



# SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2023

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Noel Williams

Hello Everybody!

Spring has finally sprung, and we've got a lot in store for you in the next few weeks. But to start, I want to mention that our first mentoring session of the season on Saturday March 11th, was a resounding success! According to Bob Hillman, our coordinator for this year's program, we had 10 mentees come out for the session! With John Leibinger, Larry Kregel and Ralph Brindise conducting, our mentees learned some of the basics of beekeeping. At this session attendees learned (hands-on) how to put together a complete hive, do package and nuc installations, as well as have many lively beekeeping discussions. For those of you who missed this opportunity, the team will be repeating the session on Thursday, April 13th (the day of the regular NIBA club meeting) at 4:00 pm and again at 6:30 pm during the pre-meeting that same day.

"But, what's next?", you ask. Well, on Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, we'll have the 2nd installment of our spring mentoring sessions. It will be held at 10:30 am at the newly renovated MCC beeyard. The session will feature a hands-on demonstration of the hive inspection process to be performed shortly after loading your bees.

Per Bob Hillman "We encourage active participation and open discussion - if you are uncertain about a beekeeping practice, this is your opportunity to ask an experienced beekeeper. The only stupid question is the one you should have asked but didn't."

A very big **THANK YOU** to Bob, John, Larry and Ralph for putting these sessions together. They are great learning opportunities for new and not-so-new beekeepers alike.

Tom Allen has been working with the folks at MCC to give the club-sponsored beeyard a makeover. Check out the picture in the inset to see the results! Thanks Tom, it looks great!



And, we're not done yet folks! Coming up pretty quick on April 18th at 7:00pm (CDT), NIBA is bringing you a presentation by Anne Marie Fauvel of the Bee Informed Partnership on Hygienic Bee Information and Testing. This presentation is hosted by the WCBA. Zoom link to follow via email prior to the event.

Then, as if that weren't enough, NIBA is once again joining forces with WCBA to bring you an evening with Randy Oliver. Randy will give a presentation on Handling Bees and How to Get Less Stings. It's a little less science and some great practical application that will appeal to newer beekeepers. Randy will speak on Tuesday, May 16th via Zoom. More details and a Zoom link to follow when they become available.

Thank you to Stephanie Slater for the opportunity to participate in both of these events.

Looking for a reason to come to a meeting? How about winning some great raffle prizes? At the upcoming April 13th meeting, as well as the meeting in May, NIBA will be selling raffle tickets for two very special prizes.

One very generous prize is a package of bees courtesy of Dave Meyer Bees. Dave really knows his way around a beeyard (so you know they'll be great) and who couldn't use another bee colony in the their apiary?

The other prizes are tickets donated by Marcin Matelski to attend a hands-on session by Randy Oliver in the beeyard at the Garfield Park Conservatory. Randy will be giving these presentations, entitled Why's of Beekeeping - Why Bees and Beekeepers Do What They Do, on Saturday May 20th and Sunday May 21st.

The drawing for bee package as well as the Randy Oliver tickets will be held during the May 11th NIBA general meeting. Thanks to Dave Meyer, Marcin Matelski and the Garfield Park Conservatory for these great prizes. And, while I'm at it, thank you very much to all of our regular club

sponsors who donate raffle prizes to NIBA each month!

Lastly, the NIBA bee order is almost here! Once we know the exact date of delivery, we will let everyone know via email. If you have ordered bees from the club, please plan to pick them up in timely manner on delivery day. Please make arrangements to have someone else pick up your bees if you can't. It is a very long day for our volunteers (Ralph & John) who make the early trip north to bring them back to a convenient location and to the rest of the volunteers who help distribute so the rest of us can swing by and grab them. We all want to get home and install our new bees too!

The program for the May 11th general meeting will be a presentation by Larry Krengel on "Harmonious Swarming". Bee there or bee square.

If you overwintered your bees this year, may your losses be small. See you at the April 13th meeting!

All the Best,

Noel

**BEE PACKAGE PICKUP  
3514 N ROUTE 47, WOODSTOCK  
SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 2023  
10:00AM - 2:00PM  
LOOK FOR THE BEES SIGN**



**YOU MUST PICK UP YOUR PACKAGES WITHIN THE DESIGNATED TIMES ON DELIVERY DAY. IF YOU CANNOT, PLEASE ARRANGE FOR SOMEONE TO PICK THEM UP FOR YOU. WE HAVE NOWHERE TO STORE PACKAGES.**

**RALPH BRINDISE (847) 970-0669**

## MENTORING SESSIONS FOR BASIC BEEKEEPING PRACTICES

Bob Hillman

### **Thursday April 13 – 4 pm at the MCC Beeyard**

A “dry-run” of the process of installing a package and installing a nuc. We will discuss what to do after installation – i.e. feeding, etc...

