



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER - APRIL 2018

THE BEE PULPIT

Dave Hill

Why are we surprised that this spring just can't get started? Temperatures are just not warming up. When we last checked, the three hives that were alive out of the eight that we had going into winter seemed to be ok. We took a quick peek at them and saw signs that the sugar boards and pollen patties were being worked on. That's a good sign. Did not go deeper into the hives because the temperature was just not high enough.

The five dead-outs have not been cleaned up yet but we'll get to that on a good day. We still have a bit of work to do before our bees arrive. Marianne and I ordered two packages and two nucs for the April delivery. The first (early) club package delivery went well, but I'll leave the recap to Joe.

We're thinking about moving the hives at the farm to another location (or locations). We've had them at the same location since we started, but Damon (our son) and

Marianne would like to try a different location. So they are going to scout out a couple of new locations and, we'll see how that works this year.

We have never worked with nucs but are excited about the possibility. We are considering doing a split with the nucs as well.

All in all, we are getting anxious for spring to arrive and for the beekeeping experience to begin anew!

The regular meeting held on March 9th was well attended. There were around 100 at the meeting. Tom Montavan gave a bee inspector's report. Good discussion followed. We reviewed the upcoming club events. The next event is Gardenfest at MCC on April 7th. McHenry County Ag Days on April 10, 11, 12 will follow. Other events later in the year include Peterson Farm in June, the McHenry County Fair in August, and the MCC Green Expo in November.

UPCOMING EVENTS

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, April 13, 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

McBEES FRIDAY

Friday, April 20, 7pm
McDonald's
250 S Eastwood Dr (Route 47)
Woodstock, IL 60098

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

Bartlett Nature Center
James "Pate" Philip State Park
2054 West Stearns Rd
Bartlett, IL 60103

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, May 11, 7pm
McHenry County Farm Bureau
1102 McConnell Rd
Woodstock, IL 60098

Marcin Matelski reminded the members about the 9th Annual Bee Forum at the Garfield Park Conservancy in Chicago on March 25th. We recognized a number of "newbees" to the meeting. It's good to know that our numbers continue to grow.

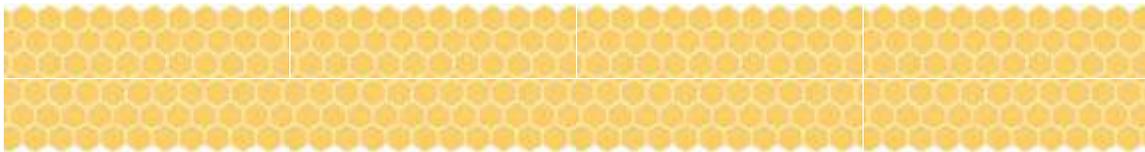
We announced that the club will be doing a "McBee" informal meeting (forum) at the McDonald's in Woodstock on the third Friday of each month. We'll

see how it works, but the idea is to have an informal setting where club members can come together to chat about the hobby. An opportunity to share stories and ask questions.

The rest of the meeting was spent talking about bee packages and nucs. Larry presented two videos on installation, and it was followed by a spirited discussion about the subject. A dead-out deep

body was brought to the meeting, and Larry went through the frames with members trying to determine what might have happened. Refreshments and the regular raffle followed.

Our next club meeting will be on Friday, April 13th at 7pm at the McHenry County Farm Bureau building in Woodstock. Bee there or bee square!



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 – **April 20, 7 pm**

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



NIBA VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Tom Allen

We likely will have had the Gardenfest event on April 7th at McHenry County College by the time you read this. I'll give a detailed explanation of how things went at our April 13th meeting. (However, if you're reading this prior to April 7th and have the time, please feel free to meet us at McHenry County College to help run our table.)

I would like everyone to start thinking about volunteering for this year's McHenry County Fair. This is our largest event of the year, and we need all hands on deck. This year the fair dates are Tuesday, July 31st through Sunday, August 5th. We are working on having two booths this year. This will give us the ability to have additional hands-on displays for all the curious people. We will need more volunteers than we've had in the past. You do not have to be a 15-year beekeeper. Quite the opposite, we just need passionate beekeepers to answer questions from the general public. Volunteers receive a NIBA t-shirt, which will need to be ordered early, so look at your calendar and have in mind when you'd like to work a shift or two. I'll post a list of shift days and times at our May meeting. If you already know when you're available, send me a message, so I can put you on the schedule.

