

the Norfolk Bee

FEBRUARY 2023 • NORFOLKBEEES.ORG

NEXT CLUB MEETING

FEBRUARY 6, 2023

7:30 to 9:00 pm

**Hybrid
In-person
and on Zoom**

400 Main Street
Walpole, MA



Dear Fellow beekeepers,

I can't believe that another bee school has started. Over 90 students.

This is the first class we have had in-person in 3 years. I was a bit nervous and had to get the cobwebs out as it's a lot different than sitting at home in your comfy clothes with a fire going and not having to travel.

We had a great first class. Onward we go with a whole new batch of beekeepers that will be ready come Spring. I do encourage anyone from the club to come to Bee School. I think the students learn a lot more when they hear from others' experiences. I also have to say that it's been an honor and privilege to have taught Bee School for so many years (I think it's been over 10 years).

Each year is different as each bee season, meeting new people, and now getting to know them in person is an invaluable part of our club. The friendships we form with our fellow beekeepers is incredible. It has been an incredible opportunity to have made so many good friends.

The other part of our Bee School that is really important is the mentoring program. So the call will be going out soon from Dana and I encourage all those who can to sign up and be a mentor.

See you all at the February meeting.

Tony Lulik

(The Bee Man)

Beer Attack in Norfolk County!

See page 6



Mentors Needed for 2023

It is that exciting time of the year. Bee School started on Tuesday January 24th and the need for mentors is on the horizon. 93 students have enrolled in Bee School.

The goal is to have 50+ club members sign up to be mentors. That way there is a good chance most mentors will have no more than 2 Bee School students and many will only have 1. This is a great opportunity for you to share your knowledge and experience with these new beekeepers. It is also a great time for you to learn and do more. Many mentors have expressed "this

is a great learning experience for both the mentor and student".

Help a new beekeeper hone their skills and ***become a mentor!***

Yes, second year beekeepers have the knowledge to be a mentor.

Click on the button and fill out the form. It's easy!

Thank you to all those who will be volunteering this year and to those who have done so in past years.

**BECOME
A
MENTOR!**



NCBA BOARD MEMBERS
2022-2024

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Tony Lulek

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Edward Rock

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MEMBERS AT LARGE
Carin Cohen, Joel Richards,
and Jenna Tibbetts

NCBA BEE SCHOOLS:

INTRODUCTORY SCHOOL DIRECTOR
Tony Lulek

INTRODUCTORY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR
Dana Wilson

**INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL
DIRECTOR**
Ed Szymanski

INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR
Marian Szymanski

NCBA TECH GURU
Greg Rushton

APPAREL
MaryBeth Noonan and Maureen Harrington

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Kara Sullivan

HOSPITALITY
Rose Thornton and Carin Cohen

EXTRACTORS
Brianda Younie

MEMBERSHIP/FACEBOOK/GOOGLE
Rose Thornton
Deb Spielman

LIBRARIAN
Michael Simone

PROGRAMS
Ed and Marian Szymanski

SCHOLARSHIPS & GRANTS
Lara Davis



News from the Landing Board

The February 6th Meeting Agenda



Mel Gadd Famed apiarist, and Drumlin Farm beekeeper, Mel Gadd, has had remarkable success combatting varroa mites and associated viruses with the use of mushroom extracts. His hive management is based on research from Washington State University where entomologists found 75% reductions in mite levels in hives using mushroom extracts. Mel's hives have enjoyed similar successes. Come meet Mel Gadd (he'll be in-person at the Aggie). He plans on bringing samples of mushroom extract with him so that would be neat to see and smell. Mel is entertaining, informative, and overall, a fungi. This meeting will be hybrid.

Todd Barker from Barkers Beehives & Supplies Remember all the bee gear you didn't get as gifts for the holidays? Get it at the bee meeting! Todd Barker of Barkers Beehives & Supplies will be available at the meeting at Norfolk Aggie. Browse his wares for a quick impulse buy, or, for the *really organized*, pre-order and pre-pay for supplies by Friday, February 3rd, and Todd will bring it to the meeting.

Spring is coming quicker than you realize, and it's best to have all your gear ready before the bees start to fly!



A look ahead... Future Meeting Agendas

March: Spring Prep – Horray! This season that is filling in for a no-show winter is nearing an end; soon to be replaced by (if the last several years are any guide), a very late spring. Make a plan to get your hives ready for the big pivot. A honey crop in June gets its start in March.

St. Valentine Day

Valentine's Day is a day of extra devotion for beekeepers. It may be because we are very romantic, or that St. Valentine is the Patron Saint of Beekeepers, or that it marks the rough start of the Queen Bee starting

to lay eggs again.

