



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2018

THE BEE PULPIT

Dave Hill

Well the weather continues to toss us up and down with temperatures not conducive to an evaluation of hive health.

Last Tuesday however, the daytime temp spiked to the high 50's, and Marianne and I took a look. The two hives at the house were alive, and there was evidence that they had been eating the candy board. The cluster seemed to be on the top frames of the upper deep body. There was a fair amount of activity at that level. We



pulled the candy board up a bit to get a look at the top of the frames but did not go into the hive any further. We placed two pollen patties on both hives. There were a few dead bees on the candy board but not many on the frames. We removed the entrance reducer and used a hive tool to remove a fair

amount of dead bees from the bottom. Made quite a pile of bees on the ground in front of the hive. Unfortunate but the casualty of winter I guess.

We checked out the six hives on the farm. Quickly realized that the situation was not going to be as positive as what we found at the house. We determined that there were five "dead outs". The one remaining hive was alive but did not show the strength that the ones at the house had. The sugar board had bees on it but it did not look like the bees had consumed much, if any. There was activity however, and the hope is that the colony has enough stores in the deeps and has not needed to move up to the sugar board. We cleaned out the dead bees in the bottom and put everything back.

We loaded the five dead out hives as complete units into the truck and took them home. We'll store the sugar boards and clean up the frames and the rest of

UPCOMING EVENTS

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, March 9, 7pm

McHenry County Farm Bureau
1102 McConnell Rd
Woodstock, IL 60098

GARDENFEST

Saturday, April 7

7:30 am – 4 pm

Luecht Conference Center
McHenry County College

AG. EXPO

April 10-11-12

9:15 am – 2 pm

McHenry County Fairgrounds
11900 Country Club Rd
Woodstock, IL 60098

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, April 13, 7pm

McHenry County Farm Bureau
1102 McConnell Rd
Woodstock, IL 60098

the equipment a bit and get them ready for new occupants in April. We have not examined them to see what might have happened to the colonies



but will take on that task another day. We hope that the sugar boards and pollen patties will be enough to get the three hives through the last



remaining winter days and that they'll be ok when the weather warms.

If time allows between now and the March meeting, we might take a few frames from the dead outs and bring them to the meeting so we can all take a look at them together.

If you recall, on February 9th, the weather prognosticators were predicting a storm and heavy snowfall to hit us on Thursday night, prior to and through our scheduled club meeting on Friday. Schools were canceled in advance of the expected weather. We considered rescheduling the meeting, and if that wouldn't work to cancel it altogether. I caused a bit of miscommunication as I was working on my options to get home from an out-of-town business meeting in advance of the weather. Alternative dates were not available at the Farm Bureau. The weather seemed to be clearing, so by noon on Friday we notified the membership

that the meeting was on! We decided to let members decide if it would be prudent to travel to Woodstock and to have the meeting with whoever got there.

The turnout was much larger than any of us expected and the meeting was good. Marcin Matelski, our friend from the Garfield Park Conservatory, announced the upcoming 9th Annual Bee Forum: Honey Bee Nutrition, which will be held on **March 25th from 10 am to 4pm in Chicago**. The topic will cover "What are your bees eating and what's eating your bees?" Information and registration can be obtained at <https://garfieldconservatory.org/event/9th-annual-bee-forum-honey-bee-nutrition/>

We had a very lively discussion getting winter updates from members



about their mid-winter experiences and inspection reports. Reports of high losses were pretty much the norm. A number of new beekeepers had many questions and a lively discussion was enjoyed by all. Frank Moriarty, President of the Lake County Beekeepers,

invited members to a "NewBeez" Session at the Belli Farm on Saturday, February 17th. He made himself available for discussion about the event after the meeting was over. We discussed the club events coming up, had refreshments and enjoyed the raffle as always. Our "Bee Bio" featured Warren Spencer. Warren detailed in humorous detail his experience years ago in "not" keeping bees and how he got involved later (and since he joined NIBA) several years ago in the crafting of beekeeping woodenware and how that has grown steadily. He is a faithful member of the club and donates regularly to the club raffles and supports the club when called upon. He announced that this year he will begin a new relationship with the honey bee, as he will be purchasing his first package and diving into the hobby as a beekeeper as well. We all thank his wife, Marianne, for supporting him (giving him permission) to start this new phase in life for Warren!

