

September 2025

Hive Dive in the Apiary (Nuc Yard) tonight at 6:00!!

# The Hive Tool



Dates to remember in **September**

**Member Meeting** Wednesday, September 3, 7:00 pm

in person at the

Baltimore County Agriculture Center 1114 Shawan Rd. 21030

**Speaker John Klapac on "Getting Ready For Winter Feeding: Making Fondant Without Cooking"**

John Klapac has been a beekeeper for over 43 years and is the current Apicology instructor at Hagerstown Community College. He is currently participating in the Penn State E.P.I.G. honey bee development program. He has experience breeding queen bees in Russia and the United States. John is a bee equipment retailer for MannLake LTD and other suppliers.

**Plus State of the Bees and What To Do In the Beeyard This Month**

**Board Meeting** Thursday September 18, 7:00 pm Zoom

**PICK UP Honey Show Entries in the Home Arts Building Monday 9/8 9 am – 7 pm**

Or Sunday Sept. 7 at 8 pm

**PICK UP Honey Consignments in the Cow Palace Monday 9/8 10 am – 2 pm**

And help with cleanup on Monday

**MD State Fair Ends Sunday September 7 at 8 pm**

Cindy Landefeld and the Howard County crew enjoyed their day at the Fair



## Wow! What a State Fair!

By Steve McDaniel

Never in all my years at the Maryland State Fair, starting with my first summer job in 1961, have I seen such beautiful weather as this year—sunny with highs in the 70's nearly every day. Everyone, visitors and workers alike, is enjoying being at the fair without the sweltering heat and the driving wind and rain of thunderstorms. It's just delightful to walk around the fair and take in the sights and sounds and aromas of the funnel cakes, the corn dogs, the pit beef, and yes, the cows. Don't let the lack of heat stop you from sampling the ice cream at the Cow Palace. Peach or black raspberry? So hard to choose!



Sarah White  
giving tastes at  
the Honey Booth

Our honey booth workers have done a fantastic job so far, with one more weekend to go, but I hope they take the time to enjoy the rest of the Fair. The rides, the concerts, the exhibits (which of my friends won blue ribbons this year?) the races, the livestock shows, the food—did I mention the food?—there is so much to do! Then there are the bees!

The State Fair Honey Booth Committee has pulled off a performance just short of miraculous, including an observation hive in the middle of a huge building. The members of the committee have each contributed their time and expertise and kept things organized and running smoothly, all without a boss! The committee has no chair, just a group of workers cooperating like worker bees in a hive—really!—doing what needs to be done at the time. They put it all together from scratch in just a few weeks, after the previous committee chair resigned.

In addition to CMBA, four other bee associations from around the state have taken days at the fair in which they man the booth, teach about bees, do demonstrations, and even sell honey. Susquehanna (Harford and Cecil Counties), Howard, BUMBA, and ASMB are our partners this year.

Susquehanna Beekeepers Association took two days, and SBA member and committee member Rita Kryglik designed the layout of the booth and put together the educational components, including a hive with frames holding pictures of real frames and the Wall of Learning with tons of information about the bees' life cycle, pollination, pests, etc. Her husband

Paul built three beautiful risers to showcase the honey for sale. Harry Dutcher demonstrated honey extracting, and Suzette Jackson showed how to make beeswax candles.



Our Honey Bee Learning Center features Rita Kryglik's Learning Wall, her Picture Beehive, and props for kids to dress up like beekeepers for pictures.

The Maryland State Fair provided the 8' x 10' backdrop with a picture by Phil Frank. We set up a table in front of it for demonstrations. The observation hive was a hit!

Howard County took a day, and their members Nick Rowan and Katey O'Donnell (Irish Kate, according to her honey label) are also CMBA members and are mainstays of the committee as well. Nick assembled shelving in our storage room from the pieces of the shelves I salvaged from the Farm and Garden Building as it was being demolished. We needed those shelves to hold over 2000 lb. of honey from 21 Maryland beekeepers who consigned honey. After the fair, we need to disassemble them and store them for next year. Katey, as Acting Treasurer of CMBA, has done a fabulous job keeping track of sales and consignments, programming the tablets for credit card sales, and manning the booth, as have all of the committee members.

The Bowie-Upper Marlboro Beekeepers Association, led by Mike and Kim Mehalik, handled the second Saturday, one of the busiest days of the Fair. Diane Wellons and her team from Southern Maryland have reserved the last two days of the Fair, and they always do a great job. They come a long way and usually stay overnight near the Fair. One benefit to being the "closers" is that they can gather any leftover consigned honey and entries from the honey show in the Home Arts Building and take them home, avoiding having to come back on Monday. You can do that, too, after 8 pm Sunday night.

