



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2018

THE BEE PULPIT

Dave Hill

The temperature has fallen again! And that means that we can't take a peek at our hives, and they will be "stressing" because of the cold. We did look at the hives when we got that very brief increase in temp. The one day that it hit 50 degrees, we quickly opened the two hives at the house and they were alive! Didn't dwell long so didn't get a feel for the strength of the cluster. By the time we got to the farm, it was misting rain. Marianne held an umbrella over the hives while I pulled the tops. We took a quick look at each hive and at least 4 of the 6 were dead-outs. Not the best result, but we were pleasantly surprised vs our expectations. With a renewed cold spell, it will be some time before we have another opportunity to get into the hives again.

At 7am on February 2nd Woodstock Willie came out of his home and "saw his shadow". Unfortunately that means 6 more weeks of winter. Considering the way our weather has been since the beginning of winter, it's no surprise. Let's hope that in a couple of months Mother

Nature will be kind, and we'll get warmer temperatures which will be more favorable to the health and survival of our bee population.

The club is off to a good start for the year. We are working hard to bring more emphasis to education, both from a club member perspective and to the community. We are looking at increasing our mentoring and club networking. Club programs will be an important part of the club's focus. If you know of anyone that might have experiences and/or expertise in any area of beekeeping, please let us know. We are developing a speakers list and are reaching out to them.

The next opportunity for club involvement will be Gardenfest which will be held at McHenry County College on Saturday April 7th from 7:30am to 4:00pm. The event features a keynote speaker and breakout sessions focusing on a variety of garden-related topics. Included this year will be talks on "Developing a

UPCOMING EVENTS

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, February 9, 7pm

McHenry County Farm Bureau
1102 McConnell Rd
Woodstock, IL 60098

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

Pollinator's Paradise" by Mark Dwyer and "The Plight of the Honey Bee, Native Bees and Other Pollinators" by Jerry Gudauskas (a member of NIBA). Information and

registration is through McHenry County College. Web access is www.mchenry.edu/gardenfest/ NIBA will have an informational booth at this event and will be selling local honey donated by club members.

On April 10, 11, and 12 the Ag Expo will take place at the McHenry County Fairgrounds. This is a biannual event sponsored by the McHenry County Farm Bureau. It reaches some 2,200 students in grades 3 and 4 and 100 teachers from several McHenry County school districts. Students see six-minute presentations from 20 different agricultural booths.

NIBA sponsors the "honey bee" booth and has done so for many years. It is a wonderful opportunity to share the hobby of beekeeping with young inquisitive minds and briefly expose them to an agricultural subject that will likely be totally new to them. The club will need volunteers, and if you are interested please contact Tom Allen at tallen122@yahoo.com. You do not have to be an experienced beekeeper to help and believe me, it is a fun and rewarding experience. You will have a blast. Please consider volunteering!

Our January meeting was very well attended, and we

welcomed several newbees to the meeting. We began taking membership applications for 2018. At that time we were still working out the details and pricing for this year's bee order. The membership has now been informed of the program and order forms have been distributed. There are both the membership form and the bee order form included in this newsletter.

Our next club meeting will be on Friday, February 9th at 7pm at the McHenry County Farm Bureau building in Woodstock. We look forward to seeing you there!

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU TRUST ONLINE

Marianne Hill

I was clicking around the Internet the other day and came across a blog titled "15 Household Uses for Honey." Always on the lookout, I clicked into the article. #5 jumped off the screen for me: "Add 1 tablespoon honey and 10 drops lavender essential oil to your bath." The leading expert in the use of essential oils is Robert Tisserand. I reference his website A LOT! (www.tisserandinstitute.org)



So when this "bathe in honey" claim was made, I immediately checked it out with Mr. Tisserand. He worked with Deborah Kallevig to assemble a list of common substances that can be used to disperse EOs in your bath. They also list a number of substances thought to be dispersants, but actually are not. Honey is not listed as either what to use nor what not to use.

I emailed Deborah Kallevig asking that very question. She had an interesting response.

"It really isn't a dispersant when used as you've described - water soluble honey with an oil soluble essential oil (lavender). It might look mixed together and seem mixed together, but it really isn't. As soon as the honey melts in the water, the oil is left completely unaffected. If it's a tiny amount of oil it won't be a big deal in a large bath, but the more oil, the increase in the potential for problems."

All this to say, don't believe everything you read on the Internet. Do your own research, check the sources. Also, enjoy your honey!

BLAIN'S FARM AND FLEET BEE DAYS WAS A BIG SUCCESS!

Tom Allen

I want to start by giving a huge **thank you** to Brian and Tommi Finnestad for having everything set up for us at each Farm and Fleet store, and of course to everyone who volunteered. We couldn't have done it without each and every one of you.

