

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA JUNE 2003 NEWSLETTER

DATE: Tuesday, June 24, 2003
TIME: 7:00-Basic Beekeepers; 8:00-General Meeting/Program
PLACE: Community Center, 205 Main St., Round Rock, TX 78664
PROGRAM: Robert Bryce, author of "The Trouble with Bees"
HOSTS: **Donnie & Wilber Brinkmeyer, Deborah Jorden**

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I hope the recent rains have been beneficial to each of you. The Indian Blankets, which had almost stopped blooming, have brought out new blossoms, so there should be additional forage for the bees. Mesquite trees are also blooming profusely. Perhaps if more showers keep coming to Central Texas, all crops, including cotton, will have a better chance and all God's creatures will benefit.

The Field Day was a huge success. Nearly 60 people attended, the food was plentiful and delicious, and the program was well received. The TBA Honey Queen, Vanessa Bounds, also attended and we appreciate her making the effort to meet with us. Again, we thank Bill and Julie Hein and family for graciously hosting our group. Jimmie Oakley had arranged for an interesting variety of demonstrations, including how to extract honey at home by the Hein family; finding the queen, caging and marking her by G. C. Walker; the complete hive system by Mark Jones; queen rearing-the new way by Frank Hunt; and top bar hives by Randy Oakley.



The program this month will be given by Robert Bryce of Austin, a freelance writer and the author of the story, "The Trouble with Bees" which appeared in the March 2003 issue of Texas Parks and Wildlife magazine. Perhaps he will tell us what other stories he has written as well as talk about his new book called *Pipe Dreams: Greed, Ego and the Death of Enron*. He is married with three children and has been a beekeeper for three years. He should be an interesting speaker.

Some of our members have already begun taking honey, and some of us are eagerly looking forward to extracting that golden liquid. The Basic Beekeeping discussion this month will be about extracting. How do I know my honey is ready to be extracted? What preparations do I need to make? What pitfalls should I avoid? How do I go about extracting my honey? If you have questions, this is a good time to get answers. There are always members who are willing to share their experiences so come prepared to ask, listen, and learn."

Door prizes at the Field Day were donated by Barbara Hunt, Julie Hein, and Cherie Miller. The lucky winners were Bill Hein, bee ballpoint pen; Skip Shaw, bee

bicycle helmet; Randy Oakley, bee ballpoint pen; and Anna Oakley, bee candle reflector.

Mark Jones donated several very nice bee woodenware articles that he is discontinuing in his bee woodenware manufacturing designs. These items were raffled off

and the lucky ticket holders were Stan Timmerman, Lydia Miller and Gayle Shaw, top feeders; Barbara Hunt, Julie Hein, and Lydia Miller, bottom boards; Bill Hein, Stan Timmerman, and Frank Hunt, hive stands.

Mark and Jeannine Jones are new members to WCABA, having joined this spring. Mark has a company called BeeCARE in Leander. He has a website, <http://www.beecare.com> that contains information to help hobby beekeepers have special needs differing from commercial beekeepers. He has tailored his unique designs to meet those needs. He sells his products over the Internet and does business internationally as well as in the United States. If you want to contact him by e-mail, his address is markjones@beecare.com.



Recent membership renewals to WCABA are Melanie and Earbie Matheny of Jarrell. There are still more than a dozen '02 members who have not renewed their membership. If you see someone who has not been to one of our meetings this year, please tell him/her that we miss them and hope they will soon be returning. We expect to welcome some new members from Killeen at this next meeting: Nial and Darla Chase and their daughter, Ellen Piekarski, are very interested in beekeeping and are looking forward to visiting with experienced beekeepers as well as other novice beekeepers. Nial has recently returned from overseas; they contacted me about getting some beehives and last week became the proud owners of three nuc hives purchased from Richard Wygle, a beekeeper who has had to dispose of his hives due to his physical problems.

Mr. Wygle had sent money for a want ad and we had announced at the Field Day that he had 250 bee hives for sale, but we have learned that he sold all the hives to one individual, having only the three nucs left that he sold to the Chase family. However, he still has quite a lot of miscellaneous equipment and supplies which he would like to sell and I will have several copies of his inventory at the meeting. If you are interested, he has new woodenware, both assembled and unassembled, used woodenware, foundation wax, three different sizes of extractors, and many miscellaneous items. Check over the list and see if there are enough items that it would be worth your making a trip to New Braunfels to buy some of them. His phone numbers are cell: 830/660-2631, home #: 830/620-6627.

