



## May 2023 Second Quarter Newsletter

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Please note that depending on your email service, you may need to click a "view all" or "view more" link to see the entire newsletter.

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## Editor's Musings

by Becky Green, MBA newsletter editor

What a spring it has been. Temperatures in the 80s in mid-April in SE Michigan, followed by cool days that just didn't seem to want to go away. Finally, it is warm enough here to get serious about splits, and even if I had not already been planning for it, my bees are demanding it, as many of them seem to be celebrating the warm weather by making preparations to do splits of their own. Or in other words, swarm season has arrived! I have spent the last five days deep in bees. The good news is that my bees had a good winter. The bad news is that

the local raccoons, possums and skunks (yes I have seen all three!) are making regular visits to the hives, looking for snacks. At least one of them has been pulling out the sliders below the screened bottoms on every hive. This week I removed those myself, but I can still tell when the visitors have been there based on how the bees greet me when I open the hives. Interestingly, with all my hives more defensive than I am used to, I have learned that one of my goats reacts to bee alarm pheromone just like the bees! If I try to milk her without showering after working a defensive hive, my normally friendly goat bites me. I have also come up with a theory that alarm pheromone deters ticks. I had just commented to my husband that I had been spared my usual daily tick or two from the bee yard this spring. Then, today the bees were all chill (Yeah!). My goat took a good sniff and decided I didn't need biting. Tonight I removed 3 ticks from my head. If I am correct, it could be a million dollar discovery: alarm pheromone as a super effective tick repellent! There are only 2 problems: 1) I don't want to be the one to test my theory, and 2) Covering oneself with a honey bee "come sting me" scent and then walking around outside might have some side effects that would discourage sales. But enough silliness! I have to run! I need to go check on some bees! I suspect many of you are doing the same.

## President's Corner

By Rich Wieske, MBA president



What a start to this year's bee season, a typical Michigan spring, 80 degrees for two days then 30 and 40's for a week. I am hearing mixed reviews on survival so far this year, with varroa again taking its deadly toll. I am personally so done with burying dead outs even if it is only a couple in a yard ... Confession, since becoming MBA president my beekeeping skills have gone downhill, so mothers, don't let your babies

grow up and be bee club presidents....

Our Spring Conference was a huge success. In fact it appears to have been one of the top attended state bee association conferences in the country this spring. We were second only to Texas who had over 600 folks show up. In Michigan we topped out with over 450. Thank you David Peck and all the other great presenters who shared their knowledge and made it such a memorable day. And between the silent auction and the Roger Hoopingartner's T-shirt quilt we raised over \$2000.



Keynote speaker David Peck  
Photo by Joan Mandrell



Roger Hoopingartner's T-shirt quilt.

Our Pollinator Tree Program went well for our first year. We distributed almost 1400 trees, large leaf basswoods, sergeant



crabapple and small leaf basswoods. We still have a few large leaf basswoods left, that are now potted and waiting for new homes. Big shout out to A2B2, BENZI bees, Holland Area Bee Club and Mid Michigan Bee Club. Of the 18 clubs who participated, these four contributed over 50% of our total sales. Once the dust settles we will be doing a review on how to make the tree program better for next time. Current thinking is

centralizing orders to avoid a run up on any one type of tree. With each club handling their own orders, it wasn't until pretty late that we realized we'd sold out of crabapples and had to scramble to fulfill those orders. Also we're looking to add a tulip tree and possibly a small shrub or bush next time. We are very interested in hearing your comments and thoughts on how to improve this project. I would love to make a goal of distributing 5,000 pollinator trees and shrubs next time. Who knows, one day we may get to the point of having a tree planted for each child born in our state.



Thank you to Ana Heck for pulling together the Club Leadership and Instructor's session for our first virtual conference. This was a follow up to a lively luncheon during our spring conference. All club leaders and officers who are interested in healthy clubs can learn something from these

gatherings. The next one is coming up June 21, definitely a not to miss event.



Pictured are Robbyn Smith author of "H is for Honey Bee" with Niki Barnes's elementary class from Wayland Union Schools, proudly displaying their copy of "Welcome to our Honey Farm". Out of the 10,000 "Welcome to our Honey Farm" coloring books the MBA

purchased at the beginning of the year, only about 500 copies remain. The board has just approved the order for another 10,000. We will try and distribute them to our district reps and have them available at the fall conference. At this rate we may need another 10,000 for our spring conference.



