



# “Along the Gooney”

Browntown Community Center Association

April, 2025

Vol. 33 No. 04 Editors: Jackie Hodgkiss [Jackie.BCCA@gmail.com](mailto:Jackie.BCCA@gmail.com) & Tom Lacombe [tomlacombe@comcast.net](mailto:tomlacombe@comcast.net)

## **BCCA Board of Directors - 2025**

President	Martha Buracker	540-671-6349
Vice. Pres.	Mary McKinney	540-635-4725
Secretary	Kristin Pence	540-230-1155
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Trustees	Allan Brockway	540 635-7783
	Denny Pennington	540 635-5568
	Wes Deavers	540-631-0016

- Apr. 1<sup>st</sup> Tues. April Fools Day
- Apr. 13<sup>th</sup> Sun. 1:00 Izaak Walton Road Cleanup
- Apr. 14<sup>th</sup> Mon. BCCA Public Meeting 7:30p.m.
- Apr. 19<sup>th</sup> Easter Sunday
- Apr. 26<sup>th</sup> Sat. Redbud Festival
- Apr 28<sup>th</sup> Mon. Deadline for May newsletter

## **Browntown Baptist Church**

12 Browntown Road  
Bentonville, VA 22610

Pastor: Sherman Kaipha Brown

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

Check out Browntown Baptist Church’s new 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

Much appreciation to church member Tracy Abbott for his hard work on our website. Stay tuned for more updates. Below is the link.

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

## **Cool Spring Church of God**

Pastor: Jeff Fletcher

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

## **Limeton Community Church**

9 Limeton Main St. Bentonville, VA

Pastor Lorne Fyfe

SS at 10 and service at 11

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## Obituaries

**Joan Carol (Burkhart) Lewis**, from Front Royal, passed on March 12 at Inova Fairfax Hosp. She was the daughter of the late Clyde Burkhart, Sr. and Mattie (Alger) Burkhart. She was the wife of the late Kenny Lewis. She leaves behind a daughter, Andrea Weakley and husband Charlie; and granddaughters, Madison, Kenna, and Destiny. Joan also leaves brothers-in-law, Chester Lewis (Peggy) of Westerville, OH and Richard Lewis (Stephanie) of Sault Ste Marie, MI; and sister-in-law, Gloria Burkhart. She was preceded in death by her brother, Clyde V. Burkhart, Jr. Joan was raised in Front Royal, and graduated from John Mosby in '63. She met her husband Kenny and they were married June 3, 1967. They resided together in Manassas and raised Andrea.

**Samuel Jackson Baggarly**, 82, of Front Royal, passed on Feb. 28 at Hidden Springs Senior Living in Limeton. Samuel was born in the Old Johnson's Nursing Home in Front Royal, son of the late Samuel Brown Baggarly and Hazel Virginia Partlow Baggarly. Samuel was a native of Browntown, before moving to Front Royal. He was a graduate of John S. Mosby, Class of '61. Samuel furthered his education in accounting and graduated from Shenandoah College and VCU, receiving his Bachelor's degree. Samuel did taxes for many people in the Warren County area. He was gifted with numbers, dates, and birthdays. Samuel was on the board of directors of Virginia Savings Bank, was secretary and treasure of the magazine Advocate Messenger and worked on the reunion committee of John S. Mosby Academy for many years. He was a member of the Old Carroll Primitive Baptist Church in Point of Rocks, MD. Surviving is a sister, Dorothy Baggarly of Woodbridge, VA. Memorial Gifts may be made to the American Diabetes Ass'n., P.O. Box 7023, Merrifield, VA 22116 or to the Old Carroll Primitive Baptist Church, 1519 Ballenger Creek Pike, Point of Rocks, MD 21777.

**Doris Dodson Smedley**, 73, of Front Royal, passed on Feb. 28, at home. Doris was born in Front Royal to the late Floyd Lee Dodson Sr. and Sidney Annabelle Sealock Dodson. She graduated from WCHS, Class of '69 and was formerly a teacher's aide at A.S. Rhodes. She was a clerk for the J.J. Newberry's store and was a day care provider in her home for area teacher's for 22 years. She assembled papers with her husband for the Washington Post and was a member of Riverton Church. She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, John H. Smedley Sr.; brother, Floyd Lee Dodson, Jr.;

*continued on next column*

## O.J. Rudacille Gen. Mdse.

Check us out on Facebook for  
**Browntown History**

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**Deadline for May News: Apr.  
28th**

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 center line.**  
**Watch out for Tractors Hauling Hay**

grandson Wesley Smedley; sisters-in-law, Geneva Mae "Sally" Stogdale, Jimmye Ann Dodson, Kathleen Smedley, Carol Smedley, Phyllis Smedley and Judith Smedley; and brothers-in-law, Leonard Smedley, Donnie Smedley and Benjamin Stogdale. Surviving are two sons, John H. Smedley Jr. of Front Royal and Christopher Kelley Smedley and his wife Linda of Strasburg; two daughters, Desiree Nicole Smedley of Front Royal and Jessica Lesley Margaret Pinker and husband Jason of Nokesville; two brothers-in-law, Charles Smedley of Front Royal and Winn Smedley of Browntown; 11 grandchildren, Brittney, Alyssa, Deadra "DD", Diane, Evan, Preston, Chase, Alex, Ethan, Noah and Cameron; and 14 great-grandchildren. Memorial gifts may be made to Humane Society of Warren County, 1245 Progress Drive, Front Royal, VA 22630.

