

Spilling the Honey

GBA Monthly Newsletter

Editors: Gina Gallucci and Linda Tillman

July 2015



Photo by Linda Tillman, June 2015 Huge Bee Beard

President's Message

Recently I wrote about the Bee Team and discussed the different facets of involvement and education of beekeeping. This month I would like to talk about the diversity of our association. As I have travelled all over Georgia meeting with clubs and getting to know more of our members, I realize that beekeepers come from every aspect of America. We have Republicans, Democrats, independents, conservatives, liberals and any other political party there is. We are every race, creed and color America has to offer and don't really care who you may fall in love with. Our members are rich, poor and somewhere in the "middle" class; but who cares?

The Georgia Beekeepers use every method of keeping bees known and some not so familiar ways. We use chemicals, go natural, top bar hives, AZ hives, Langstroth hives and tree stumps. We are in the mountains, swamps, forests, farm fields, urban and suburban. But with all this said, we have "ONE" thing in mind...the honey bee! We care about the health and mere existence of the little critter. And it doesn't matter why. Honey production, Queen rearing, pollination, selling bees, or just observing them.

America did not become her powerful self and grow from a boatload of pilgrims to over 300 million people by everyone living life the exact same way. We need to recognize that as we meet other beekeepers, and we need to be considerate of how they do it. One of the first things I heard when I started keeping bees was if you ask 10 beekeepers a question, you get 15 answers. That is because of who we are as a people. In fact, our diverse practices are what will keep the bees alive for many years to come.

If we all did it the same way, and it turned out wrong; then poof! Bees all gone. But by diversifying our practices, if one effort doesn't work, then we haven't lost everything. Jennifer Berry explains it as good as I have ever heard anyone say. She says that she loves her bees so much and will not use any chemicals as long as she doesn't have to. But before she stands there and watches them die, she will do what is necessary to save them. That's logical.

For whatever reason, we have each chosen our own way of keeping bees. And I'll stand before you and say everyone keep trying what you think is best. Maybe one day we will figure out how to do it "one way." There are about 3,000 beeks in Georgia (that we know of) from hobbyist, side-liners and commercial folk operating over 73,000 colonies. It doesn't matter if there are 73,000 individuals with one hive or one individual with 73,000 hives; we have a lot of bees in this state and should work together to keep the industry alive and thriving. The hobbyist want to help; the sideliners want to participate and there is a large market out there so that we are not really competing too much for territory. Georgia ranked number 9 in 2014 in honey and bee production and we should be proud of that. There is room to improve, but before we do, we have to embrace each other as fellow beekeepers and not criticize one practice over another. Together, we are the Bee Team!

Bear Kelley,
President, Georgia Beekeepers Assn.



We are officially Legal Beekeepers in Gwinnett County!

by Janet Poe



Finally! On, Tuesday, June 23, 2015, the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners voted to approve a new and vastly improved ordinance that allows beekeeping in all zoning districts. We are thrilled to be able to brag about our bees again. No more hiding hives in our spare bedrooms or basements! No more losing our hives because they are painted with camo paint! And no more selling honey out of the back of our pickups after dark!

We are bona fide!

Last year the commission had restricted beekeeping to residents who lived in agricultural areas. Before the vote, Derrick Fowler, president of the Beekeeper's Club of Gwinnett County said, "You have the opportunity to leave here as heros to the backyard beekeeping community in Gwinnett County."

Beekeeping in Gwinnett as approved by Commissioners:

In all non-agricultural residential zoning districts, beekeeping shall meet the following requirements:

1. Honey bees shall not be kept on lots containing less than ten thousand (10,000) square feet. No more than two colonies or hives, with only two swarms, shall be allowed per ten thousand (10,000) square feet.
2. Hives shall be marked or identified to notify visitors.
3. No hive shall exceed twenty (20) cubic feet in volume.
4. No hive shall be located closer than ten (10) feet from any property line.
5. No hive shall be located closer than fifty (50) feet from a public right-of-way or twenty-five (25) feet from the principal building on an abutting lot.
6. A constant supply of water shall be provided for all hives.
7. A flyway barrier at least six (6) feet in height shall shield any part of a property line that is within twenty-five (25) feet of a hive. The flyway barrier shall consist of a wall, fence, dense vegetation or a combination thereof.
8. Any colony or hive which becomes a nuisance as defined by state law must be removed.
9. Abandoned colonies or hives and diseased bees shall be removed (this shall not prohibit the use of SWARM traps).

