

Viewpoint

The Jasper Newsboy

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Our Viewpoint Editorials

'Day(s) of infamy' put steel in U.S. backbone

TOMMOROW, Dec. 7, is the 65th anniversary of one of the most horrific days in American history - the bombing of the U.S. Naval Base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii by the Japanese Imperial Air Force. That "day of infamy," as it was termed by then-President Franklin D. Roosevelt, propelled a reluctant United States into World War II.

To at least a couple of generations now, that act of war is just part of history and that view is hastened by the almost daily passing of veterans of that attack and the ensuing battle. There are few left to remind us of that awful day in which more than 2,400 American servicemen and civilians died, hundreds more wounded and the majority of the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet was either destroyed or damaged extensively.

That attack galvanized a national resolve to defeat unprincipled enemies in Japan, Germany and Italy. The United States and its allies accomplished that goal in less than four years after Americans entered the war.

Since that time no conflict has both challenged this nation's resolve and tested its capacity to wage a successful war to defeat

tyranny and despotism.

In 1950's Korea, the involvement of Communist China and the threat of Russian entry into the war on the side of North Korea brought about a stalemate and ultimately a truce.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Americans were even more divided and frustrated over a war in Vietnam, many thought we shouldn't be fighting and those fighting were hindered by civilian political actions and the lack of resolve to see that war to a positive conclusion.

Once before (in 1991) we were involved in a war in the Middle East, which had the support of a majority of Americans.

Then, an unprincipled enemy - radical international Islamic terrorists - pulled off a day of sneak attacks that shook the United States to its very foundation. And, while most Americans support the idea of finding and punishing the perpetrators of 9-11-01, this country finds itself in a "second war" that is unpopular and that leaves the attackers seemingly unpunished and unthreatened.

And, we long for a group that is leaving us daily - the Greatest Generation of World War II - and the steel they implanted in the American backbone.

Commentary One person's viewpoint

Those hooked on 'ice' have emaciated look

THIS COUNTRY has long had a problem with drugs, the latest absolutely destructive one being a new form of methamphetamine called "ice."

Nothing brings home the devastation on individuals and families like seeing a user up close or talking to a family member and seeing and hearing the utter hopelessness that both the drug and our system bring about.

On this week's front page is a story by Managing Editor Jimmy Galvan of the justice system's efforts to combat this drug, called the most addictive of all, even more than crack cocaine. You can read the frustration in the statements by law enforcement officers in trying to stem the tide of this terrible American affliction, but that can't compare to the absolute devastation this brings on a family.

Recently, I had a phone call from the mother of a meth addict. We'll call her Mary and the addicted daughter Martha for purposes of protecting their privacy.

Martha, the user, has a criminal record as do many meth addicts. She is on probation and is required to take regular drug tests as a condition of her probation. Martha is also unmarried and seven months pregnant. She is still a meth user. Children's Protective Services has already removed one child from her home and given custody to Mary, the child's grandmother. There are multiple arrest warrants out for Martha because of failed drug tests.

According to Mary, Martha was arrested several months back and was kept in jail for some time. Upon release, Mary says, Martha immediately gravitated to the drug crowd again, became pregnant with a child that, if it survives the birthing, will have a multitude of problems due to the mother's meth use.

Mary told me, when she first called trying to find a way to help her daughter, that she talked with the Jasper County Sheriff's Department. Mary told them she knew of the warrants for Martha and gave them her daughter's whereabouts because "she's just laying there in that house, doing drugs and she looks like

some of those abused horses y'all ran pictures of in the paper several months ago."

The anguish and pain in Mary's voice pushed her to tears and the desperation and fear she felt for her daughter's survival was quite apparent.

The Sheriff's Office representatives told her that because of her daughter's emaciated condition and the almost certain condition of the unborn baby, they couldn't put her in jail and risk some catastrophic occurrence for which the county would be held financially liable.

Mary pleaded with me to help her find assistance for Martha.

