

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA JUNE 2024 NEWSLETTER

www.wcaba.org

Meeting: 4th TUESDAY, June 25, 2024 @ 7PM
Georgetown Library Hewlett Room (2nd floor)

2024 Club Officers:

PRESIDENT: Shannon Montez
president@wcaba.org

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SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR:
Jimmie Oakley
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QUEEN CHAIR:
(vacant)

WEB ADMINISTRATOR:
Rachel Glass
webmaster@wcaba.org

DIRECTOR AT LARGE:
Ken Browning

DIRECTOR AT LARGE:
Ann Bierschenk

PROGRAM:

Becky Barajas – Complexity of Honey

Becky Barajas will take us on a microscopic look at honey and the complexity that makes each harvest unique.



Becky Barajas



Becky and Friends

Becky Barajas is the store manager at the recently opened The Bee Supply on Round Rock Avenue in Round Rock. She has been an avid beekeeper for 10 years. From sitting on National nonprofit boards, running conferences and clubs, winning dozens of ribbons, writing for Bee Culture, volunteering for EAS, ABF, BIP and others- you could say she is slightly addicted to working honey bees and helping their stewards. Come see her presentation and welcome to our community.

ZOOM Notes:

We would certainly enjoy your presence at the next meeting on June. 25th (***fourth*** Tuesday), but if you can't, then tune in to broadcast virtually via "Zoom".

If you are planning to join from an iPhone or iPad, be sure to download this application first: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/zoom-cloud-meetings/id546505307>

We look forward to seeing you there Tuesday night @ 7PM!
GT Library - Hewlett Rm- 402 W 8th Street Georgetown 78626
Topic: **WCABA Member Meeting (and Beekeeping 101)**
Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82475068933?pwd=aHRiRjc3bS9kYXJGS2g5THVpOEx2UT09>

A Place to Call Home...

a note from your President

Since I have been a member, our club has been fortunate to have a consistent gathering place for our monthly member meetings. When I first joined the club a few years ago, we were meeting at the First United Methodist in Georgetown where we had been meeting for several years, first in the Fellowship Hall and then in the Gymnasium. However, this ended after a conflict over the meeting time, and we were fortunate that Chris Doggett suggested our current meeting place, the Georgetown Public Library.



Shannon Montez - President

If I can describe in one word our relationship with the library, it would be ***generous***. The staff at the library have been very hospitable to our group and are always willing to work with us should we need additional space for our speakers. Since we began meeting at the library, we have been able to provide a consistent meeting space; one that provides a room big enough for our meeting space and a location that is convenient for many of our members.

Like all buildings, maintenance has to be completed and the rooms where we normally meet are unavailable at the end of the summer because of installation of carpet on the second floor. The library announced the area will be closed from early August through late September. Our board is actively looking at options for alternative meetings and we promise to keep you informed about any changes in location. With summertime comes vacations and many of you may be out of town during the months that the library will be unavailable. Fortunately, technology has enabled many of us to stay in touch even if we're not meeting in person. Like many of our past meetings, we will be hosting the meetings on Zoom regardless of the meeting space. Please make sure to watch out for information regarding the meeting changes on the monthly newsletter. The information will also be posted on our website. We appreciate your patience.

Shannon

Honeybee Research Pearls

Compiled by Phil Ainslie

Honey bees may inherit altruistic behavior from their mothers

The study, published in the journal *Molecular Ecology*, examined the genetics behind "retinue" behavior in worker honey bees, which are always female. After the worker bees are exposed to the queen bee's pheromone, they deactivate their own ovaries, help spread the pheromone to the other worker bees, and tend to the queen and the eggs she produces.

This behavior is altruistic because it ultimately benefits the queen's ability to produce offspring while the worker bee remains sterile. For honey bees, the queen is typically the mother of all, or nearly all, the bees in the hive.

The researchers found that the genes that make worker bees more receptive to this pheromone -- and therefore more likely to display the retinue behavior -- can be passed down from either the mother or father bees. However, the genes only result in altruistic behavior when passed down from the mother.

"Honey bees are one of the few animal species that display altruistic behavior, where some individuals give up their own reproduction to help others," Grozinger said (Christina Grozinger, co-author and Publius Vergilius Maro Professor of Entomology at Penn State.) "This study reveals a very subtle and unexpected form of genetic control of those behaviors."

