

January 2012 Newsletter



President's Report

As we welcome in 2012, I hope that everyone is in good health and that all the bees are doing well. I hope that we will have a low mortality this spring with excellent nectar flows for this upcoming season. I also hope that we can maintain our status of being Varroa mite-free in the Thunder Bay area.

Beth Stewart, Dianna Bockus and Linda Turk have joined the executive as acting Secretary, Membership Coordinator and PR contact. We are getting things on track and are coming up with a plan for this New Year. I cannot express how thankful I am to have these individuals on board, as Joanne and I have had a huge burden taken off of our shoulders. Thank you to the entire past and present executive who helped out last year, re-organizing and re-structuring the Association to serve its members better. We will continue to improve the association for the membership's benefit. We also encourage input from our members on how we can improve the Association, too.

This past year was very productive as an Association. One of the issues that had been talked about since OMAFRA discontinued the mite testing, was why aren't they testing our mite-free bees? Well, the Executive worked very hard with the Provincial Apiarist and the good news is, it is being reinstated in the Thunder Bay area this coming spring. The testing, from what I understand, will be the alcohol wash method; however, I am trying to work out a protocol with Paul to use the sticky board test.

The Overwinter Workshop held on October 16 was a huge success. All participants had great questions and good interaction. I had great feedback from participants and plan on

doing an annual session on overwintering colonies. The pot luck after the session was superb, not only the food, but the participants who made the inaugural workshop a huge success.

The Executive has been working hard on ensuring that all registered beekeepers in Ontario are included in the new Growing Forward Wildlife compensation program. It will remain as registered beekeepers and they may be entitled to \$250.00 per colony if destroyed by wildlife covered under the program. The Farm Business Registration Number or the Premises ID Number is no longer a requirement to be eligible.

The Birdsfoot Trefoil project that I proposed to Oliver Paipoonge was very well received by the township. We have been given 2 roads to seed and monitor within the township. I have yet to do a site visit, but it will be happening in the next few weeks. The Thunder Bay District Stewardship Council supports the project in principal, and may potentially become a funding/ resource partner. My goal is to have TBBA lead in this project as a community partner. Please contact me if you are interested in this project or can offer some expertise or



*Stay informed – be a 2012
member of the TBBA*

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time. Remember this is for our bees and your honey flow!!

There is so much more to discuss --Format change of TBBA meetings, virus profiling of mite-free bees, Blueberry pollination in the Northeast.....!! I hope to see you all at the March AGM

Barry



Ramblings of a New Beekeeper

I have read repeatedly that anyone interested in bees should work with an existing beekeeper for a year. I am the type who jumps in with both feet and reads the directions later and only if required.

This zeal for my new-found hobby was not dampened at all by the lack of enthusiasm on the part of my husband who repeatedly told me that he *wanted nothing to do with my latest project*.

Undaunted, I joined forces with my like-minded friend, Linda.

First on the agenda was obtaining the hardware for our soon-to-be tenants. We followed suggestions from existing beekeepers and purchased polystyrene hives.

We were not perturbed when more than half our shipment came in damaged. Nor was I bothered by the complaints from my husband about my latest project as he drove to the border three times to complete the hive shipment. After all, I argued, it gave us some quality time together.

The polystyrene hives go together in a flash, as promised by the supplier. What they don't explain is that the glue used to permanently hold them together is messy, goopy and ugly. Not a job for Linda or me ...and again, my husband pointed out, with fingers covered in pasty, grey-coloured glue, *he wanted nothing to do with this latest project*

We wanted to keep our expenses to a minimum, so used paint that I had purchased previously for a now forgotten project that never happened. Linda is convinced that you won't need GPS coordinates to find us on Google maps; you will see the bright yellow dots in the lush green colour of Gillies! The supplier included in our purchase of a "complete beginner kit" yet another reference book on beekeeping. I skimmed through it, promptly smudging the paragraph about a year's mentorship, with a big blob of yellow paint.

Our beginner kit included veils and hat and we purchased suitable gloves. While Linda

looks quite dashing under her netting, I think I resemble a giant marsh-mallow.

Jim Heald provided us with 2 nucs. Jim was extremely patient with our constant questions and carefully went through the process of showing us who was who in the busy hive.

Our hives are registered and I was thrilled when my certificate came in. There at the bottom of my certificate is: "1 hive in 1 beeyard". But that's MY one hive in MY one beeyard!

We needed to protect our newly registered hive from bears. Armed with a picture off the internet of what our electric fence should look like, off we went to our local Farm Co-op.



