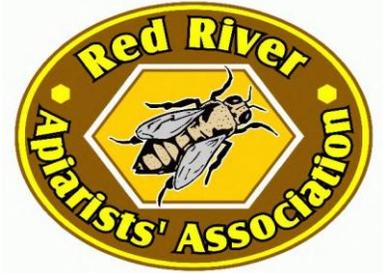


Red River Apiarists' Association

57 Years



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Waggle Dance: Page 4

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So Far, So Good?

It's been a mild one so far, and it's hard to resist the urge to peek. The lack of insulating snow shouldn't be a concern if your wintering wraps are efficient. Now live bees in the beginning of January don't necessarily equate to live bees in April, so if you are seeing signs of life, keep in mind we have a way to go yet. If you are looking to soothe your curiosity or confirm your fears here are a few non-invasive methods to check for signs of life:



1) Thermal
Camera



2) Any mirror,
held
up to a top
entrance. (Fog
indicates life)



3) Stethoscope:
Hear the
buzz.....



4) Probe or Infrared Thermometer



5) Endoscope inspection camera

-November Meeting
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Next meeting:

January 14th, 2020

Elmwood Legion 920 Nairn Ave. Wpg, Mb

*Novice Group meets at 6:45 pm **Downstairs***

Main Meeting: starts at 7:30 pm

Guest Speaker: Ian Stepler

“I Get Knocked Down, But I Get Back Up Again”

*My experiences throughout the years and the
adjustments to manage our variable conditions.*

The Bee Cause

2020 Issue I

January 2020

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Winter Activities for Beekeepers

By: Melissa Caughey (abridged)

Cold weather is upon us and the bees have been prepped and tucked into their hives for the winter. Even though beekeepers are hands-off in the winter, it doesn't mean that they stop their beekeeping activities. To the contrary, there are plenty of activities for beekeepers that keep them busy during the next few months.



Melt down beeswax. During this time, excess comb, bits, scraps and older wax from frames is melted down to form blocks of beeswax for future use.

Make beauty products. Lip balms, lotions, creams, salves and scrubs are all fun things beekeepers learn how to make and sell on their own.



Make candles. From the beeswax that was melted down. This attracts customers for honey sales too!

Research new techniques. Beekeeping is a field that continues to grow. New hives, alternative feeding methods, and integrated pest management techniques are always adapting and improving.

Repair and replace old hives. This is a great time to repair honey supers, build new deeps, and replace worn frames and/or foundation. It's also time to assemble new hives.

Prepare for spring splits. Most hives that come out of winter with strong numbers should be split. Learn how to make splits and what equipment is necessary.



Build a swarm box. Be ready to catch a swarm this spring with this fun project!

Review your notes, successes, and mistakes.

Decide now what you would like to change, or try

Email: rraaweb@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: John R. Badiuk

Email: honeyb@mymts.net

before the busy season comes! -M.C.

Our Social & Gadget Night 2019



A special thanks to the members who brought in their products from the hive, and the special tools they use to keep bees and process wax!

From soaps to candles, mead to wax wraps, a plethora of products were proudly displayed and described to the delight of all.



Adelle Kennedy: Soaps

Veronica Larmour: Wax melter

Monica Wiebe: Beeswax cloth wraps

Our Appreciation award recipients: Dr. Currie, Rheal, Beemaid, and Adelle.



Photo Credits: Jim Campbell

Research: Bees learn to evaluate the importance of information shared by waggle dances -

For bees and other social insects, being able to exchange information is vital for the success of their colony. One way honeybees do this is through their waggle dance, which is a unique



- James Patterson pattern of behavior, which probably evolved more than 20 million years ago. A bee's waggle

dance tells its sisters in the colony where to find a high-quality source of food. However, in recent years people have begun to study the actual benefits of this dance language. Biologists at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland and at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (JGU) in Germany have now shed some new light on the benefits and disadvantages of the bee dance. "To our surprise, we found that bee colonies are more successful at collecting food if they are deprived of their dance language," reported Dr. Christoph Grüter, a behavioral ecologist at Mainz University. One possible reason may be human-induced habitat change. Together with his colleagues in Lausanne, Grüter conducted experiments over several years to examine what effect the dance language has on a colony's success.

-A worker bee communicating to her colony.

