

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA SEPTEMBER 2003 NEWSLETTER

DATE: Tuesday, September 23, 2003
TIME: 7:00 P. M.
PLACE: Round Rock Community Center, 205 Main Street
PROGRAM: Annual Honey Tasting, Honey Judging, Cooking Demonstration
HOSTS: **Kay and Jimmie Oakley, Darlene Hawkins**

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What an enjoyable time we had eating ice cream and cookies while we visited with our fellow beekeepers last month. And we had the biggest attendance we've had in a long while. The slide pictures Jimmie Oakley showed also gave an interesting view of what we can expect if we participate in the upcoming events.

Our program this month will again give us an opportunity to visit informally while we participate in the honey tasting. Everyone is encouraged to bring a small jar (such as a baby food jar) of honey to be tasted. (It doesn't have to be honey your bees produced: it can be a "mystery" honey.) Everyone can taste each of the samples and will have three votes to indicate their preferences. The sample receiving the most votes will receive a blue ribbon followed by red and white ribbons for the next highest votes.

While the honey tasting is taking place, honey judging will also be done on the 2-pound queenline jars of honey brought by our members. This honey will be judged for clarity, lack of bubbles or any debris, and taste. The judges will have specific criteria for scoring the honey and will award points according to the standards each jar meets. Ribbons will be awarded according to this scoring. All of the honey will be taken to the State Fair in Dallas to be exhibited in the Food Booth, and when the Fair is over, will be given to the Happy Hills Childrens' Home in Granbury.



Kay Oakley, assisted by her granddaughter, Sarah, will give a cooking demonstration using honey. The audience will get to taste these delectable goodies to give them their stamp of approval. There will also be some brochures that the Honey Board has sent, enough for everyone to have two or three to take home. This should be a very interesting program.

Margaret Henson is asking that each of the associations in TBA put together a basket of honey and/or by-products of the hive to be auctioned at the TBA Convention in November. Be thinking of what you might be able to contribute: lip balm, beeswax candles, etc. Jimmie Oakley will have more information about this at the meeting.

We were saddened to hear that Herbert Konze, a charter member of WCABA, passed away Monday, September 1. Visitation was on Wednesday evening and funeral services were held Thursday. We offer our heartfelt condolences to Alma and family.

Deane Thomas asked to be relieved of the responsibility of Treasurer due to his work hours, so Harold Kind was elected to that post as Jimmie Oakley has become the

interim program chairman. We will miss Deane and Evan at our meetings and hope that they can return in the near future.

We welcome new members Kimberly and Bert Arnett of Hutto; David Felps, CedarPark; Stephen Poldrack, Round Rock; and Marcus and Jody Young, Elgin. Dorothy Steffek of Taylor and James, Helen, and Desi Swenson were guests, and we were delighted that members Travis and Maureen Lane from San Angelo were visiting relatives in this area and were able to attend our meeting. We hope all these people enjoyed the meeting and will be able to continue attending meetings.

Door prize donations were made by Jacque McBride, Robert and Mary Bost, Deborah Jorden, Travis and Maureen Lane, and Nial and Darla Chase. Door prize winners were honey skep pot – Maureen Lane; Concho Valley Beekeepers cookbooks – Barbara Hunt, Donnie Brinkmeyer, and Samuel Oakley; hanging honey bear – Sarah Oakley; bee garden fence – Julie Hein; bee paper towel – Nathanael Hein; Kim Arnett – beeswax skin cream; candle holder/candle – Helen Swenson; bee socks – Abigail Oakley; and Burt’s Bees kit – Meghan Cantlon. (I apologize to the donor of the candle holder/candle: I failed to write down your name. M.B.)

