

# Viewpoint

## The Jasper Newsboy

Established in 1865

Texas Oldest Weekly Newspaper, Continuously Published Under the Same Name

702 S. Wheeler, Jasper, Texas 75951

USPS 273-140 • ISSN 0764-2824

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### Our Viewpoint Editorials

#### Roses and thorns

## City workers step up again

The city of Jasper endured its second major flood Saturday, Dec. 30 and in true fashion, city workers stepped up and worked hard to keep the floodwaters from reaching area homes.

These workers are to be commended for their hard work and diligence during the early morning hours when flooding rains hit the area. For the second time in three months, Sandy Creek came out of its banks and flooded homes and businesses along the bank.

While most of us slept in our beds dreaming of our New Year's plans, the city's water, electrical and policemen dealt with flooding issues and for that, we are truly blessed.

#### Roses go to....

▼ "Bitsy" Hanna for her book chronicling the life of W.P. Cook. Cook is responsible for a number of the early homes built in Jasper and

the book will provide a solid history of the early stages of Jasper for future generations.

▼ Temple Foundation for donated land to the city. The five acres of land along Bulldog Avenue will be used for the city's new library project and will move the library from its spot in a flood plain on Sandy Creek.

▼ To all those who made resolutions and are still sticking with them, good luck.

#### Thorns go to....

▼ To all those who made resolutions and have already broken them three days into the new year.

▼ Federal response. The number of trees still clogging the waterways in the county has hampered the flow of water in Jasper. Without federal aid to help clean these watersheds, the flooding will continue for years to come.

### Guest Commentary One person's viewpoint

## A ten-point program for a better America

Although the next President will not take the oath until over two years from now, already the will-to-power bunch are pushing and shoving each other in hopes of someday being empowered by you and me to push and shove you and me.

Since I have more foreign policy experience than Barack Obama, am more sober than Ted Kennedy, and am prettier than Hillary Clinton, I feel this is the right time to announce my candidacy for President of the United States.

My fellow Americans, if you elect me I will promote the following acts and policies:

1. By executive decree, Rosie O'Donnell and Donald Trump will be required to resolve their differences in a nude mud-wrestling match. Proceeds from ticket sales will go to offset the national deficit.

2. During my term as President not one American soldier will be mis-used in futile attempts at nation-building among savages. I'm talking about France, of course.

3. Since "The Anacreontic Song," also known as "To Anacreon in Heaven," is an unsingable English drinking song, I will propose "Margaritaville," a singable American drinking song, as an alternative national anthem.

4. All foreign aid stops now. America has been sacrificing herself for others for sixty years, and the only result is insolence, ingratitude, and corruption at the other end. We take care of the home folks from now on.

5. Texas Department of Transportation



Mack Hall

pickup trucks will be required to obey the speed limits and use turn signals, just like everyone else.

6. Convicted felons will be entitled to the best medical care they or their families can afford. All prison medical staff will be transferred to free clinics for the working poor.

7. Chocolate will be declared an essential nutrient, and will not be taxed.

8. Senator Edwards has said that America should be the world's moral leader. Forget it. No other country has asked us to be their leader. Nothing in the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution even suggests that we should be the world's leader. Under my administration America will be stunningly isolationist.

9. The death penalty will be abolished, except for the producers of television reality shows.

10. The Reverend Al Sharpton has proposed a return to conscription, a nasty European idea. Forget this too. Some bully with a bad hairdo will not be permitted to dispose of young people's lives. It's a freedom thing.

Isolationist, chocolate-fed, and free — that's my vision for America.

Mack Hall is a resident of Kirbyville.

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

## North Texas lawmaker campaigns to unseat current speaker

AUSTIN - When the Texas Legislature convenes Jan. 9, the 150 members of the Texas House of Representatives must choose who among them will preside as speaker.

Incumbent Speaker Tom Craddick, R-Midland, will need 76 votes — 50 percent of 150, plus one — to retain his office.

But Craddick will have competition this time from fellow Republican state Rep. Brian McCall of Plano.

McCall says he and other state representatives are ready for a change in leadership and he believes he has the votes to unseat Craddick.

The House's composition is 81 Republicans and 69 Democrats. Without a large-scale switch of allegiance among Republicans to his camp, McCall will have to convince many Democrats to back him. Craddick, 63, was

elected speaker in January 2003 after serving 34 years as a House member. He was re-elected speaker in 2005. McCall, 48, has served in the House since 1991.

#### President Ford honored in death

Gov. Rick Perry on Dec. 27 ordered all flags to be flown at half-staff in memory and in honor of the life and public service of former President Gerald R. Ford. Ford, 93, died Dec. 26.

"President Ford was a calming, dignified voice of leadership during a turbulent time in the history of our country," Perry said. "His tenure as president was extraordinary and his lifetime of public service to our country in the United States Navy and in Congress was admirable and worthy of the respect of all Americans."

The governor's directive applies to all U.S. and state flags under the control of the state. Flags will be at half-

staff on the state Capitol Building and on flag displays in the Capitol Complex, and upon all public buildings, grounds, and facilities throughout the state for 30 days.

Perry encouraged all Texans to fly flags at half-staff for the same length of time as a sign of respect.

Perry also ordered Texas flags to half-staff on Dec. 29 in honor of Scottie Stevenson, daughter-in-law of Gov. Coke Stevenson. She served as Texas' first lady after Gov. Stevenson's wife died and when her husband, Gov. Stevenson's son, was deployed to the Pacific during World War II.

TEA clears schools after



Ed Sterling  
Texas Press Association

#### audit

The Texas Education Agency closed investigations into possible TAKS testing irregularities at 592 Texas schools when no evidence of wrongdoing was found.

The agency said an analysis by Caveon Test Security earlier this year flagged 700 schools as having "data anomalies" during the 2005 testing period.

A school was flagged by Caveon if the firm's review found an aberrant or unusual response pattern, a large score gain, a statistically unusual number of erasures or very similar test responses, such as correctly answering hard questions while missing easy questions.

The Commissioner's Task Force on Test Integrity concluded that security audits and on-site investigations found no evidence of action

that violated the state's extensive test security system at 592 schools.

Three of the 700 schools flagged for their 2005 test results have since closed. Cases are still open for 105 schools.

#### Sierra Club joins coal lawsuit

Power companies are moving quickly on plans to build coal-fired plants in Texas to meet growing demand for power and to reduce the state's reliance on expensive natural gas to produce electricity.

According to a Reuters news agency report, the Sierra Club has intervened in a lawsuit to slow the permitting process for as many as 18 coal-fired power plants in Texas.

The suit, aimed mainly at plans by Dallas-based TXU Corp. to invest \$10 billion to build 11 pulverized coal-burning units in the next few years, seeks to overturn an

executive order issued last year by Gov. Perry that accelerates the process to obtain an air permit in Texas.

The State Office of Administrative Hearings has scheduled a Feb. 21 hearing to consider six air permits for identical coal units to be built at TXU sites in north Texas.

#### Former AG now out of prison

Dan Morales, who served two terms as Texas attorney general, has been released from federal prison in Texarkana.

Morales began serving a sentence in 2003 after he was convicted of fraud related to payment of attorney fees in the state's \$17 billion lawsuit against cigarette makers.

Morales has transferred to a halfway house in the San Antonio area.

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.

## In Jasper County

Justice and his son...



Newsboy photo/Charles Kerr

JUDGE JOE BOB GOLDEN, left, swore in Jasper County District Attorney Steve Hollis, who is holding his son Seth, during the ceremony in a packed district courtroom Monday, Jan. 1.

### 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
- Signed 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

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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.