



SEMBA NEWS

Volume 18 Number 8 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association
December 2008 - January 2009

OAKLAND BEE CLUB MEETING

When: Tuesday, December 2, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.

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

Program:

"CCD and a Review of Other Honey Bee Research"- Speaker: Ken Schramm

OAKLAND BEE CLUB MEETING

When: Tuesday, January 6, 2009 at 7:30 p.m.

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

Program:

"Raising Queens and Constructing Equipment for the Beekeeper with a Few Hives"-
Speaker: Fritz Sanders

SEMBA BOARD MEETING

When: Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Where: Schoolcraft College, Lower Waterman

THOUGHTS FROM BILL SIRR

Last January, at the ABF convention in California, I spoke with a representative from the C.C. Pollen Company who told me that they pay \$22.00 a pound for propolis. (Well, that's more than I can get for my honey and wax combined.) I learned, too, that they only wanted 25# or more, because the usual shipment contained 1/3 wax, 1/3 dirt and 1/3 useable propolis. So, I asked, how do you clean the propolis before shipping? The answer was to put it in cold water and mix well; the wax will float to the top and the propolis will sink along with the dirt. Skim off the wax and wash the propolis in clean water. When I returned home, I gathered up all the propolis laying around. Following his instructions for cleaning, I was able to ship off a little over 10#. In August, I received a check for \$132.00, with the following report: wax 27%, moisture 3%, trash 12%, pure propolis 58% or 6.0 pounds. So, $6 \times 22.00 = \$132.00$. Shipping by U.P.S. was \$15.54. You do the math. Is it worth it?

Bill

PRESENTATIONS BY SEMBA MEMBERS

If you have made or will be making beekeeping presentations, please let us know so that your efforts can be publicized in our newsletter. The following SEMBA members have made presentations recently:

Stephen Burt - at the Henry Ford Estate on September 27, 2008. Stephen also maintains the observation hive for the city of Detroit on Belle Isle.

John Kates - at the Detroit Public Library, Redford Branch; the Children's Hospital of Michigan; the Phyllis Ann Colburn Memorial Library; and the U of M, Dearborn guiding university students and adults in various beekeeping tasks.

Jane Levy - Maintains the observation hive at the Hands-On Museum in Ann Arbor.

Teresa McCurdy - to the Master Gardeners of Alcona County, MI; the Alcona Farmers' Market; her Master Gardener class; and the Harrisville, MI Garden Club.

Roger Sutherland - Maintained an observation hive at the Northfield Township Library from June through September; presented "The Fascinating World of Honey Bees and Beekeeping" at: Zingerman's in Ann Arbor; the Lyon Township library; the Birmingham Master Gardeners; the Grosse Pointe Garden Club; the Dearborn Garden Club; and Eastern Michigan University.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

In October, at a culinary event at Schoolcraft College, my daughter and I joined with SEMBA members Jack and Ruth Turner and their friends Dr. Steven Berg, Professor of English and history at Schoolcraft College and his parents Judy and Lorain Berg who are retired and live in Rose City, Michigan.

After introductions, the subject of honey bees entered the discussion. The Bergs mentioned that their son had been a beekeeper before his untimely death in 1994, at the age of 34, from a

heart attack. They explained that they had spent considerable time with officials at MSU trying to make a donation for the establishment of a memorial fund in the name of their son but the plan didn't materialize until they were put in touch with Dr. Roger Hoopingarner who was teaching in the department of entomology at that time.

Upon hearing their son's name and the story about the memorial donation, I realized that this was the Christopher Berg who had been in my beekeeping class at Schoolcraft College over fifteen years ago, and had become an active member of our beekeeping club. He was a person who anyone would remember because of his passion for beekeeping,



The memorial fund which the Bergs were finally able to establish within the Fremont Area Foundation now provides funding for beekeeping research that benefits all Michigan beekeepers. Donations of memorial contributions continue to increase the value of the fund and currently the Foundation matches memorial gifts made to endowment funds within one year of a decedent's death, \$1 for \$1, up to \$500 per donor household per year;

Anyone can make memorial contributions to the Fremont Area Community Foundation. Memorial contribution checks to the Foundation should be made payable to the Fremont Area Community Foundation, 4428 W. 48th Street, P.O. Box B, Fremont, MI 49412, with a note specifying the decedent's name, date of death and that the gift is to be earmarked for the Michigan Beekeepers' Association Fund. Also, include the name and address of the person or family to be notified of the contribution.

