



July 16, 2021 - 3rd Quarter
Newsletter, Part 1



The recent rains in some parts of Michigan have brought out the mosquitoes in full force. I find myself wearing my bee suit to pick black raspberries so I can avoid the tiny blood suckers. They cloud around my veil, but they can't get in!

I'm excited to be able to meet in person for our fall conference this year. We'll be meeting in October in Grand Blanc and I hope to see some of you there! We'll also be broadcasting the conference online if you would rather join from home.

The Michigan Honey Festival is coming up in early August and is a great opportunity to taste honey from around Michigan, visit vendors, and attend classes.

I'll be sending another mini newsletter in early August with more Fall conference information as well as MSU Webinars and updates for August and September.

If you'd like to get in touch with us in the meantime, I can be reached at communications@mba-bees.org

I'd love to hear about your honey harvest so far this year!

Jen Blackburn, Communications Director, MBA

MBA President's Corner

Chris Beck

Hello beekeepers,

Our annual membership business meeting will be held in October. The agenda will include finances, member recognition, and election results.

The nominating committee will meet this summer to recruit volunteers as board candidates for the ballot. Each position serves a two year term. Specific responsibilities vary based on role, however everyone will participate in a monthly meeting (via Zoom) and help various committees.

This year the ballot will include candidates for: President, Secretary, Communications Director, and District Representatives 1, 3, 5, and 7. Please consider running for one of these positions. We need you. I truly hope the incumbents will seek re-election, however, multiple candidates vying for the same role is healthy for the association. Contact me directly with questions. I would be happy to help find the right role for you!

Thanks,
Chris Beck

What a season, from drought to flood. Even minus life jackets, the bees seem to be doing fine. After a very mild winter, colony losses were pretty low. Spring was slow, but the number of swarms since April has been unprecedented. Beekeepers love to complain, so now our complaint is too many bees and too much honey.

MBA Vice-President's Corner

by Rich Wieske

vicepresident@mba-bees.org



SEMBA Bee School went "The Way of the Nuc" this spring with over 50 nucs distributed to 60 students. Michelle Kinney, SEMBA's secretary extraordinaire, created a spreadsheet that made the process so smooth, we felt like professionals, well, almost. The only problem was that the nucs were so healthy that they kept swarming, keeping our students on their toes.

Waggle dance! MSU Tollgate Farm reopened their gates to SEMBA Bee School in June, after more than a year's closure due to COVID-19. Ana Heck, MSU Apiculture Extension Educator, demonstrated frame evaluation, brood patterns, and sampling for disease.



Save The Date!

You are invited to attend the MBA Fall Conference on Saturday, October 23rd. For those who wish to meet in person, we will be at the Grand Blanc Holiday Inn with vendors, honey show and keynote speaker, Bill Hesbach, EAS Master Beekeeper. For those wishing to participate from the comfort of your own beeyard,

the conference will be simultaneously live-streamed.

We'll be sending more information soon!

MBA Legislative Committee

The MBA is looking for a few more volunteers to participate in its Legislative Committee. The MBA has a proud history of legislative activity that has enhanced the beekeeping community both at home and around the country. The committee's goal is to support and create legislation that enhances the Michigan beekeeping industry! If you are interested in participating, please email Phillip Preston at legislative@mba-bees.org

Michigan Honey Festival



Visit the MBA booth at the Michigan Honey Festival!

**Harvey Kern Pavilion
601 Weiss St.
Frankenmuth, MI
Saturday August 7, 2021
9am - 5pm**

Admission: \$5, children 12 and under free

[Michigan Honey Festival Website](#)

The Honey Festival also needs volunteers! Visit their website to sign up or contact them directly.

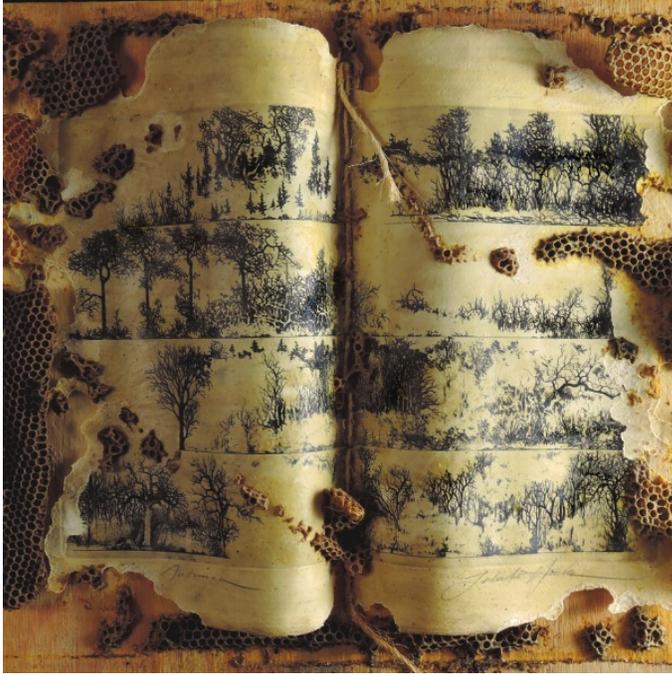
Lad Hanka Art Exhibit at Lansing Art Gallery

The Lansing Art Gallery & Education Center currently has an exhibition on view of artist and beekeeper Lad Hanka.

