



SEMBA NEWS

Vol. 13 No. 6 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association June/July 2003
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Upcoming Events

July 20

2003 SEMBA Picnic, the annual picnic will meet at Lloyd and Judy Schmalz's home in Clarkston. Please see page 3 for details.

August 24-29

APIMONDIA 2003, the biennial international meeting of beekeeping organizations will meet in Ljubljana, Slovenia this year from August 24-29. Information on registration and attending is available at:

Apimondia 2003
 c/o Cankarjev Dom
 Cultural and Congress Centre
 Presernova 10

SI - 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
 Phone 386 1 24 17 141; Fax 386v1 24 17 296
 E-mail apiregistration@cd-cc.si

AgriTours Canada Inc. is organizing a tour to Apimondia and Slovenia for the conference. See page 2-3 for more information.

USDA TO CONDUCT REFERENDUM ON NATIONAL HONEY BOARD

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced on May 23, 2003 that honey producers and importers have submitted enough valid names on a petition requesting the USDA hold a referendum on the National Honey Board.

The American Honey Producers Association filed the petition on February 10, 2003 requesting a referendum to determine whether honey producers and importers favor continuing the Honey Research, Promotion, and Consumer Information Order - the last such referendum was conducted in 2002.

For the Order to continue, it must be supported in a referendum by a majority of the voters who represent 50 percent or more of the honey or honey products represented by the voters in the referendum. The USDA will announce the dates and location of the referendum soon.

For more information contact Julia Pirnack at the National Honey Board - 800-553-7162 or Kathie Birdsall, AMS Fruit and Vegetable Programs, USDA Stop 0244, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20250-0244, 888-720-9917

-- Roger Sutherland

SCHOOLCRAFT VISTATECH CENTER SET TO OPEN

In the year 2000, plans were announced for the expansion of the Waterman Center with a 2003 target date for completion. This new addition, named the VisTaTech Center, houses a vastly expanded Culinary Arts program, twelve state-of-the-art classrooms dedicated to information technology and business development training, and much needed public space for conferences, events, performances and celebrations. The American Harvest Restaurant, operated by the Culinary Arts Students and staff, opens to the public in September 2003. Funding for the \$27 million expansion has been provided by the State of Michigan (\$13.5 million), Schoolcraft College (\$11.5 million), and the Schoolcraft College Foundation (\$2million). SEMBA contributed \$1000 to the Foundation and several SEMBA members have made individual donations to the VisTaTech Center.

Much of the interior work on the new Center is nearing completion and in the early Fall; there will be a dedication to which all SEMBA members are invited. We will keep you posted on the date, time and other details in a future SEMBA Newsletter.

Presently, renovations are underway in the existing Waterman Center where SEMBA bee schools have been held since the mid 1980s.

Inside SEMBA News	
Schoolcraft VisTatech Center Cont.	2
The Importance of Bees in War Time	2-3
2003 SEMBA Picnic	3
SEMBA: Smoker Contest	3
SEMBA Picnic Map	3
SEMBA Bargain Corner	4

SCHOOLCRAFT VISTATECH CENTER SET TO OPEN (Continued)

(Holding the bee school at Schoolcraft College began in 1974, first in the Liberal Arts Building and later in the Forum Building.) Now because of construction, SEMBA will not be able to use the Waterman Center for meetings, and it will be August or September before it is known whether or not the Waterman renovations will be completed in time for the March 2004 SEMBA Bee School. The SEMBA officers are aware of this potential problem and are investigating other meeting sites. Suggestions may be directed to any SEMBA officer.

-- Roger Sutherland

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEES IN WAR TIME (Part 1 of a Two Part Series)

With the war on terrorism and in Iraq fresh in our minds it may be interesting to review how honeybees have been utilized over the years in war situations. Even now scientists are looking for ways to train bees to find mines and explosives.

September, 2002, Missoula, Montana (AP)
Trained honey bees have shown a remarkable ability to sniff out land mines, suggesting a possible new way to find the estimated 110 million unexploded land mines around the world, according to researchers at the University of Montana. Jerry Bromenshenk has studied bees as pollution sensors and environmental sensors for the past 30 years. He said honeybees have proven themselves to be easier to train, harder working and more accurate than bomb sniffing dogs.

BEES OF WAR

This news article brings to mind an article "The Bees of War" by Nick Howes, published in the 2001 Farmers' Almanac. The following is the first installment of the article.

