# KG DERKENDALL GENTAL EMAN

JUNE 2025 | ISSUE 5 :: VOLUME 1



# INS MARTIN

KENDALL GENTLEMAN

KENDALL CO. HISTORY

Caspar Real

**OUTDOORS** 

Devil's River

**CIGAR REVIEW** Hemingway Short Story

BETTER**MEN**T

The Art of the Note



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# DERKENDALL GENTLEMAN

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Are you interested in contributing to The Kendall Gentleman? Do you have an interesting story to tell the men of Kendall County? Could you be considered an expert in your given field? Have something interesting to say? We're always looking for talented writers for The Kendall Gentleman. Email us at info@thekendallgentleman.com





# Why We Celebrate: The Importance of Remembering Who We Are



June in Kendall County means summer is in full swing—sunlit evenings, community celebrations, and the welcome hum of tradition echoing down Main Street. And there's no better reflection of that spirit than Das Festival of Kendall. As one of its founding board members, I've had the privilege of seeing this event grow from an idea among friends into a full-fledged celebration of culture, tradition, and togetherness. But more than the food, music, or parade, Das Festival is about something deeper: remembering who we are.

In a world moving at breakneck speed, where identity is often reduced to hashtags and headlines, events like this remind us that true belonging starts at home. Kendall County has a rich and layered story—one built by German immigrants, ranching families, veterans, craftsmen, and faithful citizens who knew that strength comes from shared values. Faith. Family. Hard work. Honor. These aren't just words—they're threads woven into the fabric of this place.

Das Festival doesn't celebrate the past for nostalgia's sake. It celebrates the people and principles that built Kendall County in the first place. It honors the generations who came before us and encourages us to ask: What are we leaving behind for the next? At this year's Mayor's Prayer Breakfast, Boerne Mayor Frank Ritchie-who was just re-elected to continue his service to the people of Boerne—said something that stuck with me: "Boerne is bigger than its City limits." And he's right. Our sense of community has never been confined by a map. Das Festival may march down Main Street, but its heartbeat comes from every corner of Kendall County-from Comfort to





Sisterdale, Waring to Welfare, Bergheim to Boerne. It's a festival for all of us.

There's something powerful about shared rituals—parades, prayers, dancing in the street, or simply standing shoulder-toshoulder with neighbors who share your love for this place. These aren't just quaint traditions. They're how we pass on the culture, values, and sense of place that bind us together. In that sense, Das Festival isn't just a good time—it's a sacred responsibility.

When we gather in the heart of Boerne, we're not only paying tribute to our German roots. We're also celebrating our modernday mosaic—a County made stronger by its diversity, yet united by a shared commitment to faith, family, and freedom. We celebrate the moms and dads who serve on booster clubs and bass fishing teams, the business owners who donate their time, talent, and treasure, the volunteers who show up rain or shine, and the kids who learn what it means to belong.

These moments—when we laugh together, sing together, pray together, and raise a glass to where we've been—matter more than we realize. They tether us to something solid in a world that often feels like it's floating. They remind us that heritage isn't something kept under glass in a museum. It's alive. It's meant to be worn, sung, tasted, toasted, and passed down.

And as we gather this June, we also celebrate something deeply personal: Father's Day. For me, it's a time to reflect on the example set by my own father—a man who never saw community service as optional. He taught me that showing up, lending a



hand, and giving more than you take isn't just good citizenship—it's good manhood. Whether it was volunteering at church, helping a neighbor, or quietly paying for someone's groceries, my dad lived a life of quiet generosity. That spirit is alive in Kendall County, and it's something I hope we continue to pass down. Because a strong community isn't built by spectators—it's built by those willing to serve.

The Kendall Gentleman was founded in that same spirit. We don't publish this magazine to impress anyone. We do it to remember who we are and to remind each other that the good, the true, and the beautiful are still worth pursuing. In a culture that often forgets what matters, we choose to remember.

So this June, as the streets fill with music and the air carries the scent of sausage and strudel, I hope you'll take a moment to reflect on what it means to be part of something bigger. Whether you're marching in the parade, clapping from the curb, or

sharing a story over a cold beer, you're helping write the next chapter of the Kendall County story.

And that's worth celebrating.

So dust off your lederhosen and fluff your dirndls, and come join me at Das Festival on Boerne's Main Plaza this Father's Day Weekend. Let's raise a toast to heritage, to fatherhood, and to a community that knows how to celebrate what matters most.

Until next time,

Michael G. Ethridge Publisher/Owner

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

## **Saturdays**

## **Farmers Market**

The Cibolo-Herff Farm 33 Herff Rd, Boerne, TX 78006 www.cibolo.org

You can buy products directly from local growers, ranchers, and crafters on a beautiful historic German farmstead in the Texas Hill Country. Explore our fenced gardens, pollinator meadow, and trails, and see the historic limestone Herff House.

## 5.31.25

## **Open Bowling**

Boerne Turn Verein 221 E. Theissen, Boerne, TX 78006 www.boerneturnverein.com

## 6.7.25

## **VFW Veterans Coffee**

Black Rifle Coffee Company 101 S Main St Ste A, Boerne, TX 78006

www.vfw688.org

Enjoy a cup of coffee and camaraderie with other veterans on the first Saturday of each month at Boerne's Black Rifle Coffee Company. 8:00-10:00am

## 6.7.25

## **Dutch Oven Cooking Class**

The AgriCultural Museum & Arts Center 102 City Park Rd., Boerne, TX 78006 www.theagricultural.org

### 6.9.25

## American Legion General Membership Meeting

American Legion Post 313 Kronkosky Center 17 Old San Antonio Rd, Boerne, TX 78006 www.alpost313boernetx.org We meet every second Monday of the month from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM (with a social/pot luck hour from 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM)

## 6.10.25

## **VFW Business Meeting**

VFW Post 688 Kendall Masonic Lodge 897 E Blanco, Boerne, TX 78006 www.vfw688.org

## 6.13-.15.25

## **Das Festival**

Das Festival of Kendall Main Plaza 101 S Main St, Boerne, TX 78006 www.dasfestival.org

A Father's Day weekend tradition celebrating Kendall County's German roots and historic cultures with live music, food, family fun, and a Saturday morning parade. Proceeds benefit local charities.

