

THE BEE HERDER

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www.MedinaBeekeepers.com



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MCBA Club Meetings

Third Monday of each month at Williams on the Lake, 787 Lafayette Road, Medina, OH (west of the fairgrounds).

- 6:30 -7:00 pm question and answer session
- 7:00 - 9:00 pm meeting and speaker

December 16, 2019- Holiday Social Gathering for those who registered. No monthly meeting. The flyer follows.

January 20, 2020 – Bill Stitt – Native bees in Ohio and opportunities for creating native bee habitats in Medina County.

Bill, a Medina County resident, has been a beekeeper for 21 years, is a certified naturalist, and for many years worked with Medina County Parks. Bill is an OSU extension pollinator specialist and pollinator identification specialist.

Chili Cook Off! Cold weather is here and its chili time in Medina! Bring your favorite chili and recipe for members to share at the January meeting. Red, white, vegetarian, meat or meatless chili – you bring it – let the members sample it! A prize will be awarded for the best chili. What a perfect way to warm a cold up month!



February 17 – Denzil St. Clair – Coming out of Winter

March 16 – Dr. Jay Evans, USDA Beltsville Lab – The state of Honey Bees and Viruses

April 20 – Andrew Connor – How to Read the Frames in your Hive.

May 18, 2020 – Dr. Tracey Cook – Herbs and Honey Bees

Ten Minutes with the Bees

By Paul Kosmos, MCBA President

The Bee Yard in December

Twas the month of December
And all through the yard,
Hardly a Honey Bee was stirring,
Not even a guard.

My jacket was hung
In the barn with care,
My hive tool and veil
Also were there.

I hope they're all clustered,
All buttoned up tight,
With plenty of food,
And nary a mite.

My ear to the box,
A tap on the side,
I hear a faint buzz...
That means they're alive!

My joys are quite simple,
I need not a thing,
I'd really be happy,
To have bees in the Spring.

Yes, it is pretty quiet now in the Bee Yard. There is little to do except watch for those mild days to see some activity in front of the hive.



Sunny Day in Late December

But there are always a few things to watch for!

After a cold day you will see a few dead bees on the front porch. This is completely normal, and is a good thing. It means someone is home and doing house cleaning! A few bees die each day from old age. In the summer the worker bees haul them away and you do not see them. When it is cold, they haul them down to the porch but can't carry them off until it warms up.

You may see quite a few dead bees scattered on the snow near the hive after a real cold snap. It's good house cleaning at work. On occasion you may also see yellow spots on the snow. Oh, what a relief it is! Yes, it's a BP break on a mild day.

Once in a while take a peek at the entrance. If you should see too many dead bees inside the entrance (blocking the entrance), remove the mouse guard and carefully remove them with a stick. This does not happen too often.



On a mild day in winter you can pull out the insert (SBB) to see what's to learn and clean it. It is interesting since where the hive debris is heaviest tells you where the cluster is. You will also see a few dead mites, and SHB (Yeah!). I scrape it clean to prevent the wax debris from holding water when it rains or snows.

Medina County Beekeepers Association Minutes

Regular Monthly Membership Meeting - Meeting Date: November 18, 2019 - DRAFT

Call to Order: The regular monthly meeting of the Medina County Beekeeper's Association, was held at the Williams on the Lake at 787 Lafayette Rd, Medina, Ohio on November 18, 2019. The meeting convened at 7:00 P.M., President, Paul Kosmos presiding, Kim Barkfelt, Secretary.

Approval of Minutes: Paul Kosmos presented the minutes from the October 21, 2019 meeting as published in the November newsletter. No corrections were made; minutes were approved as distributed.

Officers' Reports: none

Committee Reports: One nominee, Don Spring, and any write-in candidates are eligible to be voted on for the open Director position. This position will commence on January 1, 2020 and expire on December 31, 2022.

Unfinished Business: none

New Business: Paper ballots to vote on the open Director position were distributed to verified members that were in attendance. 40/43 ballots distributed were submitted for the count.

The election results: (40) - Don Spring (0) - Write-in Candidates

Announcements: Our own, Peggy Garnes, was elected as OSBA President. Her term will commence on January 1, 2020 and is a two-year commitment. Congratulations Peggy!

Save this date: This year's holiday party will be held at Santasoutos Restaurant located at 3725 Medina Rd. The date will be December 16, 2019 and the time will be from 6:00 - 8:30 P.M. This will be, as usual, in place of our regular December meeting. Watch your email for details to follow.

Presentation: Dwight Wells presented on the topic of sustainable beekeeping. He is President of West Central Ohio Beekeepers Association and a Board Director for OSBA. He is also active in many of Ohio's Queen and NUC producers. Dwight is currently working with several universities, including Purdue, Penn State, Central State, and Kentucky on Feral Honey Bee projects.

Adjournment: December 16, 2019 from 6:00 - 8:30 P.M. and Santasoutos Restaurant located at 3725 Medina Rd, Medina, Ohio were fixed as the time and place for the Holiday gathering in place of a December meeting. Meeting adjourned at 8:28 P.M.

