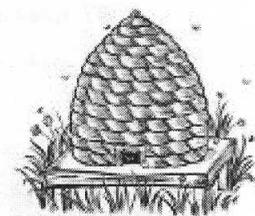


# The Bee Cause



Volume 5, Issue 2

February 2008

### Points of Interest:

- Next general meeting is 7:30 Tuesday, February 12th at the River Heights Community Centre, 1370 Grosvenor Ave.. Winnipeg.

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## Canadian Beekeepers Urged to Go Organic

- (excerpts from a speech delivered to the Canadian Honey Council in Calgary - Jack Lee)

Canadian beekeepers should take advantage of the organic trends in the food industry. This was one of the major points that Ron Phillips, the president of CPNA International made at his speech addressing the current status and trends in the international honey market at the Canadian Honey Council held in Calgary last January.

Ron pointed out that in Germany, about 20% of all foods are organic. In the United States, the organic trend is tremendous. Brazil is a

important source of organic honey but that honey is dark. Canada has the potential of to provide the world with organic white honey. Significant premiums are being paid for organic honey to the benefit of producers, packers, and retailers.

Other points of interest according to Ron, was the first International Symposium of Honey and Health held earlier that month, where research was presented linking honey to health benefits. He points to a role that science can play:

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Overwintering 2-Frame Nucs in Manitoba (continued)

(Ted Scheuneman and David Ostermann, continued from previous issue)

Later in the year (late fall), when overnight temperatures consistently drop to around 0° C, each 5-nuc hive box is put in the outdoor wintering box unit, in the evening.

Ted's wintering box unit is about 8 ft long and accommodates 5 x 5-nuc hive boxes (i.e. 25 nucs). The wintering box unit has 4 side walls of 2 inch thick foam insulation (about R14).

Figure 4 shows the base of the wintering box unit which supports the wall pieces and hive boxes, and allows for a space with a (water pipe type) heating cable. The insulation at the

bottom of the wintering unit is 3 inch thick foam insulation (about R21). The temperature of the space is regulated by a thermostat so that the heating cable is provided power when the temperature falls below 7° C (45° F).

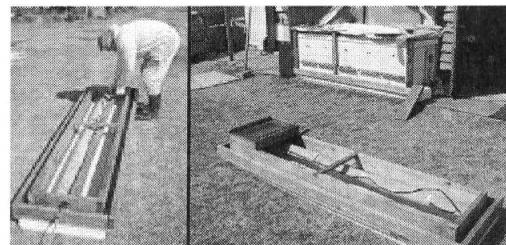


Figure 4. The wintering box unit base

*(Continued on page 3)*

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**Canadian Beekeepers Urged to go Organic**

*(Continued from page 1)*

"An overriding goal for the honey and health initiative is use good science as a marketing tool which creates positive health message for honey. We have seen the almond industry double and triple both consumption and prices on the basis of linking health and almonds. The American Tea industry has grown from one billion to \$7 billion dollars in a little over a decade, largely influenced by the health message."

In addition to the presentation of re-search was the formation of a committee for the Promotion of Honey and Health. This committee is based on the following premises:

1. Good science begets good science,
2. Good publicity begets good publicity,
3. An effective and independent organization devoted to the development of the honey and health message has the ability to integrate both science and publicity,
4. The health message must also be embraced within the history and romance, quality and variety of honey.

Ron Phillips went on to explain that the retailers and packers can resist price increases because of the consolidation that has occurred in that sector of the industry. Producers and packers, although small and fragmented, can

overcome this resistance by combining a health message with creative marketing to penetrate the retail environment and obtain the premium prices enjoyed by small and healthful luxuries.

Ron also blames manufacturers of honey for conveying the image of honey in a bold and aggressive way without a significant use of the product. Many products touting honey are "all form and no content". He states that when companies become interested to convey a health message they are compelled to use that product in a significant amount to justify the health message.

A Canadian and European branch of the International Health and Honey Committee are being discussed.

To drive his points home, Ron Phillips illustrated a report that a Russian spacecraft had been launched which brought honey and tea to the international space station.

Ron's speech also discussed the impact of the "packer's blend" and other forms of circumvention of the intent of American antidumping order against Chinese honey.

