



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2022

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tom Allen

Happy New Year!!

I hope all of you had a safe, family-filled holiday season. December was relatively warm, but January came in and reminded us we live in Northern Illinois. Snow, high winds, and temperatures dropping below zero were what we saw just after we put 2021 in our rearview mirror. Those changing conditions will have beekeepers worried about their colonies and hope they survive.

Now is the time of year to learn a new-to-you aspect of beekeeping, whether it's how to split an overwintered colony, queen-rearing, or showing honey. There's no shortage of books and articles available. There are also many Zoom opportunities on which experts talk about different beekeeping subjects. When Board

The January General Meeting is on **Friday, January 14 at 7pm**, with Newbee Q&A session starting at 6:30pm.

McHenry County College has notified us that they're not allowing outside groups to meet at the college currently. We will meet on Zoom only. The Zoom link is included in the email with this newsletter. The meeting ID is **882 3577 9513**.

members learn of them, we send you the registration information, so you can take advantage of their knowledge.

We hope to bring more meaningful mentor sessions this beekeeping season as well as some classes for more experienced beekeepers. If you're interested in helping out, please let a board member know.

MEETING AGENDA

6:30 Newbee Q & A – Marcin

7:00 Pledge of Allegiance – Tom

**7:02 Old Business
Bee order, memberships - Ralph**

**7:05 New Business
Until further notice we will be remote
Recent purchases: Electric extractor, uncapper, and tank**

**Upcoming speakers –
February – Tom
Seeley**

**March – Steve
Rypasky – swarms**

Tonight's speaker – Marcin

Spin the wheel

MEMBERSHIP

Annual membership (new and renewal) is \$20 single/\$30 family. Includes one membership in the Illinois State Beekeepers Association. Form available to print & mail, or online payment available at NIBAINFO.ORG.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The beekeeping classes at MCC this year will be both in person and virtual. The Beekeeping 101 class begins February 2. More information on these classes is on the NIBA website – NIBAINfo.org.

Garfield Park Observatory February virtual beekeeping lecture with Emily Noordyke

Join us for a virtual beekeeping lectures with Emily Noordyke to learn about the latest research on feeding pollen substitutes. Emily has worked on honey bee research with Grand Valley State University, the United States Geological Survey, Michigan State University, and the University of Florida. She graduated from UF with her Master's degree in Entomology in 2020, with a focus on the efficacy of pollen substitutes as a honey bee management tool. Currently, she works as an instructional designer for the UF Honey Bee Research and Extension Lab and as a mobile tech team field specialist for the Bee Informed Partnership.

Emily's presentation will summarize the findings of pollen substitute research as a whole, and will include results of her research on pollen substitutes at the University of Florida.

<https://garfieldconservatory.org/event/virtual-beekeeping-lecture-with-emily-noordyke/>

Heritage Honeybee – Beekeeping 101 – February 19 & 26, 2022

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/beekeeping-101-two-part-course-february-19th-26th-tickets-218927577277>

Indiana Bee School – February 26, 2022

https://indianabeekeeper.com/events/indiana_bee_school_xx

Heartland Apiculture Society (HAS) – 2022 Conference – June 2022 in Indiana

<https://www.heartlandbees.org/has-2022-evansville-in/>

American Beekeeping Federation (ABF) – On-demand beekeeping classes

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

Michigan State University Webinars

<https://pollinators.msu.edu/resources/beekeepers/webinars/past-webinars/>

University of Minnesota Bee Lab Classes and Mentoring Apiary

<https://beelab.umn.edu/beekeeping-classes>

Western Apicultural Society (WAS) – Monthly mini conference recordings

<https://www.westernapiculturalsociety.org/events-1>

Kansas Honey Producers Association – Extracting More \$\$\$ From Your Hives speaker series recordings

<http://www.kansashoneyproducers.org/archives.html>

University of Guelph Honey Bee Research Centre -

<https://honeybee.uoguelph.ca/videos/video-list/>



CHORES OF THE MONTH - JANUARY

John Leibinger

Like the bees we study, we accomplish more together.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

What's happening in the hive?

Finally, there is somewhat typical winter weather upon us. December was a strange one. Temperatures hovering around 50 degrees on Christmas Eve & Christmas Day!?!? That's a first for me and I've been around the block a couple of times.

