



East Texas Beekeepers Association

Vol. 25 No. 4

April 1, 2010

April Report by Dick Counts

Once again we had a great turn out for the March meeting. The head count was 105. Sure is good to see a great turnout to hear a young man report on how he has made beekeeping easy. Sorry if you missed it.

Great things are going on in this club. We are doing more with photographs and expanded our web page to include more picture albums sharing our club activities. Don Johnson, Ken Wilkinson, Mike Rappazzo, and others are working on an Internet forum so you may share ideas and converse with other club members on the web. Details are still being worked on, but I'll bet you will really like what they come up with.

Bee loses? Most everyone is reporting big hive loses. I can be counted along with my own deadouts. Hives I thought were heavy enough to survive didn't make in the 11 degree weather we had for four days. This means bees are and will be in short supply. Eddie Collins has sold out and will have to work extra to furnish all of the hives he has orders for. I found a small supply in the Dallas area. Price \$100.00 each FOB Dallas. I understand the major supply houses have some packages available.

I have people all over East Texas looking for bees, someone to pollinate, even someone to take care of 6 hives. I am sure Eddie could have sold many more hives, the same as I could have sold 10 to 15 more. If you have hives or know someone that has some for sale please let me know.

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President—Andrew Bellefeuille

Vice President—Gloria Harmon

Treasurer—Don Johnson

Secretary—Karen Anderson

Ex. Director and Reporter—Dick Counts

Directors-at-Large—John McCall and Joe Mekalip

Webmaster—Ardy Johnson

Join us the first Thursday of each month at

TJC West Campus — Room 104
1530 West Loop 323 S SW

6:45 PM

Next Meeting is April 1!

Contact Us

On the Web: easttexasbeekeepersassociation.com

Or on the phone: (903) 566-6789

DIRECTOR'S MEETING AT 6:00

We are hearing from a lot of you about how much you like the new bee letter format. Please give Dan, Don and Andrew a word of thanks.

Our program this month will be some of our Scholarship Students talking about bee topics. Vi has given each a word to research and report on. We have some really sharp guys and girls. I don't think you will want to miss this one. Don't forget April is an Auction/Raffle month.

HONEY QUEEN REPORT *By Vi Bourns*

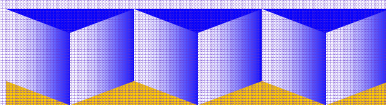
Spring has finally arrived. Flowers and trees are blooming and the bees are busy in their hives. It was a wonderful sight to see capped brood and the queen who managed to survive the harsh wet snowy winter. By the side of the brood was pollen and honey just waiting for the new babies to burst out and start eating. One of my hives made it and I lost one. But the wonder of it all makes my effort to help them survive worth every minute, and keeps the excitement in my beekeeping experience.

Our Queen and Princess are booked pretty heavy until July. The 27th of March, Kellie will be in Tyler and Merry Margaret in Grand Saline, each doing two cooking demonstrations. Other club members will be working the Honey Bee Festival at Breedlove's Nursery and Landscape here in Tyler from 1-3pm and in Grand Saline downtown from 9am-4pm. Shirley and John Knight donated a gallon of honey already bottled. I made a "BEE" gift basket to be given away by the radio station as advertisement for ETBA's participation in the Grand Saline Festival. We have asked Dan Eudy to be in Tyler and Taylor Wolf in Grand Saline to photograph each event.

The calendar on our ETBA web site has recently been updated. You can click on "Calendar And Events" to find who is working at each event. Other events for the year are also posted and will be updated as needed. As the weather warms, these outdoor events and festivals will be fun to attend. Of course, we would love to see you at the festivals. Not only can you share Kellie and Merry Margaret's recipe samples, but being there will let them know how much you love and support them.

This news letter may not reach you before the festivals, but you can hear their reports at the meeting and maybe Dan and Taylor will have some pictures.

Some of you have called to say you put posters to sell our cookbooks in public places and that is much appreciated---- just to see your participation tells us this was a good fundraiser. We have been invited to sell the cookbooks at the festivals and if you can help please contact me at 903-316-9300. We probably need to start thinking about the possibility of reordering the cookbooks or adding new recipes as a supplement to put in the book to increase interest. I would like to know what you think.



April is Auction/Raffle Month



President's Letter *by Andrew Bellefeuille*

Is It Spring Yet?

On Friday the sun was out, the flowers were blooming, the supers were on and the bees were buzzing. Then came Saturday with bitterly cold wind and rain, plus snow! Again!! This season's weather has been a crazy seesaw and really kept us guessing. Just when we have a good run of warm, sunny days - WHAM! – like a houseguest who has overstayed his welcome, the lingering winter seems to hang on. I had been fretting that spring would never arrive (another remnant of growing up in the frozen north) because the buds and blooms on the trees were so late to appear but they obviously knew something that we humans didn't. Winter's last gasp hadn't been uttered yet. Finally, I hope the cold is gone for good and we can resume the beautiful spring we have been having in spurts.

