



East Texas Beekeepers Association

Vol. 26 No. 6

June 2, 2011

June Report by Dick Counts

I don't know if our May attendance of 110 was due to Mr. Knight's auction or if you are just interested in our bees. So far, we have collected \$1036, dedicated to the Knight-Johnson Scholarship fund. We have a few small whatnot shelf items which will be available on a special table at the June meeting.

The big news is our Summer Clinic will be held at the Lenamond home on June 11. The Lenamond's are located off highway 64 between Canton and Wills Point. Turn off 64 onto CR 1504 at Myrtle Springs. Stay on 1504 and follow the black and yellow balloons to the Summer Clinic. Don't forget to RSVP to me so we can know how much BBQ to order.

The Clinic opens at 10:30 AM, BBQ lunch at noon, and afternoon activities start at 1:00 PM. Vi and the girls have put together eight tables of more than just beekeeping. Brenda Claire and Dan Eudy are making a booth about bee vision. The children will be putting on a bee skit. We will have a "making splits" booth headed up by Mike Rappazzo and a booth about the Top Bar Hive. Don't forget "Name That Gadget" -- if you have a bee item that you don't know how it was used, please bring it. Sale and raffle of bee attracting plants. And of course, speeches by TBA leadership. Be sure to pick up your flyer and driving directions at the June meeting.

It is time for you to check your supers for honey stores and make arrangements to extract. Call me if you need to extract at my place. It is free, but you must be an ETBA member.

Honey, at least pure, local East Texas honey will be in short supply this year, please sell it at a fair price.

ATTENTION: Scholarship students and beekeeping class members, your diplomas will be handed out at the June meeting. Please attend so you may be honored.

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

Webmaster—Ardy Johnson

NEXT MEETING
June 2
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 Wally Schmerheim

HONEY QUEEN REPORT *By Vi Bourns*

Here is wishing all of you a safe and happy Memorial Day and to say thank you for being so willing to volunteer and help when asked because it is YOU who make our club more attractive to visitors and interesting to other members. We are privileged to have Texas Honey Queen Kaylynn Mansker and Texas Honey Princess Kelly Lenamond as guests on June 2.

The TBA summer Clinic is shaping up to be a very interesting day and you will learn the exciting details at our June meeting. You can meet Queens and Princesses from all over Texas. Hayden and Bekah will be focused on helping everyone feel welcome. Remember each person needs to RSVP to Dick Counts so we will have enough BBQ for all. June looks like a quiet month for Bekah and Hayden; but their next booking could be just around the corner.

Happy Beekeeping till we meet again.

~Vi



Hello everyone! I hope you are enjoying the rain, the bees sure are! I put supers on my hives about two weeks ago and they have begun drawing out the comb. I'm so excited to be watching their progress! I was also able to remove a swarm this month out of a lady's water meter.

On May 18th I visited Higgins Elementary School where I gave a presentation to several different classes of 5th graders. They had so many questions!

On May 26th, I will be giving a presentation to a group of various aged homeschool children for a Forest Awareness day in Longview. I am also looking forward to the annual Mineola Nature Fest on the 28th. Last but not least, I am looking forward to seeing you not only at the June meeting but also at the summer clinic on June 11th! ~Bekah



As I was doing a routine check on my hive, I noticed a little bee head peaking partway out of a cell on one of the frames. It was a tiny bee hatching out. I was so enamored watching it climb out of the cell for the very first time. Of course, I couldn't watch the whole process because it was getting late and the forager bees were coming back, but I enjoyed watching what I could. This helped me get over the disappointment of finding my super completely empty and untouched. I had been hoping to sell some honey this year, but there is always next year! My hive and my dad's seven hives are all doing really well, there is just no honey in the supers.

