



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER - JUNE 2018

THE BEE PULPIT

Dave Hill

The five hives at the farm are doing well. They represent the two packages we received on the second NIBA delivery date and the two nucs also from NIBA which we received on April 18th. Top feeding until it looked like they were not taking the sugar water. Warm weather and the appearance of nectar and pollen sources are helping the colonies to build. We added the second deep on the two nuc hives within about 2 weeks as they looked ready. We waited an extra week or so to add the deeps to the two packages. We had one hive that had overwintered at the farm but wasn't doing well. Upon inspection we determined that the hive was without a reigning queen. We found no brood and no sign of queen cells. There were very few bees in the hive.

We had one overwintered hive at the house which had a queen but there was a dearth of bees and brood. We found the queen and sent her to the

honeybee retirement home! We had one additional hive at the house which was a dead out.

We received three nucs from Ed Allen. Installed one nuc at the farm. Installed the second in the dead out at the house. And installed the third in the hive where the queen was retired. All three are doing well.

We monitored all the hives and placed a second deep on the remaining single brood hives. We set supers on all seven of the hives when the population was filling the brood chambers and it looked like it was time. So now our inventory consists of 5 farm and 2 house hives.

There are supers on all 7 hives. We use queen excluders and will be watching the hives closely for the much anticipated buildup of honey!

The May 11th meeting had good attendance. We seem to be exceeding 100 at every meeting. We

UPCOMING EVENTS

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, June 8, 7pm

McHenry County Farm Bureau
1102 McConnell Rd
Woodstock, IL 60098

McBEES FRIDAY

Friday, June 15, 7pm

McDonald's
250 S Eastwood Dr (Route 47)
Woodstock, IL 60098

NIBA OPEN HIVE/PICNIC

Saturday, July 14, 2:30pm

Phil & Caryn Konopinski
321 W Dowell Rd
McHenry, IL 60031

McHENRY COUNTY FAIR

July 31, thru August 5

McHenry County Fairgrounds
12015 Country Club Rd
Woodstock, IL 60098

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, August 10, 7pm

McHenry County Farm Bureau
1102 McConnell Rd
Woodstock, IL 60098

recognized a number of new members and beekeepers. Joe Sherb, Club VP, gave a recap of the bee package and nuc program that the club

conducted this year. With a few exceptions, the delivery and pick-ups went well. Weather was a challenge but as we all know, that pretty much comes with the territory. We had a general discussion by club members on their experiences with the installations and shared thoughts on the success or lack thereof. All in all, a very good discussion by beekeepers of all levels of experience. The discussion was lively and spirited at times! A report on the McHenry County Gardenfest and the McHenry County Ag Days was presented. The members were reminded that the Day at Petersen Farm event will be held on June 24th. The McHenry County Fair will be held July

31st thru August 5th. We are still looking for volunteers to help with the Fair. Please don't miss this great opportunity to meet fairgoers and share the fun of beekeeping with the public. The club will have its regular booth as we always have but will be adding a second area, in effect doubling our space.

We announced that the date for the NIBA Picnic/Open Hive event has been set for Saturday July 14th. This event will take the place of the regular meeting in July. So there will not be a meeting on Friday July 13th.

Tom Montavan gave a "beekeeper inspector" report. Slava Strogolov, Scientist and Founder of "Strong Microbials," gave a presentation on his work

and the product he has developed--all natural probiotics which improve the health of honey bees.

The every third Friday "McBee" gathering at the Woodstock McDonald's is going well. It's an opportunity for our local beekeepers to get together in a casual setting to ask questions and discuss items of bee interest and just have good conversation.

Our next club meeting will be on Friday June 8th at 7pm at the McHenry County Farm Bureau building in Woodstock. Bee there!

MCBEE'S FRIDAYS

MEETING AT McDONALD'S

Let's gather to chat. No agenda, just time for us to get together. Time to get to know our fellow beekeepers. Time to compare notes. Time to ask questions.

Interested? Just show up. No need for reservations.

Third Friday of the Month – **June 15, 7 pm**

McDonald's, 250 S Eastwood Dr (Route 47), Woodstock



NIBA VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Tom Allen

Hello All.

I hope your hives are abuzz with activity, and you have new bees emerging every day. We still need people to sign up for shifts at the Fair.

