

# the Norfolk Bee

MARCH 2022 • NORFOLKBEEES.ORG

## NEXT CLUB MEETING

**MARCH 7, 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 Club Members,

Hopefully your bees are doing well and they have plenty of food available to them.

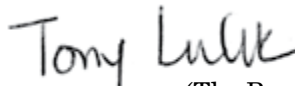
I've been beekeeping for almost 18 years and this by far has been my best winter overing ever. Just a few more weeks and we will be in the clear. And Spring=Splits. We are putting together a panel for the April meeting that will cover different methods of splitting, requeening, or making nucs. So stay tuned for the April meeting.

Over the past month or so I have embarked on a bit of a journey. I have learned a little bit about a few different methods of beekeeping. Recently I became aware of Biodynamic Beekeeping by the Demeter group. I read all of the materials and while some of it makes sense to me, there is some of it that doesn't jive with what I know about honeybees. I have also been learning about Warre hives and hope to be able to see some in action this year. And now let's add in Layens hives. This one is new to me. And then Top Bar hives and something called a Long Langstroth which is like a top bar hive but with Langstroth frames. *Go figure!*

If you start out with one of these methods, I suppose it's all you know, but to be honest, and in my humble opinion, get a few years under your belt with standard Langstroth hives before embarking on something else. Learn about the bees, their behaviours, their patterns. Understand the seasons in the hives. Each of these other methods have their own nuances that require a working knowledge of honeybees and then add in diseases and pests, and it can be a whole different ball game. The good thing about the Langstroth hives is that they are the standard, and you will get more support from those in the community. Learn, learn, learn and then branch out. I am actually hoping to build and start a long top bar hive this year, but we will see.

Always something new and exciting come springtime. So no matter what your choice for types of hives, we as a community are here to support you and we all get to learn something new.

Looking forward to Spring,

  
(The Bee Man)

## NCBA Queen Survey Coming

For all those who participated in the NCBA Queen Program last summer, please look for a survey in your email and respond as soon as you can. The short Google survey asks a few questions about how the

Northern-Raised, Varroa-Resistant queen fared, how often they were treated for mites, and (the million dollar question) if they survived the winter. We will share results in the next newsletter.



# News from the Landing Board

## The March 7th Meeting Agenda



**March: William Hesbach**, Master Beekeeper. Seasonal Management of Bee Colonies: Spring build up and how to evaluate an over-wintered colony and swarm management.

Bill Hesbach is a Connecticut native with a background in engineering. He's an Eastern Apicultural Society Certified Master Beekeeper and a graduate of the University of Montana's master beekeeping program. Bill operates a sideline bee business called Wing Dance Apiary in Cheshire, CT., that produces a crop of artisanal raw honey along with other natural hive products. Bill teaches bee biology and various methods of beekeeping at meetings hosted by the Backyard Beekeeping Association and the Connecticut Beekeepers Association. Bill is an active member of the Eastern Apicultural Society where he is part of the Master Beekeeper Certification program. Bill is a regular guest speaker at local beekeeping seminars in surrounding states and was presented the Distinguished Speaker Award at the 2019 EAS conference. His interests in beekeeping include queen production, and the connection between local flora and bee behavior.

Bill is also president of the Connecticut Queen Breeders Cooperative. He's a published author and his articles on beekeeping can be found in *Bee Culture*, *Bee Craft* and *The American Bee Journal*.

## A look ahead... Future Meeting Agendas

**April: Splits, Splits, and Splits** Spring equals splits, and this spring holds the promise of a lot of them. Splits are an opportunity: either an opportunity lost - or an opportunity found! Join us for the April meeting as we will have a panel discussions about how to manage splitting your hive. It'll be information you need, just when you will need it!

