

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA SEPTEMBER, 2008 NEWSLETTER

WWW.WCABA.ORG

(for meeting directions see website)

DATE: Tuesday, September 23, 2008
TIME: 7:00 P.M.—Beekeeping 101; 8:00--Program
PLACE: Allen Baca Senior Ctr, 301W. Bagdad, (Cafeteria Dining Rm), Round Rock
PROGRAM: Honey Tasting, Honey Judging
HOSTS: **Janet Church, Leroy Hampleman**

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NEWSLETTER

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I'm sorry I missed the Ice Cream Social last month. I did think of you eating all that ice cream and exchanging beekeeping stories while I was enjoying cruising the Alaskan coast, watching salmon swim upstream to their spawning area, and enjoying first-rate cuisine. I hope to see many of you at our meeting Tuesday evening. Remember: 4th Tuesday comes early this month—**please mark September 23 on your calendar today!**

Our honey tasting contest, known as the “Taster’s Choice,” is always a fun time as we taste the various samples brought by our club members. The samples, in small jars (such as baby food or pimienta jars) are numbered as they are brought in—no names or labels, please—and everyone is encouraged to poke a tasting stick into the different samples. Each person will get to cast three votes for the honeys they like best, or you can vote three times for one sample if you think it is outstanding. The results of the voting will determine the Taster’s Choice for 2008. A blue, red, and white ribbon will be awarded for first, second and third place. Come, bring your honey, participate, vote, have fun.

If you have read *Robbing the Bees* by Holley Bishop, you will remember that she writes extensively about “tupelo honey which is distinctively light and mild”. Also, it reportedly does not granulate as most other raw honeys do. A friend gave me a jar of tupelo honey six months ago and it hasn’t granulated. I’ll plan to bring it to the meeting and all are welcome to taste it and compare with our local honey. Perhaps you’d like to comment on it, too.

You are also invited to bring a two-pound jar of your honey to be judged. This judging is not for contest placing but judged against certain criteria: clarity, freedom from bubbles, freedom from any debris, taste, etc. These jars of honey are then displayed in the TBA booth at the Texas State Fair in Dallas and, after the Fair ends, are given to the Happy Hills Children’s Home in Granbury.



Speaking of the State Fair: if you would like to go to the Fair, get into the grounds on a pass, and talk about bees and honey, have we got a deal for you! Any of our WCABA members who would be willing to work in the TBA honey booth for half a day will have not only the fun of promoting beekeeping but will then have the other half of the day to attend the Fair. Members who have done this previously reported having a very good experience. Jimmie Oakley will have more information; see him at the meeting to sign up for the date you would like to help in the TBA booth.

There were several guests at the July meeting but regretfully, only one couple signed with their address so we can send them a newsletter. We welcome Phil and Dorothee Auldridge of Dripping Springs, Shirley and Chris Doggett, Sharon Van Hecke, Chris Corns, Eric Emerson II, and Laura Shanklund. If you know any of these visitors who didn't give their addresses, please share your newsletter with them or ask them to e-mail me at bostbees@juno.com and I'll be happy to send them the newsletter. We welcome visitors as well as potential new members.

Door prizes at the last meeting were donated by Jimmie and Kay Oakley, Faith Miller, Frank and Barbara Hunt, Elizabeth Exley, and Sara Reeves. Lucky winners were Elizabeth Exley, Sarah Reeves, Phil and Dorothee Auldridge, Daniel Oakley, Jen Martin, Nathan Exley, and Ben Oakley.

Now that another beekeeping season is nearly over, you might enjoy reading James E. Tew's article in the July '08 issue of *Bee Culture*, entitled "The Real World Versus the Ideal World". He states, "As each new bee season begins, I plan to do the right bee things.....The truth is that every year the bees are the same and every year, I am a year older.I do lead a chaotic bee life and many of my bee events are disastrous or nearly so: I am not a bad beekeeper, but simply a normal beekeeper. I have grown to believe that bee books, magazines and web pages offer ideal standards for beekeeping. My world is rarely ideal. Good things simply go wrong. That's the real world."

Labor. Now 60 years old and working full time at his day job, Tew finds that trying to get good help is not worth it, so he, alone, is his crew. After listing all the management recommendations, from requeening every year, treating for mites, controlling swarming, supering, processing honey, and other management procedures, he now does what many other beekeepers, do—keeps fewer colonies in fewer yards. Trying to keep bees the way we did in 1950's is impractical if not impossible. "It's not bad. It's just beekeeping. The world needs bees and the world needs beekeepers," Tew says.

Some of his suggestions are: (1) **Accept the 25-50-25 rule.** No one should expect 100% of your colonies to do great; 25% will be poor, 50% will be okay, while the remaining 25% will be great. (2) **Leave the bees alone.** We should open colonies only on good days while they are out foraging and it takes about 24 hours for a disturbed colony to return to their normal state. If you want to observe bees more often, he suggests that you get an observation hive to watch. (3) **Cut the busy work.** He says hives don't have to be neatly painted. Grass doesn't have to be constantly mowed. When supering, add too many boxes rather than too few. Scrape burr comb and propolis only enough to make equipment fit properly. If equipment needs extensive repair, toss it, and be sure the equipment components you are using are alike.

Put wheels on everything. Use hand trucks, carts, dollies. Don't stoop and lift any more than absolutely necessary. Consider a lift gate for your truck. Tew often leaves hives on his trucks when he moves them to fresh forage. (John Howe bought and uses the 4-wheel trailers that Robert and I had placed hives on in our outyards. MB) **Small things.** Tew uses ratchet straps instead of staples when moving

hives. Keep a bag of cedar bedding chips to use as smoker fuel or have a store of dry fuel . Start the smoker with pines needles or grass clippings and add chips. Keep adding chips and clippings and packing until the smoker is full, and with a few additions, it will burn all day.

Tew concludes: “Respect your bees, but respect yourself, too....Do the best you can with your bees and then let them do what they can, accept the outcome. Strive for great colonies but know that most will be average. Most importantly, work smart. Take care of yourself and your bees. We need you both”.

Below are a couple recipes using fall vegetables. These are taken from the Honey Queen Recipes published by the TBA and includes the names of the Honey Queens and the year they served.

COLESLAW

Deon Zumwalt, '84 & Shiryl Donahoo, '87

1 cup mild honey	1 cup wine vinegar	½ cup finely chopped onion	1 tsp. salt
½ tsp. celery seed	1 cup diced celery	½ cup diced green pepper	1 large cabbage, chopped

In a saucepan combine honey, vinegar, onion, salt, and celery seed. Bring mixture to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Cool. Mix celery and green pepper and add to mixture. Chill mixture for several hours or overnight. Add to cabbage just before serving time. Makes about 10-12 servings.

ACORN SQUASH

Shiryl Donahoo, '87

3 medium acorn squash	¼ cup butter	¼ tsp. cinnamon
½ tsp. salt	¼ tsp. ginger	1/3 cup honey

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Cut squash in half and clean. Place open side down in ½ inch of hot water, bake ½ hour. Pour off water; turn right side up. Place honey, butter, and seasoning mixture in each. Return to oven and bake another ½ hour.



Bees

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Honey

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