American Beekeeping Federation NEWSLETTER

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From the Vice President

by George Hansen, ABF Vice President

George Hansen
ABF Vice President

As I am packing to go to Washington, D.C., to represent the ABF's priorities to the government, I am thinking for some reason this joke applies. In any case, I think it is funny.

So, this guy is driving around on the back roads and he sees a sign in front of a broken down shanty-style house: "Talking Dog for Sale." He rings the bell and the owner appears and tells him the dog is in the backyard. The guy goes into the backyard and sees a nice looking Labrador retriever sitting there.

'You talk?' he asks.
'Yep,' the Lab replies.

After the guy recovers from the shock of hearing a dog talk, he says 'So, what's your story?'

The lab looks up and says, "Well, I discovered that I could talk when I was pretty young. I wanted to help the government, so I told the CIA. In no time at all they had me jetting from country to country, sitting in rooms with spies and world leaders, because no one figured a dog would be eavesdropping.

"I was one of their most valuable spies for eight years running. But the jetting around really tired me out, and I knew I wasn't getting any younger, so I decided to settle down. I signed up for a job at the airport to do some undercover security, wandering near suspicious characters and listening in. I uncovered some incredible dealings and was awarded a batch of medals. I got married, had a mess of puppies, and now I'm just retired."

The guy is amazed. He goes back in and asks the owner what he wants for the dog.

"Ten dollars," the guy says.

"Ten dollars? This dog is amazing! Why on earth are you selling him so cheap?"

"Because he's a liar. He never did any of that stuff he told you."

I know it is a cheap shot to associate the government with a story about a talking dog that is a liar. Actually, the story reminds me of the guy who recently strongly indicated to me that my political leanings, as he perceived them, apparently made anything and everything I do, have done and will ever do, totally useless or worse.

This column was to be about the difference between the difficult and the impossible. This spring, getting bees out of almond orchards in weeks of rain and flooding was difficult. Retrieving the load of hives on the other side of raging floodwaters, where the only access was by fording the stream, appeared to be impossible. The logical thing to do was to wait until the water went down.

Almonds three weeks after bloom

Sitting around paying a crew to live in a motel for any length of time is pretty expensive under any circumstance. There was no indication the rain was going to stop soon. On the other hand, going home and returning later would be sensible, but not without cost. The extra return travel, lodging, and the inevitable loss of colonies to starvation might be calculated and compared to the cost of hiring a helicopter if one could be found to undertake the job. Perhaps some local could be paid to get the bees out when the

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American Beekeeping Federation
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From the President

by Dave Mendes, ABF President

Dave Mendes
ABF President

It is early May and we are shipping loads of bees to pollinate wild blueberries in northeastern Maine. I received some very good news from one of my larger growers this year. They have decided not to apply any fungicides during the daytime while the bees are present. They have also promised not to use the fungicide Pristine until after the hives have left.

This is very encouraging news for beekeepers. I have not seen the effects of Pristine in any of my hives yet, but got an education on what it does from another East Coast beekeeper that purchased hives that were exposed to Pristine during almond pollination in California this year. He brought these bees back to Georgia where there were very good spring build up conditions. He split his other hives and they grew nicely. The Pristine exposed bees could not be split. They did not die, but they also would not grow for several weeks. Bee hives that don't grow in the spring create problems for beekeepers. You can't make splits with them, you can't make honey with them, you definitely can't raise queens with them, and most of the time they don't turn into good pollination units for early crops like blueberries or apples.

We need more research on the impacts of fungicides on honey bees and other pollinators. This must be solid research that is well coordinated with beekeepers.

The impact of fungicides on honey bees has become a hot topic among beekeepers and bee researchers. There generally are no restrictions on fungicide use while pollinators are present. Most of the crops that my bees pollinate are heavy users of fungicides – almonds, blueberries and cranberries. It has been standard practice to begin application of fungicides at early bloom and continue until after petal fall. The end result is that bees get a lot of exposure to fungicide while pollinating a crop. Pollen analysis tests done over the last few years have shown that levels of fungicide inside beehives are right behind mite treatments in prevalence and exposure level in parts per billion. There are at least three areas of concern with fungicides for honey bees that I would like to share with you.

