



November 2022 Fourth Quarter Newsletter

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And stay tuned for part 2. Thanks to so many enthusiastic submissions for the newsletter this quarter, we have more to share. Part 2 is coming soon.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Giving Tuesday

November 29, 2022



For Giving Tuesday, consider [supporting Michigan State University \(MSU\) Pollinator Initiative](#). The MSU Apiculture Extension team composed an [update on its work to help beekeepers, honey bees, and other pollinators](#). This extension work includes providing education to beekeepers, training veterinarians in honey bee health, delivering pollinator stewardship information to growers and pesticide applicators, and more. You can [support this work by making a gift today!](#)

Bee Informed Partnership Webinar:

Wednesday, Nov. 30 at 6 pm EST

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Join the Bee Informed Partnership's guest speakers Scott McArt (Dyce Lab for Honey Bee Studies at Cornell University), Judy Wu-Smart (University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bee Lab), and Reed Johnson (Ohio State University) for a panel discussion about pesticides and honey bee colonies! **Register for the webinar.**

The panelists will discuss topics such as:

- The effects of pesticides on honey bee colonies.
- The most commonly detected pesticides in colonies.
- Understanding actual risk levels to honey bees.
- And more!



Holland Area Beekeepers Association Bee School

HABA Bee School will be on Saturday, February 11, 2023 at GVSU Meijer Campus - 515 S. Waverly Rd, Holland, Michigan 49423.

HABA's Bee School is a day-long event featuring keynote speakers and breakout sessions for beginners & intermediate beekeepers. Bee School provides educational and networking opportunities, along with vendors who will be available throughout the day selling bees, bee-related equipment, and other products. Registration will open in December. Check the event page at **<http://www.hollandbees.org>** for additional information

SAVE THE DATE: MBA SPRING CONFERENCE 2023

On **March 11, 2023**, we'll be back to our two day in-person spring conference at the Kellogg Center in E. Lansing. Registration is not yet open. More information will be posted to the **Michigan Beekeepers' Association's webpage** closer to the event.

And check out the **fall meeting summary and photos** while you are at it!

Editor's introduction

Hello everyone! I am the new editor of the MBA newsletter and I am excited to be joining the



communications team at the Michigan Beekeepers Association in this role.

As I take over editing the newsletter, I thought I would try out a couple of new things, “Bee Club Buzz” which I am hoping will inspire clubs to introduce themselves to our readers, and share stories about club activities and “Books from the Hive”, a place where people can share reviews of bee books that they love (nonfiction, fiction, children’s, new and old are all welcome). If you have other ideas about how to make the newsletter more valuable to you please send them to me,

I also wanted to take this opportunity to tell you a little bit about me. I grew up in Ann Arbor, but school and then work took me away after high school. While an undergraduate at University of Wisconsin, I met my husband. Our lives together have taken us on a 41 year tour of the Midwest, ending back here in Michigan. I started beekeeping in my backyard in Springfield, Illinois in 2013 with a beekeeping class and a package of bees from California. By 2015 I was convinced that package bees were not for me. I bought a locally raised colony, put up swarm traps, and I haven’t bought a package since. I learned the hard way that successful overwintering often means either a swarm or a new hive. I chose new hives. As a result, during my time in Springfield, my hives slowly outgrew my city yard and spilled over to a few friends’ yards as well.

In 2019, I retired from my medical practice and brought my husband, daughter and 8 beehives “home” to Michigan. We took over the small farm in Dexter my parents had spent years taking back to wetlands, forest and natural fields. It has been a perfect home for my bees and a great place to retire.



Since moving to the farm, my apiary has grown to 29 hives, so yet again, I am spilling over to the property of friends and neighbors. Add to that a large vegetable garden, a flock of chickens and a few goats. As it turns out, in retirement I am still working hard, but at different tasks, and loving it. Since coming to the farm I have also found that I really enjoy writing stories about my beekeeping and other farm experiences, which makes taking on being newsletter editor seem like a great fit. Plus, arriving just 6 months before COVID has limited my opportunities to meet and get to know many in the Michigan beekeeping community. So this is the perfect opportunity to get to know all of you! I look forward to working with you! You can reach me at,Newsletter Editor@mba-bees.org

2022 BEEKEEPERS OF THE YEAR

By Lisa Stinson

The annual Michigan Beekeepers Association’s Beekeeper of the Year award

has undergone a recasting of sorts, from singular to plural. Heretofore, MBA will confer this award on two recipients, one from the Upper Peninsula and one from the Lower Peninsula. To that end, without further ado, MBA mirthfully honors the 2022 Beekeepers of the Year.



