

Bethel Rural Community Organization

Newsletter

www.bethelrural.org

October 2021

2021 BRCO Officers and Board Members

Officers

- President: Mike McLean
- Vice President : Greg Christopher
- Secretary: Beth Cook
- Treasurer: Stephanie Quis-Garrett

Board Members::

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



A Word from our president, Mike McLean



As we move forward in the 2021 recovery period in Bethel, Cruso and nearby communities, it is a good time to reflect on why BRCO was formed and its key ingredients that have sustained all challenges of life. Today, on the WNC Communities zoom call we were reminded to renew our purpose by documenting our Vision, Mission and Values that caused BRCO to be formed. The discussion concerned a common problem for most Community Clubs whereby all have the same problem of membership and officer and Board succession planning due to few volunteers signing up to participate.

The WNC Communities organization is revising the award program from how we do in a particular year to a measurement of the sustainability and capability of each club over time. This new system will have 4 tiers of assessment, called Trillium, Mountain Laurel, Redbud and White Oak-the highest level. What will be measured is the structure of the club, and the efforts to advance and sustain the existence of the club. Some of the main focus areas today were collaboration among members and other organizations and how conflict is actually good since you turn the conflict into resolutions and actions to strengthen the club. These subjects will be explored as WNC Communities increases their involvement with all clubs in their region.

While we expect that the excellent work of BRCO will place us in the upper categories, by no means will we accept where we are without identifying areas to improve and grow. The ability to continue as a valued resource to the Bethel Community will depend on an honest approach to face the weaknesses of our organization and create programs and efforts that represent the needs of our community. To accomplish this, we must recruit new members, officers and board members to continue the hard work that our current leadership exhibits.

Is it worthwhile, yes! A video was shared today and can be seen at [Joy of Community Video](#). This summarizes why we volunteer and why it is important to our community. I look forward to our growth and continuous improvement in 2022. Working together is a rewarding activity, especially when there is a common purpose.

Mike McLean
President



Make plans now to attend our general meeting in November!

Haywood County Sheriff (and our BRCO Vice-President), Greg Christopher will be the speaker. Sheriff Christopher will speak about the difficult and challenging efforts after the devastating floods in our area. He will address the relief efforts, programs available to those affected directly, and what the future looks like.

BRCO TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SHELTON HOUSE TINSEL TRAIL



The Shelton House - Museum of NC Handicrafts in Waynesville, NC will conclude their 41st season on **December 5**, will 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**. Santa Claus will visit on December 5 from 5pm to 7pm from a safe distance and hot chocolate and treats can be enjoyed. Holiday tunes will be played from the front porch of the house so gather on the front lawn and sing along.

Last year's BRCO tree was voted the "favorite tree" by the many visitors to the Tinsel Trail. Kara Kolaski will be coordinating the decoration of the tree again this year and would love to have some of the members volunteer to help decorate the tree. If you are interested in helping, please let Kara know of your interest. She can be reached by email at karyn.kolaski@gmail.com

Thank You!



Steve Van Doren from Vans Clothing donated 24 large boxes of shoes, socks, backpacks, and shirts. These items have been distributed to victims of the August flooding in the Bethel and Cruso communities.



BRCO Committee News

Maintenance Committee – Ted Carr, Chair. Thanks to David Singleton and Hometown Hardware who supplied the labor and materials to redo the entrance ramp.

Benevolence Committee – Lucas Sorrells, Chair

The committee has met twice since the flood. We are accepting flood relief donations that will be designated funds to help the members of our community. If you would like to donate you can do so on our website, or you can give Stephanie a check. Please put “flood relief” in the memo line. The committee will work to identify needs and how best to use the donations. If you know an individual or family that BRCO could help, please let Lucas know via email.

