

Bee friendly

A Newsletter of the New Mexico Beekeepers Association

www.nmbeekeepers.org

Fall 2022

Report from the President

By Robert Reneau, NMBKA president



Beekeeping is something that starts during the spring and continues through summer then ends in fall, right?

WRONG!

Beekeeping is a continuous process and cycles every year through all the seasons. The start of your beekeeping year is the six weeks between Labor Day and Columbus Day, often considered the fall management window. To have viable honey bee colonies in the spring, you need an effective fall management plan. Fall management assures your colonies remain healthy throughout the winter so they can build up quickly in the spring. To remain healthy our colonies must be disease-free, well fed, have a robust productive queen, and varroa mite infestation kept at a manageable level. Varroa mite management is especially critical because in late summer and early fall, varroa mite numbers are at

their peak and the bee population is decreasing for winter. This is a recipe for disaster! I encourage you to manage your colonies, get those inspections done, combine weak colonies and keep varroa mites to a manageable level as we start into winter.

NMBKA started the new beekeeping season with a highly successful summer workshop and conference in Santa Fe on Saturday, August 27th. This was our first in-person meeting after the COVID pandemic and also the first workshop and conference held outside of Albuquerque. We beekeepers from southern New Mexico really enjoyed the cooler temperatures in Santa Fe.

A big thanks to Kurt Ferreira and his committee for organizing such a great meeting. There were 138

members and guests in attendance from all areas of New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Nevada and Arizona. The most popular part of the program was the workshop in the apiary organized by Melanie Kirby and Mark Spitzig with IAIA students assisting to set up the apiary. John Gagne, Mark Spitzig, Amy Owen,



CBeeks New beekeepers in the Cert Program approach season's end Page 3	The State Fair One more year of wowing the public with live bees Page 4	Club News Three clubs around New Mexico providing learning opportunities Page 5
Demo Hive Adventures Courtney Bradley doesn't give up loading those demo hives Pages 6-7	Langstroth frames to top bars? Christa Coggins defies the impossible and wins Page 8	A dramatic cutout, sticky harvesting, a touching poem, and a pollinator quiz Pages 9-13

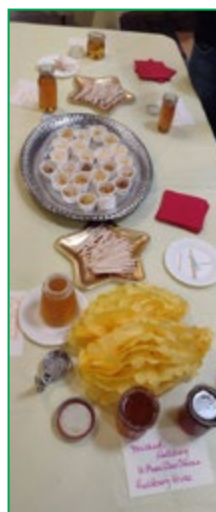
Lara Lovell and Craig Noorlander shared their skills and techniques on reading comb, queen marking and varroa mite monitoring. John, Amy and Mark continued with presentations in the afternoon. Before the honey tasting and social, John moderated an enjoyable panel with Moira O'Hanlon, Brad Kohler, Lara Lovell and Scott Anderson.

It was my privilege and honor to award Beth and Mark Sommer a well deserved Lifetime Achievement Award for the dedication and service to the NMBKA Certified Beekeeper Education Program. T J Carr introduced

the Sommers and shared his memory about when they stepped forward and volunteered to manage the program in July 2016. They continued to manage and grow CBEEKs through 2021.

The Institute of American Indian Arts facilities are excellent and I know we will be back in Santa Fe for future conferences.

Make this new year of beekeeping one of your most successful!



Certified Beekeeper Training (aka CBeeks)

By Steve Black, CBeeks Director

Our 2022 Certified Beekeeping classes are nearly complete with 27 Level I students graduating in July. We celebrated with cake and ice cream!



We recently demonstrated and included students in extracting honey from both Langstroth and top bar hives. Due to excellent care of the hives at the Open Space Visitor Center by Craig Noorlander and Amy Owen, as well as an abundant monsoon season, many gallons were harvested.

Level I students have been learning how to perform mite tests.

Level II students have been working with mentors and gaining the remaining volunteer hours needed to meet graduation requirements for certification. Many students have been gaining required volunteer hours at NMBKA events such as the summer conference in Santa Fe and the State Fair (student Kyle Swimmer at left) in Albuquerque.