## 6.14.25

## Second Saturday Speakeasy Nights

Longhorn Lounge 810 Avenue A, Comfort, TX 78013 www.longhorn-lounge.com The velvet curtains will come down from 6-9 p.m. every Second Saturday of the Month while you bring the liquor and we provide the set-up. Text SSSN to 830-353-2663

## 6.16.25

## Masonic Lodge Stated Meeting

Kendall Masonic Lodge No. 897 897 E Blanco, Boerne, TX 78006 www.kendalllodge897.org Monthly Stated (Business) Meeting at 7:30; Supper at 6:30. Our publisher is fixing supper that night!

## 6.19.25

## Whiskey & Wisdom Book Club

The Boerne Bookshop 153 S. Main St. #120, Boerne, TX 78006

www.theboernebookshop.com
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## 6.20-21.25

## **Texas Hill Country Game Fair**

San Antonio Rodeo Wildlife and Natural Resources Committee Joshua Creek Ranch 132 Cravey Road, Boerne, Texas 78006

www.sarodeo.com/wildlife

## 5.15.25

## **Men's Night**

Free Roam Brewing Company 325 S Main St, Boerne, TX 78006 www.freeroambrewing.com

## 5.8.25

## **Men's Thursday Study**

Trinity Presbyterian Church 31 Ammann Road, Boerne, TX 78015 www.trinityboerne.org

## **Tuesdays**

## **Trivia Night**

Free Roam Brewing Company 325 S Main Street, Boerne, TX 78006

www.freeroambrewing.com Trivia, Tacos, Tuesdays!

## Wednesdays

## **Mens Bible Study**

First Baptist Church of Boerne 631 S School St, Boerne, TX 78006 *www.fbcboerne.org/men*Join FBCMen for a Bible study on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 PM in the Family Life Building during the school year.

## **Thursdays**

## **Karaoke Night**

Salvador Dobbs 512 River Rd, Boerne, TX 78006 www.salvadordobbs.com Karaoke every Thursday night at Salvador Dobbs from 8:00-Midnight, with fabulous drink specials and the friendliest bar in town.

## **Sundays**

## Community Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Class

Black Diamond Martial Arts 645 South School Street, Suite 201 Boerne, TX 78006

www.bdmaboerne.com

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# The Boerne Bookshop

## Dale Adams, Store Owner

Recommends "When Money Dies" by Adam Fergusson.

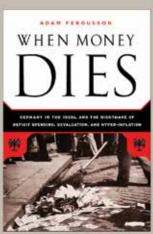
What happens when the money we use to conduct our lives dies? Adam Fergusson gives a detailed look at what happened to the German Mark after World War 1. Its decline to worthlessness is an example of how losing the value of money leads to loss of savings, the collapse of industry, declines in agriculture, and starvation. The amazing thing is how obvious it was that the central bank's actions would lead to economic collapse.

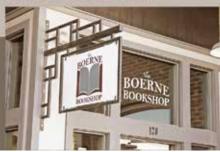






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# Caspar Real: German Pioneer of Kendall County

By Tom Allred, Sr.





By the mid-19th century, political unrest and economic uncertainty were driving countless German families to seek a new life across the Atlantic. Among them was a determined young man named Caspar Real, whose journey from Hanover to the Texas Hill Country would help shape the heart and soul of Kendall County.

### From Hanover to the Hill Country

Born on March 15, 1828, near Göttingen in the Kingdom of Hanover, Caspar Real was the youngest of five children. Raised in a culture that valued education, hard work, and family, he came of age during a period of upheaval in Europe. With the promise of opportunity in America, the Real family made the life-changing decision to emigrate in 1845, when Caspar was just 17.

The United States—particularly Texas—was an attractive destination for German immigrants, thanks to organizations like the Adelsverein (Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas), which actively encouraged settlement in the Lone Star State. Caspar arrived during this wave of immigration and began working as a farmhand, gaining vital experience that would later support his success as a landowner and rancher.

### **Settling in Comfort**

By 1847, Caspar had made his way to the Texas Hill Country and established himself in what would later become Comfort, Texas, in Kendall County. The area, with its rolling hills and fertile ground, was ideal for farming and ranching. German settlers like Caspar brought with them a spirit of industriousness and resilience that helped transform the rugged frontier into thriving communities.

Caspar quickly distinguished himself through hard work, perseverance, and a deep commitment to community. He expanded his landholdings, raised livestock, and built a successful homestead. In Maria Schmidt, he found a life partner who shared his values. Together, they raised a family—Johann, Heinrich, Anna, and Elise—passing on to them the principles of integrity, service, and determination.

## A Community Leader in Times of Peace and War

Comfort, founded by German Freethinkers, was known for its progressive ideals, including religious tolerance, public education, and resistance to slavery. These values aligned closely with Caspar Real's own beliefs. When the Civil War erupted, many German-Texans, including Caspar, remained loyal to the Union cause. Kendall County became a stronghold of Unionist sentiment.

Caspar served in the Comfort 1862 Militia and later in the Kendall County Squad of Cavalry, part of the 31st Brigade, Texas State Troops. Though official records list him as a private, some accounts refer to him as a captain of the local Home Guard. Regardless of title, his service during this turbulent time exemplified his steadfast commitment to protecting the community he helped build.

## **Shaping Kendall County's Future**

In the years following the war, Caspar Real remained a central figure in Kendall County's development. He served multiple terms as a county commissioner, playing a key role in shaping the county's infrastructure, governance, and civic institutions. His advocacy on behalf of local farmers and ranchers reflected his belief that communities thrive when their voices are heard.

One of Caspar's enduring passions was education. Recognizing the transformative power of learning, he helped support the establishment of schools across the region, ensuring that children of settlers would grow up with access to the knowledge and skills needed to succeed.

## A Legacy of Generosity and Service

Beyond his political and economic achievements, Caspar Real was widely respected for his generosity and compassion. He was known to offer financial support, employment, and a helping hand to those in need. Neighbors described him as a man of integrity—someone who never forgot where he came from or who he served.

He passed away on January 12, 1892, at the age of 64, but his legacy endures. His life stands as a testament to the values that built Kendall County: hard work, courage, community, and vision.

### **Remembering Caspar Real**

Today, Comfort still bears the cultural imprint of its German founders. The town's architecture, traditions, and civic spirit reflect the ideals of those early pioneers—among them, Caspar Real. His descendants continue to live and work in the region, preserving the legacy he helped establish.

