



# SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2021

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tom Allen

Happy New Year! Boy, have I missed meeting in person. My brain needs personal interactions, so this pandemic has presented some challenges for me. On one hand, both of our daughters that are in college are home-learning and my wife is working from home, so that's been a welcome change. On the other hand, not being able to hold in-person meetings for NIBA and MCC have prevented me from shaking hands, talking, and just being around so many of you.

I had taken Larry's class at MCC just to learn something different. During that class, Larry's passion for beekeeping was evident. I caught the beekeeping fever by about the 3<sup>rd</sup> class. I went home and talked my wife's ear off about what I had learned. I was passionate about becoming a beekeeper. As a firefighter/paramedic, my entire identity was wrapped around being a firefighter. I worked with the same 15 guys for 24 hours at a time, having each other's backs. There's something about being around people you can count on—you develop bonds knowing if you need a hand, all you have to do is ask. Neighbors and friends called me for help at all

hours of the day and night. Even my daughters' teachers knew me as Tom the firefighter. I was injured and forced to retire, and I slowly lost my identity as a firefighter. I was no longer with those 15 guys fighting fires or responding to other emergencies. They were going about their usual lives—I was out of sight and out of mind now. I was adjusting to my new life. I became Mr. Mom, taking over the daily house duties from cooking and cleaning to getting our daughters off to school while my wife was working full time. I was Tom the stay-at-home dad. After taking Larry's class, I bought my first package of bees, and I became Tom the beekeeper! By joining NIBA, I found an identity and a camaraderie with other beekeepers that reminded me of being back at the fire house. If you need help or have a question, you just need to ask members of this group, much like when I was a firefighter. My neighbors ask me to talk to people about being a beekeeper or ask if I have honey to sell.

I write this so you learn more about me. Many of you might not know that I was a firefighter for almost 30 years, and I've been a beekeeper for 5 years. NIBA provides a different

### MEETING AGENDA

6:30 New Beekeeper Q&A - Marcin

7:00 Pledge of Allegiance

7:05 Old Business

7:10 New Business  
Photo Contest, Stephanie  
Mentor Days- Tom  
Bee Order Report- Ralph

7:20 Honey and Wax Products, Collecting and Studying Pollen- Stephanie

Q&A session

8:10 Spin the Wheel for a Gift Card- Stephanie

Anything for the good of the group

Adjournment

experience to each of us. Some join to get a reduced price on bees, others join for the camaraderie, and a number of other reasons. However, the more you participate, the more you learn, and the more you share, the more we all benefit. I hope you're a passionate beekeeper, and your passion is infectious to others in the group.

I hope that 2021 gives us the ability to meet in person so we feel the camaraderie that NIBA provides.

POSTPONED

## ISBA 130<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION PARTY

The Anniversary Meeting originally planned for March 2021, at Dadant & Sons in Hamilton, IL, has been postponed until further notice.



The poster features a dark blue background with a large, expressive yellow brushstroke. In the center, a white hexagonal shape with a black border contains a yellow megaphone icon at the top, followed by the text "• Beekeeper •" and "Webinar" in a large, bold, white font. To the right of the hexagon is a yellow circular badge with the text "Free to sponsor club members" in black. Below the hexagon, the name "Dr. Kirsten Traynor" is written in a bold, yellow font. Underneath the name, three vertical yellow lines separate the text "Tuesday, 1/19/2021", "7:00 pm", and "Zoom", which are all in white. At the bottom of the poster, the text "Event Sponsors:" is followed by a list of five beekeeping organizations in white. A white rectangular box at the very bottom contains a paragraph of text in black, providing details about the webinar and contact information.

• Beekeeper •  
**Webinar**

Free to sponsor club members

**Dr. Kirsten Traynor**

**Tuesday, 1/19/2021** | **7:00 pm** | **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 Dr. Kirsten Traynor. Dr. Traynor will discuss the honey bee versus native bee debate. Dr. Traynor works full-time as a honey bee researcher, edits the quarterly magazine *2 Million Blossoms*, and guest co-hosts the *Beekeeping Today* podcast. The Zoom link will be emailed 1/16/2021. No registration required. Contact [stephanie.d.slater@gmail.com](mailto:stephanie.d.slater@gmail.com) with any questions.

## SAY BEES!

We know many of you enjoy taking photos in your apiaries. We'd like to invite you to submit your favorite beekeeping-related photos. We'll conduct an informal poll during the monthly meetings, and the top pick will be featured in the following month's newsletter and as the group's Facebook page cover photo. Here are the details:

1. Submit one photo per month by 9:00 pm the Thursday immediately preceding the scheduled monthly meeting.
2. Email your photo as an attachment to [stephanie.d.slater@gmail.com](mailto:stephanie.d.slater@gmail.com) with "**NIBA Photo**" typed in the subject line.
3. Please include your name and a short caption in the body of the email.
4. Each month's top pick may be used for future club activities.
5. Participate in as many months as you'd like.

