



“Along the Gooney”

Browntown Community Center Association

March 2026
Volume 34, Number 3

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

March 9 BCCA General Meeting
7:30 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.

Chilly Weather and Homemade Chili Makes Successful Second Annual Battle of the Bowls Event

By Emma Bricker

On February 7, a bone-chilling day, the second annual Browntown Battle of the Bowls was held. At the event were 11 chefs battling to be voted the best bowl in Browntown. There was a wide variety of chilis prepared: spicy, traditional, and vegetarian, and the chefs chose a range of ingredients, hoping to create and be voted the fan favorite in each category. The Browntown Boys warmed the atmosphere with lively tunes and used their break to taste and vote! Around 40 courageous souls braved the plummeting outdoor

temperatures to come listen to music, taste outstanding chili, cornbread, and cookies, vote for their favorite, and spend an afternoon gathered with neighbors and friends chatting and enjoying themselves. The winning chefs, posted below, went home with some fun Browntown swag! The BCCA’s Community Fellowship and Engagement Committee looks forward to hosting this entertaining event again next year. Do you have a winning chili? You have a year to perfect!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS

BROWNTOWN BATTLE OF THE BOWLS
CHILI COOK-OFF

THE 2026 WINNERS

TRADITIONAL

1ST MICHELE KOPSAK
2ND KIM HERON
3RD JESSIE SPROUSE

SPICY

1ST DUSTY CORNWELL
2ND CHRISTY HARTMAN
3RD MICHAEL PROSISE

VEGETARIAN

1ST DEBBIE SYLVESTER

Wrangling The Roof

By Steve Merz

The soffit repair project is being undertaken to stop further damage to the building. The gutters and soffits will be removed so we can inspect the walls and make necessary repairs. New soffits and gutters will be installed along with drip edge material that will correctly divert the rainwater to the new gutters. This project will protect the building while we raise funds to replace the roof in a few years.

Contractor's bids are due by the end of the month. Once we evaluate them and confirm the schedule necessary for the work, the final proposal will be presented for approval in the March board meeting. The work will proceed in two phases – one before and the other after Redbud. We hope to have it all wrapped up by May.

Treasurer's Corner



Happy March!

Mother Nature tricked us again, and we got lots of snow and ice this year. Hopefully we are moving on and spring is around the corner!

February was a slow month, but we are gearing up for the annual Redbud Festival on April 18. Expenditures this month consisted mostly of regular utility, propane delivery and vendors paying their table fees.

As I mentioned before, we have set up a separate line item for the soffit and gutter repairs. Donations from miscellaneous events are being added here. In addition, Martha has submitted a Non-Profit Grant request via the Rappahanock Electric "The Power of Change" program. She also presented our annual budget request to Warren County on Tuesday, Feb. 24. Our main goal is to obtain funds for our upcoming critical maintenance and repairs.

Feb. 2026 – INCOME ~\$842

- BROWNTOWN MERCHANDISE & RECYCLING - \$92.32

Reminder to bring your aluminum cans to Tom's shed at the store! We receive a small income from aluminum cans brought to the store for recycling.

- REDBUD VENDOR TABLES & NEWSLETTER AD - \$490.00
- BROWNTOWN CALENDARS - \$260.00

Feb. 2026 – EXPENSES ~\$2,071

The majority of the costs fall into these categories:

- Electricity (\$268)

- Propane (~\$808)
- Newsletter (~\$46)
- Redbud Trees (~\$832)
- Website/Internet Service/Telephone (~\$117).

Other – Reinvested Treasury Bill

Happy St. Patrick's Day! Wishing you the luck of the Irish today and always!

Nancy McDermott

BCCA Treasurer

nancymcd.bcca.@bccca.com

A Thank You to George Hodgkiss

By Jim Sylvester

The Browntown Community Center was recently gifted all the essential components of a public address system that has been used most effectively by our local band, The Browntown Boys. The equipment was used at both a November 19 Community Center concert and, most recently, to provide entertainment at our annual February Chili-Cookoff. It's a gift that will keep giving. We also wish to acknowledge George for his time and expertise in demonstrating the set up and usage of the system, as well as his longtime commitment to presenting and recording live music in the valley. Thank you George!

To hear more about George and his contributions to music in the valley go to Oral Histories on the Gooney Valley History and Preservation Clubs website at gooneyvalleyhistoryclub.com or go to the link below.

