From the President – The Mystery of Colony Loss

by George Hansen, ABF President

Tonight I will sleep in my own bed for the last time for quite a while. Literally, we leave to work our bees in California and will not return for weeks. Figuratively, my life will be consumed by the active season of beekeeping. The next time I come up for air, so it seems, it will be Thanksgiving.

I suppose it has always been like this. But, somehow, things used to flow on their own. Bees did not need so much care. Sure, just like every other year, we had management tasks to do, almost according to the calendar. Now, intervention is crucial, and always lingering is the thought that maybe I am not doing something really important, or my timing is off. Or maybe the bees have come in contact with something that will show up downstream as really bad, if not immediately lethal. Over the span of not that many years, things we almost never used to do, like protein supplement feeding, have now become an absolutely necessary input. It is so hard to be sure exactly what has changed.

Indications are that a nationwide decline in colony overwinter survival has once again been experienced. The previous winter survival survey had recorded a significant improvement from prior levels. It has been estimated that losses may exceed 40 percent this last winter, almost double the previous year. Have beekeepers as a group suddenly lost all their skills and instincts for good management? Was the weather consistently bad across the country? Can pesticides be blamed for this decline? Is there some sneaky pathogen that has slipped in without previously having been identified? Or, can we once again blame varroa for our misery?

In some ways it depends on which group you are with at the time. I just returned from an EPA summit concerning neonicotinoid seed treatment on corn and the honey bee colony losses associated with planting last season. In a room full of people with a focus on that subject and surrounded by some who are already strongly committed to the idea that this activity is a root cause of our problems, it is a little hard to keep objectivity.

Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) has gained the honey bee industry a lot of attention. However, it has turned out to be a slippery opponent, foiling valiant and repeated attempts to identify a culprit. We are still left with only a list of symptoms and the statement that if a few, but not all of the symptoms are present, then it might be CCD. Bees continue to die. The causes of these losses are most frequently identified as other than CCD. Scientists have not been able to cause CCD with any combination of stressors, and a series of experiments in multiple states with closely monitored hives failed to have any exhibit symptoms consistent with CCD. But the bees died. All of them in those experiments died in two years or less. The term CCD has given the media and the government a handle for approaching our problems, but it has proved to be a poor descriptor of what is really happening to our bees.

Unfortunately, the disaster assistance program available to beekeepers, ELAP, is worded to compensate for losses certified as from CCD. Additionally, supplemental funding for honey bee research is also connected to CCD investigation. The media seems fixated on the mystery of CCD and the eventual solution. There is plenty of mystery to solve when a bee outfit collapses, but it is definitely not limited to CCD.

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</tr>
<tr>
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  - Fax: 406.322.5780
  - E-mail: psundberg@hotmail.com
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  - E-mail: gbrandi@sbcglobal.net
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  - E-mail: john@sabinecreekhoney.com

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From the Vice President – Perspectives in Beekeeping: Honey Bees to the Rescue

by Tim Tucker, ABF Vice President

We live in one of the most remarkable times in man’s history. Even though we are not building any big projects currently like the Hoover Dam, Great Pyramids or Stonehenge, or putting any more men on the Moon or Mars, it is truly amazing how many discoveries are happening every day.

It seems as though every day there is news about honey bees in the media, but the most recent one is perhaps the Hoover Dam of discoveries in the medical world. It’s been reported by the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis that the melittin found in honey bee venom is effective at killing the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Somehow, a researcher has found compounds that can be attached to nanoparticles that are able to target cancer cells and not harm the good cells that are floating around in our bodies. While I’m sure most people know what nanoparticles are, for those of you who do not, I will try to explain that as well.

