



Along the Gooney

August 2026

Volume 34, Number 8

President
Martha Buracker
540-671-6349

Vice President
Mary McKinney
540-635-4725

Treasurer
Nancy McDermott
703-975-8668

Secretary
Kristen Pence
540-230-1155

Trustees
Bill Lacy
Denny Pennington
Wes Deavers

Scheduling
Patsy Pennington
540-635-5568



Sunshine streams through the windows of the kitchen, highlighting the refinished walls, floor, and ceiling. New cabinets provide increased storage space, while additional counter space is available for more streamlined food preparation. (Photo provided by Jim Sylvester)

Project Kitchen Sink

(a.k.a. Updating the BCCA's Kitchen)

By Jim Sylvester

The BCCA's kitchen renovations are not quite done, but we're close! June has been a very busy month for our selected contractors. They completed several major milestones:

- Holtzman completed the gas work and it passed inspection the following day. The new stove will be installed in the coming week and readied for final inspection.
- G2G completed their electrical work, including upgrading the lighting, and it passed inspection this week.
- MT (plumber) completed installation of the new water heater, installed new, commercial-grade faucets, plumbed the relocated sink, and added an outside spigot.

(continued on page 4)

Inside the BCCA

Upcoming Events

August 10	BCCA General Meeting 7:30 p.m.
August 15	Grand Reopening 2-4 p.m.
September 18-19	Community Yard Sale 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

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

Submission Deadline

Submissions for the September edition of the newsletter must be submitted by August 24.

Get the Newsletter

To get the newsletter delivered to you by email, send an email to
newsletter+subscribe@browntowncommunity.com

You'll get an email that acknowledges your request to join. Simply reply to the acknowledgement and you should receive a confirmation that you have joined.

Back issues of the newsletter are available on [our website](#).

President's Message

Greetings everyone! Although it's been a quiet summer for events at the BCCA, there has been a lot going on behind the scenes. Let me catch you up.

Just before the Redbud Festival, we had new soffit, fascia and gutters installed on the building. Sounds kind of boring, but it was an overdue part of building maintenance as what was there was in dire need of replacement. We couldn't move forward on the inside renovations till this was completed. Our front kitchen window/wall had been taking water and we could see the rot around the window frame on the inside. Cost estimates were \$20-25K, but we managed to come in a little under budget at \$15,260. Thanks to a generous donation by Stephen Colwell and Anne Shulman (Strawberry Fields Farm), we were able to get this done!

After the Redbud Festival, we shut down for the summer so that our kitchen renovations could begin. This was a huge project, but our 40 year old "make do" kitchen needed to be made safer and more user friendly. It is nearing completion thanks to a dedicated team of volunteers and paid licensed contractors (electrician, plumber and gas company). We don't have total cost on this yet, but we estimated up to \$50K and we will be pretty close to this upon completion. Thanks to the estate donations by the families of Doodle Campbell and Sam Updike, and the Rappahannock Electric Cooperative "Round Up" Grant of \$5K, we were able to get this done! Save the date of Saturday, August 15 for our Grand Reopening event from 2-4 p.m.! Please check out the flyer for Grand Reopening. We are looking for donations of appetizers and desserts for our event, so if you can bring something, please contact Patsy Pennington at 540-635-5568 and let her know what you will bring. This will be a free event for the community!

(continued on next page)

(President's Message, continued from previous page)

Over the years our community center has grown and our building maintained, but we've never had extra to do the big projects. Our annual overhead for insurance, utilities, and maintenance are easily \$15K or more. And to put that in perspective, we raise about \$20K with our Redbud Festival, Yard Sales and Christmas Bazaar. So there isn't much left over to tackle large projects. The generous donations by community members and from the families of the estates of Doodle Campbell and Sam Updike have made the impossible possible. We wanted their legacy to be a visible difference in our community and not just to pay a utility or insurance bill. We think they would be happy that their money went to a really great cause.

