



# SEMBA NEWS

Vol. 12 No. 8

Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association

November 2002

## Upcoming Events

### December 3

Oakland Bee Club Meeting, 7:30 p.m.



### Oakland Bee Club Meeting

The Oakland Bee Club meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m., December 3<sup>rd</sup>, at the E.L. Johnson Nature Center, 3325 Franklin Road, Bloomfield Hills. The speaker will be Marie Strum, Water Resources Engineer from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who will present, *History and Future of Water Levels of the Great Lakes*.

*Submitted by Larry Yates, VP SEMBA*



### SEMBA President Jim Goodrich

How was your honey production this year? Was it great, average or mediocre? We at Good-Rich Apiaries were surprised at what happened. Our bee yards are in northern Oakland and southern Lapeer counties. Last year, we ran 63 hives and harvested 3,400 lbs of honey. The results were far from great. Did we do a lousy job of beekeeping, was the weather to blame, what went wrong? Last winter we were hit hard with mites even though we treated. We repackaged some of the lost hives this spring which gave us a total 51 hives.

The spring weather was great. The black locust blossomed heavily along with other spring blossoms. Then came the summer weather. This has been the driest summer in memory for this area. Early on, we thought that the crop of honey this year would be low. In mid July we pulled honey from a yard in Lapeer county and put the wet boxes back on. In late August, we removed the rest of our honey along with

the second crop from the yard in Lapeer county. We couldn't believe the results. Our total crop was 6,800 pounds. This year we took of twice as much honey as we did last year with only 51 hives compared to 63 last year.

Did we do a much better job of beekeeping this year compared to last? Do bees produce much more honey in a very dry year compared to a year with average rainfall? Do the bees know something that we don't about the winter (I doubt it)? If you have any ideas, bring them to the club meetings so that we can discuss them.

*Submitted by Jim Goodrich, President-SEMBA*



### Winfred Harless: Life Member

SEMBA is pleased to add Winfred Harless of Plymouth, Michigan to our list of life members. Winfred grew up in eastern Kentucky surrounded by his father's honeybees that were kept in Langstroff hives but they called them "gums". (Historically, bees were kept in hollowed out logs called gums; therefore, any new kind of hive body continued to be referred to as a gum.)

After high school graduation, Winfred entered trade school; then in 1965, he was lured north where there were employment



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opportunities in Michigan. Initially, he worked for Evans Products in Plymouth. When that plant closed, he began a new career with GM where he has been for more than 26 years.

Even though he was exposed to beekeeping at an early age, Winfred did not start bees until last year when he took Earl Hoffman's class. Earl supplied the first colony; then Winfred purchased three packages from Weavers in Texas. This past summer, swarms from Michigan and Kentucky were added to his apiary. He now has nine hives. Recently, Winfred took the queen-rearing class taught at the University of Minnesota, so no doubt he will be raising his own queens. His colonies are in two locations, and surplus honey is sold at work or enjoyed by his wife and family.

Winfred makes much of his own equipment. He says, "It probably would be cheaper to buy wood ware, but I get a great deal of enjoyment out of constructing my own." After retirement, he hopes to return south, buy land and build a home where he can maintain 30-50 hives. He says, "Beekeeping will provide me with something to do outdoors rather than being confined to a shop." *Submitted by Roger Sutherland*



### **Hoffman Team Become SEMBA Life Members**

We welcome Carol and Earl Hoffman of Livonia as our newest SEMBA Life members. As children, Carol and Earl were surrounded by family members who were beekeepers. In 1994, when the bees died of Varroa mite on Earl's family farm in Calhoun County, Michigan, the Hoffmans decided they needed to learn more about beekeeping practices. During that same year, they saw a newspaper article about the SEMBA Annual Bee School which they attended and started one hive. They now have fifty colonies. Their apiaries are located in Marshall, Michigan and on Earl's family farm.

Carol and Earl have become active members in several beekeeping organizations: American Beekeeping Federation (ABF), Michigan Beekeepers' Association (MBA) and the Eastern Apiculture Society (EAS). They regularly attend the yearly EAS conferences and in

2000, Earl completed the EAS Master Beekeeper certification program; Carol gained her EAS Master Beekeeper certification in 2001. Earl was appointed recently as the EAS delegate from MBA. Earl has served as SEMBA vice-president, and he and Carol have been leaders, along with Ed Nowak, of the SEMBA Bee Classes. Conducting bee-school workshops and assisting with SEMBA meetings are additional ways they have contributed to our organization. After attending professional queen-rearing workshops in Minnesota this past summer, they plan to offer queen-rearing programs to SEMBA members next year.

