

Bethel Rural Community Organization

Newsletter

www.bethelrural.org

December 2022

2023 BRCO Officers and Board Members

Officers

- President: Carol Litchfield
- Vice President : Greg Christopher
- Secretary: Roxie Billings
- Treasurer: Mike McLean

Board Members:

- Frances Adamson
- Carol Litchfield
- Lucas Sorrells
- Eleanor Porter
- Brent McKee



A Word from Our President, Carol Litchfield



So much has happened since our November 8th BRCO Meeting that I hardly know where to begin! On November 12th, I had the pleasure of attending the WNC Honors Award Program with Evelyn Coltman, Pat and Ted Carr, Stephanie Quis-Garrett and Glenn Garrett, and Eleanor Porter and Don Brown. I was cautiously optimistic that BRCO would advance from the second to the third honor level this year based on our many accomplishments and the valuable programs and services we had delivered. Imagine my surprise to learn that we had actually advanced to the 4th and highest level, *and* we had achieved Best in Class, *and* we were also the first ever recipient of the WNC Communities Impact Award. These honors are especially meaningful considering the long hours that our members put in, often under hectic and trying circumstances, to deliver our “regular” programs and services while also being responsive to the Flood Relief needs of a devastated community.

A few days later, I received an e-mail from Elizabeth Brazas, President of The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina. She wrote: “We congratulate Bethel Rural Community Organization for being awarded a Human Services grant from The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina.” Back in September, Stephanie Quis-Garrett had completed the grant application which requested funding for BRCO to expand its Food Pantry operation. The \$20,000 grant will be used to expand the Food Pantry storage space within our building, add a new freezer, improve the HVAC system, and enhance the work area to ensure that Food Pantry volunteers are able to carry out their tasks in an efficient manner. The good work of our Food Pantry volunteers is much appreciated by the families who receive the food boxes each month. I look forward to working with Stephanie and the volunteers and others in BRCO in implementing the Food Pantry improvements during 2023.

Adam Griffith will be our speaker at our January 10th meeting. Adam is the Project Director for Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources and is stationed in Cherokee with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. He will explain how river cane can be planted to help stabilize stream banks and also how that same river cane can be used as a future source of material by Cherokee artisans for making baskets and other crafts. I look forward to seeing everyone on January 10th. In the meantime, enjoy the beauty of the season and the many blessings that our community has to offer.

Carol Litchfield, President

BRCO Wins Top Honors at the 73rd Annual WNC Honors Award Program

This year's WNC Honors Award Program occurred on Saturday, November 12th in Asheville. Honors Award applications had been submitted from 64 community organizations, including BRCO.

All participating communities received \$600 to support their efforts. Additionally, communities were assessed across six different competencies and awarded a designation of Trillium, Mountain Laurel, Redbud, or White Oak level according to their demonstrated capacity to lead and serve.

BRCO was the first and only community to achieve the White Oak level. At this top level, communities have significant board training, an annual budget of at least \$50,000, active committees with Chairs, a high level of excellence in their program offerings, and have helped another community develop a program or capacity.

WNC Communities also gives out Best in Class Awards to the stand-out communities at each level. BRCO was awarded the White Oak Best in Class Award and took home an additional \$2000. BRCO was recognized as Best in Class due to its members' involvement in the Flood Relief effort which was initiated in August 2021 in the wake of the devastation caused by Tropical Storm Fred.

In addition, BRCO took home the WNC Communities Impact Award for its collaboration with local produce stand operators to establish the Fresh Produce Coupon Program. This innovative program enables more than 40 families (BRCO Food Pantry clients) to purchase fresh produce at local produce stands using the coupons provided to them by BRCO. This not only adds nutritional value to family meals but also boosts the economic viability of the produce stands. BRCO reimburses the produce stand operators for the coupons they collect.



BRCO wins the White Oak Best in Class Award at the 73rd Annual WNC Honors Awards. Evelyn Coltman, holding the award, spent many long hours gathering, organizing, and entering all of the information that was needed to complete the BRCO Honors Award application.



BRCO was one of 10 Community Clubs to have a special project featured on a poster in the Best Practices Gallery prior to the start of the Honors Award Program. Carol Litchfield stood next to the poster that described the BRCO Flood Relief effort and shared information about the project with attendees.



Ted Carr with the WNC Communities Impact Award – Ted was the one who initiated the Fresh Produce Coupon Program and convinced the produce stand operators to participate.



Mark Your Calendar

Don't sit on the sidelines...Get involved!
Important Dates to Enter in Your 2023 Calendar

Board meetings at 6:00 p.m.

Monday, January 2, 2023

Monday, March 6, 2023

Monday, May 1, 2023

Monday, July 10, 2023

Monday, September 11, 2023

Monday, November 6, 2023

General Meetings at 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, January 10, 2023

Tuesday, March 14, 2023

Tuesday, May 9, 2023

Tuesday, July 11, 2023

Tuesday, September 12, 2023

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

REMINDER: E-mail notices of our meetings will be sent out by our new Secretary, Roxie Billings. Her e-mail address is RSBillings51@gmail.com (be sure to check your spam folder just in case her e-mails get sent there). Thank You, Roxie!

