

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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Hobby Brings Sweet Rewards

Tully Bee Farms harvests wild flower honey



Protected in their beekeeping suits, Ryan and Cindy Tullis are surrounded by their hives on their rural property outside of Arnold. The honey harvested by Tully Bee Farms is becoming well known in the area. - Courtesy photo

By Janet Larreau

In the United States there are anywhere from 115,000 to 125,000 beekeepers. According to USDA reports, 2.71 million honey-producing colonies in 2020 generated 1.48 million pounds of raw honey. The vast majority are hobbyists with less than 25 hives. Commercial beekeepers are those with 300 or more hives.

At the end of 2020, a young rural Arnold family decided to embark on their own beekeeping journey. But there was a big bump along the road for Ryan and Cindy Tullis, and their kids Luke and Adalei.

To start beekeeping, typically bees are ordered in the winter and are set to arrive the following spring. After ordering

four packages of bees, the Tullis' bought, assembled, and painted several hives. They were ready to go. However, on April 1st, their house was lost to fire, along with all of their beekeeping equipment. With their bees set to be delivered in a few days, they had to decide if they wanted to continue with the bees.

“We didn't know if we wanted another project with everything else that was going on at the time,” said Ryan. “It was decided, though, that maybe we did want a distraction from everything else, so we quickly rounded up the necessary equipment to house the bees. Looking back now, we are very grateful we had the bees that year as it was definitely the best part of 2021 for us! It is so exciting to open a hive with a young

colony and see the queen laying eggs in freshly drawn comb and building up to be a large colony and eventually bringing in honey. It's truly amazing and inspiring to see how quickly and methodically these creatures work.”

The Tullis' were able to harvest some honey their first year in 2021. Most of the hives are kept near their house.

Ryan went on to explain the interesting process of how bees are purchased. Bees are available in packages or nucleus colonies. Packages consist of a box with three pounds of bees and a caged queen. There are no frames or comb in the box, just the bees. Nucleus colonies include five frames of bees with food stores (honey and pollen) and brood (eggs/larvae). The Tullis' started up by purchasing a few pack-

ages from a beekeeping supply store out of Lincoln. The last few years, some of their hives have been splits from the original hives from the first year bees. They currently have 20 hives with around 60,000 bees in each hive.

Honey is typically harvested in late summer (Spring Honey) and early fall (Fall Honey). The bees do not cap the honey until it is at the right moisture content, so it is a waiting game to see when they cap the cells, but on average, they start this in the late part of July and early August. The timing on this is very dependent on weather, however. After the harvest, the Tullis' get going full speed on bottling and selling, which is typically the latter part of August through November; dependent on the harvest honey supply available.

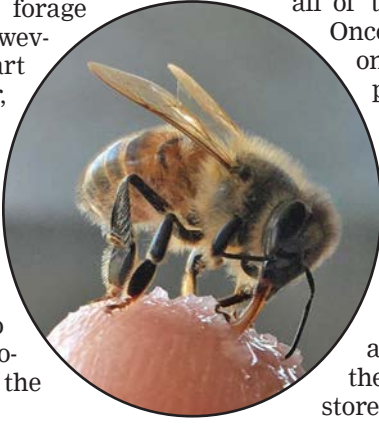
Bees collect nectar and convert that into honey as a source of food (carbohydrate). They also collect pollen (protein) for food, as well. Pollen is primarily used to feed young larvae when mixed with honey to create bee bread. A typical bee only lives about six weeks during the forage season. However, at the start of winter, they make larger bees (winter bees) that can live for a couple of months to help the colony survive the winter.

“It is said that much of the food we enjoy today would not be possible without the help of honeybees,” said Ryan. “In fact, many large honeybee farms can make more profit from renting out their bees for pollination services than producing honey. As an example,

every winter honeybees from across the country are trucked to California to pollinate the almond fields.”

The Tullis' like to check their hives at least every two weeks during the spring and summer. Each inspection takes about two hours to go through all of the hives. Once the colony has plenty of honey, Ryan and Cindy put extra boxes above their area for the bees to store extra honey that can be harvested. Ryan said they want to be careful to leave enough for the bees to survive the winter.

When the bees cap off the comb, that typically means that the honey is at a proper moisture con-



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Using a serrated knife, Luke Tullis uncaps the honey in the harvesting process. His sister, Adalei, also helps with the family business. - Courtesy photo



Gavin Gracey, great-grandson of the late Jack Collier, holds his 1st place prize in the Interior category at the Melon Roaster's car show held in August at Hastings. Gavin inherited the car from his grandmother, Judy (Collier) Gracey. - Courtesy photo

Jack's Car Is In Good Hands

By Janet Larreau

When he was just a kid and visiting relatives in Arnold, Gavin Gracey remembers admiring his great-grandfather's 1953 Buick Riviera. The 2-tone red car was tucked away safely in a shop, only taken out on special occasions. Running on a 322 cubic inch Nailhead V8 engine, it was Gavin's dream car.

“Jack Collier was my great-grandfather, and he always had a huge love for cars, but this Buick was his baby, and I can

remember him being very passionate about it when I was a kid. I can remember him driving through the parades in Arnold in the car and driving to all kinds of events with it,” said Gavin.

Gavin's ties to Arnold have remained strong, with pretty much all of his dad's side of the family living in the area. His parents are Marty Gracey and Susan Gracey, and his grandparents are Rod Gracey and Judy Gracey. His paternal great-grandparents are Evelyn and (the late) Gene Gracey



The interior of the award winning 1953 Buick Riviera is peppermint striped with red and white leather and a red cloth base.

and Genevieve and (the late) Jack Collier. Years later, when his grandmother Judy in-

herited the car from her father, Gavin was lucky enough to then receive the

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“Woodstock” Theme of This Weekend's Fall Festival

Everyone is looking forward to this weekend's annual Fall Festival. By a vote of the people at the 2023 Chili Cook-Off, the theme of Woodstock was chosen, and organizers RT Green, Della Dailey, Robin Dailey, Allison Goodenow and Kenzie Kulp are excited to see what Saturday's parade will look like.

Festival activities will start Friday night as South Loup takes on Sandhills Thedford on the local field. Vendors are welcome at the field. A highlight of the evening will be the opportunity to plunge Brad Atkins and Dave Birnie into the dunk tank that evening at the field. We wonder: will Brad be wearing his cowboy boots and hat?

Saturday morning's parade entrants will line up at the Methodist Church, go south on Walnut St., turn onto W. Lincoln Ave, and go around the city park. Prizes for Best Decorated Float and Best

Hippie will be awarded by Arnold Chamber. A free-will donation lunch will be served by Joel Morgan at the city park following the parade.

The afternoon's schedule will be bringing back favorites for young and old alike, and new kids games have been added in and around the park area.

The Citizen Washington Focus kids will be holding Cow Pie Bingo, and the dunk tank will be moved to the park for Dunk Yo Teacher, with proceeds from this event going to next year's Festival.

Everyone is encouraged to sign up for the talent show at the pavilion. Vendors are welcome to set up in the northwest corner of the park.

The 2023 festival is being made possible by a long list of generous sponsors. To see the complete schedule and contact information for events, please turn to page 8.

Aardvark Clue Hidden In This Issue

Ready, set, go! Aardvark hunting season will begin this week, but first readers have to search this issue for the hidden clue. Tiff Varney said the prize for finding the aardvark has gone up to \$150.00 thanks to additional spon-

sors Pinnacle Bank and First State Insurance. A reminder that the aardvark will only be hidden on public property. The lucky prize winner of this pre-Festival event will be announced in next week's issue.