

Viewpoint

The Jasper Newsboy

Established in 1865

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Our Viewpoint Editorials

Ladder truck proves its worth in the end

For years, many have pointed to the city of Jasper's ladder truck and wondered why a city of this size would require such a truck.

It was called a \$700,000 flagpole that was only used to give Santa Claus a ride during the Christmas parade.

But Monday evening, that question was not being raised at all. Instead, all were thankful for its existence in the city.

Monday night, the Jasper Volunteer Fire Department responded to a fire at the LP plant on Hwy. 63 East and utilized the ladder truck to extinguish the fire at the plant, which is being refurbished to be used by Tiger Truck.

The 100-foot ladder enabled firefighters to pour water on the ductwork that was three to four stories high at the plant.

By doing this, JVFDD was able to keep the fire contained to the ductwork and keep it from spreading to the other structures at the plant site.

With the use of the ladder truck, the department was able to limit the fire and save the plant from further damage.

Kudos to the JVFDD for another job well done and for the progressive approach to purchasing this truck some years ago.

Roses go to....

▼ Jasper County 4-H and FFA members who showed their projects during last weekend's Jr. Livestock Show.

▼ The Jasper Pilot Club for putting together another strong showing at the Taste of Jasper event Saturday afternoon.

Thorns go to....

▼ The wet weekend, which caused the cancellation of the Jasper Air Show.

In Jasper County

Ribbons tasty too...



Newsboy photo/ Jimmy Galvan

Guest Commentary One person's viewpoint

Fluffy dies for the Revolution

It's a dog-eat-poisoned-glop world out there.

Dogs and cats are carnivores. They like to kill other animals and eat them, and all our Disney-fying anthropomorphism can't change that. They also eat their own vomit, sniff each other's lieutenants, and reproduce with a stunning lack of dignity and in public, much like your children's television and movie role models.

Still, we softies rather like the little varmints (dogs and cats, not actors) and take them into our homes, give them funny names, and cuddle up with them to watch television. Show me a man or woman who doesn't become misty-eyed at the mention of his childhood dog or cat and you're showing me someone who missed out on an essential part of growing up.

Once upon a time our house pets made do with scraps and the occasional careless mouse or too-slow sparrow. Now we buy Thunderbolt and Simba packaged or canned food with fancy names and scientific testimonials as to why these products are much better than dead rabbit.

Alas, the testimonials seem to be false. No matter what the labels say, and regardless of brand loyalty, it appears that most pet food is unidentifiable glop. And recently some of it has been poisoned glop.

It seems that many American and Canadian packagers of pet food employ something called wheat gluten (gluten — doesn't that just sound yummy!) as a staple. And much of this wheat gluten is purchased from the merry Chinese Communists.

You'll remember that those are the jolly folks who execute inconvenient prisoners upon demand for their healthy organs —

the parts not shattered by a 7.62 mm bullet — for sale to the wealthy sick of the world.

Kinda makes you wonder what happens to the leftover bits of Prisoner #717747's body, eh? Maybe Prisoner #717747 has in his own small way contributed to little Fluffy's glossy coat and healthy teeth and bright eyes.

Unfortunately, recently mixed in with the wheat gluten and body parts in Glorious People's Liberation Shining Red Star Factory #0880315 were some toxins, including rat poison and some chemicals used in making plastic.

The wheat gluten and mystery meats (maybe the ground-up spleen and eyeballs of Prisoner #717747) were good for Rover and Fluffums, but the poisons were not, and uncounted thousands of beloved pets in Canada and the U.S. are sick and dead this week.

As the reports flicker onto the telescreen we learn that the poisoned pet food is not only off-brands, but also some of the heavily advertised and reputable old labels.

Thus, when we well-meaning pet owners buy any brand of food for Dynamite or Teensy, we really have no idea of what garbage is in that bag or can: gluten, poison, floor-sweepings, rat-droppings, long-rotted meat, or sawdust. That our pets thrive is perhaps a tribute to their digestive systems than our judgment.

Yep, your little Fluffy lives or dies according to the decisions made by the bosses in a factory in Communist China. Long live the Glorious Workers' and Peasants' Revolution!