First, several researchers have been looking into the direct effects of fungicide to damage the probiotic bacteria found in the honey bee digestive tract. Many beekeepers have noticed that when bees get sick, they stop eating. They have also noticed that certain agricultural chemicals have a repellent effect on bees that can last for several weeks. There may be flowers in bloom, but the bees are not making honey. The bees seem to have a "tummy ache." If bees are not able to process food properly, the result will be poor nutrition in the hive, even if there are adequate forage resources available and plenty of bees in the hive. The first bees that were autopsied from CCD hives showed extensive scars in their digestive tract. This may be an important clue to understand CCD. Anything that may be impacting the bee's ability to process food properly should be investigated.

The second concern with fungicides is when they are applied at the same time as an insecticide, a synergistic effect can occur that can make both of the individual products more toxic than they would have been separately. I have seen lab data on this where caged adult honey bees are exposed to the normal dose of an insecticide or fungicide with minimal mortality, but when the two are mixed most of the caged bees die. It has become common for farmers to "tank mix" several different products to save additional spray applications. The EPA only requires these products to be tested individually.

A third impact of fungicides on honey bees is how they use up the bees natural system to detoxify chemicals. Recent work has shown that honey bees have a very limited amount of enzymes called P450s that help them to handle toxins. P450s allow the bees to handle foreign substances like mite treatments or small amounts of other pesticides. Fungicide exposure can use up these P450s. Beekeepers who have placed a mite treatment in their hives during almond pollination have found that exposure to certain fungicides can result in many dead bees.

(continued on page 15)

Government Relations Update

by Troy Fore, ABF Director of Government Relations

Troy Fore, ABF Director of Government Relations

In May, ABF Vice President George Hansen and I made a trip to Washington, D.C. I want to give you a bit of the feeling for how those days went.

We started off at the offices of Meyers and Associates, the ABF's Washington representatives, plotting our agenda with Fran Boyd. While reviewing the schedule of appointments he had set up, we put calls into two more offices. One call was successful; one was not.

Our first stop on Wednesday was at the Department of Labor, a cab ride across town. There we received assurances that work was nearing fruition on one of our issues – moving H2A workers from state-to-state – but we were told that visa difficulties was a State Department issue. Before we left town, we were given the contact information for a person at State.

After lunch, another cab ride to the Agriculture Department to talk about pollinator conservation issues. This visit generated a spate of e-mails that continued into the next day, assuring us that the honey bee would be given its proper due in conservation materials.

Our first Congressional visit was on the Senate side of the Capitol. We had a wait while one of our two "meetees" finished an earlier appointment. Then we waited until an earlier group vacated a conference room. Our discussion there centered on the standard of identity for honey. FDA had assured one Senator that movement on our petition could be expected soon. One of the staffers was in his fourth stint on the Hill. Between those, he had worked at USDA; when we last talked to him, he was at Farm Service Agency.

Next we walked across the Capitol grounds to the House side for a meeting at the office of my congressman, Jack Kingston, who is chairman of the Agricultural Appropriations Subcommittee. After a long wait, we met with his staffer for ag issues, but the talk was all about budget issues, the topic that dominated all our meetings other than the one at Labor.

After a review of what we had learned and the next day's agenda, we were done for the day; ready to walk back to the hotel and soak our sore feet.

We began Thursday at the headquarters of USDA's Agriculture Research Service. Money – actually the lack thereof – was again the main topic. It would be hard for the ag men to say much until Congress took some action on the budget. Back on Capitol Hill, we met with four Ag Committee staff members. Again, everything hinged on money.

At noon, another brief money discussion with a staff person from the Ag Appropriations subcommittee. Lunch, then a walk over to the Senate side to meet with Senate Ag Staffers. After a wait at the committee office in the Russell Building, we were told the meeting would be in the Dirksen Building. There, talk of the next Farm Bill matched the talk of money woes.

Our final meeting of the trip was at the office of George's congressman, Kurt Schrader. We shared with his staffer what we had gleaned from our two days of visits and emphasized our priorities.

I left for the airport. Taking the last flight out, I would arrive home just after midnight. It was too late for George to head back to Oregon; he had another night in the hotel before his early morning flight on Friday.

We felt like we had a successful visit. We met with staffers who are important to our issues. For some, it was the first face-to-face, an opportunity for us to remind them that behind the phone calls and e-mails there are real, live

(continued on next page)

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people out there whose livelihoods depend on what they and their bosses do – or do not do.