My Honey Princess appearances are as follows: on the 13th, I went to Higgins Elementary School in Whitehouse where the 4th grade from all the schools in Whitehouse attended "Roundup Day". It was a busy day and I was able to talk to approximately one hundred and sixty 4th graders in groups of twenty. That is eight separate groups of 4th graders! Fortunately, Bekah arrived after lunch and was able to share the workload with me.



The next event was the Forest Awareness Tour at Eastman Nature Center on the 18th where I was able to talk to the 9th grade from Longview High School. It was more challenging talking to 9th graders, but it went really well. And even 9th graders loved the honey sticks we handed out!

There are still two more events scheduled for me this month: The Forest Awareness Tour for the Home School club on the 26th, and the Mineola Nature Fest on the 28th.

I just want to say "Thanks" to ETBA for giving me the opportunity to speak all over East Texas!

~Hayden

June is Auction / Raffle Month



President's Letter *by Gus Wolf*

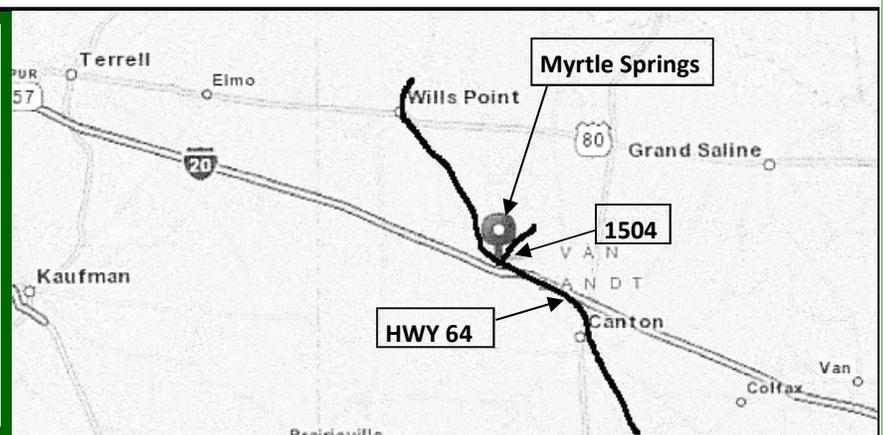
Another month has flown by. Even though life sometimes seems like the same thing day after day, it never really is. No two days are ever the same. I'm thankful for the variety that life brings. But just think about how bees are diligent and tolerant of tedium! Except for the first week or so in the hive, their life is pretty much the same day after day: work in the hive, go out and get nectar or pollen when the sun comes up, and stop when the sun goes down. The same thing day after day until their wings wear out and they can no longer fly. And they do their jobs just as diligently on their first day as the last. Diligence stands in stark contrast with its opposite -- Slothfulness. Diligence has been defined as "Accepting each task as a special assignment from God and using all my energies to do it quickly and skillfully." We use the expression "work my fingers to the bone", but bees really do that, don't they? Imagine what our work life would be like if we worked until our arm and legs were no longer there. A pretty dismal prospect! It's a good thing that God never gave bees the capacity to reason. If they stopped to think about it, they probably wouldn't be as willing to work so hard!

Looking at my hives today, I saw there are plenty of stores in the deeps for the bees to be raising brood. But there is no honey in the supers. Some of the supers are partially drawn out but there is no liquid in the cells. The two swarm hives caught within the last month are busy gobbling up the syrup I keep feeding them and drawing out comb. Perhaps after some of the recent rains there will be more flowering with some excess nectar for the girls. If you are in an area that is providing nectar for your supers, consider yourself fortunate. At the rate things are going in Big Sandy, I have a feeling that my extractor will just be gathering dust this year. I hope it isn't so.

