Hello Fellow Beekeepers,

Spring is upon us, and it represents the beginning to busy times in beekeeping. The rainy weather and blustery wind have posed some challenges with queen mating, and of course getting to those bee yards that are way in the back of those fields after those heavy rain days. However, it does show signs of a good Tallow flow, which is something that we all look forward to.

We are not alone with the crazy weather. There have been tornadoes in the mid-section of the country, and yesterday they had 7 inches of snow in Maine. Northwest Louisiana has experienced heavy flooding that has hit our state much closer to home. There always seem to be different issues swirling around us. I have heard it said that Mother Nature is our silent partner, and she always has the final word.

It does look as though honey prices might be slightly lower than last year. Now it seems that inexpensive honey is coming in through Canada. I know that the AHPA and ABF are looking into the origin and other factors that might get to the answers. It seems that challenges from all over the world are more the norm than something unusual.

Even with the more recent weather issues, it was an outstanding winter for the bees. I have seen an abundance of feral swarms this year and managed colonies seemed to come through with good strength and colony size. We did not have a hard frost near my home, and there were flowers in bloom consistently through winter and into the spring. I know that we are all hoping that the good conditions will produce an abundant honey crop for all in the coming weeks.

Best Regards,

Wes Card
It’s May, 2016 and this spring turned out to be either normal, less than normal or really abnormal, depending upon where you resided in the state. Some areas received more rain and flooding than they’d seen in years. Others missed the rain and were flooded or missed out on being flooded altogether. Other areas had little or no rain or just the normal seasonal rains. I was fortunate in being in the latter group. Not too much or too little and no flooding. I did notice that the floral sources seemed to be about a month in arrears – the dogwoods didn’t bloom in CENLA until late March. The honey flow as of the last week in April is off as well and this May’s returns have been way below normal. Normally the bees are filling out a super a week. Now it appears to take them 2-3 weeks. Maybe it’s my hives but others in the CENLA Beekeeping Club are witnessing the same thing.

If the honey flow is off, not so the swarming of the bees. Lots of reported calls have come in and the normal issue of infestations in homes and businesses are appearing. In this newsletter, I have decided to discuss the age-old topic of, “cut-outs” or the removing of beehives from structures and either attempting to save the bees or eliminate them. I realize that this isn’t everyone’s cup of tea but many beekeepers enjoy doing this, if not for the capturing of the bees then for the possible cash reward or possibly just the thrill of the chase. This topic has been hashed over many a time in numerous periodicals over the years and I’m sure YouTube can give the intrepid beekeeper a eyeful of on-site experience.

I’m also going to present a list/guide that just about every beekeeper should be attempting to do to not only preserve his/her hives but promote good beekeeping. The list will be simple and to-the-point. If followed, the bees and the apiarist should get along fine and both should prosper.

The final article is in regards to a survey conducted by the University of Maryland on varroa mites across the U.S.: Beekeepers lost 44 percent of their honeybee colonies during the year spanning April 2015 to April 2016, according to the latest preliminary results.

In this newsletter:

- Articles of Interest
  - Cut-outs: The Good, The Bad and the Ugly Aspects
  - Basic List of What Every Beekeeper Should Be Doing to Maintain Their Bees/Apiaries
  - UM Research: Varroa Mite Infestations Worse Than Previously Thought
- Internet Sites and New Books You Might Find Useful
- Renew you LBA membership
- Commercial Business Advertisements
- Listing of the 2016 LBA Board of Directors
- Listing of LA Honey Bee Clubs and their presidents’ contact information
Articles of Interest

Cut-outs: The Good, The Bad and the Ugly Aspects

First of all, the removal of a beehive from a building for the sake of capturing the bees, is the hard way of gaining a beehive. It is much simpler to buy 3# of bees with a queen, capture a swarm, split an existing hive and raise queens. In the first place, some locations don’t lend themselves to “saving the bees.” Removing and trying to save a hive from 30-40’ up in the overhang of a building, from a billboard sign, a column of a home or business, a chimney or a tree can be done but the capturing and installation in a hive is often very hard on the bees. Mortality and hive failure are high. Such hives are, sad to say, similar to a plant-out-of-place – i.e., a weed, and are generally better candidates for killing and removal. This is especially true in a business setting where liability issues exist, and the owners just want the problem removed. YouTube is a great location to graphically see how the process is carried out.

