

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA FEBRUARY 2004 NEWSLETTER

DATE: Tuesday, February 24, 2004
TIME: 7:00 p.m.—Basic Beekeepers; 8:00 – Gen. Meeting, Program.
PLACE: Round Rock Community Center, 205 Main Street
PROGRAM: Races of Bees and Their Characteristics; Jimmie Oakley
HOSTS: **Frank & Barbara Hunt, Deborah Jordan**

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It was good to see a large group turn out for our WCABA meeting last month. Frank Hunt led a very attentive Basic Beekeeping audience in discussing activities that should be carried out in order to have our colonies of bees ready for spring flowers. Tanya Pankiw gave a slide presentation on research being done with bees at Texas A & M, after which a motion was made by Jimmie Oakley that our association donate \$300.00 to the Honey Bee Lab Capital Campaign at Texas A&M. The motion passed. The funds will be on deposit with TBA.

The topic for discussion in Basic Beekeepers this month will be “Why Should I Requeen” and will be lead by Jimmie Oakley. This will be a very good forerunner to the program for the general meeting as Jimmie will present “Races of Bees and Their Characteristics – You Choose”. He had prepared this presentation for our meeting that was cancelled due to the ice storm last February, but perhaps we’ve already had our winter weather for this year and the forecast spring-like weather this week will make us ready to think about what we need to do for our bees this year. It will also be helpful if you have some questions regarding making your order for bees through the club discount offer.

We are delighted to welcome six new members to WCABA. They are Clyde Anderson, Austin; Brandon Fehrenkamp, Austin; Charles Oliver, Round Rock; Lynne Thompson, Austin; Frank Toussaint, Manor; and David Walker, Liberty Hill. We trust that each of these new members will find our association beneficial as well as enjoyable to them and that they will enjoy contributing their time and talents to making our club better.

Members who renewed their membership last meeting are Kenneth Miller, Frank B. Fajkus, Rick Lattanzio, John and Taysha Howe, Frank and Barbara Hunt, Nial and Darla Chase, Robert and Ellen Piekarski, Marcus and Jody Young, Gayle and Stan Timmerman, Louis and Dot Absnaider, Benjamin Cox, Barry and Margaret Henson. Also, Vinton L. Stanfield, Lance Powell, Gregory Pekar, Andrew and Sheila Wray, William and Julie Hein, David Felps, and (by mail) Travis and Maureen Lane and Robert and Pam Yurk. Since the meeting, the following members have mailed their dues to me: Jonathan and Theresa



Clyburn, John and Lucia Gilbert, Albert W. Morgan, and Chuck and Sandy Wohl. This is a good start on renewing our memberships but let me urge those of you who have not yet renewed to do so as soon as possible. If you have not renewed by March 15, you will receive one of those cards saying you are no longer eligible to receive the newsletter. We don't want to lose you as a member.

One of the benefits of membership in WCABA is being able to order packages of bees and/or queen bees at a club discount. One member sent me his dues and his money for two packages of bees. Fifteen members have indicated their orders on the sheet that went around at the last meeting. We need to let Clint Walker know how many packages and how many queens we want by March 1, even though he said he could make a few changes after that date. Bees will be picked up at Rogers and delivered to the Bost farm on the first Saturday in April. Packages of bees (3# pkg. with queen) are \$48.00 and queen bees are \$11.00. All queens will be marked at no extra cost. If you want your queen clipped, add \$1.00 to the price. These prices are good only for April 3, picked up at Rogers or at the Bost farm, and apply to WCABA members only. Payment must be made by the March 23rd meeting. **Please make your check for bees payable to WCABA.**

If you know of a youngster who is planning to apply for one of the Ed Wolfe Memorial scholarships, please encourage him/her to mail the application to Robert Bost or hand it to him at the meeting Tuesday night. March 1st is the deadline date, as the committee needs to meet, make their decisions, and arrange for the equipment that will be given to the recipients at the March meeting. Since the number of recipients is limited, the paragraph telling why he/she is interested in beekeeping is very important.

