

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

PHONE:(409) 384-3441 FAX: (409) 384-8803

PUBLISHER

Jeffrey T. Reedy jreedy@hearstnp.com

EDITOR

Jimmy Galvan jgalvan@jaspernewsboy.com

Your Viewpoint Letters to the Editor

Time for little 'housecleaning'

By SKEET CATHEY
Jasper

Once again the people in the Jasper area are to be overwhelmed by stupidity. The loss of the McDonald tournament will be disaster for merchants in the Jasper area and a real blow to the reputation of Jasper as a whole. Where in the world are we getting the people that are running (ruining) the city and county government.

It is time for the citizens of Jasper and the merchants in the Jasper area to stand up and request, NO, DEMAND, that city support Bob Sealey and the tournament and return the hotel and motel tax revenues to the Chamber of Commerce who had the good of Jasper as their main goal. It appears that we are going back to the days of 30 years ago when the "old clique" in Jasper did everything they could to discourage any growth. Maybe it is time for another housecleaning.

Difficult to take city's BBS stance

By JOHN SALAMONE
Jasper

I just finished reading the article entitled "City may lose Big Bash Splash." It is not often that I read an article and then feel immediately compelled to refute the statements or content, but this one certainly qualifies. I find it difficult to accept that the City Manager, Mr. Grindstaff has completely done his homework on this event. Is the true measure of economic feasibility based on "little cards" placed in hotel rooms in hopes of creating a momentary lapse of ambivalence, thus spurring the guest to disclose why they are there in the first place? I understand that the procedure states that the Secretary will then follow up with telephone calls to find out "how many patrons were there for the event". I would certainly like to see the metrics used to gauge this survey.

Curiosity got the better of me on this one, so I conducted my own accurate, albeit unscientific survey. Unable to question every hotel/motel in town, I selected four hotels that I felt would represent an accurate depiction of the actual financial picture. I queried Best Western, Holiday Inn Express, Ramada Inn, and Bass Buster Inn. In EVERY case, the respondent stated that their hotels were completely full for at least three nights as a result of the Big Bash Splash. One of them even stated that they require a five night minimum stay during this tournament and have a long waiting list of customers wanting to utilize their facility. Based on this information, it is

easy to assume at least a three-night stay per hotel. The subject hotels have 59, 65, 100, and 32 rooms respectively. On average, these hotels charge \$70.00 per night, not including tax. Using the representative total of 256 rooms at \$70.00 per night, we total \$17,920.00 in revenue per night on just these four hotels. When you apply the tax rate of 13 percent to this figure you reach \$2,329.60 in hotel/motel tax per night on just four hotels, or \$582.40 per individual hotel. At last look, there are over twice the number of hotels used in this example listed in the Jasper telephone book. If we double the number of hotels to 8 and use the already established number of (at least) a three-night stay, you can extrapolate a number of \$13,977.60 just in hotel/motel tax for this single event.

Next I called a few area restaurants to touch on the economic impact of the Big Bass Splash to their business. While I did not ask for, and did not receive any actual numbers I was told in every case that the tournament in question contributes significantly to the bottom line of the restaurant. Sherry Markovich of the Cedar Tree Restaurant in Jasper went so far as to say that the Big Bass Splash weekend is "By far the biggest weekend of the year." She added, "Losing this tournament will make a significant difference to our business. Every event is important to us, and we cater to a diverse set of customers, but this event clearly has the most impact on our business." Similar statements were given by every restaurant I contacted, with McDonalds even stating that they increase staffing requirements to meet the increased demand.

