



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2020

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tom Allen

Well we had a few Spring like days a couple of weeks ago, so if your colonies were alive then hopefully you saw your bees flying! There are a few videos on the club Facebook page of bees out doing cleansing flights. Our February meeting saw around 100 members in attendance and enjoyed our speaker as he talked about how honeybees with a healthy gut will have an increased chance to overwinter. Slavo Strogolov showed us that by using a probiotic, you can reset the bee's gut and help them become a stronger colony. The science used and the data points he provided were impressive. We also had a few people attend the meeting to check out the club, and several of them joined NIBA that night. It was announced that in March we will begin having a separate meeting aimed at new beekeepers in the room next to our current meeting room. The meeting will begin at 7:00, the same time as the general meeting. Those attending the new beekeepers meeting will miss only the first 45 minutes of the general meeting. This will give us the ability to keep meetings pertinent for both newer beekeepers as well as more experienced ones. Hopefully this will accommodate the needs of both groups because we are a better club that way.

We begin with our club events in April with our usual Gardenfest event at McHenry County College on April 4th. Booth set up must be completed by 7:30, and the booth can't be broken down before 4:00. There are sessions on different subjects throughout the day with a break between them, allowing attendees to visit booths. We generally sell some honey and talk to many gardeners about beekeeping. Lunch is also available but must be preordered.

We've been asked to attend the Elgin Green Expo which is part of the Elgin Earth Month 50th

UPCOMING EVENTS

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, March 13, 7pm

McHenry County College

Room A211

8900 US Hwy 14, Crystal Lake

GARDENFEST

Saturday, April 4, 7:30am -4pm

McHenry County Fairgrounds

Woodstock, IL

AG EXPO

April 7, 8, 9, 2020

McHenry County College

Leucht Conference Center

Crystal Lake, IL

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, April 10, 7pm

McHenry County College

Room A211

8900 US Hwy 14, Crystal Lake

Anniversary celebration on April 4th. We've never been to this event before so this would give us the ability to teach more people about bees and sell some honey, and who knows? We might get some new members as well. It looks like this will run from 10 to 2, but I'm waiting to hear back about a set up time. We will be selling honey along with handing out information if we attend this event.

The McHenry County Farm Bureau Ag Expo is on April 7th, 8th, & 9th. The time slots run from 9:15 to 11:30 and 11:45 to 2:00. The sessions are very short--you talk briefly to a group of 3rd and 4th grade students about bees and beekeeping, and then a new group comes in. On any of the days, you can volunteer for a morning or afternoon session or stay for the day. If you volunteer for both time sessions, lunch is provided. Any help you can provide is greatly appreciated.

We also have an Earth Day event for the Bartlett Park District on April 25th from 12 to 4. Volunteer extraordinaire Jerry Gudauskas has done this by himself the last few years, but Jerry would like someone to volunteer with him this year and would be willing to take it over next year. Jerry loves doing this event, but he's requested for so many events through both NIBA and the Master Gardeners. If you'd like to help Jerry out, contact him or me.

On a serious note, we keep asking for help with events that we do throughout the year. We had Cathy Davis and Phil Webb step up to take care of the drinks and snacks at our meetings which is really nice! We need more help at the events where NIBA is invited to present. The people at these events want to help the honey bee and some

Rich Morris is a beekeeper and electrical engineer whose passion and career combined to produce Broodminder. Broodminder is a set of battery-powered sensors and scale that provide insights to beekeepers on the changes within their monitored hives. The sensors include separate devices for temperature, temperature and humidity, and weight and (external) temperature. While this is interesting information on a hive by hive basis, the real power of the data is when it is combined, tracked and monitored across regions or even countries. Rich and Broodminder are achieving this through their beecounted.org website

might become members, and the honey we sell helps support what we do as a club, such as purchasing teaching needs, T-shirts for Fair volunteers, bee packages for the new mentor program, and the Broodminders for the mentor hives. Please consider volunteering for events. You're never alone, so if you get a question you don't know how to answer, just ask another volunteer. It's fun to get out and get to know club members better--you might have more in common than beekeeping. We have members that do some pretty amazing things. I found out one of our members has a metal flower that he made displayed in the Smithsonian Institute! I found that out while we talked at the Fair one day.

What could we do to get more of you to volunteer? Please let me know what your thoughts are.

