MICHIGAN BEEKEEPERS’ ASSOCIATION

MINUTES

Saturday, August 25, 2012

Members in attendance: Terry Toland, Ann Leonard, Zachary Huang, Don Lam, Roger Hoopingarner, Tim Dekorne, Terry Klein, Don Schram, Bill Sirr

Meeting called to order at 10:03am.

Call for changes and additions to the agenda.

Approval of the agenda, motion passed.

Approval of the minutes, motion passed.

Approval of the Treasurer’s Report, motion passed. (Read by T. Toland, in S. Tilmann's absence.)

Honey Sticks: Availability of honey sticks was discussed, along with their distribution to club members who request them. T. Toland announced that honey sticks will be brought to the board meetings from now on, and will be given to club presidents who request them. Housing a number of them with local club presidents was agreed to be a good idea, especially with the distances involved with the northern and western clubs.

Coloring Books: Coloring books will also be brought to the next meeting for local club presidents to store for their club needs.

State Apiarist Report: (Read by T. Toland, in M. Hansen's absence.) Mike Hansen was not here today, however he sent an email in lieu.

He, and the legislative liaison for MDARD, had an interview with Senator Booher. 15 minutes was allotted in the senator's busy schedule, however the meeting went for 45 minutes, due to the Senator's interest in beekeeping. In Mike's words, “I believe it was a very positive meeting and I was able to re-state positions that have already been stated by Michigan's commercial beekeepers.”

The National Honey Bee Survey will begin again next month, and through October. Volunteers for the survey will again be asked for, and commercial beekeepers will be contacted.

M. Hansen also wrote: “We received the Section 18 for Hopguard in Michigan last spring. I now need to complete 5 interviews with beekeepers that used the product. I plan to do the interviews during the National Honey Bee Survey inspections, but I can always use a few names of beekeepers that used the product. We use this information to support subsequent requests to maintain the Section 18 label. The
questions are not intrusive, but rather ask how well the product worked and how important the product is to the industry.”

Old Business:

Summer Picnic: T. Toland fell ill and was unable to attend the picnic in Novi, MI. According to reports, there were about 120 people in attendance. The next summer picnic will be at Oren Best's in Sunfield, MI. We will be in contact with him to schedule an exact date.

Fall Conference: The Fall Conference will take place Friday and Saturday, October 5 and 6, at the Gateway Holiday Inn in Flint. A. Leonard reported that we have a hospitality room at our disposal, however, she would like someone to be in charge of it and will make phone calls to look for a volunteer. Dann Purvis of Purvis Queens (formerly Purvis Brothers), will be our guest speaker. D. Schram agreed to make sure he arrives without problem and is taken care of.

There will be a Beekeepers' Banquet, which is required by the venue, and 50 tickets will need to be sold. This is said to be typical. A sample menu with dinner selections was circulated around the room. The dinner will be Friday night, after that day's conference. Entertainment options were talked about, although no single option was decided. Price for the banquet will be $25 a ticket.

Dann Purvis will do keynote both days, and will do break out sessions on both days, also.

Honey and wax judging will be back for 2012! Norm Adams, with the Saginaw Valley club, will perform judging duties, along with Oren Best assisting.

Iotron is a company in Indiana that does electron beam processing to sterilize beekeeping equipment, like supers, comb, etc. They would like the opportunity to present at the conference. Details about the process were discussed. Terry Toland will contact him for a break out session.

Blocks of hotel rooms have been reserved at $89 each, per night.

Don Lam volunteered to do a winter preparation breakout session.

The question of whether we should have vendors at the Fall Conference was discussed. It was decided that it is an addition draw for beekeepers, and additional income for the association in the form of table fees, says Don Lam. And, at this venue, we do have the room. Tim Dekorne mentioned that it's good for letting new beekeepers know where to get equipment. Table fees will be the same as last year; $50 a table. Don Lam will contact vendors, and assume the vendor area duties, again.

The Fall Conference is traditionally where the association's financial records and books are audited for the year. Forming a small committee to audit them prior to the conference expedites the process and will be looked into by Terry Toland.

MDOT Flyers, tabled as Bob Hollis and Cindy Dudock were absent.
Newsletter, also tabled, as Roxi Davidek was absent.

Oral History Report, with Rich Wieske absent, tabled also.

