

**Minnesota Honey Producers
Association**

www.minnesotahoneyproducers.org

March 2018



President's Message

Time for my president's letter again. I've had what I've wanted to say in my head for a month or better, but am just now sitting down to put it all down. I've got a lot to say in a short amount of space. So it might not flow or fit together real well.

I always start off with how my bees are doing. The ones in Calif. Are doing fantastic. Over 90% of what I sent out last Nov. placed in the almonds. The bees in Texas are just ok. We picked up less than 5% this winter down here. It has been a tough cold winter down here. And, the last 2-3 weeks its been rainy. The bees are behind. Spring is just starting to pop. We'll be off to the races soon enough.

As I stated in my last presidents letter, I am stepping down this summer. An excellent candidate has stepped forward. This person will do a fantastic job in my opinion. If any other persons out there want to throw their hat in the ring, please contact a nomination's committee member. Other positions will be up as well. We can use all sorts of volunteers. You don't have to sit on the executive board to be involved. We have program committees that could use good people too. Also, David Schaaf is gone as the supervisor of the Bee and Honey wing at the State Fair. We need to come flooding back and give Hannah a ton of support. Volunteers will be welcome and not turned away. This is our chance to show our support for Hannah to the State Fair board. Let's get back and reclaim that area as "ours".

I've been busy for several years pushing for honeybee forage. The battle never ends. I can't predict when we will see a major victory, but we are getting closer. Trying to get legumes, and stopping the blanket spraying of the roadside ditches will be a battle. If we are serious about seeing change on the honeybee habitat front, we will need to become politically active. We will need to spearhead legislation. We will need to pass laws that gives marching orders to the state agencies. I have done a good bit of leg work with farmers and Ag producers and their officers of MN's farming associations. We have allies there, ideas, opportunities, and most importantly votes.

I have approached a few lobbyists. A couple have approached me on representing the MHPA. I've been looking for lobbyists that are conservationists. Not environmentalists. I'm looking for someone that can work on both sides of the aisle, and yet not be in the back pocket of Big Ag interests. To me, forage issues for honey bees should be bi-partisan and a slam dunk. Just recently, I reached out to the native pollinator peoples to see how we can work together. Didn't get any angry responses like last time. Just silence. And that's fine. We will move forward with the concept that we can have plants on the landscape that benefit all pollinators. We will be the polite ones. We will be the inclusive ones. We will be the reasonable peoples in this native vs non-native debate. And we will be the winners.

We as an organization have kicked around the idea of a lobbyist for some time. I know the idea of hiring a lobbyist is uncomfortable to some of our members. Maybe it's distasteful, or maybe it's the idea of spending \$\$\$. I think we as an organization are at the point where we need to get professional representation and make our presence as THE HONEY BEE people known in St. Paul. There is a lot of noise and confusion caused by well meaning people out there, that want to "help" us. They may mean well, but they can cause a lot of harm to our industry. We need to be the voice the politicians hear. We need to quiet some of the nonsense. Personally, I think the best way to do this is to go on the offense and pursue legislation. As president of the MHPA I am tired of constantly putting out fires. Nonsense

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THE MINNESOTA BEEKEEPER

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Dan Whitney

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From the Editor

Every year brings a new set of challenges for beekeepers. We think we have mites under control in the fall. Winter comes. We dig deeper for the next treatment. Spring comes. Bees start to look like they are invincible. We get our hopes up for the big crop. It never comes. Fall comes. Repeat. This is the new normal for those of us that keep bees. Every now and then someone gets a big crop or sets a high percentage into almonds and the rest of us ride that wave into thinking next year it's going to be me. Sound familiar? Let's go 2018!!

Well there are SOME positive things that are happening in our industry so far this season. It looks like the weather has been pretty decent in California for almond pollination. I'm hearing reports of good bees in the Deep South so far. The honey market is moving in the upward direction. If you participate in the Emergency Livestock Assistance Program good news came in early February. The \$20 million cap on program funding was lifted. Senator Heidi Hietkamp (D) North Dakota introduced a bill last December that removed the funding cap after it was brought to her attention that too many applicants were chasing too little funding. Many of the recipient's payments were "factored" into considerably smaller amounts in an effort to stretch the funding to all who applied. Now all who apply and qualify, including beekeepers that have lost bees to CCD, can receive the full amount they qualify for. The President signed the bill into law February 9th.