Many shifts still need one or two more people to fill them, and a few shifts don't have anyone signed up to be there. Part of what makes our club special is that we educate non-beekeepers about honey bees and that we actively try to get new members. These two things go hand in hand. Often talking to someone about bees piques their interest, and they join the club and get some bees. Some of you might have started just that way.

Working at the Fair booth is a way to talk to the public about bees. I feel like a nagging parent (which, by the way, I was) because I keep asking for help with the Fair. The truth is, if we can't staff the booth, we'll lose the Fair opportunity in the future. Please consider signing up for a shift.

Shifts are as follows:

Tuesday, July 31 4pm-10pm

Wednesday, August 1 through Sunday, August 5 (each day)
10am-2pm 2pm-6pm 6pm-10pm

You can email me at tallen122@yahoo.com, and include your t-shirt size.





MEMBER DONATIONS

The refreshments have been great this year! In large part, that has been due to generous and delicious donations from members.

"Thank You" for refreshment donations to the following members:

- *Paul Allen
- *Charlotte St. John
- *Cathy and Scott Davis
- *Mary Hubert
- *Theresa Udelle
- *Donna Taliaferro and John Leibinger

...and thanks to Donna T. and Sue Rancak for organizing and managing the "bar" last month.

An additional huge **"Thank You"** to these members who made raffle donations:

- *Sue Dietz (*Harvard Eggs, Feed, & Produce*)
- *Warren Spencer (*Spencer Apiary Specialties*)
- *Tom Montavon (*BL Plastic Containers*)
- *Ralph Brindise (Ralph arranged the custom hive painting with a local high school. Wooden ware donated by Sue Dietz (*Harvard Eggs, Feed, & Produce*))
- *Ron Zimmerman and Sara Wiaduck

A general thanks to **Harvard Eggs, Feed, & Produce**, **Spencer's Apiary Specialties**, and **BL Plastic Containers** for their generous and continued support. When you have some beekeeping needs, please consider supporting these member-vendors as they support us.

I think that I captured all the donations but if I have missed someone, my sincere apologies.

Like the bees we study, we accomplish more together.
John Leibinger

OPEN HIVE/PICNIC

Saturday, July 14th, starting at 2:30 pm
Phil & Caryn Konopinski's 321 W Dowell Rd, McHenry

\$5 NIBA Members, **\$10** Non-Members, Kids 5 & under are **FREE**

Please bring a side or a dessert to share.
Please bring your own chairs.

We will collect payment at our meeting on June 8.
Or you can mail a check **payable to NIBA**, to
Ralph Brindise, 517 Northlake Rd, Lakemoor, IL 60051

Thank you so much to Jerry Gudauskas, Erin Wagner, and Ron Zimmerman! These three volunteers participated in Exploration Day at the Woodview School in Grayslake on May 11. They spoke to five groups of children, each for 45 minutes, providing them with in-depth information about bees and beekeeping. Erin and Ron brought the enthusiasm, and an extra thank you to Jerry Gudauskas for taking the lead on the day and for bringing along extra supplies to give the kids hands-on experiences! Thank you!



DO YOU HAVE EXTRA TOOLS TO SPARE? PLEASE DONATE!

We are looking for hands-on tools for all ages to check out at Petersen Farm and the McHenry County Fair.

Kids LOVE to feel what it is like to be a real beekeeper! And kids just go crazy over getting to look at real comb crafted by real bees!

Please consider donating the following used items that you may no longer need by bringing them to our general meetings:



- Frames with drawn (but mostly empty) comb
- Smoker
- Hive tool
- Bee brush
- Frame grip
- Gloves

CHORES OF THE MONTH – JUNE

John Leibinger

What's happening in the hive?

The colony population should be expanding fairly rapidly and reaching its peak this month. Like May, in June the nectar flows and pollen availability are quite diverse and abundant in our area so there is great wealth of resources for colony growth. Resources/nutrition lead to growing healthy hives. You should notice that the bees are probably no longer taking sugar syrup, but rather are collecting nectar from natural sources. Remove the feeders at this transition. Large healthy colonies are also susceptible to an increased swarming urge. Make sure that there is plenty of space for colony expansion. The queen needs room to lay eggs. The workers need room for nectar and pollen storage. As you inspect frames in the brood nest, be mindful of excessive nectar storage in the brood nest. Excessive storage in this area can restrict the queen's ability to find space to lay and can lead to swarming or reduced colony growth due to lack of egg laying space. Remove and replace excessive storage frames with frames of open drawn comb or new foundation. Keep in mind that the bee population is not the only expanding population. Varroa mites will be on the increase also. Monitor their growth by doing regular mite checks (monthly sugar roll or alcohol wash). Know what you have and keep records. Keep their growth in check by utilizing a miticide, organic acids, drone comb culling, a combination of IPM methods, or a brood break. Your specific approach will be influenced by your personal goals and philosophy, but, if you have a mite problem, doing nothing is not an acceptable answer if you want your colony to thrive and survive.

