



SEMBA NEWS

Volume 21 Number 3 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association
April/May 2011

SEMBA APRIL MEETING

When: Sunday April 17, 2011 at **2:00 p.m.**

Where: Schoolcraft College, Lower Waterman Center, 18600 Haggerty Road, Livonia, MI

(Park in the North parking lot and enter through the VisTaTech entrance.)

There will be no potluck.

Program:

Queen Rearing in Michigan and the Michigan Queen Breeders Guild -- Mike Risk

*(See program note below.)

Demonstration by beekeeping invention contest winners

Refreshments are welcome. Coffee and tea will be provided by SEMBA.

Our speaker, Mike Risk, who has been raising Michigan queens for several years in the Lansing area, will discuss the different methods and races of honey bees that he has experimented with. He will also tell us about the newly proposed initiative, the Michigan Queen Breeders Guild, whose purpose is to develop an improved stock of honey bees by Michigan beekeepers and for Michigan beekeepers. The goal of the Guild is to bring to market a superior honey bee stock

~with high survivability in the Great Lakes area, specifically Michigan

~that can be maintained with minimal, if any, chemical intervention

~that expresses superior traits for a managed-colony

~Further Information on the Michigan Queen Breeders Guild can found at <http://michiganqueens.com/default.aspx>

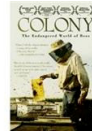
The State of Illinois has already established a queen breeder initiative. Dr. Stu Jacobson, retired research specialist from the University of Illinois-Springfield, who taught honey bee management, said, "We have a program called the Illinois Queen Initiative. We want to produce locally grown queens to insure the

SEMBA MAY MEETING

When: Wednesday, May 25, 2011 7 p.m.

Where: Congregational Church of Birmingham, 1000 Cranbrook Rd., Bloomfield Hills, MI

Program: Premier showing of the new movie entitled "Colony", followed by a panel discussion on CCD and beekeeping.



More information may be gained by going to: ccbucc.org

Refreshments will be served.

stability of the bee population here in the Midwest. This is why the Illinois Queen Initiative can be very beneficial to Illinois beekeepers. Through skillfully trained Illinois queen breeders **following a carefully selective breeding which** includes hygienic behavior, honey production, and gentleness, we believe we can greatly enhance the quality of queens available to beekeepers throughout the state.

"It will not happen overnight, but year upon year there is every reason to believe that we can improve upon Illinois queens. With the cooperation of local beekeepers sharing their best stock and trying the Illinois queens, we can enjoy local queens whose progeny is known and whose origin is well documented. These will be queens from hives that can survive the harsh winters of Illinois, queens that do not have to be stressed through lengthy shipments and queens that are accustomed to our pests and diseases".

More information on the Illinois Queen Initiative can be viewed at their website:

<http://www.illinoisqueeninitiative.com/>

**SKEPS, TOP-BAR AND WARRE HIVES-
COMMENTS FROM THE STATE APIARIST
MIKE HANSEN**

Recently, Clay Ottoni asked Michigan State Apiarist Michael Hansen if there was a Michigan law that requires bees to be kept in a beehive with removable frames (and, therefore, not a skep). Below is his response:

The Michigan Apiary Law, prior to the changes in 1993, had a section that required that honey bees be kept in hives with moveable frames. At that time, we were able to require a beekeeper to correct all cross-comb situations in a colony to allow for inspection. That section of the law was rescinded in 1993.

At this time, I explain to beekeepers that skeps and other types of colonies that do not utilize moveable frames are not illegal, but they also are not a good idea. Disease management alone is major concern for the beekeeper; expect to lose colonies from all of the potential maladies. I also explain that all other states that I know of, require the use of moveable frames, so the use of a colony without moveable frames needs to be done with the knowledge that those bees cannot be certified for movement to another state.

Top Bar Colonies and Warre Hives: We've had some discussion about these beekeeping systems among Apiary Inspectors of America members in recent days. For some states, the rule is that the frames must be moveable to allow for inspection. Top- Bar hives are allowed in a number of states because they allow for the inspector to remove a frame for inspection. This is a state-by-state decision though and not universal--and only a few states participated in the discussion. I believe it was Keith out of Virginia that noted that most top bar hives allow for bees to build their natural oval combs freely and when done correctly, this allows for removal of a comb for inspection. Warre Hives received negative reviews with inspectors calling them a three step backwards approach to beekeeping. I understand that the problem with Warre hives is that they are effectively a top-bar hive in a confined space. The bees attach combs to the box to the bottom, anywhere their comb comes into contact with wood. To remove a comb requires disassembly of the colony and cutting the wax with piano wire. Time consuming, messy and damaging. Warre Hives are definitely not recommended by my inspector counterparts.

