

Viewpoint

The Jasper Newsboy

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Our Viewpoint Editorials

Make voice heard on budget process

All our local entities are in the budget process at this moment.

Most have approved a proposed budget for the upcoming year. It's time now for the citizens of the county to let their voices be heard.

If you disagree with something in the school district's budget, speak up now. After the board approves the budget, there is nothing more to say.

Don't wait until time is over. The time to speak up is now. Most entities will host a public hearing before the final vote on their budgets.

Let your voice be heard.

Failure to raise questions now only hurts the citizens in the long run. We live in a country that can question issues with our local governments.

Make these public servants answer those tough questions about the budget process. Make them show us why increases were given in one department and a cutback was made in another.

More importantly, it shows our governmental leaders need to know that we care about what they are doing. We want

accountability and we want them to explain thoroughly how they came to their budget's decisions.

Remember, these servants were put in office by the public.

If you don't like an issue with area entities' budgets, speak up now.

Soon, it will be too late.

Roses go to....

▼ High school football. If ever there is something that captures a community, it's Friday night high school football and our area teams are taking to the football fields this Friday as they open up their seasons.

▼ All the people who work to make this area thrive. On Monday, Sept. 3, we celebrate the working men and women of this country. Hats off to all of you.

▼ A quiet month in the Gulf for August. Typically, August is a hot month when it comes to hurricanes. Just a quiet September and we will be alright.

Thorns go to....

▼ Copper thieves. A rash of copper theft in the area has put the Jasper Police Department on alert.

In Jasper County

School starts....



Newsboy photo/Sharon Kerr

Guest Commentary One person's viewpoint

Down from the door where it all began

*The road goes ever on and on
Down from the door where it began
Now far ahead the road has gone
And I must follow, if I can
Pursuing it with eager feet
Until it joins some larger way
Where many paths and errands
meet -
And whither then? I cannot say.*

- J. R. R. Tolkien



Mack Hall

Our former random collection of stem cells left for university on Sunday, alternating between giggles and tears as she loaded her little Volkswagen with flutes, clothes, books, tennis racket, computer, makeup, pillows, blankies, and all the other impedimenta of the late-adolescent female beginning her journey on her chosen road. This has been a week of departures, the annual late-August migration of high school graduates out of America's fast-disappearing little towns and into the groaning centers of population for college or careers. In ones and twos they have flown away like hummingbirds in November, all the little rug-rats who squealed at birthday parties and sleepovers, and scampered through the house with the merry dachshunds. They long ago packed away the Barbies and took up books, musical instruments, microscopes, and computers instead. Some are off to great universities, some to the Marines, and some to the wonderful world of entry-level jobs: "Ya want fries with that?"

I woke up early on Sunday morning, and did what all fathers do for their college-bound kids: I washed Sarah's car. It didn't really need it, but I didn't know what else to do. We had all gone to Mass the night before, because all journeys properly begin and end at the Altar. However, this left us with maybe too much time before Sarah joined The Other Sarah for their two-car departure. So I mowed the lawn. It didn't really need it, but I didn't know what else to do.

Eldon came over in the early afternoon; both his girls have left for A & M, so in our great sorrow we broke out a couple of cigars, sat under the fan on the back porch (now more commonly known as a patio), and felt old. Finally, around two, I violated my own no-cars-on-the-lawn rule and backed Sarah's little Bug to the front door, where I followed orders and helped Sarah load her gear to her specifications while the usually merry dachshunds watched sadly. They didn't know what was going on, but they somehow knew that their little world was about to change.

And then there was nothing left to do. Sunlight fell on the green grass and the blue Volkswagen while the sky to the north darkened with an approaching thunderstorm. Hugs all around, and then Sarah drove away down the lane and the dusty East Texas road — not to a movie or pizza with her buds, and not for an afternoon or an evening, but far away and forever.

Now the house is very quiet, and the babble of the television and the rattle of the washer can't disguise the emptiness of a house where a child used to live. Sarah's awards-heavy letter jacket hangs in her closet in its plastic bag from the cleaners. Last week it was her resume'; now it's just an artifact of the past, stored away with plastic boxes of toys and games. On her bed reside the stuffed animals she cuddled at night and when she was sick. Her books are stacked on their accustomed shelves: the worn Little House books she read over and over, Diary of a Young Girl, My Cat Spit Magee, 501 Spanish Verbs, Agatha Christie mysteries, The Six Wives of Henry VIII, every Sweet Valley High book ever churned out on spec, Finland, Jane Austen.

One of the best things I ever did for Sarah was to ban daytime television during her childhood summers. Thus, she climbed

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Your Viewpoint Letters to the Editor

Sayers met his Waterloo Monday

By WINCY WALKER
Jasper

If you're about to be mugged by a clown, don't hesitate ... go for the juggler.

My friends think that Randy Sayers being my city councilman proves that God has a wonderful sense of humor. Thankfully, the 3-ring circus vacated City Hall; has a new clown. I refer to Sayers' over-reaction to whining within the police department.