2023 World Bee Day Presenter Report  
by Kimi Baker

We are kicking off another pilot program this year, to coordinate with World Bee Day. The program will provide resources to those of us brave enough to work with elementary school children. One of the most rewarding and challenging

tasks we beekeepers can do is share our knowledge with the next generation. The Committee, led by Audrey Heckwolf, Marge Kessler and Kimi Baker has put together a collection of age appropriate activities, including Bingo, follow the bee maze, rubbings on plastic foundation, looking at bees close up with a magnifying lens, or a waggle dance, to name a few of the many activities they have designed to help engage the kids. With input from the pilot program



participants, the committee plans to continue to develop and refine the tools, with the goal of making them widely available as an MBA resource available to all you amazing folks committed to teaching kids about bees. We've also gathered several bee and pollinator books by Michigan based authors to be donated to schools participating in our World Bee Day program.



Photo by Josie Whelan

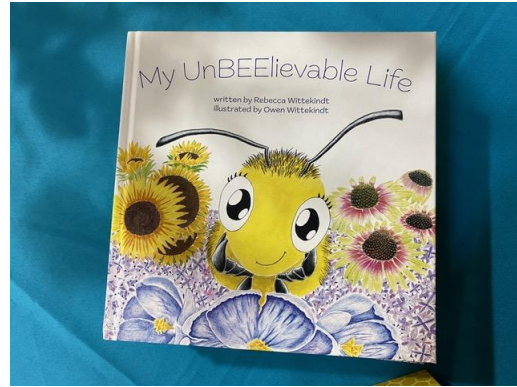


Photo by Rich Wieske



Our Program committee has been hard at work on our fall meeting lineup. The meeting will be held Oct 21 in Clare at the Doherty Hotel. Minnesota's Katie Lee, will be our keynote presenter. Katie is the apiculture extension educator & Minnesota NCR-SARE co-coordinator. Along with a few other special guests, the fall should be a memorable event. They have also

gotten a commitment from David Tarpay to be our Spring 2024 keynote. This is very exciting news in deed! And in 2024, we will also be back to a two-day conference. There are some rumblings of a possible fall 2024 joint conference with the Ontario Bee Keepers Association. Finally, it has been confirmed that the Eastern Apicultural Society will be holding their 70th annual short course and conference in Dearborn Aug 2025. What an incredible line up of conferences and speakers.

We can always use some help on our legislative committee and coming up this fall we need assistance with the elections and nominations committees and will need a few new officers to fill in vacancies. Please let us know if you want to become more active in the MBA in any of these roles.



Oh, and have you got your MBA hat?



Blood root flower with bee.  
Photo by Rich Wieske

Until next time, 'may all your swarms be low'.

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## Resources for Beekeepers

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### Selling or buying locally raised nucs and queens

The Northern Bee Network is an online directory of individuals selling honey bee queens and nucs. It is free for producers, and any beekeeper can be listed by filling out a simple form. The goal is to have a directory where queen producers can find each other to share ideas and genetics and where beekeepers can find individuals selling local queens and bees. The Northern Bee Network was started in 2013 through a [kickstarter campaign by Meghan Milbrath](#), a beekeeper and small-scale queen producer in Michigan. In 2015, Meghan accepted a position at Michigan State University working in bee research and extension. She continues to run the Northern Bee Network as part of her extension activities at MSU. Visit [www.northernbeetwork.org](http://www.northernbeetwork.org) to find local bees or to create a free listing to sell queens or nucs. If you have questions, or want to update your existing listing email [northernbeetwork@gmail.com](mailto:northernbeetwork@gmail.com)

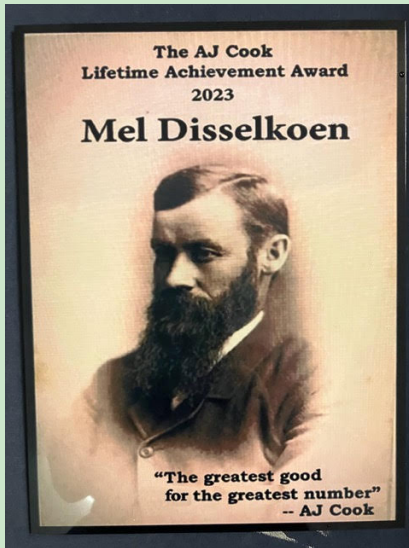


### Coming Soon: MBA Local Honey Locator

The Michigan Beekeepers Association is gearing up to launch a new resource page aimed at helping connect Michigan honey producers directly with honey buyers in their local communities. Whether you are selling your honey as your business or beekeeping is a hobby, and just happen to have more honey than you can use, we want to help you connect with customers who recognize the benefits of buying local honey and are looking for you!!! Click [here](#) to get more information about how to get on to the list.

