



Georgia Beekeepers Association Officers

President
Bob Binnie
P.O. Box 15,
Lakemont, GA 30556 706-782-6722

Vice President
Wally Batchelor
P.O. Box 71425
Newnan, GA 30271 770-328-3472
wallybees@juno.com

Secretary
Tom Bonnell
95 Little Rd
Hampton, GA 30228 770-707-2110
tombonnell@bellsouth.net

Treasurer
Virginia Webb
349 Gastley Rd.
Clarksville, GA 30523 706-754-7062
mtnhoney@windstream.com

Past President
Keith Fielder
243 Folds Rd
Eatonton, GA 31024 706-923-0183
kfielder@uga.edu

Board of Directors
Keith Fielder
243 Folds Rd
Eatonton, GA 31024

Cindy Bee
1041 Wilburn Dr.
Marietta, GA 30064 770-424-0076
dillonbee@bellsouth.net

Fred Rossman
P.O. Box 909
Moultrie, GA 31776 229-985-7200
rossman-bees@windstream.net

Newsletter Editor
Rose Anne Fielder
243 Fold Rd.
Eatonton, GA 31024 706-923-0183
rad243@hotmail.com

Webmaster
Bill Owens
4510 Springwood Dr.
Monroe, GA 30655
770-266-6619(home) 404-516-1807
(cell) webmaster@gabeekeeping.com

GEORGIA BUZZ

Georgia Beekeepers Association

Winter 2009

The Honeybee— only insect producing food for mankind

A Letter from the President

I

It's been an amazing and unusual spring.

The maple trees bloomed very early in the southern part of the state and very late in the north. The maples are important for spring buildup and because of the very late bloom in the north many colonies didn't survive that may have otherwise done so. This tied together with what seems to be an increased interest in beekeeping has made the demand for packages and nucs stronger than ever.

I've been speaking to many local clubs in and out of the state and I see the numbers of new beekeepers way up. Interest in beekeeping schools and workshops for beginners is very high and clubs sponsoring these events report record numbers of participants. This is great news and I hope this trend continues.

Our annual fall meeting is beginning to come together and shows good promise of being a great meeting. It will be held in Rock Springs, Georgia, on the 25th and 26th of September at the Walker County Civic Center.

The speakers on board so far are;

Dr Tom Seely - Cornell University

Doug McGinnis - Tropical Blossom Honey

Dr Jamie Ellis - University of Florida

Dr Fred Hossler - East Tennessee State University

Dr Joe Latshaw - Ohio Queen Breeders and Latshaw Apiaries.

Keith Fielder—UGA Extension

There will be more detailed information on the program and accommodations in the summer newsletter.

Until then I hope you all have a great spring with now swarming and lots of Honey.

Bob Binnie

President

Georgia Beekeepers Assoc.

NO FOOLING, GBA GETS SMALL COMMODITY BLOCK GRANT!

April 1st may have been a rainy day in Georgia but not for the Georgia Beekeepers Association. The day began with a tension filled drive in the pouring rain along with the usual early morning Atlanta traffic. Just like a NASCAR race at Talladega, mix rain and Atlanta traffic, and you get “the Big One”. Forty five minutes stalled in traffic (glad I left extra early). Follow with two unscheduled train changes on the west bound MARTA train, then a “pleasant” two block walk in the rain and it was “show me the money” time.

All this began back in late August with a phone call from GBA president Bob Binnie. Bob said he had an “opportunity” for me, write a grant proposal for a Small Commodity Block Grant. This money comes from USDA and is funneled through the various State Department of Agriculture offices to assist smaller commodity associations with their promotional efforts. The target of the proposal was a \$7500 grant to be used to help GBA in spot lighting Georgia honey. Hours of thinking, writing, rephrasing, the “traditional” re-write after the initial submission and 8 long months..... Then a call from the Georgia Department of Agriculture and we got the money.

