

Viewpoint

The Jasper Newsboy

Established in 1865

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Our Viewpoint Editorials

Youth deserve our support at livestock auction sale

This weekend, Jasper County FFA and 4-H members will have the opportunity to see just how much their hard work was worth this past year.

The Jasper County Junior Livestock Show Sale will be held Friday and Saturday at the show arena on Hwy. 777.

These students have showed tremendous responsibility during the past year in caring and raising their show animals in preparation for this show.

There were plenty of mornings that the students cared for their animals when most of us wouldn't have crawled out of bed. There were plenty of evenings these students cared for their animals when most of us were headed for the nearest couch to rest.

For that, they should be commended and rewarded.

The auction sale for the top 20 animals in each division is scheduled to begin at 4 p.m. at the livestock barn.

Jasper County is long been known for taking care of its own during times of

need. It's time for the county's businesses that thrive during the year, to pay homage to these hard-working leaders of tomorrow by showing up in force and with open wallets at the auction.

Our society is quick to condemn our youth when they do something wrong. This is an opportunity to praise our youth that have displayed qualities such as respect and responsibility throughout the past year.

It's a nice change of pace.

Roses go to....

▼ All the Jasper County FFA and 4-H members who are participating in this year's Junior Livestock Show.

▼ Glenn Beatty Jr., who was honored by for his heroic act in saving members of his family from a fire.

Thorns go to....

▼ The suspect or suspects responsible for the shooting of horses in our county.

▼ The Newton County Correctional Facility for allowing a second prisoner to escape in the past two months during visits to medical personnel in Jasper.

In Jasper County

Azalea shoppers...



Newsboy photo/ Charles Kerr

Your Viewpoint Letters to the Editor

McClurg finally earns a paycheck

By WINCY WALKER
Jasper

Results are what you expect, and consequences are what you get. — Author Unknown

In a recent letter to the Newsboy, "County, city owes thanks to McClurg," Stephan Myers wrote, "McClurg...is a humble man who reluctantly takes credit for his great accomplishments, preferring to recognize the contributions of others, instead."

Reality is, the city owes Tom McClurg a paycheck and for the first time in years, McClurg earned his paycheck! So, thank you, Tom McClurg, for doing what you get paid to do.

It would be appropriate for McClurg and his merry band of supporters to recognize the actions of three city councilwomen who had the backbone to do what should have been done long before they did it.

In January 2006, Gayle Meigs, Gloria Monzingo, and Diane Pace, in a city council meeting voted to dissolve and replace members on the JEDCO board, where incompetence had reigned supreme. For too long the JEDCO board had not done what boards should do.

There was no accountability. The board did not hold McClurg accountable; the board was not accountable to the city council. Many people wanted an election to let people vote to keep the sales tax and JEDCO — or to vote it out.

Re-organizing the JEDCO board was an effort to put some accountability and public confidence into an organization that had "hit rock bottom."

A Newsboy article by Kari Ellis, describing the actions of the three city councilwomen, "Monday Night Massacre," (1/11/06) ends, "The dismantling of the JEDCO board and the uncertainties about operations come on the eve of a visit from a company that has narrowed its location choices to Jasper and two other cities. According to...Tom McClurg, Jasper is among the top three locations for a large dinosaur museum... would bring much-needed jobs, tourism and a resulting tax base increase and economic boost to the area."

Safe assumptions because Meigs, Monzingo and Pace stepped up — 1) we're hearing about Tigers instead of dinosaurs; 2) Kari Ellis, now McClurg's assistant, pays for her own shoes!

Good results and consequences happen when people do what they're supposed to do.

Family wants dogs to be given back

By CYNTHIA GREENWOOD
Jasper

Recently (approximately Feb. 20), my two grown Rottweiler dogs went missing from around my home, located 10 miles south of Jasper.

I don't know who did this to my family but they've not only taken my pets, they have taken a part of my family. I understand that unscrupulous people steal full-blooded dogs and resell them on the Internet for their money or they use the larger dogs as bait dogs for their Pit Bull dogfights that are occurring.

I have a \$500 reward for their return to my home unhurt, no questions asked. I hope you will feel a twinge of conscience and return them to us. My son and I have cried ourselves to sleep and we have put our fliers and drove many a mile looking for them.

Please bring them back — our lives seem so empty.

They have no particular markings other than the black and tan markings of a Rottweiler and did not have any collars but I would recognize them if I saw them.

Letters to editor criteria outlined

The Jasper Newsboy would like to publish your thoughts and concerns about issues that are important to you. All Letters to the Editor should be accompanied with the writer's name and daytime telephone number for verification purposes.

Phone numbers will not be published, but the author's name will be. Under no circumstances will the author's name be withheld. All letters are subject to editing for newspaper style and clarity, without changing the meaning of the content.

Letters should be limited to 300 words. Letters endorsing or opposing political candidates are considered political advertising and will be forwarded to the advertising department.

Deadline for letters is 10 a.m. Monday to be published in the following Wednesday's publication.

Mail letters to:
The Jasper Newsboy
P.O. Box 1419
Jasper, Texas 75951-1419
or e-mail to:
jgalvan@jaspernewsboy.com

Guest Commentary One person's viewpoint

Waveland, Mississippi

There are no blue FEMA tarps in Waveland, Mississippi because there is nothing to shelter. One does not unfold FEMA tarps on knee-high waves of ruins and wreckage.

