



“Along the Gooney”

Browntown Community Center Association

January 2026

Volume 34, Number 1

BCCA Executive Board – 2026

President	Martha Buracker	540-671-6349
Vice President	Mary McKinney	540-635-4725
Secretary	Kristen Pence	540-230-1155
Treasurer	Nancy McDermott	703-975-8668
Trustees	Bill Lacy	
	Denny Pennington	540-635-5568
	Wes Deavers	540-631-0016

Upcoming Events

January 12 Kitchen Updates Meeting
5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

January 12 Redbud Organization Meeting
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

January 12 BCCA Business Meeting
7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

View the entire online calendar of events at
<https://browntowncommunity.com/calendar>

Submission Deadline

The customary deadline for content submission for the newsletter is the 24th of the month preceding the month of publication. Send your submissions to Gène at gene.raymond@browntowncommunity.com.

BCCA Elects Officers for 2026

At the December business meeting, the general membership voted for four officers and one trustee. The ballot was presented by president Martha Buracker in the absence of any member of the Nominating Committee. The slate of officer candidates was comprised of the existing officers, who all ran uncontested. In addition, Bill Lacy was elected to a three-year term as a trustee, filling the position previously held by Allan Brockway.

President Creates Ad Hoc Social Committee

Before adjourning the December business meeting, President Martha Buracker created an ad hoc Social Committee. The committee is headed by Emma Bricker, who is joined by Debbie Sutton and Linda Arnold. The primary focus of the Social Committee will be to plan and execute events specifically aimed at bringing community members together for more leisurely activities and “to strengthen fellowship,” one of the stated objectives of the BCCA. The committee has already kicked off plans for the 2026 Chili Cook-Off, which will be held on Feb. 7, 2026 at the Community Center. Those wishing to participate in the Cook-Off competition can register on the website at browntowncommunity.com. Donations of corn-bread and desserts will be appreciated on the day of the event.

Holiday Cheer at the BCCA

The annual Holiday Open House and Social took place on Saturday, Dec. 13, 2025 at the Community Center. The facility had been decorated by Roxanne Campbell. About two dozen people attended the event. Members of the association provided an abundance of food for the evening festivities including sandwiches, a variety of cheeses and crackers, and various sweet treats. Martha Buracker, Roxanne Campbell, and Patsy Pennington were seen at various times during the evening making sure the kitchen was ready for the attendees. Music was provided by Howard Johnson, Wayne Deavers, and the group Caney Ridge. Memorial snowflakes donated to the memory of loved ones covered the tree on display in the front room.

Obituaries

Deborah Humphreys Walty, 68, of Stephens City, passed on Nov. 17. Deborah was born March 3, 1957, in Macomb, Ill., to the late John Roy and Louise Humphreys, Jr. and was raised in Bear, Ark. Her true passions were being a child of God, a mother to her four kids, a devoted wife to her husband, and a doting grandmother to her grandchildren. Deborah will be dearly missed by her friends and family.

Dr. Jeff Fletcher passed on Nov. 22. Jeff was preceded in death by his father, Joe Fletcher, and is survived by his wife of nearly 41 years, Karen Burnham Fletcher, sons JJ (Hope), Jon (Shawn), Josh (Cayce), Joel (Stephanie), Jordan, Josiah, and James, and his daughters, Keree Gregory (Tyler), Kailyn, Katie-Beth Mattison (Chris), and Kass (Sami). Jeff is also survived by a hoard of grandchildren: Scarlett, Peyton, Isla, Jane, Declan, Aiden, Julia, Jonah, Rowan, Stella, Olivia, Connor, Elly, Mary, Zion, Bryce, and Sophie. Jeff is also survived by his mother, Shirley Fletcher; sisters Cheryl Swartz (Dale), Debbie Buckman (Simon), Christie Fletcher; cousins, nieces, and nephews.

Margaret Lucy "Peg" Goodyear, 88, of Browntown passed Nov. 21 at Hidden Springs. Ms. Goodyear was born on May 14, 1937 to the late Alfred Sr. and Wynelle Speegle Goodyear. She was also preceded in death by her brother, Alfred Wyman Goodyear II. Following retirement, she became an Animal Welfare Officer in Virginia and rescued numerous animals from difficult conditions. While serving as President of the Humane Society, Peg was instrumental in the construction of the new Warren County Humane Society. She volunteered with St. Luke's Community Clinic and the Warren Memorial miss her deeply.

