

*Since 1948 Exploring the wonderful world of beekeeping together*

## The Bee Buzzer

*Monthly publication of the*

### Northeastern Kansas Beekeepers' Association

VOLUME 72, NUMBER 8

EDITOR: CHERYL BURKHEAD

August 2020

#### General Meeting

**Monday, August 17, 2020 (7 p.m.)**

**Join Us for a ZOOM Meeting**

“In the comfort of your own home”

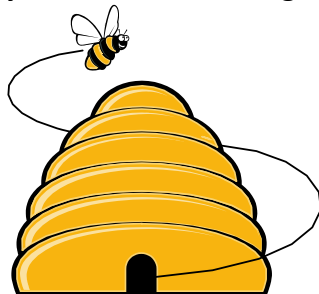
Download the Zoom App and watch from your computer, smartphone, or tablet  
Log in instructions will be posted on the [www.NEKBA.org](http://www.NEKBA.org) website.

**Main Program:** Integrated Pest Management presented by Dr. Judy Wu-Smart. Questions will be taken after the presentation.

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#### Beelines

By President Ed Darlington



My last month's newsletter entry ended with a comment; “more to follow next month”, the topic was that plants have less nutrition than they did in the past, primarily because of poor soil health and farming practices.

My point is that if this is true of our nutrition, then what is lacking in the nutrition that our bees get from pollen and nectar? Additionally, what is lacking not only in their nutrition; but what is also

lacking in the propolis medicinal envelope that the bees are using to help ward off diseases and the protective envelope of the hive?

Even if we get different entities to plant more pollinator-friendly plants, is this enough? While this has been one of our goals and should remain so, how much more should we understand in order to address the issues our bees are facing? Actually, I believe it is only the tip of an iceberg. More importantly, we need to also address issues from declining soil health.

Today, industry and our government regulators seem to endorse the application of more chemicals. This pushes us further in the wrong direction. The last thing we need is more chemical pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides. Also detrimental to the soil are applications of synthetic fertilizers.

I have heard some of our experienced beekeepers take newer beekeepers to task for blaming everything on chemicals rather than focus on poor beekeeping practices; and while in some instances these are valid questions, one needs to remember that all insects are being devastated by chemicals and poor nutrition; not just insects managed by us. Bees that have access to plants grown in what is called healthy soil, as defined by:

- Minimize soil disturbance, as in “no-till”: this can be difficult as gardeners. The concept is that in nature there is no mechanical or chemical disturbance, and it is in old-growth forests where we find the healthiest soils.
- Water infiltration rates > 5”/hour

- Organic carbon > 3%
- Mycorrhizal fungi/ bacteria ratio of > 3 to 1

One shocking piece of data; is that bees produce 20% more honey when they forage plants raised in healthy soil than do bees foraging plants not raised in healthy soil. While this goes to the volume, it should also raise additional questions about what is lacking in the quality of the of honey, beebread, and propolis.

Beekeepers need to be wary of the information gathered from the internet. We have seen things touted by supposed experienced beekeepers that are just flat out wrong! Be very careful of where we are getting our information. One extremely good place to obtain good reliable information is to participate in our monthly Q&A sessions held on the first Monday of the month at 7:00 P. M., by way of our Zoom webinar platform.



**2020 Meeting Dates: (Starting Time is 7pm. Log in a few minutes ahead on Zoom.)**

- Monday, August 17, 2020
- Monday, September 7, 2020 (Q & A)
- Monday, September 21, 2020
- Monday, October 5, 2020 (Q & A)
- Monday, October 19, 2020
- Monday, November 2, 2020 (Q & A)
- Monday, November 16, 2020
- Monday, December 14, 2020



**Bee Book Reads**

Here are four books about bees and beekeepers that I recently heard about. I haven't read them,

but they all sound like fun.

Confessions of an Urban Beekeeper, by Andrew Cote'.

"I will never eat bananas near a beehive. The mere thought is enough to set lively scenes from this book replaying in my mind's eye. Bananas contain a chemical that resembles the substance in honeybees' alarm scent, so the resulting encounter could turn nasty..."

Cote's book is full of facts like this, interwoven with anecdotes from his life as an urban beekeeper. Cote' tends hundreds of hives throughout New York City, high on rooftops, in parks and gardens..."

