

The Fifty-Two Most Important People in Your Bee Club for 2016 by Joe Lewis

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The foundation of any great beekeeping club is in getting great support from the volunteer members! With great volunteers, the officers and board of the local club can then guide, support and leverage the enthusiasm of its members rather than assume every task that comes down the pike. Getting each member fired up and excited about doing their part is easy when one is aware of *individual members'* interests and skills. The analogy comes to mind of a pastor who learned each church member's capabilities (by being truly interested in each person) and then asking each one to do something for the group. He leveraged each person's individual passion and natural abilities. If you have a leadership role in your local club or just want to get your club jump-started, figure out what talents your members have as well as what excites them. Remember leadership can come not just from the top but from all levels of an organization. No matter where you are in experience or knowledge, you can spearhead a particular project or find someone who could.

What follows are suggestions and a general outline for 52 possible roles for volunteerism within a beekeeping club, at least one for every week of the beekeeping year, jobs that everybody can find something to get excited about. Note: A chairperson should always be paired with an assistant chairperson because a single point of failure must never exist in any good system! If the chair is sick or too busy, then the assistant or deputy steps up and takes charge.

Here are the *"Fifty-Two Most Important People in Your Bee Club for 2016"*! Feel free to copy this list, add to it, and share it. Then knowing a person's interests, one can squeeze their elbow gently, look them directly in the eyes, ask them to do one of these jobs and praise each for their volunteerism. Each of these activities can be seen in action within local bee clubs --- great bee clubs!

General:

Greeter - One or two people are always at the front door before each meeting to welcome attendees, introduce new folks, and show them the coffee pot & the name tag table.

Membership Committee Chairperson - Encouraging new members as well as searching out past members. Most clubs have a fairly high turnover rate. Keeping members past three years is a challenge so going back over old member lists and reaching out to past members is vital.

Party Planner – Chairperson Hospitality and Social Committee. I was once in a flying club where the leaders believed the club was about the three Fs: Flying, Food and Fellowship. Food and Fellowship are important factors in any volunteer club. Members want to learn and be entertained, but they also enjoy eating and seeing their friends!

Club Librarian and Periodicals Coordinator (with books & hard copies of monthly journals) – Books are loaned out for one month with the understanding (and signed acknowledgement)

that they will be returned at the next meeting. Members who pass on or who lose interest can donate their books to the library. Amazon Used Books has great deals on beek books ... sometimes considerably less than retail. One Maryland club has over 300 volumes plus videos, a collection not as extensive as the 50,000 volumes in the E. F. Phillips Beekeeping collection and library at Cornell University (<http://bees.library.cornell.edu/b/bees/browse.html>), but still pretty good for a local club!

Website Master, Newsletter Editor, Media Coordinator, Videographer – Many clubs have great speakers so why not record some of these presentations and share with others? For example, look at the great videos on YouTube sponsored by Shenandoah Valley Beekeepers and NW New Jersey Beekeepers.

Education:

NewBees Group Leader – for absolute beginners.

Beeginers Group Leader/Mentor (“The BeeGees”) – One club has over 80 members in this group and they regularly trade emails, hints and tips. The group arranges its own lectures and Beginner ‘Hive Crawls’ to visit apiaries and inspect hives.

Mentor Coordinator -

Introduction to Beekeeping (Teacher) - A One-Day Fall Introduction Course offered through the local county extension agent or community college for a small fee.

Short Course Instructor - The Local Beekeeping Short Course could be re-named Beekeeping 101 especially when offered through the local community college as a non-credit course.

Intermediate Beekeeping 201 Instructor – A course for folks that have kept bees for 1 to 3 years – includes a review of material in the short course material, but geared to beekeepers that have more experience and want to dig deeper. Many beekeepers want more than what is offered in the beginners short course, but don’t know where or how to get it.

Training and Education Coordinator – To lead a statewide effort like the standardized beekeepers training program developed by Billy Davis, Pat Haskell and the Northern Virginia Beekeeping Teaching Consortium.

Beekeeping Annual Conference Coordinator - To plan a full day conference a year in advance with a top name speaker or two.

Grants:

Young Beekeeper Grant – Scholarship Committee - One Maryland club has been quite successful in offering grants, education and mentorship to potential young beekeepers to help get each started. A hidden benefit is in also getting these young beekeepers’ parents to become active members!

Legislative:

Legislative Affairs Coordinator – To organize support for bee and pollinator friendly legislation.

