

The University of Michigan Department of Urology

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What's New April 13, 2018



New Faculty Introduction: Dr. Brian Stork

1 Item, 8 Minutes

Good morning, everyone, and happy Friday!

Today's edition of What's New continues our series of faculty introductions with another member of the West Shore Urology team, Dr. Brian Stork. Dr. Stork's introductory edition is taking on a somewhat different format, as we're borrowing from a feature on Dr. Stork recently written for the University Record. Dr. Stork felt this article would work perfectly for his introduction, as it covers his passions: his wife, his children and his beekeeping (as well as the charitable causes he's supporting).

Dr. Stork is an avid blogger and active on social media, so this will not be the last time he's featured in an edition of What's New. To read more about Dr. Stork, find out more about his charitable work or to learn more about the products he discusses later in this edition, you can visit his blog (<https://www.drbrianstork.com/>). Now, without further ado, let's hear from Dr. Brian Stork.

-Eric Anderson

Beekeeper's honey goes into charitable chocolate

By Olivia Puente, The University Record, March 26, 2018

When Brian Stork began beekeeping, his intention was to teach his children about farming. What he had not anticipated, was the positive impact his honey would have in West Michigan.

Stork, a urologist at West Shore Urology in Muskegon, which joined Michigan Medicine's Department of Urology last fall, began beekeeping about seven years ago. The nature of

his beekeeping changed when he and his daughter were looking for a Mother's Day gift and they walked into Patricia's Chocolates in Grand Haven.

"My daughter and I took a bottle of honey down to Patricia's store and asked her if she could incorporate some of it into her chocolate. So, the very first chocolates we did were for Mother's Day for my wife," said Stork, who is also an assistant professor of urology. Patricia's Chocolates, owned by Patricia Christopher, is known for the unique flavors and intricate designs of its chocolates. Since the inception of the Mother's Day chocolates, Stork and Christopher have worked together to create other varieties of chocolate that include Stork's honey.



Brian Stork, assistant professor of urology, is also a beekeeper who works with a Grand Haven chocolate maker to create honey-and-chocolate treats that help support a pair of West Michigan charities. (Photo courtesy of Brian Stork)

"When we first started beekeeping, we enjoyed giving the honey away as gifts, especially at Christmas. Over time, however, the word got out and our honey became quite popular. People started asking if they could buy it. As we began removing more and more honey, to keep up with demand, I started to worry all this activity might be stressing the bees," he said.

"I was really excited to work with Patricia because she can take a very small amount of honey and make a lot of chocolates. We started to think, moving forward, maybe we should just put our honey in these chocolates and support a couple of local causes our family is passionate about."

The causes Stork mentions are two West Michigan-based charities called Reading Enables Adult Development (R.E.A.D.) and Step Up.

"R.E.A.D. is an adult literacy organization," Stork says. "They have trouble getting the word out because people they are trying to serve can't read. The chocolates raise money, but more than money, they raise awareness. They get people talking."

Step Up is a nonprofit that takes people transitioning out of foster care and provides them a new home. Stork is in charge of fundraising. Depending on the chocolate, a portion of the proceeds goes to either supporting the current women's house, which is up and running, or it goes toward acquiring a location to create a men's house.

"We sell three different chocolates, and you can buy them all together in one box or you can buy them individually. Then she donates a portion of the proceeds to each organization," he said.

It is safe to say Stork's passion has served his community in more ways than one. However, the process helps to serve him, in a way, as well.

"The whole experience grounds you in nature. Working in health care, right now, I am sitting under fluorescent lights. I have no idea what the weather is like outside. When I'm out there, I can feel the sun, feel the breeze, smell the plants, see the pollen. It connects you to nature," he said.

Q&A

What moment in the classroom stands out as the most memorable?

I vividly remember one time in organic chemistry when my lab partner and I almost, accidentally, blew the classroom up. Fortunately, we lived to tell. One of many reasons I'm not an organic chemist!

What can't you live without?

My wife, and love of my life, Marisol. I'm pretty fond of my son and daughter as well.

Who/what inspires you?

I find myself always inspired by the underdog.

What are you currently reading?

I am currently reading "Honeybee Democracy" by Thomas D. Seeley and "The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma" by Bessel van der Kolk.

What/who had the greatest impact on your career path?

I think if I didn't grow up on a farm, I wouldn't be where I am today. I learned a lot of good lessons on the farm.

Where is your favorite spot on campus?

I know this sounds a bit strange but, having not spent hardly any time on campus, I'd have to say the Department of Urology.