Mack Hall is a resident of Kirbyville



Mack Hall

Guest Commentary One person's viewpoint

All buyers should be commended

By VERN KAYLOR
Jasper

Jasper County Junior Livestock Show and Sale 2007 has come and gone. I sincerely hope every participant in the show benefited from this experience.

To be a successful show it takes patient, determined youth and willing family and friends.

To be a successful sale it takes generous buyers. Two of the generous buyers this year were Charles and Brenda Frazier (DBA Advantage Plus Homecare.) They deserve recognition for their generosity and their support for the youth.

We also would like to give a big thanks to all the buyers and to those who did added money.

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

"Dictatorship: A place where public opinion can't even be expressed privately."

— Walter Winchell

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

House passes version of state budget for 2008-2009

AUSTIN - The Texas House of Representatives on March 30 passed House Bill 1, the state budget for the 2008-2009 biennium.

The budget totals slightly more than \$150 billion, an increase of 5.4 percent from the previous biennium. Note: the figure does not include the \$14.2 billion property tax relief passed a year ago in the Third Called Session of the 79th Legislature.

Speaker Tom Craddick said that compared with the state's population growth and the rate of inflation since that time, the increase embodied in HB 1 is fiscally conservative, leaving a \$4.2 billion surplus to carry forward to the next state budget cycle.

When compared to the present 2006-2007 budget, education received a \$3.6 billion increase, covering the Teachers' Retirement System, financial aid and additional funding for public schools and higher education. An amendment to HB 1 gives teachers an across-

the-board \$850 annual pay increase.

More than \$2.5 billion was added to health and human services for increased Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program costs, improved provider rates for physicians and other healthcare professionals, increased trauma funding for hospitals, and a new mental health crisis stabilization program.

Corrections received nearly \$600 million to meet projected inmate population growth and increase border security. Before debating HB 1 on the House floor, members voted to require that any new spending item added to the budget must be accompanied by removing another item of equal value.

If the House version of the budget does not square with the Senate version, differences will be debated in a conference committee of House and Senate members.

Report shows costs of obesity

A new report commissioned by Comptroller Susan Combs shows obesity-related costs set Texas



Ed Sterling
Texas Press Association

report, "Counting Costs and Calories - Measuring the Cost of Obesity to Texas Employers."

"Nearly two-thirds of our state's adult population is currently overweight or obese, and because of the alarming rise in obesity, we decided to communicate what stake Texas businesses have in stemming the obesity crisis," she said. "The costs are shocking, and the future could be very grim if we don't take action now to reverse this trend.

businesses back an estimated \$3.3 billion in 2005 and could cost employers about \$16 billion annually by 2025.

The dollar amount includes cost of health care, absenteeism, decreased productivity and disability.

Combs commented on the report, "Counting Costs and Calories - Measuring the Cost of Obesity to Texas Employers."

The trend in obesity is avoidable — not inevitable — but we must take action now."

Perry signs 'Castle Doctrine' bill

Gov. Rick Perry on March 27 signed into law Senate Bill 378, extending Texans' rights to use deadly force for self-defense in their home, vehicle or workplace. The law takes effect Sept. 1.

Under SB 378, Perry said, a person's right to stand their ground extends beyond the home to vehicles and workplaces, allowing reasonable use of deadly force when an intruder is:

▼ Committing or attempting to commit a violent crime, such as murder or sexual assault;

▼ Unlawfully trying to enter a protected place; or

▼ Unlawfully trying to remove a person from a protected place.

The law also provides civil immunity for a person who lawfully uses deadly force.

Senate confirms Kimbrough

The Senate Committee of the Whole on March 28 confirmed Jay

Kimbrough as conservator of the Texas Youth Commission.

Kimbrough had been serving as special master of the ailing state agency since early March, when he was appointed to the post by Gov. Perry. Allegations of sex abuse of inmates and official wrongdoing at the agency are under investigation.

As conservator, Kimbrough has legal authority over the agency. He will act as chief executive, overseeing day-to-day operations while directing the investigation. Already, some high-level officials have left, employee firings are possible and sentences of youths are being reviewed for fairness.

The only senator voting against the confirmation of Kimbrough was Eliot Shapleigh, D-El Paso, who wanted a conservator without close ties to Gov. Perry. Kimbrough is a former staff member of Perry's and a former member of Attorney General Greg Abbott.

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