

N. Aurora beekeeper teaches sweet art

Course is part of Young Scholars Program

By ERIC SCHELKOPF
Kane County Chronicle

NORTH AURORA — The bees started to scatter as 10-year-old Kayleigh Hood unleashed the smoke.

Kayleigh was helping North Aurora beekeeper Harry Patterson smoke out the bees so they could take the honey from their hive.

Youngsters were learning about beekeeping Wednesday as part of "Outdoor Nature and Clay," a week-long course that Patterson teaches through the Young Scholars program at Aurora University.

"We smoked them to quiet the bees down, like they were sleeping," said Patterson, who has been a beekeeper for 27 years.

Dressed in a beekeeper suit and helmet, Kayleigh said she was not afraid of getting stung.

"It was cool," Kayleigh said.

The students learned what fresh honey tastes like.

"This is liquid gold," Patterson said as he let the students taste the honey right from the hive.

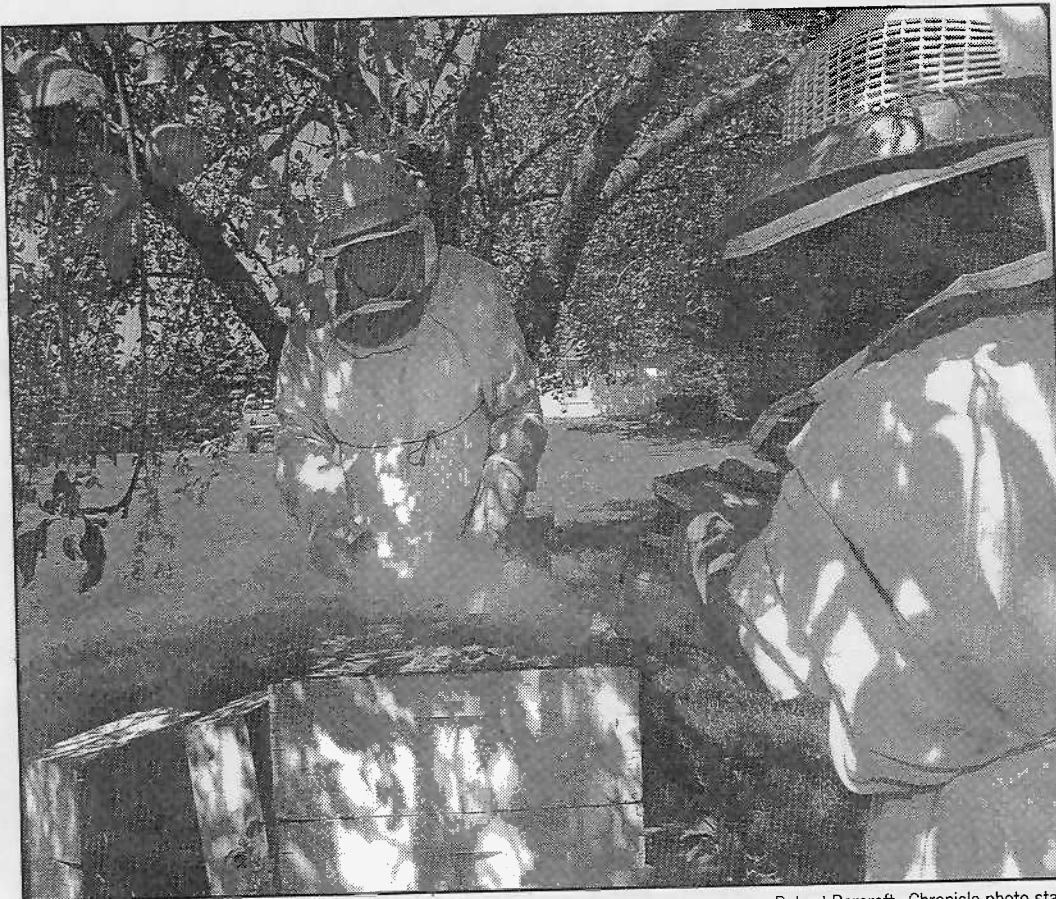
Patterson also gave the students drone bees to hold in their hands.

Drone bees do not have stingers, meaning that the students had no reason to be afraid.

"He likes me," said 9-year-old Haley O'Brien of Aurora as she cupped a drone bee. "He is not flying away. This drone just absolutely loves me."

Garrett Hipsman, 10, of Newark, said the bee tickled.

"I can feel its wings flapping. I am not scared of it because it doesn't have a



Robert Barcroft - Chronicle photo staff

Aurora University Young Scholar student Kayleigh Hood, 10, of Naperville, right, uses smoke to sedate bees as beekeeper Harry Patterson waits to access the honeycomb on Wednesday at Patterson's North Aurora home.

stinger," Garrett said.

Patterson also exposed the truth behind many myths about bees.

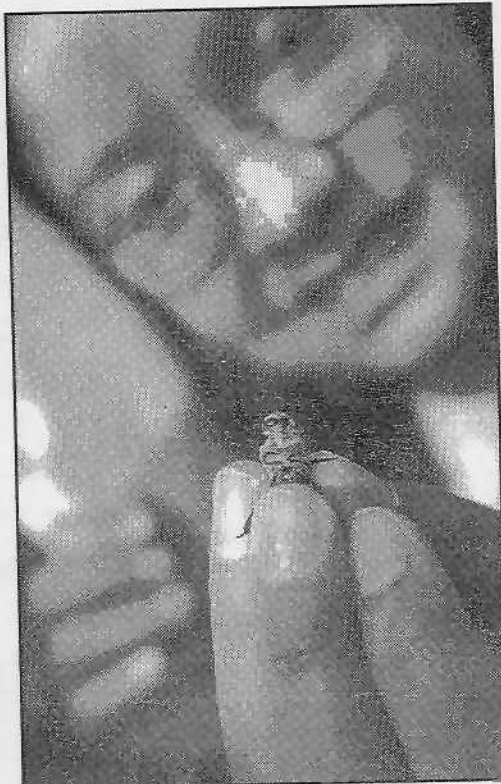
"The buzzing, they don't do with their mouths, they do it with their wings," Patterson told the students.

Patterson also explained that honey was used during the Civil War to help heal cuts.

"Honey does not have any bacteria. It is a preservative," Patterson said.

A retired teacher who has a master's degree in outdoor education, Patterson said he believes that students learn more when they are experiencing something rather than just reading about it in a textbook.

"Children learn and remember more when they have that experience. They will long remember it and understand it," Patterson said.



Stephanie Glennon, 9, of Naperville gently handles a honey bee drone Wednesday during the Aurora University Young Scholars program visit to the North Aurora home of beekeeper Harry Patterson.

Robert Barcroft - Chronicle photo staff