Bee People and the Bugs They Love, by Frank Mortimer,

As Mortimer starts out beekeeping, meetings with individuals as well as the local beekeeping club, play a major role in his progress from "newbee" to experienced beekeeper. ... Mortimer presents himself as a bee nerd and offers solid expertise when it comes to facts about honeybees...

Show Me the Honey, Adventures of an Accidental Apiarist, by Dave Doroghy.

If you think beekeeping is a quick and easy shortcut to wealth, this book sets you straight. The author's beekeeping sister sets a hive on Doroghy's houseboat, with resounding success. The author relates his mistakes as a rookie beekeeper with wit and honesty....

A Honeybee Heart Has Five Openings, by Helen Jukes.

This delightful book is as much about people and our relationships with one another as it is about beekeeping. Follow the author to a new existence as an Oxford professor. She decides to "keep" bees in the back yard. Read about her personal history which she weaves into a larger tale of friendship and responsibility for one another and for the honeybee...

Happy reading!

Marlene Pantos



## O' Bee Gal

Have you harvested your honey yet? It's a common question between beekeepers this time of year. For most, it is the measure of success from all your hard work, mother nature's bounty, and the steadfast labor of your honey bees. Honey is the only food produced by insects to be consumed by man. It is nearly magical in its properties. It's the only food that never spoils. They found honey in the tomb of King Tut that was 3,000 years old and still edible! Valued for its delightful flavor, it is also treasured for its healing properties.

Whether you have a few frames to extract or a few thousand pounds, the procedure is amazingly similar. You start by removing the bees. Brush and walk, fume boards, one-way bee escapes, or a leaf blower, all work to get the bees out of the super so you can take it back to your extracting area. Throughout all of this process, you need to keep in the forefront, **THIS IS FOOD THAT WILL BE CONSUMED RAW**. Your consumer will probably do nothing more than pour your honey from bear or bottle directly onto their daily bread. We owe them the respect of careful preparation. We owe our bees similar regard to take care of their treasure to the best of our ability.

In your extracting room/area, start with a clean space. A dusty floor will kick up particles that will find their way into your honey bucket. Sanitizing with commercial cleaners or bleach solution is best and although honey is a very safe product, you want to keep it that way. Plan to extract your honey soon after harvesting from the hive. If you aren't going to extract the same day, stacking supers in a crisscross fashion allows air and light circulation. A CLEAN (new) box fan can be added to the top of the stack to both circulate air and promote dehydration. Honey moisture needs to be below 18.6% for long-term storage. Honey frames are attractive to a multitude of pests but most

problematic are small hive beetles and wax moth. Both can severely damage your honey crop. Don't let them have that opportunity.

Are you ready to extract? If you are extracting for your consumption only, you are the only person you need to please. If you plan to share your honey with friends, family, or even sell a little to neighbors, take a serious look at your extracting set up. Is it clean? Are you clean? If you have on work clothes, protect the honey from any debris you may inadvertently be carrying to the honey with a clean apron. Nothing ruins a beautiful jar of honey like a dog or cat (or human) hair suspended in the amber liquid. Animals should not be part of the extracting process. Your hair should be covered, both on your head and your hairy body! Again, this is the finished product you are producing. Would you want someone else's fingers in your honey? No one does. Wear disposable gloves or kitchen gloves that can be washed frequently. Start your extracting with a stack of clean, sanitized towels to wipe up drips. Keep it clean at every step of the process.

How are you storing your honey? A first-year beekeeper was bragging that she scored 2 pickle buckets from a local eatery and she was planning to use them for her honey storage. Food grade food buckets are not expensive and will literally last for decades. Don't get penny wise and pound foolish at this point of your harvest. Put that honey in a pickle bucket and someone will wonder why you thought dill infused honey was a good idea. There are sources for free buckets if you want to do some leg work but choose carefully or this final step will ruin your honey harvest.

Now is an important time in beekeeping as well. Early treatment for varroa mites ensures that bees will be able to raise healthy, fat bees to go into winter. Your bees may still be able to produce some fall, harvestable honey. Environmental conditions will impact this decision but, more importantly, the condition of your hives determines your next actions. Do your bees have adequate stored honey and pollen for winter. In drought years, we have had to start supplemental feeding of both syrup and pollen sub very early. My point is, just because you've made your harvest,

you are not done being a beekeeper. Beekeeping has two seasons: winter and getting ready for winter.

