



# SEMBA NEWS

Vol. 13 No. 10

Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association

November/December 2003

## Upcoming Events

**December 2** -- Oakland Bee Club Meeting

**January 6** -- Oakland Bee Club Meeting

**Please note:** both Oakland Bee Club Meetings will be held at the E.L. Johnson Nature Center. See below for details.

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## MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW FOR THE UPCOMING OAKLAND BEE CLUB MEETINGS

**Please note:** that this newsletter is a combined November/December issue. **No newsletter will be published in December, 2003;** therefore, mark your calendars now for the Oakland Bee Club meetings to be held on December 2, 2003 and January 6, 2004. Both meetings will be held at the E.L. Johnson Nature Center, 3325 Franklin Road, West Bloomfield Township, MI at 7:30 p.m. Refreshments are welcome at each of these meetings.

At the December 2<sup>nd</sup> Oakland Bee Club, Bill Sirr will be the speaker. His topic will be, "The Importance of Timing in Colony Management." Also at this meeting, Ken Schramm, a local mead-wine maker, will be selling autographed copies of his new book entitled *The Complete Mead Maker* published by Brewers Publishing, a division of the Association of Brewers, Boulder, CO. The book sells for \$19.95.

At the January 6<sup>th</sup> Oakland Bee Club, Tom Congdon will discuss the "Reality of beekeeping in

Canada." Mr. Congdon keeps 1400 colonies of bees in Canada, thirty miles south of the majority of Michigan beekeepers.

## SEMBA ANNUAL MEETING

The 2003 SEMBA Annual Meeting was held on October 19<sup>th</sup> at Schoolcraft College. After a potluck dinner, representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Food and Dairy Division, presented a program on the licensing of honey houses. A lively discussion followed. (SEMBA wishes to thank Mike Siarkowski for making the speaker arrangements.)

During the business meeting, Ronald Forfinski was elected president; Earl Hoffman, 2<sup>nd</sup> vice-president; and Ann Kerwin, secretary.

-- Roger Sutherland

## HONEY HOUSE LICENSE REGULATION COMMITTEE APPOINTED

A motion was passed to appoint a committee to study the current regulations (federal, state, and local) and to make recommendations to the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Food and Dairy Division. Specifically, the committee will determine exemptions and guidelines for honey-house regulations for those who are required to hold licenses. Ideas are welcome. Contact Bill Sirr for more information.

-- Roger Sutherland

## OAKLAND BEE CLUB THANKS VENDORS

Larry Yates, leader of the Oakland Bee Club, thanks the following vendors for supplying door prizes for the bee club meetings: Dadant and Sons, Groeb Farms, Walter Kelly, Mann Lake and Better Bee. All SEMBA members are encouraged to support these suppliers for their generous contributions.

-- Larry Yates

## SEMBA MOURNS DEATH OF FRANK ROZMUS

We were saddened to learn of the tragic death of SEMBA and MBA member Frank Rozmus of Harrison Township, Macomb County. In early October, Frank, an avid photographer, fell to his death while photographing in the mountains of Utah. **Our heartfelt sympathy is extended to his family.**

## MICHIGAN BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION NEWS

The 2003 MBA Annual Meeting was held in Cadillac, MI on October 24-25. Highlights of the business meeting are as follows:

### Election results:

President.....Richard Leonard  
Vice president.....Eric Goodrich  
Dist. #1 Rep..... Paul Johnson  
Dist. #3 Rep.....Dan Guthrie  
Dist. #5 Rep..... Larry Hilbert  
Dist. #7 Rep.....Mark Spitzig

### Dues changes:

The 2004 MBA yearly dues, effective January 1, 2004, will be \$30.00 for an individual and \$35.00 for a family. A Family Membership is defined as those residing in one household to the age of 18. Family Memberships are entitled to two votes.

## SEMBA MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

If your newsletter label denotes **N03**, your membership is due now. Enclosed is a membership application for your convenience. Please note that if you are a SEMBA Life Member, you may use the enclosed form to join or renew MBA membership.

