



# SEMBA NEWS

Volume 19 Number 6 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association  
September 2009

## UP-COMING EVENTS

### August 27 thru Labor Day, September 7 – Michigan State Fair

(Contact Bill Sirr, 248-544-8619 or Mary Hobart, 248-545-6563 if you wish to work at the SEMBA booth.)

### Tues., Sept. 8 -- SEMBA Planning Meeting

### Sun., Sept. 20 – SEMBA Meeting

(Note the change of date as listed in August newsletter.)

### Sat., Sept., 19 -- Tollgate Fall Fair

### Tue., Oct., 8 – Oakland Bee Club

### Sun., Oct., 18 – SEMBA Annual Meeting

## SEMBA PLANNING MEETING

**When:** Wednesday, September 8, at **7:00 p.m.**

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

### **Agenda:**

Planning for the October 18, 2009 Annual Meeting; setting meeting dates for 2010 events; review of the 2009 Michigan State Fair; budget decisions. **All SEMBA members are invited to attend.**

## SEMBA EARLY FALL MEETING

**When:** Sunday, September 20, at **1:30 p.m.**

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

**Potluck:** 1:30 p.m. Bring a dish to pass and your own table service. Coffee and tea will be provided by SEMBA.

**Program:** Premiere of the videos *Pollination Pyramid* and *An Adventure With Bees* by Barbara Lucas (\*See program note below.)

“Removing Bees from Buildings and Trees”-- videos and discussion by SEMBA members.

A refractometer will be available to check the moisture content of your newly-extracted honey.

### **\*Program Note)**

Barbara Lucas, of In-Site Video, LLC will answer questions about the premiered videos. Also, she will display special “Pollinator Habitat Kits”

designed for home owners who wish to make their yards more bee-friendly. Several SEMBA members worked with Barbara Lucas in producing these videos.

## MICHIGAN HOUSE BILL PROPOSED FOR EXEMPTION OF SMALL SCALE BEEKEEPERS FROM LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS FOR HONEY PROCESSING

For more than a year, SEMBA members Bill Sirr and Dennis Holly worked with Michigan Representative Andy Meisner to develop House Bill No. 6657. This bill, introduced on November 13, 2008 would amend the Food law of 2000.

House Bill 6657 was passed unanimously but it did not make it to the Michigan Senate before the December 31, 2008 deadline so the bill died. Therefore, it must be introduced again in this legislative session.

Section 4105, part e, of the bill, would have included the following provision:

“Retail outlets for the sale of prepackaged honey or maple syrup produced in Michigan if the outlet is operated by the producer and the processing facility is licensed under this act. A RETAIL OUTLET FOR HONEY PRODUCED BY HOBBY BEEKEEPERS FOR RETAIL AT FARMER’S MARKETS, CHURCH BAZAARS, AND SCHOOL FAIRS IS INCLUDED IN THIS EXEMPTION EVEN THOUGH THE PROCESSING IS NOT LICENSED UNDER THIS ACT.”

On July 20, 2009 at a hearing in Howell, Michigan of the House Agriculture Committee held by Rep. Cindy Denby, Roger and Mary Sutherland stressed the need for reintroduction of House Bill 6657 and outlined many of the problems facing beekeepers today. The importance of beekeeping in Michigan agriculture was emphasized. Also, they requested to be notified if anyone had reintroduced the exemption bill.

As of August 15, 2009, the exemption bill had not been introduced.

On August 24, 2009, SEMBA members met with Representative John Walsh (R) Livonia to encourage him to reintroduce the exemption bill.

A report of this meeting will be included in the October issue of SEMBA News.

## PRESIDENT'S PLEA

On September 8, at 7:00 P.M., SEMBA will be planning programs for 2010. Please offer your ideas for programs or activities to any of the officers listed on page 4. If you would like to present a program at one of our meetings or run for an office, please let us know.

## BEES IN HISTORY

*Mr. Lincoln's Army* (Catton, 1951) recorded an incident in Maryland during the American Civil War. It happened during the battle of Antietam (or Sharpsburg) on 17 September 1862, when there were more casualties than on any other day during the War: 7753 dead or missing and 18,440 wounded. The 132<sup>nd</sup> Pennsylvania Voluntary Infantry Regiment advanced under heavy fire from the Confederates, and 'some of the men went through a yard where there was a long row of bee hives: just then a round of shot from some Southern gun smashed through the length of these hives ... It took the combined efforts of General Kimball ... and the regimental officers to reorganize the regiment.'

