

# Bethel Rural Community Organization Newsletter

www.bethelrural.org

February 2023

## 2023 BRCO Officers and Board Members

### Officers

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

### Board Members:

- Frances Adamson, Chair
- Carol Litchfield
- Eleanor Porter, Vice Chair
- Brent McKee
- Vacant



## A Word from Our President, Carol Litchfield



The new year is only a few weeks old, and already BRCO is fully engaged in activities of all types. In addition to our “regular” service activities, we are in the process of closing out the last of our Flood Relief projects and are also gearing up to implement our Food Pantry expansion. The expansion is covered by a \$20,000 Human Services grant from the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina. 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.

In December, we were saddened to learn of the passing of Josh Sorrells. Josh loved farming and owned and operated Cold Mountain Nursery with his wife and parents. On January 11, Lucas Sorrells notified us that, due to his work life changing over the past year and the recent passing of his brother Josh, he would have a lot more on his plate than in years past. Lucas expressed that he needed to resign from all positions that he holds at BRCO through the 2023 calendar year. We certainly understand Lucas’ need to step back from his BRCO duties. He has been a great help to us for many years, whether he was overseeing the planning of our Bethel 5K/Half Marathon Races, serving as Chair of our Benevolence and Education Advancement Committees, or serving on our BRCO Board. Our hearts go out to Lucas and his family. We look forward to welcoming him back in the future, when he is ready to become more involved with BRCO once again.

Preston Jacobsen will be the speaker at our March 14th meeting. Preston is the Executive Director of Haywood Waterways Association, a position he has held since last June following the departure of longtime Executive Director Eric Romaniszyn. He previously served on the HWA Board from 2011 – 2013. Before managing environmental nonprofits, Preston worked as a Sustainability Manager for the University of Tennessee and Haywood Community College. He will share with us how HWA will be helping to assess areas in the Upper Pigeon River Watershed to determine the best locations for restoration and flood mitigation projects.

I look forward to seeing everyone on March 14th. In the meantime, stay safe and keep warm as you enjoy the many blessings that our community has to offer.

Carol Litchfield, President

## Fellowship Hall Rental

Folks in the community are realizing how easy, how convenient, and how wonderful it is to rent the Fellowship Hall and not have their home messed up with a party. Word is spreading much faster now than in past years. That is in part because the extremely satisfied users tell their friends. Announcements on the WPTL Flea Market help also. You, as BRCO members can help, too, by mentioning it at church, or at your bridge club, on the golf course, or by organizing a party yourself. Members pay only half of the ridiculously low fee of \$80 for all day. Look at the two photos below. See how much fun they are having and they didn't have their home torn up in the process. Direct your friends to our website <http://www.bethelrural.org> to get the form and phone number to get started. Ted will be glad to get them set up.



## WELCOME TO OUR NEW BRCO Member - Weogo Reed

### In his own words:

"I was born in Kentucky, and first visited Haywood County in the early sixties. I've seen many lovely parts of the USA, bits of Europe and Africa, and for me, Haywood County, and in particular the Bethel area, is special.

My wife and I currently own a home near Swannanoa and I'm hoping to move to Bethel.

I've worked with my hands in various trades, and about thirty years ago started doing live audio production. If you have any questions about audio, please ask!

I am also a volunteer Librarian with the Asheville Tool Library: <https://ashevilletoollibrary.myturn.com/library/>

Laura Lengnick, my better half, got her Soil Science Masters from NC State and PhD from Penn State. She was a farm state Senate staffer, USDA researcher, taught Sustainable Ag for fourteen years, has been a grower, and wrote a book about Resilience, with a focus on climate change and agriculture. She's also a pretty hot Fiddler.

I believe Community is one of the most valuable things we can have and was delighted to discover BRCO; thanks for having me!"