Election Results

Don Spring was elected to the Director-at-Large position at the November meeting. We apologize that due to phone trouble we were not able to reach Don earlier to send out this announcement. We look forward to having Don join the board and help us guide MCBA through the coming years. Don and his wife Vanessa have been keeping bees for two years and are regulars at our meetings. We will introduce him formally at the next meeting.

The Northeast Ohio Bee Yard – December

- When temperatures are 50 degrees or warmer, peek under the inner cover. If the bees are already clustered at top, consider putting on a winter patty, fondant, or other emergency food.
- This time of the year, when there is no brood or very little brood, it is a good time to treat with vaporized oxalic acid. Vaporize once each month in winter months. As the days start lengthening after December 21, the queen will slowly start to build out the brood nest. Any mites still in the hive will begin to reproduce under the capped brood. Take action now so that your colony comes into the spring with as few mites as possible.
- It is still not too late to wrap hives with tar paper or insulation board. Also consider placing a piece of insulation board between the inner cover and top cover. And, very important, place a heavy rock or brick on top of hives to keep the lid from flying off in a heavy wind. Am I speaking from experience? Maybe. But (now) there is a rock holding down the top cover on each hive in my apiary.
- Start planning for next year. What are your beekeeping goal for 2020? Will you be focusing on honey production, preventing swarms, catching swarms, splitting, earning master beekeeping certification, successfully overwintering a hive, or something else? Are there techniques or practices that you might want to try this year? Will you need to replace or invest in new equipment? Will you want to borrow books from the library or purchase some bee books?
- New beekeepers and those whose bees have already perished, place an order for one or more package or nuc. Think about ordering several different types of bees so that you can observe the differences and decide which works best with your beekeeping practice.

A Bee Inspector's View of Treatment-Free Beekeeping

By Ron Zickefoose Medina County Bee Inspector

Ohio hog producers generally keep the Yorkshire breed of pig. Yorkshires are white in color with erect ears and a high lean meat to fat ratio. They are thoroughly domesticated, selected solely for food production (bacon). Their normal care requires shelter, supplemental feeding, routine vaccinations, and treatment with antibiotics as needed. If a pork producer turned his Yorkshires out on the range to fend for themselves without care, and half of them died each year, he would be accused of having committed animal neglect—"the failure to provide the basic care required for an animal to thrive."

This is exactly what thousands of recreational beekeepers do every year. Under the misconception that they are practicing "treatment free" beekeeping, they are in actuality simply neglecting their domesticated animals. The reason for this is that they are starting with commercial package bees—bees akin to Yorkshire pigs, in that they are bred for high brood and honey production under standard management practices (notably mite management, but also supplemental feeding or antibiotic treatment if indicated). Most commercial bee stocks should be considered as domesticated animals. There is absolutely no reason to expect that your bees will miraculously transform into hardy survivor stock able to survive as wild animals without standard care and treatment.

Allowing domesticated package colonies to die year after year is not in any way, shape, or form a contribution to the breeding of mite-resistant stocks. There is a vast difference between breeding for

survivor stock and simply allowing commercial bees to die from neglect! By introducing commercial bees year after year into an area, and then allowing those package colonies to first produce drones and then to later die from varroa, these well-meaning but misguided beekeepers screw up any evolutionary progress that the local populations might be making towards developing natural resistance to varroa. Not only that, but those collapsing “mite bombs” create problems for your neighbors. Referring to yourself as a bee-keeper confers upon you a responsibility to the local beekeeping community. Allowing hives to collapse from varroa makes you a disease-spreading nuisance!

If you start your hive with commercial stock, then by all means care for them as domesticated animals! If you want to go treatment free, then start with survivor stock bred to be naturally resistant to mites and viruses. There are several members of our club breeding such stock.

Beginner’s Beekeeping Class – A great reason to join the club!

Cost for the class is \$85 for an individual or \$100 for a family. Current MCBA members who have paid for and taken the class before may retake the class for free. In addition to the class tuition, students receive a textbook, 1-year membership in the Medina County Beekeepers Association and a variety of magazines and catalogs from the beekeeping industry. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged so we know how to prepare, but late registration will be available at the door as long as space is available.

[Beginner Beekeeper Class 2020 Saturday track](#): Sat, Feb 22 and 29, 2020; 9:00 AM –4:30 PM at Medina County District Library, 210 South Broadway Street, Medina, OH 44256.

[Beginner Beekeeper Class 2020 Tuesday track](#): Tuesday, March 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31, 2020; 6:00 PM – 8:15 PM at Medina County District Library, 210 South Broadway Street, Medina, OH 44256.

2020 MCBA Membership Application / Renewal

Annual MCBA membership has two options for members, \$20 if newsletters will be emailed or \$25 for a printed newsletter mailed to your postal address. Membership provides one vote in MCBA club matters and includes one family member in club activities other than voting.

You may renew your membership either [online here](#) or complete the form below, make a check payable to Medina County Beekeepers Association, and

- Mail both to MCBA Treasurer, PO Box 1353, Medina, Ohio 44258 OR
- **Bring a check and completed membership form to the club treasure at a club meeting.**

Membership Form - Please complete so that we have current roster information for the newsletters!

Member Name: _____

e-mail: (please print): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____ (Optional) # of colonies: _____