



East Texas Beekeepers Association

Vol. 26 No. 2

Feb. 3, 2011

February Report by Dick Counts

Hello once again. You guys really make me proud to be a member of ETBA. Attendance at our January meeting counted 101. Randy Bobo shared an informative and humorous presentation about his techniques and experiences removing bees, including showing some of the unusual equipment he uses. GREAT job, Randy!

We have started our 2011 Beginners Beekeeping class. This year's class has 21 adults and four scholarship students. We had five scholarship requests and funds to honor all of them. However, one was unable to participate so we have four scholarship students in the class. They look to be very promising future beekeepers. "Thanks" to all that donated money to this cause.

As we announced at the last meeting, Dr. Larry Conner will be giving an all day seminar on February 5. The location is Indian Rock Baptist Church on HWY 154, one mile east of the junction with FM 1650, between Gilmer and Diana. We have room for 60 and we have 60 signed up. Sorry, you will not be able to attend unless you have already paid in advance. For those of you who have paid, we will start promptly at 9:00 AM. Coffee and donuts will be available. Lunch will be on your own. Information on where you can eat in Gilmer or Diana will be announced. Or, you can bring a sack lunch.

February is our Auction/Raffle month. So bring any item for the auction or raffle table -- it doesn't have to be bee related. FYI to our new friends, money from the auctions and raffles helps fund club expenses. This is why our dues have been \$7.50 for 25 years.

Now is time for you to start thinking about who you would like to see as our 2011 club President and Board of Directors. Nominations will be taken at the March meeting and April is election 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
February 6

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

HONEY QUEEN REPORT *By Vi Bourns*

February is the month we turn our attention to our Valentine, not only the people in our life, but our love for the honey bee. As we check the hives looking for life to prove they survived the cold weeks of January, a smile crosses our face and a sigh of relief escapes our lips as we see them emerge from the opening.

I have been caring for my hives and Dick's hives by myself while he is recuperating. His new hip was not quite ready for walking rough ground and handling heavy hive parts. This was a first for me but under his careful and watchful eye, we prepared the hives for the cold January weather. Some hives were in good shape with plenty of stores but some needed supplemental feeding.

It was hard to turn my attention to my real duty for the club -- our Honey Queen and Princess. Don Johnson has their pictures and bio's on the website for you to view. I have their recipes and different pictures for their brochures ready to go to print. I am working with different organizations to schedule public presentations and also with the ETBA program committee to have them demonstrate their talents to the club so you get a feel for what they do in public. We are planning to have a part in the program on Feb. 3rd. I will also be asking them to take part in the monthly news letter. Bekah has written a report from Kentucky this month.

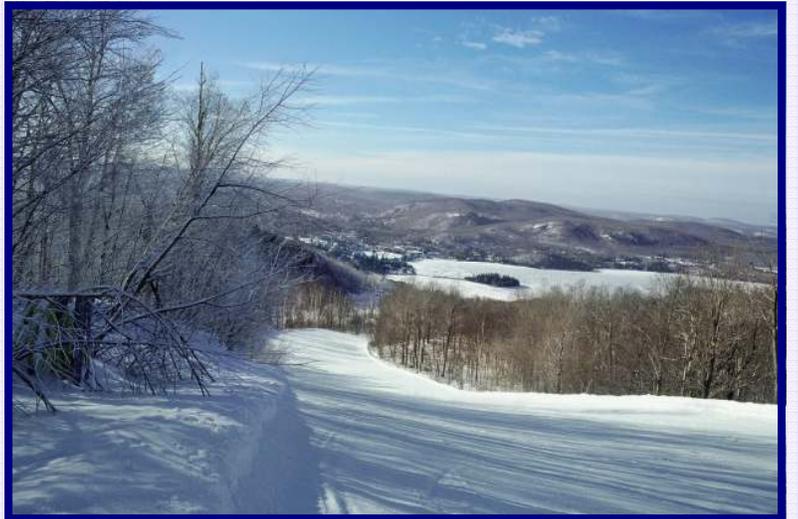


Hello Everybody!! I hope you are all enjoying the warm weather. I am currently on a family vacation in Kentucky where we have had nothing but snow, snow, and more snow! So far the temperature has dropped down to a terribly chilly five degrees. That's why I described the weather back home as 'warm'. My family and I are having a wonderful time visiting my grandparents and Kellie! If the weather warms up, we may even get a chance to go snowboarding -- not something you get to do in Texas!

