



Nantahala Hiking Club Newsletter

nantalahikingclub.org

1st Quarter 2022

— Rev. A. Rufus Morgan, Club Founder

“Keep ever clear the trails that lead to mountaintops.”



An example of our incredible trail work heading NOBO on the AT toward Albert Mountain. Submitted by Will McAllister.



Welcome to New Members!!!!

- David Ambler, Franklin, NC
- Margaret Auer, Franklin, NC
- Beth Bergstrom, Franklin, NC
- Sharon Burns, Whittier, NC
- Rory & Stacey Cassedy, Hayesville, NC
- Linda Collins, Venice, FL
- Dennis Desmond, Franklin, NC
- Sandi & John Hawk, Franklin, NC
- Bill Jones, Franklin, NC
- Susan Krawec, Hayesville, NC
- Alfred M. Levy, Jupiter, FL
- Adam Mullikin, Whittier, NC
- Julie Papay, Franklin, NC
- John & Betty Scotto, Franklin, NC
- Karen Stearns, Otto, NC
- Matt & Celeste Villo, Franklin, NC
- Leigh Westcott, St. Petersburg, FL
- Sarah Wiley, Franklin, NC



WHAT IS THIS????????? Read on to find out.....

President's Message

by Victor Treutel

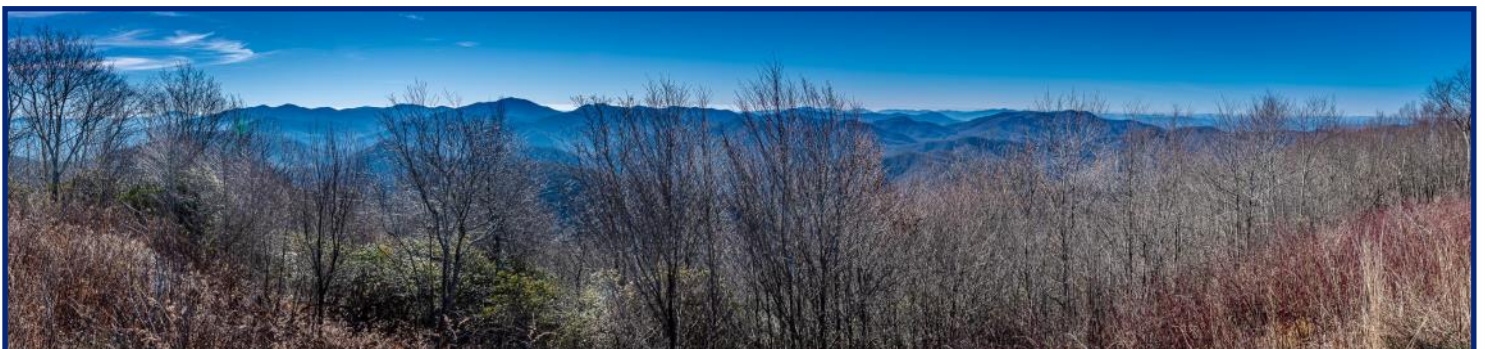
For nearly two years our lives have been turned upside down. Hardly a day has gone by when we haven't heard that a friend or loved one was sick with COVID, or that cases were spiking, or that new lockdowns or mandates were coming. When we think the corner is being turned we hear there's a new variant on its way. What a rollercoaster we've all been on.

Almost everyone who had intentions of a thru-hike in 2020 was forced to cancel. Some returned last year, but the A.T. Conservancy recommended that individuals not thru-hike the Appalachian Trail. As a club, we tried to return to normal in 2021, although that was oftentimes strained and difficult. We had half as many Trail Ambassadors, fewer attendees at meetings and less maintainers, but we continued as best we could.

Miraculously, our club's membership has grown, doubling from pre-COVID to over 300. This was all the buzz at the Southern Regional meeting. How'd we do it, the other clubs asked? Social media, advertising, sign spinners on street corners, free puppies? In talking to our new members, there wasn't one single thing besides their own desire to be outdoors, to enjoy our mountains and to give back.

As 2022 begins, we are preparing for a monster thru-hiker season that will begin in March. Driven by a pent up demand, desire to be outdoors, need to connect with nature and an ultimate passion to live life to its fullest, we expect an unprecedented number of people through our section of the Appalachian Trail and our community this spring. More than ever the club needs volunteers.

