

# Bethel Rural Community Organization

## Newsletter

www.bethelrural.org

December 2021

### 2022 BRCO Officers and Board Members

#### Officers

- President: Carol Litchfield
- Vice President : Greg Christopher
- Secretary: Beth Cook
- Treasurer: Mike McLean

#### Board Members::

- Frances Adamson
- Carol Litchfield
- Lucas Sorrells
- Pat Carr
- Eleanor Porter



#### Message from our outgoing president, Mike McLean



As we complete the past 2 years of lockdowns, masks, vaccinations, virus, variants, zoom calls, food pantry demand, flood relief efforts and a few in-person events I give thanks. I am thankful for the opportunity that I was given in January of 2020 to be the President of BRCO. For reasons that no one could have predicted, the past two years became an ongoing challenge each and every month as the variety of needs emerged in our community. Each month I asked myself how to lead our organization through these challenges, and always found that the answer was already present. The equation was simple, since the question was never if we can help, it was how we can help. BRCO exemplifies this principle naturally, and I am thankful for that opportunity to be part of this team.

When Stephanie Quis-Garrett recently announced her departure from the duties of our Treasurer position, I began to think about a new opportunity to contribute to BRCO. Discussions among the Board were productive, and now I will move to assume the role of Treasurer while Stephanie focuses on the Food Pantry and the large amount of work needed as we see the demand in our community increase significantly. With Carol Litchfield stepping up to lead BRCO as the new President in 2022, along with a strong Board, it seems like this is truly a win-win for each of us. Although there will be many more challenges, I believe that BRCO is in great hands to provide support in our community, and leadership for the future. Thanks to all and Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

#### Message from our incoming president, Carol Litchfield



As 2021 comes to a close, it is amazing to think about all that we have been through as individuals and as a community. While I look back and think about all of the challenges we faced, I cannot help but feel a sense of joy and relief that we were able to meet the challenges together, working alongside people we care about. It has been such a blessing to be able to contribute to the good works of a community organization that does so much to help those in need. I appreciate the opportunity to serve as BRCO President and am grateful to Mike McLean for the leadership he has provided and continues to provide. I look forward to working with each of you in the coming year. If you have ideas on new projects we should undertake or new opportunities we should pursue, please do not hesitate to bring your suggestions to me or the other Board members. As you gather

with family and friends in the coming weeks, I hope you will take time to enjoy the beauty of the season and the beauty of Bethel-- I know that's what I will be doing!

Carol Litchfield

Incoming President

## 2022 General Meetings

- Tuesday, January 11, 2022
- Tuesday, March 8, 2022
- Tuesday, May 10, 2022
- Tuesday, July 12, 2022
- Tuesday, September 13, 2022
- Tuesday, November 8, 2022



## BRCO's 2021 Tree on the Shelton House Tinsel Trail



The Shelton House Museum of NC Handicrafts in Waynesville, NC will conclude their 41st season on **December 5**, with their annual **Appalachian Family Christmas** event and opening of the **Tinsel Trail** for a month-long opportunity to safely get outside and enjoy the **Holiday Lights and Decorations**. Last year's BRCO tree was voted the "favorite tree" by the many visitors to the Tinsel Trail. The Tinsel Trail will be open through January 1, 2022. Stop by during the month of December and vote for BRCO's "Joys of Bethel" tree. Thanks to Tom and Kara Kolaski for decorating the tree and to Steve Sorrells for picking the tree and providing the hay.

## New Officers and Board Members Elected

Stephanie Quis-Garrett has resigned as BRCO's Treasurer effective 12/31/2021. At the November general meeting, Mike McLean was nominated and elected to fill the treasurer's position through 2022. Carol Litchfield was nominated and elected as President to complete Mike's term through 2022. Eleanor Porter was elected to serve a three-year term on the BRCO Board and Pat Carr was appointed to serve as the Presidential appointee on the Board.

