

# THE HONEYBEE TIMES

## Are Your Bees Getting Aggressive?

See Page 5



A fighting bee similar to the one here is a frequent logo of St. Baldrick's Foundation. (It's usually missing the hockey stick!) In cooperation with the Foundation, students will often shave their heads to raise awareness and money for childhood cancer research. [Bay Village students](#) raised \$20K earlier this year for the Foundation.

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## President's Message

Hello everyone,

As I sit here writing this article, my bees are very busy gathering all the available nectar from Goldenrod, aster, and any fall flowering plant. The queen is laying the eggs that will be the workers that will carry the hive into next spring. She is likely in the bottom brood box.

September is the last month of nearly uninterrupted flights of opportunity for your hives. You should now do a thorough inspection before the start of cool weather. What you do now will influence the success or failure of your hives this winter. Following is a list of some things you can do this fall to prepare your bees for the cold weather:

1. Estimate colony strength.
2. Combine disease-free, weak hives with stronger ones. Note: Exchange or combine equipment from different hives only after making sure they are disease-free.
3. Make sure the queen is present. If you can't find her, make sure you see eggs. A good queen will lay a solid brood pattern.
4. Take off all of your honey supers so as to tighten up the hive.
5. Estimate the weight of your hive by lifting up the back a couple of inches. It should weigh around 70 pounds. If not, you will want to start feeding a 2 to 1 sugar water solution.
6. Install entrance reducers or mouse guards late in the month.
7. Feed two gallons of 2 to 1 sugar syrup by weight with Fumagilin b added to help prevent Nosema. This should be done after removing your honey crop.

I know this is a lot to take in, but now is the time to get ready for our nasty Ohio winter. I cannot stress this enough.

Til we meet again, bee safe!

Dennis

## Elections

Why the heck am I writing about the December GCBA elections in September? Well...it's important! Besides, I'm not sure everyone reads the Honeybee Times every month and I decided to get a jump on all the mail you normally get around the holidays. So with the encouragement of the board, we are starting early!

In November we will be asking for nominations for the following offices:

- President
- Vice-President
- Treasurer (someone needed immediately!)
- Secretary
- Director



The responsibilities of these positions are defined in our charter and the commitment runs for one year (January to December)

## Quick Questions

**Why should I run? I think they are doing a great job.** The answer is simple. Some of them have been at it for a long time and need a break. Sometimes work and personal family issues need more attention.

**If I run for an office, doesn't that imply I don't like how the person is doing the job?** Not at all. What it means is you're interested in taking a more active role in planning and setting the direction of the Greater Cleveland Beekeepers Association.

**I've never done anything like this before. What do I do?** No problem for a variety of reasons. First, this is a volunteer organization, so everyone understands having elected volunteers at the helm brings a wide range of experience and inexperience. The current Board members are not leaving the organization so they will answer any questions and provide advice as needed. It's really not in their best interest as members to let you flounder.

**Is this a paid position?** No. There is no fiscal compensation only the satisfaction of doing the job well. How many of your friends can say they sit on the board of an influential non-profit organization with over 130 members across Cuyahoga county? Money is over rated and worries over it can lead to sleepless nights. Go for the glory! 😊

**How many meetings am I expected to attend?** In short, all of them. We understand other obligations may get in the way and perfect attendance may not be possible. However, for the good of the organization and out of respect for other members of the Board, missing a meeting should be an exception, not the rule. There is the general meeting you attend now and one executive meeting each month.

**How can I get a better idea what a position entails?** Download the by-laws from our website; ask the current person doing that job; attend an executive meeting. Executive meetings are open to all members and occur the Wednesday after our general meeting at the Cuyahoga Fair Grounds. If the weather is nice the meeting occurs on the picnic tables in the shelter. If the weather is foul, it takes place in a small building next to the bee barn.

**What if I get elected and then discover I can't fulfill my entire term due to a life complication?** We are a volunteer organization and we understand that's always a risk. We can't force someone to fulfill their obligations and stuff happens to the best of us. If a life event occurs we just ask you notify the other Board members so they can appoint an interim person to finish your term. Ideally, you would spare them the work and recruit your own replacement!

**What If I get elected and then discover I just don't want to do it?** Again, we are a volunteer organization and if you stop fulfilling your obligation and decide to abandon the other board members and disappoint your fellow GCBA members who voted you in, then not much can be done. The commitment is only a year and we really ask that you be professional and keep your commitment. If after you abdicate your hives become Africanized, be assured we had nothing to do with it! A little humor of course, but for the good of the group we ask that you take this position seriously.

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## **Wanted - New Honeybee Times Editor**

I exceeded the 12 month commitment I promised when I took on this position and frankly I had planned on doing it a bit longer but one of those unexpected life events keeps me from doing my best job. If you like beekeeping and read about beekeeping throughout the month, then this is really an easy position. I have learned a lot and I believe I'm a better beekeeper having taken this job.

