# WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

www.wcaba.org

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**DIRECTOR AT LARGE: Ann Bierschenk**

## 4th TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2026 @ 7PM
## Georgetown Library - Friends Room (2nd Floor)

PROGRAM:

Beekeeping 101 [7:00 PM - Class Room]

Speaker: **Sean O'Neil-Texas Master Beekeeper Program**



Sean O''Neil

Utilizing Dr. Garett Slater's *Texas Master Beekeeper Program* curriculum, Sean will go through the basics of beekeeping found in the 10 modules course during our monthly meetings, so that by the end of the year you've learned everything you need to pass the *Apprentice* certification exam. This month's module is titled Honey Bee Biology. A good place to start any discussion on Bees. Come see, join us! (handout available)

Beekeeping 201 Speaker: **Tara Chapman** [8:00 PM- Friends Room]




*(available at meeting)*

Tara Chapman is the founder and owner of Two Hives Honey, a full service honey and beekeeping company serving Austin for almost a decade. Tara started her career working in intelligence for the federal government, but a chance beekeeping class inspired her to quit her job and become a beekeeper. An accomplished speaker and educator, she is asked to speak and educate beekeepers across the United States each year and has taught thousands of beekeepers in her ten year tenure.

Tara's beekeeping book, *"For the Bees: A Handbook for Happy Beekeeping"* was published by the University of Texas Press in November 2024. She will bring it as well as and some other fun items from her shop for sale.

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We would certainly enjoy your presence at the next meeting on February 24th (***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 - Friends Room– 402 W 8th Street Georgetown 78626
Topic: **WCABA Member Meeting Speaker Presentation**
Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime
Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82475068933?pwd=aHRiRjc3bS9kYXJGS2g5THVpOEx2UT09
Meeting ID: 824 7506 8933. Passcode: 909659

# Honey Bee Biology

## …a note from your President



*Sean O'Neil - President*

I will admit my bias right away. Module 2 of the Texas Master Beekeeper Program Apprentice course is my favorite. Back in college, you could just as easily find me in the biology lab as the computer lab, so this section feels like home. This is the biology module, Understanding Honey Bees, and I love it so much that I designed a piece of it and had it tattooed on me.

I find this topic endlessly fascinating. As you move from head to abdomen, you begin to see how every structure fits together in remarkable harmony. Compound eyes made up of thousands of tiny lenses. A honey stomach that stays separate from the digestive stomach. Wax glands quietly produce the building blocks of the hive. The sting apparatus, which most of us have encountered at least once. The deeper you look, the more impressive it becomes.

Then you step back and look at the colony as a superorganism. Individual bees function like cells within a larger body, each with a role that supports the whole. When you start viewing the hive that way, management changes. This is no simple box of insects; You are caring for a coordinated, living system that responds as one.

For those planning to take the Apprentice exam, this material shows up everywhere. Anatomy, caste roles, brood stages, colony behavior. It is the foundation of everything else you will study. If you are solid here, the rest builds much more smoothly.

We are working with Dr. Garett Slater and the Texas Master Beekeeper Program team to better align our WCABA 101 meetings with the Apprentice curriculum. We are also exploring the possibility of hosting Apprentice exams locally so folks do not have to drive halfway across Texas to test. I will share more details as that develops.

In the meantime, I hope you will join us at the next meeting and spend some time digging into this material together. And if you are curious about the tattoo, just ask for a closer look. It only stung a little.

*Sean*



*Advanced Level - TMBP*

# From The Editor . . .



Jimmie Oakley - Editor

Okay. Let's have a quick review to see where we are…

Bees and queens will be here soon, about 8 weeks.

We have a new Procurement Coordinator, that'd be Dusty Brinley, and a new B&Q distribution location, that'd be the Sugar Ranch, not the Bost Farm.

Everyone confused? If so, this will be the. article that will clear everything up, well as much as we can this early in the process.

Well just about everything's new, new President, new Vice President, new Membership Director, new Program Chair, same Editor, but a new Past President. To get the latest list of Club Officers see the newsletter cover page, left column, there you are.

So, with all this *NEW*, why shouldn't we have new pickup distribution site too, especially since the old site (Bost Farm) is quickly becoming one of Georgetown's newest premier subdivision, MELINA by Hillwood ($400'd to $600's).