You might note that I made no mention of meeting with actual senators or representatives. This was not particularly unusual. In my own case, I see Rep. Kingston occasionally on D.C. trips, but he is regularly in Jesup or a nearby town. With a little investment in time, I could see him back in the district. That is what we need you to do: watch for opportunities to see your congressmen when they are "back home." Ease these visits by making regular contact with their district offices.

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United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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Foundation: Essayists Investigate U.S. Honey and Uncover Unique Differences

by Troy Fore, Executive Director, Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees

For the 2011 4-H Beekeeping Essay Contest, the essayists were asked investigate the local/regional honeys of the United States and see how they differ in taste and color. The 23 state-winning essayists took varied approaches to this task.

The top essayist, Rachel Ricchiuto, 14, of Gold River, Calif., assembled five honey samples and invited 25 people from age seven to adult to judge the honeys on color, smell and taste.

"I chose clover honey and four others with very distinct color and taste differences that I thought people wouldn't have tried before," she reported, "these orange blossom, sage, buckwheat and eucalyptus…I had them rate on color first, then smell and finally taste. I found that some people rated a honey high in color and smell but when they actually tasted it, they didn't like the flavor very much. I tallied up the results and was surprised to find that in overall scores more people preferred sage."

Rachel concluded: "In researching this topic I learned a lot about different types of honey that I didn't know and I had a lot of fun watching the expressions on people's faces when they judged my honeys…With over 300 honey varieties in the United States, there is definitely a honey for everyone's taste preference." Her first place prize is a cash award of $750.

Second place essayist, Kayla Ackerman, 11, of College Station, Texas, receives $500 for her efforts. She identified the various factors that determine a particular honey's color and taste. "Americans delight in many varieties of honey from mild, light flavors, to rich, strong tastes," she wrote. "Honey is delicious whether from one flower or many, whether whipped or liquid, and whether raw or pasteurized. From the table to baking, honey is enjoyed day to day."

There was a tie for third place. Mikayla Ockels, 12, of Milton, Del., and Seth Fuchs, 14, of Santa Rosa, N.M., each receive $250. Mikayla detailed the varieties of regional honey. Seth explored the physical properties of honeys. Each state winner, including the national winners, will receive a copy of a book about beekeeping.

The essay topic for 2012 is "The Results of Honey Bee Pollination in My Community." The 4-H'ers are encouraged to investigate the plants in their communities that benefit from honey bee pollination and determine the results of that pollination. Students interested in writing should contact their local 4-H offices for contest details. The state selection must be done through the 4-H system.

2011 4-H FOUNDATION ESSAY WINNERS

Rachel Ricchiuto, Calif. – NATIONAL WINNER
Kayla Ackerman, Texas – SECOND PLACE
Seth Fuchs, N.M. – THIRD PLACE (tied)
Mikayla Ockels, Del. – THIRD PLACE (tied)

STATE WINNERS

Grace Costello, Ark.
Rianna Campagne, Ariz.
Chad Schlagel, Colo.
Grace Schultz, Conn.
Amanda Rosauer, Fla.
Murphy Doran, Ga.
Hannah Wheeler, Ind.
Kayleigh Jowers, La.
Tiffany Jo Bystra, Mich.
Katelin Wallace, Miss.
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2012 4-H Beekeeping Essay Contest Announcement and Rules

sponsored by The Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees, Inc.

AWARDS (Cash Prizes to Top 3 Winners):

1st Place – $750
2nd Place – $500
3rd Place – $250

Each state winner, including the national winners, receives an appropriate book about honey bees, beekeeping or honey.

TOPIC:
"The Results of Honey Bee Pollination in My Community"

The 4-H'ers are encouraged to investigate the plants in their communities that benefit from honey bee pollination and determine the results of that pollination.

The scope of the research is an essential judging criterion, accounting for 40 percent of the score. The number of sources consulted, the authority of the sources and the variety of the sources are all evaluated.

Personal interviews with beekeepers and others familiar with the subject are valued sources of information and should be documented. Sources, which are not cited in the endnotes, should be listed in a "Resources" or "Bibliography" list. Note that "honey bee" is properly spelled as two words, even though many otherwise authoritative references spell it as one word.

2012 4-H BEEKEEPING ESSAY CONTEST RULES:

For 2012, only essays submitted electronically will be accepted. For official rules, contact the Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees, Inc., Troy Fore, executive director, troyfore@honeybeepreservation.org or www.honeybeepreservation.org. The states' entries must reach the Foundation before March 1, 2012.