Caspar Real's journey from immigrant farmhand to community leader embodies the spirit of the American frontier. His story is not just a chapter in Kendall County's history—it is a cornerstone of it. KG



Tom Allred, born in 1949, has lived in Kendall County since 1993 and is a dedicated contributor to The Kendall Gentleman. Inspired by his great-uncle, James V. Allred, the 33rd Governor of Texas, Tom explores local history and the legacies of men who shaped their communities.

tom@thekendallgentleman.com



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# Hemingway Short Story

## By Clay Smoot

As we prepare for the upcoming Das Festival on Father's Day weekend, I started to wonder what cigar is light enough to pair with a great German style beer. I wanted it to have the ability to grab you with its tremendous flavor profile, yet to also be a quicker smoke as to not to have to be in the Texas heat in June for longer than necessary. So, I scrolled through the rolodex of cigars in my mind and kept flipping back to one of my personal favorites by Arturo Fuente, the Hemingway Short Story. In full disclosure, this cigar is my "breakfast cigar". Breakfast cigar? Yes. Typically, on Saturday and Sunday mornings, I sit

alone in my office or on the back patio, depending on the weather, and enjoy a delicious cup of coffee from a locally owned coffee company, Dirty Duck Coffee. I rotate the flavors between the French Roast and the Morning Wood brew. Everyone talks about pairing a cigar with bourbon or scotch, but I highly recommend pairing a cigar and coffee. Try any cigar and any coffee. When people balk at that suggestion, I ask, "do you know the feeling you get at the end of the day with that scotch/bourbon and cigar? Now, imagine STARTING your day with that feeling"! Ok, back

to the German style beer pairing. I will be pairing this cigar with Bajuvator, a Doppelbock Dunkel by Tucher. A true German style beer. I am excited about this pairing and review.

The Arturo Fuente brand was founded, initially, in 1912 in Florida by Arturo Fuente, Sr. The factory is now located in Santiago, Dominican Republic. The Hemingway line pays homage to the famous writer and avid cigar smoker, Ernest Hemingway. The line is made with Dominican tobacco and often uses a Cameroon wrapper.



The Arturo Fuente Hemingway Short Story began life as the famous Arturo Fuente Perfecto cigar in the 1920s. By the 1940s, the cigar makers were too old to make them anymore. However, in the 1980s Arturo's grandson Carlos Fuente, Jr., decided the time had come to bring the classic Perfecto shaped cigar back to life. The Hemingway line quickly gained popularity due to its size, strength, and shape.

Now for the cutting and the lighting. As always, I start by using my v-cut cutter to cut the tip off. Yes, I use my v-cut cutter even on this small of a cigar. Then I rotate my cigar as I use my torch to light this delicious cigar. I cleansed my palate with a Canada Dry club soda and two saltine crackers.

The cigar lights easily, and unlike some of the larger cigars with this shape, the burn and draw is perfect from the start—quite a few sticks with this shape and shapes like it burn unevenly and have problems with the draw until you get over the hump of the fastest part of the cigar.

As I take my first deep draw, the sweetness arrives first, confirming that I did indeed make the right choice. Each subsequent draw is intertwined with a great tobacco flavor, not too much or too little, just enough. Or what I like to call the "Goldilocks effect", because it's just right. I then took my first sip of the Bajuvator. Every flavor I experienced turned other worldly as each individual

flavor on every subsequent draw was more intense and satisfying.

The first third has that great tobacco flavor I mentioned earlier, intermingled with a little bit of pepper, but just enough to make the smoke interesting, not overwhelming at all. There is a little bit of sweetness, and for me, just enough to really enjoy.

During the second third, the pepper remains almost constant, but a wood flavor starts to dominate the stick. I know a lot of reviews mean cedar when they say woodsy, but I tasted wood, not necessarily cedar and very distinct difference in taste that I enjoyed quite a bit.

The final third is pretty much the same as the second third, which is not saying much, since it is such a small, stout cigar, but the pepper picked up a little bit and it started getting hot at the very end, but close enough to the tip that it did not affect the smoke at all.



This medium-bodied cigar has a rich flavor profile with notes of wood, earth, spice, pepper, coffee and roasted nut that pair well with the malty sweetness and caramel notes of German style beers.

### Pairs well with

German style beers Tequila Bourbon Coffee or Espresso

Size: 4"x49 (Perfecto)

Country of Origin: Dominican Republic

Wrapper: Cameroon

Binder: Dominican Republic Filler: Dominican Republic

Body: Medium

Strength: Mild to Medium | KG



Clay Smoot is the owner of The Cigar Society, a local business dedicated to offering premium cigars for aficionados. His carefully curated selection, including the featured cigar in this issue, is available at popular Kendall County spots like Free Roam Brewing Company and Roc-N-Ritas, providing a perfect pairing for great company.clay@ thekendallgentleman.com

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# The Art of the Note

## By Frank Addington

Chances are, you have a handwritten card or note that a family member or friend mailed that you have saved. When you see it, doesn't it serve as a quiet reminder of that person? Perhaps they are no longer with us, and that note is your link to them. Perhaps it marks a special occasion, milestone, or event, or maybe it was sent out of the blue. Remember how it felt to see it in your mailbox... opening it and reading their words in their own handwriting?

Today, in a day of digital messages, texts, emails, and such, it is very rare to get an actual handwritten card, letter, or note - which is the very reason you should do it! It's rare and will make an impact on whoever gets it.

Coach Mack Brown has been one of the top college football coaches in the country. He's also considered one of the best recruiters and gets along famously with everyone around him. One of his trademarks is the fact that he takes time to send handwritten cards and notes. Talk about impact! It may only be a few sentences, but the fact that a guy that busy took the time to do it has a huge impact. He is

retired from coaching, but I bet there are cards and notes from him on desks and framed all over the country.

A handwritten card from you will separate you from your competition in business, too. The late Joe Girard was considered the world's greatest salesman. I recall in his book and in a speech I saw online, he talked about the art of sending cards to potential clients. He also sent birthday cards. His idea was that when the potential client did want a car, his name would be at the top of the list. You can't argue with his success. At one time, he set a Guinness World Record for being the "world's greatest salesman".