## 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

## Thank You to Greg Christopher (and Sherri, too)

Greg Christopher has volunteered to serve as Chair of our Benevolence and Education Advancement Committees. Says Greg: "Although I will certainly not be able to fill Lucas' shoes in either of those committees, I will be glad to chair those committees, with Sherri's help." Thank you, Greg and Sherri, your willingness to serve is much appreciated!

## Nominating Committee Needs Your Help in Filling the BRCO Board Vacancy

On January 11, Lucas Sorrells resigned from his Director position on the BRCO Board in order to devote more time to his personal and work life. He had been serving in the final year of his three-year term as Director. According to our BRCO Bylaws, a new Director needs to be elected at our next Membership Meeting on March 14. The new Director will serve for the remainder of the term which ends at the end of 2023. **If you are interested in being considered as a candidate for this Director position, please contact Ted Carr, Evelyn Coltman, or Frances Adamson, who are currently serving on our BRCO Nominating Committee.** Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at our meeting on March 14. The BRCO Board members (including the newly elected Director) will meet as a Board at 6:00 p.m. on May 1, July 10, September 11, and November 6.

## Congratulations to Haywood County's 2022 Person of the Year - Greg Christopher



Greg Christopher (photo reprinted with permission of *The Mountaineer*)

Each year, *The Mountaineer* selects an individual in Haywood County who has made a difference that will last beyond their lifetime to be named as Haywood County's Person of the Year. This year retiring Sheriff Greg Christopher was named Haywood County's 2022 Person of the Year. Greg Christopher was sheriff of Haywood County from 2013 until his retirement in 2022. He and his wife Sherri reside in Bethel and Greg is the Vice President of BRCO. As mentioned in the article above, Greg has also agreed to serve as Chair of BRCO's Benevolence and Education Advancement Committees.

Click the link below to read the article in *The Mountaineer*.

[https://www.themountaineer.com/news/greg-christopher-is-the-mountaineers-person-of-the-year/article\\_38433b88-888a-11ed-a525-dbab2215ccfa.html](https://www.themountaineer.com/news/greg-christopher-is-the-mountaineers-person-of-the-year/article_38433b88-888a-11ed-a525-dbab2215ccfa.html)

## BRCO Committee News

### Rural Preservation - Carol Litchfield, Chair

Last November, Ted Carr and Carol Litchfield met with Barclay Taylor who teaches the FFA students at Bethel Middle School. Barclay was in need of a secure, convenient place on the school grounds to store the items needed by his students when they plan and implement their FFA projects throughout the year. In December, Barclay was very grateful to learn that BRCO had purchased a new 10' x 16' "lofted barn" storage unit that would be delivered and placed on the school grounds next to the greenhouse. On January 12, the delivery truck arrived.



The storage unit is ready for touch down on the grassy area behind the greenhouse at Bethel Middle School.



Because there are "rollers" beneath the storage unit, it is easy to pull it across the grass.



The storage unit is pulled into its final resting place next to the greenhouse.



Ted Carr and Barclay Taylor are pleased with the results.



The upper lofts inside the storage unit provide ample space for additional storage.

### Beautification Committee - Carol Litchfield, Acting Chair

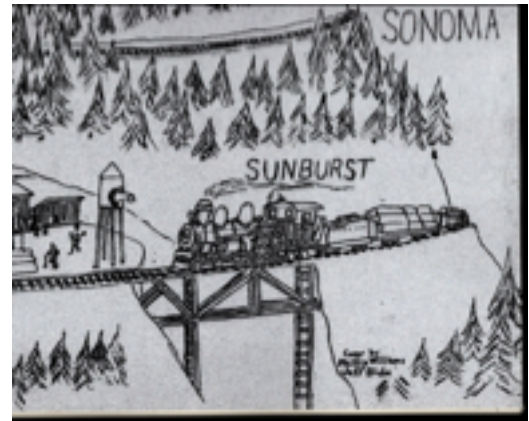
The Beautification Committee has been working alongside the Food Pantry Committee to support the Food Pantry expansion. To free up more space for the expansion, the Pastor's Study has been converted into a classroom, and the cleaning and maintenance supplies have been moved from the back closet to the closet next to the Fellowship Hall where they will be easier to retrieve.

