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DECEMBER 2025 | ISSUE 11 :: VOLUME 1

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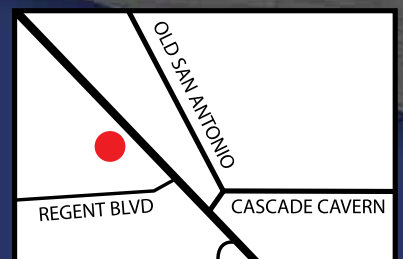
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Publisher Michael G. Ethridge

Creative Director Ben Weber

Director of Photography Jonathan Mallard

**Photographer &
Social Media** Emily Pfeiffer

Sales Austin Fanning

Intern Brayden Church

Contributors Tom Allred, Sr.
Clay Smoot
Stan Leech
John Eddie Vogt
Frank Addington, Jr.
Stephani Risinger

www.thekendallgentleman.com
sales@thekendallgentleman.com
info@thekendallgentleman.com

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 Standard We Keep

Over the past few months, I've spent a lot of time thinking about standards. Not the kind codified in rule books, but the kind we used to carry within us. The ones that shaped how we looked, spoke, worked, and lived. Somewhere along the way, we've let too many of them slip.

When I was in school, young men were held to a higher bar. We were expected to dress with respect, show up on time, and carry ourselves with pride. You couldn't just skip class or talk back without consequence. If your grades fell, you didn't get a pat on the back and a participation ribbon. You repeated the class. There

were prayers before football games, shirts tucked in, and teachers who didn't flinch when they demanded more from you.

Gone are those days.

Today, schools add more electives, more stress, and more "awareness weeks," but fewer real expectations. Truancy isn't criminal anymore. Dress codes are optional. Accountability is negotiable. And we wonder why so many young men drift without direction.

The truth is, young men crave structure. They need challenge, discipline, and

high standards to push against. When expectations are lowered, they don't find freedom. They lose purpose. But when they're held to something higher, they rise every time.

Take a look at Joe Liemandt's Alpha School. They flipped the traditional model upside down and started expecting more from their students, not less. The results speak for themselves. Their kids are performing in the top one percent nationwide. Not because they made school easier, but because they raised the standard and refused to bend it.

That's the kind of mindset we need to bring back at home, in the classroom, and in the mirror. Not perfection, but purpose. Not punishment, but pride.

As we step into Christmas, it's worth remembering that the highest standard ever set came from a carpenter's son born in a manger. Jesus didn't come to make life easier. He came to call us higher - to live with humility, courage, faith, and conviction. He showed us that real leadership begins with service, and that the strength of a man isn't measured in power, but in obedience.

This Christmas, maybe our gift to the next generation of young men should be a return to that standard. Let's teach them that discipline is love, that expectations are opportunity, and that grace never means lowering the bar. Let's stop mentoring to the lowest common denominator and start lifting boys toward the men they're meant to become.

Because when we hold one another to a higher standard, we all rise. Every time.

Merry Christmas,

Michael G. Ethridge
Publisher/Owner



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

11.19.25

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

The Kendall Gentleman
Kendall Point
20 Guthrie Rd, Boerne, TX 78006
www.thekendallgentleman.com
Join The Kendall Gentleman for The Forum VII at Kendall Point. From 5:00–8:00 PM, enjoy an open-invite evening of fellowship, conversation, and community as we celebrate the men of Kendall County - and those who stand beside them.

11.20.25

Men's Night

Free Roam Brewing Company
325 S Main St, Boerne, TX 78006
www.freeroambrewing.com
Featuring Boerne's legendary welding technologies teacher, Dorman Vick, speaking about the national movement to bring vocational education to the schools.

11.28.25

Dickens On Main

City of Boerne
Main Street Boerne
www.holidaysinboerne.com/dickens-on-main
Kick off the holiday season at Dickens on Main, Boerne's premier holiday celebration, happening Thanksgiving weekend, November 28 & 29. Main Street shuts down, and the Hill Country Mile transforms into a vintage Christmas wonderland, featuring live music, performances, visits with Santa, ice sculpting, and snow along Main Street.

12.4.25

Pub Poll Game Night

Tapatio Springs Hill Country Resort
1 Resort Way, Boerne, TX 78006
www.tapatiosprings.com
Join the fun at Pub Poll Game Nights, happening every first Thursday of the month at Tapatio Springs Hill Country Resort! The games start at 6:30 pm and are free to play, offering a fantastic night out filled with laughter and friendly competition.

12.6.25

Veterans Coffee

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

12.6.25

Chili Cook-Off

Comfort Golden Age Center
628 Front St, Comfort, TX
www.comfortgac.org
The Comfort Golden Age Center will host its 8th Annual CASI-sanctioned Chili Cook-Off starting at 9:00 am, with the chili contest starting at 2:00 pm.

12.8.25

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)

12.9.25

VFW Business Meeting

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

12.12.25

Boerne Bright

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12.12.25

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1 Resort Way, Boerne, TX 78006
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12.13.25

Open Bowling

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

12.15.25

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

12.20.25

Texas Driven Shooting Series

Joshua Creek Ranch
132 Cravey Rd, Boerne, TX 78006
www.joshuacreek.com
Experience the thrill of traditional driven pheasant and mallard shoots in the scenic Texas Hill Country with the JCR Texas Driven Series at Joshua Creek Ranch. This fall and winter lineup features seven open-line shoot dates from October 4, 2025, through January 1, 2026, offering a mix of standard and high-volume shooting experiences for upland bird enthusiasts.

12.27.25

Tour the Old Jail Museum

The Old Jail Museum
208 E. San Antonio Ave, Boerne, TX 78006
www.thejail.org
Built in 1887, the Kendall County Historic Jail served for 100 years as the county jail. It has recently been restored, and is open for tours the second and fourth Saturdays of the month from 10am to 4pm. Adult tickets are \$5, and kids under 10 and Law Enforcement get free entry. KG

