

Viewpoint

The Jasper Newsboy

Established in 1865

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Our Viewpoint Editorials

Take time to honor veterans this week

The holidays are quickly approaching and people will be rushing around without a worry in the world shopping for that elusive gift or traveling from one part of our country to visit relatives in another part.

We will walk freely in malls and stores searching for that perfect gift. We will freely travel the roads of America as we venture off to Grandma's house for that special Thanksgiving meal.

While we might complain about the traffic on the road or the high price of gasoline, we need to take time before this holiday season hits to remember why we are allowed these wonderful freedoms.

Monday we celebrate Veteran's Day and it is vitally important that we remember those who have served for this country during its greatest time of need.

Our youth need to take a lesson from the veterans of yesteryear.

These brave men and women stepped up and answered the call from our country to serve and put their lives in harm's way. They didn't do it for the glory or the pay but because they felt it was the right thing to do.

So before we get all too wrapped up in the holiday season ahead, let us all take time to honor and celebrate the veterans

that made this country as great as it is.

Remember those who went off to battle in the name of freedom.

Remember those who went off to battle to secure our borders.

Remember those who went off to battle in defending the oppressed and beaten down.

Remember those who are bravely serving abroad today.

Remember that without the sacrifices these veterans make for us, we might not be allowed the freedoms that we so often take for granted.

Roses go to....

▼ Henderson County Sheriff's Department for nabbing the multi-county robber. Ah, today's Clyde taken down by a fender-bender.

▼ Victor "Tina" Williams, for keeping his promise to his students to dress up like Tina Turner as part of a fund-raiser for Rowe Intermediate. Some may frown on the attire, but the spirit of the event remains priceless to the students.

▼ How about them Dawgs? Jasper will play Silsbee in the Bone Yard Friday with a Class 3A playoff berth at stake. Get your tickets early. This one has the makings of being a good one.

Your Viewpoint Letters to the Editor

Thanks for help

By CODY MCBRIDE
Brookeland

On Friday, Oct. 19, a benefit fish fry was held for Susan Muncrief, the four-year-old daughter of William and Crystal Muncrief. The benefit was very successful, but it wouldn't have been so without the help of so many people.

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Don and Saundra Wood and Charlie and Tammy Beckett of Brookeland for not only providing the place and the equipment for the fish fry but for their tireless efforts in the planning and carrying out of our benefit as well.

We would also like to thank the numerous individuals, local businesses and organizations for their generous donations and for purchasing fish plates.

Last, but certainly not least, there were many others who kindly donated their time to frying fish, preparing plates and selling/delivering them. We appreciate each and every one for their love and support.

Thanks to Parnell

By MARGUERITE BRADEN
Jasper

On Friday, Oct. 26, it was my privilege to participate in the exciting "Outdoor Day" at Parnell Elementary directed by Eva Seal.

First of all, I would like to compliment the children on their behavior. It was a pleasure providing flowers and instructing the students in creating their own bouquets with "real" flowers. They were very attentive and anxious to learn about fresh flowers.

Also, a devoted 4th grade teacher, Mrs. Seal, should be commended for her time and effort in organizing a special day for the students. She was there very early to help direct the participants in setting up, worked throughout the day to accommodate the needs of the students and the participants, and then stayed late to clean up.

Thank you Parnell for providing hands on educational experiences and acquainting the future leaders of Jasper with the community services available to them.

"Where's help?"

By TRINA SAMUEL
Jasper

My question is, "Where's the help?" DETCOG tells the citizens of my county to be patient, that help is on the way, we've just received a new grant.

Yeah, right, this is all double talk. DETCOG co-workers are repairing properties that some homeowners are dead, in nursing homes, or have more income than some four or five families combined.

Families are being put out of the FEMA trailers due to formaldehyde, they claim. Yet, formaldehyde has been used as a preservation in trailers for years.

Excuses, excuses, excuses, when will they stop?

People are getting sick from mold - leaky roofs, broken windows in their homes because DETCOG sent out someone to fix the problem, yet there is nothing being done - then you get a letter of denial.

What are the people to do two years later? Where is the money? People of this county wake up.

Voice your concerns, DETCOG, an investigation needs to be done, we have been waiting too long.

Citizens, we need to focus on where the money is going and who's benefiting from it, surely not the needy. DETCOG, your storm has just begun - the concerned citizens of this county will be heard.

Letters criteria set

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.

All letters are subject to editing for newspaper style and clarity, without changing the meaning of the content.

Mail letters to:

The Jasper Newsboy P.O. Box 1419
Jasper, Texas 75951-1419 or e-mail to: jgalvan@jaspernewsboy.com

Guest Commentary One person's viewpoint

Diplomats reluctant to serve in Bagdad?

"I shall have to delay you for a few minutes. You see the Legation is only just open and we have not yet got our full equipment. We are expecting the rubber stamp any minute now."

— A diplomat in Evelyn Waugh's *Scoop*

The American diplomatic corps, the envy of the world of pallid wine and crumbly cheese, is afraid to go to Bagdad - so afraid that no one is volunteering, and diplomats may have to be dragged out of cocktail parties in Ottawa and the racing season at Epsom Downs and ordered to report to The Cradle of Civilization.