When I first started out with beekeeping I learned from an older lady how to capture a hive from a structure. What I didn’t learn from her but which I learned later, was how to do it correctly and when it was the best or worst time to do it. Here are some points to help you if you choose to do a cut-out.

- Avoid trying to save a colony whenever it is unsafe to capture the brood and bees – examples: unsafe heights when on a ladder; repeated climbing up and down a ladder to capture the brood comb and bees.
- Avoid trying to save a colony in the dead of winter, late fall or late summer – you will probably end up feeding and nursing them along all winter and possibly into the spring.
- Avoid trying to save a colony when removal of the hive will entail undue damaging of the brood comb and/or bees.
- When doing a cut-out far from a home and where it isn’t practical to leave and service a hive box that would normally be placed at the location of the hive removal, do not try to save it. Example #1: the cut out is 20-30 feet up in a wall, column or overhang. The transfer hive is generally set up at ground level and in these examples, placement of the transfer hive near the old hive’s location is out-of-the-question, or nigh impossible. Example #2: your cut-out is 50+ miles away and you will have to return to pick it up.
- Utilize a deep brood box with frames that have 3-4 strands of wire/string stretched across them to transfer the cut-out comb. Bring some extra frames with foundation to fill out the transfer hive if you end up with extra space in the box after the cut-out.
- Whenever possible, when doing a cut-out and when you are trying to save the bees, it is always best to leave the transfer hive as near the cut-out area for a few days. This allows the foragers and bees not caught and placed in the hive to find it and hopefully accept it. This transfer hive can be picked up a few days after the cut-out, preferably near dusk.
- I utilize a wire frame bottom board to allow for dripping of honey, thus keeping it away from drowning the brood or bees.
- When doing a cut-out, separate out the comb into three groups: 1) comb with nothing in the cells or mostly nothing – place this in a container for the solar wax melter later; 2) The comb with brood, uncapped or capped should be gently placed on frames. Attach each leaf of comb with rubber bands. If necessary, trim the comb to fit the frame. Be sure the comb is aligned in the frame as it came from the structure – [The bees build the
comb with a slight inclination upward – 5-10 degrees]. When you place the comb in the frame, be sure to keep the incline pointed upward. Now place the frame with the comb in the hive box. Avoid collecting more than what will fill one 10-frame deep. If you are lucky you may get 8 frames of this bound comb in the box. Because you are bound to lose a fair number of bees during the capture and transfer, compiling too many brood frames into more than one deep box can often allow for too much brood that can be cared for by the remaining brood bees. The extra comb sets the stage for an infestation of small hive beetles and/or wax moths. The transferred hive is in a stressed condition already so don’t compromise it further. 3) Remove all the honey and if possible, place one frame of the cut honey comb (best if it has pollen as well) on the outside frame of the brood box. DO NOT place comb honey above the brood bees in the transfer box nor in the center.

- Following the comb removal, gently gather as many bees as possible and shake them into the transfer hive. I use a bee brush, a leaf of honeycomb and/or a small box to gather the bees.
- When you think you have gathered enough bees from the cut-out, you can force the remaining bees gathered around the old hive area to abandon the area by spraying it with OFF insect repellant. Try not to spray the bees – just spray around them.
- Some people use a bee vacuum to capture the bees. Again, if the hive is in a “rotten” location then the use of this device may prove too difficult or unwieldy to use. Over the years, I’ve found through the use of several models that in many cases the bees are compromised and losses are unacceptable. The less the bees are handled the better. If you can set up a transfer hive and allow the bees flying about to accept it and then move in on their own the better. Some people have done well with this method and at times I have as well, but the devices are just something else to carry around.
- Here are some photo shots of hives locations you should not consider “saving the bees”: Dormer – bees located under the roof and above the ceiling. Roofers found it and the owner and roofers needed it out ASAP so they could complete the roofing job.
The following hive was located behind the fascia board, under a roof overhang, ~30 feet above the ground. A previous hive (June 2015) had been removed from where it was just hanging from the dormer (second photo). This year’s infestation had started up inside the dormer (third photo) – the owners hadn’t closed the area up after I’d removed the earlier hive.

