# THE BEELINE

Official Newsletter of the Central Iowa Beekeepers Association

Issue: June 2014

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Date: June 21, 2014

Time: Summer Hours

6:30 pm Dinner on your own

7:30 pm Business meeting

Where: Bonanza Steakhouse

5029 N.E. 14<sup>th</sup> St.

Des Moines, IA 50313

Speaker: Steve Hanlin, USDA

Entomologist

## SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER IS: AUGUST 1, 2014

To submit an item by email: <a href="mailto:jcammcguire@yahoo.com">jcammcguire@yahoo.com</a>

To submit an item by U.S. Postal Service:

Julia McGuire 919 45<sup>th</sup> St. West Des Moines, IA 50265

To add an email subscription, received updates between newsletters, or replace your print newsletter with an email newsletter, send your email address to Julia: jcammcguire@yahoo.com

#### FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hey, Beekeepers of Central Iowa!

I'll just say it has been an interesting spring so far. I am writing this letter in the middle of May and it was 45 degrees this morning with some people saying they had frost on their lawns.

I have had a tough time getting colonies going this spring. I overwintered 20 colonies and all lived until March. I lost three of my nucs, that I had wintered in my garage, during that cold snap in March. I have set up several two queen colonies with the new NWC Queens I received 4/12/2014. This fall I will remove the old queen and have a young queen for overwintering. The rest of the NWC Queens that I received, I tried to set them in nuc boxes, but they did very poorly and I don't really know why. It was raining and cold during this period and queens were not accepted very well. Next year I will order my queens for the end of April. Hopefully the dandelions will be out by then.

All you new beekeepers with packages, I hope things are going well for you. By now, you should have brood and several frames of foundation pulled out. Andy is planning on a field day on May 31 and everyone is invited, details to come as soon as available.

ISU received 23 packages and we have lost at least two queens already, but most of the packages are doing well. The over wintered colonies are not building like I hoped they would, so I am giving them special attention.

We have a great program for you June 21. Steve Hanlin will present his dog and pony show with his work at the USDA Plant Introduction Station near Ames. IA.

We always have a good time when Steve is in attendance. His bio is here: http://www.ars.usda.gov/pandp/people/people.htm?personid=2285

See you in June and keep your hive tool sharp,

Arvin CIBA President

#### **Minutes**

Submitted by Margaret Hala, CIBA Secretary

Meeting for Spring 2014, March 15, 2014 was called to order by President Arvin Foell at 6:30 p.m. at Bonanza Steakhouse and Restaurant with a very good turnout of approximately 45 or more present.

Minutes of last meeting reviewed as published in BEELINE. Approved.

Financial report was forgotten at home, so was omitted.

Pat Ennis gave a brief report on the progress of the upcoming auction. Stated there are already 11 or 12 consignees listed, but we can still handle more.

Arvin suggested that the CIBA start a youth beekeeping program of our own and sponsor at least one youth. Discussion followed. Decision that we sponsor one of the youth of the IHPA program. Pat Ennis reported that one of the stipulations Lee Heine made when he offered to provide the bees for the IHPA Youth Beekeeping Program was that all youths that applied be accepted, so the CIBA could not sponsor an additional youth. We could, however, sponsor one of those who applied. Motion made and seconded that we sponsor one of the youth who apply to the IHPA Youth Beekeeping Program. Question called and motion carried.

No other new business.

**Election of Officers** 

Board of Directors: Mark Eimers

President: Arvin Foell Secretary/Treasurer: Margaret Hala

Vice President: Mike Brahms Membership Committee Head: Tiff Ingersoll

Meeting adjourned.

## **Program Notes for March 15**

by Margaret Hala

Tim Wilbanks was our featured speaker. He's the son of Reg Wilbanks, a queen breeder of some renown in Georgia. Tim says he wasn't interested in keeping bees as a youngster, and pursued a different field. A licensed chiropractor who had a thriving business for several years, Tim met and married a fellow student while in college; they moved to the Midwest as she is from Wisconsin. He likes the area.

About 5 years ago, Wilbanks decided he missed bees and beekeeping and decided to get back into beekeeping. His work as a chiropractor didn't give him enough time for beekeeping, so he sold his business and has gotten more colonies. He has started Kalona Honey Company and has 40 – 45 colonies.

