

OCBA Up to the Minutes News

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TheOCBA.org

March 2019

IT'S 5:00 O'CLOCK . . .

DO YOU KNOW WHERE DINNER IS?

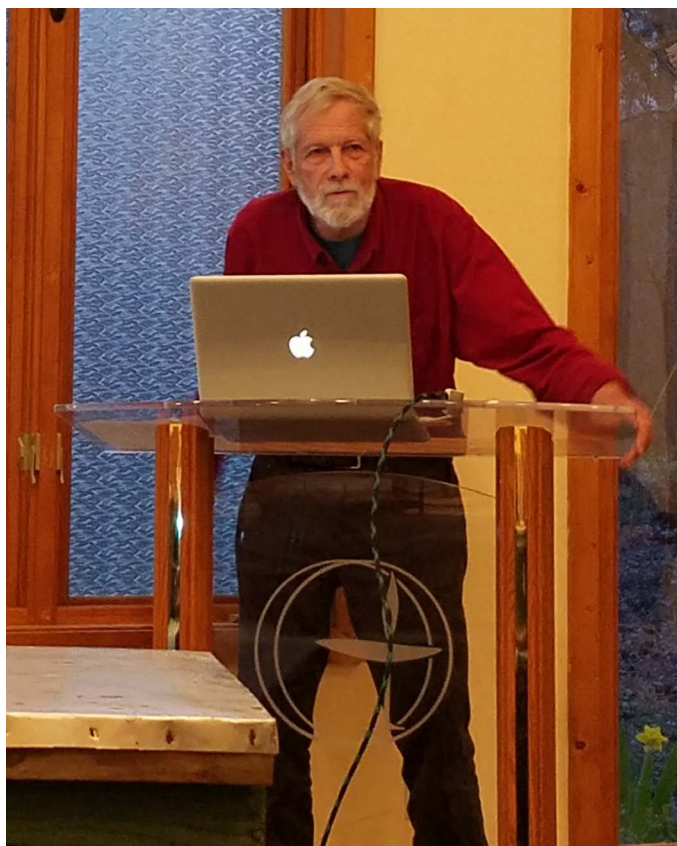
Join OCBA, Join the Discussion

OCBA's March pre-meeting dinner at Radius Pizzeria in Hillsborough was attended by 13 members and guests. Come join the discussion before the April meeting. Everyone is welcome to attend this group dinner prior to each monthly meeting. The group meets at Radius at 5:00 prior to each monthly membership meeting.

WHAT'S BETTER THAN FREE BEES?

Knowing how to attract them

A record 76 members turned out in March to hear **David Fruchtenicht's** presentation on swarm behavior, approaches to preventing them, and his techniques for catching swarms in swarm traps.



A seasoned beekeeper, David has been keeping bees for 60 years. He shared his first hand experience and extensive knowledge of bees and beekeeping. David explained the difference between absconding and swarming as being two alternatives to what might occur when your relationship with the bees' is not working out. He noted that crowded hives and colonies with older queens are most likely to swarm. The

dissemination of queen pheromone in the colony diminishes as the queen ages or as the colony becomes so large that it isn't fully distributed throughout the hive. This can trigger the colony's decision to replace the queen or to swarm as the size of the colony exceeds the ability of the bees to detect sufficient queen pheromone.

In the Piedmont, swarming begins around the 15th of April and ends around the 15th of June. The first sign of potential swarming is an increase in drones followed by the presence of queen cell cups. David mentioned that based on the research of Dr. Tom Seeley (Cornell University) only about 17% of swarms survive in the wild.

David follows Dr. Seeley's guidelines for setting up a swarm trap. Use a trap having an entrance of about 2 square inches with an internal volume of 40 liters (~ 1 deep super). The trap should be placed 10-12 feet above the ground along the shaded edge of the woods. And, of course, the entrance should face south.

The record attendance for David's captivating presentation is an indication of the interest in this topic as swarm season approaches.

A FIRST FOR OCBA

*Perfect score on NCSBA Certified Written Test
by Randall Austin*

For years, OCBA Bee School Headmaster **Randall Austin** has smugly told his students, "Nobody scores 100% on the NCSBA Certified Written Test!" He has seen at least one 98%, but no 100s. Until now.

Larry Arnold was in the 2018 OCBA Bee School, but didn't take the exam. He regretted that so he asked to sit in on testing night with this year's students. Now he's glad he did: he aced it! What's next for Larry? He already is part of the OCBA MBP Study Group so that he'll be prepared to ace the NCSBA MBP Journeyman Test. But first he must finish off his Certified level by passing the Certified Practical Exam, where he'll go into a hive and show that he can tell a worker from a drone, among other things.

