

Viewpoint

The Jasper Newsboy

Established in 1865

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Our Viewpoint Editorials

Real battle against drugs starts at home

Two groups are taking strong steps in delivering a clear message on illegal drug usage in our community and for that they should be commended.

The Jasper Police Department has stepped up their fight against those selling these illegal drugs in the community by serving more than 20 warrants in the coming weeks.

Willie Smith, director of the Boys and Girls Club of Jasper, has instituted several programs for the children at the club. Smith believes these programs might have an

impact on these children in the coming years when drugs are introduced to their lives.

The efforts of these two groups are strong but for them to fully work, they need the help of everyone in Jasper. It has been said we can't change the past, but we can properly influence the future.

Once drugs take control of a community, then the police have to step in and take care of the situation.

The real battle against drugs usage in our community starts at home — with the parents. Start now.

Your Viewpoint Letters to the Editor

'Good ole boys, gone bad'

By WINCY WALKER
Jasper

If capable, I'd write a country/western song, "Good Ole Boys Gone Bad."

I laughed when reading about Ky Griffin's concern that David Schultz would be a body snatcher if given the job of death investigator for the county. Schulz ... told the commissioners he would assist the Justices of the Peace for free because he needed training hours to receive national certification.

Precinct 1 Commissioner Charles Shofner and Precinct 2 Commissioner Roy Parker voted against. Why?

Parker said he called each JP ... and the new ones said they needed the help (of a death investigator), "but I still think there is a conflict of interest. It just looks bad." When did Parker (or any other commissioner) become concerned about "conflict of interest" that "looks bad?"

While they concern themselves with body snatching, here's what really looks like "conflict of interest" that looks really bad: County Commissioners of Precincts 1, 2, 3, & 4 are paid an annual "travel allowance" of \$15,000 each, plus 15.24% Employer Retirement Contribution. Why do commissioners get retirement benefits for "travel allowance?" Because they can; they give themselves whatever they want and we all know they want a lot! Spending \$7.2 million after Rita proved that! It looks real bad! That's \$69,144 per year for four commissioners and what each receives in allowance/benefits in a four year term; total of \$276,576 every four years—in addition to their salaries. The county has ZERO to show for it. That borders on misuse of public funds! Can we

assume they gas up at the county barns?

They should get bids on four "work trucks" with AC/heater and a radio that get good gas mileage; nothing fancy. Put a Jasper County insignia on the door. They get a new one at the beginning of a new term and the old truck goes to the county barn as was done in the past. For sure they should get rid of their travel allowances when they work on the 2008 budget. It's time for the commissioners to stop taking advantage of us poor, apathetic, ignorant Jasper County voters. It just looks bad.

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

In Jasper County

Celebrating....



Newsboy photo/Charles Kerr

KIARA FOWLER is hugged by Nicole Standly after Fowler was named Miss Juneteenth 2007 during ceremonies Thursday, June 14.

Guest Commentary One person's viewpoint

So you want to B a cowboy?

For Father's Day the daughter-person gave me a tin box containing 12 of John Wayne's B westerns from the 1930s. Made on budgets of hundreds of dollars, these Depression-era yarns feature repetitive plots and plot devices, hokey dialogue, flimsy sets out back, and cheesy acting, and yet they remain great fun.

Highly structured, the B western's immutable characteristics are:

Saloons are strictly all-guy. No problem is so subtle or so complicated that it can't be solved by the indiscriminate discharge of firearms by everyone in the immediate area.

All bankers wear black frock coats and black hats, are evil, and are in cahoots with the gang that is trying to steal the ranchers' land because there is a vein of gold that the ranchers don't know about.

Unless absolutely necessary for a plot device, six-shooters never need re-loading.

All jails have windows facing on an alley, convenient for whispered visits and escapes.

Horses never need care of any kind; you just park them out front and ignore them until you need them again.

Horses can run at full speed for hours at a time.

There is always a pass, as in: "They'll meet us at the pass" and "They'll meet you at the pass" and "I'll meet you at the pass" and "Meet me at the pass" and "The supply wagon is coming through the pass" and "The outlaws are blocking the pass."

There is exactly one young woman. She is almost always brunette and always spunky/feisty. Her elderly father or uncle always gets killed. She sticks a shotgun or rifle in the hero's stomach when she thinks

he's the varmint, but when facing the real villains needs rescuing.

If there is an older woman, her sole purpose is to tell Paw or Unc to come into the house and leave them kids (meaning the hero and the spunky brunette) alone on the front porch at the end of the movie.

