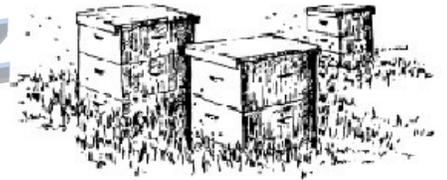




Fort Bend Buzz

newsletter of the
Fort Bend Beekeepers Association



April, 2014

The Fort Bend Beekeepers Association meets on the second Tuesday of the month (except December) at 7:00 pm in Fort Bend County's "Bud" O'Shieles Community Center, 1330 Band Rd., Rosenberg, Texas. Visitors (and new members) are always welcome (membership dues are \$5.00 for the calendar year). Our next meeting will be Tuesday, April 8. The meeting is called to order at 7:30 pm after social time. The Association provides coffee and lemonade for meeting refreshments while members volunteer to bring snacks. Thanks to Dave and Tracey Grimme (something salty) and Bill Windrow (something sweet) for volunteering to bring treats for our April meeting. social time We still need a few volunteers for a few vacant spots on our refreshments sign-up sheet.

Ask a dozen beekeepers...

Here is this month's Q (from one of our members) and an A:

Q: I caught a swarm and put them in a nuc. Hoping to make sure they would stay in the box, I decided to keep them closed up in the shade on the patio over night. The next morning they were all dead. I'm heartbroken at the sight! What happened?

An A: This is a painful lesson. As they say, experience is a difficult teacher since the test comes first!!

Honey bees maintain the temperature inside the hive at 90 - 95 degrees F all year around. In the winter, the bees flex their flight muscles to generate heat to keep the hive warm. And they cluster closely together to maintain heat when it is cold outside. During our Texas summer, the hive must be cooled. The bees ventilate the hive by fanning at the entrance and bring in water to cool things down by evaporation. That is why a convenient source of water is so important for your bees.

Despite mild temperatures and the shaded location, the swarm overheated and the bees died. In fact, the loud buzzing heard coming from the nuc in late afternoon was a frantic effort to cool the hive. The result was the opposite of what was intended by the bees: the fanning effort generated even more heat, the temperature soared until

the noise stopped and the bees died.

If you plan to leave bees closed up, you need to make sure that there is adequate ventilation to prevent overheating. While outside temperatures seem mild, thousands of bees generate a lot of heat. A screened bottom board helps a lot and a screened cover insures the free flow of air as the bees try to stay cool.

Honey Containers

As discussed at our March meeting, many of our Association members use containers purchased in bulk from bee supply houses or from Sailor Plastics:

(http://www.sailorplastics.com/Honey-Containers_c_7-1-3.html).

The cost per container is substantially less with the large quantity (200 or more containers and lids in a single box). But because of their large size, shipping on these individual big boxes is about \$40 each. According to Sailor Plastics, we can reduce shipping to about \$15 or less per box by ordering in quantity and shipping by truck on pallets (each pallet holds twelve to sixteen boxes).

To take advantage of these savings, we will be placing a group order with Sailor Plastics. If you want in, you'll need to complete an order form and have it with you at the April meeting. We emailed copies of the form and we'll have a few more available at the meeting. You will need to visit Sailor's web site to

choose from the many choices in containers and lids that are available.

Jack Richardson will collect the forms. We plan to place the order as soon as we have forms and deposits in hand. We are requiring a \$50 per box nonrefundable deposit, so make sure you get your order right. And be aware that lids must be ordered separately.

The Association's entire order will be shipped on pallets by truck and shipping costs will be divided equally by the total number of boxes ordered. You will have to pick up your order at Jack Richardson's in Sugar Land (or make other arrangements with Jack).

Make your \$50.00 per box deposit checks out to Fort Bend Beekeepers Association. The balance on your order will be due at pickup. If you change your mind or something, we will offer your order to others for the remaining unpaid balance. It is ok for members to get together to split a box, but one of them must place the order for the full box and lids.

Meeting Time

We have made a few changes to improve our meetings: Start time is still 7:00 pm, but we will be called to order at 7:30 pm so that we have thirty minutes to enjoy our snacks and get our visiting done. We will plan a 30 minute program and be sure to leave plenty of time for questions, comments and updates.

