



# SEMBA NEWS

Volume 22 Number 1 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association  
January 2012

## SEMBA WINTER MEETING

When: Sunday, January 29, 2012

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

**Potluck: 1:30 p.m.** Bring a dish to pass with labeled serving utensils and your own table service. Coffee and tea provided.

**Program: 2:30 p.m.**

Late winter feeding and hive maintenance will be discussed by a panel of experts – Winn Harless, Keith Lazar, Richard Mendel, Clay Ottoni, and Bill Sirr.

The SEMBA Executive Committee will meet following the program to address any remaining issues regarding the March 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Beekeeping Conference.

## MID WINTER REFLECTION ON THE PAST SEASON ~ by Mike Siarkowski

The year 2011 was much better for the bees than 2010. In Livingston County we had plenty of rain all season long - maybe too much. I and many others found the moisture content of our honey a little higher than usual, but there was a steady flow most of the season and the hives went into winter nice and heavy.

As beekeepers it's good to try new things. This not only helps us keep up with the industry but also keeps our avocation of keeping bees more interesting.

This past summer after reading books, watching videos, going to seminars, and being encouraged by SEMBA members who raise their own queens, I thought I'd give it a try and to my surprise I was successful in raising fifteen new queens from my best hive.

I'd like to share with you some of the things that helped me to reach my goal of successfully raising some queens. (Now bear in mind that this was my first attempt so in no way do I consider myself an expert!) The first thing was choosing the time of year. I chose early June. We had a good honey flow going; in fact, the bees had already filled 2 supers of Black Locust honey when I started. This hive consisted of 2 deeps and 2 medium honey supers and was just packed with bees.

I decided to try the grafting method using a cloake board; that way I could use the hive as a starter/finisher. Here's how I setup the hive. After finding the queen, I put her in the bottom deep under a queen excluder and because I didn't have a cloake board, I used a sheet of plywood over the excluder. Next I stacked on the 2 medium supers plus the top deep full of nurse bees and 9 frames of brood, pollen, and nectar. I didn't use a top entrance, so I put on a screened inner cover.

Using my home-made grafting tool fashioned from a bobby pin and an ink pen, I grafted larvae into those little JZ-BZ queen cups. I tried a Chinese grafting tool but found it too cumbersome for me. I should mention here that I coated the outside of the queen cups with bees wax to make them seem more natural, and I think it helped. Also, good light is essential when you do a graft.

At 50-plus years of age, I found it a challenge to see, let alone pick up one day-old larvae, that look like small wet spots at the bottom of the cells. In fact, when I was grafting two thoughts kept running through my mind: first, that this isn't going to work, and second, the cell-punch method would be much easier.

You must work fast when grafting so that the larvae don't dry out. Therefore, be sure to wet the area in which you are grafting and don't try to graft too many cells the first few times. I grafted 22 cells on 2 bars. One bar was dry; the other bar I primed with royal jelly which made getting larvae off my grafting tool much easier.

After 48 hours, I checked to see if any queen cells were started. To my surprise there were eighteen started cells. Now it was time to remove the cloake board but keep the excluder in place! -- and to start thinking about some mating Nucs. I used all of my wooden nucs and some plastic coated cardboard nuc boxes. I also used those JZ-BZ push-in cell protectors which I think help. I let some of those little nucs grow into ten frame nucs to over winter which will become production hives next season.

Speaking of next season, now is the time to plan for the bee year ahead. My advice is to read, watch, and listen, then try something new. That's what keeps beekeeping fun. Hope we all have a great year.

## 2012 SEMBA BEEKEEPING CONFERENCE

Under the leadership of SEMBA Vice President Richard Mendel, planning for the March 17, 2012 Annual SEMBA Beekeeping Conference is underway. Conference sub-committees have been formed and we are asking for volunteers to work on these committees. Therefore, you may be asked to share some of your time by any one of the committee chairpersons.

Note: Members on working committees and concurrent session presenters will be exempt from registration fees. Contact Richard or one of the committee chairs listed below:

**Conference Coordinator** – Richard Mendel  
brescue@att.net (734)-660-8621

**Vendor/Prize Committee Chairperson** – Keith Lazar  
[keithmlazar@hotmail.com](mailto:keithmlazar@hotmail.com) (248)-361-1710

**Beverage /Refreshment Chairperson** – Donna Laws,  
[donnaihlaws@juno.com](mailto:donnaihlaws@juno.com) (586)-419-8264

**Lunch Committee Chairperson** – Judy Forfinski  
[snorp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:snorp@sbcglobal.net) (810)-220-1084

**Registration Committee Chairpersons** – Roger and Mary Sutherland  
[rsuther30@gmail.com](mailto:rsuther30@gmail.com) (734)-668-8568

**Concurrent Workshop Committee Chairperson** – Bernadette Ethridge  
[bethridge99@yahoo.com](mailto:bethridge99@yahoo.com) (248)-417-0791  
(If you would like to present and share a demonstration topic or if you could recommend a presenter contact Bernadette).

