

# the Norfolk Bee

DECEMBER 2022 • NORFOLKBEEES.ORG

## NEXT CLUB MEETING

**DECEMBER 5, 2022**

7:30 to 9:00 pm

**Hybrid  
In-person  
and on Zoom**

400 Main Street  
Walpole, MA



Dear Fellow Members,

I hope that everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving filled with all the things you love. Now we can look forward to winter. A time to reflect, a time to catch up on things, time for fires in the wood stove, and cuddling on the couch.

Now is also a good time to review your year of beekeeping. What did I do right this year? What did I do wrong? What can I do better? Am I a good beekeeper? Since I've been keeping bees for 18 years, I can tell you that the answers to these questions change from year to year. What makes a good season? What makes a bad season? There are so many variables when it comes to beekeeping.

The weather is one of the biggest factors. As we saw this past summer with the drought. Second is the bees themselves. Each year there seems to be different challenges. Some out of our control and some within our control.

Life is the third one. We are all busy with many things: work, family life, friendships, travel and all the things we do that make our lives full. Sometimes things don't go as we plan, and sometimes something has to give.

As many of you know the first 3-4 years are challenging, and I can tell you the next 5-10 will be too. No year is ever the same, but if you are still keeping bees after 2-4 years, I'd consider you a good beekeeper. For me, what defines a good beekeeper is always learning, always trying new things, forging new bee friends, listening, watching, asking questions, educating yourself, and always trying to do your best. That to me is a good beekeeper. It's not whether your bees swarm, or your hives die in the winter, or you didn't get any honey, it's that you keep trying to improve.

I can tell you that throughout my 18 years, I have had plenty of ups and downs, good years and bad years. Sometimes it's the weather, sometimes it's my fault, but each spring I start fresh with all that I have learned and always hope for the best.

Yours always in Beekeeping,

(The Bee Man)

## WEATHER FORECAST

Milder and seasonable weather expected for most of the month, except when there is cooler weather. There will be some rain. And some sun. Nights will generally be darker than the days.

## Renew your NCBA membership!

2023 is right around the corner; time to renew your membership! The \$25.00 membership leads to a plethora of benefits. Renew today so that when you see the next reminder, you can calmly say "I already did that!"

**RENEW  
MEMBER-  
SHIP**



# News from the Landing Board

## The December 5th Meeting Agenda

### NCBA Holiday Party!

Join us at the Norfolk Aggie cafeteria for the annual Holiday Party! It will be a great opportunity to meet fellow beekeepers; many of which you have only met over Zoom. Did you know that Tony Lulek is actually 6' 7".... and that NCBA Recording Secretary Ed Rock has *ten* fingers? (That's why he can type the minutes of the Board meetings so quickly). But the best reasons to go is that the evening will be fun. The meeting's activities will be:

- ✿ **Baklava Contest** – Bring your very best baklava (and its recipe) to share and enter into the contest.
- ✿ **Trivia Contest** – compete for prizes and pride against your fellow beekeepers
- ✿ **Honey Tasting** – *everyone attending should bring at least 1 pound jar of their honey* so we can include them in a Norfolk County wide Honey Tasting Extravaganza at the Holiday Party.
- ✿ **NCBA Membership Awards for longevity** – Many NCBA members have been loyal and contributing members for a **LONG TIME**
- ✿ **3+ Vendors** will “bee” available to participants for buying holiday gifts for you and your bees
- ✿ **Pot Luck Dinner** – We'll be sharing a spreadsheet in the next few days – so folks who are planning to attend the Holiday Party will be able to sign up for what they'll bring to share and pass.
- ✿ **And a “Your Hive Invention” table.** If you've made some unique tool, device, or widget that helps you keep your bees and want to share your innovation, bring “IT” and a bit of a description of the tool and purpose to display.

The meeting will be hybrid. For those on Zoom it will be great to see everyone, but admittedly, the honey tasting and potluck may be lacking.

