President’s Message

May 2018

Our spring meeting at Topsfield went off without a hitch. Attendance was better than expected and Essex County did a great job managing and coordinating Friday evening speaker’s dinner and the meeting luncheon. Again none of this would be possible without the great help and assistance provided by the Mass Bee Board of Director’s and its membership. Mass Bee’s Honey Queen (Desiree Gracie) did an exemplary job addressing the membership during the meeting. Please consider inviting Desiree to one of your county events to help promote the state organization.

Please consider having your county association sponsor and execute a public event discussing and demonstrating honeybees and their plight and importance. Please submit your event plan prior for posting and then take plenty of pictures during the event for Ed to post on the various Mass Bee platforms for all to see. Looking ahead to Franklin County’s “Field Day” at UMass Agricultural Center on June 16th this is a must attend event. Our fall meeting on November 17th located at Bristol Community College in Fall River will include a Friday evening speaker’s dinner providing an opportunity to spend the entire weekend talking bees.

A county association challenge was presented during the spring meeting by our own Ed Szymanski Norfolk County President and Mass Bee Webmaster was to hold a local county event on “World Bee Day” May 20, 2018. We will certainly keep you abreast of the meetings in the newsletter. As always let us know if there is something you want to have presented at one of the meetings, we will accommodate.

—continued on page 2—
~President’s message continued from page 1 ~

The Legislative Committee is working diligently with the various State Representatives helping to craft comprehensive legislation that will help the environment from the misuse of pesticides, thus creating less stress on the bee population. Additionally, Mass Bee and the Legislative Committee have written and submitted commentary regarding proposed Apiary Regulations. We need feedback from all of our members and county associations as these regulations progress. Please let us know of any honeybee concerns that might occur in your local area. We try to assist all bee associations across the state with all the resources that we have available.

Just a note from last month: My final thought in this message is one of MBA business structure. At our fall meeting this year we will be electing officers per our bylaws for President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer. Currently we have some great folks filling those positions and hopefully they will continue for their second term. With that being said we must ask of every member in this organization if they would take a turn at the helm of this association. If you have any interest, please let our nomination committee know and get involved with the nuts and bolts of the Directors. Attend their meetings and give input for their consideration. New ideas and various outlooks make an association like MBA better, stronger and more enjoyable for everyone.

Pete

Beekeeper of the Year

Mass Bee’s Honey Queen, Desiree Gracie, presents the Beekeeper of the Year Award.

Pictured are: Desiree Gracie, Dave Thayer and Mel Glad receiving the 2018 Award for Beekeeper of the year.

Congratulations!
Mass Bee Field Day

Saturday June 16, 2018 9am-4pm
UMASS Agricultural Learning Center on 911 North Pleasant Street Amherst, MA.

- The Massachusetts Beekeepers Association is holding our annual FIELD DAY on Saturday, June 16, 2018.

- The event is hosted by Franklin County Beekeepers Association.

- The theme of this year’s Field Day is INCREASING YOUR HONEY PRODUCTION. The event is free and open to all.

- Better Bee, Mann Lake, Brushy Mountain and other vendors will exhibit in the open area located adjacent to the main tent where everyone meets.

- Place your orders with your favorite vendor and enjoy FREE SHIPPING.

- Morning Coffee and a $10 Catered Barbeque lunch will be available.

- Please pre-register for lunch on the Mass Bee web site.

- If you are interested in presenting, please contact Dan Conlon of Warm Color Apiary. (warmcolors@verizon.net).

- For updates please check: https://www.massbee.org or check the Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/MassachusettsBeekeepers/
JUST DO IT

By Ed Szymanski, Norfolk County Beekeepers Association

I recently read an article on a blog-type site called Honey Bee Suite, where Rusty Burlew writes about many relevant beekeeping issues. A link to this particular article about making time to care for your bees had been posted on Facebook, and at the same time, I was reading several posts from people whom had lost bees over the winter and into the spring and knew that they had been negligent in taking care of them. I commented on the Facebook post, “Very good advice. People need to understand the commitment needed to be successful at keeping bees”. I decided to write about it too.

