

Hazel Ridge Workshop and Gallery
7409 Clark Rd. Bath, Mi. 48808
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Newsletter 21 Fall 2020



Around the Farm

We're still here. I think the last newsletter I wrote was in 2015. For a writer, it appears I am pretty lax at keeping you all informed. I'll chalk it up to "busy at the farm". But with Covid-19 and 90 degree weather forecasted for the next couple of weeks I think being productive inside is the right call. Covid has not altered our farm life much. We have been semi-self-isolating for years and see little difference. We wear masks and keep our social distance when folks drop by for honey, books or art and it's relearning not to hug or shake hands with old and new acquaintances, but as Dr. Fauci says, "Now is the time, if ever there was one, for us to care selflessly about one another." It's not political, it's not macho, and it's not about personal freedoms. It doesn't make me weak or "controlled". Wearing a mask is societal and patriotic, helping our country get out of this mess. Ok..off the soap box. So, even though retired life on the farm is pretty much the same, we don our hazmat outfit while shopping or carrying out any business in public. Just common sense. We have missed hugging and visiting family. Kelly, who now lives in Royal Oak, started her job as a Health Communication specialist at the CDC Foundation August 3rd. Working with the Detroit City Health, she will be working to create messages and programs for people to understand how to prevent covid 19. Heather & Ahmed have brought the grands by for a farm visit a couple times as well. But only air hugs and kisses for now. Heather continues working at a Ft Wayne hospital as NICU nurse with very little exposure to covid- 19. The family has committed to home schooling for this school year. Not an easy task but very rewarding.

Hats off to Ahmed & Heather for taking on this challenge. Nick has been expanding the prairies by "plastic smothering" certain grassy areas and then sowing collected seeds from his already established prairies. What was once a hayfield is now, with hard work, becoming one more Michigan prairie. Then there's me and my bees. I'm still in love with beekeeping and continue to learn new things about the "gurls". I came out of the winter with terrible losses. Only 7 of 15 of my hives made it through the winter. But between catching swarms and making splits from existing strong hives, I am back up to 29 hives. I am sure by late summer I will be merging weaker hives with stronger hives to ensure a good winter survival rate. The varroa mite continues to be the biggest challenge for beekeepers. This parasite is also a vector for virus' that continue to plague colonies. Keeping healthy hives is a challenge but one that I passionately take up. I will extract some honey from 10 of those 28 hives, the other "younger" hives will keep it all to get them through the long winter months. I have created bee web site that shares all things bees at Hazel Ridge Farm. I did the best that I could with my limited tech abilities. Enjoy.

<https://hazel300318181.wordpress.com>



Robbyn tending her bees.

Painting by Nick

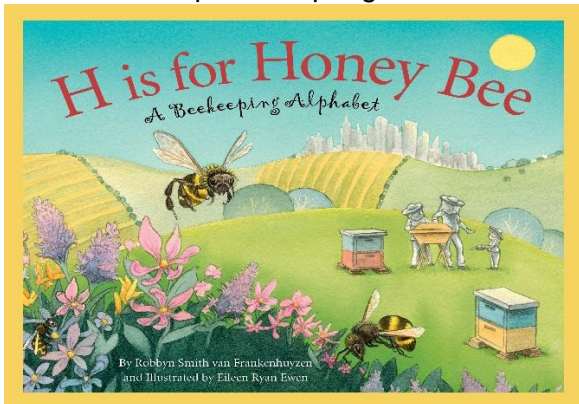
We maintain our relationship with the MMLC: Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy <http://www.midmilandcons.org/index.php> . Someone from the organization hikes the property once a year to see how we have kept the land natural and protected. Putting our land into a conservation easement has been one of the best things we have ever done. We highly recommend it.

Books

Since our last newsletter Nick had a book released that you may not be aware of, *The Skydiving Beavers*. Here is the link to real footage of the true story from the 1948 event. It's a 14 minute clip about the beaver's adventure into relocation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snbTtuDCT6w>

He traveled to the isolated area in Idaho to get a sense of the geography to recreate for the paintings. Except for any of the *Hazel Ridge* series books, Nick has officially retired from book illustrating. He is just way too happy working outside on his prairies to be cooped up inside painting. So for my next book, *H is for Honey Bee: a beekeeping alphabet* it won't be Nick's artwork. Nevertheless, I like what the illustrator has done in her whimsical style. It is due out this August 2020 and I am very proud of it. In the works now is a Michigan pictorial with paintings from many of Nick's previous books plus from his private collection. *Sleeping Bear* is still a little sketchy with the details but plans a spring 2021 release.



Events

Actually, this is more of a non-event section. Again, due to covid-19 practically all of our 2020 events were cancelled. School visits, conferences, speaking engagements, summer camps and book tours. These are a big part of our income so we feel the unemployment pinch like many of you. **We will not be having our annual Fall at the Farm, for the same reason, too many people in close confinement.** Because many of you have made our books and art work on a "must keep up to date" list, we will be open by appointment. We will only take orders for pre-signed books if you prepay. We don't want to end up with books signed to certain names and not picked up.. We can't sell a book inscribed "To Aunt Agatha, thanks for taking care of Snookums while we went on vacation". So we are

happy to set up gallery appointments and also happy to sign pre-paid books to be picked up or mailed. So, this October, the gallery will be open by appointment to shop and browse. Masks are required unless the virus situation has improved. At the end of July, I will have extracted honey from many of my hives and will have honey, creams, and candles available for purchase as well. The same precaution applies: call for an appointment and arrive with a mask. Thanks for doing your part in keeping everyone safe.

Commissions

One big commission this year, with a twist. A new senior living community, Woodlands of DeWitt, now has 3 large paintings depicting woodland scenes and 18 wildlife photographs from around Hazel Ridge Farm. The twist? Just as everything was ready to open, covid-19 hit nursing and assisted living homes hard and everything was shut down. Since June, there has been a slow reopening, starting with the independent units and an easing into the assisted living quarters. The paintings and the photographs are beautiful and will add nature to the lives of the residents.

Etc.

I leave you with a couple of quotes that speak to us out here at Hazel Ridge Farm:

And into the forest I go to lose my mind and find my soul. John Muir

Life sucks a lot less when you add mountain air, a campfire and some peace and quiet. Brooke Hampton

Nature is not a place to visit. It is home. Gary Snyder

Book recommendations. I am a science fiction/fantasy and "end of the world" stories. Nora Roberts has a trilogy called *Chronicles of the One*. The first one is called *Year One*, followed by *Of Blood and Bone* and finally *The Rise of Magicks*. I devoured all three.





Zayd, Jude & Noorah 2020

Birds & bees July 2020



Monarch on purple coneflower



Kunal & Kelly July 2020



Heather, Ahmed, Noorah, Jude & Zayd



Humming bird & bees