THE RIGHT TO FARM ACT IN MICHIGAN Timothy Fischer

The Michigan Right to Farm Act (RTFA) provides producers (bee keepers in this case) who conform to GAAMPS an affirmative defense against a nuisance lawsuit brought by another citizen (not a government). A nuisance suit is a civil action where the person suing (plaintiff) claims that the person against whom the suit is brought (defendant) has unreasonably interfered with the plaintiff's quiet use and enjoyment of their property. A potential result of this action would be an order requiring the defendant to stop the operation which caused the nuisance. However, if the defendant's agricultural practices conform to GAAMPs, a court will presume, at the outset, that the defendant has done nothing wrong and that the plaintiff does not have this particular claim of action available to the plaintiff. Further, the defendant may sue the plaintiff for recovery of legal expenses.

The RTFA preempts, or trumps, local zoning ordinances. This means that if a producer's agricultural practices conform to GAAMPs, a township or other municipality may not force the producer from operating – for example by “zoning out” the practice. This is perhaps the stronger of the two protections afforded by the RTFA. Until now, the Michigan RTFA did not contemplate bee keeping as an agricultural practice under the Act. So, a bee keeper did not have a GAAMP to conform to, and therefore, could not come under RTFA protection. This will change once the Agriculture Commission approves the new Draft Care of Animals GAAMP.

A GAAMP is a Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practice. It is essentially a best practices guide for a farmer (or bee keeper in this case). GAAMPs are drafted by a GAAMP committee, typically chaired by an MSU agriculture professor and made up of other “experts” and sometimes a member of the community. GAAMPs are supposed to be “scientifically based”. GAAMPs are reviewed each year by a GAAMP committee. The Agriculture Commission approves draft GAAMPS each year.

A note of caution is necessary here. As stated above, a GAAMP is basically a best practices guide (this bee keeping GAAMP was taken whole-cloth from Maine). A common mistake that farmers make is to state that they are farmers and therefore protected by the RT*FA. This is definitely not the case. A producer must become familiar with the GAAMP and follow its constraints (sometimes more than one GAAMP

may apply). Bee keepers should review the GAAMP closely to see where it is appropriate to site their apiaries and the number of hives in an apiary vis-à-vis vacant acreage, etc.

Also, there are other requirements that must be met for a bee keeper to come under RFTA protection, even if the bee keeper conforms to GAAMPs. For example, the operation must be commercial in nature (this could use a discussion by itself).

The draft bee keeping GAAMP will be discussed at the next Care of Animals GAAMP committee meeting and will be finalized at the December 9, 2008 Michigan Agriculture Commission meeting (assuming that the GAAMP committee will accept the bee keeping GAAMP as it is currently written). Once it is officially approved by the Agriculture Commission it will be available on the Michigan Department of Agriculture website at this link:

http://www.michigan.gov/mda/0,1607,7-125-1567_1599_1605---,00.html.

Timothy R. Fischer is the fifth generation American bee keeper in his family. He is a lawyer who specializes in the Michigan Right to Farm Act. Fischer has been a member of GAAMP task forces and co-authored "A Citizens Guide to the Michigan Right to Farm Act" which will be available in the middle of November 2008. He has presented on the RTFA and CAFOs. Fischer is the Deputy Policy Director at the Michigan Environmental Council. Phone: 517-487-9539 Email: tim@environmentalcouncil.org

NEW BEEKEEPING CLUB ORGANIZED

A new beekeeping club, known as the Center of Michigan Beekeepers, has been initiated in the Lansing, MI area. Their meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of the month at the Ingham County Extension Office, 121 E. Maple, Mason, MI. For more information contact Roger Hoopingarner 517-709-3514 or rahoopie@msu.edu

SEMBA WELCOMES NEW LIFE MEMBERS

The Laws family (Donna, Howard, Alexander, and Jack), and Freda Howard are the newest SEMBA Life Members. Donna grew up going to the bee yard and bee meetings as far back as she can remember. She says, "I guess that is what happens when you are a third generation bee keeper. When my grandfather (William Howard) was getting up in his 80's, my dad (Jack Howard) needed a little more of my help. After a few summers, I guess my dad knew I was going to stick around because he bought me my first real bee outfit - white overalls, a bee

veil with no holes, and a pair of very large yellow sting-proof gloves. Working in the bee yard with my dad are some of the best memories I have. Then, along came Howard. While we were dating, I took him to the bee yard to wrap the hives. He seemed to be interested, telling of a time when his family had bees in the wall of their house. (I guess he always wanted to be a beekeeper.) So, in the spring of 2003, I ordered 20 packages of bees and Howard has been learning more and more each year, while I still do mostly the grunt work.