An example of what we do can now be seen from Siler Bald. For years, trees and undergrowth had consumed the most spectacular view in our section of the A.T. Here is a photo I took of the southern view from Siler Bald. Even without leaves, the distant mountaintops of Albert, Pickens Nose and Standing Indian mountains can barely be seen. During the summer months, only small cracks were open.



After many long months of garnering government approval, our team of maintainers (see photo, taken after the day's work) were permitted to restore the view to its original state.

President's Message (continued)

The weather was amazing as we cleared the trees and underbrush, leaving obscured piles for small critters to make their homes. At the end of the day, the view was restored and our breaths were taken. See below photo taken from the exact same spot as the "before" photo.



Our maintainers go out every Wednesday. We meet at the clubhouse (173 Carl Slagle Road) at 8:45 a.m. No experience or expertise is required; just a willingness to help and the physical ability to hike a few miles. Jobs are available to everyone, so come join us for a day of "keeping ever clear the open trails that lead to the mountaintops."



2022 Thru-Hiker Chow Down

Fingers crossed, we are looking forward to hosting the 2022 Thru-Hiker Chow Down with Lazy Hiker. Who knows what time will bring, but we are trying to be positive. On that note, the Chow Down will take place on April 2. We will once again work with the brewery to serve the thru-hikers a lunch of chili dogs with all the fixings, chips, homemade baked goods and fruit. As in the past, we will be in the Lazy Hiker yard, weather permitting.

We will also be inviting our Trail Ambassadors to come, meet, and get to know the 2022 thru-hikers. NHC would like all our members to consider volunteering in some capacity and also plan on attending the event. Volunteer opportunities include:

1. Make a crockpot of chili (need at least one of vegetarian chili)
2. Make a homemade baked good which needs to be individually wrapped
3. Provide small fresh fruit (also individually wrapped if berries or grapes)
4. Set-up and serve from 11:30-1:30pm
5. Serve and take down from 1:30- 3:30pm

Emails to club members will be sent out in early March confirming the date and time if the Board decides we are going to do the Chow Down in 2022. Once you receive that email, it will tell you how you can contact the lead volunteer to volunteer yourself.

This is always a fun event as we serve the thru-hikers and get to know them. Lazy Hiker usually releases their Spring Fever beer at this event. Be looking for more details to be emailed in March 2022. Be thinking of what you would like to do to help NHC restart this annual event. We will need your help to make it happen and be successful!!



Calling All Volunteers!

We have some very exciting work coming up with our clubhouse facelift. If you are skilled in electrical or plumbing, please let us know. Also looking for cleaners, painters and skilled organizers! If you think you meet any of these qualifications and want to be part of a very significant project, please contact treasurer@nantahalahikingclub.org and we can begin putting this awesome crew together.

Once we know who would like to participate we will work on dates to try to accommodate everyone's schedule.

Please include your name, phone number and what you'd like to help with!

This event will only happen if cleared by the Nantahala Hiking Club and COVID is in remission

Easter on the Trail: APRIL 16, 2022 @ 8:30 AM

If you are uncomfortable joining a group activity like this, please consider donating some of the items given out on the trail during this event.

On April 16th, we will continue our Club's tradition of spreading "TRAIL MAGIC" to the thru hikers coming through our AT section. The term 'trail magic' was coined by long distance hikers to describe an unexpected occurrence or act of kindness that lifts a hiker's spirits and inspires awe and gratitude. To perform our 'trail magic', we distribute small bags of fruits, hard boiled eggs and candy to hikers during the Easter weekend. We would also like to hand out some dog treats for those hikers who had their companions with them.

This year we would like to concentrate on more fruits, nuts and other healthy treats with a smaller amount of candy.

ALL Club members are invited to participate in this joyous event!

We will meet at the Clubhouse on Carl Slagle Road on Saturday, April 16th at 8:30 am to make up the bags and then head out on the Trail to distribute them. Trail distribution areas will be assigned according to personal preferences and ability to hike or travel to them. Members are encouraged to work together at each area.

We will be collecting bags of candy brought to the next hiking meeting on April 8th. Please do not bring fresh fruit or hard boiled eggs at that time – ONLY CANDY.

If you are unable to participate in the actual making and distribution of bags for Trail Magic, please consider dropping off something at the clubhouse on the morning of April 16th.

COLORED HARDBOILED EGGS and FRESH FRUIT can ONLY be delivered to the Clubhouse on Saturday, APRIL 16th. This makes sure that the items are fresh for the hikers to enjoy.