**RED RIVER APIARIST'S ASSOCIATION  
 2008 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM**

Please complete and mail with your cheque, for \$25.00, payable to: Red River Apiarist's Association

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ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ PROV: \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

NEW MEMBER [ ] RENEWAL [ ] STUDENT (free 1<sup>st</sup> year) [ ]

Mail to: John Speers (Secretary RRAA)  
 Box 16, Group 555, RR 5  
 Winnipeg, MB R2C 2Z2

## World's Most Famous Beekeeper Dies (JAN. 11, 2008)

-Jack Lee

Sir Edmund Hillary died of heart failure last January. Although he was famous for his ascent of Mt. Everest, he was also a former professional beekeeper using his honey money to finance his mountain climbing hobby in the off season. Although a shy person and of lanky build, Hillary was noted at the time as a climber of great strength and endurance.



Hillary was also a man of great awareness. He spent most of his life championing environmental causes and raising funds for hospitals, schools, and medical clinics for the Nepalese people. Hillary preferred to be remembered for those accomplishments rather than his mountaineering ones. Perhaps in one of his remarks about himself, we can find values that also helped him as a beekeeper:

"I was just an enthusiastic mountaineer of modest abilities who was willing to work quite hard and had the necessary imagination and determination."

## President's Message

By this time the Canadian Honey Council in Calgary is over. I hope that some of the RRAA members had a chance to attend and are willing to report back at our next meeting in February.

I won't be there as I am now living in El Pariso, Honduras and working as a volunteer for CESO on a beekeeping assignment. El Pariso is about 15 miles from the border to Nicaragua, and was a busy place during the US backed/funded revolution in the 1980's.

There are still unpapered refugees here in this town trying to make a living as coffee harvest laborers and what ever else comes their way. The bees have been well africanized since the early 80's, so beekeeping styles had to change.

I have been asked to rebuild a queen rearing program that crashed last year with unexplained losses of over 90 % of the queen rearing colonies between May and September, their prime honey flow time.

(Continued on page 6)

## Overwintering 2-Frame Nucs in Manitoba

(Continued from page 1)

The heating cable, which runs the length of the unit, is supported in the space by a tin trough, which is held up by metal bolts and in the wood at the ends. On top of the nuc boxes, Ted puts a layer of insulating cushion (about 2 inches thick), then the top of the unit is closed with 3 inch thick foam insulation (about R21).

A hole in the wintering unit at the top of each hive box (see Figure 4) allows moist air from the nucs to escape the wintering unit. For the winter, all entrances are diverted to the front with a wooden insert which creates a separate outside entrance with small landing for each nuc.

As early as possible, usually in early March when there is still snow on the ground (and temperatures are around 0°C or slightly higher), Ted checks the nucs to see which colonies are alive. It is also critical to check on feed stores.

Ted has found that 10-15% of the nucs may starve to death or have very little feed by the time he opens them up, so light colonies must be fed. Overall, he's been able to minimize the loss of colonies over the winter to about 15-20%. [Note: Ted has also worked with 3-frame nucs and hasn't observed any notable benefits over the 2-frame nucs.]

Two (2) nucs are left in the wintering box unit and their space is increased; 2 of the partitions are removed so that the nucs now have 4 frames of space, and the middle 2-frame space is filled with insulation (e.g. wood chips or fiber glass insulation).

From the wintering box unit, up to 3 nucs are transferred into standard hive boxes (2 nucs to a box) which are put indoors on a shelving unit. Ted's shelving unit on one wall holds 16-20 standard singles and opens to the outside so the bees can go on cleansing flights, yet they still benefit from a more controlled (warm) indoor environment.

Nucs can also be transferred to another wintering box unit. The movement of the nucs within the same general area is made possible due to the cool temperatures, and low bee flight activity, at this time of year. If the bees were more active, then the bees should be moved a couple miles or so. When the colonies are too big for the shelf hive set up, or the wintering box unit, they are put into full hive boxes (one nuc per box) and moved to a bee yard.

