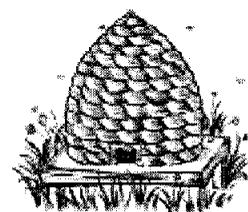


# The Bee Cause



Volume 4, Issue 3

April, 2007

## Spring 2007 Extension Report

### Points of Interest:

- Next general meeting is Tuesday, April 10th. Ted Scheuneman and David Ostermann will be discussing the production of queens and nucs.
- New Moon April 17th

### Inside this issue:

Executive List	2
Ontario Honey Bee Losses	2
Honey Recipe of the Week	3
Beekeeper's Field Day and Summer Picnic	4
Editor's Bee Musing - What is in a Disease's Name	4
Minutes of General Meeting	5
A Penny for Your Sting	6
Promoting Honey and Health	6
Classified Ads	7

- David Ostermann, Business Development Specialist and Pollination Apiarist, MFR!

Early indications are that overwinter losses in the province are normal this year, and at this point (March 21) there are no reports of any major losses; however it is still very early. So far there has been some, albeit limited, flight activity on the warm, sunny days. There is still much snow on the ground, and daily lows remain, well... low, however, there's a feeling that spring conditions are near with highs of +10 °C forecast for later this week.

There are some reports of losses possibly associated with treatments not working, or not being used properly. For example, Check-Mite+ strips for varroa, as indicated on the label, are not to be kept in over the winter, as significant bee losses may result! **Generally speaking, as treatment-resistant risk**

**grows, and more treatment options become available, it is important to remember to monitor mite and disease levels, before and after treatment, and be sure to follow the specific product label instructions.**

As presented at the MBA Convention in February, pollination recommendations for a number of crops requiring custom pollination in Manitoba are expected to be posted on the MBA website ([www.manitobabee.org](http://www.manitobabee.org)) this spring. The recommendations attempt to maximize the resources of growers and beekeepers, highlight some of the issues and address common questions about honey bee custom pollination in Manitoba. So stay tuned!

Also posted on the MBA website

*(Continued on page 3)*

## President's Comments

March may be going out like a lamb as the last week has been warm, but let us be patient. The signs are there as hundreds of geese are heading north, streets are slushy and beekeepers are beginning to move some of their hives outside. Maybe we will have that proverbial warm April showery month and get those overwintered bees off to a good start. The fall 2007 Manitoba Honey Show will be held on September 28th to the 30th at the Centre Court in The Forks this year. We will be a part

of their Harvest Days Week which starts on September 21st. The space for display, education and vendors will be about the same as we have had at St. Vital and Kildonan Place malls. Both malls, who have been our hosts in the past, want us to pay over \$500 or more this year to have the Honey Show over a weekend in October. The Executive agreed that our budget doesn't allow an expenditure of that size as a part of the Honey Show expenses, thus the change of venue.

Also we have a confirmation of the MAY 8th RRAA MEETING to be held at the Bee Maid Honey Cooperative off Ellice Avenue. MARK this CHANGE of LOCATION on your Calendar. There will be a tour first of

*(Continued on page 2)*

**Did You Know!** Spring is an unpredictable season because that is when the Arctic Air Mass recedes and advances with warmer air masses from the Gulf of Mexico in a meteorological tug of war.

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## President's Report

*(Continued from page 1)*

the facilities for receiving and packing honey, as well as a walk about in the Beekeeper Supply Area. After that we will have our regular business meeting in the Honey Co-op board room.

There seems to be another problem coming up for beekeepers in Canada that has its origins in other countries. The next one likely for us may be the CCD, or Colony Collapse Disease. However this one may stay away for a while as it seems linked to possible pesticide accumulations in pollen that bees begin to use when fresh natural pollen is no longer available. Hopefully farmers up here are not using the same pesticides that are used in many areas of the central and southern states, which may be a link to this problem.

Now if there is shortage of bees in the USA as well as in Europe, does that mean that the price of honey may go up, and that we may be selling bees over the 49th parallel on a one way trip. Summer may have the answers to those questions.