There are about ten different species of honeybees communicating through waggle dancing. However, the vast majority of bees, i.e., more than 500 species of highly social stingless insects, have no dance language. Thus, Grüter was interested in the benefits the waggle dance brings to colonies, not least because, as a communication strategy, it is relatively time-consuming. Some waggle dances can last only a few seconds, while others may take up to five minutes.

In the experiments, the scientists manipulated the conditions influencing some of the bee colonies to confuse and, as a result, disorientate the dancing bees. Performed under such conditions, the waggle dance no longer made sense to its bee audience. To create these conditions, light was prevented from falling on the honeycombs, and they were also turned into a horizontal position, preventing the bees from using gravity to orientate themselves. Another particularly important aspect was to take into account their ability to memorize the location of food. "Bees foraging for food have an excellent memory and can recall a rich feeding spot for several days," explained Grüter. Thus, the research team had to prevent foragers performing the waggle dance for 18 days to ensure they could not use their memory to tell other bees where to fly to find the excellent sources of food. Foraging bees are older than other colony members. In their final phase of life, they no longer work in the hive, but go out to collect nectar and pollen. Typically, they are in the last 18 days of

Honeybees with no information from the waggle dance are more effective in challenging conditions

The team of biologists was surprised by their result that beehives without the dance information were more active and produced more honey than beehives that used dance language “We were expecting to confirm that dance language was important, but our results were the exact opposite,” said Dr. Robbie l’Anson Price, lead author of the study. “I suspect that the bees probably lose interest when confronted with a disoriented dance, and they go out to search for food on their own initiative,” added Price.

-Continued on next page

Bees learn to evaluate—cont. from previous page.

The differences are significant: Bees in colonies with no dance language went on foraging flights that were eight minutes longer and yielded 29 percent more honey over the entire 18-day period than bees using the waggle dance.

The conclusion is that some bees, such as the Buckfast bee in this study, a 100-year-old cross-bred western honeybee, may do better without social communication. Grüter believes that the environment and the availability of food play an important role. If there is a large apple tree in full bloom nearby, then waiting for information on its location is probably a good strategy. If, on the other hand, there is only a sparse scattering of flowering plants on balconies or roadsides, it may be better to leave the hive sooner and forage independently. “In our opinion, the behavior we observed can be primarily explained in terms of how much time the bees save,” said Grüter.

By observing the bees, the scientists made the extraordinary discovery that the bees were apparently able to judge the relevance of the information content of a dance and hence would lose interest in disoriented dancing. “It looks as if after a while they become aware that something is wrong,” postulated Grüter. “Our results raise the possibility that humans have created environments to which the waggle dance language is not well adapted,” write the authors in their study, recently published in the journal *Science Advances*.

The idea that bees may be capable of evaluating the quality of information in a dance is one that Grüter wants to investigate more closely in the future. He is also planning to repeat the experiments in the Mainz area under different conditions — in urban and rural areas and at different times of the year.

Christoph Grüter has been head of a research team at the Institute of Organismic and Molecular Evolution at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz since 2015. Previously, he was head of a research group at the Department of Ecology and Evolution at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland. His group investigates how social insects organize and coordinate their collective activities, with communication in insect colonies playing a central role. - J.Patterson

YOU ARE NEEDED!!

What makes a great association great?



THE 10 STAGES OF BEEKEEPING ADDICTION

www.beekeepinglikeagirl.com

submitted by Asmara Polcyn

Involvement, and contribution! If everyone does one small task, gives up one HOUR a month to help the RRAA, then we all benefit!

(Call 204-612-2337 to lend a hand.)

WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE: *Mentoring- a novice beekeeper, join a RRAA committee, bring a toonie draw prize, submit an article or a book review for the newsletter, bring cookies for our coffee break,*

share experiences and advice with new beekeepers, help at the Honey Show, or Day of The Honeybee, network with novices to source Manitoba bred bees and equipment, Teach a class!

TALK TO AN EXECUTIVE

MEMBER FOR MORE DETAILS

TOGETHER WE ARE BETER!!

◁◁◁◁ President's Message ▷▷▷▷

-John Russell

You can always complain about the weather, but you really shouldn't this year. Not in Manitoba anyway. Pretty mild so far. And yes, now I've jinxed it and we will have tornadoes in March. Welcome to agriculture.

