



East Texas Beekeepers Association

Vol. 26 No. 4

April 7, 2011

April Report by Dick Counts

Believe it or not March has come and gone! It brought plenty of wind but no showers. I don't think I got even one drop of rain at my house. But on the good side, the early March winds did blow in 98 members to our last meeting. Thanks to all that made the effort. We had a good meeting with lots of informative questions and answers and a lot of good fellowship and laughter.

Trees and flowers are blooming well and our bees are working hard every day. You should already have your supers on. If not, do it right away. It is past time.

There's a lot going on this month. Vi and our Honey Queen and Honey Princess will be out showing and talking about our bees several times in the coming months. I have already spoken to a couple of clubs and schools and will do so as long as needed. If you are speaking to any group, please let us know, especially if you need help or props.

Royce Pelham and I picked up John Knight's bee equipment this week. We are looking at having an auction/sale in the parking lot at our May meeting. Some of the equipment includes a powered extractor, heated honey storage tank, and an insulating cover for the storage tank. John had made many gadgets to make his beekeeping easier, especially in his honey house. You will just have to see it setup to really appreciate it. All money raised will go to the KNIGHT-JOHNSON SCHOLARSHIP FUND.

DON'T FORGET — we vote this month for our 2011 club officers.

April is Auction / Raffle Month

President—Andrew Bellefeuille
Vice President—Gloria Harmon
Treasurer—Tammy Lenamond
Secretary—Karen Anderson
Ex. Director and Reporter—
Dick Counts
Directors-at-Large—Stanford
Brantley, Randy Bobo
Program Directors — Eddie
Collins, Stanford Brantley,
Mike Rappazzo, Savannah Ross
Webmaster—Ardy Johnson

NEXT MEETING

April 7

TJC West Campus — Room 104
1530 West Loop 323 S SW
6:45 PM

Contact Us

On the Web: easttexasbeekeepersassociation.com
Or on the phone: (903) 566-6789

Photo by Ethan Harvey

HONEY QUEEN REPORT *By Vi Bourns*

Once again we have gone from winter into summer with a short spring and very little rain for the bees. However, drawing on their resources and instincts, they have become “busy little bees” searching the flowers and trees for pollen and nectar to bring home to their sisters who will make honey and beebread for the hive.

Many seem to be searching for a new home from the number of calls coming in from people with bee “problems.” I even captured a large swarm that had collected on a new motorcycle, to the amazement of a group of bikers. The queen was easily recognized, put on a piece of comb, and then into a bucket. All the other bees just walked into the bucket and joined the queen. It was an awesome sight! The bikers weren’t afraid and even took close up pictures to send to their friends via internet.

Bekah and Hayden are also gearing up for a busy season. On March 29th Bekah will be educating roughly 150 second graders in Canton Elementary School. On March 31st Bekah and Hayden will speak to the 4-H club at the Wood County Extension Office in Quitman. The 4-H club has about 20 young people ranging from 8 to 16 years of age.

April bookings so far include the Bluebird Festival in Wills Point, East Texas Earth Day in Tyler, and possibly the Caldwell Zoo Earth Day in Tyler.

I will keep you updated on what they are doing through the newsletter, but it is better to hear their reports from their perspective when you come to the meeting, plus you can enjoy the delicious honey recipes they bring.

Gloria Harmon has a new batch of bee shirts she will bring to the next meeting for all of you who want one. Maybe it would be a good idea to buy one for our auction and raffle table in April.

A side note -- Shirley Knight is doing well and is now living at her new address in Ft. Worth. She thanks all of us who sent memorials in John’s name for the Knight-Johnson scholarship fund.

Until we meet again — Happy Bee Experiences to all of you.



A few weeks ago I was going through our hives checking them to see how they were doing with brood and honey. When I got to my hive, I couldn’t find any brood at all. There were no fresh eggs, larvae or capped brood. Failing to find anything, I then started looking for the queen. After a diligent search with no success, I decided to keep a close watch and see if I had simply overlooked her. After several days with no change to the hive, I called Mr. Counts to explain the situation and ask his thoughts. He said I could have a virgin queen and so I left the hive alone for a few more days. When I checked it again I found a wonderful surprise! There were plenty of fresh eggs and uncapped larvae in a perfect football shape. I was even able to find the new queen! This hive is the original hive I started out with in 2008. It has survived beetles, wax moths, and has re-queened itself twice. It amazes me because it continues to be the largest and strongest hive on our farm!

As for events, I have one scheduled for March 29th at the Canton Elementary School. This will be my first official talk as ETBA Honey Queen and I am so excited! I will be presenting a talk about bees to the entire 2nd grade class, which consists of about 7 classes. My county extension agent, Mr. Tommy Phillips, will be in attendance as well. I will be traveling to Quitman to present another talk to a 4H group on March 31st. I am thrilled at the opportunity to speak with other 4H’ers, since it is a big part of my life.