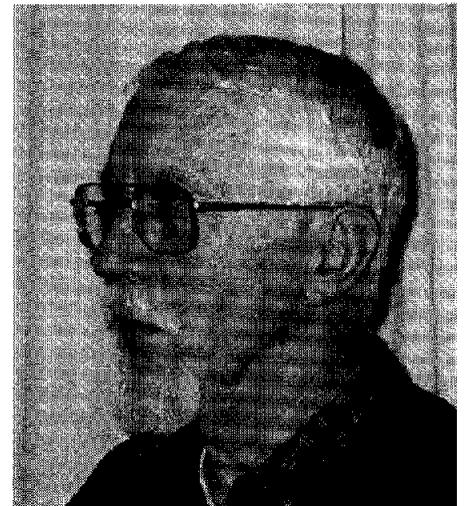
This should also be the year for all of us to be aware of the health of our own colonies, and plan to expand our colony

count for future opportunities. Just like buying your vegetables and fruit from the local producer, we as beekeepers should consider doing the same when we need more queens or colonies. Less traveled should be good for all aspects of agriculture, not just Peak of the Market produce.

And to close on a note of caution, cold weather can still turn up in April, so don't be quick to unwrap outdoor hives, or be afraid of slipping wind breakers over hives you have moved outside. April is always unpredictable.

Enjoy the Easter Holidays--

Charles Polcyn, RRAA President



## Ontario Honey Bee Losses

- Report on Winter Losses of Honey Bee Colonies in Ontario 2007 by Doug McRory, March 30, 2007

Normal winter losses of honey bees in Ontario since we have had mites have settled out at about 18%. This season several beekeepers in an area from St. Thomas in the west to Niagara in the east are reporting losses around 50-60% with one as high as 90%. There is a line south of the 401 where if the bees are south of the line the losses are more severe than north of the line.

As Provincial Apiarist, I have been expecting higher winter losses this season than normal. I expect the loss to be in the 25-30% range across the province. This is

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Ontario Honey Bee Losses

(Continued from page 2)

due to the fall conditions where there was not a strong honey flow in August and September to stimulate brood production which would result in baby bees to form a good winter cluster. The affected area in Niagara and Haldimand-Norfolk was even worse for depressing conditions last fall. Beekeepers reported very small clusters of bees going into fall. The fall stayed warm and these small clusters of bees just dwindled away. In these colonies we do not find even any dead bees. All of the bees are gone.

The fall weather was very mild and true winter weather did not set in until mid January. The bees tried raising baby bees (brood). It then turned very

cold for about six weeks. Once the bees have started a brood nest with brood, they will not leave it even to get food reserves that may be one or two combs away from them. There is a large number of colonies that have died for this reason.

As Provincial Apiarist, I do not believe that we have the CCD – Colony Collapse Disorder that the beekeepers of United States are experiencing. We do not have Small Hive Beetles in Ontario. We do not move the bees as much or over the great distances that they do in the United States. We do not have many of the other possible conditions that are suspected of causing the losses in United States.

### Lemon Honey Butter

1/4 cup of honey  
1 Tbsp. lemon juice  
1/4 cup softened butter  
Grated rind of 1 lemon

Mix above ingredients together well. Spread between slices of fruit or nut bread.

-originally published in "Hydro Lines"  
-original author was Elizabeth  
-reprinted by kind permission of Manitoba  
Hydro

## Spring 2007 Extension Report

(Continued from page 1)

("Bulletins") you can find information on news and events, as well as contact information for producer's selling honey bee colonies, nucs, queens, etc. this upcoming season. Generally, queen cells or mated queens are available locally as early as the second half of May, if ordered well in advance.

### *Nosema disease*

Recent reports out of Europe and the U.S. indicate that *Nosema ceranae*, a relative of *Nosema apis*, is being found in honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) there, and that it may be associated with colony losses. As more is learned about the distribution of *N. ceranae*, it is speculated that the endoparasite may have been infecting honey bees in these areas, in addition to *N. apis*, for a considerable period of time prior to its relatively recent identification in honey bees there.