But first, it is the melittin from the bee venom that pokes holes in the envelope of the virus, eventually stripping away the protective wall from the virus. There is no way for the virus to adapt or mutate to get around this type of an attack on it. That is the great thing and there is hope that this may be a cure for those affected, and measures may be able to be developed that will prevent the spread of HIV throughout the world. Almost 34 million people have contracted HIV worldwide, according to amFAR, the Foundation for AIDS Research. Of these, 3.3 million are under the age of 15 years old. Each day, almost 7,000 people contract HIV around the globe. The study was published recently in the journal Antiviral Therapy, according to U.S. News & World Report.

I promised to explain the nanoparticle, which is another amazing discovery. It is not one that is new because we have been using it for a long time. It turns out that pottery from the Middle Ages often displayed the use of these particles in the metal glazing of pottery that still resists atmospheric oxidation. The artisans used copper and silver salts together with vinegar, ochre and clay to coat or glaze the surface and, when baked in a kiln, the amazing finish was created giving a unique optical effect that simulates the appearance of a golden luster. This technology originated in the Islamic world as Muslims were not allowed to use gold in artistic creations. Michael Farady first described these tiny particles in a paper he published in 1857, which is phenomenal.

Today, nanoparticles are being used in dozens of ways to help fight cancer, improve magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and battling cardiovascular disease. Those are just the health benefits! They also are used widely in the optical and electronic fields. You can read the following article if you are interested in finding out more about these amazing, tiny wonders at www.understandingnano.com/nanoparticles.html.

There have been other great strides in the fight against this disease with the first people being cured with drug therapy. This new use of honey bee venom is very exciting to think that there is one more thing that honey bees are capable of doing that is so beneficial to man. Working with this amazing little creature keeps inspiring me on a daily basis. These are tough times for our bees and we can hope that we soon find some definitive answers to what has constantly been plaguing them for the past 20 years. I am confident, however, and don’t expect them to disappear from the environment because I have great faith in our ability to discover. If we can build things like the pyramids and the Great Wall of China, and utilize tiny nanoparticles to cure cancer or treat HIV, we can surely find some simple answers for restoring the health of our bees.

You can read more about the Washington University School of Medicine study at the following link:

Government Relations Update

by George Hansen, ABF President

The EPA hosted a summit of stakeholders around the issue of corn planting with treated seed and the honey bee losses associated with it last season. The ABF was represented by Zac Browning, Gene Brandi and myself. In a full day of presentations and discussion, the seed companies, agronomists, growers, equipment manufacturers, beekeepers and, at the perimeter, environmental groups presented the current stage of the situation with an eye on the future.

The focus of this meeting was on the pesticide contaminated dust that occurs when the rough corn seed tumbled through the planting machinery loses some of the coating because of abrasion. This pesticide becomes mixed with talc or graphite, which is used as a seed lubricant in the pneumatic planters. Depending on the style of planter, this combination of dust and pesticide is exhausted into the air, and can be carried long distances by wind, sometimes many miles, and can land on blooming crops. Serious bee losses have been verified from this source. Losses to other pollinators are more difficult to verify, but nobody should be surprised if that is not an additional problem. Specifically not discussed by the manufacturers and growers was the impact of systemic pesticides as a source of contaminated pollen and nectar in the plants that have taken up the pesticides either from the seed treatment or from residue in the soil in subsequent planting.

It should be said that corn is not the only seed coated with pesticides in this way. Nearly all soybeans, canola and sunflower seeds are also coated. They do not seem to have the problem with dust because the seed is smooth and there is far less abrasion. However, the issue of a plant with this systemic pesticide expressing contaminated nectar and pollen is still present.

The pesticide companies, in concert with the equipment manufacturers and seed companies, have developed new wax coatings that do not seem to be as prone to creating dust. They will be doing large trials this year with the plan to have them fully deployed by 2015 planting. Using filters as an immediate solution apparently causes major problems with the machinery. Engineering filter solutions is possible. Think of what we have done with smoke stacks in industry; it would just take time and would be costly to develop.