If you need a map of the Beeyard location at McHenry County College – please e-mail me at [rthillman77@yahoo.com](mailto:rthillman77@yahoo.com)

NOTE: We will be doing a simulation with no bees, but we will be in the beeyard with bees flying. We always encourage anyone in any beeyard to bring their protective gear and wear it to suit their personal level of caution.

( Note: This demonstration will be repeated at the 6:30 pm New Beekeeper session prior to the Association meeting.)

### **Saturday April 29 – 10:30 am at the MCC beeyard**

A hands-on demonstration of the hive inspection process to be performed shortly after loading your bees. What to look for; how to interpret what you see; and what to do about any problems. We will be opening active hives. We always encourage anyone in any beeyard to bring their protective gear and wear it to suit their personal level of caution.

We encourage active participation and open discussion - if you are uncertain about a beekeeping practice, this is your opportunity to ask an experienced beekeeper. “ The only stupid question is the one you should have asked but didn’t.”

IN CASE OF HEAVY RAIN OR SEVERE WEATHER THE SESSIONS MAY BE CANCELLED. IF THE WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR THE PERIOD OF THE SESSION IS DOUBTFUL, PLEASE CALL BOB HILLMAN AT **847-739-6004** FOR SESSION STATUS UPDATE.



 **SAVE THE DATE** 

Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association  
**SWAP MEET**

**SATURDAY | MAY 6TH | 9 AM - 12 PM**

McHenry County Farm Bureau  
1102 McConnell Rd  
Woodstock, IL 60098

 **Buy / Sell / Trade / Exchange**   
Beekeeping equipment or items

More details to follow



• Beekeeper •

# Webinar

Free to  
sponsor club  
members

**Anne Marie Fauvel - BIP**

**Tuesday,  
4/18/2023**

**7:00 pm**

**In Person  
& Zoom**

Event Sponsors:

Walworth County Beekeepers Club  
Racine/Kenosha Beekeepers Club  
Brown County Beekeepers Association  
Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association  
Lake County Beekeepers Association

Join us for an evening with Anne Marie Fauvel of the Bee Informed Partnership. Anne Marie will discuss honeybee hygienic behavior and testing.  
Join us at Gateway Technical College – Elkhorn Campus – South Building, Room 114 or via Zoom.  
The Zoom link will be emailed on 4/16/2023. No registration required.  
Contact [stephanie.d.slater@gmail.com](mailto:stephanie.d.slater@gmail.com) with any questions.

## CHORES OF THE MONTH – APRIL – AND SO IT BEGINS!

John Leibinger

*Like the bees we study, we accomplish more together.*

### **What's happening in the hive?**

Overwintered colonies should be well into raising brood for the coming year. On warm days the bees will be out foraging pollen from some early flowering plants and trees. About mid-month the dandelions will start blooming and you will see a lot of their tell-tale tangerine-orange pollen being brought in. Though temperatures may be a bit low to do a prolonged deep dive inspection early in the month, the influx of pollen is a good sign that the colony is raising brood. Brood rearing requires significant protein which is sourced from the incoming pollen. If weather conditions are preventing foraging, use pollen patties and/or pollen substitutes as supplemental feed. 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. You may well see bee poop or signs of dysentery at the exit points for bees. Don't panic and jump to the conclusion that your bees have Nosema. This is more likely an accumulation of feces the bees are finally getting to void. It could be dysentery, but dysentery is not Nosema. Nosema can only be determined by inspection of bee guts via microscopy. If it is dysentery, it will likely clear up fairly quickly as the bees get foraging and consuming fresh nectar. If it is Nosema, the only approved product on the market right now is Fumidil-B (Fumagillin) but its efficacy on the most prevalent type of Nosema (*N. Ceranae*) is marginal.

### **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 (with frames) above or simply the addition of super(s) 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. This time of year, place new foundation frames just outside of the broodnest

**Remove Winter Wrappings as the weather warms.**

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

**Breakdown 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 for the most part. Mites do also, so you have minimal 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 (assuming that you will be rehabilitating this hive this season).

### **For New Beekeepers just getting started this year:**

**Bees will be arriving soon so make sure all equipment is ready to go.**

**Finish assembling and painting your equipment.** If you have not done this already, **Get On It!** Don't procrastinate, the bees will not wait! 😊

**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 smoother.

**Get a Mentor from the Bee Club.** Ask for help and guidance. Hands-on assistance is on the rise as Covid settles a bit,, but verbal or written communication should always be available.

