



THE KENDALL GENTLEMAN

AUGUST 2025 | ISSUE 7 :: VOLUME 1

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KENDALL CO. HISTORY

Jacob Luchenbach

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Paloma Fest

REVIEW

Espada Ricasso

BETTERMENT

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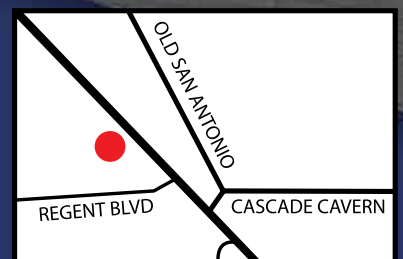
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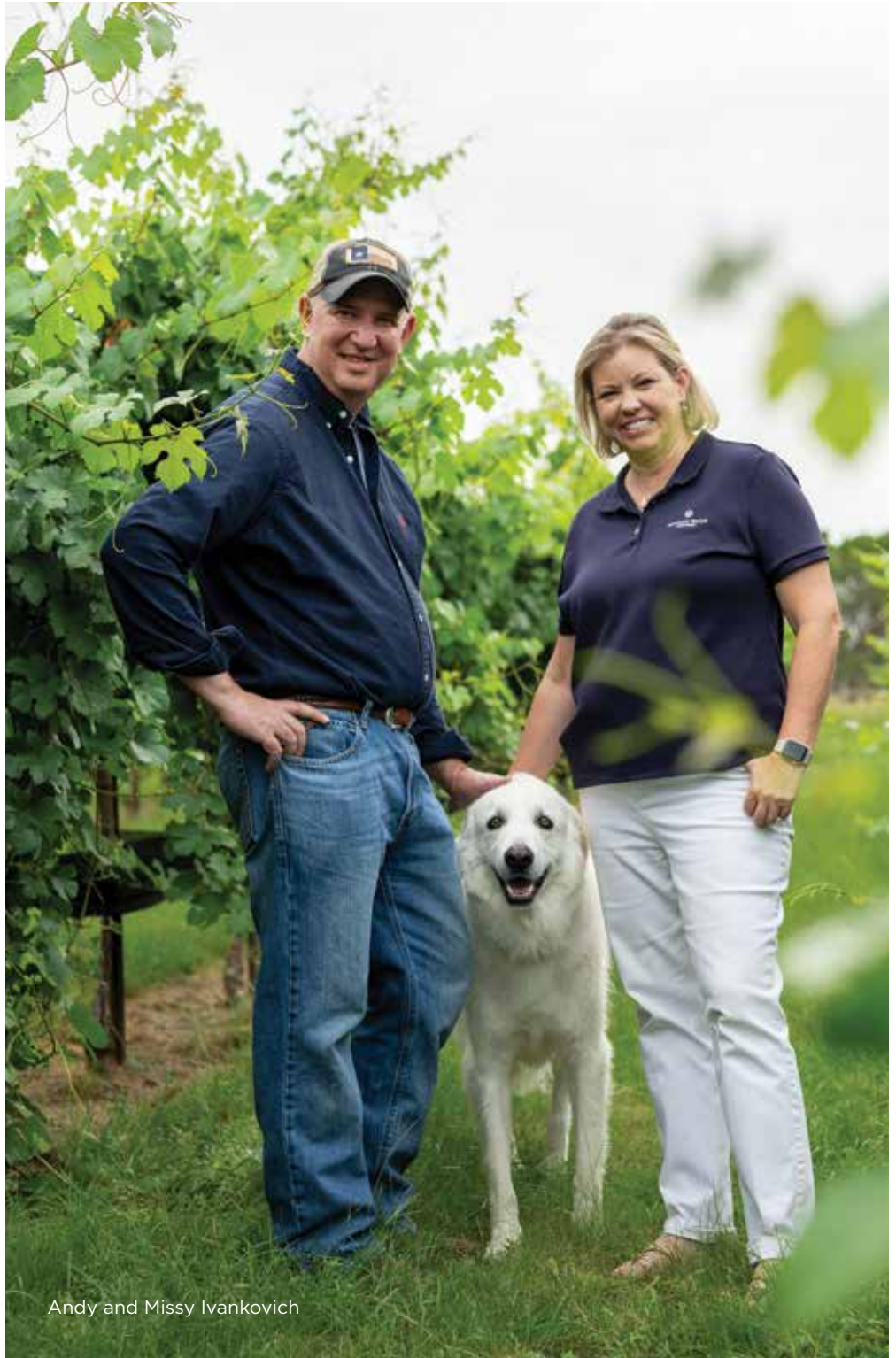
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Are you interested in contributing to The Kendall Gentleman? Do you have an interesting story to tell the men of Kendall County? Could you be considered an expert in your given field? Have something interesting to say? We're always looking for talented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

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Teaching the Unwritten Lessons: *Manners, Grit, and Grace in a Modern World*

Some lessons aren't written in books. They aren't found in classrooms, and they don't come with degrees or gold stars. They're passed down in quiet moments—on porches, in pickup trucks, or at the dinner table—when a father or mentor looks a boy in the eye and says, “This is how a man does it.” They're also passed along in workplaces, churches, and neighborhoods, when a younger man sees how an older gentleman carries himself and thinks, “That's the kind of man I want to be.”

In today's world, it's easy to believe those lessons don't matter anymore. Our culture celebrates talent and hustle, but often forgets character. Boys grow up learning how to chase success but not how to carry it with humility. They're taught to speak their minds but not when to hold their tongues. They're told they can be anything, but not why being a man of integrity is worth more than any job title or trophy.

Here in Kendall County, we know better. We know a man's word still matters. We know the value of grit, the kind that wakes up early, works with calloused hands, and finishes what it starts. We know grace isn't weakness; it's strength under control. And we know manners aren't old-fashioned; they're the oil that keeps families, friendships, and communities running smoothly.

The truth is, every boy is learning from the men around him, whether we like it or

not. The question is: what are we teaching? Are we showing them how to honor their commitments, treat women with respect, and stand tall when life gets hard? Or are we leaving them to figure it out in a world that rewards flash over substance?

Summer break offers a gift most of us don't think enough about: more time with our kids. Time for those long talks during fishing trips or teaching them how to swing a hammer the right way. Time to show, not just tell, what work ethic looks like. These are moments we can use to pass down more than skills. We can pass down the unwritten code of what it means to be a man.

And those lessons don't stop when they toss a graduation cap or move out of the house. They're still watching when they're grown. They're paying attention to how we treat their mother, how we speak about neighbors, and how we handle setbacks. A gentleman's job as a teacher and example doesn't end. It shifts and deepens as our sons and daughters grow older.

Even for the men without children, this call still stands. There are boys in our community who may never have known a father's steady hand or heard a mentor's words of wisdom. They're watching too. In churches, ball fields, and job sites, they're learning what manhood means from the way we speak, the way we work, and the way we carry ourselves. Every handshake, every kind word, every quiet

act of discipline has the power to leave an impression that lasts.

A gentleman doesn't just teach skills like how to cast a line, drive a truck, or balance a checkbook. He teaches character. He teaches that you shake a man's hand firmly and look him in the eye. That you say “yes sir” and “no ma'am,” not because you have to, but because it shows respect. That you speak the truth, even when it costs you. That real strength comes from serving others, not dominating them. The gospel of Mark tells us that “even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve” (Mark 10:45).