When you buy a dog, adopt a cat, even plant a garden, you don’t sign a contract or take an oath, but you implicitly make a commitment to see to it that they remain happy and healthy. The same goes for honey bees. We have decided to become the stewards of these creatures who work their little abdomens off pollinating our gardens and storing honey for us to harvest. Don’t we owe to them to be diligent in our care for them?

I have said before, everyone loses bees. The loss rate in Massachusetts is running at around 45%. If your bees die, it doesn’t necessarily mean you are a bad beekeeper. Things go wrong, and even when we give it our best effort, we sometimes fail. But it’s those times when we could have made a difference, but didn’t, that we need to address.

We all have work and family pressures that sometimes keep us from spending as much time with our bees as we’d like, but we really need to put time aside to take care of them. If you think you’re going to stick a few hives in the back yard, install some packages, and head for the Cape for the summer, maybe keeping bees is not for you. Rusty points out in the article that many of our excuses have to do with our own personal comfort than anything else.

Just do it.
Your overwintered hives are bursting with bees. You see drones, looks like they’re getting ready to swarm. But, there’s a lot going on this weekend, the grass needs to be cut, Sox are on TV, you’ll do it next weekend. On Wednesday, you come home to find that half of your bees and that special queen just flew off to make a hive somewhere else.

Just do it.

Make sure you have extra equipment on hand in case you do check them and find that a split is order. You wanted to go to the bee supply store and pick up a few nucs, but there were other things going on, and you didn't make it. See them flying away?

Just do it.

It’s early spring, the hives are light, and bees are up top looking for food. You didn’t get to the store to buy some sugar, you didn’t have time to make up the fondant, etc. and the bees starved. What a shame. And it’s not too cold to feed them if they’re going to starve!

Bring out your fondant, open the top and quickly slide the fondant in and then close up. You can do it in 10 seconds. A few bees up top may die from the cold or you squashed them under the fondant, but you saved the colony!

Just do it.

And while I’m on the soap box – I feel the same way about education. There are always new developments in the beekeeping world. Read your journals; don’t just look at the photos and ads. Bee clubs bring speakers in for your benefit, to help you learn how to do a better job at this. Take advantage of these opportunities! There’s always something else going on, but try to make time for reading and learning. And helping others too.

Just do it. Your bees are depending on you.

- Ed Szymanski
President, Norfolk Beekeepers Association

Photos courtesy Ed Szymanski
Spring 2018 Legislative Update

By Cliff Youse

On April 4th Representative Carolyn Dykema sent a letter to Representative Jeffrey Sanchez, House Ways and Means Committee Chair, urging him to allow H.4041 - An Act to protect Massachusetts pollinators to move to the floor for a vote by the legislature. This letter was co-signed by an unprecedented 111 of her fellow legislators from both chambers and both sides of the aisle. This represents an overwhelming show of support for this legislation by her colleagues.

So, as you can imagine, the current focus is to get H.4041 successfully through the House Ways committee and on to a vote by the legislature. Those who would like to help make this happen can do so by contacting their legislators and asking them to urge Representative Jeffrey Sanchez, House Ways and Means Committee Chair, to allow H.4041 - An Act to protect Massachusetts pollinators to move to the floor for a vote by the legislature.

H.4041 seeks to limit the use of the neonicotinoid class of systemic pesticides to licensed pesticide applicators only. It also contains a disclosure component that gives consumers the information they need to opt out of purchasing pesticide application services where neonicotinoids are used. The states of Maryland and Connecticut have already passed similar legislation and other states are also considering it. It is common sense legislation whose time has arrived.

To learn more about the legislative process please refer to How An Idea Becomes A Law - Massachusetts Legislature and The Legislative Process in Massachusetts. H.4041 is at the beginning of the “Three Readings” phase of a bill’s journey on its way to becoming law.
Ag Day on the Hill 2018

On Tuesday March 27th, Massachusetts Farm Bureau Hosted Ag Day on the Hill at the Massachusetts State House. Ag Day is an event that is designed to showcase agriculture from all over our state. Many groups were in attendance representing their agricultural commodities, associations, and Agricultural Schools.

