

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA FEBRUARY 2003 NEWSLETTER

DATE: Tuesday, February 25, 2003
TIME: 7:00-Basic Beekeepers; 8:00-General Meeting/Program
PLACE: Community Center, 205 Main St., Round Rock
PROGRAM: Queen Bees: Jimmie Oakley and Clint Walker
HOSTS: **Earbie & Melanie Matheny, Robert & Mary Bost**

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I hope you didn't come to the meeting last month only to find that it wasn't being held in the Community Center: We had to go to the Round Rock Library instead as some roof repair work was being done on the Community Center. Some of our members stayed awhile near the usual meeting place to direct members to the Library, and we hope everyone was duly notified. The repair work is finished so we will be back at the above address for our meeting Tuesday night.



We will be talking about queen bees at our meeting this month. Jimmie Oakley will discuss what queen breeders do to produce queens when the Basic Beekeepers meet. He will have materials used in this process to demonstrate his talk. Clint Walker has been invited to discuss the different races of bees and the qualities looked for in each race. We hope he can accept the invitation, as he is so knowledgeable and articulate about bees.

We will be taking orders for queens and packages of bees at the meeting. The date for delivery of our club order will be Saturday, April 5. More specifics will be available in the March newsletter. Packages of bees will be \$48.00 for the 3- pound package that includes the queen, and she will be clipped and marked, no exceptions. Queens will be \$10.00, all marked. Add \$1.00 if you want your queen(s) clipped and marked. These are Clint Walker's prices for quantity orders; if you order bees other than with the club order, you will need to expect to pay higher prices. Please have your check ready when you make your order; if you cannot attend the meeting, you may mail your order with check to the return address on this newsletter.

We welcome new members Chris Hill , Georgetown; Mark Jones, Leander; and John Sivells, and Ray and Darlene Hawkins, Marble Falls. Also, it was good to welcome back Brit Schlinke of Austin after several year's absence. Renewing their membership at the meeting were Eldor and Elaine Schorn, Killeen; Rick Lattanzio, Liberty Hill; Frank Fajkus, Killeen; Wilbur and Donnie Brinkmeyer, Taylor; Karin, Joe, Meghan and Tyler Cantlon, Marble Falls; James and Genevieve Friesenhahn, Austin; John and Taysha Howe, Georgetown; Frank and Barbara Hunt, Austin; Harold Kind, Round Rock; Buddy, Cherie, and

Lydia Miller, Marble Falls; Deane and Evan Thomas, Georgetown; and Stan Timmerman, Austin. Also received since the meeting are renewals for Emmett Glosson, Austin; Travis and Maureen Lane, San Angelo; Elmer Goertz, Pflugerville; and Jonathan and Theresa Clyburn, Georgetown.

We thank those of you who have notified us of a change of address. One newsletter that was returned to us had the notation “due to state mandated 911 changes this address is no longer valid”. Please keep us updated on mailing as well as e-mail addresses.

We hope all those WCABA members who have not yet renewed their membership will do so Tuesday night. We need each of you, and we trust that our programs and conversations about bees are helpful to each of you. Our membership is by the calendar year (January through November—no meeting in December) and the dues are only \$10.00 per year for each member family. Several bee organizations have lost members and have become inactive; let’s don’t let that happen to WCABA. Pay your dues, come to every meeting if possible, and bring a friend who is interested in bees. Remember, if you have neglected to pay your WCABA dues by the time the newsletter is mailed in March, you will not receive a newsletter.

Robert Bost, chairman of the Ed Wolfe Memorial scholarship committee, has already received several applications from youngsters interested in learning beekeeping. This is encouraging. If you know of a school age boy or girl who is interested in learning about the fascinating world of beekeeping, have him/her contact Robert or Jimmie Oakley to receive an application form. The deadline for mailing the application back to Robert Bost, 4355 C. R. 110, Georgetown, TX 78626 is March 1. The committee needs time to meet and evaluate the applications as well as to notify the winners before the meeting on March 25.

Julie Hein, assisted by Jeann Schmidt, set up a beekeeping display in the Georgetown Library on Saturday, February 1. As luck would have it, a mold problem in the library was discovered and the library had to shut down for a week; however, Mr. Eric Lashley, librarian, stated that he expected the library to reopen on the 17th. I hope many of you will be able to go by and see this interesting display. If you do not live in Georgetown, please refer to last month’s newsletter to find out how you can check out some of the following books about beekeeping:

“The Secret Life of Bees” by Sue Monk Kidd

“Apis Mellifera a.k.a. Honey Bee” by Rick Green

“The Keeper of the Bees” by Gene Stratton Porter

“Beeing” by Rosanne Thomas

“The Beekeeper’s Apprentice” by Laurie King

“Honey Bees” (author not listed)

