

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA JULY, 2011 NEWSLETTER

www.wcaba.org

(for meeting directions, see website)

DATE: Tuesday, July 26, 2011
TIME: 7:00 PM-Beekeeping 101; 7:15PM-Program - DVD
PLACE: First United Methodist Church Georgetown (basement)
PROGRAM: Free screening of documentary "Vanishing of the Bees" (87min.)
HOSTS: Ana & Chat Lerma, Wayne Baker, Stephen Gardipee

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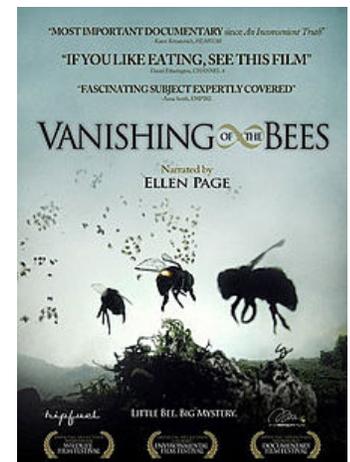
It was good to see many of our "newbie" members as well as the scholarship youths taking part in the honey extraction demonstration at our June meeting. We appreciate Gary Bible's bringing his extracting equipment and Caleb Oakley using the WCABA equipment as they and Jimmie Oakley supervised and answered questions. (see the pictures of extracting on page 3-4).

We thank Gary Bible for giving the church cleaning staff one pound jars of honey. Also, thanks to Mary Bost who gave the church staff honey bears in appreciation for allowing us to use the Fellowship Hall without charge again this year.

Our club extracting equipment has remained mostly unused this month, however, probably reflecting the dearth of nectar for the bees to use to make honey. One member, Keith Handley of Austin, was pleased with the honey he extracted but most of our hives of bees have been adversely affected by the heat and drought. This may be one of those years when beekeepers *give* (sugar water) instead of *take* (honey). Please be sure your bees don't starve nor lack a water supply.

This month our club has the privilege of screening a special documentary titled "**Vanishing of the Bees**". Jimmie Oakley and Honey Queen Rebekah Jones and her mom Cindy were at a screening at the Elgin Library in May and recommend it highly. It deals in depth with the discovery and investigation of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD).

It is 87 minutes long so it will constitute both Beekeeping 101 and our regular program, with a refreshment and business meeting intermission half way through the evening. Please arrive at the meeting in time to catch the beginning of this DVD so you get the whole story. It will be well worth your while. You may even want to take notes.



Did you know that our youth scholarship program was started 25 years ago, in 1986, with one recipient? It was named as a memorial to Ed Wolfe, an avid promoter and teacher of beekeeping. After Robert Bost had served as chairman of the program for 20 years, the program was renamed the Ed Wolfe-Robert Bost Memorial Scholarship in 2006. The average number of scholarships awarded each year (about four) are to school-age boys or girls who indicate their interest by writing an essay describing their reasons for wanting to learn about bees. They are given the woodware and basic equipment plus a package of bees to start a hive, and a mentor is selected to work with each youth. This has been a very effective program. To learn more contact Jimmie Oakley (Scholarship Chair) or go to our web site to view an application.

Chris and Shirley Doggett and Leslie Tucker (2011 scholarship recipient) were invited by WCABA member Stephen Gardipee to give a talk on basic beekeeping to the Bell County Master Gardener's organization recently. Chris said their presentation was well-received and "Lesli added great value to the event from the point of view of a new beekeeper and we were given to understand that Stephen promotes beekeeping and even gives hives to interested folks." The BCMG association gave a generous donation to WCABA. We appreciate Chris, Shirley and Lesli's efforts and Stephen's invitation as well as the donation.

Welcome to our new members: Ed and Jena Thomas, Round Rock; Jack L. Matzen, Jr., Taylor; and Albert Garcia III, Georgetown. We trust you will find our programs helpful and interesting and that you will enjoy talking bees with our friendly members.

We know you will want to keep Sara and Jim Reeves in your thoughts and prayers. Sara had recently asked to be relieved of her duties as WCABA secretary due to health issues in her family. Jim will have surgery July 17th. Sara's father, Charles J. Florence, passed away July 11 at the age of 92. He had served in the Army during WWII, was an educator for 34 years, and is survived by his wife Jo, son Mike, and daughter, Sara (Jim). He had 7 grandchildren (including Jolynn Reeves, 2000 EW/RB scholarship recipient) and 6 great grandchildren. WCABA extends our condolences to Sara and Jim and all their family.

