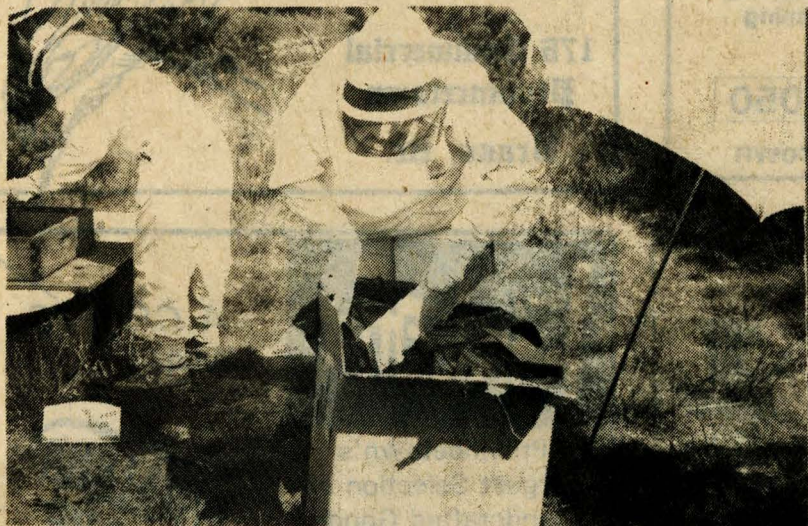
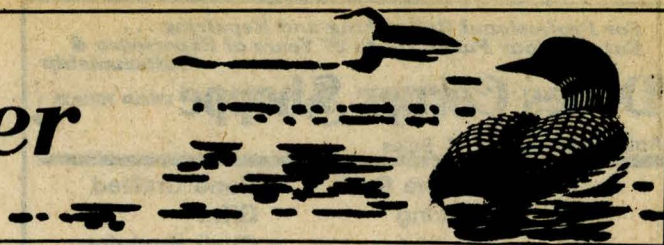


# Kelly's Corner

by Jan Kelly



Cathy Skowron and Maggie Tinkham, hive and honey partners

As I look at my column of the balance of time and weather at Equinox, I can barely hear the update of the hurricane warnings the crickets are chirping so loud. They've been loud for days in expectation of this storm but now they are yelling to each other, "Spring, next Spring, Spring, Spring!" And that heavy load of mosquitoes that land on you at any moment, you are standing still; we'll have to wait till 32 degrees for this to change, or maybe not. The retired fishermen were down the wharf for their daily personal political rally and the talk went like this: "Crickets coming inside. Spiders coming inside. Loads of mosquitoes, late. Feels the same as 1938." These men have a fine memory for weather and weather conditions. They piece the wind direction and velocity with cloud signs and land signs and are able to accurately predict our local weather. They don't argue; they concur. When in doubt, I go down the wharf for the weather report.

Did you think you were finally going to get a look at Cathy Skowron? This is all you get—Cathy Kayak looking like the Surgeon General at her hives. In case you don't recognize her, that's Maggie Tinkham, Cathy's neighbor and hive and honey partner. The reason for the white outfits is that bees are not attracted to white. Cathy explained that bees really like dark colors, especially navy blue as I stood there in black dance pants and navy blue sweatshirt. Maggie hooked up in mechanics' white jumpsuit and pith helmet with netting to the shoulders. Cathy had a one-piece beekeeper jacket: hood arrangement over painters' overalls. Both wore gloves and velcroed their cuffs shut and there I was—all black, navy blue and skin. Tremulous position.

Well, Cathy has three hives in the back yard. Each hive has 18 frames and each frame holds about three

pounds of honey. Each hive will have eighty pounds left in it for the bees to feed on through the cold winter. Cathy likes to leave plenty rather than feed the bees sugar water when the honey stores are depleted. Only the females, who are the workers, and the queen will be in the hive for the winter. The gigolo drones, males to service the queen, will be useless with the first frost and the females will force them out to exposure and death.