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## The A.J. Cook Award



Periodically the MBA presents the AJ Cook award to honor Michigan's longest serving beekeeper, whose lifetime contributions expanded our understanding of the art and science of beekeeping and strengthened our beekeeping community.

AJ Cook ranks with Langstroth and Dadant as one of the founding fathers of American beekeeping. As the nation's first professor of economic entomology, his contributions to the world of beekeeping through teaching, research, writing, and community organization transformed the practice of apiculture at home and abroad. He has

special significance to Michigan, as he was a native of our state, and one of the first faculty at MSU. In addition, he was instrumental in the founding of the MBA and in making Michigan one of the most influential states in the development of the beekeeping industry. He was also renowned for his teaching and being a really nice guy!

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## 2023 AJ Cook Award Recipient: Mel Disselkoen

By Lisa Stinson



Unbeknownst to Mel's parents, they began intertwining his life with honey bees at birth when they bestowed on him the name Mel, which is Greek for "honey bearing." Born on a South Dakota farm in May of 1944, he is the fourth of six children. His family moved to Michigan in 1947, but it was 25 years before honeybees and Mel actually crossed paths.

1972 marked the commencement of Mel Disselkoen's life as a beekeeper. He was 28 years old with well-formed inclinations toward

innovation and learning. From these earliest days of observing honeybees, his deep fascination with them inspired both. He thoroughly enjoyed "the good years" of beekeeping, before varroa, when winter losses were held below 10% because the bees were strong and healthy. Additionally, early on in his beekeeping endeavors, and for many years, he assisted at the commercial level; affording him the opportunity to gain intensive beekeeping experience. The commercial work generated a booming nuc business, which was the impetus for Mel's creation of the MDA Splitter.

Captivated by honey bee reproduction and challenged by his predecessors, Langstroth, Doolittle, Miller and Dzierzon, Mel spent 14 years meticulously studying and practicing their methods. By 1986, when he earned the Master Beekeeper title from the Eastern Apiculture Society, his grafting and queen rearing skills matched those of the pioneers that inspired him. It was through this process that Mel began experimenting with the technique of notching cells of



comb that contained 36 hour or younger larvae as a means of managed queen rearing for optimal colony strength. This experimentation marked the beginning of what is now known as "On the Spot Queen Rearing." Commonly referred to as "OTS," Mel's method, and subsequent book, *Queen Rearing: A Survival Guide for Beekeepers Worldwide* have revitalized apiaries around the world and here in our own backyards.

All of these aspects of Mel's beekeeping, and his personality, culminated in the development of the On the Spot (OTS) Queen Rearing method. Mel credits the aforementioned pioneers with a large portion of inspiration and leadership, "Indeed, these accounts of their beekeeping adventures which, commenced over one hundred years ago, led me step-by-step to perceiving, discovering and developing the OTS system of non-grafted queen rearing."

Over the years, Mel has supported countless people in their pursuits to learn beekeeping and maintain strong, healthy, productive colonies. To this day, Mel never ceases to make himself available to help beekeepers learn and succeed. His apiary often serves as a mentoring ground for those desiring some hands on OTS training. Frequently, he can be found at his vendor booth answering questions and signing books. Above all, Mel wants beekeepers to have the skills they need in order for their bees to thrive.

For 51 years, Mel Disselkoen has used his talents to make inventive, accessible contributions to beekeeping. He remains committed to supporting beekeepers, knowing that if they can succeed, the honey bees will prosper. With tremendous gratitude, MBA honors him with the 2023 A.J. Cooke award.

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## Call for nominations: Lee Heine 'Good People Award'



The Wisconsin Honey Producers Association is proud to announce a new national award entitled, the **Lee Heine 'Good People' Award** in honor of Lee Heine, a longtime friend and leader in the beekeeping industry who passed away in 2021 after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. With Lee's passing, we lost a significant figure; a friend who not only kept bees, but one who connected with many about bees, honey, and the advancement of the beekeeping industry.

Lee Heine contributed countless hours to the Wisconsin Honey Producers Association. and was also a key figure in the national industry as well. He was a partner in starting youth mentorship programs in Wisconsin and Iowa. He served as the chairperson of the National Honey Board. He was the membership committee co-chair for the American Beekeeping Federation and also served for many years as a state delegate. What was most significant about Lee Heine was his friendship and influence. Lee had a way of forming friendships, connections and networks that spanned the nation. This is the inspiration for the Lee Heine Good People Award.

