



THE KENDALLTM GENTLEMAN

SEPTEMBER 2025 | ISSUE 8 :: VOLUME 1

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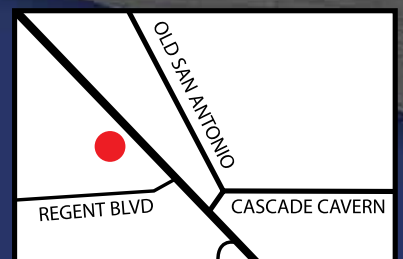
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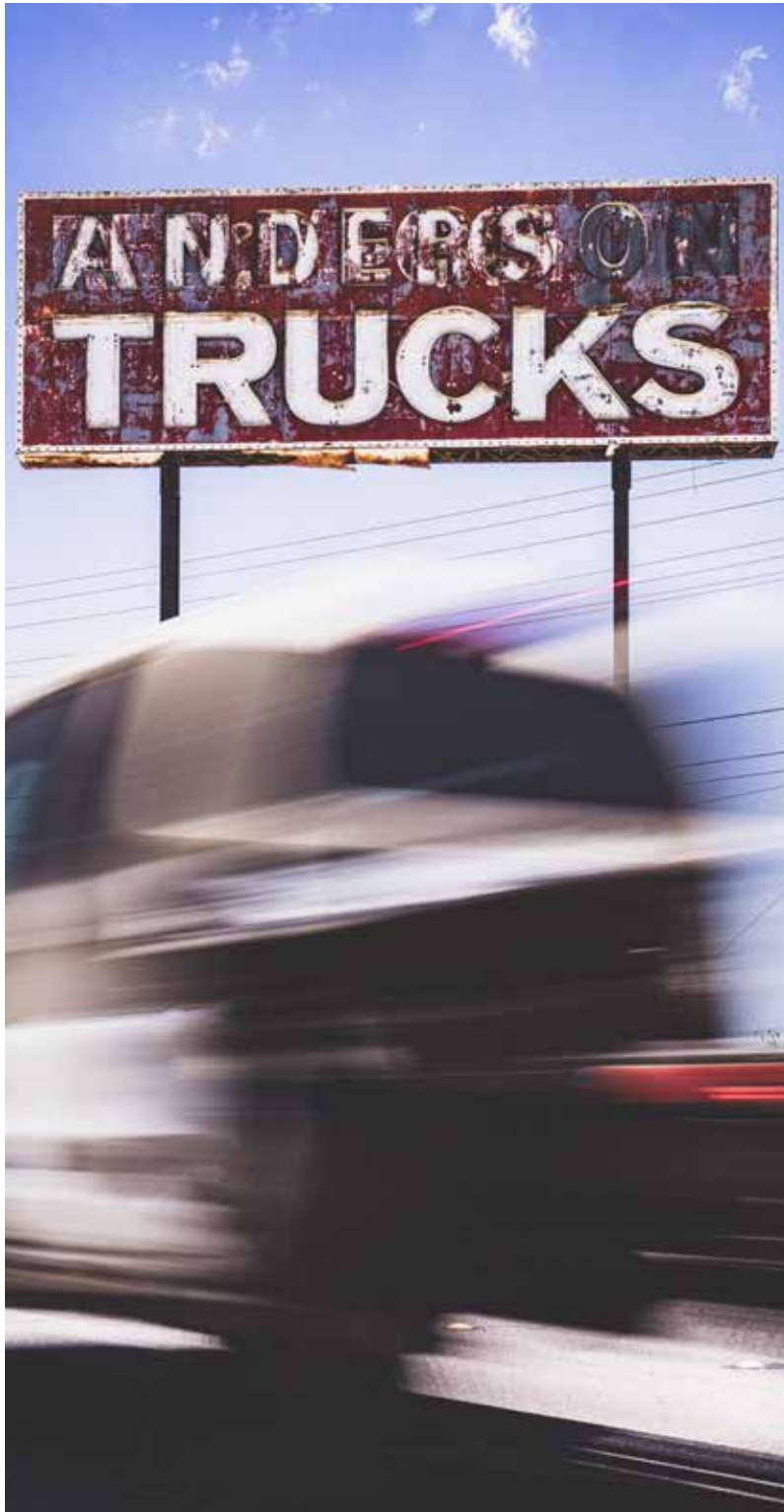
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Are you interested in contributing to The Kendall Gentleman? Do you have an interesting story to tell the men of Kendall County? Could you be considered an expert in your given field? Have something interesting to say? We're always looking for talented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



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The Men Beside You

Most men I know aren't looking for applause. They've got families to care for, work to do, and burdens they rarely speak aloud.

That's the part we often miss. Not because we're too proud to ask for help, but because somewhere along the way, we started believing we were supposed to carry it all alone.

We weren't.

The truth is, you can only carry so much by yourself before it starts to show. Maybe not on your face, maybe not in your words, but somewhere in the quiet parts of your life. The frayed edges. The short temper. The way you find yourself staring out the window a little longer than usual.

Real strength doesn't mean isolation. It means having someone beside you when the weight gets heavy, and being that someone when it's not your turn to fall apart. That kind of strength gets built over time, through real friendships and honest conversations, not surface-level small talk.

I've been thinking a lot about that since the flood.

On July 4th, while most of the country was lighting fireworks, families in Kendall and Kerr counties were watching the river rise again. Fast water. Real loss. And in the days that followed, search crews, recovery efforts, neighbors gutting homes, volunteers delivering food, strangers turning into brothers.

It shook something loose in this community. For those who were directly affected, the pain is still raw. For those who helped, the exhaustion runs deeper than they admit. And for the rest of us, there's a sense that life shifted a little, that maybe we ought to be paying closer attention to the things that really matter.

Men like Jed Mazour, our outdoors contributor and a man who's spent his life in and around the Guadalupe, felt the weight of it all. Not just the physical work,

but the emotional toll of witnessing what was lost and wondering what could've been done differently. It stays with you. And it changes you.

Jed opens up about his experience in this month's outdoors article, "My Homage to the Guadalupe River Tragedy." I hope you'll take the time to read it. His words carry the kind of honesty and reverence that stick with you. Because behind every headline and photo, there are men who showed up, and some who are still carrying the weight of that day. The question I keep coming back to is this: Who's checking on them?

We live in a world that doesn't really know what to do with strong, quiet men. The kind who don't broadcast their struggles or seek the spotlight. The kind who shoulder the hard stuff without complaint. But even those men, especially those men, need someone walking beside them.

Not just in crisis, but in the daily, ordinary grind of being a husband, father, friend, mentor, neighbor. The grind that wears you down when no one is clapping, and no one is watching.

That's where brotherhood matters.

Not the kind built on shared hobbies or game-day beers, but the kind forged in truth and time. The kind of friendship where you can say, "I'm not okay," and know it won't be held against you. The kind of bond that makes a man better just by being near it. We need more of that. In our churches. In our neighborhoods. In our workplaces. In our homes.

We need men who show up when it matters, and stay even when it doesn't look heroic. We need men who check on each other, pray for each other, challenge each other, and remind each other who they're called to be.

And while the good men get to work quietly and without complaint, there will always be a few who see tragedy as an opportunity. The kind of people who believe you should never let a good crisis go to waste. They'll use

heartbreak to push agendas, expand control, or sell a solution nobody asked for. That's not leadership. That's opportunism dressed up like compassion.

Real men don't use pain to posture. They meet it with presence.

If you've got men like that in your life, thank them. If you don't, find them. And if you don't know where to start, maybe that's your sign to become one of those men for somebody else.

Because at the end of the day, that's the measure of a man. Not how much he carries, but who he carries it with.

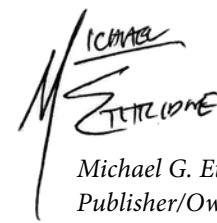
"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."

-Proverbs 27:17

If you're looking for a place to meet those kinds of men, we'd love to see you at The Forum, our monthly men's mixer right here in Kendall County. No pretense, no agenda. Just good conversation, strong coffee (or whiskey), and men showing up for each other.

Here's to the men beside you.

I'll see you soon,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "MICHAEL G. ETHRIDGE". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "M" and "E".