Sign-up sheets will be available at the April 8th general meeting. Contact Elena Marsh at 828-369-8915, email – marsh67@frontier.com if you have any questions or would like to

Still curious about what this is?



Read on.....

Upcoming Membership Programs.....

We'll be looking forward to welcoming back regular programming in March!

Our first meeting of 2022 will be at the Franklin Public Library on March 10 at 6 p.m. in the general meeting room. Guest speakers will be Johnathan and Laura Byrd, who will speak on winter/cold weather hiking, as well as ice climbing!

On April 14, Rob Gudger, Wildlife Biologist (NC State University) and avid outdoorsman, will bring one of his three wolves, Wayaha (Cherokee for wolf) to meet, greet and discuss the history of wolves in WNC. During Rob's 24 years with Duke Power Company, he was instrumental in the layout of the Foothills Trail System. He has spent 50 years involved with the Boy Scouts and shares his knowledge in schools and classes around WNC.



Food Storage on the Trail

By Bill Mandler, Regional Partnership Committee Representative

With an increase in bear/hiker interactions along the AT, including in our area, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is strongly recommending all overnight hikers make use of Bear Resistant Food Storage Containers (BRFSC). Food hangs, which involve hanging food from trees, are strongly discouraged for several reasons. The bygone is that bears have figured out how to defeat these even if done properly. OK, "smarter than the average bear" comes immediately to mind!

The BRFSCs come in basically two flavors: a hard plastic cylinder with a screw on lid (e.g. Bear Vault BV450, www.bearvault.com) or Kevlar reinforced sacks (e.g. Ursack Major, www.ursack.com). Any food storage container on the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee's approved list (<https://igbconline.org/programs/bear-resistant-products/>) is considered acceptable but the strong preference is to use a hard-sided container. These can also be used to sit on!

I expect at some point BRFSCs will become a requirement for AT hikers; they are already a requirement for back country camping in some national parks.

If you're planning an overnight hike on any trails, not just the AT, where there is the possibility of bear activity (which means any in our area), please consider using a BRFSC. The Macon County Library has two Ursacks available to check out. These were funded through the North Carolina AT License Plate Grant. Outdoor 76 also has BRFSCs for sale.

Can I persuade you to Volunteer for NHC?

by Syndie Cassedy, Volunteer Recruiting Lead Coordinator

Do you enjoy being involved? Making new friends? Giving back or paying it forward? The Nantahala Hiking Club welcomes new volunteers to share their gifts and talents. This is a wonderful way to give back to your community by doing something you love! And if you need training, we'll gladly provide it.

This year we are preparing for a monster thru-hiker season. Driven by a pent up demand, desire to be outdoors, need to connect with nature and a passion to live life to its fullest, we expect an unprecedented number of people through our section of the AT and our community this spring. We need volunteers to assist more than ever. Maintaining the trail is our number one priority. Our maintainers go out every Wednesday morning. No experience or expertise is required; just a willingness to help and the physical ability to hike a few miles.

Volunteer opportunities include the following:

- Trail maintenance: Perform maintenance of the AT and connecting trails to clean up tree blowdowns, clear brush, control water issues and other items.
- Trail Ambassador: Interact with hikers while on the AT to answer questions, ensure their safety and monitor trail conditions.
- Board of Directors: Board members, who help define the club's direction and ensure smooth operations, are elected annually by the membership in July.
- Newsletter: Write articles of interest for the club's quarterly newsletter.
- Hike leader: Lead and guide groups on organized hikes.
- Trail magic such as Easter on the Trail: Provide acts of good will to hikers as an organized event.
- Festivals and events: Assist in promoting the club and local trails at various community events.
- Social Media: Coordinate the club's social media accounts.
- Shuttle driver: Using your personal vehicle, drive hikers to and from local trailheads.
- School outreach: Chaperone and otherwise assist with events for local school children.
- Club events: Help provide refreshments and entertainment at the club's meetings, parties and fundraising events.

Anyone interested in volunteering in any capacity should send me an email at syndiecassedy1225@gmail.com. Please put "NHC Volunteer Activity Information" in the subject line. I will direct you to the appropriate person who will get you involved in whatever you wish. **The first 10 volunteers to take on a position will receive a Nantahala Hiking Club sticker!**

Thank you!

VOLUNTEER!

and speaking of volunteering...