## GOONEY VALLEY HISTORY CLUB THERE IS STILL TIME TO GET YOUR 2025 HISTORIC BROWNTOWN NOTECARDS

GET YOURS AT OJ'S BEFORE WE SELL OUT.

VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE TO READ MORE STORIES ABOUT  
THE HISTORY OF OUR VALLEY AND ITS PEOPLE:

<https://gooneyvalleyhistoryclub.com>



### The Browntown Union Church, as it appeared in 1929

More on the Village of Browntown by Dan Pezzoni. This is from his draft of a survey done for The Browntown Historic District: 82 Browntown Road. Browntown Union Church. The church originally served Methodist, Lutheran, and Old and New School Baptist congregations on a rotating basis, hence the term "union church." The site was acquired from James W. and Zoe Boyd in June 1882 and the building is thought to have been built soon after. Most recently the Old School Baptists and the Agape Love Baptist Church worshipped here, but currently no congregation meets here and the Browntown Baptist Church serves as caretaker of the building. According to Renee O'Connell, the church was built by Jacob Masemer for \$1,600 and was dedicated November 10, 1882. According to longtime Browntown resident and former church trustee Sam Baggaly, the original steeple spire was removed in 1984. The current spire was added in 1996 through the fundraising efforts of Anna Rae Rudacille White in memory of Raymond H. Rudacille. When the church was dedicated it was said the bell had the sweetest ring in the valley. Far in the background, I believe we can see Effie Manuel's house.

On March 5<sup>th</sup> we experienced high gusty winds which took down the steeple on the oldest church in Browntown. Luckily no one was injured, and it appears the roof itself was spared any major damage. The belfry is now open to the weather, and hopefully that will be taken care of soon.



To the left you can see the Union Church as it appeared in 2021; even then you can see the steeple leaning a bit. The photos below show the March 5<sup>th</sup> damage





# APRIL,2025 UPDATE - THE BEARR GROUP “KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY SAFE”

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Facebook: BEARR Group Instagram: @bearr\_group Twitter: @bearr\_group



## 911 REFLECTIVE SIGNS -- HAVE YOU GOT YOURS YET?

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## Reminder from Warren County Fire & Rescue, March 20, 2025

One year ago, Warren County, Virginia's tranquil landscape was transformed into a scene of devastation as several brush fires swept across the region. The blazes, fueled by dry conditions and strong winds, burned 120-plus acres, threatened homes, and tested the resilience of local communities.

“On March 20, 2024, reports of small fires quickly escalated into a full-fledged emergency. Strong gusts and a lack of rainfall created the perfect conditions for the flames to spread rapidly. Firefighters from Warren County worked to contain the inferno, facing treacherous terrain and unpredictable fire behavior. Many residents were forced to evacuate as the flames inched closer to their homes. Emergency responders acted swiftly, coordinating efforts to prevent loss of life and minimize property damage. A temporary shelter was opened at Rivermont Fire Department for residents to escape. Warren County Fire and Rescue worked into the night to contain the fires.”

While nature slowly healed, the lessons from the disaster serve as a stark reminder of the power and unpredictability of wildfires. Remember, the Virginia 4 PM Burn Law is in effect through April 30th. No burning until after 4:00 PM; fires must be attended at all times, and no fuel should be added or fire started after midnight. Any fire should be completely extinguished before leaving it.

\*\*Blue Mountain Subdivision and High Knob Subdivision are currently no-burn areas year-round.

**PHONE BEFORE YOU BURN!** Call Warren County Communications Center at [540-635-4128](tel:540-635-4128) to let them know you are planning to start burning brush.



Red Flag Warnings have already been issued this year for areas west of the Blue Ridge, based on dry conditions, fallen trees, and low humidity “which may result in favorable conditions for the rapid spread of fires”.

All of us need to be prepared for a worst case scenario. You can get started by putting together a Wildfire Action Plan for your family:

[https://readyforwildfire.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/wildfire\\_action\\_plan\\_2024-update.pdf](https://readyforwildfire.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/wildfire_action_plan_2024-update.pdf)

**Browntown Community Center**

*Come enjoy the day at the Annual Redbud Festival in scenic downtown Browntown. This annual event benefits the Browntown Community Center*

(Old Browntown Schoolhouse). Shop for Crafts, bid at the Silent Auction, vote for your favorite Antique Car, buy some plants, watch the ducks race and enjoy the wonderful food and great entertainment. A great time for all! **Free Admission and Free Parking!**

**Entertainment Schedule**

(Bring Chairs!)