~ Source: *The World History of Beekeeping and Honey Hunting*, by Eva Crane

## TWO ADDITIONS TO SEMBA LIBRARY

*Bee Sex Essentials*, a book by Larry Connor, and *Pollination Pyramid*, a video by Barbara Lucas. Check out the complete list of videos and books by visiting [sembabees.org](http://sembabees.org) and clicking on SEMBA Resources.

## E-MAIL LETTERS TO THE SEMBA EDITORS

My honey sales have started to grow so the request for advice. Are most SEMBA members Limited Liability Companies? If so, is there a simple way to file or is an attorney required?

Jim

(If you are a registered as a Limited Liability Company, LLC please let Roger Sutherland know, [rsuther@hotmail.com](mailto:rsuther@hotmail.com) or 734-668-8568.)

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Dear Beekeeping Friends,

Question: Anyone out there have a book

manuscript that you've started on beekeeping? If yes, I'd be interested in talking with you about helping develop/edit your manuscript and get it to press.

I am a professional writer/editor (and non-beekeeper SEMBA member) and learned this afternoon about a publisher who is looking for book on this topic.

Thanks! Look forward to hearing from you.

Christina L. Breed  
(517) 522-8114 -- Home office  
(734) 277-6503 -- Mobile phone

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July 17, 2009, Greetings from Bulgaria -- I'm writing you from Bulgaria. I have 10 years in beekeeping in my country. Now I am looking for new opportunities, and want to come and see how beekeeping is done in your country. For the purpose I am looking for an employer who might be interested in hiring guy from outside your country.

**Aleksandar Avramov**  
([alexx.beeman@gmail.com](mailto:alexx.beeman@gmail.com))

## USA- BEES HELP CURB CARBON DIOXIDE POLLUTION

Department of Energy is currently looking into alternative options to measure the effectiveness of carbon dioxide storage sites. Researchers at the National Energy Technology Lab are studying the use of bees as means to make sure that CO<sub>2</sub> is remaining at the appropriated sites and not re-polluting the surrounding atmosphere. The research which utilizes bees and helium balloons is being undertaken at Michigan State University. Michigan State University has bee hives on site, and incidentally also harvests their own honey. Researches will use the pollen collected by the bees to measure the amount of trace CO<sub>2</sub> picked up from direct contact with foliage at the CO<sub>2</sub> storage sites.

~Source: Apitrack No.19†

## STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT ENVIRONMENT (AND HONEY BEES) AT SCHOOL

**ANNARBOR.com** – August 4, 2009  
Nature is the classroom, with trips to Saginaw Forest and Parker Mill. Even the Allen School playground became a classroom, with students

wandering the clover-scented schoolyard on the look-out for honey bees.

"We learn things about how to help our planet," said student Alexjandro Derieux 9, clipboard in hand, observing bees at work. Jane Levy led a group of 65 students to the Raynor Farm north of Ann Arbor to tend a larger "fargen" - part farm and part garden - said Ryan Brown, director of Green Adventures. They grow buckwheat, gourds, tomatoes and more. Students and staff also built a bee house, complete with thousands of bees.

(Editor's note: Jane Levy is a SEMBA member who presents many beekeeping programs for youth in the Ann Arbor area.)

### **MATING OF THOSE NEW VIRGIN QUEENS**

In the August 2009 SEMBA Newsletter, some of the basic biology of swarming was covered. Conditions leading to the issuance of the swarm and how honey bees choose a new nesting site were discussed. Also mentioned was the fact that new queens would hatch in the hive shortly after the swarming. The events taking place in the hive after swarming are now reviewed.

Shortly after the swarm leaves the nest, the virgin queens emerge. The first behavior is the elimination of all but one new queen. This is done often by the first emerging queen stinging un-hatched virgins or fighting to the death by competing queens. The end result is one single queen after approximately 24 hours.

Preparation for mating now takes place, but it will be a minimum of two weeks before the new queen begins laying eggs. Much is still unknown about what happens during these two weeks but it is known that virgin queens may begin orientation flights as early as the third day of adult life and that mating usually occurs on the sixth or seventh day. It is believed that a virgin queen is accompanied by a group of workers on her nuptial flight. Mating flights may be short at first and increase to over thirty minutes. A well mated queen will mate with fifteen to twenty drones over a two-day period. Mating usually occurs in the afternoon if there is good flying weather.

