



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2023

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Noel Williams

In November our outgoing President, Tom Allen, was named NIBA's Beekeeper of the Year for 2022. Tom's unfailing commitment of time and energy to the club allowed NIBA to flourish even in these uncertain times. Tom has continued on the NIBA board for 2023 as our Vice President. **Congratulations and thank you, Tom!**



Also in November of 2022, outgoing NIBA Director Stephanie Slater was named 2022 Beekeeper of the Year by the Wisconsin Honey Producer's Association. (See

<https://www.wihoney.org/2022/12/01/2022-beekeeper-of-the-year-stephanie-slater/>).

Stephanie also earned recognition at the 2023 ABF meeting in Florida, winning Best of Show. That's the best honey in the country, folks! Stephanie is a valued member of NIBA and continues to make contributions to the growth of the club on a regular basis. **Congratulations and thank you, Stephanie!**



One of the main purposes of organizations like NIBA is to bring people together so they can exchange what they've learned about their shared interests. We learn from speaker presentations, roundtables, stories we tell each other, and outside events. We can also learn a heck of a lot from each other one-on-one and, in the process, make new friends. A great way to meet people who share your interests (bees, in this case) is to volunteer for club-sponsored events. Whether it's mentoring, helping to manage the club's apiary, or working the NIBA booth at a show,

Please join the Northern IL Beekeepers Assoc. on Thursday - February 9th at 7:00 pm McHenry County College Room 213 for guest Speaker Dave Meyer of Meyer Bees followed by a vendor event featuring

Warren Spencer Apiaries

HARVARD EGGS AND FEED

Gift items by Hannah

MEYER BEES
2023 Packages, Nuts, Queens and Beekeeping Supplies

McHenry County College
8900 US Hwy 14, Crystal Lake, IL 60012
Enter building A on Second Level

you will likely strike up new friendships and learn something new to boot! And, as a bonus, you will be helping to strengthen NIBA as an organization. Wow, talk about a great investment of your time! Want new friends? Raise your hand, volunteer!

On a very sad note, Joe Magyar, a long-time member of NIBA passed away last month at the age of 83. Our heartfelt condolences to his wife, Jan, and their family. Joe and Jan have been very actively involved with NIBA for many years. They have always been there to help move the club forward. Joe, you will be missed!

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/nwherald/name/josef-magyar-obituary?id=38671727>

I hear from Larry Kregel that the queens are laying! Have a great season everyone, here we go!

Noel

CHORES OF THE MONTH – FEBRUARY

John Leibinger

Like the bees we study, we accomplish more together.

What's happening in the hive?

Well, no doubt about it, winter is finally here! Nonetheless, healthy overwintering colonies have already or will start raising brood for the coming year. Late 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. A peek inside on a warm day may also provide insight. A sign that the bees may be in need of feed is their location in the hive. If they have worked their way to the top box, just under the inner cover, they may have consumed all the honey in their pathway and may need assistance. On a warmer day, you can 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 sucrose based feed, e.g. dry sugar, sugar bricks, winter patties, fondant, candy board, etc., to help them through the remaining winter. A little later in the month, providing pollen/pollen sub or pollen patties may provide needed protein for brood development.

Check for activity at the hive on warmer days. Have they been taking cleansing flights? Don't be alarmed at seeing some dead bees on the snow outside the hive. These are bees that likely left the hive for a cleansing flight and were too weak (or they chose a day that was a bit too cold for them) to make it back. This is not necessarily a bad sign. It is a sign that there are likely live bees inside still. 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 afterwards). 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.

Consider spending some winter downtime setting up a spare hive with new equipment or some you have recently cleaned up.

When you have a reasonably warm day in late April or early May to do your first complete inspection, you can position this spare equipment next to one of your overwintered colonies and methodically transfer the frames from old to 'new'. While doing your inspection, this gives you an opportunity to evaluate all the frames and replace some as you see fit. It also provides the opportunity to rotate frames from top box to bottom if that is part of your management process.