Some discussion of why this method of pesticide application has become so pervasive should be included here. First of all, spraying pesticides has its own issues and that activity is closely regulated. Some might dispute how closely this activity is actually regulated, but there are rules and the EPA has oversight through the states. On the other hand, treated seed is not considered a pesticide application by the EPA. Planting treated seed is considered using a “treated product” and not a pesticide application. So, the EPA does not regulate this activity. If the pesticide is exhausted out of the planter into the air to be carried by the wind into the next county, even the EPA admits we are in new territory.

Using systemic pesticides is an attempt to solve a whole raft of pest problems in advance, even problems that the grower does not know or care about. On the other hand, one is applying pesticides for pests that sometimes aren’t even present, as well. Prophylactic use of antibiotics and pesticides leads to early resistance and eventual loss of valuable tools and flies in the face of basic IPM practices. The beekeeper input came from presentations from Dr. Jeff Pettis and Brett Adee. Both pointed out the declines suffered by the bee industry over time, culminating in the significant shortages of bees for almond pollination this

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year. Both also pointed to the pervasive sub-lethal doses of pesticides in the agriculture environment, exacerbated by the wholesale plowing under of traditional honey bee habitat for corn and soybean planting. For bees that spent the summer with a diet of treated canola, soybeans, sunflowers, and a fall dose of treated corn pollen, it was hard for honey bees to catch a break. Coupled with drought conditions in much of the Midwest and the unavailability of effective mite treatments last fall, one could foresee problems. Adee pointed out that many problems for our industry are the outcome of farming practices and policies made without any industry input, but the impacts and the costs downstream are externalized onto our industry. He pointed out that this is not sustainable, and further, the non-managed pollinators and wildlife are left to suffer serious declines.

Adee presented the six best management practices for corn planting that the National Honey Bee Advisory Board had forwarded to the EPA. The problem is getting this information out to the growers. EPA has no intention of including them on the label. Crop Life America has developed a website on the subject, but in reality there can be little expectation that this next year’s planting procedures will be much different than last year’s. Likewise, the bee losses from 2012 will likely be repeated unless growers embrace reasonable precautions.

**NHABAB RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TREATED CORN SEED PLANTING**

1. Plant treated seed only in accordance with Integrated Pest Management principles. Use of scouting and field history information can reveal whether economically damaging levels of pests controlled by seed treatment insecticides are present in the field. When using transgenic corn hybrids and/or granular or liquid insecticides to control key pests, treated seed may not be necessary.

2. Only use seeds treated with an effective adhesive agent and perhaps a polymer over coating to prevent abrasion of insecticidal dust from the seed and release to the environment. Only use corn seeds with coatings that do not exceed a Heubach dust abrasion value of 0.75 grams of dust per 100,000 kernels of corn [[ substitute similar “kernel equivalent” for other crops – EPA is requested to provide the appropriate technical specification ]].

3. If lubricants are used in planting machine seed hoppers, then only use lubricants causing minimal dust off.

4. Use deflectors and other measures on planting machines adequate to restrict dust to the planted field margins.

5. Planting treated seeds causes insecticidal dust drift. Drift is more of a hazard the faster the wind speed. Do not sow treated seeds when measured wind velocity exceeds ten (10) miles per hour.

6. Do not dispose of dust remaining in planters after planting into the environment. Carefully collect, cover and enclose the dust and dispose of it in accordance with the disposal requirements for unused portions of this insecticide according to this label.
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Legislative Fund Contributions

The following ABF members contributed to the ABF Legislative Fund during the month of February 2013. These donations enable us to carry out the legislative initiatives that will benefit ABF members and the American beekeeping industry.

Donald Berry, Minn.  Howard Hohnsen, Ill.
Tom Emde, Fla.  Nancy Putnam, Fla.
Mark Hedley, Texas

Foundation Donations

The following ABF members made general contributions to the ABF Foundation during the month of February 2013.

Sarah Gendron, N.M.
Howard Hohnsen, Ill.
Tracey Middlebrooks, Ga.
Jeffrey Nelson, Md.

