



A drone seeking a warm place to spend the winter--you can adopt him!
 Photo courtesy of Dan Wyns

Hopefully your bee work, yard work, house work and home work are all caught up, and you have time to read this robust newsletter. Interspersed with news and announcements is a bit of fun.

We received some intriguing swarm stories this summer and I thought I'd include them here, but then I was swarmed with articles. Watch for them in another issue before year end. It will also include a comprehensive update from MSU; they've been busier than bees.

We also have info on some of the district Beekeepers of the Year and our state winner. Congrats to all of them, and thanks for your efforts to help us all become better beekeepers.

Special thanks to all the photographers who submitted photos for the MBA's Adopt-A-Bee FUNdraiser. Their work enhances this addition.

Have you adopted a bee yet? We're all yearning for connection these days; gifting someone a bee-autiful customized letter and a postcard of "their" bee will provide some emotional sunshine -- and help bees and beekeepers. Please order bees for loved ones by clicking [here](#). The program goes until October of **next year**.

Charlotte Hubbard, newsletter editor



Drone Photo Contest Winners for Adopt-A-Bee Postcards clockwise from upper left

- Rich Wieske
- Marshall Beachler (2nd and 4th)
- Rebecca Wittekindt
- Ron Maurer

Thanks to everyone who submitted photos for the first Adopt-A-Bee postcard competition. Above are the drone winners. You'll surely want to adopt one (or more!) of these handsome fellows before they're kicked out in the cold. Isn't that bronze-eyed drone, upper left, remarkable?

MBA Fall Conference Overview

by Charlotte Hubbard, newsletter editor



The MBA recently wrapped up a very unique – and SUPER successful -- Fall Conference. It was online, which meant of course there were technology stumbles (but luckily none of significance), and was attended by 60 – 120ish folks, although one person logged on might actually represent several people on the other side of the screen. (I'm sure sometimes it meant no one on the other side of the screen when they wandered off to fix lunch or move clothes to the dryer.)

As many attendees mentioned, the conference benefits that occur in hallways were greatly missed. However, an advantage of being virtual meant that we had incredible, industry-leading speakers from all over the country whom we would not otherwise be able to afford – and a swarm of them. Special salute to Dr. Larry Connor for recruiting so many excellent speakers, and so smoothly handling **two full days** of programming. And to think it was all free to MBA members. Hopefully you were able to attend some or all of the conference, and gain great value from your membership.

There was so much information, wow. One of the many things that will change my beekeeping will be colony rearrangement. A couple of speakers mentioned the benefit of reduced drift (and thus disease transmission) when colonies are positioned in a circle or a 'U'. I'm also thinking of planting more trees for bees; we probably all should. I was so inspired by so much of what was shared, I wish the active season were just starting, instead of coming to an end. Can we please fast forward to next Spring?

There were SO many remarkable speakers with insightful content that I can't begin to summarize or do justice to them. In addition to speakers, the conference hosted the MBA's annual Fall meeting. Joel Lantz, who stepped down as District 7 rep this year, received life membership to the MBA in honor of his amazing service, to beekeepers across the UP and bee-yond. Thanks Joel for all you've given to the beekeeping community. (Inset photo features auctioneer Joel, at a previous conference.)

Hope to see everyone at the Spring Conference, although most likely, we'll be seeing each other in the participants bar across our screens. Stay healthy, safe, and sane everyone.

And oh yes, **please adopt a bee!**

Seeking Heroes to Hives Applicants

Adam J. Ingrao, PhD, U.S. Army Veteran, Veterans' Liaison | Agricultural Entomologist, MSU Extension

Veterans, National Guard, active duty personnel, and reservists--are you interested in becoming a successful beekeeper? Heroes to Hives is the nation's largest ag training program for military personnel and since 2015 has trained nearly 1,000 veterans in the art and science of beekeeping. Students leave our program with a broad depth of beekeeping knowledge, as well as personal and professional relationships that open up new opportunities and ensure long-term peer support.