As we send kids back to school in the coming weeks, let's remember the most important lessons aren't found on any syllabus. They're learned by watching us. Let's give the next generation something worth imitating. Let's teach them manners, grit, and grace. The world may not always reward virtue, but our children and our community will.

Michael G. Ethridge
Publisher/Owner



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

7.17.25

The Forum IV: The Official Men's Mixer of The Kendall Gentleman

The Kendall Gentleman
Singing Water Vineyards
316 Mill Dam Rd, Comfort, TX 78013
thekendallgentleman.com
Join The Kendall Gentleman for the July edition of The Forum – a relaxed men's mixer held this month at the serene Singing Water Vineyards.

7.23.25

Steak Night

Joshua Creek Ranch
132 Cravey Road, Boerne, TX 78006
joshuacreek.com
Don't get left out wondering what's for dinner this summer. Every Wednesday through mid-September is Steak Night at Joshua Creek Ranch

7.26.25

Antique Tractor Pull

The AgriCultural
106 City Park Rd, Boerne, TX 78006
www.theagricultural.org
The AgriCultural Museum & Arts Center in Boerne is hosting a series of antique tractor pulls and a trail ride throughout 2025. These events celebrate farming heritage with powerful antique tractors in action, making for a fun-filled experience for the entire family.

8.2.25

VFW Veterans Coffee

Ford of Boerne
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

Sporting Clays Fun Shoot

Joshua Creek Ranch
132 Cravey Road, Boerne, TX 78006
joshuacreek.com

8.12.25

VFW Business Meeting

VFW Post 688

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

8.9.25

Open Bowling

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

4th Annual Back 2 School Event

Task Force VOSBO
Patrick Heath Public Library
451 N Main St, Boerne, TX 78006
operationhomefront.org/event/btsb-in-boerne-tx/
Task Force VOSBO is pumped to team up with Operation Homefront's Back to School Brigade to support our amazing veteran & military families! FREE school supplies to help your kids start the school year strong!

8.11.25

American Legion General Membership Meeting

American Legion Post 313
Kendall County EMS Bldg
1175 North Main Street, 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)

8.18.25

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

8.19.25

Kendall County 4-H Information Night Kendall County AgriLife Extension & 4-H

Burdick Community Center
119 Old San Antonio Rd, Boerne, TX 78006
kendall.agrilife.org

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8.21.25

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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

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www.salvadordobbs.com
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Saturdays

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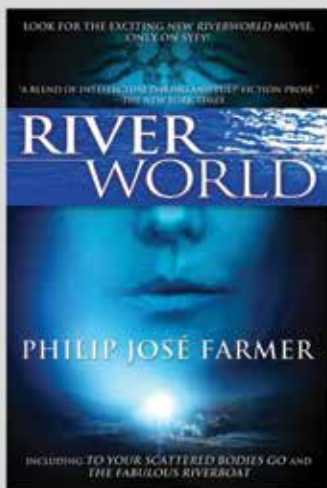


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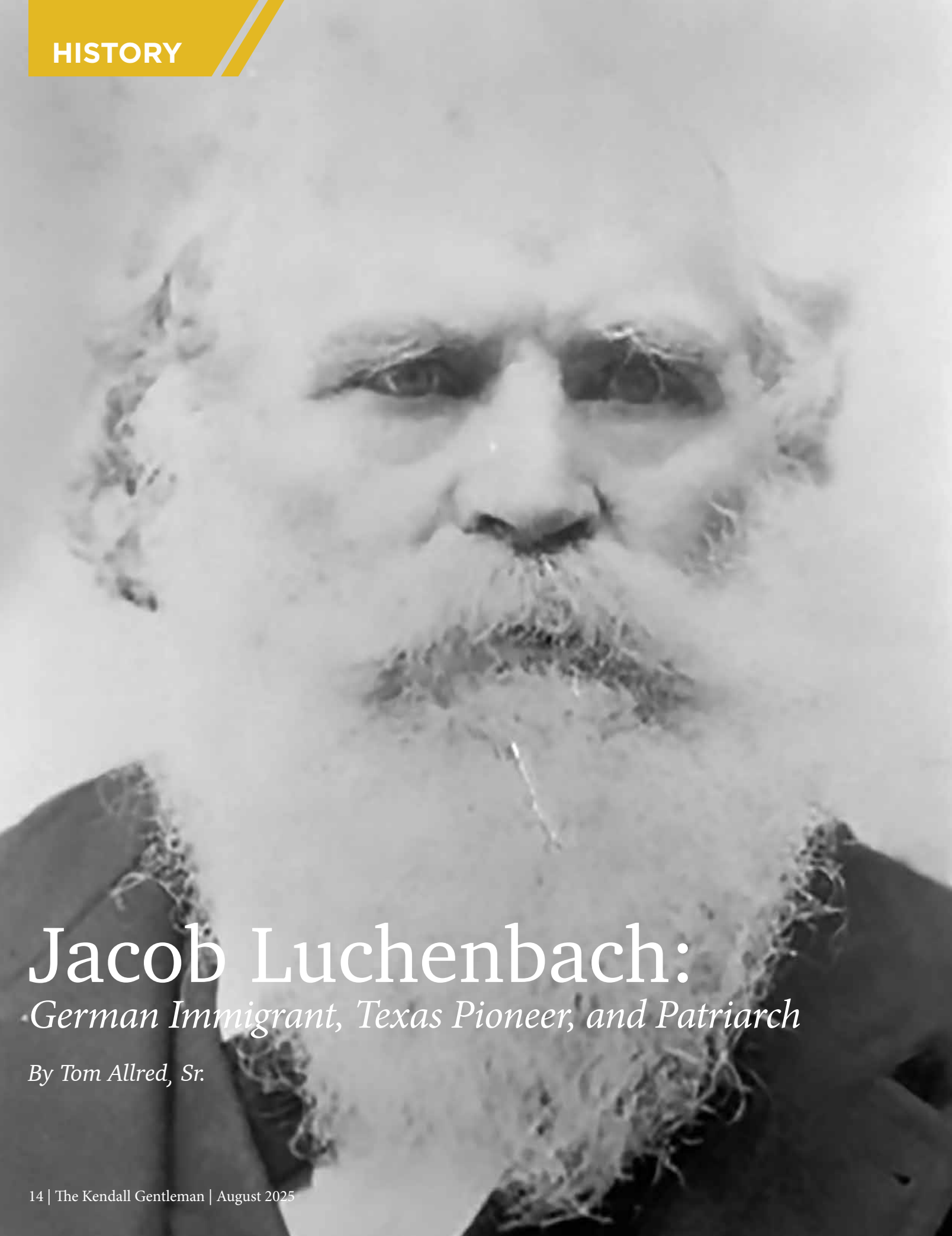
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Jacob Luchenbach:

German Immigrant, Texas Pioneer, and Patriarch

By Tom Allred, Sr.

The story of Jacob and Justina Luchenbach is one of perseverance, hope, and quiet influence.

The mid-19th century witnessed a remarkable tide of German immigration to Texas, a movement that profoundly shaped the cultural and economic landscape of the Lone Star State. Among these intrepid pioneers stands Jacob Luchenbach, whose journey from the Duchy of Nassau to the heart of Kendall County, Texas, epitomizes the spirit of resilience, community building, and family devotion that characterized this era.