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Former American Honey Princess Launches Beekeeping Project in China

by Grayson Daniels, ABF Membership Coordinator

When the 2013 American Honey Queen and Princess were crowned this January, their lives were changed. But, it’s their impact beyond the glitz and glamor that will make a difference in our country, and in one former princess’ case, our world.

When Katie Klett was named American Honey Princess in 2007, she spent a year traveling across the United States, educating adults and children on the importance of honey bees, giving presentations, sharing recipes, and participating in radio and television interviews. So, after an exciting and whirlwind year comes to an end, what comes next?

For Katie, the end of her term meant taking on a whole new adventure. In 2009, Katie embarked on a trip to Beijing, China, to work in a proteomics research laboratory where she learned to extract proteins and analyze the data. While working in the lab, she met the wife and daughter of the U.N. ambassador to China. Together, the women were interested in starting a beekeeping project in the western province of Yunnan, but needed someone who had beekeeping experience and could speak both English and Chinese. Katie knew then that she was the right candidate for the job.

Katie did not have an average childhood like most girls. Her parents were migratory beekeepers and she grew up immersed in the business and lifestyle.

“It was not until I left home as an adult that I realized how different it is from most upbringings. For me, it was normal to move around with the bees and to be largely socializing with others who lived in the same manner,” Katie explained.

After leaving home and looking into various career paths in college, Katie realized that she was not made out for an average job, which led to her journey to China. Once Katie moved out into the province of Yunnan, she got right to work. Her main goals for the project were to generate income and foster biodiversity preservation.

“Beekeeping is ideal for many of these people because they are living in very remote regions with almost no other way to generate income,” said Katie. The men she worked with were really serious about getting better at beekeeping and turning it into a main source of income. “Everyone I work with likes learning and working hard. I love it out there,” Katie said.

Katie’s project has circled back to the states, as she now is working with engineers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology designing fixed comb extractors for log hives. “Right now the log hives they use do not produce enough clean honey to sell in a store, as they must squeeze it out by hand. We hope that this new and affordable machine will encourage them to use their existing beekeeping technology, instead of having to always switch to our boxes,” explains Katie.

Katie moved back to the United States in September 2012 to finish her undergraduate degree at the University of Minnesota. She is planning on traveling back to China this May to continue her work with the beekeepers she has come to know and love.

When asked about how her time in China affected her personally, Katie answered, “I guess for me it is not so much a trip as a long journey through this project and its different stages. My life is much richer in all ways because I have this project there. Some of my best friends are the beekeepers and farmers I have gotten to know over the years.”

Katie has big dreams for the future, as she will pursue a master’s degree after her undergraduate studies.

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Katie Klett Article  
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conclude. In addition to her studies and her projects in China, which were supported and made possible by Shangri-La Farms and Yunnan Mountain Heritage Foundation, she has just started working with people in Vietnam, learning how their beekeeping industry operates and how she can lend a hand. She has partnered with Mel-O Honey, a U.S. company, and Dak Lak Honey Cooperative, a Vietnamese cooperative, participating in social projects for the benefit of farmers.

“After that, who can say? I am very interested in potentially working with Native American populations in the United States or Canada, maybe indigenous populations in other places like Australia. But, we will have to see how long I end up staying in Asia. It’s pretty hard to leave.”

It is sufficient to say this former Honey Princess will continue to thrive as one of the honey bee’s ambassadors to the world.
Queen Committee Report

by Anna Kettlewell, Honey Queen Program Chair

The first quarter of 2013 has proven to be successful for our American Honey Queen and Princess. Caroline and Emily have collectively visited seven states through March 7, with many more trips planned this spring. Thank you to the many new groups that have contacted me to arrange many of the events about which you will read in this and upcoming newsletters. The Honey Queen Committee is pleased with the new promotions.

