



February 2022 First Quarter Newsletter

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## Registration is Open!

**Michigan Beekeepers' Association Spring Conference 2022: In-Person and Virtual Programs**

**MICHIGAN STATE**  
UNIVERSITY | **Extension**

[Register Here!](#)

Registration is now open for the MBA Spring Conference.

### Webinars

Thursday, February 24, 2022 7:00pm.

Native Michigander Emily Noordyke, all the way from Washington State. Emily will talk about her research on the value of pollen substitutes.

Jennifer Berry will follow, covering her latest research on oxalic acid, a most important talk for all of us concerned about effective mite treatments.

Thursday, March 3, 2022 7:00pm

We'll reconvene our webinar series with Linda Tillman, past president of the Georgia State Beekeepers Association. Linda will talk about "Absconding: It's a Mystery!"

Dewey Caron will close the evening session. Ever wonder why your hive died? If so, his talk on "Bee Hive CSI, Dead-Out Necropsy" is a do-not-miss!

Thursday, March 10, 2022 7:00pm

In the last webinar of the series, Peter Fowler will discuss his research on bacterial brood diseases, specifically European foulbrood.

Jennifer Tsuruda will share tips on photographing bees and how she gets those amazing images with an iPhone!

End the evening with Adam and Lacey Ingrao of Bee Wise Farms, who will share with us some of the therapeutic value of working with honey bees.

**Saturday March 12, 2022**

**Kellogg Center, East Lansing**

Live and in-person! (When's the last time you wandered around in a room full of beekeepers?)

Did we mention vendors, please check out our list and send in your pre orders.

Our Keynote Speaker for this year is Paul Kelly, University of Guelph, Honey Bee Research Centre. Paul will talk about "Regional Self-Sufficiency in the Ontario Beekeeping Community".

Four tracks ranging from Beginners ("So You Want to Be a Beekeeper" with Charlotte Hubbard) to the latest research on European foulbrood with Megan Milbrath. Interesting topics like "Turning Your Hobby into a Business", the "Flow Hive", and "Small Hive Beetles".



### **Mentors by Brian Walters**

I read with interest the Bee Club's request for "Help" with people asking for a mentor. These newbees are looking for someone to guide them through the steep learning curve. I thought to myself "I could do that." Of course, my mind gets clouded with self-doubt, and I think, "Am I good enough?" and "Have I been a beekeeper long enough to be useful?"

Mentoring does have a skill set. I actually took a mentoring class nine years ago so I could be a mentor for returning citizens. The purpose is the same: help another person by listening, encouraging, and providing support.

In case you're wondering, a "returning citizen" also has a parole agent. Yes! I've been a mentor to this segment of the population for the past nine years. Yes! It has unique challenges but also has its own rewards. If you are a parent and have successfully raised a child into adulthood, you get the idea.

So, what are some recommendations that will greatly enhance your mentoring experience and make you invaluable to your mentee?

- Be nonjudgmental
- Communicate
- Be sensitive
- Have fun
- Smile
- Be enthusiastic
- Know people's two basic needs: acceptance and validation

That's not hard is it? If this has you thinking you could be a beekeeping mentor I'll give you something more to think about. Why be a mentor?

"Nobody rises to low expectations." – Unknown

"The road to success is always under construction." – Arnold Palmer

"Success is not counted by how high you have climbed but by how many you have brought with you." – Wil Rose

Two-time Academy Award winning actor and director, Denzel Washington, attributes his success to his childhood mentor. As he says, "You don't go it alone." I think being a successful beekeeper means you don't go it alone. Do you know what the top mistakes most newbie beekeepers make and have to learn the hard way?

- Not understanding and aggressively managing Varroa.
- Assessing colony health based solely on the level of "bee traffic."
- Not recognizing queenlessness.
- Leaving out frames or placing empty supers.
- Harvesting honey too early or taking too much.
- Not feeding new colonies.
- Placing your hive in a troublesome location.
- Not properly suiting up.
- Not using your smoker.
- Starting with just one colony.
- Being satisfied with limited knowledge of beekeeping.