Drones pay no attention to the virgin queens inside the hive, but are attracted to the queen substance only above thirteen to fifteen feet in the air. Drones can perceive the queen

substance at least two hundred feet away. Drones take their first flights between five to seven days post-emergence first for orientation and later for mating. Mature drones fly out to drone congregation areas (DCA's) about one hour before virgin queens take their mating flights. Several DCA's can be found within the flight range of an apiary. The location of a DCA remains constant for several years. Drones may make several trips to local DCA's in a given afternoon. They fly in large circles until their energy sources are depleted. Several thousand drones, representing several races of *Apis mellifera*, will normally be found in a DCA. Congregation zones have highly variable areas of 30- 200 m wide by 15-40 m above ground. With regard to the role that the worker bees (associated with the queen) play is not clear. It appears that these workers allow some drones access to her and others not. Is this a safeguard against inbreeding? Sperm cells from the initial pairing remain viable for years.

Excellent resource material on this topic are:

*Drone Congregation Areas* by Clarence Collison, *Bee Culture*, September 2008.

*Honey Bee Biology and Beekeeping*, by Dewey Caron, (1999), Chapter 10.

*The Buss About Bees* by Jurgen Tautz (2008) Springer-Verlag, Berlin, Heidelberg.

### **A MESSAGE FOR MAZIN**

In the August 2009 SEMBA Newsletter, Mazin Malallah wrote the following after capturing a swarm and placing it in a hive body: "I opened the cover and did not find even one bee!" Mazin requested reasons why the bees left the box.

Winn Harless offers the following response: "Well Mazin, first of all you have to realize you have a lot of females that have to come to some agreement whether or not to accept the new home. Fresh paint, mold, mouse urine, cedar wood, pressure treated wood and bee poop from *Nosema* will cause them to come out and leave. The best way to treat a nasty hive body is to char all wood in it by burning with a torch. Then rub it with peach leaves which emit a smell like queen pheromones. It will also help to place a frame of brood from another hive. Better luck next time."

## SEMBA LEADERS

President.....Roger Sutherland (734-668-8568)	SEMBA Hostesses .....Donna & Howard Laws (248-698-6908)
1st Vice President.....Winn Harless (734-453-2914)	Teresa and Walter McCurdy (248-360-1390)
2nd Vice President.....Dennis Holly (248-542-1316)	Oakland Bee Club Leader...Larry and Sue Yates (248-649-5078)
Secretary.....Mary Hobart (248-545-6563)	Historian.....Ron Forfinski (810-220-1084)
Treasurer.....Mary Sutherland (734-668-8568)	Outreach Presentation Committee....John Kates (313-273-8214)
Past President.....Keith Lazar (248-361-1710)	SEMBA Representative to MBA.....Rich Wieske (248-705-5181)
Web Master.....Tom Lisk (810-229-6365)	SEMBA Director.....Fritz Sanders (734-425-0449)
Bee Class Leader.....Ed Nowak (734-422-0508)	SEMBA Director.....Don Schram (248-310-8205)

## A LITTLE MORE BEEKEEPING HISTORY

Recently, Mary and Roger Sutherland presented a program entitled "The Fascinating World of Bees and Beekeeping" (including some documented information as it related to beekeeping and the Catholic Church) to a group of 83 nuns at a convent near Ann Arbor. Historically, beekeeping was an important activity in monasteries, abbeys and convents and remains so today in some Catholic institutions. Our research revealed two Patron Saints. The most famous was Saint Ambrose. According to legend, a swarm of bees settled on the face of Ambrose while he lay in his cradle, leaving behind a drop of honey. His father considered this to be a sign of his future eloquence and honeyed tongue. The other saint was Saint Gonnait. She is the Patron Saint of Irish beekeepers. Among the many miracles attributed to her in her lifetime was the routing of a band of bandits by throwing a skep of bees upon them thus saving the convent.

### SEMBA Bargain Corner

#### Wanted,

This Fall's honey from SE Michigan by the pail or drum. Or, bring us the supers and we'll extract the honey and you get the money while avoiding the mess! call Don Ragan, 810-378-5972.

#### Services:

- Honey bee removal service. **Call Don Schram** 248-310-8205.

**For sale:** Hand-cranked Stainless Steel Extractor; Used supers with Ross Rounds; New cypress-wood hives; New black plastic feeders (deep frame size); New Pierco beeswax-coated white plastic frames (medium); New Pierco beeswax-coated black plastic frames (deep); New wooden frames (NOT ASSEMBLED) for deep and medium supers, 248/321-3749, [jykchou@yahoo.com](mailto:jykchou@yahoo.com)

#### Notice:

- Honey for sale or honey wanted: **Send your name to the Sutherlands, 5488 Warren, Ann Arbor, MI 48105, or [rsuther@hotmail.com](mailto:rsuther@hotmail.com)** Names will be printed in the next newsletter and posted on the [sembabees.org](http://sembabees.org) web pages.

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

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

Oakland Beekeepers' Club



Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club