Both Caroline and Emily highlight their visits to spring beekeeping meetings and beekeeping schools and courses in this newsletter. The Queen Program began working with the University of Minnesota several years ago to have our representatives attend their renowned beekeeping short course. It has proven to be an extremely beneficial course for our queens regardless of their experience and expertise in the industry. Those with much experience have learned new ways to explain complicated aspects of the industry or techniques different than they have learned. Queens from warmer climates learn more about beekeeping in colder climates. Queens who are newer to the industry gain solid reaffirmation of their knowledge and also learn some new things. On behalf of the Queen Committee, I thank Dr. Marla Spivak and Gary Reuter for continuing to give the American Honey Queen and Princess the opportunity to improve their knowledge of the industry through your course.

While it is extremely beneficial to learn about honey bees in northern climates, it is equally important to learn about beekeeping in other parts of the country. If your organization hosts an annual bee school or if your local university hosts a similar short course, consider having the American Honey Queen and Princess attend. In addition to aiding in their knowledge to best represent our industry nationally, the Queen and Princess can help in other ways. For example, the Queens can give presentations on giving effective school or civic group presentations about honey bees or the industry. They can present on the American Beekeeping Federation and its benefits to new beekeepers. We would love to send the Queen and Princess to your state’s event this year and in coming years. To maximize their visit, the Queen and Princess can speak in area schools, participate in media interviews about the industry on your local television and radio stations, or meet with government officials about how they can help honey bees in your area.

Caroline and Emily are really hitting their stride in their year of promotions. They are excited to promote in as many states as possible this year, so please contact me to discuss your opportunities. Great months for honey queen promotions are May and June, when things are quieter for the program. Contact me now about your upcoming farmers’ market, school visits, store promotions, and other events. You may reach me at 414.545.5514 or honeyqueen99@hotmail.com. Happy promoting!

U.S. Honey Production Down One Percent in 2012


Honey production in 2012 from producers with five or more colonies totaled 147 million pounds, down 1 percent from 2011. There were 2.62 million colonies producing honey in 2012, up 5 percent from 2011. Yield per colony averaged 56.1 pounds, down 6 percent from the 59.6 pounds in 2011. Colonies which produced honey in more than one state were counted in each state where the honey was produced. Therefore, at the United States level yield per colony may be understated, but total production would not be impacted. Colonies were not included if honey was not harvested. Producer honey stocks were 32.9 million pounds on December 15, 2012, down 10 percent from a year earlier. Stocks held by producers exclude those held under the commodity loan program.

Honey prices increased to a record high during 2012 to 195.1 cents per pound, up 11 percent from 176.5 cents per pound in 2011. United States and State level prices reflect the portions of honey sold through cooperatives, private, and retail channels. Prices for each color class are derived by weighting the quantities sold for each marketing channel. Prices for the 2011 crop reflect honey sold in 2011 and 2012. Some 2011 crop honey was sold in 2012, which caused some revisions to the 2011 crop prices.

The complete NASS Honey Report is available on the ABF Web site at www.abfnet.org under the “Education & Events” tab, “Honey Facts.”
Hello fellow beekeepers! I hope you and your bees are doing very well and are looking forward to the beginning of spring. While winter is definitely still present, I am eager for the warm weather, blooming flowers and increased activity in the beehive!

I was very busy promoting our industry and the ABF in February and March. From February 13-18, I visited Tampa, Fla., for the Florida State Fair. I spent two days working at the Florida State Beekeepers Association booth at the fair. During those two days, 52,373 people came through! I answered dozens of questions, handed out literature and sampled and sold local tupelo, wildflower, and holly honey, as well as soaps and lip balms. It is exciting to see how surprised and pleased the consumers are to sample and purchase products from their area. The connection between honey bees and their daily lives suddenly becomes very clear to them and they have an increased appreciation for our industry. On Valentine’s Day at the fair, I also helped give cooking demonstrations during “Honey Day.” Hundreds of people came by to learn about the versatility of honey in the kitchen as well as sample some of the delicious dishes we made. I also had the great privilege of giving a six-minute radio interview with WTBA AM 570 and 910 Tampa Bay’s Christian Talk. This station reaches seven different counties, allowing for mass promotion of the industry. I spoke about the importance of honey bees and pollination, the versatility of honey and the ABF’s work for the industry. At the fair, I worked with the 2013 Florida Honey Queen, Susannah Austin, and 2013 Orange Blossom Beekeepers Association Honey Princess, Autumn Webb. It was a great pleasure to work with these fellow representatives of the beekeeping industry.

