



# East Texas Beekeepers Association

Vol. 27 No. 9

November 1, 2012

## *November Report by Dick Counts*

October was the first meeting in our new location. Ninety-one members and guests were present despite having to find our new home in Whitehouse. One notable absentee was our coffee lady Margaret Beatty who was a bit under the weather and could not come. However, other members filled the gap and we did have coffee on the snack table!

We struggled a little with our new sound system and some of you may have had a little difficulty hearing the speakers. For the November meeting, we have rearranged the speakers to distribute sound better to the back of the room and made adjustments to the microphones so they pick-up voices much better.

We spent October 19, 20 and 21 at the Texas State Fair, working in the TBA honey booth. Vi and our Royal Court had a great time doing cooking demonstrations for the fair goers. The cooking demonstrations are a great tool to attract people to stop at the booth. Their real purpose is to hold an audience and allow us to share information about Honey Bees. All in all, it was a successful but tiring three days. We had a good time but were glad to get home.

Our annual Honey Tasting Contest will be part of our November meeting. Your honey entry must be in a SQUEEZE BEAR. If you do not have any bears, bring your honey and see me before the meeting. I will bring some bears for your use in case you need one. Gloria Harmon will be in charge of the contest and has contest details on page 6.

November is also when we nominate and vote for the Beekeeper of the Year. This honor goes to the member who has done the most to promote the success of ETBA during the past year. The 2012 Beekeeper of the Year will also be announced at the December meeting.

Texas Beekeepers Association state convention begins November 8<sup>th</sup> in Killeen. If you plan on going, see me at this meeting.

Ray Latner, manager of the Paris Dadant store, has been promoted to manager of the Florida area. Congratulations Ray, we wish you well in your new position. Kacy Cole is the new manager of the Paris Store.

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 — Joe  
Mekalip, Gus Wolf

Webmaster—Ken Wilkinson

**November 1**

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



**On the Web: [etba.info](http://etba.info)  
Or on the phone: (903) 566-6789**

## *HONEY QUEEN REPORT* by Vi Bourns



As the old saying goes, "ASHES TO ASHES AND DUST TO DUST". This weekend at the Texas State Fair in Dallas, we watched as an icon of 60 years was destroyed by fire in a matter of minutes. The cause, possibly an electrical short, started a fire and Big Tex was reduced to nothing but a skeleton made of steel, his hands still lifted in greeting for a little while. Workers were forced to dismantle what was left of him as a safety precaution for people enjoying the last weekend of the fair.

But never fear, this hero of Texas will be back to watch over our children once again as they eat, laugh, and scream as they enjoy the festivities of the midway. He is already in the process of being rebuilt and will take his rightful place where he stood so many years.

Did you know that Big Tex began as a 52 foot Santa Clause in his birth place of Kerens, Texas in 1949? Instead of greeting people with "Howdy Folks", his greeting was "Ho-Ho-Ho". He was purchased by the Dallas Fair in 1951 for a mere \$750 dollars. So, just how big was he? He was 52 feet tall, wore a 75 gallon cowboy hat, and size 70 boots, and a 50# belt buckle. But hey, everything in Texas is big.

An exciting weekend for Queen Bekah and Princess Hayden to witness, but as typical royalty, they carried out their duty, cooking with honey for the crowd that filled the area around the Texas Beekeepers display and took their turns answering some pretty unusual questions about the honey bees. Then, they dressed in their evening gowns to ride in the parade before saying goodbye and returning to a night of rest before starting all over again on Saturday and Sunday. I must say, life has its' way of twisting and turning to make living every day an interesting one.



This last weekend flew by fast but it was a wonderful weekend! Hayden and I both attended the State Fair of Texas on Friday and Saturday of this last weekend. Beekeepers and Honey Queens and Princesses from all across Texas came and represented their respective clubs. I got to fellowship with so many people and I enjoyed it immensely! The State Fair is always a busy event for a Honey Queen or Princess and this year was no different!