Mass Bee was well represented, with dedicated volunteers from our counties’ associations. We were able to speak to Governor Baker, and many other State officials. Even our honey (thank you donors!) reminded all to lend their support to H4041, a Bill to Protect Our Pollinators.

Many thanks to Sue Robinson and to all who came to make bees and beekeeping more visible at the State House.

~ Thank You ~

Pictured in photos from bottom right counter clockwise: Dr. Dick Callahan with Governor Baker, Susan Robinson and Kathy Halamka with Governor Baker. Group photo: Susan, Kathy, Mary, Beth Noon, Michael Galasso, Jan Cormier, Suzanne Atyrzk, Mary Sprogell, Jeanette Poillon, Janice Olsson and Max Day. Center: donated honey
MDAR Apiary Program Update for Mass Bee Newsletter – Summer-018

**Join the MDAR Apiary Program Team!**

We currently have an opening on the MDAR Apiary Program Team to fill one vacant inspector position for the 2018 bee season. The primary service area for this position will be Eastern MA (Middlesex county, Essex county, Suffolk county, Norfolk county and extending to The Cape, as needed) with some additional travel required throughout the state. Specific information and additional details can be found on MassCareers Job Opportunities by searching for the Keyword: Apiary.

**Participate in the 2017-18 Massachusetts Honey Bee Survey**

Please participate in evaluating our local honey bee populations by completing the Massachusetts Honey Bee Survey April 2017 - April 2018. This is the prime source for local data on honey bee health and also assists the MDAR Apiary Program in determining needs for future work. We have only had a total of 41 responses thus far representing 95 colonies. We need more responses to get an adequate portrait of our winter losses this year, especially given the unique weather conditions that honey bees were exposed.

Alternately, if your organization, neighborhood, or local collective of beekeepers has been collecting similar data throughout the season, please feel free to email me the information and I will include as part of the statewide survey. Note that we are also open to any suggestions or comments that you may which could improve the current survey to encourage more participation.

**Beekeepers Wanted!**

Are you interested in participating in the 2018 Massachusetts Hobby Beekeeper Honey Bee Health Survey? In response to beekeeper feedback to conduct a statewide pesticide survey for honey bee colonies, the MDAR Apiary Program Team has collaborated with the University of Massachusetts-Amherst lab of Lynn Adler to design a health survey of hobby beekeepers, similar to that of the annual commercial beekeeper focused USDA Honey Bee Survey, during the 2018 season. Funds for the survey were provided by state appropriated budgetary funds given to MDAR to be contracted through UMass for this project. The project will consist of the Adler lab team being trained by MDAR to take the following samples for the survey:
-continued from previous page-

- Apiaries will include:
  - 40 hobbyist
  - Located throughout the state with a goal of 10 apiaries per region
  - Only those that consist of <5 colonies

- Samples will be taken:
  - Twice during the season - spring and fall
  - Of live bees, pollen/bee bread and wax
  - From 2 randomly selected colonies per apiary
  - To analyze for pesticides, Nosema, Varroa mites, and viruses

- Lab analysis of samples will be conducted by USDA-ARS and Cornell bee labs
- Beekeepers will be notified by the labs after sample analysis is complete with the goal of results to be distributed as soon as possible to allow for augmentation, if needed, of management decisions.

Contact Kim Skyrm, kim.skyrm@state.ma.us, ASAP if you are interested in participating given the time sensitive nature of the survey to start sampling.

Visit a State Apiary!

Join Apiary Program Team for the monthly educational demonstrations offered on each date and time at both State Apiary locations listed below. These events are open to the public, but will focus on the topics of interest to beekeepers. Please remember to bring the required protective clothing (i.e. bee suit and/or bee veil with long pants and closed toed shoes) that you will need to enter a State Apiary. Note: alternate dates will be provided in the event of inclement weather.

