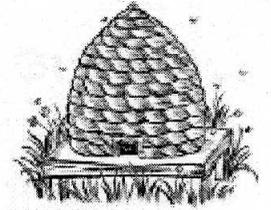


The Bee Cause



Volume 4, Issue 1

February, 2007

Points of Interest:

- Next general meeting is Tuesday, February 13th. Rhéal will be talking on his experiences with Chilean Beekeeping.
- New Moon February 19th.
- Daylight Saving time begins this year March 11th.

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MBA Ponders 'The Beetle'

-Jim Campbell, MBA Rep

The Manitoba Beekeepers' Association is reviewing its' policy on permitting imports of package bees from Australia and working with Canadian Honey Council to develop revisions.

Specimens of the Small Hive Beetle (SHB) found last year in Alberta, and previously in Manitoba, have been analyzed by the USDA bee laboratory in Beltsville Maryland. DNA analysis confirmed that these beetles are identical to the one found at Beaverlodge in June and that all of these beetles are of Australian origin. The analysis confirmed the suspicions the pest was imported in packages of bees from that country.

In preparation for the Annual Meeting of Canadian Honey Council, in Langley, BC, the

directors of MBA considered three possibilities:

- ONE: Outright discontinue the importation of packaged bees from Australia until a further assessment is done as it is too risky to bring the SHB into our country.
- TWO: Continue to allow the importation of packaged bees from Australia however ask for certain provisions in order to minimize the risk of the hive beetle arriving here in packages. i.e.: isolation areas in Australia, improved inspections, certain hive treatment guidelines, etc..
- THREE: Continue to allow the importation of packaged bees from Australia

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Founding Member Passes On

Peacefully on Sunday, January 14, 2007 at the Selkirk District General Hospital, Bill Brace aged 82 years.

Bill was predeceased by his wife Margaret, daughter Karen, great-granddaughter Lexi, parents Henry and Beatrice, and brother Barton. He is survived by his daughters Diane (Ches) Smolinski and Sharon (Ed) Tardi and by his sons Murray and Chris (Val), as well as eleven grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren and an eighth great-grandchild soon to arrive.

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Bill Brace was a friend to everyone he met.

Decline of Bees Raises Concerns

Dennis Bueckert
Canadian Press
Monday, January 22, 2007

The decline of bee populations in Europe and North America has raised alarm about pollinators that fertilize crops essential for the human food supply.

Experts are calling for measures to protect pollinators of all kinds, including not only bees, both managed and wild, but birds, bats, flies and even beetles.

They say people should become much more tolerant of plant species that are currently viewed as weeds, which can be vital to pollinators' survival.

"Pollinator declines and pollination deficits are now being reported for North America and may signal a threat to ecosystem and agricultural productivity," says a paper by University of Guelph ecologist Vernon Thomas.

Threats to pollinators include pesticides, climate change, habitat destruction, invasive species and human indifference.

Farmers and others should be less zealous about eliminating weeds around the boundaries of farmland, in ditches or utility rights of way, experts say.

"It's actually these kind of scruffy areas that pollinators like," said Laurie Davies Adams, executive director of the Washington-based CoEvolution Institute.

Government regulations that discourage the growth of certain types of plants, such as milkweed, can also be a problem.

Gardeners can play a useful role by creating habitat for pollinators, Adams said.

"What we want is for everyday people to look at their gardens and say, do you want just a static stage that is an empty

theatre or do you want actors to come in and have this interaction?"

"Very few pollinators are specialists; most are generalists. Consequently they depend on a full range and diversity of plants.

"Keep in mind that many flowers have particular blooming periods. You need to have an availability of floral resources right through the lifespan of that insect."

Did You Know! Blueberry farmers in Nova Scotia depend on native bees as much as they depend on honey bees. Without either of them, the berries do not set as well.

Founding Member Passes On

(Continued from page 1)

Bill Brace worked for the RCMP and was one of the founding members of the Red River Apiarists' Association. In 1982, Bill founded the Association for Young Magicians in Canada and was also a founding member of the St. James Optomists Club.