So the bottom line is that Michigan does not have a rule regarding the use of moveable frames. I definitely recommend it. I also see a social and alluring value to having a skep in the middle of the garden, but a serious beekeeper should realize that skeps are not good for much more than a conversation piece when compared

to the Langstroth hive. Tell that to someone who is bedazzled by ancient beekeeping systems and they won't believe you. Tell it to someone who is serious about beekeeping and you'll be talking to the choir.

If we were to write an apiary law again, I would argue for the use of moveable framed colonies, but I'd also be open to the idea of a person owning a skep under certain conditions. Disease management would be the key, and in a community like SE Michigan where there are a lot of beekeepers in close proximity, it only takes a few that don't take care of disease to be a problem for their neighbors.

At this point, there is neither the money nor interest to writing a new bee law – so don't misunderstand me. I'm only saying that moveable frames that allow the beekeeper and, if necessary, an inspector to carefully examine a colony for diseases is the best way to go.

MITE AWAY QUICK STRIP™ GETS SECTION 3 LABEL

The US beekeeping industry will welcome a versatile new product to the Varroa mite control tool box. Mite Away Quick Strips™ (MAQS™) was officially federally registered by EPA in the United States as of February 4, 2011, obtaining the Section 3 registration. The product will be gradually available over the next few months as production ramps up and pesticide registrations are obtained in each state.

MAQS™ is a formic acid gel strip product. Two strips are placed on the top bars in the brood area of the hive. The treatment period is seven days and can be used during the honey flow at temperatures up to 93 degrees F. No extra equipment is required. MAQS™ achieves up to 95% mite kill and penetrates the capping to destroy the male mite and immature female mites as well as the phoretic female mites on the adult bees.

A pair of prescription glasses marked as "new pair" were found in a classroom after the beekeeping conference on Saturday, March 19. Owner please contact rsuther@hotmail.com or call the Sutherlands at 734-668-8568.

THE GREAT LAKE AGRICULTURAL FAIR AT THE SILVERDOME, SEPTEMBER 2 – 5, 2011

The Great Lakes Agricultural Fair is organized as a not-for-profit corporation under the laws of the State of Michigan to provide an educational

experience for urban, near urban and rural people, especially youth, through programs and exhibitions designed to include local and regional participation, demonstration and competition. Field Crops Entries: Vegetables (artistic displays); Theme-type exhibits; Wheel barrel displays; Vegetables on trays; Herbs; Unusual Specimens (largest/tallest/longest); Apiary products; Maple products. For more information visit:

<http://www.greatlakesfair.com>

~ Contributed by Judy Durfy

73rd SEMBA BEEKEEPING CONFERENCE

Approximately 350 people interested in honey bees attended the Bee Conference held at Schoolcraft College on March 19, 2011.

SEMBA wishes to thank the speakers, workshop leaders and other volunteers who made the conference a success. **Key note speakers:** Roy Hendrickson, Roger Hoopingarner, Ph.D.

Workshop presenters: Jerry Catana, Winn Harless, Dennis Holly, Rick Hopman, Zachary Huang, Ph.D., Kristine Jacobson, Keith Lazar, Richard Mendel, Fritz Sanders, Don Schram, Mike Siarkowski, Roger Sutherland, Gilbert Terry. **Registration workers:** Frances Alloway, Bernie Ethridge, Sandy and Randy Graichen, Mary Carole Haering, Donna Holly, Ann Kerwin, Alex Lupercio, Marie Powers, Kathryn Sampson, Mary Sutherland, Mary VandeWalker.

Coffee and potluck coordinators: Judy Forfinski, Donna and Howard Laws. **Door prizes:** Ron Forfinski. **SEMBA Web Master:** Tom Lisk. **Hive Raffle:** Freda Howard, Jessica Curtis. **Judges:** Clay Ottoni, Richard Mendel, Rich Wieske. **Vendor coordinator:** Dennis Holly. **Hive donor:** Dadant and Sons. **Package bees for hive:** Shawn Schubel.

A special thanks to Devere Sturm for his monetary donation to Schoolcraft College.

Winner of the hive and package of bees was Paul Antonelli. Winners of the Invention and Innovations Contest were: Fritz Sanders, 1st place, Winn Harless, 2nd place, and Don Schram 3rd place.

