



# MONTREAT COTTAGERS, INC.

P.O. BOX 111 MONTREAT, NORTH CAROLINA 28757

www.montreatcottagers.com

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## SPRING NEWSLETTER 2026

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### Spring in Montreat

Spring in Montreat is a gorgeous time of year when we enjoy seeing the gray of winter evolve into spring colors. The daffodils, azaleas, rhododendrons, flowering dogwoods and mountain laurels have been exquisite. A group of **Montreat Cottagers** gathered their tools, gloves and hats to plant flowers for the community on May 8th for our Spring Volunteer Project. The sign at Town Hall now has beautiful flowers and MRA's Gate entrance is also full of patriotic colors we will enjoy through the summer. We enjoyed the opportunity to support both the Town and MRA in this way and had a great day together as you can see in the photo below. We hope you enjoy the colorful welcome as you drive, walk or ride into Montreat. Thank you volunteers!



### Message from Co-Presidents

Please be reminded of our **Montreat Cottagers Annual Meeting to be held at Upper Anderson on July 18<sup>th</sup> at 10am. Come meet the Board Members and Directors for the 2026-2027 term and hear updates from the Town, MRA, PHC and the College. We will be voting on a slate of new officers at the meeting. Representatives from Community Projects will be stationed around the room with information and volunteer opportunities.**

### TREASURER'S REPORT – Rick Giles

Cash on hand is \$11,544.18. Dues are effective for the calendar year and reminders will be emailed in January.

### MEMBERSHIP REPORT – Laurie Morgan

This is a reminder that you may pay your Montreat Cottager membership dues via our website. Please note that a number of people who paid their 2026 dues through the website have paid more than once. We will be contacting those of you who have overpaid my email very soon. In the meantime, if you have a question about the status of your membership, please contact Laurie Morgan, Membership Chair and Website Administrator at: lollygaggins@gmail.com The 2024 Montreat Directory may still be purchased at Town Hall. See Angie and pay \$25 to Montreat Cottagers, Inc. with "Directory" written in the memo line. They will also be available during Ticket Sales for the July 4<sup>th</sup> BBQ at the Post Office.

### Montreat Cottagers, Inc. Board of Directors

#### Elected Officers:

Co-Presidents- John Casper and Beth Taylor Casper

Co-Presidents Elect – Mary & Luis De Luzuriaga

Secretary: Katharine Efirid 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 – Marti Hazelrigg

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 – Beth Fountain



## Presbyterian Heritage Center

News & Dates from Anne Chesky

A new, updated Logo and PHC website can be viewed at [www.phcmontreat.org/exhibits](http://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 next exhibit will highlight Early Montreat (1897-1909). PHC will display large formatted maps of the original plat with streets, and buildings. New print materials will also be available.



## Town of Montreat

Report from Jane Alexander

The Town of Montreat is thriving under the leadership of Mayor Tim Helms, the Town Council, Town Manager Savannah Parish, the Montreat Police Department, Maintenance and the entire staff. Their dedicated work and attention to detail benefit all Montreaters. As announced by the Town, a new Police Chief has been appointed: Justin Whitson. Thank you Chief Whitson for keeping Montreat safe, we appreciate the efforts of you and all the officers. Budget workshops are ongoing with the Commissioners, Management and staff at this time.

MAJOR UPDATE: \$4.8 million grant has been attained to upgrade to our town's water/sewer systems.

## WE'RE SPREADING THE NEWS...COTTAGERS' NEW RACK CARD

When visitors or prospective new residents arrive in Montreat, they typically make a stop at Town Hall. As they gather information, they will now discover our new rack card. It introduces the Montreat cottagers as the community organization to get involved in when they are looking for activities and volunteer opportunities. You can see them at Town Hall.



Report from Myles Fish

- 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.



## Montreat Conference Center

Report from: Marti Hazelrigg

We have some exciting news to share with you about the Mountain Retreat Association. (MRA) We value connection in our community, so we want to keep you in the loop.

MRA President Richard DuBose held a community meeting on April 9<sup>th</sup> to give an update on the new lodge. At its March meeting, the MRA board voted to begin construction of the new lodge as soon as approvals and funding are in place. The board expressed enthusiasm for an "Option Two" plan that calls for a smaller lodge, along with cottage-style residences, green space, and all-access walkways. For more information, please visit our website ([Montreat.org](http://Montreat.org)) choose the tab "Montreat's New Lodge" to learn more and to see a recording of the meeting.

Come meet the new VP of Development, Marti Reed Hazelrigg, this summer on Tuesdays at 9 am in the Huck for Common Grounds, a morning coffee meet-up.

Thank you for supporting the ministry and mission of MRA. Your gift as a Montreat Patron makes a difference!