When Earl has time from his engineering position at the Ford Motor Company, he and Carol sell honey and beeswax products at craft shows and farmers' markets. Also, they rent bees for pumpkin pollination in Manchester, Michigan. Their daughter Andrea was recently awarded the Girl Scout Gold Award for presenting over thirty programs on the importance of honey bees and has competed in the MBA Honey Queen Pageant. *Submitted by Roger Sutherland*



### **Membership Information**

SEMBA membership costs are 6.00 for an individual, \$8.00 for a family; \$60.00 for an individual life membership, and \$80.00 for a family membership. If your label has an **N**, your membership is due in November. Please send the enclosed membership application to Roger Sutherland, 5488 Warren Rd. Ann Arbor, MI 48105. SEMBA membership provides a 25% discount to subscriptions to *Bee Culture*, *American Bee Journal* or the *Speedy Bee*. When you pay your SEMBA membership dues the treasurer will send you a subscription form, with the next SEMBA Newsletter, to complete and send it to the journal of your choice.



### **SEMBA Honey House Cooperative**

SEMBA operates a Honey House cooperative that enables the members to use the honey house that is located at 5488 Warren Road, Ann Arbor. Membership is \$100 a year, and \$3 a day for electricity when you use the honey house. Equipment includes a 12 frame

radial motorized extractor, a hot room, settling tanks, decapping tanks. The house has electricity and water. Contact Roger Sutherland, rsuther@hotmail.com.



### Submissions to SEMBA News

Send your submissions electronically to smrutter@umich.edu, by mail to Rutter/Bowman 1314 Olivia Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104, or phone 734-741-0482 (feel free to leave message). The newsletter is only as good as its contributors; please share your knowledge, observations, and discoveries with other SEMBA members.



### News From the SEMBA Bee Classes

The five hives that were at the Newman house are now located at the E.L. Johnson Nature Center. Next year, classes will be held at the new site. The maximum ratio of students to instructor is 10:1 so there is a need for volunteers and guest speakers to allow all who want to attend the sessions to register. We will have a new syllabus for next year.

In addition to providing much needed instruction for beginning beekeepers, the SEMBA Bee Classes are an important source of revenue for SEMBA. Contact Earl Hoffman at 734 427-7649 if you can help with the Bee Classes or have questions about the sessions. *Submitted by Earl Hoffman*



### Minutes of the Annual SEMBA Meeting

Sunday, October 20, 2002.  
President Jim Goodrich opened the meeting at 2:40pm, following a pot-luck meal.

Jim expressed appreciation on behalf of the organization to Roger and Mary Sutherland for all the work they have done over a period of many years. Roger is retiring as Treasurer.

Newman House demolition - Jim explained that because of the demolition of the Newman House at the edge of the Schoolcraft College campus, the 5 hives managed by our Bee Classes had to be

moved recently. Earl and Carol Hoffman handled the difficult transfer to Bordines' Nurseries, but the site turned out to be unacceptable and they will be moved to the E.L. Johnson Center. Joanne Holden is the manager there and says they are very welcome on that property.

Jim also extended our thanks to Sara Rutter and David Bowman for the fine job they are doing with the newsletter.

Ann Kerwin read the minutes from the annual meeting of October 7, 2001. They were **Approved** as read.

The Treasurer's report was printed in the newsletter which was distributed at the meeting. On 9-30-02 the bank account balance was \$4066.19. Roger asked for questions and said the books were there and available for inspection. M & S approval as printed **-Approved**.

Next Meeting- 7:30pm ,Nov.13 in the biology lab at Schoolcraft (just south of the Waterman Center). Honey samples can be checked for moisture content at that time.

Bill Sirr asked if anyone knew the person who submitted an individual entry of light honey to the State Fair. It took a third prize. There were questions about Fair procedures, so it was M & S and **Approved** to establish a State Fair Committee now. Members are, Roger Sutherland, Bill Sirr, Dave Barber, Jim Goodrich and Dick Miller, with Miller as Chair.

Discussion of SEMBA Web Site and/or a group e-mail list -- M and S to form a committee on setting up a web site. **Approved**. Sara Rutter, David Bowman, Allen Pagliere, Roger Sutherland and Tom Lisk will serve on that committee.

Dues Increase - The recommendation of the Executive Committee from their April 3rd meeting was presented and M & S -- Raise the \$6 individual dues to \$10/year and raise the family dues from \$8 to \$15/year. This also raises the cost of life memberships which are ten times the cost of yearly dues, or \$100 and \$150. After discussion, Roger offered an amendment to make the effective date Jan.1, 2003. M & S to make an increase effective Jan.1 - **Approved**. The vote on the motion passed with 2 No votes.