**Ready or not here it comes!** No worries. Chill. You have done your homework. You have Read, Studied, and Learned. A little nervous anticipation is all part of the excitement of becoming a beekeeper and right about now it is reaching an apex. Take a breath. A few more seasons under your belt and you will look back on this time with a knowing smile. If you have not received hands on instruction on package installation, review several YouTube videos, or use a lifeline and 'Phone a Friend' (or mentor) on package installation.

**Have a checklist for your package or nuc installation.** It helps keep you organized and focused.

**Have all your tools and supplies ready ahead of time.** Avoid the nervous scramble.

Again, No worries, coaching and virtual help is available.

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)

### ***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 2023 and act accordingly. See earlier month's chores list.

Wash your beekeeping suit or jacket to remove general dirt and specifically to remove lingering essence of alarm pheromone from previous 'suit stings'. Tip: Use an unscented laundry detergent.

### ***General Info:***

A couple of ways to install packages:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZknUirqbQk> Randy Oliver

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ft7BWolTbw> Penn State

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9qu-zMhtQ0>

Are you seeing pollen coming in?

[Nice Seasonal Pollen Color Chart](#) (Ctrl + Click link)

## **It is April. Welcome to the 2023 Beekeeping Season!**



## **BEEKEEPERS AND SWARMS**

Larry Kregel

I was talking with my class in the beeyard over the weekend. One of the points I made was the difference between the commercial beekeeper and the backyard beekeeper. Both have their place, but their relationship with the bees is different. The commercial beekeeper needs to be efficient, moving rapidly in a regimented way with a list of tasks that seems to never end. In the beeyard these taskmasters are in command of troops. If I were to go commercial (which is not in the cards) I would need to take that approach to be successful.

The life of a commercial beekeeper is demanding. The bees are the employees (who have no union representation). It is a business that needs to maximize income while controlling expenses.

For the small-scale, backyard keeper life is different. It is unlikely that the beeyard will pay for itself. Most do not expect such. Expenses are likely included in the budget along with golf, a week in Minnesota or tickets to the theater.

I categorize myself as the latter. I do sell honey. My bees do produce a bit of income, but I am firmly in the small-scale category.

Most of those I meet in my bee classes as well as those I hang around with at bee events keep bees for fun, education, camaraderie, fascination, to commune with nature... but accept it as an entertainment expense.

To us our bees are not employees. We need not be in command of the beeyard.

As we talked in class, I made a point that I often mention to groups of want-to-be beekeeper... My goal in the beeyard is to be accepted as a member of the bee community. I want only to appear as the biggest member. I have a job just like each of the other members.

Having that relationship with the bees is more difficult than being the commander of an army of tens of thousands of bees. It takes finesse, confidence, and a willingness to accept being a member rather than a general.

### **'TIS THE SEASON TO SWARM**

A few Beelines ago I wrote about the coming swarm season. I think the coming has arrived. This week I will deploy my bait hives.



Swarm season brings two events to our apiaries. The obvious one is half of the workforce moving out with the former queen of the hive. In preparation for leaving home, the queen has been put on a diet and backed off on laying eggs. She must return to the flying fitness of the virgin queen she once was needing to venture off on her nuptial flights. This is likely the second time in her life she will use her wings.

The workers need to divvy themselves up, who goes, who stays. How that choice is made is one of the secrets the bees have yet to share with us. Those leaving are off for a dangerous adventure. The future is not assured.<sup>1</sup> As they fly off to bivouac in a tree their memory of their former home is erased. They can no longer go home. All they have is the adventure.

The departure of a swarm is an important ritual of the bee world<sup>2</sup>, but another equally critical event occurs at the same time.

The parent colony is now rolling the dice on a single bee, the new queen. True, there may be multiple queen cells created. Mother nature does not want to bet on a single cell. Of all the queen cells (perhaps a dozen) which is the best, the most fit for the ordeal ahead? That is not what selects the new queen. The new monarch is simply the first to emerge. Her duty number one is to kill all the competition. The future of the colony will now depend entirely on the performance of a single bee.

Two events of great importance.<sup>3</sup>

### **C. C. Miller and swarms**

C. C. Miller, a beekeeper of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century known for his bee acumen and ingenuity, yielded to the swarm as a force of nature. In his beeyard, just a hop, step, and jump south of the city of Marengo, he kept a large number of honeybee colonies from which he harvested and sold comb honey. Good comb honey is made in large, crowded colonies ripe for swarming. To deal with the inevitability of swarms in his beeyard, he hired local kids and paid them to spend days with his colonies where they would hive swarms as they emanated. I am not sure many of today's kids would take that job.

