

COMB Courier

Mid-Michigan—Land of the bee

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Editor: mike french

Canada versus the U.S.

Apimondia fever is coming to Michigan.

The world-wide congregation of beekeepers is coming to north America in 2019. The bidders for the conference are our neighbor Canada, and the good old U.S.A. This is a win-win for us, but it would be a feather in our cap if it was held in Minneapolis, instead of the Alberta prairie: Minneapolis being the designated venue for our side. Politics always plays a part in these decisions, so a letter delivered to the right quarters would help. Please do not enclose any money, as this may mistaken for a bribe, *a la FIFA*.

Questions not asked: Do the bees recognize international borders? Are there bee custom posts on the border? Do they have to make pollen and honey declarations, and are they searched for renegade pollen?

I have met the enemy

I have met the enemy, and it is—corn syrup. Yes, corn syrup. Read the ingredients on processed products like snack bars and energy bars. The sweetener and binding agent is corn syrup. Once again, we are being stymied by the corn and soy people. We need to convince manufacturers and the general public that the preferred agent should and could be honey. Honey has all the properties of corn syrup, plus the health benefits we all know come with the consumption of our favorite product.

There is only one hurdle to jump before we get too excited, corn syrup is cheap, cheap, cheap. Much cheaper than honey! So, how do we convince them that our product is superior to theirs? Advertising, that's what! Who pays for the ads? We do of course, through our contributions to the National Beekeeping Association.

At one COMB meeting I was saddened and dejected to find that one member, unable to sell all of his honey harvest, sold it in 5-gallon buckets to Groebs of Onstead for less than \$2 a pound. An open door into the food industry would put paid to unhappy tales such as this. I sell my honey at a local festival, without this outlet I would be hard put to sell it all.

Color me . . .

The traditional color of bee hives has always been white. Why this is so, I have no idea. Perhaps there was a surplus of white paint after World War II, who knows. Some beekeepers paint their hives in different colors as a means for identifying supers and hive bodies. Do the bees

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care? Not according to my informant. Bees do not have an avenue in which to announce their preference, so we have to take our best guess. I think different colors for different hives are a good idea, and I will experiment with this next year. Of course, that means I will have to buy smaller tins of paint at a greater cost, but what the heck, I've spent plenty already on my so-called hobby, what's a few more dollars down the chute?

Now comes the biggie: do I change the color of my bee suit to blend in with the new arrangement? And, if I do, what color will look best on me? What about camo? Decisions, decisions!

It tolls for me . . .

If you see repeated items in this newsletter, it is not because I'm short of material, — because I'm not! Often I forget to erase said material from my slush pile. So there!

. . . It tolls for thee

Once pollen is extracted from the honey, you can't trace the country of origin. 80% of honey sold in the U.S.A. doesn't have what's listed on the label. No pollen in national honey distributor Sue Bee honey products, they have been filtered out, therefore its origin can't be traced. Doesn't anyone give a waxed ear about all these deceptive practices? *Send not for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee.*

P. S. I stole that last line from Ernest Hemingway. I have no shame.

Ask the editor

Dear Ed,
I like to smoke cigars. Would it be okay to use them instead of a smoker?
Signed, Choker

C.O.M.B. Monthly meeting.
2nd Monday of the month 6:30pm.
MSU Pavilion, Farm Lane, E. Lansing

Dear Choke,
If you insist on smoking with your veil on, at least switch to wire mesh, or the choke will be on you.

Bee Read

If you have a comment, query, problem, or an interesting story or anecdote concerning bees that you would like to share with your fellow beekeepers, here is your chance. Send it in to mjbusybee@frontier.com or debbie.foote@hotmail.com or hand it in at the meeting. Jane Carhartt may be contacted at janesbees@yahoo.com
This is your newsletter, make use of it!

Bee Classifieds

If you have any bee-related items you would like to buy, sell, or trade, this section is for you. This service is free for members of C.O.M.B. You may submit ads to Mike French or Deb Foote. There will be a nominal fee for

associate members.

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**Deadline for next issue is October 30th**