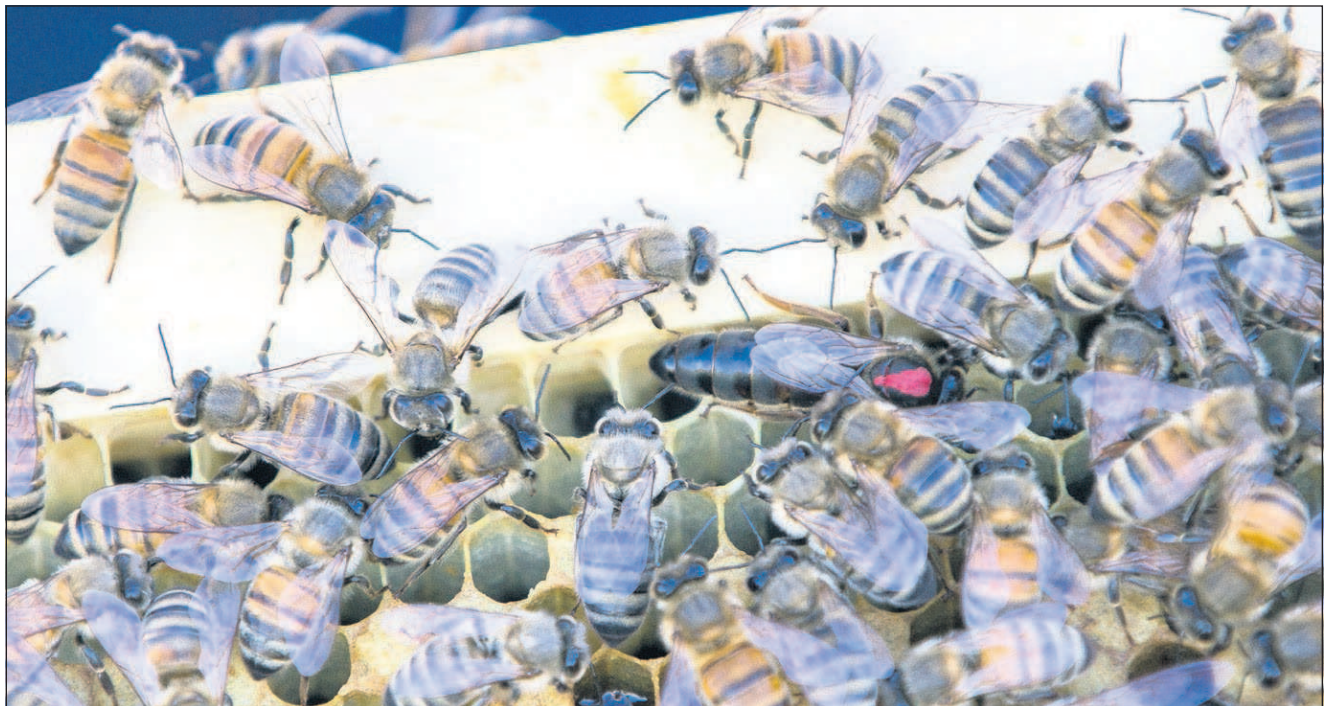
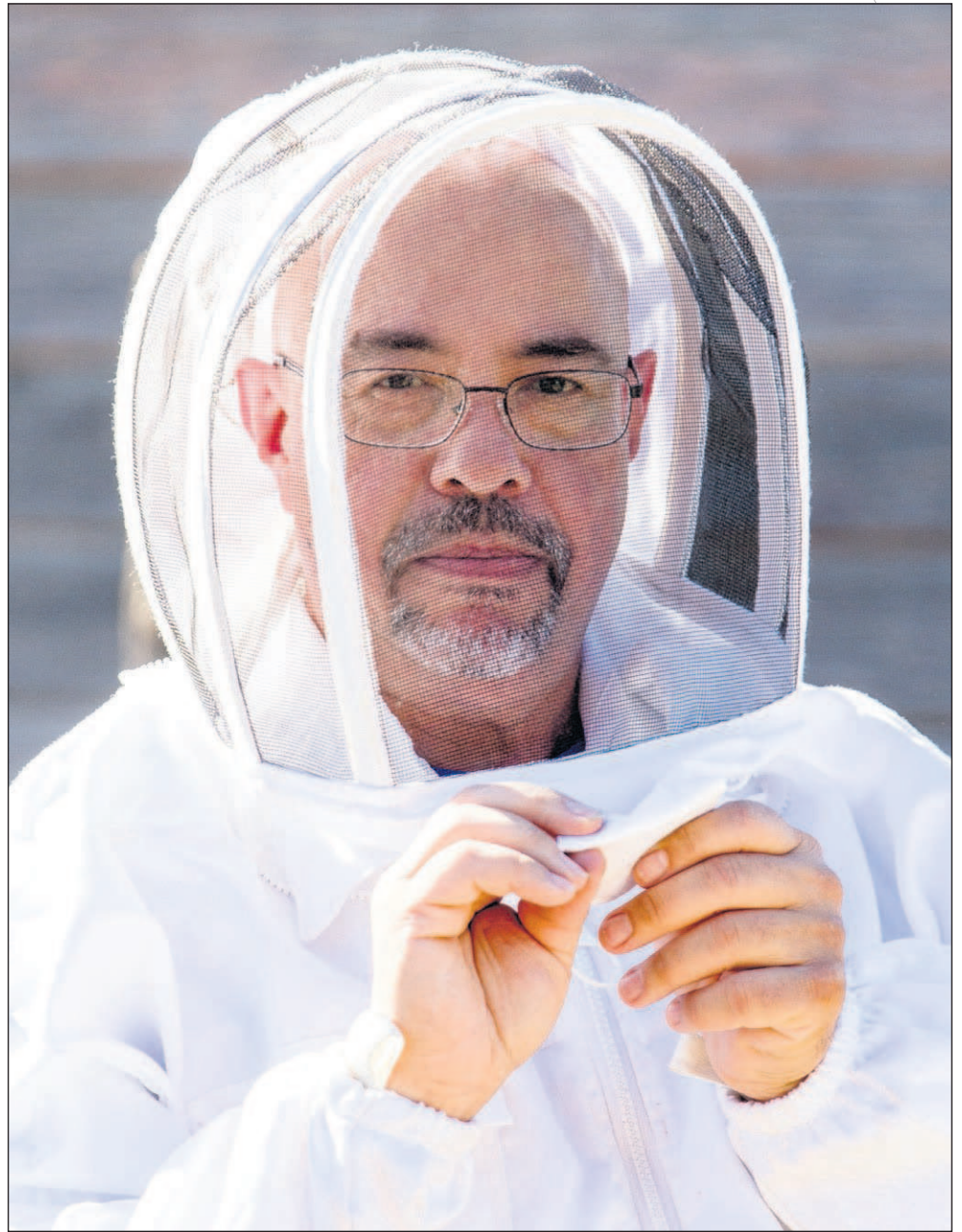