Becky Tipton, Special Events Coordinator



### Meet the Beek

When I was young, I liked to play with bugs. I used to sit in the grass and play with grasshoppers. I would turn over rocks and look for pill bugs. At night, we would turn on the porch light and collect a male and female praying mantis. They would mate and she would lay an egg case. I would watch the new offspring emerge from their egg case in the spring. When I was a toddler, I managed to pick up a wasp and, of course, I got stung. Mom said from then on, I would point to a wasp and call out “hurt bugs”.

As a family we attended the county fair and I can remember looking at the bug collections there and was fascinated with all the different bug collections that the 4-H kids had done. I guess with this interest in bugs, it was natural that I became a beekeeper. In college, my professor gave me the book and video, The Queen and I, by Ed Weiss. I read this book cover to cover twice, highlighting what I thought was important and watching the video numerous times. I subscribed to Bee Culture magazine and American Beekeeping Journal and would read them cover to cover.

We started a bee hive on the school farm with a nuc purchased from Ed Fisher in Smithville. After graduating from college, I started some packages at my parent’s place in Topeka. This was really too far away as I lived in Olathe and didn’t get there as often as I needed to take care of them. One day I got a panicked call from my dad informing me that there was a huge cloud of bees in the air. I immediately left for Topeka and found the swarm had gathered on a fence post. In my rush to leave, I had forgotten my gloves and a bee brush. I borrowed a pair of suede gloves from my dad’s shop and proceeded to scoop the bees off the post and into a hive. I quickly learned that bees don’t like suede! By the time I finished there were several stingers in my gloves. Fortunately, the bees stayed and this was one of my first swarm captures.

I eventually moved my hives to Olathe and kept growing in numbers of colonies and packages and splits. I was at Mid-Con bee supply one day when Joli asked me if I wanted a job. This was a great opportunity and my knowledge in beekeeping grew very fast. When Bee Culture magazine would come in the mail, Cecil, Joli, and I would ask each other the ‘What Do You Know’ questions by Clarence Collison. Sometimes on the weekends, Cecil would ask me to work bees with him. I learned the simplest of things from using a hive tool, to manipulating frames within a hive body, to more complex things like evaluating a colony in order to make a split. Cecil was deliberate and calm when going through a hive and patient with me as I was learning the art of beekeeping.

Over the years, I earned 2 master certificates in beekeeping; Eastern Apiculture Society and Midwest Master Beekeeper. EAS is a series of 3 different tests; one in the lab, one in the field, and one at the hive. The Midwest course was given by Marion Ellis through the University of Nebraska. This was an open book test and service credits must be earned by volunteering for your local bee club and then educating the public about bees by either presenting to school or civic groups. Each certificate was very different in how it was earned but both were very good programs that expanded my beekeeping knowledge.

I have learned so much about beekeeping from many beekeepers over the years. I am grateful that they were willing to share their knowledge with me. I still learn new things while talking with other about bees and attending local and national meetings. All these things have molded me into the beekeeper that I am today.

Beekeeping has taught me to pay attention to the seasons based on weather instead of the calendar. Still after 33 years, I find joy in some of the simple things like newly capped honey with white wax. I get most excited in the spring when I see the purple carpet of henbit in the fields. Beekeeping is my passion and I love sharing it with others. It is so rewarding to watch new beekeepers see eggs for the first time and share in their excitement when they harvest that first crop of honey.