Our last Social night meeting was a nice closer to the year. I'd like to thank Ken Rowes for his musical set, and the loan of his audio system as ours decided to be stubborn that evening. Next year we are planning a complete potluck themed gathering, so we can all get a head start on our holiday season weight gain!

Ted Schuneman passed away before Christmas near the end of November. Ted was one of our senior members, and an avid experiment conductor on wintering nucs and breeding. He was incredibly willing to share his results, wisdom, and his knowledge with everyone he came across. He will be missed, and remembered fondly for what he gave back to the beekeeping community.

January 6th the movie: "How to Bee" was shown as a "On Demand" feature in Winnipeg, It was nice to see more than a few RRAA faces there to enjoy a heartwarming story of teaching, loss, and passing the torch.

ELECTIONS! The Election committee had some response for volunteers for some of the much needed committee heads, however so far no one seems to want my job. I'm still not certain if that's a good thing? :) How are your bees? The itch to check and meddle gets stronger the closer we get to spring and mild weather tickles this impulse. Justin K. will be addressing the novices at 6:45pm at our next meeting on this topic.

The how and the when and the why of early checks on wintered colonies.
Bring your questions!

See you on the 14th!

- J.R.

Obituary: Ted Scheuneman

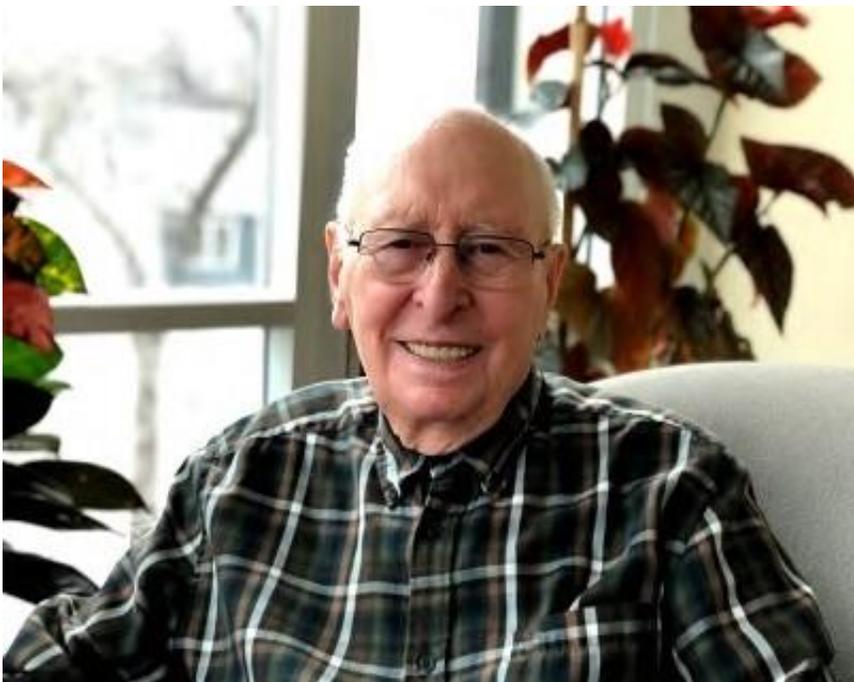
Theodore (Ted) Scheuneman, beloved husband of Marianne, and father of Barbara, passed away on November 24, 2019.

Ted was long time member of RRAA, having joined in 1988. He was 2VP 1991 and 1992, and MBA rep for 1992. A good friend and good mentor to many. He often spoke of his experiments at meetings and was always willing to share his knowledge, findings, and experiences with all beekeepers, both novice and master.

Some of his innovations took form in developing techniques for the outdoor overwintering of 2 frame nucs in styrofoam enclosures for 50 nucs, indoor overwinter of 4 frame nucs, and overwintering honey bees in 1/2 length frames of mini nucs.

Ted created a device which vaporized low levels of formic acid to treat for mites during winter, made an electric stainless steel melter and purchased a special press to make foundation from his own bees wax, made a huge bucket device for dipping supers to weather proof them, and created his own device for reinforcing frame foundation with imbedded stainless steel wire. Giving lectures and mentoring is something he will always be remembered by those he helped along the way.