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USDA/AIA Report Reveals Average Individual Colony Loss 38.4 Percent

Total losses from managed honey bee colonies nationwide were 30 percent from all causes for the 2010/2011 winter, according to the annual survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Apiary Inspectors of America (AIA).

This is roughly similar to total losses reported in similar surveys done in the four previous years: 34 percent for the 2009/2010 winter, 29 percent for 2008/2009; 36 percent for 2007/2008, and 32 percent for 2006/2007.

"The lack of increase in losses is marginally encouraging in the sense that the problem does not appear to be getting worse for honey bees and beekeepers," said Jeff Pettis, an entomologist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) who helped conduct the study. "But continued losses of this size put tremendous pressure on the economic sustainability of commercial beekeeping." Pettis is the leader of the Bee Research Laboratory operated in Beltsville, Md., by ARS, the chief scientific research agency of USDA.

Photo courtesy of Mann Lake Ltd.

The survey, which covered the period from October 2010 to April 2011, was led by Pettis and by AIA Past Presidents Dennis vanEngelsdorp and Jerry Hayes.

Beekeepers reported that, on average, they felt losses of 13 percent would be economically acceptable. Sixty-one percent of responding beekeepers reported having losses greater than this.

Average colony loss for an individual beekeeper's operation was 38.4 percent. This compares to an average loss of 42.2 percent for individual beekeepers' operations in 2009/2010.

Average loss by operation represents the percentage of loss in each operation added together and divided by the number of beekeeping operations that responded to the survey. This number is affected more by small beekeeping operations, which may only have 10 or fewer colonies, so a loss of just five colonies in a 10-colony operation would represent a 50 percent loss. Total losses were calculated as all colonies reported lost in the survey divided by the total number of bee colonies reported in the survey. This number is affected more by larger operations, which might have 10,000 or more colonies, so a loss of five colonies in a 10,000-colony operation would equal only a 0.05 percent loss.

Among surveyed beekeepers who lost any colonies, 31 percent reported losing at least some of their colonies without finding dead bee bodies-one of the symptoms that defines Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). As this was an interview-based survey, it was not possible to differentiate between verifiable cases of CCD and colonies lost as the result of other causes that share the "absence of dead bees" as a symptom. The cause of CCD is still unknown.

The beekeepers who reported colony losses with no dead bee bodies present also reported higher average colony losses (61 percent), compared to beekeepers who lost colonies but did not report the absence of dead bees (34 percent in losses).

A total of 5,572 beekeepers, who manage more than 15 percent of the country's estimated 2.68 million colonies, responded to the survey.

A complete analysis of the survey data will be published later this year. The abstract can be found at http://www.extension.org/pages/58013/honey-bee-winter-loss-survey. More information about CCD can be found at www.ars.usda.gov/ccd.

Source: Kim Kaplan, USDA-ARS

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Queen Committee Report

by Anna Kettlewell, Honey Queen Program Chair

This year, the Queen Committee has emphasized government relations with the American Honey Queen and Princess. During their training session in January, we discussed protocol for meeting with elected officials on all levels, assisted Teresa and Allison in developing materials that they can use this year when meeting elected officials, and discussed messages they could deliver to elected officials. Both Teresa and Allison have previous experience meeting with elected officials as state honey queens. Teresa has had several opportunities to meet with elected officials this year and you can read about her most recent visits in this newsletter.

The Queen Committee encourages you to include a governmental visit in your promotions with the American Honey Queen and Princess. They can range from an in-office meeting with a state legislator, a speech before a common council, county board, or state legislative body, or a gift basket presentation to a mayor or governor. These visits offer a variety of opportunities for the industry. On the local level, your visit may be a promotional visit, where the queen can encourage elected officials to attend the promotional event. On all levels, the queen can discuss issues facing the industry and ways elected officials and citizens can help the industry.

A governmental visit is a nice supplement to any promotion, including fairs, festivals, farmers' markets, school promotions and state conventions. Please consider it for your promotion with the Queen or Princess.

Our summer schedule is filling quickly, but we have plenty of availability in the fall months for Queen Teresa and Princess Allison to visit your area schools, stores, beekeeping conventions or other special events you have in your area. Please contact me at honeyqueen99@hotmail.com or 414.545.5514.

