



# SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2024

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tom Allen

Here we are in November and the weather is still warm enough on some days to have the bees out flying. Whether they find resources or not they're expending energy which means they're eating their stored resources more. Make sure that you check their honey stores and add feed for them if necessary.

This month is when we hold our NIBA elections for the positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. If you're interested in running for any of those positions please contact Jackie Tesser at 815-790-6999 to let her know of your intentions. We will definitely need a Secretary, that person takes notes during the Board meetings and sends them out to the Board members. The Board meets once a month over zoom on the last Wednesday of the month. If you have more questions you can reach out to me or any of the Board members. The new Board appoints the Directors for the next year, if you're interested in being a Director please reach out to me or any Board member to let us know.

Last month's meeting had the honey tasting and the turnout was great. The number of people that brought honey samples was the highest in recent years! So many different colors and they all tasted different. I enjoyed listening to people as they tasted the different honeys, they were trying to pick out what flavored the honey. I don't have that ability, my wife who is a super taster jokes that I only have 4 tastebuds so she doesn't take my word for what I say tastes good. I thought all of the honey tasted good!

As President I hope I've lead NIBA in a positive direction, this Board has been busy meeting the needs of the members and I couldn't be more proud of them. Ralph Brindise is stepping down as the NIBA treasurer, a position he's held for around 8 years. Ralph has worked tirelessly for the club and the members since he joined NIBA. He's worked on the hives out at MCC, did the groundwork for the McHenry County Fair and Planetpalooza as well as most of the other events we attend. Ralph has taken care of the bee order for several years and that's no small feat, coordinating what everyone orders and the many changes that come in because people find they have another deadout. Just dealing with the many phone calls and emails from people asking when the bees are coming in would push me over the edge but Ralph handled it very well. He and John Leibinger would rent a truck in recent years but before that they rented a trailer, built up the sides of the trailer with pieces of wood and then head up very early in the morning to load up the

bees, drive them back and stay to pass them out. Most of all Ralph has become one of my very best friends, I feel like we could call each other up for anything. He's helped me get bees out of a large tree that fell down and I was helping him pull honey supers off when my famous "son of a nutcracker" incident happened. NIBA owes Ralph a debt of gratitude for all that he's done. Thank you Ralph! We're also losing our Secretary Kristen Mueller who has done a fabulous job as secretary. Her meeting notes were very detailed and she had good ideas for things we were discussing. Kristen made sure the zoom links went out for Board meetings and our general meetings. Thank you Kristen!

We had a storage shed built out by the hives at MCC. Looking at the pictures it's going to be a welcome addition. Thank you Ralph for getting this done and Ralph and Al Fullerton for moving the boxes into the shed. Al has added some lighting and made some other additions to the shed and I'm sure will get more ideas on how to make it more useful as time goes on. Thank you Al!

Remember you can't vote or nominate someone over zoom so please attend the meeting in person, everyone that attends gets a door prize ticket which will be pulled at this meeting.

Thank you,  
Tom



## Club Activities

### Upcoming:

To be Determined...

### Past Activities:

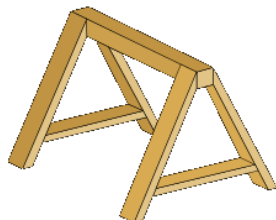
Oct 6<sup>th</sup> – McHenry County Historical Society 10 am – 2 pm

Oct 6<sup>th</sup> – The Far Field Nature Preserve in Barrington 1 pm – 4 pm

Sept 8<sup>th</sup> – History Day and Antique & Artisan Market in Lake Zurich 12 pm – 6 pm



# Pictures of New Shed



## Fall – Soon Winter

Larry Kregel

Is there still more you would like to do for your bees as you prepare them for winter? For me, there always is. Next week it seems we will have the weather to work bees without doing damage. We are supposed to be in the 50's and sunny. Thank you, Mother Nature.