Our students are provided with a free 9-month education course that includes online lectures and Q and A sessions coupled with hands-on instruction at 6 training locations across Michigan. Our online curriculum focuses on the fundamentals of beekeeping while our on-ground classes focus on hive management as well as the therapeutic benefits of beekeeping.

Applications for the 2021 Heroes to Hives cohort are open November 1 through February 28 and classes run from March – November every year. Interested in learning more about the 2021 program? View our 2021 Program Preview video [here](#). To apply for the program or learn more about Heroes to Hives visit our [website](#) or contact [Dr. Adam Ingrao](#).



Update on Michigan Managed Pollinator Protection Plan (MP3)

by Ana Heck

MSU's Michigan Pollinator Initiative is working to implement strategies outlined in the Managed Pollinator Protection Plan (MP3). We post updates on our work related to the MP3 action items on our [MP3 webpage](#), where you can find a [full update](#). Some specific highlights include:

1. We received funding from the [North Central IPM Center](#) to lead a national working group of people who work on MP3s and related projects. Our group currently includes representatives from 11 different states. We are working to create shared resources and support efforts in other states to protect managed pollinators. One of our current projects is to create and share a presentation about pollinators that can be given at pesticide recertification credit clinics in Michigan and throughout the U.S.
2. We wrote a section about pollinators for the *Michigan Private and Commercial Applicator Core Manual*, the book that many people study before taking an exam to become certified pesticide applicators. We've shared this text with other states that are interested in including a similar section in their study materials for pesticide applicators.
3. With input from growers, beekeepers, and MSU Extension experts, we are developing crop-specific pollinator stewardship guides on how growers can support pollinator health. I've spoken to hundreds of growers about managed pollinators and how they can support bees.
4. Last year I spoke at 10 recertification credit clinics to hundreds of pesticide applicators about managed bees and strategies to reduce pesticide exposure. I'll give virtual presentations to pesticide applicators in the fall and winter of this year.
5. MSU student Holly Hooper created a [trifold brochure](#) on how home gardeners can reduce pollinator exposure to pesticides.
6. Our [online Pollinator Champions course](#) has had over 2,100 students enroll. Pollinator Champions is the fastest growing online course in terms of enrollment within MSU Extension and has a high completion rate. The Pollinator Champions course received MSU Extension's 2019 Innovative Technology Award. We are grateful to the [Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development \(MDARD\)](#), and the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#), for partly funding a position to improve and implement our state's Managed Pollinator Protection Plan.



The state plan is a living document that is born from stakeholder input. Please feel free to reach out to Ana Heck at heckanar@msu.edu if you have ideas of action items, funding opportunities for action items, questions, or feedback.

Editor's Note: This article overviews some of the excellent work done by MSU Extension. Please support them. Have I mentioned the Adopt-A-Bee gifting opportunity yet? :) Photo featured above was one of the worker bee submissions; thanks photographer Lucas Beachler.

Beekeepers of the Year

SO many beekeepers are worthy of this honor! But, the 2020 results are in; congrats to all:

District 1: Ryan Mestdagh
 District 2: Andrea Stevens
 District 3: Michael Sautter
 District 4: Chuck Bauer (also state winner)
 District 5: Laurie McMurray
 District 6: Mark Spencer
 District 7: Nancy Osterberg

This issue reviews some of them -- watch for more information in future issues.



Save Your Back, Grow a Tomato

When you make the switch from 10-frame to something smaller (because probably none of us should be repeatedly lifting 10-frame deeps of honey but we do it anyway) or those hive bodies have too many "upper entrances" (aka holes and cracks) -- here's a great, proven repurposing for them: raised gardens!

Deep boxes work best, but this gardener also crafted a few double-mediums containers. The gardener noted that the cardboard in the photos is used as an environmentally friendly weed barrier, and the sticks are tomato trellises.

The dog guards the tomatoes, although she also likes to remove and chew on the trellis sticks when the gardener isn't watching.

Thanks to beekeeper R.D. Rivers for the photos and idea.



