



East Texas Beekeepers Association

Vol. 26 No. 8

August 4, 2011

August Report by Dick Counts

We had 99 present for our 4th of July meeting. That was a good crowd for a holiday week. Thank you for coming and making this a great club.

You don't need me to tell you how hot it has been! Bees have been suffering more than I have seen in 36 years. Several members have reported that some of their hives have died or had a heavy infestation of moths and beetles. During our August meeting, we will talk about feeding -- ways to feed, how much to feed, and how to tell if you should be feeding.

Looking forward to the next few months, we have the East Texas State Fair and the State Fair of Texas coming up in September and October. Plan to schedule some time in our booths. It is a great opportunity to talk about bees and beekeeping to all kinds of people. You will also be able to sell your honey at our local fair. In November, TBA will be having the state convention in Corpus Christi. Also in November, we will be having our annual honey contest. We have always judged our honey based on taste but will be discussing and voting on whether to continue that method of judging or to use the state TBA guidelines that also look at other factors like clarity, moisture content and color.

At the meeting, we will also be talking again about the need to vacate our room by 9:00. Our agreement with TJC states that we must be out of the room by 9:00 so the custodian can clean and set up the room for the next morning's classes. We have often been late and TJC is not happy with us. I will share more with you at the meeting. Come prepared to be out of the room **NO LATER THAN 8:55!** That means out of the door with all your stuff and all your people. Once outside, you can stand around and visit but make sure we get out of the room on time. I appreciate your help and know we can make this work.

August is Auction / Raffle Month

President—Gus Wolf

Vice President—Mike Rappazzo

Treasurer—Tammy Lenamond

Secretary—Karen Anderson

Ex. Director and Reporter—
Dick Counts

Honey Queen Chair—Vi Bourns

Directors-at-Large—Stanford
Brantley, Randy Bobo

Program Directors — Joshua
Bradley, Eddie Collins, Mike
Rappazzo, Stanford Brantley

NEXT MEETING
August 4

TJC West Campus — Room 104
1530 West Loop 323 S SW

Contact Us

On the Web: easttexasbeekeepersassociation.com

Or on the phone: (903) 566-6789



HONEYQUEEN REPORT *By Vi Bourns*

July is almost over and our Queen and Princess have had quite a month. They have spoken to many children from four year olds to the 6th grade. They have learned to talk about the honey bees using puppets, the bee dance, observation hives, and the equipment they use working their hives.

They work well together as a team and compliment each other's presentation better than I could ever have expected. Their success has been enhanced by Eddie Collins and Dick Counts who both enjoyed interacting with the little ones. It has been exciting to see the look of wonderment in the children's eyes as they absorb all the information and are able to find the real queen bee. Of course, the surprised look in their eyes as we hand the honey sticks for them to their teachers was a real bonus.

I want to thank all of you for the opportunity of working with these two young ladies and the other youth of ETBA. Our club has a heart not only for the honey bee, but also for these young beekeepers who are following in your footsteps.



Hayden and I have been very busy this month with multiple events. On the 13th of this month, we had an event in Tyler at Jack Elementary School. We were privileged to give presentations to about 200 children split into about ten groups. Oh my goodness, they have so many questions! Or rather, they had so many statements. They all wanted to tell me about every time they had been stung or every time they even saw a bee. They were so cute!

On the 19th, we went to Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler. We talked to about thirty children between the ages of 3 and 5. Their attention span is very small so to amuse them Hayden and I used our bee puppets, Buddy and Buzzy Bee. They seemed to listen very well and even came up with their own analogies to help them understand better. They also performed the Bee Dance with us before going over to the observation hive where Mr. Eddie Collins showed them some beekeeping equipment and the bees themselves.

July 20th, we traveled to Gladewater, Texas, and talked to fifty children and adults about honeybees. These children also had numerous questions (I'm sure they asked the same question fifty times though). They learned a lot and Hayden and I certainly enjoyed ourselves. The more our year progresses the more I find that I love this 'job'. Who knew talking could be so much fun? I look forward to all of the events that Mrs. Vi has for us in August, until then I will be feeding my bees and hoping they survive this heat! I will see you at the meeting! ~Bekah



This month sure has flown by too quickly. I guess that happens though when you have a lot going on. All of our bees are doing really well. We caught another swarm this month and it kept growing and growing. My dad wrote about it in this month's newsletter. It was interesting how parts of the swarm that had gotten separated were able to find the main part of the swarm in the nuc box. Other than that, there hasn't been any major activity with our bees.

