



East Texas Beekeepers Association

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March 3, 2011

March Report by Dick Counts

If you are not coming regularly you are missing some great meetings. If you were among the 78 or so people at the last meeting or among the 52 to hear Dr. Larry Conner, you know what I am talking about. Last meeting, our Honey Queen and Princess put on quite a show, sharing insight into the presentations they make for children. Throughout the next year, they will give presentations at schools, fairs, weekend festivals, churches and garden clubs.

Mike Rappazzo really did a great job in getting Dr. Conner here and making sure everything went as planned, even with snow and ice. We did have to delay the start time until 11 AM to let the roads become drivable but made up for the late start by essentially working through lunch. Thanks, Mike, for a job well done.

Vi and I have just returned from the Winter Delegates Meeting in Dripping Springs, just southwest of Austin. Current updates include that A&M is interviewing candidates for the open position of Bee Scientist for our new lab. We also learned that a young lady from the Collin County club won first place in the 2011 National 4H Essay contest. Our club helps support the beekeeping division of this worthy 4H activity.

Also, the TBA Summer Clinic will be held at the Lenamond's home near Wills Point on June 11. Members of beekeeping clubs all across Texas will be there. About a hundred turned out for last summers' Clinic in Webberville. Our club is this year's sponsor, so we will be asking you to help out.

There will be a panel discussion at this month's meeting. The panel will be Stanford Brantley, Royce Pelham, Mike Rappazzo and Dick Counts. Please bring your questions for the panel. You can ask them from the floor or drop them in the Suggestion Box. I promise to bring the key to the Suggestion Box this time! There will be no prize for stumping the panel but you might get four different answers to your questions!

After the panel, if time allows, Mike will share information about how he builds his nucs.

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Dick Counts

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Mike Rappazzo, Savannah Ross

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NEXT MEETING
March 3
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*

March is the beginning of warm weather mixed in with the cold fronts still coming our way. Queen Bekah and Princess Hayden are reporting how excited they were as they checked their hives with great expectations of seeing a laying queen bee and a good brood pattern. Hayden and her father Gus have an ongoing contest as which of their hives are more prolific with Hayden coming out ahead. Hayden was able to attend Dr. Conner's lecture with her father and her report will follow mine.

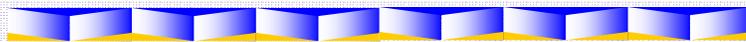
Bekah has taken on the duty of caring for Texas Honey Queen Kellie's hives as well as her own. Hey, what is a little sister for!

I checked my hives and Dick's hives yesterday in his bee yard and am happy to report we only lost two this winter. I found brood in fourteen. We still have more hives plus the observation hives around East Texas to check this week. The observation hive on Bascom Road and from the Discovery Science Center have come through the cold weather and that is a real breakthrough for us. We have been experimenting to find a way to accomplish this and this year we have had time to feed them more and even wrapped one nuc with a tarp.

Tammy reports that the brochures of Bekah and Hayden will be ready for you to pick up at our March meeting. I also picked up some of Kellie's TBA Honey Princess brochures at the Winter Delegates Meeting this past weekend for you. It was good to see four Honey Queens from clubs around the state were able to attend the Delegates meeting.

I am booking educational appearances already and am looking forward to seeing them share their love for the honey bee. I will be asking Don Johnson to post their bookings on the web so you can follow their progress. We will also start a 2011 web album with photos of their activities.

I am looking forward to visiting with all of you this coming week at the meeting and hearing about your bees.



Hello! I hope this newsletter finds you all well. I have had a pretty good month so far and I hope that all of you have too. All of my hives are doing really well and have survived all three of the snow storms. My dad and I opened them up on the 6th and gave them each a patty of fondant with megabee. All of the hives also had an extremely good supply of honey stored away and have been bringing in lots of pollen. I was a little worried about the two swarm hives we are nursing through the winter, however, they are both doing great! My hive especially was much stronger than all the other hives.

Earlier this month at the February beekeepers meeting, Bekah and I gave a talk on bees the way we would if we were talking to a group of school children. I gave my talk about pollination. We even asked the people there to pretend that they were little kids who didn't know anything about bees! It went really well and I think everyone enjoyed it.

A couple of days later on the 5th, I was very privileged to be one of the many people to attend a beekeeping seminar taught by Dr. Larry Conner. It was very informative and I was impressed at how friendly and approachable Dr. Conner was. I am very glad that I went because I realized how much a beekeeper needs to know. One thing that stuck out to me was his repeating "when in doubt, feed the bees" and "I want fat bees not skinny bees!" Dad and I did get three books by Dr. Conner called "Increase Essentials", "Queen Rearing", and "A Year in the Out Apiary". I will enjoy reading them. I hope that he will be able to come back and give another seminar next year.

That's all the news I have for now. I can't wait till the next meeting to see all of you again. See you all in March!