Wilbanks showed a slide presentation describing several methods of managing bees to keep them from swarming and being lost to the beekeeper. He stressed that allowing your colonies to swarm and make no attempt to catch, stop, or control them is not beekeeping and is not profitable. Only about 25% of uncaught swarms survive, so allowing uncontrolled swarming is not beneficial to anyone.

SPLITTING – Splitting the existing colony by removing brood and bees and starting a new colony is the most practiced method. If you don't want more colonies, you can sell the frames of brood, freeze the frames to kill the brood and reinsert those frames into the colony for cleaning. You can split by separating the top and bottom brood chambers and letting the bees make a new queen in the body that doesn't have a queen. This is called the walk-away method of splitting. You can separate the bodies and go back in 3 – 4 days, find which body doesn't have a queen and give that body a cell or introduce a new queen.

(Our favorite method is to order queens and two to five days before delivery go through the colony, select 3 – 5 frames with eggs and larvae to leave with the queen, move the rest of the brood upstairs and insert a queen excluder between the bodies, thus keeping the queen downstairs with empty frames to lay in. When the queens arrive, you go back and remove the frames of brood upstairs along with the attending bees. You can also shake most of the bees that are upstairs into your new colonies. The existing colony has had the benefit of the hatching bees during the time you're waiting for the queens to arrive, so you won't' cut the parent colony short of bees. – Margaret)

CHECKERBOARDING – Checkerboarding is placing drawn comb in the top brood chamber in every other position. (We've also put 2-3 frames of drawn comb in the bottom brood chamber. – Margaret)

OPENING AND EXPANDING THE BROOD NEST – You add foundation to the outside of the brood nest but inside of the honey frames. You can also put one frame of capped brood outside the foundation with the honey frames. This makes the bees draw comb for the queen to lay in more rapidly. There must a good honey flow on for this to work well.

You must remember to feed if there isn't a good enough honey flow or if you must use foundation, but don't overfeed. If the bees have 60-75% of the combs drawn, you can probably stop feeding. Otherwise they will pack the brood nest with this new 'nectar' and swarm because they are out of room.

SUPERING – The last method of controlling swarms is to super, super, super. If you don't want more colonies and don't want to draw more brood comb, then you must put supers on the colonies to keep the bees 'home.'

Also, clipping a queen will not stop swarming. The queen can't fly, but she can leave, by crawling, and you will still have a new queen, so it's more or less a waste of money.

## **2014 CIBA Auction Report**

By Margaret Hala

Our auction was held April 12 in Perry. Curt and Connie Bronnenberg were gracious enough to let us use their honey house and we had a very good turn out. We normally have about 50 buyers. Last year we had 54. This year we had 62! Sales were about the same, with 12 consigners, eleven of which actually brought items. Also sales were about the same, in the \$5400 range.

Of course I made a couple of mistakes. Doing this once a year, checking several people out in rapid succession and just the stress of it always makes for errors. Of the two people contacted about errors made, one has paid. I'm still waiting to hear from the other one.

One other thing occurred that needs addressing---our policy has been that members who consign before April 1 will pay a 10% commission fee. Non-members and members who consign after April 1 will pay 15%

commission fee. This was not made clear to those who consigned and they believed they were paying 10% commission, so I'm having to refigure everything and write more checks.

The weather was good this year. We didn't get rained on or frozen out, nor was it swelteringly hot. I really think the decision to move the auction up a week worked out best for everyone. It was still too chilly to do much in the way of beekeeping and it was early enough to get equipment for this year.

**Spare equipment? Donate it.** Forest Avenue Outreach (FAO) is a nonprofit organization focused on community gardens, youth clubs, and outreach in the King Irving neighborhood of Des Moines, IA. We build long-term mentoring relationships with the youth through nature-related trips and as they help with garden projects. We believe youth will accomplish great things, if given the chance, the training, and the expectations.