## **ADULT SUMMER CLUB**

### **Summer dates and Speakers:**

**July 8 John Lafferty on American Revolution**

**July 15 Josh GoForth**

**July 22 Deke Arndt**

**July 29 Picnic at Gaither Fellowship Hall**

All Wednesday programs will be held in Gaither/Graham Chapel at 2:30 .

The Annual Picnic will be a covered dish supper in Gaither Fellowship Hall at 6pm.

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 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

## **Montreat Community Projects**

Many grass root ideas grow in the heart of our community. This has been a component of the culture of Montreat for generations. The Cottagers organization nurtures these ideas and select projects are approved by the board. There are currently two Montreat Community Projects underway; The Stone Bridges Project and Flat Creek Crossing. More in-depth information is provided on page 4 of this Newsletter.

## **Volunteer with us!**

### **4TH OF JULY BAR-B-QUE**

Beth Fountain and her leadership team are gearing up for our annual fundraiser ...the Cottager's 4<sup>th</sup> of July Bar-B-Que! This requires many people and Beth requests that you consider how you may be able to help her this summer. Contact Beth at: [bfountain798@gmail.com](mailto:bfountain798@gmail.com)

### **OTHER MONTREAT ORGANIZATIONS YOU MAY WANT TO JOIN:**

Landcare- George Sawyer  
Flat Creek Crossing- Patti Pyle - Jean Norris  
Stone Bridges Project- Beth Casper  
Bearcare- Arrington Cox  
Firewise- Nancy Midgette  
Tree Board- Ed Kramer  
Scottish Society- Righton McCallum

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### **WILDERNESS & OPEN SPACE REPORT – Beth Fountain**

The Board of Montreat Cottagers, Inc. 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 and again on January 15 to make a decision to accept the transfer, however insurance questions were not completely 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. The hope is to have an announcement at the July 18<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting.

## FLAT CREEK CROSSING

### TOWN OF MONTREAT LANDCARE FLAT CREEK CROSSING STEERING COMMITTEE



After delays from Helene, work has begun on the Town of Montreat's only park, Flat Creek Crossing, just inside the Gate, targeted to open in 2028. The goal for this small park is making the waters of Flat Creek accessible for everyone at a delightful destination for residents and visitors alike. Because Helene damaged the surroundings, the Flat Creek Crossing Steering Committee is working with the Town to expand the design and reconnect to the Montreat Trail System, including screening the Town maintenance compound, designing a new accessible bridge and additional picnic area, writing grants and raising matching funds. WC 101. Watercolor cards and prints are on sale in the Montreat Store to support the project. Efforts are underway to rope off the area in a more aesthetic fashion to respect services held in the adjacent Memorial Garden. To learn more, call Patti Pyle (262) 573-8242 and follow on Facebook, Friends of Flat Creek Crossing. WC 54 both pieces, total WC 155. Or Contact Landcare Flat Creek Crossing Steering Committee Treasurer, Jean Norris at (510) 332-7550.

## STONE BRIDGES PROJECT

### TOWN OF MONTREAT AND STONE BRIDGES ADVISORY COMMITTEE



The bridges of Montreat suffered significant damage from Hurricane Helene in 2024. While the Town has repaired them to ensure safety, they no longer reflect their original beauty. The aftermath of the storm has raised an important question for our community: Should we leave the bridges as they are or work to restore them to their former beauty?

FEMA has not been able to provide the assistance we need for this project, which means we must rely on donations from those who cherish and support Montreat. Restoring the historic Montreat "style" of the bridges will ensure that future generations can enjoy them as our founders intended.

The first bridge to be restored will be Lookout Road at Assembly Drive, followed by Community Drive at Assembly. For more information, please contact:

Beth Casper, Chair of the Advisory Committee:  
bethcasperl@gmail.com or  
Savannah Parish, Town Manager:  
sparish@townofmontreat.org

### **DONATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS: THE STONE BRIDGES PROJECT AND/OR FLAT CREEK CROSSING**

Montreat Cottagers, Inc. are able to receive donations made by check (please mail checks to PO Box 111, Montreat, NC 28757) or made on-line by credit card using our website, [montreatcottagers.com](http://montreatcottagers.com). Please make sure you indicate whether the payment is for your annual dues or a donation to Cottagers or to a specific project, naming it clearly. Gifts of appreciated securities and qualified charitable distributions from Individual Retirement Accounts, which may offer significant tax benefits, are also accepted. The Cottagers have established a brokerage account with Edward Jones Investments to accommodate gifts of securities. Questions regarding gifts may be directed to Mason Blake at: [masonblake@gmail.com](mailto:masonblake@gmail.com)