MARCH NIBA MEETING AGENDA

Open the meeting 7:00
 Pledge of Allegiance 7:00
 New members 7:00-7:05
 New beekeeper separate meeting begins tonight start time 7:00
 Old Business 7:05-7:15
 Mentor program sites
 Looking for mentors

Ag Days April 7th, 8th & 9th
 Shifts are 9:15-11:30 and 11:45-2:00
 We should be there 10 minutes early,
 Earlier for setup on the first day

Honey donations

New Business 7:15-7:20
 Brown tickets for mentor hive inspections-Larry

March ISBA event-Larry 7:20-7:25

Bee Order-Ralph 7:25-7:35

Short panel discussion on current hive problems 7:35-7:50

Rich Morris BroodMinder presentation 7:50-8:30

Raffle 8:30

IT IS GOOD TO KEEP BEES

Larry Krengel

UPDATE: As of this time, the Saturday morning small group session is full and closed. There is still space in the Friday afternoon small group session.

Mother Nature is teasing us. The bees have had a few warm days for their cleansing flights. Beekeepers have been busy checking on the food supply for the final weeks of winter. Yet certainly there are cold nights still in the offing.

It is almost time to start mixing the sugar water... we still have time to put a new coat of paint on our supers and make up a few new frames. Both keepers and bees seem impatient, but... it is good.

For keepers of bees spring is indeed exciting, a good time, but it is tempered by having to deal with the winter deadouts, always a sad scene. This is the time of the year where the discussions at bee meetings center on the nucs and packages. Though to get ready for the new bees, the remains of the winter deadouts need to be cleaned up. How much cleaning is needed? Did the bees die from something that will affect the next installed colony of bees? How do I deal with the “nosema spots”? Just why did they die? The questions are many, and the answers from our fellow beekeepers vary.

Would an expert's answers help? Yep.

In the last days of March (March 27 and 28) ISBA is bringing in an expert with the answers to the many winter deadout questions. **Dr. Dewey Caron**, from the Oregon State University, will be joining us to talk about honeybee necropsies – a post mortem on dead bee hives.

Those who would like to meet with Dr. Caron and together analyze frames from local deadouts, will have two opportunities. On Friday, March 27, at 2:00 pm Dr. Caron will lead local beekeepers as they search for the causes of the colony deaths. Each participant in these groups is invited to bring two brood frames from a winter deadout to analyze.

For those wanting to join Dr. Caron at one of these sessions, sign up at -

<https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/4509035>

The fee is \$25.00. Space in these groups is limited.

On Saturday afternoon, March 28, at 1:00 pm Dr. Caron will give a talk on causes of winter deadouts to all who would like to attend. There is no charge for the afternoon event. Knowing why last winter's colonies died will help as we plan for next winter. Here is an opportunity to become a more skillful beekeeper. Consider it an investment in a more successful future with your bees.

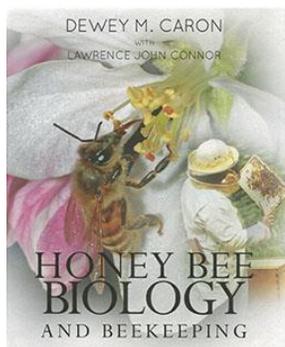
McHenry County College’s Conference Center (where NIBA meets) will be the site of all Dr. Caron’s sessions. More information is available at NIBAINfo.org or at ILSBA.com. It is good to keep bees.

Questions about the workshop can be sent to LKrengel@mc.net.



Dr. Dewey Caron, an entomologist by profession, is also an avid beekeeper. He dedicates his life to sharing his knowledge with other beekeepers. Dr. Dewey Caron Professor Emeritus, Entomology & Wildlife Ecology, University of Delaware and Affiliate Professor, Horticulture Department, Oregon State University Dr. Caron started with honey bees as teenager in Vermont and studied for his Ph.D. under Roger Morse at Cornell

University. Ever the educator, he has been the recipient of a number of prestigious teaching awards. He presents over 100 talks each year about such topics as pollinating insects, bees, and natural history.



Dr. Dewey Caron is the author of the standard beekeeping (apiculture) textbook used to teach college students and beekeepers the science and practice of bees and beekeeping. Widely considered the most complete beekeeping textbook, covering a vast array of topics of bee biology and colony management. Dr. Caron will be happy to sign any copies of his book at the Workshop.



MEMBER DONATIONS

John Leibinger

Thank You to those who brought refreshments to the February “Valentine” meeting. The treats were great. We appreciate your sharing. Your generous donations help foster camaraderie within the group and make the meetings even more enjoyable. Your support is truly appreciated.