For New Beekeepers just getting started this year:

Download the forms to register your bees with the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Insects/Bees/Documents/beekeep.pdf> (Ctrl+Click link)

Finish assembling and painting additional equipment, if you have not already done it. You should be on a second deep brood box (or third or fourth if using medium brood boxes) now or very soon. Let's hope for the best and have honey supers built and ready to install later in June.

Feed your Bees. Feed them until they stop taking the supplemental feed. At some point in the month, they will likely switch over to entirely natural nectar sources at which point you can remove the feeders.

Spend time observing your bees. This is one of the reasons you took up this hobby. Observe their comings and goings. Are they bringing in pollen? What color? What is the source? (See Pollen Identification Chart link in General Info section below).

Get a Mentor from the Bee Club. Ask for help and guidance.

For All Beekeepers, it is time to:

Maintain the space around your hive(s). Your bees work hard at thermoregulation of the hive. Help them out. Trim weeds and grass to allow maximum air flow as the temperatures rise. Maintaining a clear flight path to the hive also increases their foraging efficiency.

Make sure the bees have a water source as we move into the heat of summer. Bees collect water to help cool the hive as part of their thermoregulation efforts.

Monitor for Varroa Mites monthly. (See General Info section below for references to mite checking procedures)

Treat for Varroa Mites.

Make sure that you keep records. This is a very important element of the learning process...whether you are a first year beekeeper or a forty year beekeeper....you should always be learning something. Record inspection dates, time and temp and weather conditions, quantity of bees, bee behaviors, signs indicating the presence of the queen (eggs, young larvae, actual sighting), number of frames of brood and stores, brood pattern and frame/comb condition, available laying space, observations of signs of swarm preparation, pollen coming in (color, type if possible), drone production, Varroa Mite count, presence of Small Hive Beetle or other pests, and a number of other issues. Record anything else that is outside of 'normal' once you learn what 'normal' is. Take notes in the bee yard. You will be surprised at how easy it is to get confused over what was observed and which hive it was observed in if you wait to record info after the fact. Here is an example of one of many checklists that can be found in a quick Google search. Not necessarily the best...just an example.

Monitor the hives for swarming signs. Probably not a big problem for new beekeepers that started on new foundation or foundationless, but for the rest, keep your eyes peeled for telltale queen cups/cells at the bottom of the frames. Do they have eggs or larvae in them? If they do, the swarm is coming....if not, keep watching and provide additional space immediately.

Get your swarm traps out! Anybody interested in getting **FREE BEES?** This is the time of year to take advantage of the natural biological rhythms of the hive. Overwintered colonies are highly likely to swarm. Why not be an opportunist and capture a colony that otherwise will find a hole in a tree? It is fun, challenging, and **IMMENSELY EXCITING** when you find bees in your trap. Additionally, these are often colonies that have overwintered....Northern Illinois proven stock capable of handling our winter....wouldn't you want to add some of that quality to your apiary? Here is a swarm trapping website...Jason is 'the man' when it comes to swarm trapping. He has lots of advice and encouragement on swarm trapping along with free plans for building swarm traps. Check it out.

[Swarm Trapping & Bait Hives by Jason Bruns ...](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Assemble some gear to be prepared to catch a swarm hanging in a tree, on a fence, or somewhere else they aren't wanted! Be ready in case a friend calls and says "Get here quick, my neighbor is freaking out! There is a bunch of bees hanging on my neighbor's swing set and we don't know what to do!"

Note: Swarm trapping and swarm 'catching' are two different things. Swarm trapping involves putting out 'bait hives' for bees to find and inhabit (and then join your apiary). Swarm catching involves capturing a swarm from a tree, bush, fence, or any of a hundred other areas that an initial swarm may land at shortly after exiting the hive and while waiting for the scout bees to find a new home. Usually this is the result of a panic phone call you receive from someone who knows you are a beekeeper. This can be an **INTENSELY EXCITING** activity.

