# Murder Hornets, She Wrote!

(The RIBA Newsletter)

**September 2020**

To paraphrase a Green Day song – Wake me up when 2020 ends! What a year it was – we had a warm winter, mild early spring and were headed for what looked like the best honey year in long time. Then came crazy colony development and frequent early swarms, and then – Bam! - drought and a steaming hot, humid, rainless summer. Nectar production came to a screeching halt. And then, the COVID-19 pandemic put a stop to in-person bee club meetings. What next? Asian hornets? Tropilaelaps mites? We wait all winter for the warm weather to come and now, here we are wishing the year was over and 2021 could begin.

But. it was a great year for many of our crops. Black raspberries, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, currants were fantastic this year. I'm still bringing in a ton of blackberries and raspberries every morning. Tomatoes were good, peppers fantastic. Cucumbers need a lot of water and dried up fast after a good start. We have 4 new hens ready to lay. We brought in a decent amount of honey early. A fall harvest is not likely. As our climate, and therefore our weather, changes, we have to make some adjustments in how we keep bees and grow food. I've never been a fan of beekeeping by the calendar anyway, but now it's getting to especially important to observe hive conditions, anticipate changes, and react accordingly. If your bees are starving in early August, feed them, even if you've never had to do that before. Observe and take action.

Make sure your bees are healthy, well-fed and have your mites under control, so they stand a good chance of surviving our winter.

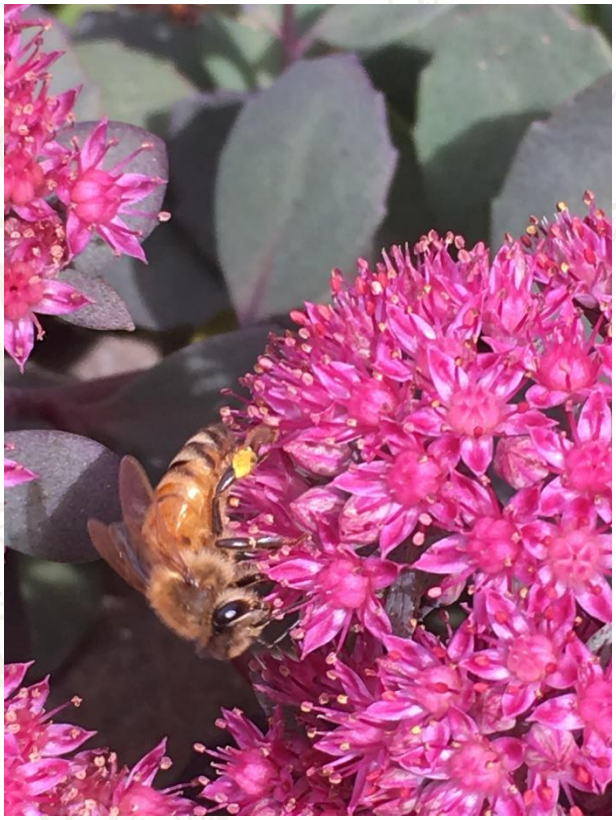
I'm looking forward to 2021 already. I'm starting the Cornell Master Beekeeper program in January so I'll have plenty to keep me busy waiting for spring. And I really mean it when I say "Hope to see you all soon!"

*-Ed Szymanski*

# CONTENTS



**Photos are by the respective authors, except where noted**



-Ed Szymanski



## The RIBA LIBRARY

*80+ Titles and growing!*

RIBA is constantly adding to its collection of beekeeping literature, comprised of the most up-to-date works on a wide variety of subjects. These books are free to borrow for any valid RI library card-holder.

The books you want can be picked up from whatever branch is most convenient for you. Simply navigate to https://catalog.oslri.net/ to begin your search. Enter keyword "RIBA" and narrow the focus to Greenville.