My mom (Freda Howard) still is very much involved in the bees. All the equipment is at her house. She does the laundering of the bee suits when we come back from the yard and makes the syrup in the fall and the spring. Also, she watches the boys (Alexander 9 and Jack 7) while we go out to the bee yard. Sometimes the boys come with us; Alexander has a suit but after a few hives, he is done.

Today we keep about 20 hives. (Well, we are going into winter with 20, so get back with me in the spring to see how many we really have.) Our future Plans? Well, to be a life-time member we should stay at least another 10 years; maybe by then one of the boys will take it over.

We usually sell our honey from home and by "word of mouth", usually in 60# buckets and some jars.

Since my background is in early childhood education, I go to preschools and the boys' classrooms to give bee programs. I am still trying to invent a pocket size observation hive so that I do not have so much to carry. As for our hobbies, I would have to say it is beekeeping and reading about beekeeping."

NOVEMBER DUES ARE NOW PAYABLE

The SEMBA treasurer is accepting membership renewals from November-paying members. If your address label denotes N08, your dues are now payable. Enclosed is a renewal form for your convenience. Please note that dues for the Michigan Beekeepers' Association (MBA) can also be paid when paying SEMBA dues.

GEORGE TOBIAS HONORED AT SEMBA ANNUAL MEETING

Approximately 50 SEMBA members attended the Annual Meeting held at Schoolcraft College on Sunday, October 19, 2008. After a delicious potluck dinner, we were enlightened by an excellent presentation by Anne Benninghoff entitled *Honeybees and Electrostatics*. Many interesting questions were raised as a result of the talk. During the business meeting, Mary Hobart, SEMBA secretary, read the minutes of previous SEMBA meetings. Mary Sutherland, gave the treasurer's report. John Kates reported on the SEMBA Community Outreach Presentation Committee. He cited the need for SEMBA members to share items that could be used by others making presentations or to donate these items if they no longer need them. John moved that SEMBA purchase or lease two observation hives and other educational materials to be used by SEMBA presenters. An amendment to this motion set the limit of \$500 for one year to cover the costs. Motion passed. A motion was made to send a complaint letter to Proctor and Gamble regarding their use of their label - HONEY BUTTER PRINGLES STIX. This product contains no honey and a picture of a honey dipper is used as a further deception. A letter will also be sent to the Michigan Consumer Protection Division (MCPD) to request a complaint/inquiry. We encourage all members to call the MCPD at 877-765-8388 to request the complaint/inquiry.

Winfred Harless was re-elected 1st vice president and Mary Sutherland was re-elected treasurer. Fritz Sanders and Don Schram were elected to serve as SEMBA directors.

Long time SEMBA member George Tobias was awarded a SEMBA Life Membership for his many contributions to the organization. George joined SEMBA in 1964, making him the member with the longest tenure. Prior to becoming a member of SEMBA, George belonged to the Wayne County Beekeepers, the forerunner of SEMBA, from 1953 to 1964. His interest in beekeeping began when he read a book on beekeeping in the early 1950s. He ordered bees, and all the beekeeping equipment from Sears and Roebuck for which he paid the whopping sum of \$15. George's father owned acreage in Oakland County so he kept his bees there and became very involved in planting and caring for a variety of trees. He is a graduate of the University of Detroit and as an attorney he has assisted beekeepers in court cases and by giving legal advice. We welcome George Tobias as our 45th SEMBA Life member.

SEMBA Bargain Corner

For Sale:

- ~Looking for locations in the Saline area to keep bees? Contact Larry Hene, 734-216-2161 or Cathrine Santure, 517-423-4257. There are several locations for bees.
- ~If you have beeswax that you would like to sell, please contact Wendy Harless at 1-734-546-4449 or email wmharless@wowway.com
- ~Looking for a location in Ypsilanti to keep bees? Contact Zana at 734-822-0494.
- ~Wanted in good condition: SS extractor, electric uncapping knife, uncapping tank, SS strainer, uncapping fork. Call Mary VandeWalker at 734-483-7330.
- ~ Need better queens? Detroit Survivor Queen cells available. Call Rich at 248-705-5181, rich@greentoegardens.com
- ~Wanted: Light amber honey, in 60# pails. Contact Ron Colf, 734-654-8316.
- ~Wanted: Michigan honey in 60# pails. Contact Richard Raynor, 734-663-4338.

Southeastern Michigan
Beekeepers' Association
Organized April 1, 1934

Oakland Beekeepers' Club



Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club



Seven Ponds Beekeepers' Club



SEMBA Membership
5488 Warren Road
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