What about you? If you have passed the Certified Written Test within the past four years and have kept honey bees for a full season, review [OCBA's policy](#) toward Master Beekeeper Program testing. When you are ready to take the Practical Exam contact [Ryan Chamberlain](#) or [Randall Austin](#) to schedule a hive visit. We don't want Larry to be lonely at the top!

SWARM PATROL - NEW NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

Chris Richmond, coordinator for OCBA's Swarm Patrol, circulated a signup sheet for those interested in being contacted

when he receives a call to collect a swarm. When a call is received Chris will send a group text to all who have indicated an interest. The first swarm responder will be assigned to collect the swarm. Others on the list may attend as observers and/or helpers if they choose.



Chris suggested that members of the Swarm Patrol be prepared at all times. Have your swarm collection gear gathered together and ready to go. This includes: pruners, ladder, smoker, protective gear, etc. Have a nuc box ready to hive the swarm and possibly to serve as their first home in your bee yard.

BE A COMMUNITY BEE EDUCATOR

*Earn Journeyman or Masters community service credits
by Chris Apple*

Community outreach requests are pouring in. I desperately need everyone's help in meeting these requests. If any of these volunteer opportunities appeal to you, please contact me at chrisapple1231@gmail.com.

OCBA members work hard to educate the public about our beloved honey bees. I hope you will consider participating in some of these events. Remember – we all know way more about honey bees and beekeeping than the folks who attend these festivals and events. We are all educators!

- APRIL 6 - Morehead Science Fair. This is an awesome event at Morehead Planetarium on the UNC campus. Last year we teamed up with **Carrie Donley's** electron microscopy lab in addition to having an information booth set up. This event is an all day event and we will need at least 2 people there at all times (3 would be better, as it is very busy!). [Geneva Green](#) will coordinate this activity.
- APRIL 26 - Earth Evening. This festive event is held at the Farmers' Market Pavilion in downtown Hillsborough. It is an event geared to kids and we will have some sort of activity for them. Volunteers are needed and ideas for the activity are welcome.
- MAY 4 - Hillsborough Garden Tour. **Karen Lauterbach** is doing a great job of putting this together. Participants will have the opportunity to sell honey and plants. Please contact [Karen](#) if you are willing to help with this event.

- MAY 19 - Kidzu Children's Museum. Kidzu in Chapel Hill is planning a Bee Workshop on Saturday, May 19. I need a volunteer or two who would be willing to be responsible for that outreach opportunity. Not a lot of details yet, but I want to make sure that OCBA can accommodate that program.
- JUNE 6 & 7 - Annie's Lavender Farm. OCBA has been involved with this festival event for several years. We staff an information table. It is a great time to be in the lavender fields.
- JUNE 22 - Granville County Bee Jubilee. Last year OCBA had a booth set up. We made and sold lip balm and healing ointment. We could do this again depending on the number and interest of volunteers. I will be at the Jubilee with a booth for NCSBA. I am also giving a talk so what we do will depend on who signs up and what they would like to do. I would love to have a lead volunteer to coordinate this.
- JUNE 22 - Duke Homestead. This is the same day as the Granville Bee Jubilee. If we can get enough volunteers to cover both events, that would be great. I have explained to the Duke Homestead folks that OCBA's participation would depend on adequate volunteers since the Jubilee submitted their request first. We would staff an information table.

On March 25th I am speaking on how honey is made at The Seasons at Southpoint, a senior living facility. On April 1st I am giving a talk on pollinators for the UNC Bee Club at the UNC Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill from 5:30 until 6:30.

MEMBERSHIP DEADLINE IS APPROACHING

You must join or renew your OCBA membership before April 1st if you plan to use the OCBA extractors to bottle your 2019 honey harvest. Membership is only \$10. In addition to eligibility to rent the extractor, membership assures that you will be tuned in to OCBA's excellent ongoing beekeeping education programs at our monthly meetings. And you will be able to share the joy of being a member of the best county bee club in North Carolina. [Join now or renew your membership today!](#)

At the March meeting **Ryan Chamberlain** announced that **Cathy Starks** has been appointed as OCBA's first Membership Secretary. Cathy will not only monitor membership rolls, but will be working with other members to assure that new members and visitors feel welcome when they attend our meetings. Look forward to helping Cathy as OCBA works to be as welcoming as possible. Introduce yourself to an unfamiliar face at the next meeting!

CLUSTERS FORMED

By Lisa Vogel

OCBA's 2019 Clusters have been formed. 61 new beekeepers have signed up for 2019 and will be mentored by 20 experienced beekeepers. First cluster meeting will be at **Randall Austin's** apiary on the bee school field day. Originally the field day was scheduled for Saturday, March 23rd, but as often happens with

beekeeping the weather didn't cooperate. Saturday, March 30th is the planned make-up date.

