

# Honey Letter 2016

Two of our three hives did make it through last winter. We ordered two more packages which arrived in late April. We left the two new hives alone to grow and thrive and only harvested honey from our overwintered hives. In the warmth of summer the bees hung on the front of their hives forming festoons and beards. It was a very good summer for bees with intermittent rain and plenty of sunny days for foraging. We harvested two full supers of honey and had countless bears of all sizes from two ounces to entire quarts.



A group of elementary students from Regina participating in First Lego League came out to learn about bees as part of their project to find a solution to an important problem facing animals (Animal Allies). Their presentation, about the bees' arch enemy, Varroa Mites, came in first place in their competition and they will go on to present again at the State competition in January!

Something new for us this year: candy boards to feed our bees during the winter! I learned about this at the Iowa Honey Producers Association Meeting in Cedar Rapids this Fall. Tom and the boys built the frames. I made a sugar based candy and packed it into the frames for the bees to melt with the humidity inside the hive so that it can be consumed. You can watch a video about our Candy Boards at <http://www.cedarrunbees.com/> Unfortunately, though our honey harvest went without a single stinging incident, both Tom and I got stung putting the candy boards on the hives! That's gratitude for you!

Here was an experience of true gratitude: Aubrey and Beau and their friends, sisters Rachel and Ruth, put on a chamber quartet performance to thank the nurses and doctors of the NICU at the University of Iowa. Rachel, Aubrey and Beau's bassinets were stacked on top of each other in early December of 2002. Their coach also had a family member spend many months in the NICU. Emotions were running high and the new mothers watching had tears streaking down their faces as they watched and filmed the beautiful performance, filled with hope for their tiny babies. KCRG shared this lovely expression of gratitude on the 6:00 news. <https://youtu.be/4VmcDMW5gqo>



Warm, happy bees, educational experiences for both children and adults and an exercise in gratitude, support and hope. I think it was a pretty good year.

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you!**

**Aubrey, Beau, Tom and Lyse**

