



East Texas Beekeepers Association

Vol. 30 No. 11

November 5, 2015

November Report by Dick Counts

We had a good crowd of 119 members and guests at our October meeting. Thank you for your support of our meetings. Your presence is what makes it worthwhile.

For the first time in several months I can say, "We finally had some good rain!" In fact, we had so much good rain that some of us did not have places to put it. As far as I have been able to tell, my bees were all on high enough ground to escape harm. I hope that your bees and your home fared as well.

I had the opportunity to spend a couple days at the Texas State Fair in Dallas with our Honey Queen and Princess. Queen Willow and Princess Brittany were working in the TBA booth, doing cooking demonstrations and talking about the Honey Bee to hundreds of visitors each day. I even had a chance to do some of the talking! You would be amazed at the interest people have in the TBA booth. Some questions are almost universal -- How are bees doing? Are they still dying? What can we do to help the bees? How can I get started as a beekeeper? If you have never worked in a bee booth at the Tyler or Dallas fairs, you should give it a try. It is a great experience.

I will be attending the TBA state convention in Belton October 29—31. They are expecting around 200 attendees and have a full slate of speakers and activities. I will share a report with you at our November meeting.

Let me give you an update on our 2016 Beginners Beekeeping class. We have received seven applications for youth scholarships. Our youth scholarship application period is now closed. I will still consider adult applications for the class. Please talk to me within the next couple weeks if you are interested in being an adult student. The class will begin in January and meet one Saturday each month through May.

Remember the Bee Art Show at TJC Art Gallery November 9-13. Our own Queen Willow will have some of her bee art on display.

Don't forget to bring your honey for our Annual Honey Tasting Contest at the November meeting.

President—Gus Wolf

Vice President—John Stewart

Treasurer—John Holladay

Secretary—Brenda Sheridan

Ex. Director and Reporter—
Dick Counts

Honey Queen Chair—Lani
Lanchester

Directors-at-Large—Stanford
Brantley

Program Director — Matt Thomas

Webmaster—Ken Wilkinson

Next Meeting

Nov 5

United Methodist Church
405 West Main in Whitehouse
6:45 PM
On the Web: etba.org
Or on the phone: (903) 766-7700

HONEY QUEEN REPORT by *Lani Lanchester*



A Queen Bee is made when worker bees choose a three day old egg and give it extra nurture. They enlarge her cell to give her room to grow and feed her Royal Jelly. What would have been a common worker bee turns into a magnificent queen who will be the heart of her community. I think of this as I watch Willow and Brittany. They began as lovely young women with great courage presenting interesting information about an amazing creature. Somewhere along the way, it happened with each one of them. They became a queen. Their insecurities were gone. They had full command of their topic and knew what they had to say was important and their audience wanted to hear it. They developed an ease at fielding questions. They presented themselves with professionalism and maturity that amazed their audience as much as the subject they presented. They have developed beyond what we would otherwise imagine for girls their age.

Now it is time for the cycle to begin again. We are accepting applications for the Queen Program for 2016, but we are adding something new! This year, we are adding the position of Ambassador. Ambassadors will be young men who would like to join the Queen and Princess in presentations about Honey Bees and represent ETBA in our community.

If you know a young woman or young man who is a beekeeper and would like to join the program, encourage them to fill out an application. Applications must be completed and returned by November 8th. The Queen's Committee will be interviewing for the Queen, Princess and Ambassador positions in November. For any questions please call me at 903-279-5599. If you received this newsletter by email, you can find applications attached to the original email.



My year as the 2015 ETBA Honey Queen seems to have flown by. I have been honored by this opportunity to serve ETBA. This exceptional year has been very busy with events, school, and everything else, and I have enjoyed every minute of it. I learned so much and it has been a joy to share that knowledge with others. I will never forget my year as your Honey Queen.

Working with many amazing people this year helped me grow and created many memories. So far this year, I had 31 events and spoke to well over 4,000 people. I gave presentations at schools, fairs, rotary clubs, and libraries. I loved working these events, even the ones that leave you exhausted and ready to sleep for a solid 48 hours. In some ways, those exhausting events are the best because you feel a real sense of accomplishment once you are finished and will remember them forever.