Michael G. Ethridge
Publisher/Owner

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

8.21.25

The Forum IV: The Official Men's Mixer of 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.

9.3.25

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.

9.3.25

Boerne Radio's Pastors Masters Golf Tournament

Boerne Radio 103.9FM
Tapatio Springs Hill Country Resort
1 Resort Way, Boerne, TX 78006
boerneradio.com

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9.4.25

Summer 2025 Fun Shoot

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

9.6.25

VFW Veterans Coffee

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

9.8.25

American Legion General Membership Meeting

American Legion Post 313
Kendall County EMS Bldg
1175 North Main Street, Boerne, TX 78006
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)

9.9.25

VFW Business Meeting

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

9.13.25

Tug The Truck 100 Club of Kendall County

Black Rifle Coffee Company
101 S Main St Ste A, Boerne, TX 78006
100clubkendallcounty.org
Come hang out with us outside of Black Rifle Coffee Company in Boerne, TX and watch teams (including first responder teams) compete against each other to achieve the fastest time pulling a firetruck, and pushing a police cruiser!

9.13.25

Open Bowling

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

9.15.25

Masonic Lodge Stated Meeting

Kendall Masonic Lodge No. 897
897 E Blanco, Boerne, TX 78006
kendalllodge897.org
Monthly Stated (Business) Meeting at 7:30; Supper at 6:30

9.27.25

Mainz Meat Market Grand Opening + BRCC Block Party

Mainz Meat Market + Black Rifle Coffee Company
Black Rifle Coffee Company
101 S Main St Ste A, Boerne, TX 78006
facebook.com/mainzmeatmarket

9.29.25

Tee Off For Our Heroes

Hope for Heroes Texas
Fair Oaks Ranch Golf and Country Club
7900 Fair Oaks Pkwy, Fair Oaks Ranch, TX 78015
hopeforheroestexas.org
Support local first responders while enjoying a day on the green at the 1st Annual Tee Off For Our Heroes Golf Tournament, benefiting Hope for Heroes Texas.

Tuesdays

Trivia Night

Free Roam Brewing Company
325 S Main Street, Boerne, TX 78006
freeroambrewing.com
Trivia, Tacos, Tuesdays!

Wednesdays

Men's Bible Study

First Baptist Church of Boerne
631 S School St, Boerne, TX 78006
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
salvadordobbs.com
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My Homage to the Guadalupe River Tragedy

By Jed Mazour

Over the past couple of weeks, I have been concentrating on ideas for this article. I knew what I needed to write about, but I have been avoiding it. I have endless stories to share of the outdoors, and I enjoy doing so, but the truth is, I feel I owe it to myself and anyone experiencing the same feelings to talk this out, so to speak. There are thoughts and questions many of us share that we can't answer right now. Sometimes burying these will seemingly make them go away. But my heart is telling me to talk about it. We (community volunteers) all have our experiences with this recent tragedy on the Guadalupe River. Some you hear about on the news, others from conversations with locals while cleaning up debris, or just airing things out with friends. I have heard some stories that can haunt a man's life forever. Stories that are so heartbreaking they should only be in a movie and never lived out. Some that will undeniably change the course of the lives of its cast.

This story is mine. I share it with Denise, Cory, Shannon, Matt, and Erin. There was never a question of whether we should be doing something to help. There were only questions like: Where do we start? What time will we start up again tomorrow, and the next day, and so on? As I am writing this, I can feel the uneasiness of my friends. This is not something that any of them would talk openly about, nonetheless, write an article. But like I said, I feel called to do so. The 6 of us, for 6 days, cut our own path down the river from Center Point to Sisterdale. Each day was filled with miles of muddy river banks, mountains of debris, and what seemed like the impossible task of clearing an area, the best we could. Walking away from some of these areas was incredibly difficult, and for some of us, it probably still haunts us. You never could be sure if your best was enough, if it was your best, or when it was enough. Sounds confusing, but there are a lot of you who will uniquely understand this part. In the early parts of our endeavor,

we learned pretty quickly that we had made the right decision. There were times in our search when it was just us as far as we could see. The feeling of just how vast the devastation was and the scale of the search really set in thick. It's a feeling that seemed so hopeless. But it wasn't.

Sunday afternoon, we decided to stop for a meal and replenish some of our energy. Comfort Pizza was open and happens to be one of our favorite stops in the area. The owner, Ty, was extremely generous and bought our lunch. We sat and talked for about an hour, sipping a few cold drinks and calming our nerves. Before long, we pushed off and set out for a special spot on the river. This section happens to be the exact same location we have been kayaking all season, and I even mentioned to y'all in my previous articles about fishing the Guadalupe River. We pulled up to the bridge, and it was completely covered in flood debris. Only two county road crew employees were there at



the time. We talked them into letting us cross the bridge. From there, we moved upriver on foot. That Saturday night, as Denise and I were getting ready for bed, I told Denise, "Something tells me we need to be looking in the same spot we have been kayaking all season. It's a new spot for us and unusual to frequent it so much. Maybe there is a reason?" Well, there was a reason.

Steve Edwards was born in the West Texas town of San Angelo. Happily married to his beautiful bride, Marilyn, for over 50 years! Steve and Marilyn raised twin girls, Allison and Courtney, in Odessa. From my conversations with Courtney, I gathered that her father was a lot like what you might expect from a West Texas gentleman. Born in the Texas desert, he worked in the oil and gas industry until he was able to retire. He was a well-respected man in his industry. Steve was the kind of guy who would have a conversation with just about anyone who would listen. He had a big personality, and I think it's safe to say his heart was just as big. He cherished his girls and adored the time they spent playing tennis. It was something he was NOT going to miss! There were moments that could make him tear up, and I don't think it bothered him. I do think his ability to show emotion was probably important to his girls. Even if it was as simple as a movie like *Hoosiers*. It seems like Steve had really settled into life well at his age. Ranching, watching sports, loving his dogs, and the RV travels with Marilyn. Seemed Steve could always make a friend pretty quickly too. I pictured Steve and Marilyn making new friends at campsites, sitting outside their RV and telling stories with the dogs in tow until dark.

I think not only did all of this fill his heart, but it also completed his journey in a way. Allison and Courtney both reside in Austin and were so lucky to be able to spend time with mom and dad just before the Fourth.

Thank God. I wonder if Steve and I had crossed paths upriver, would we have talked? I'd like to think so. I would probably be dragging my kayak across rocks down to the water. Maybe Steve would be walking his dog and start a conversation with me. Man, do I wonder... As fate would have it, we didn't meet that way....

Closure. What a simple word for such a profound feeling, experience, or moment in your life. I think closure is what we are all looking for in this tragedy. Maybe it's finding it through the ability to bury a loved one with dignity, or cleaning up the river banks along the kids' camps so they can have some normalcy. For me (us), it's getting the chance to know the man Steve Edwards was. That was so important and fulfilling to me personally. It was MY closure.

A question I keep asking myself, "Will I ever be able to look at the river the same? Enjoy it like we used to?" I don't know the answer to that question yet. I will certainly be back out kayaking and fishing the steady waters under the bald cypress trees soon enough. But I don't know how it will feel. I do know that this river is scarred with battle wounds. From the days of the Comanche Indians, Civil War stories, and now the great flood. But she blooms every spring, and the currents keep her clean. That's a gift from God.

Please understand this is just one story, our story. There are hundreds, if not thousands, more. Some with a sense of closure, and some unanswered. If you have a story, consider sharing it with someone you care about. If not, that's ok too. Maybe you can read this article and understand that people know exactly how you feel, even without saying a word. I do. We do.

With love and respect,

Jed Mazour 



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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Uisge Beatha

By Renita Reavis

Memories are instant flashes where all our senses converge, transporting us back to another moment in our past. The smell of an ingredient while cooking. The color of a stranger's hair. The perfect summer coastal breeze in the evening. A song is playing overhead while shopping at HEB. Each of these brief things invokes an emotion. Senses are so closely tied to our feelings that we can easily see why whiskey can bring joy or sadness with a simple sip.

