

# Beekeepers Crown Queen, Princess

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**LEWISBURG (Mifflin Co.)** —

Rainy weather may keep bees in a hive but it did little to keep 110 members of the Pennsylvania State Beekeepers Association from attending their 1993 fall-winter meeting held at the Country Cupboard in Lewisburg.

A featured after-banquet attraction was the presentation of the 1993 Beekeeper of the Year Award. Merle Fisher of Lewistown presented the biennial award to Fred Rich of Royersfort who at one time maintained 300 hives part time. He now has 65-70 hives.

Crowning of the Queen and Princess followed the award presentation. Melissa Swartz stepped forward to accept the 1994 Pennsylvania Honey Queen crown and then saw Melissa McGriffin being crowned as the 1994 Honey Princess.

Swartz, a 17-year-old from Shoemakersville, is the daughter of Jerry Swartz of Mifflin and Monica Blose Swartz of Lewistown. McGriffin is from Knox and is the daughter of Deanna McGriffin and the late Bill McGriffin. McGriffin manages 90 hives that were left by her father. The 1994 reign for the girls begins February first and ends the following January with the American Honey Queen competition in Austin, Texas. Becky Fisher Gerhart manages the Queen and Princess programs.

Stephanie Lynn Yoder of St. Thomas currently holds the 1993 Pennsylvania Honey Queen title. Daughter of Samuel and Barbara Yoder, Stephanie learned beekeeping from her grandfather. She studies music at Messiah College. Yoder will travel to Orlando, Florida, in January for the American Honey Queen competition.

Pennsylvania's 1993 Honey Princess, Jennifer Sue Henry of McVeytown is the daughter of Marvin and Mary Henry. She attends Juniata College majoring in early childhood education. Her grandfather's commercial beekeeping experience influenced her interest in the honey industry.

Beekeepers attending the meeting also had a chance to meet their American Beekeeping Federation representative — Heather Pomeroy of Wayland, Iowa. This 18-year-old attends Messiah Col-

lege where she is majoring in international business. Heather travels throughout the United States to talk honey at fairs, festivals, and schools, and demonstrates cooking with honey when she can.

"Honey is becoming more popular as people become more aware of the different ways to use it. It's not just for toast anymore," Pomeroy said, then added these sweet little facts about honey.

- There are more than 300 different varieties of honey — something to suit everyone's taste.

- To produce one pound of honey, bees have to visit two million flowers and travel 55,000 miles.

- Each honey bee makes only 1/12 of a teaspoon of honey.

- The pollinating service by honey bees is worth about 10 billion dollars to U.S. Agriculture.

Beekeepers attending the meeting spent the day in workshops which included determining the quality of your queen honey bee by Clarence Collison, The Eastern Apiculture Society — what does it do for you; what you can do for it by Maryann Frazier, strategies for treating tracheal and varroa mites by Jennifer Finley, preparation of honey for market and show and comments on wax by Clarence Collison, and the Hopkins Method of queen-bee rearing by Tom McCormack and Al Stankus. A short business meeting followed lunch.

Sandy Fisher of Stroudsburg, serving her second term as president of the PA State Beekeepers Association, said of the 700 to 725 members in the organization, most are hobby and sideline beekeepers, keeping anywhere from one hive to almost 400 hives. The state association formed in 1904 to promote beekeeping, address problems, help with bee management, and currently, to obtain more needed research concerning the industry.

"Right now, we're addressing a devastating mite problem. Two mites were introduced to this country causing many losses in the nation. The dumping of Chinese honey into this country has caused a downward turn in price for us," Fisher comments.

Maryann Frazier, an Extension bee specialist in the Department of Entomology at Penn State, works closely with the organization. "We're working to secure a social insect geneticist position at Penn



A line-up of royalty graced the PA State Beekeepers Association annual meeting in Lewisburg. Left to right are Jennifer Sue Henry, 1993 Honey Princess, Melissa McGriffin, 1994 Honey Princess, Melissa Swartz, 1994 Honey Queen, Stephanie Lynn Yoder, 1993 Honey Queen, and 1993 American Honey Princess Heather Pomeroy.

