



# SEMBA NEWS

Volume 17 Number 1 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association  
January 2007

## OAKLAND BEE CLUB MEETING

When: Tuesday, January 2, 2007 at 7:30 p.m.

Where: E. L. Johnson Nature Center,  
3325 Franklin Road, Bloomfield Township, MI.

Program: "The History and Making of Straw Skeps"  
Roger Sutherland

**Refreshments are welcome**

## 69<sup>th</sup> SEMBA BEEKEEPING CONFERENCE

When: Saturday, February 17, 2007

Where: Schoolcraft College, Livonia, MI

Circle your calendar now and plan to attend SEMBA's 69<sup>th</sup> Annual Beekeeping Conference. The program usually attracts 175 – 200 participants including many new and perspective beekeepers.

Kim Flottum, beekeeper and Editor of *Bee Culture*, will be one of the feature speakers. Workshops for beginners, raffles, and demonstrations will round out the program. Vendors selling supplies and equipment, members selling used equipment, and a silent auction will make for an enjoyable and profitable day.

Final planning for the conference will take place in the lower Waterman Center of Schoolcraft College, Thursday, January 4, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. You are welcome to attend, or ideas may be submitted to any SEMBA leader listed on page 4 of this newsletter.

## SEMBA BOOKLET TO BE REVISED

At the October 15, 2006 SEMBA Annual meeting, the membership approved a proposal to print 200 copies of a revised edition of *Starting and Keeping Bees in Michigan—Information and Suggestions for the Beginning Beekeeper*. The first edition is nearly sold out and is gaining a profit for the Association.

This publication, authored by Roger and Mary Sutherland and published by SEMBA, is not a how-to-do-it manual but is intended to provide new beekeepers with information they need to know before starting their first colonies.

Topics covered in the booklet are:

- Reasons for becoming a beekeeper and starting a colony of bees.
- Learning about beekeeping before starting a colony.
- Locating your honey bee colonies.
- Evaluating your nectar forage area.
- Are you allergic to honey bees?
- Obtaining honey bees in Michigan.
- Michigan apiary law.
- Monthly manipulations of colonies in Michigan.
- Honey harvesting in Michigan.
- Honey-house guidelines and requirements.
- Labeling and selling organic honey in Michigan.
- Summary of honey labeling requirements.
- Appendices: bibliography, Michigan beekeeping suppliers, Michigan beekeeping clubs, Michigan district beekeeping representatives, Michigan nectar and pollen sources, Michigan licenses – state or local?

Your assistance in making revisions to the existing document is requested. Ideas for new topics, corrections and anything you believe would be of assistance to the new beekeeper should be directed to Roger Sutherland at his address listed on page 4.

If you do not have a copy of the booklet, an electronic version can be e-mailed to you upon request.

## MORE ON THE HONEY BEE GENOME

Scientists have officially unveiled the DNA code of the honey bee, the first genome to be sequenced for an animal with ultrastratified societies.

The bees are among the select species in which a few individuals reproduce while others in the colony raise the young and do the chores.

The honey bee genome, the whole sequence of its DNA building blocks, shows some patterns that fit old ideas of social living plus some patterns that demand new thinking, reports the consortium of bee-genome researchers.

The scientists report the genome's highlights in the October 26, 2006 issue of *Nature*. More than 40 other analyses also appeared in other journals.

"The sequencing of the honey bee genome is unquestionably a historic event," comments Ben Oldroyd, a bee specialist at the University of Sydney in Australia. The honey bee genome is the fifth to be sequenced among insects, says Gene Robinson of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, a founding member of the bee consortium. Geneticists first did the lab fruit fly, *Drosophila melanogaster* and have since published reports of another fruit fly species, the malaria mosquito, and the silkworm.

Among the novelties of the honey bee, *Apis mellifera*, are its 170 genes for odor receptors; the lab fruit fly has 60. "Social life relies heavily on smell," notes Robinson.

The bees, however, carry fewer known immune-system genes than the lab fruit fly or the malaria mosquito does. "That was a surprise," says Robinson, since social life brings extra risks of disease. Perhaps the honey bee compensates through particularly healthful behaviors, such as grooming, or perhaps some undiscovered genes drive their innate immunity. "Either way, it will be interesting," says Robinson.

The honey bees' famous royal jelly, the food that sets a larva on the road to becoming a queen instead of a worker, comes from proteins encoded by nine genes. The researchers compared them with other species' genes and concluded that they evolved from the so-called *yellow* gene, which plays a role in fruit fly pigment, for example.

In several groups of genes, such as those for circadian rhythms, the honey bee also uses a full set of vertebrate-like genes for enzymes that regulate the action of other genes. Lab fruit flies use a different system for regulating genes.

