



Silent Auction Guidelines

Getting started

If you're reading this, you might be a member of a host chapter for the next NCSBA Summer Meeting, and you just volunteered your time and talent to help mount a campaign for a successful Silent Auction.

These Guidelines were created after the 2019 Silent Auction in Hickory. References below to that event may help you to move forward, and may possibly help you to come up with revisions to benefit your Silent Auction. No part of this document is carved in stone. If you've got a great idea that worked really well, share it!

Well, there's no time like the present. With Summer Meeting dates in hand, it's time to start promoting. A good place to start is the NCSBA Facebook page. Consider asking the NCSBA Facebook administrator to create a separate Silent Auction Facebook page within the main page. This can become a place where donors can post photos of their planned donations, where members can ask questions, where volunteers can get an idea of what's in store when the event begins.

Start early! Promote early donations and volunteer sign-ups.

Desirable donations for the Silent Auction

Items that:

- **are hand-crafted**, and not likely to be available for purchase 'everywhere';
- have (or can be reasonably assigned) a minimum value of \$15;
- fall into one of these Silent Auction donation categories:
 - Bee Wise, Bee Prepared (educational tools for beekeepers and for public education; 'beekeeper-created' beekeeping equipment, etc.)
 - Bee Thankful, Bee Merry (holiday items)
 - Just for Newbees (items for children)
 - Hive Sweet Hive (household use, furniture, and home décor items)
 - Bee in Style (wearables: clothing, aprons, hats, jewelry, etc.)
 - Beauty in the Eye of the Beeholder (fine art items: paintings, sculpture, pottery, etc.)
 - Got to Bee Outdoors! (items for those who garden, watch birds, hunt, fish, hike, or are involved in other outdoor pursuits. In other words, most beekeepers ☺)
 - Bee a Gift to All (gift baskets)

Donors... and Artists

While some of our wonderful donors purchase items to give to the Silent Auction, others are artists in their own right. They often have in-home studios, websites, and/or brick-and-mortar businesses where they sell the creations they make. If artists offer donations in advance, encourage them to create and provide an ‘artist’s statement’ briefly describing the purpose of (or inspiration for) their creation – something that can be attached to the bid sheet. Artists offering same-day donations upon arrival at the Summer Meeting should be given a card at check-in for this purpose (see Appendix), if they wish to make a note about the item. Also, be sure to allow the placement of some business cards next to the donated item – it could mean additional business for the artist, and hopefully more donations to the Silent Auction in the future. Look for artists in your community. A donation of one of their items is free advertising for them.

Space available?

Do you have a club storage unit, or someone in the club with space to store Silent Auction donations at their home or in another secure location? Wonderful! At the Silent Auction in Hickory in 2019, an overwhelming 55 of the 56 items arrived the day the conference opened. Did we make it work? You bet! Would it have been a bit easier with advance arrivals stored somewhere near the conference location? Absolutely. If you encourage early donations and receive at least some items in advance, you will then know the size of some items and you can then account for needed table space. You’ll also be able to determine if any of the items will need to be secured (jewelry, for example). Such security may require an expenditure (jewelry display case) to keep items secure.

The 56 items donated to the 2019 Silent Auction occupied **almost eight 30” x 72” tables**. We had just two jewelry items at auction; both of these items were placed on the table closest to the volunteers doing check-ins and answering questions. In this instance, a jewelry case was not needed. Your circumstances may be different.

Needed items (depending on the venue and what you already have ready to use):

painters tape (so as not to mar the walls of the facility)
pens (you may be able to obtain donated pens from vendors or other organizations)
scissors, stapler and staples
Scotch tape; two-sided tape may be useful, too
easels for displaying specific information (some venues may have such easels available)
at least one pocket calculator
table cloths for the display tables (some venues have these – check in advance if at all possible)
possibly a jewelry case
a cash box or bag with cash in it (see Statement of Proceeds and Cash)
a bank bag or other zippered bag to hold cash and checks received from winning bidders
“**Silent Auction Guidelines**” document, with photocopies made in advance of documents found in the Appendix:
Bid Sheets (1-2 for each item – some ‘hot’ items may need up to 6),
Record of Donation (for keeping track of who donated what)
Volunteer Coverage Estimate/List
Payment Stub (winning bid pick-up voucher)
Surveys to hand out, if you choose to conduct a survey

“Thank you” goes a long way...

