



MONTREAT COTTAGERS, INC.

P.O. BOX 111 MONTREAT, NORTH CAROLINA 28757

www.montreatcottagers.com

FALL NEWSLETTER 2025



Trivia Night Spotlight

Thank you Jan Swetenburg and Maggie Elliot for organizing Montreat Trivia night on September 18th. Cottagers matched their knowledge of the community's history in teams. Everyone learned a lot from each other and had a fun evening together. The funds raised have been contributed to the beautification of Town Hall.

Gate Planting

MRA thanked Cottagers for their help planting flowers at the Gate following their landscape project. The flowers were placed just inside the gate and under the Welcome sign. Next Spring we will do the same, so please join us in extending a warm welcome to all who enter Montreat.

THANK YOU RECEPTION

On September 30 volunteers Anne Seaman, Anne Stone, Kathy Putnam and their team created a memorable afternoon. The event was created to thank MRA and Town employees for their efforts supporting our community following the devastation left by Helene. The Cottagers presented certificates of appreciation to both groups who responded valiantly even though their own families were also in peril. The catered, beautifully organized celebration was a fitting way to say a big "Thank You!"



Town of Montreat

The Town of Montreat is thriving under the leadership of Mayor Tim Helms, the Town Council, Town Manager Savannah Parrish, the Montreat Police Department, Maintenance and the entire staff. Their dedicated work and attention to detail benefit all Montreaters.

The Town Council has approved the Stone Bridges Project led by Montreat history enthusiasts whose vision is the restoration of our bridges in the style of the bridges built in Dr. Anderson's day. A stone mason has been selected and will be guided by the supervision of Barry Creasman and Savannah Parrish. In addition, the Town is forming a Stone Bridges Advisory Committee that will help guide the aesthetics and design of the bridges

Montreat Cottagers, Inc. is receiving donations for the Stone Bridges Project. Checks have already been donated in the amount of \$50,000 and work will start with the Lookout Road at Assembly Drive bridge when the weather is amenable.

You may support this effort by writing checks to MONTREAT COTTAGERS, INC. with "Stone Bridges Project" written in the memo line. You may enjoy the tax benefits afforded you by contributing to Cottagers as we are a 501(C)(3) entity. Please give generously towards restoring an important historic feature of our town.

Message from Co-Presidents

Contact Beth or John Casper with ideas or concerns.

Please pay your dues on-line as many members have not paid their \$25/person annual fee and we want to avoid raising dues due to low funds.





Presbyterian Heritage Center

News & Dates from Anne Chesky

The PHC will host its Annual Christmas Tea on Wednesday, December 3 from 3pm - 5pm. It is free and open to all.

The exhibit, Stories from the Storm: Hurricane Helene in Montreat, will run through at least the end of the year. It has also been digitized and is available on the PHC website at www.phcmontreat.org/exhibits

On May 20, 2026, the PHC will open a brand-new exhibit on the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence and the role of Presbyterians in revolutionary North Carolina. This exhibit is funded in part by a \$30,000 grant from the State of North Carolina.

The PHC Book Club will continue in 2026. The first meeting will be on Tuesday, January 20 at 2pm and will feature John Casper and his book, "The Sky Above."



Fall Report from Myles Fish

- The College is working with the insurance company post-Helene. We've received a settlement number but are pushing back.
- 10 buildings affected; most repaired except McAlister Gymnasium (first floor). Those functions relocated to The Oaks building on the Black Mountain campus.
- Projected shortfall: Even with success, we expect about a \$400K gap. A donor has offered a \$200K matching grant; we're working to close the rest by year-end.
- Record enrollment in 10 of the last 11 years; ~996 students this fall.
- In-the-Oaks restoration: Partnering with the Preservation Society of Buncombe County and the Biltmore to restore this historic venue for community use and revenue generation. Fundraising events underway.
- New road (Black Mountain property): State grant funded; hoping construction starts by year-end (schedules TBD).



Montreat Conference Center

Report from Richard DuBose

It's been just over a year since Hurricane Helene. MRA had a normal and typical summer which is very good news. ServPro and the Insurer are within \$500K of the final resolution of our just under \$3Million claim. Our Business Interruption Insurance claim looks good; capital claims are largely resolved and we are awaiting their written confirmation.

From the \$1.4M contributed post-Helene, we still have a bit more than \$500K earmarked for recovery projects (e.g., flood-proofing, tennis courts, pool protection). We are postponing these projects until claims are finalized.

Current fiscal year: We are running ahead of budget

Fall enrollments in some programs are lighter than expected; possibly lingering effect from last year's cancellations.

Development staffing: VP of Development search is underway (~4 months in). Also replacing Major Gifts Officer.

Julie Lehman has transitioned to a new role at Mountain True (Creation Care Carolinas). We're grateful for her years here.

Program fliers are available, please visit us on our campus or find them online.