## BRCO Committee News

### Historic Preservation - Evelyn Coltman, Chair

continued production of the *Historic Schools of Bethel* DVD involved the Historic Preservation Committee’s filming of Hugh K. Terrell, Jr., as he articulated his recollections about attending Bethel School as well as his memories about teaching at his alma mater. One of Terrell’s achievements that elicited pride in the accomplishments of his students was the 1978 publication of the *Sonoma – Valley of the Moon – Sunburst* book by his eighth graders. Book production involved students interviewing dozens of original Sunburst Logging Village inhabitants, compiling those discussions into a coherent and readable text, finding photographs from approximately seventy years prior, creating artistic renderings when photographs were unavailable, proofreading, typing (there were no computers), and arranging for the printing and distribution of the completed document. Terrell admits that since his students had yet to enroll in a typing class, he spent much of that year returning to school after dinner to work until midnight typing the material gathered from each day’s work.

BRCO’s Historic Preservation Committee deems that one of its roles is to rediscover gems that have been dormant so that it can bring them to the attention of today’s audience. The committee, therefore, used Print Haus services to reprint the noteworthy compilation of memories, facts, photographs, and data from the logging village whose buildings now lie beneath the surface of Lake Logan. But for the efforts of Hugh K. Terrell, Jr., and his eighth-grade students, those memories would have perished with the Sunburst residents who lived the stories.



The Historic Preservation Committee affiliates with the Haywood County Historical & Genealogical Society whose offices are at the Folkmoot Center in Clyde. The organization also operates the Shook-Smathers House in Clyde – now recognized as the Museum of Haywood County History. Four members of BRCO attended the “show-and-tell” session at which attendees bring an item connected to Haywood County history and tell about its significance: Frances Adamson, Evelyn Coltman, Carol Litchfield, and Mike McLean. Evelyn Coltman presented both the *Sonoma-Valley of the Moon-Sunburst* book and the *Pigeon Valley* book that was produced with Cheryl Haney’s eighth grade class in 1992. The Historic Preservation Committee has reprinted both books which are available via the BRCO website:

[www.bethelrural.org](http://www.bethelrural.org).

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The BRCO website, under the “About Bethel Community” header maintains a list of historic sites in Bethel. This list continues to grow as pictures and information become available. The latest addition to the “Historical Sites” listing is the Joseph Augustus and Mary Shook Hargrove House on Highway #215. Thanks to Edie Burnette, Hargrove descendant, for the write-up about the house and to Doug Chambers, photographer. The house is currently owned by J.R. and Wendy Rogers who continue to restore the historic structure. (continued on next page)

## BRCO Committee News (Historic Preservation Committee Continued)



Joseph Augustus and Mary Shook Hargrove House

The Hargrove house was the home of Joseph Augustus and Mary Shook Hargrove and their seven children: Berlynn (Scroggs), Walter, Lenoir, Gus, Edith (Hutchins), Florence (Wells), and Cora Lee (Devlin). The house was built on a portion of the 160-acre farm owned by Joe's father, William Harrison "Hack" Hargrove.

Built in 1916, the two-story house had a living room, dining room, kitchen, a central hallway, five bedrooms, two fireplaces, and a two-section wellhouse.

Water was hand-pumped into a sink in the rock-constructed wellhouse adjoining the kitchen from a hand-dug well while perishables were stored in the water-cooled rear section.