State," continued Fisher. "Research is needed to relieve us of the mite problem."

Fisher hopes future accomplishments will include work on the mite problem and promotion of the importance of honey bees which indirectly extends into our food sources through the livestock industry with clover and alfalfa pollination.

Fisher was quick to point out that the PA State Beekeepers Association and its members are the sole supporters of their queen and princess programs, choosing to continue the program after the elimination of state funds.

Because of this, an auction followed the banquet. Merle Fisher of Lewistown helped to auction off a mailbox, a beehive stenciled apron, a straw beehive, ceramic beehives, a ceramic bear, and other donated items.

The PA State Beekeepers Association meets twice a year. For more information, call Sandy Fisher at (717) 992-7274.

For a free arts and crafts tip sheet, a free paint strip and for information about a contest which challenges young artists to create their own personalized designs, send a self-addressed, stamped #10 envelope to: "Young at Art," Natural Science Industries, 50-01 Rockaway Beach Blvd., Far Rockaway, NY 11691.



Fred Rich of Royersfort accepted the 1993 Beekeeper of the Year Award from the association. The award is given every other year.

## Honeybee Size Profile Of Full-time Beekeeper

Not many can say they make a living from beekeeping. But Merle and Emily Fisher of Granville, Mifflin County, have been doing just that since 1946. At one time, their bees traveled 75-80,000 miles per year. Fisher still manages 300 hives among four customers, but now their son Dyson rents out over 4,000 boxes of bees to growers needing pollination service all over the east coast. Each box contains 75,000 bees.

Dyson Fisher trucks his bees to Florida in the winter for citrus pollination. The bees return to Pennsylvania in the spring for cherries, apples and other fruits. They travel to Lake Champlain for apples, to Maine for blueberries, and to Massachusetts for cranberries. According to Merle Fisher, the largest renters of honeybees in the U.S. are the almond growers in California, followed by cultivated blueberry growers in New Jersey and wild blueberry growers in Maine.

Dyson also strains and packs honey for sale, often buying more honey to supplement his own. During the season, he produces 60 barrels of honey, 36,000 pounds per month.

The family's interest in the apiary business reached the third generation when two of Merle and Emily's granddaughters served as Honey Queens in 1987 and 1991. Now, granddaughter Jennifer Sue Henry is Pennsylvania's 1993 Honey Princess.

## Research On Calcium And Bones

A recent study found that increasing calcium intake from 80% to 110% of the Recommended Dietary Allowance of 1,200 mg per day during adolescence may decrease risk of osteoporosis. Twelve-year-old girls who consume an additional 354 mg of calcium (roughly the amount of calcium in a glass of milk) per day for 18 months develop higher total body and spine bone density than girls who do not consume additional calcium.

Nine- to twelve-year-old girls who increase their calcium intake from around 750 mg per day to 1,370 mg per day for one year by consuming more dairy foods develop greater total and spine bone density than girls who do not consume additional, dairy foods. Body weight does not differ between girls who consume extra

dairy foods and those who do not.

These studies confirm and extend previous research findings which indicate that children, pre-teens, teens and young adults can improve their bone status by consuming adequate calcium:

- Six- to ten-year old children who increased their calcium intake from 900 mg to 1,600 mg per day for three years increased the bone density in their arm, hip and spine.
- Seven- to nine-year-old child-

ren who consumed an additional two-thirds cup of milk every school-day for two years exhibit higher bone density 14 years later than children who did not consume additional milk.

• Women who consumed over 800 mg of calcium each day from milk and cheese during high school and college and exercised more than four hours a week had higher arm bone mass than women who had lower dairy calcium intakes and exercise less.