NCBA BOARD MEMBERS  
2022-2024

**PRESIDENT**  
Tony Lulek

**VICE PRESIDENT**  
Mohamad Khalil

**TREASURER**  
Stephen Green

**RECORDING SECRETARY**  
Edward Rock

**CORRESPONDING SECRETARY**  
Kevin Keane

**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

**DOOR PRIZE/RAFFLE**  
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

## It's time to renew your NCBA membership!

**RENEW  
MEMBER-  
SHIP**

The best bargain around is the Norfolk County Beekeepers Association. Now is 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 do Beekeepers do in the winter?

by Ed Szymanski

It's December, your bees are well fed, healthy, and tucked in for the winter. Honey is extracted and bottled, candles and soaps are made. You'll put off equipment repair until early spring. You're longing for something bee-related to occupy the time between now and Spring. What's a beekeeper to do?

Read!

Winter is the perfect time to catch up on reading and learning about honey bees. I have put together a list of my favorite books in a variety of subject categories for your winter reading enjoyment. There are many, many books out there, and we don't have them all, but we do have a good assortment (see photo). I can read about bees for the rest of my life.

This list represents my opinion of the best books in the categories mentioned. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list and you may not agree with me, but you will get an unbiased, no-sales-strings-attached review of some of the books available, before you buy too many. Oh, right, you can't have too many....

## GENERAL

***Beekeeping: Challenge What You Are Told* (Patterson)** - Roger Patterson was a UK old-timer who often challenged traditional views on beekeeping. This book provides an alternative point of many subjects and is just interesting reading.

***Keeping Bees Alive: Sustainable Beekeeping Essentials* (Connor)** - Larry Connor covers a wide of principles with the goal of helping beekeepers succeed at sustainable beekeeping. Mite-tolerant bees, sustainable management, nutrition, and more are covered.

## TEXTBOOK

***Honeybee Biology and Beekeeping* (Caron/Connor)** - Dewey Caron has taught classes on Honey Bees and Beekeeping in the Entomology program at the University



of Delaware for many years. This book is used as a textbook in those courses. The book covers the essence of all of it and lets you decide where you want to concentrate your future learning.

***The Beekeeper's Handbook* (Sammataro/Avitable)** - This is a good book for a Bee School or even an intermediate class. Great illustrations.

***The Beekeeper's Bible* (Stewart/Tabori/Chang)** - Besides being an absolutely beautiful book, it's full of good info, covers everything from history to technical to plants to recipes. The "feel" of the book, cover, and page design are wonderful.

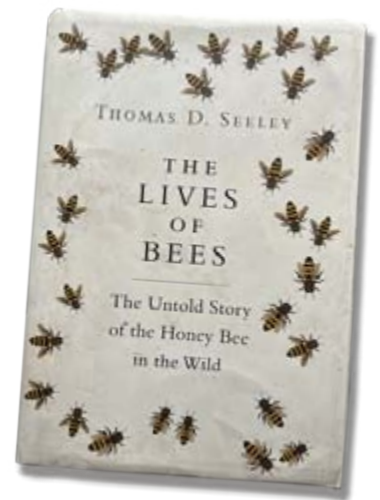
## HONEY BEE BEHAVIOR

***The Lives of Bees* (Seeley)** - Tom Seeley is the authority on honey bee behavior. This book explores honey bee behavior in the wild, and encourages us to let the bees be bees. It serves as a counterpoint to excessive management and helps beekeepers understand how bees manage themselves.

***Honeybee Democracy* (Seeley)** - Another Seeley masterpiece, this book goes into great detail about how the bees make collective decisions, especially relative to swarming, and helps us to understand why bees do what bees do, which can only help us with our management.

## HONEY

***Two Million Blossoms* (Traynor)** - A guide to the medicinal benefits of honey. Covers history of medicinal use of honey, mechanisms of healing, and practical applications for medicinal honey use. You can hone your farmer's market sales pitch by explaining the wonders of



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honey to prospective customers, or just learn for your own edification.

**The Honey Handbook** (Flottum) – Looks at honey differently than the book above. Covers honey plants, how bees process honey, extraction, bottling, sales, and more.

### STORIES ABOUT BEEKEEPING

**Beeing** (Thomas) – The story of a woman’s excursion into beekeeping after making a life change and how the bees further change her life forever. A switch from the “technical” reading.

**Bee Time** (Winston) – Mark Winston is a scientist and professor, but wrote this collection of stories that thoughtfully embrace our relationship with our bees. A favorite of mine.