For the study, the researchers cross-bred six different lineages of honey bees -- something relatively easy in mammals or plants, according to Bresnahan, but much harder to do with insects. He said the study wouldn't have been possible without the honey bee breeding expertise of co-author Juliana Rangel at Texas A&M University, as well as Kate Anton, who runs the Education about Production and Insemination of (Honey Bee) Queens program with Robyn Underwood at Penn State Extension.



Phil Ainslie - Secretary

Honey bees experience multiple health stressors out in the field

It's not a single pesticide or virus stressing honey bees and affecting their health, but exposure to a complex web of multiple interacting stressors encountered while at work pollinating crops, found new research. Even after decades of research examining the role of specific pesticides, parasitic mites, viruses, or genetics, scientists have been unable to explain increasing colony mortality. This made the research team wonder if previous studies were missing something by focusing on one stressor at a time.

Not all stressors are the same, however. Some are more influential than others—what researchers call the social media influencers of the bee world—and have an outsized impact on the architecture of a highly complex network and its co-stressors. They also found that most of these influencer stressors are viruses and pesticides that regularly appear in combination with specific other stressors, compounding the negative effects through their interactions.

Source: York University, University of British Columbia, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the University of Victoria, the University of Lethbridge, the University of Manitoba, l'Université Laval, the University of Guelph, and the Ontario Beekeepers' Association.

Practical Experiences in the Bee Yard

JULY is the month honey extraction can begin in earnest. During my employment years, I always tried to schedule my vacation during the July 4th time frame for honey extraction. This worked well because the honey flow was essentially over by the end of June in my area of residence.

Extraction marks a shift in the focus of the beekeeper. Several decisions must be made to prepare for the successful survival of the hot Ark-La-Tex summer and proper preparation for the coming winter. One of the first decisions is how to store the extracted supers. Do not leave the wet supers in your honey house, shop or garage without protection from the wax moth. Wax moths are highly attracted to the smell of honey and will begin to deposit eggs in the wet comb. One option is to let the neighborhood insects clean up your supers. If your apiary is not near you honey house, you could place the wet supers outside and let “everyone” come and dine. You may see a variety of insects feasting on the honey along with local bees. Surprisingly, Lady Bugs seem to like to eat the honey. This is not a good method if your apiary is in the same area. The smell of wet honey in the air could start a robbing frenzy of any nearby hives.

Another option is to place the wet supers back onto the hives and let the hive bees clean them. This is my preference as it just seems appropriate to allow the bees that made the honey have a chance to clean up the residual honey. They will happily clean up the mess that I have made of their wonderful honey production and storage process. It is best to return the wet supers to the hives late in the evening, if possible. This allows the smell of wet honey in the apiary to dissipate overnight so all should be somewhat normal by morning. Increased bee activity and possible robbing can occur if the wet supers are returned to the hives during the day when bees are active outside of the hive.

Another decision to be made is what to do with the extracted supers after the bees have cleaned them for you. You have the option to leave them on the hive for the bees to protect or to remove them from the hive and store under protection over the winter. If you opt to store the supers off the hive, be sure you have determined where you will store them and have obtained the necessary chemicals to protect them from wax moths and beetles during storage. If you have not done this before, you can find different methods on the Internet or from other beekeepers in your circle of contact. Whatever method you choose, be prepared to safely store the supers immediately and do not leave them setting unprotected in your shop or garage.

Entrance reducers can help save a weaker hive. Don't be afraid to place entrance reducers on less populated hives to help prevent robbing by other bees or by wasps. As the summer weather becomes hotter and dryer, nectar eating insects will be looking for readily available forage. Your hives may be attracting them as the natural nectar flow diminishes. It is a good practice to place entrance reducers with the smallest opening on the less populated hives. You can also use any board of ¾ inch or greater thickness placed over hive opening on the landing board. Leave a half inch space at the end of the board for the bees to use as an entrance. This small entrance allows the hive's guard bees to more easily defend the hive from other bees or predators.

The Ark-La-Tex is probably going to be hot from now until September. During this hot period, I like to vent my hives and use a shade board to help keep the hive cooler. I set the front edge of the Outer Cover on front edge of the Inner Cover. This allows enough space for natural convection to help the hotter air to rise and escape the hive and pull cooler air in through the front entrance. You may find bees congregating under the slanted cover but as a general rule they will not draw burr comb in this extra space. For a shade board, I place short pieces of 2x4 on the slanted Outer Cover and add a 3 foot square piece of plywood or sheet metal over them. Weigh the shade cover down with a brick or rock so the wind will not blow it off. I hope this is helpful.