[George Hodgkiss - Music of the Valley](#)

2026 Redbud Festival Planning Progresses

By Gène J. Raymond

Keep your eye on the [BCCA online calendar](#) for the appearance of another organizational meeting for the 2026 Redbud Festival.

Emma Bricker has reported that there are still vendor spots available outside, but all inside spaces have been reserved. The vendor registration form is avail-

able online in the [Library of our website](#).

This year's Antique Auto Show will be dedicated to the memory of Dave McDermott. A registration form for this event [can be obtained from the same location](#).

Want to help but don't want to spend the whole day? Consider volunteering an hour of your day to relieve somebody who's helping with parking, serving people in the kitchen, grilling burgers, or getting vendors to their assigned locations.

Please complete the [Volunteer Interest Form](#) on the website if you are interested in helping in some way.

Invitation to Bid Lawn Mowing Services

Organization: Browntown Community Center
Location: 96 Browntown Road, Browntown, VA 22610
Issue Date: Feb 13, 2026
Bid Due Date: March 27, 2026

Overview

Browntown Community Center is seeking bids from qualified lawn care providers to supply mowing services for our property. As a nonprofit organization, we operate on a tight budget and are seeking reliable, cost-effective service.

Scope of Work

The selected contractor will provide lawn mowing and basic trimming services for approximately 3 acres of property, including areas around the building, fences, and parking area.

1. Mowing all grass areas across the property
2. Mowing and trimming around buildings, fences, and parking areas
3. Trimming around sidewalks, signs, and landscaping
4. Blowing grass clippings from walkways, entrances, and paved areas

Service Frequency

1. *Minimum:* 10 mowing cuts per season

2. *Additional Cuts:* Option for additional mowing services as needed, based on weather and growth conditions. Pricing for additional cuts must be included in bid submission.

Contract Term

Initial Term: April 2026 through November 2026 (1-season contract)

Extension Option: Contract may be extended based on satisfactory performance and available funding, upon mutual agreement of both parties.

Bid Requirements

1. Cost for minimum 10 cuts (total and per cut if possible)
2. Cost per additional cut (if needed)
3. Proof of liability insurance preferred
4. Business contact information and references (if available)

Selection Criteria

1. Total cost
2. Ability to meet service needs
3. Reliability and experience

Submission Instructions

Please submit bids by March 27, 2026 via email to lrarnold317@gmail.com.

Contact Information

Allan Brockway — 703-915-4573

Linda Arnold — 703-402-0636

Browntown Community Center reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids and to waive informalities in the bidding process.

Obituary

Robert Glenn "Bob" Coverstone, 83, of Fort Valley, went home to be with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on January 25, 2026. He fought the good fight of faith and finished his race. Well done, thy good and faithful servant! (2 Timothy 4:7)

Born on November 19, 1942, in Fort Valley, to the late Garnett and Alva Coverstone, he was preceded in death by his two sisters, Marie Harper and Joann Painter. He is survived by his loving wife of almost 64 years, Flo Coverstone; his son, PG Coverstone (Barbara); his grandson, Zachary (Stephanie); his great-grandson, Liam; his brother John Coverstone (Tabitha); as well as his nieces, nephews, cousins, and numerous, wonderful friends.

Bob, or "Pap Pap," as he was affectionately known to his immediate family, was a man of few words, but when he spoke, it was with careful consideration and gentle, but firm persuasion. He never met a stranger and had a heart as big as the sky. A beloved member of his family, church and community, Bob was a strong man of faith and trusted his God in every situation, particularly over the last 3½ challenging years. He embraced hard work and servant leadership, always lending a hand to those in need.

Bob held a variety of jobs including UPS and construction, but the greatest joy he had was working on his farm in Fort Valley where he raised cattle, goats, sheep and chickens plus a menagerie of other animals. He loved to build things out of scraps, work the daily newspaper crossword puzzle, and was an avid coin collector.

Bob loved life and cherished good friends, good fun and good food (especially cherry pie with chocolate ice cream). He loved to play games, especially bingo, and enjoyed the laughter that went along with such gatherings. He got the biggest grin on his face when he was "acting" as an auctioneer for annual Relay For Life fundraising events. Bob's wisdom, warmth and kindness were a blessing to so many who knew him, and his presence will be greatly missed.

