



East Texas Beekeepers Association

Vol. 30 No. 4

April 2, 2015

April Report by Dick Counts

We had a big crowd of 132 members and guests at our March meeting. Once again, our visitors included several new families wanting to become involved with bees. Eddie Collins shared an interesting presentation about making splits, something at which he has more experience than most of us put together!

Our April meeting will be moved to the **second Thursday, April 9**. The United Methodist Church is very gracious to let us use their Friendship Hall without charge. Part of the agreement is they get first dibs when we both need the room. Since the church will be having Easter week activities in the Friendship Hall on the 2nd, we will meet on the 9th. Be sure to mark your calendars and tell your bee friends to come on the 9th. If you show up on the 2nd, you can join the church activities, then come back the following week for ETBA!

April is our Board of Directors election month. We will be electing officers for the next year. In addition to taking nominations from the floor at the meeting, our By-Laws require the ETBA Board to provide a list of nominees. The following members have agreed to be nominees: Executive Director - Dick Counts, President - Gus Wolf, Treasurer - John Holladay, Secretary - Brenda Sheridan, Programs Director - Matt Thomas, Director-at-Large - Stan Brantley, Honey Queen Chair - Lani Lanchester, and Newsletter Editor - Dan Eudy. A Vice President nominee is still needed.

If you are interested in a Board position, please nominate yourself at the April meeting. ETBA is a volunteer organization. We succeed because members become involved. There are lots of opportunities to participate. You don't have to be a board member. You can commit to arrive a bit early and set up extra chairs, look for and greet our visitors, set up the snack table, stay a few minutes afterward and help clean up, or work our booth at public functions.

We do need a couple of members to volunteer to take over our coffee service. Lani had this responsibility before accepting the Honey Queen Chair and would now like to share this opportunity with others. See Lani at the meeting.

This newsletter includes a report from our member in Webster, New York. Because of space, the paper copy includes an abbreviated version. However, the full version of Christy's letter is included in our digital copy and on our web page.

President—Gus Wolf

Vice President—Mike Rappazzo

Treasurer—John Holladay

Secretary—Brenda Sheridan

Ex. Director and Reporter—
Dick Counts

Honey Queen Chair—Lani
Lanchester

Directors-at-Large—Stanford
Brantley, Larry Tarr

Program Director — Matt Thomas
Brenda Sheridan, Eddie Collins

Webmaster—Ken Wilkinson

Next Meeting
April 9

United Methodist Church
405 West Main in Whitehouse
6:45 PM

On the Web: etba.info
on the phone: (903) 566-6789

Photo by Martha Jeske



HONEY QUEEN REPORT by *Lani Lanchester*

Shortly after the snow melted, Spring began for our Honey Queen Program. Already this month, Queen Willow and Princess Brittany have spoken to over 100 adults and children about Honey Bees and beekeeping. The ETBA Honey Queen Facebook page has achieved over 200 followers. Next month, we have a loaded schedule, including one event that we need your help to pull off. It is called the Tyler Mini Maker Faire to be held at the Discovery Science Center in Downtown Tyler on April 18th.

We are delighted that our application to have a booth at the Tyler Mini Maker Faire has been accepted. Part science fair, part county fair, and part something entirely new, the Tyler Mini Maker Faire is an all-ages gathering of tech enthusiasts, crafters, educators, tinkerers, hobbyists, engineers, science clubs, authors, artists, students, and commercial exhibitors. All of these “makers” come to Maker Faire to show what they have made and to share what they have learned.

The ETBA booth will be located inside the Discovery Science Center. We need volunteers to help man the booth for 2 hour intervals from 9AM to 5PM on Saturday, April 18th. We will have an observation hive, a small extractor, a display of items that beekeepers make with our honey and beeswax. Volunteers are encouraged to bring their honey and products to sell to the public. Finally, anyone who will volunteer to help clean up at 5:30PM would be greatly appreciated. All who volunteer will get free access to the Fair and a free copy of "Maker Makezine" that is full of fascinating Do-It-Yourself technology. Please contact me to sign up at lanilanches-ter@hotmail.com or phone 903-279-5599.

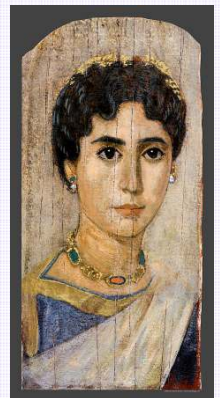


If you don't make the fair as an exhibitor, come by anyway and tour the spectrum of exhibits at the event. Tyler Mini Maker Faire is the Greatest Show and Tell in Tyler—a family-friendly showcase of invention, creativity and resourcefulness. It's a place where people show what they are making, and share what they are learning. Wow! That sounds just like our club meetings. -Lani



In addition to beekeeping, I am an artist, which has lead me to search for ways to involve beekeeping in my artwork. For the past year, I have been sketching and painting bees. Over the past few months, I have started looking into new ways of using my experience as a beekeeper in my art. I found two very interesting art forms that I am very excited about and wished to share with you.