Notices of Board Meetings will be sent to the five Board Members, the BRCO Officers, and the BRCO Committee Chairs. Notices of General Meetings will be sent to everyone on the BRCO distribution list.

Visit the Shelton House Tinsel Trail and Vote for the BRCO Christmas Tree!



The Shelton House in Waynesville is once again hosting its annual Tinsel Trail of Christmas Trees for a month-long opportunity to get outside and enjoy the holiday lights and decorations. There are more decorated trees this year, and the line of trees begins along the sidewalk by the parking lot. The BRCO tree is the second one on your right as you drive into the parking lot. Frances Adamson and Carol Litchfield decorated the tree using the BRCO ornaments from last year, many of which were hand-made by Kara Kolaski and the Beautification Committee. Please stop by during the month of December and vote for BRCO's "Joys of Bethel" tree! A box is located on the porch of the Shelton House to deposit ballots.



Frances Adamson with the BRCO Christmas Tree

Certificate of Appreciation Awards Presented by Carol Litchfield, BRCO President

Pat and Ted Carr were presented with BRCO Appreciation Awards at the November BRCO Board Meeting. They have contributed to the success of BRCO programs in many different ways over the years. Pat was a key player in establishing BRCO as a non-profit organization, served as BRCO Secretary for many years, and as BRCO Board Chair for several terms, including during 2022. She and Ted helped out with the Cold Mountain Heritage Tour, participated in roadside cleanup and flood relief efforts, and worked to enhance BRCO good governance practices.



Ted and Pat Carr

Ted has served as President and Board Chair in the past and currently serves as Chair of the Building and Grounds/Maintenance Committee. He has conducted a number of BRCO renovation projects and, earlier this year, was instrumental in making WiFi available in the parking lot outside of the BRCO Fellowship Hall. Ted has served on every committee in the organization and does so with much enthusiasm and energy. Thanks to Ted's efforts in establishing the Fresh Produce Coupon Program, BRCO received the WNC Communities Impact Award in 2022.



L to R: Beth Cook, Roger Riddle, Kaye Riddle, Carol Litchfield, BRCO President

At the November BRCO Membership Meeting, Carol Litchfield presented Appreciation Awards to Beth Cook and to Kaye and Roger Riddle. For many years, Beth has dedicated her time and talent to sharing and promoting the good works of BRCO. She transformed a barely functional, rudimentary website into one that is professional and exemplary of what a website should be. Beth developed an outstanding newsletter for BRCO which she edits and produces every other month. She also serves as primary photographer for the organization. In addition, Beth has served as BRCO secretary and helps to keep track of membership contact information. She has also presented informative programs at BRCO meetings, including ones on the BRCO web site and on how to set up a family history book.

Kaye and Roger Riddle have been instrumental players on the Beautification Committee for many years. They perform the task of decorating the tables for each BRCO membership meeting. Kaye makes beautiful flower arrangements that are the chief fundraising effort for the Beautification Committee. She is always willing to share her wealth of knowledge about planting and caring for live plants. Kaye also participated in the BRCO Historic Preservation filming about the historic schools of Bethel. Roger helps out with all of the tasks that need to be done ahead of time to prepare the Fellowship Hall for BRCO Meetings. He was also responsible for the Beautification Committee project of painting the entire exterior of the community center and much of the interior.

BRCO Committee News

Historic Preservation - Evelyn Coltman, Chair

Doug Chambers and Evelyn Coltman conducted three filming sessions for the *Historic Schools of Bethel* DVD:

- Ricki Rogers and Keith Rogers at Piney Grove United Methodist Church in Stamey Cove - this location as the site of one of Bethel's early schools. The cousins relayed valuable historical data about the school and the three churches that have existed on this site. The interview also captured their memories of attending Bethel School as well as their recollections about the Stamey Cove Golf Course that the Rogers family operated for decades.
- The following individuals relayed memories of attending Bethel School: Frances De Bord Adamson, Catherine Mashburn Chambers, Charles Chambers, Evelyn McNeil Coltman, Evelyn Edwards Lanning, Frances Trull Mease, Ruth Hightower Pressley, and Kaye Sloan Riddle.

Another session about Cecil and Cruso Schools filmed the recollections of Ray Warren from Cecil School and Judy Grogan Heatherly and Mary Grogan Wells from Cruso School.

The filming session with Keith Rogers and Ricki Rogers enabled us to secure a lovely painting by A. E. Allen of the second Piney Grove United Methodist Church that will be added to our website and art collection. This church replaced an 1800s log structure, but this white chapel burned in the mid-1900s and was replaced by the current brick structure.



Keith and Ricki Rogers conducted a walk-through of Piney Grove United Methodist Church Cemetery, and they provided a historical account of the cemetery history that was written by Nannie Smathers.