The Beekeepers Club of Gwinnett would like to send a sincere “THANK YOU!” to everyone who helped make this happen. The list is very long, and includes (but is not limited to) the following:

Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners:

Charlotte J. Nash, Chairman

Tommy Hunter, District 3 Commissioner

John Heard, District 4 Commissioner

Jace Brooks, District 1 Commissioner

Lynette Howard, District 2 Commissioner

Bryan Lackey, Director, Planning and Development
Gwinnett County Planning Commission

Carol Hassell, (who spoke on our behalf at every Town Hall Meeting, even though she doesn't own bees herself!)

Nicholas and Tabitha Weaver, who walked this path before we did

Forsyth Beekeepers Club, who came to the Gwinnett Courthouse to offer moral support

Cindy Hodges, Metro Atlanta Beekeepers Association

Bear Kelley, President, GBA

Mike Maxwell, legal expert who assisted Fayette County Beekeepers

David Shipp, East Metro Beekeepers Association

Linda Tillman and Gina Gallucci, GBA

Paul Kudyba, Tri-County Beekeepers

B.J. Weeks, Cherokee Beekeepers' Club

Mary Cahill-Roberts, Tara Beekeepers Association

Eric Weller, Amicalola Beekeepers

Ryan Sarks, Cherokee Beekeepers' Club

Damon Frost, Forsyth Beekeepers Club

And last, but not least, we wish to thank our own **Gwinnett Beekeepers Board of Directors**, who worked long hours to help bring legal beekeeping back to Gwinnett County!

They are: Derrick Fowler, Jane Lu, Tommy Bailey, Rob Williams, Jane and Clay Compton, John Pruitt, Howard Pitman, Diane May, Dave and Cindy Collins, Hugh Holcomb, and Janet Poe



Beekeeper of the Year Nominations

The Georgia Beekeeper of the Year Award is presented annually at our Fall Meeting to an outstanding member of our beekeeping community, and is selected from nominations from our membership.

To nominate a beekeeper, write us about this person and why you think they deserve this award. You won't be graded on grammar, but your person will be considered based upon what you tell us, so be as thorough and specific as possible.

Email your nominations to julia@mahoodstudio.com by July 10.

Street Cred

Steve Page sent us this [German video](#) on breathing air from beehives for health reasons.

Curt Barrett sent us [this link about bee swarms](#).



Georgia Beekeepers Association

Serving Georgia's Bee Industry for over 90 Years

Save the Date!

***The GBA Fall Meeting and
Honey Show
on
September 18, 19***

***at
Georgia College and State University
in
Milledgeville, Georgia***

Great line-up of speakers from far and wide

Honey show

Plan to come!



You'll notice that the list of club meetings below is a short one. Your editors are very busy and didn't have time to ask for the club information more than once. If you'd like to see your club listed, consider volunteering to be the person who submits the information to the Newsletter for your club. We love to list meeting information but don't have time to send more than one reminder.

Upcoming Club Meetings Across the State

Club Name	Speaker/Topic	When	Where	City
Altamaha	Bear Kelley: Honey: Who Knew?	Mon 7/6 6 PM	Gordonia Alatamaha State Park	Reidsville, GA
Coweta	Mary Cahill-Roberts: Fall Hive Inspections	Mon 7/13 7 PM	255 Pine Rd	Newnan, GA
Gwinnett	Cyndi Ball: Speaker's Choice	Tues 7/14 7 PM	Hebron Baptist Church	Dacula, GA
Heart of GA	Julia Mahood	Tues 7/21 7PM	Camp John Hope Center	Marshallville, GA
Lake Country	Cindy Hodges: Varroa	Mon 7/20 7PM	Hancock Extension Office	Sparta, GA
Lake Hartwell	Randall Kerlin: Honey Extraction	Thurs 7/2	Lavonia Baptist Church	Lavonia, GA
MABA	Jennifer Berry: Keeping Your Bees Alive Through the Winter: What You Need to Do Now	Wed 7/8 7 PM	Atlanta Botanical Garden (ask for parking ticket)	Atlanta, GA
Troup County	Pam Wilkes: USDA programs of interest to beekeepers	Mon 7/20 7 PM	Ag Building	LaGrange, GA
West Georgia	Marjorie Stansel: pollinators	Mon 7/27 7 PM	American Legion Post 145	Douglasville, GA

For club speaker ideas, GBA maintains a speaker list. If you would like to speak to clubs, [click here](#) to be added to the list. As a speaker, plan to know what your honorarium request will be if you are asked to speak. If you have invited speakers for your club, [click here to read an article](#) first published in *Bee Culture* about how to treat your speakers well.