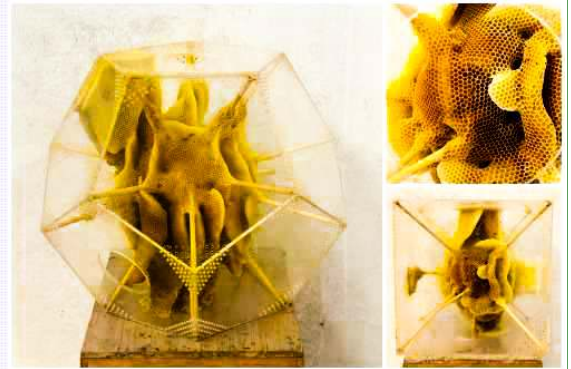
The first of these art forms is called encaustic painting. Encaustic painting uses melted beeswax with various pigments added to portray the image of the artist's choice. The beeswax offers new textures and appearances. One of the benefits of working with encaustic method is that the artist can lay down many layers of color and, once it is cooled, scrape away layers of wax to get the colors they desire. Encaustic painting is no new discovery either. Encaustic painting dates back to ancient Greece. In fact, the word encaustic comes from the Greek word enkaustikos. Encaustic painting has been used throughout history all over the world. One example is the Egyptian Fayum mummy portraits from about 100-300 A.D. [1]. These paintings are two millennia old and some of them still look like they were painted yesterday. This method is one I am very excited about and I can't wait to try it out for myself.



The second art form is one that has developed rather recently. It has no specific name but is the beginning of a trend. These works of art are sculptures that are partially done by the bees themselves. The artist builds a sculpture or a framework then places it inside a hive to let the bees draw out burr comb on the subject. Earlier this year I stumbled upon an artist named Aganetha Dyck, who was making these beeswax sculptures. She places everyday objects inside a hive for the bees to draw out the burr comb. These become intriguing pieces of art.

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Chinese artist Ren Ri was the second person I came across exploring this new field. Some of his sculptures are truly awe-inspiring others are impossible to put into words [2]. Ren Ri is a Beijing based artist and beekeeper. He makes his sculptures by building a framework for his bees to cover with comb. One of his collections from 2008 was a series of maps constructed from honeycomb [3]. In his more recent work, he builds a special hive for his bees in which he installs a sequence of struts and supports for his bees to build comb from. Ren Ri rotates his hives to a different side every seven days to change the final form of the sculpture [4]. ~Willow



- [1] "Encaustic Painting" Wikipedia
- [2] "Artist Collaborates With Honey Bees To Create Fascinating Beeswax Covered Sculptures" www.laughingsquid.com
- [3] "Sculptural Maps Made out of Honeycomb From Bee Hives" www.laughingsquid.com
- [4] "Making Sweet Sculptures from Beeswax" www.wire.co.uk



As spring arrives, we see flowers and trees blooming. This means our bees will be out pollinating and gathering nectar. Honey bees help make our environment more beautiful by pollinating flowers and fruits and vegetables.

What would we do in a world without honey bees? Agriculture depends greatly on the honeybee for pollination because honey bees pollinate one third of the food that we eat. Honeybees account for 80% of all insect pollination. Without such pollination, we would see as significant decrease in the yield of fruits and vegetables.

Each year American farmers and growers continue to feed more people using less land through the pollination of bees. They produce an abundance of food that is nutritious and safe. Honey bees are very much a part of this modern agricultural success. It's estimated that there are about 2.4 million colonies in the U.S. today, two-thirds of which travel the country each year pollinating crops and producing honey and beeswax. More than one million colonies are used each year in California just to pollinate the state's almond crop!