I send out hundreds of cards, letters, and notes per year. If someone sends me a gift, they will get a handwritten "Thank you" note. Typically, I answer cards, letters, and notes others send me that same day. Old habits die hard, they say. In business, I will often handwrite a quick note when I meet someone at a business function. I'll follow up and send them my card inside a custom notecard. I had the art for the note cards done by a cowboy artist, and I'll have

them printed locally. There are great card shops in Boerne that have some cool cards, too.

Billy's Western Wear carries "Leanin' Tree" greeting cards- humorous cards with a western theme. You can also find them at Texas Gourmet Pantry. The Corner Cartel is also a place that sometimes has cool vintage cards, photos from the early 1990s of Main Street Boerne with horses tied in front of the stores. Bechants and Bechants Men's also have great cards. It doesn't matter where you get your cards- it's the thought that counts.

Social media is important in business, as are emails and texts. To me, a lot of that is impersonal. To separate yourself from the herd, I would advise taking the time to send a handwritten card. I have a cigar box on my desk where I keep cards that folks send me. As I mentioned earlier, Coach Mack Brown, like me, is old school and sends lots of notecards and cards. Our sons both have cards from Mack framed in their rooms. Opening a card makes you feel good and means that the sender took the time to send it. If you are in business, it is a way you can impact others and leave a good impression.

Your family, friends, and loved ones will enjoy getting a handwritten card from you. I have saved every card, note, and letter my family has ever sent me. After my grandmother passed, I was glad to have cards from her. It comforts me to see her words on paper in her handwriting. I save cards from my parents, family, and close friends.

In closing, when you attend a business event and meet a new person, get their card. That night, write a quick card and enclose your business card. The same goes for potential clients. Everyone is on social media, and emails can be deleted with the click of a button. Chances are a card will have far more impact. I have written a handwritten card and hidden it in my wife's suitcase when she travels for our entire marriage. Now that our son is at Texas A&M for his freshman year of college, I try to send him a card every week or every other week. And to make sure he opens and reads them, I randomly enclose a gift card too. They all get read that way! KG



Frank Addington is a world-record-setting professional archer known for his skill with Hoyt recurve bows. He is also a sales associate at Texas Ranch Sales on Main Street in Boerne, named 2024's "Top Listing Associate" with approximately \$101 million in ranch listings. Frank, his wife Amanda, and their two sons reside locally with their spoiled Australian Shepherd, Sanchez. frank@thekendallgentleman.com



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# Walk Up Music

## By Coach Stan Leech

It's the start of a new season. The grass is mowed, the lines are chalked, and the air is buzzing with anticipation of competition. The players take the field, and then—there it is—the sound that cuts through the noise of the crowd. Walkup music.

If you've been around high school baseball or softball in recent years, you know the tradition. Each player gets a few seconds of a song as they walk up to bat. It's their moment—like a personalized entrance into the game. A few bars to reflect their personality, pump them up, or just have some fun.

But I'll be honest with you, it also brings a little stress every year.

The students pick the songs, and we do our best to honor their choices. Most of the time, the actual walk-up clip is fine—clean and appropriate. But every now and then, a parent or teacher will point out, "Coach, have you listened to the rest of that song?" And when we do, sure enough, a few lyrics past the walk up cut, things get a little dicey.

So, we trim, we edit, we replace, and we review. We walk the fine line between allowing student expression and protecting the values of our school and community. It's a real juggling act that seems to mark the beginning of each season--balancing fun for the athlete, entertaining for the fans, and keeping things clean for parents and students alike.

The process always makes me chuckle a bit. Because every time we go through this routine, I start thinking: What if we all had walk-up music?

Imagine it. You walk into the office on a Monday morning and a song plays overhead. You walk into H-E-B, and your personal

theme song starts up. You show up at church, and instead of the usual greetings, the band strikes up your walk-up anthem.

What would yours be?

Would you go country or pop? Classic rock or classical? Something with a beat that makes people smile?

For those of us in the 40-60 -year range, let's be honest—there are some walk-up songs that would be both ironic and entertaining.

Maybe "Eye of the Tiger" by Survivor because we still feel like we've got a few good rounds left in us.

Maybe it's "Walking on Sunshine" by Katrina and the Waves—because sometimes, we just want to bring a little joy into the room.

Some might choose "Back in Black" by AC/DC—because it sounds like it means business—or "Sharp Dressed Man" by ZZ Top, because there's always time for a little swagger.

Others might gravitate to "Friends in Low Places" by Garth Brooks or "Amarillo by Morning" by George Strait—Texas classics that never get old.

Then there are the anthems that fire you up: "Don't Stop Believin" by Journey, "Livin on a Prayer" by Bon Jovi, or "Takin' Care of Business" by Bachman-Turner Overdrive.

Some days, I'd probably lean toward "Jesus is Just Alright" by the Doobie Brothers or "I Can Only Imagine" by MercyMe—songs that strike a more spiritual chord and remind me of what really matters.

It's a fun thought—but it carries a deeper truth.

Because even though most of us don't have literal walk-up songs playing as we go through our day, we all bring something with us. We each have a tone, a presence, a "vibe," if you will. People feel something when we walk in the room.

Our walk-up music may not come through speakers, but it comes through in our spirit.

Are we walking in peace or with stress? With confidence or with doubt? With encouragement or with criticism?

Paul says it best in Colossians 3:17: "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

That's the heart of the matter. Whether we're coaching, parenting, serving, leading, or just living life—what we walk in with should reflect who we belong to.

Some people enter a room, and you feel lighter. Others walk in and you feel tension. Some inspire; others drain. Some encourage, while others complain.