**Set up/Logistics/Cleanup Committee Chairperson** – Winn Harless (734)-453-2914

**Advertisement/Marketing Committee Chairperson** – Kim Haynes  
[khaynes@sbcglobal.net](mailto:khaynes@sbcglobal.net) (248)-615-1085

## AS CLIMATE CHANGE SETS IN, PLANTS AND BEES KEEP PACE

ITHACA, N.Y. — No laggards are those bees and plants. As warm temperatures due to climate change encroach winter, bees and plants keep pace.

An analysis of bee collection data over the past 130 years shows that spring arrives about 10 days earlier than in the 1880s, and bees and flowering plants have kept pace by arriving

earlier in lock-step. The study also found that most of this shift has occurred since 1970, when the change in mean annual temperature has increased most rapidly, according to Bryan Danforth, Cornell professor of entomology, who co-authored a study published the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, December 5, 2011.

“It’s an illustration of how valuable our natural history collections are at Cornell, even if you don’t know in advance how these collections might be used,” says Danforth. Lead author Ignasi Bartomeus and senior author Rachael Winfree are both entomologists at Rutgers University.

Although the triggers for bee spring emergence are unknown, bees may simply be cued to emerge when temperatures rise above a threshold over a number of days, but “if climate change accelerates the way it is expected to, we don’t know if bees will continue to keep up,” says Danforth. Co-authors include researchers from the American Museum of Natural History, University of Connecticut, and York University in Canada. Jason Gibbs, a Cornell postdoctoral associate, conducted and supervised a team of undergraduates entering bee data at Cornell.

~Source: *Catch The Buzz*, December 2011

## SUGAR PRICES TO FALL FOR 2012?

Sugar prices for the coming year are forecast to fall by 12% as the market records a surplus for the first time in three years, according to financial service provider Rabobank. However, some instability is expected into mid-2012 as crops sizes remain uncertain and the industry plays catch-up on a three year deficit.

~Source: *Newsletter ApiNews*, 96/2011

## STOP SIGNALS PROVIDE CROSS INHIBITION IN COLLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING BY HONEYBEE SWARMS

Thomas D. Seeley, P. Kirk Visscher,  
Thomas Schlegel, Patrick M. Hogan,  
Nigel R. Franks, James A.R. Marshall

### Abstract

Honeybee swarms and complex brains show many parallels in how they make decisions. In both, separate populations of units (bees or neurons) integrate noisy evidence for alternatives and when one population exceeds a threshold the alternative it represents is chosen.

We show that a key feature of a brain—cross inhibition between the evidence-accumulating populations—also exists in a swarm as it chooses its nesting site. Nest-site scouts send inhibitory stop signals to other scouts producing waggle dances, causing them to cease dancing, and each scout targets scouts reporting sites other than her own. An analytic model shows that cross inhibition between populations of scout bees increases the reliability of swarm decision-making by solving the problem of deadlock over equal sites.

The complete article in the December 2011 *Science* article can be viewed by going to: <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/early/2011/12/07/science.1210361>

### **BEE BIKINI by Norman Gary**

You have seen many bee beards on men but Norman Gary, Ph.D. of UC Davis, creates a bee bikini on a very courageous woman. You can view the process on youtube at the link below.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=4p1t83erF4g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4p1t83erF4g)

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF HONEY CONSUMPTION IN HUMAN EVOLUTION**

#### **Abstract**

It has been suggested that honey may have been an important food source for early members of the genus *Homo*, yet the importance of meat and savanna plant foods continue to be stressed as the most relevant foods in dietary reconstructions. Here, the importance of honey and bee larvae in hominin diets is explored. Ethnographic reports, examples of Paleolithic rock art, and evidence from non-human primates are used to show that early hominins likely targeted beehives using the Oldowan tool kit. The consumption of honey and bee larvae likely provided significant amounts of energy, supplementing meat and plant foods. The ability to find and exploit beehives using stone tools may have been an innovation that allowed early *Homo* to nutritionally out-compete other species and may have provided critical energy to fuel the enlarging hominin brain.

~Source: *ApiNews* 103/2011

For the complete article go to Taylor Francis Online, Vol. 19, issue 4, 2011.