I'll ask one more time . . . because I can be pushy. Do you think you can prevent a new beekeeper from learning things the hard way? Do you think you can prevent a new beekeeper from making even just one mistake? Think about it. You have nothing to lose, and so much to gain.

If you want to volunteer, please email the club at [kzoobeeclub@gmail.com](mailto:kzoobeeclub@gmail.com) and let us know of your interest; thanks.

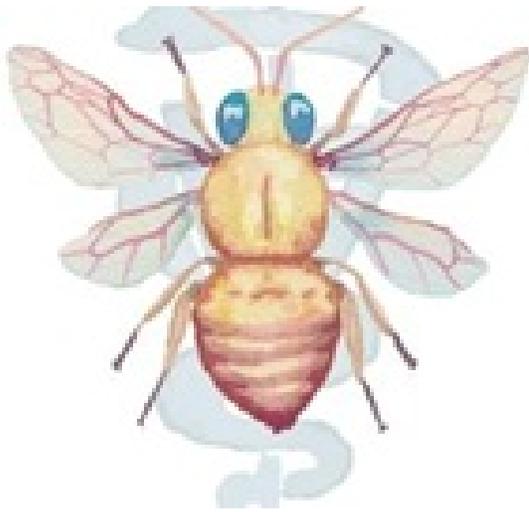
References:

Gail A. Cassidy [The Validating Mentor Making a Difference](#) New Jersey: Tomlyn Publications, 2008

Hilary Kearney [Beekeeping Like a Girl](#) Blog posted December 7, 2015 on 10 Mistakes New Beekeepers Make

# Michigan Honey Festival

The Michigan Honey Festival ([www.michiganhoneyfestival.com](http://www.michiganhoneyfestival.com)) will be held Saturday, July 16th- Sunday, July 17th at the Shiawassee County Fairgrounds. The festival organizers would love to have the bee clubs involved! Please consider if your bee club could help volunteer with events or if you'd like to have a table. If you are interested in being a vendor or volunteer, please email Mindy Brisbane at [michhoneyfestival@gmail.com](mailto:michhoneyfestival@gmail.com).



## Call for club logos and honey labels

MBA would like to highlight beekeeping club logos and honey labels at the Spring Conference. Please send your club logo, honey label or favorite bee graphic to [president@mba-bees.org](mailto:president@mba-bees.org)



## Greetings from Greenfield Village!

by Patrice Fisher, Beekeeper at Greenfield Village, The Henry Ford Archive of American Innovation

Since the 1990s, honey bees have lived in the apple orchard of Greenfield's Village's Firestone Farm, part of The Henry Ford (THF) Archive of American Innovation. The farmhouse and barn - birthplace of Harvey Firestone - were transported to Dearborn, Michigan from the original site at Columbiana, Ohio in the early 1980s.

After reconstruction was completed, the work began to properly interpret the site. Research revealed that the Firestone family indeed kept bees, which most probably would have lived in their own apple orchard. The bees at Greenfield Village are extra hard workers, serving an interpretive role in addition to their primary pollination responsibilities!

Most of our beekeepers through the years have been THF employees from many departments with an additional interest in beekeeping and volunteer some extra

time to manage the hives. As a member of the current beekeeping team of 3, we're all fairly new to beekeeping and also keep bees at other locations as well. This spring we were ecstatic when all three of our hives in the orchard successfully overwintered – that strong start for 2021 encouraged us to seriously consider increasing the number of hives as opposed to harvesting honey. We were able to accomplish this increase by making some splits and capturing a couple of swarms. By the height of the summer, we had more than doubled the number of hives. The end of the 2021 season finds us fully committed to a more biodynamic approach to beekeeping. And while biodynamic beekeeping is a current “buzzword,” for us, it just seemed to make sense to take advantage of the location and natural resources available here for honey bees and other pollinators. This year we started a second bee yard in the non-visitor area of Greenfield Village, near the greenhouses. Our primary goals for next year will be to increase the numbers of hives at that location as well as the orchard by minimal intervention other than proactive varroa mite monitoring.

