

Viewpoint

The Jasper Newsboy

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Our Viewpoint Editorials

Holmes had vision for area's youth

Ernie Holmes cared about the young people in Southeast Texas.

He was troubled by the fact that the drug culture had taken over the lives of many of the young in this area. He wanted to show the young that there was more to life than just drugs.

Holmes, who starred on the football field for the Pittsburgh Steelers, wanted to bring to the young's lives a dream that there was more to it than just turning to drugs. He wanted them to understand that their whole future was ahead of them and that drugs were just a one-way street to nowhere.

Holmes was in the process of organizing a group of pastors that would take part in a

street ministry to deal with a drug problem at "The Hill" in Newton. This area is widely known for its drug usage and drug dealing.

Unfortunately, Holmes never lived to see that street ministry come to fruition.

Holmes lost his life last week in a single-vehicle accident near Lumberton.

As we remember the life of Martin Luther King Jr., let us take time to keep Ernie Holmes' dream alive as well. In a time when our youth are challenged by so many obstacles, we can take the time to remind them there are other roads that can be taken.

Ernie Holmes had a vision to help the youth of Jasper and Newton counties. Let's keep that vision alive.

Guest Commentary One person's viewpoint

Chariots of Plastic

Seventy-something years after Germany invented The People's Car, India has reinvented it.

The Tata Group (I'm not sure what a group of Tatas is, or even a single Tata) has built the prototype of a five-seater sedan, the Nano, which will cost \$2,500, about the price of a couple of cups of de-fatted cappuccino at Starbucks's.

The Nano features a two-cylinder gasoline engine, will putt-putt down the road for fifty miles on a gallon of gas, and meets all European safety and emissions standards. The Nano features no power windows, no radio, and no air-conditioning. In short - and the Nano is fairly short - it's pretty much a Hindu reincarnation of the Model T.

You and I can't buy one. For now.

The next step up is the Maruti 800 from India and the Chery from China at about \$5,000 each.

These first-world cars (because we are now exporters of raw materials, not manufactured goods, to China and India) are cheap and efficient, and so naturally the environmentalists are concerned about the planet. This means they are concerned about uppity peasants enjoying freedom. After all, if Gupta and Chang can afford their own cars, they can drive to the next town for a better job, and maybe even move out to the suburbs. No longer will Gupta and Chang be restricted to living in the center of Bombay and Shanghai, dependent on politically-controlled public transportation and public housing.

An advantage for Hindus is that getting together to burn Christian churches will be



Mack Hall

more convenient. Instead of mobs with pitchforks and torches running down the streets, India can have mobs in their Nanos and plastic cigarette lighters driving down the streets. The old days of spreading rumors by word of mouth will be replaced with spreading rumors via text-messaging, thus advancing civilization.

One wonders - does a mob burning a church have to buy carbon-offsets for the event?

India is a remarkable nation. Controlled by the British for almost two hundred years, India after independence has become more British than the British. India is a capitalist nation that exports teachers, investors, technology, and manufactured goods all over the world, while Britain, where the Industrial Revolution began, is now little more than a Soviet Socialist Disneyland increasingly controlled by...I'm supposed to say extremists, I suppose, or disaffected youths.

India, having fought for the British in World War I, World War II, and the colonial wars, kept its British military traditions, and, unlike Britain, is proud of its army, its navy, its nuclear weapons, and its developing space program. India, like China, is taking its turn as an awakening and dynamic giant, while America and Europe seem to be idling in a lotus-land of self-indulgent pop culture, dime-store religious mysticism, junk food, and interminable lawsuits.

In sum, we might someday be driving our Nanos to our jobs at a Mahindra plant in Beaumont, and reporting to Mr. Gupta.

Mack Hall is a resident of Kirbyville

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

Inspectors told to focus on metal bridge component

AUSTIN - Last summer, the Interstate 35 West Mississippi River bridge collapse in Minneapolis woke people up.

Inspection crews fanned out across each state and assessed the condition of bridges under their care.

The Texas Department of Transportation ran bridge safety inspections and declared Texas bridges safe.

Now, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters has told Texas and the other states to address how changes in bridge weight, capacity and bridge conditions might affect "gusset plates." Gusset plates and girders hold up certain bridges. They work like a hub and spokes. Peters' directive suggests inspectors should take a closer look at gusset plates when calculating load capacity on the nation's 13,000 steel truss bridges. Texas has more than 300 of them.

According to TxDOT, there are only six bridges in Texas like the

one that collapsed in Minnesota and all of them have either been inspected within the last year or are scheduled for replacement.

Guv calls for nomination to hall

Gov. Rick Perry is calling for nominations of outstanding women for the Texas Women's Hall of Fame.

The Hall of Fame, coordinated by the Governor's Commission for Women, includes among its many inductees Lady Bird Johnson, educator and lawmaker Barbara Jordan, Gov. Ann Richards, rancher Hallie Stillwell, Pulitzer Prize winning newspaper reporter Caro Crawford Brown, musician Lydia Mendoza, and newspaper publisher and presidential cabinet member Oveta Culp Hobby.

This year's categories for nominees are leadership, historic preservation, health, physical fitness, education and performing arts.



Ed Sterling
Texas Press Association

An independent panel of judges will review the nominations and the governor will induct the women the panel recommends into the 2008 Hall of Fame at an awards ceremony in the fall.

Nominees must be native or current Texas residents, their noted achievement must have significant ties to Texas, and they must have been involved in the noted achievement during the past 12 months.