## **Phorid Fly Found Killing Honey Bees**



A new threat to honey bees and perhaps, a partial explanation for colony collapse disorder has been uncovered at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. Entomologist Dr. Brian Brown says the pest is the tiny but dangerous phorid fly, which may pose an emerging threat to North American beekeeping. It is the first documentation that the phorid fly *Apocephalus borealis*, previously known to only parasitize bumble bees, also infects and eventually kills honey bees – by leading them to abandon their hives at night. Brown, a world authority on phorid flies, has received reports of nighttime bee activity in Los Angeles. “It seems to be concentrated near the coast, which is where our collecting has also encountered the flies,” he says. Brown and his colleagues say they have proof that parasitized honey bees show hive abandonment behavior, leaving their hives at night and dying shortly thereafter. On average, seven days later, up to 13 phorid larvae emerge from each dead bee and pupate away from the bee. Using DNA barcoding, the authors confirmed the phorids that emerged from honey bees and bumble bees were the same species. The researchers say understanding details of phorid infection may shed light on similar hive abandonment behaviors seen in CCD. Further, knowledge of this parasite could help prevent spread into regions of the world where naïve hosts may be easily susceptible to attack.

For the complete article in *Scientific American* go to:

“Zombie” fly parasite killing honey bees

~Courtesy of Lyn Wellhausen

:

## 2012 BEGINNING AND ADVANCED BEEKEEPING CLASSES TO BE OFFERED

In 1997, the first SEMBA-sponsored Beginning Beekeeping course was inaugurated by Ed Nowak. Since that beginning, 223 individuals have enrolled in that course. In 2011, an Advanced Beekeeping course was initiated. Both courses will again be offered in 2012 with beginning sessions to be held on March 17, 2012 during the 74<sup>th</sup> Annual SEMBA Beekeeping Conference. The remaining sessions for both courses will be held at MSU's Tollgate Education Center in Novi. The thirteen session beginning course will be taught by Mike Siarkowski, Clay Ottoni, Richard Mendel, Winn Harless and Gilbert Terry. The seven session advanced course will be taught by Winn Harless, Clay Ottoni, Don Schram, Paul Mazur, Rich Wieske, Gilbert Terry and Bill Surr. The course syllabus and schedule for both courses can be viewed online at [sembabees.org](http://sembabees.org). Click on Education and then on course syllabus or schedule. An application for each course is available on SEMBA'S Web site [sembabees.org](http://sembabees.org) or contact Mary Sutherland, [rsuther@sembabees.org](mailto:rsuther@sembabees.org) or call (734)-668-8568.

### 74<sup>TH</sup> SEMBA ANNUAL BEEKEEPING CONFERENCE – SATURDAY, MARCH 17, 2012

Complete details of the program will be in the February SEMBA Newsletter

#### SEMBA Bargain Corner

##### For Sale:

- ~Honey, 1 lb., 2lb., 5lb., jars, and 5 gal. buckets of excellent tasting honey from Livingston county. Call Mike Siarkowski at (517)-545-0824 or e-mail [bcky286@yahoo.com](mailto:bcky286@yahoo.com)
- ~Honey, 3 and 5 gallon buckets. 5's are \$120, 3's are \$72. Call Dave Kriesch at (810)-441-2012.
- ~Honey, 100 five gallon buckets of Fall raw, unheated/unfiltered honey from the Kussmaul Honey Farm. \$125.00 each or less if you buy a large quantity. Kussmaul's colonies are located in Lenawee, Washtenaw and Jackson Counties. Please call Kussmaul Honey Farm, (517)-456-9966.
- ~Comb Honey, Call Winn Harless at (734)-453-2914.
- ~Bees, 3 lb. packages, from an accredited Georgia beekeeper, available starting the 1st week of April, 2012. Price \$80.00 to \$90.00. Reservation deposit is \$30.00 per package. Pickup at Kussmaul Honey Farm, 2017 W. Michigan Avenue, Clinton, Michigan 49236. Please call Rich Kussmaul (517)-456-9966 to make arrangements.
- ~Nucs, 2012 Medication Free 5-Frame Nucs For Sale – Michigan survivor bees. Anticipated arrival date of around April 20th, with pick up locations in White Lake, MI or Davison, MI. Price is \$135 per nuc. For more details, please e-mail Don Schram at [don.schram@gmail.com](mailto:don.schram@gmail.com) or call (248)-310-8205.
- ~Extractor, Almost new Stainless steel, radial, tank underneath. Contact: [jhainaut@comcast.net](mailto:jhainaut@comcast.net)

##### Wanted:

Empty 9 5/8 deep supers. Contact Carola Fisher at [cjfhbermehl@gmail.com](mailto:cjfhbermehl@gmail.com)

##### Location available for placement of hives

Howell area. Contact Tom: [motfrommars@yahoo.com](mailto:motfrommars@yahoo.com) or John: [johnhdhug@gmail.com](mailto:johnhdhug@gmail.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

