

SLEMCO

JULY/AUGUST 2025

# POWER

## BEE KEEPING BUZZ

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## TAKE NOTE



Photos by Kimberly Ann Photography

# Big Turnout & Lucky Winners

## 2025 SLEMCO ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The 2025 SLEMCO Annual Meeting attracted thousands of members to Lafayette's Cajundome On June 14, each hoping to win one of several valuable prizes. SLEMCO's 2025 Annual Meeting Grand-Prize Winners were Eileen and Roland Perry, Jr. of Opelousas. They selected the \$30,000 as their grand prize. *Lucky Number: 2035446042.*

The second grand prize winner, Thomas Andrus of Church Point, took home \$5,000



while the 3rd Grand Prize winner Michael Richard of Opelousas walked away with \$2,500. The early bird prize – a \$3,000 SLEMCO bill credit – was won by Roger Bertrand, Jr of Scott.

Earlier during the meeting, SLEMCO awarded \$40,000 in college scholarships to twenty students who will be attending college or trade school this fall. Winners include McKenzie Quebedeaux of Duson; Evan Privat of Scott; Ayla Richard of Sunset; Rylee Choate of Abbeville; Kaytlin Dew of Youngsville; Jameelah Starks of Duson; Adam McCarthy of Lafayette; Aniya Trahan of Youngsville; Paris Bernard of Carencro; Saniya Thomas of Broussard; Owen Vincent of Morse; Connor Fruge of Iota; Brooke Benoit of Broussard; Wyatt Viator of Morse; Braxton Roger of Duson; Luke Soileau of Baton Rouge; Layla Batiste of Broussard; Cory Richard of Iota; Haley Hardman of Lafayette; and Terryn Calais of Breaux Bridge.

**SLEMCO WINNERS  
TAKE HOME PRIZES  
PLUS 20 COLLEGE  
SCHOLARSHIPS  
AWARDED**



“ My mom has been going for 52 years faithfully and finally won for the first time. She was over the moon. Thank y'all for all that y'all do!!

SHANTELL BERTRAND

“ I finally was able to attend. AND, on my Birthday!!! I really enjoyed it, even though I didn't win. I love SLEMCO.

SABLE JOLIVETTE

Board President David Simon of Gueydan and Chief Executive Officer and General Manager Katherine Domingue of Lafayette, addressed the crowd, updating SLEMCO members on major projects and future goals and objectives of the company. In celebrating SLEMCO's 88th year in business, both renewed their commitment to making sure the organization prioritizes service reliability, rate stability and transparent communications for SLEMCO customers.

Board members Carl Comeaux of Lafayette Parish, Buck Leonards of Acadia Parish, Jeremy Melancon of St. Martin Parish and Gary Smith of St. Landry Parish were unopposed and each re-elected to the board. *Lucky Number: 2045213806.*



Congratulations to our grand prize winners, Eileen and Roland Perry, Jr. of Opelousas. They selected the \$30,000 as their prize.



Vitalant Blood Services held their annual blood drive as part of the meeting. Some 191 units of blood products were drawn to help

save the lives of people throughout Acadiana.

SLEMCO provides electric power to over 118,000 residents and businesses in the parishes of Acadia, Avoyelles, Cameron, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin and Vermilion. 🍀

Thank you to all our members for attending, and congratulations to our winners!

Mark your calendar now, for next year's meeting on Saturday, June 13, 2026.

# WEATHER PREPARED

## THROUGH STORM SEASON AND BEYOND.



You can count on SLEMCO to be prepared for whatever Mother Nature throws our way. To report a power outage from anywhere on SLEMCO's system at any time, call 888-275-3626. *Lucky Number: 4516607202.*



## LUCKY NUMBER WINNERS!

### FIND YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER AND WIN \$100 CREDITS!

We've hidden 10 SLEMCO account numbers in this issue of the magazine. If you find your SLEMCO account number, call Michelle Courville at (337) 896-2504. Once she verifies you as a winner, she'll credit \$100 to your SLEMCO account. *Lucky Number: 3074050000.* 🍀



# The Honeybee

## Nature's Pollinators and Providers

story by DIXIE POCHE

**I**N TODAY'S FAST-PACED WORLD, EVEN NATURE HAS ITS OWN VERSION OF A THRIVING ENTERPRISE THROUGH THE COMPLEX WORKINGS OF A HONEYBEE HIVE. The phrase "busy as a bee" is right on target as these industrious insects represent the epitome of teamwork and efficiency to produce honey. Often called "Mother Nature's nectar," honey is a natural sweetener with culinary, medicinal and skincare uses.