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The following ABF members contributed to the Friends of the Bee Fund during the months of March, April and May 2011. These donations enable us to fund educational programs and services that will benefit ABF members and the American beekeeping industry.

- Mary Bost, Texas *(In Honor of Jimmie and Kay Oakley)*
- Kristi Cianfichi , Penn. *(In Honor of Dr. Michael Rogan)*
- David Ellingson, Minn.
- Tom Emde, Fla.
- Jeanne Hansen, Wis.
- Ernest Huber, Mass.
- Betty Johnson, Idaho
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- Virginia Webb, Ga.

The following individuals have all made donations in honor of Fredrick J. Kozacka Sr.:

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From the Honey Queen

by Teresa Bryson, 2011 American Honey Queen

As beekeepers across the United States prepare for the honey flow and new beekeepers begin to install their first packages, the busy promotion season is starting.

On March 11-14, I visited snowy Minnesota for a beekeeping short course at the University of Minnesota. The course, conducted by Dr. Marla Spivak and Gary Reuter, attracted almost 200 students. While at the course, Princess Allison and I spoke to the attendees about the ABF and the benefits of being a member, such as receiving the latest news related to the beekeeping industry, having lobbyists working for the industry in Washington, D.C., and having a wide range of contacts for varies parts of the industry. Beekeeping short courses are an excellent way to refresh your knowledge on keeping bees while learning about the latest techniques and research. They also allow for networking with beekeepers in your area and, possibly, from other states. Thank you to Dr. Spivak and Gary for inviting Princess Allison and me to the short course. I also thank Bill and Marilyn Gorham for hosting us during our visit.

After Minnesota, I jetted to Connecticut March 14-19 for a new promotion. I had many different opportunities to promote during this trip. The first was conducting honey tasting at a local Whole Foods Market, where I presented samples of honey from across the United States, providing an opportunity to learn about the many varieties of honey and the many uses of honey. I also gave presentations to an after school high school group that was interested in the value of honey bee pollination and the many uses of honey. I spoke to the students about planting bee friendly flowers, and the students had an opportunity to see honey bees in an observation hive and taste different varieties of honey. Remember, educating the public about some of the easiest ways they can support the honey bee, like planting a garden, can be invaluable to promoting the industry.

Queen Teresa explaining how creamed honey is made at a honey tasting at a Whole Foods Market in Connecticut.

The major event during this promotion was Ag Day in Harford, the capital of Connecticut. At Ag Day, groups and businesses related to agriculture came from across the state to speak to the legislators about the important of agriculture in Connecticut. I met with House Representative Bill Wadsworth, who arranged a meeting for me to speak with other members of the House about the challenges beekeepers in Connecticut and across the country are facing, such as a decline in funding and creating a standard of identity for honey. I spoke with four different legislators and eight legislative aids. Programs like Ag Day provide for an amazing opportunity for beekeepers to speak with their legislators and make contacts that are worth having when agriculture funding comes for a vote. I encourage you to invite a honey queen with you to these events. Thank you to Ted and Becky Jones for inviting me to Connecticut, arranging all of my promotions and being my hosts.

I headed south to Mississippi March 19-26. I again visited a state capitol when I went to Jackson and spoke to the Mississippi House of Representatives about the current decline of the honey bee population, the need for more funding for research and creating a standard of identity for honey. I also met the Lieutenant Governor Phil Bryant and presented him with a basket of products from the

hive. I spoke to him briefly about the importance of honey bees for pollination and the current decline of the honey bee populations. In addition, I was introduced in front of the Mississippi Senate. After spending the morning at the capital, I headed to the Mississippi Department of Agriculture to meet with the Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture, Dr. Lester Spell. I spoke with Dr. Spell and the president of the Mississippi Farm Bureau, Randy Knight, about the necessity of honey bee pollination, a standard of identity of honey and the migration of northern beekeepers to Mississippi for the winter. In addition, Mr. Knight informed me that he would pass information on the standard of identity of honey on to the Farm Bureau lobbyists in Washington, D.C.

In addition to legislative visits, Mississippi provided many other opportunities. I gave several presentations at local elementary schools, including treating the students to Florida orange blossom honey. I also gave a cooking presentation to a women's group in Lumberton. I showed the ladies how easy and delicious it is to include honey in all their recipes by making party franks, which can be found in my recipe brochure or online at honey.com. I also had two interviews in Mississippi. The first was on Mississippi Talk, a radio station that covers three states and has nine stations! The second was a cooking demonstration on WLOX, Channel 17 in Biloxi, where I also spoke about the business side of honey bee pollination. The television interview was valued at approximately $6,000. Thank you to Joan and Dwight Gunter for arranging my presentations and being my hosts.

