

# The Formation of Collin County Hobby Beekeepers Association and Other History

*from Carole Booth, former Journal Editor and 1990 VP of TBA*

Hello, to fellow beekeepers. My name is Carole Booth, and here is a little history about one who began beekeeping in the late 80's and became a founding member of Collin County Hobby Beekeepers Association. I was asked by Chris Doggett, to go back down "Memory Lane", as one of your former TBA Newsletter Editors, and to share that window in time with you. Here is the story of the amazing growth of hobby beekeepers in Collin County.

Back in the early 1970's, I made regular 50-mile trips between my home in north Dallas, just to buy honey from Luther and Moina Maserang in Ft. Worth. I learned later that they were the founders of the Texas State Fair Honey Booth. Back then, I was a just a young mom, passionate about using local honey for her family. After tuning into their enthusiasm for honey bees and beekeeping, the Maserangs encouraged me to become a beekeeper. In 1975, I took a course in Beekeeping, taught by Robert Hutchinson. Shortly afterwards in spite of a skeptical husband, I began keeping bees. Robert became my teacher, mentor, my inspiration, and along with his wife, Glenda, became a good friend. Keep in mind, beekeeping knowledge was scarce, there was no emailing, no internet. In 1978 my family moved from Dallas to a country location in Allen and my two colonies expanded to 25.

I joined the Trinity Valley Beekeepers Association, and for several years, drove from Allen to Dallas to the meetings at Union Hall, near the old Cowboy Stadium. I checked out books, cultivated friendships at the monthly Trinity Valley Beekeepers Association meetings. I even sponsored their Honey Queen and selected locations near-by where she could do her presentations, but I wished many times for the convenience of a club with bee buddies closer to home. Anyone living in Allen, who wanted to know about bees and honey, needed to make the 70-mile monthly round-trip to the Dallas association. There were four-five of us living in Allen who made the trip, but we wondered about near-by beekeepers who didn't or couldn't drive at night down to Dallas. In time, the concerns rose to the point where you might say we were filled with "missionary zeal" to reach those beekeepers, and those who might want to be. At the close of one memorable meeting, we agreed to try to create a new association in Allen. We wrote an ad to be placed in the local newspaper, the Allen American, inviting folks with an interest in keeping bees to come to a meeting of a new Bee Club in Allen.

Johnny Sparks secured a meeting room in a bank, and amazingly, about 10 people came. In 1978, that was how the new association, Collin County Hobby Beekeepers Association was born...from that one newspaper ad. We met in the bank building for a short time, but then we were invited to meet at the Heard Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary, with no room fee. It was an ideal location. Starting an Association was like creating a new start-up business. From the beginning, we were excited and filled



*Carole Booth with Allison Adams (now Allison French) 2009 Collin County Honey Queen*

with passion for our new club, but balked at management details, like creating a Charter, By-Laws and keeping minutes. Thankfully, Grace Franklin, whose husband, Clarence, was one of the original founders, had much experience with the local Texas A&M Home Economics Extension Office. She influenced the little group to create the structure that would be needed as time went on.

All of us had experience with other clubs and we knew what we wanted (and did not want). Older clubs seemed lacking in youth, set in their ways, lacking in drive and enthusiasm. We were filled with enthusiasm to be better beekeepers, to produce & sell outstanding honey, to educate the community about the importance of the honey bee...and to include family and youth participation...as they were our future. It took a lot of thought and effort...writing and re-writing. I remember saying, "This is what it must have been like to be Founding Fathers"...

These were our influencing thoughts...

- 1st: The club should include the county name, Collin County, so people could identify with it.
- 2nd: The name must include the word, "Hobby." At that time, the state association was dominated by commercial beekeepers. It was our drive to attract and encourage beginners and small beekeepers. We agreed that the word, "Hobby" would be welcoming to those newcomers.
- 3rd: Write our Purpose; repeat it at every meeting, to help keep us on track.
- 4th: Have a clear plan for our association; agree on jobs to be done.
- 5th: Write everything down.

Create a Logo.

We needed an organization, by-laws. What was our purpose?  
We came up with five...