Jim Goodrich appointed a committee to review and possibly, update the SEMBA

Constitution. Ann Kerwin, Keith Lazar, Bill Surr and Jim Goodrich will make that committee.

Election of Officers- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, Treasurer, Representative to the MBA and Historian were the offices to be filled this year. Ann read the report the nominating committee -1<sup>st</sup> V-P-Keith Lazar, Treasurer-Mary Sutherland, MBA Rep.- Terry Lee Lansing ,Historian - Alex Bzenko. Jim Goodrich opened nominations from the floor --

1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Pres. -Keith Lazar was nominated. M & S to close nominations. Approved  
Treasurer - Mary Sutherland was nominated. M & S to close nominations. Approved  
MBA Representative - Terry Lee Lansing was nominated. M & S to close nominations. Approved  
Historian - Alex Bzenko was nominated. M & S to close nominations. Approved  
M & S to elect these candidates.

### **Unanimous Approval**

State Fair Winners - Jim Goodrich read the following names and presented ribbons and prize money.

\$40 2 observation hives - Dick Miller (Dick said it was really a joint effort as the queens were contributed by Ed Nowak and the bees came from Larry Yates) Dick took the ribbon.

\$60, comb honey- Dan Guthrie, 1<sup>st</sup> place  
\$50, round sections - Judy Schmaltz, 2<sup>nd</sup>  
\$40, beeswax - Judy Schmaltz, 2<sup>nd</sup>  
\$60, white honey - Paul Mazur, 1<sup>st</sup>  
\$15, cut comb - Paul Mazur, 2<sup>nd</sup>  
\$10, shallow frames - Carol Hoffman, 2<sup>nd</sup>  
\$15, chunk honey - Larry Yates, 2<sup>nd</sup>  
\$25, amber honey - Jim Goodrich, 2<sup>nd</sup>  
\$15, creamed honey - Judy Schmaltz, 2<sup>nd</sup>  
\$125, backboard - Dick Miller, 1<sup>st</sup> (this was a reuse of a previous display. SEMBA will keep the money)

Winterizing Your Hive - Presentation by Keith Lazar. This informative talk included a demonstration of tar-paper wrapping of a hive and useful information about moisture damage and insulation.

Queen-Rearing - Presentation by Earl Hoffman. Earl began with a description of the process of queen-rearing and then there was a lively discussion of the value of fall re-queening, which has many advantages in Michigan's climate. We have come to depend on Southern queens which are not as good in Michigan's cold spring weather. Many people indicated a willingness to buy local queens for fall re-

queening, if some local beekeepers will raise them.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20pm

*Submitted by Ann Kerwin Secretary of SEMBA*



## **Honey Bee Removal**

As beekeepers, many of us receive one or two calls a year from individuals wanting bees removed from their houses, shed or barns. At the recent Michigan State Fair, SEMBA member Lynn Wellhausen received such a request and then called me to inquire whether or not I knew of anyone in the downriver area who would remove bees from a residence. During our telephone conversation, we discussed the pros and cons of honeybee removal and the procedures involved. He then suggested that an article on honeybee removal might be an interesting topic for the SEMBA Newsletter. The following represents my thoughts and experiences on the subject. I am certainly no expert and do welcome others to weigh in on the subject in future issues of the SEMBA Newsletter.

Over the years, I have physically removed six or eight colonies of bees and have used one-way traps on four or five. Because the techniques used are quite different for physical removal versus trapping, I will only comment on physical removal and will discuss one-way trapping experiences in a later SEMBA Newsletter.

The reasons people give for wanting bees removed are varied and very interesting. In fact, some people prefer that the bees remain where they are and just want the opening changed to a new location. This summer my son and I did just that. The colony was in a tree at the edge of a parking lot at a veterinary clinic. The hive's entrance was about four feet above the ground. Using twelve feet of flexible tubing, we changed the opening so that the flight path is now about 18 feet high well away from clients exiting their cars.

Lately, many individuals who have bee problems express the desire to save the bees because of the wide-spread destruction of honeybees by mites. This reason is often given after they have had a quote of \$400 or \$500 from an exterminator to remove them. I find that most exterminators say that it is illegal to

kill honeybees, which of course is not true, and therefore they cannot destroy the colony. Several callers have emphasized how valuable the colony must be to a beekeeper because of all those bees and honey.

When answering a telephone inquiry about a bee problem, the beekeeper must make certain that the problem insect is actually honeybees and not some other critter such as yellow jackets. If the call is in the spring, the problem is more likely to involve honeybees, but calls in the late summer are usually about yellow jackets.