Our next club meeting will be on Friday March 9th at 7pm at the McHenry County Farm Bureau building in Woodstock. We'll have a discussion on installing packages, and it will be vendor day. See you there!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Our own Jerry Gudauskas received 2nd place in the Black Jar Honey Tasting contest at the Florida State Fair in Tampa. Last year's winner took 1st again. He worked 5 days at the Florida State Beekeepers Association booth. Way to go, Jerry!



NIBA 2018 PACKAGE BEE ORDERS

Joe Scherb

As a benefit of membership, we are pleased to be able to offer 3-lb packages of honey bees for \$120 and nucs for \$145. Please download the package-bee order form, follow the instructions on the form, and bring it to the March 9th meeting.

All orders must be received prior to March 15th, and packages are only available to members. This year's membership form is below. Please contact Joe Scherb with any questions (sbscherb@gmail.com or 815-861-5210).



GARDENFEST

Tom Allen

Hello All! I'm sure this warmer weather has got you thinking about Spring, which is when NIBA gets busy with our outreach opportunities. We don't have any volunteer opportunities in the month of March, but I wanted to get you thinking of our Gardenfest event. Garderfest is held at McHenry County College on Saturday April 7th. NIBA will have a booth set up to talk to attendees and sell honey between several sessions on gardening-related topics. There are morning and afternoon opportunities. (When there is a session going on, no one will be browsing the booths.) If you're interested in gardening and will be there, please feel free to stop by our booth to help answer questions from attendees between sessions.

There are two shifts needed, 6:30-11:00 and 12:00-4:00-ish. Early shift needs to be there to set up our booth at 6:30 am and have it completed by 7:30. If you're up early but are not available for the rest of the day, maybe that's for you. We also need help breaking down the booth at 4:00 pm, so if you're available then, please let us know.

There will be a signup sheet at our next meeting; please sign up if you've got some time to share on the Club's behalf.

SEMINAR OPPORTUNITY

Saturday, March 17, 8:30am-2:00pm

Location: Milton High School Auditorium, 114 W High Street, Milton, WI

Host Club: Rock County Beekeepers

Speakers/Agenda:

9:00am Awards and Recognition

9:30am-12pm Marla Spivak, PhD., Director of the University of Minnesota Bee Lab

Dr. Spivak will be speaking about exciting honey bee research taking place at the University of Minnesota Bee Lab

12pm-12:45pm Lunch

Hot dogs and chips provided by a local group at a reasonable cost

12:45-1:30pm Dan Ziehli, Southern Wisconsin Apiary Inspector

1:30-2:00pm Open Discussion



There is no charge for this seminar, and no reservation is necessary.

Contact Tim Wilbanks 319-321-2494.



MEMBER DONATIONS

A huge "Thank You" for raffle and/or refreshment donations to the following members:

Ron and Carolyn Besserud

Paul Allen

Sue Dietz (Harvard Egg and Feeds)

Linda and Mike Haswell

Donna Taliaferro and John Leibinger

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

VENDOR DAY

March 9 General Meeting

This month's club meeting will feature three local beekeeping-related vendors.

We are happy to have Warren Spencer's Apiary Specialties, Sue Dietz from Harvard Eggs & Feed, and Tom Montavon with BL Plastic Containers at the meeting. They will be on hand to display their products.

Warren is a long-time member of the club and has transformed a talent for woodworking into a beekeeper-friendly business. He has and continues to supply products to local beekeepers. He constantly strives to make improvements in his equipment and welcomes suggestions and feedback.

Sue is an active longtime member of the club. She carries a full line of beekeeping supplies and represents Brushy Mountain Bee Farm products. If she doesn't have what you need, she will be happy to order it.

Tom has been a member of NIBA for many years. He is the Bee Inspector for the Northwestern District for the State of Illinois. He is an experienced beekeeper and a great resource to the club. He carries a full line of plastic honey containers.

Warren, Sue and Tom have been very generous to the club by donating items on a regular basis for our raffles. We are thankful for their willingness to support the club in this way.

Please take time to look at their products at the meeting.



LET'S TRY SOMETHING

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 – First one, **March 16, 7 pm**

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



WHY AREN'T THERE MORE WOMEN IN BEEKEEPING?

Author: Kathy Keatley Garvey

Published on February 23, 2018

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 31 percent of all American farmers are women, contributing \$12.9 billion to the agricultural economy, says Amina Harris, director of the UC Davis Honey and Pollination Center and coordinator of the fourth annual UC Davis Bee Symposium, set for Saturday March 3 in the UC Davis Conference Center. Quoting from an article in *Bee Culture* magazine: "In national beekeeping groups women represented less than a third of leadership positions."

