



East Texas Beekeepers Association

Vol. 25 No. 3

March 4, 2010

March Report by Dick Counts

I like numbers, BIG NUMBERS, as in 123 present at our last meeting. Of course we have 30 students in our beginners bee class, so that helps our numbers, but your regular attendance is what helps most. Thanks.

My student Travis Freese (class of 2009) from Marshall, lost his Mother in a car accident on Monday February 8th. Our condolences to Travis and his Dad Roger.

Jesse Adams received his "Get Well" card with the many signatures and sends his heart warming THANKS to all. On another note, the equipment that Jesse donated to the club is almost all gone. If you could use a good used super, please call me as I have a few left and I think that the students have all they need. Both classes are coming along and by the time you read this most all wooden ware should be built.

On February 11 it started snowing and after Friday I had 6-7" on the ground. It was all gone by Sunday noon. This brings up feeding. Normally about this time, some beekeepers start feeding to encourage the Queen to begin laying. But usually at this time of the year, we have had some very nice warm days. What I am trying to say is this ain't normal, and you should be checking to make sure your bees have plenty of food. Consider! Your bees have done real well until now. With all of this cold weather they are eating more than usual, and may very well starve to death before they get a chance to bring in any nectar. TIP: Lift you hives and feed as needed.

One of our newest members, Dan Eudy, is working with Don Johnson on our ETBA Website. Some new features are now running with more to come. Don's goal is to be able to share more pictures of ETBA members and activities. **Continued on page 2.**

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 March 4!

Contact Us

On the Web: easttexasbeekeepersassociation.com

Or on the phone: (903) 566-6789

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For those of you with Internet access, Don has links in the Members Only section of the ETBA website to pictures from the TBA convention and also our Christmas awards dinner.

Dan is also working on our newsletter. You may have noticed that it looks different this month. We are trying to develop a new format that will “fancy up” our newsletter on the web. We have started on the project and this newsletter is the first draft of where we want to go. The version posted on our website will include more colors, pictures and graphics. This month, the paper version mailed to our non-computer members will be the same as the web version. We will look at the cost of printing the enhanced version and determine if it is feasible to continue to print it in the future. If the cost is too great, we may return to plain black and white printed version but try to make it a little easier to read.

We also want to start building a digital library of pictures of ETBA members in action and of our bee yards and beekeeping activities. If you already have some pictures to share, get them to Dan. You can send digital pictures or scanned photographs to him at eudy48@gmail.com. If you have prints to share, bring them to the meeting—he can scan them into the computer and mail the prints back to you. If you want to talk to Dan, call him at 903-570-5735

Be patient with us on the newsletter, we are learning as we go. Please share your ideas and comments with Dan.



MARCH PROGRAM

EASY BEEKEEPING

BY Mike Rappazzo



HONEY QUEEN REPORT By Vi Bourns

This month's TBA Journal has an article about Kellie and Merry Margaret. As usual, Joan Coplin has done a good job in reporting the news around the state. Kellie, Merry Margaret and I attended the dedication of the Texas Honey Bee Facility on Feb. 20 in Bryan.

We have two big events on the 27th of March, “The Honey Bee Festival” at Breedlove Nursery in Tyler and “The Blooming Festival” in Grand Saline. Same day, same time—different places. So I am once again asking for our youth to step up and volunteer to become a part in this like they did at “Kids Learning About Bees”. Moms and Dads, they need your permission and encouragement. Both festivals will be a day of fun and publicity, educating others about the Honey Bee.

Cookbook orders are beginning to come in from e-bay thanks to Brenda Claire, and she will mail them. Thanks Brenda.

Some of you have been asking for Kellie and Merry Margaret’s recipes from the last meeting. Just to let you know, they will be in the brochures in March.

Both ladies' bees are surviving the cold and they are busy checking them when weather permits and feeding.

Never fear, spring and warmer weather will be here before we know it.



Do you subscribe to one of the magazines devoted to beekeeping? Do you get on the Internet and search out articles or reports about the science of beekeeping? Google Bees, Honey Bees, Pollination and a new world of information will open up for you. You may even find something that you can report on at the meetings. As they say “Try it, you may like it!”