We learned that .25-joule charger is what "most farms use to keep their livestock in". My bee-buddy noted that it "was not our intent to keep the bees *IN*, but to keep the bears *OUT*" No less than a 1-joule unit would do.

The next problem was the job of pounding the T-posts into the hard-packed clay soil

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typical of Gillies township. This was obviously a part of the project where we would be better in a supervisory role. I believe Linda came up with at least two different pots of jams and some cookies to encourage my husband's work on the solar-powered fencing for her bee yard. I had to listen to him telling me that he wants *nothing to do with my latest project* as he pounded in each post around my bright yellow hive.

Now we are hoping the bees survive the winter and are talking about the process of extracting. I am thinking my husband's workshop would make an excellent room for extracting but not sure how well that idea will go over with him! Ah, well ...there's always Linda's jam to encourage his participation in this, my latest project!

Beth Stewart

Benefits of Membership

- ✓ Sharing of information pertinent to beekeeping in our district through newsletters, website, and online discussion groups
- ✓ Updates on what's happening in the industry in Ontario.
- ✓ List items for sale or offer services to other beekeepers though the newsletter and website

- ✓ Participation in bee yard demonstrations and workshops
- ✓ Opportunity for bulk purchasing
- ✓ Loan of educational materials available on request for events.
- ✓ Loan of journals and material stored at the Brodie St. Library.

Membership is \$20/year and is due January 1st and can be mailed to the TBBA mail box.

What Do You Think?

1. Would you like a January meeting?
2. Are you interested in bulk container ordering?
3. Would you prefer a Yahoo email group for discussion rather than a Face Book page?



Meeting Schedule

- March 13th,
- May 8th
- July Workshop -- TBA
- September 11th
- November 13th

While meetings are open to anyone interested in beekeeping, **notices of meetings, information and updates before and after meetings, will only be sent to members (that is, persons who have paid 2012 dues). As well, only members may vote at meetings.**

Call for Volunteers!

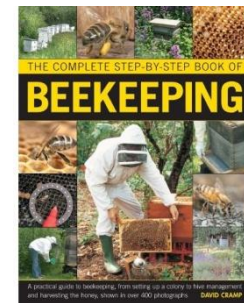
Are you interested in serving on the TBBA executive? Elections will be held at the annual meeting in March.

Can you represent the TBBA at the:

- Farmers market,
- School talks
- Library talk (Feb 28th)
- LU Food Forum (March 21st)
- Gillies Community Centre Seedy Social (March 24th)
- Earth day (Apr 22)
- National Day of the Honey Bee (~May 29th)

Contact:

evelynharris@tbaytel.net



Book Review

"The Complete Step-By-Step Book of Beekeeping" by David Cramp.

ISBN-13: 978-0754823483

As a new beekeeper, I am constantly looking for material to help me along the path of being a good beekeeper. David Cramp's book was recently released and the "step-by-step" drew my attention.

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David Cramp describes many aspects of beekeeping, along with some beautiful pictures. In this book, you will find information on bee species, sights to house the hives, how the hive works, handling the bees, and a section on a beekeeper's calendar. There is also a great section on "The Bee Garden".

For those interested in taking beekeeping further, the author describes the many products that bees supply, entering competitions, rearing queens and breeding queens. At the end of the book, the author leaves us with an additional reading list.

This is a book for beginner beekeepers, like myself, but would probably be a bit elementary for the experienced beekeeper. What I liked about this book, besides the easily understood material, was the colourful illustrations and charts. The love of bees comes across in David Cramp's writing and you can tell it is his life's passion. Other publications by David Cramp are: The Beekeeper's Field Guide, as well as, A Practical Manual of Beekeeping.

NOTE: For the next newsletter, look for a book review of "Storey's Guide to Keeping Honey Bees" with stories by our own Jeanette Momot.

Upcoming articles, in this section, will include information on bee-friendly herbs and their uses, as well as bee-friendly gardens with edible plants for us.

Happy Beekeeping.
Darlene Spakowski

Can YOU Contribute to the Next Newsletter?

If you would like to write an article or share your beekeeping experiences, please send your document in either Word or plain text to the secretary by email (clayacres@tbaytel.net)

Deadline for next newsletter is March 24th.

Classified ads (such as beekeeping items for sale or rent) can be placed in the newsletter for TBBA members at no charge

Registering Your Bees

Every beekeeper in Ontario is required to register with the Provincial Apiarist. This is so beekeepers across the province can be notified of outbreaks of pests or diseases affecting bees and beehives.