I started out in Woodstock with Scott Davis, and when we walked in about 15 minutes early, there were already people waiting to talk to us about bees. Obviously the interest is growing! The number of beekeeper prospects continued to grow throughout the morning, and we talked to more than 50 prospective



beekeepers, so thank goodness Dave Hill, John Leibinger, Ralph Brindise, Terri Reeves, Paul Allen and Ed Allen happened to stop by. They were a huge help in answering the many questions. We talked to a lot of people who told us they might come to a NIBA club meeting to see if they want to join, so that's a great sign! In the afternoon, we had representation at three additional locations: Doug Hawthorne was our volunteer at the Loves Park Farm and Fleet, Tom Montavon was our volunteer at the Sycamore store, and



I was at the Elgin store. Thankfully, my friend Pat Trunda showed up and jumped in to help me out because there was a lot of interest, and I couldn't manage the group alone. Some of the people we spoke with live in the area and might stop by one of our meetings to see if they want to join the club.

Again, thank you to all of you who volunteered. That said, we really could have used many more volunteers. Please consider volunteering at events like these. It is important both to the future of our club as well as the future of our bee friends that we have representation at these events.

Our next volunteer opportunities are **Gardenfest** at McHenry County College **April 7th** and **McHenry County Ag Expo April 10, 11, 12**. I'll have more info to post in the next month, so please look at your calendars and block out some time to volunteer for one or both events., If you enjoy working with kids, the Ag Expo will be right up your alley.



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

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

Highlights of the January meeting

We had approx 100 folks show up for the January meeting... a very high turnout for a January meeting. The hot topic of discussion was “did you see bees during the warming”...this was after the multiple weeks of very, very cold temperatures. The consensus was mixed. Many folks did get a chance to peek into their hives, sometimes seeing healthy colonies and bees taking advantage of the warmer weather to go on cleansing flights. More often than not, the overall feedback was not so good. If you do find that your colony is dead, when you reintroduce a package or nuc in the spring, they will take care of the housekeeping of any dead brood still in your hive. Although. This fact should not replace your inspecting/preparing hive boxes for the new season. As we come out of the winter, I am sure we will have continued discussions on this year’s survival rates.



Joe gave an update on status of bee package orders, and we discussed pros and cons of a 3-lb package vs. a 5-frame Nucleus hive. “Newbies” were encouraged to go the route of the Nucleus hive as they are starting out with drawn comb and brood. More details including pricing are included elsewhere in this copy of Sweet Stuff.



We recapped the events that NIBA will be participating in this year. They include Farm and Fleet Bee Days, GardenFest in April, Ag Days at the Fairground in April, Exploration Day at a Grayslake School, Peterson Farm Day in June, McHenry County Fair in August, and the Green Expo in November. These events will need plenty of member volunteers. Signups and more info to come during our general meetings this year.

CHORES OF THE MONTH - FEBRUARY

John Liebinger

What's happening in the hive?

Overwintering colonies will start raising brood for the coming year. Later in the month, *if we are blessed with some warmer weather*, some early pollen from willows and maples may be available for early foragers. This fresh pollen along with pollen and bee bread stored in combs will allow for some early feeding of brood. The brood will require warmth so the bees will be consuming more honey (carbohydrates) for the energy they will require to produce the needed heat.

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

Monitor the food stores available to your colonies. Hefting the back of the hive may give you an idea of the amount of stores still available. Alternately, a peek inside on a warm day may also provide insight. Check for honey on frames adjacent to the outer edges of the cluster. You can do this visually or you can carefully run your hive tool down this seam scraping against the adjacent comb. If the hive tool comes out with honey on it, there is food the bees should be able to access. 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. Providing pollen or pollen patties will provide needed protein for brood development.

Check for activity at the hive on warmer days. Have they been taking cleansing flights? Some dead bees on the snow outside the hive is a sign that there are likely live bees inside. If your entrance is plugged up with dead bees, scrape them out to clear the opening so that others can get out for cleansing flights (put back reducers and mouse guards). Though you may scrape out a lot of dead, it doesn't necessarily mean the colony is dead. Someone pushed them to the front in an effort to clean out the hive, so there is/was life inside.

For New Beekeepers just getting started this year:

Read, Study, and Learn. Books, Periodicals, Classes, Club Meetings, Podcasts, 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). All of these will help.

Get a Mentor from the Bee Club. The first step is to ask for help. Whoa!...that sounds like a line from a counselor's guide book! LOL

Order your equipment, tools, and protective clothing. Start with a minimum of two hives. Understanding what 'normal' behavior is in a colony of bees is an important skill to acquire. Multiple colonies allow you to learn this faster. Multiple colonies also allow you to share resources (potentially very important) between colonies if needed....more on this as the year progresses.

