



McCormick Messenger

True to Ourselves, Our Neighbors, Our Country and Our God

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In Brief

Wreaths Across America Feb. 26

Learn about Wreaths Across America's program to honor veterans this Saturday, Feb. 26 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Mobile Education Exhibit will be in the Food Lion parking lot with videos and presentations to answer all your questions.

Registration/Practice Day

The Recreation Department along with volunteers are hosting a registration/practice day on Sunday, Feb. 27 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the McCormick Baseball Complex on Bradley Street. This is for boys and girls ages 4 to 12. They will serve refreshments to all participants.

Widows Connection

Whether newly widowed or have been alone awhile there are challenges, fears, anxieties and loneliness that are better shared. Let's gather, share and grow. The group will meet Monday, Feb. 28 at 5 p.m. at McCormick United Methodist Church. Everyone is welcome. Contact Toni Graham, 391-4257, for more information.

Chamber Breakfast

McCormick Post-Acute, 204 Holiday Road, will be the host for the March 1 Chamber of Commerce Breakfast. On September 1, 2021 transition to new ownership was complete. McCormick Post-Acute is now part of the Providence Group. Mohamed Othman is the current administrator for McCormick Post-Acute.

Friends of the Library

Friends of the Library board members will meet on March 1 to discuss potential changes to their existing by-laws. The gathering will be held at the McCormick Public Library at 1:30 p.m. in their meeting room on site.

Authors Night March 3

Maris Lawyer, the winner of the 2020 South Carolina Novel Prize will speak at the McCormick Library on Thursday, March 3 at 6 p.m. She will discuss her debut novel *Blue Line Down*, a breakneck tale of betrayal, loyalty, and unexpected homecoming that spans from West Virginia to South Carolina during the 1920s. The presentation will be followed by a book signing and light refreshments.

Trip to Hamricks

McCormick Area Transit (MAT) will be taking a trip to Hamricks in North Augusta March 10. The bus will leave from MAT parking lot at 8 a.m. The trip is free of charge and space is limited. Please call 864-465-2626 to reserve your seat.

Livestock Association

The next meeting of the McCormick County Livestock Association will be Tuesday March 8, at 6:30 p.m. at the S.C. Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe at the Education Center on Tomb Rd (the old Wilderness Camp). A cheeseburger supper will be served by the de la Howe farm crew. The topic of the program will be the new SCATE (S.C. Agricultural Tax Exemption) card that will be required for making sales tax exempt purchases for farm and forestry supplies and equipment. Aaron Wood with the S.C. Department of Agriculture will be the guest speaker. Guests are welcomed.

If you plan to attend, call the McCormick County Extension meeting registration line at 864-852-3259 by noon Friday, March 4. Please tell which meeting you are registering for and who will be attending.



Pastor Jim Kinsler, along with his wife, Martha, has led the flock of the Lutheran Church By The Lake for more than 13 years. While Jim is officially retiring, the Kinslers intend to remain in Savannah Lakes Village and contribute to the McCormick community for years to come. -StocktonPhoto

Jim Kinsler retiring as pastor, but to continue contributing

By Bob Stockton

For the past 13-plus years, Jim Kinsler has served the congregation of the Lutheran Church By The Lake in Savannah Lakes Village and to an ever-so-slightly-less degree the entire county of McCormick.

"This is home," Kinsler said. "I want to invest in not only the church but also the entire community."

Kinsler's congregation has one common quality – most all are retired senior citizens – but less than half of them come from a Lutheran background.

"The growth in McCormick and Savannah Lakes Village was stagnant when I came," he said. "We were in the middle of the 2008 recession. Lutheran Church By The Lake was able to hold its own through those challenging times."

"It all turned good, however, as population grew. As building began to increase in SLV, we were able to build our new fellowship hall before construction costs skyrocketed. We also installed sound and cameras, and the system got up and running the very weekend we closed in-person services because of COVID," Kinsler said.

He graduated from Newberry College, then the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in 1981. He earned a doctor of ministry degree in family ministry in 2013, and his dissertation was "Grandparenting the Next Generation: Fanning the Flame of Faith."

"I love being a grandparent sharing heritage and faith with grandchildren," said Kinsler, who has three daughters and eight grandchildren.

That led to his creating Camp Grand, an annual four-day grandparents/grandkids get-together each summer.

"Camp Grand nurtures the relationship between grandparents and kids to share stories," he said. "It's become so significant that it will keep on going after my retirement."

Another Kinsler idea: outdoor worship on the shores of Lake Thurmond, first at the Village marina beach then over at Elijah Clark.

"I was blown away by the great outdoors here," he said. "It's natural to worship outside in the cathedral of creation."