Kristi Sanderson



### Tips for August

- Harvest any fall honey & get it extracted. Any honey that you pull off to extract should be extracted within a few days. Small hive beetle and wax moth can do a great deal of damage to your supers and your honey. Don't pull your honey off until you are ready to extract.
- Check moisture on your honey. Stack supers and use a fan and dehumidifier if necessary, to get moisture levels under 18.6.
- After pulling off your supers check your hives to make sure they have a good laying queen. You should see brood in all stages (eggs, larvae, & capped).
- Store any frames with drawn comb in paradichlorobenzene (moth crystals). Wax moth damage can be devastating to your combs. Store them in a cool ventilated area. Do not store your supers in plastic garbage bags as this acts as an incubator for wax moth.
- Update your record book-you won't remember in the spring!
- Check your hives for stored honey. Most colonies will need 60-80 pounds of honey to winter successfully. The top deep super/hive body should be packed full of honey. If it isn't you should feed the bees some syrup. If mixing your own syrup in the fall, the mixture should be 2:1 sugar to water by weight. That would be 4 lbs. of sugar to 2 lbs. of boiling water. Do not use corn syrup or any type of syrup that you purchase at the grocery store. It has things in it that can cause problems with your bees. NEVER feed honey purchased from the grocery store-it can spread American Foulbrood disease to your bees.
- Check your colonies to see if you need to treat for varroa mites. Consult Honey Bee Health Coalition to determine how best to manage varroa mites in your hive.
- If treating for mites, get your treatments on as soon as possible. Mark your calendar with the date they went in and the date they should be removed. The earlier you can get your treatments on for Varroa mites the better chance you have of getting healthy young bees into the hive to make it through winter.
- Combine a weak colony with a stronger colony. Colonies may be split again in the spring.
- Keep a vigilant eye out for small hive beetle.
- Mow around your hives so the bees can get in and out.
- Provide a water source for your bees.
- Bees are hanging outside the hives (bearding) to help keep it cooler inside the hive.
- Take an inventory at your bee yards to see what equipment you need to repair or replace over the winter.
- Get your entrance reducers on towards the end of September to keep mice out of your hives. Check for mice before installing mouse guards. Check bottom boards for

holes big enough for a mouse to get through.

- Make sure your hives are tipped slightly forward so water doesn't pool on the bottom board and cause moisture problems.

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## ASK QUINBY & REMI



**Dear Quinby and Remi:** I've just taken off my honey supers and now I want to get my bees ready for winter but I'm not sure what all I should do, can you help? What beekeeping chores should we be doing in August?

**Quinby and Remi answer:** The first chore is to remove your honey. Joli and Cecil like to check their hives right after the honey is pulled off. They make sure that they have a laying queen and several frames of brood in the hive. Most of the brood will be in the lower hive body and the upper hive body will be mostly full of honey. The bees need that much to get through the winter. If you do have a good queen-right hive, then it is a good time to check your hive for varroa mite levels using either the powdered sugar method, the ether, or alcohol method. If you don't know how to do the test, then google the University of MN varroa mite testing and a great article will come up with pictures showing how to test using that method. The best time to treat for mites is right after you take off your honey supers. The reason is that all of the bees in your supers are now forced to be in the brood boxes making the mite load on those boxes much heavier. All the female varroa mites go into the brood cells and lay eggs. To have healthy fat bees going into winter it is important to get those varroa mite treatments on early so that the bees are healthy. – Thinking back to your

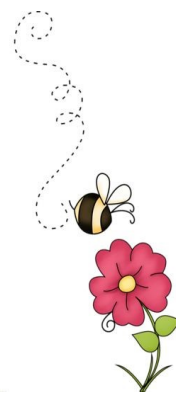
biology of bees It takes 21 days for a bee to go from egg to adult. The bees you raise in August are, as Robert said during the Q& A session, Methuselah bees. They must live for 6 months through the whole winter, not 6 weeks like the summer bees. So, you want them to be the very healthiest that they can be.

If you do have a hive that is queenless, it is best to combine it with another hive. One of the old-time beekeepers always said, "take your losses in the fall". Then you'll have a good strong hive in the spring to make some splits from.

It is too warm this month to get entrance reducers on but towards the end of September you'll want to put those on. August is a good time to try to find them!

Check for food stores for winter, you want to have a full deep hive body of honey- on top, the queen and brood should be in the bottom hive body. Get your honey extracted and your bees taken care of and you'll be on top of things!

Quinby (named after Moses Quinby who invented the bee smoker) would like to take this opportunity to invite you to send your stories or questions to him c/o Joli at the address on the back of *The Buzzer* or via email at [joli@heartlandhoney.com](mailto:joli@heartlandhoney.com).



## HONEY PLANTS

As summer begins to fade, there is a shorter list of nectar and pollen-producing plants. Late summer and fall flowering plants include Sunflower, New England Aster, Autumn Joy Stonecrop Sedum, Shasta Daisy, Showy Goldenrod, Joe Pye Weed, Balloon Flower, Black Eyed Susan, and Anise Hyssop.



