

## **Orange County Beekeepers Association Meeting Minutes**

**February 11, 2021  
7:00 - 9:00 pm via Zoom**

Carrie Donley, OCBA president, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone, including attendees from Montgomery County, NC, and OCBA Bee School students. Carrie said that the meeting would begin with an educational program by NC State Apiary Inspector Nancy Rupert, who is based in Montgomery County. The meeting was attended by 67 people.

Tim Struttman, OCBA vice president, introduced Nancy, whose talk was titled “Swarm Management.” Nancy said that the urge for honey bees to swarm is very strong in spring. She said the most common reason bees swarm is that the queen has run out of room to lay eggs. She said bees can also swarm “because they want to.” Still, beekeepers can take some actions to limit swarming, such as adding extra room before a hive decides it is going to swarm. This can be done in late February, but beekeepers will need to keep an eye on the temperature so they don’t leave a small split exposed to cold weather. If the hive is 60 - 70% full in late winter/early spring, it is time to add more space. Nancy discussed the Taranov Split Method, which has been discussed in the OCBA listserv recently. She said she is not a fan because it is too stressful for the bees. She also described the Snelgrove Board, which is used for vertical splits, primarily in Europe. Nancy talked about the use of queen castles for extra or retired queens. She also discussed the use of swarm attractants. One that she finds very effective is “Swarm Commander.” Nancy said most swarms in NC happen between March and May.

A recording of Nancy’s presentation will be available [here](#) for the next few weeks.

### **Membership Report**

Mary Anne Rhyne, membership co-chair, reported that OCBA has 177 paid members as of January 31, 2021. Fifty-five of those members are lifetime members. Mary Anne said that people who have not yet renewed their membership can do so via the OCBA website.

### **Apprentice and Mentoring Update**

Vicki Robertson, membership co-director with Kent Robertson, introduced the 2021 apprentices - Helen Hester and Seokyun Hong. Helen and Seokyun explained why they wanted to become beekeepers. Vicki and Kent are mentors for Helen, and Cely Chicurel will mentor Seokyun. Vicki thanked the following OCBA members for stepping up to be cluster mentors: Randall Austin, Jim Greco, Larry Arnold, Joan Kalnitsky, Marybeth Hamilton, Allen Hunter, Jeanne Arnts, John Rintoul, Walter Stark, and Lauren Carreto. Vicki also noted that Randall and Larry were serving as virtual mentors for a cluster of members who do not reside in Orange County or nearby. People will be able to sign up for first-year clusters at the end of Bee School.

### **Master Beekeeper Study Group**

David Eckert reported that the Master Beekeeping Study Group will begin on May 18 and run until the beginning of July to prepare people for the NC state exams, which may be given this summer. Sign-up ends February 26. To enroll in the study group, go to the OCBA website,

select “Education” from the top navigation and “Master Beekeeper Program” from the dropdown menu. Scroll to the bottom of the page for the registration link.

### **Bee School**

Randall said 169 people are registered for Bee School this year, which being given via Zoom. People can still sign up for Bee School since the classes are recorded. A late enrollee could catch up by watching recorded classes.

### **Journal Club Discussion Group**

Randall reported that the Journal Discussion Group met for the first time on January 28. The next meeting will be on February 25 at 7:30 pm. About 25 people have signed up for Journal Club, which is for advanced beekeepers. To join, visit the OCBA website, select “Education” from the top navigation and “Journal Discussion Group” from the drop-down menu.

### **State Bee Lab**

Carrie reported that she, Tim, and Celeste Mayer met with NC state representative Verla Insko about the need for repairs to the NC State Bee Laboratory. Representative Insko was supportive, but she said we would need to have Republican support to pass a bill to fund work on the state bee lab. Charles Heatherly, the NCSBA Apiculture Science Initiative chairman who spoke at our January meeting, said that he is confident funding to repair the building will be included in the budget this year. Carrie said she reiterated to Charles that OCBA members stand by ready to help with his effort to get funding for the Bee Lab.

### **Collaboratives**

Carrie said that sign-up for the collaboratives - supportive groups for beekeepers who have kept bees for a year - will begin the second or third week of March.

### **Door Prize Winners**

1. Apiary caution sign and one issue of American Bee Journal: Debbie Walker.
2. Entrance reducer, wildflower seed mix, and one issue of American Bee Journal: Lisa Vogel.
3. Bee Brush and one issue of American Bee Journal: Cynthia Speed.

### **March Speaker**

Carrie reported that Dr. Jamie Ellis, professor of entomology and nematology at the University of Florida, will be our speaker for our March 11 meeting.