The great internal support from other departments plays a part in enabling us to confidently set these goals. As an example, if time and weather allow, the farm staff will sow a small field of buckwheat at the end of the season. Our bees take full advantage of this as the year's final major food source before the crop is turned under for green fertilizer for the field. Our grounds garden crew has planted swaths of Black-eyed Susans and Joe Pye Weed, among other important pollinator perennials, that lend beauty as well as purpose to the landscape. There are many mature trees throughout the Village that provide a good variety of pollen and nectar – lindens (including American basswood), willows, hawthorns, tulip trees, maples, and of course apple trees! Farm staff aid with swarm alerts and provide support when it's time to winterize the hives.

We also try to give back to the institution whenever possible. When we do have surplus honey to harvest, we're sure to share it with the Firestone Farm staff who make use of it in their historic cooking and baking. In past years we have given talks to our Henry Ford Academy students when it fits in with the current curriculum. When performing hive maintenance tasks during visitor hours, a crowd will usually gather, often with a beekeeper or two as part of the group! We try to take those opportunities to inform of the past practices and chat about the present condition of hives here and globally. In 2020 our hard working ladies were featured in an [episode of Innovation Nation](#), where we had an opportunity to emphasize the important role honey bees play in all our lives.

Like many beekeepers, my early motivation for becoming a beekeeper was the incentive of jars of honey in my pantry. And now, like many beekeepers, the opportunity to play even a small role in increasing the honeybee population has become so much more rewarding!

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## **Dronings from a Queen Bee: What Do You Call Us?**

by Charlotte Hubbard, [Queenbeecharlotte@gmail.com](mailto:Queenbeecharlotte@gmail.com)

Those first-year beekeepers in pristine protective wear, with plans for all the money they're going to make selling honey while saving the bees? They're often referred to as “newbees”. What is the nickname for us ... the

beekeepers with permanently propolis stains on our suits (and in our vehicles, and on couch pillows (how did that happen?)

I've pondered naming possibilities. "Old" is the opposite of "new", but being referred to as an "oldbee" doesn't work, at least not for me.

It isn't denial; I know I'm older. I moved from 10-frame equipment to 8-frame years ago, and now thinking about using all 5-frame equipment draws me like bees to a spring dandelion ... but I still don't want to be called an oldbee.

"Used" is also the opposite of "new"—should we be called "usedbees?" Not "used" in the sense of done or discarded though, but "used" as in "accustomed to". If you're a beekeeper with many trips around the sun, there's a swarm of things you're accustomed to (like propolis stains on car seats). These might include:

- You thought a really fun, holiday family event would be assembling frames together for an afternoon. (Others (surprisingly!) did not share your enthusiasm.)
- Annually, you sacrifice at least one hive tool to parts unknown. Unfortunately, a lawnmower is really good at finding them. Of course, being a seasoned beekeeper, you hardly ever mow your lawn ... so the grass gets fairly deep. And wonderfully, the dandelions and clover get fairly thick.
- "Torpor" is part of your working vocabulary.



Figure 1 This is one of my favorite queens. Right, you didn't ask. Want to see 30 more photos of her?

- When asked (and sometimes when not asked) you share just a few dozen of the photos of your best producing, very elegant queen bee... and oh yeah, your kids, spouse and dog.
- You wonder why the Words with Friends game doesn't recognize "nuc".
- EVERYONE (barber, neighbors, relatives, tax accountant) asks how your bees are doing. Shockingly though, their eyes glaze over when you detail your queen-rearing successes using the Doolittle Method. These folks wander away when you share your experiments with plastic versus wax foundation.

Oldbee? Usedbee? Something else? However you refer to yourself, it is time to use that hard-gained wisdom to help newbees. (You know, the ones posting on Facebook that every winter day they pound on their hive until they hear buzzing, and so far – the colony is still alive. Yes, the same ones asking how often to do hive inspections in the Winter, sigh.) We were once all newbees, and they need our help in bee-coming what we all want to be called: a successful, sustainable beekeeper.