~Brittany

[1] "Pollination Facts" <http://www.abfnet.org/?page=14>





President's Letter *by Gus Wolf*

I knew it was just a question of time although it caught me by surprise. That last cold snap was hard on all of our hives. One of mine was caught severely short and there was little I could do about it. A week of sharp cold meant the bees were using up their sparse resources. One of my hives ran out. On the first temperate day at the end of the cold snap, I checked them all and found that most distressing of things — my top bar hive had starved. They were all dead, hundreds of bees dead on the floor of the hive and hundreds more on the comb, head first into the cells. Emerging brood, capped brood, drones, young larvae, all dead. They were starved because I did not feed them enough nor in time. It was pretty sobering cleaning the hive out and even more distressing when I found the queen. I have since modified the far end of the hive so that an entrance feeder can be filled from the outside of the hive rather than from the inside. That should make it easier to feed the next hive that will go into that box. Now to wait for a swarm to install into this top bar hive. I should have taken the chance on a cold day and added feed although it may have been too late at that point. Live and learn – oh the travails of being a beekeeper!

Four years ago, my son Spencer took down a huge pine tree at the back end of our property. It was far from the house and close to the woods and had been hit by lightning a number of years earlier. Limbs were falling off and the bark was shedding. It needed to come down in a controlled fashion and not at the whim of nature. Although Spencer is not an arborist, he is a professional Firefighter/Paramedic and an expert with a chainsaw. It was a cold winter day and he dropped that behemoth like it was a sapling. When it made contact with the ground, it split into a number of pieces and bark flew everywhere. It was what was under that bark that amazed us. Hundreds of red wasps were hibernating underneath. We had great delight squashing as many as we could find. Fertile queen wasps will survive the frost and hibernate until the spring warmth calls them to come out and begin the next generation of vexatious nests. It was cold that day and they could not fly well so they were easy prey. Every one we killed would mean one less nest come the following year. Keep that in mind this early spring.

I was reminded of this story this week as I went to inspect an empty hive whose top cover had been slightly off kilter. I lifted it up to see what the hive condition was like and was met by three red wasps hiding under there! They met a swift death at the end of my hive tool! The following morning I went back and found nine more. They met a similar fate. All nests that will never be built this year. A red wasp trap! They are one of the few things that I really do not like about East Texas.

I have not yet gone thoroughly through all my hives, that will be coming up later this week. From what I have heard from those who have gone into their hives, they were met with angry, cranky ladies. And well they should be from being cooped up in those boxes due to cold and all the rain. But all that rain should make for a super abundant floral explosion this year.

Hello East Texas Beekeepers from your New York member Christy Kapuschat!

Here in Upstate New York we have been buried in 3 feet of snow since January. It was a record-breaking winter, the worst since the 1930's. The bee losses are staggering due to the unrelenting and extended below zero temperatures. Of my two hives (one from NC purchased with my local bee club and the other from a local breeder), only the North Carolina colony has survived.

Many of the surviving bees finally ventured out for cleansing flights last week. The snow and exterior of the hives were heavy with evidence of their urgent need to get out. Sadly, there were many dead bees on the snow but I saw many gathering moisture from the top of the drifts and taking it back to the surviving hive. The cluster had broken up that day and the activity was a relief to see when I opened the cover. I was sure I had lost both my hives. I immediately began feeding them pollen patties and cane sugar after navigating the knee deep snow surrounding the hives.

I will be taking apart the dead-out hive today as we are expecting temperatures near 50F. There is a little part of me that hopes I will see some kind of activity in the lower brood chamber but the other part of me knows from the dead cluster in the upper chamber, that the chance of that is nil. If no disease is present, I will use the honey frames to supplement the need for food in the remaining hive, since we are still far from the first pollen flow.

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Practical Experiences in the Beeyard by Stan Brantley

Most commercial bee suppliers sell their Nucs in a Deep configuration. A question was recently asked about moving bees from a Deep Nuc to a Medium brood box. As with most things in beekeeping, there are multiple ways to accomplish this task. Here is one technique that has worked well for me.

Cut a piece of ½ or ¾ inch plywood to be about an inch larger than the outside dimensions of your Medium box. Cut a section from the middle of the plywood that is slightly smaller than the inside dimensions of the Nuc. Remove the lid from the Nuc box and place the plywood carefully on the Nuc, making sure the cut-out area is centered over the Nuc. Then set the Medium box on top of the plywood. You will note this is not the most stable stack of boxes. It is a good idea to add some support to the sides of the plywood that hang over the Nuc. You don't want the stack to tip over.

The queen's natural tendency will be to move up into the Medium box. If you have some drawn comb in the Medium box, it will help encourage her to make that move. If you do not have drawn comb, add foundation and give the bees time to draw out the wax. Eventually the queen will move up into the Medium. Once the queen is in the Medium, you can place a Queen Excluder between the Medium box and the plywood to prevent her from moving back into the Nuc. After the brood in the Nuc hatches, you can lift the Medium and set it on a bottom board. Any bees remaining in the Nuc can be added to the Medium hive. You can pour the bees on the ground and let them walk in or dump them into the top of the hive.