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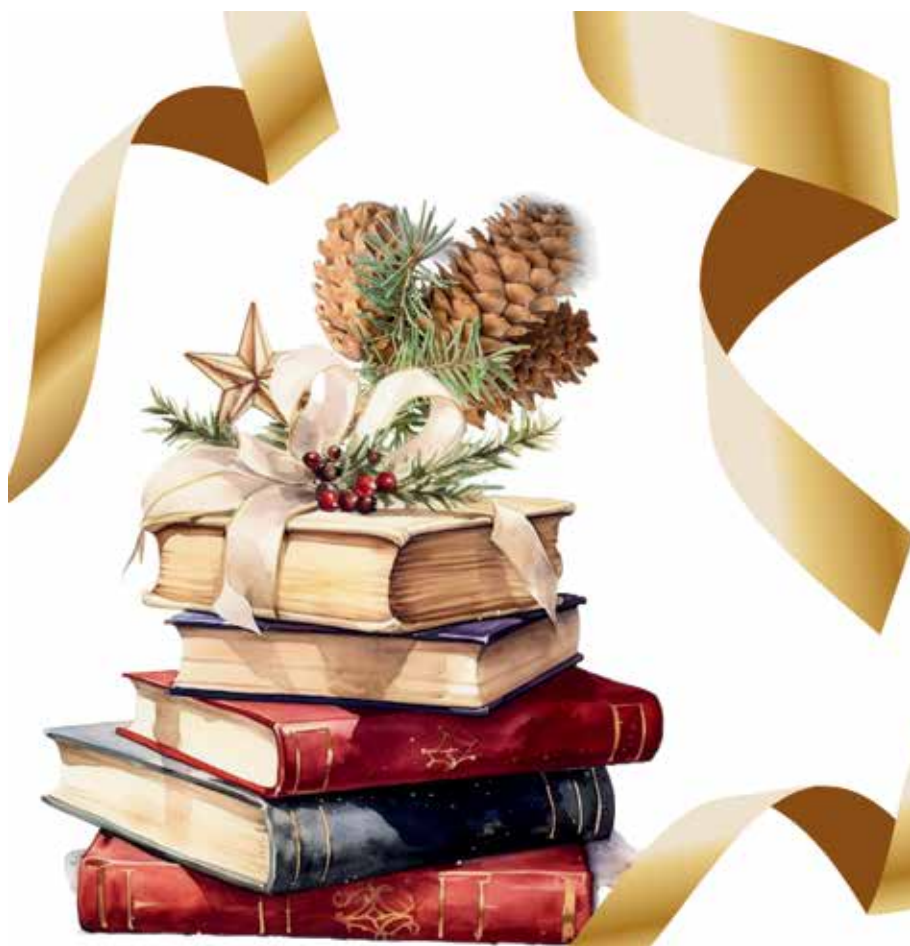
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The Art of Saying HOWDY

By Frank Addington, Jr.

Texas is known as a friendly state. In our early days when folks lived out on ranches, town was where people came to get supplies, do a little dancing and visit neighbors at a dance hall on Saturday night and attend Church on Sunday. Technology and screens have changed our lives so much.

In a day of screens, skipping the store to have everything from dinner, groceries, and about anything else delivered to your door, it's getting easier to skip human connection and communication. When people do venture into public often they are glued to a screen. While it's a convenience, it can never take the place of human interaction.

Everyone now wants instant gratification. They push a few buttons on a phone and things appear. It's so easy nowadays to get lost in this technology. They even have sites online now to date, and that's an entire conversation. I've even seen young people out on a date sitting across from each other, each looking at their screen and maybe texting friends but not talking to each other.

A text or email is quick. But trust me your mom would much prefer a phone call. She wants to hear your voice. In my last column I wrote about sending handwritten notes. I guess in this column I'm encouraging you to stop and smell the roses. You can google roses, read about them, watch videos about them but it won't take the place of actually smelling the roses.

Life is so brief in the big scheme of things. We are all only here for a little while. Let's make the most of it and take it all in.

I love to go to HEB. It's not so much about getting groceries as seeing neighbors, the staff and people from the community. The folks at my local HEB have become friends. We visit and chat for a few minutes. We catch up. Share jokes or talk about the news

of the day. The post office, the dry cleaners, and others stops around town allow the ability to say HOWDY to your neighbors. We are social in nature and in my opinion life is better by those you meet along the way.

I do archery exhibitions and sell ranches for a living. The shows have allowed me to meet folks from all walks of life, from singers, entertainers, movie stars and even a President. The ranch real estate career has also allowed me to meet interesting folks. I simply love people. A stranger is simply a friend you haven't met yet.

As a Christian, I also feel that it's my duty to try and reflect His light in my interactions with people. Maybe the sales clerk has had a rough day. Maybe things at home are tough. You don't know what the struggle or battle they may be fighting. A kind word and smile can lift them up. I once heard it said that Jesus went about life doing good. So as a follower, if a simple Howdy or smile can lift someone up it's the least I can do.

As a cigar smoker, I'm convinced the appeal is that we sat around a campfire talking in our early days. A cigar requires at least an hour of time, set aside to sit back and enjoy the time and conversation. Hunting stories, football, politics you name it but it's that human interaction that offers relaxation and enjoyment. It's very relaxing and I don't smoke cigars often but when I do I enjoy the company and discussions that follow. Democrats and Republicans may get along better if they'd simply sit down and over cigars discuss and debate the topics of the day and part as friends.

Unfortunately keyboard warriors find it easy to say mean spirited things that they'd likely never say in person on social media. Then friends get blocked, unfriended etc all over unkind words that should have never been said. Social media can be fun but it can

also allow folks to forget we are all human, we all have flaws. Sometimes it can also make others jealous. Maybe the lifestyle of a person may seem glamorous and make us feel our own life is boring. Sometimes that's human nature.

As a gentleman who aspires to be a good man, take the lead. Have family meals at the table and don't allow gadgets, talk with each other. Shop local, visit with folks and say a kind word to those you meet. Talk with your children about not being a part of mean spirited conversations about others on social media apps or in text chains. Teach them to be kind and courteous, and walk away from anything they feel is evil or mean spirited.

As the Christmas season is upon us, take the time away from your phone and gadgets long enough to speak to others. Shop local mom and pop retail shops, not only to support them but to interact with neighbors. These folks live in your neighborhood and it's nice to do business with people you know. Speak to strangers and offer a kind word when you can. Say Merry Christmas to the clerk at HEB and mean it. Not only will it make their day, but the smile and kind words you get back can lift you as well. KG



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



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For Kendall County Sheriff Al Auxier, the badge has never been about authority. It has always been about service to God, to community, and to the men and women who stand beside him. His journey into law enforcement began nearly forty years ago and continues today, guided by the same principles that first led him to raise his hand and swear an oath to protect others.

“My 25 years with DPS laid a strong foundation rooted in public safety, discipline, and professionalism,” Auxier said. “I spent decades patrolling Texas highways, responding to emergencies, and building meaningful relationships within the communities I served.”

Born with a heart for service, Auxier knew early on that he wanted to help people. After graduating from the Department of Public Safety Academy in 1987, he began his career as a Texas DPS State Trooper, joining a long tradition of men and women who kept the state’s roads safe. Over time, his role expanded from traffic enforcement to crisis response and community partnership, and he found that what mattered most was people.

“You can see a lot in 25 years,” he said. “The wrecks, the tragedies, the moments where families’ lives change forever. Those experiences teach you humility. They remind you why compassion is so important in this work.”