As far as my honey princess appearances, I have been quite busy with month with four presentations. On July 13th I went to Jack Elementary School in Tyler, where Bekah and I spoke to about two hundred 2nd graders. First, we read the whole group a book called "The Perfect Pet" and then they came by in groups of about 20 to 30 kids. We had twenty minutes to talk to them and show them the observation hive.

The next day July 14th, I went to Eastman Nature Center and did a presentation for their Forest Awareness Tour for "The School for Little Children". I talked to about twenty 3rd and 4th graders split into four groups.

On the 19th, Bekah and I went to Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler and talked to thirty 4 year olds. Mr. Eddie Collins also came and brought the observation hive. The children were split up into two groups, so Bekah did one group and I did the other. After we finished talking to the kids, we sent them over to the observation hive and Mr. Collins took it from there. He did a great job with the children!

My last presentation for this month was on the 20th at Lee Public Library in Gladewater for their summer reading program. There were about forty or fifty kids there ranging from pre-K to 6th grade. We taught them all in one big group for about an hour. Bekah and I had a lot of fun doing it together and I think that was my favorite event this month. All the kids said their favorite part of it was "seeing all the live bees." It's such a joy for me to be able to go to all these schools and events and talk about something that I love! ~Hayden



President's Letter *by Gus Wolf*

Well, I suppose the good news is that we are probably just past the half way point for summer weather. We are really only one third of the way into summer, but I am hoping that by the end of August the temperatures will begin to moderate a bit. It has, at least, been a predictable weather report – highs of 99 to 101 and a 20 percent chance of rain. That 20 percent may as well be no chance. I think they throw that in just to keep us from becoming totally despairing!

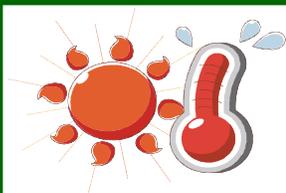
With the kind of heat and direct sun that we have to deal with every day, there is nothing more I want to do than put on a non-breathable bee suit and veil and check my hives. I didn't know I could dehydrate that fast. Not long ago, I realized that my apiary is easily accessible by car. About every other day, I drive up to the hives and from the air conditioned comfort of my automobile, I can look and see that the activity going in and out is what it should be. It's the kind of bee suit I like!

For the past two years I have been using a cover all, one piece bee suit. Its nylon and pretty stuffy. When I looked at the material of that suit and saw how thin it really is, I thought, "Who am I kidding? This is really all a mind game." It dawned on me that the bees can easily sting through the thin nylon. I am really getting only the illusion of protection. Now the veil is different, I really AM getting protection there. I thought this year I would try a jacket instead. To me, it just makes more sense for going into my hives. Easy and quick to put on, and with the double layer of cotton, I can wear short sleeves underneath. I have found it much more comfortable and it has encouraged me to "visit the girls" more often.

Eventually I might work up to beekeeping without gloves. Hats off to those who do, but I guess until I try it, I'll never know. Of all the times I have gone into the hives, I have been stung on the hand only a couple of times so perhaps it is something I should try. Although there are a number of resources that encourage beekeepers to not use gloves, I don't think I have ever read about the reason for it. Maybe it is just to encourage slow, methodical movement through the hive. The relative safety of gloves tend to make me more careless and abrupt. I don't think I'll ever be as brave as a fellow I ran across on Youtube. He is shown doing a split on a modified top bar hive dressed in a loose fitting open collar shirt, shorts and flip flops, no smoker. Either he has some gentle bees or he has nerves of steel. Find him by the title of his video, "Splitting a Bee Colony with a Queen Cell." But then the beekeeper in New Jersey that got Hayden interested in bees would routinely do his inspections without protective equipment. For the time being, I'll keep my gloves and stuff on, thank you.

