

STAHLMAN BEEKEEPING NOTES

FOR 2025

Published by Dana Stahlman Raleigh, North Carolina
Published free as a public service to anyone interested in honeybees. Email me to be added to my mailing list. stahlmanapiaries@aol.com

2025 Vol. 7
issue # 21

Memorial Day Issue

I don't generally give book reviews as subject material in my newsletters. But I would like to share a new book given by me by Joan Slemenda for review. She is a co-author of a self-published book which she sells and promotes.

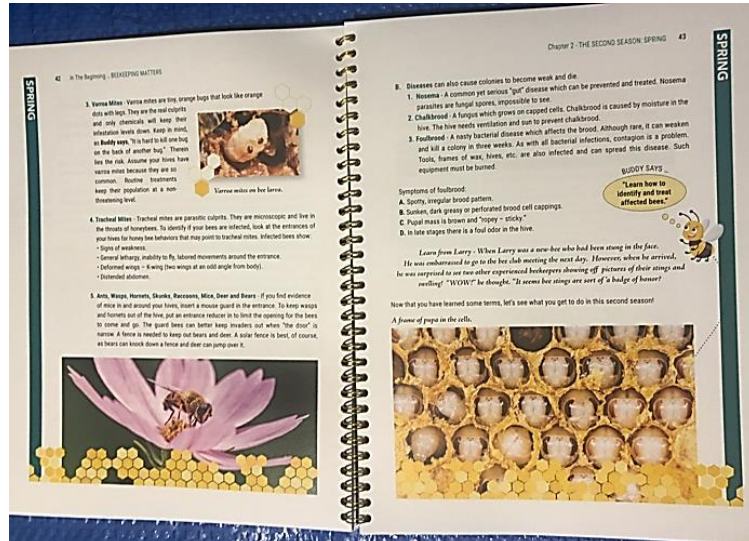
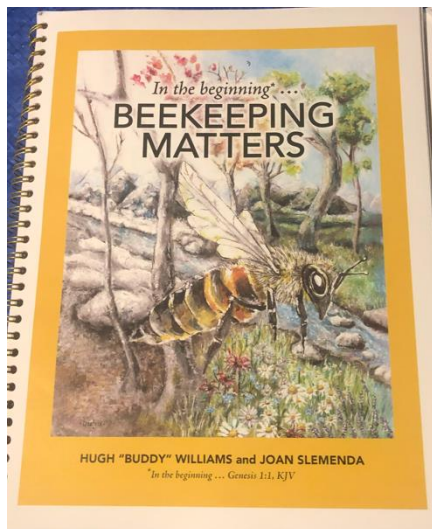
Have you heard of those "49'ers" that headed west to get gold? Many of them returned home "Busted by Gosh!" This is a book written by a teacher of many years and her mentor hoping to solve a special problem – beekeeping failure by new beekeepers.

I have had the opportunity to serve in many positions in honeybee clubs – from president to door-man. The membership in bee clubs has increased dramatically in the last 35 years. Bee schools have always been around but when the "Save the Bees" slogan caused many new individuals to get involved in keeping bees, the door was opened wide for anyone wanting to join the effort – resulting in disappointment and failure for many. I remember especially when the Central Ohio Beekeeper Association with a normal enrollment of 15 to 20 students suddenly jumped to a room full of people wanting to get into beekeeping. Standing room only. As a former educator, I was well aware that effective teaching is limited when large numbers of students are admitted to a class. There is a lack of individual attention that can be given to students. The result as I saw it, was COBA was able to take in a lot of money from student fees including membership but renewed membership the following year result in less than ½ of the previous students renewing membership in the club. The debate boiled down to the club making money – lots of it. The club officers did not want to turn away potential students. The club thrived but after the class was completed, students were sent adrift and the club looked forward to the new class coming in the following year. I see so many clubs with this model supporting bee school. It is an assembly line to failure. By the way, COBA today is thriving with 4 – yes 4 bee yards for beekeeping education. Class sizes are limited and I can say that along with Barbara Bloetscher, retired Ohio State Apiary Inspector, OSU, and COBA set up the first of the weekly "**Fun in the Bee yard**" meetings for new beekeepers and those wanting to experiment with new ideas. 20 years later COBA is still working to make instruction better for "newbie's".

Hugh "Buddy" Williams and Joan Slemenda have written a book called **In the Beginning*... Beekeeping Matters**. If you have never opened a hive of bees and think you would like to start keeping bees, this book has been written for you to succeed. The importance of success is based on finding a mentor who knows beekeeping. The pitfalls are many for uninformed individuals wanting to keep bees. Bee schools are not in a position to baby-set students. They can provide

the nuts & bolts of keeping bees but that is like handing the keys to a car buyer and expecting the new operator to know what the levers, buttons, and features can do! What happens if the car has a flat tire? What happens when a warning light suddenly appears on the dash? (Maybe it is yellow triangle blinking light).

