

The Buzz

Newsletter of the

Iowa Honey Producers

Association



March 2024

<https://www.iowahoneyproducers.org/>



Emma has the perfect honey-themed snacks for the March Madness tournament on Page 8.

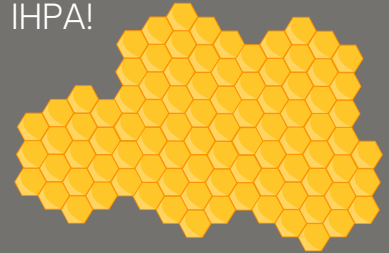
Meet your speakers for the 2024 IHPA Annual Conference and Trade Show on Page 4.



Learn about the job of the Iowa Honey Producers Association Historian on Page 3.

The Buzz

The Buzz is a monthly publication printed by the Iowa Honey Producers Association (IHPA). This is one of the many perks of being a member of the IHPA!



You may opt to receive an electronic version of The Buzz, as a donation to the IHPA. Please contact the editor at:
ihpaeditor@gmail.com

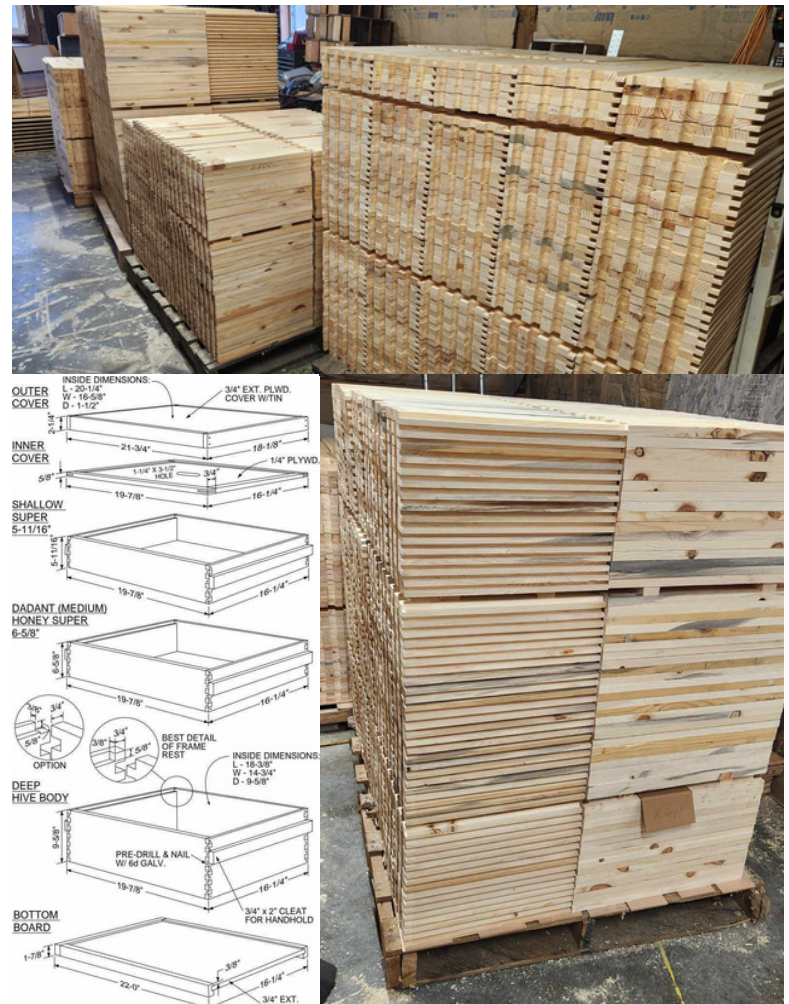
IHPA Officer & Director News

Ramblings from The Russian Bee Guy

President, Jason Foley

Hello, and welcome to my March Ramblings. Since last edition things have settled down and fortunately I've gotten out from the string of bad luck. I mean seriously, I haven't even shed a drop of blood once since my last story. That's pretty impressive considering that most every day I have been in the woodshop trying to get these orders done up. It's been a pretty busy winter in the woodshop. I had several people reach out to me this fall for pallets of unassembled hive boxes to be made for them. On top of that, this year I'm making 100 hive kits for local sales (9 of which are being donated to the youth scholarship program), making up some 240 deeps and 200 some mediums to toss into our own operation, and a list of extra parts and pieces to outfit our store inventory. Maybe that doesn't sound like a ton, but it's far more involved when you start from raw lumber than what most people experience by just buying and assembling the final product. Just one winter I would like to take off and not build equipment, but I'm pretty sure my wife would kill me for having a big chunk of our store empty.

The weather as of late has me a little worried for Iowa beekeepers. It's heading in a very scary direction. When Iowa has a rollercoaster winter (warm-cold-warm-cold-warm-cold), it's very taxing on the colonies. Here the end of January and the beginning of February we have had record highs during the day. The nights have mainly dropped back to winter temps, but these warm days will have Italian hives brooding up like crazy and will stimulate quite a few Carnies to do the same. That's fine-and-dandy if we keep on a warm track, but it only takes 1 nasty day out of 21 to decimate that developing brood. Your winter cluster uses up a ton of their bodily nutrition and remaining life span to try and get the new brood to adulthood, so losing most of that brood over a cold night is a huge waste and can make it so your hives fall short of making it through winter. Cross your fingers folks, it either needs to stay unseasonably warm, or needs to go back to winter temps ASAP.



