



# SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2023

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Noel Williams

Hi Everyone,

Suddenly... It's September, just like that! April and I are pulling honey frames and getting ready to extract our one harvest for the year. We are planning to treat for mites and then let the bee's collect nectar from the fall flow before we start feeding them. We think we'll have five strong colonies going into winter, a record for us. We started the season with two overwintered colonies and added two packages in the Spring. As far as we can tell, the single deep experiment has been pretty successful and my back is a lot happier.

A BIG round of congratulations and thanks go to Tom Allen and his team for organizing NIBA's participation in the McHenry County Fair event this year! The club's booth was well staffed with engaging NIBA members and we sold a lot of honey. As always, the observation hive brought many visitors to the booth. A special 'thank you' John Leibinger and Donna Taliaferro for coaxing their girls into making an appearance on the club's behalf!

Many thanks to those members who worked the show and also to all of you who donated honey to be sold on behalf of the club. The cut-comb honey donated by Carl Christiansen and Stephanie Slater was an especially big winner! Because of all of you, NIBA's participation in the fair was a rousing success!

Another big round of thanks to Cristy & Dave Binz and Stephanie Slater for their tireless work on the honey show at the McHenry County Fair. It was another great success and the club got a chance to show off the new display cases that Cristy found for us last year. Al Fullerton provided the awesome graphics on the cases. Outstanding work folks!

The NIBA bee quilt raffle was held at the August meeting. Bob Hillman is the lucky winner of this beautiful item. Congratulations Bob! Thank you to Debra Lindsey for donating her time, materials and mastery of the art to create this one-of-a-kind quilt. It is truly wonderful!

You can check out pictures of the NIBA quilt, our booth, the honey show and all things NIBA on the NIBA Facebook group. Just go to facebook.com and search for Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association.

Our monthly meeting will be held on Thursday, September 14th in room A211 at McHenry County College. The newbie Q & A session will begin at 6:30 with the main portion of the meeting starting at 7:00pm. This month's program will be a panel discussion overwintering bee. Please contact Tom Allen at tallen122@yahoo.com if you would like to sit on the panel.

Soon it will be time for the NIBA membership to elect new club officers for the coming year. Please consider helping to make a difference in the organization by running for office this fall.

I want to thank Marianne Hill for her great work in publishing this newsletter over these many years. I'm sure that I speak for all of our members in saying how much we appreciate Marianne's efforts. It takes a lot of time and thought to put together a publication like the 'Sweet Stuff' each and every month. Marianne, thank you!

And now I would like to introduce our brand-new editor of the 'Sweet Stuff', Sue Pinkawa. Sue has taken over publication of the

newsletter as of this very issue. Sue, thank you for stepping up and watch out for my typos!

Have a fun and safe Labor Day weekend!

Noel.

### **Hello Fellow Beekeepers:**

There will be no Mentor sessions in September. The next Mentor session is scheduled for October 15<sup>th</sup>.

A Mentor session will be scheduled for Saturday, October 15<sup>th</sup>-10:30 am. How to wash and melt beeswax capping's, etc.....”

If John Leibinger is willing, we'll schedule a session in November for Oxalic Acid dribbles. That will complete this year's NIBA Mentor program.

If you have a particular beekeeping activity you think would be a good topic for a future mentor session – please let me know. It is difficult to identify topics of interest that would increase member participation, as we all have different objectives and levels of experience. Your input would be helpful to ensure a mentor program that meets your needs and interests.

Thank you.

Regards,

Bob Hillman

## **CHORES OF THE MONTH – SEPTEMBER**

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

John Leibinger

*What's happening in the hive?*

*You will observe that the colony population will start to decline noticeably this month.* There will, however, still be significant brood rearing going on as the nurse bees work to raise the 'winter bees' (diutinus bees) that will carry the colony through the winter. Though they appear the same on the outside, winter bees are physiologically different from the worker bees raised in spring and summer. They have more fat bodies which produce the vitellogenin that is crucial to their long lives. These bees are very important bees for the survival of the colony, so do all you can to assist them through their wintery journey. That means leaving or providing them with sufficient stores to overwinter, providing them protection against robbing, providing protection against mouse infiltration, providing protection against wind infiltration in the hive, and helping prevent disease by controlling the ever-present Varroa mite.