Physical removal is not an easy task; it is messy, sticky, often sweaty, involving disturbed bees that certainly do not appreciate this major surgery. Why then would any sane beekeeper ever consent to the task? Reasons for doing such a project must be carefully considered. Sometimes the reason for considering removal might be for starting a new hive for your apiary. However, given the time required and the agony, it might be wiser and more cost effective to buy a package. But, if you do decide to use bees removed from a wall to start a new hive, I recommend doing it in the spring to give the bees time to recover from such major surgery.

The first removal I attempted was strictly for the experience of doing something once to learn what works and what does not-- should I ever do it again. Another was done as a part of a beekeeping class I was teaching. I asked the class if any of them would be interested, and we held a lottery drawing to award the removed hive to one class member. This removal resulted in a memorable but rather unpleasant experience. The colony was located about ten feet above ground level, so we constructed a scaffold. The bees had taken up residence in a hollow pillar and by removing one board we were able to expose the nest. The weather was perfect so many of the bees were out foraging. Standing on a short ladder, placed on the scaffold, I would cut out sections of comb and hand them down to class members who placed the comb into empty frames securing the comb with string. The frames with brood were placed into the center of a deep super while sections of comb containing honey were placed on either side of the brood comb. When this was complete, the super was returned to the original location of the colony and secured with rope. This part of the operation went very smoothly.

Later in the evening, we returned to retrieve the hive; the class member who would be taking it met me there at dusk. When we arrived, we could see that there were more bees than the box could accommodate, so a large cluster hung from the bottom of the super. In the process of moving the deep super, located above my head, the large mass of angry bees fell on my head and the back of my veil. Unfortunately, the veil was positioned next to my neck, with no space, so the bees had no trouble letting me have it. Also, they were stinging through my bee suit, wet with perspiration. I managed to get the box down and put it into the back of the student's pick-up. She was also taking many stings, but drove away swatting bees inside the cab. When I arrived home my wife removed more than 30 stingers from my neck and I had red welts over both of my arms. I took 2 antihistamine tablets and prepared an adrenalin syringe for possible use. Within 10 minutes, hives covered my entire body. There were no other symptoms and I did not inject the adrenalin. Much was learned from this experience! Now I would consider physical removal of bees only for friends as a favor.

There are beekeepers that will remove bees for a fee. The most recent charge that I have heard about was about \$400. More on one-way trapping in a future newsletter. *Submitted by Roger Sutherland (editors' note: this article was inadvertently shortened in the October issue)*



## Current Research

1. Beekman, M. et al. 2002. Parasitic Cape honey bee workers (*Apis mellifera capensis*) are not given differential treatment by African guards (*A.m.scutellata*). *INSECTES SOCIAUX* 49 (3) 216-220.
2. Pham-Delegue, MH et al. 2002. Behavioural methods to assess the effects of pesticides on honey bees. *APIDOLOGIE* 33 (5) 425-432.
3. Vandame, R et al. 2002. Parasitism in the social bee *Apis mellifera*: quantifying cost and benefits of behavioral resistance to *Varroa destructor* mites. *APIDOLOGIE* 33 (5) 433-445.

## Bargain Corner

**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.**

**Package Bees** from Georgia arriving in Roseville, MI in April 2003. **Call Gerald Dunbar** and leave message at **586-770-9953.**

12 frame motorized extractor with stand, 60 5 gallon honey buckets. **Michael Kielbasa 810-329-3754.**

Please book your **Package Bees.** Order early. Bees should arrive around April 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup>, from Wilbank Apiaries in Georgia. **Call Dave Barber** to arrange for packages, **248-634-7017.**

Note: ads in the Bargain Corner are free to SEMBA members. To place an ad contact Sara Rutter smrutter@umich.edu or Roger Sutherland rsuther@hotmail.com.

R.M. Farms  
**Honey Labels**  
**P.O. Box 684**  
**Dearborn Heights, MI**  
**48127**  
**734 722-7727**

T.M. Klein & Sons  
**11785 Wahl Rd.**  
**St. Charles Michigan**  
**48655**  
**517 865-937**

Groeb Farms, Inc.  
**10464 Bryan Hwy.**  
**P.O. Box 269**  
**Onsted, Michigan**  
**49265**  
**517 467-2065**



Bee Culture: the magazine of  
American Beekeeping



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Southeastern Michigan  
Beekeepers' Association  
**Organized April 1, 1934**



Oakland Beekeepers' Club



Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club



SEMBA Membership  
5548 Warren Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105-9425