Several sites were looked at and considered and weighing the pro's and con's, the Sugar Ranch* site won out because of easy access off of major well known throughfare, wide entrance, hard surface drive, and abundant shade for the nucs to sit under (more later). *[215 Burson Lane, Georgetown, 78633] *Google Map it from your house and see.*

<u>There is still time</u> to place an order before the February 28th deadline through the club if you are a current (2026) member or will join. There are nucs and queens available at a very attractive price for those wanting to get started in beekeeping, replaces winter loses, or increase the number of hives under your management. The official order form is in the newsletter ***(see page 5)*** for your convenience with a nuc price of $180 each and the M&C queens for $40 each.

<u>Delivery dates</u> for the nucs or queens with pick up Brinley's Sugar Ranch is yet to be determined, but it usually falls in mid-April. Each order is confirmed by e-mail and each order will receive a "Pickup Voucher" with a specific date and number the member is entitled to claim.

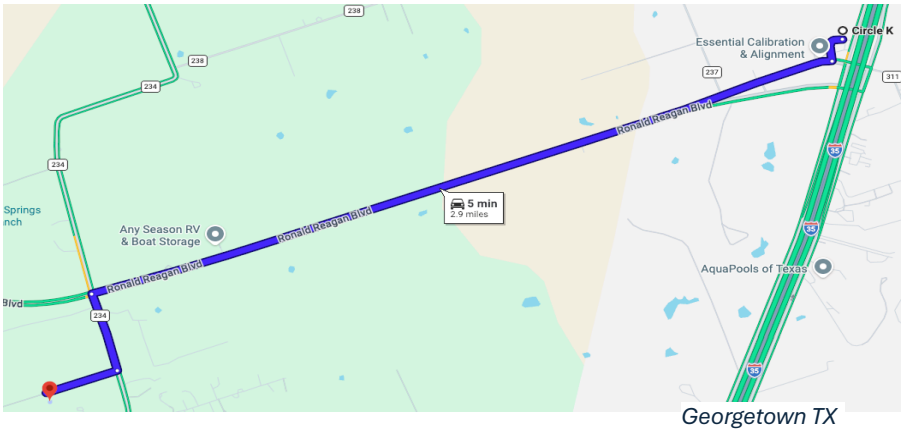
As always, your patience is appreciated while the final details of the club's bulk order for nucs and queens is worked out. Bring your order form and your money to the next meeting on the 24th to get on the list.

Finally, back to the <u>new distribution location</u>. Dusty and Judee Brinley have a beautiful homesite just off of Ronald Reagan Blvd. 2.3 mi west of the Circle K on 1-35 south of Jarrell. Take a left (south) off Ronald Reagan on C.R.234, 3/10mi, there is a large rock gate entrance onto Burson Lane (turn right) 2/10mi to distribution site. Look for the signs. More in the next Newsletter.

*Jimmie - Editor*

Jarrell TX






Georgetown TX

# Research Pearls

Compiled by Phil Ainslie

## Bees are facing new threats, putting our survival and theirs at risk.

The report from Bee: wild, a new science-led global campaign to save pollinators, identifies the top 12 emerging threats that could accelerate pollinator losses within the next 5-15 years, according to ten of the world's leading experts. It also outlines steps we can take to protect them and reverse the decline.

War and conflict, microplastic particles contaminating beehives, artificial light at night reducing flower visits by nocturnal pollinators, Antibiotic pollution potentially contaminating beehives and honey, Air pollution affecting their survival, reproduction, and growth, Pesticide cocktails weakening pollinators who increasingly face a dangerous mix, and more frequent and larger wildfires, destroying habitats and making recovery harder.

Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, President of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Board Member of nature conservation organization Re: wild, "It's getting harder for our pollinators, but we can all play a part in protecting them and building a sustainable future for all living things. She says: "The choices we make today will shape the future -- not only for pollinators, but for all life on Earth. Together, we can ensure that these remarkable species continue their vital work, sustaining the natural world that sustains us all."

*May 20, 2025, University of Reading*

## Sensing sickness: New method for boosting bee health

Honey bees are dying at alarming rates across the United States. Beekeepers in the United States lost more than 55% of their managed colonies last year. A new study supports a novel method for testing hygienic behavior that could lead to the breeding of more disease-resistant colonies in the future.

Honey bee populations remain relatively steady despite heavy losses because beekeepers are good at breeding new bees, she explains.

But that comes at the expense of time and resources for beekeepers, as well as risk for native pollinators.

Alger's team recently studied a screening tool developed by scientists at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro that tests colonies for hygienic behavior by mimicking the pheromones emitted by sick or dying bees. The researchers found the UBeeO test can identify colonies resistant to several pests and pathogens that can decimate bee populations such as *Vairimorpha*(known to many beekeepers as Nosema) and fungal infections including chalkbrood. They published their findings in *Frontiers in Bee Science* April 2.