None of this would be possible without the organization and leadership and just plain hard work of Cindy Landefeld and Sarah White. They come early, stay late, help other associations with their work, and keep it all on track. Cindy wanted the booth to sell Maryland honey from Maryland beekeepers, and we got the 2000 lb. we needed, and more! Sarah even figured out how to display and organize umpteen different kinds of honey jars from those 20+ consignors on the risers that Paul built, and the booth looks fabulous! They both have jobs and families, but they do it anyway, often at considerable personal sacrifice, because they believe in the importance of bees, beekeepers, and CMBA.





Some old guy demonstrating honey extracting. His father was a dentist, so extracting is in his genes. He got some “cranky” kids to turn the extractor.

That goes, too, for all of the beekeepers from around Maryland who devoted their time, effort, and skills to make this project a success, some 100 volunteers in all. They (we) do it not because we have nothing better to do, but because this is the best thing we can do now. The smiling faces behind the booth say it all—these are our friends who share a common interest in honey bees, and we are having fun together!

## State Fair Committee

Rita Kryglik, Cindy Landefeld, Katey O'Donnell, Nick Rowan, and Sarah White

## Helpers

Jack Anderson, Nate Anderson, Steven Cason, Keith Lucas, Steve McDaniel, Osmar Rivera, Liz Tarr and about 90 other beekeepers—Thank You!! (Apologies if I left out anyone.)



The new building is coming along, but we may want to stay in the Cow Palace. What do you think?

## What to Do in the Bees This Month

September is the beekeeper's New Year. This is the time to plan for next year by preparing for the coming fall and winter seasons. If your colonies need to be fed, this is the perfect time to do it. Feeding 1:1 sugar syrup in early September mimics a rich nectar flow, which stimulates the queen to lay eggs so the workers can rear a new generation of winter bees to survive the cold months. Feeding now allows time for the bees to ripen and cap the syrup as winter stores, and it serves as excellent winter food because it is pure carbohydrate, with no indigestible material as some fall honeys have. Feed now, and you won't have to provide emergency food in cold weather.

There seems to be a fall nectar flow this year, as we have had the last two years. Maybe the source is spotted lantern fly honeydew or smartweed, but feeding may not be necessary for all colonies. Some may still need it, so you have to check by inspecting each colony. A dry colony will need fifty pounds of sugar, or ten gallons of 1:1 syrup, so a quart jar with a few holes in the lid will not suffice. Use a hive-top tray feeder, and put two gallons into it at a time. A hungry colony can empty it overnight! If the bees ignore the feeder, they are either working a flow, already have plenty of food, or are too weak to use the syrup. Never feed with supers in place, or you will get really light "honey" you will have to label "Domino." Take off the supers first, or mark them as "food for bees" so you don't accidentally harvest them.

Check for adequate pollen stores, too. The bees will need about two frames partially filled with pollen to raise brood in the spring, so if they don't have enough, put on small pieces of protein supplement and replace it as it is used. Do not put a large patty on all at once, because small hive beetles love to hide under it, where the bees can't get to them.

Varroa mite populations tend to peak at this time of year, so you need to stay on top of them. Test for mites with a sugar roll, alcohol roll, or sticky board. Check the [Honey Bee Health Coalition](#) website for treatment methods, as recommendations vary depending on temperature and the amount of brood. Yes, it is a front for the pesticide manufacturers, but they want you to concentrate on Varroa, not their products, so it has good information on mites.

In the olden days, say ten years ago, conventional wisdom advised combining weak colonies with stronger ones in the fall. These days, that may be a bad idea, depending on why the colony is weak. It may have a virus infection, and you could be infecting your strong colony. Do many of the bees have shriveled wings or crawl around instead of flying? Don't combine, but plan on restocking it in the spring. You can try feeding a weak colony, but it will probably die anyway. If a colony has lost its queen but the bees look active and the brood is healthy, go ahead and combine it with another colony using the newspaper method. Remember newspapers? Any kind of uncoated paper will work.



Entries at last year's Fair

## How To Win Blue Ribbons

By Steve McDaniel

Did you enter the honey show at the State Fair this year? Doing so “shows the flag” to visitors who have heard that bees are in trouble (they are!), but they are still here, and beekeepers are struggling to cope with the problems. I entered twelve classes this year, mostly to fill up the tables and to help ensure that the funding for prizes does not go away. Any class that has no entries for a couple of years will probably be cut. I’m not in it to beat anybody out or to crow that I’m the best; I don’t even enter the really competitive classes where there are lots of entries already. They don’t need me. I just want to show that beekeeping is alive and well, and I hope someone will win more ribbons than I do. It is fun to show off your stuff, and the ribbons help us sell honey.

So how did I do? Well enough to win a big purple rosette ribbon as Grand Champion-- six blue ribbons for first place and five red ribbons for second—and one fourth. Of course, that was the one I worked hardest on! What’s my secret? Read on.