Ian Kjos has taken a part-time evening job prior to entering the Navy and said he and Iris would be unable to attend our meetings so they brought the library book they had checked out and asked me to return it for them. They also brought a pretty teapot with bee on top to be donated for a door prize. We wish them much success in this new endeavor. **If you have a book or any item checked out of the WCABA library, please return it or ask a member to return it if you can’t attend the next meeting.**

Most of us have finished harvesting this year’s honey crop and are looking forward to getting our bees ready for winter. Fall management includes checking for the presence of varroa mites and, if there is evidence of a problem, medicating them. We have asked G. C. Walker to bring Apistan strips to the meeting so those who want to buy them at either of the next two meetings, may do so. The usual medication is two strips per hive, and the strips will cost \$2.00 per strip. That’s much cheaper than letting the mites weaken and eventually destroy the colony of bees. Since we have had so much hot, dry weather, your bees may be short of winter stores. You may find it helpful to do a little extra feeding to keep the hive strong.



WCABA members taking part in the Honey Tasting at the meeting.

Recently a friend asked if we have organic honey. I knew organic truck garden producers had to adhere to stringent regulations, so I said, “No, we have pure raw honey.” When the *American Bee Journal* and *Bee Culture* arrived in the mail this week, there on the front covers were articles listed for organic honey. I have taken excerpts from both articles in case someone asks you about organic honey.

“While honey by any other name might taste as sweet, it would not be permitted to be sold as ‘organic’ honey without government approval. Exactly what is required under the new federal regulations to produce an organic honey that will be a sweet deal to consumers, producers and regulators is very much a sticky question.....Organic honey is honey which conforms to state and federal regulations for the production of organic food, however, honey is not specifically addressed in the federal organic regulations, and it is, also, omitted from the federal law which created the National Organic Program. Producers interested in organic honey should check with their state department of agriculture. Some states have passed laws of their own which govern organic foods. Many have not, but producers need to be aware of the possibility”, according to Rick Schell, a lawyer, in the ABJ.

Kim Flottum states, “There are, to produce organic honey, basically four components to the program: 1) where your bees are and where they forage; 2) how you manage them including housing and pest/disease control; 3) how you handle the crop, including harvesting and storage; and 4) labeling. A fifth component should be added I suppose, and that’s the record keeping system you’ll need to employ to document absolutely everything you do.”

Flottum further states, “Regulations specify that within the area surrounding your hives—a flexible circle extending about two miles in every direction—your bees must not encounter a whole host of man-made obstacles. These include, but are not limited to urban centers, landfills, cultivated (non-organic- crops routinely fertilized or chemically treated, golf courses and industrial facilities. Genetically modified planting areas must be avoided, and further, they require a significant buffer zone to avoid contamination with wild or organic forage.”

Both articles contain much more information; if you are interested in producing organic honey, they would be required reading.

The following recipe appeared in the Austin American-Statesman recently, giving several recipes intended to have a Texas Longhorns “flavor”. If you’re not a Longhorns fan, leave off the first two words of the name of the pie. The paper had taken the recipe from ‘Great Desserts of the South’.

Burnt Orange Sweet Potato Pie

1 ½ cups sweet potatoes, boiled and mashed (canned may be used) 4 eggs 1/3 cup sugar
2 Tbsp. Honey ¾ tsp. cinnamon ¼ tsp. nutmeg 1/8 tsp. ground ginger 1/8 tsp. salt
1 cup light cream 1 tsp. vanilla flavoring 9-inch pie shell, unbaked (or mini unbaked tart shells)

Mash the boiled sweet potatoes with a mixer until smooth. Beat 4 eggs lightly and add to potatoes. Stir in sugar and beat together. Add honey, cinnamon and nutmeg with the ground ginger, cream, salt and vanilla flavoring, mixing to blend. Pour mixture into an unbaked pie shell and bake in a preheated 450 degree oven for 10 minutes. Reduce the temperature to 350 degrees and bake for 30 minutes longer, or until a knife inserted near the pie’s center comes out clean. At this point the pie may be cooled. Serve with dollops of whipped cream. Serves 6 – 8.

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