Even though honey bees differ radically from fruit flies in their sex determination --honey bee males develop from unfertilized eggs and thus have only one copy of each chromosome, whereas a fruit fly gets chromosomes from both a father and mother -- the two species' sex-related genes still show similarities.

"Honey bees can perform remarkable feats of learning and memory," says Adrain Dyer of Monash University in Clayton, Australia. He predicts that having the honey bee genome in hand will spur insight into how complex behavior patterns can arise in organisms with relatively simple brains.

"The new research should also boost efforts to breed hardier honey bees," says Robinson. He says that U.S. commercial honey bee populations have shrunk by up to a third in the past 20 years, mostly because of an invasion of bee-killing mites.

~S. Milius Science News This Week, October 28, 2006 Vol. 170 [www.sciencenews.org](http://www.sciencenews.org)

## HILLTOP HONEY HOUSE

SEMBA members Dean, Lois and Craig Cross who have a licensed honey house in the Lansing area, are interested in bartering honey for its use. Their honey house is equipped with an 18 frame (ms) extractor, as well as, ss tables, baker trays, and dollies. Currently, they use a plane for uncapping and a plastic uncapping tank, but are in the process of building a ss uncapping tank and wax melter. Also, they have a variety of bottles and containers available for sale.

The Crosses extract twice a year for themselves, but the house would be available more often if people were interested. Pricing for use of the honey house and equipment, procedures for cleanup, and other details are being determined.

For more information contact Dean Cross, 517-694-9619, or [crossdaj@comcast.net](mailto:crossdaj@comcast.net)

## TIPS FROM BILL

The following ideas were found in a *Gleanings* magazine of the 1960s. (I like to keep current.)

\* Mouse traps baited with a small glob of granulated of honey will bring very good results. Most rodents seem to have a sweet tooth.

\* Try corn cobs for smoker fuel. Start the smoker in the usual way. When it is going good, add the corn cobs. They will give off a dense smoke and burn until all is consumed. The draw back--they well tar up the smoker spout. Lint from your dryer will also work.

\* This ad should make us wonder: 5 complete hives, \$37.50. 3# package with queen, \$6.50. Table and non-table honey \$0.094 per pound. .

~Yours for better beekeeping, Bill.Sirr

## BEEKEEPING OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHERS

Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan is able to offer you, through a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Education Division, the opportunity to apply to participate in a graduate level course and research study called, "Beekeeping for the Classroom Teacher". This class will be open to currently practicing K-16 teachers (any subject or discipline) in Michigan. EST650 will

be taught in an intensive, two-week period, July 15-27, 2007, meeting Monday through Friday, from 8:00am-noon and 1:00pm-4:30pm at Central Michigan University's Biological Station located on Beaver Island, 35 miles northwest of Charlevoix, MI.

Please go to <http://www.oakland.edu/MITSHAPE/> for additional information and details on how to apply.

For more information, contact Dyanne Tracy [dtracy@oakland.edu](mailto:dtracy@oakland.edu)

## HONEY BEE ARTICLE PUBLISHED

The SEMBA Newsletter Editors have been contributing articles to *Bend of the River*, a magazine of the historic Maumee Valley in Ohio. The following article entitled *Grandpa Pete took the Interurban to Trilby to get Bees* was published in the November, 2006 issue:

Beekeeping is perhaps the oldest form of animal husbandry known to mankind. The study of this insect and its social organization has fascinated and enriched humans since 2000 BC and has influenced American values for four centuries.

As a native of the Toledo area (Trilby, Ohio) and as an apiarist for the past 40 years, I found Mr. Borer's article (August '06) very interesting and informative. And although I did not take up beekeeping until I moved to a rural area in Michigan, I did have relatives who did keep bees in Ohio.

When I was just a child, I watched my uncle work with honey bees with little or no protective clothing and the stories about my great-grandfather Peter Sutherland's beekeeping were fascinating to hear.

One time Grandpa Pete was notified that there was a swarm of honey bees hanging in a tree west of Trilby. It was too far to walk, so he boarded the Toledo and Western Interurban that was a block away from his house.

Upon arrival, he shook the swarm into a burlap bag, secured the top, and with bees in hand, boarded the east bound interurban to hive the swarm in his back yard on Burdette Street.

Mr. Borer, in his article, spoke of "bee hunters" -- people who searched the woods for wild hives in trees. This was a common way for early settlers to obtain honey and sometimes they were able to save the bees from these wild feral hives to start new colonies for themselves.

Many states had a law that said in essence, if you find a bee tree and carve your initials in the tree trunk, it is your tree.