While in Florida, I also visited Southwest Middle School where I presented in sign language to deaf and hard of hearing students about the importance of honey bees. For many of these students, this presentation marked their first in-depth experience with honey bees. It is always a delight to further the beekeeping industry by sharing it with those who have previously been unreached. I send special thanks to Linda and David Hackenberg, Bert and Caryl Kelley and Noel and Marie Blanchet for the incredible hospitality they showed me during my stay.

I traveled to Virginia for a variety of events from February 22-25. First, I attended the Heritage festival at Eastern Shore Community College. At the festival, I worked with beekeepers from the Beekeepers Guild of the Eastern Shore. We had a large display set up, featuring posters and literature, beekeeping equipment, an extractor, hive products and candle dipping demonstrations. I gave an hour-long presentation about the vital importance of honey bees to Virginia agriculture. It is such an encouragement to see the interest and concern of the public. After my presentation, there was time for questions and answers – the attendees were so interested and asked so many questions, the master of ceremonies had to cut the session short to allow time for the next speaker. I also gave school presentations to children, ages 6-10, during my visit. The children were fascinated by the honey bees and asked dozens of questions about bees, pollination and beekeeping in the classroom.

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other countries. I learned that as a result of one school presentation, two of the students had decided to pursue researching honey bees as a school project. Finally, along the eastern shore, I attended the Barrier Island Center Oyster Roast to share the importance of honey bees with some of the 650 guests in attendance.

Upon leaving Virginia’s eastern shore, I headed to Norfolk, Va., to work with the Norfolk Beekeepers’ Association. My first promotion was at the Norfolk Zoo, where I shared with zoo visitors the importance of honey bees, how bees affect them personally and how to safely take care of swarms. I also visited some of the colonies that are on site at the zoo and met some new beekeepers who will be receiving their first hive in the next couple of weeks. It is so exciting to see the enthusiasm of these beekeepers as they begin this new journey! I also promoted the industry at Old Dominion University, where I had a display of information and had a slideshow of bee and beekeeping related photos. As students passed by on their way to and from class, I discussed the importance of honey bees and our industry with them. As a college student myself, it was meaningful to the students to realize that beekeeping was something they could be involved in and that they could all do something to help the honey bees. Thank you John Long, Frank Walker and Blake Pips for sponsoring and hosting me during my stay.

Finally, on March 1-3, I visited Minnesota with American Honey Princess Emily Campbell for the “Beekeeping in Northern Climates” short course hosted by the University of Minnesota Bee Lab. The two-day course was led by Gary Reuter and Dr. Marla Spivak and was excellent. This year’s course had a record-breaking attendance of 280 people. The topics discussed included preparing colonies for winter, hiving packages, making divisions, bee breeds and races, seasonal management and disease and pest management. As a beekeeper from Texas, I was unfamiliar with overwintering procedures and what northern beekeepers do and do not need to be aware of in their colonies. I learned a great deal from this course and appreciated the new information. On the first afternoon, Princess Emily and I had a booth with information about the ABF and Honey Queen Program. Many of the course attendees are not beekeepers or are just beginning beekeeping. We were able to promote the ABF and answer their many questions about the Federation and beekeeping in general. A very special thank you goes to Gary and Marla for providing such an excellent course and to Terry McDaniel for her sweet hospitality.

Coming up, I am looking forward to trips in Texas, Connecticut and Oregon. I would love to promote at your event! To schedule a visit from Princess Emily or me, please contact American Honey Queen Chairperson, Anna Kettlewell, honeyqueen99@hotmail.com or at 414.545.5514.