Maybe the colony strength is such that you will downsize to a single box while the colony develops (or continue the season under a single brood box management approach). Anyway, after making the transfer of the first colony to the fresh 'new' box(s), clean up their last year's equipment and repeat the process with your next overwintered colony.

NOTE 1: Be very observant for any signs of disease before making the woodenware transfers.

NOTE 2: Be sure to transfer the frames with brood in the same order/positions that they were positioned in original hive.

For New Beekeepers just getting started this year:

Read, Study, and Learn....Books, Periodicals, Classes, Club Meetings, Podcasts, Internet videos (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 resources will help.

Get a Mentor from the Bee Club. 2023 will likely move towards a more normalized mentoring process. Since COVID has tapered off, the opportunity for in person mentoring will be more prevalent. You may want to start with mentoring via email, text, phone calls, or for the more tech savvy, video calls before the season starts. Just be aware that there are beekeepers interested in helping other beekeepers. As my beekeeping therapist says...the first step is to ask for help.

Order your equipment, tools, and protective clothing. Try to start with a minimum of two hives. It allows for comparisons. 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 between colonies if needed (potentially very important)more on this as the year progresses.

Order your Bees. Try to start with a minimum of two hives...see above. Don't get hung up on bee race/stock, i.e., Italian, Carniolan, Russian, Buckfast, etc., they are likely mutts anyway (forgive the sarcasm). Packages or nucs (nucleus colonies)? There are advantages and disadvantages to each. Ask questions and listen to the reasoning provided. For new beekeepers, a nuc provides you with a developed working colony (albeit small) along with some drawn comb which greatly enhances early spring survival. On the other hand, packages offer the opportunity to observe the process of a hive and colony development from ground zero. Keep in mind, whoever you ask will have a bias, so it is just an opinion ...**here is mine:** since you should start with multiple colonies, get at least one of each and learn something. You will get to experience installing both types. You will get to see the development of each type. If circumstances dictate only getting one colony, it should be a nuc with the drawn comb. It will allow for the greatest chance of success and higher likelihood of getting a first year honey crop. Next year you can pass on your experience/bias and learnings to the next 'Newbee'.

Assemble and paint your equipment. It's fun and can be creative...on the painting side at least. Don't get too creative on the assembly of equipment. Follow the 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 last year. Look for signs. Take some pictures at several different angles. Consider sharing pictures of a frame or two (brood frames) at your next club meeting. Another beekeeper with different experiences may be able to offer some insight.

For All Beekeepers, it is time to:

Take an inventory.

A) Equipment/Supplies inventory

Make a list of what your equipment, tools, and supplies.

- Do you need to replace frames or foundation (a comb 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? Have you laundered your bee wear to be ready for a new season?
- Do you have sufficient (and not expired) 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 – Very Important

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.
- Successfully over-winter my bees.
- Successfully make a split.
- Move closer to achieving sustainable beekeeping (not having to buy new bees every year).
- Learn to create and use nucleus colonies to over-winter more colonies and increase the colonies in my apiary.
- Learn to raise my own queens.
- Learn to produce comb honey, e.g., Ross Rounds, cut comb honey, chunk honey, or 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.
- Learn how to collect/process/use propolis.
- Are you interested in encaustic painting? Are you interested in creating wax art?

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.

Do you need to re-evaluate your equipment to be sure you have what you need to achieve your goals (see A. above)?

C. Bee Inventory

-How many colonies do you want to start this year with? How many do you have that will overwinter? Are you sure?? A live hive in early February is a 🍌 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.
Your pre-season preparation will set the tone for your
success for the year.
Now is the time!**

Can't wait to go from this.....To this!