April Fools Day started out lousy but finished in the green. The award session at the Georgia Department of Ag office turned out to be a reunion of sorts. The first face I saw coming through the door was a former Cooperative Extension Colleague, retired Bacon County agent and Chair of the Georgia Blueberry Association Danny Staniland. The two more old friends, Duke Lane, president of Georgia Pecan Producers and Chop Evans, representing the Georgia Peach industry, were also there. Other lucky recipients that day were the Georgia wine producers, Georgia Organics and Coastal Organics.

This is a great opportunity for the Georgia Beekeepers Association. During the four year course of the grant period, the GBA will have a pool of money to help better promote Georgia honey and further education concerning the honeybee and beekeeping in general.

-Keith Fielder

Crystallized Honey? Try This Method to Reliquify

How many of you have had some of your unsold honey start to crystallize and not know what to do with it? I did for the first time this past winter and worse yet; quite a bit of it was already bottled in one pound clear plastic jars. It wasn't completely crystallized, but just beginning, with a grainy texture that I did not feel comfortable trying to sell. I remembered a presentation that Bob Binnie had done some time ago on his Blue Ridge Honey operation at one of the Georgia State Beekeepers meetings where he mentioned a thermostatically controlled box that he had constructed using a light bulb as the heat source to slowly heat the honey to a low temperature until it re-liquefied. I called and talked to Bob and got some more details from him on its construction.

The key to Bob's box was a thermostatically controlled switch sold by the Walter T. Kelly Company. They refer to this device as a "Heat Limit Control" (Catalogue No. 250) that has an adjustable range of 60 to 250 degrees F and sells for \$60.00. I sketched out a plan for my box, but had the idea that maybe I could just use some of the stored hive bodies and supers that I was not using for my box. So I rigged up a hive body and a shallow super on top of a solid bottom board with a 150 watt light bulb screwed into a ceramic base and metal utility box inside of the hive body and used an entrance reducer to close off the gap where the cord entered the hive body. On top of that, I placed a wire Queen excluder and then another hive body and hive top. While I waited for the Heat Limit Control to arrive from Kelly, I hooked the light to a dimmer switch that I had on hand to see if the rig would work. I had a thermometer with a long temperature probe on it that I inserted into the upper hive body through a small hole that I drilled into the Hive body. By playing with the dimmer switch, I was able to regulate and maintain the temperature at 105 degrees F which is a temperature that is high enough to re-liquefy the honey but not affect either the thin plastic jar or the quality of the honey. My experiment worked great! Over night the honey was completely re-liquefied.

A couple of days later the Heat Limit Control switch arrived from Kelly and I tried heating a five gallon bucket after adding a empty super to the hive body above the light. The switch worked great and eliminated the fiddling with the dimmer switch. Again I set the switch to 105 degrees and it cycled the light on and off maintaining the temperature between 105 to 108 degrees. By maintaining the temperature under 110 degrees F, you will not adversely affect the enzymes and delicate flavor of your honey. You should be able to reach the temperatures required with just a 150 watt bulb, but if you want to better insulate the set-up you can place a blanket over it. So by using many items you probably have hand, and for less than the cost of a pail heater, you can come up with a way to effectively re-liquefy your crystallized honey without adversely affecting its quality. I also used this setup to re-liquefy chunk honey that had just started to crystallize without affecting the wax comb.

WELCOME TO NORTHWEST GEORGIA

David B. Reed, President

Northwest Georgia Beekeepers' Association

The Northwest Georgia Beekeepers' Association takes great pleasure in hosting the leadership, membership, speakers, visitors, vendors and sponsors who will be attending the Georgia Beekeepers' Association's Fall meeting on September 25-26, 2009 at the Walker County Civic Center and Agricultural Complex. These wonderfully modern and spacious facilities are located in the rural community of Rock Spring, GA.