From Marienberg to the American Frontier

Jacob Luchenbach was born in 1817 in Marienberg, a town nestled within the Duchy of Nassau, a region now part of modern-day Germany. His youth unfolded amidst a period of significant political fragmentation and economic hardship across the German principalities. Limited access to land, widespread social and financial pressures, and simmering political unrest fueled a longing for a fresh start. For many, including young Jacob, the allure of the Americas—especially the vast, unsettled lands of Texas—beckoned as a beacon of freedom and abundance.

The catalyst for Jacob's emigration, and that of countless others, was the *Adelsverein*, or Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas. Founded in 1842 by German nobles, this ambitious organization aimed to establish a "New Germany" in Texas, offering a structured path for settlers to acquire land and build new lives. Jacob likely made his momentous journey across the Atlantic during the 1840s or early 1850s, a period that marked the zenith of German settlement in central Texas.

Planting Roots and Raising a Family in the Lone Star State

Upon his arrival in Texas, Jacob Luchenbach became an integral part of the industrious and close-knit German immigrant community. These resourceful newcomers, many of whom settled in the picturesque Hill Country towns like Fredericksburg and New Braunfels, were instrumental in transforming the rugged frontier. They diligently cultivated the land, established burgeoning businesses, and steadfastly preserved their cherished language and customs, creating vibrant pockets of German heritage.

It was in this new land that Jacob met and married Justina, a fellow German immigrant.

Together, they embarked on the grand adventure of building a life and raising a family that would become a cornerstone of their community. In an era where large families were not just common but essential for agricultural labor and household support, Jacob and Justina were blessed with a remarkable twelve children: three sons and nine daughters. They instilled in their offspring the bedrock values of hard work, unwavering faith, and enduring perseverance—qualities that would prove invaluable as the untamed frontier gradually transformed around them.

While the exact connection remains a subject of historical inquiry, the Luchenbach surname would later gain widespread recognition through the small community of Luckenbach, Texas. Though not definitively linked to Jacob's direct founding, members of the broader Luchenbach family were undeniably instrumental in establishing the area. This unassuming hamlet would later achieve fame as a quirky epicenter of country music and Texan cultural nostalgia, its origins deeply rooted in the unwavering commitment of these early German settlers to hard work and robust community life.

A New Chapter in Boerne: A Life Well Lived

After years spent contributing to the vibrant German communities of the Hill Country, the Luchenbach family embarked on another significant move, relocating to Boerne, Texas. This small but rapidly growing German settlement, nestled northwest of San Antonio, was founded in the 1850s by German Free Thinkers and quickly gained a reputation for its progressive ideals, salubrious climate, and steadfast dedication to preserving German culture.

In Boerne, Jacob and Justina found a thriving community of fellow immigrants and a more temperate environment in which to continue their lives. Their days remained rooted in farming, family, and faith, as they actively contributed to the civic and spiritual foundations of the young town. Their twelve children, now grown, would go on to intermarry with other prominent German families, further intertwining the Luchenbach legacy with the very fabric of the region.

Jacob Luchenbach lived a remarkably long life for his time, passing away in 1911 at the venerable age of 94. His lifetime spanned an incredible arc of history, witnessing monumental changes from the political landscape of the German Confederation

in Europe to the American Civil War, the admission of Texas into the Union, the advent of the railroad, and the dawn of the 20th century. He departed surrounded by a large and ever-growing family, leaving behind a profound legacy not merely of migration and survival, but of sustained growth, continuity, and deep, abiding roots in Texas soil. His numerous descendants, through his twelve children, continued to enrich the cultural and economic tapestry of Texas, particularly within the Boerne and wider Hill Country regions.

An Enduring Legacy of Resilience and Community

Jacob Luchenbach's story, alongside that of his devoted wife Justina and their twelve children, is a powerful testament to the immigrant experience in 19th-century America. It is a narrative of perseverance, hope, and quiet yet profound influence. Like so many of their generation, they did not seek fleeting fame or immense fortune, but rather stability, enduring freedom, and the promise of a brighter future for their progeny. Today, the Luchenbach name remains a recognizable and respected thread in the rich tapestry of German-Texan heritage, a testament to their foresight and fortitude.

Jacob's remarkable journey—from a small village in Nassau to the rugged plains and then the established communities of Texas—is emblematic of the pioneering spirit that transformed a frontier into a thriving and diverse state. His life, his unwavering devotion to his family, and his enduring presence in the communities he helped to build stand as a powerful reminder of the courage and tenacity it took to leave everything behind and forge a new life on unfamiliar soil. It is a story that continues to resonate, reminding us of the foundational role played by these early German settlers in shaping the enduring multicultural heritage that defines Kendall County and the wider Texas landscape today. 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.
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Espada Ricasso by Montecristo

By Clay Smoot

This month's review by Mr. Clay the Cigar Guy from The Cigar Society, is the Espada Ricasso (5 x 54) by Montecristo. This cigar has been in my rotation of go-to cigars since the first time I tried it four years ago. Today, I prefer to enjoy this great cigar in my home lounge with a chilled pour of my favorite Scotch, The Balvenie 14 Year Caribbean Cask. I choose to smoke indoors, because let's face it, the Texas summers are brutal. And, if you've ever met me, you can see immediately that I'm built for pleasure and not for speed. So, I grab the Espada from my personal humidor, spinning it between my fingers as I walk to my four-hole tabletop cigar cutter. As always, I do a V-cut. However, today I decided to do a "crosscut" with my V-cutter. Which is exactly how it sounds. I cut it with a V-cut, turn the cigar 180 degrees, and cut it again. I rotate the stick as I light it, using my refillable Firebird Triple Torch. I get it lit and make my first draw on the delicious cigar. I am immediately hit with a coffee and chocolate note. I smoke this cigar at my leisure, as I have nowhere to go, and a generous pour of a 14-year Scotch on my table. The draws are long, drawn-out affairs for me, as I try to devour every note on every pull. Little by little, I start to taste the leather, cedar, and earth tones that make this cigar so great. As I get into the middle third of this cigar, I'm sipping on The Balvenie 14 Year, and I notice a slight change in the flavor profile. For me, I started to taste the coffee notes a bit more, lost a little bit of the chocolate, but gained a small hint of citrus, which was a pleasant surprise. As this happens, I am reminded of how many times a well-matched pairing between a quality cigar and a worthy liquor, beer, or cup of coffee can change your entire tasting experience. The final third of this cigar is when everything comes together for me, making me reminisce about the first time I ever smoked it. The chocolate notes came back with a vengeance, and it was accompanied by a door-kicking spice, which paired perfectly with my Scotch of choice. This pairing went together like an angel and heaven, which is a perfect analogy, because

this pairing felt like it was ordained by the Gods. Do yourself a favor and pick up an Espada Ricasso by Montecristo. The drink you decide to pair it with is up to you.