### **Talking swarms**

At the May 11 meeting of the Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association, I will be talking about swarming in a presentation I call *Harmonious Swarming*. Swarming is a topic that we never tire of contemplating. It is magic. It is deeply hidden in the drive of nature. The swarming urge is one of those invisible forces that fans our fancy. It is hard to look away. Consider stopping by.

1. One could compare these individual bees to those humans who have throughout history attempted to migrate in search of their future. Economics, politics, climate change, the allure of adventure... The desire to preserve a way of life for the specie can be strong in many animals.

2. Should the opportunity present itself, do not hesitate to stand among the bees swirling in a swarm – departing or arriving. The air is filled with excitement and anticipation. A romantic question... if given the choice, would you leave with the swarm or stay safe at home?
3. In the plan of nature the passing of the genetic codes to a new generation is of critical importance. Both the swarm and the new queen share this responsibility.



I came across an interesting post on Facebook recently. My maternal grandmother came from Slovenia, and I never knew the history of beekeeping in that country. Below are excerpts from (1) the Slovenian Beekeepers Association website and (2) the Facebook post.

(SBA) Slovenia is a country in the heart of Central Europe, famous for its incredible landscape diversity as it is the crossroads of four major natural units: the Alps, the Dinaric Alps, the Pannonian Basin, and the Mediterranean.

The diversity of rocks, reliefs and the atmosphere also determines the incredible soil and biotic diversity. In this small country with pristine nature, in a country where we can admire mighty mountains, lush green forests that cover 60 percent of the total surface, clean rivers and lakes, blossoming meadows and the underground world of numerous caves, the sea and so much more, there hides a true treasure of flora and fauna. Despite Slovenia being a small country, it offers favorable conditions for beekeeping, as the diversity of plants enables the production of various types of honey.

Slovenians are emotionally attached to bees. The old saying that beekeeping is the poetry of agriculture was first used by the residents of the Slovenian lands. In addition, a recent slogan says that to be Slovenian is to be a beekeeper. Among every thousand citizens of Slovenia, four people are beekeepers, which is unique in the world. Slovenia has an over 140-year-old national beekeepers' association, the prominent technical

magazine Slovenian Beekeeper (Slovenski čebelar) of a similar age, a beautiful beekeeping center at Brdo pri Lukovici, more than 150 beekeeping banners, beekeeping formalwear, a hymn and much more.



Slovenian beekeepers are proud to continue and to preserve the tradition of their ancestors. They take special care in the conservation of the indigenous Carniolan bee, the protection of its life habitat and the production of the finest bee products.

(FB) Do you know the Carniolan honeybee? It is the native Slovenian bee species, considered one of the most widespread honeybees in the world. It is meek, hard-working, humble and has an excellent sense of direction. Traits that are also found in Slovenians. No wonder we get on so well together. There are more than 11,000 beekeepers in Slovenia, with more than 200,000 bee colonies.

Do you share my Slovenian heritage? Does YOUR heritage include an interesting connection to beekeeping? Let me know at [mariannehill1213@gmail.com](mailto:mariannehill1213@gmail.com). I'll include your story in a future newsletter.



## 2023 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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Club Extractor Coordinators – Randy Mead/Al Fullerton

Club Raffle Coordinator – John Leibinger

Snack Coordinator – Sally Willer

## Website and Newsletter Submissions

[www.nibainfo.org](http://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](mailto: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. [mariannehill1213@gmail.com](mailto:mariannehill1213@gmail.com)

## Manual Honey Extractor

Did you know that your membership in NIBA includes the opportunity to rent a club manual 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 and returned on time.

To reserve a date, **contact Randy by text or email at 847-571-1899 or [rmeadtoys@gmail.com](mailto:rmeadtoys@gmail.com).**

## NIBA Now has an Electric Extractor

It will handle both sides of 9 frames at the same time.

Club members may borrow it for 2 days for \$25.00 plus a security deposit of \$75.00. The deposit will be returned if the extractor and uncapping equipment are returned on time, clean, and undamaged.

The Extractor comes with everything you need to make the uncapping and extraction experience go smoothly, except of course, the honey frames and buckets.

Pick it up in Cary. To reserve, **contact Al Fullerton by phone or text at 815-382-7139 or email [adfhoney@gmail.com](mailto:adfhoney@gmail.com)**, Note: Al's phone doesn't always give a notification ring (He blames it on the phone or the tunnel he lives in), so if you don't get a timely response, just phone rather than text.

**The queen marking color for  
2023 is RED.**