Below are the officers and board members effective 1/1/2022:

### Officers:

- President - Carol Litchfield - term ending 12/31/2022
- Vice President - Greg Christopher - 2 year term ending 12/31/2022
- Secretary - Beth Cook - 2 year term ending 12/31/2022
- Treasurer - Mike McLean - term ending 12/31/2022

### Board:

- Pat Carr - 1 year term as Presidential appointee ending 12/31/2022
- Lucas Sorrells - 3 year term ending at 12/31/2023
- Frances Adamson - 2 year term ending 12/31/2022
- Eleanor Porter - 3 year term ending 12/31/2024
- Carol Litchfield - Presidential term ending 12/31/2022

## BRCO Members Presented with Certificates of Appreciation

At Bethel Rural Community Organization's (BRCO) November 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, the group recognized leaders whose contributions have enabled BRCO to function in spite of COVID and devastating flooding in the community.

Stephanie Quis-Garrett and Glenn Garrett are recognized for her role as Treasurer and Food Pantry Co-Chair and his assistance with the pantry and building maintenance. Both worked at the Blue Ridge Heritage Festival and with WNC Communities census project.

Tom Kolaski and Kara Kolaski received acknowledgement for his duties as Board Chair and for their work with

Beautification. Kara designed the rock garden and circle drive, and he assisted with the grant for that project. Both worked with the Tinsel Trail project at Shelton House which received first place honors at last year's event, yard sales, and recent clothing distribution.

Mike McLean, BRCO President, has led the organization so that, even during COVID and flooding, BRCO has maintained itself in good standing. McLean has worked tirelessly with Shelton House's Blue Ridge Heritage Festival, spearheading WNC Communities census project, and directing assistance to flood victims. In addition, Mike has presented programs to membership while simultaneously procuring speakers for meetings.



Pictured left to right: Tom Kolaski, Kara Kolaski, Carol Litchfield, Mike McLean



**The BRCO Officers and Board would like to hear from you. We want to have programs at our general meeting that will be of interest to our members. Let us know what speakers you would like to hear, what topics are of interest to you and any other suggestions you might have for programs. Email**

**your suggestions to our secretary at [ehc78@bellsouth.net](mailto:ehc78@bellsouth.net) and your suggestions will be shared with the BRCO officers and board members.**



## BRCO Committee News

### Rural Preservation Chair - Carol Litchfield

#### Lake Logan River Cane Planting Protects River Bank While Supporting Cherokee Artisans

Earlier this year, the Director of Camp Henry at Lake Logan Conference Center applied for and received a Creation Care grant from the Episcopal Church to plant native river cane along the river bank just above Lake Logan. On November 12, students at Warren Wilson College harvested the river cane (which grows in abundance on their campus property) and transported the plants to Lake Logan. On November 13, the students joined Bethel area volunteers (including Carol Litchfield representing BRCO) in planting the river cane.



Carol Litchfield waters newly planted river cane

The goal of the project was to restore an ecologically significant riparian buffer of river cane that could later be utilized by Cherokee artisans for basket weaving and other crafts. In addition, the Director at Camp Henry plans to showcase the value of the river cane planting by developing a conservation curriculum for use in outdoor programs.



Two dozen volunteers helped with the river cane planting on November 13.

Adam Griffith was on-site to demonstrate the best methods for

ensuring a successful planting. Adam is the Project Director for Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources. He works closely with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and is stationed in the Cooperative Extension Service office in Cherokee. "We chose this site for the planting before the August 17 flooding occurred," said Adam. "When they told me that the flood deposited sand on the site, I was ecstatic. That's exactly what we want—a site where sand deposits occur naturally. The river cane helps to slow the flood waters enough that sand and silt fall out of suspension and accumulate. The river cane rhizomes will then grow into the sand deposits, and over time, the river cane will build a natural levee."

Adam was very interested in hearing about the good works of BRCO and even offered to present a program at one of our meetings in 2022.

Carol Litchfield has been attending meetings of the Creation Care Alliance of Western NC which is open to all faith communities that appreciate God's gift of creation and want to be better stewards of the earth. The Alliance brings together morally-driven citizens and organizations to support and expand creation care efforts through inspiration, education, service, and advocacy. At the October meeting of the Alliance, the upcoming river cane planting at Lake Logan was discussed, which is how Carol found out about it. Carol will continue to bring Creation Care opportunities to the attention of BRCO members—all are welcome to participate!



