

FROM OUR CORNER

Washington Secretary Of State Blog



SECRETARY OF STATE
KIM WYMAN



BEEKEEPERS AT THE AIRWAY HEIGHTS CORRECTIONS CENTER

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From the desk of Sue Box, Library Associate at the Airway Heights Corrections Center.

On February 15, I had the pleasure and privilege of watching sixteen men be congratulated on a one-of-a-kind accomplishment. About two years ago, Mr. Jim Miller, a master beekeeper and longtime member of the West Plains Beekeepers Association, decided to give of himself and his time to help the prison really get the beekeeping program going. He helped set up hives, he taught the brand new beekeepers how to do what they needed to do, etc. But he was hoping for more. What he really wanted of the inmates in return was

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their help in writing a journeyman level beekeeping curriculum (which had been his dream for more than a decade). A daunting task, to be sure. This required the beekeepers to immerse themselves in peer-reviewed scientific literature and other pretty heavy reading and study. They took it on, they dived in head first, they worked their butts off... and a year later, the coursebook was revealed. Mr Miller was so happy and so proud of the work they did, and they are hoping to have the course approved by the state beekeepers body in the coming months.

I was lucky enough to be in the room about a year ago when the writing journey started. To see the inmates go from the deer-in-the-headlights, “He wants us to do WHAT??” faces, to the proud faces of accomplishment that I saw today, was pretty cool. I was also pleased to help them with a very small amount of research for their task. Not much, but a little.



What these men did, has never before been done. It may well never be done again. So, when I won a jar of honey in a raffle at the ceremony, it was also very cool. Just a little jar of honey....but so much more.

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