Biosecurity and Beekeeping

by Michael Hansen, State Apiarist, Plant Health Field Supervisor Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

In 2001, the United Kingdom suffered an outbreak and rapid spread of Foot and Mouth Disease. Within days of the initial discovery, it was evident the disease had spread across the UK, leading to as many as 10 million animals destroyed to stop the outbreak. Disease officials in the United States quickly realized swift action was needed to prevent a similar disaster from occurring here.

Like other animal industries, beekeeping activities flow across the nation. Bees are repeatedly moved across borders for pollination and honey production. Our borders are porous, laws between states are inconsistent, and bees are moved thousands of miles for the opportunity to be placed near other beekeeping operations to pollinate the nation's crops. All the items listed in the above sentence should be part of the foundation for a beekeeping biosecurity plan.

The U.S. has had some success in applying biosecurity at our international borders, but it has taken some real hard work. The Federal Bee Act, as well as most State Apiary laws, were first written in the early 1900s to limit the infection rate of American Foulbrood (AFB). In the first two years of Michigan having its inspection service, 27 percent of the colonies inspected were found to have AFB. By destroying diseased colonies, and through careful inspection and education, rates dropped below one percent, apiary inspection was not considered necessary when disease rates were low and was reinstated when disease rates again got out of hand.

States like Michigan went through several cycles of building inspection programs when AFB erupted, only to have them cut when the rate dropped. Many of the once strict states now offer inspection only for the purpose of issuing a health certificates for movement. The onus of managing most honeybee diseases falls to the beekeeper. Some are well prepared, but many are not.

Small Hive beetle took less than a year to be found in every state. Detection was quick because the once-quiet industry had become a web colony movement across the nation in every direction, making the mosaic difficult to sort out.

It's often missed that in the early 1990s, beekeepers were losing up to 80 percent of their operation in a year from Tracheal and Varroa mite. The industry saw a big change in the makeup of the United States' beekeeping population during that time frame. Miticides helped slow the losses. But by 2006 we learned a new phrase; Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). It took five years of intensive research to show there were six major factors contributing to bee decline. Today, we seldom see the classic symptoms of CCD, but it is still identified as a major problem.

In 2006, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued permits for the import of bees from Australia and New Zealand under the authority of the Federal Bee Act. Other countries – even those with known bee parasites - applied for permits. When the USDA denied the permits, the World Trade Organization ruled that since the U.S. did not have an established bench line for apiary pests and diseases-by international standards-they did not have a right to deny those permits.

The National Honey Bee Survey was developed in 2009. In 2010, Apiary inspectors started to collect samples nationally to help the USDA accumulate the data needed to support the Federal Bee Act. When the data showed Slow Bee Paralysis Virus (SBPV) was not found in the United States, the agency rescinded Australia's permit. SBPV had been identified in Australia, and the USDA took steps to protect our bee population.

In 2019, Canada allowed the import of bees from South America. In response, USDA closed the border to Canada to prevent the trans-shipment of South American bees into the U.S. USDA and Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) are working through a risk assessment process required to safely re-open the border for bee movement.



Above photo courtesy of Dan Wyns. The Adopt-A-Bee team did not have a contest for worker bees, as we feared being overwhelmed by breath-taking photos. We solicited photos instead from some of the folks we know who intentionally photograph bees, and they took our breath away.

Our judges did tell us that judging "just" drones and queens was hard enough! Thanks again everyone for such bee-autiful submissions. (And now, if you're reading this, please go adopt a bee.)

Conquering the biosecurity issue must start with beekeepers. Keeping bees healthy is incredibly important. Beekeepers who have adopted indoor storage practices know they will get the best results if they store only healthy bees.

Even if they don't use an indoor facility, beekeepers must strive for bees free of disease with extremely low mite levels year-round to prevent virus transmission. Retired apiculturist Medhat Nasr shared that only a small percentage of Canadian bees are stored indoors, but they have adopted similar stringent controls to help bees make it through the winter.