**SEMBA membership fees are \$10.00 for an individual, \$15.00 for a family, \$100.00 for an individual life membership, and \$150.00 for a family life membership.**

## SUPERNAVIGATOR'S SECRET

(By Henry Fountain)

Honeybees can go home again and again and again. Their ability to return directly to the hive after a rambling flight in pursuit of food is remarkable, although exactly how they accomplish this has been unclear.

The most reasonable explanation is that, like some other insects, they use vector navigation, constantly calculating the required direction of

homeward travel from their movements during foraging.

Using radar, scientists from Britain and Germany have now provided strong evidence that honeybees navigate this way. The researchers outfitted honeybees with tiny transponders so they could be tracked.

In a large mown field outside a German village, they allowed the bees to reach a feeding station. But before the bees left to return to the hive, the researchers moved them to another location in the field. A paper describing the work was published online in the Royal Society of Britain.

The researchers found that the displaced bees still flew in the direction that would have taken them home from the feeding station. In other words, they used the navigational calculations they had made while foraging. Some even completed the entire length of what would have been the return flight before starting to search for their hives.

The bees appeared to be on automatic pilot; they ignored large artificial landscape features placed in the return path and compensated for wind drift. Previous studies have shown that bees measure distance traveled using the flow of images of the ground across their retinas. The researchers suggest the bees are using this tool, plus their ability to orient themselves according to the sun's angle in the sky, to make their return journeys.

Reported in the October 28, 2003 New York Times, submitted by *Ann Kerwin*.

## THE SMOKER OR IS IT A SMOKE ENGINE?

The smoker or is it a smoke engine? I have had mine for so long I have forgotten when I purchased it. What type of fuel to use in it? Good question, pine needles, burlap, Staghorn sumac seed-heads; the list seems to go on and on. The question is not what to use but which one is best. You need a fuel that will be easy to light, and stay lit. That's the hard one, and to produce a lot of cool smoke that isn't going to drive the beekeeper away and upset the bees to the point where they will kill the queen. At one of the American Beekeeping Federation meetings the talk was on smoke fuel. Staghorn sumac was found to cause the Varroa mites to fall off the bees, and fall on to the bottom. It did not kill them. They recovered and got right back on the bees. With the introduction of the screened bottom/sticky board this problem may be eliminated. Another was of working your bees without chemicals. Sumac seed-heads

Can be easily gathered in Michigan. I use them all the time. Give it a try this year and let me know how it works for you. Yours for better beekeeping  
-- Bill Sirr

### **EUROPEAN PAPER WASPS – A NEW THREAT TO OUR HIVES?**

European paper wasps (*Polistes dominulus*) Are non-indigenous to the United States. They arrived from Europe about 20 years ago and settled in Massachusetts. From there, the insects moved through New York some time during the past decade and have now spread through the Midwest. For the past 2-3 years, this wasp has been seen in various locations throughout Michigan. Looking very much like the yellow jacket with lemon-yellow banding against a black body, they are longer and have a slender waist.

Until now there have been few reports of these insects affecting our honeybee colonies. Now comes a report from Master Beekeeper Earl Hoffman who says: "My small nucs were strong and attacked by these new wasps. We found ten dead and are still counting. We found dead honeybees and all the honey robbed".

If you do not know what the European paper wasp looks like, we will bring specimens to the November 8<sup>th</sup> Schoolcraft Bee Club meeting.

-- Roger Sutherland

### **BEEKEEPING WEB PAGE REVIEW**

There are many beekeeping web pages available to peruse; however, you may wish to check out two sites locally produced:

[Http://www.honeyflowfarm.com/#newsletter](http://www.honeyflowfarm.com/#newsletter) was developed by SEMBA member William Schnute. The site features his beekeeping and vineyard operation located at Dryden, MI. For SEMBA members who are considering their own web page this is one to check out for ideas.

In addition to many photos of products he has for sale, there is also candle and mead-making information, and a monthly newsletter, which includes articles on various aspects of beekeeping and beekeeping products. You may easily access the site by visiting the SEMBA web page [sembabees.org](http://sembabees.org) and clicking on members.

