



# EAST TEXAS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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Vol. 25 #1

January 7, 2010

PRESIDENT: Andrew Bellefeuille

TJC' S WEST CAMPUS 1530 LOOP 323 S SW

6:45 PM

REPORTER: DICK COUNTS

## JANUARY REPORT

I am sorry if you missed our Christmas dinner, about 70 people were in attendance. We should have some pictures at this meeting for you to see. We really surprised Kellie by returning her beautiful quilt that she had made for the State Convention. Our THANKS to all that donated to this cause, Kellie also THANKS you.

A word or two about 2009, which has quietly slipped out the door. It left us with a bad year for the bees, a poor honey crop, and a lot of bee loses. It does no good to say good riddance, its gone and we are now faced with a new opportunity to help our bees have a good year. So face up to the new opportunities that will soon be coming with the new spring. You say you don't know what you can do? Well that is what our club is about, helping beekeepers understand the joy of seeing our bees go about their daily life. They usually don't need us, but there are things we can do to help. But in the bigger picture there are things our club can do to help you.

And of course we need you, for many reasons. There is strength in numbers. We have received 10, YES TEN, scholarship applications for our beginners class. We wanted to spark an interest in beekeeping among the young people in our area, and, apparently, we have succeeded. Now we need sponsors to support these students. The average cost is between \$350 and \$400 dollars each. I have two sponsors already. Will you please

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

### 'Tis The Season

Christmas is here with a new year on its heels. For those of you who make New Year's resolutions I hope you can stick to them in 2010. My New Year's resolution is to be a better beekeeper and listen more closely to my bees. I have made numerous mistakes this year and blamed many of them on not having enough time to focus on the bees due to my struggle to stay employed in this harsh economic climate. Maintaining income has been my primary focus for the year but neglecting animals, or in this case bees, is never acceptable and is not being a good steward of the land. Of all the animals we raise here on our farm the bees require the least maintenance by far; however, they still need some attention. I know that my property can only support six to seven hives although I have had more in the past. Some inevitably die off as fall approaches due to robbing or because they didn't have enough stores to start and I end up combining the weaker hives to save what I can because I just hate to give up! The bees will always try their best to recover but these combo-hives usually limp along and are still weak going into the spring so it usually ends up being better for production if I bite the bullet, admit my carelessness and ask forgiveness from the bees as I move on.

Every year I also try to plant more fall forage for the bees but it somehow still fails to completely meet the demand. Although I planted more flowering plants this year I also fenced in another pasture for our grazing animals to cut down on our hay bill. When I did this I unwittingly enclosed a massive stand of goldenrod that was heavy with fall pollen each year but has now been eaten into oblivion by our sheep and goats;

## Honey Queen Chair- person

.Happy New Year to all! May this year bring all of us good health and new opportunities as we experience the wonderful and sometimes challenging world of the honey bee.

Queen Kellie crowned ETBA's 2010 Honey Princess, 14 year old Merry Margaret Holloway on Dec. 3rd at our Christmas party. Club President Andrew Bellefeuille presented each young lady with a bouquet of roses.

I will begin looking for ways that Queen Kellie and Princess Merry Margaret can share their knowledge and experiences about the honey bee with the community this month. New brochures for each should be available by Feb.

Both will attend each meeting and share their love of the honey bee and a new recipe they have prepared for you to sample. This way you can get to know them on a personal basis. Please take the first step to introduce your self to them and if you will wear your name tag it will be easier for them to remember you.

We are fortunate to have Kellie stay and work along side Marry Margaret until Kellie leaves for college in Kentucky this coming Sept.

At this meeting both ladies will share their goals for 2010 with you, what they are doing to sustain their hives through this cold winter, and what problems they are encountering, if any.

consider helping in any way you can. This opportunity is why this meeting is so important. Also, if you have new or used equipment which can be donated to the cause, please let me know as soon as possible. Please come and let us have your input at the January meeting. I have a full class of adults and will have to have a second class, which I will do in the afternoon.

Our February meeting will feature Randy Fair from Mansfield, La. Demonstrating his methods of splitting hives. His last efforts resulted in 39 of 40 successful splits. Splits are a sure way of getting the best of your hives into new hives.

Last but certainly not least. Randy Bobo of Longview was elected our new Beekeeper of the Year. Way to go Randy for your dedication and hard work. Randy handles more swarms, calls and removing bees from structures than anyone.

Also for the 6th, SIX, year Bill LaPeyre has won the honey tasting award. I need to understudy Bill, find out what he is doing as I have never even placed. Maybe we should change the rules, as in you can only win 10 in a row. Anyway Bill, congratulations.

#### DUES ARE DUE

All memberships expire on the 31st day of December and must be renewed. Renewal may be done online or at the monthly meetings.

We still have COOKBOOK'S For Sale—\$13 each. Funds generated by cookbook sales support the ETBA Queen Program.

so while one problem is solved another one is compounded. My fall bee forage is gone and I have to ask forgiveness from the bees again! I encourage each of you to learn from my mistakes and take stock of the natural world around your bee yards. Your bees may not be suffering like mine but it is still a worthwhile education.

To finish up my year-end confessional I must tell you that while I have been feeding my bees regularly I have been breaking many rules to do so. With the shorter days I'm never home from work before dark and this week was no exception; however, I knew the bees were out of syrup so I threw out the rulebook and fed them anyway. See if you can spot my many errors:

It was dark and about forty five degrees as I made my way to the bee yard with my bags of syrup. I had a flashlight because I cannot see in the dark. I was not wearing any protective equipment because I was in a hurry to finish feeding our other animals and my suit was locked in my workshop. Plus it was cold and I was hungry too! I opened the boxes and put the new syrup bags in. (I like to feed my bees using a box on top of the hive and Ziploc bags for the syrup because I don't need to disturb the cluster by going too far into the hive to feed.) For the newer beekeepers I will impart a little wisdom I have acquired in my relatively short beekeeping career: bees do NOT like flashlights. If it had been warmer I would've been greeted by numerous grumpy guard bees which would have made my lack of protective gear a much more painful error. As it was, the low temperature worked in my favor because the bees didn't, and probably wouldn't, break their cluster to bother with me. East Texas temperatures

You can read about Merry Margaret on our web site and view the pictures of her crowning by Kellie; and a new picture of Kellie.

We are all three looking forward to a exciting new year as we all work together to support East Texas Beekeepers Association and promote the integrity of pure natural honey.

See you all Thursday January 7th @TJC West Campus at 6:45 PM

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usually fluctuate quickly enough that the bees can break their cluster and work the syrup if they need it. As you can see my errors were numerous but I still walked away without a sting and the bees were fed so I received their forgiveness despite my multiple transgressions.

Once again I hope the newer folks can learn from my mistakes and the "mature" beekeepers will get a chuckle out of this fumbling novice. Merry Christmas to you all and sincerest wishes for a very happy and prosperous New Year!

The ETBA Video Library has now been updated to DVD media. With over 40 videos, the library has something for everyone and it includes a complete college course (Ohio State) in beekeeping (15 lessons). Membership in ETBA is required to borrow videos. Up to 2 videos per member or family may be borrowed each month.

**IMPORTANT  
DIRECTORS  
MEETING  
AT 6:00 PM**