***Contributors to This Issue:***

**Calvin Alexander, Scott Langlais, Sara Michaud**

**Ed Szymanski**

## Beekeeper's Almanac – Winter Preparation

There's an old saying among beekeepers – "When should I start getting my bees ready for winter? In the Spring!" It's true, really, everything we do (or should be doing) with our bees all year, whether it's mite counts and treatments, food supplements, requeening, etc. will all have an effect on the bees' winter survival. However, there are certain tasks that need to be done in the Fall to help give them the best possible chance of survival. Many of these things are matters of preference, and they are mentioned here because they are a part of many a beekeeper's routine. The most important thing is that your bees are HEALTHY AND WELL FED!

WINTER PREP CHECKLIST

Mites under control – this is #1 - hopefully you've kept up with your mite counts and treatments when necessary during the year, and now, especially, you need to keep your winter bees healthy. Test at least one more time and apply one more treatment if needed. "Touch up" with an Oxalic acid vapor or dribble late fall/early winter.

If you've taken care of your mites, hopefully colonies are free of disease (DWV, other viruses, PMS) at this point.

Check to see if colonies are queenright, if not combine with a queenright colony.

Check for good population – 8 -10 frames bees minimum, if not, dispatch the weak queen and combine with a stronger colony

Build up winter food stores. For 2-deep box hives, we shoot for a total weight of 100+ lb for Eastern Mass. Feed 2:1 syrup until temperatures reach freezing. Be sure to have robbing protection on the hives as you feed.

Frames of honey strategically located – food must be adjacent to and above the winter cluster. Bees and brood down below, food on top. The bees only heat the cluster, frames on the outskirts may be cold, and the bees will not break the cluster to get food stored too far away.

Mouse guards should be put in place – temperatures are already reaching 45F at night, mice are looking for warm places to nest. Check to be sure no mice are in there already so you don't trap them inside.

Feeding shims/candy boards – install soon before it's too cold to open the hives. Then you can slip patties in quickly when needed.

Honey supers, queen excluders, escape boards off – let the bees have any honey collected from now on for winter. Minimizes the amount of the sugar syrup you'll have to feed them. And it's better for them.

Upper entrance – make sure they have a way to get out when the bottom of the hive is buried in snow and it's warm enough for a cleansing flight

Cut insulation board or homasote to fit under the outer cover. We had always used homasote to absorb any moisture that forms in the top of the hive. This year we're going to go with a piece of insulation cut to fit tightly inside the outer cover. This will eliminate a cold spot where condensation could occur and moisture will flow out of the top entrance.

If you use quilt boxes, get those ready to install soon.

Secure hives with ratchet straps (we have ours on all year).

Slatted racks will keep the bees up further from the cold incoming air. Also keeps the wax away from the Oxalic Acid vaporizer (yes, it has happened).

Wrap if desired – this is a matter of preference. A piece of tar paper or black plastic will provide extra protection against cold winds and will allow for some heat gain on a cold sunny morning. Be sure to leave entrances and ventilation holes clear.

Protection from wind – if your apiary has no natural protection from cold north winds, a fence or pile of hay bales can help

Once winter comes, be sure to keep entrances cleared of snow and sweep out the dead bees once in a while. Watch where the bees are in the hive – once they move to the top, it's time to put fondant or sugar patties on. An Infrared camera helps with that. Don't knock on the side of the hive to hear if they're still alive! It breaks their torpor and makes them consume excess food. Watch food stores all the way to April – don't lose a colony to starvation in the early spring!

Did I mention mites under control?

-Ed Szymanski

## Upcoming Events – Zoom links sent by email/Facebook

- **September 13**, **7:00 PM**: Virtual Meeting via Zoom – Meghan Milbrath – Successful Overwintering
- **October 18, 7:00 PM:** Virtual Meeting via Zoom – Erin Forbes – Executing a Sustainable Northern Apiary Management Plan
- **November 8**, **2:00 PM**: Virtual Meeting via Zoom**:** Howard Ginsburg, URI - How to manage vector-borne diseases while protecting bees and other pollinators