IHPA Officer & Director News

What does the IHPA Historian do?

The IHPA Historian has a variety of roles in the organization. The main role of the IHPA Historian is to keep and share the historical honey bee related documents. These documents are shared through The Buzz and as information is inquired about. In fact, I have already answered an email inquiring about the tenure of a past IHPA president. The IHPA Historian is also expected to write or find (from what IHPA has stored) a certain number of Buzz articles throughout the year. You are reading one of them for this year!

So, what are these historical documents? As an association, we have about 10 totes full of historical beekeeping documents. The documents include past Buzz articles, state apiarist reports, John Johnson articles, and various other pictures and documents. I have flipped through each of these totes to get an understanding of what we have so that I am able to pull articles to be included in future Buzz newsletters. Moving forward, I will from time-to-time find an article to include in an edition of The Buzz.



If you have any questions for me or want to know more about beekeeping history in Iowa, please do not hesitate to reach out to me!

Abigail Kelly, Historian

Honey Bee Day is March 27th at the Iowa State Capitol



The event will be from 8 a.m. to about noon. We are calling all beekeepers to join us in celebrating honey bees in the great state of Iowa. Show our politicians just how many of us there are! Also enjoy a slew of food items made with honey.

Big News for 2024!

IHPA Annual Conference & Trade Show

The 2024 Annual Conference & Trade Show will be held this year at the Prairie Meadows Racetrack and Casino convention center on October 25 and 26! Your event committee has been striving to yet again, out-do last year's event. The venue is bigger, the freebies are nicer, there's even more speakers, yet we are keeping down admission prices and room rates!

On tap for speakers we have secured:

- Randy Oliver, author for American Bee Journal and owner of Golden West Bees in northern California.
- Megan Mahoney, New Mexico commercial beekeeper and former student of the acclaimed Marla Spivak.
- From the University of Mississippi, Esmaeil Amiri will present cutting-edge research on honey bee disease resistance.

- From our next door neighbors in Nebraska, Judy Wu-Smart will honor us with her latest research.
- We also have David Burns, Illinois commercial beekeeper and social media giant.
- Last, but certainly not least, we have Dr. Larry Connor famous researcher and author for Wicwas Press.

Be on the lookout for teasers for this massive Midwest event! For next year's event we will be at the same location on the same weekend.

Right now we have tentative confirmations from:

- Bob Binnie Blue Ridge Honey Company
- Jennifer Tsuruda, University of Tennessee
- Amy Vu, University of Florida
- USDA researcher Arian Avalos.