Several excellent resources are available to beekeepers, including information from the Honey Bee Health Coalition, and the Indoor Wintering Guide developed by Washington State and sponsored by Project ApisM. I especially like the resources on the [Michigan Pollinator Initiative website](http://www.pollinators.msu.edu) (www.pollinators.msu.edu). Plus, other universities with leading apiculture programs are providing webinars, web sites, and virtual meetings. Beekeepers need to adopt best management strategies which work for them, and then teach and expect that from their employees.

If you have American Foulbrood, root it out of your operation and get rid of diseased equipment. Disinfect after each yard, use chlorinated cleanser to clean your equipment. I have been in bee yards where 100 percent of the colonies had American Foulbrood. Then at the next operation there was no AFB. Do not be the one to transmit active AFB within your own operation.

If you have old antibiotic in your freezer, get rid of it properly. Locate a veterinarian who is willing to work with beekeepers and use only fresh treatments. Antibiotics lose potency quickly and mis-dosing a treatment can only lead to disease resistance. The Honey Bee Veterinary Consortium, <https://www.hbvc.org> is a good place to start if your state does not already have a way of connecting veterinarians and beekeepers.

If you are going to purchase bees, inspect them, sample them, send samples to the USDA lab in Beltsville, Maryland, or the Utah Department of Agriculture lab to know what you are dealing with. Also, send samples out for virus analysis and ensure you know what you're buying.

If you have questions, talk to your state apiary inspector. You can find an index of state and provincial Apiarists at www.apiaryinspectors.org.

Beekeeping is unlikely to return to the stationary occupation it was 40 years ago. If bees are going to move, be good to yourselves and your neighbors and move only the best we can.

Biography: Mike Hansen serves as the Plant Health Field Supervisor for the Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division in Michigan. In addition, Mike has served as Michigan's State Apiarist since October of 1992, has been active in the Apiary Inspectors of America (AIA) since 1994 with past service as Vice President and President. Currently, Mike serves as the At-Large Director for AIA.

President's Corner

by Chris Beck, MBA President

Hello Beekeepers,

No doubt this issue of the newsletter will include other articles regarding the fall zoom conference. I hope you were able to join the talks....so many outstanding speakers! If not, some of them were recorded and will be available. Timing and access to be announced. Thank you so much Larry Connor and team for executing an outstanding event. Plans are already underway for the spring event. What would you like to see included?

The annual meeting included the results of the election. Rich Wieske takes over as VP. Gary Ester is the new treasurer. Chuck Bauer joins the board as Member-at-Large. The district Rep slate will have all three incumbents returning. Congratulations to the new board members. And thank you membership for voting electronically! Pay special attention to the featured beekeepers in this and future editions. The board recognized several folks for outstanding contribution to Michigan beekeeping. They have earned Beekeeper of the Year status with trophies! Also, we offered a special salute to Joel Lantz as he stepped down as district rep after many years of service.

The board continues to meet monthly and work against our resolutions. Ray Browers has been appointed chair of the Honey Promotion Committee. Look for more to come from them. Additionally, the conference opened up a couple new opportunities with the Legislative Committee, so I hope to have more to report on that next edition.

Surely your bees are tucked away for winter. Enjoy your visions of boxes crowded with healthy bees next March!

Please contact me with questions or concerns: president@mba-bees.org. Thanks.

Connecting with the MSU Apiculture Team

eXtension Ask an Expert: Do you have beekeeping or gardening questions? The MSU Apiculture Team is asking that you submit these questions through [eXtension Ask an Expert](#) because it allows them to better track questions answered and direct your question to the right person to respond.

Michigan Beekeeping Q&A Upcoming Webinar: The MSU Apiculture Team has been hosting webinars for Michigan beekeepers. Please register for our upcoming webinar on Thursday, 10/29 and find links to past recordings on our [webinar page](#).

Facebook pages:

- [Michigan State University Beekeeping \(@MSUHoneyBees\)](#)
- [Michigan Pollinator Initiative \(@MichiganPollinatorInitiative\)](#)
- [Heroes to Hives \(@HeroesToHives\)](#)

Newsletter: To receive notifications of upcoming webinars for beekeepers and other MSU Extension events, please [sign up for our newsletter](#) and be sure to select "Pollinators & Pollination".