Working Americans whose taxes support civil servants can certainly understand the reluctance of diplomats to serve civility in Bagdad. What towboat captain or steelworker cannot appreciate the difficulty in finding a really good tailor in Port Said Street? And, after all, embassy soirees in Bagdad are more likely to be explosive

rather than sparkling, and the paucity of wine merchants is appalling, simply appalling. Worse, the shopping along Muthana Al Shaiban Street is simply not up to Paris standards, m'dear. Picnicking along the Tigris is quite impossible given the heat, and trying to punt through the bobbing, malodorous corpses is so, so tiresome.

A with-it diplomat in Bagdad can only resent the sad reality that so many of his personal bodyguards are not Harvard or Yale, and don't appreciate amusing anecdotes about yachting with Walter Cronkite off Martha's Vineyard and tittering about people who actually have jobs and love America.

And then there are the Christian priests in Iraq. In New England, anyone who's anyone keeps a tame bishop or two for amusement. In Iraq, though, priests and bishops are not much fun at parties, didn't go to the



Mack Hall

right schools, and suffer a tendency to be martyred by the sort of people American bishops like to be pals with for the cameras. Yawn.

Doesn't anyone understand that stern diplomatic notes can be exchanged just as easily after one's afternoon nap in Brussels as well as after one's afternoon nap in Iraq? And the embassy in Brussels is so convenient to the theatre.

And then there's the bother of domestic staff in Bagdad. When interviewing and hiring a suitable kitchen staff (soooooo exhausting), one must check references very carefully so that one does not hire a pastry chef who might bring explosives into the morning room. The maids, the housekeeper, the porters, the gardeners - can one find staff up to scratch in Iraq? Yes, a life of public service is terribly demanding.

Entertaining can be quite a bother too. In

Europe one knows that a grand duke l'orange takes precedent over a charge' du flatus, but how does one seat a Sunny mahdi and a Shirty sheik at dinner without causing a row? Gracious! And what is the proper dress for receptions during a rocket attack - black-tie body armor or white-tie body armor?

And must those beastly American soldiers get blown up in the street outside the embassy? Can't they go out to the countryside and get blown up there? An American diplomat needs his sleep, after all, and having all those persons from the flyover states fighting and dying just outside is so unseemly.

The American diplomatic service - always a step and six feet of reinforced concrete behind our fighting men and women. Why should they have to serve in Bagdad - or anywhere else?

Mack Hall is a resident of Kirbyville

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

Audit shows hurricane relief funds largely unspent

AUSTIN - Now the public has information about what's been happening with federal funding Texas received to help recover from hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005.

The State Auditor's Office on Nov. 1 released a report showing that most of the \$523.7 million in disaster funding received by Texas has not been spent.

Two state agencies, the Department of Housing and Community Affairs and the Office of Rural Community Affairs, are responsible for administering the funds.

According to the report, Housing and Community Affairs spent only \$1.1 million or 2.6 percent of the \$42.6 million in Community Development Block Grant funds the federal government initially awarded to it in May 2006 for hurricane recovery.

As of Sept. 14, 2007, only 13 applicants had benefited from a delivered product, and those "delivered products" were manufactured

homes.

Housing and Community Affairs used \$231,066 or 21 percent of the funding for administrative expenses.

Regarding the other agency that received funds, the Office of Rural Community Affairs, the audit reflects complexities tied to spending the money because of the timing and mechanics of reimbursements by FEMA, the federal disaster agency. Meanwhile, the audit noted, many disaster aid applicants are still living in FEMA trailers.

Official predicts low turnout

Secretary of State Phil Wilson, Texas' chief elections officer, on Nov. 2 projected an overall turnout of 9.5 percent of registered

Texas voters in the Nov. 6 election.

"This election is important, and I encourage Texans to head to the polls and prove me wrong," Wilson said.



Ed Sterling
Texas Press Association

percent of all registered voters in Texas.

Perry names TCEQ commissioner

Gov. Rick Perry on Nov. 1 appointed Bryan W. Shaw of Bryan to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for a term to expire Aug. 31, 2013.

The commission establishes, oversees and implements clean air, clean water and other environmen-

tal policies for the state of Texas. Shaw, an associate professor of biological and agricultural engineering for Texas A&M University, specializes in air pollution engineering.

He replaces Kathleen Hartnett White of Valentine, whose term expired last summer. The agency's other two commissioners are Buddy Garcia and Larry Soward.

AG launches safety initiative
Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott on Nov. 1 called for new safety measures designed to protect students from school violence.

Abbott urged school districts to implement new safety procedures to help prevent a Columbine or Virginia Tech-style shooting in Texas.

The Attorney General's Office is working on the issue with the Texas School Safety Center, an agency created in 1999 after the Columbine, Colo., tragedy. The organization provides schools with research, training, and technical assistance to reduce youth violence and promote

safety in Texas schools.

Abbott made a number of recommendations for school districts to be prepared should trouble arise, such as develop, implement and annually practice campus emergency plans. Schools should team up with law enforcement to practice school safety drills once a year, he said.

Texas Clipper to live on as reef

The decommissioned ship, Texas Clipper, on Nov. 15 will be sunk in the Gulf of Mexico 17 miles off South Padre Island and become an artificial reef.

The 473-foot, 7,000-ton World War II-vintage ship served from 1965 to 1996 as a training vessel for Texas A&M University-Galveston.

Because it will attract sport fishing and diving, the new reef is expected to generate as much as \$30 million annually for local economies over a lifespan of at least 50 years, according to Texas Parks & Wildlife.

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