As we were going into town today we passed an area with quite a few mesquite trees and I was amazed to see how profusely those trees were blooming. In looking at the January 2003 issue of the American Bee Journal, I noticed an article entitled "Mesquite: A Major Southwestern Honey Plant". It has some interesting facts about this honey plant. There are "three mesquite species found in the American Southwest, starting with Honey Mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*)," according to the author, Richard Dalby. The other two species are Velvet Mesquite (*P. velutina*), most common in Arizona, and Screwbean Mesquite (*P. pubescens*). The Honey Mesquite, a shrublike tree, ranges" from southern Kansas and eastern Texas across New Mexico and Arizona, into southern Utah, and on into southern California. It is common on arid plains, mesas, in canyons, and on hillsides...and helps stabilize the soil."

The "flowers of honey mesquite form dense, cylindrical, axillary clusters 2 to 5 inches in length. The flowers are small and fragrant, with 5 sepals, 5 yellowish-green petals, and 10 protruding stamens. These flowers have long been a nectar source of great importance to beekeepers. Depending

on conditions, mesquite may have two periods of bloom, the first in April and the second in July with some years having no interval in the blooming and some years having no bloom at all. The amount of rain during the preceding winter seems to be a critical variable. Abundant rainfall during the winter and early spring, followed by hot weather during the blooming period, constitute ideal conditions for a nectar flow. (This certainly describes the Central Texas weather this year. Ed.)

In the book, *ABC & XYZ of Bee Culture, 1923*, John H. Lovell noted that mesquite honey “is light amber in color and of good quality. It is a better table honey than any other of the Texan honeys.” In his book, *American Honey Plants*, Frank C. Pellett says that the “quality of mesquite honey is good.” Dr. H. B. Parks, an expert on Texas honey plants, said mesquite honey is “light amber, well flavored, and granulates rapidly. The flow comes on rapidly and is very heavy.”

The author concludes with “attempts to describe the flavor of any honey, particularly a gourmet variety such as mesquite, will always fall short. The proof is in the tasting, and mesquite honey is wonderful stuff indeed. Little of it finds its way to the larger markets, most of it being sold locally. That pretty much says it all.”

The following recipe by Kathie Scott appeared in the April '03 issue of *The Bee Buzzer*, the newsletter from the Northeastern Kansas Beekeeper's Association.

Crescent Breakfast Rolls

1 can Pillsbury Grand Crescent rolls (6 count)	½ c. honey	1 T. orange zest
½ apple, cored, peeled and finely diced	1 tsp. cinnamon	1/8 tsp. nutmeg
1 T. real butter	¼ c. finely chopped walnuts	2 T. brown sugar

In a Pyrex mixing cup, mix all ingredients together except rolls. In microwave, heat until warm and butter is melted. Stir again. Mixture should be very thick, almost consistency of a paste.

Place 1 tablespoon of this mixture in center of each roll. Then roll the crescent as shown on package. Place on greased cookie sheet and bake according to directions. When out of oven, warm honey can be brushed on top of each roll. Serve warm.

NOTE: Packaged rolls will keep one week out of the package; so if there is just one to back for, use two of the crescents, then wrap the rest (without filling) in a plastic wrap or ziplock bag. Still make the entire filling since it can be kept in the refrigerator until you are ready to use it. Just warm the filling through in microwave before filling remaining crescents.

From a *Taste of Home's Quick Cooking* magazine, the following recipe makes a good dressing for seasonal fresh fruits.

Fruit Salad Dressing

3 T. all purpose flour	2 cans (6 oz. each) pineapple juice	½ to 1 c. sugar
¼ c. honey	1 can (6 oz.) frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed	¼ c. lemon juice

In a saucepan, combine all ingredients. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thick and bubbly. Cool. Serve over assorted fresh fruit. Leftover dressing may be refrigerated for up to 1 week. Yield: 2 cups.



Texas Honey Queen Vanessa Bounds @ registration



Randy & Samuel Oakley work Top Bar hive

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