I called the S.O. and none of the ranking officers were in, so the dispatcher said a patrol deputy was on his way in and she would see what they could do. Later in the day, Mary called to say she'd had a call from the S.O. and thanked me. I was relieved to hear it.

However, a frustrated, tearful Mary called a few days later to tell me the officer had been ordered not to do anything because of the liability to the county. Mary said she had found a rehab facility in Louisiana that would take her daughter if law enforcement consented.

So, I made another call to Adult Probation to alert them as to Martha's plight. They acknowledged the problems inherent in a drug addict's pregnancy and the likely results with a birthed child.

They also said it was not usual for a rehab to accept someone with outstanding warrants. There is no news yet if Martha is in rehab.

I understand the position people in the justice system face, particularly in small, poor counties such as Jasper. But, I also know that the nearest facility for rehab is in Beaumont. Most meth addicts don't have transportation and, most of the time lack the will to seek help.

We keep arresting them and putting them in jail where, sometimes, they can get help but we seem to make little progress in getting at those who manufacture and sell the destructive drugs.

Some day, hopefully soon, we will realize that until we treat addiction and until we attack with full force the purveyors of this devastation, there will be no let up in stories about mothers like Mary with daughters like Martha.

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In Jasper County

Getting in the Christmas spirit...



Newsboy photo/Jimmy Galvan

MIKE WAGGENER strings lights up at a business in downtown Jasper, getting the city in the holiday mood just before the annual Christmas parade and tree-lighting on Dec. 7.

Your Viewpoint Letters to the Editor

'Boys playing' unacceptable

By SUZANNE MORGAN
Jasper

I was extremely disturbed with Stacy Chambers' (Jasper County Sheriff's Department captain) description of the young men who destroyed all the logging equipment.

Quote: "It was just a bunch of guys in their early twenties drinking and playing." Excuse me. But what would be the difference if they had been using drugs and playing?

I hardly call stealing and \$60,000 in damage playing and then to go back and destroy more equipment. These guys were not playing. What they did is criminal. Since when did drinking become an excuse for crime?

I could understand some parent wanting to believe their 20-something-year-old "boy" was playing, but for the captain of investigation to make light of such damage is a bit much.

Young men in their early twenties are dying every day in Iraq for our nation, and Mr. Chambers makes out like this was children playing.

Makes me wonder? Who's your daddy?

Letters to editor criteria outlined

Letters to the editor of The Jasper Newsboy must meet the following criteria:

- Should be of general or specific interest to the readership of The Jasper Newsboy
- Should be limited to about 300 words
- Must contain a valid signature, a valid mailing address and valid day and evening telephone numbers where the writer may be reached
- Names of persons writing letters will

not be withheld

- Unsigned letters will not be published
- Letters endorsing or opposing political candidates are considered political advertising and should be taken to the advertising department

• Letters containing personal attacks on individuals, public figures or elected officials will be edited or sent back to the writer. Criticism of how a public figure or elected official votes or on actions taken with regard to performance of his/her job are acceptable as long as the comments are not personally derisive

• Letters of complaint about private businesses will be forwarded to the business in question and will not be published

• Thank you letters with long lists of names are considered advertising and should go to the advertising department

• Deadline for letters is 10 a.m. Monday for inclusion in the following Wednesday's edition

• Letters may be edited for length, libel, grammar, clarity and newspaper style, without changing the meaning and intent of the letter

• To ensure diversity and variety of viewpoints, letter writers are limited to one letter each 30 days

• The Newsboy will not publish poetry, anonymous letters, "open" or "third party" letters written to someone else, letters that constitute advertisements, letters concerning private legal disputes or conflicts between individuals, letters that are part of organized writing campaigns and letters that include previously published material

Mail letters to: The Jasper Newsboy, P.O. Box 1419, Jasper, Texas 75951-1419; or e-mail to:

wwebb@jaspernewsboy.com

The Your Viewpoint columns are primarily for Newsboy readers and subscribers in the four-county Jasper Retail Trade Area of Jasper, Newton, Sabine and Tyler counties. First consideration will be given to letters from those residents.

"The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know."

— Texas Open Records Act