Now to the future. We have estimated that a new metal roof on the BCCA building will be due in about 5 years. This is another big ticket item. We also need to budget for HVAC as that will need to be replaced in the future as well. There is nothing inexpensive in construction anymore, both in materials and labor, so we want to be well prepared for the future. Keeping up with a 100-year old historic building is a labor of love and money, and we want to ensure that this building is here for our community for another 100 years. Please support our fundraisers and volunteer when you can!

Our Fall Community Center Yard Sale is scheduled for Friday, September 18 and Saturday, September 19 from 9-3 p.m. Save the date and come on down to shop for all kinds of great treasures and grab some breakfast or lunch at the same time! We are still accepting donations if you have something you'd like to donate! Call Patsy Pennington at 540-635-5568 to schedule a drop off.

The Christmas Bazaar will be Saturday, November 21, so save the date. For more information on vendor tables contact Emma Bricker at browntownbowls@gmail.com.

My grandson Cyrus Cornwell, age 12, recently

asked me how old you have to be to run for President of the Community Center. I laughed and said that's a good question. Are you planning to run against me? He smiled and said "Well Grammie, the playground has lots of stuff for the little kids but there really isn't anything for the older kids". I agreed with him. So we put our heads together and decided to have a "Kids Committee" comprised of a group of Browntown kids (and a few parents) and work on planning kids events designed by the kids for the kids. So far we've talked about an Outdoor Movie night, art projects, maybe a basketball pole and net for outside and special kids things for our Redbud Festival. He will be recruiting team members at the Grand Reopening event so bring the kids and ideas and get signed up. This community center is for all of us and we would really like to have more things for the kids.

Finally, the South Warren Volunteer Fire Department has given us a 60-day Notice to Void the Lease Agreement for the Browntown Sub-Station as they want to close the station. We have been negotiating with them and have also been in discussion with Warren County Fire and Rescue. We will update as soon as we have news. So stay tuned to our Facebook Page, the website www.browntowncommunity.com and email distribution as this may be finalized after the Newsletter goes out.

I hope to see all of you at the Grand Reopening!

Martha Buracker, President BCCA

Our volunteers have also been busy:

- Wall cabinets were installed on the east wall above the relocated sink.
- Base cabinets for both the peninsula and the west wall were installed and their new tops attached.
- An additional small cabinet was ordered for use as a coffee and condiment station.
- The mechanical closet was redesigned to expand kitchen wall space while creating easier maintenance access to the HVAC unit serving the kitchen and hallway.
- A new pipe chase was added under the sink to hide building mechanics and to provide a cleaner appearance.

In the coming days, our volunteers will be installing the new kitchen island, adding a broom closet, and doing a little painting and touch-up. It's looking great!

Many thanks to our labor volunteers – Ben Short, Bill Lacy, Chris Gibbs, Damon Sutton, Jim Sylvester, Lisa Merz, Mary McKenny, Roxanne Campbell, Steve Merz – and Martha Buracker. These people planned, cut, sanded, lifted, moved, painted, demolished – and still enjoyed their work.

Oh – and a lesson learned – avoid getting some of the new paints on your skin. They really put up a fight when you try to scrub them off!

We've planned an Open House for Saturday, August 15, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.. You're invited to check out the new kitchen and to enjoy both some treats and fun music by the Browntown Boys.

Treasurer's Corner

Happy Dog Days of Summer!

Our kitchen renovation is nearing completion and the bills keep rolling, rolling in! The Kitchen Team has done an outstanding job keeping us on track and on budget.

June 2026 – Income ~\$422

- Browntown Merchandise – \$52
- Redbud Sponsors, Redbud Trees – \$270
- Building Permit Donation – \$100

We received the final Redbud sponsorship in July!

