



# “Along the Gooney”

Browntown Community Center Association

## December, 2022

Vol. 30 No. 012 Editors: Jackie Hodgkiss [Jackie.BCCA@gmail.com](mailto:Jackie.BCCA@gmail.com) & Tom Lacombe [tomlacombe@comcast.net](mailto:tomlacombe@comcast.net)

### Board of Directors

President	John Bell	540 635-9705
Vice Pres.	Linda Glavis	540 636-3802
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Trustees	Allan Brockway	540 635-7783
	Jim Sylvester	540 636-7565
	Denny Pennington	540 635-5568

### Browntown Calendar

- Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> SWVFD Yard Sale 9-4
- Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> BCCA Christmas Tree lighting 6-7
- Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> IWL Browntown Rd. Litter Pick-up
- Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> BCCA Visioning Results Meeting
- Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> BCCA meeting 7:30
- Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> SWVFD Operation Santa 2022
- Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> Christmas Day
- Dec. 29<sup>th</sup> Deadline for January newsletter

### Browntown Baptist Church

[browntownbaptistva@gmail.com](mailto:browntownbaptistva@gmail.com)

Pastor: Sherman Kaipha Brown

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

### Cool Spring Church of God

Pastor: Jeff Fletcher

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

### Limeton United Methodist Church

Pastor: Anne Sisson

10 a.m. Sunday school

11:15 a.m. Sunday Worship Service

## BROWNTOWN WEB PAGE

[www.browntowncommunity.com](http://www.browntowncommunity.com)

Along the Gooney Newsletters (current 4 months)

BCCA Events

Browntown History pages

Photo Galleries

Advertising, Sponsors & other info. and links

Webmaster: George Hodgkiss

[1015gwh@centurylink.net](mailto:1015gwh@centurylink.net)

South Warren Volunteer Fire Department

### Yard Sale at the SWVFD

Thursday, Friday and Saturday

Dec. 1st, 2nd, and 3<sup>rd</sup>. 9:00 am to 4:00 pm



South Warren Volunteer Fire Department

### OPERATION SANTA 2022

Saturday, December 17<sup>th</sup>

*Santa will be at each stop for about 5 minutes*

- 1<sup>st</sup> stop: Low Water Bridge Campground 6:05
- 2<sup>nd</sup> stop: Bentonville Post Office 6:15
- 3<sup>rd</sup> stop: Thompson Hollow Road 6:25
- 4<sup>th</sup> stop: Shangri-La Road 6:35
- 5<sup>th</sup> stop: Browntown Baptist Church 6:45
- 6<sup>th</sup> stop: Browntown Community Center 7:00
- 7<sup>th</sup> stop: Wonderland Lane 7:15
- 8<sup>th</sup> stop: Limeton Methodist Church 7:30
- 9<sup>th</sup> stop: Hidden Springs Senior Living 8:00
- 10<sup>th</sup> stop: SWVFD Station 8:30

### BROWNTOWN ROAD LITTER PICKUP

DECEMBER 4, 2022

The Warren County Izaak Walton League is conducting a litter pickup on Browntown Road, Sunday Dec 4, at 1:00pm. We meet in the parking lot of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, at the Highway 340 end of the road. I have orange bags, reflective vests and pickup tools. We put out two VDOT "Litter Pickup Crew Working" signs to alert drivers to our presence. Children are welcome if accompanied by a parent. You do not need to be a member of the IWL to participate.

Dennis Mosher, IWL Anti-litter Coordinator  
(540) 635-3559 [iwl.antilitter@gmail.com](mailto:iwl.antilitter@gmail.com)

### Three Communities, Browntown, Bentonville, & Limeton – 12,000 Years of History



#### THE GOONEY VALLEY HISTORY CLUB

“Remembering Yesterday,  
Preserving Our Tomorrow”

December, 2022

#### GOONEY VALLEY MYSTERY #1 – AN UPDATE RE THE FORGOTTEN “COLORED” SCHOOL

We now know just a bit more about the African Americans who lived in Browntown in the 1880s. A “colored” church (St. Pauls Methodist church) and a “colored” school were definitely located next to one another on the west side of Gooney Run. They provided educational and religious services for African Americans residents of Browntown in the years immediately following the abolition of slavery.