His family would like to sincerely thank everyone for the overwhelming love and support shown to them during Bob's illness and since his passing. They especially want to thank the Fort Valley community, and the congregation of Cool Spring Church of God

in Browntown where he served as an elder and as a friend and mentor to so many.

Bob was very fond of his caring medical team. His family would like to especially thank Dr. Richard Ingram and all the wonderful staff at Shenandoah Oncology in Winchester; Dr. Daniel Strand and nurse Brenda at University of Virginia Medical Health; and the incredible compassion and support from nurses Jeanna and Brittany and the whole loving team at Blue Ridge Hospice.

A private burial will be held at a later date, pending the weather.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to the Cool Spring Church of God, 3705 Gooney Manor Loop, Bentonville, VA 22610, or to the American Cancer Society c/o Vicki Burner, 108 Tower Avenue, Woodstock, VA 22664. Condolences may be sent to the family at maddoxfuneralhome.com.

Browntown Baptist Church A Legacy of Faith

*Dedicated to Seeking God
and Serving People*

Unfortunately, the snow, ice and freezing temperatures forced us to meet via Zoom three Sundays in January. We finally got back in the sanctuary on February 15.

We have started planning a variety of community events and fundraisers for the coming months. On Saturday, March 21 beginning at 5:30 p.m., we will have our first Quarterly Gathering to celebrate community with delicious food, lively music and Christ's love.

On Friday, April 3, we invite you to join us for a Good Friday Service followed by food and fellowship.

In addition, we are discussing future fundraising opportunities to support the restoration of our historic 129-year-old-stained glass windows, and other important maintenance needs.

Wishing peace,

Tina Presley, Clerk of Browntown Baptist Church



The BEARR Group Keeping Our Community Safe

Web
Instagram

BEARRGroup.com
[@bearr_group](https://www.instagram.com/bearr_group)

Facebook
X

[BEARR Group](https://www.facebook.com/BEARR_Group)
[@BEARR_Group](https://www.facebook.com/BEARR_Group)

Reflective Address Signs

3
5
1
2

The cost is \$25 payable on delivery with free installation on an existing post or fence. Order at BEARRGroup.com, or text or call Alan Thompson at 520-730-4272 or Brian Wilkinson at 703-389-7288.

VIRGINIA 4 PM BURNING LAW
IN EFFECT FEBRUARY 15TH – APRIL 30TH

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY

COUNTY OF WARREN FIRE AND RESCUE

Maximum fine \$500.00

Burning Law in Brief:

- No burning until after 4 PM if the fire is within 300 feet of woodland, brushland or field containing dry grass or other inflammable material.
- Fire must be attended at all times if the fire is within 150 feet of woodland or other dry fuel leading to woodland.
- No fuel may be added or started after midnight.
- Law applies to campfires, warming fires, brush piles, stumps, fields of dry grass and brush, or anything capable of spreading fire.

Call (540) 635-4128 TO LOG A CONTROLLED BURN.

Contact the Virginia Department of Forestry for additional information.
www.dof.virginia.gov

Warren County Fire and Rescue
13 Feb • 🌐

Virginia 4 PM Burning Law

- The law is in effect between Feb. 15 and April 30
- Maximum fine \$500.00
- Call Warren County Communications Center at 540-635-4128 to let them know *before you start burning.*



President's Message

Greetings everyone and welcome to March!

We will soon be seeing daffodils and forsythia blooming as little reminders that spring indeed will be arriving in Browntown. Here's what's going on at the community center.

Actually, the first thing up is what's not going on...our Spring Yard Sale has been postponed till September as we haven't gotten enough donations! What happened? Normally we are busting at the seams with donations, but I guess the cold weather has us all hibernating and not in the "clean out the closets" mood. So, we are asking that you hang onto anything you planned to donate until after our Redbud Festival on April 18. Once that's over we can start accepting donations again. Please contact Patsy Pennington at 540-635-5568 to schedule a drop off.

Next up is our Annual Redbud Festival on April 18. According to Emma Bricker, our Vendor Coordinator, all the craft spots inside have been reserved. We still have plenty of space outside and at the Baptist Church Fellowship Hall. We are looking for unique items for our Silent Auction. If you have an "in" with a local business, we love local items. If you are a craftsman, handmade items are awesome! If you personally would like to donate a gift basket or special item, that would be great! Just let me know! If you would like to volunteer, we would much appreciate it, plus it's a fun day to meet and greet your neighbors and friends!

