

the Norfolk Bee

JANUARY 2023 • NORFOLKBEEES.ORG

NEXT CLUB MEETING

JANUARY 9, 2023

7:30 to 9:00 pm

**Hybrid
In-person
and on Zoom**

400 Main Street
Walpole, MA



Dear Fellow Beekeepers,

Happy New Year to everyone. I can't believe it is January 5th already. It doesn't really seem like winter is here. We have had almost no snow and the temperatures have been above normal. I do wish we would get some snow. It does a lot of things, like covering and protecting the ground, keeping the temperatures low so our bees don't break clusters and potentially starve to death.

At this point in time, I would make weekly check-ins with hives, making sure that they have enough food to survive (do *not* do inspections of your hives, just check the top to make sure there is enough fondant on). Spring is only 10 weeks away, but a lot can happen in that period of time. Also the queens will begin laying in just a few short weeks. So think about putting tiny amounts of pollen patties on at that time. I mean like 2" squares. They will need the pollen if there is none within reach. And keep your fondant/sugar sources stocked well.

I look forward to this coming year. Don't forget the Eastern Apicultural Society (EAS) conference is coming to Massachusetts and there are lots of ways to get involved. There is information in the newsletter. As well you can contact Mary Duane, president of [MASS BEE](#) if you have any questions or want to volunteer.

See you on Monday.

Yours in Beekeeping,

(The Bee Man)



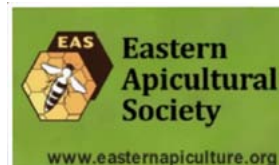
The EAS Conference is coming!

The Eastern Apiculture Society (EAS) Conference is coming to Massachusetts!

The week-long conference runs from Monday, July 31, to Friday, August 4, in beautiful Amherst, MA. Make your plans now. The conference is timed perfectly so we can make our late-season splits before heading out to Amherst for five days of learning, inspiration, and socializing.

MassBee is the official host for the EAS, so this would be the year to join MassBee as well. (www.massbee.org)

Norfolk County Beekeepers are also encouraged to join the Board of MassBee and be part of what promises to be a great conference.





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News from the Landing Board

The January 9th Meeting Agenda



Master Beekeeper Programs

Master Beekeeper and NCBA stalwart, Ed Szymanski, leads us through the various Master Beekeeper courses, describing the good and the good of these programs. If one of your New Year Resolutions (remember those?) is to make the jump to Master Beekeeper, this is one presentation you don't want to miss.

The meeting will be hybrid.

A look ahead... Future Meeting Agendas



February: 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.

It's a bit past time to renew your NCBA membership!

**RENEW
MEMBER-
SHIP**

The best bargain around is the Norfolk County Beekeepers Association, and last month was the time to renew your membership! Your \$25.00 membership makes you eligible for 50% OFF a new queen, hundreds of dollars in door prizes, scholarships (Cornell Master Beekeeper certificate program and Rearing Queens classes), Facebook group, Google Group, and this **amazing** newsletter. Plus, we'll also help you learn and grow as a beekeeper, which is the best benefit of all. Renew now!

What's blooming

Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Skunk Cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) and Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*) blooms are only 3 months away! We add the Latin names so everyone is impressed that we know how to use Wikipedia.

What does it mean to be a Master Beekeeper?

by Ed Szymanski

For the January club meeting, I will review the various Master Beekeeper programs available to us. I will discuss features of these programs and share my experience with the Cornell program. As a preliminary discussion, I wanted to share my feelings on the reasons behind the will to pursue this certification.

People often ask “why become a Master Beekeeper?”
“This is a lot of work, why did you do it?”

To me, it means validation of all I have done to improve my beekeeping skills and knowledge such that I can be the best possible steward and advocate for honey bees and all pollinators. To other beekeepers, it means that they have someone they can trust to help them be better beekeepers in the midst of a tremendous amount of misinformation available on the internet and elsewhere. They know that I put a lot of work into achieving this and that I care about them and their bees. To the public, it means that there is someone available to advocate for pollinators and to represent them in government actions.

I have seen my role to be that of an educator and facilitator for several years now. The Master Beekeeper program has expanded my knowledge such that I am now better equipped to teach beekeepers of all levels, and it gives me a significant increase in credibility to anyone skeptical of my qualifications.

