

OCBA Up to the Minutes News

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What's Up with Honey Bees?



Randall Austin and Cynthia Speed talk with WHUP-FM

On February 23rd Bob Burtman of Hillsborough's WHUP Radio interviewed Randall Austin and Cynthia Speed about beekeeping and the importance of honey bees. The interviewer commented on the local significance of bees in light of Hillsborough's recent certification as a Bee City USA.

The interview touched on native pollinators, but focused primarily on the significance of honey bees in agriculture due to their portability. Thanks to WHUP a podcast of the interview is available on OCBA's Facebook page. Check it out!

OCBA Shares Its Mentor Program Expertise at NCSBA Spring Conference



"After the Bee School: Mentoring New Beekeepers" at NCSBA

David Eckert, OCBA's Director for Mentorship and Apprentices from 2015 through 2017, developed and coordinated OCBA's mentor program. The program pairs experienced beekeepers with new-to-the-craft Bee School graduates. Annual tweaks and adjustments to the program allowed it to become one of the most successful bee mentor programs in North Carolina.

To share that expertise David presented "*After the Bee School: Mentoring New Beekeepers*" at the NCSBA Spring Conference in New Bern. The presentation was well attended by beekeepers from across the state. They were interested in replicating OCBA's success in their own programs while avoiding as many early pitfalls as possible. They will reap the benefit of David's experience with Orange County's program.

Despite the end of David's tenure as Director, OCBA's mentor program is in good hands. Lisa Vogel moved into the Director for Mentorship and Apprentices position in January. She will serve in that capacity for 3 years.

Chris Apple Shares the Stage with Native Bees

On March 10th Chris Apple shared the stage with Paige Embry, author of "*Our Native Bees: North America's Endangered Pollinators and the Fight to Save Them*". The occasion was a meet-the-author event for Paige hosted by Flyleaf Books in Chapel Hill. Paige entertained the audience with interesting facts about native bee species. She drew from her research into the 4,000 to 5,000 species that populate North America. Although her primary field of interest is solitary bees and bumble bees, Paige's book also discusses the importance of the honey bee to worldwide agriculture.

After Paige's presentation, Chris provided the audience with a summary of the distinct role of honey bees relative to native bees in the greater pollination scheme. Both Chris and Paige then responded to questions from the audience.



Many in the audience, including OCBA members who attended, bought copies of "*Our Native Bees*" which were signed by the author. The book is filled with beautiful, high resolution photos of many of our native species. The book serves as an easily understood reference for beekeepers interested in expanding their knowledge of the world of bees.

The New Face of the OCBA Facebook

f OCBA's digital presence is getting a facelift. Erika Wittchen has taken on responsibility for OCBA's Facebook page. She provides updates and fresh content for OCBA's social media friends. Feel free to contact Erika at erika48@gmail.com to provide content and other suggestions for the site. Check it out, like it and comment at www.facebook.com/theocba.

How Did You Get Involved in Beekeeping?

The Orange County Beekeepers' sponsorship of young beekeepers is the reason OCBA President, Mark Powers, and his wife Karen Lauterbach are keeping bees today. In the mid '90s, their two sons learned about the opportunity to become beekeepers through a neighborhood friend.



Karen Lauterbach – suited up and ready go into the hives

"We received one hive and Jack Tapp was our mentor. The hive did well the first year, but we lost it the second year," Karen said. "At the time, we were overscheduled with work, school, volunteer activities, soccer, basketball, baseball, etc., and Mark was working 80-hour weeks. The bees died and wax moths moved in. We realized that we had probably overextended ourselves and that maybe we should save beekeeping for another time."

By early 2012, the children had moved on and retirement was on the horizon. Karen and Mark signed up for a two-day beekeeping class at Duke Gardens given by Donna Devaney, assisted by Matthew Yearout, who is now president of the Durham County Beekeepers club.

Mark set up two hives in the spring of 2012. Later that year, Karen saw the advertisement for the 2013 OCBA Bee School. She gave Mark (and herself) tuition as a Christmas present.

The mentorship from the Orange County beekeepers – in person, through meetings, the listserv, and study groups – has made all the difference. Mark and Karen did lose all their bees one winter, but on the flip side, they have managed to keep bees through the other five. They are hoping to improve their stats in the years to come.

If you'd like to share your story about how you became a beekeeper, send your story or your suggestions to John Rintoul or Cynthia Speed.

OCBA Well Represented at NCSBA's Spring Conference

26 members of OCBA attended North Carolina State Beekeepers Association's Spring Conference held in New Bern March 1st through 3rd. That level of participation is over twice OCBA's attendance record at any prior statewide meeting. Thanks to all who attended and to everyone who is a member of NCSBA. OCBA earns GAP points for each member who documents their attendance at a state conference. We also earn GAP points for every OCBA member who joins NCSBA. So join now and plan to attend the summer conference.