Somewhat oddly related, February 14 (in a normal year) is the approximate start of the five-week maple sugaring season in this area. It's the start of two sugar crops. What could be sweeter?

Beekeeper preferences and winter loss

by Ed Szymanski, Cornell MB 2022

Beekeeper preferences and winter loss: How are these 2 things related? They're really not. We hear talk about various beekeeping practices that supposedly make or break winter survival of our colonies. Insulation vs tar paper wrapping vs no wrapping. Homasote boards vs insulation under the outer cover vs quilt boxes. Screened vs solid bottom boards. Upper entrances or not. Candy boards vs fondant vs sugar patties. White painted hives vs colors. And there are probably more.

All of these things have at one time been the subject of a statement made by a beekeeper that goes like this: "Well, I use _____ on my hives and they all survived the winter, so _____ must be the key to survival". But another did just the opposite and their colonies survived too. Or they didn't survive. Both ways, the generalizations are made and both ways they are wrong.

Most of these practices are fine, and there are different reasons for using them, but they are mostly matters of beekeeper preference and doing what makes you feel good. Sure, either a homasote board or under-cover insulation or a quilt box are needed to prevent condensation from dripping down onto the bees, but they all work. Some colonies with upper entrances live and some die. Was it the upper entrance? No.

Barring any egregiously wrong practices, winter survival comes down to one main thing – the health of the bees.

Healthy bees means mites and diseases under control, and proper nutrition. Monthly mite counts, a treatment in August, follow-up testing and further treatment if necessary – these practices help to insure that you have healthy winter bees. If the winter bees aren't healthy, the colony can't make it until spring. And proper nutrition means a diverse diet of pollens from a variety of plants and good honey stores going into winter. Again, healthy winter bees. Emergency feeding during severe drought, whenever that is, minimizes stress on the colony and prevents diseases like Nosema from breaking out or pests taking over. And of course, emergency late winter feeding can help to avoid starvation.

So go ahead and do what makes you feel better. But simple is best. Pay attention to the things that really matter. I can tell you from experience that it works

Speaking of winter loss, the mechanism of colony die-off usually comes down to one of two things:

Varroa collapse – this is the profile of a Varroa-collapsed hive: population was large going into fall, lots of honey on top, a few hundred dead bees in the bottom, a patch of spotty brood with torn cappings, and white crystals on cell walls. This is classic varroa collapse, and it can happen any time from September to January. There may be a small live cluster remaining around the queen for a while, but as soon as a cold snap hits, they are unable to

(Continued on next page)

Get involved with the NCBA

The NCBA runs on the interest and enthusiasm of its members. We encourage everyone to get involved with the club.

Come to a board meeting.

Meetings run every month from late August-June. The meetings last about an hour and we plan for the upcoming club

meetings as well as for special events and the seasonal demands of the beekeepers' year. Meetings are on Zoom. Plus, we are very nice people. If you're interested, email Tony Lulek and he will send you a link to the meeting.



Preferences and winter loss

(Continued from previous page)

keep warm. The beekeeper may say “they were doing fine until that February freeze” but it wasn’t the cold that was actually responsible for the death of the colony – it was the mites. Beekeepers will also say that the bees absconded, but they really didn’t. They left to die. Or the winter bees were compromised by the mites feeding on their fat bodies, and their winter lifespan was shortened such that the population slowly decreased until there weren’t enough bees to maintain a sufficient cluster and they died on a cold night. Again, it wasn’t really the cold that killed them.

Starvation – the bees ran out

of food. The bottom board will be covered with thousands of dead bees, many with proboscis extended, and some frames will be covered in dead bees head-first in cells. It’s sad to see. There may be some honey in the outboard frames, but they couldn’t break cluster to reach that in the cold. The center of the hive from bottom to top is empty. This is easily preventable. And if you are looking through a dead hive and find clusters of bees covered in mold, you might think moisture killed them, but the mold likely grew after the bees died and the hive became cold and damp.

So remember these words –
HEALTHY WINTER BEES!

Jan Daniel’s Educational Grant

The Jan Daniels Educational Grant aims to provide educational organizations project grants for the purpose of promoting and furthering education surrounding apiculture and healthy pollinator habitats. The grant is open to all educational organizations including, but not limited to, public & private schools, summer camp programs, Eagle Scouts, Girl Scouts, municipal libraries, and community farms & gardens who host educational programming. Applications can be filled out at norfolkbees.org. Please email Lara Davis at scholarships@norfolkbees.org for more information.

NCBA Scholarship

Are you or your child pursuing higher education? Apply for a NCBA Scholarship! NCBA provides scholarships of \$1000 to members in good standing or their children. Applications are due May 31st, and can be found at norfolkbees.org. Please email Lara Davis at scholarships@norfolkbees.org for more information.



