

NEXT CLUB MEETING

JANUARY 10, 2022

7:30 to 9:00 pm

Hosted via Zoom Meeting

An email will be sent with a meeting invite. This will include a meeting ID # and a password.

In advance of the meeting, please download and install the free Zoom app to your computer, phone or tablet. If this is new technology for you, perhaps you can do a test meeting with a friend.

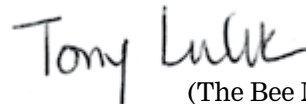
<https://vimeo.com/616977404>

Dear Fellow Beekeepers,

Happy New Year! I hope that everyone had a safe and wonderful holiday season. The past two years have been challenging to say the least. As a club, not only did we survive, but I feel we flourished. If anything can be said, we came together as a club and did our best. Both our Beginner and Intermediate Bee Schools thrived. We had again about 100 in the beginner class and almost 300 in the intermediate. Our membership rose to over 600 paid members. We had some amazing speakers over the past two years, and to be honest, it was nice to sit at home and not have to travel to meetings. Having said that, I do miss everyone. I am a people person and not being able to see everyone is tough. We, the board, are hoping we will be able to have some meetings in the spring in person. We, as a club, should be very proud of what we have accomplished over the past two years. So, everyone, give yourselves a pat on the back for making this the best club in the state (my personal opinion).

I hope that 2022 will be a good year for everyone. As beekeepers, spring is always such a great time. Hives that survived the winter will be bursting at the seams with bees ready for a split, packages and nuc will be coming in April and May, and once again hope springs eternal for a great bee season.

Yours fondly in Beekeeping,


(The Bee Man)

40 Years of Membership!

In the December newsletter it was stated the **Richard Kramer** and **Jackie Chados** were celebrating their 25th year of membership. That was an understatement; they are actually celebrating their 40th year of membership. Richard and Jackie joined in 1982!

Back in 1982 Britain was fighting Argentina over the Falkland Islands, the first artificial heart was invented, gas was \$1.30 a gallon, Olivia Newton-John's song "Physical" was at the top of the charts, and Richard and Jackie were getting their feet wet in beekeeping.

Put another way, when Richard and Jackie were

getting into beekeeping, there was no talk of "mite control" because varroa mites didn't arrive in the US until 1987. What did they talk about at Bee School!?

Thank you, Richard and Jackie, for your continued support. It is members such as yourselves that make this a strong and viable association.

May we all enjoy 40 years of beekeeping!

**CONGRATULATIONS
RICHARD
AND JACKIE!**





News from the Landing Board

The January 10th Meeting Agenda

Steve Repasky - Single Brood Chamber Hive Management Steve has spoken to NCBA several times now. Last year, he presented this talk to our Intermediate Bee School and I decided that the whole club should hear it. Steve is a nationally recognized speaker, author, and consultant from Pittsburgh, PA. He is a certified Master Beekeeper, current president of the PA Beekeepers Association, and owner of Meadow Sweet Apiaries. This talk inspired us to convert our apiary to single brood boxes in our ecosystem.



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Brianda Younie

MEMBERSHIP/FACEBOOK/GOOGLE

Rose Thornton

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Michael Simone

PROGRAMS

Ed and Marian Szymanski

A look ahead... Future Meeting Agendas

February: Stephanie Bruneau - Common Sense Natural Beekeeping -

Stephanie Bruneau is a beekeeper, environmental educator, artist, writer and mama to two junior beekeepers in training. She is passionate about bees, natural living, and raising healthy, creative and curious kids. Stephanie is the author of **The Benevolent Bee** (Quarry Press, 2017) and **Common Sense Natural Beekeeping**, with co-author Kim Flottum (Quarry Press, 2021).