Earlier articles have highlighted various celebratory reasons to buy a bottle. I will continue to encourage you to visit distilleries and whiskey events, not just to try new whiskeys, but to create lasting memories with others. Each of these visits, shared with someone, becomes a binding experience, tying the memory to the smell and taste of the whiskey you enjoyed during that visit. It may not have been your preference at the time, but it will always be a cherished memory when you see the label in the store. Recent events have caused many of us to step back and reevaluate the priceless value of memories. I will always encourage you to enjoy whiskey with others. Whiskey is meant to be enjoyed and not stored on a shelf. Find a reason to open those bottles and create those memories.

The shape of many bottles is filled with brand recognition. They can be spotted without the label. Who needs a label when you recognize some of their unique shapes? These bottle shapes are not just containers; they are linked to people and our experiences. They bring us comfort when we see a bottle that a loved one used to enjoy. The color of the liquid may be that perfect shade of harvested hay from a wonderful year, or a tinge of amber closely resembling a favorite pet's fur. Already, the simple shape and color of a bottle, what we see, evoke memories and a sense of warmth and nostalgia. It's a joy to recognize these familiar shapes and colors, as they instantly connect us to our past experiences and loved ones.

The cork is popped, or the screw top is off. Finally, pour into the glass. Rushing to smell that perfume of whiskey burns your nose like the inexperience of youth, or rushing to get through something painful. Slow it down. Slow it down even more. Gently bring it to your nose. Open your mouth as if you are sighing in delight. You are getting ready to smell the most delicious thing in the world. Take your time. Now, slowly inhale with your mouth open. See how it changes from one side of your nose to the other. Close off one side of your nose and switch sides if needed. Give your brain a chance to process what you are smelling. Floral gardens, hay fields in summer, cut wood, baking spice, campfire smoke, lemon varnish, and many other things may come to mind when you slow it down and give yourself a chance to think about it. This will be the first time that you want to put words to what you are saying. What do you remember smelling like this from your memories? Think in broad terms until you have trained your sense of smell to verbalize what you smell. Have you noticed that you started to taste the whiskey without a sip?

You are now finally ready to take that sip. Treat it as if it is the hottest coffee. Tiniest of sips. Hold it on your tongue as if you are letting an ice chip melt away. Notice how the whiskey feels on distinct parts of your tongue as if it were a grid: front, mid, sides, and back. Tingling on the sides is an excellent indicator that it is a rye or Red-Hot candy. Softness may mean there is wheat, as if you had a bite of soft wheat rolls. Spiky sharpness may mean younger. Rounder feelings come with age. Do you taste the raw pie dough your favorite aunt made? What about licking the spoon after making mixed stone fruit jams? How about the overall taste of barbecue smoke? Light floral summer feelings? Deep fruitcake Christmas warm celebrations. Do you taste celebrations, comfort, or brooding loneliness? Even if you have not named flavors in your whiskey. How do you interpret the flavor?

As you continue your whiskey appreciation journey, you can find whiskey flavor wheels online. These tools are designed to help you identify and understand the various flavors you might find in any style of whiskey. Just as you take your time when buying groceries to select new ingredients, studying their smell and taste, or slow down during the holidays to savor all the bountiful items that are enjoyed with the holiday feasts, you can use these flavor wheels to enhance your whiskey tasting experience. By memorizing the flavors, they turn into memories poured into a glass, enriching your whiskey appreciation journey.

Remember, it takes a long time to make whiskey. It is only fair to give it some time to enjoy. Whiskey is a culmination of science, art, hope, and prayer, all bottled up and poured out before you. By taking a moment to appreciate the journey that each sip of whiskey represents, you not only enhance your enjoyment but also deepen your understanding of this complex and beautiful spirit. This patience and appreciation are key to mindful drinking, allowing you to savor the flavors and aromas and solidify memories that last longer than the bottle. Whiskey has long been believed to be the water of life, Uisge Beatha, but it flows with our memories. KG



Renita Reavis, a 15-year Boerne resident and Army veteran, is a whiskey enthusiast passionate about craft distilleries. She holds an Executive Bourbon Steward certification and Whiskey Sommelier Level 1, blending her love for unique flavors with rich experiences, friendships, and mentorships in the whiskey world. renita@thekendallgentleman.com



Kevin Klaerner:

A Legacy of Service

By Jonathan Mallard

Kevin Klaerner's roots in law enforcement run deep. His great-great-uncle John Klaerner, great-grandfather Alfred Klaerner, and grandfather Hugo Klaerner each served as Sheriffs of Gillespie County. "Continuing that family tradition is something I take great pride in," he said. "It drives me every day to uphold the values they lived by."

Now a Kendall County Sheriff's Lieutenant, Klaerner has carved his own path. "Law enforcement today requires new tools, new approaches, and a deep understanding of the communities we serve," he said. "I've worked hard to build a career that honors their example

while adapting to the evolving challenges." For Klaerner, the work is personal. "This isn't just where I work, it's home," he said. "This is where I'm raising my family, where my kids go to school, and where we're building our lives." His son Logan, who has special needs, has been embraced by the community. "That only deepens my commitment to give back and protect it with everything I have."

Klaerner's approach to leadership was shaped early in his career by a sergeant who told him, "If you're not a part of the solution, you must be a part of the problem." That line stuck with him. "It made me realize that it's not enough to just show up and do the job," he said. "You have to be actively engaged in making things better." Whether it's stepping up for a coworker, improving communication, or taking on difficult tasks, Klaerner says that mindset still drives how he leads.

He first encountered Hope for Heroes Texas when founder Brad Cornell was still developing the idea. "From that very first conversation, I knew he was onto something big," Klaerner said. "It wasn't just about the programs. It was about the greeting, the way they welcomed and treated every hero and their family." Even the monthly luncheons make a lasting impact. "These gatherings are more than just meals. They provide us with a vital opportunity to break bread together, share experiences, and build camaraderie," he said.

As Kendall County grows, Klaerner sees the sheriff's role as one that must adapt while remaining grounded in core values. "The sheriff is now not only a law enforcement leader, but also a communicator, strategist, and public servant," he said. "In Kendall County, that balance between honoring our heritage and preparing for the future is critical."

Brad Cornell put it simply: "Kevin is the kind of leader that shows up early, stays late, and brings the calm presence his people need in every situation. He's the one you want on the other end of the radio when everything goes wrong. His faith, his humility, and his willingness to serve set the tone for his entire department." In a profession where presence matters, Kevin Klaerner leads with quiet strength and unwavering purpose. **KG**



