



# SEMBA NEWS

Vol. 14 No. 6

Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association

September/October 2004

## Upcoming Events

### September 9

SEMBA Planning Meeting  
(See below for details)

### September 14

Schoolcraft Bee Club Meeting  
(See Below for details)

### October 5

Oakland Bee Club Meeting  
(See Page 2 for details)

### October 29-30

MBA Fall Meeting  
(See page 2 for details)

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## IN MEMORY OF DAVID BARBER

On July 16, 2004, following medical complications, long-time SEMBA and MBA member David Barber died at the age of 69. Many SEMBA members attended the funeral held on Tuesday, July 20<sup>th</sup>.

David was born on July 6, 1935 in Drayton Plains to Earl and Mary Barber. He graduated from Clarkston High School and then served in the Marine Corp. After discharge from the marines, he married Blanche Tatton. They resided in Davisburg MI where they raised three children: Matthew (Kim), Christopher (Michelle), Holly (fiancé Rick). They had 4 grandchildren: Michael, Kristin, Danielle and Christopher.

David was a commercial beekeeper for over 46 years and many beekeepers got to know Dave because he made many trips to Georgia to pick up package bees for delivery to Michigan beekeepers. Dave and Blanche maintained a booth at the Michigan State Fair for 29 years. Dave won many blue ribbons at the State Fair as well as national beekeeping conventions. He was especially pleased with ribbons won in the cut-comb category.

David was a Davisburg fireman for 34 years, and MBA member and Treasurer for many years. He was a life member of SEMBA.

The beekeeping community will certainly miss David Barber.

## SEMBA PLANNING MEETING (All SEMBA members are welcome)

WHEN: Thursday, September 9, 2004 at 7:30 p.m.

WHERE: Schoolcraft College, Lower Waterman Center

PROGRAM: Officers and members will discuss plans for the 2004 SEMBA Annual Meeting and determine activities and meetings for 2005. New ideas for the organization will be on the agenda.

## SCHOOLCRAFT BEE CLUB MEETING

WHEN: Tuesday, September 14, 2004 at 7:30 p.m.

WHERE: Schoolcraft College, Lower Waterman Center

PROGRAM: Honey-house Regulation Update. What does a person need to know to become a beekeeper in Michigan and how can SEMBA help? (See Schoolcraft program note)

*Bring your honey samples for moisture testing*  
Refreshments are welcome

## SCHOOLCRAFT PROGRAM NOTE

During the May meeting with the Michigan Department of Agriculture-Food and Dairy Division committee, SEMBA and MBA representatives proposed that a booklet outlining regulations be developed and made available to all beekeepers.

Several SEMBA members felt that the booklet should include not only honey-house regulations but also other beekeeping information to help the new beekeeper. There are many beekeeping books on how to get started in beekeeping, but this publication would be aimed at beekeeping information unique to Michigan. The meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> will be a brainstorming session. Your input is welcome.

### **OAKLAND BEE CLUB MEEING**

WHEN: Tuesday, October 5, 2004 at 7:30 p.m.

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

PROGRAM: "Bee Intelligence"  
Lloyd Schmaltz

*Bring your honey samples for moisture testing*  
Refreshments are welcome.

### **MBA FALL MEETING**

WHEN: Friday-Saturday, October 29-30, 2004

WHERE: DNR Conference Center on beautiful Higgins Lake, Roscommon, MI

PROGRAM: Details to follow in the next SEMBA Newsletter

### **THE GENESIS OF BEEKEEPING** **AT SCHOOLCRAFT COLLEGE (Part 2 of 3)**

During those early years, the college faculty had a great deal of decision-making authority, so the Biology Department secured the instructors for the class. Jack Englehart, a master beekeeper, was hired to teach the course with me assisting as a beginning beekeeper. At the conclusion of the 8-week course, several members of the class who wanted to start bee colonies, asked if it would be possible to keep bees in the already-established college apiary in the orchard. By having their bees there, they could continue to get advice and assistance. (It should be noted that many of the class members lived in homes on small lots and were not permitted to keep bees because of ordinance restrictions.) Included in the group of new beekeepers were several faculty and staff members.