When a hero or a villain runs out of a building, there is always a horse — not necessarily his — just standing around waiting to

be taken. If two men run out of a building there are always two horses — not necessarily theirs — waiting.

When the plot slows, one bunch of horsemen chase another bunch of horsemen for a few minutes, often around the same big rock several times, shooting pistols at each other.

Indians are rare in B westerns. The few you see suffer a remarkable inability to use prepositions or helping verbs.

Unless the bad guys have intercepted the supply wagon again, pistols, rifles, bullets, and dynamite are available for sale right next to the candy and the dresses down at the general store.

The hideout, the runaway stagecoach with the screaming maiden in need of rescuing, the quick draw, the showdown in Main Street, the dive off the cliff into the convenient body of water, fisticuffs, the leap onto the horse from the hayloft, the loyal if somewhat dim partner — all are stirred into a plot soup in varying proportions to make movies that in their artlessness make great art indeed.

Thanks, daughter-person; you've taken me back to the 1950s and Saturday afternoons at The Palace Theatre on Main Street.

Mack Hall is a resident of Kirbyville



Mack Hall

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

Governor completes task of signing, vetoing bills

AUSTIN - By June 15, two days before the veto deadline, Gov. Rick Perry had signed HB 1, the state's two-year budget for 2008-2009, vetoed 53 bills and signed thousands of others.

Perry used the line-item veto to remove what he considers "pork" from the budget, but HB 1 still totals out at more than \$150 billion.

Among aspects of HB 1 Perry praised are an increase in border security funding by more than \$100 million, an additional \$146 million in college financial aid, funding for a new motion picture incentive program, and more money for the Children's Health Insurance Program.

One of the bills Perry signed, HB 14, creates the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas and dedicates \$300 million in general obligation bonds to annually fund scientific research to find a cure for cancer.

But funding for HB 14 will depend on registered voters who participate in the constitutional

amendment election Nov. 6. The ballot will include a proposition for authorization of \$3 billion in general obligation bonds for use during a span of 10 years.

Medicaid coverage to reach more

SB 10, authored by Sen. Jane Nelson, R-Lewisville, and Rep. Dianne

White Delisi, R-Temple, also got Perry's signature.

This law, which takes effect Sept. 1, expands the reach of Medicaid, giving health benefits to 200,000 more Texans than are presently uncovered.

Perry said SB 10 will:

▼ Help qualified people enroll in private insurance and employer-sponsored plans;

▼ Create tailored benefit packages for children with special health care needs;

▼ Promote consumer choice through health savings accounts and consumer directed services;

▼ Reward healthy lifestyle behaviors with health care incentives; and

▼ Set a cost-sharing base for



Ed Sterling
Texas Press
Association

which takes effect Sept. 1, requires school districts to adopt and implement a policy establishing a limited public forum for student speakers at school events.

Included in the bill is a model policy that districts may directly adopt or use for reference.

HB 3678 protects a student from being punished for expressing a religious viewpoint verbally or in a class assignment.

It also allows students to form prayer groups, religious clubs and "see-you-at-the-pole" gatherings

non-emergency use of emergency rooms.

Perry signs religious view act

The governor signed HB 3678 by Rep. Charlie Howard, R-Sugar Land, the Religious Viewpoint Anti-Discrimination Act.

This act, before, during and after school to the same extent that students are permitted to organize other non-curricular student activities and groups.

Secretary of state resigns

Roger Williams on June 11 announced his resignation as secretary of state, effective July 1. Gov. Perry named his own deputy chief of staff Phil Wilson to succeed Williams.

Wilson earlier worked as the governor's communications director and previously was state director for then-U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas.

Williams served more than two years as Texas' 105th secretary of state. In that capacity he served as the state's chief election officer. He also worked to create jobs and develop the state's economy, leading business recruitment missions around the U.S. and trade promotion missions in Mexico, Canada and Japan.

TCEQ approves coal plants

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality on June 13 overruled two State Office of

Administrative Hearings judges in approving a permit allowing TXU to build two lignite coal-fired power plants in Robertson County.

Environmental groups and a number of state lawmakers and other public officials, mainly from the Austin area and Dallas-Fort Worth, have come out in opposition.

Objections to the plant have been lodged, citing the release of unhealthy levels of particulate matter, ozone, greenhouse gases and mercury.

TXU Power, a subsidiary of TXU Corp., released a statement lauding the decision to allow construction of the plants, saying, "The TCEQ has determined that the Oak Grove air permit will be protective of human health and the environment. This permit contains some of the cleanest emission standards ever set for a lignite power plant, and the plant will help meet Texas' near-term need for power."

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