The Montecristo Espada Ricasso cigars are a collaboration between the legendary Grupo de Maestros from Altadis U.S.A., and the famous Plasencia family in Nicaragua. This collaboration is the first Montecristo offering made in Nicaragua, and it does not disappoint. The Espada Ricasso is a 5x54 Nicaraguan puro comprised solely of choice Cuban-seed tobacco, expertly cultivated by the highly skilled growers at the Plasencia family farm. This sophisticated blend features Habano Jalapa Seco Vintage 2008 / Habano Jalapa Viso Ometepe Vintage 2008 / and Habano Condega Ligero Vintage 2008 tobacco was used for the long fillers. Those leaves are followed by a Habano Jalapa Vintage 2009 binder and a Habano Jalapa Vintage 2010 wrapper. The luxurious medium-to-full bodied premium tobacco proudly displays the unrivaled skills of two of the most notable names in the cigar world. This collaboration provides a decadent smoke with rich flavors of earth, leather, cinnamon, cocoa, and cream.

The Espada is widely regarded as a solid, medium-bodied Nicaraguan puro that offers a flavorful experience with a focus on coffee, earthy notes, and a hint of cedar. Some reviewers praise its complexity and transitions, while others note construction issues like draw problems and bitterness. For the record, I did not have any construction issues or bitterness. Overall, I think it is a great addition to the Montecristo line, particularly for those who enjoy Nicaraguan cigars, but some find the price point a bit high. I think the price point is spot on.

Key Points from Reviews

Flavor Profile:

The Montecristo Espada is known for flavors like cedar, coffee, earth, leather, and occasionally hints of chocolate, citrus, or spice.

Body and Strength:

It's generally considered a medium-bodied cigar with a medium strength, offering a balanced experience.

Construction:

Some reviewers have reported construction issues, such as draw problems and bitterness. I found the burn and draw to be excellent.

Pairing:

Scotch, Bourbon, Rum, Guinness Stout, Cognac, Brandy, Wine, Dark Roast Coffee, or Espresso.

Smoking Experience:

Reviewers highlight the cigar's complexity and transitions, noting that the flavors evolve throughout the smoking experience.

Specific Observations:

Some reviewers note that the Espada offers a more refined side of Nicaraguan tobacco, compared to the more traditional Dominican blends associated with Montecristo.

The Espada is often compared to other Nicaraguan puros, with some reviewers suggesting that it offers a more approachable and less overwhelming experience than some of the bolder options.

The "Montecristo Espada Signature" line, in particular, has been noted for its medium-bodied, flavor-rich experience, and its tendency to build towards a satisfying crescendo.

The "Espada Oscuro Guard" has been described as having a rich, earthy flavor profile with notes of chocolate, cedar, and pepper.

Overall:

The Montecristo Espada is a well-regarded cigar that offers a flavorful and complex smoking experience, particularly for those who enjoy Nicaraguan puros. It is a solid addition to the Montecristo line and a worthwhile smoke for those seeking a medium-bodied experience. **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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Rick Goodrich

A Life Defined by Purpose

By Jonathan Mallard

When Rick Goodrich took the helm as Chief of Safety and Security for Boerne ISD, it wasn't just another chapter in a long career. It was the culmination of decades spent answering the call to serve, lead, and step in when others needed help.

Goodrich's journey began in 1990 with the United States Air Force. From Desert Storm to Somalia, he found himself in the middle of history. "That was the first time I saw air power used at that scale," he recalled of Desert Storm. But it was his experience during the

1993 mission in Somalia that reshaped his outlook. "What happens when there is no rule of law?" he asked. "That's when I knew law enforcement was the right direction."

That decision led him into federal law enforcement with the DEA, where he spent more than two decades confronting violent crime and international drug trafficking. From gang investigations in the Bronx to counter-narcotics operations in Colombia, Goodrich's work helped indict members of the FARC, seize millions in cartel funds, and support the rescue of Americans held hostage overseas.

But for Goodrich, the most rewarding chapter of his career began when he accepted the newly created position of Safety and Security Director for Boerne ISD. After the tragedy at Robb Elementary in Uvalde, he was asked to help write the district's new approach to school safety. He applied for the role and began the job the same week school started.

"This is the most fulfilling job I've ever had," he said. "These kids are incredible."

When he started, there wasn't even a rifle in the schools. Today, thanks to the overwhelming generosity of the Boerne community, officers are equipped with the tools, trauma kits, and training they need. Local foundations, churches, and business leaders have stepped up to support the mission without hesitation.

"We didn't have what we needed before," Goodrich said. "But this community didn't wait. They just asked, 'What do you need, and how can we help?'"

More than just physical security, Goodrich's program also emphasizes student wellness. His close partnership with the district's counseling leadership and local mental health officers has created a rapid-response structure for at-risk students. In his three years with Boerne ISD, the district has not lost a student to suicide or overdose.

"We're present," he said. "Not notional."

Goodrich also plays a statewide role as an adjunct instructor with ALERRT, training other departments in how to respond to active threats. He says what fuels him now is making sure the right people are in place, trained, and equipped to act when they are needed most.

"A lot of people believe they're going to rise to the occasion when the day chooses them. They make no mistake, the day chooses you. You don't get to schedule it, and it's going to be when you're at your weakest and least prepared."

That belief in readiness, in stepping up for others, is what connects Goodrich to the mission of Hope for Heroes Texas.

"There are officers I've worked with, guys from Austin or San Antonio, who saw things they weren't prepared to see," he said. "Hope for Heroes Texas opened its doors and gave them space to reset. If they hadn't had that, it probably would have ended in self-harm."

But what struck Goodrich most wasn't just the impact on officers. It was the impact on their children.

"To have those children see their parents celebrated as heroes. That's the game changer."

A Note from Brad Cornell of Hope for Heroes Texas

"Rick Goodrich is the kind of man we built Hope for Heroes Texas for. He's lived a life of service, and he continues to pour that into his community today. When we talk about heroes, it's not just those who wear a uniform. It's those who keep showing up for others long after the uniform comes off. Rick reminds us what true leadership looks like." **KG**