2022 Upper Peninsula Beekeeper of the Year: Gino Venditti – District 8

Hailing from Iron Mountain, Gino Venditti began keeping bees in 2016.

In short order, under the mentorship of the formidable Mike Holmes, his beekeeping ramped up to that of sideliner. He manages roughly 55 colonies and is a familiar face at the local farm market. His product offerings, which are also available via mail order, include fire honey and a habanero honey. The latter has become quite popular.

2022 Upper Peninsula Beekeeper of the Year: Gino Venditti – Hailing from Iron Mountain, Gino Venditti began keeping bees in 2016. In short order, under the mentorship of the formidable Mike Holmes, his beekeeping ramped up to that of sideliner. He manages roughly 55 colonies and is a familiar face at the local farm market. His product offerings, which are also available via mail order, include fire honey and a habanero honey. The latter has become quite popular. What is remarkable about Gino is not the extent to which he keeps bees, it's the extent to which he keeps beekeepers. His commitment and contribution to the honey bees by caring for beekeepers is exemplary and impactful.

Gino is a founding member of his local club, Northwoods Beekeepers. His participation in the club, from its inception is, in large part, the means by which he avails himself to other beekeepers. He puts his relentless devotion to education and mentoring into action through a myriad of activities.

Gino is committed to educating his western U.P. community about bees and beekeeping. Everything he learns, he shares with others. He is a fixture in the club booth during the annual Dickinson County fair. He is an instructor for the club's beginning class, which is held annually, and teaches beekeeping basics in high school classrooms throughout the school year. At the monthly club meetings, he skillfully leads the Q&A segment without reservation. In these ways, he passes on his acquired knowledge and helps others to continuously increase theirs.

Providing opportunities for hands on beekeeping experience is an essential objective for Northwoods Beekeepers. Gino routinely goes above and beyond in this area. He maintains numerous long-term mentorship relationships with new beekeepers. Throughout the year Gino is overwhelmingly generous with his time by hosting club members at his apiary for package installations, hive inspections, and honey harvests.

A beekeeper local to Gino recently commented, “He serves the U.P. well.” This modest and concise observation is a most sincere and high compliment. By his indefatigable sharing of his time, knowledge and bees with others, Gino makes a pivotal contribution to giving beekeepers what they need to become responsible, conscientious and successful caretakers of honey bees. For this, MBA recognizes him as a 2022 Beekeeper of the Year.



2022 Lower Peninsula Beekeeper of the Year: Michelle Kinney – District 3

In the winter of 2018, without fanfare, Michelle Kinney attended an A2B2 meeting to discuss the possibility and logistics of purchasing bees for the upcoming spring.

That matter of fact attempt to gather information catapulted her into the world of beekeeping. She enrolled in the SEMBA Beginning Bee School class and, in due time, the Intermediate class. Her apiary quickly grew to 10 robust colonies. From them she and her bees make a cornucopia of products.

It wasn't long before Michelle had a desire to give back to the beekeeping community. Currently, she participates in SEMBA Bee School as an instructor at Tollgate Farm. She has also logged countless hours volunteering for the 2022 MBA conferences.

However, it was in taking on the role of SEMBA Secretary, in 2019, that she made a long-standing impact. Serving in this capacity, Michelle researched, customized and implemented the Wild Apricot software system to manage club operations. To say this overhaul dramatically improved the management of SEMBA operations is a colossal understatement. Michelle's efforts completely transformed the day to day functions of the club, all for the better, including, but not limited to: Membership tracking, accounting, newsletter production, communications and event planning.

Much like her delve into beekeeping, she made it look easy, but regardless of ones' technological skill set, or lack thereof, we all know reconstruction on this scale takes a tremendous amount of time, effort and patience, among other qualities. The real feat is that she did all of this while working full time and raising 2 puppies!

But wait, there's more! Michelle didn't stop there! She is working on a similar refashioning for MBA. As an aside, in this process, she made a startling discovery. At the onset, it was thought that MBA had 250 active members. Michelle's work revealed the actual number of active members is in the neighborhood of 600!

It's easy to realize that Michelle's talents are numerous and she freely

and whole heartedly shares them. About her it has been said that her selfless hours of volunteering make her a treasure as valuable as drawn comb. It is with much gratitude that MBA acknowledges her as a 2022 Beekeeper of the Year.