This year I demonstrated how to make Honey Oatmeal Crasin cookies for the people at the fair. This was a new recipe for me and I can't wait to share it with you! Last year at the State Fair, I was pretty nervous, but this year I felt much better about it and actually had LOTS of fun doing the cooking demos. I cannot wait to see each of you at our next meeting. I will be bringing my Crasin cookies for you to try; hopefully you like it as much as the people at the fair did! See you soon and God bless,  
~Bekah



Hello East Texas Beekeepers!  
I hope you are all having a wonderful month and are enjoying the beautiful, cool weather.  
On October 19<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup>, I was privileged to represent ETBA at the State Fair of Texas in Dallas for a busy weekend of cooking with honey demonstrations. This year, I made Whole Wheat Honey Brownies which everyone loved. Throughout the whole weekend, I did six cooking demonstrations, did an impromptu "bee talk" with Collin County Honey Princess Shannon LaGrave, worked a lot in the Texas Beekeepers Association booth, and rode on a float in the Starlight Parade on both Friday and Saturday nights. I also had a wonderful time with the eight Honey Queens and Princesses there, including the American Honey Princess Danielle Dale! I'm so glad that I have the opportunity to help educate so many people about honeybees, beekeeping, and promote this amazing industry!



I'll see you all at the meeting!

~Hayden



## President's Letter *by Gus Wolf*

It was an exciting time at the State Fair. You should have been there! There was lots of traffic at the Texas Beekeepers booth and equal amount of interest in bees and beekeeping. I believe we had eight Honey Queens and Princesses doing cooking demonstrations and bee education for the long weekend. I am amazed at how many people tell about their family having bees when they were younger or how their grandparents always kept bees. Many of them expressed interest in beekeeping themselves and asked how to get started.

Considering how important bees are to our living, it is indeed striking how ill informed people are about them. The questions people asked at the observation hive were the same as I experienced last year. They are the predictable three: 1. What about colony collapse disorder, or something related. 2. Are they making honey? 3. Where is the queen? There were some questions about imported honey. I don't remember any of them last year. But those people that asked seemed to be fairly well informed about the topic. Ms. Vi said someone asked her where "sugar free honey" came from. This person had run across it on a store shelf. I thought perhaps diabetic bees would make that! All in all, I believe the booth and demonstrations were a rousing success again this year and did a lot to inform, educate and pique interest in beekeeping.

After dropping Hayden and my wife off at the Food and Fiber Pavilion, I went to park the van. Out of the corner of my eye, I noticed something unusual. Turning, I saw it was a plume of smoke and I thought I heard fire engines. My first thought was that a concession stand had a mishap and I have to admit I thought, with all the people there, it might be something worse. Of course, you all know it was just Big Tex going up in flames. My wife later commented that it was probably the arrival of all the Honey Queens and Princesses that short-circuited him. All that beauty arriving at once must have blown old Tex's mind!

Getting on to bees – my two new hives appear to be doing well. Lots of activity going in and out. I am feeding them as I want the queen to keep laying eggs. I am hoping that the new location for the apiary will yield better results for next year. With some amount of luck, perhaps the two hives will be strong enough to split next year.

The two hives that absconded last month left me with 40 frames of drawn comb that were almost, but not completely, robbed out of honey. I left them out in the open for a few days about a hundred feet from my new hives. It didn't take long for them to be completely emptied. And then it rained. I couldn't believe how much water can get into the cells just from being out in the open in boxes! By the time I got to them, yellow jackets had found them. Hundreds of yellow jackets were going for who knows what in those frames. I couldn't even get close to them during the day, so I went up at night to shake the frames out. Yellow jackets and red wasps must find comb a good place to sleep because there were plenty of them. Since I was holding my small flashlight in my mouth, I realized I was really tempting the fates. The next day I brought up a yellow jacket trap and within a couple of hours it was filled with the nasty little creatures. Deciding to join in the festivities, I put on my beekeeping jacket, got two lids and the para-nuggets. I put one lid on the ground up-side-down and stacked the four boxes on top of it with the stinging critters flying all around. In went the nuggets and on went the other lid. A couple of days later I looked and, *viola*, no more opportunistic robbers! Problem solved.

I did turn down an opportunity to remove a hive from a fallen tree. It was about thirty feet up in a large knot hole. The tree had fallen in a recent storm and that was when the homeowner found out it contained a hive. The timing was just not right and he wanted the tree removed by this week. So, I had to respectfully decline. I admit I would like to try my hand at extricating a hive from a tree once, just to be able to say that I've done it. But I would hate to spend the time and effort only to find out the queen was crushed between the combs when the tree hit the ground!



## Directors' Meeting 6:00



## Dr. Eva Crane

Hello, again, fellow beekeepers! It was good to see those of you who turned out at our new location this past month. This month, continuing my series of famous beekeepers, I'd like to tell you about Dr. Eva Crane.

Eva Crane was born named Ethel Eva Widellson June 6, 1912 in London, England. As a girl, she and her older sister attended Sydenham School. Later, she received a math scholarship and attended King's College, graduating in two years. Afterwards, she went on to receive a Master's degree in quantum mechanics and, in 1938, a PhD in Nuclear Physics. In 1948, she accepted a position at Sheffield University as a physics lecturer, and a year later she married James Crane.