Hive location ~ 30 feet up under overhang.  

June 2015 hive

April 2016 – infestation behind fascia board.  Pictorial description of hive locations and problems with overhang
The follow photos are of a hive location you could consider while trying to “save the bees”:

This hive was located in a bedroom closet wall adjoining an outside wall

Listing of What Every Beekeeper Should Be Doing to Maintain Their Bees/Apiaries (the list is not necessarily in any order or priority)

- Most beekeepers are hobby beekeepers. Don’t make the art of beekeeping a chore. Enjoy it – the best way to do that is learn and keep learning what/how to manage and take care of the bees.
- It goes without saying that the beekeeper should be thinking, “location, location, location” when selecting a site for placement of the apiary.
  1. Be sure to provide adequate nectar, pollen and water sources throughout the growing season.
  2. Avoid locations that might flood, make it impossible to access in poor weather, etc.
- Rotate the two brood boxes (assuming you are using two brood boxes) every spring and fall. Reasons:
  1. In the spring, the second brood box often has honey still remaining in it and the bottom box should almost be empty. The winter core position of the bees, brood, pollen and honey is in the center of the two brood boxes. The bottom box should be pretty much empty. By moving the bottom up and second box down you are
providing the queen with space to lay her eggs, forcing the core to begin moving out from the core and making the bees utilize the stored honey (which is now below the brood and not where they would normally place it).

2. While rotating the boxes you can view the condition of the bees, the brood and the comb. At this time the bottom board can be cleaned and the old brood comb/frames replaced. Woodwork can be replaced as well.

3. The queen can be replaced at this time thus providing for a young queen going into the honey flow of spring or the fall months before the winter thus ensuring a stronger colony during the spring, summer, fall and winter months.

4. Speaking of queen replacement, learning how to raise queens and splitting hives is a valuable knowledge base to have. Work toward that and become self-reliant.

- Provide adequate stores of food following splits, going into the fall months, creation of nucs. Think protein and carbohydrates and when providing concentrated sugar water, think in gallons, not pints or quarts.
- Maintain good wooden ware and hive equipment. Most maintenance of such equipment is carried out during the off-season by larger beekeeping operations. Know when to deal and when to fold: all wooden-ware has a life expectancy. It won’t last forever.
- Manage for vegetation in the apiary.
- Of all the pests associated with beekeeping, varroa mites are the most damaging. Manage for them throughout the seasons. Small hive beetles should be managed and kept at low concentrations through prevention and/or management techniques. Through good hive management, the opportunistic greater and lesser wax moths can be kept at bay.
- During the spring to fall months plan on visiting the hives weekly. In the late fall and through the winter, once a month visits should suffice.
- Be observant and take note of items out of the ordinary. Example: no activity at a hive entrance when adjacent hives are active is a trouble signal.
- Talk to other beekeepers, learn from their experiences and share your own. Don’t operate in a vacuum. Be sure to register you hives/apiaries with the state.
- Learn the varied nectar and pollen sources in your area. Know where they can be found and when they come on-line.
- Keep a field book and take copious notes – you can refer back to them during the season(s).
- Be safe and practice safe beekeeping.

UM Research: Varroa Mite Infestations Worse Than Previously Thought
http://www.pctonline.com/article/honey-bees-varroa-mites/
Honey bee colonies in the United States are in decline, due in part to the ill effects of voracious mites, fungal gut parasites and a wide variety of debilitating viruses, according to new research from the University of Maryland and USDA.
May 3, 2016
Honey bee colonies in the United States are in decline, due in part to the ill effects of voracious mites, fungal gut parasites and a wide variety of debilitating viruses. Researchers from the University of Maryland and the U.S. Department of Agriculture recently completed the first comprehensive, multi-year study of honey bee parasites and disease as part of the National Honey Bee Disease Survey. The findings reveal some alarming patterns, but provide at least a few pieces of good news as well.

The results, published online in the journal http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13592-016-0431-0 on April 20, 2016, provide an important five-year baseline against which to track future trends. Key findings show that the varroa mite, a major honey bee pest, is far more abundant than previous estimates indicated and is closely linked to several damaging viruses. Also, the results show that the previously rare Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus has skyrocketed in prevalence since it was first detected by the survey in 2010.