President's Corner

By Rich Wieske

Becky Green, our new newsletter editor, asked me if I'd do a Presidents Corner, so here goes . . .

I love beekeepers almost as much as I love bees. I know it is hard to believe. So this will be a more stream of conscious type article, about my thoughts and perceptions in our bee world and what's coming up in the near future.



Sorry I missed the meeting in Romulus at James Lee's Sustainable Beekeepers Guild of Michigan. Sam Comfort, an old acquaintance, was visiting after attending the Indiana Fall conference as one of their keynote speakers. Sam is hard to describe, a wandering bare foot troubadour and a beekeeper, queen rearer extraordinaire, who truly thinks outside of the Langstroth box. Check out his Ode to Varroa on youtube.

Hives are fed, treated and insulated, maybe one more dribble after big bird day. Very dry fall here in south east Michigan. Very decent honey harvest this year. I'll be finishing up the year with the holidays and family, been a hard one. Lost my father last January to COVID and a brother this past October to cancer. As beekeepers, we often face loss of hives, but that doesn't come close to preparing one for loss of loved ones.

January, I'll be traipsing down to Tennessee for the Hive Life conference, imagine over a thousand beekeepers in one place, haven't been this excited since Apimondia in Montreal. Would love to have a Michigan table there, or at least a gathering of us, I know Matt Kobe is planning on going. Anybody else? Wait, did I mention the tree program? We just had a very successful meeting with a dozen folks and are working on a flyer for clubs and for their members. We now have commitments for 800 trees.

Working on a 2023 syllabus for SEMBA's very exciting nine-month Bee School program, which will start in February.

Looks like I'll be continuing my traveling to clubs with a planned visit to talk about Pollen and Propolis with Randy Barkley and the Saginaw Club on Feb. 7, then over to Holland for their Bee School program talking about A year in the Life of Hive, on February 11. If you're in the area please stop on by. Anybody else doing a bee school program, let us know, will put it on our calendar and help promote it.

In March we'll be back to our two day in-person spring conference at the Kellogg Center in E. Lansing on the 10th & 11th. So save the date for this very important event, chock full of Speakers, Vendors and Beekeepers oh my . . .



Okay question for the day. . . What was your first bee book? Send to president@mba-bees.org

Oh, almost forgot working on hosting an EAS conference in the Detroit area in 2025, anybody interested?

Do plan on visiting the rest of the clubs I missed this past year, look out, Battle Creek, River Raisin, Scottsville, Benzie, Middle of the Mitt and I'm sure there's a few more out there. . .

Looking for bee folks who'd like to be abused and taken advantage of, to volunteer on the MBA board, don't be shy, we all benefit with more hands helping ... and remember all beekeeping is local, except when its . . .

BOOKS FROM THE HIVE:

Bee books worth seeing and sharing

Wild Honey Bees: An intimate portrait

Authors: Ingo Arndt, Jürgen Tautz

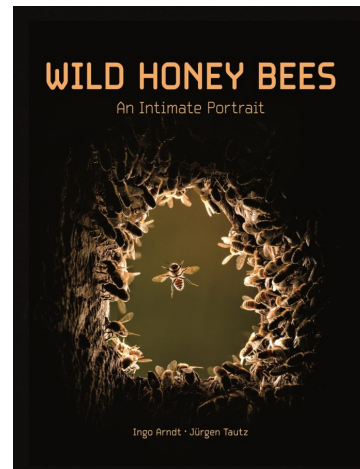
Category: Nonfiction

Retail price: \$29.95

Rating: 4 * * * *

Review by: Becky Green

Ingo Arndt, a prominent wildlife photographer, and Jürgen Tautz, behavioral researcher, sociobiologist and bee expert have produced a bee book for everyone.



This book chronicles their exploration of the homes and lives of wild honey bees. Their observations in wild hives may explain some behaviors that have puzzled beekeepers for years, and they pose some intriguing questions about what thriving wild bee populations might teach us about our own beekeeping practices. But the heart of the book is the photographs, which are truly amazing and well worth seeing. Even if you never read a word of the text, you will enjoy this book! It would make a great addition to your coffee table collection. Or check if your library has or can borrow a copy for you.

A Wonderful Gift

Charlotte Hubbard

Photos by Brian Walters

Gifts sometimes come from unexpected places, at unexpected times. In mid-summer, "Robin," a rookie beekeeper, contacted me. Robin's life had dramatically changed and she could no longer keep bees. Did I want her bees and equipment, no charge?