The family would like to acknowledge the excellent care that was provided by all the staff, both at Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface Hospital. Donations may be made to the Heart & Stroke Foundation, CancerCare Manitoba, the Scheuneman-Timm Family Fund c/o the Winnipeg Foundation, or a charity of your choice. A celebration of life will take place. Time and date yet to be determined.



RRAA Meeting Minutes for November 12 2019 - Recorded by Monica Wiebe

Minutes from October 8 accepted. Moved by Marg smith Seconded by Justin Kolano

New Bee Keepers 6:45 – 7:20

Justin Kolano: Feeding Ideas for winter and spring specialized top board with 5 plugs to give options for feed placement. Black lids to ensure warmth in spring and winter

Ideas and plans for spring : bears, splits, queens, equipment

Wrapping and insulation ideas: Internal insulation on bottom boards, black shrink wrap to seal old equipment

Treasurer John Speer: Balance \$3930.74

Extra News Letters available

Honey Show – Forks not community minded at this time. Honey show 2020 may be at St. Vital. Looking for a volunteer team leader to step forward.

Positions available coming up in January.

MBA. Marg: Convention Feb. 28 + 29. 2020 Block of rooms set aside. Main speakers: Dr. Frank Rinkevick, USA, Ral Alvarez, Queen Breeder, Hannah Neil Sask. Tech Transfer team,

Apumondia happened in – strong honey council body

Awards:

Rheal Lafreniere. \$50 to Barry Fingler fund for research

Dr. Robert Currie – Thanks for your expertise

Mike from Bee Maid –

Adele Kennedy – coffee is so important for beekeepers

Howard Alexander – Thanks for the use of the land

Music by Ken Row: The Beekeepers Blues

Gadget night

Carol Sweet mountain Farms disc

Veronica – wax melter

Waldemar – 2-person transporters

Adele – soap and moisture bars

John and Brad – Mead

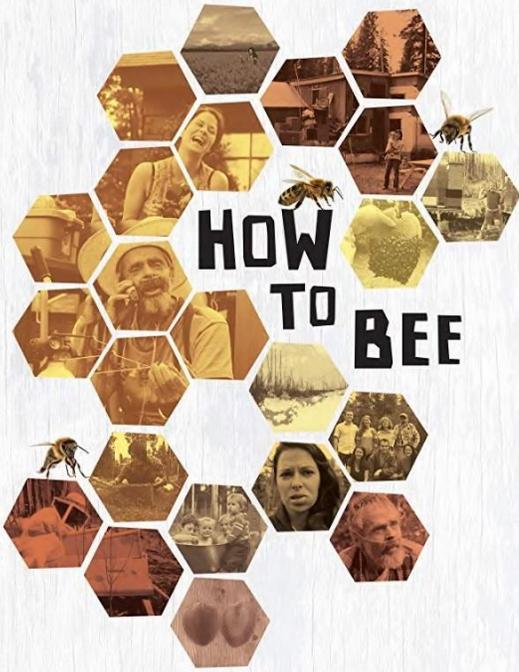
Monica -Food wraps

Thanks to all who contributed to the looney draw. \$157.70 was raised.

Respectfully submitted by

Monica Wiebe

A story of life, family and a fascination with bees.



MIDNIGHT LIGHT MEDIA THAT THE FILMS & FEEL IT ALL PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS A FILM BY NAOMI MARK WITH DON MARK & NAOMI MARK "HOW TO BEE"
 BRIAN WALKER & **NICOLE SMITH** **JENISLEY BALEWIN** & **JOSHUA HARTY O'BRIEN** & **MURRAY SATTLE** **VIVIAN BELK** & **NAOMI MARK** **NAOMI MARK** & **JENISLEY BALEWIN** **NAOMI MARK**

How To Bee: A review.

How To Bee documents the three beekeeping seasons that filmmaker Naomi Mark spends learning to keep bees from her father who is living with COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease).

Starting a family late in life with his wife Ruth, Don wanted to build a life that was based on self-sustainability - an interest in beekeeping lead him to pursue the development of his own apiary which soon became one of the most prolific the territory had ever seen. A lack of focus and a burgeoning young family combined with a series of unfortunate events in the apiary lead Don to put his passion on hold.