The beekeeping class was offered for several years and the number of colonies in the apiary continued to grow; at one point there were 53 colonies in the orchard area. This apiary was only a few feet away from the south parking lot yet few realized that approximately a million and one-half honey bees resided there. Because each established hive contains 40,000 to 50,000 honeybees, one of our worries was the possibility of swarming. This phenomenon occurs early each summer when the bees in a single hive build up into large numbers and

produce huge stores of honey. As a result, the bees become crowded and start producing new queens. Just before the new queens hatch, the old queen leaves with approximately half of the bee population and lands on a tree branch or some object usually just a short distance away; the mass of bees then form a cluster around the old queen. This is called a swarm. A few bees from the swarm, called scout bees, leave the grouping in search of a new home. Bees are not aggressive during this period, but we were concerned that a swarm might wander onto campus or land on someone's car causing students to panic even though the danger of stinging would be minimal. To prevent swarming, the beekeepers that had hives in the apiary were encouraged to add sufficient hive boxes to give their bees room for expansion. Even so, we did have our share of swarms so a back-up plan was devised. Retirees David Nairn and Richard Ford, who had been in the bee class, would patrol the area twice a day looking for swarms for immediate capture. Also, Schoolcraft College Public Safety Officer Bill Ross patrolled daily watching for swarms and for theft of beehives. (Yes, people do steal beehives.) From 1967 until the apiary closed, only one hive was stolen--the hive owned by Officer Ross. We learned that the individuals taking the hive had mired their pick-up truck in the mud during the theft, but were able to leave the area assisted by a Detroit Edison crew working nearby. The Edison crew was unaware that a theft was occurring.

One swarming incident, I remember well. Our swarm patrol had called reporting a swarm hanging in a tree in the apiary. On my way to the apiary, I ran into Dr. Richard McDowell, the newly inaugurated Schoolcraft College President and asked him if he would like to have a new experience. Without even asking what it was he said, "Yes". When we arrived in the apiary, I provided him with a veiled hat and he bravely assisted in hiving the swarm into a new hive box. (He was offered the bees to take home, but declined the offer.) I'm certain that not many college presidents can boast about a swarm-collecting initiation.  
~ Roger Sutherland

### **SWARM CATCHING**

Most of us beekeepers love to catch swarms of bees, especially someone else's bees. There have been all kinds of foolish acts pulled to extract a swarm from high places; like cutting down a tree and watching the swarm fly away, shooting a limb off, or climbing the tree and cutting the limb off. James Tew a guest lecturer at the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Heartland Apiculture Societies annual meeting (which met July 8-10 of 2004) recommends not going higher than an 8 foot step ladder in a pickup bed.

When a man at work asked me to come and get a swarm from his ditch line in front of his house I was a

bit apprehensive about a swarm in a ditch. Bees don't generally settle in a ditch. "Are you sure these are honey bees? I asked him. His reply was that he thought so, there was a great big cluster, and they had been there a week. It was too early for a big cluster of anything else, so I drove 60 miles to his house and sure enough they were honeybees. They have been there long enough to start building honeycomb in the grass. I sat a hive down next to them and smoked them, which made them march right into the hive. They are now doing well in their new hive.

I found another swarm while mowing grass around my hives this year. They had the bush they had settled on bent to the ground. I picked up the bush and shook them onto the front of an empty hive and they went right in. Another success story, as they are doing well too.

Another man called me about a swarm in his pine tree about the size of two baseballs, 10 or 12 feet off the ground. We arranged for me to pick them up around 5 o'clock, so that he could watch me catch them, but he called back to tell me they had flown away around 4 o'clock. That was all right, since that swarm sounded like it was too small and most likely too high up. I did have plans of putting on a show for him. I was going to do an Indian dance in my bee suit, talk to the bees, tell them where I wanted them, shake them off, and march them in like an army drill sergeant.

It's about too late in the season to catch a good swarm now. About all you can do is combine them with a weak hive, which is what I'd do. I have some young Buckfast queens in nucs that I will put in with my swarms after they start laying eggs. This will get these hives in good shape for winter.

From one beekeeper to another, this old saying still holds true:

A swarm in May is worth a load of hay.

A swarm in June is worth a silver spoon.

A swarm in July is not worth a blue tail fly.

~ Winn Harless

### **SEMBA DUES NOW PAYABLE**

If your SEMBA Newsletter label denotes N04, your membership renewal is due in November. Enclosed is a membership application for your convenience. You may pay your dues (\$10 per individual or \$15 per family) at the Schoolcraft Bee Club meeting, Oakland Bee Club meeting, or send it to the address listed on the application form.

Please note that if you pay your SEMBA dues you are eligible to join MBA for a reduced membership fee of \$25 per individual or \$30 per family.

### **SEMBA WEB PAGE GETS LETTERS AND PHONE CALLS**

As the contact person for the SEMBA web page <http://www.sembabees.org>, I receive a number of calls and e-mails about a variety of beekeeping issues and problems. Recently, I have had numerous inquiries about removal of bees from dwellings. If you are in the business of removing established nests, please e-mail me so I can place your name on the contact list if you wish referral. Send to Roger Sutherland [rsuther@hotmail.com](mailto:rsuther@hotmail.com)

The following e-mail requests assistance for long-time Life SEMBA member Alex Bzenko

Roger,

"I am a customer, friend and volunteer of Al Bzenko, a long-time member of SEMBA. The purpose of my e-mail is to ask if you might be able to direct me to someone who could help Al plan for the future of his honey farm and property.