"One of our members told me that he thought it would never work, 'but it's the best thing going right now.' It's comparable to Jesus preaching on the grassy hills overlooking the Sea of Galilee," said Kinsler.

The fellowship hall, now named the ARK which stands for Activity Renewal Koinonia (a Greek word for Fellowship), has hosted both church events and a wide

variety of community events. "We want to make it accessible to the community," he said.

Born in Germany, Kinsler is the son of an Army chaplain who served for more than 20 years beginning in 1942 during WWII.

He visited the Village while a pastor at same church his father had served in Parkersburg, W.Va. and accepted the call to come to McCormick.

He has served on the board of Helping Hands, Habitat for Humanity and is the chair of the McCormick County Community Relations Council. He is an energetic force and the president of the McCormick County Ministerial Alliance, and there are more groups benefitting from his contributions.

"As the former pastor of the church, I do not want to cast too big a shadow. I want to spend more time building bridges, working and worshipping with our African/American brothers and sisters," he said.

Kinsler will continue to contribute. He and his wife Martha live in the Village, and her mother lives in Augusta.

Village growth booming and projects completed but new challenges rise

By Bob Stockton

During its latest two hall meetings (virtual due to COVID precautions), Savannah Lakes Village (SLV) officials announced significant successes and also challenges associated with these successes.

"SLV's operational cash balance increased from \$2.1 million in 2020 to \$2.8 million at the end of 2021," announced Village Chief Operating Officer Kirk Smith. "As a result of these operations, we are allocating \$1.5 million from operational cash into our community's capital reserve account in order to build reserve levels to help meet critical funding needs that are on our short-to-mid-term horizon."

Village growth is dramatic: 732 new families have moved to SLV during the past four years, and 360 of those have been new construction homes. Fifty-percent of Village residents have settled here in the past four years, and the Village has seen 32 more new home starts so far this year.

Golf rounds on the two golf courses increased to 51,669, 600 more rounds than in 2020, despite ongoing work to replace the 30-year old irrigation system at the Tara course.

Projects completed in 2021 are many:

Human remains discovery draws McCormick, Abbeville & SLED

By Bob Stockton

Discovery of human remains in the Old Charleston Road area tops this week's list of incidents from the McCormick County Sheriff's Office.

Deputies made contact with the caller who stated he believed he had discovered human remains on his property while hunting. The caller showed them the area where he thought he had seen the remains.

Deputies conducted a search of the area, discovered skeletal remains and secured the area with crime scene tape. Supervisors were contacted, and the SC Law Enforcement Division (SLED) Forensic Team was dispatched to the area.

Deputies from McCormick and Abbeville and SLED Agents searched the area and recovered multiple sections of bone. The Coroner was contacted and responded to collect the evidence which was sent to a forensic lab in Abbeville. The case remains open pending the findings of forensics analysis.

Deputies were dispatched to an arson call in the Mars Bridge Road area, and the complainant stated her neighbor had started a fire on his property, then disposed of hot ash on her property which ignited.

Deputies were aware of three prior calls from the suspect's house in which fire had spread to US Forestry land. US Forest Agents had cited the suspect all three times.

Deputies questioned the suspect who stated he did in fact dump hot ash over his fence onto his neighbor's property. They arrested the subject and transported him to the detention center for booking and processing.

The victim owns approximately 31 acres of land, and approximately two acres were on fire. Local fire departments extinguished the blaze.

Deputies initiated a traffic stop for a vehicle headlight out on highway 28 south near the intersection of State Park Road. They approached the driver, detected the odor of marijuana and had the driver and a passenger step out of the vehicle.

Deputies detected a strong odor of marijuana coming from the passenger, asked her about the odor of marijuana, and she stated she had marijuana on her. They asked her to

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a new kitchen in the Monticello clubhouse; completion of a hillside terrace at Tara; new bocce ball courts; a new community garden to be completed at the end of March; 20 new community docks and 23 private docks; new and larger traffic signage and striping at golf cart crossings; the acquisition of 10 acres adjacent to the Tara clubhouse at no cost to SLV; the new irrigation system at Tara, forward tees and practice range improvements, and completion of a major indoor pool remodeling.

The growth comes with growing pains: staffing shortages; needs for new docks, and the lack of action on the old lodge on the peninsula.

"We have been working through turnover while also adding new positions," Smith said. "We welcomed 50 new team members all of last year and another 14 to our team so far this year. We currently have 119 team members and are growing."

Demolition of the old lodge is scheduled later this year, according to Savannah Lakes Real Estate & Development, the independent Village developer. Furniture and all interior finishes and equipment have al-

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