In Rudyard Kipling's *The Second Jungle Book*, Mowgli (the main character) enlists the unwitting aid of the Little People of the Rocks to halt and invasion of the jungle by a ferocious pack of red dogs called *dholes*. A super colony of bees, the Little People of the Rocks, live along the river Waingunga, stinging to death any intruders. Mowgli leads the ferocious dogs through their domain, alarming the Little People who swarm and destroy half of the pack.

The concept of using bees to protect and defend was not unique to Kipling. Thousands of years of beekeeping have led people all around

the world to search for a role for bees in wars, as primitive biological weapons. Recognition of their potential existed in Biblical times, as indicated by several passages from Exodus 23:28: "And I will send hornets before thee, which will drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite before thee."

One of the earliest historical accounts (first century B.C.) that mentioned bees being used against enemies involves the Heptakometes of Asia Minor (present-day Turkey) and Pompey the Great. With the aid of their bees, the Heptakometes temporarily halted an advance by Pompey's soldiers. The Heptakometes knew that when bees gather pollen from such plants as rhododendron or azalea the honey crop produced is loaded with alkaloids, which are harmless to bees but toxic to humans. They were able to obtain and leave a cache of poisoned honey in the path of 1,000 advancing Roman soldiers.

During that time, the gains from raiding and looting were part of a soldier's pay, so the Romans naturally seized the honey and consumed it. They were soon deathly ill, and in no shape to resist the attack that followed.

The Roman legions were less subtle in their use of bees. The catapulting of portable beehives at enemy positions often preceded their attacks; when the hives smashed explosively among the enemies, a sudden assault by angry bees occurred. At one point during the many clashes between the Dacians (of modern-day Romania) and the Romans (between 112 B.C. and A.D. 106, when the Romans gained complete control), the Dacians used bee hives with effect to, again only temporarily, halt Roman advances into their homeland. In naval battles of the time, bees, housed in earthen hives designed specifically for shipboard use, were catapulted at enemy ships.

BEES IN THE WALLS

In medieval times, would-be conquerors laid siege to the cities and castles they coveted. However, castles were designed and built by builders who included as many possible defensive features as they could think of. Often, they incorporated beehives within the walls, an unwelcome surprise for any attackers who might breach a wall at the wrong spot. Straw hives were kept out of the way atop city walls, where they were also at hand during sieges.

There were advantages to using bees that go beyond the mere unreasoning fear they may have of them. Imagine a mounted knight in heavy

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEES IN WAR TIME Part 1 (Continued)

armor, fully dependent on his horse for any real mobility, sharing this helmet with several maddened bees.

-- Roger Sutherland

2003 SEMBA PICNIC

Here are the specifics everyone has been waiting for, regarding the SEMBA picnic in July.

When: Sunday July 20, 2003

Times: 1:00 p.m. to 4:00

Where: Lloyd and Judy Schmaltz's home
3119 Oakhill Place
Clarkston, MI 48348

Telephone: 248-627-4556 (JUST IN CASE YOU GET LOST AND SEE ATTACHED MAP)

What to bring: yourself and family, a dish to pass would be nice, place settings for your group, chairs, and refreshments.

What to do: bring your smoker for the smoker contest, talk to other Bee Keepers and enjoy the afternoon.

SEMBA: SMOKER CONTEST

SEMBA will be hosting a smoker contest at the July picnic. Here are the specifics of that contest.

