

Viewpoint

The Jasper Newsboy

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Our Viewpoint Editorials

Aid needed to clear waterways in county

Residents and businesses along Sandy Creek are in need of federal and state assistance and it's time that their cries are heard.

Since Hurricane Rita's arrival on the East Texas coast in September of 2005, Jasper County residents have worked hard to rebuild their lives.

The first open wound was the amount of money given to the region by the federal government for recovery efforts. East Texas leaders screamed and federal leaders heard and rectified the situation with the second round of Community Development Block Grant funds.

But now a new problem exists for Jasper County that was caused by Rita. Creeks and rivers throughout the county are clogged by downed trees and debris and with every passing shower, areas flood that normally didn't hold water.

Being ignored by federal and state authorities has been the norm for East Texas counties. It's time for that to change.

Many of these residents and businesses have experienced hard times recovering from the damage caused by Rita.

If it takes another contingent of East Texas leaders to get together on this issue, then so be it.

Material items can be replaced and homes and businesses can be rebuilt. The flooding has cost Jasper County one resident's life.

That is one too many.

Roses go to....

▼ Lisa Ellerman. The pastor of Community Church in Jasper saw a vision in forming the Nathaniel Home and even though the home is relocated, the ministry lives on.

Thorns go to....

▼ Main Street road contractors. What a mess Main Street is in now. We know the job is not complete, but how many cars will need just as many repair as the road does after traveling on Main Street while the work is under way?

Guest Commentary One person's viewpoint

Cell phones cause tooth decay

The Times of London reports that scientists are exploring the possibility that cell 'phones cause cancer.

Obviously this is not true; otherwise there would be no teenaged girls left alive on this planet.

Still, one would like to think that cell 'phones, attached to hands and ears as firmly as tumors, were declared a health hazard, and that the wretched things were banned. Imagine what a happier world this would be without cell 'phones:

Married men would find peace at last, free of that electronic choke chain.

Funerals would no longer be interrupted by the insistent "Bleedle-ee-dle-blooodle-bleedle-ee-dle-leedle-blooodle-bleedle-ee-dle-bleedle-ee-dle-blooodle-bleedle-ee-dle" racket from a purse left near the coffin by a woman who disappeared into the bathroom before the service began.

The few remaining cell 'phone users would have to cluster out back next to the dumpsters along with the three surviving smokers.

Sales clerks trying to make change and complete transactions would not have to try to talk through one-sided conversations involving the complex romantic soap operas of stupid people.

The phrases "Can you hear me now?" and "An' she all up in my face..." would disappear from the culture.

Drivers would return to handling only the steering wheel, a hamburger, a cup of coffee, a cigarette, and a couple of screaming chil-

dren instead of the steering wheel, a hamburger, a cup of coffee, a cigarette, a couple of screaming children, and a cell 'phone.

Reformed smokers (and is there anyone more tiresome than an ex-smoker?) who bore people at the lunch table about how they quit would have to share time and egos with reformed cell 'phone talkers who bore people about how they quit.

Weddings would no longer be cursed with all those hands held up in the air in a sort of cell 'phone Nazi photo salute as the bride processes down the aisle.

College students could meet each other and have, like, y'know, conversations. Live. In person.

Valley Girl-Speak would join Communism in the rubbish heap of history. Totally.

Blue tooth would mean someone really needs to get to a dentist right now.

No more people walking around with tin crickets pinned to their ears and talking to the Mother Ship.

Finally, if cell 'phones were banned, families would sit together in the evenings reading the Bible and Charles Dickens to each other, and young people in urban gangs would leave off violence and begin discussing whether Sinopoli or Von Karajan does the best interpretation of Wagner's Die Valkure.

Mack Hall is a resident of Kirbyville



Mack Hall

In Jasper County

Showing love for one another...



Newsboy photo/Charles Kerr

R.C. HORN, Loucille Martindale and Rev. John D. Hardin talk during Sunday's annual Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church Men's Day breakfast.

Your Viewpoint Letters to the Editor

Thanks offered to 'gift angels' Letters to editor criteria outlined

By DOROTHY STANLEY
Jasper

The holiday season has come and gone, yet remaining are the happy thoughts about the people who thought about us during that time. Advocates for Children, Inc. has many happy thoughts about the innumerable individuals who either personally or as representatives of area organizations, churches and businesses, chose to become "gift angels" for the foster children that we serve. As a result, we were able to make certain that more than 190 children within the foster care system had a joyful Christmas because you cared.