## Letter from the President, Sept. 2020

The 2020 beekeeping season is one we are unlikely to soon forget. Many new challenges have cropped up along the way--shortages of alcohol and sugar, shipping delays, travel restrictions, and cancellation of bee meetings to name just a few. For some of us there have also been unexpected benefits: more time to spend in our gardens, closer observation of hives, more opportunities for reading and reflection. As an organization, we really had the rug pulled out from under us at an inopportune moment. RIBA has experienced a tremendous amount of forward momentum over the past decade and our plan going into the '20s was to continue building on that energy and maintaining our upward climb. Covid threw a wrench into our plans and several of our initiatives had to be scrapped or revamped at the last minute. It also forced us to reevaluate our core goals and how we can best achieve them. Just as every beekeeper has their own particular way of going through a hive, they also have their own particular ways of learning. What works for one person isn't necessarily what will work for the next.

We are investigating every possibility for new ways to serve our membership under the restrictions of the current pandemic. Our online offerings have really seen a boost over the past month. Our monthly meetings have morphed into Zoom meetings. We now have a dedicated YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCj5tuGtDhGvote9lpLuUElg) that will become an ongoing source of content available at whatever time that is convenient to you. Our website has seen the beginnings of a drastic slimming and reorganization. Additional content such as podcasts, videos, and links to useful sites has been added after careful vetting by the Executive Board. Our Facebook group is as active as ever. Emails and texts are a quick and easy way to stay in touch. The mentor program, still in its infancy, has already evolved to better meet your needs while social distancing remains in effect. With the reopening of the library system, the holdings in the RIBA collection of the Greenville library (over 100 unique titles) are once again available for loan. Of course, this newsletter is another facet of our ongoing efforts. Previous issues are available on the website and are well worth rereading.

There has always been a strong social component to RIBA. Our February and March meetings saw over a hundred attendees, a phenomenal response. It is harder now to maintain that social aspect when we can't meet in person, but it's not impossible. Check in with your mentor or mentee. Some may feel comfortable with small outdoor gatherings. Try to attend our Zoom meetings live and ask your questions to the speaker. Keep posting your photos and questions on Facebook. I miss you guys and eagerly look forward to the days when we can meet in person again. As always, if you have ideas or suggestions please don't hesitate to get in touch.

*Scott Langlais*
*President*

# The Flow Hive Experience

RIBA's involvement

Since the invention of the Flow hive and its successful crowdfunding, the public has been enamored by this beehive that has been marketed as a revolutionary piece of equipment to make beekeeping easier. Almost every beekeeper and Beekeeping Association, including RIBA, were being asked about the Flow hive ad nauseam. Keith Salisbury and Malinda Colletta saw this wave of interest as an opportunity to engage potential beekeepers and hopefully address the many unknowns of the Flow hive. Keith also saw this as an opportunity to shed the reputation of RIBA being a Langstroth Club that was not inclusive. Malinda, in her capacity as organizer of the silent auction, reached out to the BEEINVENTIVE PTY LTD, the company that manufacturers the flow hive, in Australia to seek a donation for our 2017 Spring Banquet. She was then directed to enroll RIBA in their Beekeeping Club Support Program. Through this program we received a Flow Hive Classic 6 and other support materials for use in our education program. One condition of receiving the Flow hive was a commitment to keep the hive for one year. The hive was displayed at our booth at various County fairs and at our annual Field Day and it generated a lot of interest. The hive was eventually populated and kept by Keith who reported his experiences to RIBA members at our monthly meetings. There are also videos posted by Cindy Holt on RIBA's Facebook page demonstrating the challenges of extracting honey from a Flow hive. Keith reports that "having a Flow hive among the list of beehives we have kept has allowed us to intelligently answer questions people have about the hive."

How I got into the Flow

After possessing the Flow hive for over three years RIBA decided it was time to move on. RIBA had met its obligation to the manufacturer, and we had become knowledgeable of the management and nuances associated with the hive. I agreed to take possession of the Flow hive and share my experiences with the RIBA's membership for one season.

