



MCR&GC NEWS



A PUBLICATION OF THE MOUNTAIN COUNTRY ROD & GUN CLUB, MURPHY, NC

AUTUMN 2025

On the Social Side...

It's been said, man is a social animal. Accordingly, a club isn't really a club unless it does things together.

COVID-19 made gatherings impossible, and the memory of that time, and the impact it had on people's mindset about close contact, left some wary. For those with health issues, this is understandable.

We all get just so many days upon the earth, and life is far too short to unnecessarily shun crowds and hide indoors peeking out through windows, especially when the weather is nice.

The September meeting was incorporated with the club's cookout at Konehete Park. The park, with its riverwalk and pleasant surroundings is an excellent spot to relax, greet old friends, retell fish stories they've all heard before, and speculate about

what hunting season will bring. If you missed it, we hope you'll join us next year.



MCR&GC members fellowship at Konehete Park in Murphy.

On that note, mark your calendar for the MCR&GC's Annual Christmas Party, December 9th, 6:00 pm, at [The Ballroom](#) in Murphy, Ticket prices will be announced later this year.

Don't forget to monitor our website. Keep an eye on the [upcoming events page](#) for additional details:



Club Meeting Notes

During the **July** club meeting, President Gustason reported on the [recent dissolution of the Union County Gun Club in Blairsville](#). Given that management of the Union County Shooting Range fell under the control of the county's recreation department, the inability of the club to host private events there essentially rendered them irrelevant because membership in their organization isn't necessary.

Jeff said our club is looking to host a picnic for its September meeting, likely at Konehete Park. Details to be announced later.

Jeff reminded everyone the election **[continued on page 2]**

[Meeting Notes: continued from page 1] of club officers will occur during the September meeting. Any member interested in standing for election, or who wish to make a nomination, should plan on attending.

Jeff asked the club to consider making a donation to the ongoing fundraising effort in support of the family of fallen Cherokee County Detention Officer, Francisco Paul Flattes. Members present approved a donation of \$100 in the name of the club. Additionally, half of the 50/50 drawing, at the behest of the winner, was donated to the Flattes family as well.

Michael Howe reported the recent passage of the "Big, Beautiful Bill, containing the elimination of the \$200 tax required for ATF approval of suppressors, short-barrel rifles and shotguns, etc. The paperwork and background checks will remain in place. The aforementioned provision takes effect on January 1, 2026.

The evening's guest speaker was Angee Quinones-Belian, a correspondent for the *Cherokee Scout*, who presented information on Medical Access and Service Advantage (MASA), a plan which pays for medical air and ground transportation services. Angee made it clear she was speaking strictly as a consumer and NOT as an agent or company representative. Angee indicated she is a subscriber to a MASA benefits plan.

Given that no trauma center is located nearby, serious medical events often result in patients being flown to a distant hospital. Cost for air transport can reportedly exceed \$80,000. Several companies offer plans to mitigate the cost, and they vary in coverage.

Note: The Mountain Country Rod and Gun Club neither recommends nor endorses this or any other plan or product. Those interested should consult appropriate agents in order to assess and compare any such offerings.



Angee Quinones-Belian

During the **August** club meeting Jeff announced the September meeting will be held at Konehete Park in Murphy in order to facilitate the club's cookout. He also announced the club's election of officers will be conducted during that meeting.

Michael Howe updated the members on efforts to override the governor's veto of [SB50](#), and that the federal government has dropped its appeal in [Mock v. Bondi](#), the case which overturned the ATF's rule reclassifying pistol braces as short-barrel rifles which had placed them under NFA requirements.



MPD Chief Tim Lominac

Murphy Police Chief Tim Lominac was the evening's guest speaker. Lominac served 30-years as a wildlife

officer before becoming chief of police. He discussed elements of the NC Castle Doctrine and areas within the town in which concealed carry is prohibited.

During questions from attendees Chief Lominac advised the criminal activity which occurs most often in Murphy is retail theft at Walmart.

Members were interested in learning more about homeless-related crime in the area. Chief Lominac said drug use and incidents of overdose were the most prevalent calls involving homeless persons in Murphy. He said the town has ordinances against camping and panhandling within the town limits.

The **September** club meeting was held at Konehete Park in Murphy to facilitate the club's cookout. There was a nice turnout, and attendees enjoyed hamburgers, hotdogs, excellent pulled pork, and many other gastronomical delights.