Cluster members will be shown how to inspect a hive and how to perform a sugar shake for varroa mites. Participants will receive an email with details and the time and with directions to Randall's house.

Also, I would like to thank all past and present mentors and junior mentors for donating many hours of their time to help new beekeepers develop sound beekeeping skills.

GIRLS RULE AT NCSBA SPRING CONFERENCE!

by Cynthia Speed

What is the Holst Milk Test used to determine? Yes, it relates to Honey Bees. If you attended the recent joint North Carolina – South Carolina Beekeepers meeting you would know the answer. It's a test for American foulbrood! In short, enzymes found in the spores will clear milk. Look it up.

One of the highlights of the conference was the Bee Bowl. The best of the best beekeepers were pitted against each other. It was purely coincidental that four male contestants from SC competed against four female contestants (Libby Mack, Jody Rierson, Jeanie Frye, Lane Kreitlow) from NC. There was one male judge and one female judge (me). Scoring was very close until the final question about the Holst milk test. Both sides gave the correct answer!!



*NCSBA's Championship Bee Bowl Team and Friends
Paul Newbold, Libby Mack, Jody Rierson, Cynthia Speed,
Jeanie Frye, Lane Kreitlow, Doug Galloway*

The scoring put the womenfolk way ahead in points so they were declared the winners and North Carolina brought home the prize - "bragging rights". Women were well represented within the selection of speakers, as well. They actually outnumbered the men. We heard from Dr. Katie Lee who talked about her research to reduce colony losses by analyzing which management practices fail and which ones work. Dr. Alison McAfee talked about keeping hygienic behavior in mind when trying to breed healthy bees. Kim O'Shea shared some beautiful photos and great videos of a year in her apiary. Dr. Annie Krueger gave us lessons learned from the Hive Scale Project. I have to admit that the fellows' remarks were outstanding as well.

Going to a beekeepers conference is one of the best experiences a beekeeper can have. You get an opportunity to meet and hear talks from the people who've authored those great beekeeping books you've been reading, to attend workshops, and to visit the wall-to-wall vendors. I always look forward to visiting the book sellers where I can inspect a book before I buy and forego shipping costs as well. Most importantly, it's where I buy my bee jewelry!

CONGRATULATIONS TO DAWN ROGERS

North Carolina State Beekeepers Association's President, Paul Newbold announced that OCBA's own, **Dawn Rogers**, has been appointed as the Secretary for the NCSBA. As Secretary to our state association Dawn will play a critical role in assuring that the actions of the Board are appropriately recorded and archived for future generations of North Carolina beekeepers. NCSBA is starting its second century as the oldest beekeeping association in the U.S. As they say, "You can't tell where you're going if you know where you've been." The efforts of Dawn and her predecessors will assure that NCSBA will have a clear path forward. Congratulations, Dawn!

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

In North Carolina, honey bees are classified as livestock. It is generally accepted that if one keeps livestock s/he needs to feed them, look after their health, vaccinate them as appropriate, transport them safely, and generally take responsibility for their well-being. In some cases, owners of livestock can be prosecuted for animal cruelty if the animals under their care are improperly treated.

Adherence to these principles assures a safe food supply and reduces the impact that diseased animals may have on the health of other livestock or the health of humans who consume their milk, meat, honey or other animal products.

As beekeepers we have a responsibility to look after our livestock properly. It is the morally responsible thing to do. Just as a dog owner would treat their dog for fleas or ticks a beekeeper must treat their bees for parasites such as varroa. We have a moral and ethical obligation to monitor for disease and ensure that our bees have sufficient food during periods when environmental resources are scarce.

If we cannot commit to managing these basic animal husbandry tasks, then perhaps we should simply buy our honey from responsible beekeepers who are up to the task of maintaining livestock.

VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

Can't hurt, might help . . .

An international listserv for the informed discussion of beekeeping issues and bee biology recently asked its experienced members for quick tips to share with new and less experienced beekeepers. One of the contributors noted that he used collected

propolis to make a varnish for brushing on the smooth surfaces inside his hive boxes.

For those interested in trying this technique, the table below provides guidance on the relative proportion of propolis to alcohol to make varnishes with concentrations of 10, 20 or 30%. Denatured alcohol purchased at home improvement stores in one gallon cans is a suitable and inexpensive choice.