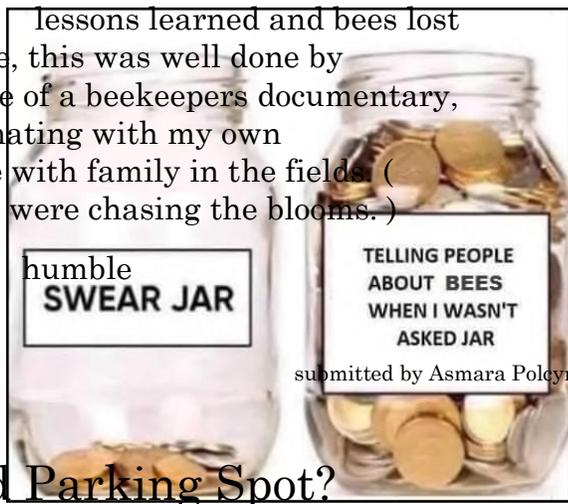
Now diagnosed with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and retired from his job on the highway maintenance crew, Don has returned to his passion maintaining a small apiary north of Whitehorse. Don's health is a constant hurdle for him.

As Don's health changes Naomi struggles to accept what the new found space between her father and the bees really means. Part biography, part point-of-view documentary and part intro to beekeeping, *How To Bee* is a celebration of life in all stages that depicts the journey of a father and daughter as they come to terms with the changing shape of their lives.

This is more of a family story than a beekeeping story, so those looking for pure educational content will be feeling a little disappointed. However that transfer of knowledge, insights to keeping bees in the Yukon, and your ability to relate to will make it worth the watch. An emotionally powerful movie, this was well done by emerging filmmaker Naomi Mark. If you are looking for more of a beekeepers documentary, this may not be the movie for you. I personally found it resonating with my own experiences and feelings of teaching sons, and spending time with family in the fields. (Especially those many, many pre dawn yard moves when we were chasing the blooms.)

All in all, definitely worth a watch in this beekeepers opinion.

-John Russell



submitted by Asmara Polym

Having Trouble Finding A Good Parking Spot?

Norshel Inc. at 890 Nairn

(Two doors west of the Legion) Has generously given the R.R.A.A. members permission to park on the property when the legion lot is full. Please do not block lanes or building exits, or park in the Midland Foods parking lot.

Melissa's Musings

-Mary Chown

Many Red River Apiarist members subscribe to the American Bee Journal. We started getting it 2 years ago. The issues are so full of articles of every kind of subject related to bees. Some contain hard science; others accounts of a particular beekeeper's method of doing some specific work or treatment of bees. We never actually read every article, just cherry pick the ones that appeal to us at our stage of beekeeping.

The November 2019 issue contained an intriguing title: "Richard Taylor : The Metaphysical Beekeeper". After reading about him I would like to obtain a copy of one of his most popular books, "The Joys of Beekeeping". I understand that it is out of print, so the library or Amazon may have to be where I look for it.

I am sure that many of you have already heard of Richard Taylor but I hadn't. I enjoyed reading about him, especially when the author of the article quoted what he called, "Taylorisms in the Beeyard".

Here are a few of these gems.

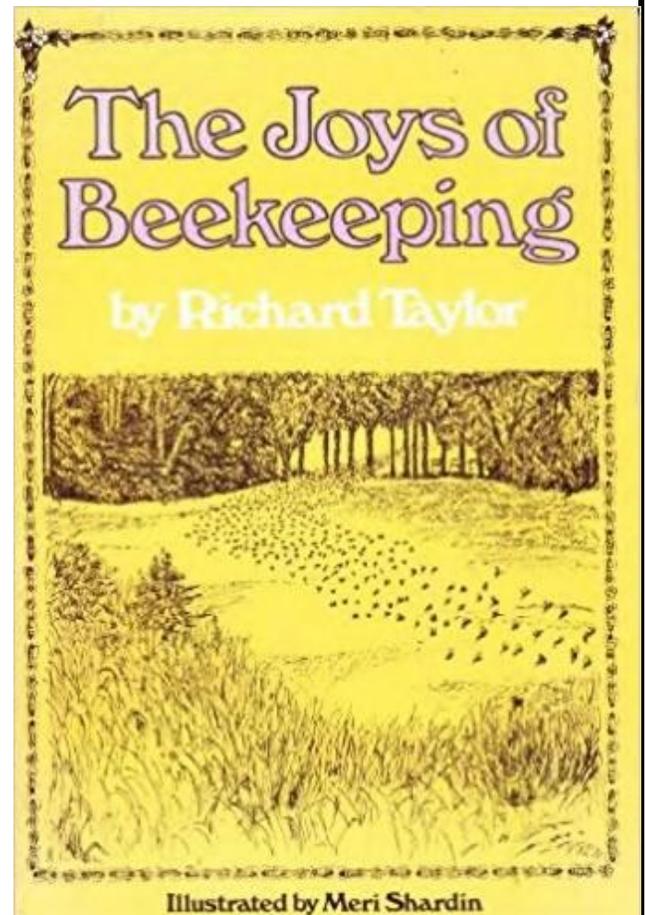
"Beekeeping demands a certain demeanour. It is not so much slow motion that is wanted, but a controlled approach."