My two hives are doing great, not a whole lot to report on them. But then

that's not such a bad thing is it? In the spring I will be adding three new hives to our family farm, and I'm looking forward to that very much.

I have also begun taking Mr. Counts' beekeeping class and I'm enjoying it immensely. Four years ago, I took the class taught by Mr. Talbert and have been a beekeeper for almost four years. However, I have found that even people who have been beekeeping for twenty to thirty years still learn new things about honeybees. I know that in taking Mr. Counts, class I will learn a lot of new things. It will definitely be a learning experience for me, as well as our 2011 scholarship students.



I hope that all of you who are reading this are doing great. January is already almost over and our monthly meeting is coming up. I'll see you in February!

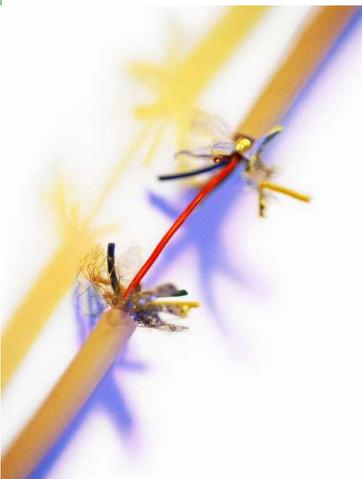
Bekah



President's Letter *by Andrew Bellefeuille*

"Green" Bees

I hope everyone is doing well and staying warm as you thumb through the new supply catalogues and make your plans for spring. I have been in my workshop refurbishing the solar hive fans I bought a few years ago. These boxes have been sitting in a corner of my shop taking up room and I was tired of looking at them with my father's voice ringing in my head saying, "I really should do something with those." As the construction industry is slow right now, what better time to work on bee stuff? I also just completed a 5 KW solar project for a customer last week so I was still in a "green" frame of mind.



After blowing the dead bees and accumulated sawdust out of the boxes I realized once again why I had stashed them in the corner for so long - there were wires inside them running everywhere! The previous owner built these boxes himself and clearly had a limited knowledge of electronics; which is probably why he said they didn't work. I have found that incorrectly connected wires (or those not connected at all!) make it difficult for circuits to function as desired. This is a little something I picked up in college. So, I first removed every piece of wire and took the batteries and solar panels outside to see if they would charge. When the wires were connected back together it was amazing how well the current flowed! Then I cleaned the propolis off of all the screens. The bees obviously didn't realize the screens were there for their benefit and thus, they did what bees do. They filled every gap and opening with "bee glue". I visualized a worker bee going around with a tool belt and tiny caulking gun filling all the holes. Sometimes when I work alone my mind wanders!

Finally, I made these "new" boxes ready for paint and also cleaned up some old frames so they are now ready for new wire and foundation. As I was on a roll, I also added more paramoth to my stored supers and bodies to make sure my good comb remained good and didn't turn into wax moth heaven. I have yet to lose a stored box but I have seen a few webs in a bottom box once when I opened it in the spring. I encourage you all to check your own stored boxes because early spring is coming soon. Any mothballs you may have added last fall are long gone by now. Even with stretch wrap the moths are looking for an opportunity to invade and it would be a shame to lose a box now with the spring honey flow so close at hand.

I recently lifted the back of my hives and found them surprisingly heavy for the downhill side of a cold Texas winter. On the next warm-ish day I will peek inside to see what I can see. Last step is to determine if any bottom boxes are light and then decide whether or not to flip any of the hives. I know this topic always gets a lively discussion going among beekeepers. It's a real discussion grenade just like asking what is most effective for treating mites. Everyone has an opinion and I like asking questions like these to stir up conversation and get people involved. I can still remember my grandfather stirring things up years ago with his fellow dairy farmers by asking them about BST or embryo transplant, so I suppose I can't outrun my upbringing.



I promise I will make the next meeting, barring a natural disaster or having the winning lotto numbers. See you all in February.