Race – Lucas Sorrells, Chair

The race committee met 2 weeks ago and discussed this year’s race. We decided to cancel this year’s race due to the recent floods in the area. We felt that the emergency services and other potential volunteers were probable overwhelmed due to their efforts during the floods. We also felt that the race might be a greater burden than benefit for our community. We presented a recommendation to the board to cancel this year. We have frozen registration and have posted statements on the race website and the registration site. We are emailing the runners that have registered up to this point and will give them an option for a refund or to donate their entry money to our organization.

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

The Food Pantry served 58 families in July, 57 families in August, and 39 families to date in September. Year to date 425 families and 1,064 individuals have been served. The pantry received 100 free boxes from Manna which were given out at a Red Cross resource event in Canton and 2 events in Cruso partnering with WNC Rural Immigrant Coalition and the Red Cross.

Rural Preservation - Carol Litchfield, Chair



Carol Litchfield, Rural Preservation Committee Chair, used a butterfly cage filled with milkweed cuttings to entice three monarch caterpillars to form their chrysalis while in captivity. The first monarch butterfly emerged on October 8th. It is shown in the photo at the left, clinging to Carol's finger as she releases it into her backyard garden.



In the photo to the right, the monarch happily tested its wings while enjoying the flowers in its new surroundings. Carol reports that she and

others observed an abundance of monarch caterpillars this year with many sightings of monarch butterflies occurring from mid-September to early October. BRCO provides butterfly cages to gardeners who want to educate others on the important role that monarch waystations play in sustaining the monarch butterfly life cycle. Bethel Middle School FFA students made the cages for BRCO after BRCO provided funding for the project. (Photos provided by Carol Litchfield)

BRCO Committee News (continued)

Historic Preservation Chair - Evelyn Coltman

An oral history about the historic schools of Bethel is continuing its documentation with two recent filming sessions:

Norman Long has taught at Bethel and Pisgah for 55 + years and was one of the first teachers to teach at Haywood Technical Institute (Haywood Community College). The first teaching sessions of the community educational facility occurred at Bethel School. Long recalls memories of teaching at the historic, three-story Bethel School building.

Brother and sister, Dr. Gordon Berger and Dr. Suzanne Berger, traveled from California and Massachusetts, respectively, to film a session about High Valley Camp which they attended when they were children living in New Jersey. High Valley Camp was the summer program conducted by Columbia University professor, Dr. Thomas Alexander, who was with New College Community Experience of New College Branch of Columbia University's Teachers College. Prospective teachers training under Dr. Alexander were tutored in operating a farm as well as educating students and young campers. The camp operated from 1934-1961 at the site of today's Springdale Country Club.

Thanks to Historic Preservation Committee members Carol Litchfield and Alex McKay, we have been able to procure two copies of the "Bethel News" that was published by the high school, in conjunction with the "Carolina Mountaineer" and the "Waynesville Courier," from 1923 – 1924. Eight publications were planned, but apparently only four were published. If anyone reading this information has a copy of the "Bethel News," please let us know.

The Historic Preservation committee presented the 2020-21 Pigeon Valley Award for Historic Preservation to Bob and Phyllis Barnett for their restoration of Inman Chapel.



Historic Preservation members
(left to right) Evelyn Coltman, Chair; Ted Carr, Tom Kolaski, Mike McLean, Frances Adamson, and Carol Litchfield. Mike McLean is holding the print of Inman Chapel that will be presented to Bob and Phyllis Barnett - 2020-21 Pigeon Valley Award recipients.

Pigeon Valley Award for Historic Preservation presented to Bob and Phyllis Barnett

Bethel Rural Community Organization's (BRCO) Historic Preservation Committee is appreciative of the preservation and restoration work of its community residents. In order to recognize outstanding historic conservation achievements by individuals in Bethel, the committee, in 2014, initiated an annual acknowledgement: Pigeon Valley Award for Historic Preservation. Pigeon Valley is the alternate name for Bethel, commemorating the legacy of the now extinct passenger pigeon that migrated to the valley for eons until its demise in 1914. While we could not keep the passenger pigeon from going extinct, with this award BRCO hopes to keep our own local history from sharing the fate of the passenger pigeon. BRCO has granted 9 Bethel citizens with this prestigious honor.