Through the program, I found out what I didn't know about honey bees, keeping bees, researching honey bee issues, and making contributions to the community. I discussed issues with other beekeepers, researched topics of interest to beekeepers, and did presentations for review. It was all very rewarding and challenging.

Having achieved the certification, I expect to continue communicating with beekeepers of all levels of expertise, to educate and to further my knowledge, and I can envision advocating for bees and beekeepers to local Boards of Health regarding beekeeping regulations, to State Representatives in matters of pesticide regulation and other pollinator health issues.

In my operation, I plan to use what I learned to improve my planning, to better identify colony problems, and take decisive action quickly.

I can help to improve pollinator health in my area by standing up for pollinators on issues such as open space preservation, pesticide regulation, and beekeeping-related ordinances and regulations.

To be a Master Beekeeper is to be an educator and advocate in all things beekeeping and pollinator related. How much of that you do is up to you – there seems to be an expectation that you will share your knowledge and talents with others, but it isn't a requirement of the program. But to me, it's the best reason for going through the program in the first place.

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.



Here are two poems from *Blind Huber*, a small but potent little book by Nick Flynn. The works are inspired by the imagined observations and musings of Francoise Huber, an actual blind scientist/beekeeper from the 18th Century. These tightly well-crafted and compelling poems wander through the inhabitants of the hive as well as the keeper.

We're aware of Langstroth, but Huber was his progenitor.

I've learned to recognize by hearing the change in intensity and tone of a hive when it is becoming annoyed or a bit "spicy" during an inspection, but whether I could assess a hive (or even light a smoker) sightless would be impossible: Huber attained and ascended to a completely unexplored and fantastic level of dedication, devotion and expertise, akin to the blind mountaineer, Erik Weihe, who summited Mt. Everest.

This poem is direct and clear, except

Edited from Wikipedia:

Francoise Huber

He became interested in honey bees after being read the works of René de Réaumur and Charles Bonnet... Since he was now blind, he had to rely on the help of others. This included his wife but also his servant François Burnens. François Burnens (1760–1837) was the son of peasants who arrived in 1780.[10][6] Through his "observation," he discovered that the queen bee did not mate in the hive but in the air and detailed how the timing of this event was essential. He also confirmed

Queen

Net suit & smoking cup,
you reek fear.

If we fight back,
or if there isn't enough,
you seek me out
with gloved fingers
to crush my head.

When we sting
you scream.

We know why
you carry our white boxes
to the edge of the alfalfa,
to the figs& raspberries.

You take our honey
because we let you.

We pollinate the fields
because we are the fields.

for the wonderful, expansive and oceanic last line. "We pollinate the fields/because we are the fields." How democratic, how royally generous of her to use a plural

the discovery by A. M. Schirach that bees are able to convert eggs into queens by the use of food (royal jelly) and that worker bees can also lay eggs. He described the battles between queens, the killing of drones at the end of the summer and what happens when a queen is replaced by a newly introduced queen. He also proved that bees used their antennae to communicate. He looked at the dimensions of the cells and how they influence the shape of the insects, the way the larvae spins silk to make its cocoons. He showed that queens are oviparitous. He looked at the ways

(Continued on page 6)

pronoun, especially since she is not a pollinator at all. Not only that, the philosophical/spiritual/universal acknowledgement of being one with her/their environment shows the interconnection and unity of purpose and goal, which she embodies. A paraphrase might be, "We work because what we work for/in becomes/is us." Or, to be mundane, "You are what you eat," or, in this case, a reversal: "What you eat is what you are." Our environment's survival is inextricably ours as well, she muses, and our charge is to protect, to nourish - because by nourishing it, we nourish ourselves. All is One.

In contrast, here is a worker's encounter. It's more specifically individual, one little bee's personal and overwhelmingly sensual experience.

