

# Viewpoint

## The Jasper Newsboy

Established in 1865

Texas Oldest Weekly Newspaper, Continuously Published Under the Same Name

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## Our Viewpoint Editorials

### Roses and thorns

# JPA commended for Toys for Tots work

#### Roses go to....

▼ Jasper Police Association for their work on the Toys for Tots campaign. This year, the JPA delivered gifts to 106 families and passed out 260 toys to children in the Jasper area to help all have a Merry Christmas.

▼ Becky Wilson and Diane Pace for paperless classrooms. Both teachers at Jasper Junior High have implemented teaching their classes on the computer with stunning results and with more participation from their students.

▼ To everyone who took the time to remember our servicemen and women serving abroad. Showing our appreciation for the military is vital to their success and safe return.

▼ Jasper County Judge Joe Folk, Precinct 2 Commissioner Rod Bargar and Precinct 4

Commissioner Mack Rose. All three are retiring from county government this year and will be remembered for their leadership through the trying time of Hurricane Rita.

▼ Jasper Police Officer Gerald Hudson. Hudson left this month to serve in Iraq and will be missed patrolling the streets of Jasper.

#### Thorns go to....

▼ Rayburn County Association members. Those who have complained loudly about the RCA board but failed to show up during last week's meeting when they had the opportunity to speak out publicly.

▼ Tyler County Deputy Gary Parks. Parks said that he had been shot on Dec. 8 near Hillister but has now confessed that he shot himself and made up the traffic stop story. Parks has been fired.

## In Jasper County

Celebrating the spirit of the giving...



Newsboy photo/Linda Teague

**VOLUNTEERS fill up pudding cups during the annual Elijah's Christmas dinner held Saturday, Dec. 23.**

## Guest Commentary One person's viewpoint

# New year's revolutions

Imagine the innermost thoughts of celebrities and government entities as they contemplate making their new year's resolutions:

Rosie O'Donnell: "Let's face it, I really am fat, ugly, and mean."

Donald Trump: "Y'know, you'd think a guy worth billions could keep a steady girlfriend. And get a decent haircut."

Barack Obama: "I wonder how long I can work this thing about my African father; after all, the dude abandoned me when I was only two years old."

Cardinal Renato Martino: "I've certainly been bashing the Americans about their proposed border fence, so it's only fair that I petition the Pope to tear down the wall around the Vatican. The Papal state is only a few acres, but, hey, who are we to deny entrance to our fair share of illegal aliens?"

The Dalai Lama: "Since I make big bucks jet-setting around the planet giving speeches about non-violent responses to violence, I'm going to dismiss all my bodyguards so that I will be practicing what I preach."

The Archbishop of Canterbury: "I'm the spiritual head of a communion which is inept, top-heavy, out of control, and infested with divisions, so I'm going to give up telling other people what to do, and go back home and take care of my own business."

Bono: "I'm going to give back that knight-hood my buddy Tony Blair awarded me. After all, I'm really just a tax-dodging, garage-band mediocrity who puts on airs."

Vladimir Putin: "I'm never going to admit to anyone that I sleep with a Stalin action figure."

Arnold Schwarzenegger: "I should be honest with myself — if I were really loyal to the people who elected me and who pay me with their hard-earned tax dollars, I would go



Mack Hall

skiing at one of California's many excellent winter resorts, not in Idaho."

President Bush: "Like I even know who James Brown was."

Durham, North Carolina District Attorney Mike Nifong: "It's ego-driven jerks like me who hurt people and give the legal profession the horrible reputation it suffers today. I'm going to reform my life and do right by the people."

Texas Department of Transportation: "We're going to stop tearing up perfectly good roads and then leaving them in muddy, pot-holed, chaos for months or years before getting on with re-building."

Governor Rick Perry: "I think I'll shave my head and get a tattoo in order to show the people that Republicans are cool."