**10:30 -2:30— Ryan Jewel**  
(Break at 1 for Duck Race)

**1 pm— Gooney Creek Duck Race!**

**2:30 Silent Auction Ends**  
**Nashville Recording Artist and**  
**Warren County Native!**  
**Ryan Jewel!**



*Sponsored by .....*



***Browntown's Annual***

**Redbud Festival**



**Saturday, April 26th 9a.m.-3 p.m.**

**Highlights**

- Redbud Seedling Trees
- Silent Auction—ends at 2:30 pm
- Craft Sales—two locations!  
*Browntown Community Center*  
*Browntown Baptist Church*  
*Fellowship Hall*
- Gooney Creek Duck Race 1pm
- Annual Antique Car Show  
sponsored by Manor Line Ranch!
- Full Kitchen Menu! Bake Sale!
- Browntown Museum Open
- Live Outdoor music featuring **Ryan Jewel** beginning at 10:30 am till 2:30 p.m

**Information:**

For Craft Vendor Entry Forms or more information contact : Emma Bricker at browntownbowl@gmail.com  
For Car Show Entry Forms, Silent Auction Donations or other questions contact: Martha Buracker at 540-671-6349 or marthaburacker@gmail.com

Browntown Baptist Fellowship Hall Craft Space  
contJayne Guilford 540-636-4231

**Gooney Creek Duck Race**

1 pm Race Time!



**\$5 per ticket**

**Available at:**

O.J. Rudacille General Store  
in Browntown 636-2149

and Martha Buracker-Weichert Realtors in  
Front Royal 671-6349

and at the  
Browntown Community Center on the day  
of the festival.

**OTHER INFO**

Please leave the pets at home!

Sorry no Alcohol

Free Shuttle from back parking lot  
to Community Center via  
Side by Sides

Bring Chairs to watch the Show!

**Directions:** From Front Royal take  
Rt. 340 South 1/2 mile and turn left  
onto Browntown Road.  
Go 8 miles to the Village of Brown-  
town.

96 Browntown Rd, Browntown, VA

Find us on online at-  
[www.browntowncommunity.com](http://www.browntowncommunity.com)  
and on Facebook



Greetings Fellow Browntowners,

Spring is here! And with the warm weather our Redbud Trees will soon be in full bloom. We are gearing up for our Annual Redbud Festival on Saturday, April 26 and are looking forward to seeing all of you either as a volunteer or a guest! We definitely need the community's support and I realize not everyone can make it to our monthly meetings. So here is a list of ways you can help! If you see something that you can help with, send me an email at [marthaburacker@gmail.com](mailto:marthaburacker@gmail.com) or give me a call or text at 540-671-6349.

1. Help set up (the week of the event).
2. Donate an item for the Silent Auction.
3. Be a sponsor! We can hang your business's banner on our perimeter fence the day of the festival for \$50.
4. Bake something for our Bake Sale (If we can get enough donations we would like to do a Cake Walk) Patsy Pennington is our Bake Sale Coordinator so give her a call at 540-635-5568.
5. Buy a Duck for the Duck Race. They are \$5 each. First place wins \$100, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place is \$50 and 3<sup>rd</sup> Place wins \$25.
6. Volunteer the day of the Festival.
7. Antique Car Show Coordinator
8. Share our Facebook Page about the Festival.
9. Let any of your crafty friends know we still have some vendor space left outside at the community center and inside at the Browntown Baptist Church Fellowship Hall.

We hope this year is our best ever and that will happen with your support!

Our Spring Yard Sale was a success with the Community Center netting about \$5,000 from our Yard Sale Items and Kitchen Sales. Thanks to everyone for your donations and for shopping! I also want to give a big shout out to Roxanne Campbell, Patsy Pennington, and Mary McKinney for receiving, unpacking, organizing and arranging all the donations. This is a huge job and its much appreciated. Also thanks to Amy Cornwell and Martha Buracker who helped with pricing and to Jessie Sprouse and Missy Moore for helping Roxanne in the kitchen! If you had a donation, but missed out on getting it down there, don't worry, we'll have another sale this fall. You can schedule a donation drop off with Patsy Pennington at 540-635-5568.

Let me know if you have any suggestions for future events at the center!

See you at the Redbud Festival!

Martha Buracker, President BCCA



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### **Alton W. Mathews 1913-1983**

Mary McKinney gave me this photo of Alton, most likely standing on the tracks in Bentonville. I believe Alton, among other things was a farmer, landlord, storekeeper and auctioneer. I found a Warren Sentinel article today from 1963 that tells of a Mathews Reunion to be held at Dickey Ridge, 300 to 500 guests were expected for the event. According to Alton the first Mathews to arrive in Warren County was Alexander, in 1746. Alton estimated there were three or four thousand descendants of this family, at the time of this reunion, one of the oldest and largest family lines in Virginia. According to Alton, Alexander came to America in 1706, emigrating from Northern Ireland. One of his eight children, Benjamin remained in the South River District.