### How it works

Picture a honey bee colony. Inside the boxed hive are frames with hexagonal holes where a queen bee lays one egg inside each cell. As the eggs hatch, nurse bees feed the developing larvae and eventually cap over the cells with wax to protect them as they mature into adults. When nurse bees detect that a developing bee is sick or dead, they will uncap the cell and remove the pupa to protect the rest of the hive. This is called hygienic behavior, and pheromones play an important role in this process.

## Research Pearls (con't)

Wagoner co-developed UBeeO during her doctoral studies after she identified chemical compounds associated with unhealthy brood odors. She co-founded Optera (named for the order Hymenoptera, which includes the honeybee) to bring UBeeO to beekeepers in the field. It became publicly available in 2024.

The study also revealed that the UBeeO test could identify colonies with resistance to *Vairimorpha* (formerly known as Nosema), a disease that affects adult bees, not developing brood. That finding has prompted new research into how hygienic behavior works to keep these *Vairimorpha* levels down.

"In the case of *Vairimorpha*, what they're doing is kind of the mystery," Alger says. "… There might be other behaviors that hygienic colonies are performing aside from what we know."

Varroa mite infection is trickier. These tiny parasitic mites were introduced about four decades ago in the United States and are vectors of disease to bee populations. They pose a significant threat to colonies and reproduce by laying eggs inside capped-over cells and feeding on the developing pupa. If nurse bees don't detect a problem, Varroa mites will be released into the hive when the young honey bee emerges. That is where hygienic behavior becomes critical since uncapping the cells disrupts the mites' life cycle.

April 3, 2025, University of Vermont *Phil*

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## W.C.A.B.A. Club 5-Frame Nuc & Queen Order Form - 2026

**Name**_____ ORDER # _____

**Address** _____ **City/State/Zip**_____

**Phone**_____ e-mail:_____

**want to order:** ***Are you a current member? [ ] Yes!*** please print

No._____ **5 Frame Nuc** (Based on group order of 100 nucs) **$180.00/ Nuc.**

*Nuc with three frames brood, mated queen, "NOT" marked or clipped.*

No._____ **Honey Bee Queen** (Based on group order of 100) **$40.00/ Queen**

*BeeWeaver marked & clipped Queen from mite tolerant and virus resistant stock.*

How will you pay? CASH or Check # _____ **TOTAL $ AMT**

Mail remittance to: Check Preferred **OF ORDER**

**WCABA Order/ Dusty Brinley** – 50100 Flintrock Dr. Georgetown, TX 78626

*Must be Current Member - Nuc order* ***deadline:****Must be postmarked by February 28th or while supplies las.t*

*Limit 6 nucs per family, 4 nucs for new members . No individual resale or ownership transfer on nucs once order*

*All secondary transactions and scheduling must come through the club for tracking & delivery.*

Special Instructions:

# Practical Experiences in the Bee Yard


Stanford Brantley

FEBRUARY usually has some of our most severe weather in the ArkLaTex area. However, winter has not yet made an appearance as I write this in mid-January. On Christmas day just a couple weeks prior, while my son was visiting for the holiday, local temperatures were nearing the 80 degree mark. It was so warm we decided to extract honey from the one remaining hive that I had not been able to extract. With my younger and stronger son handling the 9-frame supers, we pulled three supers and found honey in 21 of the 27 frames. The total yield was 5 gallons of dark amber honey.

One of the concerns about extracting in fall or later is the possible taint of Goldenrod altering the taste of the honey. I asked several of my beekeeping associates to smell and taste the honey. All agreed the honey had an excellent taste and did not have the raunchy smell or taste caused when the bees heavily forage Goldenrod. I encourage beekeepers to finish extraction before the fall Goldenrod bloom but it appears this hive found other types of forage and did not harvest a lot of Goldenrod.

February should also include warmer days allowing you to do short hive inspections. The inspections should include the weight of the hive as well as evidence of diseases or failing queens. With the ups and downs of daily temperatures, be on the lookout for robbing of any weak hive in the apiary. I have received reports of robbing of some hives because the entrances had not been reduced to the smallest opening. If you observe robbing getting started, close the hive entrance with a plug of steel wool. Leave it closed all day and remove it about a half hour before dark. All of the robber bees will run out of the hive to go home. Before it gets too dark to see, re-insert the steel wool plug and leave it in place for couple of days. If your hive does not have a screened bottom board and you are worried the bees might suffocate with the entrance closed, tape a piece of 9-mesh hardware cloth over the entrance rather than using the steel wool plug. However, the bees are unlikely to suffocate if the weather is cool.