We are happy to announce that we already have students signing up for our 2023 program. More information is available at <https://nmbeekeepers.org/certified-beekeepers-program/>

Live Bees are the Buzz at the State Fair

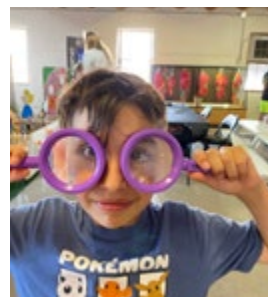
Pics by Steve Black, Kathy Grassel, Lynette Ewer

With the extraordinary organizing powers of Level II coordinator Lynette Ewer, 2022 was a great year for volunteer beekeepers at the booth. Thanks to ABQ Beeks, NMBKA, and the many Level 1 and 2 Cbeeks students and alumni who sat the many hours over the 10 days, explaining the workings of bees in the demonstration hive (thanks again to Lynette for making sure live bees made it to the fair and back home daily).

Where's the Queen?



Cuteness Overload



Lynette Ewer scores four Blue Ribbons!!

Extra light amber honey



Beeswax candle



Lavender beeswax hand cream



Pure Beeswax



Around New Mexico: Club News

Sangre de Cristo *by Steve Black*

At our August meeting, Steve Wall of Buckin' Bees shared information regarding his business and how he manages the 100+ hives he has in and around Santa Fe. A portion of the meeting included a field trip to Dean and Cindy Fry's apiary to demonstrate his technique for doing a powdered sugar mite test.

Our meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month from spring through September, starting at 6:30, at the Unitarian Universalist Church located at 107 W Barcelona Rd, in Santa Fe. In addition to our physical meeting location, we plan to continue to include a Zoom element for those northern New Mexico beekeepers who are unable to attend in person.

Each month, our meetings typically offer a seasonally relevant presentation followed by a general question and answer session, which has been particularly helpful for new beekeepers. In September, our meeting included a fun honey-tasting with samples from our members' apiaries. Membership is free. See <https://sdcbeeks.org>



ABQ Beeks

Matt Strong, ABQ Beeks president, is wrapping up the year by hosting a BBQ on Sept. 30, starting at 6:00 at Mountainside Church, 12300 Indian School Rd NE. Craig Noorlander will present winter prep tips. Matt is looking for a VP, secretary and treasurer, so consider stepping up when the bee season picks up again!

Paseo del Norte *by Michael Hallberg*

Paseo del Norte Beekeeper's Association has been abuzz with activity in 2022. The club has been gaining new members and more importantly these new members are transitioning into new beekeepers! The club meetings have included some excellent information on coming out of the Winter/Spring inspections, hive design, splitting and combing hives, Varroa Mite education, and many more exciting topics. We have been lucky enough to have several in-person events as well, allowing us to show our members top bar and Langstroth hive inspections, frame wiring, foundation embedding, swarm trap construction/baiting, solar wax melter construction/use, and honey collection methods.

Paseo del Norte Beekeeper's Association has hosted and co-hosted several events at the Amigos Community Garden in El Paso, TX. This was the location for our International Bee Day and National Pollinator Month celebration. We were able to provide tours of the garden, focusing on pollinator friendly plants, their care, and uses. This was headed up by Bill Hooten (Head of the Amigos Garden/Paseo del Norte Beekeepers). Along with that we had tours and information by Bob Reneau (Master Beekeeper/Past PDN club president, current NMBKA president), on native pollinators, their vast diversity and the incredibly important role they play! The day included a honey bee exhibit as well. From hive samples to beekeeping equipment, inner workings of the hive, structure of a colony, roles each type of bee plays, honey samples and a display hive with an unmarked queen (just to make it interesting). These bees were a feral colony that were rescued and are being kept by our honey bee presenter Michael Hallberg (PDN Vice President/Beekeeper).