After the Redbud Festival, we are closing the community center for rentals until July. We have lots of construction planned for spring and summer, so sorry the building won't be available, but the wait will be worth it. Our first project isn't glamorous, but much needed replacement of the soffit, fascia and gutters. A portion of the work is planned for before Redbud on the outside of the building and won't affect the building use. But we are planning our kitchen remodel to make it safer (new range with hood vent), more user friendly (a large island) and better storage. This existing kitchen has served us well, but it is time to update! Thanks to our Trustees and Buildings & Grounds Committee for the hard work of planning and scheduling because the logistics of this isn't easy.

At the last meeting several members requested that our lawn mowing go out to bid. If you are interested, the bids must be received by March 27. Bid specifications are available in the newsletter, at O. J. Rudacille Gen. Mdse., on [our Facebook page](#) and also on our website www.browntowncommunity.com. As a reminder, the minutes of our meetings are available on the website under the "Library" tab. If you have time, please fill out the survey that pops up when you go to the website. We would love your input.

One of the final things I would like to mention is that our South River Supervisor Cheryl Cullers, our SWVFD Fire Chief Allan Brockway and WC Fire and Rescue collaborated to get an emergency phone installed at the SWVFD Substation in Browntown just before the snow/ice storm from several weeks ago. As beautiful and scenic as Browntown is, most of it is in a cell phone desert. Those of us who connect our cell phones to our Wifi have no way to call 911 if we end up without power. The county put a Starlink satellite hook up with a "Red Phone" at the substation so that it was available in the event of a power outage so that you could call 911 at the substation. They are working to have the phone on the outside of the building in the future. Keep in mind you would only be able to call 911.

I think that's it for now! Hope to see you at the meetings! If you want to get in touch with me, the best way is email at marthaburacker@gmail.com.

Take care,

Martha Buracker, President BCCA

Gooney Valley History Club

The John Andrew and Mary Katherine Baublitz Story- Part II



In Part I of this article, we told how John Baublitz and his family became one of the most influential families in Browntown during about 22 years that they lived here and, in particular, their role in the religious life of the community through their volunteer work for the local Lutheran Church. In Part II we focus on the store and post office that they operated, which would have been central to the everyday life of local farming families and tannery workers during Browntown's "industrial" period. We also describe briefly their life after they left Browntown.

Running the Store

The Baublitz family owned and operated their store in Browntown from 1884 to 1906. Initially it served only as a general store. However, in 1889 John Baublitz was appointed postmaster when Browntown postmaster, Lafayette Updike, resigned. The Baublitzes ran the post office until selling the store in 1906. A 1901 article in a local newspaper provided this description of their store: "Mr.

Baublitz is one of the hustling merchants of the town. He carries a large stock of general merchandise, and can supply you with anything from a paper of pins to a steam thresher." It seems safe to assume that Mary Catherine, John's wife, played a major role in running the store. Ada and Luther, two of their children, were also involved, especially as buyers of goods for sale in the store. They would travel to DC and Baltimore regularly to buy all kinds of goods, including millinery, which sold well and seem to have been Ada's main interest.

We don't have a picture of the Baublitz store prior to its closure in 1906 but this photo shows how the store looked in 1929 when it was owned O.J. and Annice Rudacille and leased and operated by R.L. "Rene" Cooper. Source: History of Browntown, 1856-1929, Accession #11587, Special Collections, UVA Library, Charlottesville. Va.



Records suggest that John Baublitz also was a successful farmer and invested in buying land that he later sold (hopefully!) at a profit. There had been two other general stores, Grants and T.S. Updike, in Browntown in 1884, but the Baublitz store seems to have outlived the other two. In 1899 the Cover

Tannery closed owing to most of the local forests having been fully depleted of bark suitable for tanning. Frank Cover and his family relocated to Cherokee, North Carolina in 1900. Sadly, Frank died from a heart attack in 1903 and Laura, his wife (and Mary Catherine Baublitz' sister) did not return to Warren County. She died in 1930 and was buried in Front Royal.