Iowa Honey Royalty



Britta McCollum - 2024 Iowa Honey Queen

Happy March everyone! I am hoping that all of your hives are doing well, I just got into mine for the first time this year and my lovely ladies are all looking fine and dandy. It was such a big relief to see them still buzzing about. We gave the ladies some sugar and we made sure to tuck them in for the rest of the winter season. I am excited for longer summer days and happy bees.

Iowa Honey Bee Day is this month on the 27th! Iowa Honey Bee Day is a great opportunity to talk about honey bees to our legislators. As Iowa's honey producers, we know our honey bees best and can share our knowledge, experience, and stories to make sure that they keep thinking about our hives. If you haven't already, be sure to mark your calendars so that you do not miss the best day of the year at Iowa's capital. Did I also mention there will be honey lemonade?

As we reach spring I am growing more and more excited to represent Iowa's honey producers and share photos from every experience I encounter. I'd love to visit groups in your communities to talk about honey and honey products and give a demo making a treat. Please contact me at brittabmcc@gmail.com!

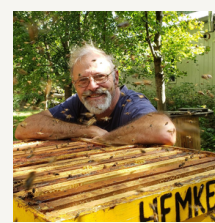
Stay sweet and we will see you at Iowa Honey Bee Day!
-Queen Britta



A peek at my lovely ladies on a warm day this winter.



From the Honey House



A collection of information from those with direct, personal knowledge about beekeeping

Written by: Andy the Bee Guy (Andy Hemken)

Organizational Physics

It's difficult to find people willing to lead. We can inspire others to step up and take over when needed, through mentorship and encouragement.

Over my lifetime, I have seen and experienced the success and failure of leadership in various organizations. All are valuable lessons, and have improved my understanding of human nature. Part of my background has been the development of supervisors in leadership skills to be more effective within their jobs. I am by no means an expert, but I continue to learn and understand what leadership is, and isn't.

In our beekeeping associations, certain people endeavor to lead, are coerced to lead, or are tricked into leading. Being the president of a local, regional or state organization requires certain skills to be effective, and is definitely a continuing process. There are some basic ideals that can be helpful in a leading a county bee-keeping association.

The president of the association is not a dictator, but a facilitator, keeping the organization moving forward. You have been voted in by your peers, as someone they trust to lead. Never forget the purpose of a county bee-keeping association; learning, networking and being a support group for a bunch of beekeepers. Due to the temperament of many beekeepers, it's akin to herding cats...

Normally, there is a written constitution and by-laws that govern the association, which should lay out goals and objectives to guide and organize the operation. Roberts Rules of Order are normally used to organize meetings, but should not impede activities. Remember that beekeepers join an association to learn and associate, not to "sit through meetings".

Meetings normally involve a presentation, business meeting, and other current activities. Discussions during meetings should be relatively short. The grunt work and deliberations are done before the open meetings. The idea is to make the actual meeting more pleasant and productive. Sometimes discussions venture into non-productive issues and these need to be limited. The

president is the one who orchestrates and guides the meetings, and should have some discretion in running the show.

Good leaders will solicit input and ideas, delegate responsibilities to spread the load and develop people to grow into various activities. This includes preparing potential members to take over as president or other officers, or to conduct the various tasks in the association. Good leaders will spend a lot of time outside of meetings with members, talking, helping and learning needs and strengths.

Meetings should never be a display of criticism, quarreling or bickering. Disruptions of the meetings should be quickly halted. Nothing drives people away from an organization faster than personal conflicts, fighting and other non-beekeeping activity. Constructive criticism should be conducted away from the meeting, if possible. The association should facilitate solving problems, and developing good beekeeping habits.

Leaders help people where needed, give praise where deserved, and recognize achievements of the members. Leaders need not be experts or even the best beekeepers, but in leading, know how to find information, good speakers and programs, and keep the meetings interesting. Above all, membership in the association should be fun, rewarding and beneficial to all involved. The members are the most important part of the association, and the beneficiaries of the work. The president is the one that guarantees the goals of the club.