The community garden houses two top bar hives with rescued swarms as well. These hives were constructed by the local Eagle Scouts. We have been graciously allowed a large plot behind the garden to construct our Urban Apiary that is currently in the works! Once completed we will have a gated area with multiple plots that can be used by beekeepers unable to tend their hives at home for whatever reason. It will provide a great space to keep honey bees while also fostering a community of keepers that can learn and assist each other!

The Summer of Bees

By Courtney Bradley, NMBKA treasurer, Beekeeper, CBeeks student

So as a Certified Beekeeper Student I am required, for graduation, to complete 40 hours of education and community outreach. I'm in my first of two years and I set out to complete my hours as fast as I possibly could. So naturally I signed up for bee presentations to children of a wide variety of ages at their summer farm camps. I planned to take an observation hive to my many presentations and fill it with bees from my apiary so that I could dazzle these kids with a visual. Really it was a fallback in case the words of bee wisdom coming out of my mouth were not enough to impress.

My first presentation was for kiddos ages 4 and 5. I had about an hour drive to the camp and of course it was hot because helllooo, it's summer! So I wanted to wait until the last possible second to load up the bees into the observation hive. I also hate lighting my smoker because it takes me forever (Who can relate?) and I didn't want to use it anyway because I wanted to take it to show the children what we use to smoke the bees and I didn't want to have it hot in the process ... little fingers don't mix with hot metal. So I allotted myself 10 minutes to get in the hive, get the frame, get it into the plate glass demo hive, and get on my way.

Now, I know my hives and I know their temperament so I knew I wasn't going for my strongest hive because those girls are very protective and rightfully so, they worked hard for that honey! So I chose my next strongest hive--some girls that had been feisty in the spring but the last inspection they were sweet as pie. So now I'm down to eight minutes to departure. I get the demo hive open, ready to go and I pop the top on my Lang. Cover comes off and bam!...a sting! then divebombs to the face. I'm wearing a bee suit equipped with a veil and top half but it doesn't have pants. My girls are stinging me through my jeans. This is because they are smart. So smart, and I am not...at least not in this situation. So I'm already in the hive, I'm already stung, so I just suck it up buttercup and grab my frame. Four more stings and I have my demo hive ready and in the truck with a minute to spare. Not too bad... except for the eight stings on my legs. Oh the pain! But I'm determined to present to these future entomologists so I head over to the camp. I get there, I get set up, and immediately after snack is my curtain call. Let me just tell you, these kiddos know every bit as much

as you and I about bees. Some even knew more ("My uncle is a bug scientist!" one little boy says.) and they were FULL of questions and just as many answers. Fun was had by all and learning was abound. Enthusiasm and interest was plentiful.

Now fast forward to the following week. Once again I am called to present but this week it's to 8- to 10-year-olds. I got out to my apiary with the intention of taking a top bar frame this time because the demo hive I have can house either Langstroth or Top Bars so Why Not??? Also my top bar girls truly are the sweetest girls on the block, no smoke no worries. I get in the hive and as I predicted my little worker bees are happy to share their space with me. I remove a few back bars so I can get to the heart of the hive and take a prime example of Mother Nature at her finest. I find the perfect comb specimen and being the smart beekeeper I am (this week at least), I begin to inspect it closely to assure the Queen isn't on this one. As a CBeek student we are taught exactly how to maneuver a top bar frame so it doesn't fall off the bar. We are also taught never to inspect in the hot middle of the day sun. So I am good, I have been taught the skills and also it's morning so I have all my bases covered. Except it's July...it's hot even at 8:45 in the morning...at least hotter than beeswax would prefer. BAM! Down goes the entire comb, bees and all. Poor girls just had a crash, a man-made one at that which is 10 times worse than a bee inflicted crash. So of course I am sad, feeling awful and I have to fix this. I have to repair the comb, which luckily for me I have top bar comb savers designed by TJ Carr, constructed by Jason Fink and absolute life savers. Working as quickly as I can to scoop up the fallen comb and save my girls from being squished by the heavy fruits of their labor on top of their house, I pick up the once perfect triangular comb. Wowzas! Stung. I get stung. By no fault of her own, my finger had pinched a honeybee princess and she had no choice but to retaliate. I earned every bit of that sting. So I get the comb all strung up in the saver, gather a new top bar for the demo hive and I'm on my way to the farm camp. These wee children had sponges for brains and the presentation went very well.