My bees are building and the brood patterns look good so hopefully we are on course for a great honey year. I have seen bees lumbering in with full pollen baskets, which is always a good sight. I watch them and am reminded of film footage I have seen of the World War II bombers coming in for landings. I am amazed that either one has the ability to make it to their destination in one piece. Bees are consistently amazing and I admire their tireless efforts. Oh, to be a bee! I could get so much more accomplished in my life! Of course I would be female and die in six weeks but I suppose one has to take a measure of bad along with the good!



I have yet to receive any swarm calls this season but I am sure Randy Bobo is up to two or three hundred by now. I did get a call yesterday about some digger bees emerging from the ground causing small mounds similar to earthworm mounds. It was an interesting situation but the man was only concerned about the damage to his lawn. I explained that the bees were not aggressive and actually very good pollinators, and told him that they would likely be gone soon (at least until next year) and that they would cause no real damage. He, like many other people, had fallen under the spell of the media hysteria which I hate and which grossly misrepresents the bee. This hysteria falls into two categories of fallacy: #1- Every bee is a honey bee and all the world's honey bees are dying off so any beekeeper should want the "free" bees; OR, # 2- Every bee is a "killer bee" and should be disposed of because a brother's cousin's friend's wife's dog got stung by one when it was walking near the hive. When dealing with these frequently irrational assumptions and fears, I rely heavily on Article I of the ETBA By-Laws which describes one of our missions as "the dissemination of information to the general public as to the importance of the honey bee." There is much more to be found in the By-Laws than just this excerpt but I will leave it to you to read them.

I am hoping this year is a good year for feral colony swarming. Notice I wrote **feral** colonies. I do not need my own colonies to get the wanderlust and leave! I hope to fill all the woodenware I have ready and get my hives to several locations and build this year. The feral colonies I have seen appear to be making a comeback after the massive damage caused by the mites and do not seem to be bothered by the small hive beetle. All the feral colonies I have removed in recent years have had a significant beetle load. I never thought the beetles travelled with the swarm but it appears they do. I am interested in reading more about what causes this phenomenon. Is it a queen pheromone, the scent of the bees themselves, the swarm itself, or something else? If anyone can direct me toward research or answers regarding this subject, I would appreciate it.

Feed, check and watch are the three things I am doing vigilantly as spring makes its punctuated, tumultuous arrival here in East Texas. Of course I am also thinking about the gallons of honey we will all surely make this season. Good luck and I look forward to seeing everyone in April.

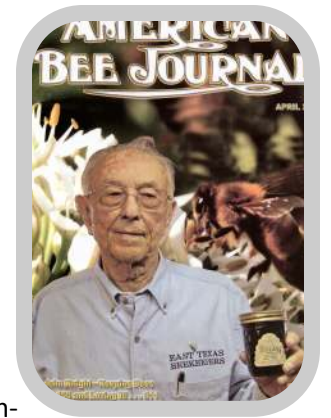


The Timeless Lure of Beekeeping

In November, 1907 John Knight was born. As a youngster growing up in Kaufman County, John remembers riding in the wagon with his father and brothers to search for bee trees. They would rob the honey from wild bees, collecting it in metal washtubs. John was introduced to beekeeping by a neighbor after he retired and moved to Cedar Creek Lake. He had his first hives, courtesy of his neighbor in the early 70s. Forty years later he is still at it. John became a charter member in the East Texas Beekeepers Association at its inception in 1984. He and Shirley are very active members, not only making the drive

from Cedar Creek to attend our monthly meeting, but participating in many of the other club activities.

Two years ago, at the tender young age of 100, John was featured as the cover and lead article in the American Bee Journal.



More than 20 years after John extracted his first honey, Mike Rappazzo was born. While John grew up with mules, wagons and washtubs of wild honey, Mike grew up with air conditioned cars, Nintendo, personal computers and the Internet.

Though bees were not a part of Mike's rearing, he became interested in them through FFA and 4H. After the family agreed that he could keep bees on the farm, Mike, just 13 years old, became a Scholarship Student in the ETBA Beginners Beekeeping course taught by Dick Counts. Now age 16, Mike has demonstrated a sound knowledge of beekeeping. He studies the craft and is constantly seeking better ways to keep his bees. He has shown to be clever and inventive in designing and making some of his own equipment.

Mike is also active in ETBA. He made an outstanding presentation to the club at the March meeting, sharing some of his techniques. His presentation was interesting, informative and filled with humor. He also was instrumental in the Kids Learning About Bees program at the state TBA convention this past November. Mike is also currently working with Don Johnson and Ken Wilkinson to explore ways to use the Internet to facilitate communication and knowledge sharing for ETBA.



MIKE'S BEE CANDY

During Mike's presentation at the March meeting, several members were interested in his recipe for bee candy that included whey. Here is Mike's recipe.

Heat one quart of water to boiling. Add 25 pounds sugar. Heat to a Candy Boil of 240 degrees. Stir in one quart can of whey powder or pollen substitute. Pour into molds.

DIRECTOR'S MEETING

6:00