NCSBA's Summer Conference will be held July 19-21 in Flat Rock, NC at Blue Ridge Community College. The featured speaker will be Dr. Thomas Seeley of Cornell University. Dr. Seeley is renowned in the beekeeping community for his research and his seminal books "*Honey Bee Democracy*" and "*The Wisdom of the Hive*." Take a break from the heat. In July it will be much cooler in the Smoky Mountains than here in the Piedmont. You will be among OCBA friends and learn from leading lights in the national beekeeping community.



Highland Lake Dam – Flat Rock, NC

Swarm Season Door Prizes in March

With swarm season on the horizon, door prizes at this month's meeting included two swarm lures donated by Mark Powers. In addition, a ceramic honeypot with dipper, and a solar honey bee night light were awarded as door prizes. These latter two items were generously donated by OCBA members as re-gifted items. Remember: To be eligible for OCBA's door prize giveaways you must be a member. Join online now at www.theocba.org.

If you have items that you would like to donate as a door prize at future membership meetings contact Cynthia Speed or simply pass them along to her at the next monthly meeting.

March Membership Meeting News

During the 7:00 to 7:15 social period members chatted with each other and enjoyed refreshments provided by Jeannie Arnts, Jennifer Phelan and Elizabeth Strong. President Mark Powers opened the meeting acknowledging that he has received several requests from members indicating that they were not receiving posts from Google Group Discussion Forum. He reminded everyone that OCBA's membership and membership to the Discussion Forum are two different things. Some OCBA members are not interested in participating in the Discussion Forum. For those who are interested the Discussion Forum is an *opt in* forum. To join the forum go to OCBA's website and click the [Join the Discussion Forum](#) link at the top of the home page.

Dickson House Pollinator Garden Leadership

Karen Lauterbach is taking over coordination of the OCBA Pollinator Garden at the Dickson House in Hillsborough. She circulated a signup sheet for volunteers. Volunteers are asked to work one hour in the garden during 2018. Interested volunteers can contact Karen at karen.e.lauterbach@gmail.com. Garden volunteers have been managed by Lucy Wilson since the garden was dedicated in 2011. Karen thanked Lucy for her years of service to the garden and to OCBA.

Extractor Deadline is Approaching

Brad Kosiba, keeper of our extractors, explained that thanks to the generosity of Bailey Bee Supply OCBA has a second, smaller 2-frame extractor in addition to the 6-frame stainless steel extractor purchased by the club in 2011. The new extractor is a polypropylene, tangential extractor perfect for small jobs. OCBA members who pay their dues **before April 1, 2018** are eligible to rent the extractors in 2018. The rental fee is \$5.00. Look for Extractor Rental on the OCBA website under [OCBA Policies and Guidelines](#) for details on renting.



Golden Achievement Program (GAP)

John Rintoul brought everyone up to date on OCBA's efforts to win the NCSBA GAP (Golden Achievement Award) for 2018. At the meeting last month, John explained that through this program, NCSBA recognizes one Chapter each year that has made significant accomplishments in support of North Carolina beekeeping. Points are awarded for various Chapter activities and accomplishments. A monetary prize as well as an award is given to the most outstanding Chapter. OCBA will be documenting and collecting relevant data from January 1, 2018 through

December 31, 2018 with the hope of securing the GAP Award at the NCSBA 2019 Summer Meeting.

Cynthia Speed explained that GAP points are awarded for members who achieve Certified, Journeyman, or Master Beekeeper status during 2018. Points are also awarded for winning a ribbon at the State Fair, so plan your honey, wax and basket entries now. Cynthia encouraged members to participate and passed out the individual GAP activities sheet for each person to document their public presentation and education activities. [GAP forms](#) will be available at each meeting, on the OCBA web site, and on the NCSBA web site. Completed sheets may be returned to Cynthia at a meeting or at Katrina501@aol.com.

Swarm Collection – Free Bees



Swarm photo courtesy of Glenn Gurley, Charlotte, NC

Swarm season is upon us. Once again OCBA was privileged to host Chris Richmond, OCBA's Swarm Patrol Coordinator, as our featured speaker. "Hey Buddy, Mind If I Grab These Honey Bees?" was the title of Chris' talk. Chris provided members with a checklist of tools and equipment necessary to efficiently collect a honey bee swarm.

In addition to heading up OCBA's Swarm Patrol, Chris performs "cut-outs" to remove and relocate honey bees that have taken up residence in unwanted locations – walls, ceilings, chimneys, etc. He cautioned that doing cut-outs requires a thorough understanding of construction techniques coupled with carpentry competence.

Chris' presentation was coupled with excellent examples and photos of swarm behavior, swarm collection and the intricacies of cut-outs. At the conclusion of his presentation he circulated a Swarm Patrol signup sheet for OCBA members who would like to be contacted when Chris gets word that a honey bee swarm is available.

You can get more information about Chris and his swarm collection activities on his website www.swarmhunter.org.

OCBA's Community Outreach

Throughout 2018 OCBA will be contacted by schools, churches, and other community organizations seeking speakers and presentations about honey bees and beekeeping. Chris Apple (chrisapple1231@gmail.com), OCBA's Outreach Coordinator,

fields those calls. However, Chris alone cannot respond to all of these outreach requests. Check out the number of events scheduled for April to the right.

