

Messenger Mail

Response to David Flom's letter of March 3

I appreciate David Flom's confirmation in last week's *Messenger* that his perspectives on our 45th President are consistent with the narratives of the mainstream media that denied his legitimacy and attacked his credibility before, during and even after his term of office. If his major sources of information include CNN, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the country's principal wire service – the Associated Press – and even FOX News (at times), there can be little doubt about his view of the world. I would, however, point out the following:

First, the daily print and broadcast media no longer have the time, money or inclination to do much in-depth investigative reporting, but rely substantially on highly partisan sources funded mainly by a cadre of elite billionaires with political narratives to peddle, axes to grind and corporate holdings to protect. If Mr. Flom would like a more scholarly perspective on his major information sources, I would recommend Sharyl Attkisson's trilogy of recent books on the mainstream media that I have referenced and cited in previous essays – *Stonewalled*, *Slanted* and *The Smear*.

Second, the mainstream media's standard narrative on Trump's role in the Jan. 6 fiasco on Capitol Hill universally omits the following – (1) an exhortation to "peacefully" protest the outcome of the 2020 election was perfectly within his 1st amendment rights; (2) the fact that Democrats did much the same thing following the 2016 election – denying the legitimacy of its outcome and urging their supporters to march in protest (which they did) is never mentioned; (3) prior to Jan. 6 Trump repeatedly offered Congress additional boots on the ground to protect the Capitol during any protests that might ensue and was repeatedly told to mind his own business; (4) the powers that be who are responsible for protecting the Capitol grounds – the legislature, not the President – refused additional law enforcement personnel offered by the District of Columbia; and (5) the vast majority of those who were arrested during the protest at the Capitol have been held in jail incommunicado, without bail and largely without counsel while they have awaited trial for the crimes alleged against them – preventing any interviews with the press that would enlighten the public on what they saw or did, or endanger the partisan narrative on Trump's complicity.

Third, the recorded conversations between Trump and Georgia state election officials clearly indicate that he did not ask them to "find" an additional 12,000 votes to change the outcome, but to disqualify voters that the state itself had identified as having improperly cast ballots. Their reply was that his information – obtained from official state sources – was incorrect. Trump's request for them to provide the correct information that contradicted the published results was repeatedly denied.

Finally, the implication that there was anything unusual or heroic in career bureaucrats assisting the Biden team during the transition process is patently absurd. There may have been careerists who wanted to curry favor with the incoming administration by alleging a lack of cooperation within their departments, but I can affirm from experience that this is an assertion that lacks credibility. As a careerist, I personally led transition teams during the Reagan-Bush I, Bush I-Clinton, and Clinton-Bush II presidencies. These transitions are virtually always led and carried out by career employees to avoid any conflicts-of-interest that would prejudice the process. The transition protocols between Trump and Biden would have been no different, but – of course – that information would have contradicted the mainstream media's projected image of Trump.

- Chuck Cook

The State Capitol Report

(Continued from last week)

By Rep. Anne Parks,
SC House District 12

February 22 - 24, 2022

The House approved H. 4143, as amended by the committee, gave third reading and sent to the Senate, legislation dealing with the warning lights on tow wreckers. This bill outlines that a wrecker must use a mounted oscillating, rotating, or flashing light at an emergency scene and at any time when rendering roadside assistance.

The House approved H. 3538, as amended by the committee, gave third reading and sent to the Senate, legislation that requires the Department of Natural Resources to set conditions under the Alligator Management Program for the humane taking and disposition of alligators. The legislation adds that a person capturing alligators must take all reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of members of the public and prevent direct contact between the public and captured alligators. Alligators only may be relocated or moved within the boundary of the parcel described on the depredation permit, unless written permission is given by the Department. Disposal of alligator carcasses into waters, ephemeral and intermittent streams, ditches, and swales is prohibited. In addition, disposal on any property without the landowner's permission or at any public boat ramp is prohibited. It is also noted that no alligator may be held alive for more than eight hours and no live alligator may be transferred to another person unless with written permission from the Department. In addition, the legislation outlines that the official citation issued by enforcement officers may be used to cite violations.