## District 4 Report by Ray Browers

District 4 clubs are not meeting through the winter, however, all clubs plan to start with in person meetings in 2022. Three out of the four District 4 organizations will be meeting in temporary locations this spring. The Holland Area Beekeepers are meeting at the Herrick District Library, Holland. The Grand Rapids Beekeepers Club will meet at the Home School Building in Wyoming. The Fremont Area Beekeepers are meeting at the NCRESA building at the Dogwood Center Fremont. The Muskegon Area Beekeepers will continue to meet at their regular location at the Muskegon Conservation Building in Twin Lakes.

District 4 held a Presidents meeting on January 12, 2022, Items discussed centered on 2022 schedules, the MBA queen rearing program, and the spring conference.

District 4 plans to coordinate club training schedules to help promote training and to work toward more consistent training. Our discussion seems to be that schedules of many beekeeping events can vary, however the actual mechanics of most beekeeping procedures can be and should be taught with consistency. Each president is going to put together a list of names of people, from their organization, skilled in different items. Our plan is to utilize these lists to organize more consistent training in our area.

The club presidents were asked to help spread information about the spring conference and promote attendance within their members.

One of our discussions centered around our belief that many new beekeepers are very apprehensive about doing splits. We discussed putting together a list of splitters. This list would be similar to the list of swarm collectors. It would be people who would come to your apiary and do your splits for you.

It was decided that this District Presidents meeting was very useful. We are going to continue them on a twice a year basis. No further details were decided.

MBA District 4 representative Ray Browers met with his district club presidents: Jason Tower from the Fremont Area Beekeepers, AJ Menefee from the Muskegon Beekeepers club, Chuck Bauer from the Grand Rapids Area Beekeeping Club, and Erin Kauth from the Holland Area Beekeeping Club.

The meeting was to discuss the District 4 club meetings and class schedules for the year. The Michigan queen rearing program, and the MBA conference was also discussed. It was a worthwhile and enjoyable meeting at the Coopersville Brewing Company in Coopersville.



# Little Traverse Bay Beekeepers Guild Year End Report

## Jim Anglewicz



The Little Traverse Bay Beekeepers Guild had a refreshingly eventful year despite the challenges of the COVID-19 crisis. Our annual beginner beekeeping classes, presented online through North Central Michigan College, had around 150 registrants and a record number of participants for our group.

Several attendees became active participants in this year's meetings and events. Several younger beekeepers are becoming involved in the hobby, which was nice to see. Overall we have seen and heard from many new beekeepers this year. Our new website also came online this spring. [Little Traverse Bay Beekeepers website](#) launched in June and should help to inform and connect beekeepers in our area.

Participation in Zoom meetings for our beekeeping group has been a challenge over the past year. Fortunately, beginning in April, our monthly meetings were held in person, mostly in various local parks or in local apiaries. The apiary visits were especially popular. We met in a variety of locations around the area with host beekeepers having different hive types and management styles. The demonstrations on making splits and nucs, marking queens, and overwintering hives were very informative and well received.

Two of our main focus areas for the past year have been improving our overwintering success and becoming more sustainable by producing our own local nucs. Our beekeepers reported an average colony loss of around 50% for the 2020-2021 winter season. We were looking forward to better results, thinking we had our varroa mite populations under control and given the winter had significantly less snow and warmer temperatures than usual. Our August meeting and apiary visit was devoted to this issue, with information provided by Dr. Adam Ingrao via two videos he shared with us to review overwintering best practices.

To complement our overwintering strategies, and as an effort to be more sustainable, some of our beekeepers started producing nucs from local survivor queens last summer to replace losses and provide to new beekeepers for the spring. We hope that over time, as we replace our losses with local winter survivor stock, our winter survival rates will improve. A few guild members and a local sideliner helped provide local nucs for this spring. Two of our apiary visits

demonstrated to beekeepers how to make splits and we expect we will have even more local nucs available for next spring.

This year's honey harvest was disappointing. Most beekeepers in the area reported lower than average honey yields despite mostly ideal weather. We suffered some spring frosts that impacted fruit trees and much of the area experienced monsoon-like rains late in the summer which we believe impacted our harvest. Also the warm weather into October found many hives consuming their winter stores.

Looking forward to next year, we hope for a healthy year for all of us with demonstrations and events to help us support our joyful beekeeping in Northern Michigan.

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[Visit our Website](#)

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