Speaking of President, Dan Whitney has been doing a great job representing the MHPA by attending a couple Ag shows and talking with farmers about issues we all face in agriculture. This will be our best way to make lasting changes to the way we all use the land. Sometimes laws and regulations are necessary but it's much more effective and long-lasting if farmers WANT to make changes on their own through better understanding of how we all work. Nobody wants the government telling you what you have to do.

I hope your spring comes early and makes for great bees.

Enjoy this issue!

Mark Sundberg
Editor



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American Honey Queen & Princess Crowned



The American Beekeeping Federation is proud to announce that Kayla Fusselman and Jenny Gross were selected as the 2018 American Honey Queen and Princess at its annual January convention in Reno, NV.

Queen Kayla is the 23-year-old daughter of Brian and Diane Fusselman of Kempton, PA, and the granddaughter of Margaret Weller of Fleetwood, PA. She is a 2017 graduate of Kutztown University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in art education. Kayla is an active alumna with the Kutztown High School FFA chapter and the Kutztown University Presidential Ambassadors. She previously served as the Pennsylvania Honey Queen

Princess Jenny is the 20-year-old daughter of Bill and Mary Gross of Sheboygan, WI, and granddaughter of Shirley and Herman Gross of DePere, WI. She is a sophomore at Concordia University Wisconsin studying hospitality and event management through the Accelerated Business Scholars Program, earning dual bachelor's and master's degrees. Jenny is a student ambassador, social media copywriter, and orientation leader at school. She previously served as the Wisconsin Honey Queen.

Kayla and Jenny will spend the next year promoting the beekeeping industry throughout the United States in a wide variety of venues, including fairs, festivals, schools, and media interviews. To schedule an appearance with American Honey Queen Kayla Fusselman or American Honey Princess Jenny Gross, please contact American Honey Queen Program Chairperson Anna Kettlewell at 414.545.5514.



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President's Message

Continued from page 10

ideas that pop up constantly from way out in the blue. Ideas that are clearly meant to be sneaky and are done at the eleventh hour under the cover of darkness so we won't have the time to respond. Just last November, a politician put together a meeting that I first learned about at 4am on a Wednesday morning drinking my morning coffee in Texas, that a meeting was to be held that day at 4pm. They wanted to take samples of honey from MN beekeepers to be tested for Ag chemicals and then give the beekeeper a certificate that would ok the honey to be sold IF, the samples came up clean. The heads of the Dept. of Ag were there. As well as the Dept. of Health (as they were the ones that would issue the safety certificates). A meeting of this magnitude takes weeks in the planning, yet we were given a 12- hour notice. Brought only to our attention by an alert MHPA member that passed the info on to Joe Coffey our website manager. We scrambled and got people there to attend. (Big thanks to all that attended). The idea failed because of lack of money to fund the proposed program. What if the idea went through? Think of the Pandora's box that would have been opened. What if you couldn't sell your honey, because it contained a farm chemical that you didn't put there? Why should we be forced to bear that cost? Is that fair? Would an idea like that put you out of business?

Hiring a lobbyist will cost us money. But not investing in our future and the future of the next generation of beekeepers could prove devastating for Minnesota's honey bee industry. It will cost us \$10-\$15,000 for good monitoring. About \$20k a year if we go on the offensive and pursue legislation. I believe we should pursue legislation for bee forage. After we get our wins, our presence should be known enough, we can drop back into the monitoring phase. This would be a 2-3 year battle. There is a very real chance as an organization, that we will be politically astute enough after this to not need a lobbyist again. We will have gained experience and the political contacts needed.

Laying low and flying under the radar and responding only to negative things that affect our industry worked well in the past. But things have changed so drastically since the information age got rolling in the early 2000's that we must adapt. How do we pay for this? Can we pay for this? I believe we can. We can do this if this is the road we as an organization decide to travel down. We need to establish a legislative fund similar to the ABF. We have already invested in ourselves with the \$10,000 annual pledge to the UofM Bee Lab. This summer is our last installment of the 5 year pledge. That frees up 10k. I believe we can come up with an additional 5-10k to cover the additional expenses of lobbyist and added travel for our members. We have about 200 members. What if everyone bumped in \$50.00 a piece? What if everyone that is financially able, kicked in \$25.00 to our legislative fund, and the commercial guys kicked in \$500.00 a person. (less than half a barrel of honey) We'd have it easy. What if our commercial guys all kicked in the dollar amount of a barrel of honey? We'd smoke that goal. And, it would put balance in our organization. There are few commercial members in comparison to the number of small-scale beekeepers in our organization yet, they maintain most of the colonies in the state, and have the most to lose financially from dumb laws. In my mind this provides some checks and balances. If ever in the future, the organization takes off in a crazy direction, the big donations dry up until the course is corrected. I think we should focus on the road ditches and getting legumes back on the landscape. Honey bee forage should be an easy bi-partisan issue. Should get us the early win we as an organization need.