The importance of thank you notes* to individual donors and volunteers (and, ideally, a formal recognition of the volunteers’ efforts to their chapter presidents) cannot be emphasized enough. These should be sent within 10 days of the end of the conference, if possible. To expedite this process, be sure to get an email for each donor, and for all volunteers. Commercial email service providers (AOL was first) began offering this communication option in 1995 – nearly 25 years ago. The current cost of first class postage (October, 2019) is 55 cents per stamp. You may encounter the occasional person who does not have email (or refuses to provide an email address), but overall, your best bet at this point in our history is a well-written and very timely email.

*The NCSBA leadership amended the organization’s Constitution at the 2019 Summer Meeting to reflect that most of the ongoing communication between NCSBA and members going forward would be by email, in the name of cost-effectiveness and timeliness of communication. While sending handwritten ‘thank you’ notes to donors and volunteers would certainly be a gracious gesture, the stamps and paper (or cards) cost the organization money – and someone has to do the writing, envelope stuffing, and mailing. Emails can be as warm and personal as you choose to make them. Also, email allows the recipient to respond promptly to you if they wish to do so – at no charge to them for stamps or a card. In some cases they may offer suggestions or inspiration for future Auctions. They may also want to contact you later to offer leads on potential donors, or to share other ideas.

Each donor should receive a thank-you email or note expressing sincere appreciation for the item they donated. The item title (or a description of the item) should be provided in the thank-you message, along with the winning bid, to let the donor know how much financial benefit NCSBA received from their donation.

Tax deduction?

Sorry, no. As of this writing (October 2019) I have learned from NCSBA leadership that NCSBA's tax designation is as a **501(c)5 organization**. That means that individuals or groups who donate items/funds to NCSBA are not eligible for an income tax deduction. Clearly, tax laws can change from year to year, and at some future point NCSBA may decide to change their organizational tax status. However, if someone asks, and continues to press the question of the possibility of a tax donation for a Silent Auction item/cash donation, those inquiring individuals should also be advised that even if a donation were tax-deductible, the donating individual would need to fall into the category of people who itemize their deductions and they would still be required to exceed the \$12,000 individual filing or \$24,000 joint filing automatic deduction level allowed by the IRS in order for such a charitable donation to have any real value as a tax deduction. The vast majority of tax payers take the standard deduction rather than itemizing, because the standard deduction is much more than what their otherwise-deductible itemized amounts might total. Again, at this point in our history: based on the 501(c)5 tax status of NCSBA, there is no tax deduction for a donation to NCSBA.

Volunteers

Have you signed up to work at an event using a SignupGenius online? If you’ve volunteered for the NC State Fair honey sales booth or the bee information booth, the answer is yes! Using an inexpensive online tool like SignupGenius (signupgenius.com) will provide you with a ready-made schedule of volunteers, including **each volunteer’s name, email, cell phone number, and the chapter to which they belong**. This will be more than helpful in keeping track of volunteers and thanking them later. Also, the SignupGenius could be posted in the NCSBA President’s Message before the event, to encourage volunteers across the NCSBA to sign up.

Despite pre-event Facebook posts and other attempts to get early donations, any number of donated items may arrive as the Summer Meeting opens. Be ready to check these items in. As items arrive, it can get busy: **be sure to keep control of paperwork.** Do not allow donors to walk off with a Record of Donation or other form to fill out by themselves. We were missing one or two of them at the end of the auction in 2019.

For volunteers who attend and assist at the actual event, consider creating a to-do list for them to follow. One of your volunteers may one day be the chair of the Silent Auction, and helping them to understand the process will be of great benefit to them down the road.