### Requirements

- Beekeeper! (Duh!)
- Attend the monthly meetings to know what's going on. (I've missed most of them! Do as I say, not as I do! )
- Optionally, attend the Executive meetings.
- Like to surf the web and read stuff on beekeeping.
- Be able to put thoughts on paper.

Please note what's not in the requirements: good writing style, excellent speller, strong grammatical knowledge, etc. Having those skills would be incredibly wonderful since you'll bring more to the position than I do!

There are many Google alerts that automatically arrive in the GCBAeditor mailbox so much of the information will come to you. You'll still probably do some web searches for information on topics that came up at the monthly meetings or stuff you're personally interested in and want to share.

This is an unstructured position with a lot of flexibility.

If you're interested, please contact me at [GCBAeditor@gmail.com](mailto:GCBAeditor@gmail.com). Don't worry; I won't leave you an orphan and will help as needed.

## Aggressive Bees

At last month's meeting Bella Donna talked extensively on the aggressive bee population in her area of Arizona. She suspected the bees were Africanized. As she spoke of her practices, the more experienced beekeepers in our group became a bit suspicious and made several suggestions. In the end, I think she gained as much from us as we did from her!



My hives are generally very passive, but it got me wondering what I'm doing by luck to have passive bees. Put another way, what makes passive bees turn aggressive? With a little bit of web surfing I came up with this list. We know everything on the web is completely truthful and accurate. With that disclaimer in place, here's a working list of things to consider if your bees are more interested in stinging than foraging.

Like all animals (Insects are part of the Animal Kingdom – go figure.) aggressiveness can naturally wax and wane depending upon the season, "mood", hive condition and safety. Think about yourself, what makes you ornery and aggressive? Ok. You're a bad example. What makes your spouse or significant other ornery and aggressive? (Ahhh! You now have a long list.) Your list may include: hunger, annoying neighbors/workers/people, nagging problems (bills, car problems, roof leaks, etc.), strangers and the list goes on. Your bees aren't much different. Take a look at this list. It's not in any order.

- The dearth! No food coming in.
- Freeloading friends. Better known as "robbing" in beekeeping parlance. Ongoing "robbing" will keep the entire hive on high alert. Robbing is usually characterized by bees fighting at the entrance or on the ground in front of the hive. Fighting bees give off pheromones alerting the hive of danger which decreases their tolerance of anything moving in the vicinity.
- Robbing is just the beginning. The carnage of battle (dead meat) and the scent of lose honey in the open draws in wasps, yellow jackets, flies and other predators. Soon the hive's heightened alert is justified.
- As the weather cools and it becomes obvious winter is on the horizon, skunks, raccoons and opossums can take a particular interest in the honey store within. Skunks particularly love your hive and view attack bees as meals- on-wheels...or should I say meals-on-wings. A hive under attack at night can be very aggressive well into the daylight hours.
- Then there's our wonderful Cleveland weather. A long sequence of hot days with high humidity into the night hours hampers evaporation delaying honey capping and storage. All that work fanning with no results makes everyone cranky. Likewise a long sequence of rainy days prohibits foraging. With all those hungry mouths to feed and no food coming in "anxiety" runs high. (I don't know about you, but being stuck in a house for days with a bunch of relatives puts me on edge; especially when it's my wife's family!)
- Finally and probably the most important possibility is a queenless hive! A hive without a queen is on borrowed time and they know it! It's the queen's pheromones wafting around that assure the colony that all is right. No queen – no pheromones and your bees are no longer happy. Once the colony is queen right an aggressive hive will probably settle down.

A happy hive is a tranquil hive!

## Buzzin' Around the Web

[When do Varroa know when to leave the hive?](#) Before reading this article, I didn't think they ever leave!

Finally an article about Roundup's impact on humans that makes sense to me! In a nutshell, glyphosate is the active ingredient in Roundup and its *immediate* toxicity in mammals and other animals is extremely low (although more recent studies are showing the "inert" ingredient used in the formulation may not be so inert, but that's a different topic). However, our gut is loaded with beneficial bacteria that we need to detoxify and produce enzymes used in other human biological processes. So while glyphosate doesn't hurt "us", it does hurt the gut bacteria on which we depend. I believe the semantics difference on what it affects and how, is at the heart of the controversy with Roundup. For you insomniacs, [here's the full 48 page study](#) done in 2013. A good Reader's Digest version of the study can be found [here](#). Either is highly recommended for those interested in this topic.



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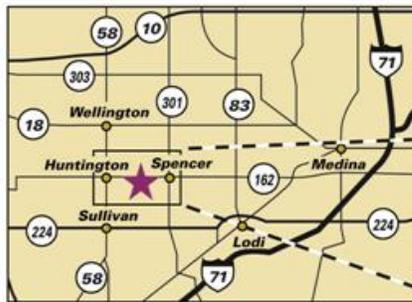
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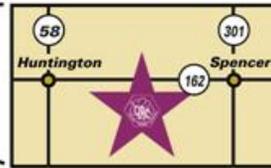
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