



# Fort Bend Buzz

the monthly newsletter of the Fort Bend Beekeepers Association

*fostering safe, responsible, successful beekeeping*

The Tuesday March 10 meeting of the Fort Bend Beekeepers Association will be held 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 and the sooner you join, the cheaper each month is.

The Association provides coffee and lemonade for meeting refreshments if someone will volunteer to make it and clean up afterwards. It is important that we leave the Community Center the way we found it! Please lend a hand in straightening up the tables and chairs and cleaning up the refreshment area. We will be called to order at 7:30 after 30 minutes of social time. Don't forget about the *letgo* table in the back of the room. You may find just what you need or get rid of stuff (beekeeping treasures).

## Ask a dozen beekeepers...

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

**Q:** I need to move my hives. What do I need to know?

An **A:** As you suspected, there are a few things to know about moving bee hives. It's important not to lose (or leave behind) many bees. It's also important to make sure that the colony doesn't overheat. This is a good time of the year for moving hives since they will be getting significantly heavier in the coming weeks. Cool weather also makes it easier to confine all the bees inside and makes overheating less of a concern. If you use screened inner covers, you can remove the telescoping cover for the move.

Your new location should be in full sun with a nearby water source. Always plan for avoiding people or pets conflicting with guard bees. Bees really don't like mowers and weed eaters so controlling weeds is an important factor too. It is not a good idea to suit up and use this noisy equipment near your hives since the bees may stay stirred up for quite a while.

Prepare the new beeyard ahead of time. Make sure the area is well drained since any standing water or wet areas under beehives is an invitation to diseases, especially fungus like chalkbrood. You can use weed barrier cloth with mulch, gravel or like material. Crushed (or

"weathered") granite (without weed barrier cloth) is a good choice since it compacts and drains really well. Glyphosate herbicide (like Roundup) in a pump sprayer makes weed control a piece of cake (always mix and use it according to the label instructions).

A morning move in cold weather is a better option than waiting until foragers return at dusk then closing up the hive in the dark. But it doesn't need to be very hot for bees to be hanging around outside at night, requiring smoke to run them all inside and slowing down preparations for the move. A staple gun and perforated vinyl drywall corner (scissor-cut to size) is the easy way to seal hive entrances. Always be sure to check for "leaks"; they can usually be easily closed with masking tape. Use snug ratchet straps to make sure the hive stacks stays that way. They sell big hive staples for this, but hammering on the side of a bee hive just doesn't sound like a good idea.

It's said that bee hives should be moved less than three feet or more than three miles. This is relatively consistent with Langstroth's advice from 1853: "stocks...should be brought from a distance of at least two miles". The idea is to prevent foragers from returning to an empty hive stand. To encourage foragers to reorient to a new hive location, you can try leaving the hive closed up for a day then obstruct the entrance with a leafy branch that will

help foragers recognize that the hive has moved. Another option is to make a short move in small steps. To move across the yard, you can load the hive on a garden cart or wheelbarrow and move it a couple of feet every few days. Another option is to move the hive to an intermediate location for a week or so. For the two step move, you can load the hive on a utility trailer (there is really no need to unload them at their temporary home). If you ask around at a beekeeper meeting you can probably find a parking spot a few miles away. If you can, wait until dark to open the hive at their new location so the bees can get reoriented the next morning (do that at your final stop too).

The hive lifter in your bee supply catalogue is a wonderful gadget that allows two people to safely lift and move hives. If you ask around at a beekeeper meeting you can probably locate one to borrow. It works really really well. Always expect the hive to be top heavy, especially this time of the year as the bees have consumed their lower level stores.

You may find that the hive is just too heavy even for two people to move. It may be necessary to break it down and restack it after the move. Full supers can go in the freezer for extraction later, or maybe it should be split to prevent swarming.

## HLSR, March 3 - 22

The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo continues for about two more weeks. The AGVENTURE in Hall A of NRG Center has a wide variety of exhibits for both adults and kids to learn about agriculture. It is open to visitors from 9:00 am until 9:00 pm every day of the show.

One of the most popular AGVENTURE stops is the honey bee exhibit that includes two observation hives. Our club joins with other area clubs to host the exhibit. During the day there are guided school groups while afternoons and weekends are busy with rodeo performance attendance.