Stanford



Stanford Brantley

Scholarship Recipients Continue to Grow Their Hives

Jimmie Oakley – Scholarship Chair

The 2024 Scholarship Recipients have been diligent to check and feed their bee hives according to the schedule, and with the coming of the expected honey flow of Indian Bantam blooming everywhere at the Bost Farm, the hive population has expanded to the point where the third box could be added to each recipient's colony. The three deep boxes provide sufficient space to allow the queen to lay enough eggs to increase the hive population to meet the demands of the spring honey flow, and enough storage space to contain the surplus stores that the honey flow will provide. As the season progresses the utilization of the comb space in the three deep boxes is interchangeable so there is no waste of the valuable commodity. The valuable comb that has been constructed by the young bees on the new foundation using the gallons of syrup fed in the early weeks of the buildup is now put to use raising brood and storing pollen and nectar (honey) to the benefit of the

colony. These activities are all in line with what is taught by the *Wisdom of the Bee Tree*. In order to better manage their colonies, the recipients are striving to learn how bees in nature adhere to the principles of the bee tree. Each recipient is required to read and record the population and resources of each frame every time a full hive check is performed. This will help them to develop an understanding of what is going on inside the hive during each of the beekeeping seasons. It seems like a lot of attention to detail, and it is, but developing an understanding of what is not seen from the outside will help the recipient deal with what is going on the inside. This accumulated knowledge provides a basis on which to make informed decisions to the benefit of the bees and the beekeeper. To grasp this concept may take most beekeepers years, but mastered early it can greatly enhance your survival and sustainability in the field. *JO*



Riley's hive is fully configured at three deeps, ready to grow



Alys has added the third box to her hive to complete setup



Mentor, Randy Oakley, reads first frame as an example



Randy coaches Alys in frame reading as Riley records results

Frame Reading in Scholarship Bee Yard



Now it's time for Riley to receive instruction in frame reading



Riley, I read that as a perfect frame of brood, yea!



As Alys and Riley continue the process, reading and recording frame after frame, box after box... they finally reach the end and close up



Workshop Teaching Yard Still a Popular Place

by Jimmie Oakley – Scholarship Chair

Well in my humble estimation the concept of a club teaching bee yard where workshops and demonstrations can be conducted is still a popular idea. After all the scholarship beehives were moved from the Heritage Garden in December of 2023 they just didn't get moved back. Large three (3) story hives heavy with winter stores are not as easily managed. With the coming of spring and the thought of securing new nuc hives from our club's bee procurement program the idea took seed to repurpose the bee yard for more varied use, thus the teaching yard sprang forth (yea!).

As a reminder I have committed to being at the Heritage Garden in the Saturday following our regular club meeting from 10 – noon to work through all the hives there for my benefit and all those others who want to observe and take part, even participate. That so happens to be the last Saturday in the month for the remainder of the year.

I consider these gatherings to be open to any interested party that wants to attend. As I stated before, please be mindful to dress appropriately for the activity, long sleeve shirt with collar, long pants or the equivalent, close toed shoes, with socks, and a head covering for your hair; or wear your own bee suit. All of it should be in light colors to be less noticeable and threatening in the eye of the bees.

We will always exercise as much caution and safety as possible, but everyone attending is reminded that bees are stinging insects and there is always that possibility. Otherwise, weather permitting, y'all come!

I was a little surprised and somewhat pleased to see from my voluntary list of attendees that all except for two repeat names all the rest were new folks to the Heritage Garden and the teaching yard (hard to tell with all those hooded faces). That shows new interest and an expansion of our intended purpose.

Another new and exciting possibility is a cooperative effort between WCABA and the Parks Department to do an educational class that they would promote. I am awaiting further contact. This may serve well to highlight the honey bee as a primary pollinator and increase the value of our little "angels of agriculture" in the public eye, especially our city dwellers. Maybe a partnership could be struck up between WCABA and the new beekeeping club just up the road on the Southwestern campus ... think of all the possibilities.

Jimmie



THIS IS THE PLACE - Heritage Garden – Georgetown, Texas



THESE ARE THE PEOPLE - WCABA Member Beekeepers

More Pictures from the Workshop Teaching Yard

picture credits – Donnas Watermiller & Jimmie Oakley



Jimmie Oakley opening that first hive



Others get involved in the checking



Serious checking going on here... two heads are better than one. Ella and Elsa Chang



Pretty nice brood pattern...aye



Lookie there, another queen (yea!)