A group of bees, called a colony, is composed of worker bees, drones and one queen bee. Worker bees are responsible for foraging food, cleaning up and guarding the hive. Their most important responsibility is through their contribution to pollination as they fly among flowers and various plants. *Lucky Number: 4519106307.*

While worker bees are all female and constitute most of the colony's population, the drone bees are male and do not have a stinger. Their only duty is to mate with the queen bee, which once accomplished, is followed by the drone's death. As the only fertile female in the hive and the largest of the bees, the queen bee lays eggs, up to 2,000 a day in her brood chamber. As leader, she also maintains the structure, productivity and health of the entire bee colony.

An apiarian for over 20 years in rural St. Martin Parish, Daniel Leger has been fascinated with the lives of bees or as he calls them in Cajun French "mouche a miel" meaning honey flies. In other francophone areas, bees are called "abeille." He enjoys his self-sustaining life through the garden he tends, the chickens he raises along with the eggs he collects, and the smokehouse he enjoys on his mini farm. "There's great satisfaction from harvesting tomatoes



Photo by Robin May



Photos by Robin May



and peppers. Likewise, having jars of honey on hand is rewarding,” Daniel acknowledged.

How did he learn about the remarkable life of the honeybee? By spending hours of research online and reading books and talking to local beekeepers. Through trial and error, he started his apiary with two “wooden box” hives along with other tools of the trade. “I grow more impressed about how the bees work together efficiently. Their contribution in pollination and honey production benefits the environment,” Daniel added. *Lucky Number: 4519301100.*

To ensure the health of the bee colony, Daniel inspects the hives year-round by checking on the eggs, larvae and queen bee. Since bees can instinctively determine if their hive is overpopulated, they will form a swarm. Accompanied by the queen bee, they depart from the original colony to establish a new one in a different location which provides more space.

The bees devise a flight path directly to the abundance of white clover and Chinese tallow trees on Daniel’s farm. In the autumn, the bees gravitate to goldenrod. As bees collect nectar from a variety of plants, the nectar’s composition affects the color and taste of the honey produced through this process. Nectar and pollen are essential food sources for honeybees. Nectar is sugar water which provides energy to the

bees whereas pollen serves as protein.

However, it’s not all work, as the bees are considered social insects because they dwell as one big happy family. They use dancing movements, called a wagtail dance, to indicate to other bees the direction and distance as a “map” to a viable food source.

The busiest time of the year for the Leger Apiary is every July when Daniel draws thirty-five gallons of honey from his five colonies with each colony hosting 60,000 bees. To prevent from being stung by the bees, the beekeeper covers up: thick,

protective clothing, including a hat with an attached veil, and gloves are white because bees are not attracted to light colors. To keep the bees calm, a beekeeper uses a smoker to spray into the hives. No

“ I grow more impressed about how the bees work together efficiently. Their contribution in pollination and honey production benefits the environment.



harm is done to the bees, but the process does help the bees to settle down while the honey is removed.

Once the honey is pulled from the hives, a commercial extractor equipped with a big cylinder spins the hive frames. This pulls the honey out of the combs causing it to drip downward to a collection container. *Lucky Number:*

3046218008.

The honeybee is considered the most economically valuable of all insects. It was named Louisiana’s official insect in 1977. 🍯





# Trees & Power Lines

## Plant Smart to Stay Safe

When trees or vegetation come into contact with overhead power lines, they can cause power outages and flickering lights. One of the best ways to prevent these disruptions—for yourself and your neighbors—is by planting the right tree in the right place. With smart landscaping choices, you can enjoy a beautiful yard while helping keep your community powered up.

Follow these five simple steps for safe and smart tree planting:

### 1. SELECT THE RIGHT TREE

Trees vary greatly in shape, size and root systems—and they change significantly as they mature. Before planting, research how tall, wide and deep your chosen tree will grow. This will help you avoid future issues with space, safety and utilities.

### 2. PICK THE PROPER LOCATION

Before you plant, take a look up—are there power lines nearby? Always consider how your tree will grow over time and how it might affect utility lines. Refer to recommended setback distances to avoid future conflicts. Trees planted too close to power lines can cause outages or slow down restoration efforts during storms.