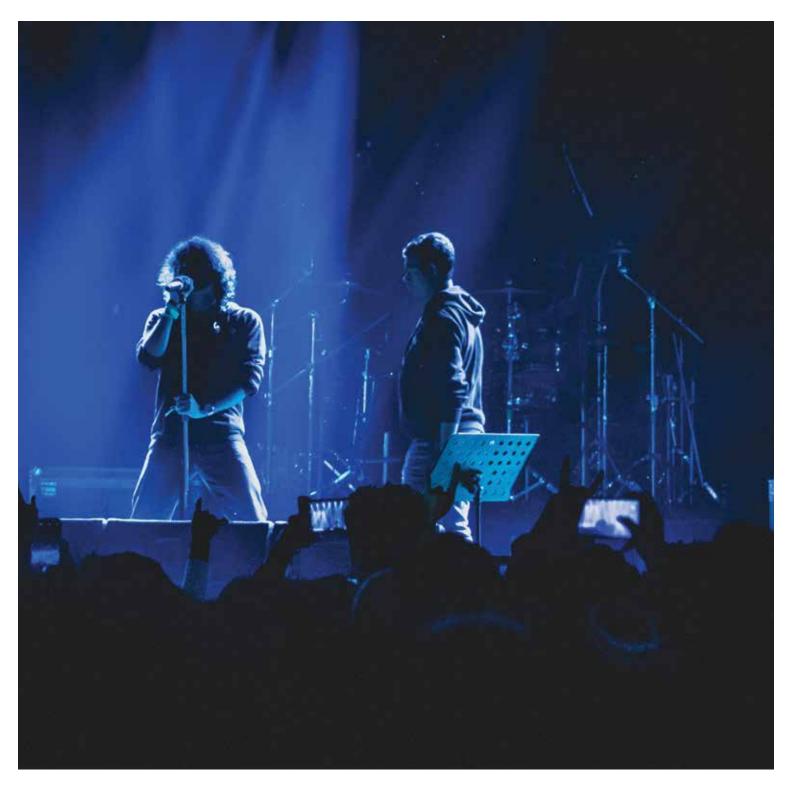
What kind of walk-up music are we living out?

It's easy to default to stress, sarcasm, or short tempers. Life can be busy and overwhelming. But maybe it's time we edited our soundtrack.

Maybe we replace the grumbling with gratitude. Swap out worries for worship. Trade in frustration for joy.

Maybe we walk into each day like it's an opportunity to reflect, something eternal in a very noisy, temporary world.

If someone asked me today what my real walk-up music should be. I think I'd want it to be something that makes people feel peace. I'd want them to feel God's presence through my words and actions. I'd want to bring light into the room—not just noise.



In high school sports, those few seconds of walk-up music are just that –seconds. But in life, we're constantly walking into moments that matter. We're always being "introduced" by the spirit we carry.

What if, every time we walked into a room, people sensed the fruit of the Spirit? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

That's the playlist I want to live by. That's the walk-up music worth playing.

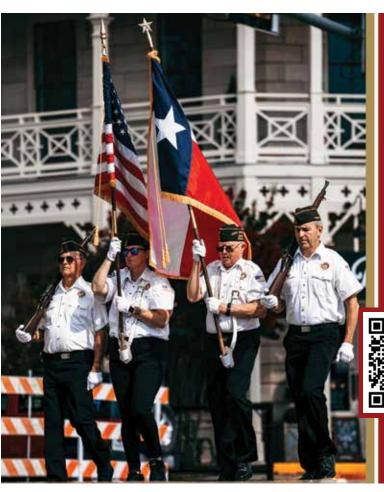
So, go ahead—hum a little tune as you step into your next meeting or walk down the grocery store aisle. But more importantly, walk in with grace, with gratitude, and with a heart that reflects the One who walks with you.

And remember, whether you're up to bat, up against a challenge, or just showing up for another ordinary day, your walk-up music matters.

Choose it well. KG



Coach Leech, now in his 39th year with Boerne ISD and 26th as Athletic Director, is a legendary high school basketball coach and a respected leader in the community. Beyond the basketball court, he has devoted over 30 years to teaching Sunday School at First Baptist Church, exemplifying his commitment to faith and mentorship. stan@thekendallgentleman.com



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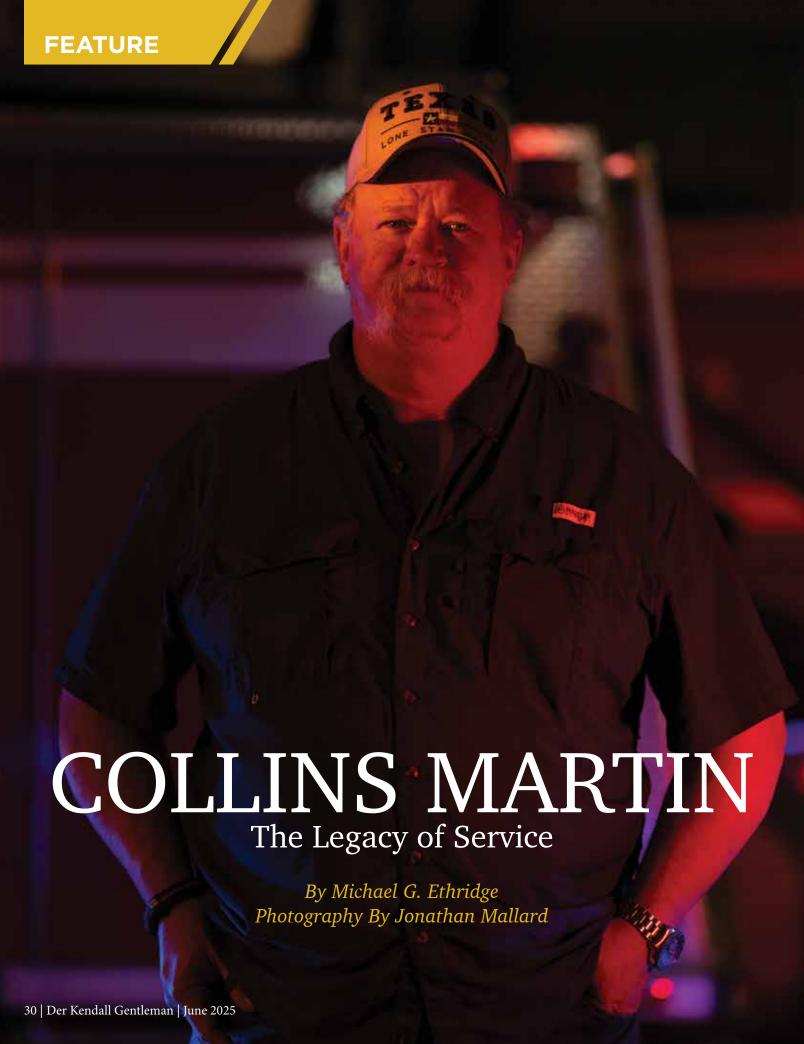


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Born in San Antonio to a family deeply rooted in military tradition, Collins Martin's life is a testament to service, perseverance, and an unwavering commitment to community. His father and maternal grandfather both served in the U.S. Air Force, and when his grandfather retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in the late 1960s, he established a small retirement community off John's Road in Boerne. Though Collins spent his early years in Georgia, the family's tragic loss of an uncle—who drowned in Cibolo Creek—prompted a return to Boerne to continue the family business.