**Do you know a Michigan beekeeper who would be a good candidate for this award?**

Nominations open June 1 and with a deadline of September 30. [Visit the Wisconsin Honey Producers Association website for additional details.](#)

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# Dronings from a Queen Bee: Beekeeping Time

By Charlotte Hubbard

At the end of March, I received an email from our awesome newsletter editor. She politely pleaded we get our articles to her ASAP. Once beekeeping season started in earnest, she wasn't sure she'd have much time.

Her plea made me laugh a little bit, but only a little bit. Beekeeping season is here and I don't have time for a full belly laugh, or even a deep breath. Why didn't I build more frames in February, instead of dreaming over bee supply catalogs?

I remember when I had more time, known as life before bees. Life was not as fun or interesting, but I fondly recall being able to park in the garage, and a freezer that held ice cream among other essential food. Now 80% of my freezer holds capped drone comb, partially capped honey frames, and somewhere in there -- a fresh chicken I was about to grill last spring when I got a swarm call. Not sure "fresh" applies anymore.

Recently, a student from my "thinking about keeping bees" class called me out of the blue. "In class you said beekeeping takes more time than you think, and easily 10 hours a month during the active season. Google says beekeeping only takes 15 – 30 hours an entire year. Are you wrong?", she asked. Probably. Google knows everything; I certainly don't. Bees remind me of that every time I open a hive.

I've given some thought to why my beekeeping takes longer than Google suggests. First, beekeeping requires dozens of things. In my (always) excitement to go to the apiary, inevitably I forget an item or two or seven. Safety suggests we beekeepers should always have a lit smoker, which requires fuel, an ignitor, and oh yeah – the actual smoker. At least once a season I make the 45-minute round trip back home for the smoker, the ignitor, (and more than once, my suit). Mother Nature usually provides when I forget smoker fuel, but here's a helpful beekeeping tip: your vehicle's registration is highly flammable and you can go online and print another for free. Multiple times as it turns out.

Another thing that chews up my time is managing the specific things beekeeping requires, like having enough correctly sized frames. Using a shallow frame in a deep box is a temporary fix, and a cool IPM trick . Only 6 frames in an 8-frame box because you forgot spares? A future mess. Having kept bees since 2008, I'm proud to have all colors of queen marking pens (if only I knew where they were).



*Usually the bees draw the below-bar portion for drones. When capped, you can reduce mite pressure by breaking off the drone portion and feeding it to appreciative chickens*

I think, though, the bulk of my (excessive? obsessive?) beekeeping time disappears into simply marveling at them. The perfection of a capped frame of



honey, the bee who lands on my hand and just looks at me, pollen streaming into the hive! It's all time gone too quickly, but never time wasted. I once zipped out to the backyard hives to put on a fresh jar of feed, and got caught up spotting green and blue pollen. When I finally returned to the house, my kids had graduated from high school, completed college, married ... I even had grandchildren, one of whom had found my green queen marking pen under the couch and was coloring his little sister with it. I quickly put a stop to that. His sister was born in last year; she should've been marked yellow.

Probably the major reason my beekeeping takes waaaaay more time? Dreaming – of 1% mite counts, of four-way splits, of tick-free yards, of bees so happy to see me that it's no issue that I've (again) forgotten my smoker or suit. I also dream that this is the year – when my swarms will all be low, I'll find both the red marking pen and robust new queens who need it, and not only will I get some spare frames built, but I'll remember to take them with me.

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## Gardening For Bees: The Perennial Edition

By Lisa Stinson

In the previous MBA newsletter, I offered 3 annual flowers underappreciated for what they offer honey bees in terms of forage resources. In this issue, I'll cough up three perennial flowers that fall into the same category. I happen to be a big fan of perennials. Whether or not it's true on paper, they make me "feel" like I'm getting a better bang for my buck, than when I spend money on annuals. More than that, I love the hope they instill, during those early days of spring, when they first peek out from the soil. Once again, here are 3 that don't appear at the top of the list of an internet search for honey bee friendly perennials:

**Garlic Chive:** Also called Chinese Chive, this is a fascinating herb. From a distance, its foliage resembles the tubular foliage of traditional chives. However, up close, it's easy to see that the foliage is not tubular, but thick and flat. Its flavor is exactly like garlic and can easily be an equivalent substitution to actual garlic. The white flowers appear later and bloom longer than traditional chives and the honey bees can't get enough of them. I've never noticed the flavor of the foliage to wane or worsen once the plant blooms. Even if it did, a gardener could obtain enough foliage for herbal use for an entire season from 1-3 plants, then let the other the others flower for the bees. This is an extremely reliable late summer and fall bloom.





