President’s Message:

They say spring is right around the corner, I will believe it when I put the snow shovel away for good. I hope your bees are doing well no matter where they are at. As I write this article, we are waiting for our bees to come home from California. I’ve heard all sorts of things from the almond pollination this year. Some pretty good and enough not so good. Hope your bees are doing well and look forward to a better year this go around.

This year several of us attended the American Bee Federation meeting down in Myrtle Beach in early January. While we were there, some of us took time out from the convention to meet, discuss, and outline the requirements for the open Minnesota State Fair Honey booth Manager position this year. As many of you may or may not know, Linda Newman will not be back at the fair this year. Linda did an excellent job in running the honey booth for the MHPA for the last 9 years and I commend her for her great leadership and business skills. Thus, we did narrowed our search down and after a number of meetings we have hired a new Manager for the state fair this year. Ellie Kalke from Field Stone Apiaries is stepping up to be our new Manager at the fair. A few minor things will change going forward at the fair, but everything else will remain the same. All the honey producers and vendors who have supplied honey and products to the fair in the past, will be contacted here in the near future. Since the newsletter deadline for this article is March 15\textsuperscript{th}, this will probably already be old news to some of you. Looking forward to another state fair season coming up. See if we can beat the record 5 days of record attendance at the fair this year along with great weather of course.

Last July the MHPA board approved the hiring of a lobbyist to represent us at the state level when it comes to pollinator protection and concerns. For many years, while we were all out doing our bee stuff, things were happening over at the capital with little or no input from the MHPA. Most of the interaction at the state level has been with hobbyists who sometimes have different views and concerns than our organization. During our December MHPA winter meeting, we brought in Judy Erickson from Conservation Strategies to assist us with our needs. A list was compiled with our needs and concerns and it has been game on since the new Legislative session started in January. We are including updates (as time goes on) to our MHPA website for your review. One of our goals is to get more legumes and forage in the landscapes for our honey bee’s state wide. Roadside ditches, CRP, CREP, RIM, and even solar gardens need the right seed mixes to benefit all bees (including honey bees). Allowing a mixture of native, non-invasive, and non-native species in recommended seed mixes, clovers and alfalfa should be recognized, as these plants may provide the significant resources for all pollinators. We have had nothing but positive remarks from a number of other groups about us being down there at Legislative session this year. We know it is going to take a while to get things done at the capital that benefit our honey bees, but little by little we intend to make a difference.

Quick note on our summer MHPA convention this year. Our original goal was to have our summer convention in Morehead, MN this year, but motel and events come at a price and timing isn’t always in our favor. The meeting is now being held in Fargo, N.D. at the Holiday Inn. It will now be a joint meeting with the North Dakota Beekeepers Association who have elected to join us on our venture. Our dual Minnesota-North Dakota members are pleased with the arrangement. Liz has the convention all set up again this year. We have Randy Oliver as our key note speaker along several other great speakers on the agenda. We plan on having great topics, several participating vendors, and even a field trip to Mark Sundburg’s place on Saturday as we are getting out of town. Pete Berthelsen of the Honey Bee & Butter
Fly Habitat Fund will be there to show us what real honey bee and butterfly habitats looks like when done correctly. Please see the sign up form for the convention in this newsletter and remember to reserve your rooms early. We expect a larger than normal turnout this year.

So keep up the good fight for our honey bees! Remember to hold our Legislators responsible for correcting the beneficial forage for our bees. Write them a letter or just a phone call to your local Legislator is a step in the right direction. Good Luck with your bees!

Dave Schroeder

President