Fidel Castro: "Okay, how am I going to keep persuading the Cuban people that my socialist health care system works when I've just had a Spanish surgeon flown in for me, me, me?"

Britney Spears: "I'm a mother now, so I have to grow up and take care of my child." All women over twelve: "I will never again employ the phrase 'And she all up in my face!' while talking on a cell phone."

All men over twelve: "I will never again wear a cap in church, in a private home, in a restaurant, in an inner office, or while talking to my mother."

Oh, yeah, like any of that's going to happen.

Mack Hall is a resident of Kirbyville.

## Your Viewpoint Letters to the Editor

### 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

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:  
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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.

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

# Governor grants Christmas season pardons

AUSTIN - Gov. Rick Perry on Dec. 20 pardoned Billy Wayne Miller of Dallas after DNA testing proved his innocence and the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles recommended his case for clemency.

Miller, who was released from the prison system seven months ago after having served 22 years, was convicted of aggravated sexual assault in Dallas County in 1984 and received a life sentence. Post-conviction DNA testing showed that Miller was innocent. The district attorney, district judge, sheriff and police chief all supported the pardon.

Perry also pardoned 14 other current or former Texas prison inmates - 11 from Dallas County, counting Miller - following recom-

mendations by the Board of Pardons and Paroles. Most were in their teens or early 20s more than a decade ago when convicted of minor offenses.

### AG files suit against polluters

Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott on Dec. 20 sued four Houston-area chemical plants owned by Lyondell Chemical Co. and subsidiaries.

Court papers filed in Travis County say the plants repeatedly failed to prevent harmful air emissions and are in violation of Texas environmental laws.

Negotiations to settle



Ed Sterling  
Texas Press Association

with the four chemical plants reached an impasse earlier this year. In its lawsuit, the state is seeking civil penalties ranging from \$50 to \$25,000 per day, per violation.

Abbott's office said the lawsuit is the first in Texas arising out of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's initiative to cut air pollution at chemical plants across the nation.

### Future comptroller hires deputy

Newly elected State Comptroller Susan Combs, who will be the state's chief accountant, named Martin A. Hubert deputy comptroller.

In joining the Combs administration, Hubert, 43, follows Billy Hamilton, who resigned recently after serving as deputy under departing Comptroller Carole

Keeton Strayhorn.

Hubert is currently serving as a member of the the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

Combs and Hubert will be sworn into office on Jan. 1.

### Gaming group to make proposal

The lobbying group Texas Gaming Association announced a plan to use casino revenue to pay college tuition for high school graduates.

Details of the plan have not been finalized by the group, but a tuition-paying plan would be tied to the Legislature's acceptance of the group's proposal enabling the construction of casinos.

The idea is to embed casinos in 12 "casino destination resorts," three of which would be located on Indian reservations within the state.

For the plan to come to fruition, the Texas Legislature would have to pass legislation requiring an amendment to the state constitution, and Texas voters would make the final decision at the ballot box.

### Officials' training deadline to hit

Each elected or appointed public official who is a member of a governmental body must have completed a course of training in the Texas Open Meetings Act and the Texas Public Information Act before Jan. 1.

Passed in 2005, the law also requires public information coordinators to take the training.

Anyone who wishes to do so may view the training videos online via the Web site [www.oag.state.tx.us](http://www.oag.state.tx.us).

### Restroom opening effort begins

A 10-year-old Austin girl has begun an effort to convince lawmakers to consider legislation requiring businesses to make restrooms available to the public.

She wants businesses to be more accommodating to people who suffer from digestive ailments and other conditions.

New cigarette tax to take effect

The state sales tax on cigarettes will increase a dollar on Jan. 1 to \$1.41 for a 20-pack.

### Inaugural scheduled for top execs

The second inauguration of Gov. Rick Perry and Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst will be on Jan. 16.

The full report is available online at [window.state.tx.us](http://window.state.tx.us). Ed Sterling is director of member services for the Texas Press Association in Austin.