That sent me to the workshop to make more Imirie rings. George Imirie was a beekeeper out east who promoted using rings to provide more space between the brood chamber and the honey supers. His rings also added an entrance at that point. Nowadays, we often use the term Imirie ring to mean any spacer we put in a hive to provide additional space. In the present case, I am going to use an Imirie ring to provide additional space on top of the deep brood hive bodies to



easily put in additional feed, pollen patties or the like. Some call it a “feeder ring.” I like giving George the credit he deserves.<sup>1</sup>

At this time of the year, bees are not prone to producing beeswax comb so there is little danger of having the bees build wild comb in the additional space. If this were April, that would be a potential problem. As in the photo, I did not remove a wide Imirie ring soon enough in the spring. Artistic, yes. Definitely difficult to clean up.

In recent years I have been making thicker rings – an inch and a half, maybe two inches. I think that will work well for me presently. Next week, with the nice weather, I will place the rings in between the top hive body and the inner cover. Any hives that seem light will get the Mountain Camp treatment. I will place newsprint on top of the frames with a mound of granulated sugar. On a nice January day I can peak to see if I need more. If the bees and their keeper (me)



have done well, they should not need a January fill up. Some suggest that the bees are prone to treating the granulated sugar as refuse and pushing it out of the hive. I have not experienced that, but one way of discouraging that is to use a sugar “slurry” or by spraying water gently on the mound of granulated sugar. Not a bad idea.

The world has gone virtual. The word Zoom has taken a new place in our vernacular. The bee world is in step. There are Zoom bee conferences, Zoom bee meetings, Zoom bee classes numbering more than any socially distanced beekeeper can realistically participate in. That said, it is good to look at investing our at-home winter time in a bit of education. I plan to partake in at least some hoping to break the bee-talk draught.

I have not been a Facebook guy... not really. But just for the comradery in the cold months I joined up with a couple of different Facebook bee groups. With a

little searching, one can find hundreds of bee groups on Facebook or elsewhere online – including the NIBA group.<sup>2</sup> One does need to be cautious about the info that is not filtered before arriving on one's computer screen. The world is full of helpful people who offer advice based on little expertise. Read, but question. Be cautious.

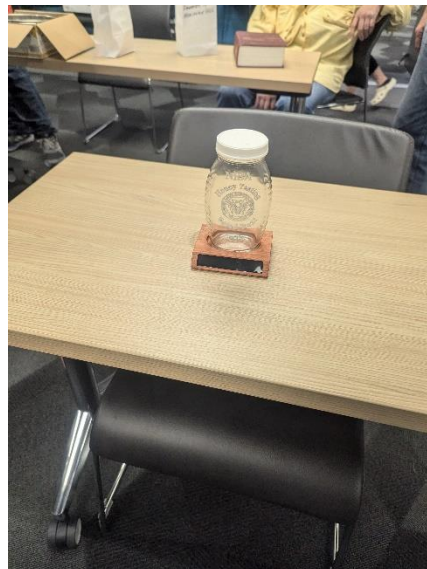
Once again I will be teaching Beekeeping 101 at McHenry County College. I have enjoyed doing it for many years. The College has now added more bee classes including a new one I will teach on varroa mites.<sup>3</sup> Most classes are hybrid – in person or virtual.

Stay safe. Stay happy. Think bees.

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1. George was an avid small scale beekeeper who wrote (before the internet) a blog that he snail-mailed to his readers. In real life he was a nuclear physicist.
2. I think this will get you to the group - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/141344284811/>. It was intended to be a meeting place for the NIBA members, but it brings in many others. The title picture was taken many years ago when NIBA had 60 members. Now the membership is somewhere over 200. Beekeeping has gained popularity and NIBA has an excellent program.
3. [https://mchenry.augusoft.net/index.cfm?method=ClassListing.ClassListingDisplay&int\\_category\\_id=7&int\\_sub\\_category\\_id=38&int\\_catalog\\_id=3...](https://mchenry.augusoft.net/index.cfm?method=ClassListing.ClassListingDisplay&int_category_id=7&int_sub_category_id=38&int_catalog_id=3...) Will get you to the course descriptions.

## *Pictures from Honey Tasting*



# October Mentoring in the Beeyard.....



## **Chores of the Month – November 2024**

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

John Leibinger

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

It looks like a relatively mild start to November...at least compared to last year when we experienced a bit of snow on Halloween. Nonetheless, winter is just around the corner and the bees will be settling in for the season. The nighttime temps will be running between the 30s to low 40s the first half of the month and likely 20s and 30s the last half.