Trail Ambassador Training Scheduled

The role of Trail Ambassador is fun and rewarding: you get to make your own schedule, which includes a hike along the AT, work as long as you want and talk with hikers. You will represent our club and community, offering information and advice, as needed and/or requested, to amazing individuals who are on a life-changing journey. Trail Ambassadors are crucial to our club, and will be even more important this year as we are expecting an increase in thru-hikers (March—May) on the AT and in our community.

If you are interested, mandatory training will take place on Saturday, February 12, from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Lazy Hiker Brewery. You must RSVP to ensure that a seat is reserved for you at this training by sending an email to Victor at president@nantahalahikingclub.org.



2020 Trail Ambassadors at Rock Gap Shelter

Hike Leader Program

In 2001 a group of hike leaders—Kay Coriell, Roger Beattie, Joe Gatin and Bud Colcord—decided that it would be good to compose a Hike Leader's Guide. The purpose was to encourage members of the Nantahala Hiking Club to become hike leaders. This was completed in October of 2001. Every two years a time is selected to present a class to interested people. In 2021, the Guide was revised and seven new leaders attended the class. Present leaders were also given a refresher course in May. We currently have 14 active hike leaders. All leaders are encouraged to have First Aid and CPR training. Knowledge of the area for hikes is most important.

Hikes are offered almost every Saturday and Sunday throughout the year. There are hikes for all levels of hikers.

Hike Leader Program (continued)

Families are encouraged to participate. Some hikes welcome well-behaved dogs. The Hike Schedule is on our website and mailed to all members every two months. Hikes are also advertised in the local media. Hikes are taken on the Appalachian Trail, the Bartram Trail, trails in the Standing Indian Recreational Area, Panthertown Valley and surrounding area, North Georgia, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, as well as hikes near the Blue Ridge Parkway.

A new hike leader class may be offered in March 2022. If you are interested, please call Gail Lehman at 828-524-5298 or Katharine Brown at 828-421-4178.

Trail Manager's Report

by Rich Corporon, Trail Manager

The past few months have been busy ones for our maintainers. We have been clearing blowdowns, brush cutting and working on water control. A few weeks ago we went up to Siler Bald and cleared the southern view. This project was done in coordination with the ATC and the USFS. A special thanks to Bill Van Horn for all his work to make this possible. It was a beautiful day and the view is incredible.

We are working to prepare the AT for another season. We have already met a few early bird thru-hikers. Our last two remaining old-style privies have been switched and serviced at Cold Springs and Wesser. Our two southernmost privies at Muskrat and Standing Indian were serviced last week. Four down; six to go. We've been through our wilderness section in the south recently and look to complete our trail work toward the Georgia line in January.

I would like to acknowledge some of our maintainers who have joined us over the past year. We now have a "western chapter" of maintainers. These maintainers come all the way from Andrews, Brasstown, Hiawassee and Blairsville, Georgia! Mark, Hygie, Rory and Kelly...we are glad you drive the extra miles to join us every week. In addition to our newer maintainers, we continue to have a great core of veteran maintainers going out most every week. Your dedication to the trail is an inspiration to us all.

Sarah Adams, our ATC rep, has been out with us many times since she started her job. She is responsible for the AT from the southern terminus at Springer Mountain to Fontana Dam. It's been great having an ATC person so involved with our club and our maintainers. She is based out of Otto and splits her duties between the three maintaining clubs in her section.

Just a reminder...If you are out hiking and pass a shelter, please take a few minutes to dump some leaves into the privy and fill the leaf buckets. This is a small thing but an incredible help to our maintainers.

We always welcome new maintainers. If you are comfortable hiking five miles or so, come join us for a Wednesday work hike. No one is ever asked to do more than they are comfortable with. All of us contribute. We meet at the clubhouse on Wednesday mornings between 8:30 and 8:45. Come join us. If you would like more information, please email me at nhctrailcrew@gmail.com.

Happy Trails,

Rich



Sarah Adams and Bill Van Horn hiked up Beech Gap trail with chainsaws to the Wilderness boundary. Cut a step out of this blowdown. Too large and dangerous to totally remove. All they had to improve the trail around the tree was their Leave No Trace cat hole trowels!

New Member Orientation Scheduled!

Our first New Member Orientation, held in October of last year, was a great success: a nice turnout, good program, interesting conversation and food and drink. Our next event is planned for February 8 from 5:00—7:00 p.m. at the Rock Creek Lodge in the rear of Outdoor 76. Details are forthcoming on our website events calendar, as well as on the NHC Meetup page. If you have joined since last October, you will receive a personal email to attend., but all are welcome. If you are a new member, the first drink is on us!

Welcome new members!