**Time:** 10 am-noon  
**Dates - Topics:**  
Saturday, April 14th – Winter Evaluation and Spring Management Part 1  
Saturday, May 12th – Spring Management Part 2- (postponed due to inclement weather)  
Saturday, June 9th – Summer Management  
Saturday, July 14th – Pests, Parasites and Pathogen Detection  
Saturday, August 11th – Fall Management Part 1  
Saturday, September 8th – Fall Management Part 2  
Saturday, October 13th – Winter Prep

**State Apiary Locations:**  
UMass Agricultural Learning Center (ALC) Farm  
911 North Pleasant St  
Amherst, MA 01002  
-park in the field adjacent to the apiary

Essex Technical High School  
565 Maples St  
Danvers, MA 01923  
-park in the lot next to the old Administration building
**SAVE THE DATE! Upcoming Events, Meetings & More**

*Saturday May 19th – “Spring Management” at the State Apiary UMass Amherst*

10am – 12pm at the UMass Agricultural Learning Center, 911 North Pleasant St, Amherst, MA, 01002  [http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/farm-products/apiary/](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/farm-products/apiary/)

*Saturday June 9rd - 7th Annual Langstroth Bee Fest*

The Langstroth Bee Fest committee invites you to attend the seventh annual Bee Fest celebration. It will be held at the Second Congregational Church, 16 Court Square, Greenfield, MA, from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm on Saturday. Langstroth, former pastor at the church, is the “Father of American Beekeeping.” This is a family-friendly event with myriad activities for children including a Pollinator Parade, bee-inspired arts and crafts and a bee piñata. Adults will be treated to presentations by well-known keynote speaker, Kim Flottum, Editor, *Bee Culture* magazine, as well as short talks by top researchers and statewide beekeepers, all held inside a historic sanctuary. Second Church is celebrating its 200 anniversary this year and this is one of many community activities throughout the year.

*Saturday June 16th – Mass Bee Field Day at the State Apiary UMass Amherst.*

9am – 4pm  UMass Agricultural Learning Center, 911 North Pleasant St, Amherst, MA, 01002  This event is hosted by Franklin County Beekeepers Association. The UMASS AGRICULTURAL CENTER is a 70 acre “Living Classroom” located on the northeast corner of the UMASS Amherst campus. The facility features Livestock, Fruit and Vegetable Gardens, Turf Management, Pollination Gardens and Landscaping areas. It hosts the State’s (MDAR) and UMASS research Apiaries. Better Bee, Mann Lake, Brushy Mountain and other vendors will exhibit in the open area located adjacent to the main tent where everyone meets. Free Parking on site. Morning Coffee and a catered lunch will be available; please note that lunch must be pre-paid by June 12th at a cost of $10 per person. The theme of 2017 Field Day is *Healthy Bees through Management*. 45 minute presentation topics to include Mites, Nucs, Honey Production, Swarming, Feeding and Nutrition and many other interesting beekeeping subjects. There will be hives on site for field inspections. Check our web site to register for this event (available soon!)  [https://www.massbee.org/events/2017-field-day/](https://www.massbee.org/events/2017-field-day/) This is a free event!

If you are interested in presenting, please contact Dan Conlon of Warm Color Apiary. (warmcolors@verizon.net)

*Veils & protective clothing are now required to enter ANY apiary*

*Continued on the next page*
**Sunday June 18th - Annual Tour de Hives**: The tour is family-friendly and open to anyone who would like to spend the day doing something fun and active while learning about the local beekeeping community! The tour will be followed by a bring-your-own-brown-bag picnic lunch. As the tour gets closer, check out [www.bostonbeekeepers.org](http://www.bostonbeekeepers.org) for more information and registration. Read more about the Tour de Hives and how it got started [here](http://www.bostonbeekeepers.org). Questions? Send an email to [bostontourdehives@gmail.com](mailto:bostontourdehives@gmail.com).