New business:

**Michigan Commercial Beekeepers Association (MCBA):** Tim Dekorne and Terry Klein introduced themselves as the President and Vice-President of the newly formed MCBA. The rest of the MCBA board consists of Ed Eisele as Secretary, and John Hettinga as Treasurer.

The MCBA was formed because of the need for a commercial voice for beekeepers in the state. They have been meeting with lawmakers, with good feedback and results, especially with hot button issues such as the eradication of certain plants that have been deemed invasive. Tim Dekorne also explained the key differences between the commercial beekeepers in the state and the hobbyists that mainly comprise the MBA membership.

It was also explained that the commercial beekeepers needed a faster moving association than the MBA could provide, to meet with politicians and policy makers on issues that affect their businesses and livelihoods.

Overall, it was felt by the group, and voiced by Terry Toland, that from an MBA standpoint, a commercial branch group is a good idea. He also voiced the sentiment that if there is anything the MBA can do for their group, to let us know. Tim Dekorne agreed, and felt that we can definitely work together to further all levels of beekeeping.

Terry Klein extended an honorary membership to the MCBA to President Terry Toland, and also asked for a table that the next upcoming Honey Festival to promote their new association.

Roger Hoopingarner and Bill Sirr, both provided a historical background of the past commercial nature of the MBA, and how the current membership is a result of an influx of younger hobbyist beekeepers, and the natural attrition of older commercial beekeepers.

Dues for the newly formed MCBA are $100 dollars for the first year, to help with the necessary start up costs. The MCBA asks that membership be limited to those who derive their sole income from beekeeping, and have 300+ hives, or are retired full-time beekeepers.

[Secretary's Note: The MCBA was formed loosely about 2 years prior. This was a reaction to the attempt of eradicating Star Thistle by releasing a root weevil and seed head fly, performed by Dr. Doug Landis of MSU. The loss of this plant would be disastrous to the commercial beekeeper, and the effects would cascade beyond losing the commercial beekeepers from within the state. Larger operations would move from the state, which would lose tax revenue. Naturally, pollination fees would increase across the board, and would be felt by all residents at the supermarket cash register. This is without taking into consideration all the smaller incidental benefits the commercial beekeepers provide, such as providing package bees, nucs, extraction services, attracting support businesses like Dadant, etc., that the smaller hobbyist enjoys.]
**Doug Landis Open House:** The MCBA was invited to tour the experimental plantings at the MSU Agricultural Station in Traverse City, and see the proposed plants to replace Star Thistle. Terry Klein provided a candid report on the open house.

Landis provided a tour of 7 plots, each measuring about 12x40, and planted with flowers, which had turned brown and were in pretty poor condition. The flowers they had selected for Star Thistle replacement aren’t sustainable for commercial beekeeping. Tim Dekorne, however, felt that they deserve some credit for the effort. Several people, though, weren’t happy with what they seen.

Dr. Issac reported that they had just received a $10 million dollar grant for a 5 year study on these replacement plants. Beekeepers in attendance would like them to refocus their efforts on plants that are more compatible with the honey bee, rather than various plants that restore grassy plains.

Various plants were planted in the test plots, including types of mint, Buckwheat (which had blooms, but no bees, and ironically, isn't a native plant either) and were being evaluated. Terry Klein talked to Dr. Landis, who agreed to come up to his farm and see other plant possibilities, such as Mountain Mint and Anise Hyssop, which are in bloom there.

The open house was aimed toward the fruit growers, who are being courted to plant these native plants and to encourage natural pollinators. It was clear that these offerings are not cost effective to the growers, and the beekeepers pointed out that attractants for bees would be detrimental to the bees themselves, as the fruit trees are typically sprayed with pesticides soon after pollination.

As an update, Dr. Landis has agreed to not release any more bio-control insects, due to the efforts of the MCBA. However, Dr. Landis, in a effort of finger pointing, makes it out that the MBA, specifically a letter written by R. Hoopingarner without MBA consent, was responsible for approving the releases. The MCBA will sit down with Landis in the future and discuss the other non-native plants that are on the eradication list.

Terry Klein pointed out that Landis had no answer as to why an environmental or economic impact study wasn't done prior to bio-control releases.