Although not fully understood at this

time, research suggests that *N. ceranae* may be more harmful than *N. apis*. In a recent laboratory study, where small numbers of honey bees were confined in cages, *N. ceranae* was found to kill all bees within 8 days. Reports from apiaries affected by *N. ceranae* in Spain, however, show non-specific symptoms, such as a gradual depopulation, higher fall/winter colony losses, or low production, not a sudden loss of bees. Ultimately, it's unclear how it might progress over a long harsh winter period such as in Manitoba. Also, dysentery or crawling bee behaviour have not been reported with the infections in Spain. In the U.S. it is speculated that *N. ceranae* is contributing to recent colony losses, and that it may be associated with what is being called "colony collapse disorder" (CCD). Early reports indicate that, like *N. apis*, *N. ceranae* can be managed with fumagillin; however, the antibiotic is not registered for such treatment.

To analyse the species of *Nosema* in

Manitoba, a number of nosema samples from last year's inspection program, collected from throughout the province, have been sent away for species identification. Although spores of *N. ceranae* are generally smaller than those of *N. apis*, reliable diagnosis requires genetic sequencing or molecular analysis. Currently in Manitoba, *N. ceranae* has not been documented, nor has it been documented in Canada. The results are expected back sometime this spring.

**Did You Know! Honey Bees keep their brood at a relative humidity of 90-95%. That requires 44 pounds of water per year on top of the nectar collected. (The Hive and the Honey Bee, page 215).**

## Beekeepers' Field Day and Summer Picnic

Manitoba Beekeepers' Association together with the Red River Apiarists' Association invite all interested beekeepers to attend a **Field Day and Summer Picnic** at Ethelbert, Manitoba.

**Date:** Friday 22 June 2007 at 12:00 noon.

**Location:** BBQ and Tour to take place at the Podolski Honey Farm, Ethelbert at 12:00 noon on Friday.

**Food Cost:** \$10.00 each. Bring your lawn chair, and perhaps a baseball

glove too!

**Directions:** Drive north from Dauphin along Hwy 10. Turn East at the second 10A exit. (at XTR Gas Station) into Ethelbert. Drive about 1/4 mile, turn left into driveway (North side of 10A) at yard with large quonsets.

**Events:** Tour one of the larger Honey Producers in Manitoba. Learn about the recent conversion to Coal Heating unit. See the "Spider" at work. Learn about hiring Foreign Workers for Honey producers.

**Bear Pit Session:** Discussion on current beekeeping activities and events, including updates on in-progress research.

Those attending the tour are expected to arrange their own transportation to and from the tour site.

For those interested, the Saskatchewan Field Day will be near Nipawin on Saturday.

For more information, call Jim Campbell at (204) 467-5246, or Rhéal Lafrenière at (204) 945-4825.

## Bee Musings - What is in a Disease's Name

- Jack Lee (editor)

In the scientific world, naming is everything and the scientific world naming has its own quirks—especially when it comes to the naming of diseases.

Take "American Foulbrood". The name describes an identifiable symptom of the disease (stinky brood) and at the same time infers that the disease is either found in or originated from the United States. Arabian horses come from Arabia—right! Well no. American Foulbrood has been found all over the world ever since beekeepers started taking interest in the health of their bees.

In fact, European foulbrood was once considered the same disease. Both were named simply "foulbrood". It wasn't until 1906 that scientist realized they were two separate diseases with different causes and different treatments. The two foulbroods were thus renamed to reflect which continent their causative agents were discovered.

No one likes disease and no one likes to be associated with them. Everyone

can be rest assured that if a Canadian scientist were to discover a new form of foulbrood, it would not be called "Canadian Foulbrood" and CCD would never be called "Migratory Beekeepers Disappearance Disease". Not only would this infer unfair blame upon those that first reported it, these names are not all descriptive of their nature.

The word "disorder" in CCD refers to the fact that no cause has been identified.