Master Beekeeper candidates, take note:

For those beekeepers seeking to participate in the Master Beekeeper Program, know that in order to achieve the Master Beekeeper level there is a requirement to “Assist in some manner as a volunteer at a state meeting or convention”. Serving as a volunteer at the Silent Auction will enable a candidate to meet that requirement. As of this writing, there is not a specific number of hours required in order for volunteer work to meet the requirement. Several of the volunteers who helped at the Silent Auction in 2019 provided two hours of much-needed service (in some cases, a lot more) to assure that the event ran as smoothly as possible.

During the Event

Coordinate with NCSBA leadership to encourage them to mention the Silent Auction from the main stage throughout the conference. When they make announcements, ask them to make a comment about the progress of the Silent Auction: at minimum, ask them to mention the Auction location (especially if it is not in the main hall), a reminder that bids close at 10 a.m. on Saturday, and that cash or checks are the only payment options for winning bidders. (Credit cards cost the organization money in usage fees. As of this writing, NCSBA does not choose to process credit cards for purchases or payments at events).

Statement of Proceeds and Cash

Keep receipts for any purchases you make to support the Silent Auction. Did you make photocopies of bid sheets? Buy folders for use during the Auction? Did you purchase display materials? Keep track of this. In the week after the Auction, make copies of these receipts for your records, and submit the originals to the NCSBA treasurer. Also, submit the deposit ticket documenting your deposit of the Silent Auction proceeds into the NCSBA account.

Be aware that you will need cash for this event. In 2019, the Auction coordinator brought a bank bag with \$200 in small bills to enable Silent Auction winning bidders to pay cash and to receive change if change was due. If a winning bid payment stub for \$70 is presented to you, and the winner hands you four \$20 bills, they need \$10 back, of course. Plan for this, with the assistance of your club treasurer if necessary. Bring a bank bag with cash to help transactions move along smoothly. In 2019, the money in the cash bag was counted in the presence of a Silent Auction volunteer by the Auction coordinator, and both individuals signed a statement of cash on hand before payments began coming in. After the final payment was made, the coordinator and a volunteer counted all cash in the bag again, and the initial \$200 was returned to the coordinator, who provided it.

Survey

Consider offering attendees (and volunteers) a survey to learn more in advance of the next Silent Auction.

The Appendix of this document offers a template for a survey that was used at in 2019. From a survey you may learn important points about how the Auction was conducted, more about what types of items attendees hope to see in the Auction, and much more that will help you to improve the results at the next Summer Meeting.

Last day of the Silent Auction...

“It’s mine!” “No!!! It’s mine!!!”

Have you got a bidding war heating up? Put that fire out! As the bidding period closes, if bidders have ‘circled around’ a particularly desirable item, here is one possible way to arrive at a peaceful resolution: provide each bidder with a small piece of paper and a pen. Tell each interested party to privately write down their name and the highest bid that they are willing and able to pay. Take the papers. Whoever has written the highest bid gets the item. No yelling, no escalation, no endlessly-drawn-out ‘I’ll pay a dollar more!’...

Closing Time

This is the most challenging part of the auction. Who won what? How much do they owe? Do you have the Record of Donation for each item to be sure you can thank the person or club that donated each item?

Plan now to **schedule a delay** between the time bidding ends and when winners can pick up their items. For example, if bidding closes at 10, winners could pick up their items starting at 10:30, or 11, depending on how big/complex the auction is. Have this administrative time posted clearly in several places around the auction:

**“Bidding ends at 10 a.m. on Saturday. The Auction area will be closed at that time.
The area will re-open at 10:30 a.m. (or 11 a.m.) for winners to pick up their items.
Please have cash or check ready. We do not accept credit or debit cards.”**

This will give the volunteers running the auction time to sort out who won what, and group items that were won by the same individual. If the auction is held in a separate room, it would be a good idea to close the room to all but the auction workers for that period, but that would be harder to do if the auction is in the back of the main meeting room or in a hallway.