Symbiosis and Interspecies Collaborations is on view now.

Lansing Art Gallery & Education Center
119 N. Washington Sq.
Suite 101
Lansing, MI 48933
517 374 6400

[Lansing Art Gallery](#)



Speaking of his work Lad states: "I am a beekeeper and an artist - a member of two ancient brotherhoods. In this exhibit, my two interests collide: The etchings are made in the usual way, but then I insert them into the hive for bees to add the next layer."

Here are the details of the exhibition and corresponding events:

Exhibition dates: July 10 - August 21, 2021

Meet the Artist Event: Sat., July 17, 2021, more information can be found [HERE](#)

Virtual Artist Talk: Wed. July 21, 2021, register [HERE](#)

District 1 News

Kyle LeRoux

Berrien/Cass Beekeepers have opened up guest speaker presentations to the public (not just club members) and are planning summer apiary days.

Battle Creek Bee Club is currently presenting to kids and the community with the club's new observation hive. The club sponsored an MSU webinar and is looking into more educational sponsorship opportunities. The club has been doing hive dives before their monthly meeting for members who have questions and has been planning monthly education topics.

Torch by Dave Pearce - District 2

Throughout my years of beekeeping, I have learned that there is an endless number of tools and gadgets to buy. Some are useful while most others prove to be unnecessary and end up cluttering my garage. One tool I can't seem to live without is my



Bernzomatic TS4000 Trigger Start Torch. The torch itself costs about \$35.00. The gas is another \$12.00. Here are a handful of ways that this tool is indispensable to me.

I use wood pellets in my smoker. They can be slow to light, especially if I'm just using a lighter and some tinder. The torch just gets the job done quickly. It lights immediately and applies intense heat directly to the object you intend to light up!

Have you ever had the lid of your smoker get stuck shut? I used to think that it was happening because my smoker had gotten bent and misshaped. I then realized that the tannin in the fuel I was using (pellets and pine needles) was building up and causing the lid to feel like it was welded on once it cooled down. Hitting the rim with the torch for a few seconds heats that tannin up and enables the lid to come on and off smoothly.

The tank itself fits perfectly in the smoker and is great for tamping down pine needles etc. prior to lighting.

- Oftentimes the bees will form propolis over the tiny holes on the lids of their feeding jars. Hitting the lids for a second with the torch melts the propolis immediately and clears the holes thus enabling the sugar syrup to flow freely.
- The lids themselves can get stuck on my jars. This can be very frustrating when trying to refill them. Running the torch around the rim of the lid loosens them up quickly.
- My torch makes for quick work when eliminating ant eggs or spider webs that collect under the inner cover or outside of the hive.
- Running my torch over my hive tool for a second or two between hives helps prevent the transfer of viruses and diseases between hives.
- The torch can also be used to slightly char the inside of a hive box if I suspect that there may be some spores or other pests or pathogens that I would like to prevent from being introduced to my apiary.



A few tips: Spend the extra money to buy the torch with a trigger start. The torch can get blown out multiple times, especially while working the bellows on your smoker as you light it. It can get very frustrating to have to relight the torch every time this happens. The trigger start keeps things moving so that you can get through your task at hand. It also has a locking feature to prevent it from accidentally being pressed.

Speaking of tips . . . Don't leave your torch bouncing around in the back of your truck.

There is a tip on the end of the torch that can work itself loose, unscrew and fall off. Once that is lost, you will have to buy a new torch!

Of course, always be smart when lighting your torch. Be sure to avoid being near highly combustible materials. It is not uncommon to have isopropyl alcohol close by for mite

checks. That alcohol is quite flammable. Don't let the two mix! Being that the torch lights so quickly you should also be sure to not light it near dry grass. Since it's just the pull of a trigger, it is easy to have a dangerous flame in a split second!

District 3 News

Kerry Wysocki



With state restrictions on gatherings opening up, we are seeing our clubs prepare themselves to once again meet in person. Pine River Beekeeping Club is not yet cleared to meet at the nature center, but they have been meeting at alternative locations. The annual picnic is on the schedule for next month. After several months of Zoom meetings, members are very excited to see their beek friends and share war stories. The 4 hives at the nature center remain active under the guidance of Jim Ford who also maintains Macomb Community College Bee Club's 6 hives. MCC has indicated their club may return to normal activities in 1-2 months.

Keep Growing Detroit just does that, it keeps growing. Their staff is working overtime on the community outreach programs with their gardens and accompanying bee hives. They run a beginner class each Spring with 6 sessions from late May – June. Local Detroit beeks come in for demonstrations and lend their knowledge to this ever increasing interest to all things bees.

