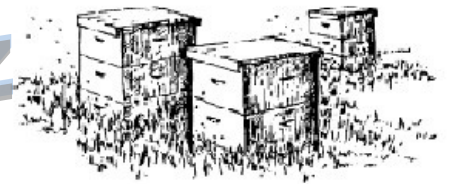




# Fort Bend Buzz

newsletter of the  
Fort Bend Beekeepers Association



September, 2015

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, September 8. The Association provides coffee and lemonade for meeting refreshments while members volunteer to bring snacks. Thanks to Diane McConnon for volunteering to get the coffee and lemonade set up for us. Thanks to Roy Nash who volunteered to bring salty treats and Dona Tomplait (something sweet) for our September meeting. After 30 minutes of social time, our September meeting will be called to order with an opening invocation by Kim Kutach.

## Ask a dozen beekeepers...

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

**Q:** I'm really interested in the club's beekeeper mentoring program. When will it be up and running?

**An A:** The Fort Bend Beekeepers Association Beekeeper Mentoring Program is up and running NOW.

Anyone interested in becoming a beekeeper should start by joining a local beekeeper association. Our group is one of several in the area and new members are added to the roster each month. Our membership now stands at 136! Attending our monthly meetings affords the opportunity to make contacts and find others when seeking advice or direction. Informal "mentoring" was happening all the time.

As our membership has grown, the need for a more formal approach to mentoring was recognized. New beekeeper Wendy Chopin is coordinating our Beekeeper Mentoring Program that now has five mentoring teams.

Hopefully, almost every member will become either a mentor or "mentee" because it is very important that all beekeepers are knowledgeable, safe, responsible, and successful (the goals of our program).

As we all know, when you ask a dozen beekeepers a question, you

should expect 14 answers. Hopefully all 14 are technically sound and only reflect an individual's preference. To help make sure that is the case, each member on our mentoring teams gets a copy of an excellent reference book: The Beekeeper's Handbook by Diana Sammatro and Alphonse Avitabile (2011). This book was carefully selected, in large part because it is one of the newer beekeeping guide books available. It seems that new challenges to successful beekeeping arise every day and any reference material should be as current as possible. To help stay current, each team member must also subscribe to *The American Bee Journal* monthly magazine. A 25% subscription discount is available to all Association members.

Each mentoring team member receives a "Beekeeper's Journal" that was developed specifically for this program. It is a pocket-sized log book to record activities. It includes basic beekeeping safety pointers as well as a handy reference to help identify things we see in the hive. A honey bee life cycle diagram and several years worth of calendars help make the Journal an essential tool in the bee yard.

The cost to participate is \$25.00 for mentees and \$zero for mentors (other than the ABJ subscription). This is an incredible bargain since the reference book alone has a retail price of \$29.95. And then we have

a "sweetener": a Fort Bend Beekeepers Association ball cap. Generous donations to our club have made this great member benefit program possible.

Another part of our mentoring program will be "weekend workshops" for mentors, mentees and all members of our association. The workshop format will not be a program to listen to. Instead it will be hands on "show and tell" with topics like selecting what to buy (boxes and bees), assembling hive components, selecting what to buy (gadgets and gear), splits for swarm control, harvesting and packaging honey, etc.

More mentoring program details are on our web site: [fortbendbeekeepers.org](http://fortbendbeekeepers.org). There is also information on how to subscribe to a new online forum for our members and mentoring teams to share information: [fortbendbees.proboards.com](http://fortbendbees.proboards.com).

*Thanks Wendy for making all this happen!!*

## Treasurer's Report

Our August treasury balance was \$2,121.73. Since then we collected dues from three new members (\$15.00) and received \$100.00 in donations. We also collected \$60.00 for the use of the club's honey harvest set up. The resulting treasury balance is \$2,296.73, consisting of \$2,266.73 in our Wells Fargo checking account plus \$30.00 in cash to make change.

## August Meeting Notes

We had 38 members and guests sign in at our August meeting. Attendance was down a bit due to some heavy weather that hit right before meeting time. The meeting went on despite thunder, lightening and short power interruptions. Our PA system is battery powered so we were prepared to continue even if the lights went out!