The most interesting word in this disease's name is "collapse". Collapse is never a good thing. Some definitions of the word are:

*"to crumble suddenly; to come to nothing; a falling in or together; to sink into extreme weakness"*

To put it another way - people get sick, cars break down; but bridges never break or bend, they collapse!! And so it seems can the health of honey bees.

At the Beekeeper's Symposium last March, one of the presenters showed a

picture of a comb of bees upon which a group of bees were milling around on one side and the on the other side was the queen bee all by itself.

The horror that I felt was also felt by at least one other beekeeper in the crowd who asked "where is her retinue?".

To at least us both, and probably many more, was the "coming to nothing" of the social glue that makes a group of honey bees a colony. Not a strong colony, not a weak colony, not a sick colony, but no colony at all. That is colony collapse.

The biologist in me knows that the instincts of the honey bee to act for the greater good of the colony are stronger than its sense of self preservation. That is why we get stung so much. It is hard to believe that a disease could interfere with something so basic.

The gist of the symposium is that beekeepers have to be mindful of all the various stresses that a modern bee hive is subjected to. Any one component by itself may not be alarming but the sum of them all could be resulting in CCD.

## Red River Apiarists' Association Minutes of the General Meeting March 13, 2007

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Thirty-two members and guests were in attendance as Charles Polcyn welcomed everyone to the March meeting at 7:30 PM. Moved by Ken Fehler and seconded by Chris Argeriou that the minutes be accepted as circulated in the "Bee Cause". Carried

**Emergency Spring Feeding:** Charles drew everyone's attention to a large box of zipper lock bags that each contained blocks of a hard white material. He explained that John Russell had made these out of sugar and water which had been carefully heated and then poured onto cookie sheets to produce a fondant to be used as feed for hungry colonies in the spring. These fondant blocks are quite popular in Europe as they are easy to handle and accepted well by honey bee colonies. Jack Lee said that his bees had used them with no apparent problem. In describing how they are made, John said that it is important to watch, carefully, the temperature with a candy thermometer and increase the temperature slowly up to 225 deg F (takes 20 - 30 minutes). When the temperature rises to 225 deg, the process is complete and will produce a "Soft Ball" candy suitable for feeding bees. When pouring the candy onto trays, it is important that the end product is thin enough to be placed underneath the hive lid. Charles encouraged everyone to take a sample of this material home along with a detailed recipe sheet.

**Financial Report:** Dennis reported that we have 50 paid up memberships and \$4600 in our bank account.

**MBA Report:** Jim Campbell announced that the new CHC honey promotion brochures have been very popular and that an additional supply had to be ordered. Anyone needing to have a supply on hand can order them from Jim. The cost is \$25 per 100 brochures.

Manitoba bees that were wintered in BC have been inspected and approved for their trip back to Manitoba.

An MBA committee has been selected to review proposed fee requirements in order to fully implement the existing Farm Products Marketing Act for Honey. Saskatchewan and Alberta have both formed commissions which operate in a similar way to our Manitoba Marketing Act for Honey. Full implementation of this legislation will stabilize membership numbers and provide the much needed revenue for our disease inspection

program, honey promotion and education program.

**Canadian Honey Council:** Ron Rudiak gave a report on the successful Winnipeg Test Market and honey marketing survey. This CHC program was developed by Karo and the associated surveys were conducted by Probe Research. Substantial costs were shared by the honey industry across Canada. A \$10,000 payment provided by the Manitoba Beekeepers' Association, was matched by another \$10,000 from Manitoba Agri-Ventures Initiatives (MAVI). MAVI is set up to create more revenue for Manitoba farms through marketing. With sustainable funding our promotional program can be extended across the country and possibly internationally. An effective honey promotion would benefit all Canadian honey producers.

**MAFRI Report:** Rhéal Lafrenière and Charles Polcyn provided updates and answered questions on Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). Rhéal announced that the American Entomological Society conference will take place in Winnipeg at the Delta Hotel on Sunday, March 25 from 1:00 PM until 4:30 PM. Yves LeConte, director of research - INRA, from France and other researchers will be the featured speakers.

