



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – JULY 2022

MCHEMRY COUNTY FAIR August 2-7, 2022

The SignUp Genius invitation went out via email in early June. There are still slots available. If you haven't signed up yet, please consider volunteering to help in the NIBA booth. It's a great way to meet the public and to share your beekeeping knowledge. *You likely know more than you think you do.*



If you did not receive the invitation, please let Tom Allen know at tallen122@yahoo.com.

We are in need of honey donations so that we have product to sell. This is our largest fundraiser for the year. Many customers wait all year to stop by and purchase local Northern Illinois honey so we want to be sure to have enough inventory to meet the need.

Thank you to Tom from BL Plastics for donating bottles to club members to fill for donation. Even if you haven't been to a meeting to pick up a bottle, we'll accept donations in any container.

If you are attending the picnic, please bring your honey donations.

Don't forget to [sign up](#) to enter the McHenry County Fair honey show. The deadline to sign up is July 10. Open Honey judging is Wednesday, August 3, 2022 at 10:00 am. [HERE](#) are the rules.

There is no general meeting at MCC this month. The picnic is being held on Saturday, July 9th.

The general meetings are moving to the 2nd Thursday of the month, starting August 11th. 7pm. At McHenry County College.

The schedule for the rest of 2022 is as follows:

August 11 September 8 October 13 November 10

No December Meeting

ASK CARL

Carl Christiansen

Besides the mites and mite management, what are the top three biggest differences in beekeeping between now and when you first started beekeeping?



I'll list more than three because they are significant differences, but you'll notice a common theme that relates to nutrition:

1. The decrease in dairy farming and the loss of the hay fields.
2. Queen problems--bees trying to supersede the old queen and not being successful.
3. Parasitic mite syndrome (snotty brood-cruddy brood) is probably one of the bigger problems.
4. There are a lot of changes like the removal of fence rows and the use of weed killers.
5. Higher winter losses.
6. There used to be a flow from milkweed, sumac, and the sweet clovers which were growing all over. Fall flows were common back then.
7. Winter mortality was usually starvation.
8. Spotty brood was either European or American Foul Brood.

When buying my first package I asked how to install it? Just drop them in. And then what do I do next? Just put on supers. And after that? Harvest the honey...there's nothing to it. That advice wouldn't work today. It's a lot more work and much more complicated now.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

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/>

REMEMBERING EUGENE "GENE" KILLION

Charles and Karen Nielsen Lorence

If you have been around long enough in the beekeeping industry, the name Gene Killion not only rings a bell but it also inspires awe. Gene passed away on June 19, 2022 at the age of 98. With his perennial humor, Gene claimed he was (two years younger than) a centenarian and had been keeping bees since he was five years old. Gene's family was a member of the American Beekeeping Federation since its inception. His father, Carl Killion began the stellar bee hive inspection program in the State of Illinois and, in 1971, Gene took over from his father. He remained on the staff until 1990 when he retired. Fifty plus years had passed since the inspection program had begun! At the height of the program, he oversaw about ten inspectors. All the pioneers in the industry were Carl and Gene's friends.

Gene was in the US Air Force during World War II. When he left, he sold his honey to his father for 5c a pound and his father forewarned him, "Someday you will be selling your honey for \$1.00 a pound." Again the Killions were on the cutting edge when they began selling pollen traps, were the first to sell pollen supplements, and packaged their honey in plastic. They were the first to have a stainless steel extractor from A.I. Root.



Gene & Mark Killion
2020 ABF Convention
Schaumburg, IL
Photo courtesy of Kent Pegorsch

The specialty of the Killion family was section box comb honey. They had a very unique method of production and produced thousands of sections which were sold around the nation. The highlight came in 1951 when they broke the all-time record by averaging fourteen comb honey supers each from 100 hives. One hive actually produced seventeen supers. The small town of Paris, Illinois was not even aware of it as the honey would be shipped out of town within the confines of a semi.



Gene and his father
beside the record-setting
comb honey hive.

Each year in October, HONEY WEEK is celebrated in Paris, Illinois. This commemorates the anniversary of the issuing of a bee stamp in 1980. Gene's father Carl worked tirelessly with the U.S. post office as did Gene as his father aged. The Killion family has always been a well respected family in Paris, IL and continued to

impact the beekeeping industry in the United States.

In the late 1940s, Gene studied under Dr. Bert Martin of Michigan State University to enable him to be a judge of honey. Over the years, Gene was the chief judge of many national honey shows, writing several articles on how to judge honey exhibits.

With this fine history behind him, it was in 2016 that Gene was attending the American Beekeeping Federation convention in Ponte Vedra, Florida. There he was giving

a presentation and met the chef. They became fast friends and Gene helped to make Sawgrass Marriott more natural- food oriented.



A cute story that was remembered by Gene is when his father, Carl, built a camper truck to drive to the bee convention down in New Orleans at the Roosevelt Hotel. It just so happened that the major league baseball convention was being held at the same time. Gene and his brother were mesmerized by meeting many of the ball players and getting their autographs rather than going to the bee meetings with their mom and dad.

Gene is survived by his son Mark in Paris, Illinois. Condolences can be sent to P.O. Box 96, Paris, IL 61944

WHAT TO DO WITH A DEAD BEE

Larry Kregel

Dead bee trap... an interesting thought. It should not be too difficult to trap a dead bee. But this is a technique used by some bee researchers to gain information about a colony. For the backyard beekeeper, it might be useful. More properly we could term it a dead bee collection.

The undertaker bees will remove those sisters and brothers who die inside the hive and drop them off the landing board. Even knowing that most bees die outside the hive, the in-house deaths may tell a tale about the happenings in the colony.



A dead bee trap is a tray... perhaps three feet square... laid immediately in front of the hive entrance positioned to collect the bodies removed from the hive. One system uses a wood frame with a fabric bottom.

After 24 hours the collected bodies can be examined. Are they old bees with tattered wings? Young bees that appear sickly? Are their larvae in the trap?

More than that, if the trap is examined on an ongoing basis, it can provide insight to the changes inside the box.

A hive inspection is a major event in the life of a colony, but it is important for the keeper to be aware of the conditions in the colony. Perhaps a dead bee trap can provide the critical insights without the disruption of opening the hive and pulling frames.

The skilled beekeeper has many tools to call on. A dead bee trap could be one.

SNELGROVE VERTICAL SWARM

David Murillo

When the pandemic first hit, one of the things I tried to keep busy during my off time was to read the American Bee Journal (ABJ) magazine. I ran into a 2-series article about the Snelgrove board (aka: Double-Screened Board) by Sid Lehr published in March 2020.

I learned you can have a dual queen colony system and more than likely increase your honey production by preventing swarms. One full hive body added to your 3 supers, and it makes a whole lot of sense, 2 hives with workers filling up your supers. So this year I did it; I bought a standard and a modified (for nonconventional hives) Snelgrove board from Spencer's. If you are unfamiliar with what the board looks like, please Google it, but in a nutshell: you have a board with a square mesh screen in the center on both sides of the board. The mesh allows pheromones to move freely up and down the tower of bees you will have created, mixing the scent, while keeping the bees separated. Additionally, 3-4 sides of the boards have two 3-inch "entrance doors" into the hive with hinges that you would manipulate to move the bees as you desire.



As this article is limited in space and there a variety of books on the subject, this article will be about my experience using the board in a 3-part series (July-September). I will point out challenges, obstacles, how they were overcome, and what I would do differently using Method I of using the board. On June 17, 2022, I installed the modified board on my Apimaye thermal hive.