### BEE PLANTS

**Victory Gardens for Bees** (Weidenhammer) – We have most all of the bee plant books, and this one is our favorite. Information about different types of bees, planting guides, and garden planning.

**Garden Plants for Honey Bees** (Lindtner) – A field guide and reference manual of bee plants with ratings as to suitability and preference as nectar and pollen sources for bees. Full of photographs.

**The Bee Friendly Garden** (Frey/LeBuhn) – How-to guide to planning and creating pollinator gardens.

**The Pollinator Victory Garden** (Eierman) – All about pollinator gardens, geared toward the use of native plants to provide food and habitat for all pollinators. A lot of great photos.

### TEST PREP

**Honeybee Biology and Beekeeping** (Caron/Connor) – Dewey Caron puts together the written tests for the EAS Master Beekeeper program, enough said.

**What Do You Know** (Collison) – Clarence Collison is a Professor of Entomology. He put together this book of tests on every aspect of honey bees. It would be more aptly named “What Don’t You Know?” because that’s what it demonstrates. Answers with explanations at the end of each chapter. Absolutely essential for Master Beekeeper test prep.

### BIOLOGY/GENETICS

**Mating Biology of Honey Bees** (Koeniger/Ellis/Connor) – The comprehensive bee sex manual. Good distillation of very complex material.

**The Biology of the Honey Bee** (Winston) – a comprehensive explanation of honey bee anatomy and physiology. Very technical but also readable.

**Honey Bee Drones: Specialists in the Field** (Kingham) – A book dedicated to the unsung heroes of breeding. From anatomy to DCAs to the mating process, drones get full coverage.

**Raising Honey Bee Queens** (Fert) – All about queen rearing, geared toward sustainability

### FUN

**Queenspotting** (Kearney) – A Christmas gift I loved. 48 fold-out pictorial pages of queen spotting challenges, increasing in difficulty. People have also found varroa mites, yellowjackets, and possibly multiple queens. It’s a blast.

**What Do You Know** (Collison) – In case you like taking tests just for fun.



### FOR NEWBEES/REFRESHERS

**Bee-Sentials** (Connor) – A field guide to all things beekeeping.

**Queenspotting** (Kearney) – In between the picture puzzles, there’s a lot of good basic info about bees and queens in particular.

### SWARMING AND PREVENTION

**Swarm Essentials** (Repasky) – Steve Repasky is a Master Beekeeper, great speaker, and swarm catcher. Great guide to swarm prediction and management

There’s also the journals - **Bee Culture** and **American Bee Journal**, and state and county club newsletters. This should get you through the winter. Remember, NCBA has a well-stocked library so you don’t have to buy them all. Books may be borrowed at monthly meetings.

Happy reading!

## Honey

Only calmness will reassure  
the bees to let you rob their hoard.

Any sweat of fear provokes them.  
Approach with confidence, and from  
the side, not shading their entrance.

And hush smoke gently from the spout  
of the pot of rags, for sparks will  
anger them. If you go near bees  
every day they will know you.

And never jerk or turn so quick  
you excite them. If weeds are trimmed  
around the hives they have access  
and feel free. When they taste your smoke  
they fill themselves with honey and  
are laden and lazy as you  
lift the lid to let in daylight.

No bee full of sweetness wants to  
sting. Resist greed. With the top off  
you touch the fat gold frames, each cell  
a hex perfect as a snowflake,  
a sealed relic of sun and time  
and roots of many acres fixed

In crystal-tight arrays, in rows  
And lattices of sweeter Latin  
from scattered prose of meadows, woods.

**Robert Morgan**

Some poems have a fulcrum point, a place where one melody or organizing sense or structure changes to another and adjusts the balance of the work. I'd pose that this poem, for about two thirds, puts forth both instructions, suggestions and myths about approaching and opening a hive – some valid, some not – “If you go near bees/ every day they will know you” – maybe. Toward the end, though, somewhere around “Resist

greed” the poem moves from the singular, axiomatic and specific to the expansive, figurative and universal, and from almost prose to poetry – as if by the process of opening the hive to gather treasure, the poem itself opens and reveals its core as well.

