

OCBA Meeting Minutes, November 9, 2017

Cynthia Speed, Secretary

Our pre-meeting dinner was held in a private room at Radius Pizzeria with 11 in attendance.

President John Rintoul opened the meeting with a response to Muriel Williman who asked if she could provide the club with a supply of campaign signs to recycle. John declined for the club, urging members to just use the signs in their local neighborhood as bottom boards or SHB traps to help keep them out of the land fill.

Bee School registration is now open and Randall reports that 26 have already signed up. Our school capacity is 75.

Door prizes for tonight were 2 frame holders and 1 extra-long hive tool generously donated by Bailey Bee Supply.

A special program was prepared for tonight: "Where Have We Been . . . Where Are We Going?" Speakers from our own membership came forward and talked about OCBA's activity and involvement in the community over the past year. It was designed to let our many new members who may not know the scope of OCBA's enthusiasm and commitment, see how we are promoting beekeeping education and supporting honey bees in Orange County. Every OCBA member can contribute time and energy somewhere to maintain the strength and viability of OCBA and to help OCBA education the non-beekeeping community about beekeeping and honey.

David Eckert - Director of New Beekeeper Mentoring and Apprentice Programs

David said that beekeeping is a team sport and the success of this program is a testament to that fact. New beekeepers who are interested, opt into the Mentoring Program and are grouped geographically. The mentoring program has been in effect for two years. OCBA mentors volunteer at a ratio of 3 to 1, beekeepers to mentors. Each "cluster" meets in a different apiary monthly.

1 st year: 2016	2 nd year 2017
14 clusters	6 clusters
17 mentors	16 mentors
53 new beeks	49 new beeks

This program develops the next generation of beekeepers and mentors, increases participation, and creates healthier bees. The participants are required to attend Bee School. The plan offers timely monthly topics that encourage good practices, skill development, as well as support to think through an issue and figure it out.

Apprenticeship Program

David said that the Apprenticeship Program has been alive and well for about 8 years. The

goal is to promote beekeeping by young people in Orange County. Two are selected annually, ages 10 – 16. OCBA provides free Bee School enrollment, an experienced beekeeping mentor, free honey bees, the equipment needed to start beekeeping, and a one year membership in the OCBA. The total value is estimated to be over \$600.00. Applications for the 2018 Apprenticeship Program are open now with applications accepted until December 1, 2017. Please log onto the web site for further details and instructions on how to apply.

Our current apprentices are Ian Rasmussen, mentored by Celeste Mayer and Sara Stern mentored by Jim Evans. Young Ian gave a delightful talk about his experience with his bees and his experience as an apprentice.

Chris Apple – Director of Outreach

Chris had a very busy year meeting the goal of interfacing with the community with different ages and different populations. She and a few volunteers engaged the community in too many activities to mention them all.

Some were:

- Family night with 3rd graders at Grady Brown Elementary;
- STEAM night at Mary Scroggs Elementary;
- a mini school for UNC students who have now formed the Carolina Bee Club;
- Cultural Explosion for teens at Cedar Ridge;
- Ecology Day at Estes Hills Elementary;
- Farm To Table for Orange County 3rd graders;
- Hillsborough Garden Tour;
- Seniors at the Passmore Senior center in Hillsborough and the Seymour Senior center in Chapel Hill;
- Pollinator Bee Day presentations;
- July NCSBA Centennial Conference display of 100 live plants which were then sold with funds donated to Apiary research;
- National Honey Bee Day information tables at the Chapel Hill and Eno farmer's markets;
- Building native Bee houses with children at the Chapel Hill Library and more!

Chris has coordinated our state fair booth and hopes that volunteers will step forward next year to continue the project. We have won ribbons in the past. As beekeepers there are many, many ways for you to express your passion for the honey bee through education and community awareness and consequently helping to insure its future. Please contact Chris and offer a tiny bit of your time.

John Rintoul – President and one of the custodians of the OCBA demonstration hives in Carrboro

John said that Carrboro was the 3rd municipality to become a Bee City USA. Six months after that OCBA placed demonstration hives in Carrboro. In May 2016 these hives were moved to Carrboro High School. This location provided better public visibility, easy access by the public, and off street parking not available at the first chosen site. Carrboro High now has a bee club that has grown from 5 members its first year to as many as 20 members this year.