It is generally agreed a strong colony of bees should already have at least two frames of honey and six to eight frames of brood and bees. Hives with inadequate stores of honey should be fed 2-to-1 sugar syrup or diluted disease-free honey from a known source. Dilute the honey to 80% honey and 20% water.

Don't keep telling yourself that you have still have time to get your equipment ready for the coming bee season. The new season is already getting started. The unusually warm weather of December and January has caused some early activity in the hives. Elms should be blooming by the end of January, providing the first major forage of spring. I am already seeing Henbit growing 5-6 inches tall and showing the small purple flowers providing some of the first available fresh pollen from spring flowers. A good sign of the beginning nectar flow will be the blooming of the Wild Plum trees. We will soon see them in the fence rows along highways as we travel to work. If this unusually warm pattern continues, I would not be surprised to hear reports of swarms issuing forth in late February or early March. You should have your equipment ready to house swarms or to super your hives as soon cold weather is past.

I discovered a way to get rid of all the hive beetles in a hive -- but the cost was pretty high. During a warm spell following a cold week in January, I checked on a single brood hive that seemed to have a problem. The hive had been very active through December with bees flying on the warmer days. Suddenly there was no activity at the landing board. I removed the outer cover and found about 150 adult hive beetles dead on the inner cover. My first though was the bees had done a good job controlling the hive beetles. Then I popped the inner cover and found nothing but empty drawn comb and not a bee in the hive. I guess the bees absconded and left the beetles behind. The next cold night there was no food in the hive and no cluster to keep the beetles warm. The beetles all either starved or froze in the hive. Fortunately, the weather had been cold enough to keep the wax moths inactive so there was no damage to the drawn comb. I recovered the frames and drawn comb and will use them to start a Nuc next month.

*Stanford*

# *From One Set of Hands to the Next: The WCABA Legacy*

*by Judee Brinley*

Before you dive in, I have a small recommendation: find a comfortable chair, pour yourself a cup of coffee (or tea), and settle in for a bit. This is a long article, intentionally so. The stories that follow deserve the time and space it takes to tell them, because they reflect the roots, heart, and people of the **Williamson County Area Bee Association**. I think you'll learn something, smile a few times, and gain an even deeper appreciation for the club we share.

Founded in 1980, WCABA grew out of the belief — encouraged by former Texas State Bee Inspector **Bill Victor** — that local beekeepers would be stronger through discussion, shared experience, and community. Among those early charter members were husband and wife **Robert Bost** and **Mary Bost**, whose influence continues to shape the association today. Mary later served as President, while Robert devoted decades of service to the club, including leadership of the youth scholarship program that now bears both his name and Ed Wolfe's.

As the new Membership Director, officially stepping into this role in December 2025, I've had the privilege of learning WCABA's story not from a single source, but through conversations, shared memories, and the lived experiences of our members. What quickly became clear to me is that our club's history isn't just something that happened *back then*. More importantly, it's something that continues to live on through the people who built it, nurtured it, and kept showing up.

The Lifetime Member profiles that follow offer a glimpse into those lives. These are the beekeepers who hauled bees, brewed coffee, asked questions, shared answers, sacrificed time, and served our beekeeping community with generosity and humor. Their stories are the threads that connect WCABA's founding spirit to the vibrant club we are today.




*Lifetime Membership Badge*

Here are the stories of a few of our Lifetime Members.

**S. S. (Stanford S.) Brantley** came to beekeeping through a mix of encouragement, curiosity, and an unexpected spark. After retiring from the Army, a well-placed honey bee sting to the head set him on a new path. With guidance from aging beekeepers in his area, he and his sister began keeping bees together, eventually managing as many as 50 hives — a testament to his dedication and work ethic. One of his most memorable lessons came the year they processed 1,300 pounds of honey in her kitchen, an ambitious undertaking that quickly made it clear a proper honey house was no longer optional.

Beyond his involvement with the Williamson County Area Bee Association, Stanford Brantley has been a prominent and respected figure in the Texas beekeeping community for many years. He was deeply involved with the Texas Beekeepers Association, providing organizational leadership with both the East Texas Beekeepers Association and the Ark-La-Tex Beekeepers Association. Well known for promoting education, he regularly traveled to fairs and festivals to sell honey and advocate for local beekeeping. He also contributed to the broader beekeeping conversation by writing a quarterly article for the Texas Beekeepers Association, sharing knowledge and experience with beekeepers across the state.