If you have Internet access, you can go to Service Ontario's website (www.serviceontario.ca) and enter "register bees" in the search space. This will provide

you with a form you print out, complete, and either mail or fax to the Provincial Apiarist. The form asks for your name, contact information, and very specific descriptions of where your beehives are located. You can register a single hive, if you are working on a small scale, but there is space provided for describing the locations of as many as six beeyards, and you can add more if necessary.

If you don't have Internet access, or if you're using dial-up and don't want to take the time, let me know (Linda Turk, 577-4787 or lindat@tbaytel.net) and I will be happy to print out a form for you and get it to you.

Recent changes to legislation have affected how small-scale beekeepers may or may not be compensated for wildlife damage to hives, bees, and equipment; it will be worth your while to be a registered beekeeper.

This newsletter will provide updates on the legislation as changes are made final.



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THE BEE

*Out of the starving hive, early one
summer day
The scout flew.
By the guiding sun she set her
course and was away.*

*She left behind her colony well-hid
in a broken wall,
The last of its kind.
She must surely bring salvation
back before dewfall.*

*Her tiny shadow glided over
concrete, brick and stone,
Earth sealed beneath
Where bee-pasture once had
shimmered, teeming and
windblown.*

*Over thronging crowds; heedless
gods and blind
To the urgent bee,
Hurrying, lost in thoughts, intent
on the daily grind.*

*Drowning the song of her wings,
traffic shook the air.
How far could she go?
Below was death; wheels, poison,
metal and glare.*

*And then at last, a beacon signalled
clear and bold,
"Come to me!"
Down she plunged into the cradle
of nectared gold.*

*Shadowed by windowed walls in a
scruffy vacant lot
Deliverance bloomed
In litter, stones and scrap and up
through rust and rot.*

*From beacon flower to beacon
flower, under the sun
The bee worked on.
Dandelions, nettles, vetch, all
visited one by one.*

*A human crowd came jostling along
the busy walk,
Happy and loud.
By the lot they gathered to hear
their leader talk,*

*"Thank you for coming," he said,
"We're here to celebrate.
"You voted for me;
"Now on this long abandoned land,
worthless and desolate*

*"We shall build housing and clinics,
shelters and stores.
"Can you see it friends?
"Together we'll transform this
place. The future is yours.*

*This will be a loving place wherein
we may raise
Our little ones,
And keep them safe and healthy
through all their nights and days.*

*"To the corporate greedsters I send
a wake-up call.
"Poverty shall end!
"Our country is wealthy, growing
plenty of food for all.*

*All the people cheered, then went
their separate ways
With lightened steps
And hopeful hearts, full of the
promised better days.*

*And as they left he handed out
apples and pears
To symbolize
The peaceful life of plenty that one
day would be theirs.*

*Back at the nest the scout bee
danced to say*

*This far This way
.....
The young are saved.*

Hildegarde Henderson

Face Book Group

Question: why can't we have a discussion group on the website?

Answer: Our webpage has been created using free software intended for lightweight use. It will not support a chat room and many pictures.

As well, our website administrator is a volunteer, so frequent changes to the website to post updates, which is what the q&a would be, is not realistic.

Updating doesn't happen daily. You might submit a question and weeks will go by before the answer may be posted. To provide a venue for concurrent discussion and sharing, a group has been set up on Face Book.

Question: can I join the group without being on Face Book?

Answer: Unfortunately you will have to set yourself up on facebook. There is a plethora of information on how to do this on the Internet. If you are not in to the "social media" craze, simply set your page up with minimal information and then no one will find you! Next, join the TBBA group to participate in discussions, ask questions, share info & pictures.

Question: Why can't someone just copy & paste the discussions from face book into an email for the rest of us?

Answer: The "Someone" in your question would be a volunteer and no one is going

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to make that time commitment.

Where is your Bee Yard?

This year, as the Executive moves into discussions about roadside management and use of pesticides with interested groups, it would further the TBBA influence if we could identify the number and proximity of yards in the areas being discussed. If we need the assistance of ratepayers in a particular township in discussions with their Councils, we need to be able to contact you, specifically.

Stay connected! – be a member of the TBBA. In order to continue to receive information in the form of newsletters or notices, including those sent by email, you will need to make sure that your 2012 membership dues have been paid.