Anyway... 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, especially this year, 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 consume fewer stores during this time, 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:

Unless we have a few days of unseasonably warm weather or you perceive your hive weight being unreasonably light, 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 that if 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 2021 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 2022. Still no guarantee, but you have shifted 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 if you want to increase your hive count. Most hives that come out of winter with strong numbers can be split (or they may split themselves, i.e., swarm). Learn how to make splits and what equipment is necessary. Alternately, learn some swarm mitigation techniques, e.g. spring queen replacement.

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 2022 season:

Pay your association dues for 2022.

Renew your annual Apiary Registration with Illinois Department of Agriculture.

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

Laundry 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 2022. **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
- 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? New Queens?

Review your 2021 season (and your notes) for successes and opportunities.

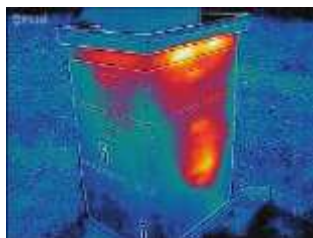
Think about and set new goals for 2022. What do you want to accomplish this year?

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!***



Hi. I want to say **thank you** to all of you who have thought about, prayed for & with, and supported me through this very sad time since the passing of my husband, Dave Hill. And thank you to those who stepped up to continue to get the newsletter out. I honestly don't know how I get through my days if not for friends like you.

For those of you who are blessed to have known Dave, I know that you also grieve his absence in your life, and I grieve with you. He certainly was the light of every room, wasn't he?

Marianne

THE YEAR OF THE BEEHIVE

Larry Kregel

Happy 2022! This the year of the Bee Hive! ... OK, I made that up. But we have a day or month or year or almost anything or person or nationality or disease... I think we should try starting a year of the Bee Hive. Bee hives have been celebrated for years from cave paintings to tapestry, from jewelry to song. 2022, the year of the Bee Hive.

A couple of years ago NIBA invited Dr. Gene Kritsky, an authority on the history of man's attempt to keep bees in boxes, to speak at our meeting. Mankind's history is full of



attempts that today seem strange. Finally we settled on a system that recognized the bee space. According to Dr. Kritsky, Reverend L. L. Langstroth gets credit for designing a hive – in 1851 – that employed the bee space that keepers had long observed, but not honored.



Today we know that lack of respect for bee space (about 3/8 of an inch or one centimeter if you think metric) make our beekeeping efforts more difficult.

The Langstroth hive is still the standard in beekeeping. Even as it has been modified (like the British National Hive, the Warre Hive, the top bar hive, and a dozen others...) they still show respect for bee space. But what should the nubee choose?



As those who have taken my Beekeeping 101 class at MCC have heard me say, it is wise for the nubee to start with the tried and true Langstroth hive, that stack of white boxes. Whether one chooses 8 or ten frames, deeps or mediums, staying with the standard Langstroth hive gives easy access to compatible equipment, knowledgeable mentoring assistance, and a better chance of success. For those who choose the challenge of

running their first colony in a unique, seldom-seen hive, the adventure is soon tempered by frustration and often the demise of their colony. After a few years of experience with traditional beekeeping, the new beekeeper has enough familiarity with the bees to explore the myriad of options found in the bee world. There are many. Learn first, adventure later.



The internet is full of advice for beekeepers on the subject of which hive to use. Caution... much of the advice comes from beekeepers new to the endeavor who have found that long overlooked and better way to keep bees early in their beekeeping years. (I know, sarcasm is the lowest form of humor.) "Here is what beekeepers have been doing wrong for the last Century." I encourage the reading of these internet postings for amusement.

Seriously, if you want beekeeping advice you can always rely on internet sites that are ".edu" and use the resources that come with a NIBA

membership. Other sources always need to be evaluated carefully.

The hive is the foundation of our beekeeping endeavors. The insights of generations of beekeepers brought us to a hive that recognizes the bee's needs as well as the important place bees hold in nature. Then, how do we celebrate the Year of the Bee Hive? There is the challenge. I turn it to you. Happy Year of the Bee Hive!

Larry

2020 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President – Tom Allen
tallen122@yahoo.com
Vice President – Marcin Matelski
marcin@chicagobees.com
Treasurer – Ralph Brindise
rbrindise@att.net
Secretary – David Murillo
dmurillo3@aol.com
Director – Al Fullerton
adfhoney@gmail.com
Director – John Leibinger
jleibinger@aol.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
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Snack Coordinators – Cathy Davis & Phil Webb

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. 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.

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 the Fall season and preparing for winter, robbing, etc. And LOTS of pictures!

Join the fun today!

**The queen marking color for
2022 is YELLOW.**