Collins' upbringing revolved around hard work and responsibility. "I grew up mowing grass and hauling trash for 125 mobile home sites. Summers were busy—twice a week we hauled all our own trash, too," he recalls. His father, a fixture in the Lions Club, Masonic Lodge, Shriners, and Berges Fest, led by example. "My dad worked a full day at Vapo Butane and then came home to clear brush, pour slabs... he was a hardworking son of a gun."

A serious accident between sixth and seventh grade—being struck by a car on I-10—left Collins in traction for six weeks, ending any dreams of sports. "I guess God had a different plan," he says, chuckling.

After graduating from Boerne High School in 1984, where he participated in drama and an athletic trainer program, Collins admits he wasn't exactly a model student. "I've been accused more than once of not applying myself. I skated by in high school," he laughs. His post-high school plans faltered, and after a stint working in Georgia making VRS pagers, he returned home to Boerne, working full-time with the family business.

It was a rocky road early on. After clashing with his dad, Collins bounced through jobs—working for Boerne Homes setting mobile homes, and even briefly at the

iconic PoPo Family Restaurant, which a family friend, Jerry Tilley, had purchased. Following his father's motorcycle accident, Collins quit his job to help run the parks so his dad could recover.

The real turning point came in 1989 when Collins enrolled at Texas A&M's Fire School. "That was the first time I really applied myself," he says. He graduated #1 in his class, and a fire was lit. Collins took an EMT course at Turtle Creek Fire Department and began a dual career—working days for Ricky Stewart, maintaining gas station storage tanks, and nights training in emergency medicine. His first full-time fire job came at Alamo Heights Fire Department.

"Somewhere in there, I joined the Boerne Volunteer Fire Department," he notes—"somewhere in there" being a recurring phrase Collins uses when describing his busy and colorful life. As a volunteer, he also earned a license to shoot commercial fireworks, launching July 4th displays around Texas for 20 years. "Some of those mortars were so big, the blast sucked my hearing protection out of my ears!" he says with a grin.

Beyond firefighting, Collins' thirst for knowledge and service led him into technical rescue. After attending an early swift water rescue class, he co-founded Rescue Safety Training (RST) Associates with fellow firefighter Darrin Smith. "Our idea was simple: teach cool stuff, buy cool toys, and have fun doing it." RST trained first responders across the Hill Country and San Antonio, teaching water rescue, rope rescue, confined space rescue, and more.

A pivotal figure in RST's success was Jim Segerstrom of Rescue3 International. "Jim loved Boerne, loved PoPo's—he really looked out for us," Collins says. Their relationship catapulted RST into national visibility,



including TV appearances. Collins laughs, recalling, "In the fire service, if you get on TV, you owe ice cream to everyone—I bought a lot of ice cream!"

Though RST grew, Collins never wanted to leave firefighting behind. "I never did any of this stuff for the money. If you could find something I did just for the money, I could show you where it didn't go right," he jokes.

Through his work, Collins helped shape the swiftwater rescue protocols for Texas Task Force 1 and assisted with developing disaster ambulance staging strategies during hurricanes Ike and Harvey. Despite these achievements, he remained humble. "If I had been more accolade-motivated, I could've stayed a whole lot tighter in it, but it wasn't about me—it was about helping people."

His career also included some harrowing moments. During a job cleaning up an ammonium nitrate spill at San Antonio's Union Stockyards—a situation dangerously close to disaster—Collins and his team successfully averted catastrophe. "Everything rusted. You could literally watch things rust around you," he remembers. "We called ourselves toxic janitors."

Collins spent 10.5 years at Alamo Heights before moving to Schertz Fire Department, where he rose to Battalion Chief. "It was arguably the best job ever. I worked with good people and good firefighters," he says warmly.

Health issues eventually caught up with him. After retiring in 2018, Collins faced a series of life-threatening illnesses, including a rare bacterial pneumonia and reactive arthritis.

Despite hospital stays at Methodist Stone Oak, University Hospital, and even a trip to Mayo Clinic, answers were slow to come. His faith remained strong throughout. "The Lord has blessed us in so many ways we can't even quantify it."

Post-retirement, Collins and his wife, Cindy, launched Firehouse Fare, a catering business that started as a food truck and quickly became a local favorite. "I loved cooking at the firehouse. It was always about family to me," he says.

When COVID-19 hit and shut down events, they kept their staff on full-time for six months despite no income. "You don't turn your back on your people," Collins insists.

At the heart of it all, Collins' proudest role has always been family man. He and Cindy, who recently celebrated 19 years of marriage, built a blended family anchored in love, loyalty, and hard-earned respect. "When we stood on the rock in front of the Plaza, my vows included Cindy's children," Collins says proudly. "They're mine, just like Chase and Hunter."

His approach to fatherhood echoes the lessons he learned from his own father and grandfather: hard work, service, and humility. He made it a point to teach his boys practical life skills—from pulling trailers in reverse to the finer points of carpentry and plumbing. "You've got to be diverse," he says. "If you focus on just one thing, that's all you're ever going to be good at, and people will take advantage of you."

Chase, his oldest son, reflects on that upbringing: "He taught me how to work with my hands and to be proud whenever I could accomplish something like fixing a busted waterline or repairing a vehicle. It feels good to know I don't have to call somebody—I can fix it myself."

Hunter adds, "My dad is an incredibly intelligent, strong, dedicated man who can do anything he puts his mind to. I learned my work ethic and how to critically think about things from him."

