



“Along the Gooney”

Browntown Community Center Association

August, 2023

Vol. 31 No. 08 Editors: Jackie Hodgkiss Jackie.BCCA@gmail.com & Tom Lacombe tomlacombe@comcast.net

BCCA Board of Directors - 2023

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	Jim Sylvester	540 636-7565
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Browntown Calendar

Aug. 9th Wed. First day of school
 Aug. 14th Mon. BCCA Public Meeting 7:30p.m.
 Aug. 29th Deadline for September newsletter

Browntown Baptist Church

browntownbaptistva@gmail.com

Pastor: Sherman Kaipha Brown

Worship Service @ 11 a.m. Fellowship @ 12 p.m.

Baptist Church provides food at the Fellowship Hall.

Every Wednesday is “Free Food” for Browntown Residents who needs help with feeding their families. Hours are: 12:30 to 2:30 (for pick up).

Cool Spring Church of God

Pastor: Jeff Fletcher

Sunday School at 9:30 and Worship at 10:30.

Limeton United Methodist Church

Pastor: Taeshin Kim

10:00 a.m. Sunday School

11:15 a.m. Sunday Worship Service

2023 BCCA Rental FEE

Any Browntown organization, group, or individual wishing to use the Community Center shall pre-pay \$100.00, (\$75.00 usage fee and \$25.00 refundable security deposit), and shall sign the “BCCA Facilities Use Agreement”. Any organization or individual outside of the Browntown Area shall pre-pay \$150.00, (\$125.00 usage fee and \$25.00 refundable security deposit), and shall sign the “BCCA Facilities Use Agreement”. No alcohol Permitted!

To rent the center:

Call Patsy Pennington at 540-635-5568

Beekeepers of the Northern Shenandoah (BONS)

Interested in learning more about honey bees and what it takes to become a beekeeper? Denise Vowell, one of Browntown's many beekeepers and an instructor with the Beekeepers of the Northern Shenandoah (BONS) is teaching a two-hour **FREE** course, through Warren County Parks and Recreation, on August 4th and again on August 5th. The sessions each run from 10 AM to Noon, and take place at the Warren County Community Center on Villa Avenue in Front Royal.

No need to pre-register.

Denise Vowell



Home school Co-Op

A new home school co-op is in the works, with a start date of September 21, here in Browntown!

Once a week, on Thursdays, from 10 am to 1 pm.

It will be held at the Browntown Baptist Church Fellowship Hall. Please feel free to reach out to us with questions/details.

Thank you!

Jonlaya Haines and Brittany Chivalal

jonlaya@gmail.com

BCCA YARD SALE
SCHEDULED for Friday and
Saturday, Oct. 6th & 7th
9:00 to 2:00

We are collecting donations of furniture, dishes, clothes, books, appliances, linens and tools. Please call Patsy Pennington at 540-635-5568 for drop off. Now is the time to clean out your garage, attic, shed and basement of all those items you just don't use anymore.

BCCA will take almost anything.

Obituary

Margaret Lois Smelser, 82, of Front Royal, Virginia, passed away on Wednesday, July 19, 2023, at Winchester Medical Center. Funeral services will be private. Mrs. Smelser was born on August 16, 1940, in Ridgely, West Virginia, to the late John and Levie Carr Phillips. She was also preceded in death by two brothers, Larry and Donnie Phillips; grandson, Chad Smelser, and granddaughter, Stacey Prechtel.

She was a member of the Pentecostal Church in Cumberland, Maryland. Survivors include her husband of 62 years, Richard William Smelser, Sr.; son, Richard William Smelser Jr. (Vanessa Van Meter); two daughters, Joyce L. Smelser (Tommy Jenkins) and Jeanne A. Smelser (Jason Brittain); sister, Marsha Smelser; four grandchildren; numerous great-grandchildren and her dog, Buddy. Memorial donations may be made to Blue Ridge Hospice, 333 West Cork St., Winchester, VA 22601

Open House

Warren County Public Schools

WCPS will be opening their doors to families on **Thursday, August 7, 2023**
from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm.

We are excited to once again bring our families back into the schools as we prepare for a successful school year. During Open House, we encourage all parents and students to visit with teachers, administrators, and school resource officers. We also invite our families to review the instructional materials that are utilized within your child's school. We want to ensure that all families feel welcomed and to know that we place safety as a high priority.

