

# OCBA Up to the Minutes News

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## BEE DOWNTOWN SPEAKER JOINS OCBA GROUP DINNER

8 members were joined by Ben Dictus, the evening's speaker, for the pre-meeting dinner at Radius Pizzeria. Those in attendance discussed current swarming activities in their bee yards and bragged about swarms that they have captured this year. All members are invited to attend this group dinner prior to each monthly meeting. It is a great opportunity to get to know each other and to share all things bee related. The group meets at 5:00.

## OCBA OUTREACH VOLUNTEERS HAVE BEEN BUSY

Spring is a busy time for bees and beekeepers. In addition to tending to *bees-ness*, **Chris Apple**, OCBA's Outreach Director, has been keeping OCBA members hopping as they volunteered to educate the non-beekeeping public at multiple spring events.



Anne Cabell hosts the Honey Bee Hive Tour

April 21<sup>st</sup> **Anne Cabell** conducted a "Honey Bee Hive Tour" at the Carolina Campus Community Garden where she keeps bees. This tour was open to the public.



Nerissa and James at Earth Evening in Hillsborough

April 27<sup>th</sup> **Nerissa Rivera** and **James Wasnak** sponsored an education event with live bees and information at Hillsborough's Earth Evening to help celebrate Earth Week.

April 28<sup>th</sup> **John Rintoul** staffed a beekeeping education table at the CORA Community Garden's open garden tour in Chatham County. **Sheri Gant** joined to inspect a hive and share the inner workings of an active colony with visitors to the garden.



Lou Rascoe's enthusiasm was contagious.

May 1<sup>st</sup> **Lou Rascoe** taught a group of pre-K through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade home-schooled students at the Ridgecrest Baptist Church in Durham about honey bees and beekeeping. The students were studying the importance of pollinators to gardening. Their teacher, Hope Cantrell, said, "We enjoyed having Lou in our class! She did a wonderful job keeping the kids interested. The kids all had their own stories to tell about bees."



May 2<sup>nd</sup> **Anne Cabell** hosted two groups of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders from Scroggs Elementary at the Carolina Campus Community Garden where she introduced them to honey bees and beekeeping.



Sheri Gant – master gardener and beekeeper

May 5<sup>th</sup> **Sheri Gant** wore two hats at the Orange County Master Gardeners' plant sale on May 5th. Not only did she man a booth on invasive plants for the Orange County Extension Master Gardeners, but she also set up a great display table for OCBA. Gant helps with the GAP!



1st grade class at Carrboro Elementary

May 11<sup>th</sup> **John Rintoul** introduced 3 classes of Carrboro Elementary students to bees, beekeeping and pollination as part of the school's spring gardening curriculum.

### BEE DOWNTOWN

The keynote speaker at our May membership meeting was Ben Dictus of Bee Downtown in Durham. Ben explained the mission of Bee Downtown to raise awareness for the plight of honey bees and other pollinators. This is accomplished by encouraging corporations and businesses to sponsor bee hives on their property. The hives are identified with the company's branding information. This allows the company to promote their environmental awareness and their commitment to environmental causes.

Ben shared the unusual beekeeping tasks associated with keeping honey bee colonies on rooftops in urban areas.

### BLACKWOOD FARM PARK – TOP BAR BEES

by *Mary Leonhardi and Cynthia Speed*

Our first visit this spring was to the orange top bar hive. The white hive was empty throughout the winter. We saw lots of drone brood, some worker brood, the queen and good amounts of pollen and nectar. Almost no honey. There was a decent amount of worker bees.

We went to check the status of the orange hive and to do a sugar shake since there had been so much drone brood on the last visit. The hive was booming with worker bees, some drones and lots of nectar, pollen and some honey. There was not a lot of uncapped worker brood but we did a sugar shake anyway to see if we could get a reading on mites. We didn't get any. We also found better than a dozen queen cells, mostly open. We decided it was time to split the hive. So, the previously empty white hive was given 10 bars with open and capped worker cells, some drone cells, several queen cells (mostly uncapped) and ample nectar, honey and pollen. We also put in four empty bars for future expansion. We left about the same amount in the orange hive so they could continue growing and added some additional bars. We'll see what happens.