(Continued on page 6)

## Red River Apiarists' Association Minutes of the General Meeting January 8, ~~2007~~ 2008

Charles Polcyn welcomed everyone to the January meeting at the River Heights Community Centre, in Winnipeg, with 23 members and guests present. Charles asked everyone for their ideas and suggestions on topics that we could arrange for future meetings in 2008. Charles will also be leaving for Nicaragua this week to exchange information on honey production with beekeepers in that country.

**Brandon Area Beekeepers' Association:** Walter Wright reminded everyone that the BABA has been holding regular monthly meetings the same as the RRAA. Rhéal Lafrenière noted that Ted Turnbull is chairman of BABA and that updates are regularly posted on their web site. Walter also reported that Anne Donkin, one of our senior members, recently celebrated her 97th year and is in good health. Many of us remember Anne for her many years serving on our social committee.

**Minutes:** Moved by Walter Wright and seconded by Gilles Lantagne to accept the November minutes of the regular meeting as circulated with the Bee Cause. Motion was carried.

**Financial Report:** Dennis Ross reported that the RRAA has 74 paid up members and the account balance is currently \$5556.36. Charles reminded everyone that memberships are due this month.

**Newsletter:** French Bee Farm of Notre Dame de Lourdes, second place winner in the Dark liquid Honey class, at the 2007 Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, was inadvertently missed in the list of winners in the January Bee Cause.

**MBA Report:** Jim Campbell indicated that the program for the 2008 MBA Convention in Brandon includes a special meeting at noon, on February 4th, to discuss implementation of the new membership fee structure and answer any questions. Membership in the MBA is a legislated requirement for anyone marketing honey from 50 colonies or more. An associate (nonvoting) membership will also be made available to anyone, with less than 50 colonies, who wants to receive CHC's Hive Lights and the Manitoba Beekeeper publications. Jim also said that the second MBA Strategic Planning meeting took place in Winnipeg in mid December and noted that there will be additional meetings to finalize this document. There will be an updated report, on the Strategic Plan, given at the MBA Convention.

**Election of Executive:** Charles gave the report on behalf of the election committee and called for any further nominations. The following members agreed to let their names stand for election. There were no further nominations. Moved by Walter and seconded by Rhéal that nominations cease. The following members were elected for 2008.

President:	Charles Polcyn
1st Vice President:	John Badiuk
2nd Vice President:	Margaret Smith
Newsletter Editor:	Jack Lee
MBA Delegate:	Jim Campbell
Treasurer:	John Speer
Recording Secretary:	Ron Rudiak

**Program:** CCD (Colony Collapse Disorder) Rhéal Lafrenière provided an update and answered many questions on CCD. Rhéal noted that there are still very many questions to be answered and much research is being done. Some interesting discoveries have been made as a result of the urgency of this situation. Rhéal will provide more information at the Brandon convention in February.

**Canadian Honey Council:** Ron Rudiak spoke about the changes which have taken place over the past four years in CHC and the progress that has been made in reorganizing Council and the MBA. These very necessary changes will result in a national organization that is able to respond to the needs of beekeepers across Canada. Ron also said that there has been a lot of work and co-ordination that had to take place across Canada by every provincial beekeeping association in preparation for these changes. Ron also expressed appreciation for everyone's co-operation which is making all these changes possible. Bruce Podolski, of Ethelbert, has recently taken over from Ron as CHC delegate for Manitoba. Bruce is also serving on several other MBA committees. Members of the RRAA showed their appreciation and thanked Ron for his four years on Council.

**Loonie Draw:** Several items were again donated by RRAA members. Charles brought several interesting jars of honey for prizes. Stan Grysiuk won the jar of Thompson Valley Honey, Alan Aime won the honey from Bogota, Carol Anderson won the honey from Nova Scotia and Nelson Szwaluk won the jar of Chinese honey. Rhéal was the winner of the large plush honey bee.

*Ron Rudiak, Secretary RRAA*

# CLASSIFIEDS

**For Sale:** Small number of 4 frame nucs with 2007 queens. Some 3/8 plywood inner cover with 7/8 \* 7/8 pine rim. \$7.50 each.

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:** 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:** 300 supered nucs for sale. Includes 10 frame laying queen. No less than 3 brood pollen feed. Inspected and treated. Wintered outside. Ready for May 15 to June 5. Some queens from Chile and marked available.