**Anise Hyssop:** Also called Licorice Mint, Lavender Hyssop, or Blue Giant Hyssop, it's actually neither anise nor hyssop. If you're not a fan of the anise flavored foliage, it's still worthwhile to add this abundant bloomer to your garden for the sake of the bees. It is unbelievably hearty and, like so many perennials, multiplies exponentially in the spring. This is an astoundingly dependable bloomer. It's on the larger side, sometimes growing as tall as 48 inches, but once it fills in for the season, it requires little to no weeding. Because of these qualities, if you have the space to plant 2 rows

12" apart, it can make a unique type of hedge row. Even without that amount of space available, much like Bee Balm, just one plant can produce ample resources for the bees.



**Catmint:** I have a soft spot on my green thumb for Catmint. Twenty years ago, before I ever knew anything about gardening, I planted Catmint in full sun and clay soil. (If you've ever had to deal with clay soil, then maybe like me, you find the term "clay soil" oxymoronic.) My kids were little at the time so, by and large, I also ignored it. Lo and behold, it has thrived for years. It is both delicate and hearty; growing to 36" and producing pale purple flowers. It consistently forgives me for failing to water it during heatwaves, staying upright and wispy. If the fact

that Catmint practically takes care of itself isn't enough of a reason to give this one a try, let it be known that this is the most deer resistant perennial I've ever grown. I've lost a fair amount of nursery proclaimed "deer resistant" perennials to those innocent looking free-loaders, but never have they gone after the Catmint. Most importantly, Catmint is a steadfast resource for our girls in black and yellow.

**BONUS FLOWER – Blue Globe Thistle:** Also known as Russian Globe Thistle. This doesn't get the best rating in my handy dandy book Garden Plants for Honey Bees (Peter Lintner, Wicwas Press), but it is both a pollen and nectar producer and most certainly adds a less common flower to the garden. It is actually the only globe shaped bloom with which I've ever had success. The foliage of this perennial, especially in its infancy, very much resembles traditional thistle, so wear gloves when weeding and don't accidentally pull it out in the spring, if your weeding the nuisance thistle out of your garden beds. The blue blooms are dazzling, bordering on iridescent. If you're looking for something different, that still provides resources for the bees, make some space for this one.





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## Bee Club Buzz

A place to introduce your club, and/or share stories about club activities

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### Sustainable Beekeepers Guild Survey

The Sustainable Beekeepers Guild of Michigan is seeking feedback from Michigan beekeepers concerning their experience, management practices, and success in maintaining perennial honeybee colonies. To this end, they are partnering with the Michigan Beekeepers Association to distribute a management survey which you can find in the link below. The survey should take three to five minutes to complete. Please note, the purpose of this survey is different from USDA/NASS, MDARD, and Bee Informed Partnership Surveys in that it attempts to address small scale beekeeping operations and hobbyist level practice in the State of Michigan. The SBGMI will compile the data and the raw and/or compiled data will be made available to local bee clubs in Michigan, their officers, and members with the goal of helping to improve beekeeping education, mentoring programs, and overall support of hobbyist and sideline beekeepers. If you have any questions or feedback please feel free to email [survey@sbgmi.org](mailto:survey@sbgmi.org).

[Take the SBGMI Survey](#)

The SBGMI also invites you to check out their [Spring Quarterly Journal](#) and their [smoker give-away](#).

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The [Holland Area Beekeepers Association](#) will be helping the Ottawa County Conservation District celebrate 85 years of creating conservation connections at the Conservation District's 2023





annual meeting on June 13! This event will highlight District program accomplishments from the last year, introduce up and coming initiatives, and showcase connections made between Ottawa County residents and local conservation resources. There will be opportunities for attendees to learn about how the

Ottawa Conservation District can be a local hub for your natural resource needs. HABA will be at the event with an observation hive to showcase the importance of pollinators.

Visit [www.ottawacd.org](http://www.ottawacd.org) for more information or to register. The event will be on:

Tuesday, June 13th - 5:30 pm  
Hemlock Crossing Nature Center  
8115 West Olive Road  
West Olive, MI 49460

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## Books from the hive

Bee books worth seeing and sharing: A trip back in time  
By Becky Green

### The Books:

- A Country Year: Living the Question (1986)
- A Book of Bees... And how to keep them (1988)

**The Author:** Sue Hubbell

**Rating:** \*\*\*\* (They are not new but they are two of my very favorite bee books.)

If you love Charlotte Hubbard's stories in the newsletters as much as I do, I think you will enjoy these two books. Let me tell you about how I met them.