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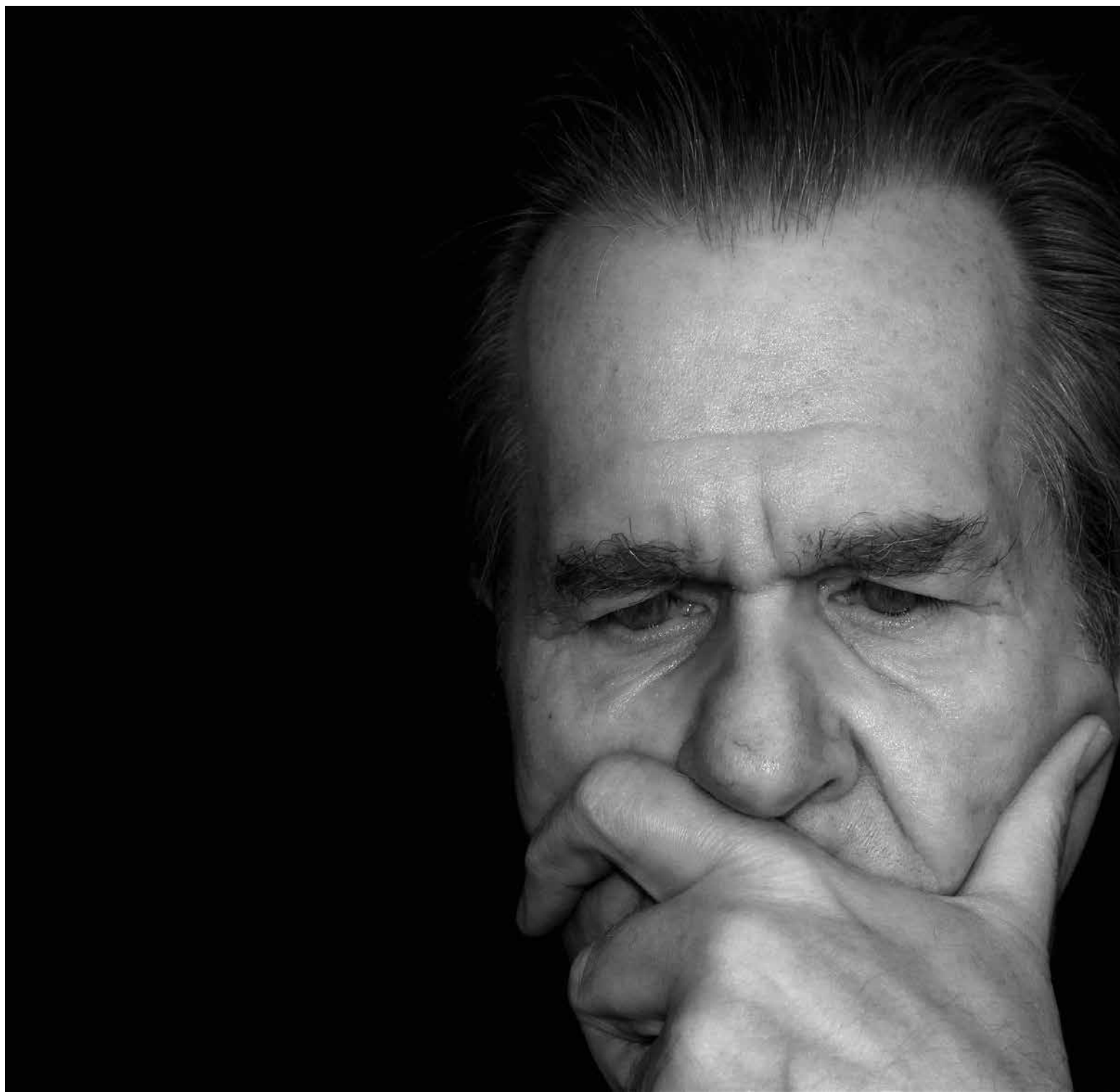
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Stepping Up To Better MENtal Health

By Lance Lira

Growing up as a Gen X Texas boy, it was never considered to be 'manly' to show emotions (unless those emotions happened to be something to do with courage, perhaps). Sadly, this is a recurring theme with many fellow men I have visited with. Dealing with emotions is something that every human must contend with, although many still deal with self-shaming if they are publicly seen in a vulnerable state.

Why many feel this way is important to understand, and how to change this attitude towards better mental health for men is of critical importance. There are many things that men can do to help with mental health, and the goal of this article is to highlight some of those as well as bringing light to the vulnerability many men feel when discussing this topic.

Good mental health can have many definitions. It might mean being able to fight off feelings of inadequacy. It might also mean bringing oneself out of a state of depression or from a state of consistent anxiety. If you ask many men, "How are you feeling today?", you are likely to get a canned answer of "Fine." Sadly, hiding emotions or vulnerabilities is how many men live their daily lives...but are there things that men can do to help with these feelings?

There are many things men can do to improve their mental health. Sometimes it is as simple as getting outside in the sunshine and breathing some fresh air. Many of us are stuck inside and staring at computer screens for most of the day, neither of which are particularly good for mental clarity. Many studies have shown that a high percentage of the population is deficient in Vitamin D. Vitamin D has been shown to have a great effect on mood in humans, and not surprisingly, with our modern lifestyles, many are deficient.

Popular myths abound about Vitamin D. One of the most popular is that if you just get out in the sun, your body will produce plenty of Vitamin D. Unfortunately, this is not true for most of us. Vitamin D is only produced when very specific areas of the body are exposed to direct sunlight (specifically our midsection), and most of us can't walk around the afternoon shirtless. I personally learned this the hard way, as I drive a Jeep and have the top off any chance I get. Even with a great tan and lots of sun exposure, my Vitamin D levels were very low. Luckily for all of us, many good supplements are available over the counter to help naturally raise Vitamin D levels to where they should be. There are many combos now available with Vitamin D, so finding a trusted source where you can ask questions to get the right combo is critical.

Often referred to as the 'second brain', the flora, also known as beneficial bacteria, in our guts, is often overlooked. It has been shown in many research studies that the health of the gut flora can heavily affect many aspects of the body, one being the mind. We all have a complement of good bacteria that live in our intestines to help with the breakdown of food. These beneficial bacteria also release compounds that affect the function of our bodies. Far too often, this flora does not receive the nutrients needed to flourish. Here is where a good probiotic and a diet high in fiber can come into play. Probiotics help replenish the gut flora and fiber, because it is insoluble, can provide much-needed nourishment for these bacteria. In the typical American diet, we do not consume nearly enough fiber and other nutrient-dense foods to feed our gut flora, so

supplementation can be an effective way to garner better gut health.

Other factors that affect a lot of men today are stress and anxiety. These two conditions are paired together, as stress may not necessarily lead to anxiety, but anxiety will most certainly manifest into stress within the body. While moderate levels of stress can actually be good for us, the high levels of stress we face today are not. High levels of stress can bring down the immune system and cause irritability as well as inflammation throughout the body as cortisol levels rise. As most disease states in the body are a direct result of inflammation, it is easy to see why reducing stress levels is of critical importance. There are a number of things men can do to help alleviate stress levels. Having a good physical outlet, like hitting the gym, can definitely get some endorphins going, which will result in lower stress levels. Finding other outlets, like a good hobby, whether fishing, playing music, or anything else that helps you unwind, can also be beneficial. It is critical to schedule time for yourself to allow some unwinding from the stresses of the day. Additional help can be found in some great supplements that can help bring down anxiety levels.

The most important aspect of men's mental health is realizing that we need to consciously focus on that. For far too long, it has been something that is ignored and often stigmatized. Taking some time to allow for a recharge and finding a good, trusted resource to learn about supplementation is also very important. There is a lot of information out there on the subject if you take the time to do some research. We are happy to invite you to Nature's Presence to ask any questions and to help you on your journey to better MENTAL health! **[KG]**



Lance Lira, a Kendall County resident for over 20 years, holds a degree in Biology from UTSA and has a background in research science, fitness, and nutrition. A musician and community leader, Lance serves on local boards, leads the Mighty Greyhound Band Boosters, and co-owns Nature's Presence Supplements in Boerne. lance@thekendallgentleman.com

We Do What We Want

By Coach Stan Leech

I once heard a simple line that stopped me cold. As the saying goes, “We do what we want to do, and we don’t do what we don’t want to do.” At first, it made me laugh—it sounded like something someone might say to justify skipping a meeting or leaving a party early, but the more I sat with it, the more truth it carried. It’s not just a quip. It’s a principle.

Think about it. If we really want to do something—really want to—nothing stands in our way. Not the distance, not the cost, not the early morning, not the weather, not the inconvenience. If we want to go to the hunting lease, we’re up at 4:00 a.m. with our gear packed. If we want to make the game, we’ll drive four hours, stand in the rain, and never complain. If we want to visit family, we’ll figure out flights, schedules, and logistics. But when we don’t want to do something? We become artists of excuses. We find ways not to show up, or we do show up, but not with our whole selves.

