

# WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

## WCABA APRIL, 2009 NEWSLETTER

[WWW.WCABA.ORG](http://WWW.WCABA.ORG)

(for meeting directions see website)

DATE: Tuesday, April 28, 2009  
TIME: 7:00 P.M.—Beekeeping 101; 8:00--Program  
PLACE: Allen Baca Senior Ctr, 301W. Bagdad, (Cafeteria Dining Room), Round Rock  
PROGRAM: I Got My Bees, What Next??  
HOSTS: **Barbara Hunt and Mary Bost**

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### **NEWSLETTER**

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We couldn't ask for a meeting to be more informative and interesting than last month's WCABA meeting and to top it off, the **Texas Honey Queen, Nicole Pettibon**, attended and helped present Achievement Certificates to the 2008 **Ed Wolfe-Robert Bost** scholarship recipients as well as helped to welcome the **2009 scholarship winners: Paul Exley**, Georgetown; **Jared Rutherford**, Marble Falls; and **Colter Chase**, Killeen. Congratulations to this new class of beekeeping enthusiasts. May you have a good year with many exciting experiences.



2009 Wolf-Bost Scholarship Recipients

Our Program: By the time most of you read this you will have, or will be getting ready to, pick up your package bees, queen bees or nucs. Now that you have your bees, what next??? We will provide a short outline of what to do over the next several weeks and what to look for to keep you and your bees on track. They say, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Since you have to buy bees by the pound, it might be worth the time to consider some of the ounces that might make the difference in your beekeeping year to come. We will welcome questions and hopefully have lots of answers. Come see.

We appreciate **Clint Walker's** diligent efforts to ensure our getting the nucs he had expected to help us receive. When the beekeeper from whom he had arranged to buy nucs notified him that he would be unable to supply us, Clint checked with other well-known beekeepers and bought sufficient frames of brood for his needs and for WCABA members who had paid the club for nucs. **We will be receiving the nucs with their queens** as well

as **queens** that were **ordered separately** on **Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>** at the Bost farm (see attached map for directions).

For those of you who ordered queens, Jimmie Oakley will be marking queens for your convenience Saturday morning. Queens and nucs should be available by noon on the 25<sup>th</sup>. The scholarship recipients should be at the Bost farm by 1:00. Mr. Oakley will present his orientation talk and demonstration to the scholarship youths beginning at 1:30. Adult WCABA members are welcome to attend, also. And Randy Oakley will have protein patties that you can buy from him.

The Spring months, when hives are building up and get too crowded, are prime times for swarms to leave the hive and seek a new home, either in nature—like a hollow tree—or in a structure that offers protection from the elements. The swarm usually settles on a tree limb or other temporary haven while the scout bees locate a possible nesting area. This is when a beekeeper has the best opportunity to capture the swarm to start a new hive. The Taylor Daily Press published a good story this week about Wilbur Brinkmeyer, one of our WCABA members, retrieving a swarm and then locating the nest from which the bees had swarmed. We keep a list of members who would be willing to capture swarms. If you would like to be on that list, contact Mary Bost and give her your name, phone number(s) and areas you would serve. Tips to help in capturing swarms will be given later in the newsletter.

New members who joined WCABA at the last meeting are Shelley and Mark Franklin, Georgetown; Tommy, Amanda, Tyler, and Jared Rutherford, Marble Falls; and Tim, Paige, Kaycee, and Blake Roberts, Burnet. Joining by mail since the last meeting are Terry Rushing, Moody; Kimberly and Kevin Nesmith, Georgetown, and the Jack and Sherry Youngblood Family, Liberty Hill. We welcome guests Matt Thue, Christian Moore, Pietro Caporusso, Miranda Kimberly, and Kim Lehman. Renewing their membership were Stephen Poldrack, Round Rock; Albert Morgan, Austin; Edward Holzapfel, Killeen; Nancy Tuuk, Austin; Shirley Kinningham, Cameron; Gayle and Stanley Timmerman, Austin; Kent Knight, Georgetown; and since the meeting, Kim Arnett, Hutto.

Door prizes last meeting were donated by Shirley and Chris Doggett, Janet Church, Frank Hunt, Barbara Hunt, Carmen Heussner, Nathan Exley, and Kay and Jimmie Oakley. Lucky winners were Janet Church, Wilbur Brinkmeyer, Kay Oakley, Matt Thue, Christian Moore, Carmen Heussner, Josiah Youngblood, Rick Gommert, Saowanee Gommert, David Kohn, Elizabeth Exley, Luke Exley, Kathiren Chase, Nathan Exley, and Nial Chase.