Statistics from *Bee Culture* also indicate that of the

- national/regional beekeeping/pollinator groups: 30.4 percent are women
- state beekeeping associations: 30 percent are women
- local beekeeping clubs: 42 percent are women

Beekeeper Sharon Schmidt of Phoenix, OR, who founded the Cascade Girl Organization-Oregon Honey Festival, will shed light on the subject during the Bee Symposium's lightning round on "Women in Beekeeping."



She'll focus on "Women in Beekeeping: Past Accomplishments and Future Pathways." "I believe we are observing a phenomena among women in which it appears that we are beginning to value ourselves and our skills and becoming more willing to learn from each other," Schmidt says.

Schmidt, who maintains bee hives in Phoenix, at a winery in Ashland, and a nursery in Central Point, traces her interest in bees to her beekeeper grandmother. "And my father passed my love of bees and probably more importantly—my understanding of them—along to me. I come from a long line of Wisconsin farmer-cheese makers."

The rest of this article and more information on the UC Davis Bee Symposium can be found here:

<http://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=26429>

AG EXPO AND EXPLORATION DAY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Rebekkah Burtcher

Hello, fellow NIBA members! We have two very different community events coming up in the next few months that involve working with children. Ag Expo in April is very fast-paced for a couple of hours, reaches 3rd and 4th graders, and involves talking to several hundred children. In contrast, Exploration Day in May is an all-day event that involves much longer times with smaller groups of kindergarten to 4th-grade children, and really allows NIBA members to give more in-depth information and hands-on demonstration. Please contact me at rebekkahcross@yahoo.com to sign up to be a volunteer, or look for the sign up sheet at the meeting.

Ag Expo at the McHenry County Fairgrounds
April 10, 11, & 12, 9:15am-2:00pm
Volunteer shifts 9:00am-11:30am
 11:30am-2:00pm

Exploration Day at Woodview School, Grayslake
May 11, times not yet determined
Kindergarten through 4th grade



DO YOU HAVE EXTRA TOOLS TO SPARE? PLEASE DONATE!

We are looking for hands-on tools for the children to pass around at Ag Expo and Exploration Day, and 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

Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association - (NIBA)
2018 Application for Membership
Affiliated with the Illinois State Beekeepers Association (ISBA)

Check One: ___Renewal Membership ___New Membership

Check One: ___Individual Membership - \$20 ___Family membership - \$30
(Includes Single Membership in the Illinois State Beekeepers Association
Additional ISBA memberships, \$10 each)

The NIBA membership expires December 31

Name(s):

Address:

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email (if family membership, include all emails. Newsletter will be sent to all emails):

Add \$5.00 for handling if you would like a paper copy of the newsletter mailed.

___I would like to order a NIBA name tag(s) \$12 each.

Name tag(s) should read: _____

Please Complete The Following:

I have been a NIBA Member since _____ (year). I plan to have _____ colonies/hives this season.

I have been a Beekeeper for about _____ years.

Check all that apply: ___I sell Honey ___Willing to Coach/Mentor ___Swarm Catcher
___Willing to remove Bees from buildings

Personal Skills I Would Be Willing to Donate to NIBA (i.e. Beekeeping Experience, Accounting, Webmaster, Event Planning, Community Education, Carpentry, Legal, Business Management, Retail Knowledge, Any Other, etc.)

Skills:

Print and complete this form. Mail it with a check payable to **Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association** to:
NIBA Membership, c/o Ralph Brindise, 517 Northlake Road, Lakemoor, IL 60051

CHORES OF THE MONTH - MARCH

John Liebing

Please Review February Chores List.

Most apply to March also, but with an increased sense of urgency.

What's happening in the hive?

The bees have surely started raising brood by now. There won't be much early in the month, but as the month passes and if we get some warm weather, the pace of egg laying will pick up. The bees will need pollen (protein) to feed the brood and honey (carbohydrates) to energize the bees to forage and to produce heat to keep the brood warm. Early pollen sources will become available, but the weather must be favorable for the bees to forage.