New England Asters bloom until heavy frosts in

October and offer mounds of purple, white, or rose-colored flowers. A drought-tolerant, low-moisture, nectar-rich perennial that offers a quick energy boost to migrating monarchs on their journey south are highly sought out by honeybees and native bees alike.



Autumn Joy Stonecrop Sedum is an herbaceous perennial that blooms from August to October. Autumn Joy thrives in poor soil conditions, is super drought tolerant, and requires full sun exposure for best blooms and upright standing. These plants, in shade, have a tendency to lay over. Attractive to both butterflies and bees, they offer fall and winter interest with their succulent-like foliage.



Shasta Daisy has a long-lasting bloom and grows best in full sun. Good drainage is a must, as they are susceptible to root rot. A drought-tolerant option that is loved by all pollinators.



Showy Goldenrod (*Solidago speciosa*) is a late summer perennial that blooms from late July through September. It has brightly colored yellow blooms, densely packed on stalks that can reach 2-to-3 feet in height. Our native Goldenrod is attractive to native pollinators but normally not a benefit to honeybees. Bees prefer Showy Goldenrod so add it to your flower garden and it will flourish with minimal care and has good heat and drought tolerance.



Joe Pye Weed blooms from July to October and has a sweet, vanilla-like fragrance growing 3-to-7 feet tall. Joe Pye Weed has burgundy green foliage and

large heads of pink and purple flowers. It grows best in above average soil and flourishes in medium to wet soil, and can handle light shade conditions.



Balloon Flower offers an eye-catching display of blue, pale pink, and white flowers through August that can reach up to two-and-half-feet tall and young buds swell like balloons before bursting open into bell-shaped flowers. It is a low-maintenance option for your perennial garden that thrives in full sun but can handle partial shade locations.



A long-time favorite, Black-Eyed Susan, blooms from June to September and is one of the easiest wildflowers to grow. They do require full sun; but once established, are drought-resistant and offer a spectacular long-lasting bloom.



My last perennial pollinator-friendly plant option is Anise Hyssop, also known as butterfly mint. It is a fragrant flower with varieties of blue, lavender, and purple blooms. Native to prairies across the Midwest, it spreads by rhizomes but in colder climates self-seeds once established. Anise Hyssop is drought-tolerant and is very attractive to bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds.

With this month's article I only touched on 10 perennial options for late summer and fall pollinator gardens. There are quite a few more nectar and pollen producing plants out there to choose from but these 10 are easy to grow and maintain and offer a nice variety of color, texture, and height to different parts of your pollinator gardens.

Chad Gilliland- Honey Plants Chairman



## The Honey Pot

by Cheryl Burkhead

### Fire and Ice Melon Salad

Ingredients:

- 1/3 cup honey
- ¼ cup white wine
- 1 Tablespoon thinly sliced banana pepper (go head and slice the whole pepper!)
- 2 Tablespoons diced red bell pepper
- ¼ cup lime juice
- 1 Tablespoon chopped mint (scant)
- ½ teaspoon chili powder

- Pinch (1/8 tsp) cayenne pepper
- Sea salt (3/4 tsp +)
- ½ each watermelon or Athena melon or both (combo is a favorite)
- 3 ounces prosciutto (lightly crisped, or try bacon crumbles)
- 4 ounces feta cheese (Gorgonzola, sharp white cheddar are yummy alternatives)

Directions:

Combine honey & wine in saucepan. Heat slightly until dissolved. Add peppers, chili powder, salt & cayenne. Mix until incorporated and let cool. Stir in lime juice & mint. Peel and chunk melons. Place melons on a platter, sprinkle with feta, peppers, and prosciutto and drizzle with the cooled syrup. Garnish with mint or basil if desired.