The House gave third reading and sent to the Senate H. 4904, legislation that allows the Department of Natural Resources to obtain and utilize Schedule III Nonnarcotic and Schedule IV Controlled Substances for the capture and immobilization of wildlife. The department must apply for a Controlled Substance Registration Certificate from DEA and a state controlled substances registration from the Department of Health and Environmental Control. Only trained and certified department employees can provide the administration of tranquilizing agents.

The House gave third reading and sent to the Senate H. 4905, a bill that includes the reference of hybrid bass in the striped bass statutes.

The House gave third reading and sent to Senate H. 4906. In an effort to prevent the introduction or distribution of a disease, in particular the chronic waste disease, that affects the deer population, the bill outlines that upon declaration of a wildlife disease emergency by the Director of the Department of Natural Resources, after consulting with the Director of the Livestock Poultry Health Division (Clemson University), may promulgate regulations, among many things, to delineate disease management zones at any geographic scale; and declare temporary emergency open seasons.

The House gave third reading and sent to Senate H. 4907, legislation that updates the freshwater game fish laws to include other specifics of bass, such as the Alabama bass, and trout hybrids. The legislation outlines that it is illegal to sale game fish in this state.

The House gave third reading and sent to the Senate H. 4600, a bill that revises the priority list of persons who can make healthcare decisions for persons who are unable to do so. This bill is a result of a recommendation arising from the House Legislative Oversight Committee's study of the Department of Mental Health completed in 2020. This bill modernizes the code of laws pertaining to persons authorized to make healthcare decisions for a DMH patient unable to consent so as to be consistent with 2019 legislative changes to a statute governing care for all adults unable to provide consent for treatment.

The House gave third reading and sent to Senate H. 4597, a bill that outlines that an individual who is in need of an anatomical gift shall not be deemed ineligible to receive an anatomical gift solely because of the individual's physical or mental disability.

The House approved H. 3599, as amended by the committee, gave third reading and sent to Senate, a bill that enacts the Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact. This bill allows South Carolina to enter into a multistate licensure compact to provide for the reciprocal practice of occupation therapy among the states that are part of the compact. The purpose of this compact is to facilitate interstate practice of occupational therapy with the goal of improving public access to occupational therapy services. Nine states have enacted legislation to join the compact with several others underway. South Carolina currently has membership with the nursing and physical therapy compacts. The bill adds requirements for fingerprinting and criminal SLED background checks.

The House approved H. 3833, as amended by the committee, gave third reading and sent to Senate, a bill that allows for South Carolina Board of Examiners in Psychology Board to enter into the Psychology Inter-jurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT). This bill permits eligible psychologists to practice telepsychology and temporary in-person psychology across state boundaries. The bill additionally establishes the qualifications for

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Crescent Brass Quartet to perform

Sundays at Four will feature the Crescent Brass Quartet on March 13. All performances are at the Lutheran Church By The Lake, highway 378 and Twelve Oaks Drive, Savannah Lakes Village, McCormick, at 4 p.m. Individual tickets can be purchased at the door of each performance for \$25. Sundays at Four is a not-for-profit artist series organization in cooperation with McCormick Arts Council at the Keturah (MACK). The Crescent Brass was founded in 2001 by Todd and Kate Jenkins while graduate students at The University of Georgia. Since then, the ensemble has performed hundreds of concerts, weddings and church services throughout Georgia and the Carolinas. The current members of the Crescent Brass are active teachers, conductors, and performers. Pictured are Josh Workman, Todd Jenkins, Matt Henderson, Meredith Boyd, Kate Jenkins and Kevin Baggott.

Another view of

Openness and transparency in county government – redux

By Chuck Cook

Throughout the original 15 parts of this series and others regarding county council redistricting and zoning I have consistently emphasized the desirability of greater openness and transparency in McCormick County government. Some readers – particularly those who reside outside the county – have interpreted these articles and the rumors they may have generated as indications of serious problems in our county that may inhibit economic development and/or personal animosities between me and council chairman Charles Jennings. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Mr. Jennings and I enjoy a relationship of mutual respect and cordiality that in no way detracts from our joint desire for progress and prosperity in McCormick County. Neither do our differences inhibit our ability to work together collegially, and with other council members and administrative staff on issues of importance to county residents. I believe the record supports our general willingness and ability to work collaboratively and effectively on those matters that may represent obstacles to our shared objectives.

