



# SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – JULY 2020

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tom Allen

Well here we are in July already. In some ways it seems like the year is flying by, and in other ways it seems like we're in slow motion. The Governor put the state in Phase 4 so we're able to meet in small groups, eat inside restaurants, and do a lot more things that we couldn't in Phase 3. We are going to open up for groups at the mentor hives on July 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. We'll still using social distancing and the wearing of masks for everyone's safety. I hope all of you are working your bees and enjoying the little miracles that they are. It seems like this is the year of the swarm. We've received emails from people that needed help with swarms they found, and we've had lots of communications among club members after finding queen cells during hive inspections.

We had one hive at MCC swarm, and after one cycle of letting the hive work through being queenless, we decided to buy a queen from Sue at Harvard Eggs, Feed and Produce. The decision to buy a queen or let the colony make a queen is up to each individual beekeeper. If it's early in the season, letting them try to make a queen might be ok. But we felt requeening was our best bet to build the colony and get through the winter.

I've been out to help several NIBA members do hive inspections and mite checks. The mite checks have produced some surprising observations. Some hives have had zero mites, and others have had 1 or 2 per hundred bees. Whether you use either the sugar roll test or the alcohol shake, you must test for mites. Treating your bees for mites is something that must be done regardless of how you do it. Not treating for mites doesn't help the colony get through the winter – as a matter of fact, it reduces the chances that the colony will survive the winter. We should all strive to be bee keepers not bee buyers.

This month's meeting will be a Zoom meeting-please try to attend. I know some members are hesitant to watch a meeting on your phone or computer, but I still get the sense of community when I meet that way. You can submit questions that

the presenter will answer during the meeting. We are also going to have our photo contest again this month. June's winner, Kristen Mueller, had her photo used as the NIBA Facebook group cover photo as well as having it printed in this newsletter. I know everyone has lots of photos of bees on flowers and on the hive, or photos of a frame of honey. Send in a photo or two of anything beekeeping, and we will vote for the best photo during Friday's meeting.

This month's meeting is in place of our NIBA picnic, which was cancelled. Al Fullerton will be presenting on honey extraction, which he has done several times at the picnic. Al's presentation will be very beneficial to everyone because we will all eventually be extracting honey. And remember, the club has two extractors available to rent. Contact Randy Mead at [meadtoys@gmail.com](mailto:meadtoys@gmail.com).

As of the time this newsletter is written, the McHenry County Fair is still on as planned. The Fair Board will be meeting soon to make a final

### MEETING AGENDA

6:30 Q&A session for newbees, but any is invited to join for answers to your questions.

7:00 Pledge of Allegiance

7:05 Old Business

7:10 New Business

7:20 Extraction presentation.

Q&A session immediately following presentation

Anything for the good of the group

Adjournment

decision, but I felt we should plan as if the Fair is going to happen. Marianne Hill has created a SignUp Genius event and sent a link to everyone that can be used to sign up to volunteer at the Fair. I know many of you don't want to participate, and I understand that. If you have high-risk factors (yes I'm in the age-based high risk group), it's up to you to determine your own level of involvement. I'm not sure how they will address social distancing and other guidelines. We will do our part while working at the booth by limiting how many people are in the booth and wearing a

mask while in the booth. We have two of the best booth locations, and we don't want to risk losing that opportunity in the future. If you do sign up for a shift, please include your t-shirt size in the SignUp Genius app so we can have a t-shirt waiting for you at the booth.

David Murillo has stepped up to be the NIBA Secretary. Our Board is now complete. David lives in Crystal Lake and manages two hives with his young daughter. Thank you, David, for joining us!

**Tom**



**June Photo Contest Winner  
Kristen Mueller**

Happy bees say hello as a new beekeeper begins her very first hive inspection.

**THE FAIR IS ON!** (subject to change)

Tuesday, August 4 through Sunday, August 8 (Monday, August 3 for set up)



Part of what makes our club special is that we educate non-beekeepers about honey bees and that we actively try to get new members. These two things go hand in hand. Often talking to someone about bees piques their interest, and they join the club and get some bees. Some of you might have started just that way.

Working at the Fair booth is a way to talk to the public about bees.

Please consider volunteering in the NIBA booth at the McHenry County Fair. Please include your shirt size when you sign up for a shift.

The link to SignUp Genius went out to the membership via email. If you need to receive it again, please contact [Marianne Hill](#).

Please note: the Fair Board is voting the week of 7/6/20 to finalize approval to hold the Fair based on the Illinois Phase program and IDPH guidelines. NIBA is being proactive in planning our booth.