April 13-14 I traveled to Delaware for a two-day trip of school presentations. I spoke to five schools in Dover, Wilmington and Newark, reaching over 1,200 students. I presented in several private schools, which are typically eager for presentations and are very excited to welcome special guests. I encourage all of you to consider contacting the private schools in your area when you invite the Honey Queen or Princess to visit.

I have upcoming promotions in Delaware, Colorado and North Carolina, and I would love to come and promote in your state. Contact Anna Kettlewell, Queen Program chair, at 414.545.5514 or honeyqueen99@hotmail.com to invite me or Princess Allison to your event. I hope to see you as I go buzzing across America!

Queen Teresa presenting the Lt. Governor of Mississippi with a basket of honey and products made with honey or beeswax.

(From the President...continued from page 3)

We need more research on the impacts of fungicides on honey bees and other pollinators. This must be solid research that is well coordinated with beekeepers. I have seen work done on Pristine, which concluded little impact to exposed hives. There are problems with this work since it was done with small beehives. Several pretty sharp California beekeepers have said that it is the big beehives (8+ frames of bees) that get hurt by Pristine while the small hives show much less effects. This appears to be a simple case of dose exposure, since larger hives collect much more pollen than small hives. My almond growers don't want small hives. It makes little sense to run field tests that don't represent a real-world situation.

The University of Maine is conducting a field test this season on hives exposed to an insecticide and fungicide at the same time in wild blueberries. I hope to share with you the results as they become available.

From the Honey Princess

by Allison Adams, 2011 American Honey Princess

Hello, friends! I hope that you and your bees very happy, healthy and enjoying this season as much as I am. Let me share with you what I have been up to as I educate about the importance of this fascinating art and industry of ours.

In mid-March, I traveled to Minnesota for the Minnesota Beekeeping Short Course, where I met with Queen Teresa as we attended the classes together. This excellent, two-day course for beginner beekeepers is taught every year by Dr. Marla Spivak, professor at the University of Minnesota, and Gary Reuter, scientist at the University of Minnesota, both in the Department of Entomology. We, together with our 200+ fellow classmates, were privileged to sit under their tutelage as we were given all the information necessary to keep bees in cold climates over the first two years, including aspects such as purchasing and assembling equipment, hiving packages, overwintering bees, dividing colonies in spring, and producing and extracting honey, in addition to important information on pest and disease management. Simply hearing the way our instructors presented information on these topics was one of the ways I benefitted most from this course, and will prove very helpful as I, in turn, teach others about the industry. As I continue to represent American beekeepers this year, learning how bees are kept in other parts of the country is a very valuable experience and I encourage you to attend next year! Thank you, Dr. Spivak and Gary Reuter, for providing for Teresa and my attendance at the course, and many thanks to Bill and Marilyn Gorham for so kindly hosting us during our stay.

Princess Allison and Queen Teresa speak with Dr. Marla Spivak at the Beekeeping Short Course expo's honey tasting station.

For my next promotion, I was back in Texas, March 18-23, with the first event being the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. I joined 2011 Texas Honey Queen Kaylynn Mansker and members of the Harris County Beekeepers Association in manning the honey bee educational station in the AgVenture area. The booth, with its large observation hive and bright yellow screened-in gazebo (the "Beezebo") with a live beehive inside, attracted a lot of attention. I shared with many people the vital importance of honey bees to agriculture in Texas and all of North America. Honey bees may have been the smallest kind of livestock exhibited at the show, but they were by far one of the most (if not the most) important!

While in the Houston area, I also had the opportunity to attend the grand opening of Revival Market, a grocery store specializing in locally produced foods, where I offered samples of local honey to a number of interested customers. Many were surprised to discover that all honey does not taste the same, which gave me a prime opportunity to educate about the various honey varietals. I ended my visit to Houston at the Harris County Beekeepers Association's monthly meeting, where I gave a presentation on the value of the Honey Queen program, whether on a county, state or national level. I extend special thanks to my wonderful hosts, Don Angle and Ed and Elaine Michalik!