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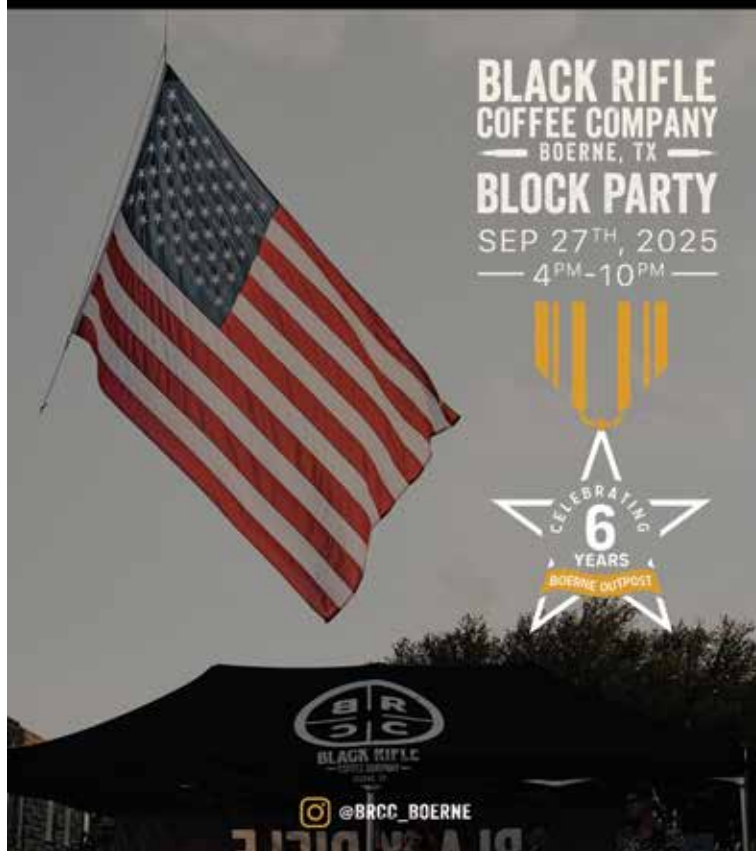
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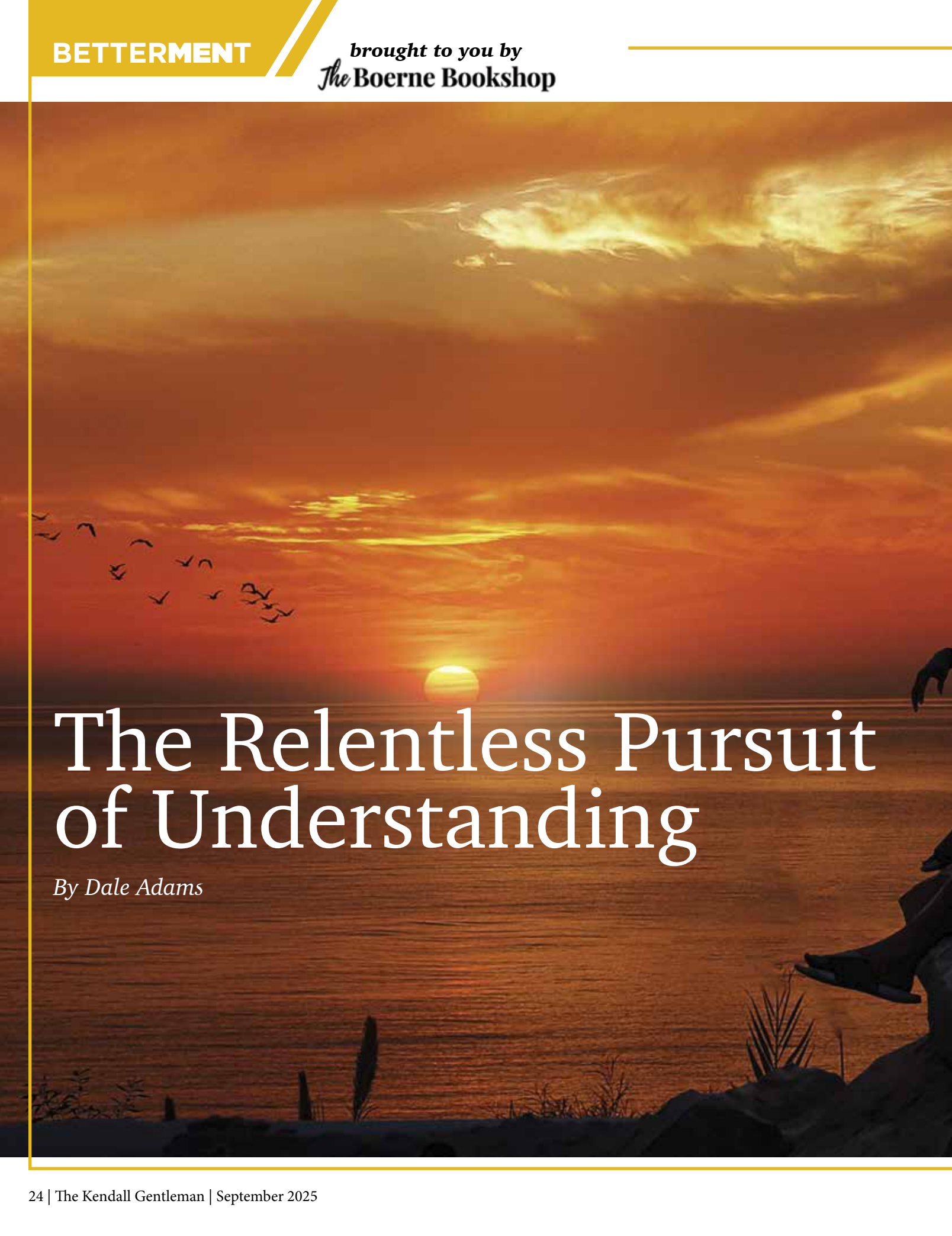


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The Relentless Pursuit of Understanding

By Dale Adams



When I was young, I liked to take things apart to see how they worked. Unfortunately, they didn't work as well when I put them back together. Nowadays, I tend to suppress my urge to dismantle unless there is a problem. Which still gives me frequent opportunities to see how things work, since nothing is made to last. But for those more important contraptions, I go to YouTube to see how other guys have taken things apart. This has improved my put-back-together success rate considerably.

Trying to comprehend how various things work, and the world in general, is something men have been doing for time immemorial. It is an important aspect of what makes us men. And it's not just mechanical contraptions. I sell more history, philosophy, and business books to men than to women. The need to master what is going on around us is a critical part of the role of being a provider. In order to provide, we must know 3 things: what is available, how to get it, and how to prepare it for family use. This need is why men must constantly strive to figure out everything about the world they live in. Success comes from capability, which comes from understanding.

In today's post-subsistence world, grasping iPhone app functionality may have replaced tracking a deer, and navigating the I-10/1604 interchange may have replaced reading the weather, but nothing can replace a general understanding of the world. It is still a man's duty to constantly seek to make sense of our world, regardless of how crazy it gets. In fact, today it is more important than ever for us to understand even more about the world. Not only must we decipher how more contraptions in our home work, but we need to understand the ways of the wider world in order to prepare our children for wherever they may go.

The need for men to understand the world is becoming more critical than ever. You may not have noticed but fantasy is becoming more and more common in all aspects of our society, from books and movies to games and decor. There is nothing wrong with fantasy per se, but I believe its pervasiveness in today's society shows a developing disconnect between reality and how we interpret reality. Arthur C. Clarke once said, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." I think we are on the cusp of that now. Many people view magic and science in very similar ways. Very few people realize how their cell phone works, and fewer have any inkling of how ChatGPT functions

(but we all know how to use them). I would even go so far as to say that people today understand their world less than people did 50 years ago. We may be able to recite the correct incantation to get tomatoes magically delivered to our doorstep, but we don't even know what a tomato plant looks like, much less grow one.

Don't take that road. Tap your innate masculine curiosity to discover how everything works.

There are many ways to seek knowledge, but being curious is how it starts. The next step is to observe and listen. When I was young, I would watch the ants and small insects to try to figure out how their world worked. Today, I watch traffic patterns and development around Boerne to try to grasp how the flow works and what community developments would be the most beneficial. As a citizen of this community, I have a duty to provide input on these issues, and as a man, I have a responsibility to lead (in my small way) our community to a continuously better future. I also engage in conversations. Not so much to tell others my opinion but to learn from them. In fact, I would even go so far as to say that the stereotype of the silent man comes from the fact that men are listening and learning rather than engaging in small talk.

I will always seek understanding, whether asking probing questions, reading a history of The Great Game, or just taking things apart to see how they work. And I will listen because everyone knows something I do not. And I will discuss because other perspectives enhance my view of the world. But most of all, I will always be in awe of this incredible world we live in. I relish the new things to come and the windows into the past. A past that amazes me in how it teaches us about our world today. I encourage you to join me in the relentless pursuit of understanding and use that understanding to make our world a place where our children can achieve any dream they choose to pursue. **KG**



Dale Adams has lived a life rich in experiences, having called various places across the U.S. home. Alongside his wife, Jaye, he's raised three wonderful children. Now settled in the beautiful hills outside Boerne, Dale owns The Boerne Bookshop, where his passion for stories and community thrives. dale@thekendallgentleman.com



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Just Stay Down

By Coach Stan Leech

“Though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again...”

– Proverbs 24:16

In 2009, Boerne High School reopened its doors, and with it, the heartbeat of a small-town tradition came back to life. We had closed the school for a calendar year while it was remodeled. And with that return came the need for a head football coach.

We hired Dane Johnson.

Coach Johnson was young, hungry, and carried with him the pedigree of excellence. He had graduated from the legendary Southlake Carroll High School—a place where winning wasn’t expected, it was required. In fact, 33 seasons later, his name and image are still displayed on the wall of their indoor facility—a lasting tribute to his impact as a legacy contributor in football. After high school, he went on to play for four years at Texas Tech University, where he made his mark as a quick, fearless defensive back and return specialist. Before coming to Boerne, he served as the defensive coordinator at Lewisville Hebron, helping lead the Hawks to the 2005 UIL 4A Division 2 State Championship. He was sharp, confident, and ready for his first head coaching opportunity.