Dr. Chris L. Ballenger
Superintendent
Warren County Public Schools

O.J. Rudacille Gen. Mdse.

Phone 636-2149

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Mon thru Sat 7:30am till 5pm

Mon thru Fri, closed 2pm till 3pm

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OJ's New Hours

O.J.'s will be open 9 till 5 Mon-Sat and Noon till 4 on Sundays. Look for the "Open" flag out front, and a sign on the front door, (in case we have to close up for some unforeseen reason).

Thanks again, Tom

Deadline for September News:

August 29th

Make A Note: Patsy Pennington is the person to contact if you need to use the Center.
Patsy's number is 540-635-5568

Leave Home a few minutes Earlier
Please Slow Down, Enjoy the Ride
Remember, our roads aren't designed for the amount of traffic they carry these days. I'm sure many of you have been going down the road and find an oncoming vehicle across the double center line.

Don't forget school opens
August 9th.

Gooney Valley History Club



"Stealing Apples," 1877. Library of Congress



Does anyone know where this local orchard was?

GV History --- THIS MONTH'S GOONEY VALLEY MYSTERY

HOW MANY OF THE OLD VARIETIES CAN STILL BE FOUND GROWING IN OUR VALLEY?

Apples and other fruit trees have always played an important part in the history of our valley. Settlement of Gooney Manor began about 1770. Lord Fairfax would not sell his land, so early settlers leased 200 and 300 acre lots of "ungranted waste land," built cabins with a stone or brick chimney, and planted 100 fruit trees as the leases specified.

During the 2nd half of the 19th Century the surrounding hills were stripped of trees to meet the needs of the Tanneries but apples and peaches were still grown commercially to serve the needs of local distilleries where the fruit was transformed into Brandy. According to a history of Browntown written in 1929, "Sometime after 1872 Jacob Masemer built and operated for many years a distillery making pure apple brandy, also corn and rye whiskey."

Also, during his period the tradition began of families making apple butter to enhance their diet during the winter months. Fresh apples could be stored in a cold house or sliced and dried. But apple butter, with its concentrated sugars, was a powerful way to extend shelf life before refrigeration. Each fall, families would assemble to make fun of the hard work of putting up. Apple butter making was (and still is today) a social event, but it was also productive.

In the early 20th century fruit production in the Shenandoah Valley grew considerably. In Warren County the tanneries closed and much of the farmland in South Warren was planted in apple orchards. At one time there were as many as 1,600 varieties of apples in southern and central Appalachia.

Apple varieties grown locally included Smokehouse, American Beauties, Wolf River, Grimes Golden, Banana, King David, Maiden's Blush, Ralls Janet, Hawk, and York Imperial. One type of apple might grow well on one part of a property, and another would grow well on another, while your neighbors maybe grew different varieties entirely. Your family had your apple and you liked it better than someone else's. Each of these varieties has a unique history and characteristics. For example, Wolf River apples grow up to 5 inches in diameter and can weigh over one pound each! The Ralls Janet is a great old U.S. apple that became known in the 1790s, growing on the farm of Caleb Ralls, a Virginian. One story says the apple was a seedling planted by Caleb and named for his wife, Janet.

In the 1920s the editors of the Warren Sentinel regularly mentioned apples grown in the Gooney Valley that had been "sent to this office". Here are two from 1920 and 1922:

Continued on page 4

. . . . Continued from page 3

“Mrs. Arthur Warthen sent this office yesterday three beautiful apples which were grown on the Gene Updike farm near Browntown. They are known as American Beauties; are of rich dark color and are said to be of excellent quality. They weighed one pound each. The mountain sections of Warren County raise as fine apples as are to be found anywhere.”

“George W. Manuel, the mail carrier, on the Front Royal Browntown route, brought this office some extra fine samples of the old-time smooth Hawk apples which he raised on his farm near Browntown. They are of fine quality, both for eating and cooking, and he sold 30 bushels of them from two trees 15 years old. Sheriff Collins says the Hawk is a variety especially adapted to the Browntown-Bentonville-Limeton section and is very popular there.”