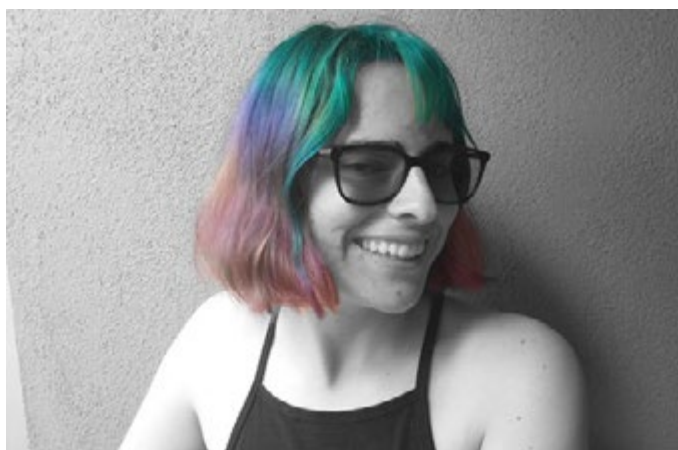
One more kids camp to go and I am determined to get my observation hive loaded this week with no stings. Well let me tell you what, I did it! Third time's a charm

I guess. Now the presentation could have gone better. These kids were middle schoolers and high schoolers and do you know what is more interesting than bees? A cell phone...at least that's what these kids thought. Just one more reason why we need to keep spreading the word of the bee.

I was able to do two more live bee presentations this summer for adults without a hitch. I would like to say I have gotten much more efficient at loading up my girls for their field trips but I can't take all the credit, really it's them that I owe my success to, after all, they did such a great job teaching me! Ouch!



Welcome new board member Rosabeth Link



I have a passion for insects, especially bees. I have a BS in biology, and an MS in entomology. Specifically I studied the foraging behavior of honey bees, bumble bees, and alfalfa leaf cutting bees. I moved to New Mexico about 5 years ago and I worked as a preschool teacher and as an arthropod keeper in the Bugarium at the ABQ Biopark for 2 years. I am interested in helping with the education/outreach committee by helping to plan, make material for, and presenting at local outreach/education events. I am a watercolor nature illustrator and I would be interested in making material for the NMBKA. This spring I completed the first level beekeeping certification course from NMBKA and was able to keep my own bees for the first time, and I am really enjoying it as well as being part of the NMBKA community. Looking forward to working with you all.

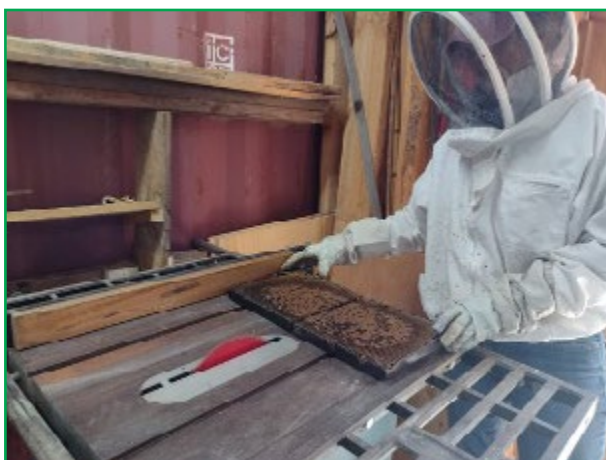
Trials of a Backyard Beekeeper

By Christa Coggins, NMBKA member-at-large

With huge thanks to Sue Strebe, Beekeeper Extraordinaire of Mora, NM

What happens when you order two nucs, then you go to pick them up, and realize that you forgot to mention that your hives are top bar – and you see that the nucs are for Langstroth hives?