(continued on next page)

Life After Browntown

John and Mary Catherine bought a house in 1906 with 8 acres of land in Stephens City close to where their daughter Ada, her husband and their new granddaughter, Virginia, were already living. They moved to Stephens City in October 1907 and lived there for the rest of their lives. Their son, Luther, was the last of the Baublitz family to live in Browntown. Mary Catherine Baublitz died on July 21, 1917, aged 68. Her dear friend, Mozelle Updike Masemer, wrote the following about her: “Her sudden death cast a gloom over loving hearts and community. She was a member of the Lutheran church from childhood, and her Christian life was one of rare beauty. Before she died, she expressed herself by saying to those present, “I want to go to my Saviour.” She was a faithful wife, fond mother, and her smile met all with its messages of love; her hand was ever ready to bring loving gifts to those who were needy. In sorrow her sympathy was profound; in trouble she proved to be a wise counselor. John Andrew Baublitz, died seven years later on July 11, 1924 of heart disease, aged 78, at the home of his daughter, Ada Baublitz Trussell, in Stephens City where he had been living for several years.

See our website (gooneyvalleyhistoryclub.com) to learn more about the history of Browntown

Browntown Redbud Festival featuring musical talent

RYAN JEWELL

& KATIE RIDGE

Celebrate the beauty of spring!! Enjoy a day filled with fun, entertainment, and community spirit.

Date: April 18

Time: 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Location: Browntown Community Center & Browntown Baptist Church Fellowship Hall

Event Highlights:

- Duck Race (Tickets available onsite)
- Crafters & Artisans
- Barrel Train for kids
- Face Painting
- Silent Auction
- Antique Car Show
- Great Food & Refreshments
- Redbud Seedlings for Sale

An easy stroll between venues, with the Browntown Museum in between!

Free Admission & Parking with a free shuttle from parking area!

Come and enjoy a wonderful day with family and friends!

For more information, visit our website: <https://browntowncommunity.com>
Vendor information: browntownbowls@gmail.com



Martha Buracker, Realtor
Weichert Realtors
824 John Marshall Hwy
Front Royal, VA



"Your Shenandoah Valley Expert"

Licensed in Virginia

Cell: 540-671-6349
Office: 540-635-8000
marthaburacker@gmail.com

Weichert

REALTORS®

Browntown Redbud Festival

Antique Car Show

In honor and memory of our friend and fellow volunteer
Dave McDermott

A great
Family Day

Saturday, April 18, 2026

9 am—1 pm (check in between 8 & 9 am)

Showcase your antique or classic car at this event filled day. Visit the past and enjoy the present in scenic Browntown, VA at the Annual Redbud Festival!

Sponsored by.....



Redbud Festival

Events

9am—3pm

Redbud Seedling Tree Sale

Silent Auction

Craft Sales 2 Locations

Bake Sale

Full Kitchen Menu

Gooney Creek Duck

Race at 1 pm

Live Music!

Katie Ridge Band

followed by Ryan Jewel!



Trophy Prizes

People's Choice

Participant's Choice

Best Paint

Best Interior

Voting Ends at 1:00 p.m.

Prizes awarded at 2 p.m at BCCA Stage

Bring your own chairs, No alcohol permitted.

Held in the Grassy Lot between the Museum and Browntown Community Center

Register early, space is limited.

\$15 Registration Fee

Please make check payable to Browntown Community Center Association (BCCA)

Complete registration below and mail to:

Browntown Community Center Association

96 Browntown Rd

540-671-6349

Browntown, VA 22610

marthaburacker@gmail.com

Name: _____

Car Info

_____ Year: _____

Address: _____ Make: _____

_____ Model: _____

Phone: _____ Signature: _____

Browntown Baptist Church

12 Browntown Road
Bentonville, VA 22610
Pastor: S. Kaipha Brown
Sunday School @ 10 a.m.
Worship Service @ 11 a.m.
browntownbaptistva@gmail.com

Check out Browntown Baptist Church's [website](#):

- Watch/listen to sermons
- Send in a prayer request
- Log on to Bible Study every Wednesday night
- Read about the history of our church
- See calendar of events

Cool Spring Church of God

Pastor: PG Coverstone
Sunday School at 9:30 and Worship at 10:30.

Limeton Community Church

9 Limeton Main St., Bentonville, VA
Pastor Lorne Fyfe
Sunday School at 10 and service at 11

O. J. Rudacille Gen. Mdse.

Check us out on Facebook for
Browntown History
Phone 636-2149

Serving Browntown since 1884



Hours: Monday-Saturday 9 to 5
Sunday Noon to 4

Don't forget! We carry lots of Browntown merchandise year 'round:
Hats, Sweatshirts, Cookbooks, etc.

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