*You are likely observing the Fall 'Ousting of the Drones'.* Don't confuse this with robbing. A small group of workers will be ganging up on a drone, dragging him to the edge of the bottom board and dumping his lazy, freeloadng carcass over the abyss (drama added for the smiles of our ever-increasing female beekeeper population).

*You may notice a significant change in the odor (not a pleasant change) of your hives (second or third week of Sept, historically, but maybe a bit different this year.... maybe a bit earlier in this strange weather year).*

*This is very common, and is a result of goldenrod nectar foraging. FYI, I was just out observing my hives (late August) and pollen is coming in quite frequently. Life is good in the beehive!*

*You may well be seeing robbing occur.* *With continued good weather, we may experience a Fall nectar flow primarily from goldenrod and asters, but as the month progresses, food sources will become more lean and opportunistic robbing may occur. Weak hives are most susceptible, so consider combining a weak hive with a stronger one to help the combined colony make it through winter. If successful, you can split the hive in early Spring to increase your colony count.*

*A robbing event can not only kill a colony, but can destroy drawn out comb which is, arguably, the most valuable resource you have in the hive.*

*Expect to find your bees have developed some 'attitude' as we get into the month.* *Reduced resources not only lead to robbing behaviors but also defensive behaviors. Dress accordingly.*

*For All Beekeepers, it is time to:*

*Finalize your annual harvest if you haven't already.* *Let the bees collect and store some natural fall food after your harvest by returning a wet super to the hive. If you have sufficient stores already you can return wet supers to the hives to allow the bees to clean them up. Place the wet super above the inner cover and below the outer cover. \* Some beekeepers recommend putting an empty super between the inner cover and the wet super to add additional space. Either way works. This has a twofold benefit. First, the bees can pull the remaining honey from the wet super and store it in the boxes below. Second, it gets the super frames cleaned and dried and, in most cases, repaired and ready for winter storage. You may be surprised at what a nice job they do.*

*\*Beware the possibility of promoting robbing when doing this. Seal off any outside entrance from the inner cover. Don't use a ventilated inner cover when doing this.*

*Another tip from member Carl Christiansen: If you have supers with frames that are partially filled, consider placing them under the brood boxes. The bees will remove the honey/nectar from that lower super and bring it up into the upper box(es).*

*Bottle and label your harvest.* *Sell some, give some to friends and family, prepare some Holiday gifts, donate some to your favorite bee club for fund raising.*

*Monitor Varroa Mite levels and take action if needed* *(See Honey Bee Health Coalition link in General Info section for guidance on treatment. Also see links for references to mite checking procedures).*

*It is very important to get the mite loads under control now. Actually, it is a bit late, but better a bit late than never. The brood that will be raised as winter bees are in process. Help them out. Pay attention to labeling instructions when using treatments and be mindful of temperature ranges for various types of treatments. Your specific approach will be influenced by your personal goals and philosophy, but, if you have a mite problem, doing nothing is not an acceptable answer if you want your colonies to thrive and survive and come out of winter as healthy hives raring to go for 2024. This is a great step towards sustainable beekeeping.*

*Be very aware of robbing.* *It happens quickly and can be devastating. Reduce entrance openings to the smallest size on your entrance reducers, or alternately, install robbing screens. There are many types of robbing screens, some very simple and some a bit more 'inventive'. Check the internet for robbing screens and you will get an abundance of ideas. You will have to use your judgement on the direction you take. Be aware that robbing is not just honey bee to honey bee, but oftentimes involves wasps, hornets, and yellow jackets. If you are inclined to use a yellow jacket trap, do not place it near your hives as it may tend to draw more yellow jackets to your hives and cause greater problems.*

## ROBBING SCREENS



Add mouse guards. Nights will start to cool off soon and mice will be looking for warm, dry spaces to make fall and winter nests. Don't let that be your hives.

## MOUSE DAMAGE



Check your hives for honey stores. Consider moving existing full frames of honey to outer edges and partially filled towards the center allow bees easier access to filling them. Do not break up/ separate the brood nest to accomplish this.

Start feeding and don't stop until they stop taking it. \*\* Use a 2:1 sugar to water syrup mix. Check your feeders often enough to keep them filled. Avoid using Boardman type feeders this time of year to reduce inducing robbing.

\*\* If they still seem to be consuming by the end of October (which is doubtful) you may want to stop. They will need time to reduce the moisture content of the syrup before winter sets in.

