



Smithsonian Associates

## Abuzz About Bees

Thomas D. Seeley

Tuesday, June 18--6:30-7:45 p.m.

### Program Overview

"The honey bee is as far above the general run of other insects as man is above all his fellow mammals. The complexity of the social life of bees, their powers of mutual communication, their diversity in skills and employment, their debates and decisions on policy, are so remarkable that they raise the question of the capacity of the bee for thinking."

---Vincent B. Wigglesworth, *Is the honey-bee conscious?*, 1987

In my talk, I will provide a little tour of my 50 years of investigating the wondrous behavioral skills of honey bees. We will see:

1. How a worker bee rouses her sleepy hive mates at the start of a day.
2. How honey bees share with just one other species (us!) the ability to guide others to an important place—e.g., a rich flower patch/a good restaurant—without either leading others to the place or laying a trail to it.
3. How worker bees conduct a democratic debate to choose a new home site for their colony.
4. How a worker bee calls for assistance in grooming the hard-to-reach places on her body.
5. How a worker bee that is toiling as a nectar collector calls for help when she gets home and has difficulty finding a hive mate who will receive her load of fresh nectar.

For more information about the remarkable behavioral skills of worker honey bees, see my new book, *Piping Hot Bees and Boisterous Buzz-Runners: 20 Mysteries of Honey Bee Behavior Solved*, Princeton University Press.