Oakland Beekeepers Club may also finally begin live meetings the second week of July. The club awaits final approval from Bloomfield Hills Schools which own and operate the Bowers Farm and E.L. Johnson Nature Center. In 2021, a brand new apiary was established at Bowers Farm. There are currently 9 thriving hives near the gardens which has recently been added to the Bee Informed Sentinel program. The first data samples should head out shortly. The Bowers personal hives have also been resurrected from one mouse-friendly small overwintered hive to five strong, including two swarm captures.

SEMBA continues to lead our area in informative monthly Zoom meetings. With a 500 participant capacity, many club leaders strongly encourage their membership to not only join but gather and participate in these sessions. SEMBA Education Director, Rich Wieske, is leading his team through a multi-platform beginner class that began in January via Zoom and now has had several live apiary visits with their 60 plus strong class. Most importantly incorporating Meghan Milbrath's sustainable beekeeping practices by providing the majority of these students with overwintered Michigan strong nucs and personal mentors through the season.

Bowers Sentinel Hives

Bowers Sentinel hives

What seems to be a common thread for 2021 are queenless hives on a larger scale than in previous years. Education about removing frames with queen cells and establishing back-up nucs has been crucial to many. It's wonderful to see our

community sharing frames of eggs with young brood and even “spare” queens. Beating the oppressive heat is a HOT topic. Lots of suggestions and hydration, an obvious key to good health. Wearing a camelback water carrier under the suit is one piece of advice. Another idea is an ice vest. Prices range from \$50-\$200. Or, if you are a female beek like me, most of us have freezer packs already and just simply place them inside your sports bra. Works like a charm.



To parody Garrison Keillor, that’s the news from District 3 where all the bees are strong, all the drones are mite free, and all the queens are laying.

District 4 Ray Browers

Fremont Area Beekeepers: Meeting Thursday June 17, 2021

Kim Woods brought a sample of mead that she found in the Traverse City Area. The speaker was Larry Hasselman, a past professional beekeeper. He covered a method of raising bees strictly for the honey.

Muskegon Area Beekeepers: Meeting Wednesday June 30, 2021

They are conducting mite checks and discussing different mite treatments.

They are doing food sharing with various food and drink made with honey.

The Muskegon club is directing its program toward the new beekeeper, stressing points like lighting a smoker and keeping it burning, hive inspections, answering questions, and making them feel welcome through socializing.

Grand Rapids Bee Club will be meeting Wednesday July 7, 2021.

Holland Area Beekeepers Association met in June.

Superior Beekeeping Club Donates Hives to Local Community Garden Project by Sue Payant from District 7

Partridge
Creek
Farms is a
community
based,



hands-on farming program.

They have 6 community gardens throughout the city of Ishpeming in Marquette county. With the help of Joel Lantz and Sue and Dave

Payant, the Superior Beekeeping Club has donated all the equipment (suits, wooden ware, smoker, hive tools etc...) and two packages of bees to this project.

Connected to the community garden project is a Farm-to-School program involving all of the 5th grade students in the city of Ishpeming. The hives are being used to teach them the value of pollination in their food supply. Sue is doing both in class and in the field teaching. She is also mentoring the Partridge Creek Farm staff on how to become successful beekeepers.

In April the kids painted the hive bodies, giving them a sense of ownership. Sue held two in-school classes on the make up of a colony and what equipment is needed to care for bees. She had them try on bee suits and handle some drawn out comb. They also got to try some honey.

In May, Sue and Dave helped the Partridge Creek Farms personnel hive the packages. Sue took the kids to the bee yard the next week to visit their bees and she demonstrated how they had been hived. They talked about pollination and made seed bombs.

In June, a week-long summer day camp was held for these same 5th graders. Sue joined them and did an actual hive inspection with them. Aili and Johnathon were chosen to suit up and handle the





bees. They assisted by taking a frame to the edge of the circle to show the other children what capped honey, brood and pollen looked like. They quickly became adept at picking out the drones. Johnathon said, "My grandpa will never believe what I did." When Aili was asked if she wanted to become a beekeeper, she said, "Yes I did when I first painted the hives."

Find out more about Partridge Creek Farms on their Facebook page.

Celebrating the Life of Lisa Robinson



The Detroit beekeeping community lost a dear friend and major bee advocate when MBA member Lisa Robinson passed on May 24.

Lisa had recently retired from a full-time job and was working on the foundations of a non-profit for honey bee education. You may have met Lisa at a meeting of Sweet on Detroit, at her booth in the Hope Village Farmers Market, volunteering at Bee Fest on Belle Isle, apprenticing at the hives of Green Toe Gardens or working with bees in the garden at Marygrove College. She was a quiet person with a deafening community spirit, who did not seek accolades for her consummate service. Lisa will be sorely missed, not only by her friends and family, but by all the people who were touched by her showing up and showing us how to participate as a community bee educator.