Bills was the recipient of the Governor General's Caring Canadians Award presented personally by Adrienne Clark-

son, and was invested in the Order of Manitoba. Bill was also a life member of several associations.

He was also a close friend to well known escape artist and entertainer, Dean Gunnarson. He did hundreds of free magic shows at schools, youth centres, and seniors' homes. Bruce created the Philip Horman scholarship in memory of the young promising magician from Steinbach who passed away at an early age.

Several years ago, Bill attended an MBA convention in Winnipeg accompanied by Dean Gunnarson who entertained everyone at our banquet. During the show we were treated to several escapes and a wide variety of magic tricks.

Bill Brace was a friend to everyone he met.

President's Message

- Charles Polcyn, President

Welcome to another year of beekeeping with the usual variation of weather, honey prices and honey marketing issues. And as usual, there are some things beyond our control and others that we have been concerned with in the past and hope to see some action or changes taking place this year.

The wholesale price is still struggling to get over that \$1.00/lb level, with most of the time at year end in the low 90 cents a pound range. With the increase of energy costs of last summer and fall, the beekeepers break-even cost price certainly rose well over

\$1.00/lb. How long can the beekeeping industry continue to operate as a loss leader business when we have nothing else to sell at a loss other than our equipment.

Perhaps it is time to look for pollination contracts across the prairies, greater presence in farmers markets, honey promotion days at local parking lots and what else to encourage the sale and use of Canadian honey.

A discussion that I had with a shopper in the local President's Choice store in front of the honey section was revealing to me. Her question to me was what type/brand honey should I buy, as it

seems that honey doesn't taste like it used to anymore. We talked about looking at labels for country of origin, what ways she might be using the honey as well as where could she find honey that had been advertised recently in the Winnipeg area. Looking at the shelf choice of thirteen, of which only two were definitely of pure Canadian origin, she was undecided of her choice.

This is part of the dilemma of shoppers who want to buy quality Canadian honey but are thwarted by the inconsistent labelling that is still being permitted by the Federal Department of Agri-

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MBA Ponders 'Beetle'

(Continued from page 1)

same as before as it appears to pose a very minimal risk to our industry.

The likely MBA scenario will be one of improved inspection levels to reduce

risk of SHB importation. Should this be unworkable by the Australian exporters, there is a possibility imports could cease. This would create difficulties for Canadian and USA producers, as many packages go to both countries. Given the recently reported losses of over wintering colonies in the USA, Almond pollination could also be jeopardized. We will have to await consensus from the CHC delegates on this issue.

Did You Know! The earliest record of a beekeeper is an 8,000 year old rock painting found in eastern Spain. It depicts a person high in a tree or cliff with a pail in hand surrounded by a cloud of bees.

Colony Collapse Disorder

A group of researchers, extension agents, and regulatory officials in the United States have formalized a working group to study the current bee loss syndrome being seen in the U.S.

As of this time, there are reports that major losses have been seen in the U.S., starting in the spring in places like

Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa. Its still ongoing in Florida, with major losses occurring in Oklahoma, and a number of reports from California over the last few days.

They are no longer calling this Fall Dwindle Disease -- its not a fall phenomenon. When looked at across the

nation, its a rapid collapse (often in less than 2-3 weeks), and it may or may not be a disease in the strictest sense. So, They are terming it Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD).

The group is to investigate this problem and call themselves the CCD

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Colony Collapse Disorder

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Working Group. This group represents a diverse number of institutions including:

- Bee Alert Technology, Inc. (a bee technology transfer company Affiliated with the University of Montana),
- the Pennsylvania State University,
- the USDA/ARS,
- the Florida Department of Agriculture,
- the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

They are planning on adding Eric Musen to the group to represent California.