Friends of the Bee Fund Contributions

The following individuals contributed to the Friends of the Bee Fund during the month of February 2013. These donations enable us to fund educational programs and services that will benefit ABF members and the American beekeeping industry.

- Howard Hohnsen, Ill.
- Drew Madzin, N.J.
- Sigurd Michelson, Fla.
From the Honey Princess
by Emily Campbell, 2013 American Honey Princess

Good news, beekeepers! Spring is right around the corner, but until it actually gets here, I am sure Minnesota will throw a few blizzards and ice storms my way. However, the crazy weather has not hindered my traveling one bit!

February and March were wonderful months full of promotion. February began with an in-depth interview with AgWeek magazine in Grand Forks, N.D. My interviewer, Will Powell, covered very important topics such as pollination and my job as American Honey Princess. The interview was printed in the March 18 edition, so if you are a subscriber, be sure to check it out.

I had my very first solo promotion to New Jersey February 20-24. On my first morning in New Jersey, I woke up bright and early to help my host family make honey deliveries to many grocery stores in New Jersey. This was a fascinating new experience for me, learning more about commercial honey production operations. After our deliveries, I prepared for the upcoming days, which proved to be very busy.

Among my promotions in New Jersey, I had school presentations at Woodbridge High School in Woodbridge, N.J. I gave two cooking demonstrations to four classes, where I prepared honey applesauce with the students. You can find that recipe in this year’s recipe brochure. It was a huge hit with all the students. I also gave two more auditorium presentations. In total, I reached 350 students, who learned just how important bees are to their (and everyone’s) food supply. I also had the opportunity to participate in a store promotion at a Mount Laurel, N.J. Wegman’s Grocery Store. Wegman’s Grocery Stores offer very high quality products, so naturally there is a lot of honey there, and many of the customers were very interested in hearing about the health benefits of honey. At my table, customers could sample locally grown New Jersey honey and creamed honey. Store promotions are a staple of the Honey Queen Program, as they offer the great opportunity to hand out samples of honey, as well as doing cooking demonstrations. They also give the customer the immediate ability to purchase honey instead of hearing about it and then having to remember to buy it the next time they are at the grocery store.

The main event during my trip was the New Jersey Beekeepers’ Association’s annual winter meeting in Hamilton, N.J. There were several very good speakers and I gave a presentation on the American Honey Queen Program and the benefits it provides to the beekeeping industry. It was a very successful event and New Jersey was very welcoming. I thank the Stiles family for opening their home to me as my hosts and for also showing me many aspects of the industry that I had never seen before.

After my trip to New Jersey, I traveled to Minneapolis, Minn. March 1-3 to attend the University of Minnesota’s “Beekeeping in Northern Climates” short course with American Honey Queen Caroline Adams. It was extremely informative and I learned many things during the class. Some highlights included learning how to detect American foulbrood by its scent and taking a tour of part of the University of Minnesota’s bee lab. During the first class day, Queen Caroline and I also staffed a booth promoting the American Beekeeping Federation, encouraging the attendees to become ABF members. I extend a big thanks to my host Terry McDaniel, Gary Reuter, Dr. Marla Spivak and all the graduate students who made this fantastic class possible.

Next, I promoted in Frankfort, KY. March 6-10, where a week-long event titled “Bee Friendly Frankfort” was in full swing. The Kentucky Beekeepers kept me very busy as I spoke to over 450 students in three days. On my first day of promotions, I spoke to three FFA groups at Scott County High School. As a former FFA member, I could relate to a lot of the students on where they were in their FFA careers. I also had the pleasure of having dinner with the managers of the local Dadant beekeeping supply store, Clay and Kim Guthrie. I promoted the Honey Queen Program during this time and learned that there is a very high interest

(continued on page 14)
in restarting a program in Kentucky. In addition to my many school visits, I had a meeting with the Kentucky commissioner of agriculture on different ways to provide more forage and habitat for honey bees. Legislative work is just one of the many jobs a honey queen has, and it is also one of the most important. Honey bees need help from everyone and legislative officials can often have the biggest impact on influencing the public.