After a quarter century with DPS, Auxier felt called to bring his experience home. “Over time, I felt led to serve at the local level where I could make a direct and lasting impact,” he said. “After much prayer and reflection, I decided to run for sheriff, beginning my first term on January 1, 2013. It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve this community.”

Auxier’s leadership philosophy, however, is rooted in a much earlier and deeper transformation. “The most defining moment in my life was the day I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior,” he said. “My belief in the Bible is the foundation of my leadership values and principles. Everything I do comes back to faith, accountability, and treating others with respect.”

Faith & Service

Sheriff Al Auxier

By Jonathan Mallard

Leading with Purpose

Over his years in law enforcement, Auxier has seen change come quickly to Kendall County. “While the foundation of protecting and serving remains unchanged, today’s sheriff must also be a communicator, collaborator, and problem solver,” he said.

He describes the job as both an honor and a heavy responsibility. “This is the community where my family and friends live, where my roots run deep,” he said. “Every decision I make as sheriff is guided by a commitment to protect and strengthen the very community that helped shape who I am.”

As the county grows, his role has evolved. “We have had to adapt without losing the values that make this place special,” he explained. “That means investing in technology, expanding training, and building partnerships with local organizations and neighboring agencies.”

Equally important to Auxier is the well-being of his deputies. “Our citizens expect a high level of service, and our team takes great pride in delivering that,” he said. “But our deputies are human beings with families, emotions, and limits. Taking care of our team is essential to taking care of our community.”

He ensures his department has access to peer support, chaplain services, and counseling. “If we do not take care of our own, they cannot serve effectively,” he said. “When our employees are at their best, they serve at their best.”

Leadership, he believes, requires presence and humility. “Law enforcement comes with a lot of highs and lows,” he said. “During difficult seasons, I lead with compassion, communication, and faith. We talk often about being a family, and that means standing with each other through every situation.”

A Sheriff of Faith

Faith, for Auxier, is not something reserved for Sundays. It is a daily practice that informs every decision. “The work we do often involves high-stress and traumatic situations,” he said. “For many of us, faith

becomes a foundation of strength and hope during those times.”

He encourages his deputies to seek balance physically, mentally, and spiritually. “While spirituality is a deeply personal journey, we recognize its importance,” he said. “We try to create an environment where all forms of support, faith-based or otherwise, are respected.”

That faith also defines his view of leadership. “Leadership is about people,” he said. “It is about knowing your team, listening to them, and setting an example that others want to follow. I try to model servant leadership in every decision I make.”

The Role of Community

Auxier believes the strength of Kendall County lies in its community support. “We are fortunate in Kendall County in that the community we serve strongly supports first responders,” he said. “Hope for Heroes Texas is an extension of that community support. This partnership allows us to reach out to other law enforcement communities where that strong sense of support is not as evident.”

He often points to small gestures as the foundation of that bond. “A simple thank you goes a long way,” he said. “But getting involved by attending events, participating in the Citizens Police Academy, or volunteering helps citizens truly understand the challenges first responders face.”

Organizations like Hope for Heroes Texas have become an important part of that connection. “I first heard about Hope for Heroes Texas from Brad Cornell as he was getting the organization off the ground,” he said. “From the start, it was clear his heart was in the right place. His passion for supporting first responders was genuine and lasting.”

One of the most visible parts of that mission has been the monthly luncheons the organization hosts for first responders. “Those gatherings might seem simple, but they mean a lot,” Auxier said. “They give our team a chance to take a breath, share a meal, and know they are appreciated by the people they serve.”

He sees Hope for Heroes Texas as part of a larger movement to strengthen those who serve. “They help address the unseen emotional and spiritual needs of first responders,” he said. “It is not just about recognition. It is about building resilience.”

Legacy of Service

After nearly four decades in uniform, Sheriff Auxier remains deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve. “I hope to leave a legacy built on integrity, compassion, and a genuine commitment to others,” he said. “I have always tried to put people first, to make decisions rooted in fairness and respect, and to wear the badge with honor.”

He hopes the next generation of law enforcement in Kendall County continues to view their work as a calling, not a career. “Never forget that this job is about service over self,” he said. “Lead with integrity. Listen more than you speak. Carry the badge with humility. The heart of this work is about people.”

Message from Brad Cornell

Brad Cornell, founder of Hope for Heroes Texas, describes Sheriff Auxier as the embodiment of servant leadership. “Sheriff Auxier’s faith, humility, and compassion define his leadership,” Cornell said. “He represents what it means to serve with purpose. Hope for Heroes Texas exists to support leaders like him, people who give everything to their communities and remind others that true strength comes from service.”

KG



Jonathan R. Mallard is a retired U.S. Army Sergeant and Combat Medic who served with the 772nd Forward Surgical Team, 101st Airborne Division, providing lifesaving care in Iraq and Afghanistan. After more than a decade with the 36th Infantry Division, he now captures stories of faith and community through photography across the Texas Hill Country while pursuing a Theology degree at Grand Canyon University. jonathan@thekendallgentleman.com

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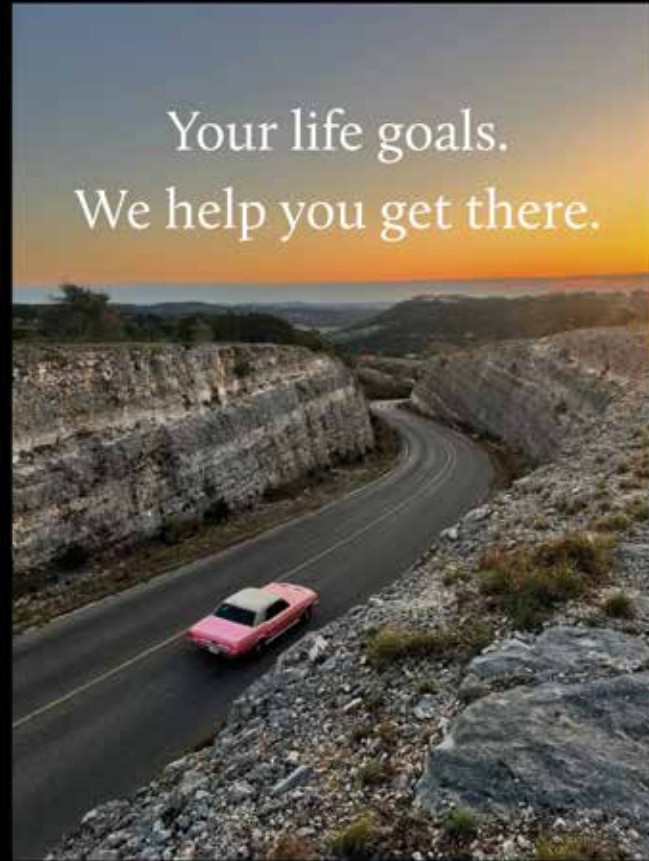
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Oliva Serie V Melanio Maduro

By Clay Smoot

This month's review by Mr. Clay the Cigar Guy from The Cigar Society is the Oliva Serie V Melanio Maduro.

