



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

MCR&GC NEWS



CHRISTMAS EDITION

WINTER 2026

Looking Back & Looking Ahead

The year is winding down and 2025 is almost gone. Was it a good year for you? Personal challenges are a fact of life, but we hope you found the last twelve months relatively free of adversity, at least no more than most of us experience. Yes, prices remain too high.

The MCR&GC developed a new [website](#) this year and it has proven quite successful. Anytime you launch a new technological project you have to keep your fingers crossed. Glitches are common, but despite a slow start, the [new website](#) has proven a good recruitment tool, and it allows new members and existing members to join or renew electronically.

NOTE: if you have an existing auto-renew set up through PayPal, do not renew manually. Your autopay should still function, and renewing manually will result in being charged twice. If you have any doubts, contact

the club treasurer for assistance: treasurer@mtncrgc.com.

On December 9th, we had a nice turnout for the Christmas party. A shoutout to member, Larry Shoeman who graciously provided the live music. Later in this issue you'll find photos from the event. If you missed it, plan now to attend next year. Fellowship during the holidays is always extra special, and we hope to see everyone anytime the club hosts an event. Also, check the [Past Events](#) tab on the website to see the latest video.

If you'll be traveling to visit family or friends during the holiday, we wish you a safe journey. The roads will surely be crowded with holiday traffic, and taking a little extra time to arrive safely is certainly worth the effort.

Merry Christmas! See you all in 2026!



Club Meeting Notes

During the **October** meeting, President Jeff Gustason announced the upcoming Christmas party would be held at The Ball Room in Murphy. He asked those who planned to attend to give their names to Michael Howe so preparations could be made for the dinner.

Michael shared updates on a couple of federal court cases impacting gun rights. Michael also introduced the idea of the club sponsoring and assembling a float for the upcoming

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Murphy Christmas parade.

It was made clear a committee would need to be appointed to acquire the necessary materials and manage production of the float. Unfortunately, little interest was expressed in the project.

The evening's guest speaker was Melinda Parrish, a new NCWRC officer.



Officer Melinda Parrish

Officer Parrish hails from Castroville, Texas, a small town near El Paso. Family connections brought her to North Carolina.

Melinda presented a slide show of her experiences in the [training program](#) required to become a WLEO. Officers must complete the state's law enforcement officer training, as well as the NCWRC's LEO training.

Melinda answered wildlife-oriented questions from those in attendance. When asked what she saw as the greatest threat to area wildlife which could be addressed by law enforcement, she indicated poaching is the biggest problem. She feels the issue could be significantly improved by families teaching their kids the value of wildlife and the need for appropriate conservation.

Also in attendance was Master Officer John Dooley who reported

the white oak tree acorn crop is heavy, but the red oak acorns are surprisingly fewer in number. Deer favor white oak acorns over red oak, but the latter tend to serve as a late winter food source for deer which could result in dwindling supplies before the spring.

During the **November** meeting, Jeff reminded everyone of the upcoming Christmas party and the need for those planning to attend to reserve seats.

Jeff outlined how Choices – The Murphy Pregnancy Center had generously been allowing the club to meet in their excellent facilities, and he asked the members to approve a donation to them. Those in attendance voted to donate \$500 to the facility.

Victoria Ivie, executive director of the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce was the evening's guest speaker. Victoria explained the purpose of the chamber is to foster economic development, growth and prosperity throughout the county.



Victoria Ivie

The chamber offers opportunities for networking, joint marketing, visitor engagement and enhancing and promoting local identity.

Victoria shared with the attendees new businesses that are expected to open soon, as well as news about local groups such as [Andrews Vision](#) who are working to help plan and coordinate future growth and development in the area.

Victoria also shared with members information regarding [WNC Business](#), a good source for news about commercial expansion in Western North Carolina.

The chamber produces a digital monthly newsletter available on their [website](#).