The most valuable asset for a beekeeping association are the long time beekeepers. They assist in mentoring new beekeepers, and are the most likely people in the room to talk about bees. Unfortunately they are also the ones who have already sat through enough meetings, and should be given time to share their wealth of knowledge.

I'm intending that this article will help our leaders, and inspire others to step up and take over when needed. It's hard enough to find people willing to lead these days, but with encouragement, can be tomorrow's leaders.

Andy Hemken, Bee Guy
andy@hemkenhoney.com

From the Beeyard

A collection of information from those with direct, personal knowledge about beekeeping

Written by Phil Ebert

One last note from the AHPA Meeting in San Diego. There was a vendor there from Australia. His name was Victor Croker. He was a beekeeper who has branched out into producing and marketing Styrofoam equipment. He has recently set up a production facility in Kansas City. I had little interest in the equipment but Australian beekeeping sounded pretty interesting. They move their bees 8-10 times per year and extract 7 or 8 times. Average yield per colony is 200-300 kilos (450-650#).

His system was very flexible. The pallets were metal and custom made to fit the Styrofoam boxes. Each box held nine frames. Sometimes they ran the colonies as single story and sometimes as doubles depending on what they were doing. As I recall, they used doubles for almond pollination. Yes, they do produce some almonds in Australia. Here is the cool part. Each employee gets a swag bag. It has a sleeping bag and camping equipment. They camp out. They can camp anywhere---by the side of the road or near a tavern if there is one in the area. Everything sounded pretty remote. I was quite impressed with the whole operation.

Both of the colonies by my steel building are still alive and full of bees. They were kicking out dead bees once the temps recovered a little. You will be reading this in March. 30 years ago, if we got our bees to the first of March, we had it made. Now, that is when they really start to die. If the winter has been light and brood rearing commences early, the bees have a decent chance. If the winter goes long and they are not regenerating new bees, mortality spikes. If there is brood rearing they will go thru a lot of food in a hurry. This past fall, we still had brood in our colonies at

the beginning of December. If you quit feeding in October, your colonies may well be light.

The simplest way to check for stores is to heft the colony from one side. If you do not trust your estimate take the lid off. Look down at the frames. If you can see the caps on the stored honey sticking out on the frames next to the cluster, you should be good to go. Some of the good colonies will have bees hanging in the feeders. Those will take syrup if temps are in the high 30's. Smaller colonies of 4-5 frames may need something put directly on top of them. They are less likely to move to a feeder. You can use a feeder jar/bucket, candy board or even raw sugar if you have a spacer. I was never keen on the raw sugar but it is okay in an emergency. Remember that bees will not move off of brood to get to feed.

All the mite tests on the bees we sent west were zero. They were the best looking bees we have ever sent. Still, after 6 weeks in California, 20 percent of them were dead. We have had worse losses, but 20 percent is about average. The bees in general look okay. We check them in January and again in February. The ones that are good early on are not always the ones that are good later.

It has been a light winter with the exception of one cold spell. I suspect the bees will build up early. If you have colonies that are too big early, you can move brood into the weaker colonies. Leave the bees on the brood frames when you move them. They will integrate okay. Just be careful you don't get the queen.

Spring draws ever nearer. I hope your bees are doing well.





Recipes by Emma Ingram

Hello March! I am always so amazed when we get to March and the trees begin to get color, warm days are more prevalent, and the sun stays out until 6 or 7. I know we are still a far cry from summer, but these spring days come just in time after a long winter. Anyway, enough of my meteorological talk, back to the food! March Madness is just around the corner and what better to pair with your game day snacks than some delicious honey treats! This month I tried honey glazed smokies and honey snack mix. Although the smokies disappeared in minutes, I was able to keep a container of snack mix on my shelf for a few weeks to test its longevity. Still crispy two weeks later! This snack mix may become my afterschool staple!

Honey Glazed Smokies (Pg. 150)

1 package bacon
Honey (I used about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup)

1 package little smokies



Cut bacon into thirds. Wrap bacon around a little smokie, secure with a toothpick. Place on a baking sheet. Bake at 400 degrees, 18-20 minutes. Quickly drizzle with honey over little smokies. Return to oven for 3 more minutes. Immediately remove from pan and serve.