I collected the hive during winter 2019 and proceeded to clean the super and freeze the brood frames. I painted the hive and replaced missing parts. I made an entrance reducer with an integrated mouse guard using ½ inch thick wood and ½ inch hardware cloth. The entrance roughly matched the larger opening on a Langstroth hive entrance reducer (4 ¾ x ½ inch). The hive setup consisted of one eight frame brood box and a six frame Flow super. I have recorded my experiences with the Flow hive and shared them here:

May 2020

The Flow hive was setup at an out yard on May 16th. I split a double nucleus and the queen-right half (five frames) went to the Flow hive along with three frames of undrawn plastic foundation. The colony is on a hive stand in the middle of two Langstroth hives. The colony was not fed as there was ample

food stores.  The hive thrived and drew out comb on all the frames and the queen laid “end to end” on all the frames except for the two outermost frames where they stored honey. Towards the end of the month the workers were in the super and the colony seemed overcrowded. I was concerned their swarming instinct would kick in. As a control measure, I grabbed frames of brood and used them to strengthen weaker hives in exchange for frames of foundation and drawn comb. While this approach worked in the short-term, it certainly would not have been sustainable over the season. Ed Szymanski suggested adding another brood box, unfortunately I do not own eight frame equipment and the dimensions of the flow hive certainly made it tricky to go grab any eight-frame brood box. In the end, Keith Salisbury was very generous and made a brood box using the Flow hive dimensions obtained from their website. It was a perfect fit.

Flow hive with two brood boxes and super on hive stand between two Langstroth hives

June/July 2020

I added the second brood box with three frames of drawn comb and five undrawn frames with plastic foundation during the third week of June. Within one week all the frames were drawn out and the queen was actively laying in the upper brood box. This addition was timely as the bees had started drawing burr comb in one corner of the hive. The brood box accommodates eight frames and there is room for maybe half of a frame if that could have been done. Thus, when you place your frames in the brood box and push them together there would be extra space on the outside of the outer frames. This can ultimately lead to burr comb being drawn. The burr comb was removed and the issue has not occurred again since then.

Left: Burr comb being drawn outside the frames. Right: Nectar being deposited in super

As of the time of this report the bees are in the super and "extraction" seems possible if we get a late summer/fall honey flow. I will provide an update of these activities as well as a summary of the pros and cons of managing a Flow hive based on my experience.

-Calvin Alexander

## Varroa Mites: Why test? Why treat?

There is an art and science to beekeeping. I was deemed the task to write an article about testing and treating for Varroa mites. This is the science part of beekeeping so I went to the evidence-based scholarly articles for the answers.

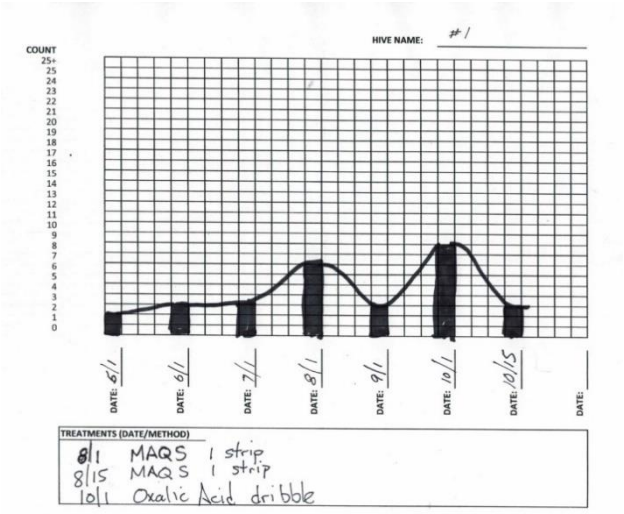
*Varroa destructor* is the most significant contributor to the loss of *Apis mellifera* colonies world wide.[1] Clearly, it is important for every beekeeper to manage the Varroa infestations that occur in their colonies. To do this we need to understand how Varroa get on our bees and their effects on our bees.