That’s why the phrase, “We vote with our feet,” is so true. Our attendance, our presence, our engagement—those things tell the truth about what we value. And it’s not just about being in the room. It’s about how we’re in the room. Are we present in mind and spirit? Or are we coasting, checking the box, going through the motions?

The principle is easy to observe in students, in athletes, in co-workers, in church members, and even in family life. It’s not hard to tell who wants to be there and who doesn’t. Presence isn’t something you can fake for long. It eventually shows. And maybe the greater truth behind it all is this:

what we want is one of the clearest indicators of who we are becoming.

Which brings me to a story close to my heart.

In 1993, a young woman named Shannon Sedgwick graduated from Boerne High School. I had the privilege of teaching her. She even served as a student aide, and like so many others in those halls, she had no idea what her future would hold. Shannon had a rare quality even then—she was present. Not just showing up, but truly engaged. Eyes open, heart open.

Years later, in 2020, we honored her as a Distinguished alum, and I’ll never forget what she said in her acceptance speech. She didn’t talk about her accomplishments, travels, or degrees. She simply said, “Be present.” That was her challenge. Her encouragement. Her life theme.

Her story proves the power of presence. Through a series of open doors, unexpected encounters, and hard truths, Shannon eventually found herself face to face with the global tragedy of sex trafficking. She could have looked away. She had every excuse not to get involved. She wasn’t a politician. She wasn’t in law enforcement. She didn’t have to go there. But something in her—something spiritual, something moral—said you’re already here, and now that you see this, you have to do something about it.

And she did.

Shannon went on to write a book called *To Stop a Warlord*, detailing her work in Uganda through the Bridgeway Foundation, where she helped fund and coordinate efforts to

stop Joseph Kony and the Lord’s Resistance Army—a group responsible for abducting children and committing horrific crimes. It was a risky, controversial mission. But it was rooted in presence. She had seen injustice and said, “Not on my watch.”

Shannon has stood before world leaders. She was even seated front row at her friend, President Jimmy Carter’s, funeral. But what’s more impressive than the seat she’s occupied is the path she took to get there—one marked by willingness, compassion, and action.

Her life embodies that phrase: We do what we want. And she wanted to be used. She wanted to stand up for the vulnerable. She wanted to respond to the spiritual pull of justice. And because she did, lives were changed.

That brings me to another story of someone who chose to be present in hard circumstances, Daniel.

Taken from his homeland, raised in a pagan empire, forced to learn a new language, new customs, new expectations. If anyone had the excuse to “check out,” it was Daniel. But he didn’t. He stayed engaged. He didn’t compromise his values. And when it came time to stand firm in his faith—even when it meant facing the lions—he was already prepared. Not because he suddenly got brave, but because he had been present every step of the way. He had built a life of quiet obedience and consistency, and that made him ready when the trial came.

Daniel’s story, like Shannon’s, is a testament to what happens when we stay spiritually present. When we live with attention,



purpose, and integrity. When we want what's right-even when it costs something.

So, here's the challenge.

If we agree that we do what we want, then maybe the question is: What do we want? Do we want comfort? Convenience? Image? Or do we want impact? Integrity? Calling?

God doesn't shame us for having wants-but He does reshape our desires when we let Him. He refines them. Daniel didn't want the lion's den, but he wanted to remain faithful. Shannon didn't want to step into the fight against warlords, but she wanted to respond to the brokenness she saw. That's what spiritual maturity looks like- wanting the things God wants.

Paul says in Romans 12:1-2, "Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice...Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." And Colossians 3:23 reminds us: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord."

So let's want what matters.

Let's be men and women who want to show up for our families, our churches, our students, and our community. Let's want to listen, learn, speak the truth, and serve. Let's be present-not just in the room, but in spirit, in attention, in heart.

Because if we want it - really want it - we'll find a way. 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.
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HARVESTING LEGACY

Andy Ivankovich's Mission of Service and Strength

*By Michael G. Ethridge
Photography By Jonathan Mallard*



When Andy Ivankovich first drove down Mill Dam Road in Comfort, Texas, he wasn't looking for a vineyard. Truth is, he'd never even tasted Texas wine. What he sought was just a quiet slice of the Hill Country, somewhere to clear brush on weekends with his kids and let his mind rest from years of tech startups and endless flights. Yet, there it was: Singing Water Vineyards. Quiet, charming, a little rough around the edges. Andy stood in the tasting room and knew instantly that God had placed him exactly where he needed to be.

Andy's story didn't begin with wine or wealth. It started far away, in Mulberry, Florida, where his father's passing when Andy was just ten left his family clinging to survival. He recalls living on \$400 Social Security checks, the kindness of his church, and teachers who cared enough to pay for his dinners and Disney trips. It was a hardship, sure, but it also forged steel in Andy, teaching him early the art of resilience. "There was no money in our family at all. Not a penny extra," Andy remembers. "My mother figured out how to make that work."

Growing up, Andy knew work. By high school, he had multiple jobs, cutting lawns, doing odd jobs, simply to help his family survive. These early experiences instilled in him a tireless work ethic that became the cornerstone of his character. He was a top student, involved in band and cross-country, but unlike many classmates, Friday nights often meant extra hours of labor rather than leisure. College was never an option, financially impossible, he says, and so at eighteen, seeking an escape from poverty, Andy enlisted in the Air Force.

As a C-130H Crew Chief, responsibility came fast and hard. He had barely earned his first stripe when pilots began turning to him, asking, "Chief, is it ready?" When the answer determined safety and survival, it aged him quickly and permanently. Andy credits the Air Force with shaping his meticulous attention to detail and sense of leadership. But more importantly, it taught him about sacrifice and brotherhood, lessons he carries to this day.

Post-military, Andy found himself in Boston, earning a business degree from Eastern Nazarene College, marrying his sweetheart Missy, and diving into the rising tide of fintech. At USAA in San Antonio, Andy pioneered technologies that changed the way banks lend money, earning patents and national recognition. He recalls, "My area was consumer lending. I had the ability - with some really good folks - to develop the first capability of doing a loan without ever talking to a person." After years of the corporate climb, his entrepreneurial spirit called louder. He founded iLendx, a software company that became so successful it was acquired by fintech giant Fiserv. Andy describes the moment he received the call from Fiserv's CEO as one of the highest honors of his career, a validation of years of risk-taking and sleepless nights. Still, ever restless, he knew life had more chapters yet unwritten.

That chapter began the day he bought Singing Water Vineyards. Partnering with legendary Texas winemaker Pat Johnson, Andy set his sights on crafting bold, world-class red wines. "I just want to make really good, bold red wine, and I want to make the best cab in the world," Andy recalls telling Pat. With each

vintage, the duo refined their vision until their Cabernet Sauvignon shocked wine circles by winning Best in Class at the prestigious San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition. Andy laughs when he remembers the moment the news came in. “Six years ago, I’d never tasted Texas wine, and here we were beating Napa at their own game.”

