

OCBA Up to the Minutes News

Volume 1, No. 2

February 2018

New Meeting Format Worked Well

OCBA's February 9th Membership Meeting marked the first time that OCBA began the meeting with the refreshments and social period. We adopted this variation to allow members to get to know each other and exchange beekeeping stories in a relaxed way prior to the educational presentation. President Mark Powers thanked Celeste Mayer and Carrie Donley who provided this month's delicious refreshments.

Honey Bee Communication – Dancing & Pheromones

Mark Powers introduced OCBA's own Chris Apple, Director of Outreach as the evening's speaker. Chris gave a well-researched presentation with excellent power point slides on Honey Bee Communication. It was interesting to hear how honey bees communicate in the dark, how they recruit their hive mates to forage at fruitful sites, and how they avoid getting lost on cloudy days with no visible sun. She talked about the famous waggle and sickle dances, but also other less well known dances; including the "groom me dance," the "I'm so happy dance," and the "get to work dance" just to name a few.

Chris discussed the role of pheromones in the colony, a complex topic, but one that she explained very well. She said that pheromones were the clue to why you don't want to eat bananas near your hives (alarm pheromone), what the heck virgin fecal pheromones do (stay away pheromone), and why there's a come hither pheromone (Nasonov pheromone). Don Hopkins, lead Apiary Inspector for North Carolina was present and occasionally offered clarification at Chris' request.

The membership meeting was attended by 51 members and guests. OCBA's pre-meeting dinner which is held in a private room at Radius Pizzeria was also well attended with 17 members in attendance – perhaps the best turnout ever. This pre-meeting dinner offers members an opportunity to "talk bees" and to get to know each other in a casual, relaxed environment. This month our guest speaker joined the gathering giving members a chance to pick the brains of an expert. Members order and pay for their meals individually.

Equipment Field Day

On Saturday, February 10th, OCBA held its annual Equipment Field Day to familiarize Bee School students with the construction of basic beekeeping woodenware. Randall Austin and David Eckert demonstrated hive box construction and frame assembly. They discussed the relative advantages and disadvantages of plastic and beeswax foundation.

OCBA's Bee School educates 75 new beekeepers each year and 2 apprentices. 45 of the students attended the Equipment Field Day.

Cedar Ridge High School's wood shop served as the venue for the field day. Keith Yow, beekeeper, OCBA member and Cedar Ridge's Award Winning Woodworking Teacher served as host and adviser to the students attending the field day event.



David Eckert demonstrates frame assembly



Randall Austin looks on as student assembles hive box

Winter Honey Extraction

Sadly, OCBA's honey extractor is being rented during these winter months. Winter stress has taken its toll on our bees. As OCBA beekeepers discover hives that failed to survive the recent cold snap they are renting one of OCBA's extractors to claim the remaining honey.

OCBA's extractors are a key benefit of membership. Rental remains low at \$5 per day. To be eligible to rent the extractors during this summer's honey harvest you must be an OCBA member before April 1st.

Verify your membership today!

OCBA's 2018 Apprentices Receive Their Hives

On Sunday, February 18th OCBA Apprentices Megan Talikoff and Catherine Trusky picked up hives donated by OCBA to help them begin their beekeeping careers. Lisa Vogel, OCBA's Director of Mentorship, was on hand to provide assistance and painting advice.



Catherine Trusky and Megan Talikoff check their hives

These hives were originally donated to OCBA in 2017 as part of a large anonymous gift. The vibrant paint jobs came with the gift. Even though Catherine and Megan were delighted by the "spilled bag of Skittles®" color motif, they have their own ideas about their best options for repainting the hives.



Catherine and Megan enlisted Dad muscle to load their hives

Certified Beekeeper Practical Exam Opportunities

As many of our members know, OCBA maintains community demonstration hives at Carrboro High School (CHS). John Rintoul currently manages those hives for OCBA. He suggested that the demonstration hives be used for members who have yet to complete their Practical Exam for Certification. Randall Austin stated that details are being worked out to develop a sign-up list allowing 2 beekeepers to test at CHS every other weekend during the spring months, possibly more often. With multiple testing days, many of last year's Bee School grads will

be able to complete their practical exam and become certified beekeepers. You must be a 2018 OCBA and NCSBA member to participate in the Certified Beekeeper program.



OCBA Hives at Carrboro High School

OCBA Great Door Prizes in February

Door prizes at this month's meeting were decorative Honey Bee Napkin Rings, and a Ceramic Honey Jar with dipper. These two items were generously donated by OCBA members as re-gifted items. A hive tool donated by Bailey Bee Supply also made the door prize giveaway list for February. To be eligible for OCBA's door prize giveaways you must be a member. Join now.