Bemused

by Susan Golswitz

Keepers: If you’ve stayed away from poetry because you think it’s too academic or precious or because of some trauma you’re still carrying from 7th grade (and who isn’t?), please put all that aside for a moment and give this one a chance.

I’m leaving out any analysis or description or intrusion. This poem is simple (in the best way), clear, and heartbreaking just as it is.

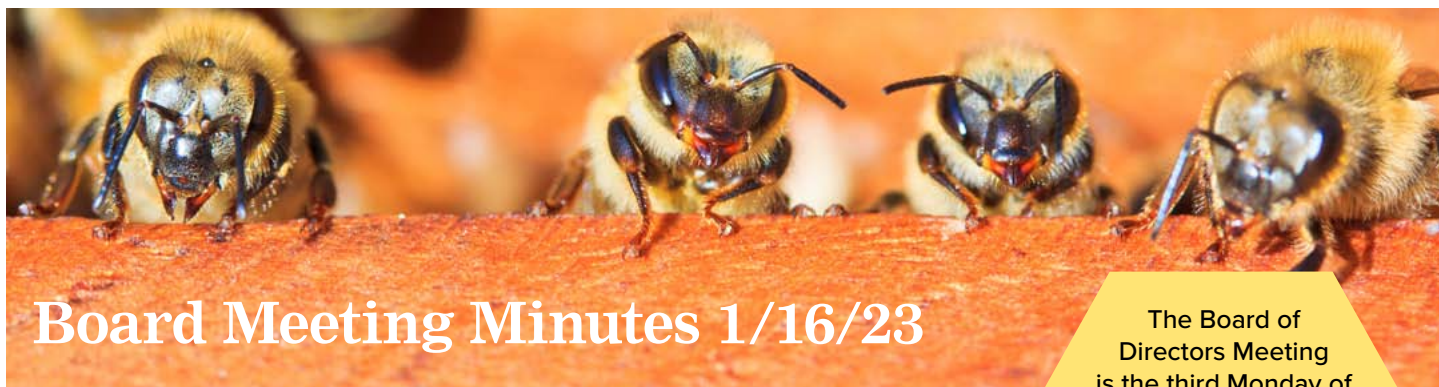
Watching Bees

Knowing you were tired of death
we spoke of other things,
traded stories
about our fathers,
dogs we used to have,
your trip to Paris - how you
bargained with the artist
for the painting of the woman
with your sister’s eyes.
we watched the afternoon light
play on the table, the color
of saffron, you said,
and you wished
for energy to dust the dust.

And now I’m watching bees
on a Saturday morning, hovering
around the fading violet
hosta flowers - and you
are back in the hospital.

We were like bees
that day - skimming what was left
of the late-summer air,
entering small doorways,
rummaging like thieves
for any sweetness.

Jeanie Tomasko



Board Meeting Minutes 1/16/23

NCBA BOARD MEETING

JANUARY 16, 2023

7:11 to 7:48 pm

Attending:

Tony Lulek
Mohamad Khalil
Ed Rock
Jennifer Jett,
Michael Simone
Roger Q. Hill
Joel Richards
Kevin Keane
Jenna Tibbetts
Laura Davis
Deborah Spielman
Tara Sullivan
Stephen Greene
Brianda Younie
Laura Davis
Ed Szymanski

President's Update – Tony Lulek

- Considering renewing the Queen Program (Club supplements 50% of cost of queen)
- Florida Beekeepers Association – they are still trying to figure out if they wanted to accept a donation – so we're letting it lapse.
- EAS planning meeting in Worcester County this Wednesday
 - o NCBA may consider supporting, through scholarship, NCBA members to attend the EAS conference

Vice President's Update – Mo

- Mo and Ed S. – Mel is interested in presenting (Mushrooms as potential anti-parasite treatment) for February 6th

Treasurer Update – Stephen

- Bank balance \$45,896.92 as of 1/16/23
- Financials accepted

Recording Secretary: Minutes – Ed R

- Meeting notes accepted

Corresponding Secretary – Kevin Keane

- Newsletter deadline 1/27/23 – delivered on the 2/3/2023
- Next club meeting 2/6/23
- Add note to NCBA members for possible volunteer opportunities at MassBee (contact Mary Dean)

Committees:

- Programs – Ed S and Marion
 - o Possible
- February – (in-person and Zoom) booked
 - o Mel to discuss his experience with mushrooms as potential anti-parasite tool - he'll be in person with some

The Board of Directors Meeting is the third Monday of each month.

It's held at 7:00pm via a Zoom Video Meeting.