There are several ways a mite free colony can pick up mites. Typically, these methods are referred to as vertical or horizontal transmissions. Most commonly discussed are the horizontal transmissions. Peck, et al showed that mites can wait upon flowers and can nimbly climb onto a honeybee that lands on it, and that she is not successful in grooming to remove the mite.[2] Another horizontal transmission method is the "mite bomb" phenomenon, although Peck and Seeley (2019) deem this a poor term. They looked at mite infested colonies that were collapsing and theorized that the "mite bomb" would send large numbers of mites into the surrounding colonies through the drifting of bees out of the collapsing

colonies. Then they would see a large spike in the mite count of those healthy surrounding colonies. What they found wasn't exactly that. They found that there was not an increase in bees leaving the infested colony and drifting into the other colonies.

While there was drifting it did not increase as the colony began its demise. What they did find was when the infested colonies weakened they became robbing targets. When the weakened colonies were robbed the mite transmission occurred. While the number of mites did rise in the colonies of the robbers it did not do so as rapidly as the bomb term might suggest. Peck and Seeley proposed the term should be referred to "robber lures."[3] Natural bee drift is a common horizontal mode of mite transfer to another colony as the mites influence a honey bee's flight orientation.[4]

Why does all this matter? If a mite test is done on a colony one week and the number is low, the bees could bring in mites quickly if they rob another colony. During periods of dearth and in the fall as infected colonies collapse robbing becomes more prevalent. This also corresponds to the time in the colony when the winter bees are being raised. Treating by the calendar or without testing is not effective. The treatment may be applied when mites are not a problem or may be a generation of bees too late. Frequent testing is supported to monitor the mite levels throughout the season and even more important during periods of dearth and subsequent robbing.




Now we know how the mites get into a colony so what happens once they are in there? The mature mated female adult mite is what is transmitted into a colony. Once there she needs to feed and most importantly reproduce. The mite will enter the cell of a larva (preferably drone) to reproduce. Her offspring will then feed on that developing larva. The adult mites will also feed on the adult honey bees, usually nurse bees, while waiting to find a larval cell to enter. This is a big deal because the mites can transmit several viruses, including Deformed Wing Virus (DWV), Kashmir Bee Virus (KBV), Sacbrood Virus (SBV), Acute Bee Paralysis Virus (ABPV) and Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus (IAPV). While a lot of viruses don't have clear, easily visible symptoms they are all destructive to a colony. A study by Francis, et al looked at Varroa-Virus interaction in honey bee colonies. They found that colonies that died in the study had significantly higher prevalence of ABPV, KBV, IAPV and DVW during the months of September and October (remember this time frame!).[5] You can spot visible symptoms of ABPV, KBV and IAPV by looking at the brood. None of the symptoms are specific to one virus making a visual diagnosis difficult. DVW is easily visible on an adult bee.

In January 2019 Ramsey et. al published their breakthrough study revealing that Varroa do in fact primarily feed on the fat bodies. So why is this a breakthrough? One of the roles of the honey bee fat bodies is to control the life span of the honey bee. The winter bees are anatomically different than the summer bees in that they have a larger fat body. During the winter bee's larval stage of development, the Varroa feed on the larva effecting the development of the fat body tissue. While the larva will develop into an adult honey bee her life span (and even her abilities to work) are effected. Another effect of the Varroa is on the nurse bee's ability to feed the larva. The Varroa can alter the production of royal jelly and the quality of the royal jelly that is fed to the larva. So, a larva doesn't receive proper nutrition and is fed upon by a Varroa mite, but can manae to fully develop. Fast forward to the fall and the first cold snap. Suddenly colonies are dead! The cold must have killed the bees. Going back to the Francis et. al study that found high virus infestations in colonies that collapsed in September and October. The cold did not kill the bees.