The club held its annual election of officers (see results below). For at least the coming year the office of treasurer and secretary will be held by the same person.

Due to the cookout, there was no guest speaker for this meeting.



Virus Monitoring Dashboard

The approaching return of cooler weather brings with it the start of **[continued on page 3]**

[Virus: continued from page 2] cold and flu season. The young pay little attention to such things; the rest of us are less relaxed about the topic.

Respiratory viruses require a measure of discretion for those most needing to avoid them. Crowded events and shopping venues potentially offer increased risks, but choosing to venture out during hours when fewer people are about might lower the risk of infection. Still, it would be nice to have a means of knowing when respiratory viruses are more prevalent. Good news: such information is a mere point-n-click away.

The NC Department of Health and Human Services has created the [Respiratory Virus Surveillance Dashboard](#). You can see how Covid-19 and Influenza are trending around the state, and in our specific region. By the way, we're in Region 6.

Much controversy surrounds the topics of infectious diseases, vaccines and effective therapeutics for these illnesses. There is even debate over who to believe in discussions on the matter, and assertions once labeled as misinformation or conspiracy theories eventually were proven accurate. Accordingly, individuals need to remain aware of the perceived risks, as well as confer with their healthcare professionals, to determine the best course of action when respiratory infections are spiking.

Time to Renew

Yes, it's September already, and it's time to renew your MCR&GC membership. The renewal cost is just

\$30 for the family, and it can be paid via the club website's [renewal application portal](#), by check at the September meeting, or you can mail your check to:

Mountain Country Rod & Gun Club
PO Box 813
Murphy, NC 28906

Club membership is worthwhile. It lets you meet and socialize with fellow sportsmen and enthusiasts with whom you share common interests. Additionally, meeting attendance allows you to hear from interesting guest speakers who offer important insight into shooting, hunting, fishing, wildlife conservation or other topics of interest. Where else can you find that locally?

It's important to remember, without the MCR&GC to maintain the Panther Top Shooting Range the USFS would close the range, and for those needing public land to shoot on, that would be a substantial loss. Please renew your membership this month.

Know anyone you might like to introduce to the club? Share this newsletter with them, invite them to visit our [website](#), or bring them to an upcoming meeting. There's room for everyone.



Election of Club Officers

The election of the MCR&GC 2025-2026 officers was held during the recent September meeting. Club officers for the next twelve months

are as follows:

President: Jeff Gustason
Vice Pres: Tom Coy
Secretary/Treasurer: Joyce Portik



Caught a Big Fish?

Did you catch a big fish but it didn't quite constitute a new record? The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) wants to honor you. Their [NC Angler Recognition Program](#) allows you to submit a photo online and apply for a recognition certificate. Hey, you deserve some credit for a great catch.

Okay, perhaps fish bragging isn't your thing, but you can bet your child or grandchild would love doing it. Take a look at the link. How hard can it be? Besides, you know you'll want to show it to your fishing buddy.



Are You Looking to Shoot Sporting Clays?

So, you want to shoot sporting clays but don't know where you can. The Panther Top Shooting Range is off limits. [continued on page 4]

[Sporting Clays: continued from page 3] What do you do?

Fortunately, a group of MCR&GC members are avid sporting clay shooters, and they're inviting you to join them.

Contact Tom Coy at 828-835-3576 and he can provide insight and share with you their shooting schedule.



News on the Planned Chatuge Drawdown

No doubt those who boat and fish in Lake Chatuge are following the TVA's planned drawdown of the lake in order to facilitate work on the dam.

The agency has yet to release a draft environmental impact report, something that is expected late this year or early next. Once it has been published, a public comment period will commence.

Those interested in the project can learn more via the [TVA website's coverage](#).



The Politics of Gun Policy Statistics

It was writer Mark Twain who introduced Americans to the phrase,

"Lies, damn lies and statistics." Twain attributed the critique to British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. The point of the quip is, statistics can deceptively be made to support essentially any argument to those who accept them without scrutiny.

Groups which oppose broad gun rights often cite statistical studies to support their calls for more restrictions on private gun ownership. In many cases they finance those studies, and as is too often true today of public research, many such firms want only to please their clients. Unfortunately, that means stacking the deck.

A [recent national study](#) claims broad support among both gun owners and non-gun owners for gun control framed as, "gun violence prevention policies." Now for the catch.