I did manage to catch another swarm this past week. I should say the swarm found my nuc box. It started about four weeks ago when there was a small, grapefruit sized swarm that showed up in my back yard. I caught it, fed it and a week later looked at what I got and found a group of listless, queenless bees just hanging around in the box drinking nectar. A few days later another swarm appeared, much larger and it also went into the box. Early the following morning, Hayden reported that there was a traveling swarm at the front of the house. I first ran to look at the nuc box and it seemed like all was well, with bees going in and out. By the time I got on my veil, the bees were gone from the front of the house. After searching for a few minutes, I noticed that the front of the nuc box was covered with bees that were going into the entrance. It had me pretty confused. But they were not done with me yet. Late last Sunday evening, the kids reported that there was a swarm cloud traveling in the back yard. Again, in the short time it took for me to suit up, they had disappeared. I found them clustered on the back of the nuc box, desperately trying to get in through the vent hole in the back! I slid back the top and they all dutifully marched into the box within a few minutes. A quick check today finds them drawing comb on the frames and this week end I'll look for the queen. Never a dull moment with those girls!

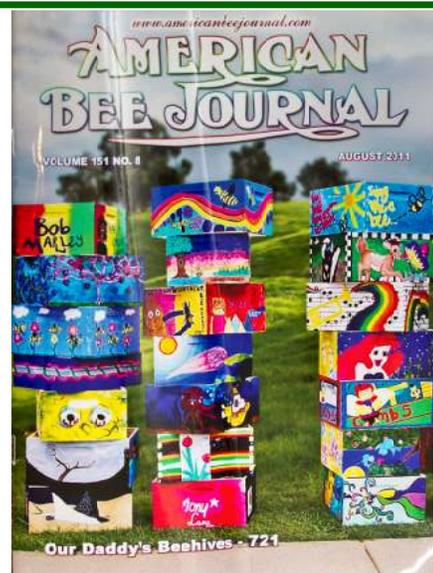
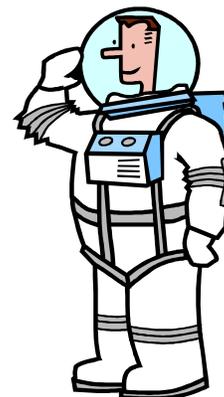




Hot! Hot! Hot! Hot!

Did you notice the recurring theme throughout this newsletter that it is hot? Of course, July and August are always hot in Texas. Maybe this summer's lack of rain has just made the heat feel worse than usual.

Working bees in a Texas summer can be uncomfortable and even dangerous. It is easy to get dehydrated or even over-heated working inside a bee suit. Sometimes when I am sweating in that suit, a part of my mind is thinking about ways to make a suit be comfortable on a hot day. One night recently, the national news was carrying the landing of Space Shuttle Atlantis, marking the end of NASA shuttle missions. Since NASA is apparently going out of the space travel business, I wonder what will happen to all of those space suits. Could that be the ideal bee suit for a Texas summer? It would truly be sting proof, not just sting resistant like most bee suits advertise. And it would come with its own self-contained AC unit, ideal for a scorching summer day in a Texas beeyard! The federal government says it needs more money — maybe they could auction a few space (bee) suits on eBay.



Recognize these boxes?

This is the front cover of the August, 2011 issue of the American Bee Journal but the boxes have been seen in an ETBA meeting. The cover article, "Our Daddy's Beehives" is written by Connie Collins Molloy.

If you have been around ETBA for a few years, you may remember Connie as a prior Honey Queen and the daughter of Eddie Collins. Connie is finishing a degree in Education at UT Tyler but still stays involved in the family bee activities. The painted hives began as a childhood activity but is currently carried on by art students at Whitehouse High School. Being a former WHS art student herself, Connie worked with the art department to develop the hive painting project. Apparently a hit with the students, the project preserves old memories and creates a new awareness about bees!



Buddy and Buzzy Bee



ETBA's Vice President Mikael Rappazzo is known to the Internet beekeeping world as KingFisher Apiaries. He is developing a new website, KingFisherApiaries.com. The website currently has several pages, including a blog and photo gallery. Mike is working on a storefront page where he will offer his products and services. For you Internet surfing beekeepers, next time you log on, check Mike's site at www.KingFisherApiaries.com. Mike would appreciate any suggestions and comments that you might have.