



# The **BEE CAUSE**

*The Official Publication of the Red River  
Apiarists' Association*

<http://www.geocities.com/ve4tg/>

March 2003

Free to Members

Volume 7: Issue 4

### ***Important Dates:***

Next Meeting Date is:

**11 March 2003**

7:30 PM Upstairs Meeting Room

**Program: Presentation by Don Dixon - Getting off to a good start this Spring. A look at spring management considerations for over wintered bee colonies. Possibly a video presentation on this topic as well.**

### ***Meeting Location:***

River Heights Community Centre  
1370 Grosvenor St.  
(Intersection of Oak & Grosvenor  
Door Prizes will be offered, Guests are welcome and free coffee will be available.

The Bee Cause Newsletter is published by the **Red River Apiarists' Association** eight times per year excluding June, July, August and December.

Membership in the **Red River Apiarists' Association** is \$20.00 per year and includes a subscription to the **Bee Cause**.

**Web Site at:** <http://www.geocities.com/ve4tg/>

### **President's Comments**

At last months regular meeting, we were pleased to have two students attending. I trust our friendly people aren't too overwhelming in offering help and advice.

As we move along into March, we are very anxious to take an early peek into our colonies. Hopefully we will see signs of successful over wintering. That is especially true now as the weather hovers around the thawing mark. The other day I started cleaning some of the dead bees away from the entrances of my hives. Several bees were spotted in the snow surrounding the colonies. Possibly a good sign that there is still life and live bees in the boxes? As we discussed back in January, Apistan treatments in the fall may not entirely ensure survival of the colonies infected with Varroa. It appears the population gets stressed during the honey flow and goes into winter in a very weak state. Thus despite the treatments, and ample food, they do not survive. It is very clear to me that spring treatment is critical to get the upper edge. It is also quite evident we must continually check colonies for infestation. As some of our members

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## RRAA Executive Members

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have told us, an easy method is to pull out capped drone brood during extracting time. If you discover any little friends on the brood, you must take action. Appearance of five mites per drone is a sure sign of a short life for your bees.

As the health of the hive is of utmost importance to us all, your executive has asked Don to review the spring management topic for our March meeting. With the possibility of an early spring, the topic should be timely.

It was great to see some of our members attend the MBA Convention in Brandon this year. Lots of activities and information to help us keep in business as well.

The RRAA executive will still be looking for more feedback into the plans we have made for the upcoming meetings. Don't hesitate to let any of us know your suggestions.

We are also in the early stages of planning our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. At the moment, Ken Fehler is gearing up for an April or early May Friday evening. Stay tuned for details. It would be nice to have lots of past members attending.

For this year's picnic, we will likely join in with the MBA as both of our groups are celebrating anniversaries. Tentative plans call for a picnic in June in the Morden area.

Just a reminder, if you have a favorite topic for our meeting, let any of the Executive know. We can discuss how or when to fit it into our plans. Our next meeting will look at Spring Preparations needed to give our bees a good start for the year. See you at our March 11<sup>th</sup> meeting!!!

Jim Campbell

**Red River Apiarists' Association  
Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
Feb. 11, 2003**

The regular meeting of the Red River Apiarists' Association, held at the River Heights Community Club on Feb. 11, 2003 with 27 members and guests present, was called to order by Jim Campbell at 7:35 PM.

Jim welcomed the guests from the beekeeping course on behalf of the RRAA.

**Minutes:**

Moved: Herb Schon and sec. by Rhéal Lafrenière that we accept the minutes as circulated in the Bee Cause. Carried.

**RRAA 40th Anniversary Celebration:**

Jim suggested that a social evening for April 11th is a possibility. It would be similar to our 25th anniversary wine and cheese party held at the Conservatory. The goal is to have a memorable get-together without a large outlay of cash.

**MBA Convention:**

Jim, Charles Polcyn and Rhéal outlined the topics presented at the MBA convention in Brandon.

At the convention, Dewey Caron from the University of Delaware talked about the "assassin bee" later to be known in the Americas as the "killer bee". He noted that this aggressive bee becomes less aggressive as it moves northward into a cooler climate. The aggressiveness is dominant and doesn't change with the introduction of genes from other lines. He also asked the question, what have we done with the time we had before mites became widespread? Did we use the time

productively to lessen the requirement for chemical controls? We were given Apistan to use for Varroa, which became, to us, a silver bullet. We need to look at other alternatives, mite tolerant bees, screened bottoms, natural products such as grapefruit leaves, sumac, tobacco smoke etc.

Ted mentioned that, in his outfit, he has one colony, which has not been treated for mites in four seasons. It has a consistently low natural mite fall of about one mite per day, except for two regularly occurring periods each year. One happens in the spring for about two weeks and another in the fall for the same length of time, where the natural mite fall increases significantly. It is difficult to visualize what is happening within the hive during these two time periods. Ted has used this hive for grafting many new queen cells. This summer he will check to see how mite tolerant the daughter queens are. Any beekeeper can monitor their own bees for this type of activity by using varroa screens and slide-out mite trays.

**MBA Bus Tour:**

Jim suggested that one of the activities to mark the 100th Anniversary of the Manitoba Beekeepers' Association might be a fall bus tour similar to the tour, which marked the 50th Anniversary. The tour would take place in mid October and go through Ontario and Quebec, stopping at various sights and beekeeping destinations such as the University of Guelph. Beautiful fall colors and stops at several mead producers would be on the itinerary. The bus would accommodate approximately 47 passengers.