Up to this point, Eva had little or no contact with bees. As a wedding present, a friend gave her a beehive. The friend hoped that the honey from this hive might supplement the shortage of sugar brought on by the war, which, as far as we know, it did. It also helped with something else in Eva's life – it created a lifelong interest in bees.

Soon after receiving the hive, Eva subscribed to *Bee World* magazine. Later, she became a member of the British Beekeeping Association (BBKA). Several years after that, she began serving as the secretary for its research committee. In 1949, her passion to share bee research with others, especially those in developing countries, led her to found the Bee Research Association (BRA). From 1962 to 1982, she edited its *Journal of Apicultural Research*. She also edited *Bee World* magazine, from 1949 to 1984.

Throughout this time period, Eva Crane wrote steadily about bees. After retirement, she pursued this passion more intensely. In researching for these books, she traveled worldwide and explored other country's unique beekeeping practices as well as visiting pertinent historical sites. In 1999, she published "The World History of Beekeeping and Honey Hunting," which Paul Theroux praised "for its enormous scope and exhaustiveness, for being an up-to-date treasure house of apiaristic facts." 2001 saw the release of "The Rock Art of Honey Hunters". For this book, she visited 182 sites of rock and cave paintings in 16 different countries. "Making a Bee-Line – My Journeys in Sixty Countries 1949-2000", published in 2003, recounts some of her many traveling adventures. Four years later, on September 6, Eva Crane died in Slough, England at the age of 95.

Eva Crane's monumental work in founding the BRA and writing over 180 articles, papers, and books greatly impacted the beekeeping world. The BRA is still active today under the name International Bee Research Association (IBRA). In recent years, IBRA has instigated much research about the varroa mite and causes of colony collapse disorder. Eva Crane's many books on apicultural archeology, honey, and bees are among the most thorough and comprehensive available, highly recommended for anyone who wishes to learn about bees in history.

~Martha

### A Few More Pictures From The Fair





## *Practical Experiences in the Beeyard by Stan Brantley*

In discussions about preparing for cooler weather, we talk about lifting the back of the hive to check for stores. Some newer beekeepers have asked what the hive weight should feel like. If you still have supers on the hive, you may need to remove them to get a good feel of the weight of the hive. Pick a warm day and look into the super and the brood box to see how much capped honey is stored. Then lift the back of the hive and see how it feels. This will give you a basis of how the hive weight feels in correlation with the amount of honey stored. If the frames in the super and the brood box are full of capped honey, this is the weight of a well-stored hive. As the bees consume these stores during the cold weather, you will notice the weight of the hive lessens. As the hive gets lighter, it will be an indication that the bees may need some supplemental feeding. However, if you check the weight now and see little stored honey in the supers or brood boxes, you will know what a hive with insufficient stores feels like. If the hive feels light and does not have at least four to six frames of honey in the brood box and super combined, you should begin supplemental feeding now with 2-to-1 sugar syrup to help the bees build up the amount of stored food for the colder days ahead.

If you have supers with honey stores for the winter, be sure to remove any Queen Excluders. Bees cluster and move within the hive as they consume stores during cold weather. If Queen Excluders are left in place, the cluster may move through the excluder to reach stored food and leave the queen behind to die from the cold.

It is usually not necessary to start feeding a pollen substitute until mid-December. Bees usually collect and store lots of pollen during the fall months prior to frost. Although hive beetles are not as active now, they are still present and love to lay eggs under pollen patties. With the cooler weather, bees are also less active in combating the beetles. If you are concerned that your bees have not collected and stored pollen and feel the need to feed pollen patties now, add only small squares of patty so the bees can consume them before the beetles have a chance to lay eggs under them. If you are not familiar with feeding pollen patties, they come as a large rectangle with paper on both sides. Cut them across the narrow width into strips about an two inches wide. Place them in the hive with the paper on. Bees will eat the patty and leave the paper. Randy Fair of the ArkLaTex bee club uses a large-wheel pizza cutter to easily cut the patties into smaller pieces. Randy says pizza cutters with small wheels get clogged and do not cut well.

Be aware this is "robbing season" for bees as available nectar and pollen begin to fade with the cooling weather. Bees and wasps will take advantage of any food they can steal from another hive. If you have the Outer Cover tipped up for ventilation during the hot months, now is the time to put it back down flat, eliminating a possible entry for robbing insects. If you have not already added entrance reducers, put them on and close the entrance down to winter width, leaving a space about two bees wide. The bees will readily adjust and you may keep a weak hive from being destroyed by robbers.