Stanford and his wife, Mary Jo, were active partners in these efforts and strong supporters of the Texas Honey Queen Program. He was especially instrumental in assisting with the Queen's Auction at the TBA State Convention, helping raise funds for scholarships and honey bee education.

Stanford cherishes his memories of WCABA and the steady support the club provided along the way. Even as a Lifetime Member, he continues to send in his annual dues — joking that it helps pay for coffee or whatever else is needed to serve the members. In doing so, he quietly embodies the generosity, service, and commitment that keep WCABA — and the wider beekeeping community — thriving.

**Gary Bible** has been keeping bees for nearly two decades, officially starting his beekeeping journey in 2006, although the fascination began much earlier. As a child visiting his grandparents in Leander, Gary was intrigued by what he called "bugs in boxes," only later realizing those mysterious boxes housed honey bees. That early curiosity came full circle when he joined the Williamson County Area Bee Association in 2006, the same year he began

keeping bees himself. Gary especially enjoys hive inspections, making splits, and the reward of spinning honey, but his impact on WCABA extends well beyond his own apiary. He has served the association as President, Library Chair, Refreshment Coordinator, and Bee Procurement Coordinator, helping members access bees year after year. Gary also played a key role in launching what became the now-familiar Louisiana bee trips, making multiple long, hands-on runs for nucs and packages. Hard work by any measure, yet he remembers fondly. Some of his favorite memories come from time spent "hanging out in the nuc room" at Bost Farm with fellow nuc drivers and loaders. Gary felt the camaraderie, laughter, and shared experience which turned demanding days into lasting friendships.

**Lester and Margaret Wetherell** are a true husband-and-wife beekeeping team whose story reflects both perseverance and good humor. They began keeping bees in 2016, full of plans to expand their apiary, only to discover that Austin ordinances limit backyard beekeepers to two hives. Undeterred, they continued caring for their bees year after year, adapting their goals while maintaining healthy colonies. In recent seasons, they've taken a more hands-off approach, noting that while honey hasn't been harvested in the past three years, at least one hive remains impressively strong though, as Lester puts it, also "pretty mean."

Lester brings leadership experience to WCABA, having previously served as President of the Austin Area Beekeepers Association. He stepped into that role for a year, as he describes it, simply to help keep the club alive and it worked. Margaret contributes her own brand of wisdom, earned the hard way. A few years ago, she learned a memorable lesson while mowing near the hives without a bee suit. The bees objected loudly, chasing her around the house, where she fell, lost her glasses, and ultimately spent nearly an hour hosing herself off. Margaret stopped counting after 40 stings and, though swollen and sore, was thankfully unharmed. She now enthusiastically reminds fellow beekeepers to always wear protective gear when mowing (even on cold days).

Together, Lester and Margaret have been warm, welcoming faces for WCABA, often helping greet members and manage sign-ins at meetings. They consistently step in wherever help is needed, quietly filling gaps and making others feel at home. Their steady presence, willingness to serve, and ability to laugh through the challenges make them a valued part of the WCABA community.

**Philip Ainslie** has been keeping bees for about 20 years and has been a member of the Williamson County Area Bee Association for an impressive 21 years. His interest in beekeeping started in a college entomology class and clearly, that spark turned into a long-standing passion.

Philip especially enjoys honey production and education, over the years he has generously shared his knowledge with our club. He has served in just about every role imaginable, including Treasurer, President, and Secretary, and has also helped behind the scenes with the website, bee procurement (driving and unloading), Beekeeping 101 classes, and numerous public speaking events. If something needed doing, chances are Philip was involved. One of Philip's most memorable beekeeping experiences was observing an attempt by Africanized bees to overtake a hive. He successfully stopped the invaders before the takeover could be completed. It's a reminder of how much knowledge, vigilance, and calm decision-making good beekeeping requires. We are deeply grateful for Philip's decades of dedication, leadership, and willingness to educate others, and we are proud to recognize him as a Lifetime Member of the Williamson County Area Bee Association.

**Chris and Shirley Doggett** have been a steady, grounding presence in the Central Texas beekeeping community for decades. They began managing hives around 2000 in Round Rock and later moved to Thrall, where they continued as dedicated hobbyists and bee enthusiasts, typically maintaining six to eight hives. They joined the Williamson County Area Bee Association during the early years when, as Shirley fondly describes her, Mary Bost "the mother of the club" was still actively involved and intentionally passing along the culture and spirit that shaped WCABA's foundation.