June 2026 – Expenses ~\$24,286

The majority of the costs fall into these categories:

- Electricity – \$164
- Newsletter – ~\$107 (June, July)
- Kitchen Renovation:

- ◆ Electrical – ~\$4,538
- ◆ Plumbing – \$1,215
- ◆ Trim Install – ~\$3,000
- ◆ Paint – \$245
- ◆ Supplies – ~\$7,132
- Mowing – ~\$460
- Website/Internet Service
 - ◆ existing service – ~\$228
 - ◆ Starlink – ~\$420
- Insurance – \$6,509
- Redbud Duck Banner – \$205
- SWFD FOIA request – \$63

Lastly, as many already know, my husband Dave passed away in December. I will be heading back to North Carolina, hopefully before the end of the year. My heart is in the mountains but time to start a new journey closer to home. We need a new treasurer! For more information, see the Volunteer Opportunities article on page 8. It has truly been my pleasure to serve you.

Nancy McDermott
BCCA Treasurer
nancymcd.bcca@gmail.com



The BEARR Group

Keeping Our Community Safe

By Brian Wilkinson and Allan Brockway

Reflective Address Signs

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

We will help you to install your 911 sign in a location that ensures police, fire, and medical teams can find your home without delay, even at night. We focus on five key placement and visibility considerations:

- Bidirectional viewing: Emergency responders may approach from either direction, so your address should be printed on both sides of the sign.
- Distance to the Road: If your house is far from the road or hidden, place the sign at the end of your driveway.
- Height and Angle: Signs should be at least 3-4 feet off the ground for clear visibility.
- Number Size: Numbers to be at least 3 inches tall and feature a contrasting color e.g., white numbers on a blue background.
- 5. Maintenance: Ensure the sign cannot be blocked by overgrown bushes, tall grass, mud, or snow

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Excessive Heat Coming!

Heat Index Values Up To 106 Expected

Extreme heat and humidity will significantly increase the potential for heat-related illnesses. Be prepared to drink plenty of fluids, stay out of the sun and check up on relatives and neighbors.

Also, don't forget about your pets as they should have plenty of water and shade.

If you have an emergency, please dial 911.

Browntown Fire Substation Update



Community members gather at Browntown Fire Substation in 1986. (Photo provided by Martha Buracker.)

(This is a reprint of an article that was previously shared on Facebook and the [BCCA website](#) a week before the newsletter was published.)

Greetings All,

As most of you know, the Browntown Fire Substation is on Browntown Community Center (BCCA) property and was built and funded in 1986 by the Browntown Community in response to Sharon and Tommy Tharpe's house burning down. When their home burned, the response was also compounded by a power outage in Browntown, so until Tommy reached the pay phone in front of the

community center, no emergency call could go out. Here it is 2026, 40 years later, and while the pay phones have disappeared, the cell service in Browntown is non-existent unless you are hooked up to WiFi. The BCCA has been leasing the substation to the South Warren Volunteer Fire Department (SWVFD) for zero dollars; we just asked that they cover the costs of utilities, insurance, maintenance and upkeep of the building. They received about \$3,600 per year from the county for the substation costs. Also, over the years training requirements for responding firefighters have greatly increased, resulting in fewer volunteers and more paid firefighters and EMTs. Training is super important; don't get me wrong, I'm all for the training, but it has changed how many actually volunteer. So, between a lack of responding volunteers and increasing overhead, SWVFD has decided to close the Browntown substation. Effective July 24, 2026 there is no one responding from the Browntown substation.

In reality, we had one brush truck and Allan Brockway. Allan has been a one-man band for our community. There have been times when roads were closed due to weather and he would hear an emergency call on his radio. He would walk, if he had to, in order to get there. So next time you see Allan tell him "thank you" for all he has done. Allan will continue as Fire Chief for SWVFD.

SWVFD has a very large area to cover and parts of Browntown are 20+ minutes or more for response time from SWVFD, Rivermont or Front Royal. If a train is blocking the tracks in Bentonville and Limeton, the response time is further delayed. What we need now is input from our community. The BCCA is not a fire department, but we are willing to work with the WCFR, Warren County Board of Supervisors and our community in hopes of coming up with a solution. Please, if you have suggestions or concerns, contact our South River Supervisor Cheryl Cullers at ccullers@warrencountyva.gov; WCFR Chief James Bonzano at jbonzano@warrencountyfire.com and Assistant WCFR Chief Gerry Maiatico at gmaiatico@warrencountyfire.com. And if you think about it, put me on the carbon copy (cc:) line, marthaburacker@gmail.com, so that I can stay in the loop. At our Monday, August 10 BCCA meeting, fire service will be on the agenda, so hoping to see you there!