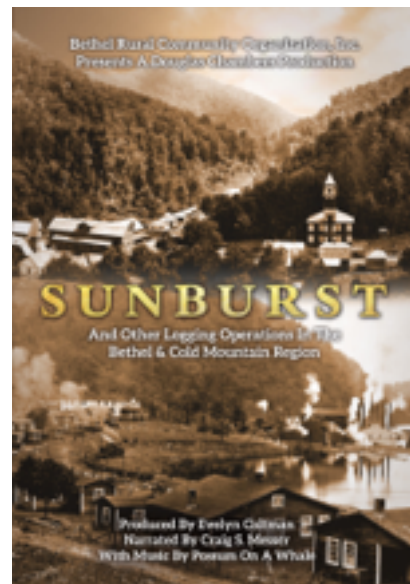
The frame house was faced with green wooden shingles and fronted by a screened-in porch. Other buildings included a large three-level barn, a meat house, a blacksmith shop, an outhouse, a woodshed, a two-level shed with the earthen level for storing potatoes and apples while the upper story sheltered the cider press and miscellany. A molasses furnace was near the river.

Cattle were pastured on wooded land with a small stream above the house.

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The TN & NC Railway carrying pulpwood from Sunburst to Champion Fibre Company in Canton chugged through the Hargrove property, essentially dividing fertile bottom land from mountainous area. A gravel road for other traffic ran along the Pigeon River. Current Hwy. 215 follows along the original rail bed.

One of the projects of the Historic Preservation Committee is the sale of art prints, books, CD/DVDs. Recently, a purchase of the *Sunburst and Other Logging Operations in the Bethel and Cold Mountain Region* DVD by Charles Leighton of Newfane, Vermont, resulted in an exciting discussion among committee members. The Historic Preservation Committee appreciates the open online forum available to the committee to discuss historical topics. Recently, the committee fielded inquiries from Leighton who had questions about Stephen and Marion Leshar, his grandparents, their history in Bethel, and the family cabin that the Leshar family built on Little East Fork in the early 1900s. (continued on next page)



## BRCO Committee News (Historic Preservation Committee Continued)

This story and the research connected with it consumed weeks of inquiry, trips to the location by Historic Preservation Committee members, consultation with historic maps, and a determination as to the location and history of the cabin. Due to the length of the story, we will feature this research about the Lesher family in two newsletters. To pique interest, the Lesher couple is pictured below, along with their marriage information. More of the Lesher story will come in the April Newsletter.



### Marriage Record of Stephen R. LESHER & Marion BODWELL

[New Search](#)

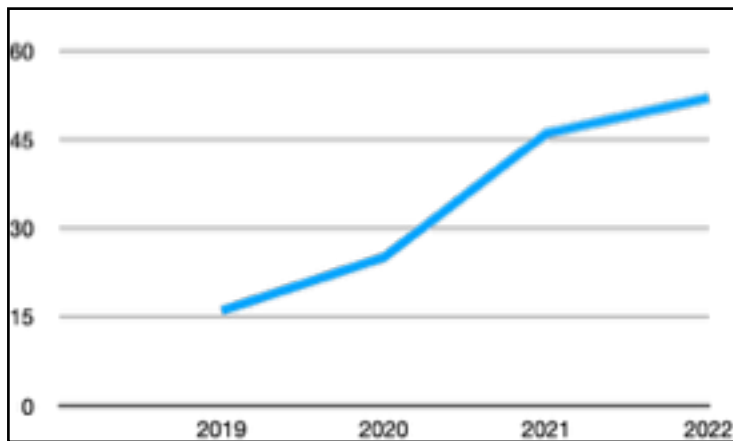
Name of Groom:	Stephen R. LESHER
Groom's Place of Residence:	Sunburst, North Carolina
Name of Bride:	Marion BODWELL
Bride's Place of Residence:	Sanford, Maine
Marriage Date:	Wednesday, 22 June 1921
Marriage Certificate Number:	Not available

A free image of this record should be available at FamilySearch. [Check now](#)

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

The number of families and individuals served each month by the Food Pantry continues to increase. The charts below graphically show the steady increase from 2019 through 2022. During 2022 the pantry served a total of 627 families and 1490 individuals.

Average Number of Families Served per Month



Total Number of Families Served per Year