Based on initial visits to affected bee yards, the CCD drew up a list of CCD

Symptoms. The following symptoms are typical of the disorder:

In collapsed colonies:

1. The complete absence of adult bees in colonies, with no or little build up of dead bees in the colonies or in front of those colonies.
2. The presence of capped brood in colonies,
3. The presence of food stores, both honey and bee bread which is not robbed by other bees, and
4. When attacked by hive pests such as wax moth and small hive beetle, the attack is noticeably delayed (days, weeks)

In cases where the colony appear to be actively collapsing:

1. An insufficient workforce to maintain the brood that is present.
2. The workforce seems to be made up of young adult bees.
3. The queen is present.
4. The cluster is reluctant to consume provided feed, such as sugar syrup

and protein supplement.

Initial results from the online survey (www.beesurvey.com) has revealed that beekeepers think that this started at least 1-2 years ago, in its present form. As this list has mentioned, similar syndromes have been reported in the U.S., dating back to 1896. It certainly looks identical to the disorder reported by Oertel in 1965 (from bee losses in 63-64).

Finally, if you've experienced this, please fill out the survey - regardless of how convinced you are that you know what caused it in your bees. <http://beealert.blackfoot.net/~beealert/surveys/index.php>

We'd like to hear from beekeepers who HAVE not ever had this problem - where are your bees, what are you doing different? So, again, fill out the survey, just be sure we know that your bees haven't had the disorder.

Editor's Bee Musings

- Jack Lee (editor)

It is customary for most publications to provide some column space for editor's comments. So here we go.

I wasn't a member of this club for more than a minute and found myself appointed with this responsibility. It wasn't until that I accepted the nomination, that I heard of how often it is published. Did I hear that right?... You want an issue how often?... Every month!

However, I am glad to see that there are so many members providing articles leaving me with only the Editor's real job—that is to assemble everything and put it together in a consistent way that can be distributed and assimilated by its audience.

I am impressed by earlier issues that the previous editor put together and

hope to be as good a beekeeper as he was an editor. This issue will not be as lengthy as his were as I need the time to master the software and develop the contacts. Unfortunately, it will not be in colour as the cost of outsourcing its printing is out of our reach right now. However, I am sure, that will be reexamined once we have cheaper options.

Although, I am new to almost all of you, I am a beekeeper long past. Back in 1970 when I was about 16, I kept bees with Albert Anderson as my mentor until I finished university where I graduated in Entomology.

Being a person with many distracting interests, I also graduated in computer science and moved about the country following job offers. Naturally I had to shed my beekeeping interests.

Since then I have cautiously put down

some roots. I got married last summer. My wife and I purchased some rural property so I can now keep bees without my neighbors siccing the city authorities on me.

Last summer, I started off again with six hives and am overwintering five. There have been many changes in the industry. It is definitely a more complex subject and it is obvious that to be successful, a beekeeper has to be a far more astute manager than he/she ever had to be. Costs are higher, returns are less. There are new pests for which science has few answers.

Some things have not changed. The honey bee is a secretive animal that is essentially wild—they can just get up and go even if you do things right. It is hard hot work. The stings always hurt. You have to love this business to stay in it!

Minutes of the General Meeting January 20, 2007

John Russell welcomed members and guests to the January meeting at 7:30 PM. Moved by Jim Campbell and seconded by Gilles Lantagne that the minutes be accepted as circulated in the "Bee Cause". Carried

MBA Report: Jim Campbell encouraged everyone to attend the MBA Convention on February 9 - 10 at the Canad Inn - Ft. Gary for some informative sessions and to enjoy the opportunity to meet with Manitoba beekeepers and beekeepers from other provinces to share ideas and fellowship.

Canadian Honey Council: Jim reported that 2700 promotional brochures from CHC have been ordered. These will be for sale to beekeepers for use at their honey house, markets and promo-

tions. A picture of the color brochure can be viewed on the CHC web site.

Financial Report: Dennis passed out copies to everyone of the 2006 year end financial statement. Moved by Jim and seconded by Charles that the report be accepted. Carried. At the present time we have approximately 60 members.