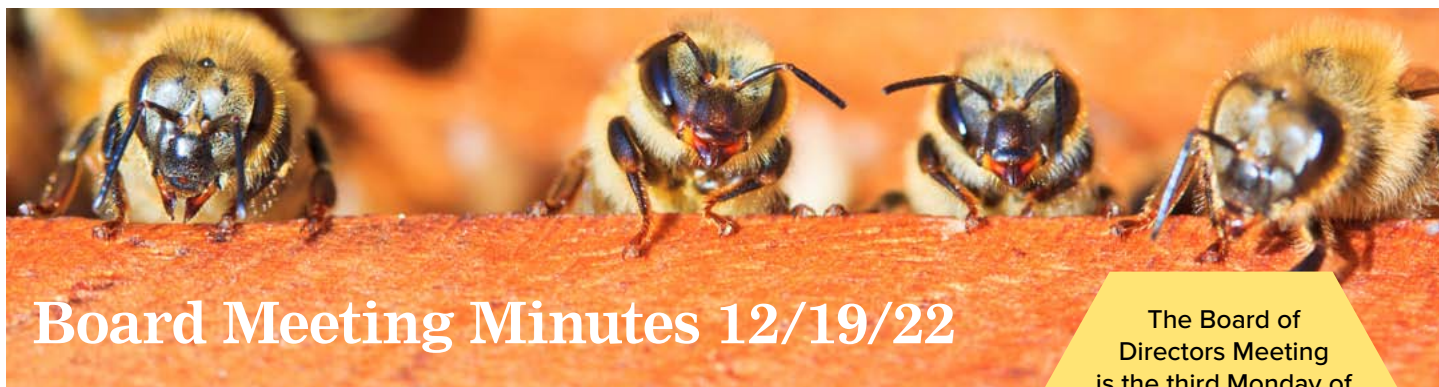
Worker

Clover whispers, each
lavender globe.

Nine days in the fields,
then our wings
are shot.

Day three
I came upon an orchid,
hidden in a stand of pine –
newly opened,
mouth wide,
a lacy white corridor,
heaven after the gloom
of the hive.

Stumbling inside, the scent
pulled me deeper,
not caring
if she closed on me forever.



Board Meeting Minutes 12/19/22

NCBA BOARD MEETING

DECEMBER 19, 2022

7:08 to 8:30 pm

Attending:

Tony Lulek
Mohamad Khalil
Dana Wilson
Ed Rock
Jennifer Jett
Michael Simone
Roger Q. Hill
Joel Richards
Kevin Keane
Laura Davis
Deborah Spielman
Kara Sullivan
Greg Rushton

President's Update – Tony Lulek

- Old & New Business
 - o Holiday party was very successful – thanks to all who contributed food and other efforts
 - o Looking at revisiting club NUC program
 - o Mo – contacted the President of Florida Beekeepers – in process.
 - o MassBee wanting volunteers for EAS and
 - Also Mass Bee wants county clubs involved in exhibiting at EAS
 - Waiting for list of possible volunteer options for EAS with Mass Bee

Vice President's Update – Mo Khalil

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

Treasurer Update – Stephen

- Bank balance \$42,422.35 as of 12/19/22
- Financials accepted

Recording Secretary: Minutes – Ed R

- Meeting notes accepted

Corresponding Secretary – Kevin Keane

- Newsletter deadline 1/31/22 – delivered on the 1/6/23
- Next club meeting 1/9/23
- Add note to NCBA members for possible volunteer opportunities at MassBee (contact Mary Dean)

Committees:

- **Programs** – Ed S and Marion Szymanski
 - o Possible
 - January 9th – Master Beekeeper

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.

Program Presentation

- February – (in-person and Zoom) booked Mel to discuss his experience with mushrooms as potential anti-parasite tool - he'll be in person with some mushroom props for show-and-tell
- Conversation about some potential speakers
- **NCBA Intro to Bee School** – Tony Lulek and Dana Wilson
 - 82 enrollees now
 - 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
- **Intermediate Bee School** – Ed & Marion Szymanski
 - o Nothing new
 - o Done for this year – registration starts up in January 2023
- **Extractors** – Brianda
 - o No new update
- **Library** – Michael Simone
 - o No update
 - o \$52 made from Holiday party book sale
- **Door Prizes** – Kara Sullivan

(Continued on page 6)

(Bemused, continued from page 4)
swarms formed and was the first to provide an accurate biological history of bee colonies.[5]