From a club hike led by Katharine Brown in November 2021

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Franklin Appalachian Trail Community Council Update

by Tim Litchford, FATCC Representative

Prime hiking season is here and preparations are being made by the Franklin Appalachian Trail Community Council (FATCC). Franklin was the first of the now 50 communities designated by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy as a Trail Community and the FATCC, which was created for Franklin to become a Trail Community, is responsible for many of the festivals and activities that take place during the traditional month-long celebration of thru-hikers and the AT.

This year is looking like one of the best in several years and the FATCC welcomes our hikers and visitors to enjoy the Franklin Trail Days Celebration.

Just some of the activities being planned:

- NHC Chow Down scheduled for April 2 at the Lazy Hiker
- An event sponsored by Mainspring Conservation Trust and The Rathskeller at The Rathskeller on April 15
- An outdoor music and gear exchange on April 23 at the Lazy Hiker
- Other activities are planned such as a fundraiser, several trail magic events and many more with additional information to follow as they are scheduled.

Advertisements and information will be placed in many local publications such as the Franklin Press, Macon County News, Smoky Mountain News, Blue Ridge Outdoors, Franklin and Nantahala Chamber of Commerce magazine, as well as many others. In addition, you can follow on Facebook at [Franklinatmile110](#) and other social media platforms.

The FATCC is excited to announce the planning for a mural located in downtown Franklin which will create more visitor awareness and help the council fulfill its mission of:

- Growing awareness of the AT among citizens of Franklin and Macon County through education.
- Inspiring our community to promote and protect the AT as one of Franklin's main assets through stewardship.
- Providing the best possible experience for all our visitors of the AT through hiker friendliness and services.
- Leveraging the AT as an asset to benefit Franklin economically and physically.

In other FATCC news:

The FATCC has been approved as a 501(c) (3) organization which will enable the council to do more fundraising and request grants to help the council fulfill its mission for many years to come.

Welcome Ashley Irons as the ATC's new Community Coordinator.

Welcome Deena Bouknight as the newest Community Supporter to the FATCC. Deena is a local author and journalist who has published three books and contributes to local and national publications.

The World Outside the Nantahala Hiking Club

by **Bill Mandler, NHC Regional Partnership Committee Representative**

With the spring Regional Partnership Committee (RPC) meeting coming up in March, I thought it might be worthwhile to explain to our members how the NHC fits into the wider world of Appalachian Trail Management.

Our club name, Nantahala Hiking Club, really hides its primary mission. To be accurate, it should be called the Nantahala Maintaining Club as our primary mission is to maintain the 59 miles of Appalachian Trail and another 40 miles of connecting trails (“blue blaze trails”) in the Nantahala National Forest in Macon County. In addition to keeping the treadway passable, we also maintain shelters, privies, and footbridges. But most people aren’t so interested in trail maintenance. They want to hike! So we’re the Nantahala Hiking Club.

Of course, we don’t operate on our own when it comes to maintaining the AT. There are a number of agencies involved. The primary agency that manages the trail under the cooperative management arrangement is the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC). It provides the central focus of trail management and works with the National Park Service (the AT is actually a national park), the U.S. Forest Service and many other state and local agencies (agency partners) that have impact on the trail. Its authority is federally mandated by Congress. For the section of trail that NHC is responsible for maintaining, the U.S. Forest Service is our main agency partner as the land the trail goes through is under its purview.

The NHC is one of 31 maintaining clubs that provide the “boots on the ground” to keep the trail open throughout its almost 2,200 mile length. The clubs are grouped into four regions by the ATC and there is staff dedicated to each: New England Regional Office (NERO); Mid-Atlantic Regional Office (MARO); Virginia Area Regional Office (VARO); and the Southern Regional Office (SORO). The SORO is based in Asheville. The RPC reps serve as a communication link between the maintaining clubs and the ATC and agency partners. I am the NHC RPC rep and current Vice-Chair, while Dave Heck is the alternate rep.

Five maintaining clubs are grouped under SORO: Georgia Appalachian Trail Club; Nantahala Hiking Club; Carolina Mountain Club; Smoky Mountains Hiking Club; and Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club.

An RPC meeting for each of the regions is held twice a year, usually in March and November. These meetings provide an opportunity to hear from the agency partners (ATC, NPS, USFS, etc.) about issues regarding the trail and provide a forum for the maintaining clubs to offer feedback to the agency partners regarding what we are seeing from our vantage point.