### NCBA Needs You!

There are lots of ways to help NCBA by volunteering. There are open positions available on the NCBA Board, and currently, the positions of President and Vice President are open. While there's a chance that our current President may stay for another term, we would like to hear if you

would like to join the board. The NCBA Nominating Committee, is asking NCBA members to submit their recommendations to serve a two year term for NCBA Club offices. If you are interested in one of these positions, please contact the NCBA Nomination Committee at [tony@littlebeehivefarm.com](mailto:tony@littlebeehivefarm.com)

#### NCBA BOARD MEMBERS

2020-2022:

##### PRESIDENT

Tony Lulek

##### VICE PRESIDENT

Dana Wilson

##### 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

Lauralyn Smith

#### 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

# Report: Books on bees a great way to improve your Bee IQ

Researchers at Gelp University have discovered that books on bees are an excellent way to increase one's knowledge about bees. "Some of these books are filled, absolutely filled, with pages of information. It's as if an expert on bees wanted to transmit all their knowledge on bees and wrote it all down. It's a very strange phenomenon worthy of continued research." The report continued, stating that many of these "books" are available in libraries - for free!

NCBA has a large library of bee-related books available for members; make sure to check it out.

## 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.

TAKE ME TO THE LIBRARY

## How big is Norfolk County?

According to the map below, Norfolk County is only about 5 inches wide, but surprisingly Norfolk County is actually 444 square miles and incredibly varied.

Often at NCBA we discuss where the most central and convenient spot is for us to meet in Norfolk County. Answer: our laptops on Zoom. Truth is, the county is fairly broad and fractured. Urban (and *urbane*) Brookline is in Norfolk County but completely surrounded by Suffolk County. So too with Cohasset, which, surrounded by Plymouth County, is a world away from Bellingham and the Rhode Island border.

The greatest human density is in the eastern side of

the county, skewing a demographic center towards the eastern side of the county. But if we judge by honey bee population, the County's population center shifts west.

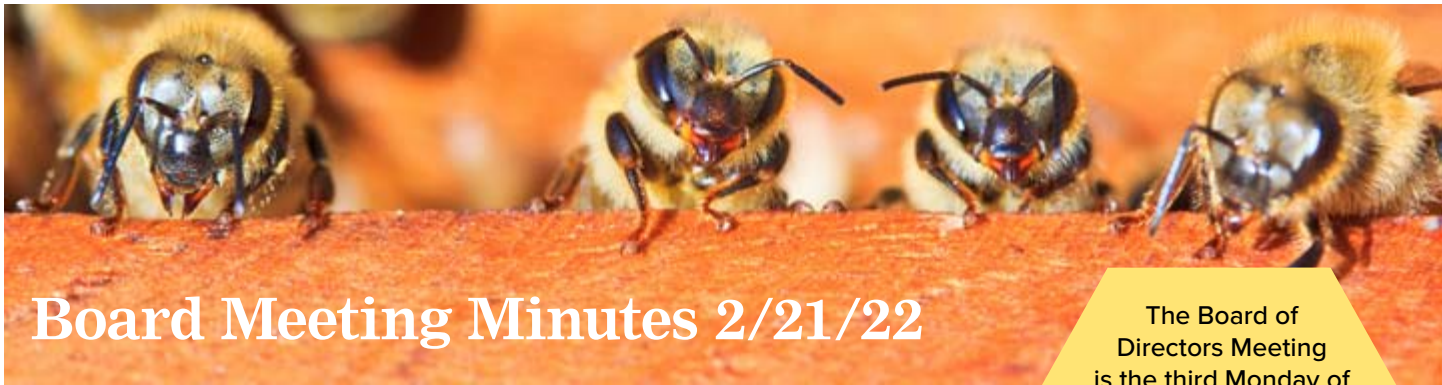
Norfolk County's history is unusual: it used to be north (north folk) of Boston and Suffolk (south folk) County, but was absorbed by Essex County. By 1793 the need for an additional county was evident and so a new county was cleaved from the southwestern parts of Suffolk County; Dedham was designated as the county seat. Evidently, our forebearers were either too cheap or unimaginative and **reused** the previous Norfolk name. They must have also been unaware that the north folk would now, erroneously, be south of the south-folk.\*

Interestingly, Norfolk County's southeastern border is the Old Colony Line, the old demarkation between the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the Plymouth Colony. And why isn't Hingham in Norfolk County? Back in 1793 Hingham was one of the biggest proponents of creating Norfolk County - they even convinced Cohasset to join in. But after Norfolk County was created, Hingham opted to join Plymouth County, isolating Cohasset.