Super Painting Contest

We hope to have begun a fun annual event at our March meeting: our inaugural Super Painting Contest. Jack Richardson spearheaded the competition since he figured that we were all assembling and painting boxes in late winter anyway.

A total of 23 decorated boxes were entered in one of three categories: KIDS (through 12 years), TEENS (age 13 to 19), and ADULTS (20 and older). Beekeepers from age 7 to 70 entered their art work.

The colorful boxes were displayed in the lobby of the Community Center. Winners were determined by popular vote; everyone was a judge!. Jack was pleased that "participation was terrific and everyone was wearing a smile!" We'll most certainly do it again next year.

First Place Winners received a ribbon, a mini-smoker trophy and a \$50 gift certificate from Dadant. Second Place earned a ribbon and a \$25 gift certificate from Brushy Mountain. Third place finishers received a ribbon. At the top of the kids division was Emily Dunbar, followed by the second-place entry of Emily and Sam Skidmore. Danielle King took the third place ribbon. Sarah Wicks won the Teen Division, followed by Reba Talafuse and Carolyn Perkison. In the Adult Division, Daryl Scott's super won first place. Bill Windrow captured second, and Rosie McCusker's entry took third.

March Meeting Notes

55 members and guests attended the March meeting of the Fort Bend Beekeepers Association. "First timers" Corey and Angie Kelly are from Needville. Others at their first meeting included Preston and Argelia Pitts from Sugar Land and Chris Henson from Katy who described themselves as "not yet" beekeepers. Steve Kubena is interested in bees and wondered if someone would like to locate hives on his property in Needville. TAMU vet student Katy Moore attended with her mom while home for spring break.

Teacher Kathryn Hijazi and four of her students at St. Catherine's Montessori in Houston attended at the behest of Jeff McMullan. Jeff is working with the class to establish hives on the school grounds and "encouraged" both Kathryn and the students to decorate supers to enter in our contest. Sarah Wicks and Carolyn Perkison placed in the TEEN division.

Long time Association member Gene deBons has been contemplating "Why Do We Keep Bees?" for some time. He presented his findings at our March meeting.

Gene has concluded that the basic answer to this "why" question is our fascination with many things about bees. Some keep bees as a connection to ancient human history: humans and bees go back together thousands of years. Writings from the time of Columbus refer to bees as the source of "sweetness and light" (honey and candles). Even further back in history are biblical references to the "land of milk and honey".

Our fascination with bees can also focus on their amazing behavior. Their role in the natural world can fuel our interest in natural history and the environment. Some keep bees to improve their gardening success or to lend a hand or advance knowledge in the face or pests and diseases that decimate bee numbers. Some keep bees because they can make money to finance their hobby or even make beekeeping their career.

Gene cited Gene Stratton-Porter's book "The Keeper of the Bees" and Dadant's "The Hive and the Honey Bee" as guides to why we keep bees.

After a short break to cast ballots for our painting contest, Jeff McMullan gave a short presentation on the youth programs by other bee clubs in our area. Clubs provide mentors to kids interested in keeping bees. In addition to a mentor, sponsored youth get bees, hives and gear in exchange for a two year

commitment to keeping bees. A key element is a presentation at each monthly meeting.

Door prize winners this month:

Flower pot swarm traps (donated by Bob Hentschel) - won by Chuck Bunkers and Roy Nash

A soft-side six pack cooler (Albert Smaistrila) - won by Jay Roussel

A squirrel feeder donated by Joe Telafuse - won by Bob Hentschel

A spearmint plant donated by Jerry Emerson - won by Jeff McMullan

Treasurer's Report

Our March 2014 balance was \$3,702.62. Since that time we collected \$60.00 in dues (12 members at \$5.00 each) and got a \$10.00 donation. We spent \$41.60 on web site development software and \$195.79 on prizes for the super decorating contest. The resulting treasury balance is \$3,535.23 consisting of \$50.00 in cash (to make change) and \$3,485.23 in our Wells Fargo checking account.

Check It Out

Check your address label for this newsletter. If your name is in italics, you have not yet paid your dues for 2014. You can mail in your \$5.00 annual dues to Jeff McMullan, Fort Bend Beekeepers Association, 74 Hessenford St., Sugar Land, TX 77479.

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AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

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Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socio-economic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national origin. The Texas A&M System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating. If you have special needs in order to participate in this program, please contact Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Fort Bend County at (281) 342-3034.