



# East Texas Beekeepers Association

Vol. 28 No. 11

November 7, 2013

## *November Report by Dick Counts*

I spent three days in the TBA booth at the State Fair of Texas. Our ETBA Honey Queen and Princess, along with queens and princesses from other bee clubs across the state, shared info about the Honey Bee. For twenty-one days, the TBA booth provided information to hundreds of people, all shapes, all sizes, big and little, young and old! The booth had a beautiful display of honey from all areas of the state and an observation hive that drew a lot of attention. The TBA booth was a great success, sharing information, answering questions, and providing guidance about where to buy equipment and how to get started in beekeeping.

Attendance at our local ETBA meeting has remained in the range of 100 all year, thanks to all of you who make the effort to come and to participate. Several of us will miss the November meeting because we will be involved with the State TBA Convention in Plano. Our November meeting is always a lot of fun. ETBA Vice President Mike Rappazzo will be your local MC. We will be having our Annual Honey Tasting Contest and voting on Beekeeper of the Year. After the break we will have a Beekeeping Equipment Auction. Be sure to bring your extra beekeeping equipment for the auction – bring good, useable equipment and not your old junk! Our goal is not only to raise some funds for the club but also to provide members the opportunity to purchase some equipment they might need.

At the meeting, we will be asking for input on a few items. One will be planning for our December meeting Christmas Party. Another discussion will be an update on our Youth Scholarship Beekeeper Training Program. Have a good meeting and I will see you in December.

Some of you long time ETBA members will remember Jesse Adams of New Boston. For many years, Jesse made the long drive to participate in ETBA meetings. Jesse was an interesting and innovative beekeeper and shared a lot of knowledge with many of us through the years. Jesse is still alive and kicking up in New Boston and will celebrate his eighty-ninth birthday on November 2nd. Happy Birthday, Jesse!

President—Gus Wolf

Vice President—Mike Rappazzo

Treasurer—Tammy Lenamond

Secretary—Lanette Lanchester

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

**Next Meeting**  
**Nov. 7**  
**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



Hayden and Martha did an excellent job educating people who came to see the observation hive that Dick Counts brought to the East Texas Fair this year. Several young people were so fascinated they kept finding their way back to the bee display. As a result, we talked with them about the scholarship program and encouraged them to apply for a scholarship.

The TBA booth at the State Fair in Dallas was at times so crowded people were waiting in line to talk to the beekeepers. TBA also had an observation hive and many people were fascinated to see the bees, find the queen bee, and watch her lay eggs. Many were proud to tell us about members of their families who had been beekeepers. All were surprised to see different colors of honey from all over Texas.

The cooking demonstrations were great. The samples went quickly to the audience so those working the bee booth got very little to taste. Most people asked for the recipes, a real compliment to the cooks. Both Hayden and Martha rode in the parade in their formals. They had fun even though it was cold.

Now that the local and state fairs are over, my attention turns to the ETBA December meeting and preparations for the coming year with the Honey Queen Program. Our Queen Committee is looking for young ladies, fifteen years or older and who are also beekeepers, to represent our club in educating East Texas about honey bees and their importance in our lives.

I will be at the state convention when you meet in November but will be thinking of you.



Hello, once again beekeepers! As I was pondering what to write this month, I remembered the reaction most people have when they are told honey bees are not native to America. They always ask how they came here. Although I know that they came over on ships with the early settlers, I myself have often wondered *how*. After doing a little research, I was able to find the answer to the question.

About a year after the pilgrims came over in 1620, a letter was sent to the Governor and Council in Virginia, written December 5, 1621, by the Council of the Virginia Company in London. The letter tells of the goods that are being sent by ship, diverse sorts of seeds, fruit trees, pigeons, conies, peacocks, mastiffs, and most, importantly, beehives!

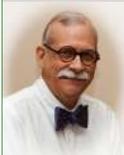
In March of 1622, the German black bees arrived in Virginia, transported in straw skeps so the bees could stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer. They were thought to have come on either the *Discovery*, the *Hopewell*, or the *Bona Nova*. Although there are few records as to how the bee colonies were stored on the voyage, Edward Goodell gives a good description from an 1830 book that tells how cargo from Antwerp was stored. “[The hives] were placed on deck as follows: A strong oak platform was built on the stern of the ship, the crate containing the skeps was securely bolted to this platform facing the sea at the rear of the ship. This kept the bees as far as possible from the ship’s crew and passengers, so that both could go about their business, neither interfering with the other.”