Most likely they collapsed due to the combined effects of the Varroa feeding on the hemolymph and virus transfer. When the cold snap came the sick bees were already near death, not able to cluster and raise the temperature in the hive and therefore died. Bees with lower levels of Varroa infestation can survive longer into the winter. They will commonly collapse in the late winter when it is expected that the queen starts to lay eggs again to raise the generation that will replace the winter bees. If these winter bees are ill they will not be able to feed the larva properly and will pass on disease. The brood being raised will not be enough to replace the dying off winter bees and again the colony will collapse.[6]

There is significant evidence in many studies of the honey bee that link Varroa as the number one threat. There are many resources available to aid in the control of Varroa through Integrative Pest Management. It is our job as beekeepers to take what we can from the science and apply it to the art of beekeeping. It is our responsibility as caretakers of livestock to monitor and control pests to prevent viral and disease outbreak.

# Honey: Raising the Bar

For some, honey is just something to spread on their toast or sweeten their tea. I view honey in a much more solemn light; it is a gift from the flower, the sun, the rain, the soil. *It is a gift from the bees.* This perfect product requires so little from the beekeeper--it is not cooked, requires minimal filtering, needs no additional ingredients--it is hard to see it as anything *but* a gift. Honey sustains life both as food and as medicine. Properly stored, its shelf life is practically infinite. Honey is eternal.

A product that merits such high esteem deserves to be treated and presented with equal respect. The strictly legal requirements are actually quite few. There is a maximum moisture content (18.6% for Grade A, measured with a refractometer) and there are some simple labeling guidelines. In the US, actual regulation of what constitutes "honey," at least for the small-scale producer, is surprisingly lax. It is largely left to the honor system for the honey packer to accurately describe his/her product; terms like "raw," "local," and "organic" carry certain connotations but are used casually by beekeepers. With the onus falling mainly on the beekeeper, the need to be rigorous in our personal standards takes on an added dimension. Every time you sell a jar of honey you are representing not only your own apiary, but the reputation of beekeepers nationwide.

Maintaining a positive public perception of honey is critical. Your personal reputation as a honey producer is equally important. It won't take long for a customer's bad experience to be spread far and wide. You want to present the best possible product every single time. Merely following the exact "letter of the law" will only take you so far; that covers the reality of the situation, but maybe not the *perception*. As beekeepers, we understand that there is nothing wrong with a partially granulated jar of honey, but your customers may not. They may interpret this as "spoiled" or "contaminated." Your filled jar may weigh out at 16 oz exactly, but if there is a quarter inch of empty space between the honey and the lid, the *perception* may be that the customer isn't getting full value for their money. If you have a display of a dozen jars on a shelf and they are filled to different levels, or the jars are sticky, or the labels are crooked, that carelessness may cause your customer to wonder *where else* you have been careless in the process. Maybe it is only a faint kernel of doubt, but our aim should be an absolutely unassailable level of public trust.

"Why Is Your Honey So Much More Expensive Than In the Supermarket?"

There is a general lack of education in this country about where our food comes from. Although our grandparents may have grown up on farms, or been only a generation removed, the number of farms in the US has diminished by 2/3 since the 1940s. Our relationship with food is increasingly divorced from its sources; Amazon, Peapod, Fresh Direct, and other services deliver produce and meats right to your door, processed and packaged in discrete units. It's no wonder an average shopper would question a $15 jar of local honey when a 12oz bottle of "Stop & Shop US Grade A Wildflower Honey" sells for $2.59. Are they really that different? *Yes*. A six pack of local craft beer will cost 2-3 times that of a mass-market domestic brand.


A pound of Wagyu beef will cost exponentially more than the supermarket brand. Consumers understand this difference, but honey has not enjoyed the level of advertising and cultural cachet that many other products have had. Rhode Island's small scale beekeepers have a premium product that merits a premium price. While your packaging need not be elaborate or novel, it does demand a high level consistency and attention to detail. This speaks to professionalism and pride, two qualities that are within the grasp of even the first-year beekeeper.