Managed honey bee colonies face unprecedented challenges, including a growing loss rate with every passing year. Outside of human management, however, wild honey bee colonies are not only surviving, they're thriving. In her talk, Common Sense Natural Beekeeping, author and naturalist Stephanie Bruneau will discuss how we can learn from the way honey bees live in the wild, and use this knowledge to inform our decision making in our managed colonies. She will talk about hive management strategies that respect the natural intelligence of the bee, leading to better outcomes for bees and beekeepers alike. Beekeepers today have myriad choices to make that affect their bees' health and productivity. From housing to nutrition, pest management and more, Stephanie will discuss Common Sense Natural Beekeeping as a sustainable alternative for natural hive management.

Looking for a NCBA Scholarship Czar

The club is looking for a volunteer to coordinate our many scholarship programs (Norfolk Aggi College Scholarship, Club Members' College Scholarship, Club Members' Cornell Master Beekeeper Scholarship, and the Subsidized Queen Program). Any interested members can reach out to Tony Lulek for more information.

A few tips going into winter...

by Ed Szymanski

As winter begins, our bees should be healthy and well-fed, and we won't have that much to do with them for a while. This is a tough time for beekeepers. As a Rhode Island Beekeepers member recently commented on Facebook, "And at this point there's not much you can do but cross your fingers and wallow in dread until spring." We worry about our bees making it through the winter. We put so much effort into keeping them healthy, we want to see them thriving in the spring. Sometimes the desire to see if they're still alive causes them more harm than good.

Try to avoid making these mistakes that could hinder your bees' chance for survival:

Checking for activity on a cold day by putting an ear to the hive and knocking – in the cold, honey bees go into a suspended state called torpor. The bees are just barely active, keeping the cluster at the minimum temperature needed to survive, and conserving food supplies. A knock on the side of the hive produces a "buzz" that tells you they're alive, but it also causes them to break their torpid state, raise the cluster temperature, and thus consume more stored food.

Splitting hive bodies to see where the cluster is – sometimes, on a day warm enough to check or replenish sugar patties or fondant, you notice no bees on the top frames. The hive seems quiet. Are they dead or just clustered in the bottom

box? A quick split of the hive bodies will tell you, but it may be quite harmful to them. The cluster may be actually spanning the two boxes and you'll split it, causing them to lose all of their stored heat, and they may be unable to build it back up by the time the cold of night sets in. Even if they're fully in the bottom box, the insulation provided by the honey frames above will be broken and valuable heat will be lost from the cluster.

Opening the top for too long – even if you are only checking or adding to fondant stores, opening the top of the hive can be detrimental to the cluster warmth. Try to open the top only if temperatures are above 40 degrees, preferably in the sun. If the colony seems to be on the brink of starvation, go ahead and open it to add fondant on a colder day, but act fast – you should be able to lift the inner cover and throw a slab of fondant on in 15 seconds (or less).

If you really want to know if your bees are alive, and know where in the hive the cluster is located, invest in an infrared camera like the FLIR One, and check on them without disturbing them. Or just keep food on top and wait until spring to check on them.



THE ONE THING YOU SHOULD LEARN FROM THIS NEWSLETTER:

renew your membership!

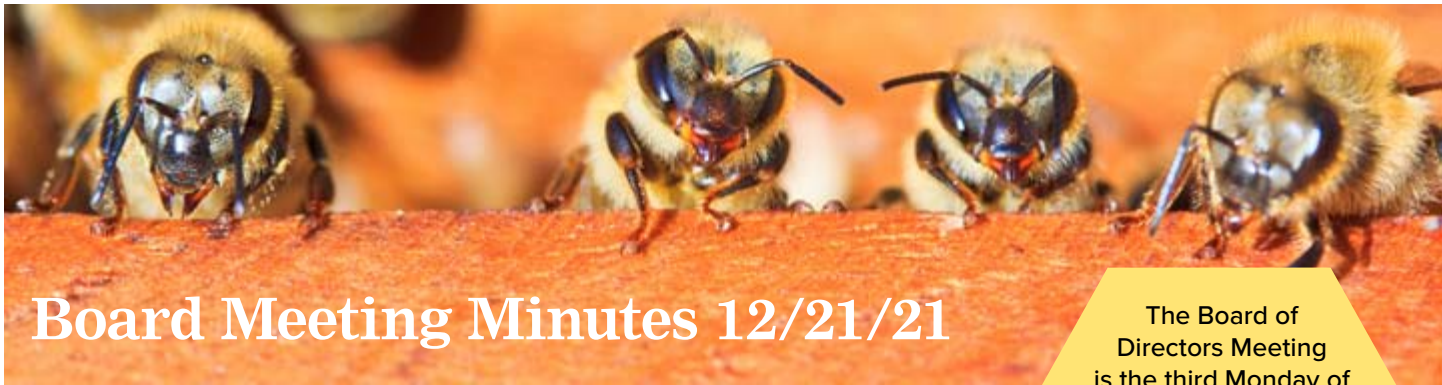
2022 is here and you want to be sure to renew your NCBA membership.