Some events, whenever I look back at them, I can't help but smile. One of my favorite things was recognizing children from a presentation I did when I was princess. This summer, I was presenting to kindergarteners who I had met at their preschool the year before. What so inspired me was these young children remembered the talk that I gave, and some of them could have given the presentation themselves. That really showed me that what the Queens and Princesses do truly makes a difference. Another inspiring part of this year was presenting to the Art Clubs at TJC. This gave me the opportunity to share with my peers and classmates. Seeing their support and newfound love of bees gave me new confidence.

The Honey Queen Program taught me so much about bees and about life in general. The other day one of my professors was telling us how much more you learn about a topic if you are teaching than if you are just a student. I immediately realized how true this is. In this year alone, I learned incredible things about bees, their anatomy and biology, and the incredible miracle that is the honey bee. I also learned so much about art that involves bees. Very recently I put together a PowerPoint on bees in ancient Egyptian art. I learned many things about ancient Egyptian art and beekeeping of that era. I also learned an immense amount about making public presentations that helped me develop my voice in ways I could have never foreseen.



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I am humbled by the love and support that I received from the club this year. I would like to thank Ms. Violet Bourns for originally offering me this opportunity. I would like to thank Mr. Counts for being so supportive of us, Mr. Brantley for always being the smiling face at the meetings that gave me confidence, and Hayden Wolf for helping train me and to develop my voice. I would also like to thank Brittany Miller, who does not realize how amazing she is, for being an awesome princess this year. Last but definitely not least, I thank my mother for everything she has done for me. I truly enjoyed my time in the ETBA Honey Queen Program and I am so excited to see where this program goes in the future. ~Willow



This past year will definitely be a year I will remember! It was filled with lots of fun, achy feet, long days, and a sore mouth from smiling so much. It may have been a little stressful at times but it was well worth it. I enjoyed meeting new people and sharing my love for the honey bee through my presentations.

I spoke to over 3200 people and gave 107 presentations at a total of 18 events. Additionally, I worked seven days in the ETBA and TBA booth. A couple of events where I worked in the booth were SAFFE Day event in Kilgore, where I spoke to 650 people, and the Texas State Fair where I spoke to hundreds of people.

One of my favorite events was the Texas State Fair in Dallas. Working the Texas State Fair was a lot of fun and is dear to me. I find it so amazing how all of the Queens and Princesses have a special bond between them. You would think that putting together a bunch of girls who don't know each other might create drama but we were all able to get along and have a great time with each other. I think we have this special bond because we all talk about this special creature that our Father in Heaven provided for us.

At the State Fair, there were always people coming and going, so it's like this big rush all the time. I was always so excited to share what I know about the honey bee. There was also an observation hive at the State Fair. This attracted crowds of people's attention, along with all the beautiful girls wearing crowns and sashes. The most common things I talked about were how many eggs the queen bee lays a day. So many people were surprised at what we told and taught them about the queen bee. It was fun to see their faces light up and see their excitement to learn more about the honey bee.



I had several other events that I could go on and on about, but to keep your attention, I will keep it brief. I have loved each and every event and I can't wait till next year! I also had a few funny moments this past year. One of them was when I was at the Tyler Fair. I was asked if Laurel Lanchester was my daughter. Didn't know I looked that old.

This has definitely been an amazing year filled with lots of fun and things I will never forget. I am so excited to see what the future holds for next year! Thinking of it brings excitement to my heart. Thank you to everyone for all of the support and encouragement along the way, especially to my parents, Tim and Darla Miller, and my sister Kaylee Miller. I would like to add Ms. Vi, Mr. Counts, Lani Lanchester, and Willow Lanchester. There is no way I could have made it this far without you! I love you all so very much! And again, thank you all for the support and encouragement throughout this past year! ~Brittany



President's Letter *by Gus Wolf*

During the month of October, I was able to volunteer time at both the East Texas State Fair in Tyler and the Texas State Fair in Dallas. Obviously my time was spent at the beekeeping booths at both fairs. Once again, interest in beekeeping runs high among the general populace. It is not surprising as most people are well aware that bees are in trouble and that bees are critical to our food supply. Many people want to do their part in helping bees in some way, from planting bee friendly plants to keeping a hive or two themselves. A honey harvest seems to be an afterthought for many people. They just want to help in some way. The good thing is that there are now more clubs in Texas than ever before. I believe the count is now thirty-one and growing. We can thank the Texas Beekeepers Association for being the clearing house for all these clubs and making the contact information available on their web site. Clubs are growing, not necessarily because they are so good but because they are in the right place at the right time.