Lois Marcia Nicholson

Lois Marcia Nicholson, age 95, peacefully went to her Heavenly Father early Monday morning on January 22, 2018, after a long battle with dementia. Lois was in the care of Inga's Place in rural Wadena, MN.

Lois was born November 5, 1922, to Walter Baird and Mildred Ona (Canon) Gunn near Clarissa, MN. When Lois and her twin brother, Loren, were born they were kept warm in small shoe boxes on the oven door. The twins resided in Wadena all their lives and recently celebrated their 95th birthdays, the last of many sweet celebrations.

Lois married Raymond K. Nicholson on May 12, 1943, at the Gunn home in Otter Tail County. After Ray returned from the Army during WWII, they lived together nearly 70 years in their home on the Bee Ranch on the east side of Wadena. With Ray, Lois raised five children, was a wonderful mother and homemaker, and was a partner in the honey business.

Lois briefly attended nursing training at Wesley Hospital, went to California to be a "Rosie the Riveter" during the war, then returned to Wadena to marry and begin her beloved profession of being a mom to her blessed children. She loved sewing and crocheting and did embroidery even to her last days. She professionally decorated cakes and enjoyed baking, cooking and preparing jelly and putting up food for other seasons. Lois often cooked a wonderful "Sunday dinner" and entertained friends, family and visiting missionaries. Ray and Lois were active in many activities at the Wadena Alliance Church where she taught Sunday School and VBS. She was active in Christian Women's Bible Study and attended many bee meetings and conventions with Ray. She spent many years on the Minnesota Honey Queen committee for the Minnesota Beekeepers Association. Lois had a strong faith, prayed daily for all of her family and many missionaries and ministries. In one's life there are only a few people who love you unconditionally and Lois gave that sweetest, life-affecting love to her family.

Lois is preceded in death by her husband Ray on December 3, 2016 after 73 years of marriage; her mother and father Walter and Mildred Gunn; her beloved Aunt Blossom; brothers Ronald and Tony Gunn; sister Nelma Gunn Rowe; and son-in-law Joe Koranda.

Lois is survived by her children, son Daniel Ray (Jan) Nicholson of Woodland Park, Colorado; daughters Diane Lois Koranda of Alexandria, Janet Joy (Roddy) Sams of Staples, Sally Rose Nicholson of Elk River and Ronda Ruth (Jim) Stumbo of Helena Montana; 14 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren and one great-great-granddaughter; twin brother Loren of Wadena; sister Viola Horner of Sauk Rapids; brother-in-law David Nicholson of Anoka; sisters-in-law Florence Peterson of Randolph, WI and Verna Nicholson of Minneapolis; along with many nieces and nephews and friends.

Honorary Pallbearers will be her granddaughters Emily, Marnie, Chanda, Sarita, Marcia and Amy, her great-grandchildren and great-great-granddaughter.

Active pallbearers will be her grandsons Lief Noll, Anders Nicholson, Soren Nicholson, Brian Sams, Jamison Cockerham, Ken Cockerham, Nick Stumbo and Andy Stumbo.

Burial will be in the Leaf River Cemetery, Wadena, MN.

The family wishes to express much gratitude to Inga's for the wonderful care Mom received, especially to Karla and Darlene.

To send flowers or a memorial gift to the family of Lois Nicholson please visit our [Sympathy Store](#).