We may be asked to help Farm & Fleet field questions when they pass out their bees. The Farm & Fleet website says bee

delivery will be Saturday, April 28th from 9am-noon in Woodstock. I'm waiting to hear back from our contact for confirmation.

I was contacted by someone from the Bartlett Nature Center about being present at their Earth Day program from noon-4pm on April 21st. They would really appreciate our help. They've reached out to their local club, but haven't gotten a response from them. If anyone lives down that way and/or is interested, please let me know.



I appreciate the kind words from Larry Kregel and Joe Sherb reminding all of us that the club sustains itself through its volunteers. I've been with a lot of volunteer organizations, and a saying used routinely is that you have 10% of the people doing 90% of the work. I think we can bust that stereotype. We have so many people passionate about bees, and talking to the public at events helps pique more people's interest in bees.



MEMBER DONATIONS

A lip smackin' **Thank You** for refreshment donations to the following members:

- * Ron and Carolyn Besserud
- * Ralph Brindise
- * Cathy and Scott Davis
- * Charlotte St. John
- * Mike Iwanicki
- * Jan and Joe Magyar

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

- * Sue Dietz (**Harvard Eggs and Feed**)
- * Tom Montavon (**BL Plastic Containers**)
- * Ralph Brindise (Ralph arranged the custom hive painting with a local high school. Wooden ware donated by Sue Dietz of **Harvard Eggs and Feed.**)
- * Linda and Mike Haswell
- * There was an unidentified member who donated a bee/hat combination that will be used in this coming month's raffle. Thank You!

A couple of additional **Thanks!**

- * Mike Crouse was kind enough to contact Bayer and request a donation of pollinator flower seed packets. Bayer donated over 2,000 seed packets that NIBA can use as 'take aways' for the children attending AG Expo and other events. Thank you to Mike Crouse and to Bayer!
- * Warren Spencer (**Spencer's Apiary Specialties**) has provided NIBA with a hive body and a super with cut-away sections so that we can have an educational display hive that allows a view of the inner parts of a typical hive set-up. We will use this display in our public and school outreach programs.
- * Thanks to Donna Taliaferro and Sue Rancak for setting up last months raffle in my absence, Thanks also to Tom Allen, Dale Dray, and Frank Moriarty for handling the ticket sales....and of course, as always, thanks to Sydney Burtcher for picking out the winners!

A general thanks to **Harvard Eggs and Feed**, **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.

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

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 for Exploration Day 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

CHORES OF THE MONTH - APRIL - AND SO IT BEGINS

John Liebing

What's happening in the hive?

Overwintered colonies should be well on their way to raising brood for the coming year. On warm days, particularly in the second half of the month, the bees should be out foraging pollen from some early flowering plants and trees. Though temperatures may be a bit low to do a deep dive inspection, the influx of pollen is a good sign that the colony is raising brood. The brood will require warmth so the bees will be consuming more carbohydrates (honey or sugar syrup) for the energy they will require to produce the heat needed to raise their brood.

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

Feed. Sugar syrup at 1:1 ratio (2 lbs sugar/1 qt water) is conventional this time of year. A small amount of heat will dissolve the sugar quickly. Allow to cool before feeding to bees.

Pollen, pollen substitute, pollen patties. These supplemental protein sources may help the colony raise brood until natural pollen sources become more abundant.

Rotate Hive Bodies. If your bees have moved into the top box, consider rotating the top box to the bottom. The upside to this is that it provides space for the colony to expand upwards and may reduce or delay the swarming urge. The downside is that you may be dividing the brood nest if it spans both boxes. If this situation exists, addition of a third box above (without rotating the bottom two) may be a better alternative.

Frame Rotation. As temps warm up, consider removing some old frames (w/o brood) and replace with new foundation as part of an annual comb renewal program. Place new foundation frames at the outer positions in the hive.

Remove Winter Wrappings as the weather warms.

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 your equipment. If you have not done this already, **Get On It!** Let's not procrastinate, the bees will not always be so forgiving. 😊

Set up your Equipment in your Apiary. Have everything in place except maybe the frames and foundation. To minimize the possibility of damage, you may want to keep them inside until the day that you get your bees. Put them in place just before going to pick up the bees. Mix your sugar syrup before picking up your bees. Try to minimize your last minute scrambling. The process will go more smoothly.