Get your blood flowing! Capture or Trap a Swarm!



General Info

Download the forms to register your bees with the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Insects/Bees/Documents/beekeep.pdf> (Ctrl+Click link)

Pollen identification chart:

https://www.nsbka.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=681&Itemid=1092&utm_content=bufferdac80&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer (Ctrl+Click link)

[Hive Inspection Checklist](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Sugar Roll Method: [varroa mite monitoring - The Sand Hill](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Alcohol Wash Method: [Alcohol Wash for Mite Control - YouTube](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

IT WAS A FOOLISH MOVE...

Larry Kregel

... but I did it. As a result, when I returned after being gone for 10 days I found two hives with massive amounts of eggs and larva in their honey supers. Yes, the queen was on top of the excluder.



Some of the commercial honey producers don't use queen excluders. They look at them as being more work and accept the brood in the honey super as normal. They have other ways of dealing with this problem. But for me... I just don't want brood in my extracting supers. I use queen excluders, but sometimes...

After finding the wayward brood, I looked for the queen. Because I had marked her, she was an easy find. I carry a queen clip in my tool box and this was a time I was glad for that. I quickly caged her in the clip, pulled the super off and released her in the lower brood boxes. She likely has lots of room to lay down there where the brood has been emerging during her absence.

I replaced the queen excluder and the super... thinking I would just let the brood emerge and eventually have that space for honey storage. Problem solved. I went home.



That night, sitting in my rocking chair, I mentally played back that day's beeyard adventure. But in a creative flash I realized this was really an opportunity I had not recognized. The next day I returned to these two hives, removed the offending honey super and replaced it with an empty super. On top of that super I place a second queen excluder followed by the brood-filled super and then closed the hive up.

I stayed with the bees for a bit longer and let them in on my plan... my hope. (I often talk to my bees not knowing if they are really listening.) The nurse bees with the brood in the top super are a long ways from the queen and her pheromone. If my plan works, they will consider themselves queenless and be invigorated by the need for creating an emergency queen. There is enough young brood up there to make a good queen(s). If all goes well, I will have two spare queens in a couple of weeks.

If I want more than two queens and if each colony creates a number of queen cells (which they generally do), I could make up mating nucs for each cell. I would have queens to spare. I will have to wait and see. Within a week, I will check to see if they understand my plan and are cooperating. I am hoping to find queen cells.

A third option... run these as two queen colonies. But what would I do with all that honey? What a nice problem to have.

It is simply a case of making lemonade with lemons that are dropped in one's lap... honey lemonade, that is. It feels good.



2018 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President – Dave Hill
daveahill95@gmail.com
Vice President – Joe Scherb
sbscherb@gmail.com
Treasurer – Ralph Brindise
rbrindise@att.net
Secretary – Dan Rank
dtrank@sbcglobal.net
Director – Tom Allen
tallen122@yahoo.com
Director – Rebekkah Burtcher
rebekkahcross@yahoo.com
Director – Marianne Hill
mariannehill1213@gmail.com
Director – John Leibinger
jleibinger@aol.com

Program Chair – Larry Krengel
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Website and Newsletter Submissions

www.nibainfo.org – The Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association website. A wealth of information is available. Contact board members via email, download the membership form, access copies of the newsletter. Terri is asking for your pictures, stories, etc. to have them highlighted on the web page! reevestherese@att.net

This is YOUR newsletter. Please feel free to contribute. Or let us know if you have any topics you'd like to see covered. newsletter@nibainfo.org

Membership Has Its Benefits!

- By Randy Mead

Did you know that your membership in NIBA includes the opportunity to rent a club honey extractor? We have two to choose from. Rental is \$10 for a 3 day rental. \$20 (\$10 for rental and \$10 deposit) is due when you pick up the extractor.

Schedule a pick up time, extract your honey and return the equipment in 3 days. The \$10 deposit will be returned if the extractor is clean.

To reserve a date, contact Randy at rmeadtoys@gmail.com.

Are you on Facebook? So are we!

Search for Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association. It's a closed group, so you need to request to join—but we're happy to approve your request.

We're an active and knowledgeable group. We've had LOTS of pictures of your hives! Also many conversations about queenless hives—more than I would have imagined.

Get in on the conversation. Join the fun today!