2013 was my first year of beekeeping. I had taken a beekeeping class, read a handful of "how to" beekeeping books, and put my first bees, a package from California, into a hive. I was excited about being a beekeeper, but nothing I had read prepared me for how drawn I would be to being with the bees. I found myself anxious to get home from work every day, just so I could spend a little time by the hive watching the bees before they settled in for the night. I counted the days between hive inspections, eager to look into the hive again, to see what the bees were doing. My mom, hearing me talk (and talk and talk....) about my bees, pulled *A Country Year: Living the Question* off her bookshelf and sent it to me. I liked it so much I quickly followed it with *A Book of Bees... And how to keep them*. The books tell the story of Sue Hubbell's move to a small farm in the Ozarks in the 1970s, and her journey as a beekeeper. The stories are memorable, funny, sometimes sad, and full of a love for beekeeping, and for life, through all its ups and downs. More than any beekeeping book I had read at that point (or since), these books helped me normalize the pull that the bees seemed to have on me. I smiled, and laughed and maybe even cried a little as I read. Although they are not really how-to books, (and also pre-date Varroa, a bit of a different beekeeping world then the one we are living in), I learned a lot from them. And to this day I pay the friends and neighbors who host my beehives with 'rent honey'.

The books are now more than 35 years old, so you likely won't find either sitting on a shelf at your local book store, but there is a good chance your library can find a copy for you, and if not, you can definitely buy them online! And just in case you are wondering... 10 years into keeping bees, I still love to stand or sit beside

the hives and watch the bees come and go. The main difference is that now that I have retired, I don't have to wait until I get home from work to do it!

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## Introductions

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### Meet our new state delegate to the American Bee Federation Nicole Lindsey



Detroit native Nicole Lindsey is the Co-Founder of Detroit Hives; a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, where she serves as Co-Executive Director. This past January, Nicole was nominated to serve as one of Michigan's state delegates to the American Beekeeping Federation (AFB). Nicole attended her second ABF conference this year, where she serves on their Marketing and Membership Committee. Additionally, Nicole Lindsey and her organization, Detroit Hives, volunteered for the Kids and Bees event to help educate hundreds

of inner city youth on the importance of pollinator conservation. In addition to her participation in her new role for the MBA and the ABF, Nicole is passionate about serving her community of people and pollinators, Nicole also volunteers her time and is a member of the following:

- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
- Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers Association
- NAPPC- Urban Pollinator Task Force Committee
- The Bee Conservancy - Bee Ambassador



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## Rapping with the Reps

Throughout the year we will help you get better acquainted with your district representatives!

### In this edition: Districts 2 and 5

MBA's district representatives help provide a link between the MBA and beekeepers and beekeeping clubs in their areas. If you represent a club, are a

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## David Kazyak - District 2

Serving Clinton, Eaton, Gratiot, Hillsdale, Ingham, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston, Shiawassee and Washtenaw Counties

Compiled by Lisa Stinson

### The Basics

- Where he calls home: Brighton
- Who he calls family: David and his wife have 3 daughters and 1 son. Among his brood, his son and one daughter help in his beekeeping endeavors, making for an impressive 50% retention rate.
- As if bees aren't enough work: David's work time is spent at Lear Automotive, but David's wife astutely observes that he limits his “play time” to activities that begin with the letter “B:” Biking, banjo playing and of course, beekeeping.
- TBD: How many of his children play the banjo.

### The Bees by the Numbers

- Years keeping bees: 10
- Colonies: Soon to be leaping from 35 to 55
- Yards: This writer lost count at 5, scattered across farms in Brighton, Fenton, Howell, and Owosso

### The Good, the Bad and the Determined

- Triumph – Biggest Beekeeping Success – “Other than getting pretty good at keeping the bees alive throughout the winter (you almost have to knock on wood when you make that statement - I don't think you can ever become complacent regarding winter survival), I have also come up with a number of hive innovations to help reduce the time it takes to manage a large number of colonies.”
- Defeat – It's not so much a failure as it a nonsuccess - “I had a hive stand that I did not anchor far enough in the ground tip over. The hive on top proceeded to be the domino to take out the next hive and so on till three hives and supers were laying scattered on the ground. Amazingly, when I put the hives back together I found all three queens.”
- Ambition - 2023 Beekeeping Goals - “I typically over winter 8-10 nucs for sale in the spring, I will try and expand this so less bees will get imported from the south.”

### In Greater Bee-tail

David isn't the first father to get saddled with a child's pet. In this case, his daughter acquired bees in hopes of keeping them while attending law school locally, then moved out of state. It's a familiar story, although for most of us it's a cat or some sort of 4H project. For David, though, not only did he develop a beekeeping hobby, he developed a friendship, “When my neighbor saw them he also decided bees would be fun. We often split the work, He will check on one apiary and I will do the check at a different one.”