I gave it strong consideration. But, my life has also changed dramatically with the passing of my bee-loved husband, and there are too many times now, even with my much smaller apiary, where I still feel I have too many bees (this mainly occurs about midnight when I'm extracting and stuck to the floor). I offered to help Robin find some organization to benefit from her generous gift ... IF the bees turned out to really be a gift. Robin had last inspected her bees two months prior. Her colonies might have disease, be hopelessly queenwrong, or perhaps have even absconded.

If the bees were healthy, the Kalamazoo Bee Club (KBC) could benefit from this gift for its new teaching apiary. KBC President Brian Walters agreed to accompany me on the literal field trip, but there was an additional complication. The bees were located over an hour from Kalamazoo, and Robin needed them moved within 48 hours. This timeline required relocating the uninspected colonies and assessing their health a few days later, after the bees had time to settle in their new location.

Just as the sun started to climb over the horizon, Brian and I arrived at Robin's bee yard on a cool morning. We had hoped to be early enough to catch the bees still all inside, but the thriving eastern colony was already well, busy as bees, gathering nectar from the myriad acres of surrounding wildflowers. The western colony though still hadn't had their coffee. A couple unmotivated guard bees, the only bees visible at that hive, gave us an unconcerned glance.

We closed the hive entrances in less than a minute to retain as many bees as possible, and then proceeded to wrestle ratchet straps for, well, embarrassingly longer than two experienced ratchet-strap-handlers should have. Some foragers returned while we untwisted and rethreaded the strap, and hovered nearby, mocking us. Finally though, the hives were secured for safe transport.

Getting the weak hive into the truck was, unfortunately, too easy . . . indicative of how little it contained. But, similar to my grandchildren, the truck bed grew several inches taller while our backs were turned. Lifting the thriving hive was a bit of a challenge for two really strong people, complicated because I was one of those two people, and I'm not that strong. Finally loaded and secured, we slowly made a beeline on backroads back to Kalamazoo to a location where there were no nearby, managed hives that we knew of. You know where the middle of nowhere is? It was about a half mile past that.

Our inspection two days later was not so good. The booming hive was still very much booming--queenright with seemingly fabulous brood. They received a much-needed honey super. But the weaker hive? Upon opening it, we encountered several hundred lackadaisical bees milling about a small patch of brood, and a foul smell. EFB, not AFB was confirmed with testing.

What should be done with this "gift" of a very sick colony, the lovely new equipment where they resided, and the adjacent booming hive that surely had been exposed to EFB? Research and discussions with lots of experienced beekeepers yielded a swarm of opinions and options. And then, we turned to one of Michigan's greatest gifts – the experts at Michigan State University (MSU).

Sometimes bees need veterinarians, especially if antibiotics (a possible treatment approach for EFB) are required. Bee vets can be hard to find as a queen in a thriving colony. One way MSU is addressing this is with an annual summer intensive rotation, led by Dr. Meghan Milbrath, to educate veterinary students. Our wondering what to do with a sick hive coincided with that class, so we arranged for the students to visit, assess and address. Additionally, a research team would go through the diseased hive to collect samples for multiple projects-

-a survey of strains of EFB circulating in Michigan and also looking at antibiotic resistance, and a project working in collaboration with the USDA Bee Lab in Tucson in reviewing the bacteria associated with different stages of EFB-diseased larvae.

Having this expertise onsite was a gift, as was watching science in action. Dr. Peter Fowler, PhD candidate and licensed veterinarian, and MSU research technician Heather Chapman efficiently set up a field lab and photographed larvae before sampling. Dr. Milbrath and the veterinary students were on a nearby house call, and joined us a half mile past the middle of nowhere about an hour later. They had GPS coordinates, but we marked the field entrance with signage that would resonate with beekeepers.



We hoped the nuc box would flag beekeepers



On this cool day, a field office with bird song in the background was a great place to "bee"

Dr. Fowler reviewed the colony health history with the eager students, and then they received hands-on experience with EFB. A discussion of what to do with all components of both hives followed, masterfully led by Dr. Milbrath.

The students considered multiple options ranging from the application of antibiotics to or the euthanasia of both colonies. For this particular set of circumstances, where the colonies were difficult to access and it was late in the season, the woodenware and frames from the EFB-symptomatic hive were bagged and trashed in an abundance of caution. The several hundred bees however were gifted their remaining days.

They were shaken in front of the booming hive, and given ramps to ease their joining it. The rationale for saving them was that both colonies have already been exposed to EFB because they had been side-by-side for so long and ample drifting had already occurred, especially as the one hive crashed. The remaining large colony is being closely monitored, and will be even more so next Spring to see if EFB surges and requires treatment.