These observations were made using a new type of hive in which each comb had glass sides, which Huber developed; these hives were the ancestors of our modern observation hives. Until then, hives had been circular and made of straw. These new hives opened as books with each frame visible to view.[10] These allowed the team to observe the bees. These discoveries would not have been possible without the skills and bravery of François Burnens. It is said that he would face the attacks of an entire hive just to learn a fact.[5]



(Board meeting minutes, continued from page 5)

- o Invite vendors (Barker, Woods...) in quarterly to our meetings (Club/Member Vendor nights)
- o Tara will also reach out to Better Bee
- **Website** – Greg
 - o Everything is OK
- **Membership** – Facebook – Google Groups - Rose & Deb Spielman
 - o 272 members (members not including bee school) renewed
 - o 399 who have not renewed
 - o Dues \$25/year for membership
- **Bee Apparel** – MaryBeth Noonan and Maureen Harrington
 - o \$1,666 in sales
 - o Nothing else new
- **Calendar Committee** – Jenna Tibbetts
 - o Nothing new – it's recently been updated
 - o Adding MDAR dates and NCBA bee school also
- **Scholarships and Grants** - Lara Davis
 - o No updates
- *Meeting was adjourned at 7:55PM*

**WHAT'S MORE IMPRESSIVE
THAN A TALKING DOG?**



A SPELLING BEE.



It's January, and sadly, it's time to put away the Christmas decorations

Great photo of a brilliant idea. Shared with us by Mo Khalil who found it on the internet. If this photo went viral, this would be the one hive in the country that went viral - not caused by varroa mites.

Join the MassBee Board

The Massachusetts Beekeepers Association (MassBee) is looking for board member volunteers! MassBee is actively looking to fill the roles for a Recording Secretary and a Corresponding Secretary. Members of the NCBA Board are eligible to be on the MassBee Board as well.

The 2023 EAS Conference will be held in the Bay State and MassBee is working hard to make sure it will be the best and most memorable EAS Conference! If you're interested in volunteering, please reach out to the current president, Mary Duane, via president@massbee.org.

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

Major Beekeeping Suppliers and Artisans

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



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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.



My Flow Hive Experience

(so far...)

by Mark Minnichelli

During the summer of 1980, during my first year working for GE in Pittsfield, MA, one of my office colleagues invited me to join him during lunch to inspect one of his beehives. It sounded interesting, so I joined him, and that day I decided that I would like to keep bees someday. When I retired in March of 2020, I gave myself the gift of beekeeping. I joined NCBA, and as I waited for Beginner Beekeeping course to begin, I started reading several books about beekeeping as a hobby. When I read about the Flow Hive system, I decided to give this new, relatively expensive technology a try. I purchased a full hive system and began prepping it well before the start of Beginner Beekeeping.

For those unfamiliar with the Flow Hive technology, it is basically a Langstroth hive with a special super which uses a unique plastic honeycomb system. Different from plastic foundation, the Flow Hive honeycomb is a “fully-drawn” segmented plastic honeycomb, which can be mechanically transformed from closed cells to a series of vertical flow channels for the honey to flow down and out of the super through.

Unlike Tom Pilis’s experience, which he nicely described in the June 2022 NCBA newsletter, my first experience using the Flow Hive system was a success! In the spring of 2021, I purchased my nuc from Archie Acevedo at Northeast Bees (northeastbees.com) and began my journey as a backyard beekeeper. Through the remainder of the 2021 beekeeping season, I paid close attention to my hive, which evolved from a single deep Langstroth brood box

(Please turn to page 9)

Each frame can be harvested individually and independent from the rest. I am harvesting the 2 outer frames which were filled and capped sooner than the interior frames. Side viewing window is shown, as are the angled steel tools on the hive stand, which are used to “open” the flow frames, creating the flow channels for the honey to drain through, to the tubes and into the jars. I did no additional filtering or processing of the honey--truly raw honey. The ziplock bag was placed over the tube end and jar top to discourage investigating bees when I was away from the hive. One less-obvious benefit of harvesting the honey frame-by-frame, is that there is less mixing of honey from various sources of nectar, and a better chance of seeing and tasting distinct differences from frame to frame.