Enjoying a spring outing in Louisiana, a friend and I on a whim drove over to Mississippi just to say we had been there. After looking at maps and brochures at the visitors' center we thought we would motor down to Waveland and enjoy a cup of coffee on the coast.

We found the coast, all right, and we found the geographical expression that used to be Waveland. We found no coffee.

We found silence. We found street after street of archaeology: foundation slabs, concrete piers holding up nothing but sky, the decaying exoskeletons of cars, blasted hopes.

This is where Katrina hit. Here. Right here.

Occasionally one sees a human, an adult, sweeping or shoveling the past off a level of concrete, but no children, no animals, no sounds except the Gulf waves. The few street signs are typically hand-lettered on cardboard stapled to the remaining few feet of a utility pole. The beach, a perfect spring-break destination, is empty. The remaining uprights of pleasure piers



Mack Hall

march out into the water and disappear. Signs caution swimmers who aren't there to stay out of the water because of submerged wreckage.

A block or two behind the beachfront one finds the occasional hurricane-proof house. Yes, the house was hurricane-proof, but not the doors or windows or contents or humans or pets, all blown through and out to their destruction by fifty-foot continents of water on the morning of Katrina. Some fifty people died within minutes, as did uncounted kittens and dachshunds and goldfish.

And beyond that second street back one finds a few more houses, all wrecked, none habitable, some with a plaintive "DO NOT BULLDOZE" spray-painted by folks who hope they can someday come back to find a few things to save: maybe an unbroken cup from the wedding dishes, or a high school graduation picture of a son or daughter who died in Iraq, or a child's favorite toy.

One finds silence in Waveland, Mississippi. One finds no blue FEMA tarps.

Naturally we will all now want to send more money to New Orleans.

Mack Hall is a resident of Kirbyville

Capital Highlights A summary of the week's significant events in Austin

TYC master orders review of inmate sentence extensions

AUSTIN - The Texas Youth Commission story continues to unfold.

It has come to light that the sentences of 93 percent of the agency's 4,700 inmates had been extended at some point, causing questions over the fairness of the process.

Special Master Jay Kimbrough, appointed by Gov. Rick Perry in February to investigate allegations of criminal wrongdoing at the 4,600-employee agency, said the inmates' sentences would be reviewed.

Meanwhile, legislation to address and correct problems at the TYC stalled in the House. One reason for the stall is that an objection was raised over a proposal to appoint a special state prosecutor to assist local district attorneys in their efforts to weed out wrongdoers at TYC units. It was argued that to create an office of special prosecutor for the TYC would take away local control and it would cost too much.

Debate was suspended, but there is a lot of public pressure on the House to act swiftly on TYC legislation.

Veto override idea up to voters

Our state constitution gives the governor a 20-day period during which to veto bills, following the final adjournment of the Legislature.

But imagine if senators and representatives could come back to the Capitol after the 20-day period, convene, and take five days to override vetoes.

That's what could happen under a proposed constitutional amendment by Rep. Gary Elkins, R-Houston. Elkins' HJR 59 passed March 21 on a vote of 109-29.

The people of Texas, of which only 39 percent voted for Gov. Perry in 2006, will put Elkins' idea to the test next fall when they vote on HJR 59 and other constitutional amendments.

The 29 members who voted "no" on the measure were Republicans



Ed Sterling
Texas Press Association

Conroe; Myra Crownover of Lake Dallas; Dianne White Delisi of Temple; Joe Driver of Garland; Rob Eissler of The Woodlands; and Dan Flynn of Canton.

Also, Republicans Rick Hardcastle of Vernon; Patricia Harless of Spring; Will Hartnett of Dallas; Fred Hill of Richardson; Mike Krusee of Round Rock; Jodie Laubenberg of Rockwall; Sid Miller

of Stephenville; Anna Mowery of Fort Worth; Ken Paxton of McKinney; Larry Phillips of Sherman; Debbie Riddle of Houston; John Smithee of Amarillo; David Swinford of Dumas; and Beverly Woolley of Houston.

Full House to debate next budget

Legislation approved by the House Appropriations Committee on March 20 tabs the state's 2008-2009 budget at about \$150 billion.

The proposed budget, about 4 percent greater than the current 2006-2007 budget, is scheduled for debate by the full House on March 29.

Plenty of attention will be focused on an estimated \$8 billion in funds that could be used or saved as prevailing temperaments see fit.

House votes to repeal phone tax

The House voted on March 20 to do away with something Texans see on their phone bills every month: the Texas Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund tax.

The legislation, House Bill 735 by Joe Straus, R-San Antonio, kills a tax brought into existence in 1995 to help fund computers, networks and training for public schools, universities, hospitals and libraries.

Texans were to pay the tax until the fund reached \$1.5 billion. The goal was reached in 2003, but the state went on charging the tax when the state had a budget shortfall. At that point, TIF funds were moved into general revenue. Now, the state has a multi-billion surplus, and the TIF is no longer necessary.

Under HB 735, Texans will go on paying the TIF tax, likely until the end of June.

A Senate version of the bill is being brought by Tommy Williams, R-The Woodlands. Differences between the two bills will have to be worked out by a conference committee.

Ed Sterling is director of member services for the Texas Press Association in Austin.