My favorite quote in the Newsboy report about Sayers' special called meeting to call the Police Chief on the carpet is, to Hunter, "I am not going by rumors. I am going by conversations with your police department."

Does that make any sense? Are rumors spread only by sign language? Smoke signals? How about "a little bird told me...? Only truth is told in "conversations?" Or, does Sayers believe everything he hears? In his infinite wisdom, thinks only he has the ability to always discern fact from fiction? When did accusations of being "arrogant, rude, liar" become sins punishable by death? Were those qualities (plus comp-time for crime scenes after 5 o'clock) retired with former Chief Stanley

Christopher, who provided an ethics-free work environment? (People new to Jasper, that's no joke!)

Sayers apparently called the meeting to play "gotcha" with the police chief and it backfired. Going strictly by "conversations," it appeared that having been on city council only three months, Sayers was told he was going about whatever he was doing, "the wrong way." Did he listen? No. "Mr. Know-It-All" only succeeded in proving his ignorance; needed no help.

Sayers bankrupted his credibility. When it was announced he was running for council, it was assumed he was encouraged by the same "Important-in-Name-Only" people who always have a "puppet-candidate" they can control "from the shadows." In other "conversations," some are laughing that their latest "puppet," Sayers, has morphed into a loose cannon.

Our district was well served by Gayle Meigs; if Sayers' intentions had truly been to serve Jasper, he should have been smart enough to know he couldn't do better. In "conversations," it's been said that he caused problems as president of Jasper Share, costing them big bucks in grant money. But city council is a much bigger, public stage and people are held accountable. Time will tell if he has learned a lesson, will look before he leaps, will go

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

Hurricane Dean response crews stand down

AUSTIN Gov. Rick Perry on Aug. 21 ordered the withdrawal of disaster response personnel and equipment deployed to South Texas in anticipation of Hurricane Dean.

Perry issued the order after the hurricane began tracking on a westerly path away from Texas.

The hurricane earlier struck Jamaica and the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico, and appeared to be headed toward the Texas-Mexico border region.

Personnel, search-and-rescue teams, buses, aircraft and refuelers were staged in the Rio Grande Valley and San Antonio to support community efforts to prepare for bad weather.

"Luckily, our state was spared and it is time for the dedicated men and women who answered the call of duty to return home," Perry said.

College Ready Texas hits road

What does it mean for a student

to be "college ready?"

Basically, it has to do with ensuring that high school curriculum matches college entrance standards.

Members of the Commission for a College Ready Texas have been on the road to get more input on exactly what it means.

Austin attorney Sandy Kress chairs the commission. Other members are Robert Scott, acting state commissioner of education, and Raymond Paredes of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

House Bill 1, in effect since 2006, requires teams of educators to define college readiness and the State Board of Education adjust high school curricula and develop online instructional resources for students and professional development for educators.

So far, the commission has gathered public testimony in Austin, Houston, Arlington and Midland.



Ed Sterling
Texas Press
Association

In September, they'll have meetings in Harlingen and San Antonio.

State considers electronic signs

The Texas Transportation Commission is contemplating passage a regulation that would allow electronic billboards visible to passing motorists.

If the commission grants preliminary approval, a 90-day public comment period will follow before final approval.

Opponents say the changing messages can distract drivers. Supporters say it's not that big of a deal if messages don't flash or crawl.

Home rule municipalities would still have the final say-so in their jurisdictions.

Sales tax holiday helps shoppers

Shoppers saved about \$52 mil-

lion in state and local sales taxes during the Aug. 17-19 annual sales tax holiday.

Combs and Sen. Rodney Ellis of Houston, the primary author of the sales tax holiday law, have said they would like to increase the maximum price for tax-exempt items from \$100 to \$150.

The officials hope to add another dimension to the tax holiday by including items such as pencils, pens, crayons and paper to the list.

Perry is asked to end shipments

Citizens and more than two dozen state legislators asked Gov. Perry to use his authority to stop further shipments of toxic waste to a Port Arthur incinerator.

The corrosive liquid waste comes from VX, a type of military nerve gas. The gas is chemically broken down and shipped from Indiana to Texas in 4,000-gallon containers.

A Port Arthur firm is processing and disposing the liquid under a three-year, \$49 million contract

that took effect in April.

State executes death row inmate

Johnny Ray Conner was executed at Huntsville Aug. 22 for the 1998 robbery and murder of convenience store clerk Kathyanna Nguyen in Houston.

Conner was the 400th Texas death row inmate to be executed since 1982, when the state resumed capital punishment.

Florida man given death sentence

John Couey, the Florida man convicted in the 2005 rape-murder of nine-year-old Jessica Lunsford, was sentenced to death by a Florida court Aug. 24.

The case prompted 31 states, including Texas, to enact some form of Jessica's Law to help protect children from sexual predators.

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