Did you attend the auction of John Knight's equipment last month? If you didn't, you missed some great deals. I had looked at the trailer of stuff before the meeting but did not see anything that I really needed. I sat inside for a while waiting for the auction to be over but then thought I should see how the sale was going. When I saw a motorized, stainless steel extractor go for less than a hundred dollars, I thought I should stick around. Soon, John's bucket of tools went up for sale. I couldn't resist and I bid until it was mine. Now, I am a sentimental old sot. What could be more sentimental than owning John's hive tool and frame lifter? Think of how many hives those tools have worked and for how many years? If those tools could only talk, think of the stories they could tell. The hive tool is, technically, not a hive tool. On it is stamped "Red Devil, Union, NJ. It's really a prybar/scrapper made not 20 miles from where we used to live in New Jersey. I've been in the old Red Devil plant numerous times before they moved to Oklahoma. That just endeared the tool to me all the more. Well, another generation of beekeepers will be using his tools. It would be great if I could pass them on to the next person 44 years from now.



TBA Summer Clinic
Saturday June 11, 2011
9 AM– 3 PM
Lenamond Farm
 Turn off 64 at Myrtle Springs onto
 1504 and follow the balloons



Director's Meeting at 5:30



Harvesting Tupelo Honey in Florida

My cell phone rang in the middle of the April ETBA meeting. It was a friend calling to tell me that Donald Smiley of Smiley Apiaries in Florida needed help getting his honey harvest off for Tupelo season. I asked how soon he needed me and he said, "Yesterday!" I left on Saturday, April 9, 2011, headed for Wewahitchka, Florida, a 12 hour drive. I got there about 3 AM Sunday morning. Later that day, I met with Mr. Smiley and his workers, and then rested and prepared for work on Monday.

Monday morning, we drove out to the first bee yard. The honey to be harvested was from the TiTi tree, sometimes called the Leatherwood tree. We took the supers full of TiTi honey off the hives, then drove to another bee yard and did the same thing. We put the supers on pallets, 36 to 42 supers on each pallet. Some supers were medium and some supers were deep. We tried not to put mediums and deeps on the same pallet. Each super could weigh from 85-150 pounds. We generally worked two bee yards a day and would gather 12 pallets. Work was generally from 8-5, but a couple of days ran much longer. One day we worked 16 hours. Wearing a full bee-suit in 80+ degree humid Florida weather builds up quite a sweat. Your clothes are soaking wet when you pull the suit off in the evening.



After the pallets were stacked with full honey supers, Mr. Smiley would load the pallets on the truck with his forklift. Then, we would tie them down and drive back to his honey house. The pallets were kept in a sealed storage room so the supers would not get robbed. You can guess that there were a few million bees in the area. When the storage room was full, we started extracting. We generally ran 7 -13

pallets through the extractor a day. It takes two or three people to run an extractor. First, we moved a pallet into the extraction room. One person pulled the frames from the super and ran them through the uncapping machine. I generally ran the extractor, loading and extracting 60 frames at a time. A third person scraped the top of the supers clean. When the extractor

finished spinning, the spun out frames were unloaded and put back in a super and onto a pallet. These supers were now ready to be taken out to the bee yards for Tupelo season.

After two weeks, I came home to see my family, then went back to Florida to help gather the Tupelo honey. Tupelo season lasted about 10 days and it took 10 days to extract. Tupelo honey is a very mild honey that many people really like. Because of the short season, there is always a limited supply.

Wewahitchka, FL. is the #1 city for producing Tupelo honey in the USA. It's a million dollar industry and there are about 12 commercial beekeepers working the area. Lanier and Smiley are the two largest apiaries. Twenty years ago, there were 40 beekeepers competing so it's in decline. Several beekeepers told me they are retiring or selling out this year. The Tupelo tree has been decimated by expansion of other industries. The tree is a hardwood used in plywood construction and dredging the rivers has taken a toll on the amount of Tupelo trees in existence. I was told more than 40% of the Tupelo habitat is now gone.

My adventure in Florida certainly gave me a new perspective of beekeeping. Extracting honey from 800 hives is definitely different from enjoying a few hives at home!

~ Ken Wilkinson



Barrels of honey, 800 pounds each



Photos courtesy of Tom Wynn, 2011