We're convinced you'll enjoy visiting this authentically southern, hospitable, historic and picturesque part of the Peach State. Here you'll find mountains with a variety of paths and trails to explore and beautifully expansive vistas to view. The area abounds with rivers, creeks, caverns, caves and canyons to be experienced. These locations have reputations that draw both the expert and amateur adventurer to explore them and meet the challenges they offer. The free spirited independent explorer and those who are more comfortable being offered very well qualified guided tours will find their expectations well met and fulfilled.

Rock Spring is surrounded by opportunities to satisfy a variety of interest. For me to attempt to share all of the locations events and possibilities with you would truly be impossible. But in an attempt at making your visit a pleasant and memorable one, I'm including here a listing of surrounding cities with web addresses that will contain information of interest to I expect most everyone.

Immediately to the north of Rock Spring you'll enter the unique City of Chickamauga, GA. Its "home town" atmosphere makes you want stay. The center of town offers shops and eateries to meet all tastes. Near the town you'll find the Gordon Lee Mansion, Chickamauga National Battle Field and Crawfish Springs; you can visit www.cityofchickamaugagerorgia.com

LaFayette, GA is to the south of Rock Spring. It is often called the "Queen City of the Highlands," and is the County Seat for Walker County GA. It offers many opportunities to explore the history of Native American, Civil War and African American History in this area. Close by to LaFayette is the location of Pigeon Mountain Wild Life Reserve. The mountain was named honoring the now extinct Homing Pigeon that used to in habit this mountain's areas. Visit www.cityoflafayettega.org to find many interesting details and points of interest about this city.

Looking to the west from Rock Spring you'll see a beautiful mountain's ridge line. This ridge line is Lookout Mountain. The northern foot hills start at the edge of the Tennessee River and the ridge runs south into Alabama. Its' eastern slopes dip into the Chattooga valley and to the west into the Chattanooga Valley. Driving along the top of the ridge offers many beautiful views of the surrounding valleys. Visit www.cityoflookoutmtga.com

Toward the east from Rock Spring you'll find Dalton GA. Dalton has been named the "Carpet Capital of the World." If you are looking for carpet or flooring and wondering how they would work in a particular application or environment; you might want to visit this city of carpet. www.cityofdalton-ga.gov

Beyond local points of interest there exists a bounty of tourist, educational, cultural and shopping opportunities to satisfy every taste. A list of web sites of possible interest to attendees:

www.rossvillega.com Rossville, GA (Home of Cherokee Chief John Ross)

www.ringgold.com Ringgold, GA (Historic Ringgold Depot and location of the recapture of the General Lee Steam Engine)

www.fortoglethorpe.com Ft. Oglethorpe, GA (historic sites, military museums and battle field sites)

www.chattanooga.gov Chattanooga, TN (historic sites, museums, theaters, restraints and tourist and shopper attractions)

We again welcome you. It's our sincere hope that you enjoy your Fall Meeting and visit to Northwest Georgia.

National Honey Bee Awareness Day

August 22, 2009

A national grassroots effort to promote awareness of the honeybee.

Locals clubs and individuals can host a honey tasting, open a beeyard and talk to people about the benefits of honey and the honey bee. A great way to educate a wide variety of people is at a local fair or your farmer's market.

For more information and a listing of clubs participating, go to

www.nhbad.com

Editor's Note: Some of you may have already read this article that Tom Bonnell sent out by email earlier this month, but I thought that this was a good article to include. We have had our share of swarm calls this year also. We are 4 for 5 of the ones that Keith was able to respond to. He has reached a personal best of 2 for 3 at the same location in a less than a two week time span.!

Caught any good Swarms?

I have had a good few weeks catching swarms. My record this year so far is three caught and two lost. First, I will tell you about the two I lost.

A call came from my wife about a large swarm in a pine tree in McDonough and the caller asked if I wanted to get it. Of course I did! I waited for Debbie to come home before going after the swarm. When we got to the address, the man who called came out and said the bees left ten minutes ago. The score now is Bees 1 and Tom 0.