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### **Loonie Draw:**

Wayne Proudlove provided small glass jars of honey packed for Austrian and French restaurants. Several of the jars were used for prizes in the loonie draw again this month.

**Meeting Adjourned:** Ron Rudiak  
(Secretary - RRAA)

### **Scheduled Presentation:**

Rhéal Lafrenière gave us a Power Point presentation on the small hive beetle. It was noted for the benefit of our new members and guests that we also talk about many of the good things in beekeeping at our meetings. We want everyone to be aware of problems with pests, diseases and sprays so that they are prepared to meet challenges with confidence and still enjoy producing a good honey crop.

Judith Roe brought a sample of a slightly dark palm tree honey from the Dominican Republic. Honey is sold by vendors in "recycled" liquor bottles in that part of the world. Some of the honey was placed into a small bowl and beekeepers were invited to sample it using coffee stir sticks. Comments ranged to "very good" to "somewhat runny but pleasant". A few mentioned that it doesn't compare with our prairie clover or canola honey.

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### **Plans for Fundraising**

A possible plan has come forward to assist the RRAA in building up our financial reserves. During the past few years, our group has looked at several ideas for improving our revenue picture, so we are

more able to fund new research projects and acquire new educational material for our members.

At it's meeting on 20 February, your executive discussed a plan to conduct a raffle. You will remember this type of question was posed at our regular February meeting, and several people indicated willingness to buy tickets. As we look deeper into the plan, we want to ensure our members are willing to participate in ticket selling.

The current plan calls for three prizes with a total value of \$1000. This means we need to sell at least 10 books of 20 tickets at \$5.00 per ticket. The prizes are ½ beef, 50 lb sausage, and tablecloth. We will seek your feedback at the next meeting. The Question is....How many are willing to sell at least one book of tickets?

Jim Campbell

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### **Anniversary Cook Book Planned**

As we approach the honey sales season, we look for items to stimulate customer purchases. What could be used to increase sales, and ultimately uses of honey?

Ken Fehler has offered to prepare a "Honey Cook Book", using favourite recipes from friends and neighbours. At the present time, we are not sure of the exact size and style of book to produce. In past years, RRAA has designed and printed "A Taste of Honey" cook book in August 1982. This was offered for sale to our members and at the honey show. Also, Jim Campbell co-ordinated "The Canadian Honey Recipe Book" for the Canadian Honey Council, distributed to all provinces in July 1984.

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Although many books are available, perhaps in this 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it 's time to look at this idea one more time.

Often we have considered handing out recipes on a regular sheet of paper at the honey show. This has not appealed to me, as I do not think people put any value in it, plus it does not lead to a purchase of honey. The only good thing is that it is fairly economical and does provide something for customers to pick up. An option here is that a small booklet attached to each jar of honey sold may ensure its use. The small booklet could be used as an RRAA fundraiser for our members to use.

Again, your executives are seeking feedback from our members. Have you any favourite recipes to contribute? What type of booklet would your customers want? How many booklets should we print?

If you have any comments or ideas to help with this project, please call Ken at 667-9013, or me at 467-5246.

Jim Campbell, Chair RRAA

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### **Items for Sale**

#### **Equipment for Sale:**

Sears Craftsman 10" Table Saw with Stand, in good working order: \$125.00 or best offer.

Call Ted Scheuneman at 338-6066

#### **Lumber for Sale:**

Planed Spruce Boards, 7/8 inch thick x 10 inch wide x 8 ft long, price \$0.80 per foot, will cut to any size required.

Contact Dennis Ross at 878-2924

#### **Bee Equipment For Sale:**

New standard screened bottom boards, hot dipped in paraffin to prevent wood rot for years, with entrance reducer and metal mite tray for easy mite counts, reduces wax moth as well. With galvanized screens \$45.00, with stainless wire mesh \$57.00. Call Ted Scheuneman at 338-6066 between 2100 and 2200 hours.

#### **Bees For Sale:**

Limited number of nucs for sale in May. Bees on 4 frames with brood on two of them. No tracheal mites, no AFB, varroa not detectable. Each nuc comes with a 2002 Manitoba raised queen. Contact Ted at (204) 338-6066 between 2100 and 2200 hours.

#### **Storage Tubs For Sale:**

Large heavy white plastic tubs for sale. Good for honey storage or other uses. Size is approx 4 feet square by 4 feet high. \$60.00 each. Delivery available if required. Contact Ken Fehler at (204) 667-9013

#### **Complete Outfit For Sale:**

Complete 100+ Colony Operation, Bees, hives, carts, 32 frame SS Dadant D. C. extractor, SS Sump, sump pump, Cowan Uncapper, uncapping trays, storage tanks, electric fencers, frame filler, boxes, frames, foundation, queen excluders, escape boards, trailers, new uniforms, veils, gloves, miscellaneous beekeeping and frame making equipment.

Contact Charles Polcyn at (204) 284-7064 or Email: charlespolcyn@yahoo.com

#### **Editor's Comments:**

If you have any items for sale let me know and I'll list them for you. For sale items are also listed on the web page. Until next time;

Doug

**RED RIVER APIARIST'S ASSOCIATION  
2003 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM**

Please complete and mail with your cheque, for \$20.00, payable to: The Red River Apiarists' Association

Mail to: **Red River Apiarists' Association  
Dennis Ross, Treasurer,  
Group 40, Box 20, RR2  
Lorette, MB  
R0A 0Y0**

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NEW MEMBER [  ] RENEWAL [  ]

**THANK YOU**