Clearly, the best town in Norfolk County is Needham. Study after study has shown this to be true. Another study has shown that the NCBA Corresponding Secretary is from Needham, which may explain the previous studies.

\* <https://cohassetcentralcemetery.com/articles/50-why-cohasset-is-in-norfolk-county-how-cohasset-came-to-be-surrounded-by-plymouth-county>





# Board Meeting Minutes 2/21/22

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

**FEBRUARY 21, 2022**

7:09 to 8:00 pm

### Attending:

- Tony Lulek
- Dana Wilson
- Stephan Greene
- Ed Rock
- Michael Simone
- Kevin Keane
- Joel Richards
- Ed Szymanski
- Kara Sullivan
- Jinni and Chris Sinnott-Stutzman

### President's Update – Tony L

- Old & New Business
  - Nominating Committee is in process for the slate of officers – will present the slate at the March Board Meeting. March/April NCBA meeting will hear the slate and it will be approved.
  - Kevin reviewing Queen Survey to membership (going out in Mid-March after March NCBA meeting).
  - Considering repeating the queen program for 2022. Reducing club member cost for queens to \$10 – club will subsidize balance of cost. Northern Raised / Mite Resistant
  - Soap making Classes – 24 slots – very interesting class – positive feedback
  - NUC program – following up with 6 people who are helping coordinate the program. More on this at the March NCBA meeting
  - Wetland's scholarships to take queen rearing (Frank Braman – Braintree – awarded this scholarship)
  - NCBA Scholarship for Master Beekeeper (Cornell) remind folks to apply
  - Mask Mandate is lifting. We'll do some research and consider a hybrid approach to May 2022 meeting (this could coordinate with the annual plant sharing event)
- Looking at attendance sign-up / monitoring size of audience
- Evaluating a/v resources to hold physical and zoom hybrid efficiently.
  - Tony L considering stepping back from President role for upcoming term

### Vice President's Update – Dana

- Nothing new.
- Dana considering stepping back from VP role for upcoming term.
- Treasurer Update – Stephen**
  - Bank balance \$47,118 as of 2/21/2022
  - Three financial reports accepted.
  - Stephen is willing to serve another 2-year term
- Recording Secretary: Minutes – Ed R**
  - Meeting notes accepted
  - Ed willing to serve another 2-year term
- Corresponding Secretary – Kevin Keane**
  - Nothing new – new newsletter material due 2/25/22
  - Kevin is willing to serve another two-year term
- Committees:**
  - Programs – Ed S and Marion
    - March Meeting
    - Bill Hesbach, Master Beekeeper from CT, Spring Management Presentation
    - Zoom Meeting for March
      - Consider a program/panel on Splits and NUCS – for April NCBA meeting
      - Ed S. willing to continue on with programming for a new term
  - Intro to Bee School – Tony & Dana
    - Registration - 94 students registered – registration closed now
    - Everything is rolling along well
    - Mentor response has been strong

*(Continued on page 6)*

# When is it time to think about Varroa mite control? Now!



by Ed Szymanski

I publish a similar article every year. I really feel that everyone needs to understand why mite control is so important to the survival of our bees, and our neighbors' bees. I don't think everybody fully understands yet.

So please read this, even if you have read it earlier articles. I firmly believe that you can't fix something until you know how it works. We all need to understand this well before we set out to do something about it.

It's never too early to start thinking about getting our bees ready for winter. In fact, we're always getting our bees ready for winter. The key is having them healthy and well-nourished before the winter bees are raised.

I continue to see posts and hear questions asking "Why did my bees die? I treated for mites" and "Why does it matter what parts of the bee Varroa mites feed on?" and "When is the right time to treat for mites?" The answers are related - It's all about getting our mites and viruses under control before the winter bees are raised. We start thinking about it now, not in August.

