

OCBA Up to the Minutes News

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IT'S 2019 - WILL YOU RAISE GOOD BEES



The classic beekeeping mnemonic to help beekeepers remember the color code for marking queens tells us that 2019's queens will get a green dot. We all hope that our 2018 red queens will still be with us, at least through the early months of 2019 as our colonies build brood in advance of the spring nectar flow. And some of us may still find a few of our 2017 yellow queens.

MEET RYAN CHAMBERLAIN, OCBA'S PRESIDENT

Welcome to an exciting new year in the Orange County Beekeepers Association. It is an honor and delight to be your chapter president for 2019. I'd like to extend a special thank you to **Mark Powers**, our immediate past-president, for all of his care and dedication in bringing us through the past year.

Caring for (give-or-take) 25 hives, I consider myself a side-line beekeeper; big enough to stay busy, but small enough that it is still a pleasurable weekend pastime. Beekeeping has exposed me to other worlds of thinking; woodworking, fair competitions, logistical challenges, and more. I find beekeeping to be something enjoyable in solitude, but fulfilling when accompanied in its pursuit. Personally, this year I hope to move hives to the coast for early nectar flow, to the mountains in late summer, to continue to increase my honey yields, and expand apiary sites by adding even more colonies.

While all of us know OCBA is the best beekeeping organization in the state, 2019 is the year we are going to make sure everyone else knows. We've spent the past year diligently assessing and documenting our countless hours of outreach, community service, work with the North Carolina State Beekeepers Association and NC State's Apiculture research program. We're dedicated as a chapter; welcoming new Certified, Journeyman and Master Beekeepers to our membership, as well as taking pride in our stewardship and the tireless labor involved in what brings all of us together, our honey bees. All of this has been compiled in an impressive portfolio that will be hard to beat for this year's Golden Achievement Program Award. Thanks to Cynthia Speed and John Rintoul for documenting and cataloging our club's impressive efforts throughout the year.

This year promises to be just as busy. The OCBA Apprenticeship Program continues to build successful new beekeepers and further the ongoing education of those who volunteer as mentors. Beginner Beekeeping School, our First-Year Clusters

and the Master Beekeeping Study Group build the foundations for our community to be successful as a whole. New initiatives, still in development, such as the Orange County Bee Collaborative, Queen Rearing Pilot Program, and NC State Fair Committee challenge us to successfully work together. Thank you to everyone who has, is, or plans to contribute to these efforts.

If you are new to the OCBA, welcome. I look forward to meeting you and encourage you to participate in one of the many activities and opportunities we offer to our members. In the OCBA, there is something for everyone. Get out of it what you can by getting involved: contribute to our efforts, be an active and engaged beekeeper, and attend meetings of our organization.

For those who are not new, thank you! I attribute my successes as a beekeeper directly to the OCBA and know that without it, I would have thrown in the towel long ago. I look forward to everything that we have planned for an exciting and successful 2019.

OCBA DINNER WELL-ATTENDED IN 2019

Come and join the discussion

OCBA's pre-meeting dinner at Radius was attended by an all-time record of 22 members and guests. 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, ask questions and share all things bee related. The group meets at 5:00 prior to each monthly membership meeting.



SHARING THE THRONE

James Withrow, a PhD candidate in Dr Tarpy's NCSU Apiculture Science Lab, shared his research with the 63 OCBA members in attendance at the January membership meeting. His presentation, entitled "*Sharing the throne: Establishing honey bee colonies with multiple queens*" detailed his studies with colonies headed with multiple queens. The queens uncharacteristically co-exist in his research hives when the colonies are created

using older queens and newly emerged worker bees. He has determined that as queens age their aggression toward other queens diminishes and that emerging brood more readily accept multiple queens than older bees. In theory, colonies with multiple queens should build faster and may be able to sustain a larger peak workforce.

Open questions remaining to be answered during his research include: would one or all queens depart during a swarm event; and, will multiple queens increase the size of the brood chamber? James was an excellent speaker and offered to return at the conclusion of his research to share his final conclusions.

OCBA ANNOUNCES SELECTION OF 2019

APPRENTICES

Lisa Vogel, Director of Mentoring, introduced the 2019 new apprentices. 11 applications were received for two apprentice positions. Both apprentices are from Hillsborough. **Harrison Hufner** is 13 and attends Hope Creek Academy. Harrison will be mentored by **Louise Rascoe**. **Finley Stinchcombe** is 15 and attends Orange High School. She will be mentored by **Vicki Robertson**.

OCBA sponsors two apprentices each year. They receive beekeeping tools, woodenware, protective gear, bees and one-on-one mentoring from an experienced OCBA member.

REGISTER YOUR 2019 HIVES WITH BEECHECK



An article in the January issue of Agricultural Review makes it clear that the NC Department of Agriculture's BeeCheck program is working to protect NC's honey bees.

- *Aaron A. Smith, owner of Rose Creek Nursery and Landscaping in Morganton, agreed to pay \$500 for **using a pesticide product that is highly toxic to bees near neighboring hives**. The label of the pesticide he was using clearly indicated not to use the product when bees are foraging.*
- *Michael Allen Bostrom, an aerial pesticide applicator of Kingtree, SC, agreed to pay \$1,200 for drift damage to a neighboring yard and **failure to notify a neighboring beekeeper registered with the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Plant Industry Division that there would be spraying near his apiary as required.***

You can register your hives on the NC BeeCheck mapping system using this [link](#) to NCD&CS Structural Pest Control and Pesticides Division. By the way, a subscription to the [Agricultural Review](#) is free. The classified ad section of the review includes "[Bees, Supplies and Services For Sale](#)" and is a good source for North Carolina bred queens, nucs and even packages.