The good news, however, is that three potentially damaging exotic species have not yet been introduced into the United States: the parasitic tropilaelaps mite, the Asian honey bee *Apis cerana* and slow bee paralysis virus.

“Poor honey bee health has gained a lot of attention from scientists and the media alike in recent years. However, our study is the first systematic survey to establish disease baselines, so that we can track changes in disease prevalence over time,” said Kirsten Traynor, a postdoctoral researcher in entomology at UMD and lead author on the study. “It highlights some troubling trends and indicates that parasites strongly influence viral prevalence.”

The results, based on a survey of beekeepers and samples from bee colonies in 41 states and two territories (Puerto Rico and Guam), span five seasons from 2009 through 2014. The study looked at two major parasites that affect honey bees: the varroa mite and nosemata, a fungal parasite that
disrupts a bee’s digestive system. The study found clear annual trends in the prevalence of both parasites, with varroa infestations peaking in late summer or early fall and nosema peaking in late winter.

The study also found notable differences in the prevalence of varroa and nosema between migratory and stationary beehives. Migratory beekeepers—those who truck their hives across the country every summer to pollinate a variety of crops—reported lower levels of varroa compared with stationary beekeepers, whose hives stay put year-round. However, the reverse was true for nosema, with a lower relative incidence of nosema infection reported by stationary beekeepers.

Additionally, more than 50 percent of all beekeeping operations sampled had high levels of varroa infestation at the beginning of winter—a crucial time when colonies are producing long-lived winter bees that must survive on stored pollen and honey.

“Our biggest surprise was the high level of varroa, especially in fall, and in well-managed colonies cared for by beekeepers who have taken steps to control the mites,” said study co-author Dennis vanEngelsdorp, an assistant professor of entomology at UMD. “We knew that varroa was a problem, but it seems to be an even bigger problem than we first thought. Moreover, varroa’s ability to spread viruses presents a more dire situation than we suspected.”

For years, evidence has pointed to varroa mites as a culprit in the spread of viruses, vanEngelsdorp noted. Until now, however, much of this evidence came from lab-based studies. The current study provides crucial field-based validation of the link between varroa and viruses.

“We know that varroa acts as a vector for viruses. The mites are basically dirty hypodermic needles,” Traynor said. “The main diet for the mites is blood from the developing bee larva. When the bee emerges, the mites move on to the nearest larval cell, bringing viruses with them. Varroa can also spread viruses between colonies. When a bee feeds on a flower, mites can jump from one bee to another and infect a whole new colony.”

Nosema, the fungal gut parasite, appears to have a more nuanced relationship with honey bee viruses. Nosema infection strongly correlates to the prevalence of Lake Sinai Virus 2, first identified in 2013, and also raises the risk for Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus. However, the researchers found an inverse relationship between nosema and Deformed Wing Virus.

Some viruses do not appear to be associated with varroa or nosema at all. One example is Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus, which causes loss of motor control and can kill individual bees within days. This virus was first detected by the survey in the U.S. in 2010. At that time, less than 1 percent of all samples submitted for study tested positive for the virus. Since then, the virus’ prevalence roughly doubled every year, reaching 16 percent in 2014.

“Prior to this national survey, we lacked the epidemiological baselines of disease prevalence in honey bees. Similar information has been available for years for the cattle, pork and chicken industries,” Traynor said. “I think people who get into beekeeping need to know that it requires maintenance. You wouldn’t get a dog and not take it to the vet, for example. People need to know what is going on with the livestock they’re managing.”
While parasites and disease are huge factors in declining honey bee health, there are other contributors as well. Pesticides, for example, have been implicated in the decline of bee colonies across the country.

“Our next step is to provide a similar baseline assessment for the effects of pesticides,” vanEngelsdorp said. “We have multiple years of data and as soon as we’ve finished the analyses, we’ll be ready to tell that part of the story as well.”

The research paper, “Multiyear survey targeting disease incidence in US honey bees,” Kirsten Traynor, Karen Rennich, Eva Forsgren, Robyn Rose, Jeffery Pettis, Grace Kunkel, Shayne Madella, Jay Evans, Dawn Lopez and Dennis vanEngelsdorp, was published online in the journal Apidologie on April 20, 2016.