We welcomed new members Glenda McGaughey of Sugar Land and Dennis Young of Simonton. Thanks to all who signed in.

After a short delay because of the weather, President Daryl Scott called the meeting to order. Kim Kutach had volunteered to offer an invocation and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Kim called in to report terrible weather and flooded roads; she had turned around to head back home. Daryl Scott stood in for Kim then announced a set of lost keys that were found in the parking lot. Doug Rowell had dropped them trying to dodge the rain.

Daryl's fun bee facts for August: worker bees have 170 odor receptors while drones have far more. For comparison, fruit flies have 62 and mosquitoes have 79. Honey bees use their sense of smell to recognize hive-mates, to communicate within the hive and to find food. Scientists have trained honey bees to detect explosives and illegal drugs.

Another incredible fact is that honey bees have fine hairs on the eyes that keep them clean by catching dirt and pollen. Hairy eyeballs?

Daryl reminded us that the bee-keeping calendar finds us in the late summer dearth: nectar and pollen are in short supply. In a few weeks though, the goldenrod and ragweed will be blooming. Yellow rain tree blooms will not be far behind. Fall splits or requeening as well as a fall harvest will be here soon too. Daryl also showed off an internet score. He uses toilet levelling

shims to prop his telescoping covers for improved ventilation. He found a plumber's bulk pack for cheap on the internet.

County Extension Agent (and beekeeper mentee) Boone Holladay discussed "swarm calls" to the Extension office. He reported several successes with our swarm trapping program in the spring. The Association purchased 18 swarm traps that are available for use through the Extension office. When bees move in, a member is called in to relocate the colony to a managed hive. Trapped bees and captured swarms prevented major problems from bees occupying the wall of someone's house. Unfortunately, most calls are to have bees removed. It seems that many folks expect beekeepers to show up at their beckon call to remove bees from their house for free. Few beekeepers do this work as a matter of routine, so we've reworded our web site to make it clear that bee removal is a pest control problem. The Association does not encourage members to do removals because of potentially serious problems with mean bees, damages or injuries. The Texas Apiary Inspection Service has a list of people that are licensed to transport bees across county lines and may do removals.

Our meeting ended with the customary drawing for donated door prizes. L. D. Lewis, guest Cindy Massengale and Craig Rench each won a pair of beetle traps made and donated by Jeff McMullan. Margaret Smaistrila took home a pint jar of Bob Hentschel's honey while Herman Hoot scored a jar brought in by Kenneth Nugent. Doug Rowell, Milton Woods, Michael Booth and Clarence Thielemann each won toilet shims donated by Daryl Scott (and he still has plenty of them). Guest Jessica Boudreaux won a can of organic pinto beans and an eye glass cloth donated by Doug Rowell.



## Did you know?

The Fort Bend Beekeepers own equipment that members can borrow. We have honey harvest equipment, a solar wax melter and frame assembly gear. Contacts for members wishing to use the equipment are:

### Extraction Equipment

Jim Lynch  
JWLTX@AOL.com  
713 254-3922

### Solar Wax Melter

Nancy Hentschel  
Nancy6610@windstream.net  
832 228-7642

### Frame Assembly Gear

Nancy Hentschel  
Nancy6610@windstream.net  
832 228-7642

The melter and frame assembly gear can be borrowed at no cost. Members that borrow the extraction equipment must pay \$20 for a week of use and provide a \$500 deposit check made out to the Association to assure that it is returned in a condition ready for the next user. The equipment package includes a two-frame manual extractor and stand, a stainless steel double sieve, a serrated uncapping knife, a pin roller, an uncapping fork and an uncapping tub. Borrowers need to provide a container for their honey (a 5-gal pail or bottling bucket is suggested).

TEXAS A&M  
**AGRI**LIFE  
EXTENSION

*Boone Holladay*

Boone Holladay  
County Extension Agent— Horticulture  
Fort Bend County  
jb.holladay@ag.tamu.edu  
281 342-3034 ext. 7034  
1402 Band Road, Suite 100  
Rosenberg, TX 77471

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. 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. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating.