

Bethel Rural Community Organization

Newsletter

www.bethelrural.org

August 2020

Officers

- President: Mike McLean
- Vice President (interim) Carroll Jones
- Secretary: Beth Cook
- Treasurer: Stephanie Quis-Garrett

Board Members::

- Frances Adamson
- Tom Kolaski
- Lucas Sorrells
- Pat Carr
- Mike McLean



Mark Your Calendars for these dates in 2020

BRCO Board Meeting **BRCO General Meeting**

May 4
July 6
September (TBD)
November 2

May 12 - cancelled
July 14 - cancelled
September 15
November 10

August 22–23 – Blue Ridge Heritage Festival Weekend at the Shelton House Campus

October 10, 2020 – BRCO Half Marathon and 5K Race

A Word from our president, Mike McLean

The Bethel Community Never Closes



So here we are in August, and our towns and businesses are closed or limited in the services they provide. The onset of the Covid-19 virus continues to surprise us all in the impact on our lives and day to day activities. This newsletter shows BRCO's efforts and actions to continue our commitment to our Community even though there are significant limitations.

Making adjustments to "normal" procedures, we see Julie, Stephanie and their Team continuing the Food Pantry in a drive through process with boxes prepared ahead of time shuttled to each car. We see Ted Carr taking the lead on the new Building & Grounds Committee working with its members and local businessman and member, Zac Guy, to prepare the property donated to us at Sonoma Rd and Hwy 276 for a new planned sign welcoming everyone to Bethel. We see Lucas planning a "Virtual Race" as a viable alternative to our annual Fundraiser, and Tom and Karyn Kolaski working with Nancy Armstrong to manage the implementation of our new access to the Fellowship Hall. What is evident is that the needs of our community continue and BRCO makes necessary adjustments to provide solutions.

In August, we will have an opportunity to share more of Bethel with visitors and residents of Haywood County at the 2nd Annual Blue Ridge Heritage Weekend on the Shelton Campus. On August 22-23, this outdoor Craft Fair will feature community social distancing on an expansive property that will demonstrate the new way of gathering during this exceptional disruption in our lives. At the Fair, BRCO will share a tent provided by the Haywood County Historical and Genealogical Society. Besides sharing our informative material about Bethel, BRCO will be encouraging participation in the 2020 Census. As part of the WNC Communities program funded by the Dogwood Trust, many Community Centers in WNC are providing this service to assist our National Decennial Census which influences many areas of our lives.

Although we must adjust, it is evident that the Bethel Community never closes.

Mike McLean
President – BRCO

NEW COMMITTEE - BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Ted Carr has agreed to chair the new Building and Grounds Committee. Since BRCO's acquisition of the church property, we are now responsible for the upkeep of the building and grounds. This committee will be separate from the Beautification Committee and will address issues relating to maintenance of the building and grounds. Thanks to Ted for volunteering to chair this important committee.

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WNC Communities Journey Scholarship

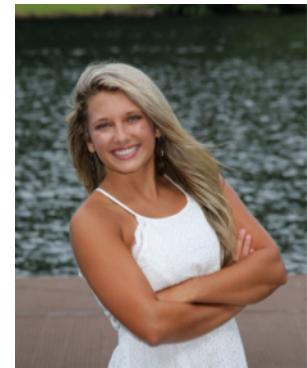
(submitted by Evelyn Coltman)

BRCO sponsored recipients of the WNC Communities Journey Scholarship are Pisgah graduates Lilly Ensley, daughter of Scott and Tammy Ensley, and Brooks Valentine, son of Kevin and Jenny Valentine. Scholarship recipients receive between \$500 and \$1,000. Applicants are sponsored by a WNC Community Honors Awards Program participating organization. BRCO nominees have received the Journey Scholarship consistently since 2018.

Lilly Ensley Receives Bethel Rural Community Organization (BRCO) Scholarship

(submitted by Evelyn Coltman)

Bethel Rural Community Organization's annual scholarship is awarded to Pisgah graduate, Lilly Ensley, daughter of Scott and Tammy Ensley of Bethel. Ensley will use the \$1,000 scholarship to further her studies in Nutrition, Foods, and Dietetics at Appalachian State University. The Education Committee selected the winner based on her commendable scholastic, club (thirteen listings), leadership, volunteer (twenty listings), and work achievements. In addition, Ensley has received numerous awards (fourteen) in extra-curricular endeavors in cheerleading and softball. Among her numerous volunteer activities, Ensley has been a seven-year participant and helper in BRCO's 5K/Half Marathon Race.