I try to smoke at least one cigar a day, as it is part of my "calming" routine. Sometimes that smoke is on the way to a meeting, getting on a video conference or after a long and exhausting day of being me. If you know me or follow my social media, then you know exactly how much truth there is in the statement of "being me". It's a lot. It is now my favorite time of year, and my favorite time to smoke a cigar outside. If you have read my previous reviews, you probably know by now that I am not a fan of the hot weather. So, when the seasons start to change from fall to winter, I relish it with the joy of someone who understands it is time for a dark, full bodied, maduro cigar outside in the crisp fall breeze or the light chill of our Hill Country winters. It truly is, for me, a time that makes me think, "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas."

I was introduced to this cigar a little over four years ago. During that time, it has

solidified itself as one of six maduros that I'll smoke during this short season. In 2021 a cigar from this series, but a different size (6.5 x 52, Torpedo), won 2021 Cigar of the Year. In my opinion the flavors of the two cigars are pretty much identical. I choose the Toro instead of the Torpedo as I am not the biggest fan of the torpedo shape. It is my preference and nothing more.

The Serie V Melanio Maduro is made by the Oliva Cigar Company that was founded in 1886 in Pinar Del Rio, Cuba. This cigar is made from a blend of Nicaraguan Sun Grown tobacco in the Jalapa region of the country. It is then wrapped in a Mexican Maduro leaf from the lush San Andres Valley. This unique cigar is sure to satisfy the highest expectations of Maduro cigar smokers.

Wrapper – Mexico
Binder – Nicaragua
Filler – Nicaragua
Size – 6x52 Toro

I will be pairing this cigar with a chilled glass of Anejo Clasico Puerto Rican Rum by Havana Club. Rum or coffee is my preferred drink with a dark maduro cigar. I grab my cigar from my big humidor; I take it outside to relax in the cool breeze (I think it's the first of its kind so far this year) and sit in the sun in my backyard. I grab my small cigar punch, make my hole and turn down the flame on my torch. I rotate my cigar clockwise, then counterclockwise to ensure that the whole end is lit evenly and correctly. I approach this cigar with the excited expectations of a child opening presents on Christmas morning. Except, I know what I am going to get this year when I "unwrap" this cigar.

Once lit, I take a deep drag on this cigar, and the hit of a rich espresso flavor is unmistakable. It is immediately followed by a strong pepper taste, that is long lasting and prominent. As I start to get a little closer to the middle, more earthy tones like oak and cedar start to emerge and really bring the first third of this cigar to a wonderful balance.

In the middle of this cigar, the pepper starts to let up a little bit and is not so prominent. I notice the beginning of a very slight sweet aroma to form, but it doesn't last long. However, the sweet creamy taste of chocolate and a hint of caramel are starting to emerge.

The last third of this cigar is a delicious smorgasbord of all of the flavors. The pepper starts to poke its spicy little head out, the espresso hits the tongue with a quick, but lasting punch as if to say, "hey, remember me?" The creamy chocolate espresso taste, with a hint of pepper is delivered in a nicely gift wrapped package down the chimney with love by Santa. It is topped with a delicious Christmas bow made of cedar and oak and the anticipation of smoking this cigar is comparable to the anticipation we all got as kids on Christmas Eve as we eagerly awaited an early rising on Christmas Morning to unwrap all of the deliciousness that awaited us.

Pairs Well With

Black Coffee
Espresso
Single Malt Scotch
Dark Rum
Lager
Red Wine – Cabernet Sauvignon or Malbec

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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Vikings & Dolphins

By Coach Stan Leech

If you grew up in the 60's and 70's, you know what really started the Christmas season. It didn't begin with the first cold front. It didn't start with a tree going up in the living room. It didn't even start with Big Crosby singing White Christmas on the record player.

It started with the Sears & Roebuck catalog.

That big, heavy book would land in the mailbox sometime in the fall, and my brother Brad and I would snatch it up like it was made of gold. Forget the tools, the drapes, and the kitchen appliances – we went straight for the toy section...even more specifically, the NFL pages.

There were pajamas, bedsheets, jerseys, pennants, and most importantly – helmets.

Most boys in our little Texas town were Cowboy fans. In fact, everybody was a Cowboy fan. Roger Staubach, Bob Lilly, Calvin Hill – those names were legendary. But Brad and me? We were thinking a little differently. I wanted something that would stand out on South Pecos Street, something that made people say, “Now that's cool.”

I was the sports nut in the family. My heart belonged to the Miami Dolphins of Bob Griese, Jim Kiick, and Larry Csonka. They were smart, they were tough, and that teal-and-orange leaping over a sun helmet logo was unlike anything else. Plus, they were dominating the NFL in those years.

I even remember wearing my Dolphin tie tack on Super Bowl Sunday – proudly – in the middle of a church sanctuary filed with Cowboy fans. It happened to be the Super Bowl when Dallas played Miami, which made my tie tack even more noticeable. I enjoyed every second of the attention.

Brad? He didn't care who the quarterback was or how the team was doing. He just loved that fierce Viking helmet – deep purple with the bold white horn curling along the side.

The weeks crawled by.

One afternoon, I took a sneaky peek in the trunk of the family car. My heart sank. There was no way those helmets were in there. I braced myself for disappointment.



That year, we were spending Christmas in Goldthwaite. Grandma Alice had a small living room with a simple, beautiful tree. On Christmas morning, we ran in and started opening gifts...but there were no helmets under the tree.

We kept unwrapping – shirts, socks, games, and candy – all good things, but not the thing I had been dreaming about since the day the Sears catalog arrived.

And then it happened.

My dad walked in holding two boxes.

Dolphins. Vikings.

Christmas was complete.

I tore open my Dolphin helmet and wore it immediately. Brad did the same with his Viking helmet. We wore them all day – through breakfast, through lunch, and even



when Grandma tried to talk to us. That Christmas became one of those “forever memories” – the kind that stays crystal clear half a century later.

Fast forward about 52 years.

Both our parents had passed, and it was time to clean out the old house. Brad was up in the attic when he found them – our two helmets, carefully packed away. They looked almost exactly as they had that Christmas morning, except the Dolphin helmet’s white had faded into a warm yellow from years of Texas attic heat.

