



# SEMBA NEWS

Volume 16 Number 3 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association  
March-April 2006

## Upcoming Events

### Seven Ponds Bee Club Meeting:

Tuesday, February 28, 2006 (See below for details)

### Ohio State University Extension and Tri-County Beekeeper's Association Bee Keeping Workshop:

Saturday, March 4, 2006, (9:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.) Wooster Ohio, Fischer Auditorium and Shisler Center at Ohio State Agricultural Research and Development Center

### Oakland Bee Club Meeting:

Tuesday, March 7, 2006 (See below for details)

### ANR Week Beekeeping Program:

Friday and Saturday, March 10-11, 2006 (See pg 1 for details)

### Seven Ponds Bee Club Meeting:

Tuesday, March 28, 2006 (See below for details)

### SEMBA Winter/Spring Meeting:

Sunday, April 2, 2006 (see pg 1 for details)

### Seven Ponds Bee Club Meeting:

Tuesday, April 25, 2006 (See below for details)

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## SEVEN PONDS BEE CLUB MEETINGS

Seven Ponds Bee Club, an affiliate chapter of SEMBA meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month. Dates for the next three meetings are February 28 and March 28, and April 25. Meetings are held at the Seven Ponds Nature Center, 3854 Crawford Road near Dryden, MI. For more information, call Nancy Schliebe, 810-395-7379.

## OAKLAND BEE CLUB MEETING

**When:** Tuesday, March 7, 2006, 7:30 p.m.

**Where:** E.L. Johnson Nature Center  
3325 Franklin Road, Bloomfield Township

**Program:** "Control of Tracheal and Varroa Mites" and "How to get the Most out of Over-Wintered Colonies"  
Ed Nowak, Master Beekeeper

Refreshments are welcome.

Ed Nowak, who will present the program at the March 7<sup>th</sup> Oakland Bee Club meeting, has had many years of experience keeping honey bees. In 1997, he initiated the very successful SEMBA beekeeping class that will be offered again this year. Class members will enroll during the 68<sup>th</sup> Annual SEMBA Beekeeping Conference on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

## ANR WEEK BEEKEEPING PROGRAM

**When:** Friday and Saturday, March 10-11, 2006

**Where:** Kellogg Center, Michigan State University

**Featured speakers:** Dianna Sammataro, Larry Connor, Mike Hansen, Roger Hoopingarner, George Ayers and Zachary Huang

Beginner's workshops and beekeeping vendors

Registration costs- \$20 for MBA members, \$25 for non-members and \$10 for each additional person.

For a complete program and other conference details go to <http://michiganbees.org>

## SEMBA WINTER/SPRING MEETING

**When:** Sunday, April 2, 2006, 1:30 p.m.

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

Potluck dinner at 1:30 p.m. Bring a dish to pass and your own table service. Beverages will be provided by SEMBA.

2:30 p.m. **PROGRAM:** "Mead Making" by Ken Schramm

Ken Schramm of Troy, MI, world-known mead maker and author of the book *The Complete Mead Maker* will be the speaker at SEMBA's Winter/Spring meeting. Ken is the manager of Video Telecommunication Services at Wayne RESA/REMC 20. His book (in paperback) details the home production of honey wine from your first batch to award-winning fruit and herb variations. Autographed copies of his book will be available to purchase at the meeting.

## WANT YOUR SEMBA NEWS BY E-MAIL?

A number of SEMBA members have expressed a desire to receive their SEMBA newsletters only by e-mail. If you wish to receive your newsletter only by e-mail, please contact [rsuther@hotmail.com](mailto:rsuther@hotmail.com)

## APRIL DUES REMINDER

If your address label denotes an A06 your dues are now payable. Enclosed is a remittance form for your convenience.

