

2015 Honey Letter

Every year of beekeeping is a continuously humbling as well as exhilarating experience. After a fire burnt down our shop with all of our tools, tractors, trucks and beekeeping equipment, we had to start from scratch. We ordered two beautiful packages of bees and installed them in their hives with cobbled together protective gear since our new bee suits had not yet arrived. Some video of this can be seen on Mad Cow Entertainment, our YouTube channel.



Swarm hive on the right

After getting the packages installed, Tom was carefully mowing surrounding weeds with his new tractor when unfortunately the combination of hill, slipperiness and new equipment conspired to having both new hives knocked over! It was tricky for him to put things back together with no proper protective clothing. But fortunately the hives recovered and did well, lucky for us since sometimes bees in such a position become angered and blame the disaster on their queen, often killing her. Kind of like people do when they blame the president for an economy of 400,000,000 people.

On the other side of the spectrum was the day that Mary Pechous from Regina's preschool called me to remove a swarm from an outdoor toybox. The swarm was up in a corner hanging over an empty wooden box. It was easy to use the hive tool to drop them into the box. I put them in a cardboard box and drove them home to their new hive where they continue to do well. The only glitch was that I left my cell phone on my bumper and it fell off 25 miles later on a steep hill by our house. The phone was then run over by the road maintainer! SD card survived!

We have been watching a pair of eagles raising clutches of eaglets on our property for the last few years. Their nest is in a tree on the Cedar River visible from our house and we watch it with our telescope. The tree however, recently died and we noticed a large branch had fallen off. We were relieved when Tom found the eagles were building a new nest. The new nest is much closer to our house but obscured by branches from other trees. I am sure Tom will figure out a way for us to observe them before spring.



New Eagles' nest

New hives, new nest, new shop, new teenagers (!) we will just keep pushing on!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Aubrey, Beau, Lyse and Tom