

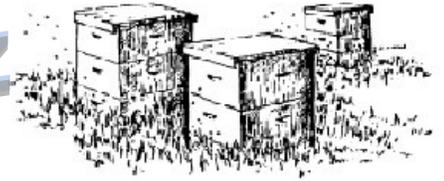


# Fort Bend Buzz

newsletter of the

Fort Bend Beekeepers Association

*promoting safe, responsible, successful beekeeping*



January, 2018

The January 9, 2018 meeting of the Fort Bend Beekeepers 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, so don't forget to stash a five dollar bill in your wallet and get your dues paid at our January meeting. The Association provides coffee and lemonade for meeting refreshments if someone will volunteer to make it and clean up afterwards. Members are welcome to bring snacks since no one volunteered for January. The meeting will be called to order at 7:30 after 30 minutes of social time.

## Ask a dozen beekeepers...

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

**Q:** I'm anxious to get started as a beekeeper. What hive components do I need (beekeeping supply catalogues and web sites are overwhelming!).

**An A:** You will have to settle for a "Reader's Digest" answer, but hopefully you will be able to make good decisions based on our answer. It just discusses the makeup of a hive stack. A smoker, protective gear, tools and gadgets are part of getting started too. New beekeepers often make choices getting started that are essentially wasting money. "Beginner kits" aren't a good idea. New beekeepers should read books (don't rely on internet posts), join a beekeeper club, meet other beekeepers and go to a beekeeping class to learn about getting started.

The basic decision is whether to keep bees in Langstroth hives or to start out with another less common hive design. Langstroth hives (named for their inventor) are by far the most common hive design and are the best way to get started. Despite what you read on the internet, success is most likely with this long proven setup.

A Langstroth hive is a stack of "boxes" without tops or bottoms (the stack's top and bottom are separate components). A box full of honey can weigh up to 100 lbs., so

the hive needs to be on a sturdy stand that is not too tall because there will be some heavy lifting to do. Langstroth boxes are made in three sizes (different heights): the shorter ones weight less (duh!).

The hive "bottom board" rests on the hive stand. A screened bottom board is preferred so that pests and junk that falls from the hive end up on the ground outside the hive. In our mild climate, the screened floor bottom can be open year around.

Atop the bottom board is the first hive box, usually where the colony's brood nest is expected to be. Inside are removable "frames" with "foundation" to guide the bees in their comb construction. Langstroth hive components are either 8 or 10 frames wide (a weight/stability consideration). A tall box (a "hive body" or "deep") is often used for the bottom "brood box" since it is not expected to be moved about in the stack and is big enough for most colonies (booming hives may need two "deeps" for the brood nest).

"Medium" or "shallow" "supers" are added to the hive stack to hold the honey crop ("superimposed" on the hive stack). Sometimes a grid-like "queen excluder" is used to keep the larger queen (and her brood) confined below the honey stores. The boxes for honey are usually of a smaller size since they will become heavily laden. One good option to consider is to use all smaller size ("medium") boxes so

that the frames can be moved about in the hive stack.

There are choices to be made about frames/foundation. Wooden frames are the usual choice, often bought unassembled. Foundation can be of wax (with reinforcing wire) or various plastic designs. Wax foundation is usually best for the beginner since bees sometimes don't take to plastic (even when heavily coated with beeswax). But the plastic foundation is a whole lot quicker to use since it just "pops" into the frame and it can be easily cleaned of old comb for reuse.

The hive will need a cover to keep out the rain. A "telescoping cover" is the preferred choice, but it requires an inner cover too since the bees may attach it to the top box. A "migratory cover" is just a flat board on top of the hive that allows them to be placed side by side on pallets and easily moved about.

Your hive stack should be carefully primed and painted with quality house paint. Caulk is recommended for any cracks that remain after assembly. Bees seem to prefer it if you don't paint the inside of the boxes (simplifies the painting job).

## November Meeting Notes

We had 41 members and guests sign in at our November meeting. A head count revealed that at least 12 folks didn't sign the roster. Please sign in! These sheets are an important club record that supports our use of County facilities.

In the absence of the other officers, Secretary-Treasurer Jeff McMullan called the meeting to order. Our first topic was reports of big small hive beetle numbers. There was speculation that the Hurricane Harvey flooding had something to do with it: colonies lost to the flood were invaded by beetles resulting in a hive beetle population boom.

Jack Richardson attended the Texas Beekeepers Association annual conference. He reported that the agenda was full of valuable topics. He also recognized member Monica Siwiak's first place win in the creamed honey competition and Harrison Roger's taking the Thomas Award for service to the TBA. Jack confessed to perhaps having too much money since he won the auction for TBA President Chris Moore's retired smoker. It was definitely ready to be replaced and Jack added it to his collection of beekeeper stuff that admittedly should be tossed!