The idea is that you create a vertical split. I bellowed some smoke and opened the hive. Frame by frame, I searched for the queen. One by one each frame was filled with bees. Capped and uncapped brood throughout the entire hive, seemed like all 10 frames were laid in. This hive was big and healthy. "The queen is marked." I thought, "and she should be easy to find regardless of the number of bees in here".

One by one I scanned the frames for the queen. Putting them in a spare plastic 5-frame Nuc, to keep organized. Finally found her, after going through 8 frames, marked yellow for

the year. I had expected to see queen cells already built, but I didn't see any other than queen cups, which are OK if they are empty. I was ready to use Snelgrove Method II, which is what you do when you find queen cells in your hive, but I didn't find any, so defaulted to Method I (no filled queen cells in your hive). I left the queen and the frames she was on, mostly capped brood and some nurse bees, on the bottom hive, and moved 9 frames to an empty deep hive body, the soon to be top hive, with an additional frame of honey I had laying around. The original hive body with the 1 queen on the frame, the bottom hive, got 9 frames added to it, being a mix of old brood comb and full honey frames, scratched to let the bees know it's OK to have some and move it out of the way for the laying queen.

I run a single deep hive, with 2-3 supers. This one had 3. Once my bottom and top hive were prepared with frames, the supers were put back on top of the bottom hive (with queen excluder on), and the additional hive body containing 9 frames of capped and uncapped brood and nurse bees was placed on top of the 3rd super. The vertical split has been performed. The next and final step was to make sure I opened one of the top hive entrances on the Snelgrove board to make sure the bees on the top hive could exit and

reenter as needed. The top entrance at the back of the hive was opened.



The trick is every 7-9 days those entrances need to be manipulated in order for this to work. The bottom hive, now with plenty of room to lay and lack of nurse doesn't see a reason to swarm, while the top box, filled with nurse bees, has no queen and very few flying bees. We'll see how I do. Fast-forward to June 24th, 7 days later. The top hive is to be inspected, and my expectation is I will find queen cells prepared and ready as the queenless top hive scrambled to raise a queen and the swarming urge has been abated. And to my surprise, I counted 4 sealed queen cells.

About half way through the inspection, I decided to stop as the objective of my opening the hive had been met. I calmly added the frames back, and now the top back door was closed, and the bottom entrance open, while the right side top entrance has been open. My intention is that now all returning flying bees from the top hive will return to the same entrance, and enter the bottom entrance as I closed the top right in to the supers. We now have worker bees from the bottom hive and top hive filling the supers. We'll see what that means soon enough.

CHORES OF THE MONTH - JULY

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 throughout the spring season.

Temperatures are continuing to be on the hot side, 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 preferably, 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. 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 twofold; 1) Provide space in the brood box for the queen to lay by removing 'honeybound' frames and replacing with new foundation or preferably open drawn comb, 2) Keep providing the bees space to store the honey by adding supers. 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.

This may be the month to start harvesting those capped frames in your supers. If you do so early, replace the supers and you may get some more production. The normal late June and early July nectar flows from Catalpa and Linden trees have or will shortly have run its course, but 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 (and a fair amount of it) to help cool the hive as part of their thermo-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, and/or a brood break. **Pay attention to labeling instructions (particularly temperature ranges for safe use)** when using treatments and be mindful that you cannot leave honey supers on for all methods of treatments. The only treatments currently EPA approved for use while honey supers are on are Hopguard 3, Mite Away Quick Strips (MAQS), and Formic Pro. You will likely hear some argument about whether Oxalic Acid is now approved, but if you investigate through the right sources you will find that the FDA has decided that OA treatment does not negatively affect honey, but the EPA, who actually control the labeling of pesticides, have not yet authorized the label change allowing OA to be used while supers are on. Since the label is the law, OA is not yet approved. 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. Some beekeepers will put an empty super in between the inner cover and the wet super. Either way, 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)

[Varroa Management Decision Tool](#) (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)

Pollen identification chart:

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

Inspection sheets:

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

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



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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 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.

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.**