## SAY BEES!



*We know many of you enjoy taking photos in your apiaries. Starting in June, 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!*

## MEET DAVID MURILLO, NIBA BOARD SECRETARY

Hello fellow beekeepers! My name is David Murillo. I am a dual-certified professional, holding both a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE) certificate. I hold the Bachelor of Accounting Degree from Florida International University in Miami, Florida, where I graduated with honors as a member of Beta Alpha Psi (International honors accounting fraternity). I have over 15 years experience in the accounting and finance profession, offering my services to a wide variety of industries. I also have vast experience training live sessions and speaking publicly at the national level through my Firm.



When I'm not working, I enjoy spending time with my family. I am a conservation ambassador and avid sportsman. I currently keep two bee hives as a hobby. This is my second season beekeeping, and I enjoy every aspect of it. I use beekeeping to spend time teaching my kids, and it helps me relax.

I am bilingual and speak Spanish fluently, and I view myself as a life-long student. I am thoroughly excited to be new NIBA Secretary, and I hope to make a difference.

## BEE ON THE FARM - AGAIN

Larry Krengel

In the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, beekeeping was in its hay day. Following the development of the movable frame hive – the Langstroth Hive – beekeepers found themselves a full partner in the workings of the honeybee colony. One of the leading names among beekeepers of the time was Dr. C. C. Miller, who lived



Doctor Miller as a young man.

on a hilltop just south of Marengo in McHenry County. He kept hundreds of colonies of bees, fretted about his bees swarming, developed his own method of queen rearing, the newspaper technique of combining colonies, a method of removing bees from supers, and... the list goes on. The growing field of beekeeping was fertile ground for Miller's creative mind.



Other beekeepers would travel from around the country to confer with him. Dr. Miller also wrote for the *American Bee Journal* and *Gleanings in Bee Culture* (now *Bee Culture*), while writing a number of books. His extensive bee library is now housed in the special collection area of the University

of Wisconsin Library.

Miller died in 1920 and is buried in the Marengo community cemetery.

Thirty years ago, the Illinois State Beekeepers Association asked the City of Marengo for permission to place a plaque in the town's Spencer Park where other residents of note are commemorated. It can be seen just a few blocks from Dr. Miller's grave.



Just by chance, I encountered the family that recently bought the Miller farm. The house looks much as it did a hundred-plus years ago. Alas though, no bees. I could not resist asking. I have now placed some of my bees on the old Miller farm.



Perhaps it is the linden trees Miller planted or the large pasture area where cows and sheep graze on blooming clover, or simply the aura left by Dr. Miller. Whatever the reason, after the first three months the bees are doing so well, I think I will increase my current four colonies and add a queen-rearing yard using the Miller technique next year. Déjà vu all over again.

For those who want to meet Dr. Miller, I suggest his autobiography *Fifty Years Among the Bees* (about \$20.00 on [abebooks.com](http://abebooks.com)).

## CHORES OF THE MONTH – JULY- THE HEAT IS ON!

John Leibinger

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

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

The colony population will have peaked by this month. You should be observing lots of bees and still see plenty of brood at all stages being raised to replace the older bees in the colony. The rate of laying of the queen will typically start to taper off from the rate that has been experienced through the spring season.

Temperatures are heating up so ventilation and available water sources are 'must haves' for your bees.

The bee population is no longer expanding, but the Varroa mite population likely is. You must monitor their growth by doing regular mite checks (monthly sugar roll or alcohol wash) and take appropriate action to remediate any problems. (See links in General Information section below.)

The bees should have stored some nectar from May and June and you will likely be finding capped frames of honey in your supers even though the weather has been quite challenging. Unfortunately, many have also found that the bees have been storing a lot of honey in the brood chamber(s). This often leads to a honey bound situation that in turn can lead to overcrowding swarms and based on the word on the street, there has been a **LOT** of that going on. The solution is to keep providing the bees space to store the honey. Don't wait for the bees to cap the existing frames before adding additional supers. Remember, when the bees bring in nectar it is very dilute and takes up lots of space. Over time they remove the moisture and cap the honey, but in the meantime they still require more space for the continuous inflow of new nectar. If you don't provide the space via supers, they find it in the brood chamber. You may have pull some of those honey filled brood frames and replace with new frames or extract and replace them.