Not long after we hired him, we attended a Rotary Club meeting where Coach Johnson was being introduced to the Boerne community. He stepped up to the microphone with that mix of humility and charm that would soon win over the town. He smiled, and told the crowd about the day I first called him to schedule the interview.

It was 2009 back when most of us still had home phones. His wife, Jill answered and walked into the other room, saying “-Dane, it’s Coach Leech.”

Being a proud Texas Tech alum, Coach Johnson’s heart skipped a beat. For a moment, he thought it was Mike Leach—the iconic, eccentric head coach of the Red Raiders. He raced to the phone in excitement...only to hear my voice on the other end.

The room laughed, and so did I. That little story stuck—not because it was funny, but because it was honest. We were both in the right place at the right time. Boerne needed a respected leader to re-launch a football program that played its first game in 1924. And Coach Johnson needed someone to believe in him—to give him the opportunity that would become the first chapter of a long and impactful coaching career.

The 2009 Greyhounds were, for all practical purposes, a junior varsity team playing what we called an “outlaw” schedule—a patched-together list of opponents made up of other new programs, JV teams, and anyone willing to fill a Friday night slot, it was anything but traditional.

It was humbling.

Most varsity programs didn’t want to schedule us. And truth be told, we didn’t blame them. We were too young, too green, and too in-between. We needed eight games to build a season, but we only had seven. Then, the phone rang.

It was Lake Travis. They had won the state championship in 2007 under former Boerne Head Coach Jeff Dicus, and then again in 2008 and 2009 under Chad Morris—going 16-0 in 2009 to claim their third straight title.

Yes, THAT Lake Travis. The one rolling through Texas 4A football like a freight train. State championship caliber. Future college stars everywhere. Their coach needed a non-district game, and nobody was saying yes—because nobody wanted to count that kind of loss on their schedule. But we needed a game. They needed a date.

Coach Johnson came into my office that day. He knew what he was walking into. We talked it over. Made some calls. And after a little pause and a deep breath, we said, “Let’s do it.”

We were going to play Lake Travis.

I’ll never forget the Friday morning before that game. It was early—7:00 a.m. ---and we gathered at St. Helena Episcopal Church basement off Johns Road. Parents brought breakfast casseroles. Coaches poured coffee. Administration and players bowed their heads in prayer. There was something sacred about that basement, the same age as the original Boerne High School built decades before on that same street. There was laughter, encouragement, and beneath it all, a quiet sense of reality.

And then Coach Johnson stood to speak.

Now, I’ve heard a few pregame speeches in my day. Speeches that fired you up. Speeches that calmed you down. Speeches



that made the hair on your arm stand up. But that morning, what Coach Johnson said wasn't about winning or losing. It wasn't about game plans or matchups. It was about something deeper.

He turned to an old movie—Cool Hand Luke.

He told our young Greyhounds the story of Luke, the prisoner who just wouldn't quit. The guards beat him. The system tried to break him. Dragline, the toughest man in the camp, beat him to the ground—over and over. But Luke kept getting up. Again, and again. Until even Dragline, fists bloodied, and heart cracked open, begged him to stay down.

"But he wouldn't," Coach Johnson said "Because sometimes, the only way you gain respect in this world is by refusing to stay down. Even when you're outmatched. Even when it hurts."

He looked around the room, at a group of boys about to take the field against giants.

"You might not win tonight," he said. "But you can earn their respect. Don't stay down."

That night, the Greyhounds played their hearts out. They lined up against the best team in Texas and never blinked. Sure, the scoreboard told one story—but the heart on display told another. Every tackle. Every block. Every moment those kids stood tall against the onslaught—it mattered.

Lake Travis won the game. But Boerne walked away with something too—identity.

It was the night a team was forged in fire, not medals. A group of boys played with a grown man's heart. A coach made his mark, and a school remembered what it meant to be the Greyhounds.

In life, there will always be games where you're outmatched. Moments where people expect you to crumble. Days where the world says, "Just stay down."

And maybe, sometimes, staying down is the wise move. But more often, the quiet voice of conviction inside of us knows better.

Get up.

Even when it hurts.

Especially when it hurts.

Because there's a kind of respect in this work that isn't handed out with a victory. It's earned on the days you refuse to quit.

Just stay down?

Not this time.

"Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Galatians 6:9 **KG**



Coach Leech, now in his 40th year with Boerne ISD and 27th 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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BREWING BOLD FAITH IN BOERNE

The Casey Barker Story

Story & Photography By Jonathan Mallard

In the heart of Kendall County, Texas, where the Hill Country's rugged beauty meets the warmth of community, a simple coffee shop stands as a testament to faith's transformative power. Barker and Wortman Coffee is more than a place for a morning brew; it's a sanctuary where an eight-foot cross looms on the wall, a symbol of one man's redemption. On Good Friday of 2020, as the world grappled with the uncertainty of a global pandemic, Casey Barker felt a divine call. In his kitchen, with his wife Lori thinking he'd lost his mind, he built that cross, carried it to his shop, and nailed it to the wall, declaring, "It is finished. He is risen." The sound of the hammer echoed his resolve, a moment of raw faith that would spark a journey reaching millions. This is the story of Casey Barker, a man who rose from despair to become a beacon of hope, rooted in family, faith, and purpose.

Casey's roots run deep in Texas, a ninth-generation descendant of pioneers who helped found Kerrville in the 1880s. Yet his early years were far from settled. "I've been in like nine different places," he said. "I was born in Ohio... went to Pennsylvania till I was 11, went to Michigan until I was 18, came back to Texas." By the time he returned at 18, he carried the weight of a restless childhood and a sense of not belonging. "My whole family was from the Deep South... I came from a blue-collar family... and was living in a very affluent area in Michigan. I just never quite fit in there." But it was at 22, in 2011, that life truly tested him. His first marriage collapsed when his high school sweetheart left him for another man.

"She took everything I had. And I mean everything—furniture, money, everything." Heartbroken and alone in Pipe Creek, he spiraled into depression, alcoholism, and addiction. "I was drinking every day, working in nightclubs, and depressed... nothing was making me happy. The money didn't make me happy. The women didn't make me happy. The drinking wasn't making me happy. Nothing was bringing joy or satisfaction in any way." Then, one night, everything changed. "The Lord came to me... and said, 'You chose this life. When are you going to follow me?'" Casey fell to his knees, repented, and surrendered. "I took everything in my house I shouldn't have had... put it in a burn barrel, and burned it that night. And I was never the same."

In that darkness, in Pipe Creek, Texas, a moment of grace broke through. One night, drunk and broken, Casey felt God's presence, a voice piercing his despair: "You chose this life. When are you going to follow me?" It was a reckoning. He surrendered, repented, and burned his alcohol and harmful possessions, vowing never to return to that life. This salvation experience was a lifeline, pulling him from the abyss. At the Boerne Home Depot, where he faced termination, his newfound faith turned things around. Within a year, he earned three promotions and an executive award, proof of a life transformed.

But Casey felt a higher calling. In 2012, he co-founded Barker and Wortman Coffee with his close friend Sean, a brother-in-faith whose shared vision turned a simple

coffee shop into a vibrant ministry. Their bond, forged through years of mutual encouragement and a deep commitment to God's work, became the foundation for something extraordinary. "Sean has been a great influence on my life," Casey said. "We would spend time together just talking about the Lord and life... he is like a brother to me." Together, they transformed the shop into a spiritual haven, distributing over 7,000 Bibles to customers seeking hope. They filled the air with worship music, offered prayers that sparked salvations, and witnessed miracles, including healings from cancer. "God wanted us to establish territory," Casey says, his eyes lighting up at the memory of lives changed over a cup of coffee. The shop became a cornerstone of Kendall County, a place where strangers became family, faith deepened, and community thrived, reflecting the heart of the Hill Country.

