

# **Orange County Beekeepers Association Meeting Minutes**

**April 8, 2021**

**7:00 - 9:00 pm via Zoom**

Carrie Donley, OCBA president, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. She explained that the meeting would begin with an educational program followed by the business meeting. The meeting was attended by 38 people.

Carrie introduced our speaker, Dana Stahlman, whose talk was titled “What to Expect as a New Beekeeper.” After retiring as a school administrator in Ohio, Dana moved to NC. He comes from a family of beekeepers and was heavily involved in the Ohio Beekeepers Association. He has raised queens, sold nucs, and at one point he managed 100 hives as a hobbyist. He currently hopes to have up to 25 colonies later this year at a site in Franklin County.

Dana had lots of advice for new beekeepers. He said it is worth the wait to get new queens when the weather is warmer because queens raised in warm weather often do better. Also, he said the best time to install a new package is around dinner time. Then the bees do not have a lot of time to fly around and decide to abscond. He said you do not need to see the queen every time you inspect a hive, but you should see eggs, larvae, and capped brood. When inspecting, Dana takes frames out from one side rather than from the center to avoid injuring the queen. He had much more advice for new (and experienced) beekeepers, including testing often for varroa mites and treating as needed. A recording of Dana’s presentation will be available [here](#) for a few weeks. And to continue to hear tips from Dana, you can subscribe to his newsletter by sending him an email (stahlmanapiaries@aol.com).

## **OCBA Apprentice Reports**

Last year’s apprentices - Fin Hensel and Brennan Davis - gave reports on their 2020 beekeeping experience. Inspired by his grandfather who kept bees, Fin learned about the apprenticeship at an event at Carrboro High School. He enjoyed his experience and may continue beekeeping at some point in the future, but he is taking a break now. His bees died and his neighborhood’s homeowner’s association was not happy that he was keeping bees. Both of Brennan’s hives made it through the winter, and he hopes to get one more hive this spring. He said the one thing that stood out for him was how different two hives can be in terms of temperament.

## **OCBA Hats, T-shirts, etc.**

Carrie Donley reminded people that they can purchase OCBA t-shirts, hats, etc., from the [OCBA website](#). Purchases can be shipped to you or you can pick them up at [Big Frog](#) in Durham.

## **Collaboratives**

Jayne Stuart reported that people can still sign up for the collaboratives on the [OCBA website](#) until April 15. She explained that the collaboratives are designed for beekeepers who have been keeping bees for more than a year and who are members of OCBA. Collaboratives meet monthly to discuss what is going on in their hives. It is an “all teach, all learn” experience. Jayne said a geolocator will be used to create groups, so you will not have to travel far. Monthly

gatherings will be both in person and via Zoom. You can choose which option works best for you. If you have questions, contact Jayne ([jayne.stuart@gmail.com](mailto:jayne.stuart@gmail.com)) or Carrie ([cdonley33@gmail.com](mailto:cdonley33@gmail.com)).

### **Outreach**

Dawn Rogers said that our next outreach opportunity will be on May 15. OCBA will have a booth at the Hillsborough Garden Tour, which will run from 8 am - 4 pm. In addition to talking about bees, OCBA will sell pollinator plants. If you are available to volunteer in the booth, contact Dawn ([dawnrogers006@gmail.com](mailto:dawnrogers006@gmail.com)). If you have pollinator plants to donate to the sale, contact Karen Lauterbach ([karen.e.lauterbach@gmail.com](mailto:karen.e.lauterbach@gmail.com)).

### **Website**

Jayne Stuart reported that we have a new webmaster for the OCBA website: Keith Glidewell.

### **First-Year Clusters**

Vicki Robertson reported that one virtual and five in-person clusters have been established, with 11 mentors and 69 participants. She said she and Kent Robertson are encouraging cluster participants to have “bee buddies” - another cluster member they can talk to about their bees.

### **Bee School**

Randall Austin reported that Bee School ended last month. 173 students attended, which is more than twice as many as he had been able to accommodate at previous, in-person Bee Schools. Randall said that some of the funds generated will be donated to NC State’s Apiculture Program. The OCBA Board of Directors will review this proposal in their June meeting.

Carrie Donley said she would send information to the listserv about how to sign up to take the Certified Test. (Note: you can sign up [here](#) to take the test.)

### **Bee Hotel**

Mary Leonhardi said that the Town of Hillsborough needs help maintain the bee hotel at the Gold Park pollinator garden in Hillsborough. If you can help, contact Mary ([mleonhardi@hotmail.com](mailto:mleonhardi@hotmail.com)).

### **Invitation from Mecklenberg Beekeepers**

Jayne Stuart said that OCBA members have been invited to attend the Mecklenberg County Beekeepers Association’s meeting on April 15 at 7 pm. [Marla Spivak](#) is the speaker. Watch for the Zoom link on the OCBA listserv a few days before the talk.

### **Q&A for New Beekeepers**

Carrie reminded people that OCBA will hold a general Q&A session for new beekeepers on April 21 at 7 pm. Mark Powers and Ryan Chamberlain will be available to answer your questions.

*Next month’s meeting will be held on May 13 at 7 pm. Our speaker will be Phoebe Snyder, who received her master’s degree in 2020 from UNC Greensboro. Her talk is titled, “From Lab to Market: a Novel Tool for Varroa Resistance.”*