The committee selected Bob and Phyllis Barnett to receive the 2020 award, but our meeting was cancelled due to COVID. This year, Bob and Phyllis who live in Florida are unable to attend to give the program. We are granting this award for their role in the restoration of the historic Inman Chapel, the first Universalist Church west of Durham. The Reverend James Anderson Inman, great grandfather of Phyllis, constructed the chapel which was dedicated in 1902. In addition, Phyllis is a Bethel writer who has composed 3 books: *At the Foot of Cold Mountain*, *Love in the Time of War*, and *Once Upon a Time: Stories of the Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater*. She was also a program hostess at several of our Cold Mountain Heritage Tours and was featured on our *Sunburst and Other Logging Operations in the Bethel & Cold Mountain Region* DVD. Phyllis is the third Inman sibling to receive this award, with Ted

Darrell and Cheryl Inman Haney receiving the award in 2017 and 2019, respectively.

Bob's project management skills, his time commitment, and his willingness to do whatever tasks were necessary were essential to seeing the restoration to completion. The two-year project required the couple to secure funding, solicit volunteers, and oversee the day-to-day tasks of finishing the project.

Inman Chapel is one of Bethel's most treasured historic sites, receiving a state historic marker in 2011, and is featured on BRCO's Cold Mountain Heritage Driving Tour CD. It is the site of the first Universalist kindergarten in NC, employed the first full-time nurse in Haywood County, had a large library, and provided adult

education classes as well as educational opportunities for African American students at Sunburst.

We will see that Phyllis and Bob receive their framed art print of Inman Chapel painted by F. Seymore. The painting is based on a photograph by the Reverend Hannah Jewett Powell, the first female Universalist minister and missionary to fill a full-time mission post in North Carolina. She served at Inman Chapel from the 1921-1941. The couple will also receive a plaque recognizing their restoration work at Inman Chapel.



Phyllis Barnett working on the interior of Inman Chapel



Bob Barnett working on the exterior of Inman Chapel

Pigeon Valley Award for Historic Preservation

The following individuals have received the Pigeon Valley Award:

- 2014 - Charles Cathey** – narrator for the *Walking in the Footsteps of Those Who Came Before Us* DVD and the *Cold Mountain Heritage Tour* CD as well as for his extensive collection of local history
- 2015 - Norman Long** - restoration of the Chinquapin Grove School and his collection of memorabilia relating to Bethel and the structure itself which served as a school, post office, church, and family home
- 2016 - Dick Alexander** - documentation of New College, Springdale School, and High Valley Camp in the *From New College to Springdale* DVD
- 2017 - Ted Darrell Inman** - Cold Mountain Heritage Tour docent and *Walking in the Footsteps of Those Who Came Before Us* DVD participant as well as a collector of local history
- 2018 - Charles and Martha Trantham** - overseers of Red Devon Cattle at Lenoir's Creek Farm, the longest continuing farm with the longest continuing herd of cattle in Haywood County, and participants in the *Walking in the Footsteps* DVD
- 2019 - Cheryl Inman Haney** – Cold Mountain Heritage Tour docent, author of *My People: History of a Mountain Family, Sunburst and Logging Operations in the Bethel and Cold Mountain Region* DVD participant, procurer of 2 state historic markers: Inman Chape and Sunburst
- 2020-2021 - Bob and Phyllis Barnett** – overseers of the Inman Chapel restoration, Cold Mountain Heritage Tour docent, author of 3 books including *At the Foot of Cold Mountain*, and *Sunburst and Other Logging Operations in the Bethel and Cold Mountain Region* DVD participant



November 1, 2021 - BRCO Board Meeting - at 7:00 p.m.

November 9, 2021 - BRCO Membership Meeting - at 6:30 p.m.

November 13, 2021 - WNC Communities Award Banquet

December 5, 2021 - Shelton House Appalachian Family Christmas and opening of the Tinsel Trail