2023 Wisconsin Honey Producers Association Southern & Southeastern Districts Spring Meeting
Saturday, March 11th 1:30pm–4:30pm
Concord Town Hall/Community Center, W1095 Concord Center Drive, Sullivan, WI 53178
Cost: WHPA members: Free; Non-members: \$5 at the door

Come enjoy an afternoon of beekeeper fellowship over coffee and treats with numerous door prizes.

Panel Discussion covering:

- Varroa mite management from Spring to Fall
- Inspections and equalizing colonies
- Tips for increasing honey production
- Managing the broodnest for better over-wintering
- And more...

Network and get to know other beekeepers in the area. Form relationships in the beekeeping community that provide resources and knowledge that go beyond the hive.

RSVPs encouraged (but not required)

Click link to register: [Spring Meeting Registration](#)

Or contact:

Tim Wilbanks (Southern District Chair) timwilb...@gmail.com or call/text [\(319\) 321-2494](tel:(319)321-2494)

Charlie Koenen (Southeastern District Chair) beevan...@gmail.com or call/text [\(414\) 617-7773](tel:(414)617-7773)

HONEYBEE MISINFORMATION

Larry Krengel

Greetings Beekeepers –

The keeping of bees has a long and often intriguing history.

In the late 1800s it was being circulated in some circles that honeybees were damaging fruit crops. Accuracy and proof were not demanded. It was assumed true by some. This accusation seems strange to our modern sensibilities. Today we have no doubt about the value the honeybee's contribution to hundreds of crops.

We could consider this a story of misinformation 19th century style. Today we can spread misinformation fast thanks to our lightning speed internet, but apparently unfounded claims were equally strong in those long-gone times even if they travelled more slowly. Uncritical minds were around then, too.

The rumor that bees would puncture fruit and suck them dry was being spread. Scientific evidence could not change minds. In the year 1899 the fight between some beekeepers and fruit growers came to a head in Amity, New York when the Utter brothers – one a beekeeper and the other an orchardist – ended up in court to settle their quarrel. The story was reported in the Gleanings in Bee Culture of June 1, 1899 and was thought important enough to find a place in the next 'new' edition of the ABC and XYZ of Bee Culture. Once and for all, the question of bees damaging fruit was to be settled.

It was a three-day jury trial in which one of the Utter brothers insisted his sibling owed him reparations for damage to his crop and should be required to remove his honeybee colonies from the vicinity. Thirty witnesses were called including Frank Benton the USDA authority on honey bees. (read more about the amazing story of Frank Benton - <https://amcinternational.org/>) The jurors dutifully considered the testimony.

Frank Benton testified that honeybees never puncture fruit. The fact is, he said, that bees have no cutting jaw as do wasps and other insect of that ilk. Other experts collaborated these facts. Honeybees lack the ability to bite. The jury exonerated the honeybees and found for the defendant. The court ruled that honeybees did not damage fruit crops.



An interesting sidelight... A Google search finds a farm store in upstate New York currently in business – Utter Brothers Feed. Hummm... Perhaps there is yet another chapter to the story.

Another small sidelight... this is a picture of Frank Benton on the job in a beeyard. They dressed well for the occasion in those days. I don't think I have ever put on a shirt and tie to tend my bees. Maybe I should.



There was a very nice write-up in the Northwest Herald on February 6th. Thank you go out to Larry Krengel, Ralph Brindise, and Sue Dietz for your contributions.

[Northwest Herald](#)



The Garfield Park Conservatory's Spring Flower Show tradition returns February 15th! This year's show, "Bee's Knees" is a peek into the wondrous relationship between bees and blooms. Beautiful blooming spring bulbs such as tulips, daffodils and hyacinth, will be featured this year alongside hydrangeas, delphiniums, azaleas, and more. Empty observation and demo hives from GPC's beekeeping program are set amongst the blooms, giving a glimpse into the world of a bee.

Wednesday, February 8 at 6:30 pm, Dr. Katie Lee will present on her 2 year research about healthy queens and colonies. Info about the lecture and registration link are below. Hope you can make it.