Happily, there are now two ways to pay your membership dues:

1. Go to <https://www.norfolkbees.org/membership.html> and renew your membership on our secure website using your credit card. (this is the easiest)

2. Go to norfolkbees.org and download the membership application form, fill it out and send it along with your check to our post office box listed on the applications.

The membership committee will be cleaning house on the Google group email list and Facebook page on January 1, 2022. You must be a paid member to be included in both of these groups after December 31st.



Board Meeting Minutes 12/21/21

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
DECEMBER 21, 2021
7:30 to 8:30 pm

Attending:
Tony Lulek
Dana Wilson
Stephan Greene,
Ed Rock
Greg Rushton
Brianda Younie,
Michael Simone
Deborah Spielman
Jenna Tibbetts
Cara Sullivan

President's Update – Tony L

- Old & New Business
 - Connecting with a beekeeper in Africa to share practices – they will be attending Bee School in 2022
 - The club may want to continue a relationship after they've finished 2022 Bee School. We'll evaluate any additional participation then.
 - NCBA Scholarships – the club is looking for a volunteer to coordinate our scholarship programs (Norfolk Agi College Scholarship, Club Member's– College Scholarship, Club Member – Cornell Master Beekeeper Scholarship, and the Subsidized Queen Program). Any interested members can reach out to Tony Lulek for more information.

Vice President's Update – Dana

- Nothing new.

Treasurer Update – Stephen

- Bank balance \$42,620.46 as of 12//2021
- Three financial reports accepted.

Recording Secretary: Minutes – Ed R

- Nothing new

Corresponding Secretary – Kevin Keane

- Nothing new – articles due by 12/26 for newsletter

Committees:

- **Programs** – Ed S and Marion
- **Intro to Bee School** – Tony
 - Registration - 71 sign-ups so far
 - Starts up January 25th, 2022 (Tuesdays) – 10 Classes
 - Meeting with WCBA about mentoring program

- **Intermediate Bee School** – Ed & Marion (FYI – First Class in 2021 starting in March – Zoom-Based)
 - Registration will open in January 2022
 - Start classes in March 2022
- **Extractors** – Brianda
 - No updates
 - Found new house to store extractors in Shelborne
- **Library** – Michael Simone
 - Got the Library from Janice and Mike
 - Currently going to consider book list on website and communicating
 - Michael Simone will be taking over responsibility for the NCBA Library.
 - Go to the Club website to review NCBA Library Titles
 - If you're interested in a title to borrow – contact Michael directly to borrow a book or other resource.
- **Door Prizes** – Kara
 - December door prizes were sent
- **Website** – Greg
 - Working on a Google Nonprofit account now – exploring its functionality before we go live.
- **Membership** – Facebook – Google Groups - Rose & Deb
 - Dana will be cleaning the rolls in January
 - 252 updated memberships

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What type of bees should I get?