This work was supported by the United States Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. The content of this article does not necessarily reflect the views of this organization.

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**Internet Sites and Books You Might Find Useful**

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- **The National Honey Bee Disease Survey: Varroa & Nosema in the US**
UM Research: Varroa Mite Infestations Worse Than Previously Thought

Honey bee colonies in the United States are in decline, due in part to the ill effects of voracious mites, fungal gut parasites and a wide variety of debilitating viruses, according to new research from the University of Maryland and USDA.

May 3, 2016
Tags: http://www.pctonline.com/article/honey-bees-varroa-mites/

Please Renew Your LBA Membership

LBA memberships have almost doubled over the last two years. The LBA is excited about this growth and sincerely appreciates your membership support. If you have not completed and submitted your membership renewal for 2016, please use the membership application at the end of this newsletter and send your renewal to our treasurer as soon as possible. Please don’t delay any longer and renew your LBA membership today.

Please feel free to make additional copies of this Bulletin and provide them to others interested in beekeeping and our organization. Reading the information provided below by our membership chairman will help you join us in our recruiting efforts by participating in our “Clubs Get A Member Campaign.” Prizes are awarded to the top Club annually! The new campaign begins November 1st, 2015 and ends October 31st, 2016.

There are many challenges facing beekeepers. Our organization provides a voice to Louisiana beekeepers and lets state government know that we are an important part of Louisiana’s agricultural industry. There is strength in numbers, so help us help you through your membership support!

To register or renew your membership, go to the LBA website:
On the left side of the page select the icon, "Join/Re-New the LBA".
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Membership dues are $10/year/individual and/or family. Your contact for mailing dues will be:
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The winner for the member get a member for 2015 is Dr. Rhea Jones from the Beekeepers of Tangi-Tamington Club.
Commercial Business Ads Information

The Louisiana Beekeepers Association would like to thank all of our sponsors for their business advertisements. We encourage our membership and visitors to our web site to consider the fine products and/or services they offer when selecting a vendor to fulfill their business and/or personal needs.

Over the past five years the number of our newsletter advertisers has steadily increased. In appreciation for their support the LBA has offered vendor booths to these advertisers at our annual State Convention free of charge. Vendor displays have also increased, providing our guests with a convenient venue for purchasing the beekeeping products they might need. These vendors in turn contribute door prizes and auction items to the LBA, making the event more enjoyable for our guests. Those who pre-purchase supplies through the vendors can have them delivered and avoid shipping charges.

Advertising is an important marketing tool for beekeepers and your beekeeping business is important to the Louisiana Beekeepers Association. Give us an opportunity to provide a portion of your advertising needs in 2016.