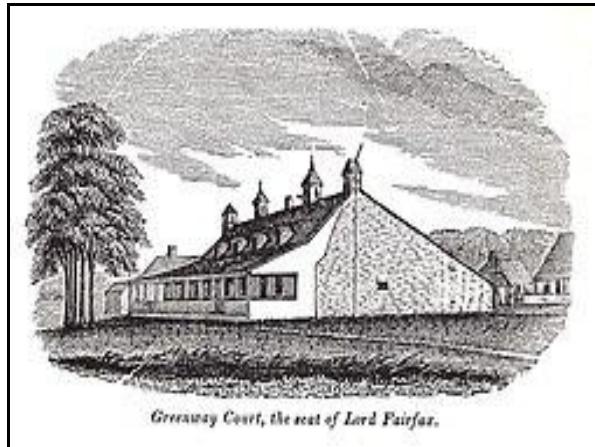
Walter J. Hayes of Browntown passed recently

Lura "Jeanette" Holmes Barbee, age 91, passed Nov. 29, at Hidden Springs. Jeanette was predeceased by her loving husband of almost 41 years, William "Bill" Cromwell Barbee, Sr., is survived by her daughter, Nancy Quincy McDermott (Dave) of Bentonville, Va., Bill's children William C Barbee, Jr. (Lea) of Sims, N.C., F. Nelson Barbee (Jane) of Bellevue, Fla., Dianna D. Barbee of Lucama, N.C., Jonathan S. Barbee of Lucama, N.C., Doretha B. Wethington (Eric) of Selma, N.C.; her sisters, Peggy

Hutson (Lou) of Winston-Salem, N.C., Carolyn Ambrose of Mann's Harbor, N.C., Jo Joyner (Tommy) of Rocky Mount, N.C., and Charles Barnes (Beverly) of Southern Pines, N.C. She was also Mammaw to many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews. She is also survived by her lifelong friend Mary Simmons (Gene) of Raleigh, N.C.

Gooney Valley History Club Lord Fairfax and Gooney Run Manor, Part 2

In 1748, when Gooney Run Manor was surveyed, Lord Fairfax clearly intended to start issuing land grants in this area to new settlers who were moving into the Shenandoah Valley. At that time there was much confusion about who was actually entitled to sell or lease land and this may have discouraged some settlers from applying for a land grant in the area. Lord Fairfax first visited his Northern Neck proprietary in Virginia in 1735, but it would take another 12 years before the Privy Council in England confirmed the boundaries of the proprietary. In 1747, he relinquished ownership of his property in England and moved to Virginia. Initially, he lived in Belvoir, a grand house on the Potomac owned by his agent and cousin, Colonel William Fairfax, where he established his land office and met 15-year-old George Washington for the first time. George had become a frequent visitor at Belvoir, beginning several years earlier after the death of his father and the marriage of William Fairfax's daughter to George's half-brother.



Greenway Court, the seat of Lord Fairfax.

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The BEARR Group Keeping Our Community Safe

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EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT ACCESS TO YOUR PROPERTY



Do you park your cars or RVs in your driveway? If so, first responders may be delayed in getting close to your house in an emergency. That delay could be the difference in saving your house or providing urgently needed medical care.

A tanker truck, for example, is about 36 feet long, 10 feet high, and over 8 feet wide; it can have a gross weight of up to 57,000 pounds. Please take a few moments to consider the possible problems there may be for such vehicle(s) to access your property in an emergency.

Fire and rescue vehicles can't help you if they can't get to you!

UPDATE ON THE FUTURE OF SOUTH WARREN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

At the SWVFD meeting on December 16, 2025, a motion to disband our fire department and turn over all assets to the Warren County Government was made but failed to get the majority required to pass. For much of 2025 SWVFD has struggled to find enough volunteers to meet all of the demands made on them. This was the main reason why this motion to disband was made with the support of many of the current board members. We will keep you updated on any further developments in the new year.

(Lord Fairfax and Gooney Run, continued from previous page)

In 1749 Lord Fairfax decided to move his land office to the Shenandoah Valley. This office was on the east side of the Shenandoah River. Later he moved the office across the river to the area known as White Post, in what is now Clarke County. He named this property, situated on 10,000 acres, Greenway Court and in 1752 built a house there where he would continue to live until his death 30 years later in 1781. He seems to have adjusted quickly to his new rustic lifestyle in what was then a largely unsettled frontier area where he could no longer maintain the sophisticated lifestyle that he had enjoyed at Belvoir and at his ancestral home in England. Hunting was one of his favorite past-times and it was during one of his hunting trips that he would have first come across the valley that he later named Gooney Run Manor.