Brad brought them down, set them in the garage, and we just stood there smiling. Without saying a word, we each grabbed our helmet – him the Viking, me the Dolphin – and took them home. Mine now sits upstairs with other special keepsakes. Every time I see it, I’m ten years old again.

It’s funny what people attach to Christmas. For some, it’s a song, a smell, or a movie. A lot of folks – for reasons I’ll never quite understand – call *Die Hard* a Christmas movie. I just smile and let them have it.

For me, it’s a *Wonderful Life*. The older I get, the more I understand it. It’s not about tinsel or presents – it’s about the truth that each of us touches far more lives than we realize, and the joy that can be found in the people we love, even when life doesn’t go as planned.

So, what’s Christmas for me? It’s family. It’s Grandma Alice’s living room in Goldthwaite. It’s the joy of opening the one gift you thought you weren’t going to get. It’s a worn old Sears & Roebuck catalog. And yes...it’s a Miami Dolphin helmet.

But more than any gift I ever found under a tree, Christmas is about the greatest gift ever given – the birth of Jesus. That quiet night

in Bethlehem changed the world forever. Helmets fade, toys break, catalogs get thrown away...but the hope, peace, and joy of that first Christmas remain, offering life that never fades.

Merry Christmas. 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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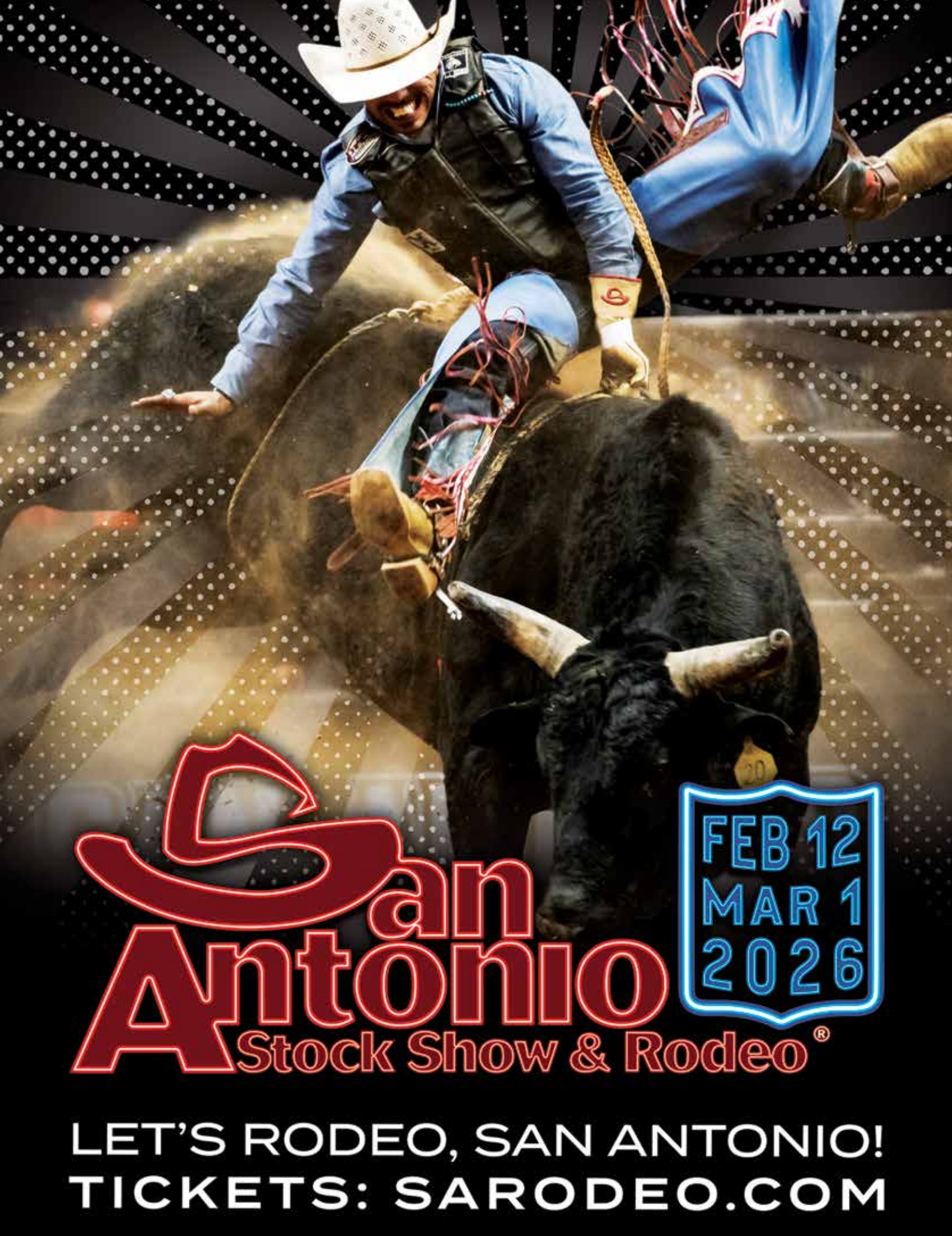
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NEVER, EVER GIVE UP

The Man Who Dug Deep And Saved Texas Water

*By Michael G. Ethridge
Photography by Jonathan Mallard*

If you drive east of Boerne, where the land begins to rise and the trees crowd closer to the road, you'll see a stretch of fence that tells you exactly who lives there. Simple white signs with bold red letters, speaking the kind of truths that make people honk, grin, and nod their heads. They belong to Donald "Donny" May, a man who has never been afraid to stand for what he believes in.

Those signs aren't for attention. They're for expression. "They're my only voice," Donny says. "I put them out there for folks who think like I do but don't have a platform. It lets them vent a little. Maybe they honk, maybe they smile, and maybe they go home feeling a tiny bit better. They're not alone."

That's the kind of man Donny is. A quiet leader. A hard worker. A man who has built more than businesses. He has built a legacy rooted in faith, family, and a love for Kendall County that runs as deep as the limestone beneath it.

