

This was the first meeting chaired by new president, Bob Berry. Bob welcomed all in attendance and after a few introductory remarks he introduced two membership guests; Ron East and Jay Gold.

## **Announcements**

### Activities – Ken Marchant

- There has been a change in the date for the planned outing to the Drayton production of “Joseph” at the St. Jacob’s Playhouse. The date is now July 22<sup>nd</sup> rather than July 15<sup>th</sup> as formerly announced. Tickets are \$47 each. Now on sale.
- Other events in the planning stage are:
  - A tour of the War-Planes Museum sometime in the fall;
  - A tour of
  - A night at the races is set for Friday, September 29<sup>th</sup> at Elora Raceway including a dinner;
  - A game to see the Guelph Storm is being considered for some time in the fall;
  - Reminder: RCMC has a bicycle team entered in the *Tour de Guelph* and accepting donations which will go to the Guelph General Hospital. Support is requested;

Lloyd LeBlanc introduced today’s speaker, (his son) Kris LeBlanc presenting on Cannabis and the grow/supply operation in Guelph.

## **Bio**

Kris has been involved in organic farming for several years where he grew vegetables for markets and restaurants. Here he developed Living Soil now used in his current operation. At the same time, he was licensed by Health Canada to supply Medical Marijuana to several patients for several years. After the legalization of cannabis, which is no longer called marijuana, he was recruited by a group to manage their indoor and outdoor growing spaces supplying THC and CBD products. He has also consulted in Canada, Italy, Zimbabwe, and the USA. In early 2021 he became the Master Grower for The Green Organic Dutchman (TGOD) located in Ancaster, Ontario. A facility with over 150,000 square feet under glass growing 10's of thousands of plants in Living Soil. Working with his team Kris harvests 550,000 grams of cannabis flowers which are sold only to the Ontario Cannabis Store. TGOD is owned by Bzam and two popular strains are Gold Butter Mac and Sugar Cookies both created and bred by Kris.

## **Presentation**

### **Kris LeBlanc**

He began by saying that for the past four years he has gone to work as a farmer and his crop is probably the highest value crop in Canada. He started when he was 19 growing marijuana in a farmer’s field and quickly learned of the value of the plant. It was Jean Chrétien who legalized cannabis in Canada for medical purposes and it was Stephen Harper who really put it forward for medicinal use. As it continued to be used by people with more severe injuries and illnesses the program expanded. Then a lot more people began to personally grow cannabis. Kris became a designated grower for people in Guelph using cannabis for prescribed medicinal purposes. The program was run by Health Canada and growers were subject to security checks and this is what lead him into the whole legalized growing aspect of cannabis.

Cannabis growing is no longer referred to as the “Black Market” but now it is the “Legacy Market.”

As the legalization was becoming the norm, Kris was busy learning how to grow plants. He attended the Guelph Organic Conference and was told if he really wanted to do this, go farm and learn how plants grow. He was sitting at a table with a woman who owned a farm just outside of Guelph and she leased him seven acres of land and she insisted her farm be organic. Kris then sold his product (vegetables) at the Guelph Farmer’s Market for seven years. Subsequently, he decided to build greenhouses in which to grow vegetables and he fell in love with farming but then he realized that he was not making enough income growing vegetables to be profitable. A friend’s family had one of the very early licenses to grow cannabis and they prompted him to move away from growing vegetables to growing cannabis.

Health Canada funded growers in the billions of dollars to create the cannabis industry. This started the stock market run in cannabis sales. Kris became part of those companies very early before recreational use of cannabis became legal. But the Canada Act in 2018 opened the market up and that was where the money was. This moved cannabis from being categorized as a narcotic to a food and this changed how it was regulated. This changed how companies could function in terms of security and reporting from the Canadian Revenue Agency and to reporting to Health Canada. This allowed cannabis stores to open up and every store in Guelph is a licensed store. They are regulated by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission like the LCBO but from a different product side than alcohol. All the provinces have a control board and the companies sell their products to the provincial boards and in turn the store will get their product from those boards. You can still get medicinal cannabis from drug companies and many are covered by some people’s health benefits.

After a few years of outdoor farming where he worked several smaller farms in Ontario, he then went to help develop farms in Italy, Zimbabwe, and the USA.

Kris was eventually head-hunted by BZAM company which has the brand of cannabis called The Green Organic Dutchman (TGOD) which produces the popular strains of Gold Butter Mac and Sugar Cookies developed by Kris.

All the product is made from the dried flowers and are sold in bags or jars or pre-rolled joints. They also make hash which is produced from the resin of the plant.

This company is certified organic and is governed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

Everything done at The Green Organic Dutchman is grown in *living soil*. Microbiology is his friend. Their motto is we don’t feed the plants, we feed the soil. The plants are grown in living soil where they manipulate the soil to give the plants the nutritional value that they want.

His title is “Master Grower” which is a title licensed by Health Canada. He is responsible for the cultivation and he has 60 people working under his direction with 170 people on site every day. He has various supervisors in various locations and he has cultivation associates who are the “worker bees” who go around to the various sites.

The facility is broken up into two different spots. The nursery where he keeps all of his mother plants, his veg plants and his clones. The other spot is the greenhouse with seven rooms in the greenhouse. This room is 12,000 sq. ft. and there are 2,850 flowering plants in that room.

In the nursery there are mother plants that produce suckers which is new growth plant. They produce mother plants and then from them they get clone plants.

There are workers who are specialized as nursery workers. There are two levels of plants so that they can use all of the space in the building and all of the rooms use LED grow lights. The nursery workers take cuts off the mother plants and start new plants in little pots which then sit in domes for two weeks. Kris uses different ways with natural chemicals to make the plants grow such as willow bark that has natural chemicals in it which assists the roots to grow just like a natural willow tree. This produces little clones and after two weeks they are removed to another room that's set at 80° all of the time and the workers count how many roots are on the plants. At present there are 3,000 rooted clones which become pot plants. At this point the little pots are replaced with bigger pots and the "living soil" is introduced into the system. The plants are then left to grow in the "veg" rooms for five weeks until they are approximately three to four feet tall. The light cycle is 20 hours of light and 4 hours of dark. This produces hyper veg growth because the plants think it is perpetual spring. The plants are harvested at 70 days.

Kris went on to explain the physical set-up of the operation and what they do to maximize their use of water so that there only is about 10% loss of water.

They produce 5.2 MegaWatts of power from their own Co-Gen generator.

There is a male cannabis plant and a female cannabis plant and the seeds need to be separated to get the particular plant required. It is the female cannabis plant that produces the resin which is the one that produces all of the cannabinoids. So tests are run on the seeds to get the female plants and the half of the seeds that produce the male plant are destroyed. They will eventually produce about 3.5 thousand plants from one seed.

Kris explained the whole process from beginning to end of the operation for growing and producing cannabis and then answered questions from the members present.

At the end of Kris's presentation, Bob Berry thanked Kris and gave him a token of appreciation from the Club.

President Bob briefly mentioned that the Club's goal for this year is to reach 80 members and we are currently at 68 on our books

Next Meeting: July6 2023, with Karen Van Ooteghem on *Balance, How Important It Is To Our Health*

Adjournment @10:58 am

Recording Secretary: Kerry Gennings