Lord Fairfax became George Washington's first employer in 1748, hiring the 16-year-old Washington to survey parts of his vast five-million-acre land holdings in the Shenandoah Valley. This experience provided Washington with a profession and a decent income, while also introducing him to the frontier. As far as we know, Washington was not involved in surveying Gooney Run Manor, Washington's association with the Fairfax family and his experience as a surveyor helped him secure a commission as a major in the Virginia militia and later command of the Virginia Regiment during the French and Indian War.

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Browntown Community Center Association
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Undoubtedly the French and Indian War (1754 – 1758) slowed down or reversed the flow of settlers into the Shenandoah Valley. The conflict began when Virginia Governor Dinwiddie sent young George Washington with a small force of soldiers to assert British claims in the Ohio Valley, where he clashed with French forces. Things went quickly downhill from there for the British colonial forces who in July 1755 suffered a big defeat by a small French force and their Indian allies. Two British regiments, 3 Virginia companies, and their Indian allies suffered 977 casualties out of a total of 1,459 men.

The first report of this defeat was delivered by Jack Ashby when he galloped up to stockaded Greenway Court with a letter addressed to Lord Fairfax. Virginia struggled to protect its vast back country from French-allied Native American raids, building inadequate forts and experiencing attacks, especially in the Northern Shenandoah Valley. Over the following three years Lord Fairfax would play a major role in the war, being responsible for recruiting volunteers and providing provisions, equipment, and food for them. On many occasions Greenway Court became an important staging post and meeting place for Virginia's military leaders.

In the next article in this series we will discuss what happened during and after the American Revolution when Lord Fairfax and his successors were forced to deal with an unprecedented set of challenges as the world changed around them. In the meantime, if you would like to learn more about the links between the Fairfax family and George Washington we recommend viewing these two videos:

- Washington's brother Lawrence married Ann Fairfax, further integrating the families and cementing these influential relationships, says this YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x50j3wqcMTI>.
- Even though Lord Fairfax remained loyal to the Crown, his friendship and support for Washington continued until Fairfax's death, notes The American Revolution Institute in this video: <https://www.americanrevolutioninstitute.org/video/an-english-lord-in-america-lord-fairfax-and-george-washington-in-revolutionary-virginia/>



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President’s Message

(This content was provided after the newsletter layout had already been finalized and made ready for the printer. Fortunately, I was able to make this available as an additional page along with the original printed newsletter as well as merge it with the electronic version. Ed.)

Happy New Year Everyone!

I hope everyone had a great Christmas and welcome to 2026! Stay warm and put a few dates on your calendar. Oh wait! If you have purchased a historical 2026 Browntown Calendar, the BCCA dates for our major events are already listed in there. Our Gooney Valley History Club pretty much thought of everything for the calendar. If you missed out, there may be a few more calendars at O.J. Rudacille Gen. Mdse. or Glen Manor Vineyards, so don’t wait!

I guess the first thing I’d like to say for the New Year is please consider volunteering. So many organizations could use an extra hand. If you’re looking for suggestions, I, of course, recommend volunteering close to home at the Browntown Community Center. We rely on our volunteers for many things; not just showing up at meetings. Everyone has their own special skill; sometimes it’s construction, gardening, special events, computers, phone calls, baking, organizing, planning, etc. We have a community full of talented people, please consider donating a little of your time back into your community. On our website www.browntowncommunity.com we have a “Volunteer” tab where you can fill out a Volunteer Interest Form. One area we especially need to improve on is stuff for the kids, but our current group of volunteers is pretty maxed out. So parents, as busy as you are, consider helping create a few kids-themed events! We need your ideas and energy!

The Chili Cook-Off is still scheduled for Saturday, Feb 7! More details in the newsletter and stay tuned to our Facebook page for more details.

Our Spring Yard Sale is set for March 13 & 14, so if you have donations, we are accepting them now. Call Patsy Pennington at 540-635-5568 to schedule a drop off.

The Redbud Festival is Saturday, April 18 and we’ll be getting more info out as it develops. Right now we’re looking for unique donations for our Silent Auction. So, if you have a cool piece of jewelry you no longer wear, or an antique, a themed gift basket, a handmade craft or art, we love having “different” than your average Silent Auction items. We appreciate all donations and are happy to give tax deductible receipts upon request!

As for our building itself, we are preparing for some major expenses in the next 5 years. The first being our soffit, fascia and gutters; all need to be replaced. We are looking at \$25K or more just for that. And in about 5 years we are projected to need a new roof. So be looking for additional fundraisers that are “goal specific,” as we want our historic community center to be here for another hundred years and we need the community’s help.

Finally, thanks to all our current volunteers for everything you did in 2025. We are a volunteer organization and we couldn’t do it without you.

Sincerely,

Martha Buracker, President

Browntown Community Center Association