Take the time to observe the traffic on your landing boards. I am still seeing lots of landing board activity, particularly on these warmer afternoons. However, when I look in the brood box, I am not seeing as much brood and more of the brood frames are full of stores. If you have Russian bees, they may have already stopped laying. Italian queens will continue to lay until the weather becomes consistently cooler, stopping about the time of the first frosts.

Helping the bees build adequate stores now can prevent having to open hives and feed on the cold days of December and January. As the weather continues to cool, you can still go into your hives, if needed. However, plan ahead what you need to do. Have your equipment or feed ready and at the hive. Get in out quickly. If the temperature is below 60 and the bees are clustered, do not pull the center frame out of the cluster and cause the bees to scatter. They are clustered to preserve warmth and protect the queen. If you are feeding, try to plan to feed on sunny warmer days and in the warmer part of early afternoon. Try to avoid opening the hive on damp or windy days.



**Winter Cluster**

Got Questions? I will be at the meeting early. Look for me in the classroom just inside the double doors on the far side of the Friendship Hall. Join us 6:00 to 6:30 with your beekeeping questions.



## ETBA Annual Honey Tasting Contest

Each member can enter one 8 to 12 ounce squeeze bear of honey.

See Dick Counts before the meeting if you need a bear.

The bear must have a cone or flip top dispenser.

The bear must have no labels or identifying marks.

Give the bear to Gloria Harmon before the meeting.

Gloria will assign each bear a sample number.

During the contest, members will be provided with voting ballots, plates or other containers, and samples of honey.

Each member will write on the ballot the sample number of the best tasting honey .

Ballots will be collected and tallied to determine First, Second and Third place winners. Winners will be announced at the December meeting.

Bears or left over honey will not be returned.

Help us keep the room clean. If you get honey on something, ask for a wet rag to clean up.

### BEE MAN

Do you know the bee man?

He catches all the bees he can.

With his trusty smoker and other things,  
He steals the honey, ignoring the stings.

Have you ever seen him at work?

It is a job that most would shirk.

You'd really have to love the honey  
Or else you must make lots of money.

He's very careful with the bees,  
Luring them to come to their knees.

He moves them to a brand new home.  
And oh the taste of that honey comb.

A keeper of bees is a useful job  
Even if some hives he does rob.

He uses them for pollination  
Providing the world with vegetation.

What would we do without a bee man

Protecting all the bees he can?

We'd have no fruit, flower or trees  
Without the bee man's busy bees.

I'm glad I'm not a bee man

Who catches all the bees he can.

While they are lovely on the wing,  
I tremble when I think of the sting.

So I'll just say thanks to the bee man

And tell him to catch all he can.

We'll let him keep all the money

If he'll just provide that sweet, sweet honey.

**By Sue Roberts, written for and about  
Jimmy Lanham**

### ODDS AND ENDS OF THE INTERNET KIND

**VITA EUROPA**— (<http://www.vita-europe.com>)

Vita is a company in England that researches and produces Honey Bee feeds and medicines. Apistan and Apiguard treatments for Varrora mites are two of its products. The Vita website has some good information about recognizing and treating various hive diseases. If you register as a member, you will receive a newsletter about bee activities in other parts of the world. They also have a photo gallery that allows you to download high quality photos free of charge for educational purposes.

**Kelly Bees Newsletter**—(<https://kelleybees.com>)

The Walter T. Kelly Co, a beekeeping equipment supplier, makes available a good monthly newsletter on their website. You can access current and archived newsletters from their home page or signup for email receipt.

**National Honey Board**—(<http://www.honey.com/index.php>)

The National Honey board website has information and links with a wide variety of information about honey and honey uses, including research and technical data, educational resources, and food and skin care recipes. Some of their cooking related links include [BakingWithHoney.com](http://BakingWithHoney.com), [SnackingWithHoney.com](http://SnackingWithHoney.com), [DairyWithHoney.com](http://DairyWithHoney.com) and [CandyWithHoney.com](http://CandyWithHoney.com).

**Basic Beekeeping**—(<http://basicbeekeeping.blogspot.com/>)

This website has over 125 well written lessons in basic beekeeping. Good material for new beekeepers in an easy to grasp format. Be aware that the authors are keeping bees in Illinois so some of the information about winter care and the timing of seasons is different from our East Texas climate.

**FatBeeMan**—search on YouTube for FatBeeMan videos.

Many interesting, informative, practical and sometimes different short videos.