An additional huge **thank you** to these members who made raffle donations:

- *Warren Spencer/Spencer Apiary Specialties
- *Larry Krengel

An additional special thanks to Terri Reeves and Ralph Brindise for the time taken to put together the new name tags. These will be invaluable for helping members get to know one another and helping foster the practice of networking in our group.

And of course a general thanks to Harvard Eggs, Feed, & Produce, Spencer's Apiary Specialties, and BL Plastic Containers for their generous and continued support. When you have some beekeeping needs, please consider supporting these member-vendors as they support us.

Like the bees we study, we accomplish more together.

CHORES OF THE MONTH – FEBRUARY

John Leibinger

Please Review February Chores List. **Most apply to March also, but with an increased sense of urgency.**

What's happening in the hive?

The bees have surely started raising brood by now. There won't be much early in the month, but as the month passes and if we get some warm weather, the pace of egg laying will pick up. The bees will need pollen (protein) to feed the brood and honey (carbohydrates) to energize the bees to forage and to produce heat to keep the brood warm. Early pollen sources will become available, but the weather must be favorable for the bees to forage.

For Beekeepers with live overwintering colonies, it is time to:

Continue to monitor the food stores available to your colonies. Checking the weight of hive by lifting/tilting from the rear may give you a sense of stores available. Unlike the super cold weather temperatures the bees have come through, warmer temps allow the cluster to relocate to available stores within the hive... if they are there. If not, supplement with sugar based feed, e.g. dry sugar, sugar bricks, winter patties, fondant, candy board, etc., to help them through the remaining winter. Unless we have unseasonably warm day and night temperatures, it still is a bit early to transition to liquid feed. Providing pollen, pollen substitute, or pollen patties will provide needed protein for brood development.

Check for activity at the hive on warmer days. You should start seeing activity on warm days. Bees will be taking cleansing flights and some will even be out foraging. If things are going really well, you may even see some orientation



flights by young bees. You may see some undertaker bees (they are the stiffer looking bees with dark tophats) dragging dead bees from the hive. Help them out by reaching into the entrance with a tool and scraping out some of the bodies. Try not to be too alarmed by the number of dead bees removed; your colony is still alive. Alternately, be alarmed....but it is too late to do anything about it now. Research, read, and ask others about how you might do things differently to improve your results next year. Keep in mind, though, your colony is still alive...have a cookie and enjoy the moment.

Replace reducers and mouse guards afterwards. As the temperature warms up later in the month, remove hive wraps you may have installed last fall.

Order any additional colonies of bees you want for 2020...pronto.....time is running out!

For New Beekeepers just getting started this year:

Continue to Read, Study, and Learn.... Before you know it Bee Arrival Day will be upon us! Books, Periodicals, Classes, Club Meetings, Internet (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). Listen to some Podcasts. All of these will help. Before you know it Bee Arrival Day will be upon us!

Get a Mentor from the Bee Club. The first step is to ask for help. There will be willing members.

Get a Mentor from the Bee Club. ...did I already say that? It bears repeating. Get a Mentor from the Bee Club.

Order your equipment, tools, and protective clothing. See February Chores.

Your Bees should be ordered by now. If not, you need to scramble. See February Chores for additional details.

Assemble and paint your equipment. No time to waste now. Bee Day will arrive before you know it. It's fun and you can be creative with your painting...don't be creative on the equipment assembly though, follow instructions. The bees will appreciate it.

Tip: Put dates (month/year) on your frames to keep track of their age to help in annual comb replacement.

Prepare your apiary location. Determine what you will use as hive stands. Make sure that the platform is reasonably level. Consider your mowing/trimming needs for the summer and position hives accordingly.

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 bringing a frame or two (brood frames) to the next club meeting and have a group-think forensic survey of the frame(s). We may or may not learn something, but we will find it interesting I'm sure. Sign up for the ISBA Winter Deadout Workshop and hear what Dewey Caron has to say.

Replace old frames or combs that have too many years on them. Commit to making this an annual effort by replacing at least 20% annually (oldest first). That will keep you from having any combs older than 5 years. Some more progressive beekeepers strive to get on a 3 year rotation of comb. To do that replace a third of the comb each year.

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 honeycomb 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? How about 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....this is a very important issue for beekeepers though probably not thought about enough.

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.
- Move closer to achieving sustainable beekeeping (not having to buy new packages every year).
- Learn to create and use nucleus colonies to overwinter more colonies.
- Learn to raise my own queens.
- Learn to produce comb honey, e.g., Ross Rounds, cut comb honey, chunk honey, section boxes.
- Learn to produce Creamed Honey.
- Learn to make Mead (like a Viking!...or a Monk for those with a more introspective demeanor)
- Learn how to process and use beeswax. Make candles, lip balms, hand creams, soaps.
- Are you interested in encaustic painting? Are you interested in creating wax art?