Chris has been deeply involved in beekeeping education and leadership, with Shirley right beside him every step of the way. Together, they have served with Real Texas Honey, the Texas Beekeepers Association, WCABA, the Central Texas Bee Club, and numerous educational and mentoring efforts. Chris continues to serve as an advisor to the Central Texas Bee Club, helping to organize the annual Bee School — an outstanding program that has introduced

countless new beekeepers to the craft. For many years, he also taught Beekeeping 101, a three-hour introductory course during Bee School, and has provided beginner-level education at WCABA meetings. He additionally served as WCABA President and the newsletter editor, further strengthening the club through communication and leadership.

Shirley's contributions have been equally impactful. Alongside her work with Real Texas Honey and ongoing assistance with Texas Beekeepers Association membership, she served as WCABA Membership Director from 2014 to 2025, welcoming new members and ensuring they felt informed, included, and valued. On a personal note, Shirley was the one who welcomed me into the Membership Director role. She patiently, kindly, and with genuine care taught me the ropes while Chris offered steady encouragement along the way. That generosity of spirit is something many members recognize and appreciate.

Though Chris and Shirley are not able to attend meetings now, they remain closely connected, following the newsletter and cheering on the continued success of the club they helped shape. Their legacy is one of education, mentorship, and hospitality, a reminder that some of the most important work in a beekeeping club happens not just in the apiary, but in the way people are welcomed and supported.

**Jimmie Oakley** is one of WCABA's true pillars, with roots that reach back to the club's earliest days alongside Robert & Mary Bost. His beekeeping journey began with a single hive rescued from a horse pasture and relocated, by methods he no longer recalls, into his wife's garden in Oak Cliff, Dallas. Long before that first hive, Jimmie's curiosity was already well formed. Growing up in Oklahoma, he was fascinated by watching red ants tunnel through dirt in a pickle jar; when he later discovered what bees could do, that fascination quickly took hold for life.

Jimmie joined the Williamson County Area Bee Association in 1992 at the invitation of Mary Bost, and by the following year had been "hoodwinked" into becoming President (a role he held for seven years). That period coincided with a particularly busy and joyful time, including Jimmie's youngest daughter, Christy, being named 1993 Texas Honey Queen. Beyond WCABA, Jimmie brings deep commercial beekeeping experience, having operated *Annie's Pure Honey* in North Dakota from 1976–1986, complete with a family-run honey house. He also raised and shipped Starline queens from the Texas Gulf Coast across the country. Within WCABA, his service has been extensive: President, long-time Program Chair, Historian, Queen Chair for more than two decades, Scholarship Chair, and Newsletter editor. He worked closely with Robert Bost, helping carry forward the club's founding spirit of education, service, and mentorship through the Ed Wolfe–Robert Bost Memorial Scholarship Program.

Jimmie's story embodies WCABA at its best: steady leadership, deep knowledge, and a generous willingness to serve wherever needed. His contributions helped shape the club from its formative years into the thriving community it remains today.

**Recently honored as new Lifetime Members:**

**Shannon Montez** has been keeping bees for over seven years and has been a member of our association for about that long as well. She first got started after tagging along with a neighbor to a bee meeting and while the neighbor decided beekeeping wasn't for her, Shannon was hooked. Shannon didn't just jump into beekeeping, she jumped into service. She joined the board her very first year, served as Vice President, and eventually stepped in as President when the club needed her. Her willingness to help wherever needed has meant a great deal to our club. Shannon was instrumental in the process to have the monthly meeting (and Board meetings) on Zoom.

What Shannon enjoys most is simply watching the bees, especially seeing how a blooming bush can suddenly be surrounded by activity. She's fascinated by the mystery of the hive and how some colonies thrive while others struggle, which is something many of us can relate to. One hard-earned lesson she likes to share is to be extra careful when treating for fire ants around your hives. A small mistake involving ant bait and sugar syrup once led to the loss of an entire hive, a reminder that beekeeping keeps us humble and always learning. We are thankful for Shannon's years of dedication, leadership, and love of the bees, and we're honored to recognize her as a new Lifetime Member of the Williamson County Area Bee Association.

**Linda Russell** was recently recognized as a Lifetime Member of the Williamson County Area Bee Association, and her service to the club reflects a quiet dedication that often goes unnoticed, but never unfelt. Linda has served

WCABA as a board member, where she was the Program Chair which organizes and coordinates our speakers. Linda's work helped to ensure that meetings were engaging, educational, and welcoming to beekeepers at every stage of their journey. Linda was the first to split the program time and introduced Beekeeping 201 for the more experienced beekeepers who wanted to be challenged beyond the basics. Beyond formal roles, Linda is known for simply stepping in where help is needed. She is the kind of member who arrives early, stays late, and fills gaps without being asked. Her steady presence and willingness to serve behind the scenes have helped keep the club running smoothly and supported countless small moments that make WCABA feel like a community rather than just a meeting.