2010-2011 WINTER LOSS SURVEY

(see next column)

During SEMBA's 73rd Beekeeping Conference, eighty-five beekeepers participated in a survey

SEMBA MEMBERS VOLUNTEER TIME TO MAINTAIN OBSERVATION HIVES

SEMBA Life member, Steve Burt, who maintains an observation hive on Belle Isle says, "The glass hive is having a tough winter. They would be dead by now, except that I have been scratching on the inner covers of my producing colonies each week and capturing a cup or so of bees to take to the Nature

to determine the number of hives lost from September 2010 thru mid March 2011.

Results:

52 beekeepers maintained	1 -- 4 hives
16 beekeepers maintained	5 – 9 hives
11 beekeepers maintained	10 – 19 hives
3 beekeepers maintained	20 – 29 hives
0 beekeepers maintained	30 – 39 hives
1 beekeeper maintained	40 – 49 hives
1 beekeeper maintained	50 – 59 hives
1 beekeeper maintained	60 - -69 hives

Number of hives alive in September 2010 = 574

Number of hives alive in mid March 2011 = 233

% of hives surviving = 40.6%

% of hives lost = 59.4%

EDITOR'S OBSERVATIONS AND OPINION

The winter losses revealed in this survey are higher than were revealed in any other year in the past ten years. In the editor's view, there were a number of stress factors that occurred late last summer and fall that contributed to colony death in addition to mites, Nosema ceranae, and other diseases. Late last summer, drought conditions in some areas depleted late summer and early fall nectar yields. In some colonies, large honey bee populations depleted stores very early in the fall because of no available nectar. Therefore, if honey was removed for extraction, the bees probably were unable to replace adequate honey stores. Very cold conditions began in November and continued unabated for a long period. There was almost no winter (January-February) thaw so bees did not break their winter cluster to move to new honey stores. Opportunities for cleansing flights were minimal.

A NOTE FROM DAN GUTHRIE

SEMBA would like to recognize two other SEMBA members who have reached 90. Frances Alloway, 94 and Alex Bzenko, 90. If we have missed other members who have reached 90 please let the editors know.

I want to thank everyone who sent me a birthday card; I didn't know turning 90 was so special. I really appreciate all your greetings..

~ Dan Guthrie

Center. Then I dump them into the observation hive. They fight a little and then merge into the cluster. I have a queen and about a 5 inch diameter of live bees. This could be the first year in five that the colony does not make it through. Come March, if they are still living, I will replace the core of the observation hive with three good combs and a queen, and reunite the losing colony with the observation queen and her few inches of bees, above a sheet of newspaper. I usually exchange the colony for new bees and a good queen each spring anyway, but have never had things this bad this early. The Belle Isle apiary and observation hive now have a population of Small Hive Beetles. I have no idea how they got to Belle Island from the mainland, but I guess they can fly some. They are nasty. Am using "Beetle Blaster" disposable traps, which do catch a lot of beetles. Will try plastic tarpaulins, maybe 12 x 12 feet, on the ground around and under the colonies this spring to try to eliminate successful pupation. I also manually kill every visible beetle during hive inspections. Have probably killed about 200 adult beetles with traps and pinching between fingers, but have found no evidence of successful beetle reproduction in the colonies. Maybe I am hosting beetles migrating from other, badly infected colonies. We also continue to have a small population of Varroa destructor, but the Russian strain of bees coupled with screened bottom boards seems to be enough to keep the colonies safe from serious impact. We keep two colonies outside in 10 frame equipment, and have had only one dead-out so far in five years, with absolutely no medication of any kind.
~ Steve Burt

SEMBA member Charles Durbin, an engineer at Hitachi in Farmington Hills, volunteers his lunch break time to set up a vertical top-bar hive at the Heritage Park Nature Center in Farmington Hills. Soon the hive will be buzzing with 15,000 busy honey bees. The wooden structure, modified so visitors can easily see the bees in action, replaces the old hive at the Nature Center where the colony died from illness last year. More about this hive will be in a future newsletter.

Bargain Corner

~ Hoping to find a beekeeper who would place one or two hives on my 40 acres near Manchester, MI. Please contact me by e-mail at odf59@aol.com. Paul Friedman.

~ S&Bee Honey Containers - Variety of plastic containers, glass containers, and lids. Free delivery to all SEMBA bee club meetings. Check out our website at www.sandbeecontainers.com or call Brad Perez at 989-996-5142.

~Dadant mini-melter, lightly used, \$250. Eight pieces of 4'x8' fiberglass (white) for lining walls, ceilings in honey house, \$10.00 each. Call Loie at 517-851-8408 or e-mail candyladyme@yahoo.com

Southeastern Michigan
Beekeepers' Association
Organized April 1, 1934

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

Affiliated Chapters
Oakland Beekeepers' Club



Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club