Door prizes last month were donated by Chris Doggett, the Youngblood family, Kay Oakley, Meredith Duke, Gary Wende, Dean Hamilton, Gayle Shaw, and Harold Kind. Lucky winners were Elizabeth Joe, Kristi Handley, Sherry Youngblood, Katie Ney, Cassandra Scott, Raul Vergara, Ed Eacrett, Anna Nemeč, Roberto Benevides, and Harold Kind.

Notice: Susan Henson, a new resident of Austin, is looking for beeswax to use in candle making, modeling wax and batik. She would like to procure 10 to 100 pounds annually; she is able to refine it herself. You may contact her at phone number 509.936.3721 and email her at: susan@lanemountain.com.

I have read several articles pointing to *clothianidin*, a neonicotinoid pesticide, as being one of the big factors in honey bee colony collapse but an article from the July/August 2011 *Sierra Magazine*, gives some very pertinent and interesting facts. Thanks to WCABA member Bill Evans for sending it to me. "Since honeybee colonies began collapsing in 2006. The cause has been a mystery", says author David Darlington. "Suspects have included mites, viruses, fungi, malnutrition, genetically modified organisms and cell phones. Mounting evidence, however, points to the role of a particular class of pesticides. The biggest mystery now is why the EPA refuses to act on those clues."

In 1999, France banned the pesticide imidacloprid (*clothianidin*), which when applied to seeds, infuses every part of a plant, including its nectar and pollen. Germany, Italy and Slovenia followed France's lead by banning *clothianidin*. Italy's first healthy bee season in 10 years followed their 2009 clothianidin-free corn planting.

When Bayer Crop-Science introduced the nicotinoid into the United States in 2003, the EPA approved it on the condition that Bayer study its chronic effects, and it became widely used. Coincidentally, many U.S. bee colonies decreased by 30 to 90 percent.

Although EPA declared a study (on a 2.5 acre test plot) to be “scientifically sound”, someone at the EPA leaked an internal memo that called *clothianidin* “highly toxic”. “Asked by several environmental and beekeeping organizations to issue a ‘stop use’ order on the pesticide, the EPA refused,” states the author. “Stephen Bradbury, director of the agency’s office of pesticide programs, said that the agency was ‘not aware of any data that reasonably demonstrates’ that bee colonies are at chronic risk from the pesticide—despite his agency’s own finding of acute hazard.”

Jimmie and Kay Oakley are staunch supporters of Tincture of Propolis to use in treating slight wounds and other remedies (just ask them; they’ll tell you about it. Jimmie carries a small bottle with him to the bee yard). Below is their “recipe” for making it and also a recipe for a soothing hand scrub.

TINCTURE OF PROPOLIS

If your bees are producing a lot of Propolis, collect the excess or purchase a Propolis trap and consider making some *propolis tincture*. Try to collect a clean product – no paint chips or bee parts. Collect the clean Propolis in a mason jar. Cover approximately 2 inches above the Propolis with *Everclear*, a pure 100 proof *grain alcohol*. Allow to sit for a week to start, tightly capped of course. Shake the jar every few days. Notice that the solution will separate. Add a little more alcohol as needed. This will make tincture. Do not add too much or the saturation point will be absorbed and you will need more Propolis. What I usually end up with is approximately 4” of deep brown tincture sitting on top of about 2” of a milky substance. Use a very small siphon tube to draw off the pure tincture (the top layer). Store tightly closed until you collect enough to bottle. Add more alcohol to the milky substance and the process starts again.

HONEY HAND SCRUB

Blend 3 tablespoons finely ground cornmeal, 2 tablespoons honey, and one tablespoon cornstarch in a small, unbreakable container. Leave near sink and use as you would any hand soap. It softens, cleans, and soothes the hands and should always be rinsed with cold water.

EXTRACTING AT THE WCABA MEEYING IN JUNE - 2011

Paul Exley demonstrates for Donna Strebe & Joseph Nemeec how to uncap honey frames. Jimmie Oakley explains to Katie Ney about operating the extractor



Yochana Mark Gundy beams as she opens the gate on the extracted honey.



Gary Bible assist interested youngsters in bottling the extracted honey.



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Randy Oakley
Caleb Oakley

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