There's a lot to love about bees. For David, one of his favorites is, “...just sitting out by the hives on a sunny day and watching the bees come and go. It is so relaxing seeing them go about their business.” Conversely, surely he's not alone in what he considers to be his least favorite aspect of beekeeping, “I hate dead



outs, Luckily I don't get too many, but scraping down the boxes and cleaning the bees out of the comb when you get a dead-out ranks among the least favorite things." Even in those situations, David's aim is to give the bees what they need, "I generally try to pull all the dead bees out of the comb and clean the boxes and frames up as much as possible. The less the new bees have to work on the hive the more they can work on brood and honey."

### **The Rap on the Rep**

Roughly 7 months into his role as District Rep, David is happily adjusting to the work load and determined to master the discipline of keeping up on the monthly newsletter. David's "home base bee club" is A2B2, but he really enjoys connecting with beekeepers around the state, making this District Rep position a good fit for him. While the number of bee related activities going on throughout his region, and the state, is surprising, it is precisely this pleasant surprise that affords him ample opportunities to share information and learn from other beekeepers. This continual exchange of information fortifies his mentor relationships. It also equips him to achieve his long term District Rep goal, "I'd like to do some speaking or instructional classes." Beekeepers in his region and around the state will undoubtedly benefit from both.

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## **Les Homan - District 5**

Serving Alpena, Alcona, Antrim, Benzie, Crawford, Cheboygan, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Missaukee, Manistee, Montmorency, Otsego, Oscoda, Presque Isle, and Wexford Counties

Compiled by Lisa Stinson

### **The Basics**

- Where he calls home: Petoskey
- Who he calls family: Les and his wife are proud owners of what turns out to be, in Les' own words, "The best dog ever." Apparently she disregards that designation on occasion, but quickly returns to living according to her much deserved title.
- TBD: If the products of his baking will turn up in an MBA conference auction.
- As if bees aren't enough work: Les is the beekeeper in the room setting the example of how not to obsess over bees. In addition to keeping bees, he fills his days with an array of activities - hiking, gardening, travelling, woodworking, baking – making for a well-balanced life.

### **The Bees by the Numbers**

- Years keeping bees: 9
- Colonies: 1
- Yards: 1; in fact, Les' backyard is his bee yard.

### **The Good, the Bad and the Determined**

- Triumph – Biggest Beekeeping Success – "Keeping a hive alive for 3 seasons."
- Defeat – It's not so much a failure as it a nonsuccess - "Not keeping a hive alive the other six years." *Show of hands: Who else is thoroughly enjoying Les' cut and dried nature? Let the record show, both of my hands are raised.*
- Ambition - 2023 Beekeeping Goals - "Keep the hive alive this full year, including this winter; also to be in touch with every existing and potential bee club in this district."

### **In Greater Bee-tail**

Not one to complicate matters, Les got into beekeeping simply because, “It seemed like the thing to do at the time.” He did some reading and became a beekeeper. His favorite thing about keeping bees? Les, of course, says, “Honey.” Equipped with these details about Les, go ahead and guess his least favorite thing about keeping bees. If you guessed, getting stung, you are absolutely correct. If you didn’t guess correctly, you can familiarize yourself with Les a little more by re-reading the first five words of this section.

### **The Rap on the Rep**

In appreciation for MBA, Les accepted the position of District 5 Rep a year or two ago and serves his local club, Little Traverse Bay (LTB), his District 5 region and MBA unpretentiously. He has an immeasurable respect for and understanding of the importance of clubs and beekeepers supporting one another. While serving in this capacity, Les has been surprised, in a good way, to see MBA leadership work together to address issues and problem solve. He also derives a great deal of satisfaction when existing and new programs work smoothly. Les may kick himself for missing deadlines or communications here and there, but he makes a concerted effort to manage his time accordingly so he can attend local club meetings and make contact with the club Presidents in his region. He may refer to the forging of these relationships as, “small successes,” but to those benefitting from his efforts, they’re big victories. Les is a man who aims high. He’s also a realist. When asked of his long term goal as District 5 Rep, his reply was both lofty and down to earth, “Discover the most cold hearty, gentle, mite resistant, prolific, and abundant honey producing bees...first I need to do the basic job.” MBA and the beekeepers in Les’ district are happy to support Les along the way.