In one hand, Adam Griffith holds a harvested river cane that Cherokee artisans will split lengthwise to use in basket-weaving and, in his other hand, holds a river cane rhizome. Rhizomes grow horizontally through sand deposits on the river bank to create a riparian buffer that benefits wildlife and protects against erosion.

## BRCO Committee News (continued)

### Historic Preservation Chair - Evelyn Coltman

Doug Chambers, videographer, filmed a session at the original Spring Hill School with former student, Lowell Grogan. Grogan taught in Haywood County Schools, primarily Bethel Middle School, for 39 years. The Spring Hill School started as a log structure in the late 1800s approximately where the Spring Hill Church parsonage is located today on Murray Road. Then it moved to be situated where today's church is now located. In 1925, it moved to the location that is now the home of David and Teresa Mitchell who graciously allowed us to film outside and inside. Their commentary will also be on the video. The school merged with Bethel Elementary School in the early 1950s. We are hoping to complete filming next year of the *Historic Schools of Bethel* DVD. Grogan also relayed a brief history of Spring Hill Baptist Church.

Artist Janice Swanger took over the task, after the passing of Nick DePaolo, of painting the Blanton-Reece Log Cabin that sits between Lake Logan and Sunburst Campground. The pastel art piece faithfully depicts the 1821 cabin that is, we believe, the oldest standing log structure in Haywood County. The Shook-Smathers House is older but is a framed building. Village Framer should have the framed print ready by the January meeting. Thanks to Carol Litchfield for photographing the painting which is now on our website and is available for purchase.



Blanton-Reece Log Cabin art print by Janice Swanger

Sewah Studios is making the historic marker for the 1891 Truss Bridge #79, NC's oldest metal truss bridge and the only NC truss bridge that contains decorative elements. Its unique Phoenix column construction makes this bridge rare nationally. The marker is due to arrive mid-December, and we will install next year. This historic signage will be BRCO's sixth local historic marker. Thanks to Carroll Jones for writing the successful National Register application in 2019, creating the historic marker statement, and for assisting with the NCDOT clearance for the marker.

New College, Springdale School, and High Valley Camp once existed in a farm setting where today's Cruso Country Club is located. New College, Springdale School, and High Valley Camp were the focus of the Historic Preservation Committee's *From New College to Springdale* DVD that relayed information by Dick Alexander and received an NC Society of Historians award in 2016. Linda Dorland recently contacted the committee with information about her father, Dr. Warren Lamb, who was a professor there from 1937-1939. (continued on next page)



## BRCO Committee News (continued)

The school was a branch of Columbia University's Teachers College that promoted teacher training via a five-pronged program: (1) studying academics and writing a thesis (2) spending at least one summer working and studying on the farm in Cruso (3) studying abroad and learning at least one foreign language (4) incorporating workplace training (a job) into the schedule (5) participating in a year's internship that involved teaching under supervision. Historic Preservation Committee member, Mike Clark who lives in Montana, relayed a massive amount of material about one of the other professors, Morris Mitchell, who went on to found Macedonia community in Georgia, the Putney Graduate School, and Friends World College. Clark relayed that his great uncle, Luther Pless was the farm manager during that period and built several staff homes for the facility.

**Maintenance Committee - Ted Carr, Chair** - The Maintenance Committee has been busy trimming the shrubbery at the side of the building. Glen Garrett and Pat Carr are helping with the project.

**Benevolence Committee - Lucas Sorrells, Chair** - The committee has been working to identify community members affected by the August flood and we have started distributing some funds. Ted Carr purchased a bed for one family impacted by the flood. If you know of anyone affected by the flood, please let Lucas Sorrells, Ted Carr, or Stephanie Quis-Garrett know. We have also taken checks to Bethel Elementary and Bethel Middle School for student Christmas shopping.

**Food Pantry Committee - Julie Green and Stephanie Quis-Garrett, Co-Chairs**

The Food Pantry served 39 families and 93 individuals in September and 39 families and 89 individuals in October, Year to date 464 families have been served.



Wishing you all a safe  
and happy holiday season!



Make plans now to attend our general meeting January 11, 2022!



YOU DON'T  
WANT TO  
MISS THIS!