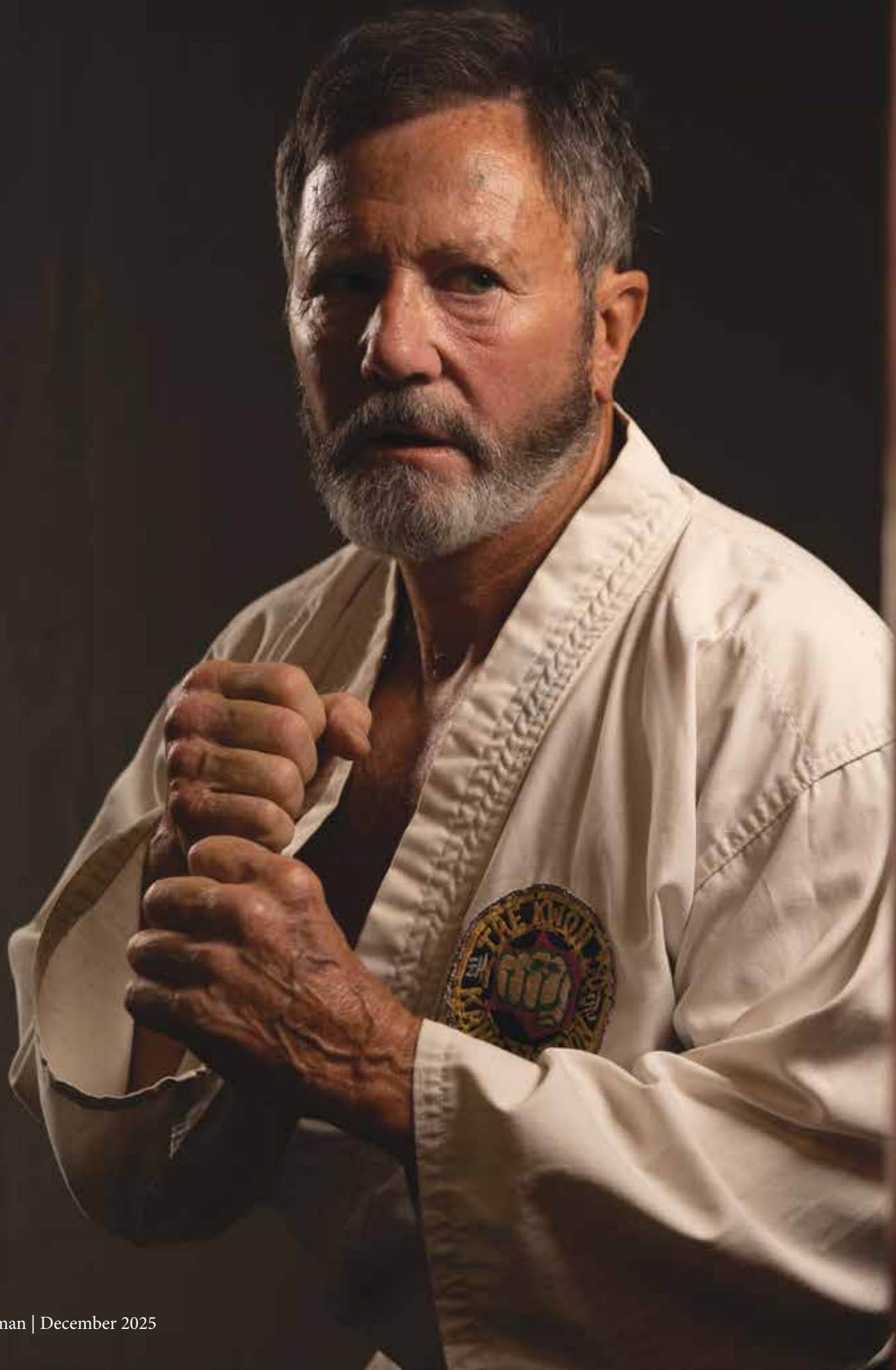
Raised on Faith and Grit

Donny's story begins with two people who shaped him more than anyone else. "My dad, Donald Sr., was raised during the worst of the Depression," he says. "He grew up in Kingsville in a big Catholic family of sharecroppers. They were extremely poor. At sixteen, he got his pilot's license by working odd jobs at the airport. At eighteen, he joined the Air Force and served in the Pacific during the Korean conflict."

His father's love of flying took root in him, too. "He passed that into my genes," Donny says. "I became a pilot in my thirties. I still love to fly. He was a great Christian man in every sense of the word."

Donny's mother is just as important to his story. "Mom is a strong Baptist. She made sure we were in church every Sunday at Castle Hills Baptist. She was a stay-at-home mom, but she spent her days volunteering for





CASA, helping rescue abused children. She's still alive, still sharp, and still the same strong woman she has always been."

He pauses before adding, "I was fortunate to have such great Christian parents."

He also speaks with affection about his siblings. "I still have one sister, Sherri, and my little brother Gary. We all get along great. Gary's the kind of guy who'd literally give anyone the shirt off his back. I am so blessed."

Those lessons of faith, family, and grit stayed with him. They formed the foundation of every business and every decision that would follow.

The Years That Shaped Him

After graduating from Marshall High, Donny attended UTSA. "I graduated in 1981 with a business degree in accounting," he says. "That was the worst year to enter the workforce because we were coming off the Jimmy Carter depression. I got a job as a ditch digger and fuel system worker with my wife's uncle. Anything to put food on the table."

That job might have looked humble, but it became the starting point for something extraordinary.

"I'll never forget the day it all changed," he says. "I was digging a ditch by hand in downtown San Antonio, uncovering a buried fuel tank. I stood up in the hole, my head just sticking above ground. I saw four sets of shiny shoes with men in suits holding briefcases. They were the guys I'd graduated with from UTSA, all of us accounting majors. They started laughing. They were belly laughing at me. It was the insult I needed. That was the spark. I wanted to cover myself up in that hole and disappear, but

instead, I decided right there that it was time to start my own company. That was divine intervention."

That day in the dirt changed everything.

Building from the Ground Up

Donny had always been an entrepreneur. "When I was nine, I had a mowing service," he says. "I opened an account with E.F. Hutton and met with my broker every month to talk about investments. I'd ride my bike to the library to read up on different companies. I didn't make much because commissions ate up most of it, but I learned the system."

That curiosity turned into innovation. With his background in accounting and hands-on field work, Donny began to see how fuel systems could be improved. "My uncle-in-law had a company that installed underground fuel systems. I was making five dollars an hour, but with my math background, I started developing more sophisticated leak detection methods. Eventually, Tami and I started our own company performing precision leak testing."

In those days, there were no environmental regulations. "Back then, you only fixed leaks if they hurt your profits," he says. "We wanted to do it right. We wanted to stop the leaks before they ruined anything."

They were good. In fact, they were the best. "Shamrock was a fledgling company then," he says. "They recognized the value of finding and preventing leaks. They used us exclusively and really put us on the map."

That success led to bigger opportunities. "Because of our database of testing results, the EPA contracted me to help determine how many leaks existed and how bad they

were. That became the sole study the EPA used to write the regulations for underground fuel systems. It was a game changer.”

As the industry evolved, Donny saw a new opportunity. “After that, I decided to step into cleanup. I formed a drilling company to help engineers install systems to capture the liquid hydrocarbons leaking into our drinking water. It required knowledge, licensing, safety training, and specialized equipment. The barrier to entry was high, but that’s why we excelled. We covered most of the market.”