# Living the HIVE LIFE



Staff photos by Kathy Aney

(Clockwise, starting top left): 1) A honey bee collects nectar from flowers Wednesday near hives belonging to Ron Martin; 2) The beekeeper dons his beekeeping suit Wednesday before tending his hives 3) and 4). Honey bees surround their queen in a beehive that Martin has been tending.

## Ron Martin teaches himself the way of the colony

By PHIL WRIGHT  
*East Oregonian*

Ron Martin is as busy as a beekeeper these days.

His sons, both grown, bought him a hive for a Christmas present in 2016. Martin was not expecting that.

"I didn't know what to do, so of course I looked online," he said.

He found he could order bees — 3 pounds of bees — and they arrived in April that year. The bees came with one queen in her own small container. "They probably never met that queen before," he said.

To put the bees into the hive, he followed the instructions: smack the package of bees down on the hive. How nervous was Martin about that move?

"So nervous," he said.

But it worked, and no bees attacked.

Introducing the queen to the new hive required more caution. Just dropping her in a tube would have meant her death, he said. So he popped out the cork from a small vial holding the queen, removed the "bee bread" that was her food and replaced that with marshmallow. She ate that inside the tube, the other bees ate it outside and all the while her pheromones seeped into the hive, inducing the bees to accept her and not kill her.

Martin said it was a success.

He bought more hives. The bees spread. And in less than two years this experiment blossomed into 40 hives.

"I kind of jumped into this thing with both feet," Martin said. "I love doing it."

Martin, 66, owns and works at Pendleton Pioneer Chapel Folsom-Bishop, Pendleton. He's a fixture of the community, earning the 2017 Tenderfoot of the Year award from the Main Street Cowboys and the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce Man of the Year for 2017. Now he regularly steps into the traditional white beekeeper's suit to tend to the hives he located on a friend's property around Pendleton and at his home. He finds the bees fascinating and relaxing. Their hive lives and constant buzz provide a break from the world, he said.

Martin also likes their self-sufficiency. Bees collecting pollen can lose track of where they are, he said, so they fly a figure-eight pattern until they orientate themselves, then zip on back home. If a hive loses its queen, the bees make several new queens. But like the 1980s cult classic "Highlander," there can be only one. Virgin queens battle to die, and the lone survivor will go on to lay 1,500 to 2,000 eggs a day.

See BEES/6C