## MENTOR DAYS



We've solidified some of the 2021 mentor program details. We will hold them at the McHenry County College and the Sherman Hospital hives on the **second** and **fourth Saturdays** of the month, **May through October** subject to weather issues and scheduling conflicts, such as (hopefully) the potential July picnic. April dates will be based on our bee delivery date and the weather. The time of the sessions are to be determined. They will be staggered for flexibility. We're working on a list of mentors to work the mentor days, as well as mentors willing to help someone with their hive. More information will be released in the coming months.



**FREE FOR ABF MEMBERS!**

**AGENDA & SPEAKERS  
ANNOUNCED**

**JOIN NOW AND REGISTER:**

[ABFNET.ORG/CONFERENCE](https://www.abfnet.org/conference)



<https://www.abfnet.org/page/conference>

Access your 2021  
Membership Application  
here:

[Membership Application](#)  
(ctrl click)

Access your 2021 Package  
Bee and Nuc Order Form  
here:

[Package Bee Order Form](#)  
(ctrl click)

WORKFORCE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
**Community Education—Spring 2021**



# BEEKEEPING

## Beekeeping 101 (878)

Larry Kregel

The demand for bees for pollination is up, so there's no better time to learn about bees and beekeeping. 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. This class will be delivered via Zoom. You'll be notified with access information 24 hours before the class begins.

Fee: \$59

Course Code #	Day	Date	Time
NPG 538 001	W	2/3-2/24	7-9:30 p.m.

## Seven Ways to Raise a Queen (879)

Larry Kregel

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 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. This class will be delivered via Zoom. You'll be notified with access information 24 hours before the class begins.

Fee: \$25

Course Code #	Day	Date	Time
NPG 583 001	W	3/3	7-9:30 p.m.

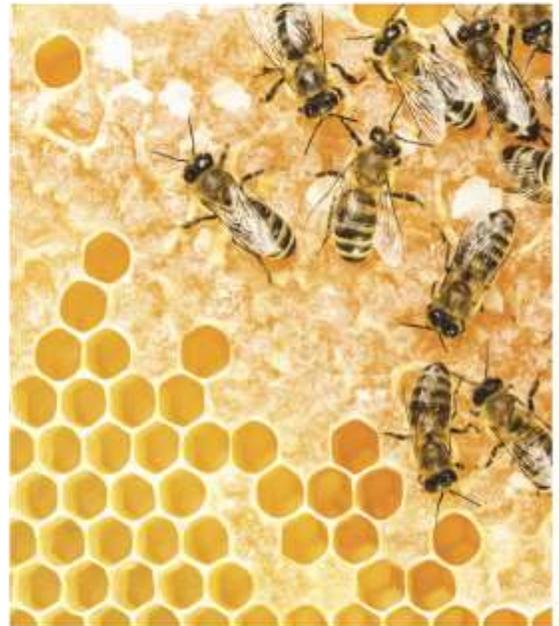
## Beekeeping Field Study (1044)

Larry Kregel

This short course will provide practical, hands-on instruction for installing, manipulating, and inspecting colonies of bees. If possible, the class will meet in a bee yard, so appropriate clothing and bee equipment will be necessary. If it is not possible to meet in the bee yard, class will be delivered via Zoom. 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. Please make sure to update your email address when you register for the class to ensure you receive all information in a timely manner.

Fee: \$59

Course Code #	Day	Date	Time	Location
NPG 539 001	S	4/10, 4/24	10 a.m.-Noon	Off-campus, TBA



To register for a class, visit [www.mchenry.edu/personaldevelopment](http://www.mchenry.edu/personaldevelopment) or call (815) 455-8588.  
 For more information, contact [personaldevelopment@mchenry.edu](mailto:personaldevelopment@mchenry.edu).

## CHORES OF THE MONTH - JANUARY

John Leibinger

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

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

The bees will be clustering to maintain colony warmth for the next several months. Slowly working their way up the hive, they will be consuming the food that they have stored away specifically for this time. A mild winter generally allows the bees to be a little more active in the hive. The result is they consume more of their stores. Be aware that they may need additional emergency feeding. A colder winter tends to minimize bee activity and leads to a tighter cluster. On the plus side, they may initially consume fewer stores, but they also have less ability to move around within the hive to access stored honey. If they are not in direct contact with frames of honey, they are at risk of starvation.

