

Sept/Oct 2003

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Don Strachan 1925-2003

The California beekeeping industry recently lost another prominent figure with the passing of 78 year old Don Strachan, founder of Strachan Apiaries, Inc. The following was written by Dons' daughter, Valeri, with help from the family.

Don's childhood was spent in the region of the Sutter Buttes, a favorite natural setting throughout his life. He gained a deep appreciation of the ocean, mountains, rivers and streams through his many outdoor adventures, hunting trips and fishing excursions. He and his wife Alice enjoyed traveling, taking regular trips to Montana and Wyoming, as well as venturing to Hawaii, Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji.

Don was very active in the community, as an elder, board member and Adult Bible School teacher with the Gray Avenue Church, serving on the Board of Directors of Faith Christian School, San Jose Christian College, and Christian Encounter Ministries. He was Past President of the Yuba City Rotary Club and board member of Sutter Buttes Savings and Loan. His agribusiness associations included the California Bee Breeders Association, California State Beekeepers' Association, and he served on the board of the Valley Honey Association.

Strachan Apiaries, Inc. began in 1954 as a small, fledgling operation that required the physical stamina necessary to work in the heat and cold and to lift and load beehives weighing up to 100

pounds. Through perseverance and the literal sweat of his brow, Don built a successful, highly respected business in nut, tree fruits, and vine crop pollination. Additionally, he became very proficient at breeding queens and selling package bees. Don and the business have been featured in several local and industry publications. Researchers at the University of California, Davis, have drawn upon Don's experience and have conducted beekeeping research in Don's apiaries.

Life was full for Don. He fell in love with and married Alice, then left for World War II. He returned home, safely, as a Navy combat veteran of the South Pacific theater of war. He enjoyed his young family and took many family vacations, eventually having the fortune to purchase a modest cabin at Dillon Beach in Sonoma County, a favorite destination for rest and relaxation.

Don and Alice went to theater productions and appreciated the blessings earned by their hard work. They graciously hosted large family celebrations, including their friends in the lovely and lively events. Daily routines included watching sports, "Those knuckleheads!" "That Montana's a good guy," "Those Giants can't do anything

right this season," "Did you see that Kings game? Boy, oh boy!"

Humor was never too far from Don's lips. He had a joke for every occasion and he loved to laugh at the ones you told him. Our foibles became fodder for his wit and his memory never seemed to fail in this area!

Athletic pursuits included playing tennis and coaching basketball as a young man. He also officiated at community basketball games and earned his "15 seconds of fame" when a Harlem Clown pulled Don's referee pants down at a Globetrotters game.

Some people seem larger than life. Don was a large man who filled a big place in many hearts and lives. Baptizing, teaching, singing, praying, working, relaxing, giving, receiving, laughing, smiling, scowling, planning, deciding, taking action, hugging, kissing ... a very full life that is remembered with dignity, love and appreciation.

Harry Hyde Laidlaw, Jr.

Professor Harry H. Laidlaw, Jr., long time resident of Davis, died at 2:30 am September 19, 2003 at his residence in the University

Retirement Community. Professor Laidlaw joined the Departments of Entomology and Genetics, UC Davis, faculty in 1947 following his service as Chief Entomologist for the US Army. Professor Laidlaw was best known for developing artificial insemination technology for honey bees. His contributions enabled selective breeding of honey bees and the fundamental study of insect genetics. He was recognized by his peers world-wide as the "father of honey bee genetics." He authored numerous scientific publications and 4 books on honey bee genetics and breeding. He was the recipient of many awards for his research and his service to the University, agriculture, and the beekeeping industry. He was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1955 and the Entomological Society of America in 1991. He and his contributions are listed in American Men of Science, Who's Who in The West, Who's Who in America, Who's Who in Science and Engineering, and Who's Who in Science. In 1997, he was honored by the College of Agriculture and Environmental Science with their Award of Distinction for his many contributions to the University and society.

In addition to his teaching and research respon-

sibilities, Professor Laidlaw served as the first Associate Dean for Research in the College of Agriculture in 1969. He retired from the University in 1974 at age 67. However, he remained active in his research and outreach efforts on behalf of the University. In 1980-1985 he established a honey bee breeding program for the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture as part of a joint UC-Egypt agricultural development program. In addition, he continued to publish scientific papers and modify and refine his instruments for artificial insemination, and wrote two new books. He published his last scientific paper at age 87 and his last book at 90.

Professor Laidlaw is survived by his wife Ruth, his daughter Barbara, son-in-law Joe, and granddaughter Pamela Murphy.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Harry H. Laidlaw, Jr. Honey Bee Research Facility Fund. Checks should be made payable to the Regents of the University of California and sent to the Department of Entomology (attention: Department Chair), University of California, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616-8521.

