

Orange County Beekeepers Association

Meeting Minutes

October 12th, 2023

Nancy Oglesby, OCBA President, welcomed everyone to the October meeting. The meeting was attended by 36 members (9 via Zoom, and 27 in-person at the Orange County Extension Office in Hillsborough).

Our invited speaker for this month's meeting was **David Bailey**, owner of Bailey Bee Supply in Hillsborough.

Presentation: How to Market Your Honey – David Bailey

David presented an engaging session on best practices to make the most of marketing your honey. One of the first takeaways was to know the cost of harvesting your honey, otherwise you can't know with confidence the value of your product! He estimated that for the average hobby beekeeper with a couple of hives, the cost for production of that 1 lb jar of honey in your first year can be ~\$8 after factoring in cost of equipment, bees, and gear, and up to ~\$13, if you factor in the cost of your labor! So be careful not to undersell your effort!

David provided many valuable tips to improve sales of your product, some of which include:

- Use quality bottles/jars, and make sure they are free from honey drips on the exterior
- Create an attractive label that is clear and informative
- To create a value-added product he suggested:
 - o Become an NC Certified Honey Producer. The "NC Certified Honey" sticker goes a long way to increase customer perception. At only \$45 every 2 years, it's a good investment.
 - o If you have won an award for your honey, label it as such. This includes State Fair, NCSBA meeting, and Tobacco Road Honey Classic ribbons! Blue ribbon honey can sell at a 3:1 rate compared to regular honey.
- Have a variety of jar sizes available, to have multiple price points.
- Offer quantity discounts.
- When selling honey at an event, include educational materials in your display.
- Be approachable! Encourage sampling, give ideas for use, recommend recipes.

At the end of his presentation, David reminded us that honey doesn't go bad (as long as it's less than ~18% water content) so it's ok to store and sell last season's honey in the future. We are never guaranteed a good honey harvest in any given year, so last year's stockpile will help if current year's supply is low.

Club Business:

1. Recap of the Inaugural Tobacco Road Honey Classic

- Mary Anne Rhyne (representing OCBA as show secretary) reported that the event held on September 30th in collaboration with the Durham County Beekeepers Association (DCBA) was a huge success. There were 81 entries from 32 exhibitors.
- The judges were complimentary on the quality of the entries and how well the show was organized.
- There was enthusiasm from both Orange and Durham county extension agents, and both OCBA and DCBA. All parties felt it would be a good idea to collaborate on more events/activities in the future.

2. Blackwood Farm Apiary Demonstration – Saturday October 21 at 1pm

- Lisa Vogel: There will be an open inspection at Blackwood Farm Park Apiary, Saturday, October 21 at 1pm. The demonstration will be on how to use a luggage scale to estimate hive weights (presented by Brad Kosiba).

3. Volunteer(s) needed for Caretaker of Blackwood Farms Park Apiary

- Nancy: OCBA is looking for a caretaker for the three OCBA hives at Blackwood Farm Park. This also involves inviting the club to your regularly scheduled inspections so people can observe and ask questions. This is a great opportunity for someone who is accumulating points towards their next level certification (Journeyman or Master Beekeeper).

4. Extractor Coordinator

- Nancy: OCBA is also looking for one more extractor coordinator. We currently have two (Kristin Long and me) and we are looking for a third person to share the job.
- It involves receiving email requests from the website when people sign up to rent the extractor and then meeting them at Blackwood Park, checking out and then signing back in the equipment.

5. Volunteer needed to manage the Hive Support and Recovery Program

- Nancy: OCBA is looking for someone to manage the Hive Support and Recovery Program. <https://theocba.org/temporary-hive-care/> If a club member needs help with their bees due to a family emergency or other unexpected event, this coordinator would find someone to take care of their bees until the situation is resolved. This is intended to be a very short-term care (maybe from one to five visits) for beekeepers who fall ill, have a family member in need, have a baby, etc.

6. Slate of Officers for 2024

- Nancy: Next year we will have openings for Vice President, Mentorship Director(s), Membership Director(s), and an additional Outreach Director. Currently we have the following:
 - VP: Elisa Bailey
 - Membership Directors: Ginia and Leif Roll
 - Mentorship Director: José Olmedo with support from David Eckert
 - Outreach Director: Victoria Hill (existing) and we are looking for one more (we have one person considering the position).

- We are looking for someone to be a Co-director of Membership with Ginia and Leif, an Outreach Co-director with Victoria, and possibly a Mentorship Co-director. Please see Nancy after the meeting if you are interested.
- Since all of these will be shared positions, none should be too burdensome and they are a good way to get to know other beekeepers, earn points towards your next beekeeper certification level, and give back to the community.

7. Annual December Holiday Party.

- Nancy: We usually start planning in early November and have a few meetings by Zoom to pull things together. If you are interested in being a part of this planning group, please sign up. We usually have food, maybe a game, a photo contest, and our annual auction.

Door Prizes

Four door prizes were handed out to lucky winners in attendance.

Next Month's Speaker

Janet announced that the speaker for the November OCBA monthly meeting will be **Dr. Rebekkah Gunn**, who will talk about the **Veterinarian's Role in Beekeeping**.

Erika Wittchen
OCBA Secretary