Linda has also helped extend WCABA's reach beyond the club through her work with BIG, an organization that provides meaningful work and community for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She has facilitated a partnership between BIG and WCABA, coordinating donations of honey frames from club members so residents can extract the honey and sell it at the BIG store. This collaboration not only supports a worthy organization but also gives WCABA members a tangible way to serve the broader community through beekeeping.

Linda's contributions reflect the heart of WCABA, service offered quietly, relationships built thoughtfully, and a belief that beekeeping can be a bridge between people. Her recognition as a Lifetime Member honors not only the roles she has held, but the many ways she has helped strengthen the club and its connection to the community.

Honey production is Linda's favorite aspect of beekeeping, especially the satisfaction of seeing the process through from hive to jar. When asked about her favorite lesson from beekeeping, Linda answers with a smile: *"The bees are much smarter than I am."* It's a line that perfectly captures her humility, good humor, and the quiet steadiness she brings to WCABA — a reminder that sometimes the best beekeepers are also the best listeners.

**A Personal Reflection: Honoring Our Lifetime Members**

If you are still reading, one of three things is probably true: you're a bit of a history buff, you got happily sucked into these stories, or you simply had the time to linger and for that, I'm grateful. These stories were never meant to be rushed. They deserve the same patience and attention that beekeeping itself requires.

As I gathered these stories, I found myself smiling often and occasionally shaking my head in admiration. The stories of our Lifetime Members remind me that the Williamson County Area Bee Association was built the same way strong colonies are built — through steady care, shared work, and people willing to show up season after season. While their paths into beekeeping may have started differently, they converge in a common thread of curiosity, generosity, and a willingness to pass knowledge forward.

What stands out most isn't just the number of years in beekeeping, hives managed, or roles held, it's the heart behind those actions. Whether it was hauling bees across state lines, mentoring a new beekeeper through their first inspection, brewing coffee for a meeting, or offering encouragement when a hive (or a season) didn't go as planned, these members shaped WCABA in ways that continue to benefit us today. Their contributions didn't end when titles changed or years passed; they live on in the traditions, programs, friendships, and culture that define our club.

Our founding members, Robert and Mary Bost, Ed Wolfe, and so many others — planted something special when WCABA was just a small gathering of beekeepers with a big curiosity and love of bees. They may not have known exactly what the club would become, but they clearly understood how it should grow: steadily, thoughtfully, and with care. Much like a good hive.

As a newer steward of this club's membership, I feel incredibly honored to help tell these stories and to share them with you. They remind me that legacy in beekeeping doesn't have to be loud. Sometimes it looks like showing up early, staying late, sending in dues "just for the coffee," or quietly making sure the bees and the beekeepers are taken care of. I also want to acknowledge that there are a few Lifetime Members whose stories are not included here, not for lack of impact, but simply because I wasn't able to connect with them in time. If and when I'm able to gather those memories, there just might be a *Part Two* to this article.

To our Lifetime Members: thank you for the foundation you built, the humor you carried, the example you set, and the support you continue to give. WCABA is better because of you and the work you started is still buzzing.

*For the love of bees,*

**Judee Brinley** - Membership Director, Williamson County Area Bee Association

# Membership Report: Judee Brinley
## February 2026

### New Members

| | |
|---|---|
| Dave D'Agrella | Bellville |
| Ryan Brinley | Belton |
| Alison Gurevich | Hutto |
| Dewey & Mary Helmcamp | Round Rock |
| John & Donna Harrigan | Burnet |
| Shawn & Denise Hoss | Georgetown |
| Jennifer Penrose | Georgetown |
| Aubrey Putney | Leander |
| Brittney Rodriguez | Cedar Park |
| Linda Sue Rodriguez | Leander |
| Steve & Kim Rodriguez | Round Rock |
| Warren Sanders | Round Rock |
| Tanya Scafe | Round Rock |
| Caroline Shalab | Georgetown |
| Lee Stiles | Killeen |
| Vanessa Van Damme | Georgetown |
| Pat Zahasky | Georgetown |