Competing in a honey show is a great way to improve your skills and identify areas where you can improve. Your judging sheet will show exactly where you have deviated from perfection. Perhaps the moisture content was too high, the jar was underfilled, or there was lint or debris in the honey. This can give you important feedback to tighten up your process and avoid pitfalls in the future.
The level of mindfulness necessary to bottle and present a winning jar of honey will translate directly into making you a more consistent and professional bottler when you are offering honey for sale at a retail location. It's YOUR name on the bottle, make sure it's something you can be proud of.

"I Heard Honey is Good for My Allergies?"

Honey is a truly amazing substance. It is food, medicine, cosmetic, and more. Exaggeration isn't necessary when extolling its virtues, and indeed may have the opposite effect when you encounter an informed shopper. Always strive to describe your honey accurately, without relying on overblown or unproven claims. When asked about honey and allergies, I generally say something along the lines of "I hear a lot of anecdotal evidence that local honey has helped alleviate allergy symptoms, but there has not been conclusive research to prove it yet." Honey *has* been shown to be effective in treating burns and wounds, but you need to be aware that how you process and store your honey can have an effect on its medicinal value. Overheating during extraction will have a deleterious effect. The honey may still be perfectly fine for eating and baking, but would you want to provide a product that you knew had its medicinal qualities compromised to an unsuspecting buyer?
According to the National Honey Board, "while there is no official U.S. federal definition of raw honey, (we) define raw honey as honey as it exists in the beehive or as obtained by extraction, settling or straining without adding heat.

This definition does not have any legal authority, but is provided to help in the understanding of honey and honey terms." If you are providing raw honey for wound care, be sure it is as described.

The term "organic" is sometimes used to describe honey. Obtaining the USDA organic certification is not a trivial matter; there are applications, on-site inspections, and other hoops to jump through. It is a very specific process that goes far beyond simply eschewing pesticides in your backyard, or other casual efforts. Katherine Keifter writes in *Bee Culture*, "the proliferation of pesticides and GMO products in U.S. agriculture in almost all cases disqualifies honey as organic in the U.S." In Rhode Island, it seems fundamentally impossible for anybody to be able to make a claim to organic honey; we are too densely populated and the foraging area of a given hive will almost certainly come into contact with agricultural or homeowner-applied pesticides. Again, this comes back to the issue of public trust for me. A canny shopper will know you can't control your bees' forage. Avoid the temptation to stretch the truth or make claims that you can't support. Real honey, processed and stored correctly, doesn't require tall tales to sell; it's perfect just as it is.

*-Scott Langlais*

1. https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/Extracted_Honey_Standard%5B1%5D.pdf
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## The RIBA Film Committee


At our last "in person" Executive Board meeting back in March of 2020, our Bee School Director, Betty Mencucci, gave me a dvd containing footage shot by RIBA in the 1940s/1950s. I had heard rumors about this film for a while and was eager to finally see it. I was awed by the level of professionalism and care that went into its production. This was clearly a labor of love for those involved in its creation, especially at a time when shooting and editing a movie was much more expensive, time consuming, and less immediate. Although there is no sound, it is usually easy to follow thanks to the excellent titles between scenes. Howard Pike, who is credited with photography, editing, and titles, was the State Bee Inspector from the 1930s into the 1950s. This is a fascinating look back into the past or our organization. The fact that we had an actual Film Committee back then speaks to the tradition for progressive and innovative thought in RIBA that continues to flourish today. Despite that, you will notice that the actual techniques, tools, and hives seen in the film will be extremely familiar to a beekeeper in 2020. The attire at meetings has certainly gotten a lot more casual over the years, however!

The fact that we have these movies today is essentially thanks to the efforts of Betty Mencucci. She and her husband, Carlo, did the initial transfer of the 8mm film reels to VHS, and later transferred them to dvd. Thankfully we never have to worry about this important historical document going lost now. Betty was kind enough to share her memories:

"The films were always in the locker when RIBA met on Pierce Street in East Greenwich. This is where we met during the winter when I joined in 1988. Bee school was held there when I joined. When Roger (Robitaille) was president and Bernie (Beider) was secretary/newsletter editor, RIBA left the place in East Greenwich and cleaned out the locker. At that time Bernie had the stuff from the locker at his house and he was looking to find uses for what was there.