Once they arrived in the New World, the bees began to spread quickly by swarming. Since bee skeps were not very large and could only hold so many bees, the hives swarmed more frequently. They soon became known to the Native Americans as “white man’s flies”, according to several early American writers, including Thomas Jefferson. By the 1820’s, approximately 200 years after arriving in the New World, honey bees had made it all the way to Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, although they did not make it to Alaska until the early 1920’s!

Beekeeping has come a long way since then, especially with the invention of the Langstroth hive. Speaking of which, October 31<sup>st</sup> is an important day for beekeepers. No, not because of Halloween, but because on that day 162 years ago Langstroth discovered “bee space” !!

I, unfortunately, will not be at the November meeting, as that is the same day the Texas Beekeepers Association Convention starts in Plano where I will be representing ETBA as I run for Texas Honey Queen/Princess. I hope some of you are able to come to the convention and enjoy the great speakers and lots of fellowship with other beekeepers from around Texas. Have a wonderful November and a happy Thanksgiving! I’ll see you all in December!

~Hayden



## President's Letter *by Gus Wolf*

State Fair was the event of the month as our Honey Queen Daughter Hayden, JoAnn and I, went for the last three days of the fair. Hayden, along with Queens and Princesses from other clubs, did cooking demonstrations each day while I helped staff the TBA booth. The size of the crowds was amazing, especially on Saturday. It was wall to wall people! There were the ever predictable questions about colony collapse and the bees dying and where was queen in the observation hive. What surprised me the most was the amount of people who asked about starting beekeeping. The level of interest in becoming a beekeeper and how you start seemed very high this year. If it is an indicator of what is to come, local clubs may see some unprecedented growth going forward.



The queen that was in the observation hive at the fair was far more cooperative this year than in previous years. I was able to find her most of the time. Although, frequently sharp-eyed youngsters beat me to it. Perhaps my skill at finding queens is getting better!



If you remember from a previous column, this spring two large swarms moved into some empty hive boxes next to my shed. They were no where near the rest of my bees and needed to be moved about 600 feet to the apiary. One complication is that I don't currently have the time or the resources to move them three miles away, wait thirty days, and then move them back. So instead, I took Stanford Brantley's advice about how to move them a short distance and moved them one night.

I prepared the first hive for being moved by fastening each of the boxes together and attaching the bottom board to the bottom box with short metal straps. I then took two 2 x 4 x 8's and secured them with 4 inch screws to the top of the bottom brood box in such a way that the hive could be picked up by two people as if it were a litter. Waiting until nightfall, I stuffed the opening closed with some tissue paper. My son Graeme and I proceeded, in the dark with headlamps, to carry the first hive to its new home. It must have been a quite a sight to see two men carrying a hive on long boards about 600 feet in the dark.

At the apiary, I had a nucleus hive that I had closed the door on the previous day. Graeme carried this small hive back to replace the one that had just been moved. Since it was small, I wanted it near the house so I could keep an eye on it through the winter. I figured that any lost field bees from the large hive we just relocated would naturally join up with this one – and they could use the help. I opened the entrance to the nuc hive and taped a branch with pine needles on it in front of the hole so the exiting bees would need to climb through the needles and re-orient themselves.

After two days, the large hive had removed enough tissue from the entrance to allow field bees to come out. I have to admit, there were not a lot of bees hanging around the nuc hive so I assume that the transition must have gone well. See, it really is possible to successfully move hives a short distance with a minimum of field bee loss.

As I write this, Graeme and I have just come back from moving the second hive. Some bees must have crawled out from a crack somewhere because about 100 feet from our destination, I felt something crawling on my hand in the dark. Quickly setting down the hive, I was still stung by a guard bee that was only doing its job.

Moving hives more than a short distance can be accomplished, but you need to finesse it a bit more to make the bees cooperate!

I regret that I will not be at the November meeting as I'll be at the TBA Convention in Plano. Mike Rappazzo will be chairing the meeting. I'll see you all at the December Christmas Party!



## Report from the 2013 State Fair of Texas

Hello, East Texas Beekeepers! This past month, I was delighted to go to the Texas State Fair in Dallas. Both Hayden and I went to give cooking with honey demonstrations to fair goers who came through the Food and Fiber Pavilion. We began our weekend at the fair on Friday, October 18, each giving two cooking demonstrations that day. That morning, we baked samples of our recipes – Hayden made a honey almond cake and I made honey custard shortbread cookies. While we cooked, we fellowshiped with other honey queens who had come from beekeeping clubs around the state. I was able to meet Shannon LaGrave, 2013 Collin County Honey Queen, and Lesli Tucker, 2013 Williamson County Honey Queen. I also enjoyed getting to better know both Shelby Kilpatrick, 2013 Texas Honey Queen, and Caroline Adams, 2013 American Honey Queen,

While we gave our cooking demonstrations, flocks of people walked through the Food and Fiber Pavilion, giving us excellent opportunities to educate them about the value of honey and honey bees. Near the stage where Hayden and I gave our cooking demonstrations, the Southwest Dairy Farmers had stationed a food truck and handed out free samples of ice cream. As you might guess, that made the area quite popular! On Friday, the food truck workers told us they had handed out 8,000 ice cream cones. What excited us



Collin County Honey Queen, Shannon Lagrave, giving a cooking demo.

honey queens and princesses was that many of those 8,000 people had heard at least part of our cooking demonstrations and had stopped by the Texas Beekeeper's booth!



While walking around with my Dad, we found a Honey Bee Pavilion!

Hayden and I also gave two cooking demonstrations on Saturday. Through both Friday and Saturday, I realized the incredible amount of work and coordination each beekeeping club puts into attending the State Fair. Thank you all so much for supporting Hayden and I as we traveled, and a special thank you to the ETBA officers, newsletter coordinators, and honey queen chair persons, especially Ms. Vi, for making our State Fair trip happen. It was a wonderful experience!

This coming week, November 7-9, I will be travelling to the Texas Beekeeper's Association Convention in Plano, along with several other ETBA members. Unfortunately, I will miss the ETBA November meeting because of this, but hope to see you all at our Christmas banquet in December. ~Martha



### *Got a Smart Phone?*

The first-ever smartphone app about keeping healthy honeybees has been launched by Vita (Europe) Ltd, the world's largest dedicated bee health company. The web app is free and gives beekeepers easy mobile access to information and photographs about honeybee disease identification and treatment. The web app, suitable for nearly all smartphones and tablet devices, can be accessed free from [www.healthybeeguide.com](http://www.healthybeeguide.com). It runs on Apple or Android, on iPhones, iPads, Samsungs and Blackberrys and the full range of smart mobiles.



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

Now that the honey season is over, what do we talk about when the topic is Honey Bees? Generally, we need to look forward to the spring of 2014. How you get there is the result of how well you plan and take care of your hives this winter. Your goal is to have strong hives by the Wild Plum bloom in late February or early March. The Wild Plum bloom typically marks the beginning of the spring “flow”, meaning that blossoms begin to produce nectar that bees can collect in sufficient amounts to begin to store excess in the super.

For you first time beekeepers that are looking to successfully get your hives through the winter and into spring, there are some things you need to do without fail. We have said them before, but let’s do it one more time. First, feed your bees in sufficient frequency and volume that the bees are storing an excess in empty cells. Check by feeling the hive weight or looking inside to ensure that the bees are storing food for the cold winter days. Second, reduce the entrance to the smallest space your reducer can provide, preferably no more than a half-inch. Third, make sure the hive is vented to prevent moisture build-up during cold weather. If you have solid bottom boards, you may need to raise one end of the Outer Cover to let moisture escape. Place a small twig, popsicle stick or short piece of thin wood on the rim of the Inner Cover, propping up that edge of the Outer Cover. Your Inner Cover needs to have the hole in the center for the moisture to escape. If your Inner Cover is solid, cut or drill a hole or slot. If you use screened bottom boards, you may have sufficient ventilation that tilting the Outer Cover is not needed. However, if you notice moisture collecting on the bottom of the Outer or Inner covers, tilt the Outer Cover.

We usually do not have to worry about closing our screened bottom boards. Winter in Texas is not usually cold enough or prolonged enough to cause a problem. However, if you are worried about using the screened bottom boards in cold weather, you can place a piece of plywood under the hive or cut a piece of thin plywood to slip inside the hive and cover the screen.

