

Viewpoint

The Jasper Newsboy

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Our Viewpoint Editorials

Hard work by youth to pay off this weekend

This week, Jasper County residents and businesses have the opportunity to pay a little respect to our youth.

These youth didn't make the front page of the newspaper or were broadcast over the radio station. They were never present in the weekly sheriff's report.

These youth worked hard every day of the year. Every morning they got up and every evening they tended to their responsibilities in preparation for this weekend.

This weekend is the Jasper County Junior Livestock Show and Sale and these youth need your support.

The sale will be held on Saturday and these youth need to know that their hard work will be rewarded.

It seems that we as a society tend to pay more attention to the youth who create trouble than to those who are bettering themselves.

And the sale comes during a time when economic hardships are being felt across businesses in the county. But our youth need to know that they're hard work is respected.

Show them your support this weekend. They worked hard to earn it.

In Jasper County

Praying for our heroes...



Courtesy photo from family

JESSIE JORDAN, son of Ronnie and Mary Jordan of Grapeland and great-grandson of Mary Sprouse of Jasper, exchanges greetings with an Iraqi child. Jordan is a Marine Fire Team leader in the 2nd Battalion stationed in Iraq. The photo was given to the Newsboy by his family.

Your Viewpoint Letters to the Editor

CDBG disappointing

By JOE MILLER
Pastor, FUMC-Newton

The CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) program is a disappointment to me, and it will be disappointing to the people of East Texas. Hurricane Rita occurred 30 months ago and reopening the application process is counterproductive.

The people of Newton County have been through this process a number of times and

have been promised assistance by DETCOG. They have been put on waiting lists, and have not been able to get information on their status. It will take a time consuming and costly effort to get them to participate again.

Those efforts and money could best be directed toward actual building, instead of generating more paper. The housing specs and guidelines for contractors are onerous and will impede progress. Local codes are more than adequate for repairs and new construction.

There are a number of faith-based and non-profit organizations that have successfully rehabilitated homes and built new ones. I mention a few: Nehemiah's Vision, Second Hope Homes (SHH), Rita Recovery and the Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS). Our own funding at Second Hope Homes has come from Church World Service, Rita Recovery, the Mennonite Disaster Service, the Permanent Endowment Fund of Moody Memorial First United Methodist Church, etc.

Although it is a constant struggle with

limited funds, hundreds of projects have come to fruition through the combined efforts of these organizations.

Much of the labor has been done by volunteers, and in some cases, the money to purchase materials; this is documented on www.NewtonMethodist.com.

The wise choice would be to fund those organizations and assist them as requested. Our area is very rural, the homesites are widely scattered and not easily accessible.

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Guest Commentary One person's viewpoint

Just your typical white passport

The typical American can only be deeply offended and hurt by the insensitivity of the State Department in snooping through the passport records only of the rich and famous and weird. This class-based apartheid must end! You and I, gentle reader, must demand that our government demonstrate genuine and relevant inclusiveness and openness to the audacious hopes and needs and aspirations of Jose' Jamaal Bubba Sixpack by snooping through the just plain workin' folks' records too.

Sometimes we typical Americans feel like former Boeing employees waiting for the employment office to open and seeing a French-built Airbus of the United States Air Force fly over.

A French-built Airbus of the United States Air Force would not be permitted to fly over France, of course, not even over those thousands of American graves in Normandy, Chateau-Thierry, Belleau Wood, and hundreds of other places where young Americans met death "at some disputed barricade."

Passport (not required for visiting France in 1917 and 1944) applications contain such

dangerous information as the applicant's date of birth. Ooooooooooooooooooooooh! We wouldn't want that to get out, would we?

And then when the typical American arrives in one of those funny little countries burdened by the curse of not being the USA he's asked really intrusive questions such as "Are you visiting Canada for business or for pleasure, sir? Eh." Who wants to know? Why? Why does the Canadian secret service (three retired Mounties, Neville, Clive, and Trevor, in a small office just behind The Department of Dog Sleds, or Bureau de Sleds de Pooches) keep a dossier on me?

Someone in Ottawa asked me if I were a Yank and I said "No, thank God, I'm from Texas." I heard a camera shaped like a puffin click and a tape recorder hidden in a moose whir.

Americans post their exualsary peccadilloes, drug preferences, relationships, and thong pix on MeMeMeSpace and



Mack Hall

MeMeMeTube and then complain about privacy issues.

Recently I downloaded and printed my father's 1941 Army enlistment, a record which is not supposed to be available even to relatives without a real letter and proof of kinship. Should someone apologize to me? Should I apologize to someone? I'm confused here. Whose turn is it to be the outraged victim?