I was pretty lucky to find a lady who wanted bees on her farm where she has 42 horses and a lot of clover growing in her pastures. With the help of fellow Tara Beekeeper Ned Isaacson, I put two hives on her property. Since the lady also wrote a book about Sweet Potatoes, we both got autographed copies. Anyway, back to the swarms. I went by to add supers and check out how the hives were doing and hanging on the side of one hive was a large swarm. Unfortunately I only had a couple of supers and queen excluders with me so I had to return home for a box to catch the swarm in. Once again, upon returning the sky was full of bees and away they went. The score is now Bees 2 and Tom 0.

It is now Saturday evening and the phone rings. My wife says someone has a ball of bees in there tree at Sunny Side and is afraid to go outside due to her allergic condition to bee stings. So Debbie gave me the phone and I talk to the lady, trying to cure her fear of these very docile bees. It is dark outside and she thought it would be a good time to get them while they could not see me! I asked how early she would be up in the morning and she said anytime I could get there. She also wanted to know if I was crazy to mess with these bees in the light! It was an easy catch; shake them into a box and go. Now the score is Bee's 2 and Tom 1.



No calls again until Friday. That morning a call came from a Church in Forest Park off of Phillips Road. It had bees inside it and the caller wanted someone to come and look. I went and found out where they were coming into the Church and it was at the highest part of the roof. Since they were in the wall, I gave the church the name of beekeepers who will extract from within walls and headed back to work. Before I arrived at work my cell phone rang and the Baptist Church in Riverdale had a ball of bees on their Sanctuary wall and wanted someone come and get them. Friday must have been the day for bees and churches! I drove over to Riverdale and found the bees straddled between a bush and on the wall. With the help of a plastic box and a bee brush I got most of them into the box.

I took the box to the truck and was standing looking at all the stragglers and wondering what I did wrong. It is a lot easier when you can clip off a branch and drop them all into a box. This was my first time for sweeping bees into a box. I felt someone was near me and I looked behind and there in bib overalls was PN Williams. PN looked at the situation and said, "Go get your box." He positioned the box back where it was under the original location, slightly propped it open, tapped on the box and watched the stragglers start to go in. All this time I was thinking they are all going to leave out of the box! PN said to leave it until later and most of the stragglers should be in the box. I sort of felt like a big sissy when I was fully clothed in bee apparel and PN used none. I left and went back to work thinking that later I would return and all the bees would be gone. I walked back into the office and the Agriculture Agent said there is another swarm out off of Flint River Road.

It is now after 5:00 PM and I am heading back to Riverdale to get my box of bees. When I arrived they were almost all in the box. I pulled out the shim and off I went to get the next swarm. The score is now even, Bees 2 and Tom 2.



When I arrived at the residence on Flint River Road and knocked on the door, a lady came out and said the bees left. It was a very windy day and I asked her if I could look around and she said to go ahead. I found the swarm hanging on a low tree branch in the back yard. With the help of a ladder I borrowed from the lady, the bees were in the box and I was on the way home. The score is now Bees 2 and Tom 3.

So, now it is Monday, April 13, 2009 and I have a call about a swarm off Fayetteville Road. The lady said they are in a tree in the front yard and that they were at work so just take them and go. With a little bit of luck the swarm will still be there over my lunch hour and the score will now be Bees 2 and Tom 4. I love it when I'm winning.....

Happy Bee Hunting – Tom Bonnell – Secretary Georgia Beekeepers Association

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Young Harris Beekeeping Institute

May 14-16, 2009

For more information and
Registration form, go to

http://www.ent.uga.edu/bees/bee_institute/Brochure-09.pdf

Georgia Beekeepers Association
Georgia Buzz Newsletter
Rose Anne Fielder
243 Folds Rd.
Eatonton, GA 31024



We're on the Web!

www.gabeekeeping.com

GA Beekeepers Association

Fall Meeting

September 25–26

Rock Spring, GA

Walker County Civic Center