~Hayden





President's Letter *by Andrew Bellefeuille*

EASY, BREEZY

Warmer weather has *finally* returned and along with it comes my excitement and anticipation of spring! I can't wait for the honey flow to begin and although I have started my woodenware, I have still not reached my goal of twenty new hives. Every day I watch my bees bringing in loads of pollen because they know there are not quite three hundred days left until winter returns once more, and it is never too early to start preparing for a rainy (or snowy) day. Bees live by the Boy Scout motto times ten and I love that about them! I have also started to prepare for next winter by rebuilding my firewood pile. This winter was so cold that we burned a lot of wood and almost ran out, so I will not let that happen again. I am too tightfisted to pay someone else to do work that I am perfectly capable of doing myself, plus it saves on gym fees too. I would be more than happy to share my wood-cutting/wood-stacking workout "secrets" so if anyone out there needs a personal trainer, please see me to set up an appointment. There are no membership fees at my "gym" and I will even provide lunch!



It was reaffirmed to me this weekend that I am officially "old" as I spent my Saturday night removing a hive of bees from the soffit of a house while the younger people inside the home were getting ready for a party. As I was vacuuming out bees and scraping comb (no power tools running or imminent possibility for bodily injury), I started to let my mind wander and reflect on other Saturday evenings from years past and how I spent them. "Much differently than tonight!" was my overriding thought.

The removal was "easy", which is a relative term especially when I use it when conversing with my wife. Upon hearing the word "easy" in reference to bees, she usually rolls her eyes and says, "See you in four hours"; however, this "easy" removal only took three hours. The bees were entering the home at the breezeway over the back door, as all civilized bees should do. I couldn't see them in the soffit vent which made me feel that it would not be quite as "easy" as I might have anticipated. The bees had built comb above the brick in the wall which made for short comb since there was only six inches of space between the roof and the brick. I did the removal after dusk because I know I can get more bees and they will not fly as much, and because it was an "easy" removal. I don't usually do many night removals because, like the bees, I would much rather be home after dark rather than standing on a ladder in the glow of my head lamp opening up a roof.

I began vacuuming and the bees kept coming, and coming and coming! At that point the little voice in my head started saying, "This is bigger than you thought, genius! You are going to be here a bit longer!" (The voice was also using some colorful adjectives but none that I will share with you now.) Understanding the vertical limitations of their chosen space, the bees had selected to expand horizontally.....for EIGHT FEET! They did find a section of space between the brick and sheathing that was wide enough to make an eighteen inch lobe, which thankfully, I was able to work up and out instead of breaking it off and losing it inside the wall as I feared. After removing more frieze board I was finally able to get the rest of the hive out and begin putting the house back together. I returned home and set them up in their new hive. I was able to salvage a decent amount of brood which I rubber banded into several frames along with honey and pollen, and so far, they have decided to stay. I have not seen the queen but I hope she is merely eluding me and has not gone to the great beehive in the sky.

I hope everyone else is busy preparing for a good honey flow this spring. I have hopes that 2011 will be a great year for beekeeping and all our endeavors. I will see you all at the next meeting, and remember we will be nominating officers for the April vote.

Directors Meeting at 6:30

Biology driven management

How colony biology impact beekeepers work.

Larry Connor
Wicwas Press
www.wicwas.com

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New Phone: 202-999-0627

ETBA sponsored a workshop with Dr. Larry Connors on February 5, at Indian Rock Baptist Church. Because of Dr. Connors' busy schedule, the date was determined several months ago. Given the craziness of East Texas winters, planning three months ahead for a date in February is a hope and a prayer about the weather. Sure enough, about the time Dr. Connors flew into DFW, winter comes to meet him. After slipping and sliding his way out of an icy Dallas, he made it to Tyler and joined us for last month's meeting. Then we all woke up Friday morning to find the roads covered with ice and snow and virtually impassable. But like a good

Texas winter storm, it started melting off the roadways late Friday and was almost all gone by early afternoon on Saturday. We delayed the Saturday meeting's start from 9 to 11 AM to give the roads a couple more hours to clear. The high traffic highways were pretty good but there were still some icy areas on the lesser travelled roads, especially where the trees blocked the morning sun from the road. Everyone seemed to make it to Indian Rock without major problems. However, the hazards of the previous day's icy driving were evident from the vehicles that slid into the ditches and medians and were abandoned overnight, including one pickup truck on its roof in someone's front yard!



The 52 people in attendance were from as far away as Texarkana, Shreveport and Athens. Dr. Connor gave some interesting presentations and engaged in questions and discussions with the audience. He has a different way of looking at some issues and probably challenged all of us to more closely evaluate what we see inside our hives. Everyone brought a sack lunch and we took only a few minutes to eat. There was also a great spread of snacks, fruit and coffee that we worked on throughout the day.



Mike Rappazzo was the man who made this opportunity happen. Mike made his initial contact with Dr. Connor at the TBA convention in November. After discussing with Dick Counts the possibility of hosting a presentation in our area, Mike worked with Dr. Connor to find a date and secure a facility. He then spent a great deal of time communicating not only within ETBA but on several Internet beekeeping forums to publicize the meeting. He also worked with all attendees to



ensure that payments were received in advance and all expenses were met. Good job, Mike!

