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PAGE 3

LOCAL

Migratory beekeepers are subjects of UM prof's book

Whynott's book focuses on the wonder of bees

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People who transport thousands of bees around the country are the subject of *Following the Bloom: Across America with the Migratory Beekeepers*, by University of Massachusetts professor and author Douglas Whynott.

Whynott teaches three courses each year, in English, Comparative Literature and Agricultural Economics.

While a graduate student working towards his Master's Degree in Creative Writing at the University, Whynott worked as a state bee inspector.

It was during his time as state bee inspector that he linked up with the migratory beekeepers.

Whynott began keeping bees in 1977 and at one point he was running 17 beehives spread out in five different locations, in an attempt to get different flavors into his honey. During the past two years, however, Whynott has dropped down to just a single hive, but he plans to build up again sometime in the future.

"I tried to set the wonder of the bees next to the wonder of this huge industry," Whynott said. "There are chapters on the economics, also some chapters on the Africanized bees, also called the Killer Bees, with all kinds of different little stories packed in."

The book follows some migratory beekeepers during the 1985 season. Starting in Florida during the month of March, Whynott tracked the beekeepers up the East Coast to Northern Maine in June, out

to North Dakota in August, and then to New York in October.

Whynott ended his trip in Washington, D.C. following Glenn Gibson, a 69-year-old "honey lobbyist" who was attempting to protect the Honey Loan Program which gives price support to honey makers. Legislators like present Vice-President Dan Quayle had been trying to cut the program.

In his book Whynott also features Andy Card Jr., whose 30,000-hive collection is the largest in the country. Each bee hive holds 50,000 individual bees, Whynott said.

"He [Card] is the only guy in the country that goes from coast to coast. He takes bees all the way to California for Almond pollination," Whynott said.

In Whynott's book Card says, "We are the last real cowboys. The last people moving livestock across the United States."

The migratory beekeepers go to so much trouble to transport so many bees to so many different places, Whynott said, because the bees pollinate around \$20 billion in crops annually.

Whynott's next book, which he plans to complete this summer, is about Sammy Price, a blues piano player known as the "King of Boogie Woogie."

Whynott studied piano under Price for three years and has brought him to the University four times for residencies. The book will profile Price but will also be the story of Whynott's experiences studying the art of piano under him.

Whynott will be signing copies of his book on May 10 at the Globe Bookshop in Northampton.