Caesar's Hotel and Casino

Highway 50, Stateline, Nevada

November 11-13, 2003

Monday, November 10

3:00 pm Board of Directors' Meeting

Tuesday, November 11

8:00 am Registration and Commercial Exhibits Open
8:30 Opening Ceremonies and Committee Reports
10:00 Exhibitor's Break
10:20 Exhibitor Introduction and Door Prizes
10:30 "Saga of the Woodworth Family" - **Bonnie Woodworth**, Halliday, ND
11:00 "Ashurst Family Business" - **Brock and Dion Ashurst**, El Centro, CA
11:00 Woman's Auxiliary: State Honey Queen Discussion
11:30 "Effects of Miticides on Queens and Drones" - **Dr. Eric Mussen**, UC Davis
12:00 pm **Women's Auxiliary No Host Luncheon**
2:00 American Honey Queen - **Catherine Danuser**, Marion, ND
2:15 "Honey Packers Panel"
3:15 "Theory of Honey Production" - **Dr. Keith Delaplane**, University of Georgia, Athens, GA
3:45 Exhibitor's Break
4:05 Exhibitor Introduction and Door Prizes
4:15 "Are You Legal?" - **Officer Chris Sahagun**, CHP, Truckee, CA
6:30 New Members Reception
7:00 American Honey Queen Reception

Wednesday, November 12

7:00 am Sioux Honey Association Breakfast
8:00 Registration Continues, Exhibits Open
9:00 "Bees, Bears, and Barcodes" - **George Hansen**, Colton, OR
9:45 "What Makes a Good Pollinator" - **Dr. Keith Delaplane**, Univ. GA
10:15 "Pollination" - **Joe Traynor**, Scientific Ag Co., Bakersfield, CA
10:30 Exhibitor's Break
10:50 Exhibitor Introduction and Door Prizes
11:00 Panel - "Second, Third and Fourth Generation Beekeepers"
12:15 pm **Research Luncheon** - "Getting Better at What We Do: A Win-Win Proposition"
- **Dr. Gloria de Grandi-Hoffman**, USDA Lab, Tucson, AZ.
3:00 Women's Auxiliary Tour
7:00 Research Committee Meeting

Thursday, November 13

8:00 am Registration Continues, Exhibits Open
8:00 "Managing 10,000+ Hives" - **John Miller**, Newcastle, CA.
8:30 "Varroa IPM" - **Dr. Marion Ellis**, University of Nebraska, Lincoln.
9:00 "No Nucs is Bad Nucs" - **George Hansen**, Colton, OR.
10:00 Exhibitor's Break
10:20 Exhibitor Introduction and Door Prizes
10:30 "Beekeeping in the Great Plains" - **Dr. Marion Ellis**, Univ. NE.
11:00 Panel - "Learn From the Experts"
12:00 pm "Comments from **Congressman Wally Herger**"
12:15 Lunch
1:30 CSBA Annual Business Meeting
3:30 Live Auction
6:30 Social Hour and Silent Auction
7:30 Awards Banquet

Friday, November 14

8:00 am Breakfast Board of Director's Meeting

Hand-mated Queens

In 1928 the following was printed in The Beekeepers Item 12(5): 209-211. The publication was mailed from San Antonio, Texas, and a subscription, for the monthly, was one dollar per year.

"Several years ago the Beekeepers Item and the British Bee World made the announcement that indubitable proof had been submitted to them that Dr. Charles W. Quinn and his grand son Harry Laidlaw, Jr., had successfully inseminated queens by hand. The scientific world was inclined to doubt this and for some time it was found impossible to have the experiment performed under strictly checked conditions.

When Dr. Quinn went over to Louisiana to assist the reconstruction work, an opportunity was provided to have the experiment made in the presence of some of the leading beekeepers of the country. It was late August and many conditions were not of the best. The great success which followed was therefore more significant.

At 1:30 in the afternoon of Tuesday, November 15th, 1927, a notable group of beekeepers and scientists gathered in the state reconstruction camp around a long table, and saw young Laidlaw (Editor - Harry was 20) perform the operation upon seven virgin queens. Among the group was James I. Hambleton, of the Bureau of Entomology,

Washington, D.C.; Prof. W.H. Gates, whose reputation as a geneticist is known over the whole world; W.E. Anderson, State Entomologist of Louisiana; Father J.M. Coulombe; and about forty other well known beekeepers. Many of these had high power glasses and watched intently every move in the operation. Mr. Hambleton selected the drones and prepared them for Mr. Laidlaw as he worked. The season being late many of the drones were found undeveloped and deficient in semen. It seemed for a time almost certain that the experiment would of necessity be a failure.

... five of the seven queens immediately produced worker brood proving their successful hand insemination."