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

Ready or not, here it comes! No worries. You have done your homework. You have Read, Studied, and Learned. You have been at the club meetings and have seen how to install your package. **Again, No worries.**

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

Break down and clean out the dead-outs. It can be a dirty job as well as a disheartening one. Don't procrastinate.

Depending on the cause of death of your colony, you may want/need to replace all your frames/combs. Viruses die with your colony. Mites do also, so you don't have a worry that either of these will carry forward. *If you had a bacterial foulbrood disease that killed your colony, the problem could carry forward.* This would not be typical, so don't rush to this conclusion. Seek an experienced beekeeper or apiary inspector for some advice.

Frame Rotation. Consider removing some older and/or condition-challenged frames and replace with new foundation as part of an annual comb renewal program. Place new foundation frames at the outer positions in the hive.

Mix up your sugar syrup. Have this done prior to bee pickup.

For All Beekeepers, it is time to:

Review package installation procedures if you are getting new bee packages.

Prepare your feed.

Review your Beekeeping Goals for 2018 and act accordingly. See earlier month's chores list.

It is April. Welcome to the 2018 Beekeeping Season!



JUST THINKING OUT LOUD

Larry Krengel

Ok, some people think I am a little crazy. You know, that guy who keeps bees... But there is an advantage in being a little crazy. It means that people give you a lot of latitude in your behavior. "That's OK, it's Krengel and, well, it's beekeeper Krengel."

Is willingly opening a box containing 50,000 stinging insects really crazy? That brings me to a point I want to make. How many bees do you want in your stack of boxes? The efficiency of a honey bee colony (honey produced per bee) increases with the population of the hive. More bees bring a disproportionately larger crop of honey. In practicality, two 25,000 member hives will not produce as much honey as one 50,000 member hive. There is an economy of scale. The overhead energy needs (housekeeping, guarding, etc.) do not increase greatly with a larger colony. So, what if I could get the bee population of a colony up to 100,000 or 120,000?

Now if you wish to maintain your claim to being quasi-normal and not a "just a little crazy" beekeeper, you might wish to stop reading here. Crazy beekeeping adventure follows.



Back in the 1970's the USDA funded a study done by the University of Wisconsin Madison examining the productivity of two-queen colonies. Indeed, the two-queen colonies won the competition over single-queen colonies. The publication of this study, including the methods used, was made available through the GPO for \$.35. (I didn't try, but I bet it is more than \$.35 now.) This publication is now available on the internet at <https://naldc.nal.usda.gov/download/CAT87210713/PDF> or in the files on the Beeline Yahoo site.

It would not be unreasonable that a well-managed two-queen colony could reach a peak population of 120,000 bees, more than twice that of a standard single-queen colony.

Although the average honey production of a two-queen colony in the seven-year study was only 280 pounds of surplus, there is mention of dealing with colonies with more than 500 pounds of total stored honey (surplus and winter stores). The maximum surplus produced by a two-queen colony in the study was 477 pounds. If we assume a 100-pound winter reserve, that would be a total of 577 pounds produced. Impressive.

Now let's again talk about crazy. According to the USDA report, a two-queen colony using all deep hive bodies will require 8 to 9 hive bodies... and suggesting the average beekeeper can handle a hive with 8 deeps. Yikes, that is a tall beekeeper! For those using mediums, 10 to 11 hive bodies. That would be an awesome sight. One's neighbors would be impressed. And walk away pondering the crazy beekeeper.

So why would one want to venture into two-queen colonies and need to face 120,000 bees when removing the inner cover? First, of course, a bigger honey crop. Second, more beekeepers are keeping bees in urban environments where the city fathers have decided to limit beekeepers to two colonies. I have yet to find one that defines the number of queens per colony... hmm... Did they mean two stacks of white boxes? OK, and no limit to how high the stacks can be. Hmm... just thinking out loud.



To the newbie who is in day one of a beekeeping adventure, this is dangerous territory. You might want to put this on your todo list for a few years in the future. For the old hands, give it some thought. Beekeeping has some interesting challenges. Here is one.

So, is it any crazier to open a box with 120,000 bees than it is to open a box with 50,000 bees? I doubt it's really different to you and me. To the uninitiated observer, it is all the same... just that crazy bee guy.



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.

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.

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