Order your Bees. Start with a minimum of two hives...see above. Don't get hung up on bee race, i.e., Italian, Carniolan, Buckfast, etc. They are likely mutts anyway (forgive the sarcasm). Packages or nucs? There are advantages and disadvantages to each. Ask questions and listen to the reasoning provided. Keep in mind, whomever you ask will have a bias, so it is just an opinionhere is mine: since you should start with multiple colonies, get at least one of each and learn something. Next year you can pass on your experience and wisdom to the next 'Newbee'.

Assemble and paint your equipment. It's fun and can be creative....on the painting side...please assemble equipment per instructions. The bees will appreciate it.

Start thinking about the location of your apiary.

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 brood frame or two 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.

For All Beekeepers, it is time to:

Take an inventory.

A) Equipment/Supplies inventory

Make a list of 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

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.
- Move closer to achieving sustainable beekeeping (not having to buy new packages every year. Successfully overwinter bees.).
- 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.

-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 February is a **hopefully** live hive in April....we still have a couple tough months 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 February. Get ahead of your season.
Read, Study, Learn. Now is the time!**



IN NEED OF SUGAR?

Blue Plastic Kegs/Tubs of high quality sugar are available from Joan Miller.

Cost is **\$50** each, and each keg is 110 lb Net Wt sugar.

Pickup location is 1311 Everett Street in Sycamore, IL.

If you are interested you can call **Joan Miller** at **641-226-6252** to make arrangements for pickup.

This sugar has been used by a number of NIBA members. You may want to stock up so you have plenty for this spring!



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.

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.

2018 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President – Dave Hill
 Vice President – Joe Scherb
 Treasurer – Ralph Brindise
 Secretary – Dan Rank
 Director – Tom Allen
 Director – Rebekkah Burtcher
 Director – Marianne Hill
 Director – John Leibinger

Program Chair – Larry Kregel
 Webmaster – Terri Reeves
 Events Coordinator – Tom Allen
 Newsletter Editor – Marianne Hill
 Snack Committee – Donna Taliaferro
 Bee Package Coordinator – Joe Scherb
 Club Extractor Coordinator – Randy Mead
 Club Raffle Coordinator – John Leibinger

**NIBA TREASURER'S REPORT
JANUARY 31, 2018**

Cash on hand 12/31/2017	10,366.57
Total Deposits	1,546.00
Total Expenses	(327.61)
Balance	11,584.96
Cash Box	50.00
Balance 01/31/2018	\$ 11,634.96

SUMMARY OF REVENUE/DEPOSITS

Bee Orders	
Dues	50.00
Extractor Rental	20.00
Honey/Candy Sales	
Membership	1,250.00
Nametags	72.00
Picnic	
Raffles	154.00
Total	\$ 1,546.00

SUMMARY OF EXPENSES

American Beekeeping Federation	
Bee Order Deposit	
Bees	
Club Hive Maintenance	
Domain Registration	
Education	
Green Expo	
IL Sales Tax	178.82
ISBA	
Labels	
MCC Garden Fest (2 Lunches)	
McHenry County Fair (honey & misc)	
Nametags	
Office Expenses	21.91
Open Hive & Picnic	
Pick up/Delivery of Bees	
Promotional/printing	
Raffles	126.88
Refreshments	
Secretary of State Annual Report	
Trailer Expense	
Total	\$ 327.61
Projected 1/31/18 – ISBA	\$ 640.00

STEAMY CREAMY TOMATO SOUP



YIELD: Makes 4 to 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

2 cans (14½ oz. each) crushed tomatoes in pureé

¾ to 1 tsp. hot sauce

3 Tbsp honey

1½ cups half-and-half

DIRECTIONS

Pour tomatoes in a large saucepan. Add half and half and 1/2 cup cold water. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Add honey and lower heat to medium. Cook 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Add hot sauce and one tsp. of salt. Cook 2 minutes longer. Serve hot.

A MOMENT OF SILENCE, PLEASE

Larry Kregel

Let's have a moment of silence for those of our colonies that did not make it through the winter.....



OK, that's enough. Water over the dam. Time to work with what we have left and make plans to build on what we have for the coming year. I suggest starting with the bees that **did** make it to spring. Let's think about these bees.

It is easy, and dangerous, to do a happy dance in the beeyard watching the surviving bees fly and get ready to put the honey supers on these overwintered hives. Watch out. These colonies – the ones whose strength and health we celebrate - are the most prone to succumbing early to their arch enemy, the varroa. Because these colonies anticipated the coming season (how do they know?), they will begin raising brood two months before any packages we install. It is that brood on which the varroa reproduce. The varroa parasitizing an overwintered colony will produce three or four generations of offspring before package bees arrive. Each generation adds to the varroa population and increases the threat to the colony. This early growth in the varroa population will challenge the colony... and the beekeeper.