We have recently learned also that the St Pauls Methodist Church was apparently established in 1878 (eight years before the establishment of the school) and that its trustees were John Thomas, David Mitchell and Edward Curtis. This seems to have been the earliest known church structure in the Browntown area, although itinerant preachers are believed to have provided Baptist services in the Browntown area prior to this date. It seems likely that St. Pauls church would have provided some kind of schooling for African American children before the actual establishment of the “one-room log-cabin school” in 1886.

*(NOTE: The Union Church located next to the BCCA was not built until 1882.)*

But what eventually happened to the Browntown “colored” school? This is a mystery that may never be fully solved. Although, thanks to several contemporary “School Columns” written by G.E. Rot, Warren County Schools Superintendent, in the Warren Sentinel in 1900 and 1903, we can piece together some of the story about when and how it ceased to exist. Sadly, we know nothing about what impact the loss of their school had on the children.

*Continued on page 8*

## O.J. Rudacille Gen. Mdse.

Phone 636-2149

Sunday Noon till 4pm

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 door in case we have to close up for unforeseen reasons.

**Thanks again, Tom**

### Deadline for January News: Dec. 29th

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

### 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 center line.

**Don’t forget school is back in session so watch for the kids and their big yellow bus**

Many of you know that the BCCA has been conducting “Visioning Workshops” for about a year. The purpose of these workshops was to have the citizens of Browntown, through the BCCA, come up with suggestions as to how our community would like to see changes made to the Warren County Comprehensive Plan, which would preserve the things that we love about our community. I don’t have room for the entire report in this newsletter, but you can find it on the BCCA Website, and the BCCA facebook page. There will also be a meeting held at the Community Center on Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm, where all the details will be discussed.

## **BCCA Specific Recommendations for the Rural Viewshed Overlay District:**

### **1. Rural Character – Protecting the experience of residents and visitors**

**A) Browntown Road, Bentonville Road, and Gooney Manor Loop** should be designated as Virginia Scenic Byways.

**B) To help protect working landscapes and the rural beauty and natural resources of our valley**, the County could encourage the creation of voluntary Habitat Corridors and Rewilding Areas, which include native, non-invasive species and work to increase accessibility and feasibility of Agricultural-Forestal Districts.

**C) Shenandoah National Park Trailheads** – Warren County should support keeping open all historic access points to the Shenandoah National Park (e.g., the Smith Run Trailhead, the Lands Run Trailhead, the Gravel Springs Gap Trailhead). Warren County should work with adjacent voluntary landowners to create basic parking lots (unlit, unpaved, but accessible from the public roadway for safety).

**D) To protect dark skies from light pollution**, the County should promote all exterior lighting on NEW structures to conform to code for shielded, down-facing, full cut off and motion sensing lights.

**E) Create an incentive program and/or grant program** in conjunction with Rappahannock Electric Cooperative and International Dark-Sky Association to encourage existing structures to change out old lighting systems for more energy efficient and non-intrusive systems.

**F) Work toward having Browntown Valley designated as an “International Dark Sky Place”.**

**G) Create an Agricultural Advisory Group** to explore financial incentives, economic development initiatives, and technical support for these community goals.

### **2. Safety – Protecting the physical safety of our community**

**A) Reduce Default Speed Limit** - Currently all rural roads with unposted speed limits (e.g., sections of Gooney Manor Loop, Smith Run Road, Lands Run, Fetchett Road, etc.) default to having a 55 MPH speed limit, making enforcement of safety rules difficult. The County should ask VDOT to post a 25 MPH speed limit for the Agricultural District unless otherwise posted.

**B) Increase presence and visibility of Fire and Emergency Services** – Though the population of the Browntown Valley has doubled in the past 25 years, it feels as if we have fewer and less visible services available now. The County should prioritize having full time Fire and EMS staff at the Browntown Substation and should make their efforts more visible to residents through public outreach and education of the sort demonstrated by the BCCA and its BEARR group.