Nominating Committee Report: Charles extended thanks to Dan Lacocq for his work on the newsletter for the past three years and to Heather Laird for the work she has done as President of the Association. The nominating committee submitted Jack Lee's name for newsletter editor and Charles Polcyn for president. No further nominations were made from the floor. Jack's name was called from the floor by Nelson Szwaluk and seconded by Rhéal Lafrenière. Charles' name was called from the floor by Jim Campbell and seconded by Rhéal Lafrenière. Both were declared elected. Representatives of the remaining committees agreed to

stay on for 2007.

Program: Charles Polcyn gave the audience a slide show presentation on his recent experiences in Armenia.

Loonie Draw: Jack Berard won the jar of honey from France, John Speer won the jar of clover honey from Wisconsin, and Jim won the jar of cranberry honey. Chris Argeriou's name was drawn for the recipe book and Nelson Szwaluk for the miniature wind chime.

President's Message

(Continued from page 3)

culture. A CANADA GRADE NUMBER ONE label on a container should mean that the honey was produced and packed in Canada. At the end she decided to purchase her honey elsewhere that had more Canadian honey choices.

There are several other beekeeping events taking place in late January and early February that are of interest to beekeepers. One of them is the U. of Manitoba Beekeepers Course that starts on January 31st and runs for ten Wednesdays, while the other is the MBA winter meeting at Canad Inns on Pembina Highway in Fort Garry. This is on February 9th and 10th. Contact www.manitobabee.org or the Provincial Apiarist's office for more information. There are some very good information sessions being offered on both days.

Many thanks from the RRAA membership for the fine work done by Dan Lecocq and Heather Laird who have stepped down from the Executive Committee of RRAA to do other things. Your efforts were noticed and appreciated by all. Also thanks to all the returning Executive Members, as well as to Jack Lee, a recent member, who will be doing the Newsletter.

Reports from the October Honey Shows indicated that the public was very interested in the information and the displays, and liked interacting with Pierre the Bear. We always need volunteers to help the annual Honey Shows flow smoothly, and I hope that many of you will be available next fall to help out with the work that is done. Promoting Manitoba Honey and the importance of honeybees in our environment helps all beekeepers.

Best Wishes for 2007

2007 Executive

Past President: Charles Polcyn
Ph 284-7064
845 kebir
Winnipeg, MB
Email: charlespolcyn@yahoo.com

1st Vice President: John Badiuk
Ph 943-0166
1413-411 Cumberland Ave
Winnipeg, MB R3B 1T7
Email: honeyb@mts.net

2nd Vice President: Margaret E Smith
Ph 254-4509
1051 Porcher Rd
St. Andrews, MB R1A 3N4
Email: rmsmith2@mts.net

Past President: Heather Laird
Ph 475-2307
1003 Jessie Ave.
Winnipeg, MB R3M 1A1
Email: hlaidd@mb.sympatico.ca

Secretary: Ron Rudiak
Ph 326-3763
Box 1448
Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0
Email: manbeekr@mts.net

Treasurer: Dennis Ross
Ph 878-2924
Group 40, Box 20, RR2
Lorette, MB R0A 0Y0
Email: rosskr@mts.net

MBA Delegate: Jim Campbell
Ph 467-5246
Box 234
Stonewall, MB R0C 2Z0
Email: jaycam@mts.net

Reporter: Ron Rudiak
Ph 326-3763
Box 1448
Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0
Email: manbeekr@mts.net

Newsletter Editor: Jack Lee
Ph 474-2075
676 Garwood Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R3M 1N2
Email: jacklee@mts.net

**Red River Apiarists' Association
Executive Meeting - January 16, 2007
Salisbury House
(Corner of Bishop Grandin and Pembina Highway)**

In attendance: John Russell, David Ostermann, Dennis Ross, Charles Polcyn, Margaret Smith, Ron Rudiak, and Jack Lee. Charles opened the meeting at 5:30 PM

- 1) **Budget Plan and Priorities for 2007:** In 2004 our bank account balance was about \$2100 and at the end of 2006 the balance is just over \$4000. The executive all agreed that we should develop a budget so that we can project how much income to expect and what the RRAA can afford to do for our members. Charles, John, Jim Campbell and Dennis will produce a budget for 2007.

