

OCBA Meeting Minutes, June 13, 2019

Cynthia Speed

Our pre-meeting dinner was held in the Fireplace Room at Radius Pizzeria in Hillsborough with 25 in attendance.

President Ryan Chamberlain opened the membership meeting following the brief social period from 7:00 to 7:15 when members enjoyed refreshments and talked about their bees. Members who needed to rush off before the meeting ended had an opportunity to talk with each other and refreshments were available throughout the meeting. Refreshments were provided by Dawn Rogers and Finley Stinchcombe.

Ryan called on Brad Kosiba who told the group that he had brought the refractometer to check honey moisture levels for those who brought honey to check at the end of the meeting.

Cathy Starks, membership secretary, welcomed visitors and new members and introduced some of them. She encouraged them to sign up for the OCBA Google Group for multiple answers to their questions about beekeeping.

Dawn Rogers, State Fair display chairperson for this year, reported that the committee has been trying to iron out a theme for this year's display that would be original and educational. They came up with "Join the Club" which would give information on OCBA, chapter organization within the NCSBA and advantages and benefits of membership. She circulated a sign up list and urged everyone to participate. Lots of entries are needed to make a good showing. Creamed, chunk, cut comb honey, mead, photographs, lotions, soaps, a gift basket, and a 10 lb. wax mold are just a few of the items we would like to have.

Chris Apple brought books bought at deep discounts from Wicwas Press for those who prepaid.

Ryan reminded everyone to register for the Summer NCSBA Meeting to be held in Hickory, August 8 – 10.

Ryan reported that an ad hoc committee has been formed to explore guidelines and usage of an OCBA honey house on the grounds of Blackwood Farm Park. John Rintoul is the representative currently in meetings with the Town of Hillsborough.

Lewis Cauble was our guest speaker. He talked at length about what a hive looks like when things are going right and how it looks when things are going wrong with a heavy emphasis on dealing with varroa mites. Lewis is North Carolina's state apiary inspector for the mountain region. His territory covers 21 counties in the western part of the

state. He lives in Rutherford County where he manages his 35 hives. Lewis credited OCBA with his early learning of beekeeping skills and his exposure to beekeeping culture. He said that he wouldn't be doing what he's doing today without OCBA. Lewis singled out three things that he thinks are most problematic for beekeepers and if mastered lead to good success with bees: mite control, managing queen events and understanding swarms, and feeding. He said to be alert to dearth conditions around July 4th as a target date when it's hot and dry with little to forage on and to watch your smaller hives for robbing. One of the members asked what could be done about defensiveness in bees. Randall Austin said that there's a good article on that and referred the group to Bailey Bee Supply's website to the educational resources section and the article entitled, "Can Stings Be A Good Thing?" Randall also recommended working your largest, touchy, or most defensive hive first working down to your easiest hive last. David Fruchtenicht suggested working your hives earlier in the day, avoiding late day inspections. The article on "Seasonal Management" is timely as well. Lewis said that he has noticed that even some experienced beekeepers inspect their top boxes first leaving the bottom brood box until last. This is not a good idea and may rile up the bees unnecessarily. Remove and stack the upper boxes but start inspections at the bottom and work up. Spend as little time as possible, quickly mentally checking off things on your "list", i.e. presence of the queen, adequate stores, risk of a swarm, brood in all stages, good laying pattern, etc. Do not spend a lot of time looking for the queen. Expected ratios are twice the number of capped brood to open brood and twice the amount of open brood to eggs. You must have: 1) an effective mite management plan; 2) it must be effective; 3) you must implement it; and, 4) monitoring is not optional. He talked a great deal about varroa checks. If done properly, sugar shakes are sufficient or try alcohol washes. His last mite check is on Nov. 1st and he does a prophylactic clean up with oxalic acid dribble in December when temps are around 50 degrees at winter solstice give or take a couple of weeks. For references, Lewis strongly recommended the Honey Bee Health Coalition website; Keep Bees Alive.org which has three great videos; and the Field Guide to Honey Bees, a free download PDF. He took questions from the members and visitors throughout his talk and gave an excellent presentation.

Don Hopkins supervisor of the state's apiary inspectors, as well as, Will Hicks apiary inspector for the Piedmont area were present. Will announced his retirement after working for the state for 20 years.

Chris Apple one of the Piedmont regional directors, presented former president, Mark Powers a nameplate recognizing him as a new Master Beekeeper. Mark thanked Lewis who gave him his practical for certification.

Chris also Outreach Director for OCBA, gave details on an event to be held at UNC which is a recognized bee campus. In honor of National Pollinator Week, participants are needed to help document as many species of living things as possible at Battle

Branch Park during BioBlitz a citizen Science project. Meet on June 22, 2019, 9 – 11 am at Battle Branch Park at Country Club Rd and Raleigh St intersection.

Chris was told that it couldn't be done so she was very excited and proud to announce that OCBA had filled an entire day with volunteers to sell honey at the state fair in 2 hour increments.

Another outreach opportunity involves Blackwood Farm Park where OCBA maintains its club apiary. A group of 10 campers, ages 7 – 12 would like to learn more about bees at 10:00 on July 17, July 26, and August 16. Please consider helping out with this. Mary Leonhardi presented to them last year and said it was a lot of fun and the kids were very smart. The campers were able to peer at bees through the windows of the top bar hives.

Brad Kosiba gave a short report on the success of the Extraction Workshop held at the Cedar Ridge High School wood working shop in Hillsborough. On last Saturday, Brad and Mark Powers along with Keith Yow, the furniture and woodworking teacher and 20 attendees, extracted 7 gallons of honey. Frames were taken from the apiary at the Briggs Avenue hives and community garden. In spite of collection taken under an umbrella during pouring rain, moisture level was below 17%. Everyone had a good time and learned how to extract honey using tools available through the club's extraction rental program.

Lisa Vogel, Mentoring and Apprentice program director, urged everyone who's participating in the cluster and collaborative program to start taking pictures for the state fair and for David Eckert's presentation at the conference.

Raffle items given away were a crystal honey dispenser, an entrance feeder, a \$10 gift certificate from Miller Bee Supply, and two OCBA patches.

At our next meeting, Randall Austin will share what we all need to know about bee viruses. Also, some of Dr. Tarpay's students will come to share progress on their research activities at the bee lab at NC State.

There were 90 members and guests in attendance.