The theme of the book is “Think Like A Honeybee.” It is well written by experienced beekeepers (50 + years of experience)



The authors write “80% of new beekeepers can fail in the first two years. We do not teach ABOUT honeybees, as is done in most books and classes. In this book, we teach HOW to be a successful beekeeper. The book uses visual learning and charts to details of what to do, when to do it, and how to do it.”

It is a bit on the expensive side (The book is \$30.00 + 5\$ shipping) and can be ordered at beekeepingmatters@gmail.com. However, I would recommend it because any mistake can easily cost more than \$30.00. In fact, I am going to use the information in this book to reorganize what I think bee school should be about.

Cold Weather and Rain could be coming your way. Sunday morning, Judi (my wife) and I got an early start back to North Carolina after spending much of the week in Ohio. Meeting with old friends draws me back to Ohio. I had expected warm weather but believe me -- I had frost on my windshield Sunday morning. Fortunately, we had taken coats and heavy sweaters with us. Warm weather was in the mid 60's with lows into the 30's.

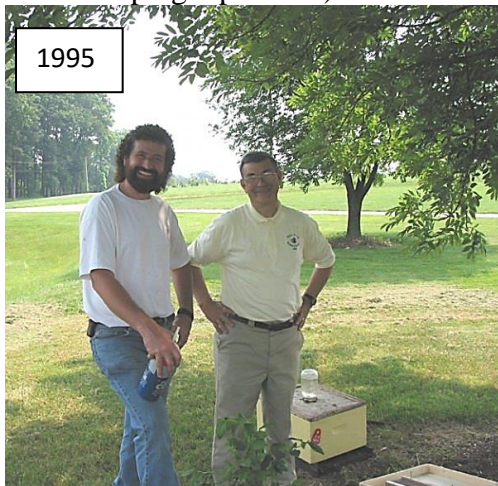
I have heard it said that beekeeping is the same anywhere one lives. That is not exactly true because Judi and I left Raleigh in almost 90°F weather and almost no rain. We were driving through West Virginia in that heavy rain storm that passed through much of the Mid-West. It was cold and I am sure the bees in those areas we passed through were not having the flight days my bees in Raleigh were having. Ohio has recorded snow in May and the beekeepers living there can just dream of living in Raleigh with the honey flow on and good weather.

I had a meeting with David Heilman and James Thompson in Wooster. David is a former assistant at OSU (The Ohio State University) working bees at the OSU Wooster campus and Jim is a long time OSBA (Ohio State Beekeepers Association) extra special member (former

president and everything else plus a honey judge and supporter of OSBA). David is the owner of Ohio Honey Farms (A commercial beekeeping Operation).



David, me with my back turned and Jim. Almost 150 + years of beekeeping experience in the photo.



The picture on the left is current. The picture on the right is 1995.

All three of us are EAS Master Beekeepers and have stayed in touch over the years.

**The point is this:
Beekeepers often
develop long term
relationships.**

David and Jim are in the process of saving the old Antique bee equipment displayed at the OARDC (Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center) bee museum. This has been something that has interested me for many years. The museum building is being torn down and OSU has done nothing in the way of preserving the History of Beekeeping in Ohio. Unlike North Carolina which is supporting beekeeping by building a new NCS bee lab with support by the North Carolina Beekeepers Association, so much of Ohio history is going down to be remembered by folk like Jim and Dave. The bee facilities on the Columbus OSU campus have been removed -- all agriculture has been moved to Wooster. This is called progress.



When people ask me about what beekeeping was like 50 years ago, I am going to let this picture do my talking. It is a fracking operation in eastern Ohio along I-77. Gone are the open fields and bee forage that existed here.

Ohio was at one time a major honey producing state in the U.S. and there are now very few commercial

beekeeping operations like the one run by David. I picked up 5 gal. buckets of Buckwheat honey produced by David's bees. He specializes in pollination, honey sales, package bees and nuc sales. Dave sells honey by the barrel or 5 gal. buckets and because he keeps bees in other states, he can provide buyers with a choice of varieties. He specializes in shipping barrels of honey to be converted into honey straws. If you are interested in buying honey, he ships buckets and straws. Contact him at Apisman@aol.com.



Ohio Honey Farms, 4346 Lattasburg Rd, Wooster, Ohio 44691