(and where should I get them?)



by Ed Szymanski

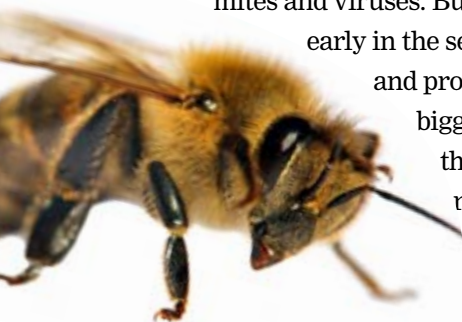
I'm often asked this question or see it asked on Facebook. The type of bees you decide to buy is mostly a matter of personal preference, based on certain qualities or characteristics you'd like to have in your bees. What characteristics? They can range from color to mite resistance to honey gathering ability. In this article, I will outline the various races and strains of bees available in this country today, and the commonly held pros and cons of each.

There are 3 races of *Apis mellifera* found in the U.S. today – Italian, Carniolan, and Caucasian. There are various strains of bees within these races and their hybrids.

ITALIAN (*Apis mellifera ligustica*)

Italians are the most prevalent honey bee in America today. Italians were first brought in to the U.S. in 1859, and Lorenzo Langstroth was one of the first to offer Italian queens for sale. They are produced in large numbers for pollination contracts, especially for almonds in California. They are well suited to commercial pollination because they build up rapidly at the first availability of pollen, without a high tendency to swarm. They also tend to overproduce brood into the summer, which can lead to overly large late summer colonies that consume too much of the food stores. This characteristic does make Italians well suited to the southern package bee industry – large colonies come back from pollination ready to be divided up into spring packages. They continue rearing brood into late fall and keep large colonies into the winter, a disadvantage here in the Northeast. They also tend to drift and rob among other colonies, which can spread

mites and viruses. But they are readily available early in the season, are fairly gentle, and produce a lot of honey. Their biggest disadvantage is in the lack of tolerance or resistance to Varroa mites.



CARNIOLAN (*Apis mellifera carnica*)

Carniolan bees originated in the part of Europe now known as Slovenia. They are darker than Italians, are quite gentle, and overwinter with small populations and therefore consume less honey. They build up rapidly in the spring flow, but have a propensity for swarming. As such, they are not as well suited for pollination or honey production without a lot of management. Carniolan bees are available from a large number of suppliers in the northeast.

CAUCASIAN (*Apis mellifera caucasia*)

Caucasian bees are originally from the Caucasus region of eastern Europe, near the Black Sea. Caucasians are darker, like Carniolans, and are very calm and gentle. They build up slowly in the Spring and as a result are not good honey producers in colder climates. They fell out of favor because of that and also because they use a lot of propolis to stick hive parts together, to the point of making them hard to inspect. Caucasians are still available but are hard to find.

Other Strains of Honey Bees

CORDOVAN

A variant of the Italian bee, Cordovans are a light honey color. The legs and head, normally black, are instead a brown color. Some people find them to be very pleasing to look at and queens are easier to find in the hive. They are quite gentle, but have a tendency to drift and rob other hives. They are still Italians so you have to stay on top of the mites.

BUCKFAST

The Buckfast bee is an Italian/Carniolan hybrid developed by Brother Adam of Buckfast Abbey in the UK, as a project to breed bees that could help to overcome an epidemic of tracheal mites in the 1920s. They build up

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quickly in spring, so they produce large honey crops, are resistant to tracheal mites, but tend to do a lot of robbing. There are several breeders of Buckfast hybrids in the Northeast. Our Buckfast hybrids have been some of the best bees we have ever had.

SASKATRAZ

Saskatraz bees were originally developed by Meadow Ridge Apiaries in Saskatchewan, Canada. They were bred from 35 diverse colonies of VSH, German, and Russian bees. The breeders selected for honey production, cold climate wintering, mite tolerance and disease resistance. These breeder queens are then crossed with diverse stock from Northern California by Olivarez Honey Bees. These Saskatraz hybrids show hybrid vigor, fast spring buildup, and excellent honey production, which I can personally attest to.