You may be somewhat familiar with the idea of "fat bees" - the workers that live for an extended period of time and carry the colony through the winter until spring when new brood can be raised. Honey bees have "fat bodies", sections of tissue in the abdomen which act in a similar way to our liver and also store fat, glycogen, proteins and enzymes. In the summer, the fat bodies are small or nonexistent in workers, but in the early fall when natural pollen supplies are getting short, a new batch of workers are raised - workers with enlarged fat bodies, and these are the workers that will live through until spring. We call them "fat bees" or "winter bees".

The secret is a compound called Vitellogenin, which resides in the bees' fat bodies. Vitellogenin is a glycolipoprotein, having properties of a sugar, a fat and a protein. I'm not going to get too technical, I'm not a scientist. I do know that it has some very important qualities. It serves an immune system function. It acts as an antioxidant that prolongs the bees' lifespan. And, it

allows nurse bees to make royal jelly even when there's no natural pollen available. You can see that this bee "fountain of youth" (Randy Oliver, Fat Bees, pt. 1) plays a critical role in raising healthy winter bees.

Dr. Sam Ramsey proved that Varroa mites feed on the fat bodies of the bee rather than the hemolymph (blood). Varroa populations tend to maximize in August/September - when the winter bees are being raised! The Vitellogenin stores in the winter bees are compromised by the Varroa mites feeding on them. Lower Vitellogenin levels shorten the lifespan of the winter bees, so colony populations dwindle in the late winter, and, since the nurse bees' ability to make food for the new brood is compromised, there are few new bees being added to the population, right when they need it.

This is very important! Perhaps that explains how your bees died - they seemed to be making it through January, no Varroa collapse occurred - you thought they were going to be ok, but the population decreased because the compromised winter bees were dying too early, and new brood wasn't being raised fast enough, until the population got so small, they weren't able to keep the cluster warm.

"They were doing fine until that March cold snap killed them". But, you see, the cold did not really kill your bees, the mites did! When you understand this, you understand why mite control is so important.

This teaches us is that our Varroa mite levels must be under control by mid-to-late August. Testing should be done monthly, starting in May, and treatment should occur when mite loads reach a threshold that you have decided on. Most people use 2% (6 mites in a 300 bee sample, with an alcohol wash). How can you know when to treat if you don't know your mite load?

Personally, Marian and I have modified our testing and treatment regimen to take this all into account. You have to think these things through, and take it very seriously. If our testing hasn't told us to treat by the end of August,



(Continued on page 6)

# Mentors Needed for 2022

Be a mentor this bee season!

The club is looking for 50 people to sign up as mentors to help Bee School graduates as they navigate the art, science, and madness of beekeeping. The chief qualification isn't that one has all the answers, but rather that one has been in the newbies' shoes before; which qualifies everyone to be a mentor.

Most issues are easy to handle and questions are on the basic level. When one does come across a problem, beyond one's capabilities, the board, advanced mentors, and bee school staff are ready and able to help.

The goal is to assign no more than 2 mentees per mentor.

Email Dana Wilson (dwilson831@gmail.com) to sign up. Include your first and last name, address, best phone number to be contacted, and towns you feel you can cover and any restrictions you would like me to know of. If you have any questions before signing up feel free to reach out to Dana.

*(Continued from page 5)*

we are going to treat to get the mite load down as the queen is starting to lay the eggs that will become the winter bees. We like to use the formic acid product (MAQS or Formic Pro), because it is the only treatment that gets under the cappings to kill the mites in the brood where they are reproducing. Killing the mites reproducing in the brood is critical. If you only do a late treatment, without knowing what your levels were, you may kill a bunch of mites, but it's a false sense of security because your winter bees are already compromised.

A late fall Oxalic Acid (drip or vapor) treatment helps to knock down the winter mite population. This helps because phoretic (on the bees) mites can live through the winter, just waiting for that spring brood so they can start reproducing again.

We will continue to test, observe, and make decisions based on those results and will never keep bees strictly by the calendar. It just doesn't work. Things are always changing, and we need to be aware of what's happening in our colonies at all times.

As summer comes, remember to monitor your food stores. Pollen and nectar can be short in August/September, just when your bees need the best possible nutrition they can get. Food shortages may cause queens to suspend laying, and if she doesn't recover in time, the winter bee population will be decreased.