You pivot quickly. Of course the Langstroth frames are too wide and too deep to fit into a top bar hive. Here's one possible solution:



1. Shake the bees off each Langstroth frame into your top bar hive box, then cut the frame in half with a table saw. Be prepared to get sprayed with larvae and brood detritus.



2. Now saw off the bottom inch so there will be room for the height of the frame in your top bar hive.



3. Screw each half Langstroth frame to a top bar.



4. Place each completed top bar in the top bar hive.

*Six
months
later*



5. Success! This is how my bees have taken on adapting a lang frame to a top bar!

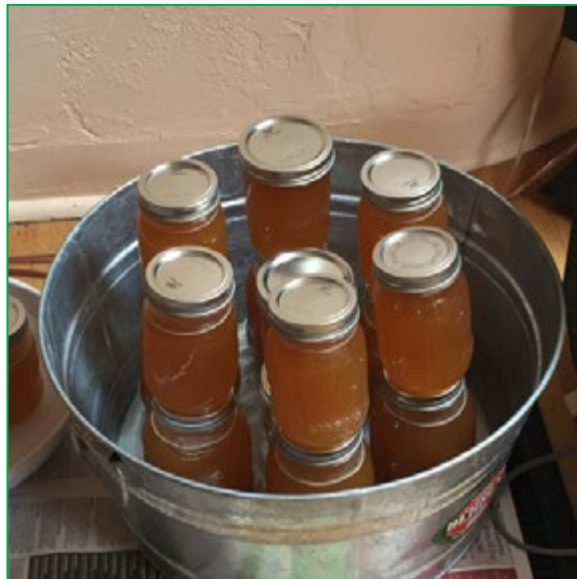
Honeytime in the Hive

By Anita Amstutz, [Think Like a Bee](#)

It's been a moment. High summer has come and gone, and now we are approaching the Fall Equinox. The only excuse I have for neglecting Think Like a Bee is a summer job which took my attention and time. I barely got around to checking my bees this summer. But the girls did not miss my interference.

In the bee world, summer is the peak of pollination, food gathering and population explosion within the hive. My girls have been working busily to store honey and pollen for the winter. As I visited them this past week, I harvested at least 50-75 pounds of honey. Yep. It was heavy.

So, I set up my honey processing plant in the kitchen and backyard. Not only is honey harvesting, sticky, exhaustingly heavy and messy work, it is also invasive. I could've cried as the some of the larger honey combs pulled the inside cleat from the topbar and the whole comb crashed down upon my girls. Inadequate equipment. I was sickened as I tried to clean it up, with the girls circling inquiringly around my head. "What are you doing?" "Why are you taking our food and wreaking this destruction?" "What have we



done to you?" I felt like I was the aggressor in a war zone, with victims falling all around me from my incursion.

The last hive I checked, slightly Africanized (no, VERY Africanized genetics) were having none of it. They were ready for me. As I opened the hive to pull out their honeycombs, swollen with high summer sweet nectar, they attacked. Clinging to every part of my clothing, the stinging began. I could feel hundreds of tiny pricks through my worn garden gloves.

Now it was my turn to fight back. I had to grudgingly admit my respect and appreciation of these little warrioresses. They were not going to give it up or go gently. I ran, peeling off my gloves in the field and replaced them with my elbow length leather gloves. Full protection. They were not able to pierce my armor, and I closed them up without further offenses.

All this to say, that yes, it is honey time, friends, in spades. Time to get your winter honey for all those teas and warm oatmeal on cold days!

A Successful 2-Day Cutout in Santa Fe

Photos by Steve Black, with Ellen Drew



Level II student Ellen Drew accumulates some serious volunteer hours with this labor-intensive cutout. No one was counting the trips up and down the ladder hoisting equipment and lowering bees on this Santa Fe rooftop!

Poetry by Amy Owen, [Desert Hives LLC](#), NMBKA Member-at-Large

Organic

It's something messy, and sometimes small.
 Bugs between lettuce leaves and life within raspberries,
 waking up to the warmth of the kitchen.
 Uninhibited by human interventions
 Imperfect and obscure.