Your Association is working hard for all beekeepers in the Thunder Bay District and needs your support. As well, you need to keep informed on the latest issues affecting your bee yard and the best way to do that, is to be a member of the organization.

Without a paid membership, this will be the last communication shared with you.

A membership form has been included with this newsletter, is available on the TBBA website. Please send you completed form and fee ASAP to:

**TBBA
Suite 228
1100 Memorial Ave
Thunder Bay ON P7B 4A3.**

CLASSIFIED

WANTED: New beekeepers looking for small, stainless steel extractor. 476-0927 or 577-4787

An Introduction to Bees and Beekeeping in NW Ontario

Thinking about becoming a beekeeper? Interested in beekeeping?

This is an opportunity to get the buzz on beekeeping in Northwestern Ontario from local beekeepers.

When: Tuesday February 28th
7 – 8:30 p.m.

Where: Waverley library auditorium.

Presenters: Local and experienced beekeepers

Cost: FREE

Contact: Joanne Henderson
hendersonlu@yahoo.ca

Bee Chat

There are a lot of unknowns when it comes to understanding bees, so I believe we should remember the old saying that “*Experience is the best teacher*”. When the executive board was looking for interesting information for the January newsletter, we agreed that an interview with a beekeeper who had a lot of experience with bees would benefit newcomers and anyone keeping bees. Thus, the interview with Paul Filipchuk came about. A friend introduced me to him when I started getting a hive 3 years ago and I was so impressed with his knowledge. I called and coaxed a bit and he agreed, so my friend and I made the visit.

When we arrived we wished Paul ‘Happy New Year’ and I said I would have liked to come before Christmas but couldn’t. He reminded us that it was Ukrainian Christmas and being a perfect Ukrainian host, he served us a glass of the best homemade red wine we have ever tasted. What an enjoyable visit we had.

Paul’s father was a bee keeper and so he was able to learn a lot from his dad. He was a bee keeper for about 30 years himself. He hasn’t had bees for a few years now due to a bout of ill health and although he is better now, he still misses them. Paul kept about 9 hives

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and built them himself, just like you would build a house. The wall had 2"x2" studs with an outer, insulated wall. The inner area was the same measurement as a regular hive. He said he never lost bees over the winter because they were warm enough. He, in his experience, felt that the bees do not like plywood and he found that spruce or pine worked the best; the same type of trees that bees collect propolis from. He also made roofs that had a 6" to 8" overhang to keep rain and moisture out. Ventilation holes should not be bigger than your finger, so the brood doesn't get cold. It is very important that the hive is level, as bees like level-accurate spaces. He said he could cut the base to ensure water didn't get in but the hive has to be kept as level as possible. The frames must always be put back in the exact, same order as they are taken out.

Swarms usually happen around June 10th and he found that listening to the bees at this time is important because the queen can give off little peeps when she thinks it is time to move. He used to take a small piece of hose and put it up to the hive and has heard this sound more than once. He would then prepare a new hive and be ready when it happened. You can learn a lot about bees by listening to their sounds. You can also see queen cells and you keep the largest one and get rid of the rest.

I had heard from a neighbour of Paul's that he saw Paul bring down a swarm of bees from a very high spot in a tree with a mirror, so I asked him how this was done. He said he used a fairly large mirror and, since swarms often take place on sunny days, you can use the reflection to confuse them. He said bees go east when they swarm and if you can get to them before they

take off, you use this method to temporarily blind or confuse them. They are not sure what direction to go and gradually, about ½ hour or so, come down closer to the ground. It does not hurt them because of the distance they are away. Once, when he was recovering a swarm, he was only dressed in shorts and a sleeveless

shirt and the bees completely covered him. He described it as "black with bees". He said the bees are calm when swarming but when the neighbours saw him, they thought he was crazy and ran to get a picture of him. Paul believes that the bees know when you are helping them because you look after them.

Paul said he was always amazed at how the bees never got lost and always able to get back to the hive no matter how far they went. He

went out every day after work and sat on a chair between the hives and watched them communicate or come flying in with pollen "like little bullets." Once, he fed a worker some honey and watched as she went and told others and this went on until a lot of bees came. Bees are more intelligent than we know.

We thanked Paul for sharing this information and asked if he would ever be interested in speaking to the Bee Association however, he stated he wouldn't be comfortable doing that. He said he didn't read books about bees but learned from his dad and on his own, experimenting and watching them. I think that's the best experience of all. Thank you, Paul, for sharing this information with us. We appreciate your kindness and love of the bees. Evelyn Harris.