## NORTHEASTERN KS BEEKEEPERS' ASSOC. 2021 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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I would like to receive the newsletter, *The Buzzer*, by email Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Northeastern KS Beekeepers per year (July-Dec. \$7.50)	\$15.00 _____
Additional family members wanting voting rights \$1.00 per person	\$1.00 _____
Additional family member's name _____	
(Youth Membership (18 years of age or under)	\$7.50 _____
Membership for Kansas Honey Producers Association	\$15.00 _____
American Bee Journal	1 year \$24.65 _____
Bee Culture Magazine (or subscribe online at <a href="http://www.BeeCulture.com">www.BeeCulture.com</a> )	1 year \$25.00 _____
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<b>Total</b>	_____

**Make checks payable to: NEKBA or Northeastern Kansas Beekeepers Assn.**

Mail to: Robert Burns, 7601 W 54<sup>th</sup> Terr., Shawnee Mission KS 66202 ph. 913-481-3504, [rburnshoney@gmail.com](mailto:rburnshoney@gmail.com)

**You may apply, re-new, register, and pay online at [www.nekba.org](http://www.nekba.org)**



## MENTORING-SWEET PRAIRIE HONEY

Have a Master Beekeeper help you at your beehive? I have an EAS and a Mid-West Master Beekeeper certificate. Evaluating your hives after winter, installing package bees, requeening, making splits, or a one on one lesson at your beehive are just some of the things we can do. After each visit, I will leave you with a written evaluation sheet from each hive we go through. Call or text Kristi Sanderson at 913-768-4961 or email [sandersonk09@gmail.com](mailto:sandersonk09@gmail.com) for pricing and appointment times.

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## COTTIN'S HARDWARE & RENTAL

Cottin's stocks a full line of beekeeping equipment year-round including items manufactured by Harvest Lane Honey, Little Giant, and Bug Baffler. Products include hives, supers, frames, foundations, extractors, tools, and protective apparel. We also stock a full line of Home Brewing Mead Making supplies. Located in Lawrence, KS at 1832 Massachusetts Street. We are open Monday - Friday 7:30 am - 6:00 pm, Saturday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm, and Sunday 10:00 am - 5:00 pm. You can follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Call us at 785-843-2981 or email us at [hardware@sunflower.com](mailto:hardware@sunflower.com)

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Our active duty & veteran students learn skills in woodworking & metal work by building beekeeping equipment, while learning beekeeping & honey production in our apiaries and extracting kitchen. We sell beekeeping supplies, containers, bottled & bulk honey, Packaged Bees, and Nucleus Bees. A Charitable, Educational Non-Profit, 501(c)(3), Proceeds go back into the training program. Hours Mon - Fri, 9-4. Golden Prairie Honey Farms, 8859 Green Valley Dr., Ste 4, Manhattan, KS 66502 Phone: (785) 370-3642 - Email [gphfarms@gmail.com](mailto:gphfarms@gmail.com) or order online at [goldenprairiehoney.com](http://goldenprairiehoney.com)

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**The Association does not endorse nor evaluate the advertisements, products or services offered in the Buzzer.**

Northeastern Kansas Beekeepers Association  
Robert Burns, Treasurer  
7601 W 54<sup>th</sup> Terr  
Shawnee Mission KS 66202-1129

## Address Service Requested

### Meeting

Monday, August 17, 2020

### ***The Northeastern Kansas Beekeepers' Association***

Membership is open to anyone interested in bees or bee culture. Dues are \$15.00 per calendar year (December 31-December 31) for the first in the family joining. Those joining in July or later in the year may pay \$7.50 for ½ year. Additional members of that family wanting voting privileges shall be assessed dues at \$1.00 per year. Youth memberships (18 years of age and younger) are \$7.50 per year. Please submit new memberships and renewals to the treasurer or on-line at [www.nekba.org](http://www.nekba.org).

*The Bee Buzzer* is the official publication of the Northeastern Kansas Beekeepers' Association, Inc. and is published monthly. Commercial ads are accepted in the newsletter for a fee; non-commercial ads by paid members are accepted & are free.

The library of the association is free to all members. Books may be checked out at the meetings and kept for a period of 30 days. The bee publications, *The American Bee Journal* and *Bee Culture* can be subscribed through the treasurer or on-line. The *American Bee Journal* is offered at a discount through the association only.

The Association meets each month, generally on the third Monday at 7:00 p.m. except during the months of January and July. Beekeeping classes will tentatively be held in January and March for 2021. This is a non-profit organization; elected officers serve without pay. Everyone is invited to attend the meetings. Check *The Bee Buzzer* or website at [www.nekba.org](http://www.nekba.org) each month for the actual date, time and location. If the weather is bad, call an officer or check the website to find out if the meeting will be held or cancelled.

#### **2020 Officers**

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