Remember, for only $25.00 annually you can advertise your company products in six issues of the Bayou Bee Bulletin. Your business ad will also be carried on our web site, labeekeepers.org. Remit your advertising fee to LBA Treasurer, Mr. David Ferguson, P. O. Box 716, Brusly, LA 70719 and forward your company’s camera ready, 4 inch by 3 inch jpeg ad image to Mr. Tim Haley, LBA Newsletter Editor, at: tamh212@suddenlink.net
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<td>President</td>
<td>Joe Sanroma</td>
<td>1062 Hwy 1176, Bunkie, LA 71322</td>
<td>318-346-2805</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lajoeehc@aol.com">lajoeehc@aol.com</a>, <a href="mailto:joe@labeekeepers.org">joe@labeekeepers.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Jennifer Brown</td>
<td>1091 Beaver Run Road, Amite, LA 70422</td>
<td>601-493-3447</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jennifer@labeekeepers.org">jennifer@labeekeepers.org</a>, <a href="mailto:ashland6400@me.com">ashland6400@me.com</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recording Secretary</td>
<td>Tam Corbett</td>
<td>4400 Hwy 569, Ferriday, LA 71334</td>
<td>318-757-6272</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tam@labeekeepers.org">tam@labeekeepers.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>David Ferguson</td>
<td>P.O. Box 716, Brusly, LA 70719</td>
<td>225-726-1664</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dwferguson315@cox.net">dwferguson315@cox.net</a>, <a href="mailto:dave@labeekeepers.org">dave@labeekeepers.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanford Brantley</td>
<td>504 W. Harrison Street, Jefferson, TX 75657-1016</td>
<td>903-665-8343</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stanford@labeekeepers.org">stanford@labeekeepers.org</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wesley Card</td>
<td>3258 Koll Road, Jennings, LA 70546</td>
<td>978-210-1893</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wesleycard@yahoo.com">wesleycard@yahoo.com</a>, <a href="mailto:wesley@labeekeepers.org">wesley@labeekeepers.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nola Ducote</td>
<td>3023 Pine Needle Drive, Sulphur, LA 70663</td>
<td>337-794-9988</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nola.ducote@gmail.com">nola.ducote@gmail.com</a>, <a href="mailto:nola@labeekeepers.org">nola@labeekeepers.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randy Fair</td>
<td>611 Evans Loop, Mansfield, LA 71052</td>
<td>318-872-2682</td>
<td><a href="mailto:randy@beebumber.com">randy@beebumber.com</a>, <a href="mailto:randy@labeekeepers.org">randy@labeekeepers.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bobby Frierson</td>
<td>9246 Arnold road, Denham Springs, LA 70726</td>
<td>225-241-6132</td>
<td><a href="mailto:beefrierson53@hotmail.com">beefrierson53@hotmail.com</a>, <a href="mailto:bobby@labeekeepers.org">bobby@labeekeepers.org</a></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy J. Haley</td>
<td>212 Charles Preuett Road, Dry Prong, LA 71423</td>
<td>318-418-7270</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tmh212@suddenlink.net">tmh212@suddenlink.net</a>, <a href="mailto:tim@labeekeepers.org">tim@labeekeepers.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Hebert</td>
<td>4456 Hwy. 27, DeRidder, LA 70634</td>
<td>337-462-0336</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rhebert@hughes.net">rhebert@hughes.net</a>, <a href="mailto:richard@labeekeepers.org">richard@labeekeepers.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren Hoag, Jr.</td>
<td>1115 S. Lake Arthur Ave, Jennings, LA 70546</td>
<td>337-824-0937</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wwhoagjr@charter.net">wwhoagjr@charter.net</a>, <a href="mailto:warren@labeekeepers.org">warren@labeekeepers.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>William Hummer</td>
<td>287 Sligo Road, Bossier City, LA 71112</td>
<td>318-742-3541</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wshummer@hummerandsonhoney.com">wshummer@hummerandsonhoney.com</a>, <a href="mailto:william@labeekeepers.org">william@labeekeepers.org</a></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry Overby</td>
<td>211 South Weir Street, Bunkie, LA 71322</td>
<td>318-359-8657</td>
<td><a href="mailto:terry@labeekeepers.org">terry@labeekeepers.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Payne</td>
<td>113 Sanro, Lafayette, LA 70507</td>
<td>478-451-9847</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Steve-payne@live.com">Steve-payne@live.com</a>, <a href="mailto:steve@labeekeepers.org">steve@labeekeepers.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bryan Sanders</td>
<td>17625 Ridgewood Drive, Hammond, LA 70403</td>
<td>985-415-5268</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sandmanridge@yahoo.com">sandmanridge@yahoo.com</a>, <a href="mailto:bryan@labeekeepers.org">bryan@labeekeepers.org</a></td>
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# LOCAL BEEKEEPING CLUBS