By the same token, there is no denying that we have frequently disagreed on a number of procedural and substantive issues that are of no little importance to citizens and the electorate. That's the nature of politics and political discourse, and – hopefully – these issues will continue to be debated and impacted through the political process itself, including parliamentary procedures during our county council meetings.

Contrary to some reports that county council proceedings were disrupted following the vote on redistricting options at our regular meeting in February, the only delay – and it was minimal – occurred as those disappointed at the outcome shouted their objections as they left council chambers. There was no attempt to take over or delay the meeting, no obscenities were uttered, and no law enforcement personnel were required to escort participants from the chamber. Personally, I thought that some of those attending exhibited very rude behavior, but it was certainly no worse than the actions of some of our elected officials in congress – on both sides of the aisle – during the past several presidential administrations. Nobody shouted "fire" in a crowded theater setting and no one was accused of exceeding their First Amendment rights of free speech.

I can also understand how some casual observers may misinterpret the changes that are occurring in the conduct of county council meetings over the past year or so. It is undoubtedly alarming to some that council chambers are now generally packed or even SRO for some of our regular meetings; that parliamentary objections are frequently raised regarding the consideration of some agenda items; and that controversial issues are now being openly discussed in the media, including the *Messenger*. I believe these are healthy changes that emphasize the need for more openness and transparency, a fuller public discussion and airing of issues that are of critical concern to our citizens, and the desirability of reforming council's internal procedures to reduce the absolute control of the chair in setting meeting agendas.

I can also appreciate that Mr. Jennings has not had to face these types of challenges during most or all of his long tenure on council. But I also believe that he and our other council members fully realize that the rapid growth and changing demographics of the county will have significant long-term effects that will generally be positive in terms of economic development and revenues to support our operations and infrastructure. But, again, these are largely political issues that have been and will continue to be considered and resolved through legal and proper political processes.

Mr. Jennings and I may disagree on some political issues, but have firmly agreed not to be disagreeable in our relationships with each other, acting civilly and with proper decorum. Perhaps we may be able to set a good example for others who have been inclined to demonize their opponents, triggering endless rounds of retaliation that have poisoned the national political landscape throughout much of the 21st century. It should also be comforting to those seeking to do business in McCormick County to know that we are not afraid to openly discuss issues of concern to us, and to fully support the ultimate decisions that are made under our laws and regulations.

Birthdays/Wedding Anniversaries

March 11 - Kenneth Dorn, Sandra Morrison, Adriane Murray, Peggie Robertson, James Settles, Kim Sanders, Joe Gable, Maya Kesler, Guy Griffin, Chuck and Pat Tinnell, Dan Gorbett, Anne Katzer.

March 12 - Nakisha Andrelle Bell, Carolyn Calhoun, Michael Hall, Jack Toland, Wyatt Thomas, Sue Burtrum, Angela Anderson.

March 13 - John Gehhardt, Marie Jennings, Joe Lewis Leverette, Janice Turner, Paul Pratt, Leland Brown, Johnny F. Gilchrist, Jen Christman, Cindy Kerwin, Joyce Meeks.

March 14 - Mike Smith, Sallie Mae Morton, Benjamin Greene, Harley Lynn Foster, Gracie Anne Self, Mary Callahan, William Willis.

March 15 - Rosalind Neal, Joyce M. Jennings, Angel Key, Lakeshia Kelly, Alan Weiner, Oliver Williams, Briana Sikes, Sarra McClintock.

March 16 - Mary M. Turner, Miriam Patterson Azevedo, Courtney Thornton, John Singleton, Jim Stiers, Judy Yodns.

March 17 - Leola Brown, Rodney Brown, Erma Taylor, Ashley Creswell, Angela Martin, Darlene Chiles, Mr. and Mrs. Terry Miller, Stacy Stacco, Sharon Miller, Eva Gresham, Kristi Boyd, Tina Broadwater.