Do healthy queens lead to healthy colonies?

A healthy queen is vital for a colony to thrive. The ability to predict the downfall of a queen can help a beekeeper make the management decision to replace a queen or leave her be. This talk covers what queen failure looks like, if colony signs like brood pattern can help beekeepers read the health of a queen, and the impact of queen age on the productiveness of a colony. Dr. Lee presented preliminary results from her research into queen and colony health in November 2021 and this lecture will have updated info and more field data from 2022.

Katie Lee is the Apiculture Extension Educator and co-coordinator for the Minnesota Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) professional development program at the University of Minnesota. Katie received her master's and doctorate in entomology from the University of Minnesota where she specialized in honey bees and focused on varroa mite and metrics that indicate queen and colony health. She also spent six years traveling the US assessing colonies of commercial beekeepers for the Bee Informed Partnership, and kept about 200 colonies for a research project looking at the benefits of pollinator planting on pollinators. She currently develops educational resources for beekeepers and does a bit of practical research. Katie is on the boards of the Minnesota Hobby Beekeepers Association and the Bee Informed Partnership.

<https://garfieldconservatory.org/event/virtual-beekeeping-lecture-with-dr-katie-lee-2/>

At Home Beekeeping Webinar
Distance Learning for Beekeepers

We're offering beekeepers the chance to attend virtual meetings from the comfort of one's own home using a computer or mobile device. Speakers include university researchers and extension specialists from across the SE US as well as USDA ARS researchers. Each event will bring participants up to date on timely beekeeping topics with time for Q & A included.

All are welcome!! Join us for this free event!!

- Jan 21: Seasonal timing of Varroa treatments, with C. Cook (UP)
- Feb 28: Dipping is a simple technique, but who is it so difficult for many of us? with W. J. Davis (USDA)
- March 22: BEEP: The National Loss and Fight Survey, with D. Williams (US)
- April 25: Sustainable Beekeeping and Disease Control, with J. Beaman (USDA)

Watch via Zoom Webinar
<https://auburn.zoom.us/j/904522838>

on Facebook Live: <https://www.facebook.com/InstituteOfAgriculture/>
Questions? Email Aliyan Shabel ashabel@aes.edu

Our webinars are equal opportunity education and employment. Everyone is welcome! Please let us know if you have accessibility needs.



NORTHERN ILLINOIS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

2023 APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Affiliated with the Illinois State Beekeepers Association (ISBA)

****PLEASE NOTE CHANGES BELOW**:**

- Check one: Renewal Individual Membership - \$20 Renewal Family Membership - \$30
- Check one: NEW Individual Membership - \$25 NEW Family Membership - \$35
- (Includes Single Membership in the Illinois State Beekeepers Association, additional ISBA memberships, \$10 each)

If applying after February 28, 2023 and you are a renewing member, please add \$5.00.



Name(s):		
Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Phone:		
Email address (if family membership, include all emails. Newsletter will be sent to all emails):		



Yes, I would like to order a NIBA name tag(s), add \$10 per name tag.

Name tag(s) should read (please print):

Please tell us more about yourself:

I have been a NIBA Member since _____ (year) I plan to have _____ colonies/hives this season

I have been a beekeeper for about _____ years I am a Master Gardener/Beekeeper _____

Check all that applies:

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, other)

Complete this form and mail with **check payable to: NORTHERN ILLINOIS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION (NIBA)**
 TO: NIBA Membership, c/o Ralph Brindise, 517 Northlake Road, Lakemoor, IL 60051

2023 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President - Noel Williams

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Program Chair – Larry Krengel

Webmaster – Terri Reeves

Newsletter Editor – Marianne Hill

Club Extractor Coordinators – Randy Mead/Al Fullerton

Club Raffle Coordinator – John Leibinger

Snack Coordinator – Sally Willer

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. 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.**

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**, 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.**