March
The month to start feeding if it has begun warming up!



President's Letter

by Andrew Bellefeuille

Snow Day

Well I guess that groundhog was right. Like many other East Texans on this mid-February morning, I awoke to 4+ inches of snow covering everything in sight. My pastures were a solid carpet of white and every tree branch and fence wire was intricately laced with a thick coating of flakes. Instantly, I was transported back in time and several thousand miles away to my Vermont childhood with many past snow days and various conjured memories. Some nostalgic and others that would not make good Norman Rockwell paintings. As I walked through my fields early this morning capturing photos of the winter wonderland, it occurred to me that the beauty of Texas snow is that it is so fleeting – it must be enjoyed immediately because it will be gone so soon, even before the fun is worn off.



All the normal sounds this morning were muffled by the snow which blanketed everything and made the world quiet. My farm animals wandered through their pastures looking for grass in the foreign landscape. The beehives were still with just a slight hum to be heard when I pressed my ear to them. Only the squeals and shrieks from my red-cheeked children echoed in the air as they soundly beat me in a snowball fight. As I write this now, looking out at all the bright white snow, I wonder if spring will ever arrive. Yet, despite the heavy, wet snow, the daffodil stems are still standing and budded. Seeing them boldly poking up through the debris of winter, as the harbingers of spring, keeps them one of my favorite flowers.

I'm also thinking of my bees clustered together in their hives during these last weeks of winter and hoping they have enough food within reach to survive and keep the brood warm and the queen laying. I continue to work on getting boxes ready for spring, although today the snow-fall and family fun has taken precedence over all else so the

bees must once again forgive my sloth. I am trying to stick to my New Year's resolution and have my equipment ready to start a new bee yard so that 2010 will be a great year for our farm.

I know that 2010 will be a great year for our club as well if the turn out for last month's meeting is any indication.

Wow! Dick reported that there were 123 people in attendance! I am so proud of our club and happy to see all the new faces - and young faces too. I hope this doesn't offend any of the "mature" beekeepers but I must say it is great to see all the kids getting into the hobby. Beekeeping is something that can involve the entire family and I know it has made me feel closer to my own children. When I am in the bee yard with my kids, I am nearly bursting with pride and happiness at their interest and questions. I enjoy the connection and hope that their involvement will continue as they grow. Of course they may

also revolt and grow up to live and work in a big city as far away from the farm as possible, telling all their friends about their crazy father and his odd ways. But either way I will cherish these times together and thank the honey bee for every one of them.

So here's to the eventual coming of spring, warmer temperatures, sunny days and a great honey flow!



Special Activities During February

Dedication of Texas A&M Honey Bee Research Lab.



The new Texas A&M Honey Bee Research Lab is now open! After 8 years of planning and support by beekeepers all across the state, the grand opening and dedication was held on February 20. The ceremonies were attended by dignitaries from A&M and beekeepers from across the state. Our club was well represented with 21 members present. A plaque of appreciation was presented to Janice and Dr. John Thomas in recognition for their support in making this dream into reality. Our own Texas Beekeepers President Todd Youngblood joined in the speechmaking.



Along with the TBA president, the Honey Queens and Princesses were present, representing our individual associations.



East Texas Fruit and Vegetable Conference

ETBA operated a booth promoting our craft at the conference on February 16 at the Rose Garden. Gayle and Joe Mekalip, Gloria Harmon and John McCall set up and operated our displays.

The booth included information about ETBA, a miniature display hive, info about pollination services and our cookbook.

Joe reported the conference attendance seemed down but our booth did attract some visitors and we sold four more cookbooks!



March Activities

- 4—ETBA meeting at TJC
- 27—Honey Bee Festival at Breedlove Nursery and Landscape, Tyler Texas. Queen Kellie will do a cooking demonstration. Other youth needed to assist in public education program.
- 27—Grand Saline Blooming Festival, Hayden Wolf and her father Gus speaking about pollination. Other youth needed to help with program.
- 30—Queen Kellie to speak with Canton Elementary students.