Presidents Message

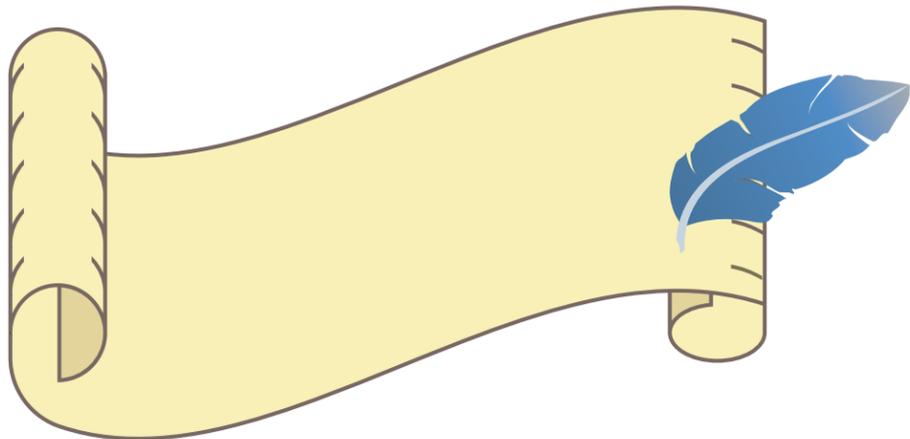
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This letter is getting long. Anyway, be thinking about the need for our organization to be at least a little more politically active. Doing business as usual isn't working anymore. At some point, something negative will be foisted upon us. I have invited a lobbyist to come talk to us at the summer meeting about the need to represent ourselves better in St. Paul. We've got a top person from the MN Farm Bureau coming to do basically the same thing as well as talk to us about the benefits of being a Farm Bureau as well. Be thinking about if this is the direction you think our organization should head. Be thinking of ideas on how to help fund this endeavor etc.... Please plan on attending the annual business meeting this summer in St. Cloud. We will be discussing this topic. The meeting by the way is at the Holiday Inn a mile or two to the west of the usual hotel (Kelley Inn).

Also I will discuss the dicamba issue next newsletter. It has been given a one year trial in MN so they can prove they can use it safely. There are strict guidelines for them to follow. If you see any herbicide drift on our honey plants etc... we need to report it. If it drifts, if it's as volatile and unstable as most of us have heard, we need to nip it in the bud or in 2019 it will be used carte blanche. I believe it has a cutoff date of June 20th or 25. Hopefully that will stop the drift because of cooler temps. Personally I believe it will evaporate out of the foliage when it gets hot and then drift. Our best battle tactic in the future would be to not allow it to be used past the current cutoff date. We must inform ourselves on the nature of the dicamba product. We must be vigilant on detecting the damage on plants. Be curious when you drive around this summer. Criss-cross the roads this summer. Check the sides that would get drift from the prevailing wind directions. If you don't see bees foraging on flowers when the conditions are right, ask why and scout around. Look for curled and blemished leaves. If you see soybeans with cupped leaves, by all means stop. Get out of your car and then check "our" honey plants. If you see damage close to road, check to see how far it has spread/drifted. I have heard this stuff can go for a mile or more before setting back down. Dicamba will not affect grasses and thus corn.

Sincerely,

Dan Whitney
President MHPA



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 1, 2018

SEED A LEGACY: New Pollinator Habitat Program Launches in 11 Midwest States

BISMARCK, North Dakota (March 1, 2018) – Midwest landowners who want to help honey bees and monarch butterflies have a unique opportunity through The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund’s SEED A LEGACY Pollinator Habitat Program. The new program expanded in 2018 to include 11 states works with landowners and beekeepers to provide cost-effective, high-quality pollinator habitat to ensure honey bee and monarch butterfly populations thrive.

Applications for each state will be accepted online at BeeAndButterflyFund.org/habitat-programs starting March 1st. The application deadline is March 31, 2018 for spring planting. A second application period will open later in 2018 for projects to be planted in the fall.

“The fastest, most impactful way to improve pollinator health and increase populations is to establish habitat that strategically delivers maximum pollinator nutrition,” Pete Berthelsen, Partnership Coordinator with The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund explains. “We bring innovation and new technology to habitat by delivering projects that are cost-effective, establish quickly, provide greater pollinator value, and better handle weed competition.”

Enrollment is open to public, private and corporate landowners in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. These states were selected based on their critical role to address National Pollinator Partnership Action Plan goals.

Pollinators populations are experiencing critical population declines. Monarch butterfly populations have declined by 80% over the past 20 years, honey bee hive losses top 40% annually, and in 2017 the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee was listed as an endangered species. Landowners participating in The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund’s SEED A LEGACY Program can help reverse this trend.

“The Seed A Legacy program offers a unique opportunity to get high quality pollinator habitat on the landscape in a critical location of the country,” says Chip Taylor, Director of Monarch Watch. “Establishing pollinator habitat is one of the most impactful ways that people can benefit monarch butterflies and other important pollinator species.”