## **RICHARD MILLER'S LIFE CELEBRATED**

A memorial service was held on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2006 in the Central Methodist Church, Detroit, for Richard Miller who died on December 22, 2005. Richard, who was born June 24, 1924 in Galesburg, Illinois, was educated in Illinois where he became a teacher before serving in the Navy during WWII. After the war, he met and married Barbara Worsinger and resumed his teaching career. When the couple moved to Southfield, Richard worked for Kelvinator and American Motors. Then in the 1970s, he began teaching physics at Southfield High School where he remained until his retirement in 1982. Richard devoted many hours volunteering for numerous causes especially his church. He was one of the founders of the Cranbrook Bee Club (now Oakland), became a SEMBA member in 1981, served as SEMBA President (1990-1993), and was very active in beekeeping activities associated with the Michigan State Fair. Richard is survived by his wife Barbara, three children, eight grandchildren and one great grandchild.

### **GROWING UP WITH BEES**

BY JACK HOWARD

(1921-2003)

Printed with permission of his daughter,  
Donna Howard Laws

When I was nine years old (1930) my dad got his first two packages of bees. They came right to the door by Railway Express. It was no big deal for the driver, as that was an everyday delivery. You always got overnight shipment of bees from the South. Railway Express knew how to ship bees. As you may recall, each passenger train had its own Railway Express Coach. In shipment, the bees were kept away from hot pipes and drafts. Since my dad was a carpenter, he made his first two hives. He said he kept bees in Ireland. The hives he made were double-walled and held 24 frames of brood and 192 sections of comb honey. The hives sat on 4 legs and had a large landing-board with a hood over the landing board and slide entrances. Of course, the hives were painted green.

It was not long and more bee hives were added. My dad decided to keep bees in the attic of the house. He had bees on both the north and south sides of the house. There was a large window in the attic so when he worked with the bees they could fly to the window and he would let the bees out. The bees made the best comb honey. There was never a winter loss when the bees were kept in the attic. My mother was fast getting sick of this situation. The bees would crawl down the attic stairs and under the door, and beat me to bed, or I would always be stepping on them and getting stung.

Now The Great Depression was in full swing and the comb honey was piling up. While I was still in grade school, I started selling honey after school. My dad made me a wagon with a 5/4 inch sides and an oak flooring bed. My neighbor painted all of the stripes on the Graham Paige cars (on the assembly lines), free hand. When a kid in the neighborhood would paint something, like a bike, he (Mr. Paige) would put a stripe on it. He also striped my wagon and wheels and put a picture of bees on the wagon. I would only sell honey to the business shops along the main streets; I found that when selling honey from door to door the women were too cranky to talk to. My honey route would run from Schaefer to Livernois on Grand River, and from Wyoming to Nash Kelvinator on Plymouth Road. I sold the comb honey for 15 cents a comb. Just for the record, I always sold more honey on snowy days. The bill that had to be paid each month was the phone bill. The bill was \$6.00 and included advertising in the Yellow Pages. This kept the line of communications open in case a

carpenter job would come in.

Very often, on my way to Mackenzie High School, I would pass by Walter Becker's home. It was a neat little bungalow home on Wyoming Avenue and it always had a big "Honey for Sale" sign on its front. He had a large garage with an upstairs and this was probably his honey house. Walter Becker helped to organize the first Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association in 1934. The most peculiar honey customer I had was Bert Baker's used car lot on Grand River and Livernois. At that time, he was the largest used car dealer in the Midwest. Every bus and streetcar had a picture of him smoking a cigar and the sign would read, "If you got \$5.00, I have a good used car for you." He had many salesmen working for him. If I could get just one salesman to buy a comb of honey, I had them all buying honey. One peculiar thing that I noticed was that Baker had good relations with all of his employees. The Blacks had their own booth to work in and always had their radios going full blast. (I found out later that people work better with music playing.) Bert kept these used cars running, whether the customer was right or wrong. He sold many used cars. Later on in life my dad and I did a lot of work for Bert Baker. It was not until after we had done a few jobs that I realized this was the same Bert Baker I had sold honey to. One day when he was paying my dad by check my dad asked if there was enough money in the bank for him to cash it. Bert said that he would go into the office and see. When he came out he said that there was one million dollars in the checking account. You will note that all of the land that Northland Shopping Center sits on was once owned by Bert Baker.