CHRIS APPLE WELCOMES 2 OCBA MEMBERS AS NCSBA JOURNEYMEN BEEKEEPERS

Chris Apple, NCSBA Regional Director, awarded Journeyman Beekeeper Certificates to **Lisa Vogel**, **Dawn Rogers** and **Philip Moore** at OCBA's January membership meeting. Lisa and Dawn are long time OCBA members. Philip is new to North Carolina, but was strongly encouraged to become an active member of OCBA.



Dawn Rogers (left) and Lisa Vogel (right) with Chris Apple

BEYOND THE FIRST YEAR CLUSTER

Prior participants in OCBA's Beekeeping Clusters are banding together to provide ongoing support to each other as they continue to build their beekeeping skills. [Tim Struttman](#) is coordinating this effort which is called the Orange County Bee Collaborative. The group will offer on-going guidance and support for OCBA beekeepers with at least one year of experience. The collaborative will provide a forum to discuss current beekeeping issues, challenges, hive management techniques and other ideas identified among the participants' apiaries. The participants will mutually support each other's continued beekeeping success with a focus on NCSBA's Certified and Journeyman certification guidelines.

OCBA QUEEN REARING PILOT PROJECT

Nerissa Rivera announced the formation of an OCBA queen rearing pilot project. All of the participants in this pilot project attended the 8 hour NCSBA Born and Bred Queen Rearing Workshop in 2017, or have had equivalent training. The goal of this pilot effort is to successfully rear healthy queens from local stock. Nerissa, who has successfully grafted larvae and reared queens for her own use, is heading up the group with logistic and coordination support from **Brad Kosiba**.

Although the long-term goals of this pilot project are still under discussion it is possible that OCBA raised and proven queens may some day be available to members. In addition, the group anticipates sharing its developed experience and expertise with other interested OCBA members in future workshops.

BEE SCHOOL BEGINS

by Randall Austin

The 2019 OCBA Bee School filled up on January 2nd and enrollment is closed. Once again we have a great crop of students. Some are family of former students. A few others are past graduates returning to learn something new. OCBA strives to have the very best bee school of its type in the state. It is extremely encouraging to see people who have taken the class

not only return but recommend that their family and friends join us. Maybe we are doing something right!

Integral to our bee school's success is the First Year Clusters Program. OCBA beekeepers with a bit of experience and lots of enthusiasm for sharing will soon be solicited to serve as Cluster Guides. You should know that the success of the program, coordinated for many years by **David Eckert** and now led by **Lisa Vogel**, is envied by other bee clubs in our area. Chatham County Beekeepers, themselves a well-respected association and bee school provider, have recently consulted with David about creating a version of the program for their own bee school. I guess that proves it: Orange *is* doing something right!

WHAT'S BLOOMING NOW?



Blooming as early as the third week of January, Red Maple (Acer rubrum) provides the first significant pollen source for NC bees each year.

Some of our members report that their bees are already bringing in tan, putty colored pollen. This is most likely red maple pollen. Small amounts of bright red pollen from native and ornamental dead nettles and ubiquitous henbit (*Lamium sp.*) have also been reported as colonies start to brood up.



Henbit (Lamium amplexicaule) yields bright red pollen

OCBA DOOR PRIZES FOR JANUARY

A new smoker was won by **Cynthia Woodsong**, a crystal honeypot with lid and crystal dipper was won by **David Eckert**,

and \$10.00 gift certificates were won by **Tim Struttman** and **Jayne Stuart**, and a tiny plastic honey bee was given to **Chris Richmond** as a consolation prize – and because he wanted it.

January and February are a great time to renew your OCBA membership. And remember . . . to be eligible for OCBA's door prize giveaways you must be a member. OCBA has great door prizes in store for future meetings. [Join OCBA now.](#)

IT'S JANUARY – TIME TO RE-GIFT

If the holidays brought you bee cufflinks, your 15th pair of bee earrings or some other well-intended but unnecessary bee gift you might consider offering them to OCBA to use as a door prize at our monthly membership meeting.

On the other hand, if the holidays brought you this \$900 Gucci bee watch . . . well aren't *you* special! As they say, "one person's trash is another person's treasure." Share your unwanted treasures with OCBA.



UPCOMING EVENTS AND SPEAKERS

February 14 OCBA Membership Meeting – Philip Moore, research scientist and field team leader at Eurofins Agrosience Services and recent NCSBA Journeyman beekeeper, will present "*Bee Wary! Internet Based Beekeeping Resources*" at OCBA's February meeting.

Other Events of Note

March 1-2, 2019 – North Carolina State Beekeepers' Association Spring Meeting, Monroe, NC (southeast of Charlotte) at the Union County Extension Complex. This will be a joint meeting with the South Carolina Beekeepers' Association. Registration is open **now** on the [NCSBA webpage](#).

July 15-19, 2019 – Eastern Apicultural Society's Annual Meeting in Greenville, SC.

August 8-10, 2019 – North Carolina State Beekeepers Association Summer Meeting, Hickory, NC. Note that the date is a month later than usual to avoid a conflict with the Eastern Apicultural Society's meeting in Greenville, SC.

September 8-12, 2019 – Apimondia International Apicultural Congress, Montreal, Canada. Plan now to attend.

Spring 2020 – North Carolina State Beekeepers' Association Spring Meeting, New Bern, NC. For beekeepers who really plan ahead.