For Beekeepers with live overwintering colonies, it is time to:

Continue to monitor the food stores available to your colonies. Checking the weight of hive by lifting/tilting from the rear may give you a sense of stores available. Unlike the super cold weather temperatures the bees have come through, warmer temps allow the cluster to relocate to available stores within the hive... if they are there. If not, supplement with sugar-based feed, e.g. dry sugar, sugar bricks, winter patties, fondant, candy board, etc., to help them through the remaining winter. Unless we have unseasonably warm day and night temperatures, it still is a bit early to transition to liquid feed. Providing pollen, pollen substitute, or pollen patties will provide needed protein for brood development.

Check for activity at the hive on warmer days. You should start seeing activity on warm days. Bees will be taking cleansing flights and some will even be out foraging. If things are going really well, you may even see some orientation flights by young bees. You may see some undertaker bees (they are the stiffer looking bees with dark coats) dragging dead bees from the hive. Help them out by reaching into the entrance with a tool and scraping out some of the bodies. Try not to be too alarmed by the number of dead bees removed; your colony is still alive. Alternately, be alarmed...but it is too late to do anything about it now. Research, read, and ask others about how you might do things differently to improve your results next year. Keep in mind, though, your colony is still alive...have a cookie and enjoy the moment.

Replace reducers and mouse guards afterwards. As the temperature warms up later in the month, remove hive wraps you may have installed last fall.

Order any additional colonies of bees you want for 2018...pronto.....time is running out!

For New Beekeepers just getting started this year:

Continue to Read, Study, and Learn...Before you know it, Bee Arrival Day will be upon us! Books, Periodicals, Classes, Club Meetings, Internet (yes, that also means YouTube videos...they range from poor to great...reading, attending classes and club meetings and asking questions will help you learn which are good and which are not). Listen to some Podcasts. All of these will help. Before you know it, Bee Arrival Day will be upon us!

Get a Mentor from the Bee Club. The first step is to ask for help. There will be willing members.

Get a Mentor from the Bee Club...did I already say that? It bears repeating. **Get a Mentor from the Bee Club.**

Order your equipment, tools, and protective clothing. See February Chores.

Your Bees should be ordered by now. If not, you need to scramble. See February Chores for additional details.

Assemble and paint your equipment. No time to waste now. Bee Day will arrive before you know it. It's fun, and you can be creative with your painting...don't be creative on the equipment assembly though. Follow instructions. The bees will appreciate it.

Prepare your apiary location. Determine what you will use as hive stands. Make sure that the platform is reasonably level. Consider your mowing/trimming needs for the summer, and position hives accordingly.

For Beekeepers with dead overwintered colonies, it is time to:

Breakdown the dead-outs. Pick a pleasant day and start the cleanup process...Doing it early, before much warmth and moisture occurs, will make an unpleasant job less unpleasant and much less smelly. Don't just clean things up. See if you can determine what caused the problem. There is a high likelihood of a mite-related problem if you did not rigorously pursue mite load reduction in a timely fashion. Look for signs. Take some pictures at several different angles. Consider bringing a frame or two (brood frames) to the next club meeting and have a group-think forensic survey of the frame(s). We may or may not learn something, but we will find it interesting, I'm sure.

Replace old frames or combs that have too many years on them. Commit to making this an annual effort by replacing at least 20% annually (oldest first). That will keep you from having any combs older than 5 years.

For All Beekeepers, it is time to:

Take inventory.

A) Equipment/Supplies inventory

Make a list of what your equipment, tools, and supplies. Do you need to replace frames or foundation (a honeycomb replacement program should be part of your annual routine)? Is your equipment in good order? Is your wooden-ware due for a paint job? Are your tools in good shape? How about your protective clothing? How about supplies, e.g., feed/nutrition supplements, pest/parasite controls, etc. Is your current equipment sufficient to help you achieve your goals for this year (see B. below)?

B) Goals inventory....this is a very important issue for beekeepers, though probably not thought about enough.

What do you want to accomplish this year in beekeeping? You may have multiple goals. What are your priorities of these goals? Here are some thoughts:

- Do better than the state average honey yield per colony. More simply, increase my honey yield over last year.
- Successfully overwinter my bees.
- Move closer to achieving sustainable beekeeping (not having to buy new packages every year).
- Learn to create and use nucleus colonies to overwinter more colonies.
- Learn to raise my own queens.
- Learn to produce comb honey, e.g., Ross Rounds, cut comb honey, chunk honey, section boxes.
- Learn to produce Creamed Honey.
- Learn to make Mead (like a Viking!...or a Monk for those with a more introspective demeanor)
- Learn how to process and use beeswax. Make candles, lip balms, hand creams, soaps.
- Are you interested in encaustic painting? Are you interested in creating wax art?