Dennis Ross has booked the River Heights Community Club for the year 2007. At present, we are paying \$58.80 for the meeting room at the River Heights Community Centre which includes coffee. Should a portion of our funds be donated to research? At the honey show, could we have a raffle to raise funding and awareness for bee research? Are there other research funding ideas that could be used?

- 2) **Newsletter Challenges:** Charles welcomed our newsletter editor, Jack Lee, to the RRAA executive committee. It was generally agreed that we need to maintain the high quality content of our newsletter. Color is not as important as content and layout. Presently we are sending our about 100 copies of the Bee Cause, 60 to members and the remainder to a supplementary list and an honorary list. The list will be verified for correctness and to make sure that each mailing is required. For members having access to e-mail it may be possible to send copies of our newsletter to them electronically to decrease costs. For B/W the projected cost per issue is about \$1.20 each to copy and mail out. Any money generated from advertising could also be used to offset costs of producing the newsletter. We will need to set advertising rates for half page, quarter page etc. Jack Lee will look into tracking individual memberships to ensure that we will not be sending copies out to unpaid members. RRAA memberships become due at the beginning of each calendar year. An April issue of BC has traditionally been the last one mailed out to a member who is in arrears. An advance of \$300 was provided to Jack for newsletter expenses.

Newsletter content was also discussed. Charles Polcyn will provide a column for February. It was agreed that a recipe should be included in each issue. Minutes of each meeting will be included as well as articles related to beekeeping, honey marketing etc.

- 3) **Honey Show Arrangements:** Margaret Smith and John Russell will arrange space for the honey show and promotion events for 2007.
- 4) **Membership:** Jim Campbell and Ron Rudiak will work on a pamphlet about becoming a beekeeper that can be handed out to prospective members. We may possibly be able to arrange with Bee Maid to have a sign or meeting notice (on their bulletin board) with details about the RRAA.
- 5) **RRAA Logo:** Members of the Association and their families will be invited to submit original hand drawn entries for a new RRAA logo to replace the outdated skep that we use now. The logo currently in use by the Manitoba Beekeepers' Association originated from a submission made by a RRAA member during the late 70's Ron Rudiak will write up the details to include the Bee Cause for February. The deadline for submissions will be March 31, 2007
- 6) **RRAA Web site:** Doug Henry has built and maintained this site for several years. It is being updated regularly and contains much useful beekeeping information. Charles will discuss, with Doug, the cost of maintaining it.
- 7) **Beekeeping Mentors:** This will be a topic for discussion at our monthly meeting on February 13th.
- 8) **Swarm Lists:** As well as the MAFRI office, Dennis and John will also be available to contact RRAA members who have placed their names on the swarm list.
- 9) **Other Business:** Ron and David Ostermann explained how money put into research is often used to apply for additional research money from the Canadian Bee Research Fund and some applicable government programs such as MAVI.

Ron also explained that tight budgeting is now occurring within the MBA. Present and future financial demands on that organization has caused them to review the provisions of the Farm Products Marketing Act. Therein, all beekeepers marketing honey from 50 colonies or more are required to be a member of the Manitoba Beekeepers' Assoc. (in good standing).

Ron Rudiak - Secretary

CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale: Limited number of nucs available around the 15th of May, weather permitting. Nucs come with 4 frames of bees and brood on at least 2 with a 2006 queen from my own breeding stock.

Please Call **Ted Scheuneman** 338-6066, West St Paul

For Sale: 4 frame Nucs with (2006) local queens available in spring.

Please call **George Chwist** ph: 338-5078

For sale: frames of brood and bee's and nucs available May 2007. Please call **Mike Grysiuk**

For Sale: 30 Wintered colonies in double brood chambers ready in spring.