As a general rule, you should not open your hive in temperatures less than 45 degrees. If you absolutely have to look in the hive on cold days, get in and out as quickly as possible. Under no circumstances should you ever pull out a frame that will break the cluster of bees apart during cold weather. Breaking the cluster can allow the queen and the brood to become chilled and die. Put simply, they may not survive your messing with them!

Now would be a good time to look for a new apiary site if you are not satisfied with your present site. An ideal site would be an open area that is exposed to the sun. Try to avoid areas that tend to be wet or hold fog in the mornings. The site should have vehicle access so you will not be carrying heavy hives or supers long distances. Look for protection from the north wind, even if you have to make some kind of windbreak. Ideally, locate the hives with the entrance facing East or Southeast. Plan your apiary carefully, thinking about hive placement in terms of future expansion. It is much easier to lay out your apiary with a good plan now than to try to rearrange it in the future.

November and December are ideal times to order new equipment. Price increases tend to become effective in January so order now and save a few bucks. Think ahead to the activities you are planning for the coming spring and summer. Are you increasing the number of your hives, making splits, replacing queens, starting some Nucs? Make a list of the activities you are planning and what equipment will be needed to accomplish them. Place your orders for equipment now. If you plan to need queens, pick your source and find out how early you can place an advance order for spring delivery. Place your queen orders as early as possible to ensure that you get a queen delivered when you need her.

If you do not keep a Nuc in your apiary, I would encourage you to consider starting one or more this spring. Add a Nuc box to your list of equipment orders. Nucs can provide an emergency source for a queen or for brood to put in other hives. If you have a hive with queen problems –not laying, poor brood pattern, dead or disappeared, or even making mean bees – you can use the queen from the Nuc as an emergency replacement. The bees in the Nuc will usually requeen themselves and give you another queen for future use. If you want to expand the number of your hives, you can grow a Nuc into a full hive. In my apiary, I like to keep one Nuc for every five hives.

I will be at the TBA Convention and therefore miss the November meeting. The Got Questions? room will be open 6:00 – 6:30 as usual. If you “Got Questions” about beekeeping, stop by and we will try to help you find answers. I will see you at the December meeting

### Spotlight on ETBA Youth: Willow Lanchester



I was recently asked to share my experiences with the Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program. Civil Air Patrol (CAP), the civilian Air Force Auxiliary, is tasked with three main missions: Emergency Services, which includes disaster relief and search and rescue, Aerospace Education for youth and the general public, and Cadet programs to shape tomorrow's leaders. Captain Brown, one of the senior members at my squadron, said he was curious to hear how beekeeping would tie in with CAP. I told him I have seen many shared ideals between the two programs.

I have seen a spirit of mentorship throughout the ETBA. I took beekeeping classes from Mr. Counts. Jan Aerts and Judy Giles took me with them to teach me how to do a bee removal. Miss Vi came to my home to help me with my bees. Dan Eudy helped me with equipment so much. Everyone is always so encouraging! When I began to look into CAP, I found this same spirit of mentorship and felt encouraged to join. Since then, I have been able to benefit so much from the program. In June, I went on a trip to NASA space center in Houston. In July, I promoted for the first time to Cadet Airman and also had my first Cadet Orientation Flight. I am also currently training to become search and rescue qualified. There are many cadet training courses that I plan to attend to continue my development.



The Cadet Program offers the opportunity to explore Air Force careers with no obligation to enter the Military. CAP also provides unique leadership opportunities. Cadets have the ability to become emergency services qualified and will be allowed to participate in real-life missions to help others in a time of need. CAP offers the ability to be more than the average teenager, the ability to go places and do things others can't even dream about. Just like beekeeping, it is passing on a legacy of knowledge and experience to my generation and helping us go down in history as something other than a generation of couch potatoes and Facebook junkies.



To summarize, both programs teach and promote experience and self reliance. I find it ironic that the first time I Googled Civil Air Patrol, I found a picture of a man collecting a swarm of bees off an airplane. Who knows, Civil Air Patrol may actually find a use for my beekeeping talent.  
~Willow



### ETBA Annual Honey Tasting Contest

- Each member can enter one 8 to 12 ounce squeeze bear of honey.
- The bear must have a cone or flip top dispenser.
- The bear must have no labels or identifying marks.

- ballots, plates or other containers, and honey samples .
- 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 cloth to clean up.

- Give the bear to Linda Pelham before the meeting.
- Linda will assign each bear a sample number.
- During the contest, members will be provided with