- Provide fellowship and sharing of information among beekeepers and those interested in honey bees
- Promote the art of beekeeping
- Encourage the use of honey
- Protect the industry of beekeeping and the honeybees
- Cooperate with County Extension Services, USDA, TBA, (Texas Beekeepers Association) and other organizations promoting beekeeping information

What was especially gratifying to me, was that our new association would become Goodwill Ambassadors for the Beekeeping Industry....

CCHBA Provides: Goodwill ambassadors for the beekeeping industry

- Youth programs; 4H, Scouts, Scholarships
- Outlets for surplus honey within members
- Participation in community events
- Public relations and media for news industry
- Factual information about bees and beekeeping
- Annual educational workshops & seminars
- Honey Queen Program

With enthusiasm for Youth, we gained family participation, and the club began to grow. The folks who guided the association were amazing. There was a deep sense of Mission and everyone contributed in his or her own special way.

These were our principles:

1. Don't wait for someone to volunteer for a job. Make an assessment of skills of members and ask a person to take on a job based on their ability.
2. Never ask for volunteers for an elected office
3. Use two people in elected office to avoid burn-out.
4. Provide description of responsibilities, be respectful of each position, and always give recognition for work done

We studied the traits of successful organizations, and agreed to follow them as much as we could. They included:

- Express genuine interest in one another
- Be respectful of each other
- Be willing to be accommodating
- Be dedicated to the common purpose

Following the principles of cross-pollination, we agreed that a successful club will expand by cultivating relationships with other clubs, so we agreed to:

- a. Set up an Exchange programs
- b. Ask for program lists from other associations
- c. Do joint activities
- d. Cultivate friendships in other associations

- e. Utilize the state association and utilize persons with expertise, such as (Dr. John Thomas, Texas A&M Entomologist) Thus...we did everything we could think of to raise community awareness of CCHBA.

Knowledge was in big demand. Many of us taught classes and we held seminars, but the best outgrowth of beekeeping instruction came from John Talbert, who held every office with CCHBA, as well as with TBA. When he retired, he set up Beekeeping Seminars that offer outstanding beekeeping knowledge.

Over the years, I have seen many people who rose up from within Collin County Hobby Beekeepers Association to become officers and then a positive driving force for the state, within TBA. I feel like a mama watching her baby grow up.

In the 80's, beekeepers everywhere, experienced four Crises in Beekeeping;

1. Mites
2. Varroa
3. Adulterated honey from China
4. Africanized Honey Bee

It was a busy time for beekeeping associations as they worked to help one another and their communities to deal with the issues on local and state levels.

One day, in 1987, the phone rang in the City Manager's office of Farmer's Branch. A lady was irate. She wanted the city to outlaw all honey bees from inside the city limits. It seemed that bees were taking over her hummingbird feeder and she wanted to eliminate them. Perhaps the anxiety about the AHB was a factor, but all we knew was that she wanted them GONE. The manager contacted Dr. John Thomas, Texas State Entomologist, who then called me to ask for help in creating a Model Ordinance for a city to use as a guide in situations like this. Local beekeepers as well as several from throughout the state, from the Texas Beekeepers Association, worked on this. It was a remarkable team effort. It was approved by the State of Texas and the story along with the Model Beekeeping Ordinance was published in the American Bee Journal. It was titled, "Model City Beekeeping Ordinance Developed for Texas by the Texas Beekeepers Association." Shortly afterwards, several of us attended a hearing in Plano, where our ordinance was later adopted to allow honeybees inside the city limits.

A Model Ordinance is a plan that is created with care and thoughtfulness before an event occurs, when there might not be time to weigh the issues and appropriate measures. It's just something to be kept on file. Because of the Africanized Honey Bee scare, there were many communities considering the elimination of beekeeping in their city limits, so the Model Ordinance was actually utilized more than you probably knew.