Out of the twelve hives that we have, we lost two this summer due to relatively unknown reasons. I am guessing that one absconded after being robbed out and the other probably succumbed to mites. Remember that I don't treat or medicate my hives so I understand that I will lose a certain amount of bees every year. My two best hives are now three years old and were feral hives that moved into swarm boxes. Thus far, they seem to be doing very well in spite of not having any mite treatments. We shall see!

It is time now to prepare your hives for the winter. Make sure they have been medicated, if you choose that route, and most of you probably will. You will want them to go through the winter with a reduced mite load or they will self-destruct. Keep a weather eye on how much honey is in the hive because this will be their food pantry for the coming dearth of food for them known as winter. If you need to feed them, buy your sugar from Les Jeske in our club. He has the best price in Texas and you can't go wrong.

You will all be happy to know that my top bar hive is still doing well. They are four bars from the end so, chances are, they will not run out of room this season. I have also modified the box to be able to feed them during the winter from outside the hive. I expect they will survive the winter but I'll need to have a bigger box for them in the spring. I do need to clean it out as one small comb did drop off its top bar during the summer heat. The bees have cleaned it up but have also attached it to the bottom. That means I'll need to build a small box to hold the drawn bars temporarily while I clean the home box out. I'd better get busy!

Don't forget that November is our annual Honey Tasting Contest. In ETBA, we base our "best honey" award on a good ole taste test. Be sure to enter your honey and then try to identify it when you do the taste testing! You may be surprised to know that most people cannot identify their own honey. We will do our tasting and voting in November and award prizes at the December meeting. Ribbons will be presented for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. See page 6 for rules about preparing and entering your honey.

We will also nominate and vote for our 2015 Beekeeper of the Year. The winner will be announced in December. Our Beekeeper of the Year should be the person who has done the most for ETBA during this past year. The ETBA board will present their nomination and we will take nominations from the floor. If you are aware of one of our members who has made outstanding contributions of time and service to our club, be prepared to offer their name and qualifications during the floor nominations.

I ran across an interesting Internet site about bees, <https://beecare.bayer.com>. The site is sponsored by Bayer Chemicals, manufacturer of some of our neonicotinoid agricultural chemicals. This link will take you to a page sharing information about a form of varroa control that is under development. Called a "varroa gate", the product will supposedly kill mites as the bees crawl through holes in the "gate" to enter and exit the hive. I am not advocating this product—just found it interesting in a "what will they think of next" fashion.

<https://beecare.bayer.com/media-center/news/news-detail/a-new-way-of-protecting-bees-against-varroa-mites>





Practical Experiences in the Beeyard by Stan Brantley

November is a month of big change in our bee world. A bit late in coming but it finally looks like we have left summer weather behind. For most of us, October was warm and dry, more so than we expect for that month. November usually marks the transition into our bees' winter pattern, with the first frost coming around the middle of the month. Days will stay warm and bees will still fly, but nights will begin to chill and fall forage will rapidly diminish. However, it is not yet time for you to relax from your beekeeping tasks.

With the fading of the Goldenrod and Aster, your bees will be having difficulty finding nectar. Even though we had a good Goldenrod bloom in some areas, the extremely dry conditions probably reduced the nectar harvest. It would be a good idea to check your hives for adequate stores before the weather begins to cool. Start right way to feed light hives so they will have time to build up stores while it is still warm.

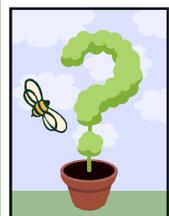
The quick way to check your hive for stores is the "two-finger lift". Make sure the bottom board is not stuck to the hive stand. Place two fingers under the back of the hive and lift. If the hive lifts easily, you may need to start feeding sugar syrup. Most East Texas beekeepers do not add pollen patties until later in December when the beetles are less active. If you feel that pollen patties are necessary now, add only small pieces that the bees can eat quickly. Remember that hive beetles like to hide and breed under the patties. If you are not sure how to evaluate the hive weight with the two-finger lift, do the lift and then look inside and evaluate stores. You can then start to build a memory of how the hive feels with that level of stores. A little practice and the two-finger lift will become a natural action.