Our interest in beekeeping started many years ago after reading <u>Fresh Food in Small Places</u>. We are very interested in having a hive in our community garden. The bees would be beneficial as pollinators. They will provide the opportunity to teach the youth where another source of real food comes from and what care goes into keeping bees. We also look forward to the signs of "Live Bees on Premises" providing incentive to the garden pilferers to pass on by. Of course, we really look forward to serving honey raised in the garden at the community meals held there. If you would like to partner with us in bringing some sweetness to the city, we are seeking sponsorship or donations of the supplies to start and maintain a hive. We'd also love to have you volunteer in educating the urban youth on beekeeping. Ed. Note – After talking to Ralph, FAO's director, it seems that 2014 would be used to gather equipment. 2015 would be used for a class and the first year of keeping bees. Equipment can be donated piecemeal or as a complete hive kit.

You can learn more at <a href="www.facebook.com/ForestAveOutreach">www.facebook.com/ForestAveOutreach</a> or email at <a href="forestaveoutreach@gmail.com">forestaveoutreach@gmail.com</a>

## **Central Iowa 4-H Club for Beekeepers**

Do you know a young person who is interested in beekeeping but 1) lives too far away to visit your hives, 2) can't have bees where s/he lives, 3) has little to no support? If so, you might want to put your youth in touch with Jen Anhalt, who writes:

I'm starting a 4-H group for beekeeping and I'm looking for kids to join me. A child must be between the ages of 9-18 to be in 4-H. Younger children will be in Clover Kids, which will meet at the same time. If siblings and parents want to come along and learn, I'm OK with that. Local bee keeper, Jason Foley of Foley's Russian Bees, has volunteered to teach us all. We would likely meet once a month on a Saturday, probably 9a-12p. Meetings will be held in the Easter Lake area; hives will be located on the grounds of the Ankeny Izaak Walton League.

If you cannot attend the next meeting, need more information, etc., contact Jen at jen\_anhalt@yahoo.com.

## A note from Margaret

Due to my cataract removal in March/April and Bernie's in April/May, we got our queens May 8 and got them installed on the 9th and 10th. Bernie went out this morning, May 14, and brought in some cages that had burr

comb built on them. He just came in from mowing now at 3:15 wanting to know where his bee suit was as the bees are flying 'pretty good' and he wants to check them more. So far everything is looking good.

We get Buckfast bees and they fly in drizzly, rainier and cooler weather than either the Italian or Carniolan bees, and they really liked the later date this year. Doesn't always work out this well though.

We also went out on the 10th to help a beekeeper we're mentoring and checked the three (Carniolan) packages he'd installed 10 days earlier. They had from 4 1/2 to 6 1/2 frames of eggs and larvae. So they are looking good too.

Don't forget the June meeting moves back to summer hours of eating at 6:30 and meeting at 7:30, to allow more time to work with your bees or just outside.

## Julia's Note

Hopefully everyone's season started well. I'd like to bring up some housekeeping before the third quarter gets much closer.

First item is the email list. The BEELINE is a quarterly publication, but many notices come through Arvin's and my hands that require a quicker, shorter deadline. I sent 4 or 5 emails to our email list between our first and second quarter newsletters for notices about seminars, workshops, swarm calls, auction updates, etc. If you'd like to add or remove yourself from this email list, please let me know either by phoning me 515-988-1828 or sending me an email <a href="mailto:jcammcguire@yahoo.com">jcammcguire@yahoo.com</a>. Note that this email usually comes from a service called MailChimp, and includes CIBA members as well as non-members.

Second is your membership. I have about 20 non-paying (former) members and about 40 paid memberships. Non-members will get a meeting notice, but only members will receive the Beeline. Tell your friends that if they want the Beeline, they need to pay dues to Margaret either in person or via U.S.P.S. Her address is on the back page of this newsletter. Dues are good for the calendar year.

Third, I can send meeting reminders via telephone through my husband's business (TellBlast) instead of the postal service. This would be a short, pre-recorded message from me with the meeting date, time, etc., sent one day before the meeting, and costs only 10¢ per answered call vs. a postcard and stamp that costs about \$1. If this interests you, let me know. CIBA doesn't ask members for phone numbers (or email addresses), so I'd need to create a new list.

Last, everyone is encouraged to write articles and send news for the Beeline. Even when you think you're boring, everyone else likes to hear from you whether you are a new or veteran beekeeper.

Hope to see you soon. -- Julia

### **CIBA Leadership**

#### **Board of Directors**

#### **State Organizations**

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Roy Kraft (2 yrs remaining)

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### **Membership Committee**

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