Daytime temps will be in the 50s the first half and maybe a day or two will hit 60. As the month progresses, high temps will likely be in the 40s. The bees will be clustering to save some heat. They will be starting to consume their winter stores and will not be taking in sugar syrup at these temperatures.

### ***For All Beekeepers, it is time to:***

#### **Finalize your colony activities for 2024\*\*:**

**\*\*Note:** These are much the same as October chores, particularly for those who have fallen a bit behind. There are a few deletions. The deletions are primarily to avoid cracking open the hive bodies and breaking the propolis seals that the bees have created to reduce infiltration of the winter winds. I'll repeat for emphasis..... ***This is not the time to be breaking into the hive bodies and disrupting the seals or the winter cluster.*** (Exception: If you are fully wrapping your hives, the air infiltration by cracking the seals will be mitigated by the wraps.

**Also, some of the notes below are specific to ventilation hives. See the October notes for condensing hives.**

**Consider an Oxalic Acid sublimation or dribble treatment** to eliminate any remaining varroa mites that may have been in the colony or brought in by a late season robbing episode. A possible advantage of an OA sublimation this time of year is that you will not need to crack open the hive bodies and ruin the hive's propolis seals that were created to keep out the imminent winter winds. A dribble treatment can also be used without cracking the seals if you utilize a single brood box management process. If you use double brood boxes and all the bees are in the lower box, you will need to crack the seal to apply the treatment. If this is the case, strongly consider wrapping the hive to minimize air infiltration.

**Tilt hive forward a little bit to assist moisture drainage.**

**Rake up leaves and debris from around the hive** to lessen the opportunity for mouse and pygmy shrew problems.

**Add mouse guards.** If you have Pygmy Shrews, the openings will need to be reduced to about 5/16". Don't forget....mice can climb, so protect upper entrances also. If you use entrance reducers as your mouse guard, make sure that the egress slot is at the top not the bottom. It seems counter intuitive, but if the slot is at the bottom it is easily plugged up with dead bees thus rendering it useless. When placed 'upside down' it allows the live bees to climb over the dead bodies to exit. A little inconsiderate and heartless of the bees if you are given to anthropomorphism.

**Make sure you have an upper entrance/exit if you are following the ventilation hive management process.** It helps with ventilation and it is an easy egress point for bees to take cleansing flights in the winter. Make sure it is mouse/shrew proofed. Sometimes the lower entrances get plugged with ice or snow and even with dead bees.

**Add an appropriate feeding shim and some solid feed** in the form of winter patties, a candy board, sugar bricks or cakes, or dry sugar above the top hive body. You may want to add emergency feed in later winter and having a spacer already in place will make that effort possible. Prepare ahead of time.

**Make sure there is adequate ventilation** to remove moisture from the hive if you are following the ventilation hive management process. Bees breathe and metabolize the carbohydrates they consume to produce heat. A by-product of that metabolism is moisture, and it must find its way out of the hive to reduce dripping from condensation. **Cold wet bees are dead bees. It is preventable.**

**Consider adding a moisture board or quilt box** or some other method of capturing the moisture and preventing it from condensing and dripping on the bees.

**Consider (very strongly) adding insulation at the top of the hive** to further reduce the opportunity for condensation.

**Consider wrapping your hive** to insulate or at least to eliminate infiltration of cold winter winds. Wraps are often done in black on the theory that there is a little solar heat gain on sunny winter days. It is a double edged sword though. If the solar gain is enough to make the bees break cluster, they may have difficulty recluster faster than the evening temperatures drop and that can be catastrophic. You judge whether or not you believe the black adds value. Consult the internet for a myriad of approaches to wrapping hives.

**\*\*Additional thoughts on insulation:** One thing that insulation does is that it slows down the transfer of heat (or cold). This provides a more stable environment inside the hive. Internal hive temps may remain cooler on warmer days and keep the bees clustered. This isn't necessarily a bad thing. Depending how much temperature fluctuation our area experiences daily, the bees are likely better off remaining in cluster rather than breaking cluster and having difficulty regrouping before they become too cold from quickly dropping temperatures. It is a personal choice. Depending where you are in the learning/experience curve, this may be a learning opportunity. Insulate some, don't insulate others and monitor the results. No matter the wrap insulation, be sure to insulate the top.

