

OCBA Up to the Minutes News

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DINNER AT RADIUS PIZZA

Join the discussion and meet fellow beekeepers

OCBA's pre-meeting dinner at Radius Pizzeria in Hillsborough was very well attended this month. 25 members and guests met to share beekeeping successes, discuss challenges and compare honey harvest stories. Everyone is welcome to attend this group which has become more and more popular as a place to talk with fellow beekeepers. The group meets at Radius at 5:00 prior to each monthly membership meeting.

RETURN OF THE NATIVE

OCBA's native son – Lewis Cauble

Lewis Cauble, North Carolina's state apiary inspector for the mountain region, was OCBA's guest speaker in June. 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 the development of his early beekeeping skills and his exposure to beekeeping culture. He said that he wouldn't be doing what he's doing today without OCBA.

Lewis talked in depth about what a hive looks like when things are going right and how it looks when things are going wrong. As always, Lewis heavily emphasized the importance of effectively dealing with varroa mites.

He 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, including understanding swarms; and feeding. He cautioned us to be alert to dearth conditions around July 4th as a target date when it's hot and dry with little to bee forage. This is a prime time to watch your smaller hives for robbing.

One member 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 brood ratios are twice as much capped brood as open brood and twice the amount of open brood to eggs.

To be a successful beekeeper you must have: 1) a regular mite management plan; 2) it must be effective; 3) you must implement it; and, 4) continued monitoring is required. Post-treatment mite counts are not optional. He talked at length about varroa checks. If done properly, sugar shakes are sufficient or try alcohol washes. Lewis' last mite check of the year is done about Nov. 1st. He does a prophylactic clean up with oxalic acid dribble in December when temps are around 50 degrees near the 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.

When Lewis inspects his 35 hives he goes from hive to hive shaking a ½ cup of bees into Ziplock bags from each hive. When he returns home he throws them into his freezer. Later he does an alcohol wash on every bag

MARK POWERS - MASTER BEEKEEPER

Chris Apple, NCSBA Piedmont Regional Director, introduced **Mark Powers** as OCBA's newest Master Beekeeper at the June meeting. Mark successfully completed all testing and all service credits required to attain Master Beekeeper certification.



When asked about his newest beekeeping achievement, Mark expressed his gratitude to **Randall Austin** for moderating OCBA's master beekeeping program discussion group and his

fellow participants in that group for helping him to effectively prepare for the written exam. He said, "I couldn't have done it without them."

Mark's achievement brings the number of Master Beekeepers in OCBA to 8. Who's next? Start down the Master Beekeeper path. Schedule your Certified Beekeeper practical exam now. [Review the testing requirements on OCBA's website](#) and then contact [Randall Austin](#), OCBA's Master Beekeeper Coordinator, to schedule your exam.

READY, SET, EXTRACT!

Participation in OCBA's annual extracting workshop on June 9th exceeded last year's turnout increasing by 9 participants. **Mark Powers, Brad Kosiba** and **Keith Yow** met with OCBA members, beekeepers from both Wake and Durham counties, and even 2 from out of state to explain honey extraction techniques and tips. Over 80 pounds of honey were extracted during the workshop from frames harvested from the Briggs Avenue Community Garden apiary. Despite the fact that the honey had been harvested under an umbrella during pouring rain the moisture level was below 17%.

Remember: OCBA offers a full array of extraction tools and equipment to its members at a modest \$5 per day rental cost. Brad will check the moisture content of your honey samples using the club's refractometer at each monthly meeting.



Brad Kosiba demonstrates the uncapping fork option

PREPARING FOR THE STATE FAIR

Dawn Rogers and **Celeste Mayer** have been working tirelessly to coordinate OCBA's exhibit at the State Fair. After last year's modest exhibit OCBA hopes to substantially improve its award standing.

The theme for this year's display is "Join the Club." Our exhibit will detail the educational advantages and beekeeping benefits of bee club membership. Dawn noted that lots of entries are

needed to make a good showing. She will send a summary of the entry categories via the Google Group Discussion Forum to encourage members to start planning now for their fair entries in October. Be prepared to help Dawn and her team and be prepared to receive multiple reminders of this important club activity.

Chris Apple thanked OCBA members for their immediate offers of assistance to cover an entire day of state fair honey sales on behalf of NCSBA and the apiculture program at NC State. Chris put out the call to OCBA members via the Google Group Discussion Forum and was quickly overwhelmed with responses from members who were willing to fill one or more of the two hour sales slots. OCBA will assume full responsibility for honey sales on October 25th.