WILDERNESS & OPEN SPACE

News from Beth Fountain

Jane Holt Wilderness

The Board of Montreat Cottagers approved offering the Jane Holt Wilderness property to the MRA. After postponements, the membership approved the decision at the July 19, 2025 Annual Meeting. There is an existing conservation easement on the property as well as a North Carolina General Warranty Deed (from Montreat Cottagers to MRA). The MRA Board of Directors is reviewing insurance liability questions related to bear hunters on adjacent land. The Board met on November 17 to make a decision to accept the transfer, however insurance questions were not resolved in time to take a formal vote. We believe that once the due diligence is completed, the Board will vote to receive the property.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Rick Giles

Cash on hand is \$3,610. Membership dues are effective for the calendar year and reminders to pay your 2026 dues (as well as any unpaid 2025 dues) will be emailed in January.

Montreat Directory sales are being handled at the Town Hall through Angie.

Who can be a Cottager member? Anyone, anywhere, age 18+, who pays dues. Montreat Cottagers is not an HOA – membership is open to those who love and support Montreat. One membership = 1 vote.

Membership dues may be paid online

The website URL is montreatcottagers.com

Website and Membership – Laurie Morgan

Laurie has transitioned to Website Administrator.

MADE IN MONTREAT

The well attended annual craft show, Made in Montreat, was held on October 18th in the Thompson-Brown Room in lower Moore Center.

Twenty local vendors with deep ties to Montreat gathered and displayed their wares. Paintings, pottery, jewelry, stained glass, leather goods (including purses), books, carved wood with many items, knitted hats, photographs, cards in many forms, and so much more were on sale. The proceeds go to support the artists as well as MRA, Flat Creek Crossing and Sally Jones Pottery.

The annual show offers a gathering place for regular Montreaters, visitors and conferees. Smiles and laughter filled the space. Look for another Made in Montreat show in mid-October 2026.





MONTREAT ADULT SUMMER CLUB

To improve communications during the busy summer months, the Cottagers added a Summer Club liaison to its Board of Directors in 2024. This facilitates a closer working relationship and better planning between the Club and the Cottagers.

Important Date for your Calendar

On December 5th we will enjoy the **Lighting of the Montreat Gate**. Everyone is invited, especially children and grandchildren! Summer Club is providing party favors for the little ones as well as Christmas cookies for all attendees. You will also enjoy hearing the Calliope playing Christmas music. Please come join your neighbors and friends for this festive annual event which begins at 5:00 PM with the lighting at approximately 5:15.

Adult Summer Club offers the opportunity to help plan summer programs in Montreat as well as the December Gate Lighting. We also march in the 4th of July Parade. New ideas are welcome and we invite you to consider joining the leadership of Summer Club 2026! This **114 year-old club** is important to the life of Montreat. Contact anyone on our Leadership Team for more information. Tom and Katie Widmer, Hugh & Jane Alexander, Sue Diehl, Judy Shuford, Mason & Amy Blake, Kitty Fouche, John & Beth Casper, Dan & Ellen Dean.



Annual Lighting of the Gate



Volunteer with us!

OTHER MONTREAT ORGANIZATIONS YOU MAY WANT TO JOIN AND CONTACTS ARE:

Landcare- George Sawyer
Flat Creek Crossing- Jean Norris
Bearwise- Arrington Cox
Firewise- Nancy Midgette
Tree Board- Ed Kramer
Scottish Society- Righton McCallum

Montreat Cottagers, Inc. Board of Directors

Elected Officers:

Co-Presidents - John and Beth Taylor Casper
Co-Presidents Elect - Mary & Luis De Luzuriaga
Secretary: Katharine Efird Sullivan
Treasurer - Rick Giles
Membership and Community - Laurie Morgan
Wilderness and Open Space - Beth Fountain
Seasonal Representative - Lucy Robinson
Seasonal Representative - Tripp Mclean

Appointed Directors

Montreat Conference Center - Martha Sloan
Montreat College - Myles Fish
Town of Montreat - Jane Alexander
Presbyterian Heritage Center - Anne Chesky
Montreat Adult Summer Club - Judy Shuford

Ex-Officio Board Members

Immediate Past Presidents - Whitney and Jim Cohen
BBQ Chair - When appointed by the Co-Presidents



Next Annual Membership Meeting 7-18-2026

Board Approves New Ad Hoc Committee - Montreat Community Projects

Throughout the year 'special projects' are created and frequently fundraising capabilities are needed to support them. Montreat Cottagers, Inc. sponsored several events in 2025 i.e., Trivia Night, Gate Planting, and The Thank You reception for Town and MRA staff for their work post Hurricane Helene. The Board will present the Committee for full approval at the annual meeting July 18, 2026. In the mean time, feel free to contact Beth Casper, who is Acting Chair until then. (bethcasperl@gmail.com)