



ONTARIO BEEKEEPERS'
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Since 1881

2023 OBA Spring Meeting – Speaker Bios

Stephen Moore, OBA Board Director

Steve has been keeping bees for 12+ years. In 2019 his family moved back to the farm he grew up on near Peterborough. Fleetwood Hills Farm is focused on maple syrup, garlic, and honey production. Before taking over the family farm Steve worked in vaccine research at the University of Oxford, spent several years doing humanitarian work in South Sudan, managed the team at Public Health Ontario that was responsible for enteric, zoonotic, and vector borne diseases, and worked for an Indigenous governed health information partnership in Northern Ontario.



Paul Kozak, Provincial Apiarist, OMAFRA:

Paul Kozak is the Provincial Apiarist for Ontario, based in Guelph, Ontario with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs since 2010. This role includes regulation of the beekeeping industry in Ontario, working closely with provincial Apiary Inspectors, reporting on the status of the industry, providing technical and strategic advisory to government and industry regarding apiculture and collaborating with other specialists in apiculture on programs. Paul holds a BSc in Zoology and an MSc in Entomology, both the University of Manitoba.

Michelle Wolfson, OBA Board Director:

Michelle Wolfson has small scale apiaries in Toronto, Coldwater and Muskoka. She's a retired chef who traded her chef's knife and cutting board for a hive tool and smoker. Not satisfied with the sweat and tears from beekeeping she also runs a mobile honey extraction trailer. When she's not irritating her husband and son with sticky floors and doorknobs she cycles, swims, knits and bakes. She also serves on the executive of the Ontario Beekeeper's Association and acts as the chair of the Urban Toronto Beekeeper's Association.

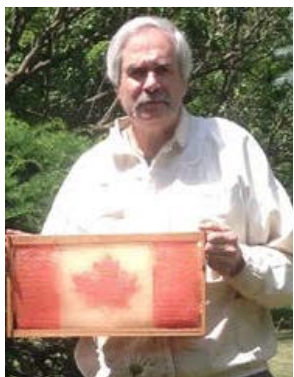




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Natalie Comeau, Prince Edward County Honey Company

Natalie began keeping bees in 2013, after moving to Prince Edward County from the GTA. While taking a course in apiculture and bee biology at the University of Guelph in 2015, she wrote a research paper on the effect of terroir in honey, analyzing how flowers that grow in different areas throughout the season would result in variations in flavour and colour. Based on that research, she keeps hives in six different regions of Prince Edward County and harvests honey individually from each yard in small batches throughout the season. Later that year, she travelled to Connecticut to take a course in the sensory analysis of honey with Carla Marena Marchese (author of *The Honey Connoisseur*) at the American Honey Tasting Society.



Ken Coyle, International Black Jar Competition Winner

Ken Coyle has been keeping bees for 30 years. It was either bees or pigs and he went with bees. Ken bought his first 2 hives without owning any equipment. No smoker, no suit, no nothing. He has since won numerous awards for his honey and is now a judge for competitions like the Royal. Ken's whole family has been involved and still are to varying degrees. He keeps between 10 and 20 hives.

Megan Rae, She Keeps Bees

Megan Rae is the 'she' behind She Keeps Bees, a small scale beekeeper in South River, Ontario. Over the past 5 years Megan has worked closely with both individual business owners and rural NGOs creating digital communication strategies and campaigns aimed on increasing public awareness and engagement through social media, email and website design.





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Anicet Desrochers, Miels d'Anicet

Born in a beehive, Anicet has a deep love for this fantastic insect, the bee, and for its science, apidology. He also has a deep desire to contribute to reducing the mortality of bees by naturally reversing the bees' mortality rate by selecting and breeding resistant queen bees adapted to their environment. Turning his world-renowned beekeeping expertise to good account, he lends a helping hand every day in the apiary to ensure the health of the bee colonies. Selective breeding is done with the utmost respect for the bee, for nature and for the environment in order to deal head on with the challenges facing modern beekeeping.

Andrew Pitek, Peter Chorabik, Adam Ritchie



Andrew Pitek is a fourth-generation beekeeper that has transitioned his hobby beekeeping setup to a commercial beekeeping operation. Previously, Andrew was involved in Ontario's forestry sector, developing and managing environmental and educational programs, as well as forest conservation plans. In more recent years, he was a board member for the Ontario Beekeepers' Association and was an apiary inspector with OMAFRA. Currently, Andrew is running his commercial operation, A.P. Bees, in Wellington County which is focused on honey production. He is also an instructor and the Beekeeping Technologist for the Niagara College Commercial Beekeeping Program.