"Sometimes the world seems on the verge of insanity, and one wonders what limit there can be to greed, aggression, deception, and the thirst for power or fame. When reflections of this sort threaten one's serenity, one can be glad for the bees."

"There are a few rules of thumb that are useful guides. One is that when you are confronted with some problem in the apiary and you do not know what to do, then do nothing. Matters are seldom made worse by doing nothing and are often made much worse by inept intervention."

"No man's back is unbreakable and even beekeepers grow older. When full, a mere shallow super is heavy, weighing forty pounds or more. Deep supers, when filled, are ponderous beyond practical limit."

And last of all, this one is my favourite, as I detest the job of scraping and cleaning the bee boxes. "Some beekeepers dismantle every hive and scrape every



frame, which is pointless as the bees soon glue everything back the way it was." -
M.C.

Harvest Sunset Manitoba Mead—A review

Along about October 2018, Jay invited me over to brew some mead. Jay had been brewing mead for at least ten years so he more or less knew what he was doing...I would say more than less in fact. The result of this brewing was two batches of gorgeous traditional mead. This experience turned me into a mead fan. When I learned that Bee Boyz was starting up a meadery, I was thrilled at the prospect of having a locally produced mead on the shelf here in Manitoba. This past week, I was thrilled to find Bee Boyz mead, both a traditional and a saskatoon berry mead on the shelf at a Winnipeg MLCC store. I purchased a couple bottles of each. Later that week, Jay and I got together for a little mead tasting session. Here are the resulting comments on the mead we tasted.

The Traditional Mead:

The overall presentation was good with good clarity and little to no sediment in the bottle. The corks in these meads are natural and personally we have a preference for synthetic corks. Synthetics don't fail as often and will allow the mead to bottle age longer with more predictable results. The bouquet is pleasing with the honey varietal being apparent and pleasant. A great mouth feel that is silky on the tongue...this is a mead of substance.

The honey can be tasted, which is important in a traditional. My preference is a mead with a bit lower alcohol content than the 14% ABV of this mead. The alcohol comes through in the taste, likely due to the mead's young age. This should smooth out with another six to 12 months of bottle aging.

Overall this is a very nice mead, something that a person should be proud to produce and is also a good representation of what mead should be. This is important due to the fact that mead is a new product to the Manitoba consumer. First impressions are very important.

I would give this mead a score of 8 out of 10 overall.

The Saskatoon Mead:

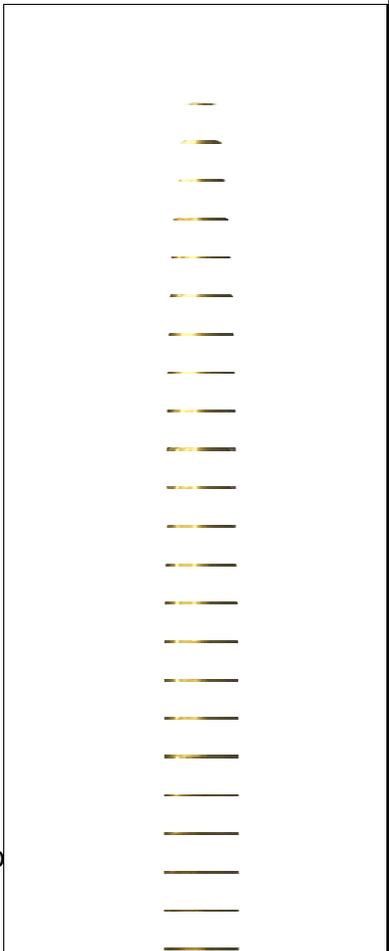
Overall presentation needs improvement. The key factor that this comment is based on is the considerable sediment that is found in the bottom of the bottle.