BRCO to Participate Blue Ridge Heritage Weekend at the Shelton House

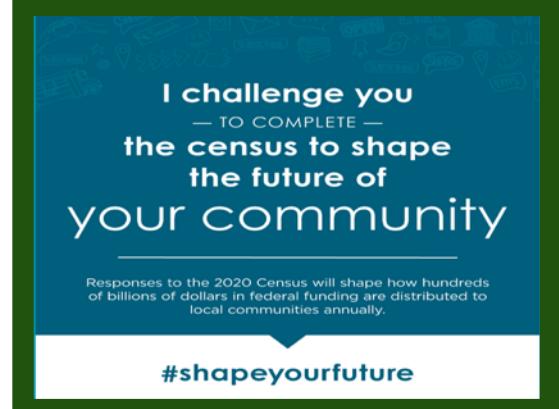
BRCO will participate in the 2nd Annual Blue Ridge Heritage Weekend at the Shelton House, August 22-23. We will have a table set up to provide information about BRCO. If you are interested in manning the table for a few hours during the weekend, let Mike McLean know and he will put you on the schedule.



Photo from 2019 Blue Ridge Heritage Weekend

A big thank you to Zac Guy and Appalachian Hardwoods for volunteering to keep BRCO's property at Sonoma Road and Hwy 276 mowed during the summer months.

Thank You!



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BRCO Committee News

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE- submitted by Evelyn Coltman, Chair

The committee has selected the recipients of the Pigeon Valley Award for Historic Preservation for 2020. Bob and Phyllis Barnett will be receiving commendation for their oversight of the restoration of the historic Inman Chapel, the first Universalist church west of Durham. Phyllis is also recognized for her book about local history: *At the Foot of Cold Mountain*. Hopefully, they will present the program and be recognized at our September meeting – if we are able to have it.

FOOD PANTRY COMMITTEE- Julie Green and Stephanie Quis-Garrett - Co-Chairs

The Food Pantry Committee continues to operate the pantry the 2nd Wednesday of each month. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the boxes are pre-packed and delivered to cars by BRCO volunteers. The Pantry is averaging 31 families (April-July) vs 18 (Jan-March). Also we are averaging 84 (April-July) individuals vs 42 (Jan-March.) We have partnered with the local gleaners and should be getting some fresh produce soon.



Left: BRCO Food Pantry volunteers getting ready to distribute boxes

Right: Pre-packed food boxes



BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE -

submitted by Nancy Armstrong, Chair

Driveway beautification-

In late July the committee implemented Phase 1 of the landscaping for our new driveway—boulders to delineate the drive and protect and enhance the plantings. A huge shout out to Karyn and Tom Kolaski for coordinating the delivery! Phase 2, plantings, will begin when it cools down, in the fall. If you have pretty bulbs to share this fall, please let us know, and we will incorporate them in the plan! Stay tuned for a beautiful BRCO frontage! (Funding for this entire project came from a Grant!)



Nancy Armstrong and Karyn Kolaski at the (HOT) rock yard with Mike. (Photo by Tom Kolaski)



Boulders lining the new circular drive (July 2020)

New Library & Archives - In June a closet at the back of the church was refurbished to create the BRCO Library and Archives. The room was painted, linoleum removed to reveal the original wood flooring, and the electrical service was upgraded to include an outlet, a light switch, and a new energy saving decorative lighting fixture. New curtains and Historic Preservation Committee art prints completed the redecoration. Shelving and files are now organized for each BRCO committee. Thanks to all who donated their time, supplies and talent: Nancy Armstrong, Ted Carr, Evelyn Coltman, Glen Garrett, Carroll Jones, Karyn Kolaski and Tom Kolaski. (All labor and supplies were donated by the above members!)

August SPOTLIGHT: BRCO's Historic Preservation Committee

(note: Each newsletter will spotlight the work of one of the BRCO Committees)

Initial focus of the Historic Preservation (HP) Committee this year has been on developing a file library. With assistance from the Beautification and Buildings and Grounds Committees, the HP Committee has a newly refurbished room that it can claim as a library. The library contains files on Bethel families, historic sites in Bethel as well as Haywood County and Western NC, and documents and clippings about general historical topics. In addition, folders include projects for which the committee has been overseer since its inception in 2005:

- Cold Mountain Heritage Tour information about the twenty-five sites that were a part of the annual tours that Bethel Rural Community Organization sponsored from 2005-2011
- The twenty-four art-print collection that captures scenes from historic Bethel under such headings as bridge, churches, drawings, farms, houses, mills, nature, post office/train depot, schools, and store
- *Legends, Tales & History of Cold Mountain*, Books 1-6, original copy of the 1978 *Sonoma – Valley of the Moon – Sunburst* book published by Hugh K. Terrell's Bethel eighth grade class, and *Pigeon Valley*, the 1992 Bethel class project by Cheryl Inman Haney's eighth graders that the HP Committee reprinted
- Two CDs: *Cold Mountain Heritage Driving Tour* (tour guide to nine of the sites on the original Cold Mountain tours) and Possum on a Whale's *Sunburst Sessions* traditional music collection
- Three DVDs: *Walking in the Footsteps of Those Who Came Before Us* (collection of 18 interviews about Bethel sites), *From New College to Springdale* (interview with Dick Alexander about the history of New College Community Experience of Columbia University, Springdale School, and High Valley Camp that were located on today's Springdale Club), and *Sunburst and Other Logging Operations in the Bethel & Cold Mountain Region* (includes a series of interviews relating to logging enterprises on the East and West Forks of the Pigeon River from the early 1900s through today's wood-based Bethel industries)
- Data on the five local historic markers established by the HP Committee: Osborne Boundary Oak, Bethel Presbyterian Church, Lenoir's Creek Farm, Pigeon Gap Watering Hole, and Calvin Filmore Christopher
- Applications for National Register of Historic Places nomination for Francis Mill (1878) and Carroll Jones' Truss Bridge #79 (1891) – both sites received National Register designation
- Applications for the NC Society of Historians awards received by the HP Committee and its members include the *Legends* books as well as the three DVDs produced by the committee chair and members.
- Nominations for two regional awards received by the organization - Western Carolina University's Mountain Heritage Award and Blue Ridge National Heritage Area's Heritage Trail designation – as well as a local designation: TDA's Haywood County Quilt Trail
- Recipient data for the nine people (seven awards) granted annually by the HP Committee for the preservation of Bethel history – the Pigeon Valley Award for Historic Preservation
- Reports of the Eagle Scout Award for restoring the 1800s Pigeon Gap Watering Hole and the Girl Scout Gold Award for cataloging Bethel Cemetery – both projects supervised by the HP Committee
- Documentation about several presentations by the HP Committee to Bethel Middle School, DAR, Leadership Haywood, and Haywood County Historical & Genealogical Society. WNC Communities featured members (Carol Adams, Evelyn Coltman, Carroll Jones, and BRCO President, Mike McLean) who discussed HP Committee programs and projects at a regional meeting held at Transylvania County Library

August SPOTLIGHT: BRCO's Historic Preservation Committee

(continued from page 4)

The Historic Preservation Committee has also worked with Beth Cook, webmaster, to collect data for the website:

- Bethel Writers and Media Contributors documents the ongoing list of names of Bethel-connected individuals who have written/published books or articles as well as those who have composed music or directed-produced media productions.
- History of Bethel Community from its beginnings
- Historic sites of Bethel
- History of Bethel/Cruso Post Offices
- History of Bethel Rural Community Organization and its predecessor, Bethel Community Organization
- Projects Timeline that lists the HP Committee's yearly endeavors from 2005-2020

The Historic Preservation (HP) Committee has been active during the pandemic via computer and email with a number of research efforts about several topics of interest to the HP Committee:

- Researched the history of community organizations in Bethel prior to Bethel Community Organization (1991-2000) and Bethel Rural Community Organization (approximately 2000 – the present). We learned that there were six in Bethel: Cecil, Center Pigeon, Cruso, East Pigeon, Stamey Cove, and West Pigeon that thrived in the mid-1900s. (archive research by HP Committee member, Carol Litchfield)
- A primary project of the West Pigeon Club was the Pigeon Valley Fair that dominated the social scene from 1949-1957. (archive research by Carol Litchfield)
- Canneries existed in Haywood County as far back as 1944. In Bethel the cannery as a cannery lasted until 1960. The purpose of a community cannery was to provide a general location at which local farmers and housewives could process their produce in a facility that made the operation efficient and safe. (archive research by Carol Litchfield; article by Evelyn Coltman)
- The committee has also recently received a donation of three paintings by renowned Bethel native/New Orleans artist, Jason Hawkins. He is a 1995 cum laude graduate from Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, Georgia, with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Art and Historic Preservation.
- The Joseph Turner and Martha Anna Iva Killian Cathey House - oldest extant framed house (1860) in Bethel (located on Highway #110)
- The James Henry and Flora Kinsland Plott House (1904) (located on Highway #110).
- The Pingree Priestly and Charity Haseltine Osborne Plott House (1867) (located on Lake Logan Road).