In addition, a Southern Partnership Meeting (SPM) is held in conjunction with the RPC meeting in March. The SPM combines representatives from SORO and VARO to provide a broader view of issues affecting the trail.

For many club members, the scope of the work that is required to maintain the trail may not be readily apparent. Hopefully, this information will help everyone to understand the number of players involved and the amount of behind-the-scenes work that occurs to keep the trail open.





Story of “The Drawer”

by Victor Treutel

As a child, the act of giving was drummed into my head, yet I spent every minute of every day salivating at the sight of the Christmas tree and the gifts that laid beneath. Each morning before I bundled up and went off to school I’d wonder if the biggest present was for me. *Surely it couldn’t have been for my rotten brother.* For every minute I spent thinking about what I would give, I spent hours thinking about what I would receive. It was such a dichotomy from what I was taught, but such is life. And such is the story I’m about to tell.

In the process of planning for the Club’s annual awards banquet and holiday party the Board of Directors debated how to pay the cost. Do we push the entire bill onto the members? Do we pay the entire cost from the club funds? Or do we somehow devise a way to split the cost? I had made the motion that we pay the entire cost with club funds, since this was an awards program for a year of hard work, and because of years of generosity and frugal management the club has been blessed with a rather large bank account. As Boards *should*, we debated, discussing precedents, overall cost, COVID concerns and many other items. It was a good debate, a hybrid compromise was offered and it passed by a single vote, our first non-unanimous vote. To that date, we had all been in agreement with every decision.

I walked away from the meeting a little frustrated that I was not able to convince the others of the merit of my original motion to pay the entire cost from the Club’s ample funds. When I got home and calculated that less than two hundred dollars would be collected from certain members, I was even more frustrated. When I discussed it with my son Austin, he said, “Dad, just pay the money yourself and be done with it.” I considered that, but then I remembered a story told to me by Rufus Morgan, the grandson of our club’s founder, Rev. Rufus Morgan, about how he was the consummate giver.

Story of the Drawer (continued)

When friends and family asked him what he wanted for Christmas or his birthday he always said, “Money for the drawer.” His “drawer” money was set aside to ensure the church he built, St. John’s Cartoogechaye, would stand forever. The original church built on the site in 1880 fell into disrepair as membership declined and in the early 1900’s it was torn down. Rufus didn’t want the same fate to befall his church, so he set aside monies so that even if membership declined the church would remain. Eighty years later, his church remains a vibrant and magical place and it will stand another eighty years. Go check it out. Take a drive and walk the grounds. Go see the church that Rufus built. (542 St. John’s Church Road, Franklin)

Rufus’ drawer went on to build many other things, including our clubhouse, which we will use as a base for our trail maintenance. Rev. Morgan passed away in 1983, and yet his giving still benefits us. Without his forethought and drawer the Nantahala Hiking Club would likely be working from someone’s garage like so many other A.T. maintaining clubs.

That story gave me the idea to make our own drawer. So I contacted Rev. Morgan’s grandson, who graciously let me rummage through what remained of the original homestead that was built in the early 1800’s. With a few scraps of wood, some square nails and the expertise of my brother in-law we made “The Drawer”. My intent is that the club have a mechanism that will allow us to receive donations at all our club events, while also continuing the legacy of Rev. Morgan.

I went back to the Board and told them about my idea of asking for donations and asked them to reconsider the vote. We did and my original motion of having the club pay the entire cost of the event along with accepting donations from members was approved. In honor of Rev. Morgan, “The Drawer” was dedicated at the Holiday Party and our generous members donated \$291, more than what we would have collected originally. “The Drawer” will be placed at every club event and hopefully the generous donations will continue. I hope that the legacy of Rev. Morgan continues to live on, and his giving nature inspires us and our community. *(Yes, Mom, I’m paying attention, finally.)*



NHC Awards Banquet and Holiday Party

On December 4, 2021, the NHC held its first combined Awards Banquet and Holiday Party. Also for the first time, the event was held at The Lodge at Cat Creek. It was a spectacularly gorgeous and warm day, allowing the event to take place outdoors. Organizers, led by Gayle Treutel, did an incredible job, even taking care to be sure that we had real flatware to use! No plastic! The food from the Haywood Smokehouse and Barber Orchard was scrumptious. Even the awards seemed special this year and immediate past president Katharine Brown outdid herself as MC. The turnout for this event was good and those who were present had lots of fun, which should serve to increase attendance at this year's party. But, as always, it's the pictures that tell the story.....