Other factors such as aroma are good and pleasant.

The bouquet is composed of notes from the honey as well as the saskatoons, however, personal preference would have included a more bold Saskatoon presence in bouquet and taste. Otherwise, the mouth feel is very pleasant, the alcohol content is still 14% ABV which may or may not be a personal preference for everyone. As mentioned, I prefer synthetic corks for reasons stated above. Since this is also a young mead, the alcohol also comes through, which I would expect to mellow over time. Overall this is also a very nice mead. Personally, a more bold saskatoon presence would be nice to separate it from a traditional in flavour and bouquet.

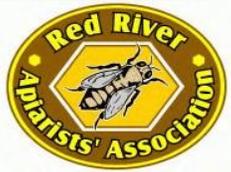
I would give this mead a score of 6 out of 10 overall, the lower score is due to the presence of too much sediment and an understated saskatoon flavour.

All in all we both would congratulate Bee Boyz for producing an excellent product and would recommend this mead as a good introduction what it should be. Well done!



Submitted by Brad Hogg & Jason Sawatzky





Editorial Notes

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Have you come across an interesting article? Would you like to share an observation? Share an anecdote or an observation from your own beekeeping experiences?

Do you have an opinion you want to voice to the beekeeping community? Seen a video you found informative or would like a topic researched?

Send it in to the Editor!

Taking all submissions at: honeyb@mymts.net

WE NEED COOKIES!!!!

Our influx of new members are finding us running short at coffee break! Please consider bringing a little contribution to the next meeting!!



The RRAA , the Bee Cause, for you and through you:

The Bee Cause is the official publication of the Red River Apiarists' Association for distribution to its members and their colleagues in the beekeeping industry. It is published eight times a year on a monthly basis except December and the summer months of June, July, and August when membership meetings do not occur.

Articles can be best submitted in word documents as email attachments. Though they may be edited for spelling and basic grammar, no changes will be made to their contents, message and opinions without the authors' written & expressed consent. They are those of their originator and not of the Red River Apiarists' Association.

Deadline for any submission to this newsletter is the second Sunday preceding the membership meeting to allow for publishing and mailing delays and the legal obligation to allow membership to review last meetings' minutes for errors or omissions before next meeting. Regular membership meetings are normally scheduled 7:30 on the second Tuesday of every month at the Elmwood Legion 920 Nairn Avenue in Winnipeg excepts months noted above.

The Red River Apiarists' 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 newsletter.

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Ph: 204-266-2276 E-mail: wdamert@yahoo.ca. (Beausejour Mb.)

R.R.A.A. Classifieds: (continued.....)

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Contact: Mark Waldner 204-771-0672.



R.R.A.A. Classifieds: (continued.....)



Need a New Fundraising Idea? Think Honey!

Schools, sports teams, daycares, band trips, cadets, and scouts. It seems that every organization needs support to provide those extra curricular activities for our kids. Our easy to manage, and no minimum fundraising program offers a large line of pure Manitoba honeys and flavored honey blends, along with other products from the hive such as candles, bath products, pollen and honey comb. No money up front and 100% guaranteed, this fundraiser offers your supporters our products at below the store price to encourage participation and help you reach your fundraising goals.

More information and a downloadable package can be found at

honeyb.ca

Or call John at 204-612-2337 for more information.



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 To Enter the Draw

From January 4
 The Winner will be

Red River Apiarists' Association Membership Application

The RRAA membership extends for one calendar year. Renewals are due in January and includes access to 8 monthly issues of the RRAA BeeCause newsletter.

I hereby apply for membership to the RRAA\$35.00/year

*Optional: Beekeeper Liability Insurance - \$65.00 + \$5.20 &&&&.... \$70.20/year

Total Payment \$ _____

**Note: Liability Insurance fees must be submitted before April 1st.*

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Signature: _____

Please check one of the following:

- New Member
- Renewal
- U of M Student Beekeeping Course (free first year)
-

Payment Method:

- Cash
- Cheque
- E-Transfer
-

Completed form and payment may be brought to a RRAA regular meeting or mailed to:

**John Speer, RRAA Treasurer
Box 16 Group 555, RR5
Winnipeg, MB
R2C 2Z2**