Even the instruction, “Resist greed” moves the gears of the poem from the objective specific to the expansive. All the previous rules refer to the physical handling of the bees and the hive, but “Resist greed” is at once a command about emotional and moral inclination. From there, as the persona handles the frames, the wonderful analogy of hexagon cells and snowflakes is offered and the poem shifts to larger ideas. Each snowflake is unique, cells are often not, but despite this difference, their shape is shared, and the inference is that there is a kind of rhyme, a harmony or echo of sorts in nature's creations, possibly only realized when in the generous presence of the opened hive.

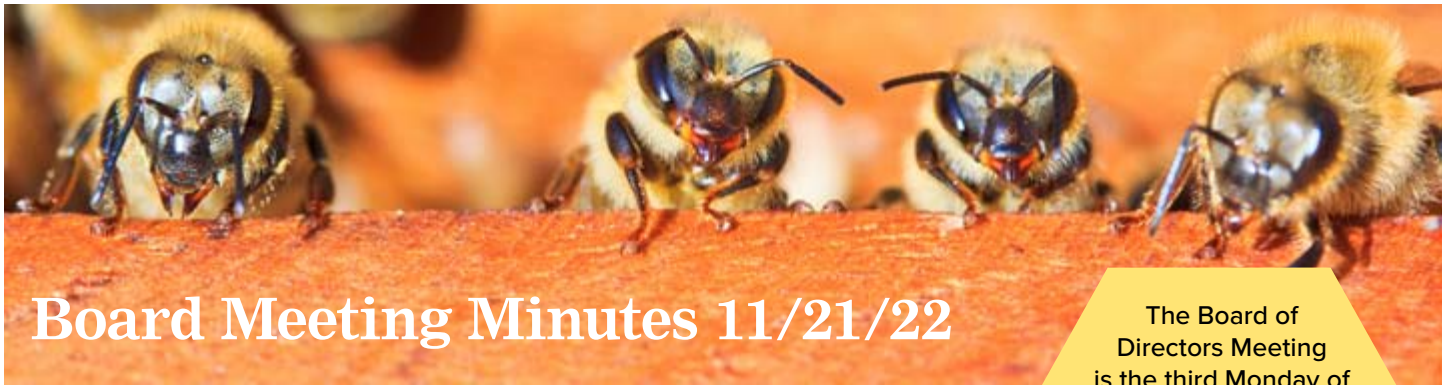
Each cell is “a sealed relic of sun and time...” and even more artful, a comparison is made between the industrious gathering from varied sources – compared to prose - to create the organized “crystal-tight arrays in rows and lattices.” Making a poem based on an organizational structure, like a sonnet, has its rules and orderly lines, pulled and put together from various and varied ingredients - forming an arrangement that language offers and which can reach beyond itself.

Just as honey is the nourishing sweetness created from disparate sources, some bitter, some common, this poem suggests, through that analogy, that poetry, too, is made from what might be, at first, commonplace and pedantic – but the magic is in the intentional precision of plan, the process which leads to eventual expansion and amplification - the whole so much greater than its parts.

*Susan Goldwitz is a NCBA member and prizewinning poet who has taught literature and writing courses on disparate levels from men's and women's prisons to undergraduate and graduate programs.*

*She has been keeping bees for about ten years.*





# Board Meeting Minutes 11/21/22

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.

## NCBA BOARD MEETING

**NOVEMBER 21, 2022**

7:08 to 8:30 pm

### Attending:

Tony Lulek  
Mohamad Khalil  
Dana Wilson  
Ed Rock  
Jennifer Jett  
Michael Simone  
Ed Szymanski  
Mary Beth Noonan  
Roger Q. Hill  
Joel Richards  
Deborah Spielman  
Jin & Chris Stutzman  
Val Mayo  
Steven Greene  
Brianda Younie

### President's Update – Tony Lulek

- Old & New Business
  - o Mass Bee
- Discussion of how do we share our hive info with MDAR so our hive show up on the data and maps and our legislators know volume of beekeepers. We'll promote registering after the holidays so
  - o Tony mentioned two things
    - 42 RSVPs and climbing so far
    - Membership Certificates for longevity (gift certificates for LONG term members) Dana coordinating
  - Pot Luck spreadsheet – Tony will be pulling together
  - Tony and Ed S. possibly pulling together a Trivia contest
  - Table for Honey Tasting
  - Hive Inventions Table
  - Baclava Contest