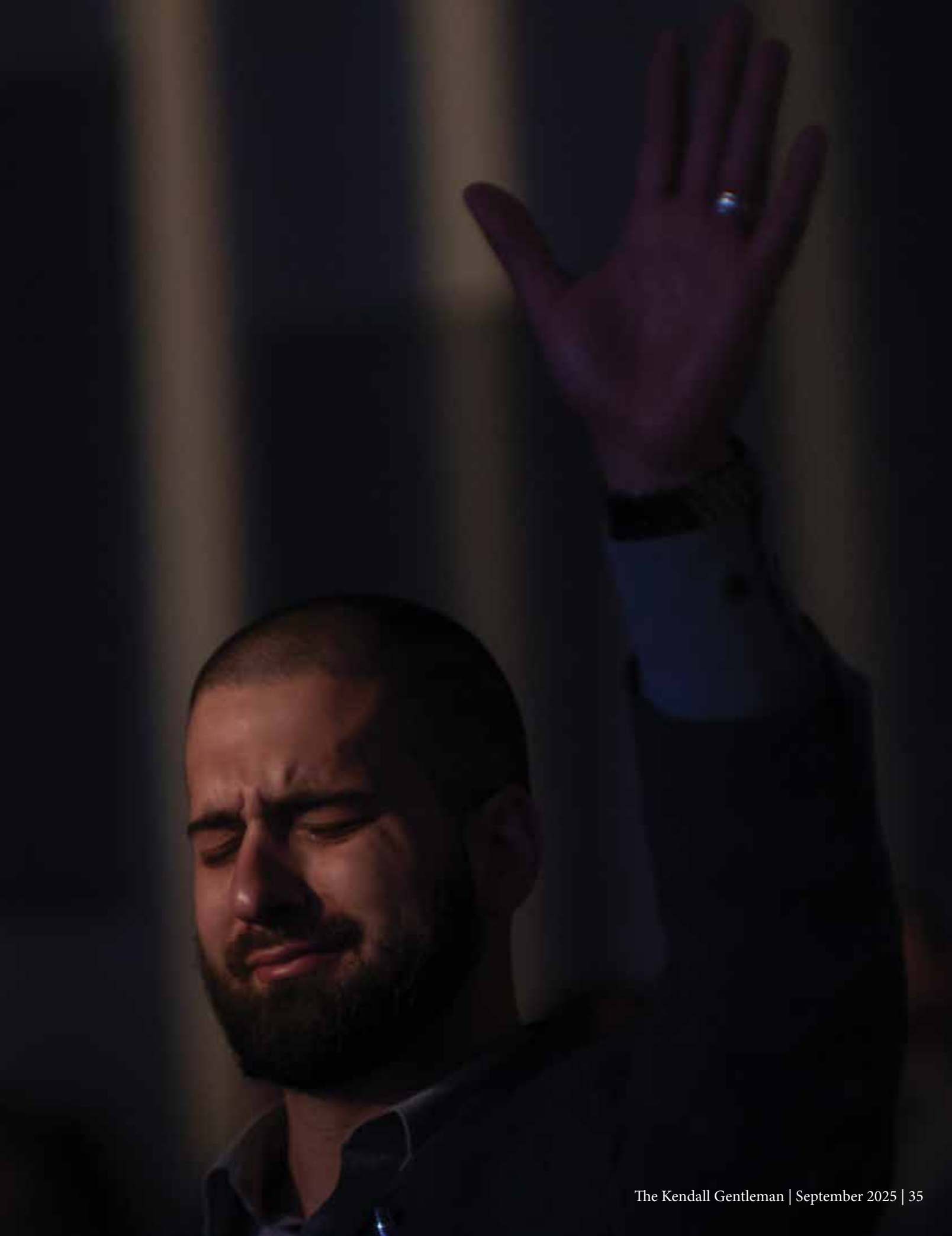
Family remains Casey's anchor. Married to Lori, with two young children, he calls

his family his primary ministry. "If I fail at home, nothing else matters," he says, a lesson learned through experience. Early in his ministry, he sometimes stretched himself too thin, letting the demands of service pull him away from Lori and his kids. Inspired by the biblical teachings of Paul Washer, a pastor known for emphasizing that a man's first duty is to lead and love his family, Casey shifted his focus. "I've learned to say no sometimes, to protect what's most important, my family," he reflects. He now fiercely guards his time, ensuring his wife and children come first. The tenderness in his voice when he speaks of Lori's support or his kids' laughter reveals a man who knows what's at stake.

The cross he nailed up in 2020 wasn't just a symbol; it was a catalyst. The day after Good Friday, Casey felt God urging him to preach on TikTok. His first video, a passionate preaching message, went live, earning a comment that dubbed him "the next online evangelist." That spark ignited a wildfire.

Today, with over 617,000 TikTok followers, Casey reaches up to 10 million people monthly, sharing the gospel and biblical truths. His videos, raw and heartfelt, call Christians to stand firm in a world of shifting values. One live stream during the pandemic saw 40 people in South Africa come to salvation, a moment so overwhelming that Casey wept after signing off. "It was so powerful," he says, still moved by God's reach through a simple screen.

Casey's boldness carried him to unexpected stages, like the 2023 VICE News panel, "Be A Man: Modernists and Traditionalists Debate Masculinity | VICE Debates." As the lone traditional Christian voice among a diverse group of modernists and cultural commentators, he stood unwavering, defining manhood through the lens of Jesus, humble, self-sacrificial, yet resolute. "The Bible offers a clear vision for manhood: humble, self-sacrificial, driven by principle and standing for what's right. That's what







I live by,” he declared, his words cutting through the debate’s clamor. Far from nervous, Casey saw the platform as a divine opportunity to share the gospel in a world grappling with identity. The experience revealed a deep cultural confusion, a generation adrift from biblical truth, which both sobered and strengthened his resolve. “It was discouraging to see so much confusion,” he admits, “but an honor to stand for what I believe.” That moment, like the cross on his shop’s wall, marked him as a man unafraid to stand alone, a beacon of clarity in a fractured dialogue.

Casey’s journey isn’t without challenges. Hate mail, threats, and dirty looks test his resolve, but he’s learned to brush them off, focusing on God’s call. “You can’t engage with the noise,” he says, a lesson born from experience. His ministry thrives on stories of impact: a man freed from hearing voices after praying with one of Casey’s videos, or locals finding hope in his shop’s prayer sessions. These moments fuel him, reminders of why he presses on.

Yet the demands of ministry once threatened to consume him. “I became a yes man, agreeing to everything,” he confesses. God

challenged him to pull back, to protect what matters most. Now, Casey starts his days in a sacred room at home, coffee in hand, immersed in prayer and scripture. He blocks out family time on his calendar, ensuring Lori and his kids aren’t sidelined. “I’ve learned that I can’t do it all,” he says, his voice steady with conviction. “I have to trust God with the outcomes and focus on what He’s called me to do today. That means saying no sometimes, even to good things, to protect what’s most important, my family and my relationship with God.”

Casey Barker’s life is a testament to redemption’s power. From a broken man in a nightclub to a faith leader touching millions, he embodies the spirit of a true Kendall County gentleman, one who rises from ashes, loves deeply, and serves humbly. His coffee shop, with that cross still standing tall, remains a beacon for the lost, a place where faith and community converge. As he looks to the future, Casey’s heart is clear: “I want to be remembered as someone who loved Jesus and loved people.” And perhaps that’s the clearest measure of who The Kendall Gentleman is not a title earned through success or polish, but through grace, grit, and a life poured out for others. **KG**



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Customs & Manners

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.*

One day when I was about eight or ten years old I was walking down the street near Williams Drug Store. I saw mother's friends, Laura Bell Theis and Alice Kutzer, sitting in a car and turned my back so as to appear that I did not see them. By the time I got home, mother called me in to say that the ladies had

called and reported that I had walked right past them without saying hello. Back at that time even the smallest things were held sacred and a responsibility to be upheld. Nowadays a young person, whether they recognize you or not, will take a shot at you as they go by (bird or gun). I might have done the same thing but I knew that Sheriff Edge would know who did it even before the echo died down. **KG**

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The Sage of Sisterdale:

Ernst Kapp and the Enduring Legacy of a Texas Hill Country Visionary

By Tom Allred, Sr.