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

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.

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 March is a **hopefully** live hive in April....we still have another tough month 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 now March. Get ahead of your season.
Plan, Read, Study, Learn. Now is the time!
Bee Arrival Day is coming soon!**

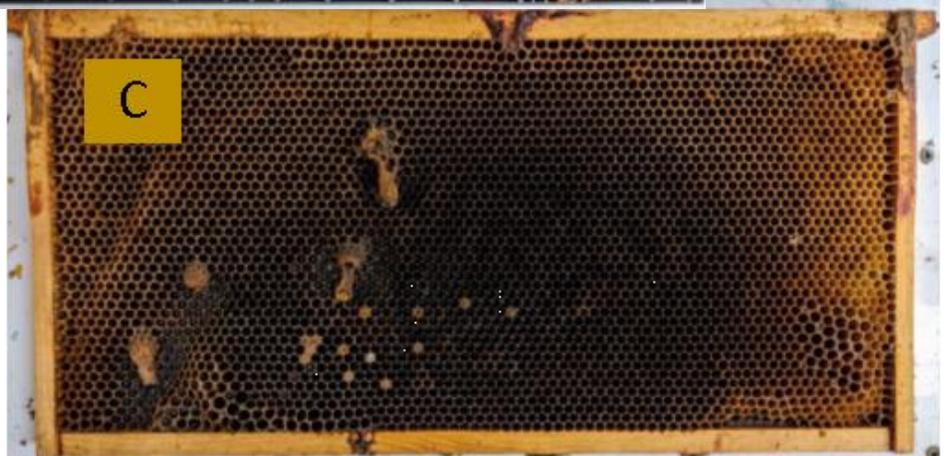


TO CULL OR NOT TO CULL?

That is the question

Each spring beekeepers face that question as they look through the overwintered frames. It is a shame to cull a usable frame. The bees have sent a great deal of time and energy drawing those cells, but does that frame contain something that will hurt bees in the coming season? Will it be discourage a productive colony? Do the bees need that many drone cells? Is it good to save those dark frames with the thick cell walls?

On March 27 and 28 at McHenry County College ISBA will be inviting Dr. Dewey Caron to lead a Winterout Workshop where just those questions will be considered. Want to know more? Go to NIBAINfo.org.



So, which of these frames would you return to your hive?

ANYONE SUFFERING FROM BEEKEEPING WITHDRAWAL?

John Leibinger

Here are a few resources that you may want to explore for your entertainment and education:

Podcasts

Beekeeper's Corner podcast <http://www.bkcorner.org>

The Kiwimana Buzz <https://kiwimana.co.nz/category/podcast/>

HiveTalk with David and Jon <https://www.talkshoe.com/show/hive-talk-with-david-and-jon>

The Beehive Jive <http://thebeehivejive.com/>

The treatment free beekeeping podcast <https://tfb.podbean.com/>

The Honest Bee <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-honest-bee/id1220294018?mt=2>

Beekeeping Short and Sweet <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/beekeeping-short-and-sweet/id1369094363?mt=2>

Beekeeping Today <http://beekeepingtodaypodcast.com/>

Recordings of Sessions of past ABF Conferences available on the Internet :

<http://abfconference.com/2018-session-recordings-handouts>

<http://abfconference.com/session-recordings-handouts-2017>

<http://abfconference.com/session-recordings-handouts-2016>

Several videos on Varroa by Meghan Milbrath

Why did my bees die? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWfSbVXqO_Y

Understanding Varroa Risk <https://pollinators.msu.edu/keep-bees-alive/understanding-varroa-risk/>

Making a Plan for the Varroa Mite <https://pollinators.msu.edu/keep-bees-alive/making-a-plan-for-the-varroa-mite/>

A Couple Other Favorites

A Canadian Beekeeper's Blog

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyDBTwXKg92H0cI3vIBQ0XOYbPQua5PzI>

University of Guelph Honey Bee Research Center Videos

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/honeybee/videos.shtml>

Minnesota Bee Lab Videos <https://www.beelab.umn.edu/resources-beekeepers/videos>

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Club Extractor Coordinator – Randy Mead
Club Raffle Coordinator – John Leibinger
Snack Coordinators - ??

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
2020 is BLUE.