### 3. KEEP TRANSFORMERS ACCESSIBLE

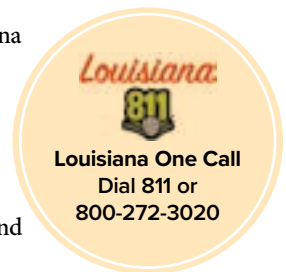
If there's a green transformer box on or near your property, keep it clear at all times. Maintain a clear zone of 8 feet in front and 3 feet on the back and sides. This space is essential for crews to perform maintenance and make repairs when needed. *Lucky Number: 4519234900.*

### 4. PRACTICE POWER LINE SAFETY

Never trim trees or plants growing near power lines yourself. Always hire a qualified professional for this work. Whether you're planting, trimming or picking fruit, stay at least 10 feet away from all overhead power lines—and 30 feet from high-voltage transmission lines.

### 5. CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

Planning to dig in your yard? Louisiana law requires you to call 811 before starting any digging project. Contact Louisiana One Call at least two full business days in advance (excluding weekends and holidays). This allows utility companies to mark underground lines and keep everyone safe.



Keeping a safe distance protects you and your property and helps ensure your trees don't interfere with power delivery.



**\* DO YOU SEE A POTENTIAL PROBLEM WITH A TREE NEAR POWER LINES?**  
Call SLEMCO. It's better to remove a stray limb interfering with power lines now, before it causes an outage during a major storm.



cookbook **Easy Weeknight Dinners**, Emily Weinstein delivers recipes that require little effort, are delicious and fancy—and there is a review of each dish to prove it. Order the book on Amazon for \$20.

## San Francisco-Style Vietnamese American Garlic Noodles

*Don't omit the oyster and fish sauces. They add a wonderful taste your kids or guests will never pinpoint.*

- 4 tbs. unsalted butter
- 20 medium garlic cloves (that's right) minced or smashed with a mortar and pestle
- 4 tsp. oyster sauce
- 2 tsp. light soy sauce or shoyu (Japanese-style soy sauce)
- 2 tsp. fish sauce
- 1 lb. spaghetti
- Heaping  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup grated Parmesan or Pecorino Romano (1 oz.)
- Small handful of thinly sliced scallions (optional)

Melt the butter in a wok or large saucepan over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant but not browned, about 2 minutes. Add the oyster sauce, soy sauce and fish sauce and stir to combine. Remove from the heat.

Meanwhile, add water to a depth of 1½ inches to a large skillet or sauté pan and bring to a boil over high heat. (Or heat just enough water to cover the spaghetti in a large Dutch oven or saucepan.) Add the pasta, stir a few times to make sure it's not clumping, and cook, stirring occasionally, until just shy of al dente, about 2 minutes short of the recommended cook time on the package.

Using tongs, transfer the cooked pasta to the garlic sauce along with whatever water clings to it. (Reserve the remaining cooking water.)

Return the wok or large saucepan to the heat, add the cheese and stir and toss vigorously with a wooden spatula or spoon until the sauce is creamy and comes together, about 30 seconds. If the sauce looks too watery, continue to reduce it over high heat. If it looks

# let's get COOKING

greasy, splash some cooking water into it and let it come together again. Stir in the scallions (if using) and serve immediately.

## Beef Short Rib Rice Bowls

*Marinating the beef is the most important step, so allow at least 15 minutes.*

- 1 lb. boneless beef short ribs, sliced  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick
- 2 tbs. soy sauce
- 1 tbs. peeled, grated fresh ginger
- 1 tbs. light brown sugar
- 2 garlic cloves, grated
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. ground turmeric
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. red pepper flakes
- 2 tbs. vegetable oil
- 4 cups hot cooked short-grain rice
- 1 small head green-leaf lettuce, shredded
- 2 celery stalks, thinly sliced crosswise
- Kosher salt
- Fresh cilantro, for serving
- Lime wedges, for serving

Combine the short ribs, soy sauce, ginger, sugar, garlic, coriander, cumin, turmeric, red pepper flakes and 1 tsp. salt in a medium bowl and toss to coat. Cover, transfer to the fridge and let marinate for at least 5 minutes to 8 hours.

Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Working in batches, cook the meat until browned all over, about 3 minutes per side.

Divide the rice and short ribs among bowls. Top with the lettuce, celery and cilantro. Serve with lime wedges for squeezing on top.

## Shrimp Scampi with Orzo

- 1 lb. large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 3 tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tbs. grated lemon zest
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. red pepper flakes
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tbs. unsalted butter
- 1 cup orzo
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup dry white wine
- 2 cups boiling water, seafood stock or chicken stock
- 3 tbs. finely chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tbs. fresh lemon juice

In a medium bowl, stir together the shrimp, 1 tbs. of the oil, the lemon zest, red pepper flakes,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. salt,  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. black pepper and half of the garlic. Set aside to marinate. (This step can be done up to 1 hour in advance and refrigerated.)