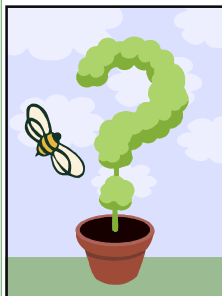
Unless you are in the middle of a strong honey flow, be sure to feed the relocated bees. Now that your bees are happily established in a Medium box, add another Medium super to complete your "all Medium hive".

If you are not planning to immediately re-use the Nuc, be sure to protect the combs. Let the bees clean any residual honey, then place the frames in the freezer for a couple days. After removing from the freezer, store with paramoth crystals to keep out beetles and wax moths

Let's talk a bit about hive inspections. If not done properly and carefully, hive inspections can create problems in the hive, including damaging, killing or losing the queen. I encourage novice beekeepers to develop a standard practice for their hive inspections and to follow the routine each time.

My first step is to lightly apply a puff of smoke directly at the hive entrance. Then raise one edge of the Outer Cover and apply 4-5 puffs directly under the Outer Cover. Lower the cover and wait about a minute. Remove the Outer Cover and add a puff through the hole in the Inner Cover before lifting it off the hive. Lay the Outer Cover upside down beside the hive. You can use it as a base for the frames you remove during the inspection.

Once the hive is open, my first step is to move the outside frame as close to the wall as possible. Slip the short end of the hive tool between the first and second frame, right at the end of the frame. Twist the hive tool sideways to create space between the two frames. Do the same thing on the other end of that frame. Once the first frame is moved close to the wall, repeat the process between the other frames to break them loose from the end rest. After all the frames are loose, gently push them to one side leaving room between the first and second frames. Move the first frame away from the wall and center it in the space you created, then lift it out with your frame lifter. After observing the condition of the frame, stand it on the Outer Cover, tilted against the hive stand so you do not crush the bees. Move Frame 2 into the open space, then lift out with the frame lifter. After observing, place it on the Outer Cover by Frame 1. You now have an open space two frames wide. You can move the remaining frames into the open space, remove and observe the frame, then place it back in the hive. Repeat for the remaining frames. After inspecting all frames, push them gently to one side, replace Frame 2 and then Frame 1. Using your hive tool, correct the space between the frames. Finally, use the hive tool to push the outside frames slightly away from the wall, pushing on the end of the frame, not in the middle of the frame. This helps prevent the outside frames from becoming glued to the wall with propolis, making removal easier on your next inspection. What is the purpose of all of this? It is to prevent accidentally crushing the queen when removing or inserting a frame.



The Got Questions? room will be open 6:00-6:30 before the meeting. Join us if you are a new beekeeper or have some beekeeping questions. We will try to help you find some answers.



Bee Facts by Eddie Collins

Have your fingers or hands ever been stung so many times that they tingle and itch? This is just one of the outcomes when working bees in the rain and using “sting resistant” gloves. I mention this to point out that a lot of beekeeping protective equipment is “sting resistant” and not “sting proof”. Now, I must mention in the everyday life of a non-commercial beekeeper, this is ok. Just a bit of information to consider when you are reviewing and purchasing equipment. Of course, who else is crazy enough to work bees in the rain?

What type of beekeeping protective equipment to choose is another one of those beekeeping questions that has a lot of answers. It just depends on what you are doing, the temperament of the bees you work, and what best works for you. You can spend the money on beekeeping equipment that is “sting proof” but from my experience this is costly, heavy, and hot. It seems that, no matter what, when working with or around bees you are going to get stung doing things like “Just picking up a hive box that happens to have a bee on it and you just happen to grab the spot she is sitting on.....ouch”! For me, I tend to choose protective equipment that works well for me when working 1,000 hives or working just one or just working on equipment and trying to not get dirty. I have multiple pieces of gear that I can use all together or just one piece at a time. Here is what I use:

A good pair of boots that are waterproof. Use boots that have a tall upper so you can pull your pants legs over them and use tape to seal the gap, if needed.

A round veil from Kelly. I use the non-elastic one with the drawstring and the ring in the front. It requires a separate hat. I prefer the strings over the zippers because of ease of putting on and off. Plus, if the strings break in the bee yard, I can repair them versus having a zipper stuck or messed up.

Coveralls from MannLake. I like these because they are beekeeper coveralls and have the elastic at the feet and hands so no duct tape is needed. If you use the standard white painters coveralls rather than beekeeper coveralls, be sure to sew up the side pocket access holes and use tape at the wrists and ankles.