Sincerely,
Martha Buracker
President BCCA

Gooney Valley History and Preservation Club

By Tom Lacombe

Researching history is easier now than in days of old, when trips to archives, etc. were sometimes required to make much headway. Today we can do much of our work at our computers using an online archive of old Virginia newspapers, the [Virginia Chronicle](#). Samples below!

Warren Sentinel, Volume 15, Number 43, 22 February 1884, Page 3

The ladies of the Manor will serve oysters in every style and refreshments, from 4 to 10 p. m. on today and tomorrow (Friday and Saturday,) at the Browntown residence of Lafayette Updike, Esq., where some of the ladies and gentlemen will appear in the costumes of one hundred years ago. All who attend will have a most pleasant time. The proceeds will be applied to the local expenses. of Warren circuit—a deserving object.

Warren Sentinel, Volume 15, Number 48, 28 March 1884, Page 1

NOTICE TO TRESPASSERS

As the owner of the 206 acres of land in Gooney Manor, on the public road from Browntown to Bentonville, I hereby notify all persons who shall shoot, run dogs, hunt, trap, cut timber, throw down fences bars or rock piles, leave open gates, ride through or walk over, or in any other manner trespass upon said land, after this, that those disregarding this notice will be prosecuted to the extent of the law in such cases made and provided. HENRY C. TRAIL.

Warren Sentinel, Volume 16, Number 1, 18 April 1884, page 3

Aunt Hannah Jackson, a good, faithful colored woman, died on Sunday a week, at her home in Woodstock, aged 84 years. When a girl she belonged to the father of the editor of this paper, who sold her to Mr. Dellinger, from whom she was purchased by Capt. S. C. Williams, in whose family she lived for many years, and each member held her in high esteem for her honesty and conscientious discharge of every duty.

Warren Sentinel, Volume 16, Number 14, 18 July 1884, page 3

Browntown Letter.

Mr. Amon Updike has an old-fashioned eight-day clock standing in his dining room, upon which a sparrow has built her nest for two consecutive years and hatched her brood and reared her young, and what is most singular, is that the room is occupied and used daily by the family. Mr. Updike says that he would not have her hurt for a considerable sum.

Shenandoah Herald, Fri., Oct. 28, 1892, page 3

On Tuesday afternoon J.J. Compton, J.W. Manuel and Henry Compton engaged in a horse race at Browntown, in which the former was thrown upon his head, fracturing the skull, and causing death at 4 a.m. Wednesday. A most unfortunate result from a friendly trial of the speed of horses. The deceased was aged about thirty years, unmarried, and much respected by those who knew him. His sad death has cast a shadow over the community in which his whole life was spent.

To learn more about the history of Browntown, visit the Gooney Valley History Club's website at gooneyvalleyhistory.com.

Volunteer Opportunities

Grand Opening Preparation

We are still seeking people to help clean up the space before the Grand Reopening – especially the dust from construction materials! If you are able to assist, let us know by filling out the [Volunteer Interest Form](#) or contact Martha Buracker. We'll let you know the schedule details when they become available.

We are asking for volunteers to provide finger food for the opening day. If you are bringing something, please let Patsy Pennington know.

Shape the Future: Officer Nominations Open

At July's general meeting, Martha Buracker named Kristen Pence and Nancy McDermott to this year's ad hoc Nominating Committee. Although nominations are open for all officer positions, the committee is particularly interested in candidates for the Secretary and Treasurer.