In a medium skillet, combine the butter, the remaining 2 tbs. oil and the remaining garlic over medium heat. When the butter starts to bubble, add the orzo and  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. salt and cook, stirring often, until the orzo is toasted, about 2 minutes; adjust the heat as necessary to prevent the garlic from burning. Carefully add the wine—it will bubble—and stir until absorbed, about 1 minute. Stir in the water, reduce the heat to low, cover and cook until the orzo is al dente, about 12 minutes.

Add the shrimp in a snug, even layer on top of the orzo, cover and cook until all the shrimp are pink and cooked through, 2 to 4 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and let sit, covered, for 2 minutes. Sprinkle with the parsley and lemon juice, season with salt and pepper and serve immediately.

## Sheet-Pan Chile Crisp Salmon and Asparagus

- 1 tbs. chile crisp, plus more for serving
- 1 tbs. soy sauce
- 1 tsp. honey
- Kosher salt
- 2 tbs. olive oil
- 2 lbs. skinless, center-cut salmon (1 to 1½" thick, cut into 1 to 1½" cubes)
- 1 bunch scallions, light green and white parts thinly sliced (save dark green for another use)
- Cooked grain or salad greens for serving (optional)



Heat the oven to 400 degrees. In a large bowl, stir together the chile crisp, soy sauce and honey. Add the salmon and scallions (if using) and toss to coat.

Place the asparagus on a sheet pan. Season with salt, drizzle with the oil and toss until it is shiny. Add the salmon mixture to the pan, nestling it between the asparagus spears or on top if needed to fit. Place any larger cubes near the edges of the pan so they'll cook evenly.

Roast until the salmon is just cooked through and the asparagus is crisp-tender, about 12 minutes. Season with salt. Serve over cooked grains, if you'd like.



For extra copies of these recipes or to email a copy to a friend, visit SLEMCOPower magazine at [SLEMCOPower.com](http://SLEMCOPower.com).





## SLEMCO SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS 2025

**CONGRATULATIONS** to all of our winners, each graduate earning \$2,000 for college this fall. Back Row: Braxton Roger of Duson, Luke Soileau of Baton Rouge, McKenzie Quebedeaux of Duson, Paris Bernard of Carencro, Haley Hardman of Lafayette, Owen Vincent of Morse, Brooke Benoit of Broussard and Jameelah Starks of Duson. Front Row: Aniya Trahan of Youngsville, Rylee Choate of Abbeville, Layla Batiste of Broussard, Kaytlin Dew of Youngsville, Wyatt Viator of Morse, Adam McCarthy of Lafayette, Cory Richard of Iota and Ayla Richard of Sunset. Not pictured are Evan Privat of Scott, Saniya Thomas of Broussard, Connor Fruge of Iota, and Terryn Calais of Breaux Bridge. *Lucky Number: 2035213052.* 🍀

## Dreams Foundation of Acadiana

### Building on Capabilities, Not Disabilities



The phrase “Fortune Favors the Bold” describes a venture, considered impossible by some. The community endeavor was created to provide jobs for individuals with special needs in the Lafayette community by baking and selling meat pies that are stocked at grocers across Acadiana.

D.R.E.A.M.S. (Disability, Resources, Education, Activities, Management, and Services) Foundation of Acadiana, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was incorporated in 2007 to help individuals with special needs and their families. The organization was created by Donielle and Brian Watkins and was inspired by their son Logan, now in his mid-twenties, to live a fully active life despite his struggles with spina bifida. *Lucky Number: 4500247600.*

According to Donielle, “Many of these remarkable adults wanted to experience more in their lives and longed for the independence of having a job. Part of our vision was to give them a stronger purpose through making meat pies which we provide to grocers and for catering assignments.”

Read more about D.R.E.A.M.S. events, Camp Unique held every July, parent resources plus support opportunities at [www.dreamsfoundationaca.org](http://www.dreamsfoundationaca.org)

The team was excited by the possibilities as they planned a program geared to the food industry. Could this endeavor of making a good Natchitoches Meat Pie from start to finish work? Could they tackle such a big undertaking?”

Results have proven amazing as the team takes their dreams on the road through the Mr. Big Stuff Food Truck which schedules lunchtime stops at offices and for events.

Donielle’s brother Brandon Gaubert, experienced in the culinary arts, supervises the production of approximately 14,000 turnover pies a month.

Through on-the-job-training, the Dreams Meat Pie Crew are introduced to teamwork, communicating, interacting with customers, math skills, cooking skills, and time management. 🍀