Take Pictures at club events and at conferences

To highlight our club's activities for the State Fair and for the newsletter we need high resolution photos of club events. So remember to take your camera whenever you participate in a club workshop, outreach event, educational program, or conference. Please send all photos to [John Rintoul](#).

BLACKWOOD FARM PARK HONEY HOUSE

Ryan Chamberlain reported that an ad hoc committee has been formed to explore development, operational guidelines and member access to an OCBA honey house adjoining the administrative office of Blackwood Farm Park. Orange County is planning to promote farm to table education at Blackwood Farm Park where OCBA currently has demonstration hives.

The possibility of the honey house was first proposed to members at the August 2017 membership meeting. Ideally this facility would give OCBA members the opportunity to extract honey using OCBA equipment while educating the public at the same time. **John Rintoul** heads the committee and acts as OCBA's liaison to the Orange County Parks and Recreation Department. Other committee members include: **Walter Starks, Cynthia Speed, Ryan Chamberlain** and **Chris Apple**.

STANDING ROOM ONLY



When **Lewis Cauble** returns to Orange County OCBA's meeting is always well attended. This month broke all previous attendance records with 90 members and guests. Don Hopkins, supervisor of the state's apiary inspectors, as well as, Will Hicks, apiary inspector for the Piedmont area, also attended.

QUEEN SPOTTING

Reviewed by John Rintoul



One of the biggest challenges for most new beekeepers is finding the queen in their hives. In the June 2019 edition of American Bee Journal (ABJ) beekeeper Tina Sebestyen shared her secrets for finding the queen. Her first suggestion: *“When you are looking for something, picture in your mind what that thing looks like. It will usually pop right out at you. It might even be a good idea to go so far as to look at a photo of a queen before going to the apiary.”*

So when I came across Hillary Kearney’s newly released book, **Queen Spotting**, the ABJ advice immediately came to mind. Queen Spotting summarizes many of the queen finding techniques shared in the ABJ article. But more importantly Ms. Kearney provides 50 beautifully photographed, hi-resolution, fold-out pages of unmarked queen bees in their natural environment – i.e. on a frame packed with other bees. As the reader progresses through the book finding the queen on each page becomes progressively more difficult. It is great practice. It not only allows you to practice visualizing what you are looking for, it allows you to do so in a target-rich environment cluttered with worker bee distractions similar to what you are likely to experience in your own hives. And for those really tough queen spotting pages, there is a key at the end of the book.

This impressively written and beautifully photographed book is an excellent training guide for new beekeepers. It is also the perfect way to share your beekeeping hobby with children of all ages. What child wouldn’t love the *Where’s Waldo* theme illustrated with queen bees?

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. Here are three tips offered for working with bees. The latter two flow from the first.

- Stop wearing gloves while working your bees.
- Before opening hives put a dab of oil of cloves on one hand and rub it in with the other. “Although bees are very clever they aren’t so good at spelling and mistake the scent of CLOVES for GLOVES.” (Editor’s note: I tried this. The results were promising, but inconclusive. Regardless, your hands will smell great!)
- “Wash” your hands in the cold ashes of your smoker before starting the smoker. This seasoned beekeeping contributor claimed, “I have no need for gloves when I do it.”

UPCOMING EVENTS AND SPEAKERS

July 11, OCBA Membership Meeting – Randall Austin, There are tiny little ninjas lurking in your bee colonies. You can’t see them. You can’t get rid of them. The goal of their very existence is to kill, kill, kill! They are extremely good at it. Typically, the ninjas make the deaths look like an accident. Most beekeepers aren’t even aware they exist. When their colonies die, the beekeeper thinks that “my bees left,” or “GMO crops must have killed my bees” or some other equally sensible-sounding, YouTube explanation. Hint: the culprits are NOT Varroa mites (we can see those) although Varroa mites act as the ninjas’ henchmen. The truth will be exposed by NC Master Beekeeper **Randall Austin**.

Randall will also introduce students from the NCSU Apiculture Department’s summer undergraduate program, BeeMORE, that gives students experience conducting hands-on research in Dr. Tarp’y’s lab. Several of the students will present a synopsis of the various bee related projects they are working on this summer.

Other Events of Note

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. Other speakers include OCBA’s own, **Lewis Cauble**, and NC Bee Inspector Don Hopkins. Registration is open now and the workshop schedule for the conference will be posted soon.

July 17, July 26 and August 16 - Blackwood Farm Park A group of 10 day campers, ages 7 to 12 would like to learn more about bees. Please consider helping out with this event on one or more of these days at 10:00 a.m. **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.

August 8-10, 2019 – North Carolina State Beekeepers Association Summer Meeting, Hickory, NC. **Registration is now open**. 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.