Bee Beard Photo Contest

It's hot out there. Please take photos of the best beard your hive has produced and enter it into our photo contest. Judging criteria include **Size, Hive Coverage, Creativity of the Bees** (Abstract shape). There's some yet to be identified prize to be won.

Deadline for Entry: **July 20**. Send an email with the subject line: BEE BEARD CONTEST and with your photo attached to gbanewsletters@gmail.com

Club News and Notes:

Gilmer County Beekeepers:

By Bear Kelley



I was invited to attend an AZ hive lecture and demonstration on 21 June up in Ellijay. This event was hosted by the Gilmer County Beekeepers Association headed up by John Tackett and what an event it was! Speaking about diversity, the AZ hive is an interesting way of beekeeping. The featured speaker was Dr. Janko Bozic, PhD. who is a professor of animal behavior and beekeeping at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia. He is a 40 year beekeeper and has been managing AZ hives for 30 years and is an expert on the Carniolan Bee. Dr. Bozic told us that 1 out of every 250 people in Slovenia are beekeepers from generation to generation.

The weekend was spent listening to lectures, opening hives and visiting the home apiary of Brian Drebber. Brian's bee house is full of AZ hives and all the necessary equipment to remove frames, extract, bottle, and clean up. There is no outside work; everything is done in house. The event brought in beekeepers from as far away as Maryland to learn about the AZ hive.

Mary Lou Blohm brought an AZ hive to our Spring Meeting to demonstrate and I have asked her to bring one again to our fall meeting for those interested.

We all know that every one of our clubs here in Georgia is led by a President and other officers, but primarily operated by the worker bees. I want to take this time to recognize the Gilmer County worker bees: Mary Lou Blohm and Chris Curtin. These ladies made their club shine and were perfect hosts. If we had an award for "Club of the Month," I would give it to the Beekeepers of Gilmer County. Thank you again for a wonderful event.



SAVANNAH - HONEY SHOW WITH WELSH HONEY JUDGE MARCY CORNELL

June 13th, 2015 saw the first iteration of the Coastal Empire Beekeeping Association's Annual Honey Show at Oatland Island in Savannah, GA. Marcy Cornell, the officiating Welsh Honey Judge, traveled to Savannah with her 9 month old son and parents from Atlanta for the occasion. Marcy's family relaxed in the hospitality of one of CEBA's member's homes for the day while Marcy welcomed the club members and accepted honey submissions at the lovely Oatland Island facility, CEBA's home.

The day was warm and sunny and the Honey Show began with all contestants submitting their honey and hive products by noon. Interested Club members spent the morning in the Club Apiary on Oatland learning how to construct wax foundation frames, taught by Linda Harms, and examining the Club hives.

Marcy gave an excellent talk at 1:00 pm about what Welsh Honey Judging is all about, about honey and hive product preparation for judging and about the art of Honey Judging.

Thirteen CEBA members submitted a total of 30 products which included the categories of:

Cut comb honey

Chunk honey

Extracted honey – Light, Amber & Dark

Black Jar



As expected the category of Black Jar was the largest with a total of 13 submissions.

The Holland Family (Terry, John & Benjamin) walked away with two First Places and Benjamin Holland swept the competition with a Best in Show for his Light Extracted Honey. This was especially poignant as Ben extracted his honey from one frame of honey from his own hive and wasn't even able to attend as he is a hard working teenager and had to work that Saturday morning.

Robert Liakas was prolific in his production and was the only contestant to submit Cut Comb & Chunk honey in addition to his extracted & black jar honeys.

Marcy was very impressed with the quality and presentation of all of the samples submitted. We as a Club are proud and excited about this first honey show and plan an annual event to be held in future years in August at Oatland Island. That will allow sufficient time for everyone to have extracted honey and prepared their hive products (wax products, cosmetics, art work, etc.). All clubs are invited to join us next year, as they were this year, and with a little more time to advertise our Honey Show we hope to have a great turn out in August of 2016.