These are merely of couple of samples of the true impact of this tournament. I would encourage the current administration to conduct its own study to ascertain the actual numbers and apply them in the determination of who and what deserves funding. Mr. Grindstaff stated that he "can't control what he does, and I cannot be blackmailed by his threats to take it elsewhere if we don't give him his money." I don't believe Mr. Sealy is attempting to "blackmail" anyone. I think he is fed up with being held hostage by the people with whom he is negotiating and feeling as though he is being strong-armed into holding his event for substantially less money. I want to know how the city can justify spending \$9,500.00 to fund a tournament that refuses to allow fishermen on the water for the entire week leading up to the tournament. The established off limits period allows for zero practice time prior to the tournament which results in zero dollars for the community. If the fishermen cannot be on the lake, why would they come a day or two early? A large percentage of the participants of this trail drive to the lake the morning of the tournament, and travel back home immediately upon the completion of the tournament, leaving

See Letters, Page 7A

Guest Commentary One person's viewpoint

Jesus and the 12 apostrophes

Recently I had occasion to visit a facility offering something called healthcare (sic). Such an event used to be called going to the doctor, and health care, as two words, was part of the phraseology of insurance forms.

In times long past, one said hello to the receptionist (probably a high school classmate), and sat in a waiting room to read a ten-year-old copy of National Geographic. After a bit a registered nurse in a crisp (forgive the cliché, but it is apt) white uniform complete with nursing cap and school pin opened a door to say, "The doctor will see you now."

Now one says hello to the receptionist (still probably an old pal from school), who gives the bearer of a fevered brow a greasy ball-point pen and a portfolio of almost illegible forms, photocopies of photocopies of photocopies, over which to labor while the receptionist photocopies the patient's insurance card, pharmacy card, Sam's Club card, and driving license. After a wait in a room full of the sick staring slack-jawed at CNN on a widescreen telly, a person of indeterminate rank and skills, wearing pajamas of indeterminate color and hygiene, admits the suffering for healthcare.

I suppose the coming phrase is "The healthcare provider will healthcare you now."

Combining words and employing nouns as verbs are fashions now ("cutting edge," I believe it's called, "educating for the 21st century"), along with the elimination of punctuation.

In school a drill team is now called a colorguard, and they aren't guarding the colors or even carrying them; the FFA does that. The denotation of color guard is the assemblage of soldiers carrying the national and unit colors, flanked by two riflemen, and don't even think of messin' with those colors unless you want to die.

Now color guard, jammed into colorguard, is a team of dancers who wave bright cloths on the ends of sticks. These routines are certainly entertaining, and I yield to no one in my admiration of dance from ballet to Gene Kelly to boot-scootin' something-or-other. But a dance troupe is not a color guard; one might with equal accuracy call it small-unit action against a gun emplacement.

One also reads of the modern tendency to exile commas and apostrophes to the same outlands as the semi-colon; one who has suffered through sixth-grade grammar drills is initially tempted to stand and



Mack Hall

applaud. But before we push the poor old apostrophe into a boxcar of the Siberian Express (return ticket not an issue), let us remember the real purpose (not Ol' Miz Grundy's sadistic got'cha game) of punctuation. Consider the following line:

PATERNOSTERQVIINCOELIS-
E S T S A N C T I -
FICETVRNOMENTVVMADVE-
NIATREGNVMTVVMFIAT-
VOLVNTVSTVAINTERRAET-
INCOELVM...

Makes no sense, right? Now let's separate the words, allow for little letters, and add some punctuation:

Pater Noster, Qui in Coelis est, sanctificetur Nomen Tuum, adveniat regnum Tuum, fiat voluntas tua in Terra et in Coelum...

Now we're getting somewhere. As with geometry, accept as a given that Pater Noster mean Father Ours, and the rest can easily be worked out. However, even in English we would have problems with no word separation, no small letters, and no punctuation:

OURFATHERWHOARTINHEAVEN-
HALLOWEDBETHYNAMETHYKING-
DOMCOMETHYWILLBEDONEIN-
EARTHASITISINHEAVEN...

Oh, easy enough to sort out a line or two, but can one imagine reading The Bible (and which one, anyway?), work orders, nursing notes, bills of lading, or a Louis L'Amour shoot-'em-up printed like that?

Language changes, but that change should flow naturally with the passage of time and with the need to express new technologies. We should not scurry like mice in obedience to the chief mouse to discard the carefully worked out usages of time and reality. Punctuation and word usage are about clarity and aesthetics, not ideology.