Mite-Resistant Strains

VARROA-SENSITIVE HYGIENIC (VSH)

This includes *Minnesota Hygienic* and what were once called *Suppressed Mite Reproduction (SMR)* bees. VSH behavior is where workers can detect brood cells, eliminate most of the mites exposed, thus preventing reproduction. They do not uncap cells with no mites or with non-reproducing mites. They were developed by Dr. John Harbo and Dr. Jeffrey Harris at the USDA bee lab and Dr. Marla Spivak in Minnesota. It is important to note that the VSH genes are additive, so VSH daughter queens can open mate and still retain some level of hygienic behavior. VSH bees are American bees, likely Italian-Carniolan hybrids. There are many sources of VSH bees and queens.

RUSSIAN

Russian bees from the Primorsky region of Eastern Russia have been living with and tolerating mites for 100 years, since they co-exist with the Asian honey bee (*Apis Cerana*), the original host of the Varroa mite. Pure bred Russian bees raised by the Russian Honey Bee Breeders Association (RHBA) show the following traits: dead mites collected from Russian colonies show damage to legs and bodies, suggesting that the Russians are biting the mites (a trait referred to as Varroa Sensitive Grooming); exhibit a high level of hygienic behavior, and regulate

brood production based on resources available.

They will shut down brood production in times of dearth, overwinter with small clusters and are frugal in winter food consumption. Pure Russian bees are produced by the RHBA under closely controlled conditions, maintaining purity will be difficult for the average hobbyist. RHBA breeders suggest maintaining all-Russian yards to preserve the desirable traits.



VARROA-SENSITIVE GROOMING (VSG)

The bees known as Purdue ankle biters, or Indiana mite-biters, developed at Purdue University. These bees chew the legs and mouth parts off of the mites, and they fall off the bees and die. Tests are showing mite populations reduced significantly, along with increased survival rates. Not much is said about these lately, they seem to have fallen off the map. I'll try to get an update.

Conclusion

My opinion is, if you're going to maintain just 2 or 3 colonies, VSH is the way to go. When you split, or a swarm or supersedure occurs, the new queens will open mate but the hygienic traits will carry on. Occasional requeening with outside VSH stock can replenish the hygienic qualities over time. If you will run a larger number of hives, you can have a base population of hygienic bees, say, 50% of your colonies, and then mix in genetics with other desirable traits, such as the frugality of the Russians, gentleness of the Carniolans, fast development and honey production of the Buckfast and Saskatraz, etc. – whatever you'd like to mix in. The hygienic traits will carry on, especially if occasionally replenished. And remember, even resistant bees must be monitored and treated if necessary. Over time, you'll end up with an interesting mix of genetics.

My Favorite Suppliers

Many nuc suppliers start taking orders on Jan. 1, and some of them sell out fast. It's hard to know whether you'll need bees at this point, but if you want to bring

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new genetics into your yard, now's the time to order. You can also buy some "insurance" bees just in case you lose a couple. Last year, we went into winter with 6 colonies and ordered a nuc for insurance/genetics. All 6 colonies survived, we got another nuc that suddenly became available, and made 2 splits. Presto, 10 colonies! We are not ordering bees this year. But if we need bees or a queen, this is who we go to. There are many suppliers of bees out there. Here are a few that I know and trust and have had good luck with:

Northeast Bees, Franklin, MA

NCBA member Archie Acevedo will be supply a limited number of nucs and an abundant supply of queens this year. These bees are Buckfast hybrids started from Mike Palmer breeder queens. I have worked with Archie and know he cares about quality. We have had very good luck with these bees. northeastbees.com

Wetlands Apiary, Brockton, MA

NCBA members Bob Hickey and Roger Hill run a queen rearing class and sell queens all through the season. They usually have several strains available and it's always fun to go and hang out while buying a queen. Contact Roger Hill through Facebook or wetlandsapiary.com