MANIFESTO

By Mark Winston,
author of *The Biology of the Honey Bee*
([reprinted with permission of the author](#))



(photo by Linda Tillman)

We often support the value of bees with economic arguments, neglecting the dimension of values, the principles we hold important and the personal and environmental standards that should be at the heart of beekeeping rather than at its fringes.

The current serious issues facing bees suggest it is time for a new manifesto to guide beekeeping, one that recognizes beekeepers as stewards of both managed and wild bees, promoters of healthy environments, managers of economically sustainable apiaries and paragons of collaboration and cooperation. It's time for some audacious thinking about the future of beekeeping.

Such a manifesto might look something like this:

- Beekeepers are **Stewards** of their honeybees, lightly managing colonies with minimal chemical and antibiotic input.
- Beekeepers are **Promoters** of healthy environments in which wild and managed bees can thrive, including reduced chemical inputs and mixed cropping systems in agricultural settings and diverse unmanaged natural habitats in urban and rural areas.
- Beekeeping is **Economically Viable**, so that hobbyists can enjoy their bees with some honey to give away, sideliners meet expenses with a bit of profit and commercial beekeepers have a consistent and sustainable income sufficient to support a family without the heavy personal stress associated with contemporary beekeeping.
- Beekeeping organizations are **Inclusive, Collaborative and Cooperative**, encompassing hobbyists with one hive to commercial beekeepers with thousands, wild bees enthusiasts to honeybee keepers, and honey producers to pollinators, under one umbrella organization that puts the health and prosperity of bees and the environment that supports them first.

We need to recognize that the good old days are gone. Bees are no longer able to respond with the resilience that allowed us to manage honeybees intensively and depend on healthy ecosystems for wild and managed bees to thrive. Today, pesticides are ubiquitous, diseases and pests rampant, and the diversity and abundance of bee forage has plummeted.

It's a new day, and below are just a few suggestions for what a manifesto-driven bee community might look like. Note that every idea goes against conventional wisdom, but keep in mind that these are not conventional times for bees:

Perhaps we can no longer take copious honey harvests from our bees. If so, a good first step would be to take ¼ less honey and feed that much less sugar.

Perhaps we should let colonies swarm every second year, providing a break in the brood cycle that might diminish the impact of varroa.

Perhaps we should move honeybees no more than once for pollination, recognizing that honeybees are no longer healthy enough to sustain multiple moves.

Perhaps honeybees should no longer be considered our primary agricultural pollinator, but used to supplement wild bee populations whose diversity and abundance we increase by large-scale habitat enhancement in and around farms.

Perhaps we should allow only one varroa treatment per year to prevent resistance.

Perhaps we should eliminate all antibiotic use, controlling bacterial diseases like American Foul Brood through a rigorous inspection and burning regime, as they do in New Zealand.

Perhaps we should cease the practice of feeding pollen supplements in the spring, as we now understand such feeding yields higher worker populations but weaker individual bees.

Perhaps research should rigorously analyze these “perhaps” ideas. Our research community has done a fabulous job of elucidating why honeybees and wild bees are doing poorly, but what we need now are bolder research directions towards solutions.

Researchers tend towards the more glamorous high-tech solutions, but those are unlikely to succeed and at best are far down the road. Some old-fashioned, large-scale management research is needed now, coupling studies of hive survival and wild bee abundance and diversity with economic analyses of what works best for beekeepers and crop pollination.

Here’s one example: I have been travelling quite a bit lately promoting my new book *“Bee Time: Lessons From the Hive,”* and I consistently encounter beekeepers who are not treating for varroa, but rather breeding from surviving untreated colonies. They report colony survival rates as good or better as those commercial beekeepers who treat heavily, but it’s all anecdotal. Let’s test those claims more rigorously, by organizing national projects to compare untreated surviving colonies to lightly or heavily chemically treated colonies.

Here’s another example: I know of no economic studies that demonstrate moving bees for pollination is economically superior to maintaining stationary apiaries, or that compare moving bees once, twice or more. My own opinion is that the extent of bee movement is a major contributing factor in the poor colony survival we see across North America, with 42% of colonies dying in 2013/2014 in the United States. But, I know of no data that support or dismiss my hunch.

There is a changed mind-set enveloped in my brief manifesto, one in which we consider the well being of bees as the primary directive rather than economic prosperity or beekeeper convenience. Putting bees first is the only way managed and wild bees will return to health, and beekeepers and farmers with bee-pollinated crops to prosperity.