Beekeepers Association Coordinator – Liaison officer to county, state, regional and national beekeeping associations to help support their activities, publicize and take advantage of their opportunities (including Beek Associations like EAS, HAS, & WAS). The club may need to provide minimal funds to join to regional and national organizations. (What is the purpose of your club? If it is to support beekeeping, and the club has the money, why not spend some of it?) Some clubs have tens of thousands of dollars sitting in CDs and bank deposits. Get this money to work instead of sitting on it! Make a donation to your state or regional association.

Hive Production:

Queen Cell and Nuc Production Coordinator - To help people re-queen their hives or make nucs with queen cells (using some brood in an upper box above the queen excluder is one example). Select lines of survivor stock are used to graft queen larvae and the queen cells are delivered to members for \$5 each. Chester County Beekeepers created and distributed over 150 cells to their members in 2015!

Bee Friendly Plants:

Plant and Tree Nursery Coordinator – The green thumb guy for bee friendly plants and trees - The Greeks had a saying, “It is a wise society whose members plant trees under whose shade they may never rest.” We should say, “It is a wise bee club who members plant bee friendly trees --- that may be enjoyed by the bees of future beekeepers.” Some clubs make volume purchases of trees and provide them to members either for free or for a small fee. One club received a grant from a local agency and purchased linden trees. Some provide young bee bee (evodia) trees to members for free.

Seed Sharing Coordinator - One club makes bulk (10 lb.) purchases of seeds from Applewood Seeds for distribution to its members. Another has seed exchange nights at club meetings.

Should this be included under woodworking since it’s already been mentioned about buying trees/seeds in bulk? Collective Purchasing Coordinator – Getting buyers together to make discounted group purchases – Sometimes this job is delegated to the Vice President but anybody can take charge of this simple committee and pass around a clip board with a sign up list --- “I want to buy **X**, quantity **Y**, and I need it by **Z**”. Volume buying gets cheaper prices & lower shipping costs. Sometimes shipping is free when the order is over \$100 or \$150.

Woodworking and Equipment:

Woodshop Construction and Build Coordinator – Woodworking hobbyists could set up their table saws to create a production line to cut wood purchased in bulk.

Woodenware Preservation Coordinator - An Annual Painting or Dipping Party at someone's farm. "Oops" paint can be purchased at around \$10 per gallon or dipping woodenware in a 50-50 mix of boiled linseed oil and paint thinner is a great way to preserve bee boxes, tops and bottom boards. One Pennsylvania club sponsors a late summer dipping party for members to soak wooden parts in its barrel of heated liquid tea tree oil, beeswax & paraffin.

Loaner Equipment Coordinator - To keep track of the club extractor, electric hot knife, etc.

Varroa Control and Other Activities:

Oxalic Acid Dribble Blast Leader – An annual December liquid treatment. About the middle of December one club mixes up a batch solution of pure 3.2 % Oxalic Acid. Then they go from apiary to apiary demonstrating this easy procedure of the dribble. Members contribute \$1 for their share of OA and this amount can treat up to 30 hives!

Sentinel Apiary Coordinator (and Bee Informed Partnership BIP - Liaison) - The Sentinel Apiary project was started in 2015 at the Dennis vanEngelsdorp Bee Lab at the University of Maryland and enrolls clubs to monitor, sample and report on eight colonies. An electronic hive scale monitors the weight & data is transferred to a smart phone by Bluetooth, then uploaded to a central server by cell phone data transfer. You can see SBA's hive scale data at: <http://bipscaleportal.herokuapp.com/hives/132>

Public Outreach:

Fairs, Festivals, First Fridays & Parades Chair (F4P) Outreach and Honey Sales Committee - First prize for a 4th of July float rewarded one bee club with \$500!

Fair Entry Training Committee Chairperson – For training and information sharing to help people understand honey and hive products judging standards and fair entry procedures. Also to coordinate club member's fair submissions. A good person is a current or past honey judge.

Beekeeping Flea Market Coordinator – To sell or trade that extra beekeeping equipment or swap bee-friendly plants.

Small Groups Coordinator – To organize groups based on special interests & common goals - Mead making is one example.

Miscellaneous:

Hive Crawl Leader – To organize a day of visits to several apiary sites and check hives. Members convoy from site to site. Practical demonstrations are arranged for queen rearing, marking queens, Demaree swarm control methods, etc.

Field Studies Director (weekend field trips) – A convoy of vehicles with members sharing rides head off to a bee destination, then have lunch or dinner at a restaurant or diner (or McDonalds) before returning home.

Bees-On-Vacation (BOV) Coordinator – To organize a truck or trailer load of bees to be moved to Florida, South Texas, or Arizona for the winter and bring them back in the spring. This task is perfect for a snowbird beekeeper who is going south for the winter anyway and can watch over the bees for a few months.

Finally: The Yet-to-Be-Named Committee that **YOU** want to Lead (write your proposed project name here) _____