### Vice President's Update – Mohamad Khalil

- o Mass Bee Legislation issue

### Treasurer Update – Stephen Greene

- Bank balance \$43,126.59 as of 11/21/22
- Financials accepted

### Recording Secretary:

#### Minutes – Ed Rock

- Meeting notes accepted

### Corresponding Secretary – Kevin Keane

- Nothing new –
- Deadline for Newsletter materials to Kevin – 11/28/22

### Committees:

- **Programs** – Ed S and Marion
  - o Possible
    - December – Holiday Party

- January – Master Beekeeper Program Presentation
- Conversation about some potential speakers
- **NCBA Intro to Bee School** – Tony and Dana
  - 61 enrollees now
  - 6 in person and 4 zoom meetings...yet all hybrid
  - Reviewing curriculum and editing for currency and accuracy
- **Intermediate Bee School** – Ed & Marion
  - o Done for this year – registration starts up in January 2023
  - o Roger Q Hill offered to help Ed S.
- **Extractors** – Brianda
  - o \$600-700 approved to purchase a new extractor to add to our “fleet” – and other than that ALL is good
- **Library** – Michael Simone
  - o December meeting as a standard “book sale” activity, then a culling after the meeting
- **Door Prizes** – Kara
  - o Nothing new to report
  - o December meeting
- **Website** – Greg
  - o Everything is OK

*(Continued on page 8)*

# Interview with a Beekeeper

by Brian Hart

*I've been interested in what got beekeepers started on their journey in beekeeping. So here is the continuing series of interviews with beekeepers - and asking them what got them started in beekeeping.*

December's beekeeper: **Tony Lulek**

**Q: How long have you been beekeeping?**

A: Since 2004

**Q: What made you begin your journey in beekeeping?**

A: I saw hives by the side of a stockade fence in Dedham and was curious. I thought that you needed acres and acres of land to have bees. I did some research, looked on Amazon for the top beekeeping books, got about 10 of them from the library, then found out that all the counties in Massachusetts have beekeeping clubs and they all offer bee school. Even though I live in Middlesex country, Walpole was closer to my house, so I decided to take their school. We had 18 people in bee school in 2004.

**Q: How many hives did you start with and how many do you have now?**

A: I started with one hive my first year, two the next, and 4 the year after. Over the years I have managed up to 25 hives in different locations. This past year I ended up with way more than I wanted, 8 hives and 8 nucs. I promised myself this coming year that I would pare down to only 4-5 hives.

**Q: Has beekeeping been what you thought it was going to be?**

A: YES and so much more. Especially since every single year is completely different than the previous. You never know what to expect. And after 20 years I am still learning how to be a better beekeeper.

**Q: What do you find the most interesting about beekeeping?**

A: So many different parts of beekeeping are interesting. I find the biology of the bees amazing, how they make a queen still baffles my mind, all of the intricate aspects of the colony and how they all work together make honeybees the most fascinating create on the planet. I also find the community of beekeepers to be amazing. I have met so many wonderful people from all walks of life and have made some incredible friends along the way.

**Q: How has beekeeping changed your life (could be something small or something big)?**

A: This is a two-part answer.

The first part is that my last name, LULEK, means

little beehive in Polish, at least that was what the nun told my mother in the 70s. So, beekeeping is in my blood somewhere back in the old country. Which means I was destined to become a beekeeper.

The second part is that I have dedicated the past 20 years to being a member of the club and to being a board member. I have been directly involved since we started the official board, serving in every position except for recording secretary (I'm not great at taking notes) I have worked hard as president (4 terms) with a great board of directors and committee heads to accomplish a lot of incredible things over the years. I had completely revised and updated our bee school to make it one of the best in the state. It has been a blast and an honor to lead the Norfolk County Beekeepers Association. Though I do think it's time for me to step back and let some new beekeepers take the helm. We have so many wonderful, dedicated, incredible people in our club, I would love to see some of them take over the leadership roles and let us "Old Timers" take a break.

**Get involved with the NCBA**



TO BEE...  
OR NOT  
TO BEE...