I have a request to make: we really appreciate the donations that are made for door prizes, but it is embarrassing to me to miss the name of a donor, and that happened at the last meeting. I don't know who donated the bee socks and book marks, and I



apologize. So please, please write your name on the yellow tablet and indicate what you donated. Donors last meeting were Jimmie Oakley, Nathanael Hein, Jeann Schmidt, Gayle Shaw, and Gayle and Stan Timmerman, plus the mystery person.



Lucky door prize winners were Clyde Anderson, fly swatter; David Felps, book mark; Wilbur Brinkmeyer, fly swatter; Nathanael Hein, bee socks; Elizabeth Batista, chocolate in cookie cutter; Charles Oliver, book mark; Pat Jorden, kitchen towel; Frank Fajkus, bee pin; Barbara Hunt, bee massager; and Daly

Young, kitchen towel.

If you haven't read "A Book of Bees" by Sue Hubbell, you have missed a very interesting read. She writes in narrative style but includes many interesting aspects of working with bees. Although the flora she describes are different from much of ours, she involves it as well as other aspects of nature in

her narrative very well. She also includes drawn pictures of the equipment that illustrate the various parts better than photographs. The glossary at the end of the book is very helpful, also.

Hubbell says, "Everyone should have two or three hives of bees. Bees are easier to keep than a dog or cat. They are more interesting than gerbils. They can be kept anywhere. A well-known New York City publisher keeps bees on the terrace of his Upper East Side penthouse, where they happily work the flowers in Central Park." Hubbell keeps 300 hives of bees scattered in outyards in the Ozark Mountains of southern Missouri and she describes her activities from the autumn of one year through the next summer.

"The nectar of flowers is over eighty percent water," writes Hubbell "and the sugars in the nectar are complex. To make honey, the bees must evaporate the water and invert the sugars—change them from complex to simple. The bees suck the nectar up through their long tongues and store it in a sac called a honey stomach. When this is full, they fly back to their hives and transfer the nectar to the young house bees, who spread it, drop by drop, throughout the honeycombs in the hives. One bee would have to fly the equivalent of three orbits around the earth in her foraging flights (using one ounce of honey as fuel for each orbit) in order to produce a single pound of honey. In the process of collecting nectar, storing it in their bodies and transferring it to the house bees, the bees add enzymes to the nectar. These break down the complex sugars into simple ones, chiefly dextrose, levulose and sucrose."

The bees assist the evaporation of water from the nectar by fanning with their wings to create currents of air from the hive entrance, and when most of the water has been evaporated, they cap each cell of finished honey with wax that is secreted in flakes from their wax glands. "This finished honey has a very low moisture content, less than nineteen percent, as dry as parched corn, dryer than air. This makes honey hygroscopic: because it can pull moisture from the atmosphere, it must be stored in tightly sealed containers once it is extracted. It is the reason why baked goods made with honey stay moist and do not dry out the way they do when sugar is used," says the author.

"Different nectars also determine the color of honey, its flavor and the speed with which it crystallizes....Bees work the best nectar source within a two-mile radius of their hive; in most places, a variety of flowers are in bloom at the same time, so that their honey generally contains a mixture of plant nectars. Honey that is labeled 'clover,' 'orange blossom' or 'tupelo' usually contains honey from other flowers as well," states Hubbell.

Oatmeal Honey Nut Cookies

Here is a delicious-sounding cookie recipe I copied from the Northeastern Kansas *Bee Buzzer*.

¾ cup shortening	2 cups quick cooking oats	2 cups flour
¾ cup honey	1 tsp. baking soda	¼ tsp. cinnamon
2 eggs, beaten	½ cup buttermilk	½ cup raisins
		½ cup chopped nuts

Grease baking sheets. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cream together shortening and honey. Add remaining ingredients. Drop by teaspoon onto baking sheets. Bake 10-12 minutes. Yield: 72 cookies.

Bees

Queens

Honey

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