**Saturday July 14th – “Hive Pests, Parasites and Pathogens” at the State Apiary UMass Amherst** 10am – 12pm at the UMass Agricultural Learning Center, 911 North Pleasant St, Amherst, MA, 01002 [http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/farm-products/apiary/](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/farm-products/apiary/)

**August 13-17 - EAS 2018 at the Hampton Roads Convention Center, VA**
For more information visit [http://www.easternapiculture.org/](http://www.easternapiculture.org/)

**Saturday August 11th – Board of Directors Meeting – TBA**

**Saturday August 11th – “Fall Management” Part I, State Apiary Amherst** 10am – 12pm at the UMass Agricultural Learning Center, 911 North Pleasant St, Amherst, MA, 01002 [http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/farm-products/apiary/](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/farm-products/apiary/)

**Saturday September 8th – “Fall Management” Part II, State Apiary UMass Amherst – “Winter Preparation” at the State Apiary UMass Amherst** 10am – 12pm at the UMass Agricultural Learning Center, 911 North Pleasant St, Amherst, MA, 01002 [see link above](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/farm-products/apiary/)

**Saturday October 13th – “Fall Management” Part II, State Apiary Amherst – “Winter Preparation” at the State Apiary UMass Amherst** 10am – 12pm at the UMass Agricultural Learning Center, 911 North Pleasant St, Amherst, MA, 01002 [see link above](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/farm-products/apiary/)

**Saturday October 27th – Board of Directors Meeting – TBA**

**Saturday November 17th – Mass Bee Fall Meeting and Annual Membership Meeting**, hosted by Bristol County Beekeepers Association 8am-4pm at Bristol Community College 777 Elsbree Street Fall River, MA 02720. Speakers will be Dr. Jamie Ellis and Sam Ramsey. Please contact Kitty DeGroot for details at KittydeGroot@hotmail.com.

If you have an event you would like listed, please contact [correspondingsecretary@massbee.org](mailto:correspondingsecretary@massbee.org)

* Participants must bring protective clothing (i.e. bee suit and/or bee veil with long pants) and closed toed shoes to any hive opening and is necessary before entering the apiary.
I’m very pleased to tell you that the current Board of Directors of Mass Bee has experienced tremendous success moving the fall Mass Bee meeting around the State. Our tour started with our sponsoring Counties of Plymouth County at the Knights of Columbus 2016, Hampden County at Westfield State College 2017 and we are currently working with Bristol County planning fall 2018 at Bristol Community College. Mass Bee also participates with Franklin County in June at “Field Day” at UMass Agricultural Center which they have presented for a dozen plus years. I would be remiss if I didn’t acknowledge Essex County (my home county) for their continued support and sponsoring of the spring Mass Bee meeting at the Topsfield Fair Grounds which they have done for over fifteen years.

The fall meeting is Mass Bee’s official Annual meeting where we have a Honey Show/Cooking Competition and Awards as well as our Bi-Annual election of Mass Bee officers. This concept allows for everyone to participate in the state, as I am very aware of the difficulty travelling across the state for a one-day meeting presents. My goal is to have a meeting in most if not every County in the State giving greater exposure to Mass Bee and allowing access to every beekeeper who wants to attend and giving greater voice to all beekeepers across Massachusetts. Generally, a County needs to start the planning work a year in advance with the particulars occurring about 3--6 months prior to the meeting date. The Mass Bee Board of Directors will assist in all aspects of financing, planning and providing support for the meeting.