Nestled deep within the picturesque embrace of the Texas Hill Country, the small community of Sisterdale often conjures images of rolling hills, meandering rivers, and a tranquil escape from the bustling world. Yet, beneath its serene surface lies a rich tapestry of history, woven with threads of intellectualism, philosophical daring, and a tenacious spirit of independence. At the heart of this unique narrative stands Dr. Ernst Kapp, a figure whose remarkable journey from a Bavarian scholar to a Texas frontier pioneer profoundly shaped the identity of Sisterdale and left an indelible mark on the intellectual landscape of early Texas.

Kapp's story is not merely a tale of emigration; it is an odyssey of conviction, a testament to the enduring power of ideas, and a vivid illustration of how European intellectual currents found fertile ground in the rugged Texas wilderness. His contributions, from establishing a pioneering health spa to leading a radical abolitionist society, illuminate a fascinating chapter in Texas history that challenges conventional perceptions of frontier life.

From Bavarian Scholar to Texas Exile: The Genesis of a New Life

Ernst Kapp's life began on October 15, 1808, in the quiet town of Ludwigstadt, Bavaria. His early years were marked by a fervent pursuit of knowledge, culminating in a doctorate from the prestigious University of Bonn. There, he had the privilege of studying under the renowned geographer Carl Ritter, a formative influence that would later manifest in

Kapp's expansive worldview and his comparative studies of human societies and their environments.

However, Kapp was not content to merely observe the world from an ivory tower. A man of deep liberal convictions, he became a vocal critic of the oppressive despotism prevalent in 19th-century Europe. His pen, a powerful instrument of dissent, ultimately led to his prosecution for sedition over an article published in 1849. Facing political persecution and an increasingly untenable intellectual climate in his homeland, Kapp made the momentous decision to seek refuge and a new beginning across the Atlantic. In 1849, he, along with his family, embarked on the arduous journey to Texas, a distant land promising the elusive ideals of freedom and self-determination.

This act of emigration was not merely a physical relocation; it was a profound ideological statement. Kapp, like many other German intellectuals of his time, was drawn to Texas by the promise of a society where enlightenment values—reason, liberty, and human dignity—could flourish unhindered by the autocratic regimes of Europe. This influx of educated and politically engaged Germans, often referred to as the “Forty-Eighters,” would significantly contribute to the cultural and intellectual diversity of early Texas.

Badenthal: A Haven of Healing and Holistic Wellness

Upon his arrival in Texas, Kapp wasted no time in establishing roots in his new home. In 1850, he acquired property in the nascent community of Sisterdale, among the lands originally purchased by Nicolaus Zink. It was on his tract, formerly belonging to George Holekamp, that Kapp embarked on an ambitious and forward-thinking venture: the establishment of the Badenthal Hydropathic Clinic.

The name “Badenthal,” meaning “natural spring valley,” was a direct nod to the very essence of the spa. Kapp shrewdly recognized the therapeutic potential of the local mineral springs, a resource that would become the cornerstone of his innovative health retreat. At Badenthal, he, along with Dr. Rudolph Wipprecht, offered a unique blend of water-cure treatments and gymnastics, embracing a holistic approach to health and well-being that was remarkably progressive for its time.

The Badenthal spa quickly gained a reputation as a minor health retreat, drawing in settlers from Sisterdale and the surrounding communities seeking relief from various ailments and a renewed sense of vitality. For roughly a decade, it served as a hub of wellness and a testament to Kapp's entrepreneurial spirit and his belief in natural remedies. The spa's operation, however, was ultimately curtailed by the tumultuous outbreak of the Civil War, which disrupted life across the state and led to its closure.

Remarkably, the physical legacy of Badenthal endures to this day. The original log home and patient quarters, silent witnesses to Kapp's pioneering efforts, remain standing. Both Badenthal and an 1893 limestone schoolhouse nearby are now listed within the Sisterdale Valley historic district, preserving a tangible link to this unique chapter of the region's past and offering a glimpse into the early blend of German intellectualism and wellness culture that defined Sisterdale.

The Crucible of Ideas: Sisterdale's Intellectual Core

While the Badenthal spa was a significant undertaking, it was perhaps Kapp's intellectual leadership that truly solidified Sisterdale's unique identity. In 1853, he was elected president of Der Freie Verein, or “The Free Society,” a German-Texas organization rooted in abolitionist and free-thinking ideals and based in Sisterdale. This group, far from being a mere social club, was a dynamic intellectual force that would profoundly impact the political discourse of Texas.

In 1854, Der Freie Verein convened a statewide convention during the annual Sängersfest in San Antonio. It was here that the society publicly articulated its radical and progressive platform, calling for:

Abolition: A bold and unequivocal demand for the end of slavery, a deeply contentious issue in pre-Civil War Texas.

Free and Secular Education: Advocating for public education accessible to all, independent of religious dogma.

Equality: Championing equal rights for all individuals, regardless of their background or beliefs.

Direct Presidential Election: A call for greater democratic participation and a more direct voice for the people in national politics.

This audacious platform, a beacon of enlightenment in a conservative state, provoked a statewide backlash. Yet, it also cemented Sisterdale's reputation as an intellectual haven, an enclave of German settlers who, despite their frontier surroundings, fiercely championed abolition and promoted the very enlightenment values that had led Kapp and his compatriots to Texas. Sisterdale fast became a hub of political and philosophical discourse, a testament to the power of collective intellect and moral conviction.

Life on the Frontier: Challenges and Resilience

Despite his intellectual pursuits and the operation of his spa, Kapp's life in Sisterdale was far from an academic idyll. Like all settlers in the Texas Hill Country, he confronted the harsh realities of frontier life. He engaged in agriculture, livestock raising, and the demanding hands-on work of establishing a new settlement. Historical accounts paint a vivid picture of this existence, noting that his farmhouse featured a fortified iron-nailed door, a stark reminder of the ever-present threat of Comanche raids.

The frontier was a volatile environment, and safety was a constant concern. Evidence of this peril can be found in records of ranch thefts, including instances of horses being stolen from Kapp and his neighbors in 1858. These realities underscore the resilience and adaptability required of pioneers like Kapp, who balanced intellectual endeavors with the practical demands of survival in a rugged and sometimes dangerous landscape. The few settlers who did have agricultural experience often found themselves learning anew, adapting European farming techniques to the unique climate and soil of the Texas Hill Country.

A Return to Academia and a Lasting Intellectual Legacy

The ravages of the American Civil War profoundly altered the trajectory of many lives in Texas, and Ernst Kapp's was no exception. In 1865, as the conflict drew to a close, Kapp made the decision to return to Germany. Ill health, a persistent companion in his later years, prevented him from ever returning to the Texas frontier that had been his home for nearly two decades.

Back in Germany, Kapp re-entered the world of academia, establishing himself in Düsseldorf. It was during this period that he produced some of his most influential and enduring works, solidifying his

reputation as a profound and original thinker:

Vergleichende allgemeine Erdkunde ("General Comparative Geography," 1869): This monumental work reflected his early training under Carl Ritter and showcased his expansive understanding of geography as a discipline that encompasses not only physical landscapes but also human societies and their interactions with the environment.

Grundlinien einer Philosophie der Technik ("Fundamentals of a Philosophy of Technical Science," 1877): This groundbreaking treatise is arguably Kapp's most significant contribution to intellectual thought. In it, he introduced the revolutionary idea of tools as "organ projections," arguing that technology serves as an extension of human capacity and faculties. This concept, remarkably prescient, predated and anticipated the theories of later media theorists such as Marshall McLuhan, who would popularize the idea that "the medium is the message" and that technologies extend human senses. Kapp's work laid foundational groundwork for understanding the profound relationship between humanity and the tools it creates, a topic that remains critically relevant in our technologically advanced world.