Emma's Notes: Little smokies have always been a family favorite in our household, from great memories of grandma making them every time we came for a weekend "vacation" to every family get-together having a small crockpot of BBQ smokies, I can confidently say I have eaten my weight in smokies and tried most smokie recipes known to man. The three ingredients made this recipe easy and fast to make. Only dirtying a cookie sheet and a knife also make this recipe the perfect party snack (fewer dishes to wash before guests arrive). Although rolling each of the smokies and stabbing them with toothpicks took a little time, the end result was worth it! The sweet honey drizzle caramelized in the oven and was the perfect partner for the savory saltiness of the bacon and smokies. We took these to a party and left them in a crockpot on warm for a few hours and they still had a fantastic caramel exterior. I will certainly be making this recipe again!

Honey Glazed Snack Mix (Pg. 150)

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup honey
9 cups Chex cereal
2 cups small pretzels

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup butter
2 cups Cheerios



Melt butter in microwave. Whisk honey until well mixed. Combine cereal and pretzels. Pour honey butter over cereal and mix until cereal is well covered. Spray 2 large baking sheets with cooking spray. Pour mixture onto the baking sheets. Bake at 325 for 15 minutes. Cool in pans for 3 minutes. Pour onto waxed paper to cool. Store in air-tight containers.

Emma's Notes: As I mentioned above, the snack mix that I hid from the family stayed fresh for several weeks. The rest of the batch was devoured in no time! I am always looking for a quick and easy snack to make at home that will satisfy my mid afternoon munchies without being too bad for me. This delicious snack mix fit the bill. My only challenge with this recipe was that it burned more easily than I anticipated. After the first 10 minutes, I kept a close eye on it and stirred the pan every few minutes. The wax paper was also a must. While it was hot, the honey stuck to everything. Being able to spread the snack mix out allowed the caramelized sugar to solidify without creating a snack mix "rock". Overall, this was a fast, easy, inexpensive treat that is perfect for a party, afterschool snack, or mid-night craving.



From the Editor

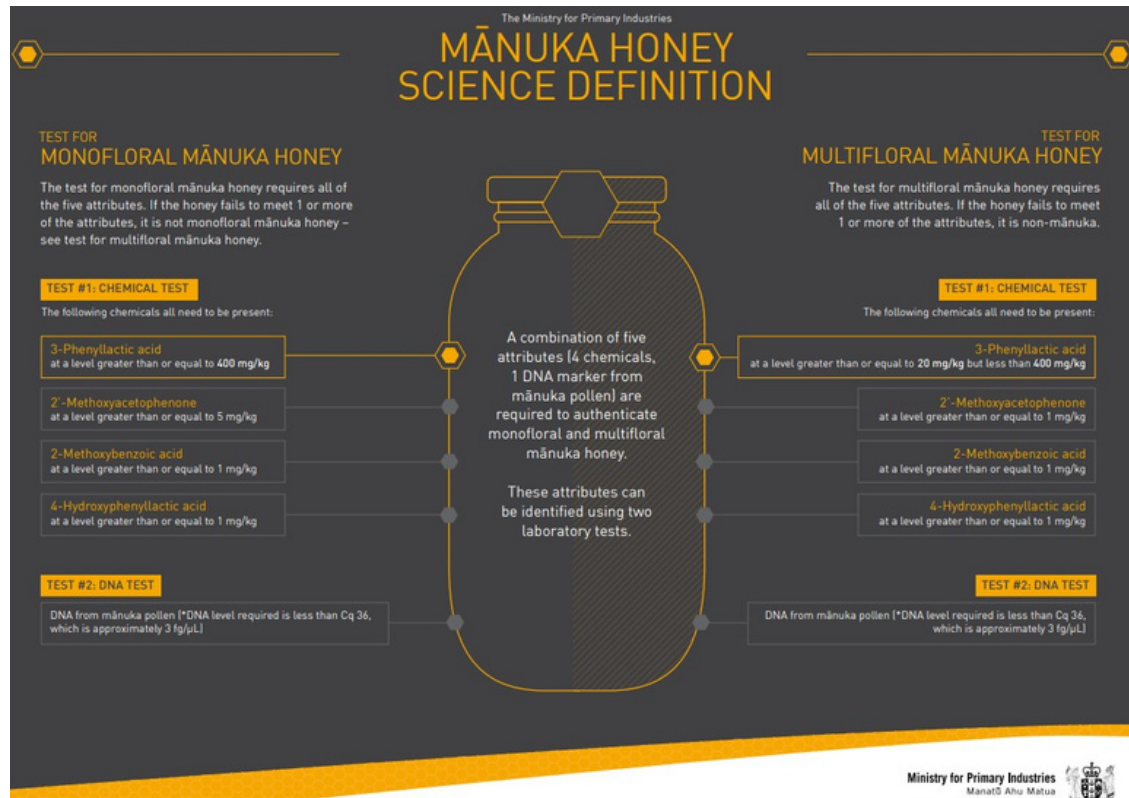
Sara Sleyster, IHPA Editor
sarasleyster@gmail.com