One more thing I would like to share with you. I took two of my closest friends out to see my hive this past week. This was their first time to see an actual working hive. They suited up, complete with duct tape around their ankles and trekked out for our little “adventure”. I was able to show them the physical difference between a drone and a worker bee, and the brood patterns. We witnessed bee’s bringing in pollen with very full pollen baskets. They even sneaked a taste of honey! One of girls was stung above the ankle, although every effort was made to prevent it. I was able to explain how to properly remove the stinger with a thumbnail. She enjoyed the new experience, despite the sting. I look forward to seeing you at the April meeting to report on the events I have mentioned. I’m already thinking of a yummy honey recipe to share with you!

~Bekah



President's Letter *by Andrew Bellefeuille*

Supers are on, flowers are blooming, and bees are buzzing. Could it get any better than this? I look around at all the wonderful things happening on my farm in the past few weeks and I am overwhelmed by my good fortune. In contrast, I think of the poor people of Japan and about all the other tragedies and calamities going on around the world, and I marvel that I have been given everything that I have. I realize how trivial my worries are and how great my blessings.

I was really annoyed a couple of weeks ago when my queen cells didn't take, yet my hives are still thriving. It is too early to tell if the new queen cells are taking yet; but if not, there is always next year. Or, I can collect an extra swarm this spring when the calls start coming. To me the miracle of this season is that everything begins anew: from a seemingly lifeless, grey winter bursts forth a fresh, green spring!

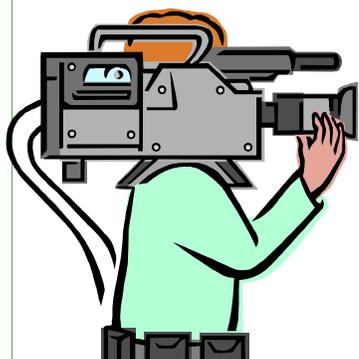
Last weekend I stood under my pear trees listening to the steady hum of the bees and watching all my girls work diligently on my new pear crop. The sound was amazing and I just stood there, watching and smiling. One of my tenants was nearby talking with me and I know he felt I was odd because I had this goofy grin on my face. He didn't "get" my happiness from watching a bunch of bees in a tree. I'm sure he just thought I was out of my tree. We beekeepers are a special breed!

I have not yet accomplished my twenty hive goal and may not get there this year, but I know I will eventually if I stay with it. I have been blessed with a great deal of income-producing work for my business this year, which is wonderful; but it has taken up much of my time and redirected my focus away from beekeeping. One of the reasons I chose not to run for club president again is that I'm currently unable to dedicate the time that this position deserves. My admiration and respect for my mentor, Dick Counts, who always gives 200%, makes me realize that I have a long way to go to keep up with his enthusiasm and dedication to our club. I will still use smoke and not vinegar...to each his own!....but thank you Dick for being a huge reason why our club is what it is today.

In closing, I want to thank a few other folks. Thank you to my wife, Jan, my writing partner, for taking my somewhat random ramblings and translating them into grammatically correct verbiage. A big thank you to Dan Eudy, our newsletter guru, who has put a fresh face on our club's publication while keeping me, and others, attentive to the necessary deadlines involved in producing it each month. Dan seems to have an endless reservoir of patience while expertly accomplishing a thankless, yet incredibly important job. And lastly, thanks to all of you members for allowing me the privilege of serving as your President for the past 2 years. I am appreciative of your participation and support, and for allowing me to have this newsletter platform to expound upon my observations and opinions regarding beekeeping and other subjects. I know I have frequently gone off the reservation in my articles but you have been a very gracious and forgiving readership to my off-the-beaten-path reflections about family, my Vermont roots, and assorted topics of the day. I really enjoy this club and hope that it continues to thrive.

We have a glorious springtime on our doorstep now and I hope you all have a terrific honey flow this year. My best to everyone and as always, see you at the April meeting!





ETBA Member Makes the News



Swarms of bees almost always attract a lot of attention. If you are not a beekeeper, a swarm can cause a lot of excitement, especially if the swarm lands in a public area. Everybody nearby wants to see but no one wants to get too close. And no one seems to know just what to do.

On March 22, a swarm of Honey Bees decided to land on a car parked in the parking lot of a grocery store in Longview. The swarm did look pretty impressive as it covered the rear quarter panel.

To the best of our understanding, someone called the police and reported the swarm. The police called Randy Bobo. Randy was unable to respond to the call and referred it to Mike. Mike and Seth showed up to capture the bees, much to the delight of the car's owner.

Mike and Seth went to work and soon had the swarm safely collected in a bucket. The KLTV news team learned of the incident and came to interview the beekeepers at the Rappazzo home.



Here is a link to the story on the KLTV website:

<http://www.kltv.com/global/story.asp?s=14304569>.

You can cut and paste the link into you Internet browser to see the video and read the article.

Some of the language used in the article was interesting. The writer referred to bees as "creepy, crawly, honey-making insects". The honey-making insect part is correct but not many people and certainly no Beekeeper speaks of bees in terms of creepy and crawly.

Mike did a excellent job in the interview, explaining about swarms and swarm removal and also using the opportunity to tell the public about the East Texas Beekeepers Association.

Newscaster Samantha Jordon, suited up and filming.



Recording her monolog.



Learning about bees!