and

**CURRENT PRESIDENTS/CONTACTS 2016**

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<tr>
<th>ACADIANA</th>
<th>ASCENSION PARISH</th>
<th>ARK-LA-TEX</th>
<th>BAYOU</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Keith Guidroz</strong>&lt;br&gt; 115 Topping Road&lt;br&gt; Lafayette, LA 70506&lt;br&gt; Ph. 337-230-1804&lt;br&gt; E-mail Address: <a href="mailto:keithguidroz@yahoo.com">keithguidroz@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td><strong>Michael Bourgeois</strong>&lt;br&gt; 4416 Stringer Bridge Rd.&lt;br&gt; St. Amant, LA 70774-3942&lt;br&gt; Ph. 225-323-3963&lt;br&gt; E-mail Address: <a href="mailto:bourged@eatel.net">bourged@eatel.net</a></td>
<td><strong>Mike Welch</strong>&lt;br&gt; 221 Westwind Church Rd.&lt;br&gt; Campti, LA 71411&lt;br&gt; Ph. 318-875-2610&lt;br&gt; E-mail Address: <a href="mailto:mwelch@cp-tel.net">mwelch@cp-tel.net</a></td>
<td><strong>Warren Hoag, Jr.</strong>&lt;br&gt; 1115 S. Lake Arthur Ave&lt;br&gt; Jennings, LA 70546&lt;br&gt; Ph. 337-824-0937&lt;br&gt; E-mail Address: <a href="mailto:wwhoagjr@charter.net">wwhoagjr@charter.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CAPITAL AREA</strong>&lt;br&gt; <strong>Chris Frink</strong>&lt;br&gt; 8266 Thurman Drive&lt;br&gt; Baton Rouge, LA 70808&lt;br&gt; Ph. 225-270-9740&lt;br&gt; E-mail Address: <a href="mailto:chris.frink@yahoo.com">chris.frink@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td><strong>Timothy J. Haley</strong>&lt;br&gt; 212 Charles Preuett Road&lt;br&gt; Dry Prong, LA 71423&lt;br&gt; Ph. 318-418-7270&lt;br&gt; E-mail Address: <a href="mailto:tamlh212@suddenlink.net">tamlh212@suddenlink.net</a></td>
<td><strong>Amy Weeks</strong>&lt;br&gt; 1498 Mock Road&lt;br&gt; West Monroe, LA 71292&lt;br&gt; Ph. 318-503-2022&lt;br&gt; E-mail Address: <a href="mailto:myfavoritethoney@gmail.com">myfavoritethoney@gmail.com</a></td>
<td><strong>Nola Ducote</strong>&lt;br&gt; 3023 Pine Needle Drive&lt;br&gt; Sulphur, LA 70663&lt;br&gt; Ph. 337-794-9988&lt;br&gt; E-mail Address: <a href="mailto:nola.ducote@gmail.com">nola.ducote@gmail.com</a>&lt;br&gt; <a href="mailto:nola@labeekeepers.org">nola@labeekeepers.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MISS-LOU</strong>&lt;br&gt; <strong>Ken Ensminger</strong>&lt;br&gt; 250 Airport road&lt;br&gt; Vidalia, LA 71373&lt;br&gt; Ph. 318-481-1740&lt;br&gt; E-mail Address: <a href="mailto:gfensminger344@hotmail.com">gfensminger344@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td><strong>Julian Laine, Jr.</strong>&lt;br&gt; 1307 N. Florida Street&lt;br&gt; Covington, LA 70433&lt;br&gt; E-mail Address: <a href="mailto:jr.buzz@hotmail.com">jr.buzz@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td><strong>Brent Gay</strong>&lt;br&gt; Address Needed&lt;br&gt; Ph. 318-235-8241&lt;br&gt; E-mail Address: <a href="mailto:Brengay1@yahoo.com">Brengay1@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td><strong>Richard Hebert</strong>&lt;br&gt; 4456 Hwy 27&lt;br&gt; DeRidder, LA 70634&lt;br&gt; Ph. 337-462-0326&lt;br&gt; E-mail Address: rphebert@ Hughes.net</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ST. HELENA</strong>&lt;br&gt; <strong>BEEKEEPERS</strong>&lt;br&gt; <strong>Lewis A. Busby</strong>&lt;br&gt; 477 Lee and Busby Lane&lt;br&gt; Greensburg, LA 70441&lt;br&gt; Ph. 985-514-8528&lt;br&gt; <a href="mailto:Thebusbys2@g-mail.com">Thebusbys2@g-mail.com</a></td>
<td><strong>Kevin Mixon</strong>&lt;br&gt; 29909 Elmore McKigney Lane&lt;br&gt; Springfield, LA 70464&lt;br&gt; Ph. 985-320-5019&lt;br&gt; E-mail Address: <a href="mailto:Komixon74@gmail.com">Komixon74@gmail.com</a></td>
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**CENLA**

**KEVIN MIXON**

29909 Elmore McKigney Lane
Springfield, LA 70464
Ph. 985-320-5019
E-mail Address: Komixon74@gmail.com