AFB - Recently

Dr. Steve Pernal, who works in one of the last government funded bee research facilities in Beaverlodge, Alberta, Canada, arrived at his job when American foulbrood (AFB) was really causing problems for some commercial beekeepers.

He first looked at possible ways to decontaminate woodenware from hives containing dead larvae, scale, and contaminated food stores. 1. Scorching and Virkon S[®] were about 84% effective. 2. Powered water was 81% effective. 3. Scrubbing was 77% effective. 4. Steam and lye were nearly

100% effective, as is irradiation.

He has been checking stocks for hygienic behavior and there are some pretty good stocks around. Queens from hygienic colonies are being traded among bee breeders, and their stocks are beginning to look pretty good. He has been pressing beekeepers with foulbrood problems to irradiate their equipment, or at least burn the worst of it. Levels of AFB in his area have diminished from 40% of the colonies to 25%. It is headed in the right direction.

Steve also found that the best sample to take for AFB spores in a colony is the nurse bees. They turn out to be very good indicators of the level of contamination in the boxes. In some cases, 100% of the bees in the sample were contaminated. A few samples had no contamination, but averages around 25-50% were common. That is a lot of inoculum to try to keep in check with prophylactic treatments of antibiotics.

AHBs: According to Paula

Many years ago a student at CSU Fullerton, Paula Fell, contacted me for assistance with obtaining information for a Master's thesis on "California Beekeepers' Concerns over Africanized Honey Bees."

I gave her some leads on where to find beekeepers to survey (in fact, I mailed the survey). I just received a copy of that thesis (ten years old). Here is what she projected would happen by now.

1. "The majority of beekeepers surveyed are likely to continue beekeeping after the arrival of AHBs." (She's right.)

2. "Of those likely to continue beekeeping, most are willing to try keeping AHBs if it is not possible to keep European varieties in the hive." (Fortunately, we haven't had to test this conclusion in California, but it is true in Arizona.)

3. "... liability problems will probably be severe ... and ... liability concerns will also limit the number of people willing to continue swarm removal, this task will be left to the government... Liability from AHB attacks could easily spill over to non-beekeeping individuals and entities if property owners are held responsible for feral AHBs found on their property." (Liability concerns are not as severe as she expected. The State worked out exceptions for entrepreneurs who wished to stay in the swarm collection and bee removal business, for profit, but they have to carry a hefty insurance policy. Homeowners have not

been badgered about AHBs nesting on their properties.)

4. "The loss of beekeepers who may provide public education (Editor - fairs, demos at schools, training emergency crews, etc.) will increase the need for the government to provide such education." (The USDA lab in Tucson took care of most of that in Arizona. University of California Cooperative Extension in San Diego County did the lion's share of preparation of written and media materials that still are being used throughout California. The LA Fire Department has developed some excellent media materials, as well.)

5. "While there is interest in possible AHB control methods that the government may instigate, most beekeepers expect to deal with any changes without any government help." (Paula is right, again. The regulatory personnel in California are keeping track of the expansion of the AHB population, but no programs have been developed to try to influence the expansion, itself.)

Paula was concerned that we would lose more beekeepers, and colonies of bees, than we have lost. She thought that was bad for two reasons: loss of pollinators and loss of EHBs to buffer the introduction of AHBs into an area. Fortunately, in

California we have been able to maintain populations of EHBs in our hives, even as AHBs fill in the feral niches. The presence of AHBs is being felt by beekeepers in the "colonized" areas, but the impact has not been terribly detrimental.

Have Unique Honey?

Even though U.S. honeys are not sold as "varietals" (similar to wines) nearly as often as specific honeys in Europe, there is a limited demand for distinctive, specific honeys in America.

At the latest WAS Conference, John Gibeau, President of Honeybee Centre, said that he was willing to negotiate for nearly any kind of honey from anywhere (that he could trust). John resides in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada. John can be reached at (604) 575-2337. He also has email: gibeau@honeybeecentre.com and a Web site: www.honeybeecentre.com.

Another person with interests in obtaining good varietal honeys is Ishai Zeldner, President of Moonshine Trading Company, in Woodland, CA. Ishai can be reached at: (530) 668-0660.

If neither of those options works out, you can always list your products with the National Honey Board, on their Honey Locator. Your products will be

seen by potential customers
all over the world.

Web Link Exchange

Sharon Cole would like
to find honey related Web
site links that she can put
on her Web page, where she is
selling the book, "101 Things
To Do with Honey."

If you have a Web page
upon which you are willing to
display a link to her
publisher, she will add a
link to your business on her
page, for free.

Sharon can be reached at
(306) 297-6360 [Saskatchewan,
Canada] or at dolphin7
@silk.net. Her Web page to
which you can link is:
www.bellalifebooks.com.

Sincerely,

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