Al has been a beekeeper on his 10-acre property just south of the city of Rochester since 1942. He tells me that at one point, he and his father had 350 hives. He now has about two -dozen hives on the property and two-dozen on property of friend in Oxford. However, nine months ago, he broke his hip and it is not healing properly and so really can't continue, even with our amateur help much longer. Several of us in Rochester are interested in not only finding a way to continue his business, but also to avoid having his very prime land from becoming an auto dealership, office building, etc. Al has no relatives left to will the land to and has expressed interest in our ideas. What we discussed was having him sell the land (possibility to the city Rochester Hills, who we intend to approach sometime soon) with conditions on how it would be used in the future and would allow him to live in his home as long as possible.

"We will, of course, find some local legal help, but we are hoping that you, or someone else in SEMBA, might be able to provide us with some ideas, thoughts, suggestions that only those who have experience on the business side of the beekeeping business might know. Al and his Busy Bee Honey Farm are on of the oldest "institutions" here in our little city of Rochester that is still "real" and we would like to do what we can for him and to help retain some small amount of heritage of the city.

Thank you for considering my request."

G. Kent Stiles  
428 Meadow Lane  
Rochester, MI 48307  
Phone: (248) 652-4031  
E-mail: [kent.stiles@rinkstats.com](mailto:kent.stiles@rinkstats.com)

Remember to check the SEMBA web Page to get the latest information on:

- SEMBA Newsletters
- Beekeeping videos available for loan
- Beekeeping books and journals available for loan
- Beekeeping equipment rental
- Michigan State Fair Honey competition information
- Other beekeeping web page links

SEMBA history

The current SEMBA membership list is available to SEMBA members only. To request a copy, E-mail [rsuther@hotmail.com](mailto:rsuther@hotmail.com). If you do not have Internet connections call 734-668-8568 or write to Roger Sutherland, 5488 Warren Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48105 and request any of the above.

~ Roger Sutherland

### SEMBA Bargain Corner

#### For Sale:

- For Sale: New deep and medium supers, frames, bottom boards, inner and outer covers and New 1 and 5 gallon buckets with lids. Please call **Keith Lazar (H) 248-626-2483 (P) 248-815-5522**.
- For Sale: honey, call **Richard Enter, 734-769-9725**
- For sale: 6-5/8 medium supers with drawn comb, good condition. Call **Dick Gerathy, 313-533-2617** or e-mail: [djbeekeeper@msn.com](mailto:djbeekeeper@msn.com)
- For sale: Four new 5-frame nuc boxes. Call **Dave Kriesch, at 810-395-2037** for details.
- For sale: Stainless steel sinks: one corner model, one single basin, one two-basin unit. Call **Roger Sutherland, 734-668-8568** or e-mail: [rsuther@hotmail.com](mailto:rsuther@hotmail.com)
- Bottom boards, inner covers, hive entrance screens for transport, also new design bottom boards with screens for Varroa mite separation and inspection. Varroa mite assembly for converting your present boards. 1/8" grid hardware cloth, 36" wide by the foot or 18" x 16 1/4" pieces also for sale. Please call **Michael Kolodziej at 734-425-1396** or e mail [Mziejwood@aol.com](mailto:Mziejwood@aol.com)
- For sale: 24 shallow supers with frames. New frames not assembled. Call Remus Pascu, 734-665-4049

#### Services:

- New! Your very special honey can be put into straws in Roseville, MI. As little as 1/2 pound can be converted into about 40 straws. Contact **Jerry Dunbar 586-770-9953**.

#### Wanted:

- Wanted: Beekeeper in Palmyra MI Lenawee County starting bees next spring would like a mentor. Contact **Debbie Wines, 517-266-9502** or email [debbiesuew@earthlink.net](mailto:debbiesuew@earthlink.net)
- I recently purchased a used spectronic 20 that I would like to calibrate to determine color ranges. Does anyone have a color-grading device to measure color grades of honey that could be borrowed to make the calibrations. Contact **Roger Sutherland, 734-668-8568, rsuther@hotmail.com**.

**Note:** Ads in Bargain Corner are free to SEMBA members. To place an ad, contact Susanne at [souxiseq2@msn.com](mailto:souxiseq2@msn.com) or phone 248-476-4991 or Roger Sutherland at [rsuther@hotmail.com](mailto:rsuther@hotmail.com). \* Ads will be run for two consecutive newsletters.

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



Oakland Beekeepers' Club



Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club



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