Please call **Javad** ph: 878-9587

For Sale. washed honey drums - \$25 ,Russian Nucs and Queens - please enquire for pricing ,and also metal hive lids - \$3.00

Please call **Paul Gregory** Tel: (204) 372-6920 or Fax: (204) 372-6635

For Sale Also Over wintered super nucs for sale next mid may. 3 frames of brood + 1 frame honey. Price is \$130.00 each.

Call **Pierre Faure:**
1 .204.248.2645



For sale: Wintered colonies ,Spring Nucs and Super Nucs (with laying queen and a minimum of 3 frames of brood available in May

Call **Rod Boudreau** ph: 885-3344

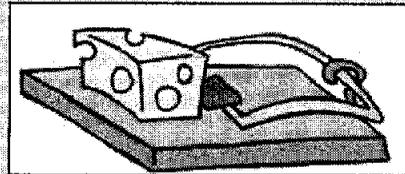
For Sale: Bee Boxes with empty frames, Bee Boxes, Metal Lids, Feeder Lids, Plastic Box Top Feeders, Wooden Box Top Feeders, Bottom Boards, Frame Making pieces, Electric Fencers for Bears, other equipment, Etc.

Contact **Charles Polcyn** at 284-7064 or Email: charlespolcyn@yahoo.com

Wanted : Looking for a solar wax melter.

Doug Henry 757-4694 dhenry@skyweb.ca

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Corporate Advertising is available on this newsletter.
Rates for quarter, half and full page.

RED RIVER APIARIST ASSOCIATION

Editor
676 Garwood Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada, R3M 1N2

Phone: 204-474-2075
Email: JackLee@mts.net



We are on the web!
www.geocities.com/ve4tg/

The Bee Cause is the official publication of the Red River Apiarist Association for distribution to its members and their colleagues in the beekeeping industry. It is published eight times a year on a monthly basis excepting December and summer months of June, July, and August.

Articles can be best submitted in HTML or RTF formats as email attachments. Though they may be edited for spelling and basic grammar, no changes will be made to their contents, message and opinions. They are those of their originator and not of the Red River Apiarist Association.

The Red River Apiarist Association, formed in 1963, represents the Beekeepers of the Red River Valley and environs in southern Manitoba. The association provides a forum for the promotion of sound beekeeping practices, education and networking opportunities through the dissemination of this monthly newsletter, meetings, field days, workshops and presentations by local apicultural experts.

Scientists Dispute Organic Activist Claim

Press Release - Ecological Society of America, January 17, 2007

The Center for Global Food Issues noticed that, on December 26, the U.S.-based Organic Consumers Association posted a "news" item on their website claiming in a headline that new research found "wild bees reject biotech crops". (http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_3665.cfm)

The posting was formatted to make it appear it was from a December 23 press release issued by the widely respected Ecological Society of America - the organization that represents professional ecologists. Below the alarming headline were the words "Ecological Society of America, Dec 23, 2006" which is standard press release formatting.

Within days, dozens of environ-

mental" news websites had republished the piece with a link back to the OCA news page. By early January, major print newspapers in Italy (such as the Turin-based *La Stampa*, circulation 300,000+) ran the story as if it were a legitimate and accurate news item, even quoting Greenpeace Italy for their reaction.

In fact, the "news" was created by misinterpreting two-year-old research. The Ecological Society has never issued a press release on the research.

The ESA's Annie Drinkard, Public Affairs Officer, says that "some people have mistaken [the Organic Consumers Association web page] as a full news release from the Ecological Society of America, which it is not."

The 2005 paper's lead researcher, Dr. Lora Morandin, says the group is mis-

interpreting her research. "They are taking our research out of context. We made no conclusions as to why there was lower bee abundance in the GM canola fields. Our two primary hypotheses are differences in the land surrounding the canola fields and low weed abundance in GM canola fields."

In fact, several other studies have shown that because weed control is often more effective in herbicide tolerant biotech crops (such as was studied by Dr. Morandin and her coauthor), there are fewer weeds and, logically, fewer weed-associated insects. So the research is not at all alarming or surprising.

For more information, contact: Alex Avery, Hudson Institute's Center for Global Food Issues