Submitted applications will be ranked to ensure projects maximize benefits for both pollinators and landowners. Successful applicants will receive free or highly discounted pollinator seed mixtures proven to provide pollinator value for monarch butterflies, honey bees and native pollinators. All projects must meet program guidelines at BeeAndButterflyFund.org/guidelines and complete the appropriate state application online at BeeAndButterflyFund.org/habitat-programs.



SEED A LEGACY

Pollinator Habitat Program

**Critical pollinator and wildlife habitat is disappearing.
YOU can help reverse the trend!**

New in 2018! The **SEED A LEGACY** program provides a unique opportunity for the managers of private, public and corporate land to establish high quality pollinator habitat.

Landowners in qualifying states with successful applications will receive access to:

- Cost-effective pollinator habitat that is documented to produce high pollinator value.
- Free or discounted pollinator seed mixtures designed to establish quickly, better handle weed competition and provide great pollinator value.
- Our proven seed mixes maximize the pollinator values for monarch butterflies, honey bees and native pollinators.
- An opportunity to make a difference by restoring high quality pollinator habitat within the critical landscape defined in the National Pollinator Partnership Action Plan.

**APPLY
ONLINE BY
MARCH 31st,
2018**

FAST FACTS

STATES THAT QUALIFY
Pollinator projects that meet program guidelines are being accepted in the following states:
Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

QUALIFICATIONS

Applications will be ranked on a number of factors to enroll the most impactful projects. Minimum project size is 2 acres. Private, public and corporate lands are all eligible for enrollment. Projects must meet program guidelines found on our [website](#).

HOW TO APPLY

Complete the online application: found on our [website](#).



BeeAndButterflyFund.org



Join the largest conservation effort of our lifetime!

The **SEED A LEGACY** program provides landowners pollinator habitat that is:

- Designed with innovation and new technology. Each project has two separate plantings: one for monarch butterflies and one for honey bees.
- Cost effective. Seed mixtures are provided for each project with cost-share rates of: 2 to 25 acres (100%); 26 to 50 acres (75%); 51 to 75 acres (50%); and 76+ acres (25%).
- Easy to apply. Applications submitted online by March 31st, 2018 will be ranked for their pollinator habitat potential and planted this spring. A second application period will open later in 2018 for projects to be planted in the fall.

Visit BeeAndButterflyFund.org for program information, guidelines, application and other resources.

WHY IS YOUR PARTICIPATION SO IMPORTANT?

Pollinators across the country are experiencing population declines like annual honey bee hive losses of 40%, monarch butterfly populations with declines of 80% in the last 20 years and the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee becoming listed as an endangered species in 2017. Reduced access to diverse, nutritious habitat is a key contributing factor to pollinator declines. With your help, we can restore pollinator habitat to the landscape.

ABOUT THE BEE & BUTTERFLY HABITAT FUND

The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund is a nonprofit dedicated to establishing high quality pollinator habitat to ensure pollinator populations thrive. We work with landowners, conservationists, scientists, and beekeepers to design and build healthy and sustainable pollinator habitat.



Questions? Learn more and speak to a biologist at 800-407-5337.

The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund is in the process of obtaining our 501.c.3 status from the Internal Revenue Service. IRS Pub 557 indicates that the effective date of our exemption will be retroactive to our date of incorporation which is January 10, 2017. Consult your tax advisor for deductibility of expenses.



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News From The Ivory Tower

Marla Spivak
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www.beelab.umn.edu

February 2018

Let's See It From Both Sides

On January 24, a group of us traveled to Mankato to attend the Ag Expo: Dan Whitney, Dan and Elizabeth Schroeder from the MHPA, Jenny Warner and Keith Johnson from the UMN Bee Squad, and myself. We were invited to attend by Kevin Papp, President of the MN Farm Bureau. The Ag Expo is a big farmer meeting, with educational sessions and a large trade show. Kevin Papp became interested in fostering a better relationship between commercial beekeepers and corn and soybean growers after hearing a presentation by Dan Whitney and Mark Sundberg to the Governor's Committee on Pollinator Protection last summer about what it is like to be a commercial beekeeper. Before that presentation, Kevin and other grower representatives on the committee had the impression that all beekeepers were anti-pesticide and anti-farmer. They were amazed to learn how the livelihoods of commercial beekeepers have so many similarities to crop growers (e.g., crops dependent on season, limited number of treatments and the need to treat crops during particular treatment windows). They also were surprised to learn that beekeepers keep apiaries on farmers land and cultivate good relationships with the landowners. Of course there are many differences between beekeepers and crop growers, but the point is that Dan and Mark did a great job helping growers understand what beekeepers need and want. After the summer presentation, a group met at the Bee Lab: Dan Whitney, Mark Sundberg and Darrel Rufer (MHPA); Kevin Papp and other members of the MN Farm Bureau; Brian Thalman (MN Corn Growers); David Kee (MN Soybean growers), Ashley Kohls (MN State Cattleman's Assoc); and Drs. Bob Koch, Theresa Cira and myself (UMN Entomology). The growers had many questions about beekeeping and what bees and beekeepers need. Based on how long people stayed and schmoozed after the meeting ended, I think the meeting was a huge success.