Golden Achievement Program (GAP)

Mark Powers introduced John Rintoul at February's meeting to announce that OCBA is 'going for the GAP' in 2018. Every year at the summer conference NCSBA awards the Golden Achievement Award to the chapter that develops and incorporates best practices in serving its members and the beekeeping community.

NCSBA has established 37 criteria that are used to assess the qualifications of GAP applicants. Points are given for various chapter activities and accomplishments. The Program runs from January 1 through December 31 of each year. A monetary prize as well as an award is given to the outstanding chapter. OCBA is applying for the award for the 2018 calendar year. We will be documenting and collecting relevant data from January 2018 through December 2018 in the hope of winning the GAP Award at the 2019 Summer Conference.

John explained that he and Cynthia Speed are serving as GAP Award co-chairs to help OCBA meet as many of the GAP criteria as possible. Activities that will help OCBA earn GAP points include: giving presentations at schools, civic clubs, churches etc.; having members who become Certified, Journeyman or Master Beekeepers; attendance at NCSBA Spring and/or Summer meetings; winning ribbons at the state fair in a bee-related category; conducting field days; conducting a beekeeping

school; maintaining a swarm hotline; having chapter members that are also NCSBA members; and, having name tags, refreshments, and attendance sheets at meetings. These are only a few of the many ways that we can maintain a strong and vibrant club to support beekeeping.

The full list of [GAP criteria](#) are posted on OCBA's website. With everyone's involvement OCBA can be recognized for the great club that we are. Look for frequent postings and updates to come on OCBA google groups.

Cynthia encouraged the group to participate and passed out the Individual GAP Form for each person to document their activities. Sheets will be available at each meeting, on the OCBA web site, and on the NCSBA web site. John circulated a sign-up sheet for members interested in serving on one of the GAP subcommittees. Members will also be able to sign up at the March meeting.

OCBA to Offer Spring Split Workshop

Weather and circumstances permitting, on Sunday, March 11th at 3:00p Randall Austin will demonstrate hive split techniques at a Spring Splits Workshop. Interested participants will meet at OCBA's community demonstration hives at Carrboro High School. This workshop will be of interest to beekeepers who want to increase their managed hives by dividing hives that have successfully overwintered.



Because there is always a chance that the weather will not cooperate stay tuned to OCBA's website for updates on dates and times. The weekend of March 17 will serve as a backup date for the workshop.



OCBA's Community Outreach

Chris Apple, OCBA's Community Outreach Director, was interviewed by Zita Voros, a UNC-Chapel Hill journalism student, during the Equipment Field Day. Chris explained the beekeeping and education mission of OCBA and introduced the student to beekeeping equipment. Ms. Voros' project is to interview a community member and to then tell a compelling video story. Chris's interview will form the foundation of that project. Ms. Voros will make her final project available online. OCBA hopes to share her final production with members.



Chris Apple and John Dorman filmed for interview

How Are Your Bees Doing?

A recent post on OCBA's Google Group Listserv generated a number of responses from members who shared information about the status of their hives based on inspections made during the few warm days of February. Some hives came through the winter in good shape, some are struggling and some didn't make it. That is to be expected every year. But sharing your observations about what you are seeing in your hives helps all of us better understand *normal seasonal variations* and become more knowledgeable beekeepers.

Pollen and nectar are showing up in hives, as are small amounts of drone brood. Once members start reporting larger amounts of drone brood we can all get ready for swarm season. Chris Richmond, OCBA's Swarm Patrol Coordinator, will speak about swarm management and collection at OCBA's March meeting.

Members are encouraged to use the listserv to share information about what you are seeing in your hives and in your area. The listserv also serves as a great forum to ask questions and learn from other beekeepers. You can post to the forum by sending your email post to theoeba@googlegroups.com or simply [click this link](#).

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.

March Meeting – Chris Richmond will speak about OCBA's Swarm Patrol, swarm management and swarm collection.

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:

February 23, Randall Austin will be interviewed by WHUP's Bob Burtman about OCBA, its mission and its bee school. The interview will be aired at 8:20. You can listen at 104.7 FM or you can live stream from the [WHUP website](#).

March 1 through 3, North Carolina State Beekeepers Association Spring Conference will be held in New Bern. 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.

March 11, Spring Splits Workshop at Carrboro High School (see *full story on Page 3 above*).

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

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.

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.

What are the Bees Eating Now – Save Our Weeds

In addition to the reliable and treasured Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) two plants often scorned as noxious weeds also provide important early forage for honey bees for spring build up.



Chickweed (*Stellaria media*)



Common Henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*)