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## **BCCA Specific Recommendations for the Rural Viewshed Overlay District:**

### **3. Zoning – Parts of the Code that should be changed to achieve Rural Character and Safety Goals**

- A) Eliminate Cluster** Subdivision in areas zoned Agricultural (§ 180-40.5 Cluster Housing Developments per Warren County <https://ecode360.com/11767222>).
- B) Review zoning and subdivision** regulations with the goal of maintaining the rural character of Browntown, specifically its landscape of farm, forest, and native meadows.
- C) Consider any provisions needed to result in an overall density that is primarily rural, not residential.**
- D) Consider any provisions needed to encourage retention of parcels large enough to farm** (e.g., land use taxation requires effective minimums of 6 acres for farming and 21 acres for forestry if house on parcel).
- E) Allow for flexibility in location and size of residential lots to retain rural uses and views** (e.g., reduce number of driveways by allowing smaller lots away from public road frontage, minimize visibility of houses from roadway and neighboring houses by changing setback and buffer requirements).

### **4. Building Requirements – Parts of building practices that should be used to achieve Rural Character and Safety Goals**

- A) Initiate an Aquifer Carrying Capacity Study & Well Monitoring Program.**
- B) Require Periodic Inspection of Well and Septic** (especially alternative systems).  
**(Did not Pass)**
- C) Require Septic Field to be located on the parcel that it serves.**
- D) To protect our soils, water quality, natural beauty, accessibility, and rural character,** Warren County should create and promote incentives for Vegetative Buffers (new or existing native, non-invasive to Virginia, dense vegetation to slow water runoff, trap sediment, and beautify the community) and Viewshed Protection (minimize the visibility of new physical development from public roads, hiking trails, and park lands) in conjunction with all or some of the following: Shenandoah National Park, USGS, NRCS.

**Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley** would like to thank the **Browntown Community Center Association** and its members for the opportunity to help shape the future of Browntown.

Browntown citizens, who participated in the community survey and attended the series of facilitated meetings, clearly cherish the unique identity of Browntown and value: the farms, working landscapes, and the agricultural heritage; the preservation of the historical, natural, and cultural resources; the beauty of the area; and the strong sense of community.

As the Browntown community continues to work to ensure that the area's rural character and natural beauty are protected into the future, we look forward to supporting your efforts. We will continue to be a resource, so please feel free to contact me at [canderson@shenandoahalliance.org](mailto:canderson@shenandoahalliance.org) or 540-908-3914 or [www.shenandoahalliance.org](http://www.shenandoahalliance.org).

**BEARR GROUP UPDATE –DECEMBER, 2022  
BROWNTOWN’S EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RISK REDUCTION  
GROUP**

**“KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY SAFE”**

**The BEARR GROUP IS NOW ONLINE!**

Help to spread the word about the BEARR Group by “liking” and “following” our social media sites and signing up for our newsletter at [BEARRGroup.com](http://BEARRGroup.com)

**Facebook:** BEARR Group

**Instagram:** @barr\_group

**Twitter:** @barr\_group



**HOW TO REDUCE THE RISK OF ROAD ACCIDENTS IN OUR  
AREA?**

**In 2023 this issue will be a top priority for the BEARR Group:**

- Have you been involved in an accident or had a “near miss” experience?
- What concerns you most?
- What do you think would help most to reduce the risk of accidents?

Speed bumps? Chokers? Rumble Strips? Lower Speed limits?

**\*We would love to hear about both your concerns and your ideas\***

Please email Mark Koszyk at [twoturtles327@comcast.net](mailto:twoturtles327@comcast.net)

***BECOME A VOLUNTEER FIRE-FIGHTER – HELP ENSURE THAT THE  
BROWNTOWN FIRE SUB-STATION WILL CONTINUE TO SERVE OUR  
NEEDS.***

For more information please contact Allan Brockway, Assistant Fire Chief, South Warren

Volunteer Fire Department, at 540 635 7783.

**911 REFLECTIVE SIGNS — HAVE YOU GOT YOURS YET?**

**WHY NOT ORDER ONE FOR A NEIGHBOR OR FRIEND FOR  
CHRISTMAS!**

Over 140 of your friends and neighbors have purchased their **blue reflective address sign**.

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

Next time you drive down your road at night, look to see how many signs are clearly visible, **from both sides**.

Make sure **yours** will be one of them—it could mean the difference between life and death!

\$25 (payable on delivery) is a cheap price to pay for peace of mind.