Top bar brood comb from demo hives at Blackwood Farm Park

### STINGLESS HONEY BEES OF CENTRAL AMERICA

Presentation by 2018 OCBA Apprentice

**Catherine Trusky** presented an overview of her encounters with *Melipona beecheii*, a species of stingless honey bee found in Central America. Catherine learned of these unique bees during a trip to the tropical region. During her time in Central America she talked with local *Melipona* beekeepers and shared information about the differences in beekeeping practices and honey harvesting due to the unique lifecycle of *Melipona*.

*Melipona* honey is quite different from *Apis mellifera* honey – a fact made evident for all as Catherine passed around a small jar of *Melipona* honey for members to taste. Fewer and fewer beekeepers continue to work with these stingless honey bees as interest grows in the more productive European honey bees.

## BEE BROTHERS – SWARM CATCHERS

Photo by Kathleen Rasmussen

**Ian Rasmussen** and his two brothers, Liam and Silas captured 3 swarms in a single day. Ian was one of OCBA's 2017 apprentices. The first swarm was a mere 25 feet off the ground. The other 2 were 70+ feet above terra firma. Not a problem for these intrepid beekeepers!



Ian, Liam and Silas Rasmussen – 3 brothers, 3 swarms

Note the bare feet and bare legs. The NCSBA Master Beekeeper Program may have to reassess the first question on the practical exam which asks, "Is the applicant properly dressed?" What does "properly dressed" really mean anyway?

## EXTENDING OCBA BEEKEEPING OUTREACH



Chris Apple and Zita Voros filming at Carrboro High School

The [February issue of "Up to the Minutes News"](#) featured a story highlighting **Chris Apple's** outreach efforts to educate a wider, non-beekeeping audience via an on camera interview with Zita Voros. That effort is starting to pay off as Zita's project moves toward completion. Check out the excellent video on Zita's [Triangle Beekeeping](#) website.

## OCBA SUPPORTS BEEKEEPERS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

*Micro loans to beekeepers via KIVA*

Several OCBA beekeepers are making microloans to beekeepers in developing countries via KIVA. Microloans are small loans made to individuals who don't qualify for conventional loans or whose loan requirements are so small that conventional lenders are uninterested. KIVA is an international nonprofit that facilitates microloans to underqualified borrowers worldwide, including within the U.S. A loan of \$25 goes a long way in a developing country. One such loan was detailed in **Lusine's story** (as described at [KIVA.org](#)).



Armenian beekeeper receives support from OCBA members

"Lusine is an enthusiastic beekeeper from Agarak town (in Armenia). She lives there with her husband and two children, ages 9 & 12. Lusine and her husband Marat try their best to sufficiently support their kids' living. They keep 30 beehives and are specialized in natural honey sales. Thanks to their bees, these farmers have daily bread all year long.

Lusine has applied for this loan (\$1,425) to improve the beekeeping process on her farm. She needs this loan to pay for the purchase of 13 beehives in order to increase the honey volume available to sell."

OCBA members can get more information about KIVA on the [KIVA website](#). If you join KIVA, please also join the "Orange County Beekeepers Assn" lending team. After you've signed up on Kiva, simply click on "My Teams" and then search for "Orange County Beekeepers Assn."

## OCBA DOOR PRIZES FOR MAY

Door prizes at this month's meeting were an 8 frame copper clad garden top hive donated by **Chris Apple**, a stainless steel honey extraction sieve donated by Bailey Bee Supply, and an Agritourism Warning sign donated by OCBA. To be eligible for OCBA's door prize giveaways you must be a member. Join OCBA now.

## KEEPING CURRENT

By Chris Apple



Each month I look forward to receiving my American Bee Journal in the mail. I read it from cover to cover. This magazine seems to have something for everyone. This month in News Notes (short little news clips) there were titles like "How Royal Jelly Helps Honey Bee Larvae Defy Gravity and Become Queens" or "Lazy Lawnmowers Can Help Support Suburban Bee Populations and Diver-

sity". The Classroom is a win-win situation. If you know the answer to the submitted question, you're feeling pretty smart. If you don't know the answer, you're getting smarter by the minute. Randy Oliver always has a great science based article. Keith Delaplane weighs in each month on some topic he finds interesting. There are personal stories from backyard beekeepers and commercial beekeepers. Often there are instructions for building a piece of bee equipment. This month it was a beetle trapping bottom board. There's even a kid's section. ABJ offers an enjoyable way to stay informed as we work to become better beekeepers.