Robin's gift of bees ends up being quite the gift of education. And if they stay healthy, they'll become an integral part of KBC fulfilling its mission of education.



Vet students hands-on learning about EFB

BEE CLUB BUZZ:

A place to introduce your club, and/or share stories about club activities

INTRODUCTIONS:

Battle Creek Bee Club (Battle Creek MI)
Deborah Heidrich, president

The Battle Creek bee club meets at the Leila Arboretum, Horticulture Training Center (103 Limit St) on the 3rd Monday of the month at 7 pm. The club focus is helping people become better informed beekeepers and be better prepared to teach about bees. We meet once a month and discuss different topics each month, ranging from becoming a beekeeper, all aspects of hive management, honey harvesting, honey medicinal uses, natural methods of beekeeping, bee communication and many other interesting topics related to beekeeping and the importance of pollinators in our environment. We believe that learning more about our bees and how to communicate with them makes us better beekeepers!

We have several members in the club who catch swarms, mentor new beekeepers, and sell honey, nucs, packages, and queens. Our club is active in the local community. We are involved in our schools with classroom demonstrations, learning activities, and assemblies. We participate in activities like parades, farmers markets, and developing pollinator gardens. Our emphasis is to promote community awareness about bees and pollinators, provide beekeeping education, and inspire the next generation of beekeepers.



Why is being beekeepers important for us? The more we learn about these social insects the closer we get to nature! We believe that the sound of the bee is the voice of nature and that bees and beekeeping provide pathways to good health and overall wellbeing! We believe that the powerful vibratory resonance from bee humming can harness the healing benefits for the mind, body and spirit and is a form of sound healing that helps us with overall health, lowers stress levels, promotes better sleep, lowers blood pressure, increases lymphatic circulation, releases endorphins and creates new neural pathways in the brain.

Finally, we can learn from the bees how to work hard but also stop to smell the flowers!



CLUB HAPPENINGS:

Battle Creek Bee Club (Battle Creek MI)
Deborah Heidrich, president



Have you heard of Sam? He has been keeping bees in equipment he builds for a 'song' and has aptly named them - "Comfort Hives." Essentially, these are low-cost economical top-bars that beekeepers can build from scraps lying around the garage. Sam manages thousands of these "Comfort Hives" in six different states.

Sam spent time working in commercial beekeeping and eventually went on with his own bees, learned to graft queen cells. He began his own beekeeping foray in 2005. Sam has not treated his bees with acaricides ever since.

Sam makes a claim to be "treatment-free but not stupid." Often derided as "lazy beekeeping" or "being a bad-neighbor," treatment-free beekeeping frequently gets a bad rap - but Sam wants folks to know that you can keep bees without acaricides, be a good beekeeper, and still make informed decisions. His level of success since 2005 demands a hearing by even the most vocal skeptic!

Sam decided that he wanted viral resistance to be at the forefront of his genetic stock baseline and chose to focus his practices on selection for just that. Hygienic behavior is great but low-mite counts don't always indicate a colony's capacity to survive and express disease tolerance. Sam's threefold approach of being treatment-free but not stupid covers these areas:

1. Environment
2. Methodology
3. Genetics

Sam was "touring the Midwest" doing bee talks and happened to be close enough to us to capture some time with him. The SBGMI was happy to have Sam swing through town and at the last-minute throw on a presentation about bees, sing a song, and even bring us a taste of some wonderful deep, dark, palm honey which is syrup! If he didn't say so, one would think it was molasses! You can hear Sam's talk by visiting <http://www.sbgmi.org/shop>. You can also visit Sam's website at <http://www.anarchyapiaries.org>.

[Visit our Website](#)

Call for submissions

Do you have an interesting beekeeping story or picture to share? Read an amazing bee book that we all might be interested in, and willing to write a brief review? Want to introduce your club or share some club news? We would love to have the opportunity to put it in the MBA newsletter. The newsletter is published quarterly and the submission deadline for the next newsletter is February 6. You can email submissions to newslettereditor@mba-bees.org. Please include your name, address, best contact phone number and preferred email address with your submission.

Editor's note: I reserve the right to edit all submissions as needed, including editing for content, grammar, length, etc. Although I will try to include all appropriate submissions, some may need to be declined or publication delayed in the event there are an abundance of submissions. Submissions received after the posted deadlines will be considered for the next newsletter.

Submissions with inappropriate or offensive content will not be published.

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