MSU Bee Blog: Subscribe to the [MSU Bee Blog](#) to receive occasional updates about MSU Extension Apiaries and related programs.

Fundraising Campaigns

Adopt-a-bee: Participate in this [FUNdraiser](#) and bees win, as does whomever you adopt a bee for.

Beekeeping Education & Support Fund: MSU has a new crowd funding campaign to support its education and outreach work for Michigan small-scale beekeepers. While our team's salaries are covered through funds from MSU, grants, and/or endowments, we often don't have funds to run programs unless we receive a grant. Donations provide us with flexibility to promptly respond to opportunities and needs, and they may go toward printing materials, traveling to talk to beekeeping groups (once MSU's travel restrictions are relaxed), and managing teaching colonies. To learn more or make a gift to support our work, please visit the [Beekeeping Education and Support Fund](#).

Beekeeper of the Year, District 3

submitted by Rich Wieske. District Rep (at the time of submission)

Michael C. Sautter is a beekeeper, queen breeder and community bee educator who has selflessly shared his passion for sustainable local beekeeping for over twenty years. His generosity is obvious to all with whom he has worked.

As an active sideline beekeeper with over 100 colonies, Michael's knowledge has been acquired through hands-on work with bees, research and networking at local and regional conferences.

After attending Larry Connor's queen rearing course in Detroit nearly 15 years ago, Michael began rearing queens and nucs. He recently earned the Kentucky Queen Breeders Certificate and would like to develop a similar program in Michigan.

Michael is passionate about helping others in their quest for sustainable beekeeping by providing support, encouragement and education, as well as being a source for locally bred queens and nucs. He is an instructor for intermediate students at SEMBA Bee School, and recently became co-director. He also gives presentations at schools, beekeeping & garden clubs and for other organizations.



Chuck started beekeeping in 2007 after retiring from IBM as a Customer Engineer. His original intent was to raise two or three colonies of bees. As the years passed, more and more were added from the splits he made and the swarms he caught. Now he has 25 colonies.

Splitting colonies every spring gives him nucs to sell. He builds the remaining colonies quickly for his summer honey crop. Chuck states with pride, "I also overwinter very successfully, usually 100%." He has membership in five different bee clubs, including the MBA. He has been the Treasurer of the Holland Area Beekeeper Association and is currently the President of the Grand Rapids Area Beekeepers.

Many beekeepers in West Michigan have benefitted from Chuck's knowledge and experience. He is widely recognized for his expertise and is frequently referenced by other beekeepers when they are giving advice.

As we award Chuck with the State of Michigan Beekeeper of the Year Award for 2020, I want to thank him for the many hours he has given to the beekeeping community. I look forward to working with him and learning from him, for many years to come.

Congratulations Chuck!

Michigan's State Beekeeper of the Year: Chuck Bauer

by Ray Browers, District Rep



Beekeeper of the Year, District 6, and other District News

submitted by Rodney Bear, District Rep



Mark Spencer is a member of the Seven Ponds Bee Club. Mark is the lead teacher for the Seven Ponds club's New Beekeepers Class as well as a mentor for several new beekeepers every season. He is patient and knowledgeable with the new beekeepers.

Mark is a sideline beekeeper (Spencer's Apiaries) and enjoys taking his knowledge of beekeeping on the road by speaking at a number of local schools where he has honeybees on display in an observation hive during his presentations. When he's not busy, you can find him at the Rochester Farmers Market selling a variety of bee products.

Rodney, (pictured right) also shared that "Bee Season is winding down and there's not much to report. SVBA and Seven Ponds have held outdoor club meetings with proper social distancing. Sunrise Side Beekeepers have continued to hold Zoom meeting because of the in-person meeting restrictions.

On a side note, I had 3 swarm calls on Labor day and another club member had 2 swarm calls, must have been something in the air. All were successfully hived."