This may be the month to start harvesting those capped frames. If you do so early, replace the supers and you may get some more production. Late June and early July blooms from Catalpa and Linden trees has the nectar flowing! Nectar flows continue into July with more herbaceous plants than trees and then taper off as we enter August. When removing honey to harvest, make sure that there is still plenty of honey left for the bees to survive the dearth in August. If you decide to harvest all your supers sometime this month, and if the nectar flow slows down, you will need to feed sugar syrup to help get them through the lean times of mid to late summer. Keep in mind that 'honey' storage at this time will likely be mostly the sugar water you are providing. When a flow restarts for the fall, you will have to decide whether to replace with fresh supers(with drawn comb) to collect a fall harvest or to just let the bees continue storing for their winter needs.

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

**Maintain the space around your hive(s).** Your bees work hard at thermo-regulation of the hive. Help them out. Trim weeds and grass to allow maximum air flow as the temperatures rise. Maintaining a clear flight path to the hive also increases their foraging efficiency.

**Provide additional ventilation** to assist the bees in maintaining proper hive temperatures. This can be in the form of ventilated inner covers or as simple as propping the outer cover to allow more air circulation. The additional ventilation is also helpful in the conversion of nectar to honey. Better ventilation eases the job of moisture removal from the stored nectar.

**Make sure the bees have a water source** as we move into the heat of summer. Bees collect water to help cool the hive as part of their thermos-regulation efforts.

**Monitor for Varroa Mites monthly and take action if needed.** (See General Info section below for references to mite checking procedures)

Know what you have and keep records. Keep varroa growth in check by utilizing a miticide, organic acids, drone comb culling, a combination of IPM methods, or a brood break. **Pay attention to labeling instructions** when using treatments and be mindful that you cannot leave honey supers on for all methods of treatments. The only treatments currently approved for use while honey supers are on are Hopguard 3, Mite Away Quick Strips (MAQS), and Formic Pro. Your specific approach will be influenced by your personal goals and philosophy, but, if you have a mite problem, **doing nothing is not an acceptable answer if you want your colony to thrive and survive.** You must have healthy hives going into later summer so the colony can raise healthy nurse bees that in turn raise the winter bees that will carry them through until next Spring.

**Make sure that you keep records.** This is a very important element of the learning process...whether you are a first year beekeeper or a forty year beekeeper...you should always be learning something. Record inspection dates, time and temp and weather conditions, quantity of bees, bee behaviors, signs indicating the presence of the queen (eggs, young larvae, actual sighting), number of frames of brood and stores, brood pattern and frame/comb condition, available laying space, observations of signs of swarm preparation, pollen coming in (color, type if possible), drone production, Varroa Mite count, presence of Small Hive Beetle or other pests, and a number of other issues. Record anything else that is outside of 'normal' once you learn what 'normal' is. Take notes in the bee yard. You will be surprised at how easy it is to get confused over what was observed and which hive it was observed in if you wait to record info after the fact.

**Monitor the hives for queen signs.** Stuff happens....the queen may be failing and the bees need to replace her. She may have died for some reason. You need to know that they have the resources to make a new queen or you will have to provide those resources from another colony. Alternately, you can buy and install a queen. Don't allow your hive to remain queenless. Doing so will likely lead to a 'laying worker' condition. This is a problem that is not easily resolved and oftentimes results in the death of the colony. Stay ahead of problems and take action when needed.

**Harvest honey appropriately.** Don't overharvest, there are some lean weeks ahead for your bees.

**Return extracted frames to the hives** for them to continue to make more honey. If you are calling it a season for your honey crop, place your super of wet combs above your inner cover and below your outer cover. The bees will come up and clean/dry it out and refurbish the comb to 'like new' condition. This makes for much easier winter storing also.

**Consider starting to split out some nucs** to raise bees for next year if this is part of your goal plan.

**Consider raising some queens to go into fall/winter with fresh young queens.** Statistically, survival of winter colonies improves and reduction/delay of spring swarming is a result. Don't delay though, time is of the essence. There are many ways to go about this that do not require a lot of equipment or experience. At the backyard beekeeper level, you can keep it pretty simple. The bees are very good at this if you create the proper conditions. Do some research.

**Start to watch out for robbing later in the month.** Reduce entrances or add robbing screens if needed. Don't dawdle around when harvesting honey.

## 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)

Pollen identification chart:

[Pollen Color Chart](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Inspection sheets:

[Inspection Checksheet \(basic\)](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

[Inspection Checksheet \(detailed\)](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Sugar Roll Method: [Sugar Roll Mite Inspection - YouTube](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Alcohol Wash Method: [Alcohol Wash for Mite Control - YouTube](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

## [Varroa Mite Treatment](#) (Ctrl+Click link)



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

Join the fun today!

The queen marking color for  
2020 is BLUE.