Contact **Rod Boudreau** 204-885-3344

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

Phone : 204.248.2645

Cell : 204.295.2856 Ask for **Pierre Faure**

**For Sale:** 50 hives for sale.

Call **Rudy Harsany** at (204) 866-2276

**For Sale:** Food grade stainless steel uncapping tank, 20 in. wide, 56 in. long, 14 in deep. stands 30 in from floor, has drain plug on one end. \$275

Contact **Dennis Ross** @ 878-2924

## Manitoba Winners in 85th RAWF Show

- Jim Campbell, MBA Rep

Congratulations go to some Manitoba Honey Producers taking prize ribbons at the 85th annual Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto recently. Over the past several years, we have had our RRAA members walking off with the top prizes at the Royal, and this tradition of entering quality honey continues.

For the 2007 Royal, Charles Polcyn, Winnipeg, took three Reserve Champion Ribbons in the Granulated, Liquid, and "Other Than White Liquid Honey" categories. These ribbons are made with colourful red, white, and blue rosettes, celebrating the 85th year of the Royal.

Congratulations also to Robert Heath, Virden, on his winning the Canadian Honey Council Challenge Trophy for Best Exhibit of Granulated Honey.

In other categories: Pierre Faure (French Bee farm), Notre Dame de Lourdes, captured second place for his Buckwheat Honey, while Robert Heath, walked off with first place in both Granulated Honey, and the Beeswax candle entries. Robert also held third place ribbons for Chunk Honey, and the Beeswax displays.

In addition Charles Polcyn, Robert Heath, and Jim Campbell won first, second and third respectively in the Liquid White (West) category.

All in all, good representation from Manitoba!

### Did you know ...

*A overwintering colony in Minnesota, in a 86 day period ending in mid-February, lost only 10 pounds of weight. In the subsequent 28 and 26 day periods covering March and April, it lost 12 and 18 pounds of weight. [The Hive and the Honey Bee](#), pp 841*

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*We are on the web!*  
[www.geocities.com/ve4tg/](http://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 the summer months of June, July, and August when membership meetings do not occur.

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.

Deadline for any submission to this newsletter is the second Saturday preceding the membership meeting to allow for publishing and mailing delays. Regular membership meetings are normally scheduled 7:30 PM on the second Tuesday of every month at the River Heights Community Centre located at 1370 Grosvenor Avenue in Winnipeg except the months as noted above.

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 through education, networking opportunities, meetings, field days, workshops, presentations by local apicultural experts, as well as the dissemination of this monthly

## President's Message

*(Continued from page 3)*

The two staff who worked there have been terminated, so I am trying to gather information and resources from the local beekeepers to rebuild the center.

We are being housed in a 4 room one story house which has no windows for security purposes. The street outside our metal doors is a busy and noisy one 24 hrs a day. However we are able to prepare our own meals and when the water is on, have a shower.

Varroa mites are very common with alcohol wash numbers ranging from 21 % down to 2 %. The natural daily mite falls range from 5 to 189 from different colonies.

I hope this bit of information gives our membership a bit of perspective on the challenge to beekeepers in other countries.

We are both well and enjoying the unexpected challenges that each day provides. Best wishes for an enjoyable Valentines Day and perhaps warmer weather. It never falls below 20 C. here.

*Charles Polcyn RRAA President in Honduras until mid March.*

## Overwintering 2-Frame Nucs in Manitoba

*(Continued from page 3)*

The results are probably best summarized by Ted:

"Is this (nuc setup) perfect? Not by a long shot. It is after 17 years of (my) research and experimenting at this stage (that it is) workable for anybody interested. I am sure there is room for improvement and refinement but in general terms it works, and that is in an area that has one of the most hostile climates on this planet for men and beast... the place is called Manitoba."

Although Ted's setup is designed to fit his own intensive operation, it shows the impressive ability to overwinter 2-frame nucs outdoors in Manitoba.

Overwintering such small colonies can be a good way to help make up colony numbers the following season. Those interested in wintering small nucs outdoors are encouraged to try doing so on a small scale at first, noting what works and what doesn't work, and tweaking a design that fits their own operation.

For more information about this article, contact Ted (338-6066) or David (945-3861).