Meyer Gloves from MannLake. I really don't like the gloves with the ventilation holes. These sound good at first but I have been stung a lot of times through these holes. A good set of gloves with long gauntlets works the best.

A good quality hive tool. Spend the extra money and get a good quality one. And don't forget the smoker. I just use the Dadant brand.

At the April meeting I will have unassembled Shastina Millwork boxes with the new improved top box finger joint.
Deeps — \$13.00 Mediums — \$11.50 .

Christy, continued from Page 3

Many folks suffered ice damming on their roofs this winter causing much damage. We have been keeping our fingers crossed that the thaw does not happen too fast, as there would be massive flooding of the basements in houses here. Everything is currently turning into a muddy spring mess. The squirrels were so desperate for food that my two bird feeders were carried off and hidden under the 3 feet of snow. I just retrieved them the other day. We are not over the hump yet as we usually get more snow and cold temperatures in March and April. But on the up side, I have spotted robins so Spring must be on its way!

This winter was also particularly sad for our local bee community . I lost my mentor, teacher of new beekeeper classes, and friend from my workplace, to early onset Alzheimer's. I will miss him greatly and still cannot believe how fast he disappeared at 55 years of age. He gave me the gift of beekeeping as a result of a casual conversation at a retirement party where I was telling him about a book that I had read recently, **The Beekeeper's Apprentice** by Laurie R King. It is a story about Sherlock Holmes who in his retirement became an avid beekeeper. He invited me to attend beginner beekeeper classes that he was teaching to see if it was something I was interested in. I was “captured” with the first class and purchased my first hive shortly thereafter. We had many such meetings in our workplace discussing our bees and problem solving. He will be greatly missed!

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Christy, continued from Page 6

I have been keeping track of your weather and see that you also suffered a winter of increased snow, ice, and frigid temperatures. I hope that this has not caused as many hive losses as here.

Winter in our region is a time of reading and learning in preparation for spring. We had an inspiring one-day conference last weekend in Geneva, NY. This was our yearly opportunity to hear national and local speakers and to network with other beekeepers. It was held at the beautiful campus of Hobart and William Smith College on the shores of Seneca Lake. The speakers this year and their impressive credentials are listed below:

Peter Loring Borst on Keeping Hives Alive: Sustainable Beekeeping Practices. Peter has worked in the beekeeping industry since his first job working as beekeeper's helper in Wolcott, NY, in 1974. Peter was Senior Apiarist at Cornell's Dyce Lab for Honey Bee Research for seven years. He was an apiary inspector for New York State from 2006 to 2008. He holds the office of vice president of the Finger Lakes Bee Club and is a regular contributor to the American Bee Journal.

Dan O'Hanlon gave two inspiring lectures on Rearing Northern Queens and Queen and Drone Biology. Dan has been a beekeeper & queen producer in West Virginia for many decades. He is an officer in his local bee club and the founder of the West Virginia Queen Producers, an organization dedicated to supporting local queen producers. Dan led the effort to pass the first bill in the nation granting beekeepers immunity from civil liability. Dan was selected as the 2011 Beekeeper of the Year by the WV Beekeepers Association. He had incredible videos of bee behavior tending the queen and also dealing with mites.

Roberta Severson spoke on Farmer-Owned Business Opportunities. Roberta "Bobbie" Severson is Director of the Cornell University Cooperative Enterprise Program. The program focuses on conducting research and providing education and information about cooperative-structured businesses in the farm and food sector. She serves as the Executive Secretary of the Northeast Cooperative Council, an organization of agriculture and finance cooperatives headquartered or doing business in New York State, Pennsylvania, and New England. The NECC provides professional development for cooperative directors and senior level management. Prior to coming to the Cooperative Enterprise Program, she was an Agricultural Economic Development Specialist at Cornell Cooperative Extension, Seneca County and the Agriculture and 4-H Program Leader at Cornell Cooperative Extension, Onondaga County. She was a co-managing partner on her family's dairy farm in Marcellus, NY.

There were vendors present as well as a honey swap. We had a photo contest and although mine was not the winner, it is listed on the website. Everyone left the conference with brains full to overflowing from the wealth of information offered! If you would like to learn more about the conference, here is the link: <http://www.genevabeeconference.org/>

I finally retired from my career in late October! I will be traveling to Texas for a month-long stay at my daughter's pine plantation and cabin in Linden, just north of your area, about the second week in May. Our honey production does not pick up until mid-June so I think the bees will be fine while I travel. A lady that I mentor will be checking in on them periodically. I am so looking forward to returning to my home state! I am also looking forward to attending your June meeting and meet you all! ~Christy Kaspuschat, Webster, New York