NOTE: If you have autopay set up with PayPal for renewal of your annual club dues, DO NOT renew manually through the club's website as doing so will result in you being charged twice.



Area Holiday Events

[Mountain Country Christmas in Lights](#): Nov 27th – Dec 23rd, Hiawassee, GA.

[Holiday Express Tour](#): Nov 28th – Dec 24th, Blue Ridge, GA.

[Blairsville Tour of Trees](#)

December 1st – December 31st, 7:30 am – 8:00 pm (Tue - Sat) & 7:30 am – 5:00 pm (Sun & Mon).

[Vogel Christmas Tree Lighting](#):

Vogel State Park, Dec 13th, 4:00 pm – 6:45 pm.

Enchanted Garden of Lights:
Through January 4th (closed Dec 24th), Rock City, Chattanooga, TN.



2025 MCR&GC Christmas Party



Larry Shoeman



President Jeff, Secretary/Treasurer Joyce and Vice President Tom

A Place You May Not Know



Sixty-two miles from the Murphy traffic circle is a unique place for those with an affinity for kitty cats – the [American Museum of the House Cat](#). It's located on US 441 north of Franklin, NC.

Their collection essentially displays practically anything associated with cats or catlore. They even have a 3000-year-old Egyptian cat mummy. Seems cats were exceedingly important in ancient Egyptian culture. It's fair to say they are a big part of present-day American culture; [Place: Continued on Page 4]

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thankfully, we don't mummify ours.



Interior of the AMHC

In case you're wondering, yes, they have live house cats wandering about the place who like to greet friendly visitors. We counted four during a recent visit.

Not everyone is a fan of cats. For that matter, some people are allergic to them. Still, if you're someone who isn't drawn to a purring kitty curled up on your lap, you're likely on somebody's prayer list, and probably should be.

Meow!



The Most Wonderful Time...

Christmas is upon us, and the hustle and bustle is in full swing. Do you still enjoy shopping in stores, or have you joined the exclusive Amazon cult where the computer is your shopping cart, and the shipper is your shopping bag?

Many of us are from the generation that anxiously awaited the Sears or JC Penney Christmas catalogues. We'd scrutinize the toy section for items to beg Santa, or our parents, to produce on Christmas morning. Those days of innocence eventually passed, and it became our turn to figure out how to fulfill Christmas wishes in the household.

In some homes, Christmas trees went up the weekend of Thanksgiving, while others waited until the first weekend of December. Thanksgiving was its own special holiday, and outdoor Christmas lights weren't seen until after it had passed. Now, Halloween displays appear in retail stores in August, and Christmas décor begins popping up in October. Thanksgiving feels like it has been absorbed.

Fewer and fewer each year send out

Christmas cards, something that once was as much a part of the holiday season as gift giving. Sorry, but electronic cards seem rather plastic by comparison.

Christmas has been referred to as, "the most wonderful time of the year." To some, this isn't the case. Perhaps it was in the time of their youth, but life proved a winding road rather than a well-marked path, and circumstances, some of their own doing and in some cases not, ultimately left them alone. Now, the celebration of Christmas emphasizes and reminds them of that, and they don't share the joy of the season.

That's certainly understandable when Christmas is purely secular, but anyone can feel a painful sense of solitude. Those who've recently lost a child or spouse, or even a beloved pet feels a dimming of the mirth Christmas once brought. It's easy to judge them for losing sight of the true meaning of Christmas, but given we all have human shortcomings, perhaps a bit of kindness would serve better in those situations.

But for the grace of God, any of us might find ourselves counted among the aforementioned.

If you know someone alone this Christmas, a visit or phone call might be the best Christmas present they've received in a very long time.

Peace on Earth.

The next meeting of the
MCR&GC
will be January 20th, 2026
7:00 pm
Choices – Murphy Pregnancy
Center
1262 Andrews Rd, Murphy
(adjacent to Sav-a-Lot)