Do you need to re-evaluate your equipment to be sure you have what you need to achieve your goals (see A. above)?

If you have some of these interests, raise the issue at a club meeting and propose having a sub-group session to explore the subject.

C. Bee Inventory

- How many colonies do you want to start this year? How many do you have that will overwinter? Are you sure??
- A live hive in early March is a **hopefully** live hive in April....we still have another tough month to go....don't be caught bee-less in April.
- Order as early as possible to reserve your bees. Packages or Nucs? Decisions, decisions.....

I'll leave you with this:

**It is now March.
Get ahead of your season.
Plan, Read, Study, Learn.
Now is the time!
Bee Arrival Day is coming soon!**



SPRING BEE THOUGHTS

Larry Kregel

Oh, Oh.... spring is here, and I have not got my hives ready for the new arrivals. I better get going.

Some beekeepers are anxious to put bees into their deadout hives, but patience might be wise. Bees are available from some sources before the end of March, but forage could be a month away then.

In our area, pollen is available before nectar. Pollen might be available almost any time. We will start seeing the buds on the maples and willows getting fat. But, bees need nectar - carbohydrates - to build new comb and renovate old comb. If I yield to the urge to install early, I will need to feed continuously and hope for weather to be warm enough for the bees to move around in the hive. I do wonder how much installing early helps the bees and improves my honey crop.... and how much it just makes the beekeeper feel useful.



I have attached two photos, both sent to me on the Beeline. One is of a green-eyed drone. I don't think this picture was shot this year. Drones are not present in most hives yet. Looks strange and spooky, but it is not an unusual mutation. Because drones are haploid (those of you who took Beekeeping 101 with me know about that), it is more likely that a mutation will show physically in the drones.

The other was shot this spring and shows what was found in a winter deadout - wax moths. Bummer! The frames that are badly affected by wax moths are not attractive to bees. It is best to remove and replace them. If a keeper wishes, it is possible to just replace wax foundation saving the



wood frame. If the comb is on plastic, it can be scraped clean. The trick is to remove as much of the moth smell as possible so the bees will not be repelled.

Interest in keeping bees continues to grow. 30 years ago, I was considered weird because I kept bees. Now you can find a beekeeper nearby almost wherever you live. That is good, and bad. I like the company, but we need to have the new members of our ranks be good and insightful beekeepers.

With the threat from the varroa mite, we have to be a member of the bee team in our colonies. As much as we wish for it, the bees cannot handle the varroa without our help. We are the member of the team that can deal better with the mites.

Some well-meaning individuals enter the ranks of beekeepers hoping that just keeping bees will help the world. Some are misled into joining the "treatment-free" club. Intentions are good, results are not. These beekeeping neighbors end up with "mite bombs," colonies weakened by mite infestation that are robbed out by stronger colonies. The mites in the dying colony hitch rides on the robber bees and migrate to the neighboring hives. Each of us is affected by the beekeeping habits of our neighboring keepers.

In my father's generation, there were "bee-havers," the name given to the beekeepers who installed bees in the spring and did nothing until they harvested honey in the fall. There was no intervention needed because there were no mites. Those may (or may not) have been the good times, but they do not exist today. Those bee-havers now harm all the bees in the neighborhood.

There are two meetings in Southern Illinois this summer - in June the ISBA has their meeting in Edwardsville (<http://www.ilsba.com/>) - in July the Heartland Apicultural Society meets near St. Louis (<http://www.heartlandbees.org/2018/01/washington-university-st-louis-mo>).

Bee good!

HIVES FOR SALE

A beekeeper in Lake Forest has hives for sale.

Enough 8-frame equipment for 12 hives. All newer cypress medium-depth supers. One-piece plastic frames. Heavy with honey. Some new equipment. Selling due to injury. They are located in Lake Forest, IL.

Contact Chris Cudlip at 847-234-2417 or e-mail c.cudlip@comcast.net.

Find Us on Facebook

If you are on Facebook, join our NIBA Facebook group where you can chat with your fellow club members between meetings. Have a question? A tip to share? Picture of your bees and hives? Share them with our group. Click "JOIN" and we will approve your request.

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 your membership in NIBA includes rental of our club honey extractor? For the low cost of \$10 a year, you can borrow an extractor.

Schedule a pick up time, extract your honey and return the cleaned equipment within 3 days. To reserve a date, contact Randy at rmeadtoys@gmail.com.

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