The State Department is investigating three contract employees who were accused of snooping through the passport files of the weird and famous, and will even polygraph them (the employees, not the candidates). But why? The investigators should just look up the employees' MeMeMeSpace 'blogs; it'll all be there.

Maybe someone doesn't want to miss out on all the fun of waterboarding a gum-chewing, Days of Our Lives-watching GS-2 clerk named Heather-Mistee-Bree.

The contract employees were hired last summer to speed up passport applications. Obviously that went well. Perhaps the con-

tract employees were former inspectors of construction cranes in New York.

Two of the three employees involved have been sacked; the only one who was not required to make fresh arrangements for his future works for a placement company owned, according to The Washington Times, by John Brennan, a former CIA agent - who ousted him? - who is an advisor to Barack Fitzgerald Obama.

Hmmm. Outrage to order? Senator Hillary Clinton, who dodged sniper fire to keep the world safe from fresh-baked cookies, was undoubtedly relieved to hear that someone had snooped into her super-secret passport file too. After all, during her tenure as co-President, snooping into secret files was one of her specialties.

In the meantime, I demand that the State Department report to me that someone has been snooping through my electronic passport file, and I demand a written apology. Money would be nice too. I want to be outraged just like the rich folks.

Oh - and God BLESS America.
Mack Hall is a resident of Kirbyville

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

Governor asks FEMA for more wildfire disaster aid

AUSTIN - More than 5,300 wildfires have burned an estimated 940,000 acres and destroyed 140 homes in Texas, the governor's office reported on March 20.

Gov. Rick Perry is urging the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide more assistance in dealing with three months of wildfires that have burned in 216 of Texas' 254 counties since Jan. 1.

In a letter to FEMA chief David Paulison, Perry requested that the state be reimbursed in full for wildfire-related efforts carried out since January.

State and local governments have spent \$20.5 million on this so far. FEMA has spent \$75 million.

But FEMA isn't the only agency that can help. Texas Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples wrote a letter to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, asking for an increase in assistance for farmers and ranchers who have suffered damages due to wildfires.

Texas Parks & Wildlife

Department reported a massive wildfire that torched 95 percent of the 15,200-acre Chaparral Wildlife Management Area in South Texas, but much of the wildlife on the state's premier public hunting site escaped harm.

Bowling Congress to move here

The United States Bowling Congress plans to move its headquarters from Greendale, Wis., to Arlington, Texas, and bring 200 jobs.

A \$693,000 award from the Texas Enterprise Fund may have helped in the group's decision to relocate.

The fund, created by the Legislature in 2003, is used to recruit and bolster business. To date, the fund has helped projects generating more than 51,800 new jobs and \$15.6 billion in capital investment in the state, the governor said.



Ed Sterling
Texas Press Association

Ethis agency fines former rep

On Feb. 12, the Texas Ethics Commission adopted a ruling that former state Rep. Toby Goodman, R-Arlington, used campaign donations to buy real estate, in violation of the state election law.

The commission imposed a \$10,000 civil penalty against Goodman and on March 11 ordered payment within 30 days.

The ruling came about as the result of a complaint filed in 2006 by the Dallas-based Texas Values in Action Coalition.

Goodman, who represented House District 93 from 1991 to 2006, on March 20 said he plans to appeal the ruling.

Travis DA investigates speaker

When the 81st regular session of the Texas Legislature convenes in January, the 150 members of the House may reelect House Speaker

Tom Craddick or choose someone else.

The office of the Travis County district attorney has been investigating a criminal complaint against Craddick, R-Midland. Texans for Public Justice, a government watchdog group, filed the criminal complaint against Craddick, alleging he sent campaign money to a political action group and illegally instructed the group to write checks to the campaign funds of lawmakers that might make a difference to him early next year.

State law prohibits the use of campaign funds for such a purpose, and Travis County District Attorney Ronnie Earle said he plans to review the matter.

County asks AG about bonuses

Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott on March 11 received a request for an opinion on a legal matter that may be of interest to all 254 counties in Texas, and to all taxpayers.

Midland County Attorney Russell W. Malm, in a written

request, asked if it is legal for the county to pay performance bonuses to its elected officials.

Malm said the county judge is interested in adopting such a plan, subject to approval by the county commissioners court.

The attorney general's office issues most opinions within 180 days of the request.

Berlanga's request denied

The State Board of Education will vote on a new set of English reading and writing standards at its March 27 meeting.

A week before the meeting board member Mary Helen Berlanga of Corpus Christi and state Rep. Abel Herrero, D-Robstown, asked that time be allotted for expert input on learning styles of Hispanic children.

SBOE chair Don McLeroy of College Station said there was no time available to accept the proposed input.

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