At the meeting it was requested that Dr. Bob Koch, Theresa Cira and I write some fact sheets for grower groups about beekeepers. The first is called, "Getting to Know Commercial Beekeepers." The second is four page brochure that we called, "Let's See It from Both Sides: Perspectives of Farmers and Commercial Beekeepers on Protection of Honey Bees." The fact sheets can be viewed and downloaded from the UMN Bee Lab [here](#). We hope you take the chance to read them, and let me know what you think.

We distributed the fact sheets at the Ag Expo. Additionally, Dan Whitney, Dave Fisher (Bayer Bee Care) and I were asked to be on a discussion panel, where the moderator posed a series of questions about bees, beekeeping, bee forage, and effects of pesticides. Dan and I emphasized the need for bee forage (Dan pushed for legumes) that is not contaminated by pesticide drift. The good news is that growers are becoming interested in planting bee and pollinator habitat on their farms. They want more information on how, where and which flowers to plant, but they are very willing to plant for bees. Here are some links about it from Ag News and KLGR radio:

[Ag Week , Mikkel Pates, Jan 29, 2018](#) [Interview KLGR with Dave Miller](#)

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Ivory Tower

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Growers are aware of the issues with dust-off at the time of corn planting (when seed treatments containing neonicotinoids blow off the seeds and drift onto willows and other early spring flowers). Bees are at high risk if they collect these highly toxic concentrations in pollen and nectar. Seed companies are working on ways to prevent this highly toxic dust-off, but in addition to changing the seed coating formulation, it will also require major tractor and planter modifications. All of this means time and money.

Growers are less aware of risks to bees when pesticides drift onto flowering habitat on roadsides, field edges, buffer strips, etc. Talk to your landowners where your bees are placed about the importance of clean forage for your bees. Suggest flowering cover crops (clover, alfalfa, canola) they could grow to help your bees. Remind them to protect the bee forage from pesticide contamination. And give them copies of our handouts.

Warm regards,
Marla Spivak

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Vice-President's Message

Hello fellow Beekeepers~

I've got a deadline on my calendar and that means it's time for the Spring newsletter. Spring....where's that at? This morning when I left for work it was -13 degrees....I think that groundhog saw his shadow, so if Spring could hurry it along that would be great. But I'll hop of that soap box for now.

It was great to see MHPA members at the annual ABF conference in Reno. Those conventions sure keep you busy and sometimes an information overload, but you sure learn a lot, and if you leave there and didn't learn a thing...you were in the wrong bar!!

The end of January was the MN Ag Expo in Mankato. Dan Whitney, myself and a crew from the U of M had a booth as the MHPA. The reception we received was warm, they welcomed us and asked lots of good questions. It helped that we had honey sticks and handouts to pass out. That, I feel, really opened dialog between us as beekeepers and farmers. I'll make this part short, I'm sure Dan talked about this in his article. But from my point of view, we need to be at that type of convention, to make it known that we're around.

Convention....can't believe that it's 5 months out, but time will fly fast. This year we're at the Holiday Inn on the west side of St. Cloud. Keep checking the website for updates. Register early, don't wait until last minute. As we speak I'm confirming appointments for speakers. Mr. Joseph Coffey has been behind the camera lately and is going to give us a look at what he's been up to. Strong Microbials has been making a presence all over and are going talk to us this year. Also, the subject of a lobbyist has been talked about, so one is going to talk to us too. We're going to be busy.

We need a nomination for Beekeeper of the year. I accept all forms of communication, if you got someone let me know. Don't forget items for the silent auction, it's always neat to see what's up for bid.

Have a safe spring

V.P Liz Schroeder

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