Antunes	<a href="mailto:honeyhillfarm@verizon.net">honeyhillfarm@verizon.net</a>
Membership Programs	Mick Newby	<a href="mailto:iammicker@yahoo.com">iammicker@yahoo.com</a>
	Margaret Zittel	<a href="mailto:mzittel1@verizon.net">mzittel1@verizon.net</a>
Queen Rearing Project	Scott Famous	<a href="mailto:famous55@verizon.net">famous55@verizon.net</a>
Hive Steward	Walt Fitzgerald	<a href="mailto:fitzgerald106@comcast.net">fitzgerald106@comcast.net</a>
Website Liason	Elinor Spring	<a href="mailto:T5Springer@aol.com">T5Springer@aol.com</a>
Queen Rearing Project	Dr. Vince Aloyo	<a href="mailto:vincent.aloya@gmail.com">vincent.aloya@gmail.com</a>
Communications	Rachel Newby	<a href="mailto:buchanan.1978@gmail.com">buchanan.1978@gmail.com</a>
Others on the Board:	Greg Lehman	<a href="mailto:glehman22@gmail.com">glehman22@gmail.com</a>

## Send in your Dues today for Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Dues are applied on a calendar year basis. January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>

New membership \_\_\_\_\_ Renewing membership \_\_\_\_\_

MCBA DUES \$15.00 per household\* per year \$ \_\_\_\_\_

PSBA DUES\*\* \$20.00 for one person per year or \$25.00 per household per year \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\* We recommend:** that you also pay dues for PA State Beekeepers in order to encourage research on bee health, and promote efforts to dissuade local township and boroughs from restricting beekeeping. You will also benefit from the 10 annual state newsletters and information sharing. (\*household = 2 adults and all children living at one address.)





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Montgomery County Beekeepers Association  
PO Box 203  
Hatfield, PA 19440

[Recipient]  
Address Line 1  
Address Line 2  
Address Line 3  
Address Line 4