Strength	100% Alcohol		Propolis
	oz.	fl. oz.	
10%	22	27	2.5
20%	17	21	4.25
30%	17	21	7.25
	70% Alcohol		
10%	22	25.3	2.5
20%	17	19.6	4.25
30%	17	19.6	7.25

Table courtesy of Gary Reuter at the University of Minnesota

At least 24 hours before you are ready to mix your varnish, place the propolis in a Zip-Lock type bag and toss it in the freezer. When you are ready to start, remove the propolis from the freezer. While it is still frozen and brittle place the Zip-Lock bag between a couple of sheets of newspaper. Place it on a solid surface and pound it gently with a hammer, rolling pin, or similar bludgeon to shatter it into fine, dust-like, shards. The newspaper protects the bag from punctures as the propolis is hammered.

Measure the propolis and alcohol and add them to a canning jar or other sealable, heat proof container. Screw the lid on tightly and shake to thoroughly mix the propolis and the alcohol.

Option 1 – for patient people

Put the propolis/alcohol mixture in a warm spot where you will see it often and remember to shake it a couple of times a day. If the mixture sets undisturbed for too long the propolis will settle in a gooey layer at the bottom of the jar rather than dissolving in the alcohol. In a week or two (depending on how often you shake it) the propolis will fully dissolve. Your propolis varnish is ready.

Option 2 – for beekeepers in a hurry



Place the jar containing the propolis/alcohol mixture in a double boiler. Heat the water to between 140°F to 150°F. Use a thermometer to keep tabs on the water temperature. Allow the water

in the double boiler to simmer. **CAUTION:** Alcohol boils at 173°F so keep the temperature below that temperature. Taking care not to burn yourself, swirl the mix from time to time until the propolis is fully dissolved (10-15 minutes). Allow the varnish to cool before opening the jar since the contents will be under pressure.

Using a disposable brush, paint the mixture on the inside of your boxes. While the alcohol and heat may destroy the antimicrobial properties of the propolis the coating will get your bees off to a great start as they propolize the surfaces of the hive. And your woodenware will smell great!

WHAT'S BLOOMING NOW?

This month we're focusing on a special plant. What makes it special? First and foremost, it is a spring favorite of the honey bee. But it has much more to recommend it.

- It's native to the southeastern U.S.
- It's avoided by browsing deer.
- It's a low growing ground cover that thrives in part and full shade.
- Once established, it's not picky about moist spots or dry spots.
- It doesn't demand that rich, loamy soil that we all hear about, but seldom see.
- It's not invasive.
- It's disease and insect resistant.
- And, best of all – it's fragrant!

What is the name of this miracle plant? It's Allegheny Spurge. It blooms from mid-March through mid-May.



Allegheny Spurge (*Pachysandra procumbens*)

UPCOMING EVENTS AND SPEAKERS

April 11, OCBA Membership Meeting – OCBA Master Beekeeper **Geneva Green** will share her knowledge of important pollinator plants that support honey bees and other pollinators.

May 9, OCBA Membership Meeting – Chris Apple, Master Beekeeper and past OCBA President, will help us understand the honey bee life cycle. As they age worker bees progress through a series of jobs and responsibilities in the hive as they age.

June 13, OCBA Membership Meeting – Lewis Cauble, Master Beekeeper, past OCBA President and current NC Apiary Inspector for the mountain region, will return to Orange County as our speaker in June. His presentation will focus on what should give us comfort vs. what may be problematic as we read the frames in our hives. He will help us recognize what is typical, seasonal variation in our hives as we evaluate frames of bees, brood and stores.

Other Events of Note

(See page 2 for complete listing)

April 26, 2019 – Hillsborough Earth Evening celebration of Earth Day, sponsored jointly by the Orange County Department of Environment, Agriculture, Parks and Recreation and the Town of Hillsborough. The event is from 6 to 8pm. Volunteers are needed from 5:30 to 8:30 to accommodate setup and take down. This is a family-oriented event. OCBA is encouraged to have some sort of hands-on or child-friendly activity. If you are interested in helping, please contact [Chris Apple](#).

June 22, 2019 – The 4th Annual Granville County Bee Jubilee at the Granville County Expo Center in Oxford is a day-long event (9:00 – 4:00) filled with bee and pollinator related speakers and demonstrations, local arts and handmade crafts, non-profits, children's activities, silent auction, HONEY, North Carolina grown produce and more! The focus is on home grown, handmade, and local. **July 15-19, 2019 – Eastern Apicultural Society's Annual Meeting** in Greenville, SC. Featured speakers include: Dewey Caron; Dennis vanEnglesdorp; Kirsten Traynor; and Jennifer Berry. The workshop schedule for the conference will be posted soon.

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. Information about the program and workshops is now available online. [Keynote speakers](#) include: Rufus Isaacs; Gene Robinson; Peter Rosenkranz; and Tom Seeley. Plan now to attend.

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