Hello, everyone!

When I told my family I was going to be the new editor for the Iowa Honey Producers Association it naturally got us talking about bees and honey. My youngest sister is a nurse who has worked in the intensive care unit, LifeFlight, and nursing homes. I was surprised to learn that she has used medicinal honey to help patients with wound healing, especially those with pressure sores. When the initial treatment of the wound does not promote quick enough healing, caregivers will switch to Manuka honey. To use it, my sister would clean the wound area well, place a small amount of honey over the whole wound, and then cover it with an occlusive dressing to keep the moisture in. She would then change the dressing daily.

It got me thinking, what makes honey medicinal? First, the medical grade honey used on patients is sterilized by using gamma radiation. This eliminates any bacterial spores that



Courtesy of the New Zealand government Ministry of Primary Industries website at www.mpi.govt.nz.

may be in the honey. Second, Manuka honey is a variety of honey that has been found to contain a higher concentration of antibacterial properties.

Manuka honey gets its name because the honey is made from the flower nectar of the Manuka tree, which is native to New Zealand. Ensuring bees collect nectar only from the Manuka tree flowers is costly and time sensitive, which is why Manuka honey costs significantly more than other honey varieties. This has led to a problem of people

making counterfeit Manuka honey claims. So if the price seems too good to be true, check to see if: it's made in New Zealand, it's been independently tested, and it's been approved by the New Zealand government's Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI).

I like learning more about natural remedies so if you have experience with the healing power of honey I'd love to hear about it! You can share your stories with me at ihpaeeditor@gmail.com.