And then there is Cindy, Collins' wife and partner through every challenge and triumph. "Collins—big, loud fireman—that's

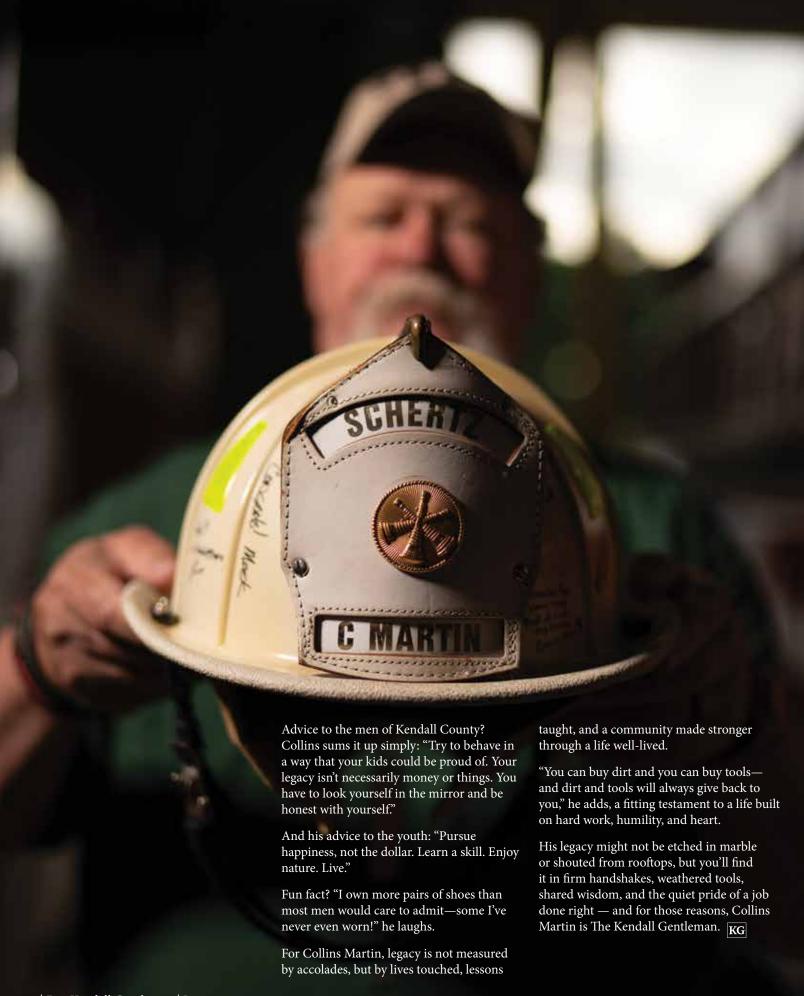


what most people see and think. But there's a side to him most don't see. He's bighearted, passionate, caring, and lovable," she says. "People would always say, 'Wow, he's loud and stubborn,' and I'd tell them, 'He's passionate.' When he finds his passion, it's all or nothing. There is no half-ass anything."

She continues, "He's the most knowledgeable man I've ever met. Constantly reading, learning, and studying. And with this knowledge, he works hard to pass it down to our children — and to others we've helped raise over the years. It wasn't unusual for us to have two or three extra kids living with us. Collins never closed his door to anyone."

Collins' love for community service also drew him into local heritage celebrations. He served two separate terms with Boerne Berges Fest, covering everything from parades and parking to treasury and security, even serving as President. "My dad did Berges Fest twice, so I guess it was in my blood. I did it because it was fun—the community loves it," he reflects. Despite knowing the headaches that come with running a major festival, Collins didn't hesitate to jump back into service when Das Festival of Kendall was formed. "People ask if I'd learned my lesson after Berges Fest, and now Das Festival... I guess not! The community deserves it. It's important to give back."













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# Boerne Fire Department

## By John Eddie Vogt

Published in 2011, the late John Eddie Vogt's book, Witches, Bitches, and Other Small Town Folks, brings to life the quirky, unforgettable, and entertaining tales of growing up and living in Kendall County from the 1930s through the 1960s. Thanks to the gracious permission of his family—and proudly sponsored by Hometown Roofing—The Kendall Gentleman is honored to share excerpts from his book for your enjoyment.

A very large percentage of the volunteer firemen for the Boerne Volunteer Fire Department worked at Boerne Motor Company. It was right down in the middle of town and only a couple of blocks from the firehouse, which was located across the street

at the far west end of the plaza. When the fire whistle sounded the mechanics would drop whatever they were doing and run over to the firehouse. The engine was the old LaFrance that the Berges Fest directors use in their parades now. There were a select few that were strong enough and knowledgeable enough to crank the old truck. It was an important position. Fritz Adler was the official starter for years. The siren was hand driven and on the right-hand side of the vehicle in front of the right-hand door. The "siren blower" would stand on the running-board and twist with all of his might.

The story goes that the old LaFrance was delivered to Boerne by mistake. Supposedly the town of Rocksprings ordered a truck at the same time that we did. Their truck was geared down lower to pull the hills in their area and ours was not geared so low. Somehow they got mixed up and we wound up with the lower geared one. For all of the years that the fire engine was used, I don't believe that it was ever able to reach a speed of more than twenty or thirty miles an hour.

H.O. Adler was fire chief for years. When the fire whistle would blow he would jump in his old Buick, cigar in his mouth and barely able to see over the steering wheel, and head up Main Street on his way to the firehouse. It is as vivid as if only yesterday. His horn going beep-beepbeep and at a speed of about twenty-five miles an hour he would arrive at the station. By then the guys from Boerne Motors would have the truck started and outside the firehouse. H.O. would pull his car in front of the fire truck and as he led, beep-beep-beeping, the fire truck would follow with the smallest and youngest of the department (usually Arno Meckel) twisting the handle of the siren to let everyone know to watch out, here we come.