Let all of your beekeeping activities have the same goal in mind - HEALTHY WINTER BEES!



*(Board meeting minutes, continued from page 4)*

- Dana and Tony are willing to continue on for the next year's school
- Intermediate Bee School – Ed & Marion (FYI – First Class in 2021 starting in March – Zoom-Based)
  - Registration closes Wednesday 2/23/22 (registration over 150)
  - Start classes in March 2022
  - Full syllabus going out in a few weeks.
  - Ed S. will stay on as Intermediate Bee School Director for next season
- **Extractors** – Brianda
  - No updates
- **Library** – Michael Simone
  - No inquiries currently
  - Emphasize the library and it's value in the upcoming newsletter
  - Will stay on for the next 2-year term
- **Door Prizes** – Kara
  - Willing to stay on for the next 2-year term
- Reviewing number of door prizes and door prize size
- Motion to up gift cards to \$40 - approved
- **Website** – Greg
  - All the NCBA scholarships are up on website (deadlines May 31st)
  - Greg willing to stay on for the next 2-year term
- **Membership – Facebook – Google Groups** - Rose & Deb
  - Deb is cleaning the rolls
  - 464 renewed members plus 99 from bee school (563 members)
  - Full purge has been done
  - Rose willing to stay on for next 2-year term form membership
- **Bee Apparel** - Lauralyn
  - Nothing New
- **Calendar Committee** – Jenna Tibbetts
  - Dates being updated for intermediate bee school
- Meeting was adjourned at 8:00PM



## More News from the Landing Board

### The Mass Bee Spring Conference is coming...fast!

The Mass Bee Spring Conference will be held in-person on Saturday, March 19 from 9:00AM-3:30PM. That's very soon!

As always, the Spring Conference is held at the Essex County Beekeepers Association's building (yes, the ECBA has their own building - it's called Coolidge Hall) on the Topsfield Fair grounds.

The registration is now open and It is a free meeting for all MBA members. Click on [MassBee](#).

#### Guest Speakers:

**Dr. Scott McArt** : Cornell University, Department of Entomology, Assistant Professor of Pollinator Health, McArt Lab. His main research interests are chemical and disease ecology, specifically in relation to pesticide and pathogen stress experienced by honey bees, bumble bees and other wild bees. He has a keen interest in working with stakeholders (e.g. beekeepers and growers) and regulatory agencies to improve pollinator health.

**Dr. Patrick James Lariviere**: Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Texas at Austin Nancy Moran Lab. He is a molecular microbiologist, broadly interested in both studying and engineering biological systems involving bacteria. Currently, he is developing molecular tools for use in engineering symbionts of honey bees. The hope is that these tools will be beneficial both in basic science research and real world applications, allowing for more robust study of bee genetics and protection against pathogens. He is also interested in studying the interaction between honey bees and their bacterial symbionts at a molecular scale.

**Dr. Kim Skyrn** is the MA State Apiarist/Chief Apiary Inspector of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) Apiary Program and is the current President of the Apiary Inspectors of America (AIA). Kim is a scientist by training and a hobby beekeeper driven by an intense love of bees.

### NCBA looking for a 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.



Although it's gratifying to see concern for bees expand into all levels of society, this one has us scratching our heads. There's just so much about it that makes so little sense. Many thanks to NCBA member, Andrew Kasper for sending this in.

### Might the May Meeting be in person?

The Board is discussing whether to have an in-person component to the May Meeting. It will be a hybrid. Either speakers will be piped in (and available on Zoom) or speakers will be in-person and broadcast onto Zoom. Still more to discuss.

The May meeting is also the traditional Plant Swap event, so think about starting some extra seeds of your favorite pollinators!



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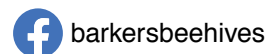
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### Package Bees & Nucs 2019

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:

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**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.

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**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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# This Spring: Become a 2022 NCBA Mentor!

Become a mentor this Spring!  
Guiding a new beekeeper in the science and art of beekeeping is rewarding and fun!  
Sign-ups are starting now!



**WHAT DO YOU CALL  
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