Briefly, the secretary records the minutes of the meetings, summarizes discussions, and tracks action items. The treasurer serves as the custodian of funds, taking care of authorized disbursements, making deposits, and reporting the financial status to the general membership. Both positions are part of the Executive Board and both may interact with various committees. Good listening and writing skills are key for the secretary post, while an enjoyment of working with numbers is helpful for the treasurer position. Familiarity with word processing and spreadsheet software is a plus, as is previous experience with cloud-based collaborative tools like Google Workspace. If interested, contact Kristen, Nancy, or Martha. Or let us know through the [Contact Us](#) page on the website.

New Network On Its Way

By Gène J. Raymond

Last month, I wrote about the eventual demise of copper telephone lines and how this eventuality would effect the Community Center. While fiber is being installed in the area, there doesn't seem to be any news about when the proverbial switch is going to be turned on. So Mike Prosis has been working on establishing network service with Starlink. In coordination with Nancy McDermott, the two of them got a business account set up and ordered the needed hardware at the end of June.

Now, a month later, the equipment has arrived, and Mike has activated and tested it. It has been configured to provide two separate networks; one for general usage and one for event vendors. He also met with Steve Merz and Jim Sylvester of the Buildings and Grounds Committee to discuss equipment placement. To get optimal signal strength, they will build a small raised shelving unit with a nearby electrical outlet near one of the rear windows in the front room. Starlink also provided a second wireless router, so once the main system is installed and operational, Mike will review the signal coverage and then make suggestions as to where that might be installed to improve the coverage area.

Thanks to Jim Sylvester's donation of a mounting bracket for the satellite antenna as well as Mike's donation of an uninterruptible power supply (UPS),



New cabinets and countertops are installed. (above) The new stove is set in its new location. (below) Photos provided by Jim Sylvester.



Fun Holidays

By Gène J. Raymond

There are probably very few people who don't enjoy bacon. A 2019 blog post from Texas A&M's Agrilife program cites data from the National Pork Board that Americans eat about 1.1 billion servings of bacon annually. The post notes that even in those days, bacon was no longer just a breakfast food. Ah! My thoughts wander to Spelunkers, where I occasionally enjoy a burger with bacon. And where they sometimes offer Maple Bacon frozen custard. Having bacon on sandwiches isn't uncommon these days. And I'm sure some of you remember dinners of meatloaf

that were wrapped in bacon to keep the meat juicy and flavorful.

Bacon is so huge that it has three holidays, one of which is this month. August 20 is National Bacon Lovers Day. (International Bacon Day is in September and National Bacon Day is in December.) As I ponder how I might use bacon to mark this particular day, my mind drifts to a Bacon, Lettuce, and Fried Green Tomato sandwich that I enjoyed on a visit to South Carolina. And there *are* green tomatoes in the garden. Hmmmmmm!

May your pan stay hot, your strips stay crispy, and your day be filled with smoky perfection.

OPEN MIC plus *The Browntown Boys*

Wed., Aug 26
7:00-8:00 Open Mic
8:15-9:30 The Boys
at the
Browntown Community
Center Association



Contact Roger Tomhave for an opportunity and a time slot to perform in the open mic portion of the evening.

Roger.Tomhave@gmail.com

(540) 551-0947

**Browntown Community Center
Association**
Community Open House

Saturday, August 15
2 pm - 4 pm

**OUR NEW KITCHEN IS
COMPLETE!
GRAND RE-OPENING!**

Join us in Celebration!
Music by the
Browntown Boys!

Bring the family, meet your neighbors, connect with old friends and see what we've accomplished! Meet the Volunteers and Contractors that did the work! We will have a photo display of the before and after. See what a community can do when they work together!

www.browntowncommunity.com
96 Browntown Rd, Browntown, VA

Call Patsy Pennington at 540-635-5568 if you can bring an appetizer or dessert!



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
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Service Directory

Browntown Baptist Church

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

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.

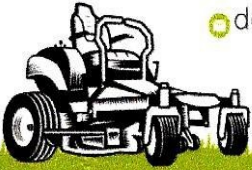
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DAVID JENKINS | OWNER

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