**Program:** David Ostermann gave the audience a slide show presentation on spring management.

**Loonie Draw:** Rhéal Lafrenière name was drawn for an attractive jar of "Wild Honey" packed in St. Paul MN. John Russell donated a jar of "Cornelia" Tea Infused Honey which was won by Frank Rekrut. Carol Anderson and Brian Schewfelt each won a set of two wine glasses. Brian Smith won the ceramic trivet. Bonnie Morrow's name was drawn for the stainless frame holder made by Lance Waldner. Lance also donated two bound reprints of "Better Queens" by Jay Smith. One was won by Ken Fehler and the other by Reg Morrow. There was a total of \$33.00 collected from the Loonie Draw. Thanks everyone.

Ron Rudiak - Secretary

### Gummidge's Law

The amount of expertise varies  
in inverse ratio to the number of statements  
understood by the general public.

## A Penny for your Sting

- Jack Lee

The executive recently passed around a remedy for treating bee stings. It was referred to us via email and recommended the pressing of a copper penny to the sting site.

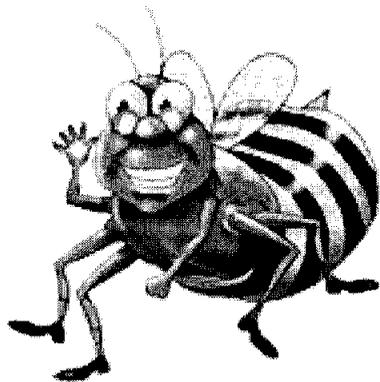
A search on the web found the same cure posted under an "urban myths" web page. Never-the-less, as long as the symptoms of a sting remain normal, we realized that any treatment, even if it has no scientific basis, can't be discounted if the user truly believes in it.

Therefore, we decided that perhaps we should gather all our sting stories and cures that we beekeepers use and publish them in this newsletter.

If you have a favourite sting remedy

that you have used, or an interesting sting story, pass them to the editor (written jacklee@mts.net or verbal 474-2075) and we will publish them with an understanding that this remedy or story is the experience of only one person and may not work for anyone else.

Never-the-less, we should share our experiences on that particular part of our business that keeps it steeped in so many misunderstandings and myths.



and medical information regarding the role that honey can play in the human diet and its positive effect on human health. Second, the primary goal of the beekeeper is to protect his bees while producing and promoting a healthful product. Third, the positive message of honey and health can be enhanced by emphasizing the romance of honey as a natural and historic food; the quality and diversity of colors and flavors of honey (drawing from the parallels in the wine and tea industry); the natural beauty of the orchards, fields and flowers with which the bees interact to produce honey; and the historic and current beliefs regarding the healthful benefits to humans. Fourth, quality standards should not come before the science necessary to back them up, i.e., bad science should not drive standards for acceptable tolerance and testing limits. And finally, it is critical in today's marketplace to maintain an international perspective with regard to the promulgation and support of both standards and research on honey's health benefits.

**The Committee for the Promotion of Honey and Health in America** will function as an independent organization in order to preserve freedom of initiative, passion of commitment and clarity of vision. However, participation, constructive input and cooperation from other organizations and members of the beekeepers and honey industry are welcome. It was the collective opinion of the committee participants that no one sector of the industry should drive the agenda.

## Committee for the Promotion of Honey and Health in America

- Ron Phipps - acting co-chairman

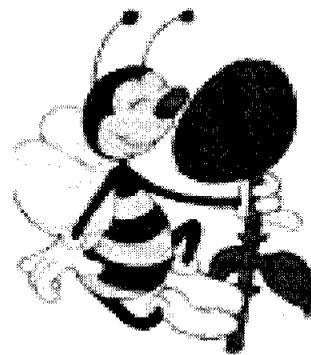
There are individuals in the honey industry who believe that the harsh winter markets of '06 and '07 can be converted from sour memories to enjoyment of a sweeter future. A few of those optimistic folks met one evening around an open table during the California State Beekeepers Association meeting last November in Tahoe. From that meeting has come a "call to arms" of sorts. Calling themselves the **Committee for the Promotion of Honey and Health in America**, this volunteer band believes that the concerted voices and actions of a few can have a huge positive impact on the state of the honey market in the United States and around the world.