Usually, the event Speakers have already been retained by Ed Szymanski as he tries to secure the Speakers at least a year in advance. He will communicate with a county designee their private contact information and travel arrangements so the host county can arrange for hotel accommodations and chauffeuring to and from the airport or bus/train station and Mass Bee events. I encourage the County to appoint one person to escort the speakers so the speakers gain confidence and familiarity with the vehicle and with their host. This also allows them to be comfortable leaving something in the vehicle that they can retrieve later. The host County must also take the speakers to dinner after the Saturday meeting. Generally, the Speakers travel on the Sunday morning after the meeting.
We ask that a County Association assume the responsibility to plan, coordinate and execute all aspects of the meeting needs. The County is most familiar with the area and the facilities and restaurants locally and most able to secure the necessary venues. The meeting venue shall include all audio visual equipment necessary for the speakers to present their power point presentations. The County can assist by setting up early coffee and goodies and providing breakdown and cleanup at the end considering they have the shortest distance to travel. Assist in locating local honey and cooking judges if possible. All rules and judging forms of Mass Bee standard will be provided. For a County to host a spring or fall meeting things that need to be included when planning: Secure venue to hold about 150 attendees and about 6 vendors and a separate area for a honey and cooking competition. Invite the State Beekeeping inspector along with her associates. Provide coffee and breakfast treats as well as the cream, sugar and honey and the necessary utensils as well as napkins during registration that will carry through the Speakers break about 10am. Usually we ask and encourage that our members make something to put out for breakfast, and our members always exceed our expectations.

The County Association shall negotiate a luncheon at the venue if possible. Or if the County chooses to provide lunch on its own; you can provide cold cut platters, macaroni or potato, green salads and rolls. A soup is also well received with a cookie plate for dessert. Additionally, provide the necessary plates, utensils, cups and napkins. This luncheon should have a cost in the $12--$15 range.

The County Association shall negotiate and make available a hotel close to the meeting venue for folks attending Friday evening and Saturday events. Discuss with Ed Szymanski the speakers travel arrangements early and provide chauffeuring accommodations to and from the airport or bus/train station to all functions of the event.

The County Association shall negotiate and secure a Friday evening Speakers dinner, meet and greet at a local restaurant or function hall for all traveling members and speakers. This is a pay your own way with Mass Bee picking up the cost of the speaker’s meals. Usually if you go with a limited selection menu it keeps the costs more affordable.

Coordinate with the web master, Facebook administrator Ed Szymanski and Mass Bee corresponding secretary Lucy Tabit, all necessary public information requiring distribution such as: hotel accommodations, meeting venue, meeting and luncheon registration, Speakers dinner reservation. All reservations have a set deadline prior meeting date.

All county costs incurred are reimbursable through the MBA treasurer with the approval of the MBA President.
The host County is encouraged to sell tee shirts or other promotional items to raise funds for local association use. Many folks like to remember where they have attended meetings and tee shirts are great. Additionally, they will wear them at other bee events.

Encourage all members to give feedback regarding our membership meetings so we can discuss in our Board of Director’s meetings, keeping in mind we are always trying to provide a better experience for our membership.

As you can see on the map below our membership is spread out over the region. It makes sense to move the fall meeting around the region so that all members have an opportunity to attend, participate/compete in the honey, wax and cooking show and assist hosting a meeting. The Mass Bee board of directors provides support during all phases of planning and execution of the event. We will hold our board of director’s meetings in the area of the fall meeting beginning in May so that the host county can count on the directors knowing all the arrangements. I look forward to answering any questions or discussing any ideas that one might have on hosting a fall meeting.
Massachusetts Beekeepers Association Membership Application

Application Date: ____________________________

Check #: _______ Amount: ______________________

Membership Year: ____________________________

New: __________ Renewal: _________________

All Memberships run from January 1st through December 31st in a given year.

NAME(S): __________________________________________________________________________

ORGANIZATION: _____________________________________________________________________

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP TYPE:  Individual $ 15.00 ____________
Family $ 20.00 ____________
Organization $25.00 ____________

ADDRESS: __________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

EMAIL #1: __________________________________________________________________________

EMAIL #2: __________________________________________________________________________

PHONE: ____________________________________________________________________________

County Beekeeping Association: _______________________________________________________

Completed applications along with payment made out to the “MBA” should be mailed to:

MBA Memberships
PO BOX 234, Halifax, MA 02338

Applications may also be emailed to treasurer@massbee.org

Or fill out the form online on our web site at https://www.massbee.org/membership/

Annual membership dues are subject to change; please check our web site for current information.