

June 22. 2009

Good Evening Your Worship and Members of City Council.

My name is Clinton Shane Ekdahl and I call Saskatoon my home.

I believe that one person can change the world.

With this in mind, I wish to impart a message that transcends all human barriers of language, skin, income, identity, religion or politics.

The message I bring before you tonight is about the Honey Bee and their alarming disappearance from hives all over our country and the world. In fact Honey Bees are disappearing in EVERY country on every continent where they are raised. According to the Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists (CAPA), Canada lost 35 percent of our Honey Bees last year and they warn that this is 20 percent more than what is sustainable loss. This means that if Honey Bees continue to die as they are, there will be serious negative consequences for our economy, agriculture and the environment.

Honey Bees have been used by mankind as a food source through domestication since at least 5000 B.C. In that ancient time they were regarded as tears of the Sun God Ra by the Ancient Egyptians and honey was believed to ward against evil spirits.

In pre-industrial times, the Honey Bee was respected and beekeepers were wealthy and esteemed leaders in their communities.

Today unfortunately, in many ways, Mankind is still in the Stone Age with regards to understanding these creatures that predate our own species by millennia.

It was only in the 18th century that mankind understood the nature and origin of the materials that Honey Bees collect that result in bee's wax and honey and by 1851 the Honey Bee was found in almost every country around the world.

Mankind has learned in the time since many fascinating things about Honey Bees, however, if we knew or fully understood what was killing Honey Bees

in such alarming numbers; I would not be where I am today asking for your help.

Honey Bees all over the world are dying for reasons that Mankind can not fully explain. They are succumbing to what has been termed Colony Collapse Disorder or CCD. Up to this point this fact has remained largely unknown to the general public. If it turns out to be that mankind's influence on the environment is a factor in CCD, we need to know what it is. There are many theories offered as an explanation to their disappearance including pesticides, genetically modified crops, cell phones, pollution, and radiation, among others.

With these theories abounding, it is still a fact that we do not know for sure what is killing them on a staggering scale all over the world. CCD may even be a syndrome or a combination of these factors and this does not yet take into account other factors that we KNOW are killing Honey Bees. Such is the case with *Varroa destructor* commonly called the Bee Mite

*Nosema apis* and *Nosema ceranae*, single-celled internal parasites have decimated thousands of Canadian hives; just as they have all over the globe; the latter of which was only discovered in Canada in 2007.

CCD is only exacerbating the already dire situation for Honey Bees. However, only by realizing the cause of their disappearance can we affect our actions, behaviour and attitudes towards an insect that, I would argue, beyond all other domesticated animals and plants has been THE MOST influential, and important to the development and advancement of Humanity across the globe.

Honey Bees have taken up the mantle of responsibility for a staggeringly large proportion of the food we eat on a primary, secondary and tertiary level. We consume what they produce, we consume what they pollinate and we consume animals that also live as a result of that pollination. To name only a few of the billions of species of plants and animals, worldwide, that have become partly, if not completely dependant upon the Honey Bee for survival would still take up more time than you have in the next year. Yet, I will say that WE are on the very top of that list.

Some of these partially or completely dependant food crops are almonds, sunflower, rapeseed, canola, strawberries, pears, apples, squash, melons,

cranberry, blueberry, alfalfa, clover, Mint, Basil, and countless other fruits, trees, shrubs, vegetables, and herbs.

This does not take into account the ecological impact of Honey Bees to plant species not used by mankind for food but have an equally important role in the stability and survival of our environment.

The true value of the Honey Bee is not measured in numbers or monetary amounts or even in metric tones of honey. Yet, in terms of the survival our own species, if the Honey Bee continues to die as they are, the saga of Humanity on this planet will be jeopardised.

My concern for the people of this city, this province, Canada and the World is that if Honey Bees disappear, there will be without a doubt less food available - in fact there may be terrible shortage.

My goal is for all levels of Government in Canada - Municipal, Provincial and Federal, to proclaim May 29, 2010 as the first annual "Day of the Honey Bee". The result of this proclamation will be to raise the level of awareness and respect for Honey Bees back to some of the former glory it witnessed in ancient Egypt.

I hope that this movement will start here in Saskatoon and this City will have the pride to say, "We were the FIRST and we began what will change the world". More people need to be made aware of this situation which affects us all to effect change before it is too late.

I already have full support from the Saskatoon Food Bank and the Roxy Theatre and in 9 hours I procured a petition supporting this proclamation signed by 375 citizens and more signatures are coming.

With great respect I call upon your Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council of Saskatoon, to formally proclaim May 29, 2010 as the first Annual "Day of the Honey Bee". It will be this step, the first in many, which may prove to be our salvation.

Thank you your Worship and Members of City Council.