The photo shows the rear view of 4 frames in the Flow super. The right-most frame is lighter in color due to the honey being drained from the cells. The frame ends and drain tube are molded in clear, food grade polycarbonate. The frame assembly is “bee tight”, meaning the bees cannot exit or enter this area during the honey collection process. Worker bees continued to come and go on foraging flights at the front of the hive, seemingly unaware that they were sharing capped honey with me at the rear. Each frame yielded 7-8 lbs of honey and took about 45 minutes to fully drain.

(Continued from page 8)

to a double deep when the bees needed more room. When 17 to 18 frames were built out, I added the Flow Hive super as a 3rd box. The bees started to explore the unique frames in the Flow super, but ran out of time as the end of the active season came to a close. I removed the Flow super and prepped the hive for winter.

In spring of 2022, with fully built-out comb already in place and filling with pollen and nectar, I again added the Flow super to the 2 Langstroth deeps, and my bees quickly adopted the new super and began filling and capping the Flow frames in the Flow super. One of the nice features of the Flow super are the viewing windows on the sides of the box, which allow me to easily and often check the progress of filling and capping the outer frame cells, with no impact on the bees. I also continued to do regular hive inspections to ensure the health of the colony and the proper progress of brood production, pollen and nectar stores, etc.

Finally in July of 2022, the 2 outermost frames of the Flow super were fully capped and ready to harvest. This was the exciting day I was waiting for 2 years! Harvesting honey from flow frames is quick, easy and non-invasive: 1) Remove a rear cover from the Flow super. 2) Remove 2 small plastic caps from each flow frame and add a plastic tube to the bottom of the frame, 3) place a quart mason jar under the tube, and 4) insert a long metal key into the top of the Flow frame and twist it to break the wax comb seals to allow fresh honey to flow directly out of the comb and into the mason jar. This is all done while keeping the super in place, and without disturbing the bees either inside or outside of the box. (I have a [3-minute video](#) of my harvest that clearly shows how this works.)

During the summer of 2022, I was able to harvest honey from all 7

(Please turn to page 10)



Front view of the hive shows July bearding. 2 bottom boxes are standard Langstroth deeps (10 standard frames each), with the top box containing seven Flow Hive frames (7 frames due to thicker dimensions of the Flow frames). Full-length mouse guard is still in place. Entrance holes are drilled in the front of the 2 bottom boxes, bottom hole is barely visible in photo.

(Continued from page 9)

of the deep Flow frames which filled the Flow super, yielding roughly 45 lbs of honey. I can comfortably declare my 2-year experience beekeeping with Flow hives a success! I am hopeful that my colony will survive another winter this year, and that I can repeat another successful harvest in 2023.

My takeaways (so far) as a beginning beekeeper using a Flow Hive:

1. 95% of learning beekeeping with a Flow Hive is the same as with a traditional Langstroth hive; only the harvesting is radically different;
2. Flow Hives are expensive; maybe OK for 1 or 2

hives, but not economical for multiple hives or commercial beekeeping;

- 3 The Flow Hive system can work well as a quick, easy means of harvesting honey
4. When Flow Hives were first introduced there was controversy over marketing claims. I think skepticism about those claims still linger, and Flow Hive owners feel it.
5. But, I am having a blast learning about bees and beekeeping as a NCBA member, and I appreciate all the great sharing which takes place among this community--Thanks!

What to do with the smoker

The results from our extraordinarily unscientific survey are in! Thank you to everyone who participated.

Here are some interesting takeaways:

- A surprising number of us are still on our first smoker. Either we are remarkably careful with our smokers, or most survey respondents were recent graduates of Bee School.
- Pine needles are the overwhelming fuel of choice. Some members mix it up a bit by adding egg cartons, cloth, or cotton to their pine needles. Some beekeepers, who took multiple times to light their smoker, said their primary fuel were “matches”.
- One respondent complained that it took so many attempts to light their smoker that they had to refuel before they headed out to the hives. But overall, 40% said they successfully light their smoker on the first try. Another 40% said it only took two tries. Very impressive. Whoever is teaching “*How to light a smoker*” at Beginner Bee School deserves a raise.
- 36% of beekeepers could go only 15 minutes before refueling, but 46% of respondents could go 30 minutes without refueling. Less than 10% could last 45 minutes.
- As for where we store our smokers, thankfully everyone waited for their smokers to be fully cooled. Once cooled, the smokers were stored in low-flammability zones such as sheds, garages, or concrete floors.





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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