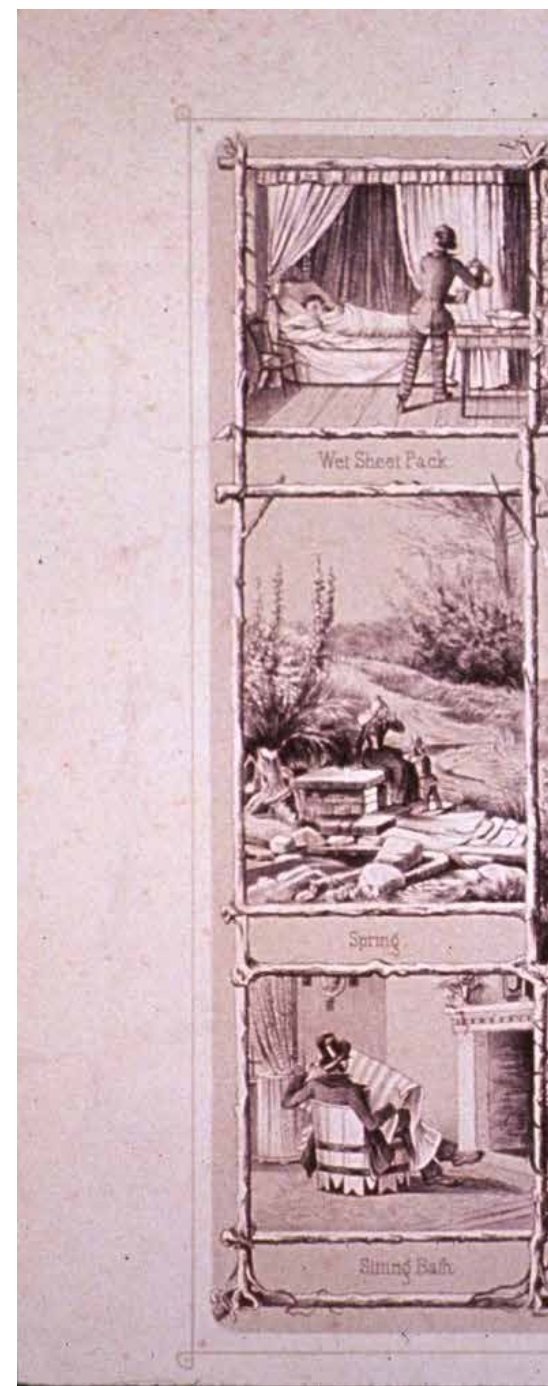
Ernst Kapp passed away on January 30, 1896, in Düsseldorf, leaving behind a legacy that transcended continents. His intellectual contributions were recognized in his native Germany, where he is included in the Allgemeine deutsche Biographie, the German equivalent of the Dictionary of American Biography, a testament to his lasting impact on German intellectual history.

The Enduring Significance to Kendall County and Sisterdale

Ernst Kapp's story is more than a historical footnote; it is a vital part of the fabric of Kendall County and Sisterdale, resonating with profound cultural and symbolic importance:

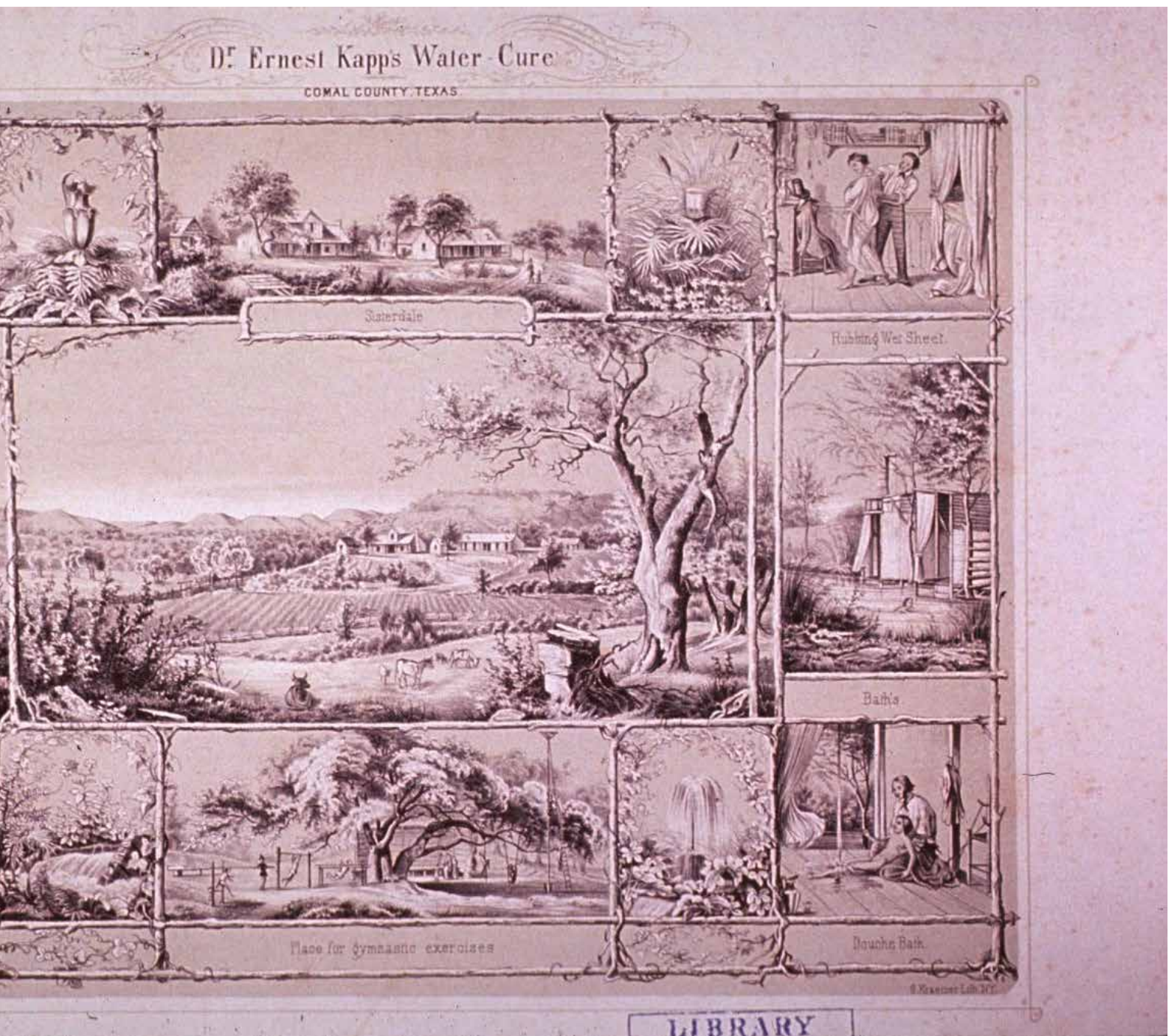
Cultural Anchor: As both an intellectual leader and the proprietor of the Badenthal spa, Kapp profoundly shaped Sisterdale's identity as a liberal, free-thinking enclave. He helped to cultivate an environment where intellectual discourse was valued and progressive ideals were openly discussed and promoted.

Symbolic Importance: The preservation of the Badenthal site and its original log home stands as a powerful symbol of Sisterdale's early and unique blend of



German intellectualism and a forward-thinking wellness culture. It represents a tangible link to a time when European ideas found new expression in the American West.

Historic Resonance: The legacy of Der Freie Verein's radical abolitionist platform contributed significantly to Sisterdale's reputation and, ultimately, to the region's complex and often challenging confrontation during the Civil War era. The sentiments fostered by Kapp and his peers, who bravely advocated for Unionist beliefs in a deeply divided state, are honored by the Treue der Union Monument (Loyalty to the Union Monument), a powerful



memorial in Comfort, Texas, dedicated to German Texans killed for their Unionist convictions. This monument stands as a poignant reminder of the moral courage and sacrifices made by those who, influenced by figures like Kapp, championed freedom and justice against the tide of prevailing sentiment.

In a world increasingly shaped by technology and the ongoing pursuit of well-being, Ernst Kapp's ideas on "organ projections" and his pioneering efforts in holistic health feel remarkably contemporary. His journey from a persecuted European intellectual to a visionary Texas pioneer serves as a compelling reminder that the pursuit

of knowledge, the courage to challenge established norms, and the unwavering commitment to ideals can take root and flourish even in the most unexpected corners of the world. The serene hills of Sisterdale, touched by the spirit of Ernst Kapp, continue to whisper tales of intellectual daring, a testament to the enduring legacy of a true sage of the Texas Hill Country.

Attribution:
Texas State Historical Association
Wikipedia
txgenweb.org & txgenwebcounties.org
The Portal to Texas History 



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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