Barker's Beehives, Oxford, MA

NCBA member Todd Barker will be selling nucs and packages. Todd prides himself on his excellent customer service. barkersbeehives.com

Cedar Lane Apiary, Sterling, CT/Greenwich, RI

Glenn Lawton and Tom Chapman, RI friends of mine, will be selling packages from Northern California with a choice of queens (Italian, Carniolan, Saskatraz) and also Carniolan and Saskatraz queens. Good people, good bees. cedarlaneapiaries.com

Full Bloom Apiary, Franklin, CT

Many NCBA members, ourselves included, have purchased Carniolan nucs and queens from Alan Holmberg. fullbloomapiaries.com

Warm Colors Apiary, South Deerfield, MA

Dan Conlon is a very good friend who has spoken to NCBA several times. Dan is the President of the Russian Honey Bee Breeders Assn., and he specializes in pure Russian nucs and queens. A bit of a ride, but a great place to visit. warmcolorsapiary.com

They Keep Bees, Montague, MA

Another good friend from Western Mass., Ang Roell has spoken to NCBA and will again soon. They are raising queens from Anarchy Apiaries stock crossed with local northern survivors and including them in Southern packages. Remember Erin Forbes' research that she has shared with us? It works. theykeepbees.com

Dave Lewcon Apiaries, Uxbridge, MA

Dave sells packages and nucs and also queens of various breeds We got a Saskatraz queen from Dave and I hung out and talked bees for a while. davelewconapiaries.com

(Board meeting minutes, continued from page 4)

- Reminder - Make sure to renew your membership for the coming year (January 1, 2022-December 31, 2022)!
- Facebook – only paid members – not much action there this month
- **Bee Apparel** - Lauralyn
 - Nothing New
- **Calendar Committee** – Jenna Tibbetts
 - Nothing New
- Meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM



How to use the NCBA Library

To access the 190 books and 30 DVDs available from the NCBA Library, click on the button below. Marvel at the extensive Library Inventory. Submit a digital request form and Michael Simone, the NCBA Librarian, will contact you.





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Package Bees & Nucs 2019

We have *three* delivery dates for packages this spring. Multiple pick-up locations and delivery available for convenience!

5 Frame Nucs available in deep frame and medium frame options.

Pick-up expected late May!

Hive Starter Kits

Assembled & unassembled complete hive kits available for new beekeepers and beekeepers adding a hive!

We also have:

Woodenware, frames, hive components & accessories, hive tools, extracting & bottling equipment, wide selection of protective gear, & much more!

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All Pricing is less than or Competitive

All Woodenware Nailed & Glued by hand
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Board Built as one piece instead of two separate pieces for stability. They are made with galvanized 1/8" screen and white plastic slide-in tray to count mites. Glued and screwed together for long lasting durability.

Slatted Racks Completely assembled, glued and nailed. This gives the bees more room in the hive on rainy days and when they are all in for the night making them less likely to think about swarming due to crowding.

Supers Made out of pine; with pre-drilled finger joints, and handles cut into boards, comes unassembled. Deep, Medium and Shallow available.

Inner Cover Ventilated, wooden inner cover.

Outer Cover covered with Tin Made from 3/4" exterior plywood, completely assembled, glued and screwed. Cover comes with tin cover to protect from outdoor elements.

Complete Hive Setup Includes screened bottom board, two deep supers, 20 frames with wax foundation, inner cover and outer cover.

Hive Frames—Deep, Medium, and Shallow Wooden frame, made out of pine, held together with 10 nails. (Does not include wire or foundation).



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- Trade show booth design
- Environmental graphics
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Learn more at: neutra-design.com

New Year's Resolution:

Become a NCBA Mentor this year!

Become a mentor in 2022!
Guiding a new beekeeper in the science and art of beekeeping is rewarding and fun!
Sign-ups will begin this spring!



DON'T FORGET...

RENEW YOUR NCBA MEMBERSHIP NOW!