He smiles when he talks about the men who worked for him. “We gave every single client our best effort. Our motto was simple: good enough is not good enough. After thousands of projects, we never had a major injury or accident. We cleaned up countless spills that were headed into aquifers. One of our biggest local jobs was drilling around Kelly and Lackland. My crews worked in space suits with supplied air. Thank God we were able to give those homeowners their lives back.”

He leans back for a moment. “In retrospect, if I’ve done anything for the betterment of the community, it’s that we prevented an unknown number of contaminated aquifers and fixed others that were already ruined. That’s something I’m proud of.”

Eventually, he sold the company, now part of Alamo1. “It was God’s company,” he says. “That’s why it was protected and successful.”

The Woman Who Made It Possible

Every story of success has a backbone, and in Donny’s case, it’s his wife Tami.

“She was divine intervention,” he says quietly. “She was the shadow force that kept everything together. She is so smart, so hard-working. Without her, our companies would have failed. I got the credit because I was the

front man, but I know the truth. Without her, I’d still be operating a shovel.”

When their first company went public, the auditors from Ernst and Young were stunned. “They told us it was the best small company they’d ever audited,” he says. “Everything was perfect. That was all Tami. I married a beautiful blonde, thinking she was just cute. Turns out she’s an accounting genius.”

Together, they raised two children who share their parents’ work ethic. “Kristin and her husband Jeremy run Kendall Point,” he says proudly. “Jonathan owns Mayday Investigations. Both are entrepreneurs, just like their mom and dad. We’ve got five grandkids, from four months old to sixteen. They’re all blessings.”

Faith and Fortitude

Donny’s success didn’t come without resistance. “We’ve been harassed by agencies for years,” he says. “Federal, state, local, you name it. I believe it’s because we fight for what’s right. We never give up, and we realize freedom isn’t free. The day you give in to government bureaucracies, you become part of the problem. That will never happen in the May family.”

His signs along Highway 3351 are part of that same conviction. “They give people hope,” he says. “Hope that they’re not the only ones who feel this way.” He laughs when he talks about the times pilots have called him from above. “I’ve even plowed messages into my hayfields. You can see them on Google Earth. One pilot friend told me he flew over my field, and the whole plane started guffawing. I guess I made a few snowflakes melt that day.”

For all his toughness, Donny’s words always circle back to gratitude. “Always include God in every venture,” he says. “Be honest







and fair. Give more than you promise. Take care of your employees because they are the company. And never, ever, ever give up.”

He looks out toward the ranch, quiet for a long moment. “I’ve fought a lot of battles in life. Some I won, some I didn’t. But I’ve learned that being scared is okay. Being too scared is not. You fight, and you keep fighting, because the minute you quit, you lose everything.”

A Ranch and a Legacy

The May ranch in Bergheim sits on land that tells its own story. “Some of these structures go back to the 1880s,” Donny says. “You can still find pieces of wagon wheels, old tools, remnants of what came before us. I’ve tried to buy back the pieces as other ranchers sold off. Too many people are losing their land. I want to keep this place together.”

He loves Kendall County for what it is. “Be thankful for what you have,” he says. “Be thankful you live in Kendall County. Don’t let people modernize it. Keep it the way it is.”

He smiles as the wind shifts through the pasture. “I’ve tried to build something that lasts longer than me. Between the ranch, my family, and the people we’ve helped, I think we did that.”

The Measure of a Man

I’ve known the May family nearly my whole life. Donny’s son, Jonathan, has been my best friend since first grade. Donny has always

been like a second dad to me. After my father passed away, he pulled me aside after the funeral and said, “I’m Dad now.” He didn’t mean it as a replacement, but as a promise that I’d always have someone to turn to for wisdom, advice, and strength.

My dad and Donny used to talk about “their boys.” They took pride in the way we grew up, worked, and found our own paths. When I started *The Kendall Gentleman*, I knew I’d write this story someday. I just needed to wait for the right moment.

Today feels like that moment.

Donny May has spent a lifetime building, teaching, and standing firm. He has fought for his family, his faith, and the land he loves. He has given more than he’s taken, believed more than he’s doubted, and worked harder than most ever will.

He’s a husband, a father, a mentor, a patriot, and a man who never quits. Around here, that’s the highest kind of compliment.

He never set out to be recognized, only to do what was right. But when you measure a man by his faith, his work, and the legacy he leaves behind, you find what this magazine was created to celebrate. I’ve known Donny most of my life, and I can tell you this with certainty: if the pages of this magazine were meant to honor men of integrity, grit, and grace, then they were meant for him.

For those reasons and many more, Donny May is *The Kendall Gentleman*. **KG**

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August B. Rausch (1847–1931)

*A Leader in Agriculture and Business Who
Strengthened Kendall County*

By Tom Allred, Sr.

In the story of Kendall County's development, certain names stand out as pillars of growth and community spirit. Among them is August B. Rausch (1847–1931), whose life and work left a lasting imprint on both the agricultural and commercial foundations of the county, and particularly the growing town of Boerne.

Early Life and Roots

Born in 1847, August Rausch came of age during a time when Texas was still young, and Kendall County was just beginning to carve out its place in the Hill Country. Like many early settlers, he inherited a tradition of hard work, resilience, and a keen sense for opportunity. These qualities would later define his role as a farmer, businessman, and civic-minded citizen.

A Pioneer in Agriculture

Agriculture formed the backbone of Kendall County's economy in the late 19th century, and Rausch distinguished himself as a leader in this field. He cultivated the fertile Hill Country soil with dedication, contributing not only to his family's livelihood but also to the region's food supply and prosperity. His success as a

farmer reflected both skill and innovation, as he adapted traditional practices to meet the unique challenges of the Texas landscape.

Business Acumen and Economic Growth

Beyond farming, Rausch was also active in business ventures that helped stimulate Boerne's local economy. He understood that a strong agricultural community required equally strong commercial institutions. By supporting business development and participating in local enterprises, he helped create the conditions for Boerne to grow from a small settlement into a thriving Hill Country town. His work bridged the gap between farm and marketplace, ensuring that Kendall County's agricultural bounty translated into broader economic opportunity.

A Lasting Community Legacy

Rausch's contributions extended beyond economics. Like many of his generation, he believed in building strong, stable communities. His leadership, marked by quiet determination rather than public spectacle, earned him the respect of

neighbors and fellow settlers. By the time of his death in 1931, he was remembered as a man whose efforts had strengthened both the land and the community.

Remembering August B. Rausch

Today, August B. Rausch stands as an example of the kind of leadership that built Kendall County—steady, practical, and rooted in both tradition and vision for the future. His life reminds us that progress in small communities often comes not from grand gestures, but from the sustained work of individuals who dedicate themselves to farming, business, and civic good.