Peter Chorabik is a commercial beekeeper located in Dufferin County. He started his beekeeping adventure in 2011, when he joined the Toronto Bee Co-op which lead to purchasing his first two hives in 2012. Since then, Peter and his wife, Sarah have both quit their full time jobs to manage 600+ colonies and sell their honey under their Toronto Bee Rescue and Ontario Honey Creation brands. Peter's beekeeping operation includes traditional commercial beekeeping, urban beekeeping, a hive share program, hive hosting program and a small scale meadery.



Adam started in beekeeping with a single backyard hive in 2012. It sparked a passion that has led him to steadily grow his operation in northern Simcoe County to 800 hives. Adam produces overwintered nucs, queens, honey and hive products, and provides pollination services. He is member of both the Ontario Bee Breeders Association, and the ORHBS breeding program.



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Dave Stotesbury & Vincent Sowa, Backed by Bees

Vincent and Dave are co-founders of Backed By Bees - a Burlington based beekeeping operation and meadery that was founded in 2018. Dave got his start in the beekeeping world at the University of Guelph Honey Bee Research Centre in 2012 under the guide of Paul Kelly and Dr. Ernesto Guzman. He worked in a variety of beekeeping operations including a bee breeding operation in New Zealand before coming back and starting his own beekeeping operation. It was later at a beekeeping course that Dave and Vincent met. Vincent had been a long-time home brewer who had a keen interest in the mead brewing world. The pair came together and now focus on the production of craft meads and keeping their 400 bee colonies happy, healthy, and productive.



Amy Floyd, Dalan Animal Health

Amy is a field technician and leads beekeeper relations at Dalan. Previously, Amy spent 7 years with the USDA studying honeybee nutrition, microbiome, pathogens and toxin exposure. She holds a BS in Wildlife Conservation and Management and a MS in Entomology, both from the University of Arizona. Amy enjoys traveling the US in her self-converted camper van with her dog Miles and tending to her personal honeybee hives.



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Garett Slater, Postdoctoral Fellow for the USDA

Garett Slater is a Postdoctoral Fellow for the USDA. He obtained his PhD from Purdue University in 2022, with a thesis focused on applying modern genetic tools to honey bee breeding. Previously, he completed a MS in Nutrition and Queen Quality at North Dakota State University. Garett's current research focuses on developing genomic tools for beekeeping, including selecting for natural defenses towards Varroa, pathogens, and other diseases. He has worked as a scientist and technician with the Bee Informed Partnership at the University of Minnesota for two years, directly supporting 30 commercial beekeepers in North Dakota. Garett has 12 years of beekeeping experience, including 8 years working for a large commercial beekeeper in North Dakota.



Glenys Robinson, Specialist, OBA TTP:

Glenys Robinson, like many others, fell in love with bees while doing her undergrad at the University of Guelph, where she studied International Development (specializing in rural and agricultural development). After graduating, she decided to dive into beekeeping head first, and took the Commercial Beekeeping program at Niagara College. In addition to bees, Glenys is interested in plants and fungi, and likes to play around in the kitchen with canning and fermenting.

Anicet Desrochers, Miels d'Anicet

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Kelly Rogers, Semi-Retired Queen Producer

Kelly started keeping bees with a couple of hives in the early 1980s while a student at U of G. She learned the trade working for a commercial beekeeper in Peace River, Alberta and all about queen rearing at Fairview College's Commercial Beekeeper program. She co-owned and operated Chatsworth Honey for 33 years, managing 700-900 hives for apple pollination, queen & nuc sales, and honey production. Chatty Honey has recently been sold and she has downsized to a sideliners, continuing to produce a small number of queens, cells and nucs. Her goal is to go full circle and become a hobby beekeeper – which she is finding easier said than done!



Jonny de Matos, Matos Apiary

Jonny de Matos is a commercial beekeeper, specializing in queen breeding. Along with queen bee production, he also operates a beekeeping supply store. They currently run 150 colonies and produce 100 queens per week. Matos Apiary looks forward to continuing to grow their operation in the coming years.

Growing up in the agricultural industry, Jonny understands the importance of working together. Both in the beekeeping industry and throughout the agriculture industry, if we cooperate with each other, we will all succeed together. Jonny's main goals are to promote Ontario beekeeping and see that our industry thrives.

Les Eccles, Eccles Apiaries/Chatsworth Honey





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John Espadero, Restoration Honey Bee Company



John Espadero is a beekeeper based in Renfrew County, in Eastern Ontario. He completed his Master Beekeeper certification through Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. John and his wife, Elizabeth, run Restoration Honey Bee Company, a small-scale commercial queen breeding operation. They have been participants in the Ontario Resistant Honey Bee Selection program since 2019, and continue in the collaborative work of working towards disease-resistance in their breeding program. In an effort to further refine selective-breeding practices, John has recently integrated instrumental insemination of queen bees in his program, and sees it as a valuable tool in the arsenal of a queen breeder.