So for now, at the end of the day, the bottom line is, when push comes to shove, in today's society, in a heartbeat, at this point in time, when the skinny lady sings, the cutting edge of education for the 21st century means thinking outside the box 24/7 in order to define a generation along a long and winding dusty country road for the just plain common people changed our lives forever as a person met his or her fate when a hurricane was brewing and then slammed ashore in an expression of freedom of choice for women's healthcare because the wrath of Mother Nature...(fade to a Blue Bell commercial).

Mack Hall is a resident of Kirbyville

"Man must cease attributing his problems to his environment, and learn again to exercise his will — his personal responsibility in the realm of faith and morals."

— Albert Schweitzer

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

State border council seeks public input on issue

AUSTIN — Texas' new Border Security Council will conduct public forums in border communities Oct. 1-3.

The state of Texas launched "Operation Border Star" last month in hopes of reducing crime along the Texas-Mexico border.

The governor's office described the operation as a "surge" in border security.

Working together in the operation are the U.S. Border Patrol, local law enforcement, the Texas Department of Public Safety, the Texas Rangers, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department game wardens, plus Texas military forces personnel and their equipment.

The governor's office said Operation Border Star will be expanded during the next year with guidance from the Texas Border Security Council and more than \$100 million provided by the 80th Texas Legislature.

In other news, information about a proposed border barrier fence along the eastern portion of the Rio Grande was published

Sept. 25 in the Federal Register.

The information describes a 16-foot-tall fence strong enough to withstand a crash by a five-ton vehicle traveling 40 mph.

TxDOT names new chief exec

Amadeo Saenz, a 51-year-old transportation engineer who has been with the Texas Department of Transportation for 29 years, has been promoted to executive director of the agency.

The Hebronville native began his career with TxDOT in 1978 as an engineering lab assistant and worked his way up.

In other news, TxDOT officials said rising costs, less federal funding and a ban on most private toll road deals could combine to force the agency to scale back on projects.

Also, in late September, State District Judge Orlinda Naranjo of Travis

County refused to grant a



Ed Sterling
Texas Press
Association

motion by Terri Hall of the San Antonio Toll Party and Texans Uniting for Reform and Freedom for a temporary restraining order to stop a TxDOT-funded toll road-promoting campaign.

Texas' first family moves out

Gov. Rick Perry and family moved out of the governor's mansion and into a \$9,900 a month rental home just outside of Austin.

The mansion is undergoing repairs including plumbing improvements that could take a year and a half to complete.

The location of the temporary quarters raised a question about the constitutionality of a state office holder living outside of Austin city limits.

AG urges safety at schools

Texas law requires school districts to conduct campus security audits and report the results in the fall of 2008.

In that regard, Attorney General

Greg Abbott said he wants school districts to take new safety procedures that could prevent a shooting like the one last spring at Virginia Tech.

Abbott recommended that each campus develop its own emergency plans and set up an anonymous incident reporting program.

He also encouraged more information sharing among law enforcement entities, juvenile justice officials and school authorities.

Volunteers clean Texas beaches

More than 9,600 volunteers removed almost 190 tons of trash from Texas beaches on a mid-September weekend as part of the 2007 Texas General Land Office Adopt-A-Beach Fall Cleanup.

Among the found objects: toilet seat, underwear, syringes, Cadillac steering wheel, bikini, rubber chicken, hair piece, dog house, tea cup, hair curlers, light bulbs, rug and broom.

State to fund background checks

Top state officials directed the Texas Education Agency to shift

funding necessary to pay the \$50 fee for fingerprinting and background checks on teachers.

Earlier, teachers and other education workers were going to have to pay for the checks themselves. Last session, the \$50 million in funding for the background checks was cut from the budget.

Prevention week theme: Strategy

The State Fire marshal's theme for Fire Prevention Week, Oct. 7-13, is "Have an Exit Strategy Where You Live, Work, and Play."

Texans are urged to learn two ways out of any room they're in, whether that room happens to be their own kitchen, a boardroom at work, a movie theater, or any other locale.

Firms seek nuke plant permits

NRG Energy of New Jersey and CPS Energy of San Antonio filed papers to build nuclear reactors at the South Texas Project in Bay City that would go online in 2014.

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