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## **District Updates**

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### **District 8**



**The Copper Country Beekeeping Club** was very active in April. The Houghton City Council was revising an ordinance that included banning bees within the City of Houghton. We worked with the Council to provide information and best practices from other cities and communities that have ordinances that allow beekeeping. We also provided a proposed ordinance based on the Michigan Agricultural Rural Development's, Generally Accepted Agricultural Best Practices (GAAMPS). As a result, the after a public hearing to allow comments, the Council voted 5-2 in favor of revising the ordinance so that it would allow beekeeping in Houghton within certain paramaters. During this process we had tremendous support from the MBA, Michigan State Extension, Michigan Pollinator Initiative, and other UP beekeeping clubs.

At our April meeting, Ana Heck of MSU Extension spoke on queen issues and events and when to intervene. We had an excellent turnout with good Q&A. Ana met with other UP beekeeping clubs in Marquette, Escanaba, and Iron Mountain during a week-long trip.

Pete Cattelino

**Northwoods Beekeepers**

Our first club meeting of 2023 was held on



Tuesday March 14th at Bay West. For the new beekeepers I explained the differences between several of the most popular bee races, nuc VS package, and where to buy bees. For years Northwoods Beekeepers has had a “pickup” program for club members. Picking up members bees and delivering them to a central drop off point in the Iron Mountain area..... Three sign up

sheets were then sent around: #1 was if you wanted your bees picked up by the club, #2, would you like a mentor, #3, would you like to be a mentor..... I am happy to report everyone asking for help is now set with a mentor. Gino did Q&A and Nancy called the winning numbers for our many door prizes. The highlight of the night, was when one of our youngest members picked her prize, a pink hive tool.....



On March 25th Mark Edens and I did a one-hour presentation at the Florence County Library entitled “What Goes on inside a Beehive”. There were a surprising number of people who were interested in becoming beekeepers....



On Tuesday April 11th we had the honor of having Ana Heck of MSU as our guest speaker. Her informative presentation covered most honey bee diseases and parasites. After her presentation, she did not leave until all our questions were answered. Thank you, Ana.

Saturday, April 15th, Mark Edens and I were invited to work in MSU’s booth at the Kiwanis Home and Garden Show in Escanaba. We introduced the audience to “The Marvelous Honeybee” ..... Forty-five minutes of interesting “Bee Facts” and what goes on inside a beehive.

Bernie Driggs

## New from MSU Apiculture

Please complete [MBA & MSU’s survey about beekeeping education](#) if you haven’t already done so.

- Featured upcoming events:
  - [Michigan Beekeeping May Office Hours Webinar](#)
  - [Hygienic testing workshop in Lansing, MI](#)
  - [Queen rearing workshop in Lansing, MI](#)
  - View all upcoming [MSU Extension pollinator & pollination events](#)
- Recordings from recent webinars hosted by MSU Extension:
  - [Trees for bees: from planting to pruning with Mike Connor](#)
  - [Michigan Department of Transportation Vegetation Management & Sunflower Plots with Carla Ahlschwede](#)
  - [April 2023 Michigan Beekeeping Office Hours Webinar](#)
- Featured articles & resources:



- [What should I do if I find a swarm of bees?](#)
- [Prairie strips: A case study on improving farming yields and pollinator habitat by transforming unprofitable farmland into prairie](#)
- [Honey production guide for Michigan beekeepers](#)
- [Generally accepted agricultural and management practices for honey bees](#)
- Stay connected MSU Apiculture
  - [Sign up for MSU Extension's "Pollinators and Pollination" news digests](#)
  - [Michigan Pollinator Initiative website](#)
  - [MSU Extension Pollinators & Pollination website](#)
  - [MSU Beekeeping YouTube channel](#)
  - [Michigan Pollinator Initiative Facebook page](#)
  - [MSU Beekeeping Facebook page](#)
  - [Ask Extension form](#) for asking beekeeping questions

[Visit our Website](#)

## Call for Submissions

Do you have an interesting beekeeping story or picture to share?  
Would you like to introduce your club or share some club news?  
Have you read an amazing bee book that you would like to tell us about?

If so, we would love to have the opportunity to put it in the MBA newsletter. The newsletter is published quarterly and the submission deadline for the next newsletter is **May 8, 2023**.

Email submissions to: [newslettereditor@mba-bees.org](mailto:newslettereditor@mba-bees.org)  
Please include your name, address, best contact phone number and preferred email address with your submission.

***Editor's note: I reserve the right to edit all submissions as needed, including editing for content, grammar, length, etc. Although I will try to include all appropriate submissions, some may need to be declined or publication delayed in the event there is an abundance of submissions. Submissions received after the posted deadline will be considered for the next newsletter.***

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