*Judee Brinley - Membership*

### Renewing Members

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Shawn Anchor | Georgetown | Cheryl & Neil Anderson | Pflugerville |
| Richard Annett | Georgetown | Brent Betts | Georgetown |
| Chris Brown | Georgetown | Kenneth Browning | Liberty Hill |
| Aaron Carpenter | Round Rock | Lori Esch | Georgetown |
| Wesley & Melissa Freeman | Round Rock | Rachel & Jon Glass | Killeen |
| Gerald, Tabitha, Gerry, Maxwell & Calvin Liboiron | Georgetown | Collin & Sadie Hampton | Round Rock |
| | | Dean Hewitt | Hutto |
| Joy Hilscher | Round Rock | Jim Houstoun | Austin |
| Cheryl Hullum | Jerrell | Paul & Jen Illingworth | Georgetown |
| Albert Janecka | Taylor | Johnny Kubicek | Lexington |
| Mark Krenek | Lexington | James Kimani | Hutto |
| Roy Markham | Round Rock | Karen Marquardt | Round Rock |
| Eric McDaniel | Georgetown | Gregory Mox | Killeen |
| Chris & Karen O'Dell | Austin | Sean O'Neil | Leander |
| Lindsey Palotta | Georgetown | John & Karrin Pate | Georgetown. |
| Logan Peters | Liberty Hill | Scott, Julia, & Justine Peterson- | Austin |
| Jimmy Shields | Georgetown | Jim & Lorna Smith | Georgetown |
| Jim Sweeny | Coppers Cove | Jack, Darla, & Caiya Ward - | Georgetown |
| Gene Wallace | Georgetown | Linda Watts | Liberty Hill |
| Valerie Warnasch | Granger | Donald & Bridget Williams | Salado |

***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. *Judee*

# Williamson County Area Beekeepers Association
## Treasurer's Report - As of February 20, 2026

**Profit and Loss**

| ACCOUNTS | Year to Date |
|---|---|
| **Income** | |
| Program Income - Bee Procurement (2026) | $24,165.00 |
| Program Income - Membership Dues | $1,565.00 |
| Total Income | $25,730.00 |
| **Cost of Goods Sold** | |
| Bee Procurement Program Nucs | $50,500.00 |
| Total Cost of Goods Sold | $50,500.00 |
| **Gross Profit** | ($24,770.00) |
| **Operating Expenses** | |
| Bank Charges | $25.00 |
| Meeting Supplies and Refreshments | $232.01 |
| Speaker Fees | $100.00 |
| Total Operating Expenses | $357.01 |
| **Net Profit** | ($25,127.01) |

**Balance Sheet**

| ACCOUNTS | As of February 20, 2026 |
|---|---|
| **Assets** | |
| Total Cash and Bank | $55,446.55 |
| Total Assets | $55,446.55 |
| **Liabilities** | |
| Bee Purchase Commitment (2026) | $50,500.00 |
| Less Payment Installments ($25,500 + $800) | ($26,300.00) |
| Total Liabilities | $24,200.00 |
| **Assets & Liabilities** | $31,246.55 |
| **Equity** | |
| Retained Earnings - Prior Years | $56,373.56 |
| Retained Earnings - Current Year | ($25,127.01) |
| Total Equity | $31,246.55 |

**Bee Procurement Program - 2026**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Income** | |
| Program Income - Bee Procurement | $28,780.00 |
| **Cost of Goods Sold** | |
| Bees | $50,500.00 |
| **Gross Profit** | ($21,720.00) |
| **Expenses** | |
| Wire Charge | $50.00 |
| Total Expenses | $50.00 |
| **Net Profit** | ($21,770.00) |

**Notes (as of January 24, 2026):**

BeeWeaver Commitment 100 Queens — $4,000.00
- Payment Installment = $800

Evergreen Purchase 300 Nucs — $46,500.00
- Evergreen Commitment = $54,000
- Less Volume and in-person pick-up discount = $7,500
- Net Amount = $46,500
- Payment Installments = $25,500

**WILLIAMSON COUNTRY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**

# MEMBERSHIP / CONTACT UPDATE FORM

Date: _____

[ ] **New** Membership or [ ] **Renewing** Membership

[ ] Individual **$20.00** per year or [ ] Family **$25.00** - individuals living same household

[ ] Update Contract Information - [ ] Request Badges

To pay your membership, bring this form and payment to the meeting or mail to:

**Judee Brinley** – Membership

50100 Flintrock Drive – Georgetown TX 78626

**Checks must be made payable to WCABA**

## Update Contact Information

Name:_____Family names:_____

Phone: ( )_____ _____

Address:_____

City/State/Zip:_____

E-mail:_____

(please print e-mail address neatly)

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

**New Member only**: Would you like a FREE 1-year Membership in Texas Beekeepers Association?

[ ] Yes [ ] No

**Request Badges:**

List names for family membership badges needed _____

_____

Addition Instructions:

(revised 2-2026)