**Sign up online now at [BEARRGroup.com](http://BEARRGroup.com). Alternatively, please email Chris Lewis at [chris@BEARRGroup.com](mailto:chris@BEARRGroup.com) or call him at 540-313-6185.**



This year marks the twelfth anniversary of the lighting of the Christmas Lights on the community center grounds. The tree lights, this year, will go on the new Blue Spruce tree located on the front grounds of the community center. The lights will be initially lit sometime during the first week in December and will be automatically lit every evening at dusk until January 1, 2023..

This year's remembrance list of names and sponsors will be posted on a snowflake that will be placed inside, on the community center hall bulletin board. The list will also be published in the January newsletter issue. You may send in the names of loved ones and friends through the end of December.

This year we will be accepting donations of \$5.00 per name (snowflake).

If you would like to make a donation for a snowflake, please make your check payable to BCCA, and include the name of the person(s) you wish to have posted. Send checks and names to: BCCA, 96 Browntown Road, Browntown, VA 22610. The lighting of the tree will be Friday Dec. 2nd. Will have the reading of the names inside. There will also be hot cider and refreshments. Names will also be posted on the inside bulletin board in the hallway at the center.

**Browntown Tree Lighting will be on Friday. December 2<sup>nd</sup> 6:00 - 7:00 pm, Community Fire Pit and Tree Lighting Gathering. Reading of the names will be inside.**

**All Browntowners welcome. Bring cookies or snacks to share. We will have hot Apple cider, and hot chocolate**

**Names will also be posted on the inside bulletin board in the hallway at the center.**

All sponsors and names will be printed in our January 's Newsletter.

As you can see we have a great response already but will continue to post names as long as they come in.

Remember, our loved ones are always in our hearts and they will see the Christmas lights here in Browntown.



**Thank you all for your donations. Merry Christmas from BCCA**

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### GREAT CHRISTMAS GIFTS

2023 Browntown Calendars and note cards are now available at Tom’s store. We also have some new sweatshirts, Browntown School House sill sitters, Browntown Cups, CD’s, Hats and Cook Books.

- 2023 Calendars \$15.00
- 2023 Note Cards \$12.00
- Browntown CD’s \$10.00
- Browntown Hats.....\$15.00
- Browntown Little Union Church...\$15.00
- Browntown School Sitter...\$20.00

All proceeds go towards the upkeep and future projects of the Browntown Community Center.

**Weichert**  
**REALTORS**

**Martha Buracker, Realtor**  
**540-671-6349 CELL**  
**540-635-8000 OFC**  
**Buracker@gmail.com**

Browntown Community Center Association  
96 Browntown Road  
Browntown, VA 22610  
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BCCA  
PERMIT #011

Postal Customer  
Bentonville, VA 22610

*continued from page 2*     **Warren Sentinel, Volume 32, Number 35, 21 December 1900**

“The Browntown colored school I found small but well taught. Russell the teacher, says some of his patrons, or who ought to be patrons, are opposed to him—he knows not why. There is a disposition to boycott Russell by some of the colored patrons. through division and prejudice. I am sorry about this.”

Warren Sentinel, Volume 34, Number 47, 27 March 1903

“The colored school at Browntown had to be closed for want of scholars. I do not know what is the matter. I learned indirectly that factions and jealousies between the two colored churches at Browntown is partly the cause. The trustees should refuse another year to furnish a teacher, unless the colored people at that place would give some guarantee they would patronize it.”

Other information about the Browntown “colored” population in the immediate postbellum years is hard to come by but here is one episode that shines some light on their experiences:

“With slavery abolished and rights restored some blacks moved quickly to establish their independence while others faced many difficulties with their newly formed freedom... One black Warren County resident remembers an older relative telling her “Our master called us all in and told us we were free, he said he couldn’t afford to take care of us anymore”. They had never been off the farm. They were given some supplies and they took off walking. They slept in the fields and “ate the things that were good to eat.” They ended up in Browntown. The husband would go out into the woods and find bark to sell to the tannery in order to live and survive”

(Source: Freedom Road: Warren County’s Black History, 1836-1988, by Betty Kilby Fisher)

If you can shed any further light on this period of our local history, please contact Brian Wilkinson by email at [bwilkinson57@verizon.net](mailto:bwilkinson57@verizon.net) or call him on 703 389 7288.