All members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

mushroom props for show-and-tell

- March – Anticipating Spring Prep session
- Looking at some additional presentations:
 - “native bee” presentation
 - review of bee sting emergency procedures (EpiPen (or similar) resources...)
 - possibly have our “club member vet” do a short presentation to club on “bee medicines and prescribing”

NCBA Intro to Bee School – Tony and Dana

- 92 enrollees now – start January 24th
- 6 in person and 4 zoom meetings... only 4 zooms will be hybrid...all will be recorded
- Reviewing curriculum and editing for currency and accuracy
- \$100 each class for in-person door prizes

Intermediate Bee School – Ed & Marion

- o Starting March 1st, 2023
- o Registration starts up at end of January 2023

Extractors – Brianda Y

- o No new update
- o All is quiet
- o New Extractor being purchased and will be sent to the Sherborne location

(Continued on page 6)

Beer Attack in Norfolk County!



A tragic typographical error resulted in the dreadful loss of several bee hives in Norfolk County last week.

"It's so rare to see beers in this part of Norfolk County," explained Needham resident, Dana Wilson, "especially as Needham was, until recently, a dry town."

As NCBA Vice-President Mo Khalil noted, "This is a recurring tragedy that spell-check just can't prevent."

"Because they are so hoppy, beers can jump pretty high," explained Mass Wildlife agent Oscar Walsh. "It could have been worse. Recently we have seen a lot of 'seasonal holiday' beers. Those ones are the worst. The return of IPAs indicates that the population is shifting."

Quick thinking saved the day and the remaining hives. Massachusetts Fisheries and Wildlife officials were able to successfully sedate the beers before a crowd of horrified onlookers.

As the cooler of traumatized beers was loaded onto a truck, a concerned Mass Wildlife Agent Oscar Walsh added, "I just hope these guys survive the weekend..."



State official load the beers into a cooler. "It's important to keep them well chilled". The beers will be relocated to a liquor store in Worcester County.

(Board meeting minutes, continued from page 5)

Library – Michael Simone

- o No update

Door Prizes – Kara S

- o Invite vendors (Barker, Woods...) in quarterly to our meetings (Club/Member Vendor nights)
- o Barker will be hosting a store at February meeting
- o Tara will also reach out to Better Bee

Website – Greg

- o Need to get Scholarship and Intermediate Bee School Registration updated

Membership – Facebook – Google Groups - Rose & Deb

- o 402members (members not including bee school) renewed

- o 200+ have not renewed
- o Dues \$25/year for membership

Bee Apparel – MaryBeth Noonan and Maureen Harrington

- o Exchanges went pretty well

Calendar Committee – Jenna Tibbetts

- o Nothing new – it's recently been updated
- Nominating Committee
- o Adding MDAR dates and NCBA bee school also

Scholarships and Grants - Lara Davis

- o No updates
- o Need to promote in the newsletter
- o Also update with NCBA Master Beekeeper Scholarships & Scholarship for Queen Program
- Meeting was adjourned at 7:48PM

EAS MA 2023

July 31 – Aug 4, 2023



68th Annual Short Course and Conference*

University of Massachusetts, Amherst MA

Speakers:

- Dr. Samuel Ramsey
- Dr. Judy Wu-Smart
- Dr. Cameron Jack
- Dr. Tammy Horn-Potter
- Paul Kelly
- Dr. Tom Seeley
- and more...

Workshops:

- Honey Judging
- Bees Under the Microscope
- Lotions and Potions
- Cooking with honey

EAS Master Beekeeping Program Testing & Certification

Short Course Tracks:

- Beginner
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Queen Rearing and Colony Management
- Hands-on beekeeping in the State Apiary

Special Events:

- Field Trips
- Auctions
- Honey Show
- Bee Olympics
- Special Visit by Lorenzo Langstroth

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90 miles from Boston and 175 miles from New York City. 64 miles to Tanglewood summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.



**Watch for Updates on the EAS Website:*
<https://easternapiculture.org/conference/eas-2023/>



2023 Nucs & Queens Available

NortheastBees.com

Archie Acevedo ■ Franklin Massachusetts

Nucs and Queens are our specialty. Nucs are the easiest way for beginners to establish new hives. We don't cut any corners.

The nucs that we sell you are the same as those that we produce for ourselves.

All of our nucs are Massachusetts raised and overwintered in our Medway, and Franklin bee yards. These are *not* southern-raised nucs. All queens have been reared from our overwintered northern stock and are better adapted to the New England climate. Each year our breeder stock is tested through a winter prior to grafting.

Our "nucs" are 5-frame mini-hives comprised of a marked queen, her daughters, pollen, nectar, and honey.

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