## MOUSE GUARDS



**General Info**

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

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

[The Honeybee Health Coalition Varroa Decision Tool](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

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

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

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

Formulas for making 2:1 syrup for fall feeding:

Sugar (lb)	1	2	4	8	16	32
Water	1cup	1 pint	1 quart	1/2/gal	1 gal	2 gal

Note 1: Do not boil sugar syrup (its OK to boil the water prior to adding sugar but not after). Boiling can lead to the creation of HMF (Hydroxymethylfurfural) which is toxic to honeybees.

Note 2: Some people are concerned about using sugar from beets. There is no difference in the sugar (sucrose) from beets vs cane sugar (sucrose). Sucrose is sucrose. Genetic modification (GM) in beets modify the proteins in the plants, not the sucrose.

Note 3: Use white table sugar (sucrose) only. Do not use brown sugar or molasses. Do not use organic sugar.

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

Hi, my name is Sue Pinkawa and I have taken over the newsletter for Marianne. My husband, Norb and I have been members of NIBA for about 3 years now and we have been keeping bees for about 3 years. At the present time we have 3 hives.

If anyone has anything they would like to contribute to the newsletter or if they have any ideas of things they would like to see in the newsletter, please email me at [spinkawa@gmail.com](mailto:spinkawa@gmail.com)



I look forward to working with all of you.



## 2023 MCHENRY COUNTY FAIR

Thank you to all who participated in the 75th Anniversary McHenry County Fair Honey Show.

We had a great turnout with 42 open entries and 4 junior entries.  
Show Judge - Ron Fischer was very pleased with the quality of entries.  
This was Ron Fischer's 35th year judging at the McHenry County Fair.

Thank you to:

Al Fullerton for the logos and casters on the cases.

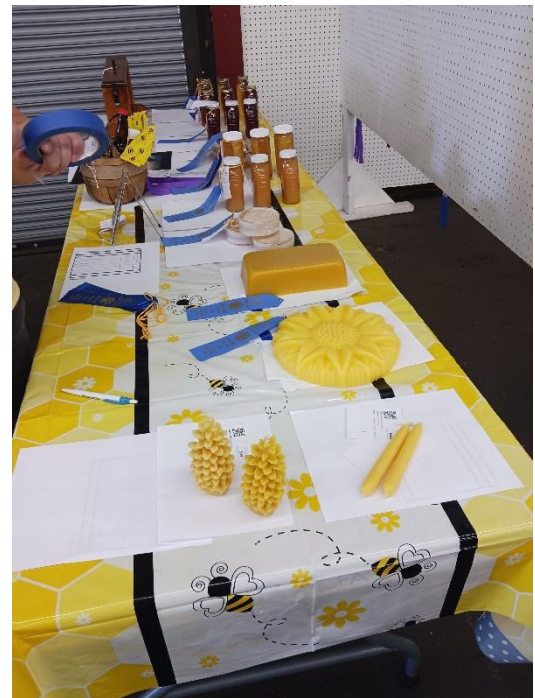
Harvard Egg & Feed - Sue Dietz for sponsoring the show judge

Ralph Brindise for the "Honey for Sale" signed.

David Binz for help with show setup and cleanup

and Stephanie Slater for being the show's Assistant Superintendent helping with set up, show organization and clean up. Everyone's help made the show a success.

Much appreciated, Cristy Binz - Honey Show Superintendent





## 2023 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President - Noel Williams

[nwilliams1250@yahoo.com](mailto:nwilliams1250@yahoo.com)

Vice President - Tom Allen

[tallen122@yahoo.com](mailto:tallen122@yahoo.com)

Secretary - Kristen Mueller

[khuschitt@gmail.com](mailto:khuschitt@gmail.com)

Treasurer - Ralph Brindise

[rbrindise@att.net](mailto:rbrindise@att.net)

Director - John Leibinger

[jleibinger@aol.com](mailto:jleibinger@aol.com)

Director - Al Fullerton

[adfhoney@gmail.com](mailto:adfhoney@gmail.com)

Director - Bob Hillman

[rthillman0690@msn.com](mailto:rthillman0690@msn.com)

Director - Ron Willer

[ronwiller38@gmail.com](mailto:ronwiller38@gmail.com)

Program Chair - Larry Krengel

Webmaster - Terri Reeves

Newsletter Editor - Sue Pinkawa

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. [spinkawa@gmail.com](mailto:spinkawa@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.**