When: July 20, 2003,

Where: at the SEMBA picnic,

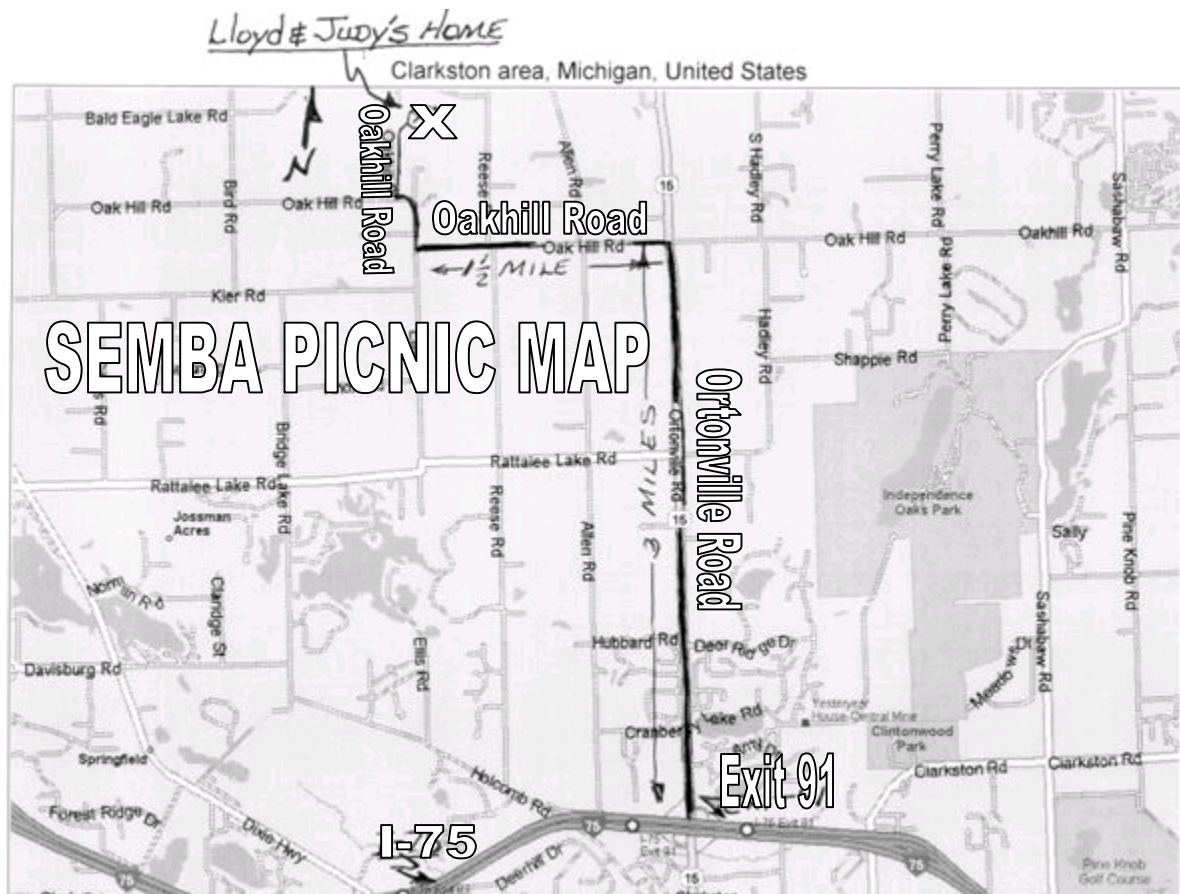
What to bring: your smoker and matches

Object: to see who can keep their smoker going the longest.

Prize: \$25.00 gift certificate for bee supplies from Groeb Farms.

NOTE: SEMBA WILL SUPPLY A METERED AMOUNT OF FUEL TO BURN FOR ALL INVOLVED.

Special Mention: thank you Groeb Farms for donating the \$25.00 gift certificate for the smoker contest.



SEMBA Bargain Corner

For Sale:

- ❖ **Michigan Beekeeping calendars**, \$5.00 plus shipping cost of \$1.50. **Contact Mary Sutherland, (734) 668-8568**, e-mail rsuther@hotmail.com.
- ❖ **New Wooden Ware**, assortment of honey bottles, 4-frame stainless steel motorized extractor, 25-frame galvanized motorized extractor, observation hive, and much more. Desire to sell as package. **Call Charles Bode at (586) 725-8163.**
- ❖ **New 1 & 5 Gal. Buckets with lids**, new medium and deep supers and frames available. **Keith Lazar, (248) 815-5522 or home (248) 626-2483.**

Wanted:

- ❖ Used 2 or 4 frame, motorized extractor.
Call Jim Armstrong, (734) 994-6696.
- ❖ 12 frame stainless steel extractor (motorized).
Call Otis White, (734) 595-4281 (in Westland)
- ❖ Beekeeper wanted to keep bees in apple orchards in Oakland Township (Adams and Buhl Road) and in Marion (property near Cadillac). **Please contact Mr. or Mrs. LaFountain at (800) 851-3947.**
- ❖ Jason Newkirk would like to buy 1000 brood boxes. **Contact Mr. Newkirk at newk78@hotmail.com.**

Note: ads in the Bargain Corner are free to SEMBA members. In order to place an ad contact Susanne at souxsieq2@msn.com, or Roger Sutherland at rsutherland@hotmail.com.

Southeastern Michigan
Beekeeper's Association
Organized April 1, 1934



Oakland Beekeeper's Club



Schoolcraft Beekeeper's Club

SEMBA Membership
5488 Warren Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105-9425