In related news, a 1986 Texas Women's Hall of Fame inductee, former State Rep. Wilhelmina Delco of Austin, has been named by House Speaker Tom Craddick as a member of the Texas Ethics Commission. Her term, effective immediately, will end in November 2011.

AG withdraws benefits opinions

Attorney General Greg Abbott withdrew two letter opinions released in 2006, disqualifying

certain veterans from receiving college tuition exemptions available under the Hazlewood Act.

The San Antonio-based Mexican American Legal Defense and Education

Fund filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of six Gulf War veterans who are now U.S. citizens.

The veterans were denied the Hazlewood exemption because they were legal residents but not U.S. citizens at the time they entered the military.

After Abbott vacated the opinions, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board adopted temporary rules to provide that qualified veterans are eligible for the Hazlewood exemption whether they were U.S. citizens or legal resident immigrants at the time they entered the military.

Student testing is rescheduled

Education Commissioner Robert Scott moved back the state-testing calendar so Texas school students will not take the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills exams on the March 4 statewide primary election day.

"By moving testing dates, we can preserve schools as polling places and maintain a calm, quiet, secure testing environment for our students," Scott said.

Tests scheduled for March 4-6 will be given one day later than originally scheduled. About 2.6 million students will be affected.

Texas' role in primaries may rise

Even though the Lone Star State's primary comes a month after the Feb. 5 Super Tuesday primaries or caucuses in 24 other states, a general sense of the importance of Texas in the presidential primaries seems to be improving.

This may be attributed to the fact that no clear frontrunner has emerged for the Democrats or the Republicans.

Texas, second in population among the states, has 34 electoral votes, and may emerge as a key to victory for any of the campaigns.

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

Your Viewpoint Letters to the Editor

Bottom line?

By LEROY KIPP
Jasper

If I understand correctly, according to some people, all of life is about the financial bottom line. As a Jasper resident, pastor of a church and father and grandfather, I am convinced that there is more to life than that.

There has to be something said about the quality of life and the responsibility we have to our community to keep it free from the problems associated with open bars and the sale of beer and wine in our stores.

Since I am not a resident of the City of Jasper, I realize that I have no say or vote in what happens within the city, but all of us are impacted by what happens in this "Jewel of the Forest."

Today I write from the point of a father who almost lost a four year old son to a drunken driver. Somehow the bottom line seems rather meaningless when one has to stand by while an unconscious child hovers between life and death.

Unfortunately, this same scenario is repeated many times over to many families who are not as fortunate as we were to have our child returned to health.

It is my sincere prayer that the people of the City of Jasper will take a stand to say that precious lives of our children, youth and adults are more important than profits and the infamous "bottom line."

TB payments to heirs not much

By WANDA MITCHELL BUTTERFIELD
PAGE
Jasper

I read with interest your article on the Toledo Bend Project; especially the statement "It is the only project of its kind built without federal funds; three investor-owned utility companies and the two states jointly financed the construction."

I am sure your statement is factual; however please let me enlighten you about the payments some heirs, to property in Sabine County, received for their share of the land.

Recently I was looking for some information in my late mother's file (Edna McGraw Boddy) and came across a letter from a well know attorney in Hemphill. My grandparents were land owners in the little community of Fairdale (now under water). They had sold or given away some of their property, but their heirs still retained 81 acres and their family home.

My mother came from a family of ten. Each received a total of \$797.87 for their 1/10 interest in the 81 acres. That is \$7,978.70 for 81 acres and the old family home.

No, my family was not from outlaws and did not swim the river to get away from the law. They were law abiding, hard working, dirt farmers. They gave what they could and helped many in their community and beyond.

They came to Texas for a new beginning and many in Sabine County and surrounding counties can be proud and hold their heads high, knowing they came from such humble God loving beginnings.

Toledo Bend is a wonderful place to visit, scenic and the fishing is great; however every time the lake has been "down," since I moved back to East Texas, I and some of my cousins, have gone "home" to Fairdale, just to remember our relatives and wonderful years we spent there.

Still waiting for justice, closure

By TAMMY COCHRAN
Jasper

For anyone who has ever had to wait on anything, you can relate to the frustration. Now imagine that you are the family or friend of someone who was murdered in Jasper County 25 months ago and are still waiting on a trial to begin. Now you can see why the family and friends of James H. McClelland are beyond frustrated. All that we are asking for is justice, the right of a speedy trial and closure.

Our local judges have managed to allow the proceedings of James Wiley Dotson to be postponed on several different occasions in the last few months alone. A local Defense Attorney asked for a motion of continuance in September 2007 which was granted by a District Judge, and then local officials were awaiting information from the DPS crime lab when the trial was to begin in November, and was once again delayed due to the information not being received. At the end of December a trial date of January 14, 2008 was set and publicly announced on local radio stations. The week before the trial was to begin the family was told the Defense Attorney filed another motion of continuance stating the he had to be out of town, which was again granted by our District Judge. Why didn't the District Judge hold this attorney to his commitments, or is this just another example of the "home town boys, small town politics" that is allowing J.W. Dotson to lead a free and normal life in our society?

The McClelland family has spent the last 25 months without a loved one that was taken from them, while other murders that have occurred in this County since have been settled. These family members have their closure, and we would appreciate the same. To all those involved in allowing this trial to be postponed time and time again if the victim was your brother, father, uncle or friend I hope that you would feel the same amount of frustration that we do. A trial date of February 25, 2008 has been set, and we strongly hope that there are no more postponements from our Judicial System.

Letters' criteria

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.

"Thank You" letters will not be published and will be transferred to the advertising department for an advertisement. Any letters thanking businesses also will be not published.

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:
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