Yet, as impressive as the accolades are, Andy insists that the winery’s greatest strength is its authenticity. Singing Water isn’t trying to imitate California or Europe. Instead, it’s pure Hill Country, rolling hills, old oak trees, a creek winding lazily, and goats grazing by a red barn. Guests might see Andy himself pouring wine, his boots muddy, swapping stories about Air Force days or how his grandfather built Model T’s alongside Bill

Ford’s ancestors. Ford Motor Company even chose Singing Water as the backdrop to launch their groundbreaking F-150 Lightning electric truck, a nod to Andy’s genuine Texas hospitality and roots. He cherishes a letter from Bill Ford that hangs in the winery, a testament to family legacy and community pride.

Community is central to Andy’s vision. He serves on local boards and mentors aspiring entrepreneurs, especially veterans. His belief in service extends well beyond profit margins. Andy and Missy spend significant time in Kauai, Hawaii, where they help



veterans transition into business ownership. This passion for mentorship and community building reflects Andy's deeply held belief in the importance of giving back.

Amid success and growth, Andy stays humble and reflective, deeply driven by integrity and faith. "I learned early on from an individual who shared with me, always remain curious and coachable," he emphasizes. A longtime friend and admirer of pastor Max Lucado, Andy's Christianity guides his life quietly but firmly. He speaks openly about grace, not from a pulpit, but from the simple truth of a man who knows

he needs it daily. It's this humility, mixed with ambition, that defines him best.

Family anchors Andy. Missy, his wife and partner in every venture, balances his visionary drive with grounded practicality. Their four kids grew up watching Dad take on seemingly impossible challenges. "This area was a really good place to raise kids," Andy says. "I wasn't going to take my kids to a city just so I could get more of a direct route on an airplane."

Today, Andy's juggling roles again. As CEO of Baker Hill, a financial technology

company dedicated to empowering community banks, he applies the lessons learned through decades of innovation. Yet, weekends find him back at Singing Water, pruning vines or walking the fields with Missy, dreaming new dreams for the land and community he loves. "I'm passionate about our area, my friends, and neighbors. I think we have to protect our private property rights... we have to develop smarter here in the Hill Country," Andy states firmly.

Andy often reflects on his life's journey, remarking that life is long, relationships matter, and every encounter shapes your





path. He emphasizes integrity as a non-negotiable, recalling lessons from his business professors that true success is not just financial, but ethical. At Baker Hill, he remains dedicated to community banks, believing they form the backbone of local economies, crucial to American prosperity.

On quiet evenings at Singing Water, Andy contemplates the future. He sees endless opportunities for growth, yet remains mindful of preserving the soul of the winery. Each vine pruned and bottle filled tells a story of passion, persistence, and purpose. He dreams about further refining his wines, creating more opportunities for local employment, and solidifying Singing Water as a treasured landmark of the Texas Hill Country.

He also envisions expanding the vineyard's outreach by hosting community events, enhancing local tourism, and offering educational opportunities in viticulture and entrepreneurship. Andy believes strongly in empowering others through knowledge and practical experience, hoping to inspire future generations of local leaders and entrepreneurs. Each decision made at Singing Water is carefully weighed, reflecting Andy's commitment to authenticity, quality, and community impact.

At its heart, Andy Ivankovich's journey isn't about wine or tech or titles. It's about resilience, rootedness, and a relentless pursuit of genuine, lasting significance. Standing beneath Singing Water's sprawling oaks, he's exactly where he's meant to be: rooted in the land, faith-filled, family-focused, and forever building. It's the story of a man shaped by struggle, strengthened by service, and dedicated above all to leaving behind a legacy worthy of the Texas Hill Country he calls home.

From the dusty streets of Mulberry, Florida, to the rolling hills of Comfort, Texas, Andy Ivankovich's life is a testament to grit, faith, and service. Whether he is leading a vineyard to unexpected heights, mentoring veterans as they step into business ownership, or pouring his energy into family and community, Andy's story shows us what it means to build a legacy with both hands and a full heart. He embodies humility, strength, and a quiet determination to make the world better. That is why Andy Ivankovich is The Kendall Gentleman. **KG**





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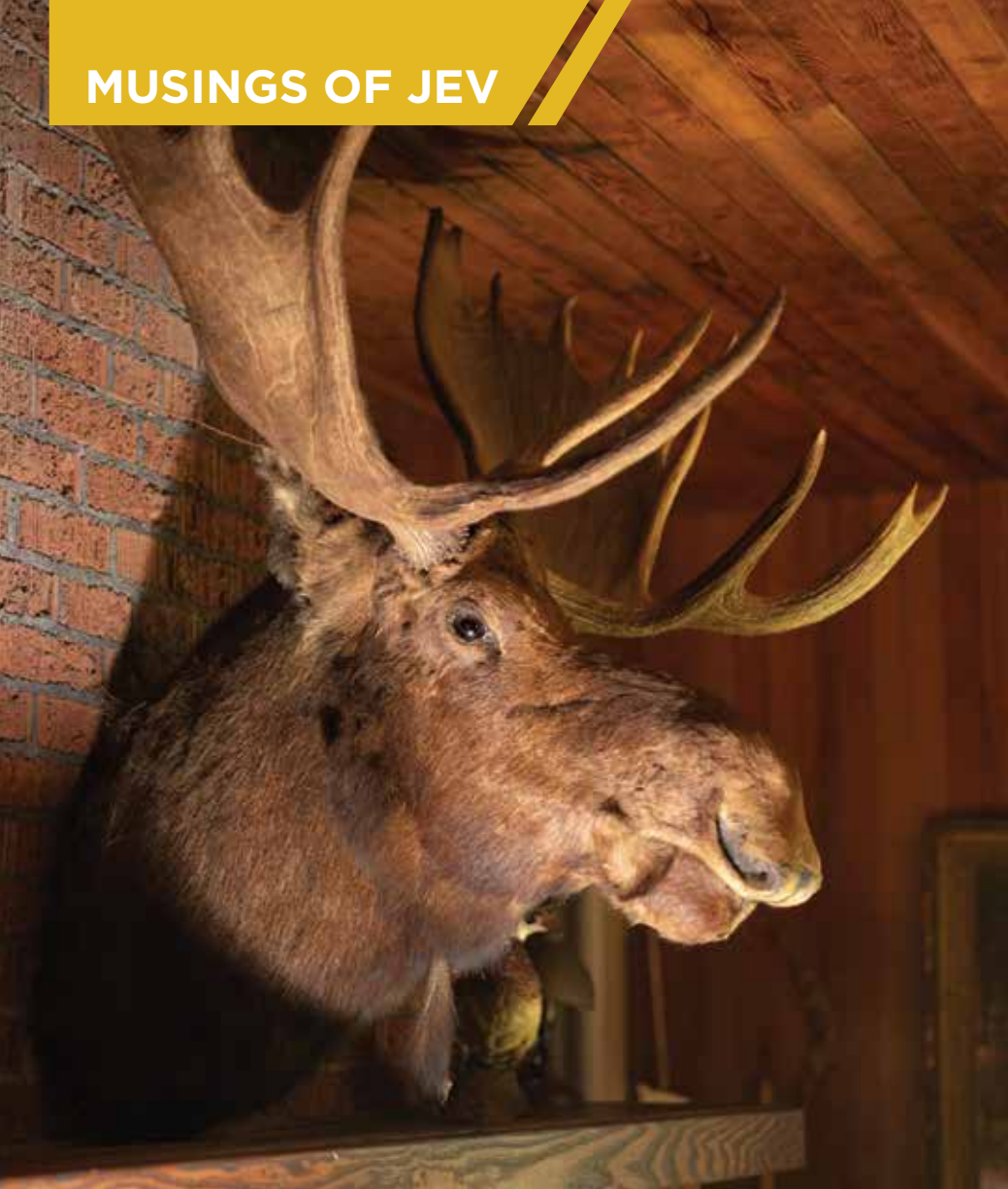
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One evening two older couples from the New Braunfels area followed me in. The men and one of the ladies bellied up to the bar for a cold draft while the other lady looked around. They all had very pronounced German accents and in this accent the one lady turned to Udo and said, “My got (God), mister. Did you chute all dos deer?” Without breaking a smile Udo replied that indeed he had, except for a few of the real small ones that friends of his had asked him to hang up on the wall. About the same instant the lady looked up and saw the moose head and, looking at Udo, said, “Got, not dat vun too?” Udo casually looked around as if to determine what she was pointing at and remarked that yes, he had also killed that one on his hunting lease out on the Balcones. Of course, to add credit to his honesty, he had spoken to the gentlemen several times in German. I’ll swear that those people left the bar after a few beers and believed every word that Udo had told them.