**Consider creating a wind block** with snow fencing, straw bales, large lawn bags filled with leaves ( word of caution: straw bales and to a lesser extent, bags of leaves may be attractive to mice, so use them with that warning in mind), or basically anything that you can position to break the force of the direct wind against your hive.

**Consider strapping down your hive** for the winter to prevent winter winds from toppling the hive.

**If you have been a conscientious beekeeper** throughout the 2024 season and have monitored and controlled varroa mites, left the bees with sufficient stores, ended the year with healthy bees and a young queen (less than a year old), you have provided your bees with the chance of thriving in Spring 2025. Still no guarantee, but you have tilted the odds in their favor.

**Start preparing for the 2025 season:**

Renew your annual Apiary Registration with Illinois Department of Agriculture.

Clean up any dead outs that you have experienced this season.

Continue to increase your knowledge of bees and beekeeping:

- Read and study about bees and beekeeping
- Attend beekeeping meetings
- Increase your knowledge of local plants and trees.
- Form a small group of beekeepers to meet for lunch and talk bees.

Inventory your equipment, tools, and supplies.

Review your 2024 season (and your notes) for successes and opportunities.

Set new goals for 2025.

## **General Info**

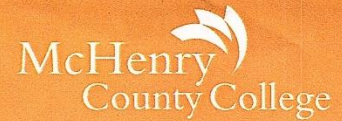
Download the forms to register your bees with the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

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





COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT CENTER  
SPRING 2025



# BEEKEEPING

## Beekeeping 101

Keeping honeybees is fascinating. Bees will pollinate your garden and provide a sweet crop of honey. In this class, you will learn where to start as a keeper of bees. We'll cover bee biology, modern beekeeping techniques, construction of hives, and how to acquire bees. Keep bees for the fun of it, as a sideline job, or to help your garden and orchard.

Fee: \$75 Larry Kregel  
 In person  
 # 9695      W    2/5-2/26    7-9:30 p.m.    Catalyst Campus  
 Remote  
 # 9696      W    2/5-2/26    7-9:30 p.m.      Remote

## 7 Ways To Raise A Queen

The number of small-scale beekeepers is increasing, and the demand for locally raised queen bees is growing. Purchased queens are often raised in areas of Africanized honeybees or come from migratory bee operations where dangerous viruses are exchanged. Gain information and learn seven simple methods of raising healthy honeybee queens. With a few insights and a small amount of equipment, the backyard beekeeper can raise locally adapted queens from bee stock with a great record of winter survival, good temperament, and excellent honey production.

Fee: \$25 Larry Kregel  
 In person  
 # 9697      W    3/5            7-9:30 p.m.    Catalyst Campus  
 Remote  
 # 9698      W    3/5            7-9:30 p.m.      Remote

## Comb Honey

Comb honey is old fashioned honey harvested in the bees own wax case. A hundred years ago honey was removed from the hive and eaten in the comb. Today, extracted honey (honey in the jar) is the norm. This course is an opportunity to return to the old (and some contend the healthiest) way of harvesting honey. Producing honey in the comb is a beekeeping challenge, an old fashioned challenge explored in this class.

Fee: \$25 Larry Kregel  
 In person  
 # 9699      W    3/12          7-9:30 p.m.    Catalyst Campus  
 Remote  
 # 9700      W    3/12          7-9:30 p.m.      Remote

## Beekeeping Field Study

This short course will provide practical, hands-on instruction for installing, manipulating, and inspecting colonies of bees. The class will meet in a bee yard, so appropriate clothing and bee equipment will be necessary. Spring is the time to start with bees, and this course will walk you through it step by step. Learn what you need to know to start out right with your bees.

Fee: \$59 Larry Kregel  
 # 9799      Sa    4/5, 4/12    10 a.m.-Noon    MCC  
 # 9800      Sa    4/5, 4/12    1-3 p.m.          MCC

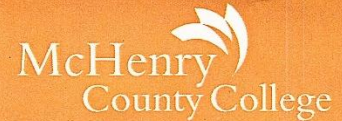


To register for a class, scan the QR code, visit [www.mchenry.edu/personaldevelopment](http://www.mchenry.edu/personaldevelopment), or call (815) 455-8588.