Beekeeper of the Year, District 1

submitted by Kyle LeRoux, District Rep

Ryan Mestdagh is currently finishing up his fifth season as a beekeeper. Ryan purchased his first nuc in 2016 and has grown and expanded to eighteen hives. Ryan takes pride in maintaining a self-sustainable apiary, making his own splits, catching swarms, and working "trap out" techniques. Ryan enjoys all aspects of beekeeping from building equipment, chasing swarms, working in his apiary, mentoring other beekeepers, to participating as Vice President of the Battle Creek Bee Club. Ryan plays a key role in his local community by assisting city workers with trap outs and swarm removals. Ryan has given countless hours towards mentoring younger beekeepers around him and presents beekeeping to local schools and library. Ryan enjoys talking bees, perhaps sometimes too much; just ask his wife Megan and two young boys who have supported him along the way.



Beekeeper of the Year, District 2

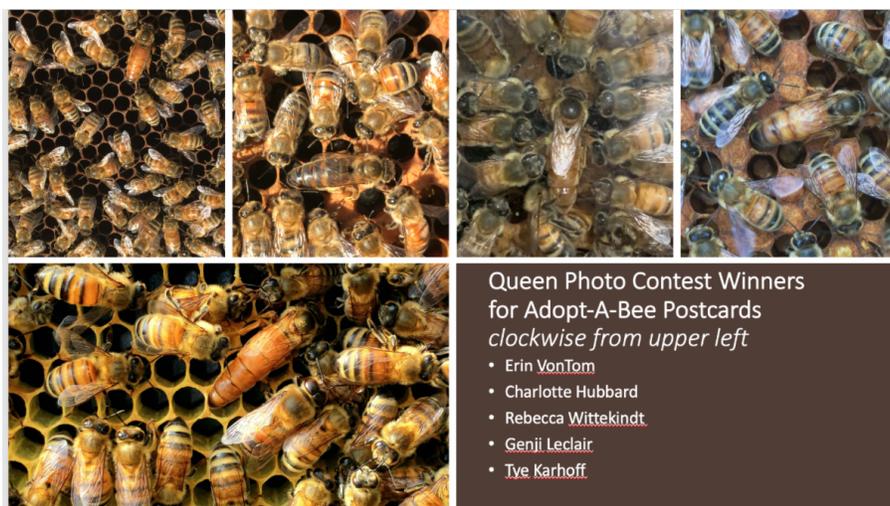
submitted by David Pearce, District Rep

Andrea Stevens began keeping bees in 2013 by joining a class with a fellow colleague as a way to share an adventure in learning. After fumbling a bit in the first few years, Andrea began learning how to successfully overwinter bees, raise queens and make nucs.

Over the years she has gained knowledge which she freely shares with others who are striving to better serve their bees. Andrea is an essential leader in the Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers bee school where she not only helps facilitate learning but also leads class sessions, offers mentorship and frequently does onsite consultations.

Through her years as a beekeeper she has developed strategies and techniques which enable her to successfully overwinter nucs. She now provides local, overwintered Michigan nucs to customers but more importantly, is willing to help other beekeepers understand her techniques for overwintering to enable them to successfully raise nucs themselves.

Andrea demonstrates the qualities of a leader in the bee community. She is extremely knowledgeable, talented and dedicated to helping others.



Queen Photo Contest Winners
for Adopt-A-Bee Postcards
clockwise from upper left

- Erin [VonTom](#)
- Charlotte Hubbard
- Rebecca [Wittekindt](#)
- Genji [Leclair](#)
- Tye [Karhoff](#)

Are you a beekeeper whose operation has been directly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic? USDA is implementing [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2](#) for

agricultural producers who continue to face market disruptions and associated costs because of COVID-19, and honey is an eligible commodity. Please contact USDA's Farm Service Agency to learn more about applying to CFAP 2.



I wrap up this lengthy newsletter with two more stunning photos, courtesy of Dan Wyns.



Thanks Dan, for capturing and sharing these remarkable photos.

And thanks everyone, for caring about pollinators.

Charlotte Hubbard

STAY CONNECTED

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