I don’t know whether this manifesto is the right direction, or the ideas above sound, but I do know that the status quo is unsustainable.

There is a quote attributed to Einstein that is highly relevant for the future of beekeeping: *“Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”*

Perhaps it’s time to challenge everything we have believed about beekeeping with honeybees, and to boldly promote wild bees to become our primary commercial-level pollinators.

Perhaps it’s time to be audacious.

Mark Winston is Professor and Senior Fellow at Simon Fraser University’s Centre for Dialogue, and author of the recent book *“Bee Time: Lessons From the Hive.”*

winston@sfu.ca | June 22, 2015 at 2:08 pm | Tags: [Bees](#) | Categories: [Bees](#) |

Predators in the Beeyard:

by Linda Tillman

In the heat of the summer, all creatures try to stay alive and feed themselves. Often in the beeyard I see brown thrashers and wrens eating dead or dying bees who are on the ground in front of the hive. But there are two hornets who also prey not on the dead bees as much as on the living ones.

The European hornet is large and threatening looking. Wikipedia says that this hornet is the only true hornet in North America. This hornet grabs live bees and returns to its paper-like nest to feed them to their young. To the right is a photo of the European hornet from the Wikipedia page.



I see the European hornet near my beehives every summer. Once I found a dead European hornet on the landing board of one of my hives, apparently killed by the bees:

Recently we were contacted by the Oglethorpe beekeepers who thought they had found a Japanese Giant hornet in their hive.

However, consultation with Jennifer Berry indicated that the length of the insect, 1.5," meant that it was a European hornet and not a Japanese Giant hornet.

Here is the photo of the insect that David King found in his beeyard and wondered if it were

a Japanese Giant Hornet (photo by Glenn Galau) —>



There is another wasp predator that haunts bee yards in the summer. This one is called the bald-faced hornet. This wasp, measuring .75 inches, is slightly smaller than the European hornet. It lives in a social nest like the European hornet and also grabs live bees to take home for lunch for its young. I have seen many of these in my summers as a beekeeper.



Here are some bald-faced hornets on a baggie I was using to feed sugar syrup to the bees one summer.

More frequently I've seen bald-faced hornets killed by the bees in the process of defending their hive from the black and white marauders. I can't get too upset, I know everyone on the earth is just trying to feed themselves and their families.

Dear Aunt Bee,

A few months ago I asked about the foam on my honey jars when I attempted to reliquify them over low heat. You said it had fermented. Can I use that partially fermented honey as the basis of making mead? Or shall I save it and give it back to the bees next winter?

Thank you,
Sweet and Boozy

Dear Sweet and Boozy,

Marcy Cornell, well-respected honey judge in the state of Georgia replied to this question:

"I would say not to use it for mead. If it's fermenting already, it's likely already developed off flavors that will be noticeable in the finished mead, for one thing. Also, the wild yeast that's making it ferment is unlikely to be a desirable strain; most mead recipes require a particular strain of yeast in order to get a particular result."

Guess you'll have to start your mead from scratch. However, I do think you could feed the honey back to the bees...who may or may not be in the mood for alcohol.

Aunt Bee

(thanks, Ricky Moore, for this question)

"I prefer to get fat on honey."

— [Stefanie Brook Trout](#),
[Prairie Gold: An Anthology of the American Heartland](#)

Dear Aunt Bee,

Please settle a neighborly dispute.

Is it okay, or advisable to raise the top cover of the hive to vent out hot air, or does that allow more small hive beetles in? What should we be doing now? It's hot in Middle Georgia.

Thanks,
AC Fiend

Dear AC Fiend,

To get an answer to this question, we turned to Steve Esau, one of Georgia's newest Journeyman beekeepers. This is what he said:

"I know we often worry about our hives overheating during the heat of Georgia summers, but this is also the time of year where robbing is of great concern. In fact, I would be more concerned in preventing robbing than I would be of small hive beetles. By raising the top cover you have created significantly more space for the bees to defend against robbers. I think there are better ways to "vent" a hive.

1.) Use notched inner covers as this will create the needed escape and flow of air thru the hive but also gives the bees less of a backdoor to defend. Position the outer cover so that it is resting on the back ledge of the inner cover exposing the "notch" without creating additional space where potential robbers can challenge guard bees and ultimately gain entrance.

2.) Place an empty honey super (no frames - don't worry without a strong nectar flow bees will not build significant comb in the empty super) immediately under the inner cover to create more hive/air space.