Tom Seeley, whom many of you met last fall, has been observing this problem for decades and feels that swarming by feral colonies that live in confined quarters in a hollow tree gives them an advantage – half the colony and the old queen leave to start a new hive home from scratch.

The existing colony has a pause in the brood rearing (think, varroa rearing) while it raises a new queen. In each group, varroa populations are slowed because of a lack of brood on which to feed.

Over the last centuries, we beekeepers have worked to solve the “problem of swarming.” It seems that swarming is a problem for the beekeeper and the keeper's honey crop, but not for the bees. One of the techniques used by beekeepers to thwart the swarming impulse is to add more hive bodies... more supers.... give them more space to keep them happy, in the hive box and raising brood... and varroa. Are we shooting ourselves in the foot?

Spring has often been the time that beekeepers make up for winter losses and expand bee holdings by splitting the surviving colonies often turning to queen breeders to provide the monarchy for those splits. The original colony continues raising new brood nearly unchanged. And within days the split's new queen is laying, and the colony is off and running. Little interruption in the brood cycle. We traditionally thought keeping the brood cycle running was the sign of a skillful beekeeper. Now we ask... Is that best for our bee holdings? Are we missing an opportunity?

If we wish, we can emulate what we observe in the feral bees. In the old days beekeepers talked about making a “shook swarm,” a technique more like the natural swarm, but allowing the beekeeper to have control over the swarm. It was simply done by putting the queen in a waiting hive box and then shaking a liberal number of bees on top of her. These bees – “the swarm” - would be moved to a distant yard just as a natural swarm would leave the parent

colony... who would proceed to raise a new queen. Each colony would benefit from an interruption in brood rearing. It is the way swarming happens in nature.

It seems to make sense.

In the last 150 years – since Reverend Langstroth invented the movable frame hive – there have been many books written on how to raise queens. The beekeeping community has sought to understand the natural requirements for making a “good” queen. Using our insights into queen rearing and the simple shook swarm technique, we have a strong tool in dealing with the plague of varroa.

Of the numerous techniques that have been written about over the years (that are not all that different), the Miller technique is among my favorites. For those who want to know more, Google it. Information on the Miller method is on the Beeline Yahoo site and is discussed in the queen rearing class I do at MCC each spring. With a little insight, the Miller technique can be used to guide the colony as it is split. Check it out.

Spring is a good time for a beekeeper to exert his/her presence in the beeyard. Take charge. Consider your options.



Member Donations

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

Ron & Carolyn Besserud
 Al & Linda LaLond
 Doug Hawthorn
 Angie Bradley
 Mike & Linda Haswell
 Sue Dietz (Harvard Eggs & Feed)
 Jan & Joe Magyar
 Donna Taliaferro & 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

NIBA 2018 PACKAGED BEE ORDER FORM

ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY MARCH 15, 2018



*Name _____ *Phone _____

*Email _____

*Required fields

Please read and initial below –checks will be returned if not initialed:

The undersigned acknowledges that NIBA will transport bee packages from the supplier in Wisconsin to various drop-off points in Illinois only for the convenience of the undersigned. The undersigned agrees that NIBA is not responsible for any damage to the bees or cages during the transport and distribution of the same. The undersigned understands that he/she remains at all times free to order and pick-up bees from alternate suppliers of their choice.

I agree with the above statement regarding NIBA's Packaged Bee delivery: _____ INITIAL HERE

NIBA is pleased to offer this group bee order as one of the benefits of membership. Therefore, your 2018 NIBA dues must be paid prior to your order being processed. Mail your membership forms to the designated address. We will return orders received from nonmembers. We will order 250 packages of bees and 100 nucleus hives (nucs).

Our supplier of packaged bees does not cage exchange, so the cage is yours to recycle.

Package Prices: \$120.00 each. Nuc Price: \$145 each **NO CASH PLEASE!!!** Each package contains approximately 3 pounds of bees and a queen.

Order Information:

My package order preference is given below. I understand that actual delivery timing is determined by many factors including weather, and producer variability.

First Pick Up (Targeting late March, early April) _____	x\$120 = _____	<u>Total Due</u>
Second Pick Up (Targeting mid to late April) _____	x\$120 = _____	
Nucleus Hive (Targeting mid to late April) _____	x\$145 = _____	

Make checks payable to Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association.

Must be completed – My queen preference is _____ Italian _____ Carniolan _____ Buckfast.

We will do our best to accommodate all requests, but queen availability is determined by package suppliers. You may mix and match your queens.

The exact date and time for delivery & pickup will be communicated via the email address above. If you do not have email, you will be contacted at the phone number you provided above.

Orders will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis until the 350 packages are sold.

Complete and mail order form and **checks payable to: NIBA** 517 Northlake Road, Lakemoor, IL 60051

Contact Ralph Brindise at rbrindise@att.net with any questions.

_____ do not write below this line _____

Bees received by: _____ Print _____ Signature _____