I believe that the old bar and back-bar are now owned by Frost Bank and are upstairs in their meeting room. If you go to look at it sometime, you might want to get down close to the floor and look at the brass bar rail. If it appears that one spot is worn a little more than anywhere else, it’s probably where I put my left foot each evening while visiting with Udo.

Udo was a good friend to many people and ran Max’s Bar for years and years. He was on the Volunteer Fire Department and was City Tax Collector for a long time. **[KG]**

Max’s Bar and Udo

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.*

Nothing about Boerne would be complete without mentioning Max’s Bar, run by Udo.

Cold draft beer and delicious wine. Udo’s was located in a narrow portion of the building in the middle of the 100 block of South Main, on the east side of the street.

Udo had a beer cooler that was rather unique. It looked like a regular Coke box with a lid that opened from either side, but instead of having to ice the drinks down, they were immersed in water. There were cooling coils that chilled the water and then circulated it around the bottles. It seemed like it made the drinks cooler than just the dry cooling of a refrigerator type box. It was more like an iced drink without the bother of having to get ice each day.

The front half of the south wall was filled by the massive bar and beautifully carved and mirrored back-bar. The whole north wall of the room was covered with deer horns and included a Mexican eagle and a mounted moose head.

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Paloma Fest

By Jed Mazour

With September around the corner, I am starting to let dove hunting creep back into my mind. Dove season comes about the same time as our peak exhaustion from the south Texas summer heat. The real dog days of summer.. The kind of heat that even a dip in my swimming pool won't take my core temperature down. But at the same time as I am sweating through my clothes at a standstill, I know relief is just weeks away. Opening weekend of dove season signals a change in seasons. While it may still be as hot as our shotgun barrels outside, cold beer and groups of low flyers sure can cool things down. This is the time of year you might consider leaving an ice chest, shotgun, bucket, and Turtlebox in the ready position because if you have any good

friends (kidding, sort of..), you will almost certainly get a random invite to a farmer's field in the South zone.

In case you aren't familiar with what this looks like, let me paint you a mental picture.

After gathering up your necessities: shotgun, ice chest, bucket, Turtlebox, snake boots, and maybe a change of clothes, it's vámonos! We tend to hunt in the Uvalde or Crystal City area, so it's about an hour drive. As we are driving down dusty farm roads, we are met at an open gate with a ranch manager sitting in his truck, soaking up the AC while he can. After a very brief conversation at the gate, we make our





way into the field. These are usually sunflower fields with the perimeter plowed about 75 yards in. Imagine a high school track field with the center being large, fully grown and dried sunflowers, and the track itself is freshly plowed ground with hay bales placed 50 yards apart from each other all the way around. Of course, on a much larger scale. I always try to choose a bale close to a tree line. But honestly, you never know what spot they will fly the heaviest. Setting up your spot is pretty simple. Lawn chair or bucket placed on the shady side of the bale with the rest of your gear and hunting buddy, and if you are lucky, a good retriever dog. Usually around that 4 o'clock hour, they start coming in hot and heavy! Some of the best memories made while doing any kind of hunting are made at opening weekend of dove season, when the birds are new and have not been shot at yet. Then comes that special moment when you see a couple groups fly in as you are leaning on a bale enjoying a cold beer, but all of a sudden things completely open up! This is when they can come in so fast, heavy, and unexpectedly that it almost seems like a game. From here, it's every man for himself! A race to get 15 birds and not be the last guy to do so. A real "Ricky Bobby" kind of moment. If you know, you know. Once things start to settle down and you are working on your last 3 birds, it's time you can slow down, grab another cold Lone Star, and make some of your better, more calculated shots. I love to really take my time at this point. Afterwards, be a good steward of the land and take the time to pick up all your shells! Not only can leaving them create an issue with cattle and unsightly litter, but it's disrespectful to the land owner, and you may not get an invite back the next time.



Much like the saying "there is more than one way to skin a cat," there are several ways to clean these birds. Some snippers and a hose are all you really need, in my opinion. Take the time to wash them thoroughly, if you don't, you might end up biting down on some dove load and you will regret that decision immediately. I learned that lesson the hard way. There are lot of really delicious recipes for dove, but the most famous is the simple dove popper. Dove breast, bacon, cream cheese, and a fresh slice of jalapeno are about all you need. We like to make a sauce to baste the poppers as they are cooking and dip them in after they are grilled.

I have met some Cajun folks who like to make a roux in the field and cook them as they shoot them, some folks take the time to keep the birds whole and pluck the feathers, and others who clean them like a quail and pan fry them. All of these are great options and will give you the rewarding feeling of a good harvest and a full belly!

For a number of years, we have been hunting with an amazing company and family. The kind of people you refer to as your own family. Luke Bledsoe and his bride Jillian own and operate the outfitter company, Speck Ops. Everything from speckled belly geese, sandhill cranes, ducks, doves, and more. In conjunction with the famous 501 Ranch in Uvalde, they have started Paloma Fest. This is the ultimate dove hunting experience. A 2 ½ day event with 2 dove hunts, lodging, chef-made meals, live music, private bowling alley, skeet competition, giveaways, and a barn burner lazy river pool party! This is for the person who wants the whole enchilada experience. Like me! Paloma Fest is booking spots now for this September. Denise and I will be there representing Cibolo Creek Brewing Company, serving up those ice-cold beers all weekend! If this doesn't sound like fun, you are reading the wrong magazine. If it does, reach out to Speck Ops and book your spot before it's too late. You can find them on Facebook and Instagram @SpeckOps, or give Jillian a holler directly at 830-247-4543

I will close with this. Dove hunting is unique. It can become a memory your young son or daughter will keep forever as a keystone to their outdoor journeys. It can be an opportunity for friends to reunite and rekindle old times. Maybe a chance for coworkers to get together and form some needed bonding outside of the office. Dove hunting can become a tradition, and I strongly encourage it. There are so many lessons you can teach your kids in the outdoors that school and a TikTok video can't. Remember, it's in our DNA as men to dream of and crave the outdoors. Be a good old-fashioned man and do it the right way for the right reasons! Step away from the noises of life. Phones, Facebook, work, traffic, etc. It is in these moments, outdoors, that you will feel closest to God.

Cheers,
Jed Mazour **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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