“So Shall You Reap” by Marilyn Wallace

“Beekeeping in the United States” by Books for Business

“A Recipe for Bees” by Gail Anderson-Dargatz

“Beekeeping: A Pet Owner’s Manual” by Werner Melzer

“A Land of Milk and Honey” by Faye Kellerman

“Bees” by Rudolf Steiner

“Book of Bees” and “Country Year: Living the Questions” by Sue Hubbell

“Five Boys” by Mick Jackson

“From Flowers to Honey” by Robin Nelson

“Hive Management” by Richard Bonney

“Honey: From Flower to Table” by Stephanie Rosenbaum

“Life Cycle of a Bee” by Lisa Trumbauer

“Beekeeping for Dummies” by Howland Blackiston

“Beekeeping: A Practical Guide” by Richard Bonney

“From Where I Sit: Essays on Bees, Beekeeping, and Science” by Mark Winston

“Killer Bees: The Africanized Honey Bee in the Americas” by Mark Winston

“Honey Thief” by Elizabeth Graver

“New Complete Guide to Beekeeping” by Roger Morse

Door prize donations last meeting were a decorated bee cookie by Jimmie Oakley; a Buzzy Bee bath ball by Barbara Hunt; a loaf of homemade wheat bread, Deane Thomas; and 2 boxes of Valentine candy, Jeann Schmidt. Lucky winners were Robert Bost, John Howe, Kristin Jung, Wilbur Brinkmeyer, and Buddy Miller. These door prize drawings are great fun: anyone can donate an item and these are always appreciated.

Following a presentation on how Heifer International uses donations to help families in poverty-stricken areas of the world to learn to care for various kinds of animals beneficial to their area and then pass on the first progeny to another deserving family, our members voted to donate \$100.00 to be used for purchasing bee hives. Following the meeting, a couple of anonymous donations were added to the club’s donation. We trust that with good husbandry, many more people will be benefited by having this good food substance, pure honey.

As the weather begins to warm, bees begin to swarm, and we begin to get calls for swarm removals. If you can help with retrieving swarms or with removing them from structures, please be sure to sign the swarm retrieval list that we will pass around at the next several meetings. Also, we need to complete the host sign-up sheet; please give consideration to when you can bring refreshments and sign up for the month you prefer.

Have you checked your bees to see if the hive is queenright? With the weather being spring one day and winter the next, these abrupt changes in temperature may have affected our bees adversely. Be sure to check your hives to see if the queen has been laying and that there are all stages of bee development, from eggs to capped brood. In A. I. Root’s book, ABC and XYZ of Bee Culture, it says, “Such a condition indicates general prosperity, and the beekeeper can feel that his bees are doing well. But if there are no eggs nor young larvae, and the queen can not be found, and if there are also initial queen cells the probabilities are that the queen has recently died or that a swarm has issued.”

If the queen is laying and has a good brood pattern, should she be replaced simply because she is a year old? That’s debatable. If there is a preponderance of Africanized bees in the area, young, vigorous queens have a better chance of having a strong force of bees to withstand the AHB’s attempt to

take over the hive; however, if she is laying well and the workforce is bringing in a good supply of nectar, a beekeeper is usually reluctant to interrupt this process with installing a new queen. Watching the hive's behavior, especially their temperament, may be better than automatically replacing queens every year. If you do plan to make replacements, ordering your queens early in the year is your best assurance for getting good quality queens at the time you want to install them in your hives.

Kim Flottum has a thoughtful commentary on queens in his column, "Inner Cover", in the February '03 issue of Bee Culture magazine. Also in the same magazine, the "Do you Know?" department has some pertinent information to consider as beekeepers prepare to have their colonies in peak condition to take advantage of early nectar and pollen flows. Some of the statements that are made are "Brood rearing begins in an overwintered colony before the workers begin to forage for nectar". The minimum temperature for active foraging is approximately 55 degrees F. Also, "In late Winter/early Spring the majority of the food stores should be located in the uppermost hive body. A colony will starve in mid-Winter even though there is plenty of honey in the lower brood-food chambers, if there is too little honey in the upper food-brood chamber. Over the Winter, the cluster slowly eats its way upward and there should always be food above and to the sides of the Winter cluster."

If, when you check your hives, you find that your bees have very little food storage, you should consider feeding them with sugar syrup or surplus honey from your previous crops. During the winter months, we fed a syrup of 2:1 ratio of sugar to water with a little old honey mixed in. Now that the weather is warming, we are making a 1:1 sugar water solution and since we have plenty of old, dark honey, we continue to add that to the sugar water. We are hoping to have good, strong colonies of bees that will take advantage of a good wildflower crop we are optimistically expecting. We hope your bees will be ready, too.

Also in the current Bee Culture magazine Ann Harman has nine quick and easy honey recipes. One of them is below. I hope you will have a chance to check out the others on page 49-50.

CHOCOLATE BURRS

2 squares unsweetened chocolate

½ teaspoon vanilla

3 tablespoons honey (a light, mild variety)

Few grains salt

3 cups corn flakes

Combine all ingredients except corn flakes in a sauce pan, heat until melted and blend thoroughly. Then stir in corn flakes. Drop from a teaspoon onto waxed paper and let cool.

For Sale: *Used deep & shallow supers. Frames available. Hive bottoms, inner lids, tops, and other equipment available at reasonable cost. **Call Mrs. Carson Smith at (512) 255-2600 for information.***

Bees

Queens

Honey

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