

EAS MB teach each other as well as others. By Dewey M. Caron

With 10 new MB certified this year, of 27 testing, the total active EAS MB membership is now around 170 individuals. They teach and keep bees (most of them) in 30 states and 2 Canadian Provinces.

New York is the largest state with active EAS MB – there are 24 of them. One-half were certified during the pilot program at Cornell University (1987 & 88 – in all a total of 30 were certified in the pilot program) the 12 individuals are still actively teaching and doing beekeeping, many attending EAS each year. A listing of the EAS MB is on the EAS website.

The first EAS tests were in 1991 at the NJ annual Conference at Rutgers University with 8 successfully passing all the exams, of 16 testing. Successful applicants needed to pass 3 exams; today they have a 4th exam – the oral exam - as well to take and pass over a 2-day period during the Annual Conference. Traditionally less than one-half of aspirants become certified each year (38% this past year).

Pennsylvania has 20 EAS MB, half of whom were certified before 2010. Rounding out the top 6 states in representation, MD with 17 (8 before 2005), ME with 13, all but 3 certified since 2012, testimony to the training program (see below), VA with 12, 3 prior to 2005 including Ann Harman of Flint Hill who was in the very first (1981) EAS certified group, and New Jersey (10) including one individual (Tom Webb) certified in 1978 at Cornell and Ping-sun Chun, who was certified in the first testing at Rutgers in 1991.

This past year there were 2 new MB certifications from NY (husband and wife team Ben and Kimberly Carpenter), one from MD (Larry Truchon), none from PA or ME, 1 from NJ (Jerry Furtell) and 3 from VA (of 5 total taking the various exams). See posting on EAS website for a short bio on the 10 new EAS MB (article under Master Beekeeping reports) <http://www.easternapiculture.org/master-beekeepers.html>



The 4 MB exams are rigorous and require significant experience and memorization. A couple of active instructional programs, one in Maine (current EAS Board Chair Erin Forbes was organizer) another this year in MA lead by 2016 certified MB Alexandra Bartsch, have arranged to help individuals prepare for the EAS MB tests. The master however at helping individuals conquer the MB tests is past (2003) MB recipient, Pat Haskell of Northern VA. Pat calls it the “old oak table” study group, begun in her kitchen in 1999-2000 around, you guessed it, her kitchen table. Pat the husband Jim continue the study today. The 3 successful VA certificants of this past year were all participants of the group study.



Pat says her concept of a MB is the same as that of Roger Morse “...a “teacher, mentor, and leader.....Not everyone is destined to become a Master Beekeeper, so only those devoted to learning prevail” according to Pat. She lists in addition to herself, 10 individuals who have benefitted from the “old oaken table” sessions. But Pat proudly points out that learning and teaching does not end with MB certification. “Each and every person has stepped forward and assumed teaching responsibilities here in Virginia and other places.”

Pat is also part of the Northern Virginia Beekeeping Teacher’s Consortium, a group of beekeeping instructors. NVBTC includes teachers from over a dozen clubs and groups that sponsor beginning beekeeping classes in their area. In nine of those clubs, the consortium member and teacher is an EAS certified MB. The consortium provides the text books and eight-week teaching curricula to each of the clubs.

QUOTE FROM FORMER STUDENT

I had been keeping bees for eight years when I joined Pat's study group. I had no idea how much I had to learn and how much there will always be to learn about bees and beekeeping. Nothing could be more enjoyable than sitting down with a group of experienced beekeepers in the dead of winter and working through the biology of bees and how it dictates how we manage them, accompanied by a bottomless coffee pot, cookie jar and an occasional glass of expertly aged mead. So many insights and so much knowledge in the group---and there is no one quite like Pat Haskell, an outstanding teacher and beekeeper well known for her very high standards---making sure we all "got it"! From candidate who passed all 4 exams in NJ