In the 1990's bee swarms were a big nuisance. There was a huge demand for people who would retrieve swarms, so we created, "The Swarm Patrol." In 1995 there were 17 folks who drove all over the county, retrieving swarms. They were beekeeping angels. As I look back now, I realize how much has changed, because swarming does not occur like it did then. Also, at that time, there were no suppliers nearby. All we could do was to order by catalog or over the phone. I decided I would

stock beekeeping supplies for my fellow beekeepers, to hasten availability of supplies at critical times. My husband and I owned an electronics distribution company, so we had the knowledge plus some warehouse space. I became a dealer for Dadant, Mann Lake and for Maxant, stocking product for local beekeepers. As time passed, however, the internet became an easy source for supplies, so dealers were ultimately eliminated.

Some enthusiasts for honey promotion came forward and the Honey Queen Program was started. Over the years, I have seen Honey Queen Programs appear throughout the state and in the U.S. I observed selfless, mission-driven beekeeping folks get engaged in the Queen Program. I marveled at their genuine caring and how they spent money from their own pockets to do whatever it took to get the Association's young queens to their promotions, pay for materials, and to cover myriad expenses. We, beekeepers, were thus encouraged to promote and sell quality honey at market value, not to give it away.

It was rewarding to put together the Newsletter for Collin County's association for several years, then I served as Newsletter Editor for the Texas Beekeepers Association for three years-1987, 1988, 1989. Back then, it was all cut and paste-all typed, taken to the printers and then collated by hand. In 1989, My article, "Honey Bees Ensure Pollination, appeared in Neil Sperry's magazine, Garden." In 1990, I served as Vice-President of TBA, and in 1991, Director at Large. These were times of transition for the Texas Beekeepers. There was an upwelling of hobby beekeepers who were eager for knowledge and beekeeping companionship. Beekeeping workshops increased and more Youth Programs began to appear. In 1994, I toured the UK with the Southern States Beekeepers Association and got to meet the great beekeeper, Brother Adam of Buckfast Abbey in Wales, who developed the strain of bees that is resistant to Varroa. That same year, I wrote another article, which was printed in the Journal - this time on the subject of Black Combs in the Hives, which was directly influenced by the meeting with Brother Adam in Wales and the visit to his apiary. (He was an advocate of replacing black combs to eliminate toxic elements embedded in the wax, that weakened the honey bee's immune system).

In 1994, I retreated from beekeeping association work, to follow a new interest, that of practicing T'ai Chi, the exercise known as "Moving Meditation." It was an effort to overcome back discomfort from years of lifting those heavy supers. Since then, I logged over 10,000 hours of learning and teaching. My husband and I sold the distribution company we ran for 40 years and I began to teach at retirement centers. I celebrated my 80th birthday last October, but continue to teach and work, and to keep bees. My colony numbers are down to just 5, but every day I continue to rejoice over my bees and their continued lives with me for the last 40 years.

Thank you to those of you who read this, because you are one who life has also been touched by our precious Honey Bee and has been forever changed by it. Each beekeeper I have known has made a profound difference. The story of Collin County Hobby Beekeepers Association, now one of the best in the country, is a tribute to willingness to learn from each other and to work together for a common good. It's the Honey Bee Way. We can all learn from each other, and together we can make Life better.

**Complete™**  
**Maximum Strength**  
**ALL-IN-ONE**  
**Nozevit™ - Optima™ - Pro-Bee™**

All Natural Plant Polyphenol Honey Bee Food Supplement Intestinal Integrity & Cleansing

Feeding stimulant with 15 essential oils and complete vitamins, minerals and amino acids

Nutrition for Queen Breeders, Nucs, Packages and Splits

Contains:  
 • All Natural Plant Polyphenols  
 • Phytonutrients  
 • Premium Essential Oils  
 • Vitamins and Minerals  
 • Complete Amino Acids and Organic Herbs

**"Complete" is the only All Natural product in the world that combines the proven results of Nozevit, Optima, and Pro-Bee.**

Available at:  
 eKoBeekeeping.com  
 Dadant & Sons  
 Or ask your local beekeeping supply store.

CompleteBee.com

**Defyant**  
**Stands LLC**™

Patent pending

**Keep ants out of your beehives**  
**Stands with ant-barrier feet**  
**Adjustable to 1 1/4" for leveling**  
**Feet sets also now available at**

**Defyantstands.com**  
**(903)799-8748**