If you have extracted your honey and plan to store the supers on the hives for the winter, you can feed and medicate with the supers on the hive. If you are medicating for mites, consider rotating the medication each year. Mites are known to develop tolerance with repetitive use and become immune to the treatment. Powdered sugar treatment, though now considered much less effective than originally thought, is more effective in the early winter than other times in the year. Since the powdered sugar dusting only causes a reduction in adult mites (called phoretic mites), it is most effective when brood laying is at its lowest. Applied periodically now through December, it helps reduce the adult mite load that the hive carries through winter.

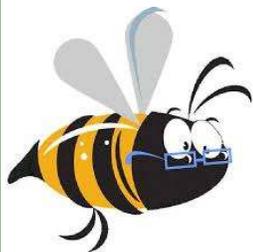
Now is a good time to begin inventorying your beekeeping supplies and planning purchases of the equipment you will need for the next bee season. Be sure to think about any expansions you want to make and order the additional equipment to make them. It is a good idea to place your orders during November and December as these are slower months for bee product suppliers. If you wait until January to place your order, you may find delays in obtaining your orders as well as cost increases for the new season.

If you have a State of Texas sales tax exemption registration number as a beekeeper, be aware of its expiration date. The exemption is good for five years and then must be renewed. I received a letter from the State Comptroller last week reminding me that mine would expire on December 31, 2015. I called the 24-hour automated system, punched in a few numbers, and was informed by a computerized voice that my new registration would be mailed on the next business day. Why is this important? Because this is the registration number that exempts your bee related purchases from state sales tax. If you are a Mann Lake customer and do not have the tax exemption registration, your catalog or online purchases will now have sales tax added since Mann Lake is opening a new store in Marshall. If you do not have a tax exemption, you can register online by answering a few questions. I am told it is very easy by my computer literate friends!

The couch bees have generated a lot of interest among readers of this column. I am happy to report that they are continuing to do well. They are still in a Nuc box but the hive strength continues to grow. I still have the entrance reduced severely to about a 1/2 inch opening to help the guard bees protect against robbers. I believe the hive will be strong enough to successfully overwinter and have a good start for the coming Spring. If things go well, we may even be able to place some famous Couch Bee Honey in the 2016 TBA Convention Queen's Auction!



The Got Questions? room will be open 6:00-6:30 before the meeting. Join us if you are a new beekeeper or have some beekeeping questions. We will try to help you find some answers.



Bee Facts by Eddie Collins

Don't forget November is the "honey contest month". Seems like I always remember this fact when I am walking into the November meeting without a honey sample! I am giving you a reminder so you will not forget to bring your honey.

Bee clubs EVERYWHERE!!! On November 17, I will be speaking on Raising Queens at the new Hillsboro, Texas club -- Hill County Beekeepers Association. You can find a list of the thirty Texas Clubs on the TBA website - <http://texasbeekeepers.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Association-Listing.pdf>

Clubs I consider local to our ETBA area are Canton, Longview, Marshall, Mount Pleasant, and Lufkin. But remember in Texas the term "local" has an entirely different meaning than in other states. I consider these local because they all share the same weather and foliage patterns.

One part of beekeeping that can be a challenge is Marketing. This becomes a bigger and bigger challenge as you decide to move from a small backyard beekeeper to a sideliner. There are a lot of things to consider: the design and contents of a label, container choice, where to sell, how much is your product worth, legal requirements, insurance, what to sell? With this said, is anybody in the club willing to do some research and create a presentation on this?

Now that I'm on the subject of presentations, this is one area where our Program Director Matt Thomas can use everybody's help. If you're willing to do some research, put together a presentation, and talk on a subject, then let us know. If you're not comfortable getting up and talking but are willing to do the research, then I'm sure we can find somebody else to do the talking. Think about it.

Another topic that comes to mind is the requirements for using bees to qualify for an agriculture exemption. Anybody willing to do some research on this? Remember, ETBA is a participatory club and will become what we make it.

I am not sure I will be able to make our November meeting. Weather and work permitting, I need to make a trip North to check on all my bees and make sure they are ready for winter.

beeman@cncfarms.com



ETBA Annual Honey Tasting Contest

Each member can enter one 8 to 12 ounce squeeze bear or squeeze bottle of honey. No glass bottles.

The bear or bottle must have a cone spout or flip top dispenser.

The bear or bottle must have no names, no labels or no identifying marks.

Give the bear or bottle to Gloria Harmon or Linda Pelham before the meeting.

Gloria will assign each container a sample number.

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

Each member will write on the ballot the sample number of the best tasting honey (only one sample number please).

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

Bears, bottles 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.