“Bee Friendly Frankfort” had many special events. I tapped into my artistic side at the “Beekeepers’ Jam” where I judged the Beehive Hair-Do Contest. There were 15 stellar entries and I must say it was quite difficult to pick a winner! Other events included a mead tasting, local musicians’ performances and plenty of honey-themed meals. To promote the week’s activities, I had three radio interviews with local Frankfort radio station Froggy 101.7 and its two sister stations. They were aired several times throughout the week promoting all my events during “Bee Friendly Frankfort.”

During my last day in Kentucky, I taught a class at the Bluegrass Beekeepers’ School, held on the Kentucky State University campus. The turnout was spectacular with over 500 beginner and advanced beekeepers attending. My presentation focused on effective methods of giving a school presentation about honey bees and beekeeping. I give huge thanks to John Antenucci, Marsha Bezold, Marti Booth, Kim and Clay Guthrie, Phil Craft and everyone else who helped make this event so successful. Together, we raised great awareness about honey bees.

I look forward to upcoming trips to Wisconsin and Washington. Hopefully, I will see some of you there. If you would like to schedule a visit from Queen Caroline or me, please contact Anna Kettlewell at 414.545.5514 or honeyqueen99@hotmail.com.
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From the Auxiliary

by Lillian Kelley, ABF Auxiliary President

Spring is late in Virginia! As I write this article during the second week in March, we should be enjoying the blooming crocus, daffodils and forsythia. Instead, we see a large bulldozer removing 18 inches of snow from our mountain road and driveway. We need warm weather, as our package bees arrive in two weeks.

Don’t forget to take pictures for the Photo Contest as you work with your bees this spring. Also, please remember the new category, which is “Pollination and Bees.”

In addition to the Photo Contest, don’t forget to select recipes for the Baking Contest.

Included is another winning recipe for your enjoyment from our most recent contest.

**Honey Ginger Creams**

*by Carmen Conrad*

- ½ cup shortening
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 ¼ cup dark honey
- 1 egg
- 4 cups flour
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 2 tsp gr. ginger
- 1 tsp. nutmeg
- 1 tsp. gr. cloves
- 1 tsp. salt

Cream the first four ingredients and add to first mixture alternately with a mixture of: 2 tsp. baking soda in ¼ cup hot water. Drop by teaspoonful onto greased cookie sheet. Bake at 400 degrees for 8 minutes. Cool and ice with creamed honey.

**ABF Auxiliary Officers**

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*From the President (continued from the cover)*

It is natural to try to distance oneself from danger, to run away. But where can you go? I am personally grappling with a decision to vacate an activity in an area that has been a part of my operation for a long time. In some ways, what success I have had has been associated in part with this activity, but any objective observer would notice that continuing is just too risky for the bees. Any financial analysis shows that the damaged condition of the bees coming out is costing me money and holding me back from doing well in other areas. Breaking relationships is painful and establishing new ones difficult. And there is not a huge virgin territory to explore for new opportunities.

Even in the sunny wonder of spring, beekeeping is like jumping into the fog, as the song says. Up close, things are recognizable enough, but one can’t really see very far nor identify what is lurking in the distance. There is no predictor of where we will be at this time next year, except the memory of how it used to be. But, don’t misunderstand me, please. I am enjoying today’s sunshine. Hope the sun shines on you, as well.

**Milestones**

*Congratulations to the following ABF members that have reached milestone years during the month of February 2013:*

- **10 Years**
  - Denise Biecke, S.C.
  - Conrad Legatt, Minn.

- **15 Years**
  - James Kellie, Kan.

- **25 Years**
  - Donald Berry, Minn.

- **30 Years**
  - Warren Johnson, Fla.

- **35 Years**
  - Lois Nicholson, Minn.
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#### PUBLICATIONS
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**Bee Culture**

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