Bye for now! Sara

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Availability

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Curt & Connie Bronnenberg
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To place an order, check us out on the web
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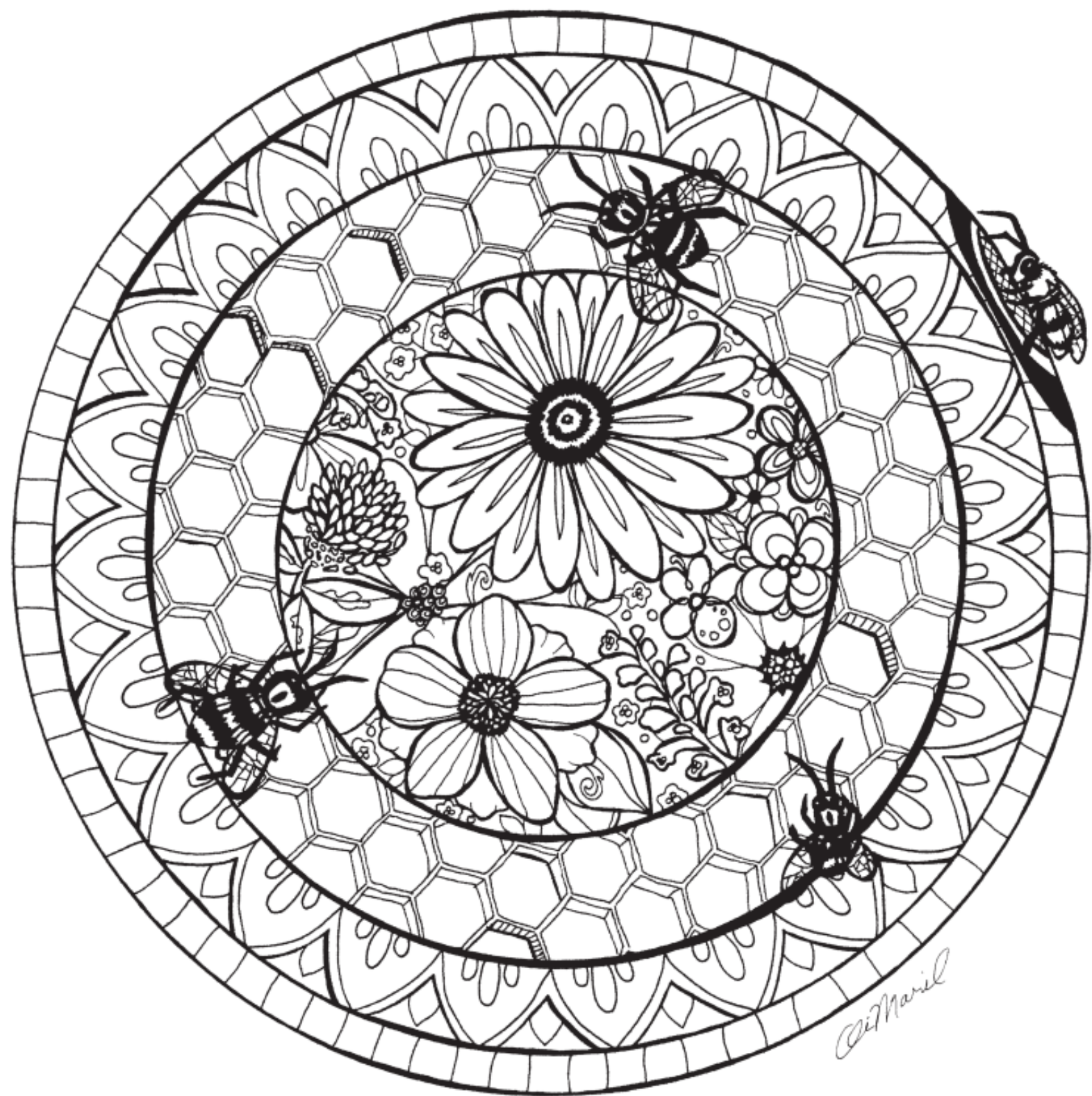
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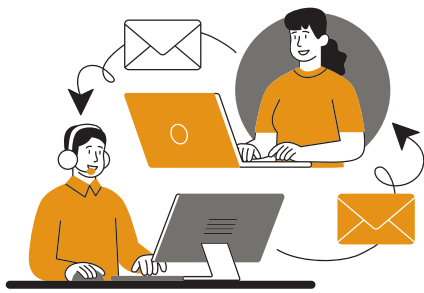
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If you would like to become more involved in the IHPA, we could certainly use your help!!!

Please email ihpa1912@gmail.com

The Buzz Newsletter

Iowa Honey Producers Association
c/o Editor, Sara Sleyster
1255 Virginia Avenue
Renwick, IA 50577



The Buzz is a monthly newsletter published by
the Iowa Honey Producers Association
which is an affiliate of the Iowa State
Horticultural Society



Deadline for submissions to *The Buzz* is always the 10th of the month at 11:59 p.m. the month prior to when you would like to see information published.

If writing an article for *The Buzz*, submissions must be 800 words or less. Pictures are encouraged!

Deadline to submit information for the April Edition of *The Buzz*

March 10th at 11:59 p.m.

Please submit materials to: ihpaeditor@gmail.com