There are heater bees at the inside of the cluster that will be producing heat, and the bulk of the rest of the workers will be surrounding them, maintaining layers of insulation to minimize loss of that precious heat. Some of those outer bees will perish and fall to the bottom board. Undertaker bees will periodically push the bodies to the front of the hive (possibly blocking off hive egress at the bottom entrance). The bees will slowly rotate from the colder outside layers of the cluster to inner layers to warm up. This will continue throughout the winter. The cluster itself will also very slowly migrate around the hive in an effort to stay near stored food. They are in survival mode.

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

***Unless we have a day of unseasonably warm weather, this is not the time to be breaking into the hive bodies and disrupting the seals or the winter cluster.***

**Periodically walk out to your hives and take an external look at them.** Remove snow from around the entrance and look to see that there haven't been any pests causing a problem.

**Try to get an idea of the remaining stores by 'hefting' the hive.** Lift up the rear of the hive and feel the weight. If fairly light, you may need to provide some emergency feed, i.e., winter patties, fondant, sugar cakes, dry sugar, etc. (dry feed, not wet). Another indicator would be if you see the cluster high up underneath the inner cover (if you are looking on a warm day). Emergency feed should be placed directly above the cluster, under the inner cover, in direct contact with the tops of the frames. (Restrict your activity to the top of the hive and avoid breaking into the hive bodies.)

**Make sure you have an upper entrance/exit and it is clear of snow and debris.** It helps with ventilation, and it is an easy egress point for bees to take cleansing flights in the winter. Sometimes the lower entrances get plugged with ice or snow and even with dead bees.

**If you have been a conscientious beekeeper** throughout the 2020 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 2021. Still no guarantee, but you have tilted the odds in their favor.

### **Some odds and ends to keep you active and engaged this winter:**

**Melt down beeswax.** During this time, excess comb, bits, scraps, and older wax from frames can be melted down to form blocks of beeswax for future use.

**Make beauty products.** Lip balms, lotions, creams, salves, and scrubs are all fun things you can learn how to make, use, gift, or sell.

**Make candles.** The beeswax that was melted down can be turned into homemade candles.

**Research new techniques.** Beekeeping is a field that continues to grow. New hives, alternative feeding methods, and integrated pest management techniques are always adapting and improving.

**Repair and replace old hives.** This is a great time to repair and paint your extra woodware and replace worn frames and/or foundation. It's also time to assemble new hives.

**Prepare for spring splits.** Most hives that come out of winter with strong numbers should be split (or they may split themselves, i.e., swarm). Learn how to make splits and what equipment is necessary.

**Build a swarm box.** Be ready to catch a swarm this spring with this fun project. Learn about tanging and give it a go...let me know how it works out.

**Train new beekeepers.** Volunteer to share your experiences to help train new beekeeper

### **Start preparing for the 2021 season:**

**Pay your association dues for 2021.**

**Renew your annual Apiary Registration with Illinois Department of Agriculture.**

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

Launder your bee clothing. Over the course of inspecting hives, clothing picks up honey, propolis, dirt, and most importantly, bee venom. The venom odor, with its accompanying alarm pheromone, sets you up for upsetting the bees before you ever open a hive. This should be done routinely during the beekeeping season, but at least let's be sure to get a clean start to 2021. Note: Use a scent free detergent.

Continue to increase your knowledge of bees and beekeeping:

- Read and study about bees and beekeeping.
- Attend beekeeping meetings, whether in-person or virtual.
- Increase your knowledge of local plants and trees. Learn about the relevance of Degree Days.
- Form a small group of beekeepers to meet for lunch and talk bees.

Inventory your equipment, tools, and supplies.

Set aside some money - for replacement or expansion bees, new/replacement equipment and supplies.

Order your bees if needed. Nucs? (Highly recommended for new beekeepers without drawn comb.) Packages?

Review your 2020 season (and your notes) for successes and opportunities.

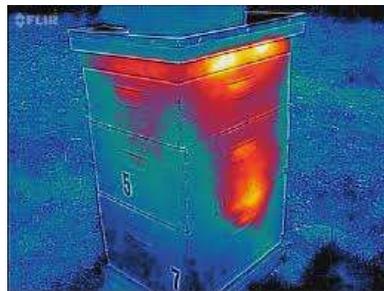
Think about and set new goals for 2021. What do you want to accomplish this year?

## **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)

***Spring is just ahead.  
There is a new beekeeping season  
on the way!***





**NORTHERN ILLINOIS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION  
2021 APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**

Affiliated with the Illinois State Beekeepers Association (ISBA)

Check one:  Renewal Membership      New  Membership

Check one:  Individual Membership - \$20       Family Membership - \$30

(Includes Single Membership in the Illinois State Beekeepers Association, additional ISBA memberships, \$10 each)

**If applying after March 15, 2021 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 a **black and white** paper copy of the newsletter mailed to me, add \$10 for handling.