I enter classes with very little competition. In some cases, mine is the only entry! It’s pretty hard not to win a blue ribbon there. Still, you have to enter your best stuff, as the judges are not obligated to give an award to junk. This year, I had the only educational display, the only molded stick candles, the only molded figurine candles, and the only Professional photograph. There were no dipped candles, rolled candles, fancy beeswax, or honey displays. There were only two mailable gift packs, personal gift arrangements, and creamed honey entries, and only one chunk entry (in the small beekeeper class). If you win a prize, you get a ribbon and a cash award. With five places in every class, a lot of ribbons and a lot of cash went begging. The organizational display will probably be dropped, as there were no entries at all, despite a \$100 first-place prize.

Several local beekeepers won champion awards for their entries, which gets a big purple rosette but no extra money. Rodney Diehl’s amber honey was the Champion Honey Exhibit in a very competitive class, and Stephanie Gold’s block of beeswax was the Champion Wax Exhibit. (Mine came in second.) Keith Lucas’s pollen entry (3 jars) was the Champion Other Exhibit, and I had the Champion Educational Exhibit. Congratulations to these and all the exhibitors who won prizes. The complete list has not been made public yet, but we’ll try to get it for the next issue.

To win ribbons, your first step is to **read the rules and classes carefully** and take note of which classes you are eligible to enter. If you have five colonies, you cannot enter the Large Beekeeper classes that require ten or more. If you are an



amateur photographer, you cannot enter the Professional photographer class, and the Organizational Display class is for bee associations, not individuals. If there is no class for your cake made with honey or your bug collection, don't try to enter it! Still, that leaves a lot of possibilities. Maybe you don't mind burning your fingers on hot wax—there are lots of candle and beeswax classes. Do you make comb honey? That's almost a lost art, and few people enter. Select the classes you are actually interested in entering and **read the rules carefully**. One more tip: **READ THE RULES CAREFULLY!**

If the rules call for three or four or more items in a class, the judges will be looking for uniformity, so make sure they are identical. Use only NEW clean containers, and handle them carefully to avoid smudges or fingerprints. Honey jars should be spotlessly clean, not sticky or blemished. Honey should be thick and low in moisture and scrupulously clean—no crystals, dirt, foam, or ants! Yes, there was one beekeeper who always had ants in his honey. You could tell whose it was, and he entered every year, but he never won a prize. Let your honey settle in the bottler for a few days before you bottle it. Your entries should come from the middle of the bucket, because dirt and crystals fall, and wax rises. There are lots more tips on YouTube, but some are a bit obsessive. Just do your best.

If you missed the State Fair honey show, you can still enter the Maryland State Beekeepers Association competition in the fall, usually November. Check the classes and rules on the MSBA website, as they are different from the Fair. There is a whole section on Honey Cookery and several classes for kids. It's good practice, and you may come away with some ribbons and bragging rights!

When your entry is judged, you will get a score sheet that shows how your entry measured up against the others in that class. You will then know what criteria are important, and sometimes the judges leave encouraging comments. Study that sheet and learn how to improve next year, and you could be the 2026 Grand Champion!



### **Susan Warner—New Master Beekeeper**

Susan Warner became Maryland's and CMBA's newest Master Beekeeper on August 1, at the closing banquet of the Eastern Apicultural Society annual convention in Cherry Hill New Jersey. Of the eighteen candidates who took the challenging Master Beekeeper Exam, only five passed and were awarded their certificates and pins. The prestigious Master Beekeeper designation identifies beekeepers who have attained a level of expertise that qualifies them to teach beekeeping with authority, and there are only about 150 EAS-certified Master Beekeepers in the United States. Congratulations, Susan!

Susan is an Associate Professor of Biology at the Community College of Baltimore County. She lives in Fallston and has been keeping bees since 2012. She is a member of CMBA and the Susquehanna Beekeepers Association.

## **Help Wanted**

Do you like to tinker with computers, digital cameras, and sound mixers? We could use your help. In order to offer Zoom attendance at our meetings for those who can't make it in person, we need someone to set up the digital camera and link it to a laptop and microphone. Please contact the President or any of the other Board members if you want to help.

## Contacts

### Officers

President (acting)	Osmar Rivera	443-525-2631	<a href="mailto:president@centralmarylandbees.org">president@centralmarylandbees.org</a>
Vice President	vacant		
Secretary (acting)	Nate Anderson		<a href="mailto:secretary@centralmarylandbees.org">secretary@centralmarylandbees.org</a>
Treasurer (acting)	Katey O'Donnell		<a href="mailto:treasurer@centralmarylandbees.org">treasurer@centralmarylandbees.org</a>
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### Committees

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