Amber, Ella, & Elsa Chang watch as Jimmie prepares to markers her

THBEA Conducts Successful Raffle at TBA Summer Clinic

by Jimmie Oakley – WCABA Editor

From the by-line you might wonder, how do you know? ...cause I was there. For the first time in several years, I attended the TBA Summer Clinic. This time it was in Allen, TX just north of Dallas up US Hwy 75 to be exact.

The occasion occurred because my son, Randy, who is now on the Board of THBEA, needed a side kick. As a Board Member he has a responsibility to sell raffle tickets to raise money for the Texas Honey Bee Education Association. I graciously ran an ad in the last WCABA Newsletter, but I didn't know I signed up to follow it to its conclusion. Nevertheless, when duty called, I answered and accompanied him on the all day road trip up to the McKenny area in support of "the cause"(and had a blast).

The event was held at the Sheraton and there was plenty of room for everything to get done. My day started the night before when I arrive at Randy's place in Elm Mott, north of Waco, where we had to get everything ready for Saturday on Friday night. You know the drill if you have ever attended a convention. Lots of loose ends to tie up. Wasn't too bad, I learned some new stuff. Some assembly was required as I put together the raffle item that Randy was donating: Hive IQ Insulated Beehive setup.

Arriving at the hotel and getting setup in the hallway worked out pretty well. We're right next to the table where THBEA was selling raffle tickets.



SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED...

There were no pre-event raffle ticket sales so it all had to be done there that day at the event. If you saw the ads or heard my spiel you know you could get one ticket for \$10 or 6 for \$50. Believe it or not, most went for the \$50 deal, one even at \$250.00, wow!



This is not Clinic Registration, it's Ticket Sales-Not Bad Aye

There were a lot of good speakers at the Clinic, but I missed most of that because I was in my own "bubble" encouraging attendees to purchase tickets and then decide where to place their stubs.

A good time was had by all, even got box lunch. The best part of all was seeing many of those older beekeepers (like me) that I hadn't seem in quiet a while.

The drawing was done at the end of the day, and we looked for an honest man to do the honors. We came up with Mr. Stanford Brantley to do the honors. He was perfect, and performed to perfection, drawing three winners in only four tries. They were all happy with his choices.

When the smoke cleared, and the dust had settled we were informed that the raffle had raised over \$3,400.00 for the non-profit educational arm of TBA.

THANKS EVERYONE FOR YOUR CONTRUBUTUION



So here is Randy with the THBEA Prize Line-up, #1 Russian Nuc w/Insulated Hive Setup, #2 Beginner Beekeeper Setup, #3 Basic Extracting Setup



Beth Darr and Stanford Brantley at Summer Clinic

THBEA Drawing for the Winning Tickets



Stanford Brantley (Marshall Beekeepers) draws the winning Raffle Tickets for THBEA



Lance Miller has the winning stub for the extracting setup



Lori Guillotte receives certificate for Beginning Beekeeper Setup



Lance Miller (NE TX Beeks) is all smiles as he claims his extractor



Lori Guillotte also received a nuc with her setup



Lisa Adams with Grayson Co Beekeepers goes home with the Big Prize

Membership Report: Shirley Doggett

June 2024

New Members: *

Amber Chun
Cheryl Hullum
Jeff Hutchens
Michelle Klingemann
Todd Monroe

Georgetown
Jerrell
Taylor
Round Rock
Bertram



Shirley Doggett - Membership

Renewing Members

Andrea Ayer
James Johnson

Liberty Hill
Burnet

***New members-** please remember that Texas Beekeepers Association still gives one-year free membership to those people that are new to beekeeping. Let me know if you are interested in this.

Best Wishes
Shirley

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Dues \$20.00 per year - individual or \$25.00 - family membership

New Member / Renewing Member

(circle one)

Date: _____

Name: _____ Amount: \$ _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: () _____ e-mail: _____ (please print)

To save postage cost may we send your Newsletter via e-mail? Yes [] No []

Instructions: print, fill out, and bring to club meeting , or mail with check to:

Mrs. Shirley Doggett - Membership - 400 C. R. 440 - Thrall, TX 76578

Be a BiG Honey Friend

by Linda Russell

Adults with disabilities (called Citizens) of Brookwood in Georgetown (BiG) extract, bottle and sell honey to help fund their non-profit vocational program. The Citizens love to work and would appreciate a donation of one or more honey supers for extraction. We will pick up and return your super(s) the week of July 8. If you prefer to participate in the extraction with the Citizens, just let us know.

Contact Linda Russell at 512-618-0348 or by email russell6083@yahoo.com



BiG Honey Friends will receive a \$25 gift card to the BiG Shop and Cafe as a thank you!