In order to produce a genuine outcome, any statistical sampling must select respondents completely at random, and survey's must be weighted to avoid oversampling of any demographic.

Of the respondents to the aforementioned study, almost twice as many people who do NOT own guns were sampled than those who do, and members of a political party traditionally opposed to gun rights made up about 50% more of the sample than those of the opposite political stripe.

Note: about 44% of American households contain at least one firearm, but it's believed gun ownership may be underrepresented in statistical research because some prefer not to admit to questioners that they own guns.

Bottom line: if you want to achieve a

certain outcome, be sure those you survey are more likely to provide the answers you're looking for.

You can [read a more detailed account here](#) of concerns involving gun policy statistical research.



A Place You May Not Know

Forty-seven miles from the Murphy traffic circle, where US 19 and GA 60 intersect, lies a large traffic circle built around a stack of loose stones. This is the site known as [Trahlyta's Grave](#) who legend tells us was a beautiful Cherokee princess among a tribe living on nearby Cedar Mountain.

As the story goes, Trahlyta refused the overtures of Wahsega. In anger, he kidnapped Trahlyta and carried her away from her people. As legend has it, a nearby stream was the secret of Trahlyta's youth (known today as Porter Springs). Having been taken from it, her youth soon began to fade.

As she was dying, Wahsega is said to have promised to bury her in the woods of her home. The stone pile is believed to be Tyahlyta's grave.

The legend also says it became a tradition among the Cherokee, and later among whites, to place a stone on the pile when passing. It was believed removing any stone would bring a curse upon the interloper. **[continued on page 5]**

[A Place: continued from page 4]

Modern highway construction, just like many of the manmade mountain lakes, does not necessarily honor structural impediments, and it's said two efforts have been made to remove the stone pile. At least one person reportedly died in each of the two attempts. A consequence of the curse? Given the present construction design, it appears engineers finally opted to exercise discretion and go around the stone pile.

Most legends tend to grow over the passage of time, and the retelling of such tales leads to embellishments. For example, the Cherokee are not known to have had princesses. Still, the stones are there for some reason, and it seems likely they were important enough for people to have remembered them and passed down the stories they were told.

Whether for cultural or historical reasons, the place seems worthy of our respect.



Tennessee Becomes First State to Mandate Gun Safety Training in Public Schools

In addition to not having a state income tax, Tennesseans now have another reason to celebrate. Public and charter schools in the state must provide gun safety training beginning in kindergarten.

Looking at the curriculum, it tends to

mirror the NRA's Eddie Eagle program in which no actual firearms are used, and kids are taught not to touch any firearm they find and to immediately go tell an adult.

Tennessee's training provides additional instruction in firearms nomenclature and "safe-storage."

While the idea offers much promise toward reducing accidental gun deaths among children, it's important to remember educators can incorporate their own spin on any topic they teach. The program appears intended to teach gun safety, but any teacher might allow arguments against the wisdom of private gun ownership and Second Amendment rights to infect the instruction. Doing so would cross the line between teaching the fundamentals of gun safety and the politics of firearms ownership in general.

Parents in The Volunteer State concerned about what their children are taught regarding firearms and their ownership should monitor the progress of the program. Rest assured, other states will be watching the outcome of Tennessee's initiative.

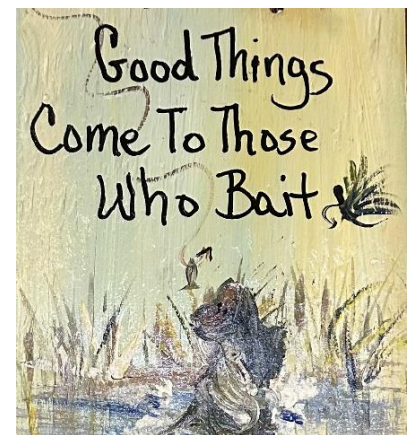


The Panther Top Shooting Range has marked twenty years since its dedication in 2005, and Cannon Crompton of the *Cherokee Scout* reported on the occasion in the

August 20, 2025 edition of the newspaper (see photo).

The shooting range was completed for only 30% of the expected cost due to the generous sacrifice of many in the community. Donations from the National Rifle Association, National Wild Turkey Federation and others helped to make it possible.

The MCR&GC continues to maintain upkeep of the range.



The next meeting of the
MCR&GC
will be held
October 21, 2025
at
Choices – Murphy Pregnancy Center