Honey bees are not native to the United States but were brought to Jamestown, Virginia in 1622 and Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1627. And because it was common for honey bees to swarm, their range was expanded each year as they moved from tree cavity to tree cavity all across the continuous forest to the Midwest. Honey bees had 150 to 200 years to reach the Toledo area, so they were here before the majority of early settlers.

Documentation shows honey bees arrived in Ohio in 1788. Some of the early settlers also brought bees housed in straw "skeps". A skep is shaped like an upside-down basket about 18 inches high.

Ohio was very important in advancing the science of beekeeping in the 1800s. The most famous American beekeeper was Reverend Lorenzo Langstroth. He was born in 1810, in Philadelphia, and had a short career as a minister and teacher, but after suffering from ill health, he started beekeeping in Massachusetts.

Later, Langstroth moved to Oxford, Ohio where he began careful observations of honey bee colonies resulting in the development of the concept of 'bee space'. Using its dimensions, he perfected the movable frame hive. Today, over 150 years later, most beekeepers still use the 'Langstroth Hive' and universally he is known as the 'Father of American Beekeeping'. His home near the campus of Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, has been preserved as a historical treasure.

In the 1860s, another Ohioan, A.I. Root (1839-1923) transformed the image of beekeeping in America. He was a jeweler who lived on Main Street in Medina, Ohio. One day, while looking down on the public square, he spied a swarm of honey bees fly into a tree. He made an offer to an employee that he would give him a dollar if he could woo them down. The man did and convinced Root that bees were a fascinating wonder.

In short order, Root struck up a friendship with Mr. Langstroth. Eventually, he standardized the moveable frame hive, published many books on beekeeping, and formed one of the major bee supply companies. His A.I. Root company, now headed by a fifth generation Root family member, is still operating in Medina, Ohio.

~Roger Sutherland

## SEMBA LEADERS

President---Keith Lazar ----- 248-626-2483  
Past President---Ron Forfinski --- 810-220-1084  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President--Win Harless---734-453-2914  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President---Ted Hysen -- 734-878-6792  
Secretary---Mary Hobart-----248-545-6563  
Treasurer---Mary Sutherland ----- 734-668-8568  
Historian ---Ron Forfinski-----810-220-1084  
Rep.to MBA---John Hernandez ---586-336-9706

Oakland President-----Larry Yates----- 248-649-5078  
Seven Ponds President---Terry Toland-----248-421-6601  
Schoolcraft President -Roger Sutherland---734-668-8568  
SEMBA bee class-----Ed Nowak-----734-422-0508  
Web Master-----Tom Lisk-----810-229-6365  
SEMBA hospitality-----Donna Laws-----248-698-6908

### SEMBA Bargain Corner

#### For sale

- One large multi-frame observation beehive at a very reasonable price. A picture and complete description is available on the SEMBA Web site [sembabees.org](http://sembabees.org). Call Bill Loyd at 734-260-9176.
- "Home-made" Honey bee DVD shows footage of honey bee activity. \$5 which includes shipping and handling. Contact Jerry Dunbar, 586-770-9953.
- Bulk honey in 5 gallon pails (warmed at 101 degrees, filtered, but not heated) and in 55 gallon drums. Contact: Don Ragan – Home 810-378-5972, Cell 313-610-5500.
- Bee Keeping Woodware available, also limited number of Nuc's for 2007. Contact Keith Lazar, (C) 248-361-1710 (P) 248-815-5522

#### Wanted:

- Beeswax, light colored preferred. Contact: Ray Kusmaul, 517-902-3270, [bzbz@provide.net](mailto:bzbz@provide.net)
- Beekeepers to help with the planning, construction and use of a cooperative honey house in Clinton Township, Macomb County, Contact Charlie Hartwig, 586-783-3216, [Charlie\\_hartwig@yahoo.com](mailto:Charlie_hartwig@yahoo.com)
- Location for colonies in the Ann Arbor-Saline area. Contact Kevin Walker, 734-429-8559.

#### Notice:

- Bulk Honey for sale or honey wanted: **Send your name to the Sutherlands, 5488 Warren, Ann Arbor, MI 48105, or [rsuther@hotmail.com](mailto:rsuther@hotmail.com)** Names will be printed in the next newsletter and posted on the [sembabees.org](http://sembabees.org) Web pages.

**Package Bees** from California. Place your order for April 2007 pick-Up. Jerry Dunbar 586-770-9953.

**Note:** Ads in Bargain Corner are free to SEMBA members. To place an ad, contact Roger Sutherland at 734-668-8568 or E-mail: [rsuther@hotmail.com](mailto:rsuther@hotmail.com)

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Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club



Seven Ponds Beekeepers' Club



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