Directors Meeting at 6:15

Thank you to all that signed up for Larry Connor's lecture on February 5th. We had an incredible interest in the event and have filled all of the available seats.

I would like to remind those who are signed up to bring a veil. Weather permitting, we will work some hives in the afternoon. Also, remember to bring some cash or the checkbook and make a stop by Dr. Connor's book table. He has some really great titles on a wide variety of beekeeping subjects.

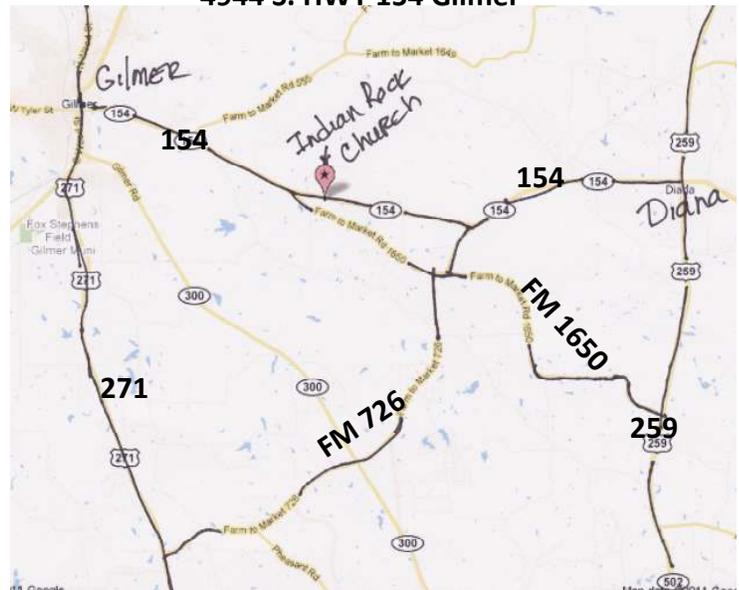
We are not catering so lunch will be on your own to drive into either Gilmer or Diana. Or, you may bring your lunch and eat at the church.

Indian Rock Baptist Church is located off HWY 154 between Gilmer and Diana. If you are coming from the south, you do not have to go all the way into Gilmer or Diana. You can turn off 259 onto FM 1650. From 271, take FM 726 to 1650, turn left on 1650. Just before FM 1650 joins HWY 154, turn right onto Catbird Lane then right again on 154 to reach the church. If you miss Catbird Lane and come to 154, just turn right on 154 and come back down the church.

If you need additional directions I will have some hard copies at the February ETBA Meeting. If you will not be attending the February ETBA Meeting, please email me (kingfisheracres@gmail.com) or call me (903.734.3553) and I will be happy to give you directions.

~Mike Rappazzo

Indian Rock Baptist Church 4944 S. HWY 154 Gilmer



ETBA operates an online bee forum called ETBA.info. The Internet address is www.etba.info. The forum is an excellent resource for answers to beekeeping questions, especially for new beekeepers or beekeepers new to this area. Even if you don't have questions, it is often interesting to read the issues posed by other beekeepers.

Log onto ETBA.info and look around. If you are an experienced beekeeper and are willing to help others, feel free to respond to the questions and discussions. Every good beekeeping discussion needs several opinions about what is the right thing to do!

Here is an example of a recent discussion on the forum:

***Checked my hives at home today. 2 hives were dead. They had very little honey but one had mason jar with syrup on top, other had division board but on top box. One with mason jar was single deep, other was deep and 2 mediums. Guess I will clean frames and put equipment up. Other 6 hives at home doing good.

***It is good to knock or brush the dead bees out from the frame (upon decomposition they make a smelly, moldy mess) and then set the boxes of frames up on their ends to air out. Exposure to strong UV light (yea, regular old sunshine) is one of the cheapest remedies to combat nosema. Some folks seem to think a bleach/water spray down of the frames is also a good remedy for nosema. I have never done this myself.

***Sounds more like starvation than anything else, but you also should become aware of the possibilities of the nosema twins in these early season dead outs. It is my experience with small population of bees, that the syrup bottle or syrup bag setting anywhere besides directly over the brood nest is never effective.

***Thanks for the advice I will clean out combs. I think you are right— they starved. The food was too far from the cluster when cold spell came upon us.