To that end, the Committee, co-chaired by Ron Phipps and Dr. Ron

Fessenden has organized itself for action. A mission statement has been drafted and a series of action plans have been adopted stretching out through 2007 and following.

The committee is composed of members of the honey industry including beekeepers, large honey producers, packers, importers, and science and health experts. The underlying goal that unified all participants was the drive to foster greater consumer appreciation and demand for honey nationwide.

Several commonly known facts and principles underscored this unity. First, all accept the fact that honey enjoys a good public image and that honey's image, like that of other natural foods, can and should be *enhanced by incorporating contemporary scientific*



(Continued on page 8)

# CLASSIFIEDS

**For Sale:** Limited number of nucs available around the 15<sup>th</sup> 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

**Wanted:** Looking for a solar wax melter.

**Doug Henry** 757-4694 dhenry@skyweb.ca

**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** ph 204 -831-0961 or 204-831-7838

**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

**For Sale:** brood frames with bees \$15/frame, also have nucs with queen. Available May 2007.

Call **Bryan Grysiuk** 204 831 7838 or 204 831 0961.

**For Sale:** Pollen Paddies . Available for April and May membership meetings. Each paddy contains 10% irradiated pollen and weights 10 ounces.

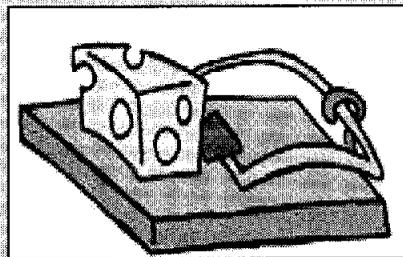
\$1.25 each. Profits will go to bee research.

**For Sale:** 60 frames Cowen extractor in mint condition.

Phone : 204.248.2645

Cell : 204.295.2856 Ask for **Pierre Faure**

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*We are on the web!*  
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*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.

## Committee for the Promotion of Honey and Health in America

*(Continued from page 6)*

A mission statement has been adopted by the **Committee for the Promotion of Honey and Health in America**. The Committee's mission is to:

1. **Create and promote a positive Honey and Health agenda** that will result in greater consumer appreciation and demand for honey nationwide and enhance the already favorable image of honey by advancing sound scientific information that underscores its healthful benefits
2. **Support and promote the development of quality standards from within the industry**, and promote an educational campaign that reinforces the need for good science to

be applied in the promulgation and establishment of standards, including realistic tolerance and testing limits

Among the first action steps planned by the Committee are the publication of articles highlighting the healthful benefits of honey; the creation of a speaker's bureau which will feature noted individuals from both the honey and healthcare industries; and the sponsoring of an international symposium early next year which will address the topic of honey and health.

There are excellent examples from both the tea and almond industries in the United States that validate and inspire the mission of this Committee and its goals of increasing national consumption of honey. Over the past 10 or so years, tea has increased from a little over a billion dollar a year industry to over \$6 billion a year. Similarly, the almond industry has witnessed in the past few years a *doubling*

*of consumption as well as doubling of prices*. The common thread between these success stories is the positive promotion of the healthful benefits of these natural products. The story of honey in America is about to experience a similar success.

Individuals who share a passion and enthusiasm for honey and would like to participate as members of an Advisory Committee to see this mission carried out are asked to contact Ron Phipps at [info@cpnaglobal.com](mailto:info@cpnaglobal.com) or Ron Fessenden, MD, MPH at [ron@worldclassemprise.com](mailto:ron@worldclassemprise.com) or 713-865-3145. Further information regarding the action plans of the Committee is available from the above contacts.

Ron Phipps, President, CPNA International, Ltd

Ron Fessenden, MD, MPH, Executive Secretary, WorldClassEmprise, LLC Co-chairman of the Committee for the Promotion of Honey in America February 2, 2007