3.) Slatted racks can also be used for the same purpose of creating more space.

4.) Make sure your colonies have access to plenty of water so they can cool the hive through evaporation.

5.) Maintain strong hives to defend against robbing and that ever so pesky small hive beetle."

Hope these suggestions help your bees get cooler.

Meanwhile, consider entering the bearding photo contest!

Your Aunt Bee

(thanks, Ricky Moore, for this question)

Dear Aunt Bee,

Here in South Georgia we use mostly pine straw in our smokers as it is so abundant and available. It works great in producing a natural smoke and stays lit easily. The problem is that the smoker gets caked up on the inside with creosote and I need advice on how to clean it out. Thank you,

Clogged Smoker

Dear Clogged,

Since I haven't cleaned out my smokers in ten years, I decided to check with BeeSource, a helpful beekeeping forum, to get an answer for you. The most popular suggestion on the forum was to use your propane torch to burn out the creosote. Someone suggested a product called "Smokehouse Cleaner."

Personally I would be uncomfortable putting chemicals in my smoker. Gina scrapes hers out with her hive tool.

My favorite [BeeSource response](#) was the following:

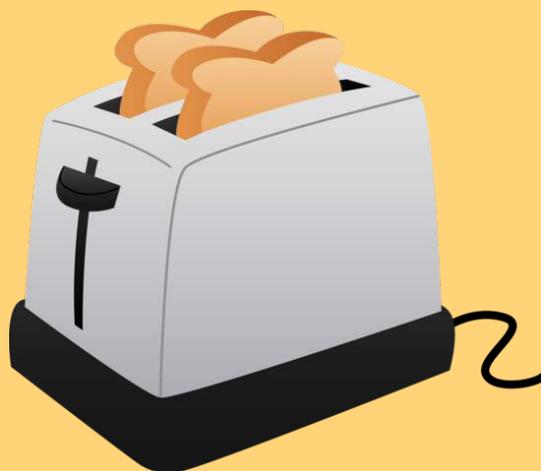
*"I would try alcohol.
Drink enough and you really won't care
how dirty the smoker is!"*

Good luck,

Aunt Bee



(thanks to Bear Kelley for this question)



Honey Blue Spread

Submitted by Bear...

"Are you tired of spreading cream cheese or just butter on your morning bagel, toast or English muffin? Well here is a simple spread that will surely brighten your breakfast faster than that cup of coffee."

1 cup blueberries (grow your own)
1/2 cup of honey (find a local Beek)
2 sticks of butter (leave out for a bit to soften)

Bring the blueberries and 4 tablespoons of honey to boil over medium heat. Use a potato masher to sort of crush and stir the berries until mixture thickens (about 3-4 minutes).

Let cool a bit, then blend the remaining honey and beat in the butter. Mix well.

After it cools a bit more, pour into small half cup containers and refrigerate. You should yield enough for 3 or 4 containers. It will set up as it cools.

Dearth is a period of time when little forage is available for bee; it is the opposite of a (honey) flow.
The Complete Idiot's Guide Beekeeping

Wild Apricot (odd name - great program)

The good news is that our state bee organization has gotten so large that it is hard for our volunteer members to manage all of the membership details. We are trying out a new software program which will do a lot of management for us. It will keep track of club finances, register you for meetings and events, remind you when your membership dues need to be paid, and send out emails to you for GBA, among many other features.

The program is Wild Apricot. We will be using it to manage your membership. You can go into the program and change your address, pay your dues, etc. To check on your own membership, click [here](#) and make any changes that are needed.

For family memberships, each individual under the family membership should enter his/her unique email address. That way you will get your own individual email copy of the newsletter, for example, and any other email sent out by the club.

The program will automatically send you a reminder when your family or individual membership is in need of renewal. Watch for emails to help you connect with us at GBA through our new software program.



[Let us know](#) if you have any questions.

Deadline for the August edition of the Newsletter is Sunday, July 26 at midnight. Please submit your articles (500 words or less) with photos to us by that time in order to be used in the Newsletter. Club meeting information about upcoming programs and speakers must be in by Wednesday, July 29.

The Final Buzz

Happy Fourth of July! Enjoy all your blessings of freedom and independence, but let's not forget to all do our part and work hard to appreciate it. This is your newsletter and it's much better because of your contributions - we appreciate you!



Linda & Gina