Carol Litchfield developed driving instructions to reach the cemetery, Evelyn Coltman wrote historical data about the cemetery, and Beth Cook added the Piney Grove Cemetery information to our website data as the third cemetery listing of the twenty-two cemeteries in Bethel.

Link to the cemetery: <https://www.bethelrural.org/about-bethel-community/bethel-cemeteries-page-4.html>

Link to the history by Nannie Smathers: <https://www.bethelrural.org/about-bethel-community/>

The Historic Preservation Committee has contacted NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources archaeologist Melissa Timo regarding historic cemeteries. We have asked her to determine how to proceed with locating and accessing the two slave cemeteries that existed in Bethel: Cathey Slave Cemetery off of Highway #110 and the Edmonston Slave Cemetery off of Lake Logan Road.

BRCO Committee News (Historic Preservation Committee Continued)

The Historic Preservation Committee has contacted NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources archaeologist Melissa Timo regarding historic cemeteries. We have asked her to determine how to proceed with locating and accessing the two slave cemeteries that existed in Bethel: Cathey Slave Cemetery off of Highway #110 and the Edmonston Slave Cemetery off of Lake Logan Road.

The Historic Preservation Committee placed its sixth historic marker at Truss Bridge #79 on Lake Logan Road. Previous markers include Osborne Boundary Oak, Bethel Presbyterian Church, Lenoir's Creek Farm, Pigeon Gap Watering Hole, and Calvin Filmore Christopher.



Thanks to Haywood County commissioners in the late 1800s who authorized construction of the bridge and to Carol Litchfield whose research of commission meeting minutes revealed the vote, to Dean & Westbrook engineers of New York, who designed the bridge, to the Phoenix Bridge Company of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, who manufactured the bridge, to Bill Terrell who determined the location of the original 1891 bridge on Highway #110 near Jukebox Junction, to original community men who moved the bridge in the 1920s, to C. Hanchey whose research detailed and documented unique features of the bridge, to Philan Medford for initial efforts to save the bridge from dismantling, to BRCO for conducting a series of successful community meetings with NCDOT aimed at saving the bridge, to La Nae McCracken for contacting NCDOT regarding restoration of the bridge, to Ava Chambers Barrett and Troy Hargrove for recording the history of the bridge in the *Walking in the Footsteps* DVD, to Carroll Jones for conducting the research and write-up to secure the National Register of Historic Places designation, to the NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources and the NC Department of Archives and History for coordinating the National Register of Historic Places application, to community members who participated in a program to celebrate National Register designation in 2019, to Doug Chambers for filming the celebration, to Sewah Studios for creating the marker, to NCDOT for allowing us to locate the marker near the highway on Lake Logan Road, to Tracy Hargrove and Zac Guy at Appalachian Antique Hardwoods for storing the 300-pound marker for months, and to Lucas Sorrells and his son, Brock, for mounting the historic marker, and to Beth Cook for placing information about the marker on the website.

<https://www.bethelrural.org/Historic-Preservation/historic-markers.html>

The Justice House in Cathey Cove is a historic treasure owned by BRCO members, Will and Lori Thompsen, who have made the extraordinary effort to preserve, restore, and secure conservation easements from Preservation NC for the house, other structures on the property, and the landscape. A plaque states that this property is under the protective covenants of the Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, Inc.



BRCO Committee News

Rural Preservation - Carol Litchfield, Chair

Ted Carr and Carol Litchfield recently met with Barclay Taylor who teaches the FFA students at Bethel Middle School. FFA is in need of a storage unit to place beside the greenhouse on the school grounds. It will be a convenient place to store the items needed by the students as they plan and implement their FFA projects throughout the year. BRCO will purchase the storage unit and help coordinate the effort to get it in place early in 2023.

Benevolence Committee - Lucas Sorrells, Chair

The benevolence committee helped with one power bill. Lucas delivered checks to the Middle & Elementary Schools on Thursday, December 1st for the student Christmas shopping. Lucas has indicated that he would like to pass the torch on the Benevolence Committee chair position. If anyone would be willing to chair the committee, Lucas will help them with the transition. If you are interested in chairing this committee please let either Lucas or Carol Litchfield know of your interest.

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

Stephanie reported that during September and October the Food Pantry served 100 families and 250 individuals. 150 man-hours were contributed by members working at the Food Pantry.

Beautification Committee - Carol Litchfield, Acting Chair

The Committee is in the process of identifying the tasks that need to be done to maintain and enhance the interior of the building and will prioritize the tasks that need to be completed in 2023. All suggestions are welcome.

Building and Grounds - Ted Carr Chair

Brent McKee and Gina Valeri spent many long hours preparing the new entrance door, making adjustments to the entrance, and installing the door. The new door provides an attractive entrance for the Fellowship Hall and has greatly enhanced the ease of moving food pantry carts in and out of the building. BRCO has been paying for lawn mowing since September and will budget for lawn mowing through 2023. Ted Carr will be working with the new pastor of the church to put a church lease in place for 2023.



**Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year!!**