The November program topic was beeswax processing by Gene deBons. Gene reviewed the biologic origin and uses of beeswax since ancient times. It is the basic construction material for the honey bee hive, a complex mixture of components produced by 4 pairs of glands on the worker's abdomen. Purest wax is white, but it can be shades of yellow to brown depending on contaminants and how it is processed. Cappings wax is the least contaminated and should be handled separately from old comb or scrapings. Propolis in wax should be avoided since the resins contaminate the product. Processing in iron, zinc (galvanized), brass or copper can cause the wax to darken. Beeswax can be rendered in the club's solar melter or in hot water. Gene's preferred method is one of his laboratory ovens set at 170° F. He mixes the molten wax with an equal volume of boiling water and allows it to cool slowly and harden. Crud that settles on the water surface is scraped off and discarded. The process can be repeated if need be. Stored beeswax can develop a powdery substance on the surface that can be easily wiped away with a cloth.

Following his presentation, Gene announced candidates and directed the election of officers for 2018 (see below).

## Election of Officers

Officers for 2018 were elected at our November meeting. Gene deBons announced our declared candidates: Jack Richardson for President (nominated by Kelly Morris, seconded by Michael McLean) and Chelsea Murray for Vice President (nominated by Jeff McMullan, seconded by Jack Richardson). There were no other nominations and both were elected by acclamation. After outgoing Secretary-Treasurer Jeff McMullan agreed to continue as our newsletter editor, Lynne Jones was nominated by her son Dan and seconded by Jeff McMullan as Secretary-Treasurer. Lynne was elected unanimously. Jack thanked the members for their vote, his first stint as an officer after being a member for 25+ years. He looks forward to the coming year and hopes to get lots of help in his new role.

Congratulations to our new leadership team and thanks to the outgoing officers for their service.

## Treasurer's Report

Our November treasury balance was \$3,197.99. We had no transactions since then so our balance is unchanged, consisting of \$3,142.99 in our Wells Fargo checking account plus \$55.00 in cash to make change.

A financial summary and year-end property inventory for 2016 is presented below.

<b>Fort Bend Beekeepers Association 2017 Financial Summary</b>	
<b>Opening balance (Jan. 1, 2017)</b>	<b>\$2,373.82</b>
<b>Income</b>	
member dues paid (171 at \$5.00)	\$855.00
donations	\$440.00
extractor use income	\$60.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,355.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
meeting supplies	(\$34.95)
speaker expenses	(\$290.00)
Texas Beekeepers Assn. dues	(\$50.00)
new web site platform	(\$155.88)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>(\$530.83)</b>
<b>Ending Balance (Dec. 31, 2017)</b>	<b>\$3,197.99</b>

<b>Fort Bend Beekeepers Association December 31, 2017 Property Inventory</b>			
<u>Description</u>	<u>Date Acquired</u>	<u>Initial Cost</u>	<u>Member Contact</u>
four framed beekeeping posters	various	unknown	Boone Holladay
Learning Hive	8/28/2009	\$144.49	Jeff McMullan
additional frame photos	2/25/2016	\$98.37	Jeff McMullan
additional hive body/btm bd	11/20/2016	<u>\$70.95</u> \$313.81	Jeff McMullan
red wagon	10/16/2009	\$45.98	Jeff McMullan
extracting equipment			Jim Lynch
extractor, stand, etc.	8/19/2011	\$583.33	
pin uncapper	11/8/2014	\$15.15	
honey refractometer	11/30/2016	<u>\$71.64</u> \$654.97	
solar wax melter	1/10/2012	donated	Nancy Hentschel
frame assembly gear	3/5/2012	\$157.88	Nancy Hentschel
outreach exhibits			
banners	11/7/2013	\$80.96	Jeff McMullan
posters and easels	2/8/2016	<u>\$193.30</u> \$274.26	Jeff McMullan
public address system	6/21/2014	\$620.22	Lynne Jones
7/18 remaining swarm traps	11/3/2014	\$54.62	Boone Holladay
remaining Mentoring Program supplies:			Daryl Scott
2/20 mentee ball caps		\$14.18	
2/10 mentor ball caps		\$14.18	
68/100 Beekeeper's Journals		\$490.28	
37/42 extra Journal fillers		\$40.33	
4/40 copies "The Beekeepers Handbook"		<u>\$73.32</u> \$632.29	
gray cart for meetings	7/7/2016	\$121.25	Boone Holladay

**TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION**

Texas A&M  
AgriLife Extension Service  
Fort Bend County  
1402 Band Road, Suite 100  
Rosenberg, TX 77471

*Boone Holladay*

Boone Holladay

County Extension Agent— Horticulture  
Fort Bend County  
jb.holladay@ag.tamu.edu  
281 342-3034 ext. 7034

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