With more bee hives in the back yard, we could read our neighbors' minds. But they never complained; we kept their shelves full of honey. We finally found a place to keep the bees, a fenced in piece of land on Seven Mile Road. Mr. Wells lived on one side of the hill and the bees were on the other side of the hill. Mr. Wells said that he used to keep bees. Every once in a while he would give us bee equipment that was of no use to him. My dad built a 4 frame hand extractor out of a wooden barrel. With 24 hives of bees it took a long time to extract honey in the fall.

Our car and trailer became a nuisance when you wanted to haul something, so my dad happened to buy a new Ford pickup in June 1941 for \$479.00, just before the War started. Many people wanted to buy my dad's truck during the War. We now had a lot of bee's wax on hand, and we heard that Chrysler and Son of Chatham, Ontario was offering a good price for bee's wax. So we loaded up the truck with bee's wax and headed for Chatham. We came back with a new 30 frame Chrysler Automatic Radial Extractor. They were the first ones to make this type of extractor. It may look crude when compared to the honey extractors made now, but it still runs good. The Canadian Customs gave us a hard time crossing the border with all of the bee's wax. They could not find anything in the books that said they could charge us duty on the bee's wax or to stop us from taking it into Canada. My dad said that if they could not make up their minds he would go someplace else. So we finally got through, with the Custom Officers still scratching their heads. Coming back we had no problem, as U.S. Customs consider bee supplies to be farm items. We also got some Chrysler Electric Welded Queen Excluders, the best we have ever used, and easy to clean.

Mr. Wells died, so we had to find another place for the bees. We found a place at Mr. Bryant's Fruit Orchard on Haggerty Road, north of Eight-Mile. When Mr. Bryant died, Mr. Tesky bought the farm. Then Mr. Tesky received word that I-275 was going to come through the farm right where the bees were located, so we had to move again. We moved the bees to Apple Crest Farm on Eight Mile, west of Haggerty.

Spraying the trees cost too much, so the trees were left to go wild. The bees made a lot of honey in this area.

Then came the big office buildings, and people complaining of bee waste on their cars, so we moved the bees further back into the Orchard. Still it seemed that just the thought of the bees still being in the orchard kept the people complaining. The people were going to sue for damages. They found spots on their cars all summer and were blaming the bees. Thankfully, Roger Sutherland explained to the people that all insects have droppings, not just honey bees.

While moving the bees for the third time, my wife stepped on an apple and twisted her ankle; when the bee hive fell on her it broke her leg. I took her to Huron Valley Hospital. Because it was Sweetest Day, the doctor thought I was abusing my wife. My wife asked the doctor what could be sweeter than working in a bee yard. And, those jerks from the office building had the nerve to call to see if I had moved the bees again, but my wife answered the phone. Ha! We never heard any more from them.

The time to move the bees came again. A housing project went in near the bees. At the hands of the children from the housing project, the bees suffered a lot of vandalism. The Novi Police were no help unless you had a lot of monetary damage. They only took a police report to get rid of you.

My bees now sit in the highest place in Washtenaw County. My son-in-law's folks live here. It is a pleasure to drive into your bee yard and find your bees the way you left them. I am grateful to my wife, daughters, sons-in-law, and grandchildren for helping me with the bees, especially when I take off honey. I am still trying to get them magnetized into working with the bees more. I sell all of my honey wholesale to grocery stores. The clang-clang of the streetcars, the clickety-click of the trains, and the puff-puff of the autos bring back the memories of my beginning days working with the bees. All of these sounds help to keep the world going around. And, we cannot forget the sound of the bees, as this sound feeds the world with honey, pollinates the flowers, and develops better food to eat.

#### **HOW I GOT INTERESTED IN BEEKEEPING** **By Brian Neumeyer (age 12)**

It all started when I was eight years old. My brother, Nick, some of our neighborhood friends and I saw a wasp nest. We got a boat hook to knock it down, a net to catch the wasps, and a squirt gun to stop them from flying at us. When we were done with that nest, we found another and did the same. For the next couple of days we found and killed the wasp nests around my house. When we could not find any other nests we started an exterminating business. We went door to door and asked our neighbors if they had any wasp nests and if they wanted us to get rid of them for 50 cents a nest. After a couple of weeks though there was not much business. We had exterminated several nests for a couple of neighbors. I found some wasp nests on the school playground equipment, so I dropped off one of my flyers to the principal. Was I ever surprised when I got called down to the office and offered the job to get rid of the wasp nests by the principal? The only stipulation she had was that I had to do it after school hours. I submitted a bill for getting rid of the wasp nests and she took it to the school PTO and they approved the funds and I got paid. That was probably the best job I had exterminating wasps and their nests.

By now I had learned a lot of things about wasps and bees. Like how different they are from each other. Neither of them likes it when you soak their nest and them with water. I had now grown pretty fond of honey bees and understood the many differences between them and other types of bees and wasps. It was then that I found out about beekeeping. By now I was 10 years old and researched beekeeping. I asked my parents if I could do it and they said that they would talk to Bill and Abby at Westview Orchards and to see if their beekeeper would take me to the hives a couple of times. Therefore, I would see if I really wanted to bee keep and I could get some experience. Bill and Abby talked with their beekeeper, David Barber; he agreed and took me along a couple of times and let me help with the hives. He also gave me my first beehive tool so I would have my own to use when we went to check on the bees. He showed me how to check an observation hive to make sure that the ventilation holes were not

plugged from propolis. David Barber dropped off some of his honey and honey butter and let me know that he had been sick and might not be tending to the bees for a bit. It was the last time that I talked with him.

Then I found out about SEMBA (I was almost 12 by now) and I asked my mom if I could join. She contacted Mr. Sutherland and he got me in contact with Mr. Guthrie. I went to Mr. Guthrie's house, and we talked about bees, and played around with his bees. It was after he said that he thought I knew enough about bees and was ready for a hive or two that I decided that I **really** wanted a hive. My parents had me start looking at prices for equipment and join SEMBA. Then my mom took me to a SEMBA meeting and learned more about bees and other beekeepers in Southeast Michigan. At my first meeting I was nominated for the Schoolcraft Beekeeper Scholarship. I am looking forward to the opportunity of attending the beekeeper classes with the scholarship from SEMBA. At the same meeting, Senad Livadic said that he would sponsor me for a fully stocked hive to help get me started. I also attended a meeting at Seven Ponds; my dad took me to that one. Give me some time and I will have my parents, brother and sister all playing with the bees with me!

And that is how I became interested in beekeeping.

#### **URBAN APICULTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

##### Report #2

(Please see previous SEMBA newsletters for additional information concerning this program.)

Another opportunity that forming a city-wide beekeepers' group here in Rochester would provide is that it is the logical opportunity to propose the formation of a local beekeepers' cooperative.

It is not surprising to me that SEMBA, and other beekeepers' associations, believe that some sort of "cooperative" would be a very useful tool for local beekeepers for a variety of reasons and that there has been at least one unsuccessful attempt to form one in Southeast Michigan in the past. It is my intention to include the successful formation of a model cooperative as a primary deliverable of the Urban Apiculture Development Program.

It has been my experience that the best way to bring about real change in any large organization is to form a small model new organization first, experiment with it and perfect it, and then replicate it. This approach is also consistent with the type of organizational structure that I have found to be ideal for many non-profit, volunteer associations.

If I am successful in creating a close-knit, very collaborative Rochester beekeepers' group, I will be recommending that other SEMBA members who live in other suburban / urban environments take the lead in forming similar groups. Therefore, one of the "sub" deliverables of this program will be documentation intended to assist those who volunteer to do so, which includes lessons learned, recommended steps to take in forming and running a group. For instance, I expect to include a recommendation concerning forming multiple groups in larger urban areas, even when group membership would be limited to just three or four people.

One important advantage of beekeepers belonging to a truly local beekeepers' group, I believe, is that it would at least provide a forum for discussion concerning what their relationship to other local beekeepers' could be. Historically, I am told, beekeepers have been rather "independent" types and, it seems to me, somewhat distrusting of each other, if only because they might be potential competitors. However, I would suggest that there are many ways in which those who might be interested in eventually becoming commercial beekeepers could collaborate in ways that would make each of them more successful than continuing to function "at arms length from one another", even if they have done some intermittent, low level business with each other in the past.

Much more to come!

The purpose of the Urban Apiculture Development Program is to advance the practice of beekeeping by examining the impact of changes in the context within which beekeeping is practiced, which have occurred over the last several decades, particularly that of urbanization, and develop and recommend appropriate changes that beekeepers might make to improve their own beekeeping activities. If you would like to contribute to this program or have questions, or other feedback, in response to these articles, please call me at (248) 652-4031 or send me an email at [kstiles@exphysica.com](mailto:kstiles@exphysica.com).

~Kent Stiles

### SEMBA Bargain Corner

#### For Sale:

- Bottom boards, inner covers, also new design bottom boards with screens for Varroa mite separation and inspection. Other equipment also available. Competitive prices. CLOSING OUT. **Call or e-mail Michael Kolodziej at 734-425-1396, [Mziejwood@aol.com](mailto:Mziejwood@aol.com).**
- Bee blower and package bees from Wilbank's Apiary, April 2006. **Call Blanche Barber, 248-634-7017.**
- Package Bees arriving in April 2006 this year from California. Source is Koehnen and Sons in Glenn California. Their web Site is "koehnen.com". If interested **contact Jerry Dunbar, ASAP, 586-770-9953.**
- **Shawn Shubel** will be delivering package bees from Georgia. Tentative arrival April 24. SEMBA members will receive a \$5 discount. **Call Mike Siarkowski 517-545-0824 for details.**
- **Keith Lazar** has a complete line of new hive construction items. **Call C 248-361-1710, H 248-815-5522**
- "Welcome to Our Honey Farm" coloring book. Ten for \$4.00. **Contact Dyanne Tracy at: [dtracy@beaverislandapiaries.com](mailto:dtracy@beaverislandapiaries.com) or 248-370-0929** for delivery or pick-up.
- New Woodware: Great Prices Inner & Outer covers, deep, medium, shallow supers, bottom boards, top feeders, frames, Complete Hives available, **Call Bob 810-338-1523.**
- Shallow 6 5/8 supers, Epson Expression 636 scanner, free copy machine with the purchase of the scanner. **Call Roger Sutherland, 734-668-8568, [rsuther@hotmail.com](mailto:rsuther@hotmail.com)**

#### Wanted:

- Electric uncapping knives that no longer work - **Call Larry Yates at 248-649-5078.**
- Extracting equipment. Contact **Dan Bartley, 248-505-8166.**
- 3 hats w/veils and gloves for 3 new beekeeping boys. **Please call Pam 734-449-1022.**

Note: ads in the Bargain Corner are free to SEMBA members. To place an ad, contact Susanne at [souxsieq2@msn.com](mailto:souxsieq2@msn.com), or phone 248-476-4991 or Roger Sutherland [rsuther@hotmail.com](mailto:rsuther@hotmail.com).

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

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

Oakland Beekeepers' Club



Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club



Seven Ponds Beekeepers' Club