On April 16, the city of Sherman, Texas, hosted the 2011 Texoma Earth Day, and I gave a presentation on the health benefits of the hive products and worked with a fellow beekeeper in his booth as he was selling honey. Festivals like these are ideal venues at which to promote beekeeping and honey, as those attending are already interested in better understanding where their food comes from and how they can be a part of its cultivation and preservation.

Princess Allison sharing the importance of honey bees to agriculture through the observation hive and Beezebo at the Houston Livestock Show.

I look forward to promotions at local schools in the coming weeks – and maybe one at your event as well! I would love to promote the beekeeping industry in your state. To schedule an appearance, please contact Anna Kettlewell at 414.545.5514 or honeyqueen99@hotmail.com. Thank you, as always, for your continued support! It means so much.

In Memoriam: Bennie Lou Weaver

Long-Time ABF Member Passes at 88

ABF member Bennie Lou Weaver passed away May 16, 2011, at home in Lynn Grove, Texas, with Binford Weaver, her husband of 52 years and nine months, by her side. Weaver was a strong supporter of the ABF since joining the organization in 1979.

She supported her husband as an active member and leader of the ABF, attending every meeting of the ABF from 1969 until 2009. She was active in the Navasota Music Study club and the Navasota Garden club, serving as president of each, and an avid bridge player. Bennie Lou was a founding member of the Grimes County Republican Party and an early supporter of George H. W. Bush in his campaigns for Congress and the Senate in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Bennie Lou grew up in the Baptist Church, became a member of the Lynn Grove Methodist Church after marriage, and subsequently, the First Presbyterian Church in Navasota, where she remained a faithful attendee until failing health intervened.

Bennie Lou and Binford Weaver pictured at one of the many ABF annual conferences they attended.

She is survived by her husband, Binford, of Lynn Grove, a son, Daniel Binford Weaver and daughter-in-law, Laura Gregory Weaver, and three grandsons, Travis Binford Weaver, Dylan Gregory Weaver and Stone Barnett Weaver, all of Austin, Texas.

Bennie Lou never met a stranger, regardless of origin, and could find a fellow Texan in the dark on a new moon anywhere she roamed, but folks from west of the Nueces were her favorites. She was always quick with a smile, but ready to speak her mind. Bennie Lou was a master of Southwestern cooking and a lover of classical, big band and jazz music. A fierce protector of right over might, and compassionate to those in need. Mostly, she was one of a kind.

Bee Connected: ABF Introduces Facebook Fan Page

by Amanda Hammerli, CMP, ABF Membership Coordinator

Extra, extra...read all about it! You can now find the ABF on Facebook. We are happy to announce the release of the official ABF Facebook fan page.

If you are a member of Facebook, you can be a fan of the ABF Facebook page. All you have to do is simply search Facebook for “American Beekeeping Federation” to access the page and click the “Like” button to become a fan.

Everyone is welcome. To date, we have 116 fans and are reaching new fans each day. When we hit the 100 fan mark, we held a drawing and presented a wonderfully stocked goodie package to one of our lucky fans, Kimberly Higgins of Kennesaw, Ga. We would like to personally thank ABF’s own Joan Gunter, Tim Tucker and Virginia Webb for their generous donations to the goodie package, as well as their unwavering support of growing the ABF membership. New contests and giveaways are also in the works.

If you have a Facebook fan page for your business or local beekeeping association, let us know and we’ll add you to our line up.

Please feel free to post your beekeeping photos on our page, write on our wall and keep sending your friends to our page. Stay tuned for ABF updates, fun facts, recipes and photos of our ABF members doing what they do best!

Kimberly Higgins, of Home Town Honey in Kennesaw, Ga., poses with her winnings from the ABF Facebook fan contest. Also pictured with Kimberly are Phillip (left) and Brian Higgins.

(From the Vice President...continued from cover)

river receded and we could get a truck back in the area to salvage what was left.

I did what I suspect most beekeepers would do. Ignoring any sensible alternative that involved waiting or giving in, I forged a new option. I spent a full day ferrying the bees with a forklift over a rough and treacherous back way no one would travel under any normal circumstance. The details of the day's foolhardy venture astound me now that I am home and this has all passed. But, in a way, that day set a new standard – since I did get the bees out, such effort is the new "normal."

After the triumphs for our industry with the gains in the 2008 Farm Bill, the research allocations were never appropriated. There wasn't even an appropriations bill, and the president's budget has been cut in negotiations to reach agreement on issues having nothing to do with the Farm Bill.