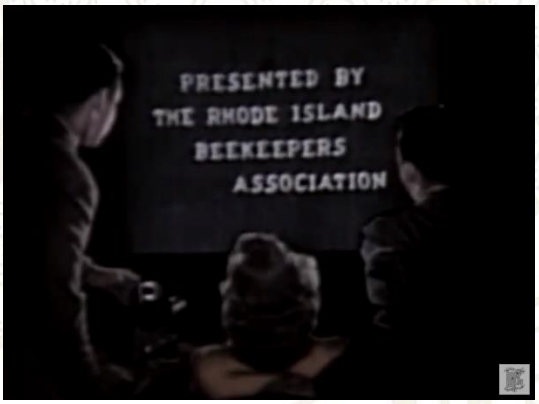

Bernie brought the films to Yvonnes in Woonsocket and had them transferred to VHS. RIBA paid a lot of money, probably several hundred or more, to transfer the film. I don't know why but somehow after he did that, he mentioned it to me and asked me if my husband could transfer the film to VHS. We did not know that it was just done by Yvonne. Yvonnes had put all the film back on the reels backwards so we spent hours and hours and hours putting them right and then playing and copying them to VHS with much painstaking care. I brought them to a board meeting and we asked for $30 to do the job. It was then I found out that the job had already been done a few months ago and it was Yvonnes that had rewound all the tapes backwards causing us hours of grief. I was upset because I felt like my time was wasted copying something that was already done and that RIBA paid a

handsome price for. I gave RIBA a copy of the VHS and I kept a copy for myself. I also may have given one to the RIBA library but I'm not sure. Nothing happened with the films, nobody mentioned it. It didn't seem that anyone cared about them. Years went by."

Dating the Footage

These scenes were originally shot on 8mm film, likely over a period of time in the 1940s and early 1950s. There is only one (apparent) date in the film: a hive body that has "BCBA May 1954" stenciled on it at the 52:29 mark. I say "apparent date" because I'm not sure why the month and date would be painted on a hive; perhaps the beekeeper was named May and the 1954 was simply an ID number. It may well be a legitimate date, but it's impossible to know. Based on preliminary research I've done, the bulk of the first hour of the film can be confidently dated to a point prior to 1950. Brayton Eddy, who appears early in the film, died in 1950 so the footage is most likely from the 1940s. CP Cornell died in 1956, Sayles Steere died in 1958. The other names of members who appear in the film were active in RIBA at various points from 1933 till at least 1945. Virtually the entire extended Executive Board of 1945 appears in, or was involved in making, the film: Rudolph Wallitsch, Evert Janson, Howard Pike (State Bee Inspector), Webster Goodwin, Amy Brown, and Rudolph Watson. After 1945 I don't have a complete slate of RIBA officials again until 1982.

In the second half of the film there is footage of several outdoor meetings, including what appears to be a meeting of the Vermont Beekeepers Association and possibly the Bristol County Beekeepers Association (BCBA May 1954). My misgivings about taking a firm stand on the 1954 date aside, I do believe this date is reasonable. We know that in the early 50s RIBA President Gaston Levitre visited meetings of other clubs regularly and was instrumental in founding the Eastern Apicultural Society. In fact, the "Tri-State Meeting" of RI, MA, and CT beekeepers which RIBA hosted at URI in 1954 was the inspiration for the formation of EAS, and Levitre was elected the first president of the new organization in 1955 at the Maryland meeting. There is footage in the film of a "Field Day at West Kingston." It is tempting to think this could be a record of that historic pre-EAS meeting, but there is no proof of that. Based on the quality of the other titles, it seems unlikely that they wouldn't have specified it as such a special event, or identified some of the famous speakers who appeared.




I hope you'll take the time to watch and enjoy. If you have any further info that can help date any of the footage, or recognize any of the names involved, please get in touch.

*-Scott Langlais*

**Link to video on YouTube:** https://youtu.be/JicmmfqZvAQ

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