The other thing that would be helpful to do during that delay would be to create and post a list of winners. Depending on the technology available in the space, this could be done on a computer / projection screen like the speakers use, typed up and printed out, or hand-written on poster board or a whiteboard. Ideally, this list of winners could be posted in several places outside the auction room or near the auction space. This will allow people to look at the list to see whether they won and the total they owe before they get in line to pay and pick up their items. If the schedule of the meeting allows, this could even be projected on the screen in the main meeting room during a break.

A large "official timer" could also help avoid misunderstandings about exactly how many minutes/seconds remain at the end of the auction, if you can obtain one or have access to one.



Appendix of Silent Auction Documents

Bidding Sheet Place one with each item on display. Add more as needed.

Record of Donation For keeping track of who donated what. Keep completed records in a folder.

Payment Stub Winning bid pick-up voucher – note that there are 3 per page. Use to document payments from winners. Keep pages in a notebook or folder to account for pickups.

Artist's Statement Encourage artists to attach a business card to the statement. Auction visitors can photograph the card if all the business cards the artist placed have been taken from the table.

Statement of Proceeds and Expenses Revise this statement and submit via email to the current NCSBA treasurer. Check in with the treasurer if he or she is present at the event to obtain in advance an address to which you can send any expense receipts and the final deposit ticket.

Survey Template Keep it short and sweet, and save paper! To use the provided sample: Go to the “Page Layout” tab in Microsoft Word. Choose 0.5 inch “Margins” on all four sides of the document. Choose ‘Landscape’ under the Orientation tab. Under the Columns tab, select two columns. You can then copy and paste the sample survey into the first column, and revise it as you see fit. Then copy and paste your completed survey into the second column. You now have two surveys per page, which you can cut apart and hand out to attendees.

Volunteer Coverage Estimate/List of Names Know who your volunteers are, and how to contact them. Consider posting this list at the Silent Auction administrative table.

Sample Thank-you Message to Donor Feel free to improvise! Provide a thank you to each donor via email or by postal mail. Keep a record of messages sent, how they were sent, and the dates sent.

Acknowledgements

Thank YOU... for volunteering to take charge of the next Silent Auction. Your efforts will result in a valuable contribution to the success of the NCSBA and beekeepers across the state.

And many thanks to the NCSBA members who provided input into this document: Paul Newbold, (NCSBA President), Rick Coor (Immediate Past President), DJ Moran (NC Master Beekeeper), Sara Kennedy (Caldwell County Beekeepers).

Jackie Hough
Scotland County Beekeepers

Auction Closes at
10 am on Saturday!
Winners' Pick up begins
at 10:30 am and ends at
12:30 pm Saturday!

This image shows a blank sheet of handwriting practice paper. It features ten rows of horizontal lines designed to guide letter formation. Each row is composed of three distinct lines: a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line. These lines are evenly spaced across the entire page, providing a structured environment for practicing consistent letter height and placement. The paper itself is white, and the lines are printed in black. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.

NCSBA Silent Auction Record of Donation

Year_____

Thank you for making a donation to the NC State Beekeepers Association.

Please complete this form so that we can accurately acknowledge your gift.

Name of Donor _____

Name to go on item display sign _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Description of item(s) and estimated dollar value: _____

ITEM NUMBER: _____ Year _____

Winning Bidder name & contact info: _____

Winning bid amount: \$ _____

Paid by CASH or CHECK

Money received by: (name) _____

Comments: _____

ITEM NUMBER: _____ Year _____

Winning Bidder name & contact info: _____

Winning bid amount: \$ _____

Paid by CASH or CHECK

Money received by: (name) _____

Comments: _____

ITEM NUMBER: _____ Year _____

Winning Bidder name & contact info: _____

Winning Bid amount: \$ _____

Paid by CASH or CHECK

Money received by: (name) _____

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Please attach
business card here

NCSBA Silent Auction _____ Statement of Proceeds and Expenses
(year)

Dear _____,
(current NCSBA treasurer)

The total amount received from the Silent Auction was \$_____ .