The committee plans to continue, as soon as the pandemic concerns die down, several interviews designed to address the topic of *Historic Schools of Bethel*, the title of the next DVD.

Bethel Rural Community Organization's Historic Preservation Committee has been diligent about its intent to research, collect, document, and educate about the history of the community. Since that initial mission was defined, the HP Committee has received numerous national, state, regional, and local awards for its historic preservation projects. In addition, the HP Committee has initiated awards, administered notable local historical endeavors and achievements, and directed several educational outreach platforms. The committee consists of eighteen members who frequently submit documents for the library collection. They also research and write about Bethel topics on their own. Individual members through the years have received fifteen NC Society of Historians Awards.

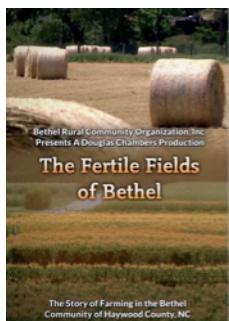
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Did You Know?

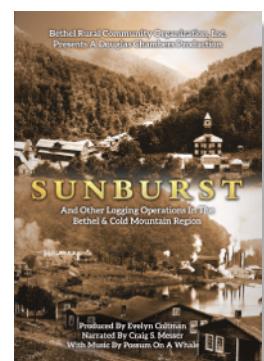
BRCO's Historic Preservation Committee and Rural Preservation Committee have produced several award winning DVDs about the Bethel community. If you are tired of re-runs on television or would like to know more about Bethel history, consider purchasing one of these informative DVDs. (The DVDs can be purchased on-line by visiting BRCO's on-line catalog at <http://www.bethelrural.org/catalog-1.html> Monies received from the sale of the DVDs go toward supporting the activities of BRCO.



The Fertile Fields of Bethel DVD

The Fertile Fields of Bethel is the story of the Bethel farmland and the people who are out there working the land every day to feed the people of Western North Carolina...and beyond. Sponsored by Haywood County Farm Bureau and Haywood EMC.

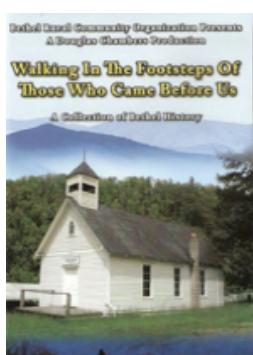
DVD Videographer and Editor: Douglas Chambers Productions



Sunburst and Other Logging Operations in the Bethel & Cold Mountain Region

DVD revisits the early 20th Century logging operation on the West Fork of the Pigeon River that resulted in construction of Champion Paper and Fiber (now Evergreen Packaging), a company that has provided substantial employment opportunities for more than a century in Canton, North Carolina.

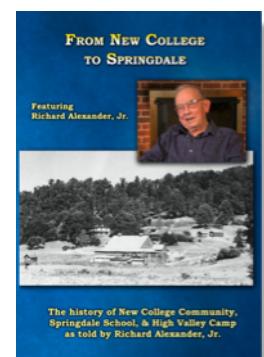
DVD Videographer and Editor: Douglas Chambers Productions



Walking in the Footsteps of Those Who Came Before Us DVD

Contains 18 segments of Bethel History
Sponsored by Cold Mountain Nursery, Haywood County Farm Bureau, and Haywood EMC

DVD Videographer and Editor: Douglas Chambers Productions



From New College to Springdale DVD

Cruso's Springdale location provided the setting for an experimental educational project unlike any instructional venture before or since.

DVD Videographer and Editor: Douglas Chambers Productions

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Arts & Craft Fair , Vendors, Appalachian Heritage Music,
Local Food & Produce,
Special Haywood County Medical Exhibit (1870-1950) and
much more...



Shelton House

2nd Annual

Blue Ridge Heritage Weekend

August 22 & 23

Saturday 8am-4pm

Sunday 11am - 4pm

Heritage Weekend sponsored by:

Shelton House - WNC History, Heritage, and Crafts,
with Haywood's Historic Farmers Market and

The HART Theatre



HART Theatre



On the Shelton Campus

Parking at 250 Pigeon St. Waynesville, NC

sheltonhouse.org / (828) 452-1551