As we approached the hives, two moon walkers and a target, accompanied by Arrow, the dog and Beatrice, a calico cat and Ginger, a ginger cat, it was explained to me that these were Italian bees, a bronze or gold shade and a more docile bee type. First time I've heard of anything Italian as docile. They may produce less honey than the more aggressive types, but they are easier to handle. The smoker, a tin can with cone top and handle, was lit up. Smoke is bellowed around the hive. Cathy explained that the bees will think there is a fire, eat some honey quickly and would be too heavy for much hostility. Smoke aired, hive top taken off the top section with nine frames placed in it was moved to about fifty feet away. One by one the frames are pried out with a hive tool, brushed free of bees and then placed in a box sealed against the entry of any bee. The bees being brushed were all female, the workers. The drones loll around the bottom of the hive. We fell into all the obvious sexist jokes at any mention of bee roles. There are about forty thousand to sixty thousand bees in each hive. When brushed from the frames, the bees are in search of the hive again. There are two layers of nine frames each for them to return to for safety and work.



Max and Marianne aerobics

For this reason you mustn't stand directly in front of the hive even at a distance. The docile Italian would panic and change her temperament to your disadvantage. You'll be glad to know none of us were stung whatever the proximity of activity. Be secure, the bees will be, too. That was the adventure part. Now the sweating partners pushed a wheelbarrow of honey toward the house. The work began. A hot knife cuts the wax tops off the honey filled cells within the frames and then three frames at a time are placed in the electric extractor. The switch is flipped on and by centrifugal force the honey flows to the bottom of the extractor where it is bottled by a spout. A labor of love and delicious is the product. In the Bible, "Song of Solomon" being my favorite, in a section in Virgil's *Bucolics*, in poetry through the ages, songs and slogans, honey is before our eyes and ears more than we realize. A natural sweetener with such an involved and interesting origin, it has been a staple through the ages. Substitute it for white sugar in your next recipe, but use less; it's sweeter. Take a tablespoon when you're weary. Honey goes right into the blood stream to give you energy. And try different types, depending on the species of flower the bee visits, the honey will be blonde or dark and the taste will be distinctive. Tupelo honey is considered the most expensive, because the hives must be boated up the Everglades and left in order for the bees to have a concentration of Tupelo blossoms. Buckwheat, sunflower, orange blossom, alfalfa, wild flower and clover are some readily available flavors. Try honey, you may give up the sugar bowl. Also, if the subject interests you, read *The Queen Must Die* by Bill Longgood. It's the complete story of bees, good reading and is available at our library.

Well, if you don't think you'll try tennis for your winter exercise routine, try aerobics. You can go Monday,

Wednesday, Friday, 8:30 to 10:00 am at the Art Association or 4:30 to 6:00 pm at the Martial Arts building. There is also a Saturday 10 am class at the Martial Arts building. There are no prerequisites. Any age, any shape, either sex is welcome. Your willingness to keep in shape will be your own prerequisite. Our youngest regular member is Heather, one year old. Heather does have company younger than herself at times and feels she is in charge of them. Heather is probably the best dressed in the class. This darling outfit, complete with Moroccan braided belt is only one of Heather's aerobic workout sets. Max is the aerobic dog, the mascot and is cherished by his mistress, our teacher Marianne. Divil the Parrot visits in good weather and loves to sing along. The tapes are excellent. MaryAlice our top deejay has expertly spliced good disco music into smooth running rhythm changes to avoid pulls and strains and to promote muscle strength and elasticity. Marianne Maloney has tunnel vision when she teaches. Her mind is on the exact spot in the routine and she guides you through it so easily you'll never know it happened.

Can you picture a room of thirty consenting adults, working up a sweat early morning or through cocktail hour, just because it's good for them? Marianne's class has the most dedicated of participants. Many have been in class since Marianne began, five years ago. You feel so much better, you look so much better, when you take the effort to show up, to go through the routine and to correspond the habits of your life to a healthier goal. Besides the workout, the camaraderie of the group is solid. You'll enjoy being a part of this group. Call Marianne Maloney at 487-0435 or show up at the Art Association or at the Martial Arts building for a class. You'll consider it a great gift to yourself and you deserve it.