The House of Representatives is in such turmoil it cannot do its normal work. As one staffer commented, there are a lot of moving parts and excess energy being displayed. For the first time in recent history, the next Farm Bill will most likely be written in the Senate. I guess the questions for us have become, "What is to be salvaged? Are there any programs that can be improved with little fiscal impact? Can we find allies and supporters with enough influence to help us with our priorities? Can we reprioritize?"

Everything we do is difficult; the impossible will take a little longer. This is the new "normal."

Surrounded by talking dogs, can we recognize the ones that are liars?

Milestones

Congratulations to the following ABF members that have reached milestone years during the months of April and May 2011:

15 Years
Ora Hayes, Md.
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Bob Olney, Mich.

20 Years
Chris Charles, Texas

25 Years
Cathy Jo Rufer, Minn.

30 Years
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40 Years
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45 Years
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Is your contact information up-to-date in the ABF membership database? If not, you're missing out on important communications from us! Please call us at 404.760.2875 or send us an e-mail at info@abfnet.org to update your information today.

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From the Auxiliary

by Shelley Rodenberg, ABF Auxiliary President

We hope all the adverse weather has ended, the sun is shining and the flowers are blooming wherever you are. Spring has been a long time coming to some areas this year. Hopefully, we can look forward to the bees being healthy and making lots of honey!

Here are two more outstanding recipes that placed in our cooking contest this year for you to try. Remember to write your recipes down to enter in the contest next January in Las Vegas.

Honey Fruit Bars
by Ellen Sundberg

- *1 cup raisins*
- *1 cup dates*
- *3 eggs*
- *¾ cup HONEY*
- *1 ½ cups flour*
- *1 ½ tsp. baking powder*
- *¼ tsp. salt*
- *½ cup chopped nuts*
- *1 tsp. vanilla*

Pour boiling water over raisins and dates and let stand for five minutes. Drain and cut into pieces. Put three eggs in a bowl and beat until foamy. Gradually add HONEY and beat until mixed. Add fruit mixture, flour, baking powder, salt, nuts and vanilla and mix well. Bake in 9x13 greased pan at 300 degrees for 40 minutes.

Frost with the following:

- *1 tbsp. soft butter*
- *2 tbsp. HONEY*
- *1 tbsp. orange juice*
- *Add powdered sugar to thicken*
- *Spread on bars and sprinkle chopped nuts on top*

Honey Buterball Cookies
by JoAnne Smith

- *8 tablespoons butter (room temperature)*
- *3 tablespoons HONEY*
- *1 cup all-purpose flour*
- *½ teaspoon salt*
- *1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract*
- *1 cup finely chopped toasted nuts**
- *½ cup dried tart cherries*
- *¾ cup sifted powdered (confectioners) sugar*

In a large bowl, cream butter. Beat in HONEY; gradually stir in flour, salt and vanilla extract. Mix in nuts and dried cherries. Wrap dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate one hour.

Preheat oven to 300 degrees.

Using your hands, roll dough into one-inch balls. Place on to ungreased cookie sheets two inches apart. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until dark golden brown. Remove from oven and cool slightly on wire racks.

While cookies are baking, place the powdered sugar in a shallow dish. While cookies are still warm, roll the cookies in powdered sugar. When cookies have cooled completely, roll them again in the confectioners' sugar to give them a nice, even coating of sugar.

Store in an airtight container. Yields three dozen cookies.

***How to toast nuts:** Spread nuts in a single layer on a baking pan (one with walls is best) for toasting in the oven. Cook at 400 degrees for seven to 10 minutes or until the nuts start to turn golden. Shake pan halfway through toasting.

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2012 North American Beekeeping Conference & Tradeshow

The ABF is pleased to announce that the 2012 ABF conference will be held **January 10-14, 2012**, at the Rio All-Suite Casino Resort in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The Rio, located just off the main strip in Las Vegas, is an all-suite property. There's plenty of room for family and friends, so make this a vacation and join us for some excitement in the city of fantasy, glamour and glitz. There's no other place like it and we know you won't want to miss this opportunity to meet with your fellow beekeepers!

Start planning now to ensure your spot at the 2012 North American Beekeeping Conference & Tradeshow.

Watch for details on the ABF Web site at: www.nabeekeepingconference.com.