## OCBA CONGRATULATES 7 NEWLY CERTIFIED BEEKEEPERS

Several OCBA members finalized their Certified Beekeeper credential in recent weeks. Congratulations to: **David Bailey, Anne Cabell, Sheri Gant, Jill Hadden, Jessica Mjelde, Haywood Rhodes and Tommy Tuck.**

As an OCBA members you are eligible to take the Certified Practical Exam with an OCBA proctor if you:

1. are a current OCBA member
2. are a current NCSBA member
3. have successfully completed the written portion of the Certified Beekeeper Exam (likely for all OCBA Bee School grads)
4. are in your 2<sup>nd</sup> year or more of beekeeping

OCBA's demonstration hives at Carrboro High School and at Blackwood Farm Park are available as exam sites. Contact [Randall Austin](#), OCBA's Master Beekeeper Program liaison, if you are interested in taking the exam.

## SECOND YEAR BEEKEEPERS – PREPARE TO EXTRACT!

You played by the rules taught to you in OCBA's Bee School. You left all of the honey for your bees the first year as they built comb and grew into strong colonies. Now the bees have rewarded your patience with a bountiful honey harvest. Once you've pulled the fully capped frames from the honey supers what's next?

What's next is "From Comb to Home" OCBA's Annual Honey Extraction Workshop. **Mark Powers** and **Brad Kosiba** will present the basics of honey extraction at Cedar Ridge High School in Hillsborough on Saturday, June 9th starting at 9:00 a.m. This year's workshop will be a two county event. Durham County beekeepers will also participate.



You will learn how honey gets from comb to home. You will get an up close and personal view of the tools and equipment needed to extract honey. You will get hands on experience uncapping honey comb and spinning gold with an extractor. Learn what equipment OCBA can provide (at a modest rental cost) to help you extract your honey.

Thanks also to **Keith Yow** and the administration at Cedar Ridge High School for making space available for this workshop.

## 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.

**June 9 Honey Extraction Workshop** – Cedar Ridge High School wood shop at 9:30 a.m. Mark Powers and Brad Kosiba will lead this workshop.

**June 14 Membership Meeting** – Randall Austin will focus on management of small hive beetles and Varroa mites in his presentation "Some Pests and Treatments."

**June 16 Varroa Management Field Day** – Learn how to do a sugar shake to assess the mite load in your colonies. Field day will start at 1:00p at Randall Austin's Bee Yard. Contact Randall for directions to his apiary.

**July 12 Membership Meeting** – OCBA members can ask questions of our own expert panel of beekeepers. Randall Austin, Walter Starks, and Will Hicks – experienced beekeepers all – will field questions from members.

**August 9 Membership Meeting** – "Hymenoptera Venom Allergy" OCBA's President Mark Powers, a Professor Emeritus in Pulmonary Medicine at Duke University, will discuss the potentially serious side effects of bee venom for beekeepers.

## OTHER EVENTS OF NOTE

**June 8** – Chapel Hill Library will host a bee education event. The target audience is preschool-elementary aged children, but older kids and parents also attend. Attendance past years has been between 1200-1500 people – about a third of attendees are adults). Setup would be before 2, the event runs from 2:00 to 6:00 pm. Ryan Chamberlain will bring the observation hive. Chris will have a craft and some type of wheel spinning game?

Volunteers are permitted to sell honey; however, the honey must be labeled in accordance with Federal law, as described [here](#). Volunteers are needed whether or not they have honey to sell. Contact Chris Apple at [chrisapple1231@gmail.com](mailto:chrisapple1231@gmail.com).

**June 9 & 10** – OCBA will host an information table at Annie’s Sunshine Lavender Farm’s 15th Annual Lavender Harvest Celebration. Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 5 pm and Sunday, June 10<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 4 pm. Volunteers should contact Chris Apple at [chrisapple1231@gmail.com](mailto:chrisapple1231@gmail.com).

**June 23, Granville County Bee Jubilee** 9:00-4:00 at the Granville County Expo Center in Oxford. OCBA will sponsor and info table and lip balm sales.

Contact Chris Apple at [chrisapple1231@gmail.com](mailto:chrisapple1231@gmail.com) or Cynthia Speed at [katrina501@aol.com](mailto:katrina501@aol.com) to volunteer.

**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 \(Box D5\)](#) 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. If you attend, please fill out an [Individual GAP Form \(Box D6\)](#) *Attended a national or international beekeeping meeting* and pass the completed form to Cynthia Speed or John Rintoul.

## *Morning in May with the bees*