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.

# Thank you 5, 10, 15, 20+ Year Members

The NCBA board is happy to announce they will be recognizing those NCBA members who had their 5th, 10th, 15th and 20th+ membership anniversary in 2022.

This recognition will occur at the December 5th club holiday party. It is because of members like you that make the club strong, bringing a wealth of information and expertise to the club and its members.

## What's blooming

In December the only plants blooming are poinsettias - safely inside. Skunk Cabbage blooms are only 3.5 months away!

WHY DID YOU GO TO  
THE DERMATOLOGIST?



I HAD HIVES.



(Board meeting minutes, continued from page 6)

- **Membership – Facebook – Google Groups** - Rose & Deb
  - o 172 members (members and bee school folks) renewed
  - o Dues \$25/year for membership
- **Bee Apparel** – MaryBeth Noonan and Maureen Harrington
  - o Mary Beth and Kara (worked with TR Miller Walpole) shared a simple array of materials (some caps, hoodies, jackets and tee shirts) that will be made available for NCBA members to purchase
  - o Substantial numbers of NCBA materials were

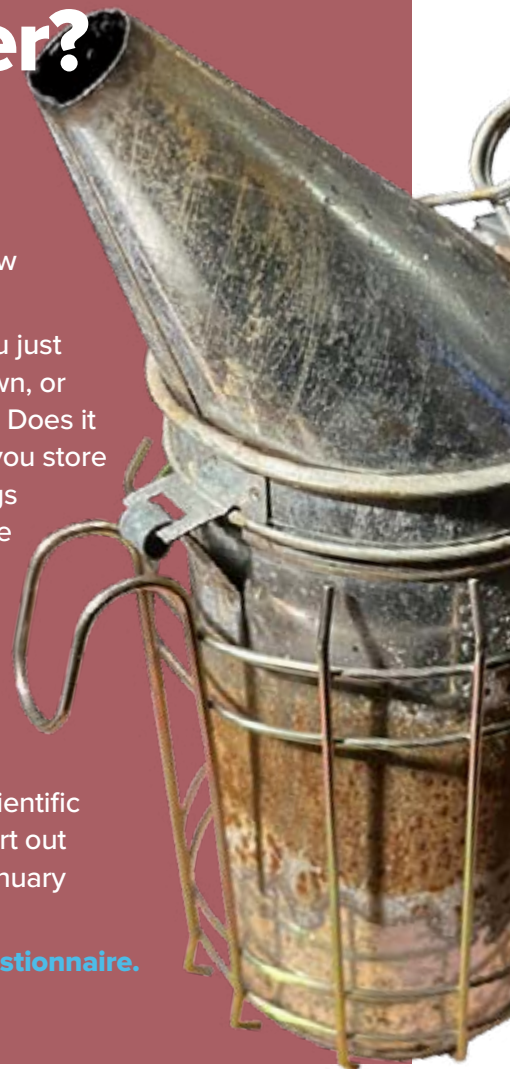
## What to do with the smoker?

The smoker is an important piece of equipment for beekeeping, but how does one store it?

After using it, do you just let the fuel burn down, or do you dump it out? Does it stay outside, or do you store it beside the oily rags and turpentine in the garage?

Help us answer these burning questions. Please click the link and fill out our brief and extraordinarily unscientific survey. We will report out the results in the January newsletter.

[NCBA Smoker Questionnaire.](#)



- o purchased (Ballpark \$1500+ in product ordered)...  
*Board thanking Mary Beth and Kara pulled this together quickly/efficiently/and the ordering went smoothly...*
- **Now awaiting delivery of the “stuff”**
- **Calendar Committee** – Jenna Tibbetts
  - o Nothing new – it’s recently been updated
- **Nominating Committee**
  - o Nothing new
- **Scholarships and Grants** - Lara Davis
  - o No updates
- *Meeting was adjourned at 8:30PM*



You know that  
good friend  
or relative  
who's  
intrigued  
about bees?

# Tell them about the NCBA Bee School 2023

Bee School fills up quick and it is the perfect opportunity to dip one's toe into the world of beekeeping.

Registration is now open. Best of all they can sign-up online!

[Sign-up online.](#)



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