Chapel Hill High School is now starting a Bee Club. Hives there will be maintained by none other than Sara Stern, one of our current apprentices with assistance from Jessica Mjelde and Rob Crook as mentors. This success has sparked further community acceptance of more hive placements near schools.

Chris Helmstetter who has a child at McDougle Elementary maintains hives at that location. The woodenware for those hives was donated by OCBA.

Several parents at other schools are volunteering their time to oversee and manage hives. All are OCBA trained! Potential new sites include Frank Porter Graham Elementary with Emma Nadeau as primary beekeeper and Cathy Starks as mentor.

Cynthia Woodsong – caretaker with David DiGiuseppe of the Langstroth Hives at Blackwood Farm Park

Cynthia gave an interesting and informative overview of Blackwood Farm Park. She said that the club has four demonstration hives placed there. The Park consists of 152 acres of farmland repurposed by the Town of Hillsborough into a park. It is located on NC Hwy 86 South between Hillsborough and Chapel Hill. There is an historic farmhouse, barn, smokehouse, corncrib and other outbuildings, a picnic shelter, restroom, 4 miles of hiking trails, fishing and lots of space to walk a dog on leash. She reported that the two Langstroth hives were usually very strong but in spite of excellent varroa mite numbers, crashed and were replaced with new packages. Currently there are no bees in the Langstroth hives.

Mary Leonhardi and Cynthia Speed – caretakers of the Top Bar Hives at Blackwood Farm Park

Mary and Cynthia described a similar roller coaster with weakened hives due to drift, a hive that crashed and some queen failures. Again, varroa was a non-issue. Sugar shakes were scheduled at the same for all 4 hives. Currently, the two Top Bar hives house medium strength clusters and appear to be hanging on for now.

Chris Richmond – Coordinator of OCBA Swarm Patrol

Chris invited the membership to join the patrol and try their hand at procuring free bees. He said that the Swarm Patrol is open to current members. Patrol members should have the ability to respond promptly, keep appropriate equipment on hand, and be tenacious. Each year he gets numerous calls to remove swarms and after determining that the insects are indeed honey bees, calls people on the list. He said that the majority of the calls occur between April and early June and said that it was lots of fun. Reach him at Swarm@OCBA or send him a text at 919-932-1335 if you are interested in joining the Swarm Patrol.

Lucy Wilson – Coordinator of the OCBA Pollinator Garden

Lucy said that the pollinator garden was established in 2011 under the leadership and inspiration of Geneva Green, past president of OCBA. It is very attractive and is usually the starting point for the Hillsborough Garden Club Tour. The location is at the Dickson House in Hillsborough next door to the Post Office. Lucy coordinates the maintenance of the

garden which involves scheduling 2 volunteers from the club each month. This consists of mostly deadheading and weeding and takes about an hour. Lucy has coordinated the volunteers since the garden's inception and will be stepping down. A new coordinator will need to be on board for next year. If you are interested in volunteering to coordinate the OCBA Pollinator Garden you can contact Lucy at lucy.wilson@gmail.com for more information.

Elections for officers were held.

The Officers and Directors for 2018 are:

President – Mark Powers

Vice President – Ryan Chamberlain

Treasurer – Nerissa Rivera

Secretary – Cynthia Speed

Randall Austin – Director of Education

Chris Apple – Director of Outreach

Lisa Vogel – Director of New Beekeeper Mentorship and Apprentice Program

State Fair Exhibit Idea

John Friedrich said that he and his wife attended the dedication of the Gold Park "Bee Hotel." There it occurred to him that a large scale Langstroth hive that children could enter could become the basis for a state fair exhibit next year that could then be donated to the Town as an educational exhibit at the Pollinator Garden at Gold Park. He described it as an upsized bee hive large enough for kids to crawl into and later be donated to Hillsborough's Gold Park. He suggested that members give some thought to how such a project could be designed to provide an interesting educational opportunity for kids. All ideas are welcome and will be discussed in January.

OCBA Holiday Social

John Rintoul reminded everyone that next month's "Meeting" would be our annual holiday gathering. On Dec 14 at 7:00 pm the club will provide wine and non-alcoholic beverages and those attending are asked to bring a finger food, savory or sweet, to share.

Dick Merritt gave notice that Bailey Bee Supply is taking orders for 2018 bee packages.

Refreshments were brought by Chris Apple, and Amy and Sara Stern and Zahra Love

There were 46 members in attendance.