I remember that once there was a fire at Krause's Cafe, not to be confused with Krause's Confectionery. One of Boerne's characters was on the scene when the fire department arrived and he was rather verbal in how the fireboys should fight the fire. H.O. went over to him and in so many words told him to keep his mouth shut and get his butt away from there. A fight soon ensued and the fire became secondary as everyone watched the pillar of the community and the lower class of the community battle it out. Both fires were extinguished at about the same time . KG

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# Devil's River

By Jed Mazour

After a three hour drive, we arrive at an old 1960's South Texas ranch house. Pulling in, you immediately notice the other trucks carrying kayaks parked around the barn, guys sitting in lawn chairs in the shade, and the Texas flag flying over the Pila. Grabbing my overnight bag, I head into Marlene's house to scout for my bed of choice. Each room is lined with several twin beds. I always try to pick something near a window and fan. The nights are hot so this is the most comfortable place to get some rest and I know it's going to be the last time for four

days to do so. Marlene's house always reminds me of nights spent at my grandparents farm. Warm temperatures at night, the window drapes blowing with the breeze, the rhythm of a box fan, and quietness. The kind of quietness that's keeps you awake with your own thoughts. Up before the sun, Marlene has the coffee on and a breakfast casserole ready on the counter as she sits on the couch watching the news, making small talk with us and praying for rain in the forecast.

kayaks, dividing all the camping gear and food, stringing up our rods and packing all of our clothes and essentials for the next four days into dry bags. After that, it's cold beer, fajitas, and conversation for as long as you will. On this trip we brought a friend of mine who has never been on the Devils River. I spent a lot of time thinking about this. Was he going to enjoy this paradise like me? Would the relentless winds drive him crazy? Would he be discouraged by the difficult sleeping conditions or the constant dragging through low water? Was he going to learn the tricks to catching these fish? One thing I did know was that he has the mentality to be uncomfortable in the wild. We spent a week chasing elk in the mountains together last October and I was witness to his physical and more importantly, his mental capabilities in bad conditions.

Morning comes and we eat our casserole, sip our coffee, and load everything up again. We make our way west, past the border patrol stop and down the winding roads of Comstock. There is really nothing to see but desert for miles. Sage brush, some rolling hills, cactus, and buzzards cleaning up the roadsides. This is a tough place for even a rattlesnake to live. Soon, we quickly descend into the river basin and there it is! The Devils River.. The river



water is shockingly clear and clean. Lush trees line its banks and green grass thrives in and around its bed. Almost immediately we hear spring turkeys calling. How did this place get here? How is this possible in the middle of the desert? Does anyone know this exists? It seems too good to be true. But there is a reason it's called the Devils River. We would all soon experience why. Gerald likes to be quick about our drop so we have about 15 minutes to unload everything from the truck and trailer. Soon, its "adios" from Gerald, "see you in 4 days, good luck".

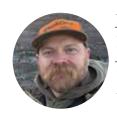
We load all of our gear into our kayaks and push off the shore. First thing is first. Fishing! Almost as soon as we set off, we are casting to the banks and in the rapids. No more than 15 minutes goes by and we are catching! A lot of day one is spent learning your boat and how to balance and fish from it as well as how to make things you might need throughout the day more accessible. As we make our way slowly down the river, we see ducks, turkeys, pigs, and deer crossing the river, snakes swimming and a lot of fish! The river's landscape constantly changes from thin, shallow water channels lined with tall grass to deep water sometimes 40 yards across and cliff faces 200 feet high. Day one will give you a taste of the struggle to come with shallow rapids. These are the

kind of rapids you could break an ankle in at any step. Dragging your 200 lb. loaded down boat through this over and over will make you pay some serious attention to your steps. As we make camp that evening we tally up the fish counts, crack open beers, and settle in for the night. Dinner is coming soon and we are all starving! Nights on the Devils River are something to cherish. The skies are usually clear and this presents an opportunity to see the stars like you are at some distant land. We sit around a string of red lights (no fires) and tell stories, drink cold beer, smoke cigars, and constantly stare up in to the sky and the stars, watching satellites drift through space. Night one we celebrate pretty hard and maybe get a little too deep in the ice chest. But it's a special night, who's to judge!

From here things get progressively more difficult. But the fishing opportunities get even better. Right away we face a strong headwind pushing our boats up river as soon as you put your paddle down. You will spend a tremendous amount of time dropping anchor, paddling and getting out pulling your boat in order to keep moving forward. At the same time the shallow water and rocks hidden in the fast moving currents will exhaust you to your daily limits. Falling over and over and not knowing when you might get cut, twist

an ankle or wrist will start to exhaust you and test your mental limits. But, just as soon as you make it through that, there is a deep hole full of bass waiting for you to cast with no one around! It is a dream situation for outdoorsmen like us and makes all the challenges worthwhile. As the day progresses, the fish count rises. Sometimes 50/50% large to small mouth bass. We make sure to stop frequently to admire God's beauty around us, sometimes to cast in promising spots, take a beer break, cool down in the crisp clean water, and fuel our bodies with a bite to eat. As our leader would say "lunch is all the time between breakfast and dinner, pack lots of snacks". We keep a soft side ice chest behind our kayak seat loaded down so heavy that the zippers are at their max. Ice doesn't last long, but there are tricks to extending it. Over the next several days and nights we will see land most men never will, catch fish that fight like Comanche's, test our physical abilities, our mental toughness, deepen our friendships and praise God for his creation. All things I believe God intended for man. It is a spiritual place and has been for forever.

As we near the end, our coolers are empty and tackle is getting low. By this time we are all tired, hungry, and very sore. But this is the point in the trip where I start to really think about my feelings for the Devils River. It is such a difficult place for so many reasons. But to me, it is still my favorite place to be. Her beauty is something picture and stories will not tell. I leave here every year wanting to show this to people and talk about this creation of God. But this is the struggle with the Devils river and me. She is and has always been a mystery to most. This river deserves her privacy. The land is hard and unchanged and should remain that way. The fish are wild and abundant just as they were when Indians painted on the cliff sides. For these reasons I feel compelled to share my stories as I believe God intended. But for the same reasons I will protect her privacy by keeping certain things close to my heart. So if you want to know the secrets to planning this trip and all the things we have learned over the years, don't hold your breath. I will do my part to preserve the Devil's River. KG



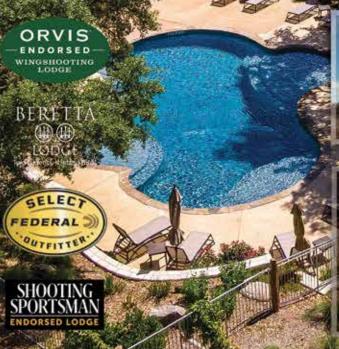
Jed Mazour has lived in Boerne for over 30 years with his wife, Denise, and their two kids. An avid outdoorsman, he leads the faith-based Boerne Bass Club, helping youth anglers in grades 6-12 compete in bass fishing while sharing his passion for the area's natural beauty and opportunities. jed@thekendallgentleman.com



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