

“Save the Bees” and everyday buzz

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Let's talk about the birds and the bees.

Actually, forget about the birds, let's skip right to the bees.

Apparently they're dying, and we need to save them.

And lo and behold, we have a new “Save the Bees” club!

It's second and most recent meeting of the year on Nov. 16 was wildly different than I had anticipated. Before it's kickoff, I had constructed this mental image of a few environmental extremists and/or eclectic insect-o-maniacs gathered together in a broom closet, discussing the finer points of progressive pollination activism strategy and sucking on organic honey lollipops, all wearing alarmingly detailed bumblebee costumes. And maybe that was an unfairly bizarre preconception, but you have to admit, a high school club centered entirely around the preservation and prosperity of one single endangered bug species sounds weirdly niche.

This mental image was torn to shreds two seconds after I walked into that Nov. 16 meeting, mostly because instead of there being sevenish hardcore bee obsessors, I found a healthy crowd of about 30 normal, non bug-eyed people. The previous expectation of elaborate bee costumes was only met to the extent of a few kids wearing one or two black and yellow pieces. Somebody had been kind enough to make some cutesie cupcakes with sunshine frosting for the occasion, which were being silently eaten as a video clip about a beekeeper's first hand account of the dying bee population played on a SmartBoard.

I scanned the room, semi-surprised to see a few familiar faces. The club's founder, Rebecca Bailey, freshman, took the reigns up front after the close of the video, excitedly leading a discussion on various ways that the club could do it's little part to protect the bee population. The prospects of planting bee friendly flowers and even caring for one bee colony independently were mentioned. Then Bailey moved on to spitballing ideas for a club pin or t-shirt, and with that, the meeting was adjourned until next month. The real bee-saving action is to come at a later date.

The whole affair was nonchalant and relaxed. Bee extinction was certainly made into an ever-present and prevalent issue, but the conduction of the meeting seemed to indicate that progress in the name of the cause was meant to be a low-stress, back burner endeavor. Like we should keep the bees in mind, but effort was really meant to be “drop in the bucket” on an individual basis. Not even a hint of fiery climate extremism was expressed.

So if the members of the “Save the Bees” club aren't crazy activist martyrs, then who are they?

“We were talking about bee extinction in one of our classes, and someone said we should start a club for that, so we did,” said Bailey. “Bees are our main provider of foods and vegetables [by pollination]...and without them we would lose those foods, and we wouldn't be able to survive more than five years,” she added.

Bailey's main plan of attack? Collaborating with the Gardening club to plant the aforementioned bee-friendly flowers, pollination by people, and raising money to donate to foundations addressing the issue of bee extinction.

Bailey and like the members of her club are not the environmental extremists and/or eclectic insect-o-maniacs I had imagined. They're realistic carers. They don't sacrifice the necessary daily rigmarole in the name of total submergence within the bee universe.

They're simply aware.

And maybe that's all they need to bee.