For more information, please contact the Community Enrichment Center at [personaldevelopment@mchenry.edu](mailto:personaldevelopment@mchenry.edu) or (815) 455-8758

# COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT CENTER

## SPRING 2025



### Varroa Mite: Know Your Enemy

Enemy #1 in the honeybee world is Varroa Destructor – the varroa mite. Understanding how the biology of the honeybee and that of the varroa mite intersect is important to successful beekeeping in today's world. This mite attaches to honeybees and their larva weakening them and passing on deadly viruses. A successful strategy for control of these mites is critical to the survival of a honeybee colony. This class will discuss the history, the biology and the control of Varroa Destructor.

**Fee: \$25** Larry Krengel  
 In person W 4/9 7–9:30 p.m. Catalyst Campus  
 # [9910](#)  
 Remote W 4/9 7–9:30 p.m. Remote  
 # [10512](#)

### Honey Tasting: A Sensory Analysis of Honey

Honey takes a long journey before it lands in your jar. The final product can be affected by many variables, including the local climate, botanical sources and the honeybees who visit them, and the activity of beekeepers. In this class, we will study varietal honeys using our senses of sight, smell, taste, and touch to fully appreciate the selection of these honeys. We will approach honey tasting as a sensory journey as we review at least five varietal honeys and compare their flavors and profile differences. We will also review and discuss: a Honey Sensory Wheel and how that impacts fragrances within the honey; how to more finely tune our senses to appreciate our local varietals of honey; how honeys acquire certain aromas that often differ from what we would expect; methods of tasting the full balance of flavors of these honeys; how to appreciate the different textures of honey and their impact on our taste buds; and sample 20+ varieties of handcrafted local honeys (creamed, infused, raw, and barrel-aged) and other honey-based products (honey sauces, mustards, and honey hot sauces). Students will receive their own Honey Sensory Booklet for future tastings.

**Fee: \$45** Frank Moriarty  
 # [10513](#) T 5/6 6–8 p.m. Catalyst Campus

### Buzzing Beauty: DIY Beeswax Lip Balm Workshop

Join us for a hands-on workshop where you'll learn to create your own natural lip balms using beeswax. Discover the benefits of beeswax and explore a variety of essential oils and natural ingredients to customize your balms. This workshop will cover the entire process, from melting and mixing to pouring and packaging, ensuring you leave with your own personalized lip balm to take home. Perfect for beginners and anyone interested in natural skincare, this fun and informative session will have you crafting your own lip care products in no time. All materials will be provided.

**Fee: \$39** Stephanie Slater  
 # [10404](#) W 4/16 6–8 p.m. Catalyst Campus



To register for a class, scan the QR code, visit [www.mchenry.edu/personaldevelopment](http://www.mchenry.edu/personaldevelopment), or call (815) 455-8588.

For more information, please contact the Community Enrichment Center at [personaldevelopment@mchenry.edu](mailto:personaldevelopment@mchenry.edu) or (815) 455-8758

## 2024 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President – Tom Allen

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Director - Al Fullerton

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Director – Andre Szechowycz

[aszech804@gmail.com](mailto:aszech804@gmail.com)

Program Chair – Larry Kregel

Webmaster – Terri Reeves

Newsletter Editor – Sue Pinkawa

Club Extractor Coordinator – Al Fullerton

Club Raffle Coordinator – John Leibinger

Snack Coordinator – Robin Tibbits

## Honey Extractor

Did you know that your membership in NIBA includes the opportunity to rent one of the clubs 3 honey extractors?

Two of the extractors are manual, a 4 frame a 3 frame. The third is motorized and is capable of extracting both sides of 9 frames at a time.

Rental fee for either of the manual extractor is \$10.00 for 3 days with a \$10.00 security deposit. The electric (motorized) 9 frame extractor costs \$25.00 to rent for 2 days with a \$75.00 security deposit. Deposits will be returned if equipment is returned on time, clean, and undamaged.

The extractors come with most equipment needed to make the uncapping and extraction experiences go smoothly, except of course, the honey frames and buckets.

To reserve a date contact Al Fullerton by phone or text at 815-382-7139 or email [adfhone@gmail.com](mailto:adfhone@gmail.com), if you don't get a timely response, just phone. Pick it up in Cary Illinois.

## 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)

**The queen marking color for  
2024 is Green.**