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



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Christmas Celebrations

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.*

When I was very young, there were only two indoor places in Boerne that were large enough to hold a crowd. They were the high school auditorium and the basement of St. Helena's Episcopal Church. Almost anything "big" that was happening would be at one of those two places. But if the weather was good, people would use the Plaza, Veteran's Park, or the fairgrounds.

Christmas celebrations were usually held at the school or the Plaza. At the school, the usual program was put on by children between five and ten years old. There would be a play—usually a Christmas play—and following would be audience participation in singing Christmas songs. After the songs, all the children would line up for Santa. There would be boxes and boxes of oranges and apples. The hard candy and ribbon candy would be in wooden buckets holding about two gallons each. Santa's helpers would be putting the candy, oranges, and apples in little bags as Santa handed them out to the children with a "Ho-ho! Merry Christmas!"

If the weather was real nice, they would sometimes have a parade with Santa riding in the back seat of a convertible automobile. When he arrived at the Plaza, it would be the same routine of handing out the bags of fruit and candy.

Years later, one time the parade started up on the north end of Boerne. At the time, there was a package store that Santa's convertible was parked in front of while awaiting the start of the parade. After waiting quite some time for the parade to start, Santa decided he needed a small drink. The driver of his vehicle went to the package store and bought him a half pint. In his hurry to take a long swig and not have anyone see him, he got his white beard in with his swallowing. For a period of time there was one very sick Santa.

No, I was not the Santa. The driver, yes, but not Santa. **KG**



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The Gentleman's Gift Guide

10 Ways to Wow Her This Christmas

By Stephani Risinger

Gentlemen, let's talk honestly. Every year around this time, I see men wandering through stores with that same look of worry and hope. You want to find the perfect gift for the woman you love, but you are not sure where to begin.

You are not alone. Choosing the right gift is not about luck or money. It is about thought.

The best gifts say, "I thought of you the moment I saw this." They make her feel seen, understood, and loved.

At Celebrations Gift Service, I spend my days helping people give gifts that create joy. Every item I wrap is chosen with care and meaning.

Over the years, I have learned that the right gift can say what words sometimes cannot.

As we step into the Christmas season, I have put together my Top 10 Gift Ideas for Her. These are thoughtful, meaningful ways to show your love and appreciation.



1. A Year of Blooms

A 12-month floral subscription is one of my favorite gifts. Every month she receives a fresh arrangement delivered to her door. It is a gentle reminder that you are thinking of her even when life gets busy.

Add a short handwritten note with the first bouquet. Honest words mean more than perfection.

2. A Garden Statue or Outdoor Accent

If she enjoys time on the patio or in the garden, choose something that adds beauty and peace. A small statue, wind chime, or water feature can make her space feel like a retreat. It shows that you notice what she loves and want to make it even better.

3. A Private Chef Experience

Nothing says “you deserve a break” like hiring a chef to prepare a meal in your own home. The experience feels special, and she gets to relax while enjoying her favorite foods. Plan a few details in advance, light the candles, and make it a night to remember.

4. Creative Kitchen and Bar Finds

If she likes cooking, baking, or entertaining, surprise her with something useful and stylish. Locally made cutting boards, serving trays, or bar tools are great options. Pair them with her favorite wine or a small basket of gourmet snacks.

Even if she is not a big cook, this kind of gift adds warmth to her home and shows that you pay attention to her interests.

5. A Day on the Town

Plan a day that is all about her. Start with brunch, add a little shopping, and finish with coffee or ice cream on Main Street. You can bundle gift cards to her favorite spots inside a tote bag with a note that says, “Today is for you.”

The time you spend together will mean far more than anything you could wrap in a box.

6. Dance Lessons

Give her the joy of moving together. Whether you choose a waltz, swing, or salsa, dance lessons create connection and laughter. You do not need to be good at it. The effort will make her smile, and the shared experience will become a memory she treasures.

7. The Ultimate Date Night

Plan a full evening that feels thoughtful and complete. Start with dinner, add tickets to a show, and finish with an overnight stay at a Hill Country inn. Wrap the details in a small box with a note that says, “Let’s make a memory.”

She will see the care you put into it, and that is what makes it special.

8. A Deep Clean or Home Organization Service

This is one of the most practical and appreciated gifts you can give. Hire a cleaning or organizing service to refresh the house from top to bottom. When she walks in and sees everything spotless, she will feel lighter and more relaxed.

You are giving her peace and time, and that matters more than most things money can buy.

9. In-Home Massage

Help her slow down and unwind with a professional massage in the comfort of her home. Book a trusted therapist for a two-hour session. Create the right atmosphere with candles, soft music, and a cozy robe waiting when it is done.

It is a peaceful escape without ever leaving the house.

10. Jewelry

Jewelry is timeless. It can be simple and elegant or bold and expressive. Earrings, bracelets, or necklaces always feel personal when chosen with care.

If you want something one-of-a-kind, I can help you find pieces made by local artists. The

sparkle is nice, but what really matters is the meaning behind it.

The Heart Behind the Gift

The best gifts come from paying attention. Listen to what she says during the year. Notice what she misses, what she wishes she had more time for, or what makes her light up.

If she has been overwhelmed, give her rest. If she misses time together, plan an experience. If she values beauty, choose something that brightens her space.

A thoughtful gift builds connection. It says, “I see you. I appreciate you.”

Let Me Help You Get It Right

This is what I love to do. I can help you hand-select gifts from local vendors, wrap them beautifully, and deliver them to you or directly to her. Each package includes custom tags and presentation details so you can relax knowing it is done right.

I will ask a few questions about her likes and preferences, then take care of the rest. My goal is to make you look good and make her feel loved.

Every order is handled with care, honesty, and integrity.

This Christmas, give her something that speaks to her heart. When the tree lights fade and the season ends, she will still remember the way you made her feel. **[KG]**



Stephani Risinger, founder of Celebrations Gift Service, has spent four years helping Boerne celebrate life's moments with personalized, locally curated gifts. Her hand-selected items make gratitude effortless and meaningful, supporting local artisans while helping families and businesses show heartfelt appreciation through thoughtful, memorable gifts for every occasion. celebrationsgiftservice@gmail.com

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Grateful to serve our community this Thanksgiving

This season, I'm thankful for the many hands and hearts that make Kendall County such a strong, caring community.

Across our county, neighbors show up — volunteering, giving, and lending their time and talent to keep Kendall County the special place we all cherish.

Serving as your County Commissioner is a blessing, and I'm honored to continue working for strong emergency services, safe roads, reliable county services, and the Hill Country character that makes our community home.

With gratitude,
Andra Wisian



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