Organic, desired by the sterile elite.
 Organic, when seen in its true form, disposed of.
 Blind to what is pure.
 Misled by commercialism and a facade of what it means
 to have wealth.
 Reaching in the wrong direction
 Grasping at morsels of liver pâté.
 Walking through glass doors
 Seeking curated perfection, health, pleasure and
 substance beneath a silver dome.

We who get messy, embrace the muddy earth beneath a
 blue sky...
 The imperfections, a worm spinning a web within our
 fruit.
 We are the ones who enjoy organic.
 The wonder of nature's beautiful imperfections
 Protected from commercialism and uniformity.
 Food, shelter and experience all one.
 Placing a chunk of honeycomb from the hive in one's
 mouth and
 Interacting with bees who allowed this pleasure.
 Appreciating a sting,
 A creature's ability to defend and persist.
 Resting in the cool shade of a cottonwood tree.

Exchanging home brewed goods for herbal medicine.
 Giving jars of honey to hive hosts.
 Receiving fresh eggs, garden vegetables

Venison, trout, home grown pork and beef.
 Sharing joys, sorrows, and thyme.

A raw goat milk latte after tending to the bees.
 Sage wisdom, and incredible tales of local legends and
 dangerous encounters.

Mulberry stains on my hands, I walk under the shade of
 the trees to hives where knowledge is shared.
 Where worries fade and wonder grows
 Where fear subsides and curiosity fills the mind.
 Organic.
 A reward.
 An experience.

Available to those with dirty hands and sweaty bodies,
 To those with an appreciation for the grotesque beauty
 of nature's offerings.
 Mold growing through cheese,
 Bacteria and yeast transforming the ordinary into
 culinary delights.
 Accidents becoming mead.
 Children running, screaming and dancing
 Laughing and crying.
 Despair enhancing and highlighting moments of peace.
 Thunderstorms cleansing the dusty air.
 The ground damp with tears.

Enjoying the full messy pleasure of love making,
 Birth,
 Life and death.
 Bodies returning to the earth, organically.
 Full.
 Whole.
 And messy.

Take the Native Pollinator Quiz!

Hints: Two are *Apis Mellifera*. One is Not-A-Bee. Some are repeats.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



9.



10.



11.



12.



13.



14.



15.



16.

Answers to the Native Pollinator Quiz

IDs are by Olivia Messinger Carril, co-author of [The Bees in Your Backyard](#). All but three found in Kathy Grassel's backyard.



1. Ceratina (Small Carpenter)



2. Bombus (Bumble bee)



3. Diadasia (Cactus bee)



4. Apis mellifera (Honey bee)



5. Xylocopa (Large Carpenter)



6. Andrena (Miner bee)



7. Melissodes (Long-horned bees, male and female)



8. Melissodes (Long-horned bee)



9. Apis mellifera (Honey bee)



10. Bembix (Sand wasp)



11. Svastra obliqua (Sunflower bee)



12. Perdita (Fairy bee)



13. Melissodes (Long-horned bee)



14. Halictus (Sweat bee)



15. Osmia (Mason bee)



16. Diadasia (Cactus bee)



Fall 2022

Our newsletter is a quarterly publication of the New Mexico Beekeepers Association (NMBKA).

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So many thanks to both donors and bidders that made our silent online auction so successful once again. The auction has turned out to be one of our best and most popular fundraisers for NMBKA, giving both donors and bidders an ideal and fun opportunity to support NMBKA in big ways with win-win benefits all around. We are most appreciative.

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Become a Member of NMBKA

Join the NMBKA Hive for \$30! Help support NMBKA by becoming a paid member. NMBKA is an all-volunteer not-for-profit organization, so all of your contributions are going toward supporting our programs, including the Certified Beekeeper program and this newsletter. Annual dues are only \$30 for the family.

Membership includes admission to, and recordings of, the Winter Conference, Summer Conference and any other program. Thank you! We can't do it without you!

You can join or renew on the our website www.nmbeekeepers.org. Or if you prefer to join or renew by mail, please request a membership form on the website, complete, and mail along with \$30 to:

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