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

## AMERICAN FOULBROOD DISEASE IN ILLINOIS

Larry Krengel

If you have taken my MCC class, you have heard about the most feared of bee disease, American Foulbrood Disease - AFB. Yet, it is likely that a beekeeper entering the field today will never see the disease. The number of cases found in Illinois in a typical year's time can be counted on your fingers. Last year there were none found. That has not always been the case.



Seventy years ago beekeepers did not really understand the disease except to know that it was deadly and contagious. Not knowing what else to do, when AFB was found in even one colony in a beeyard, the entire beeyard was destroyed by burning. In that time the Illinois Bees & Apiaries Act was developed, the one we still live by today. The rule seems severe, but it is from a different time.

Here is the 1931 McHenry County report by Illinois State Deputy Bee Inspector C. W. Deurrstein who was the bee inspector for McHenry County -

*"...I visited 216 apiaries... I examined 2,561 colonies and found 645 colonies infected with American foulbrood, of which 28 were treated, the rest of them being destroyed by burning, which was done by the owner and myself. I find some yards infested very badly with American foulbrood and I find some with no disease. It seems to be in spots."*

*From the 31<sup>st</sup> Beekeeper Report by ISBA*

AFB was prevalent. We eventually learned AFB is a bacterial disease that results from the **infection of honey bee larvae by Paenibacillus larvae**. Antibiotics will control the disease.

As I began keeping bees in the 1980's, some veterans advised treating colonies of bees with Terramycin in both spring and fall prophylactically... just in case. Today the incidence of AFB is quite low and with our concerns about the development of antibiotic resistant bacteria, annual treatment of colonies is no longer considered good bee management.

However, the Illinois Bees & Apiaries Act still gives bee inspectors direction to deal with the appearance of AFB severely -



*Any colony of bees within the State found to be affected with American foulbrood disease shall be abated. All combs, frames, honey, and bees must be abated by burning in a pit*

*at least 18 inches deep and then covering the ashes with at least 6 inches of soil. Hive bodies, supers, bottom boards, inner covers, and outer covers may be salvaged by sanitizing with a scorching flame. Unless otherwise approved by the Department, abatement by burning shall be accomplished by the beekeeper no later than 10 days after receiving written notice from the Department that American foulbrood disease has been detected in honeybee colonies.*

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Insects/Bees/Documents/beerules.pdf>

For years Terramycin was the only approved treatment for AFB. In recent years - even though there has little AFB identified, Terramycin-resistant strains have been found. For that reason a second antibiotic, Tylan, was recently approved for use. At the discretion of the bee inspector, antibiotics can be used against AFB. It seems unlikely the situation will occur and less likely the bee inspector would choose treatment over abating.



A few thoughts on avoiding AFB. The spores causing AFB can remain viable for decades in old bee equipment. If that "great stash" of bee equipment found in the old barn is to be used, be cautious. AFB can also be spread by robber bees attacking AFB weakened colonies. Looking carefully at a weak colony is well advised. Hive tools can move propolis (a hiding place for AFB spores) between colonies. It is wise to clean tools with heat or sanitizer between beeyards.

The *odds* of encountering AFB... approach zero. The *consequences* of encountering AFB could be great.

## 2021 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President – Tom Allen  
tallen122@yahoo.com  
Vice President – John Leibinger  
jleibinger@aol.com  
Treasurer – Ralph Brindise  
rbrindise@att.net  
Secretary – David Murillo  
dmurillo3@aol.com  
Director – Al Fullerton  
adfhoney@gmail.com  
Director – Marcin Matelski  
marcin@chicagobees.com  
Director – Stephanie Slater  
stephanie.d.slater@gmail.com

Program Chair – Larry Krengel  
Webmaster – Terri Reeves  
Newsletter Editor – Marianne Hill  
Club Extractor Coordinator – Randy Mead  
Club Raffle Coordinator – John Leibinger  
Snack Coordinators – Cathy Davis & Phil Webb

## 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. [newsletter@nibainfo.org](mailto:newsletter@nibainfo.org)

## Membership Has Its Benefits!

- By Randy Mead

Did you know that your membership in NIBA includes the opportunity to rent a club 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.

To reserve a date, contact Randy at [rmeadtoys@gmail.com](mailto:rmeadtoys@gmail.com).

## Are you on Facebook? So are we!

Search for Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association. It's a closed group, so you need to request to join—but we're happy to approve your request.

We're an active and knowledgeable group. Lots of questions and answers about preparing for each season, robbing, etc. And LOTS of pictures!

Join the fun today!

The queen marking  
color for 2020 is  
**WHITE.**