It takes a lot of beekeepers to volunteer for the AGVENTURE honey bees. Don't miss the opportunity to both learn and teach about honey bees and beekeeping.

## February Meeting Notes

We had 50 names on the sign-in sheets for our February 11 meeting. Our head count was 53 so some of you didn't sign in! Thanks to all that did register at our meeting since the sign-in sheets are an important record of our use of county facilities.

President Craig Rench opened the meeting at 7:30 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance. First-time visitors were invited to introduce themselves and share their interest in beekeeping. Craig welcomed them all and encouraged them to continue attending our meetings.

Secretary-Treasurer Lynne Jones made several announcements: The Central Texas Beekeepers Association's Beekeeping School is set for March 21 in Brenham. Two events in April which will need club member volunteers: Sugar Land Earth Day Celebration on April 18 and Fort Bend County Master Gardeners' Nature Festival April 25.

Patty Griffin reminded everyone of her ZipNetBags which are designed to contain a NUC box and provide a safe way to transport your new

bees. If you would like to purchase any, contact her by email at [info@zipnetbags.com](mailto:info@zipnetbags.com).

Harrison Rogers briefed us on the upcoming Rodeo exhibit and brought the sign-up calendar along with parking passes for the volunteers. The exhibit is open March 3 - 22. Morning shifts are 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and evening shifts are 3:00 pm to 9:00 pm. It's not too late to volunteer. You can find the calendar online at: <http://www.harriscountybeekeepers.org/calendar.html> You can email Harrison at [BrooksideBees@gmail.com](mailto:BrooksideBees@gmail.com) to add your name as a volunteer. Be sure to include your phone number and "Fort Bend" club designation.

Gene DeBons shared some facts about wax moths (*Tinea mellonella*) from Langstroth's 1853 "On the Hive and the Honey Bee." The "bee moth" has a long history, being mentioned by Roman historian Virgil two thousand years ago. Langstroth quotes Swammerdam, who gave a full description of the moth and its larvae at the end of the 17th century. Langstroth mentions the demise of honey production in parts of the U.S. due to the introduction and proliferation of the moth. The moth lays a tiny egg, but once the small, innocent-looking worms get the upper hand, "all the fragrance of the honied dome is soon corrupted by their abominable stench. Everything beautiful and useful is ruthlessly destroyed; the hum of happy industry is stilled..." Wax worms are still a challenge for us today and it is instructive to see that it has been a problem for centuries.

Jeff McMullan presented our program topic in February: all the decisions beekeepers must make concerning their hive choices.

All bee hives must have removable frames that allow inspection for pests and disease. Bees in a Winnie the Pooh straw skep or an abandoned foot locker are not permitted! Allowable removable frame hives include various hive box designs along with top bar hives. The hive

boxes are almost all devised as an improvement to the Langstroth hive invented by the Rev. Lorenzo L. Langstroth (1810 - 1895). Despite the "improvements", the Langstroth hive remains the most popular bee hive configuration. Jeff's presentation was careful review of all the components in a Langstroth hive stack, focusing on decisions to be made from the hive stand and bottom board to the hive cover.

Following Jeff's presentation, the drawing was held for the donated door prizes.

Did you enjoy this newsletter? If so, you might enjoy reading previous newsletters as well. All of them, going back to January 2014, are posted on the FBBA website. Go to [fortbendbeekeepers.org](http://fortbendbeekeepers.org), then click on LINKS and the FBBA NEWSLETTERS. Many thanks to our webmaster, Ian Kjos, for keeping the website in ship-shape.

## Treasurer's Report

Our February treasury balance was \$3,708.90. Since our last report we collected \$85.00 in dues (17 new and renewing members) and \$25.00 for a mentoring program enrollment fee. The only expense was \$6.38 for the monthly website cost. The resulting balance is \$3,812.52 (\$3,762.52 in our checking account plus \$50.00 in cash to make change).

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION

*Boone Holladay*

Boone Holladay

County Extension Agent- Horticulture  
Fort Bend County  
[jb.holladay@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:jb.holladay@ag.tamu.edu)  
281 342-3034 ext. 7034  
1402 Band Road, Suite 100  
Rosenberg, TX 77471

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating. Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aid or services are required to contact Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 281-342-3034 five working days prior to the meeting so appropriate arrangements can be made.