Klein also mentioned that he had asked a representative of a local Traverse City environmental organization if the MCBA came across as a radical group. The representative replied that he was surprised by the anger and passion of the group. Terry explained to him that its fear for their own existence and their family's income that drives them to be that way, and the organization rep was understanding and sympathetic at that point.

On that similar vein, it was noted by the conservation district extension agents that they're dealing with an industry that is highly stressed. MCBA has vowed to work with them.

Dr. Landis also provided some update on the released insects. Apparently, the root weevil doesn't have the ability to fly. However, the seed head fly does. It is anticipated that the seed head fly should travel about 3-4 miles a year, with the root weevil only traveling a couple hundred yards each season.

There was open discussion about the status of another controlled invasive, Purple Loosestrife. It is apparently making a comeback. The root weevil that attacks that plant dies out periodically, and makes an ebb and flow pattern of existence. Its on the upswing, but its taken 10 years to make a come back. The good news; it's more prolific than the Star Thistle.
**Election Committee:** Roger Hoopingarner spoke freely that he didn't realize that his job to oversee the elections was going to be pushed on him so quickly. He asked for input for people who might be a District Rep for Region 4, which is a position formerly held by R. Jorgensen who has voiced to Hoopingarner that he would like to vacate the office. Districts 2 and 6 have incumbent candidates; Mark O'Neill for District 2, and Bob Hollis for District 6. Hoopingarner has yet to contact Jim Dodder to see if he'd like to re-run for Member-At-Large. Other incumbent candidates are Steve Tilmann for Treasurer and Ann Leonard for Vice-President. Roger Hoopingarner will get in touch with S. Tilmann and get an email out to seek possible candidates and to look for volunteers to assist with the election.

R. Hoopingarner reported that 283 people have paid dues current, as of April 2012, and are eligible for voting.

**Spring Conference:** Don Lam brought up the fact that ABF hosts a Serious Sideliner Symposium and suggests a Serious Sideliner track be put on the spring agenda. He volunteered to assist with the planning and execution. He also would like to see bringing the microscope session back to the conference. T. Toland explained that we are too late to bring it back for this spring.

Toland explained that one of the main complaints of attendees is the repetition of the same topics every year. The challenges of providing a fresh conference each year were discussed.

The date for the spring conference (ANR Week) is the first week of March, which means our conference is slated for the second weekend, or March 8 – 9. Meghan Hronke is our conference contact person at the Kellogg Center. The overcrowding problem was discussed, along with possibility of booking fewer rooms, but larger rooms. R. Hoopingarner explained how the south rooms at the Kellogg Center can be opened up with dividers. (These are the A and B rooms on the map.) We do not have a guest keynote speaker as of yet. Possible speakers were discussed, but it was decided that a larger attendance of board members was desired before any decision was made.

**Next Meeting:** It was felt that the board would like another meeting in September, in preparation for the Fall Conference. **The next MBA board meeting date is September 16, which is a Sunday.** This was done due to an odd MSU football schedule in the month of September. The meeting will be in the usual location, in the Natural Science building, at **2pm**, instead of the regular time.

An MBA board meeting date for November was also discussed. T. Toland said that we should see how September's Sunday meeting goes first before we plan more. D. Schram suggested that we set the date and move it if necessary. [Secretary's Note: There is a gap in the MSU football schedule on November 10, which may be a bye week. We may need to accommodate for a chance game which would make movement around MSU impossible.] The MBA board is tentatively set to meet on Saturday, November 10, at 10am, in the Natural Science building.

There will be another MBA board meeting in January.

Bill Sirr mentioned as a point of interest, that he was recently in Fairbanks, Alaska. Honey there sells for $1 an ounce, he reports. That is, when it's available.
HAS: The Heartland Apicultural Society (HAS) has asked Zachary Huang, who is chairperson of HAS, to sponsor their meeting here in Michigan in 2014. He needs to form a committee. He told that it's a smaller production, compared to ANR week.

Association Conference Assistance: Terry Toland has been contacted by salespeople who represent various associations, and their job is to book associations into venues for conferences. They would like to handle booking venues for us, at no cost. It is implied that their commission comes from the venues that they book. As the MBA Fall Conference is the only conference that would need to be scheduled, it was generally felt that we will continue to book our meeting venues ourselves.

Meeting adjourned at 11:35a.