[Http://www.cyberbee.net](http://www.cyberbee.net) is a new web page prepared by Zachary Huang, Ph.D, Apicultural Specialist at Michigan State University. This site has hundreds of excellent photos in a searchable photo base featuring bee anatomy and morphology, bees on flowers, diseases and pests, beekeeping, non-bees and bee research, plus many other features you will find to be informative.

-- Roger Sutherland

### **WINTERING HONEY BEES COLONIES CHECK LIST FOR LATE FALL**

\_\_\_ 1. Does your colony have sufficient bees? A large population is very important for wintering success. You may want to combine two weak colonies.

\_\_\_ 2. Does your colony have adequate honey stores of approximately 60-80 pounds?

\_\_\_ 3. Remove miticide strips when they have been left in the recommended number of days.

\_\_\_ 4. Wrapping colonies will aid in colony survival. Two and four colony wraps are more economical of heat and material use. Windbreaks on the north and west side are also beneficial.

\_\_\_ 5. Upper entrance is important for winter flights, CO<sub>2</sub>, and moisture escape.

\_\_\_ 6. You may want to feed sugar syrup. Use a 2-part sugar to 1 part water.

\_\_\_ 7. Make up candy board with fondant. Prepare pollen supplement patties now and place them in a freezer to use in late February.

-- Roger Sutherland

### **A BEAR OF A PROBLEM** (from the MBA web site)

Over the past few years there have been an increasing number of bee colonies damaged due to bear predation. Also, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources reports that bears are increasing their range, with more sightings in the Lower Peninsula.

Last year a bill was introduced into the Michigan Legislature that would aid Michigan beekeepers regardless of level, hobbyist to commercial, against damage done by bears.

The bill mimicked a bill passed in Wisconsin, which covers bear damage and the cost of

keeping bears out of bee yards, i.e. fences, batteries, wire, t-posts, solar collectors, etc.

The bill introduced would have received its proceeds from bear licenses, so the public would not have paid unnecessary taxes.

Unfortunately the bill never made it. However, Michigan beekeepers now have the opportunity to give it another shot. Currently a bill (HB 4861) has

come to committee. The bill is identical to that which was introduced last year. This fall Michigan Legislature will begin to review the bill.

This will be our opportunity to be more active in promoting this legislation.

To read the bill, go to the MBA web page: <http://www.mi-beekeepers.org>

### SEMBA Bargain Corner

#### For Sale:

- **Package Bees** from Georgia arriving in Roseville, MI in April 2004. **Call Gerald Dunbar and leave message at 586-770-9953.**
- Now taking orders for **package bees** for 2004. Bees are from Wilbank Apiaries in Georgia. They will arrive in Michigan around April 2, 2004. Book early as many people are ordering now because of the shortage of bees in 2003. **Call Dave Barber, 248-634-7017** for prices and details.
- **Beekeeping equipment** for sale: Approximately - 400 deep supers - Aluminum paint - \$3 each, Hundreds of deep frames - no wax foundation - make offer, Approximately - 80 hives - No bees - make offer. **Call Richard Blum - 734 - 587- 3868.** Farm location: 10503 Hoffman Rd., Maybee, MI 48159, House location: 7729 High Street, Maybee, MI 48159.
- **Dark brood combs** containing 5 lbs. of capped honey. Ready for feeding packages. **Call Alex Bzenko at 248-651-0928.**

#### Wanted:

- Tom Ellis, 17511 Pleasant Lake Road (@M52) is looking for **someone to place bees on his land.** For more information please **call Tom @ 517-536-5184.**
- Deb Lentz is located near the Ann Arbor area and wishes to have **bees placed on her land,** please **contact Deb @: [tantrefarm@hotmail.com](mailto:tantrefarm@hotmail.com).**
- Lamb Farms is very interested in having **bees placed on their land,** please **call Lamb Farms at 734-428-8634.**

Note: ads in the Bargain Corner are free to SEMBA members. To place an ad contact Susanne Sadik [souxsieq2@msn.com](mailto:souxsieq2@msn.com) or Roger Sutherland [rsuther@hotmail.com](mailto:rsuther@hotmail.com).

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



Oakland Beekeepers' Club



Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club



SEMBA Membership  
5488 Warren Road  
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