

January 31, 2013

Posted by Larry Kanters

The members mostly settled down when President Bryn opened the meeting at 12:31 pm. Mark Jejina said grace after which Bryn introduced our guests Brenda Reiber, our RC of Innisfail webmaster, Joel Olsen and Richard Staples, our Adventures in Agriculture guest speakers, and last but certainly not least Colinda Chambers.

President Bryn again circulated the sign-up sheet for the April 11th tour of Red Deer College. Bryn mentioned members are invited to bring their spouses, their kids and their kids' kids etc. There will be a \$10 charge per attendee to pay for the community bus which will provide transportation to and from the RDC event. Bryn also announced that the door sign-up sheet is available (yes, at the door) for the dates Feb. 21st to July 4th so if you can help please do. John Newsham announced we have a crack team of bowlers for the Big Brothers/Big Sisters bowling fundraiser. Mark Jejina, Randy McDonald, Curtis Bachur, John Newsham and likely Mevce will be bearing the banner of the RC of Innisfail while displaying their bowling prowess. John also mentioned the next Rebels 50/50 episode is to be February 23rd and invited members (and significant others) to sign up. Michelle MacDonald announced she is looking for 2 club volunteers to help her in selecting students for the upcoming Adventures in Citizenship and RYLA. The interviews are to be held in the morning of March 8th.

Rod Bradshaw introduced our next two guest speakers Joey Olsen and Richard Staples who were sponsored to attend the 4 day Adventures in Agriculture event at the Western Canada Agribition held in Regina November 2012. Joey started off the talk by saying one of the challenges in agriculture is keeping quality young people on the farm. He said it was not the first time he had been to Agritrade but found it interesting to see all the new stuff. He said that when he was a young in and his family went to events like Agribition, they always brought him back little farm toys which he got to play with in the garden. But now he said he gets to play with the big farm toys at his farm and feedlot. Joey said some of the changes that have happened with the big farm toys are that the combine headers are getting so wide that you cannot cross some bridges without dismantling and that when you travel to other fields you need a truck traveling ahead and behind as a traffic warning when you drive the combines down the road. Also to afford the bigger and more sophisticated equipment, a farmer needs manage more land or larger herds to keep up with the economies of scale. A smaller farmer can get things done with smaller equipment but it just takes a little longer. Joey said a lot of farmers need to get jobs off the farm to keep their farming habit going. A farmer needs vet skills, carpentry abilities and mechanical inclinations amongst other talents. Young people seem to be slowly dying out in farming since operations seem to be getting bigger all the time. But Joey said the lifestyle is still attractive to many.

Richard Staples was our next speaker with his topic of "What to do with 250 lbs. of garlic". (offhand I don't know but if it involves ingestion after cooking, a breath mint or two may come in handy). Richard said his family farm was started in 1897. His parents moved back to his family farm in 1996 when he was 6 years old. Richard said the farm has 25 acres of market garden crops which includes 15 acres of U-pick strawberries, other crops of pumpkins and corn and has activities such as wagon rides and a corn maze to challenge a person's directionality. Richard said his farm is part of a 5 family farm co-op of producers

which form Innisfail Growers which markets their produce in 20 different Farmers Markets in central Alberta. The 250 lbs. of garlic that Richard said he produces comes from 3,000 plants using drip irrigation, and plastic mulch is used to keep the weeds down and retain moisture. To provide labour on the farm, Richard said he has had good experience with employing seasonal Mexican workers. The total cost of planting and seeding is about \$1,100 not including machinery and labour. The question Richard says he had was how to sell the 250 lbs of garlic for a suitable profit. Of the three choices, selling wholesale was perhaps the easiest but had the poorest profit margin. The second choice of selling the garlic through Innisfail Growers was a fairly good option with a reasonable commission and exclusivity of selling garlic in the group. The third option of selling farm direct which involves selling the product to garlic connoisseurs who would come to the farm, would give the best return but this could be done only with a smaller amount of the crop due to the smaller demand. Richard said there is a program called Communities Supporting Agriculture (CSA) where \$300 is paid for access to participating farmer's produce for 4 months. Richard said this was a good way to keep in touch with the customers. To facilitate sales at the farm they would welcome debit as well as cash payment. When asked, Richard said the demand for local garlic is there since the garlic is fresher and the type of garlic used has more flavour than the Chinese garlic in the grocery stores. In completing his talk Richard said he was interested to see the development of the farmer owned grain handling facilities of Inland Terminal when he was at Agribition. Richard and Joey thanked the RC of Innisfail for their Adventures in Agriculture sponsorship.

Brenda Reiber then gave a brief presentation on the ins and outs and sideways of Facebook such as "How to Create a Facebook Account", "How to Create a Gmail Account" and "How to Create a Hotmail Account". Handouts were given out at the meeting on these topics. Brenda also pointed out that this information has been posted for downloading on RC of Innisfail website under the Download section on the right hand margin located under the list of upcoming speakers. Also in the same area are the past weekly bulletins so one can browse at one's leisure and review fondly this editor's informational, spelling and grammatical errors. Brenda pointed out at the end of her presentation that in order to "Like" a Facebook page a person has to have their own personal Facebook page.

Happy/Sad bucks, Eric Moe had a happy buck in that his partner Brenda Reiber was still sentient since two hours before the meeting Brenda had experienced an accidental whack on the forehead and had to cope with the hemorrhagic sequela. No Sgt-at-Arms was present to quell any insurrection should one or more occur. Gerry Meding had a chance at the Joker but Elusivity seems to be the Joker's middle name.