Please offer your assistance to Chris so that OCBA can respond to as many of these educational opportunities as possible. Remember, we can earn GAP points for each one of the presentations. Record each presentation on an [Individual GAP Form](#) downloaded from our website. Completed forms can be passed to Chris or directly forwarded to Cynthia Speed.

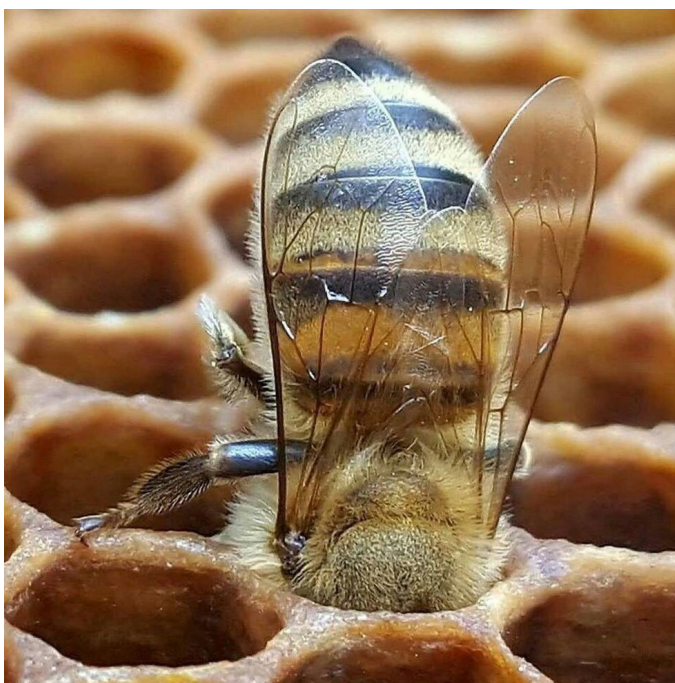
Become a Certified Beekeeper

If you attended OCBA's Bee School, you most likely completed the written portion of the Certified Beekeeper exam at the end of classes. For 2017 and earlier graduates who now want to complete the practical portion of the exam to finalize their Certified Beekeeper status, OCBA is here to help. The club maintains two demonstration hives at Carrboro High School. Each weekend, starting in April, those hives can serve as a test site for your Practical Exam. The [exam protocol](#) is available for you to review before you take the exam.

You must be an OCBA member and an NCSBA member to take the Certified Beekeeper Practical exam through OCBA. If you would like to schedule a time to complete your Practical Exam in Carrboro, contact John Rintoul (BeeCD@icloud.com).

Attendance Stats

The pre-meeting dinner at Radius Pizzeria attracted 15 hungry members who commiserated about their overwintering losses, celebrated their overwintering successes, and discussed their beekeeping plans for 2018. The March membership meeting was attended by 52 members and guests.



This hungry bee missed the pre-meeting dinner at Radius Pizzeria

Upcoming Events and Speakers

OCBA's website now features a calendar on the home page where members can stay informed about upcoming speakers, field days, community outreach events and other information of interest to our beekeeping community.

April Meeting – Geneva Green will speak about Plants for Honey Bees focusing on plants that play an important role in the health and success of your colonies.

May Meeting – Justin Maness of Bee Downtown will speak about the challenges and opportunities of urban beekeeping.

June Meeting – Randall Austin will speak about varroa management

Other events of note:

March 24, Hands On Bees Field Event for Bee School students at Randall Austin's apiary.

April 11, Science Night at Grady Brown Elementary.

April 14, Science Expo at Morehead Planetarium.

April 15-16, Pollinators and Native Plants. OCBA will staff an information table at the Garden Clubs of North Carolina Annual Meeting at the Sheraton Hotel in Chapel Hill. Contact Chris Apple if you'd like to volunteer to help staff the table.

April 19, STEM Night at Scroggins Elementary

April 23, John Rintoul will discuss the mutually beneficial relationship of plants and pollinators focusing on the importance of honey bees in the pollination of America's food crops in an Earth Week presentation at the Passmore Center in Hillsborough.

April 27, Earth Evening Celebration, Hillsborough, NC

June 18-24, National Pollinator Week. Be prepared to volunteer with Chris Apple for multiple community outreach events that are likely to be scheduled in Orange County.

July 19-21, North Carolina State Beekeepers Association Summer Conference will be held in Flat Rock. Plan now to attend. You can register online or at the door. If you attend, please fill out an [Individual GAP Form](#) and check the box at **D3 Attended a NCSBA Annual Spring or Summer meeting** and pass the completed form to Cynthia Speed or John Rintoul.

August 18, National Honey Bee Day. Be prepared to volunteer with Chris Apple for multiple community outreach events that are likely to be scheduled in Orange County.

August 13-17, [Eastern Apicultural Society](#) Annual Meeting in Hampton, VA. This conference will feature Randy Oliver and Jamie Ellis among other prestigious beekeeping experts. Plan now to attend. Register online. If you attend, please fill out an [Individual GAP Form](#) and check the box at **D6 Attended a national or international beekeeping meeting** and pass the completed form to Cynthia Speed or John Rintoul.