Advocates for Children, Inc. provides the CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) program throughout seven counties including Orange, Hardin, Jasper, Newton, Sabine, San Augustine and Tyler counties.

CASA is a non-profit organization that consists of adult volunteers who advocate for abused, neglected and abandoned children in our region.

Advocates for Children, Inc. has its main office in Orange and a satellite office in Jasper. CASA volunteers are appointed by a judge and empowered to stand up for abused children, to be a voice in court for these children and to look out for their best interests as they progress through the foster care system.

The ultimate goal is that they are placed in safe, loving, permanent homes where they can thrive.

Again, we send our sincere appreciation to our "gift angels" whose gift of giving brought smiles to the faces of almost 200 children.

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 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

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

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

Chief execs outline priorities in inaugural speeches

AUSTIN - It was a cold inaugural on Jan. 16: so cold and icy, in fact, the smaller-than-planned-for crowd moved inside the Capitol.

Texans and the rest of the world enjoyed access to the inaugural ceremonies via live webcast for the first time ever.

Gov. Rick Perry and Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst were sworn in. Both men made speeches broad in scope: so broad, in fact, their words, to many ears, belied grander political ambitions.

Perry regaled strong families as the backbone of society and outlined his agenda for his second full term as governor. He spoke of the need for tighter immigration control, a secure border with Mexico, safer neighborhoods, affordable health

care, improvements in education, substantial and long-lasting property tax relief, and budget reforms that would protect taxpayers.

He also echoed a theme that has a Washington, D.C.-ring to it: "Texas is better off when Republicans and Democrats work together because our potential is too vast to be spoiled by a politics leavened with partisanship," Perry said.

Diverging here for a moment on the subject of bipartisanship and possible higher aspirations, the governor flew to the nation's capital with Texas Democratic congressional representatives to meet with other Democrats.

The Washington, D.C., Democrats let Perry know they have not forgotten his role in bringing about the unusual mid-term redistrict-

ing in 2004 that squeezed a few Democrats out of office.

Dewhurst also delivered an expansive inaugural speech, with emphasis on his "Texas Children First" package of legislation.

The legislation, he said, is based on the premise that, "Safe and healthy children learn, they grow, and they go on to lead lives that strengthen our state and make us proud."

Dewhurst asked lawmakers to pass tougher laws dealing with child predators, put defibrillators in public schools and take illegal steroids out through mandatory, random drug testing.

Dewhurst assured the



Ed Sterling
Texas Press Association

audience there would be a "Jessica's Law" in Texas, including an automatic 25-year sentence for first-time child molesters and a death sentence for those convicted a second time.

Speaker reassures ex-challengers

Texas House Speaker Tom Craddick told The Dallas Morning News, in effect, he's holding out the olive branch to members of his own party.

Craddick, R-Midland, was re-elected speaker after Rep. Jim Pitts, R-Waxahachie, dropped his challenge. Pitts threw his support behind Craddick when it was decided the vote for the speakership would be a recorded vote, not by

secret ballot.

Earlier, Pitts and another former challenger, Rep. Brian McCall, R-Plano, individually expressed the need for a change in atmosphere in the House, because transparency and bipartisanship in the legislative process had eroded under the speaker's tenure. Craddick said he would do a better job of communicating.

State unemployment rate drops

Texas' seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped to 4.5 in December, the lowest in five years, the Texas Workforce Commission said in a report released Jan. 19.

To illustrate the improvement, the unemployment rate in November was 4.7 percent, and a year ago, in December 2005, the rate was 5.2 percent.

Nonagricultural employment grew by 15,600 jobs in December as Texas employers continue adding jobs. Over the last 12 months, the Texas economy grew by 213,200 jobs, and Texas employers have added jobs for 27 consecutive months, the agency reported.

Senator proposes smoking ban

Sen. Rodney Ellis, D-Houston, said he would file legislation banning smoking in all public buildings in Texas. Ellis is looking for a House sponsor of his bill and expects to file his version this month.

Eighteen states have laws banning smoking in public buildings.

The full report is available online at window.state.tx.us. Ed Sterling is director of member services for the Texas Press Association in Austin.