Up until the 1950s most of the apples produced in local commercial orchards were exported to Europe, with England being the most important destination. For example, in 1920 the Shenandoah Produce Co. of Front Royal shipped 50,000 barrels of apples for export, 90% of which were York Imperials. Most went to Liverpool and Glasgow. This trade declined in the 1950s after the United Kingdom introduced import tariffs. So, what did happen to all of those orchards after the 1950s and how many of those old apple varieties are still being grown locally? Maybe that old apple tree in your backyard that you were going to tear out could be brought back to life to provide your family and neighbors with a delicious apple that beats anything you can buy in the supermarket!

If you can shed any further light on this mystery, or have another story about the past that you would like to share, please contact Brian Wilkinson by email at bwilkinson57@verizon.net or call him on 703 389 7288.

“DON’T THROW IT OUT!”

If you have any old copies of local newspapers, photos, or other local family or historical artifacts please let Tom Lacombe know or simply bring them along to his shop – We will treasure these, make sure they are preserved, and draw on them to share knowledge and experience that otherwise might be lost forever.

JOIN US: Our club continues to expand & have fun sharing ideas & learning from one another. If you would like to join or learn more, please phone Tom Lacombe (540 636 2149), or email him (tomlacombe@comcast.net).





AUGUST, 2023 UPDATE - THE BEARR GROUP "KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY SAFE"

THE BEARR GROUP IS NOW ONLINE! Spread the word by "liking" & "following" our social media sites at [BEARRGroup.com](https://www.BEARRGroup.com)

Facebook: BEARR Group Instagram: @bearr_group Twitter: @bearr_group

911 REFLECTIVE SIGNS -- HAVE YOU GOT YOURS YET?

These signs are invaluable to first-responders trying to find your house in an emergency.

Cost: \$25 (payable on delivery)

Order yours at [BEARRGroup.com](https://www.BEARRGroup.com) or email Chris Lewis at chris@BEARRGroup.com or call 540-313-6185.

3
5
1
2

BECOME A VOLUNTEER FIRE-FIGHTER "ODD HOURS, NO PAY, COOL HAT"

ENSURE THE BROWNTOWN FIRE STATION CAN CONTINUE TO SERVE OUR NEEDS

Contact Allan Brockway, Assistant Fire Chief, S. Warren Volunteer Fire Department, at 540 635 7783.



EXCESSIVE HEAT COMING!

HEAT INDEX VALUES UP TO 107 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, & 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.



Beautiful Browntown pictures of John Bell's Farm and sunset.

Browntown Farmer's Market

It was an awesome turnout and well received by our community. Several people I talked to were happy that it took place. We're always looking for more vendors, many were definitely looking for more produce to be available at future Browntown Farmer's Market dates. Many thanks to all our wonderful vendors who helped make the first Browntown Farmer's Market a great one, as well as the BCCA ladies for the amazing breakfast and lunch they provided! We can't wait to do this again. August 26th is the next one.



Pictures from July 29th Browntown Farmers Market.

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Go Fetchett Lawn-Care LLC

My name is David Jenkins and I live on Fetchett Road, here in Browntown. I have my own lawn care and landscaping business, and I also sell firewood.

If anyone is in need of my services, here in Browntown, please contact me on my cell phone: 540-823-0744



Martha Buracker, Realtor
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Gooney Valley History

Linda Glavis sent me the following from her sister-in-law, Anne. This transcript is from their grandfather George S. Poe's journal from the 1930s. Anne's daughter, Jo Anne compiled some of his writings. She thought it might be interesting for folks to see how it was back then, and gave us permission to use this in *"Along the Gooney"*.

Subject: George S. Poe Journal

July 24, 1930

Still hot and dry, temp today 90, no rain yet, stock suffering for water and feed, trees dying have been watering apple trees today to keep them alive. Mountain trees turning yellow, field will burn anywhere, nothing green any place, branches all dry and spring failing. Gooney Run nearly stopped running, stock is suffering for something to eat, no gardens nowhere, leaves on trees have dried up so can rub them up in powder, lots of trees will die, can't help it if rain don't come soon.

August 3, 1930

Sunday school, and got things on the go, still dry, the corn will not make it to seed.

August 4, 1930

Hot today, temp 103, no sign of rain, sun has not set in Banke(?) every night for a week and no rain.

Town is dry, hauling water from out in county to use, no gardens, everything dried up has been no rain.

August 21

There has been no rain yet, fields all dried up, no corn at all, won't make seed, even fodder not over 2 feet tall.