In advance of the auction, I went to _____ and made photocopies for a number of things (records of donation, bid sheets, etc.,) and purchased office-supply items (pens for people to use to make bids, clips for multiple bid sheets, folders for completed records, and a display board). The total for these expenses was \$_____.

I have saved the receipts for these purchases. I can mail them to you, along with the deposit ticket from the bank, if you will provide an address.

I was able to go to the local BB&T on _____ to deposit the proceeds from the Silent Auction into the NCSBA account using the account number you provided.

The total deposit was \$_____ (proceeds minus any expenses incurred by Silent Auction coordinator).

If you have questions or need further information, please let me know.

Thank you,

(Silent Auction coordinator name, email, and phone number)

NCSBA Silent Auction Survey Summer Meeting _____

Do you feel that having a Silent Auction is an important addition to the Summer Meeting, and that it should continue?

____Yes ____No

If you answered yes:

What types of items would you like to see offered for bidding in the Silent Auction? Select your **top three** choices and number them as

1, 2, and 3:

____ overnight stay at bed & breakfast, restaurant gift card, etc.

____ hand-crafted items

____ gift baskets

____ beekeeping equipment

____ books

____ other: _____

How would you like the earnings from the Silent Auction to be allocated?

____ to the NCSBA general treasury

____ to individual chapters; example would be an expansion of GAP, with monetary awards given to more chapters per year

____ to the NC State Apiculture Science program (bee lab)

____ to provide additional funds for speakers, meeting places, and special programs at the two NCSBA annual conferences

____ other: _____

If a Summer Meeting were scheduled close to your chapter, would you be willing to volunteer at the Silent Auction? ____Yes ____No

Any other suggestions to improve the Silent Auction? _____

Thank you for sharing, and for visiting the Silent Auction ☺

SILENT AUCTION VOLUNTEER COVERAGE

Summer Meeting _____
(dates)

Volunteers needed for set-up to include receiving items, logging in items, placing items on display with bid sheets, answering visitor questions, and many other tasks each day.

Thursday _____ (date)

7:00 till 9:45 Set up: 3 volunteers _____

9:45 till 11:45 2 volunteers _____

11:45 till 1:45 2 volunteers _____

1:45 till 3:45 1 volunteer _____

3:45 till 5:15 1-2 volunteers _____

Friday _____ (date)

8:00 till 10:00 2 volunteers _____

10:00 till 10:30 2 volunteers _____

10:30 till 12:00 2 volunteers _____

12:00 till 1:25 2 volunteers _____

1:25 till 3:30 1-2 volunteers _____

3:00 till 5:15 2 volunteers _____

Saturday _____ (date)

8:00 till 9:30 2 volunteers _____

9:30 till 11:30 [INCLUDES 10:00 AM CLOSING!]

Minimum 4 volunteers _____

11:30 till 1:30 2 volunteers (one to watch over closed auction items; and one to do paperwork, collect payment, distribute items to winners) _____

1:30 till 3:00 2 volunteers (as for 11:30-1:30) _____

(Date)

Dear _____ (donor name),

Thank you so much for your donation to the ____ (year) ____ NCSBA Silent Auction!

As the coordinator of the Silent Auction, I'm delighted to say that everyone involved in the auction was very helpful to me. A couple of weeks before the event, I received a roster of volunteers prepared to help me. Together we held a successful Silent Auction, thanks to team work and thanks to donors like yourself.

I am happy to report that the winning bids for your donations were as follows:

(describe the individual's donation(s) and list winning bid(s) here)

The final total of winning bids for all items at the Auction was \$ _____. This sum represents an outstanding contribution to the NCSBA as we work to "advance beekeeping through improved communication, education, and the support of beekeeping science".

Thank you again for your generous donation to the NCSBA.

(Silent Auction coordinator name)

(NCSBA chapter to which the coordinator belongs)

____ year ____ NCSBA Silent Auction coordinator