If you work with bees, expect to get stung occasionally. Most domesticated bees are gentle, and sting only when they think they or their hive is threatened. Once a bee stings, the barb in the stinger is left at the sting site and the bee will soon die. To remove a bee's stinger, scrape it off: don't pull it out as that squeezes more of the venom into the sting site.

Some things to keep in mind to avoid getting stung are the following: (1) move slowly and deliberately around the hive; (2) avoid squeezing or crushing bees—the resulting odor incites the other bees; (3) avoid working bees in threatening weather; (4) don't swat at the bees: if one buzzes you, stand still; (5) don't stand in front of the hive entrance; work from the side or back; (6) wear appropriate protective gear: veil, gloves, bee suit or similar covering clothes, boots or high top shoes, close trouser leg bottoms with duct tape or other closure; (7) avoid wearing dark-colored clothing, such as denims; (8) use your smoker wisely-puff several puffs into entrance, under top lid before going into the hive; (9) work your bees at midday when foragers are afield; (10) don't wear any type perfume or hair spray.

If you get stung: (1) smoke the sting site ASAP; (2) ice applied to the site will alleviate some of the pain; (3) tape a penny over the sting site (I've seen this work); (4) keep an antihistamine, such as Benedryl, handy to lessen the effect. If your bee yard is 20 minutes or more from possible doctor intervention in case of severe allergic reaction, talk with your health care adviser about carrying an EpiPen to use. We carried one with us to our bee yards in Llano County; luckily, we never needed it but it made us feel more secure.

We are approaching “swarm season”. As the weather warms and if bee nests start to get crowded, the natural impulse for bees is to have the old queen leave several queen cells ready to hatch and she will leave the hive with about half the older bees. They will gather on the outside of the hive then take off in a cloud of bees to a nearby tree or other landing place, cluster—perhaps for a short while or maybe as long as three days—while scout bees locate a “suitable” nesting place. The best time to retrieve the swarm is while they are still clustered on the initial landing site.

If you would like to capture a swarm—after all, that's like getting a package of bees for free—you need to be prepared. You should have the brood box ready with frames/foundation installed, and have your tools you may need ready to take with you. Sometimes you can shake the cluster directly into the brood box. Great! But what if you need to climb a ladder to reach the swarm? We found a sturdy cardboard box much easier to lift and hold while shaking the bees into it. Perhaps you'll need to clip off the limb. Or maybe you will need to brush the laggards off after you've shaken the main cluster. And don't forget your smoker. We also liked to drizzle a little honey on the frames in the brood box; bees can smell possible food and decide that's a good place to go.

If you get a swarm call, there are several questions you need answered. Where is it—town, street address, name of caller, phone number—and where is the swarm located? Is it head high or higher, on a tree, in a wall, can you see it? How big is it—basketball, baseball, golfball size? How long has it been there? Is it on the caller's property, or will you need to get permission to go on site to retrieve it? Is it a threat to children or other people?

If you're not certain whether you'd like to retrieve swarms, you might like to talk to some of our experienced beekeepers such as Frank Hunt, Wilbur Brinkmeyer, John Howe, Randy Oakley or his sons. Also, Jimmie Oakley will have a printed handout entitled, “Catching Swarms and Removing Bees” which you would find far more informative than I have space for in this newsletter.

### **HONEY CINNAMON-CRANBERRY CHEX MIX – Kay Oakley**

6 Cups Chex cereals (Wheat, Rice, Corn or Crispix) 1 cup Honey Roasted Peanuts  
¼ cup butter or margarine ½ cup TEXAS Honey 1 tsp. ground cinnamon 1 cup dried cranberries  
½ cup vanilla yogurt-covered raisins (optional)

In large microwavable bowl, mix cereal and peanuts. In 2-cup microwavable measuring cup, microwave Honey and cinnamon uncovered on high, stirring after 1 minute until mixture comes to a boil and butter is melted (about 2 minutes on high). Pour over cereal mixture, stirring until evenly coated. Microwave uncovered on high for 2 minutes, stirring and scraping after 1 minute. Stir in cranberries, microwave uncovered on high for 2 minutes, stirring after every 40 seconds. Spread on wax paper or foil to cool. When cool, stir in yogurt-covered raisins if desired. Store in airtight container.



Above: Texas Honey Queen, Nicole Pettibon, assembles hive frames for Paul Exley to show a honey queen can.

TopLeft: Jared Rutherford nails together his bee box assisted by his dad, Tommy, his brother, Tyler, and last year's scholarship recipient, Caleb Jones.

Left: Colter Chase gets direction from his grandfather, Nial Chase, as they nail together his hive frames.

**Williamson Co. Area  
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