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MARCH 2026 | ISSUE 3 :: VOLUME 2

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The Importance of Dialogue



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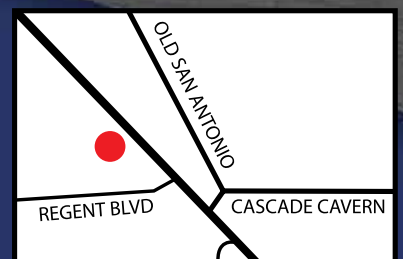
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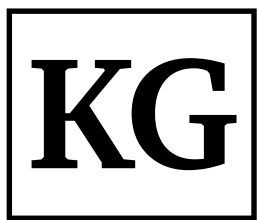
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Are you interested in contributing to The Kendall Gentleman? Do you have an interesting story to tell the men of Kendall County? Could you be considered an expert in your given field? Have something interesting to say? We're always looking for talented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



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The Erosion Nobody Notices Until It's Too Late

Erosion is quiet.

It doesn't show up all at once. It doesn't kick the door in or make a scene. Most of the time, you don't even notice it happening. Things still work. Mostly. They just don't work the way they used to.

A fence leans a little more every year.

A gate doesn't close quite right.

A road develops hairline cracks that no one worries about because you can still drive on it.

Until one day, you can't.

That's how erosion works. Not through catastrophe, but through permission. One small allowance at a time. One standard softened. One expectation lowered. One

uncomfortable conversation was avoided because it felt easier to let it slide.

Nothing dramatic. Nothing worth fighting over. Or so it seems.

Standards don't usually disappear overnight. Nobody votes to abolish them. They just get adjusted. Reworded. "Updated for the times." We tell ourselves we're being reasonable. Compassionate. Understanding. We convince ourselves that this one exception won't matter.

But erosion is patient.

Standards exist for a reason. Not to keep people out, but to give people something solid to stand on. Clear expectations tell folks where the line is and what's required to cross it. When the line is clear, people rise to meet it. When it moves every time pressure shows up, people stop trying to find it.

Lowering standards feels good at first. It removes tension. It avoids conflict. It spares feelings. It makes life smoother in the short term. But it also hollows things out. Quietly. Gradually.

We've done something similar with comfort. Somewhere along the way, discomfort became the enemy. Struggle got rebranded as harm. Difficulty became something we felt obligated to remove rather than something worth enduring. We stopped seeing friction as formative and started treating it as failure. But nobody grows without resistance.

The men who taught us how to work, how to lead, how to keep our word didn't do it by smoothing every path. They did it by standing firm when it would've been easier to bend. They didn't confuse love with leniency. Real compassion doesn't mean lowering the bar. It means staying close while refusing to move it. It says, "I care enough about you to expect more," and then it stands there while you figure out how to get there.

When comfort replaces responsibility, erosion speeds up.

That's where inclusion often goes sideways.

True inclusion asks people to rise. It knows growth is possible and more than worth the effort. Abdication does the opposite. It lowers

the ceiling until no one has to stretch and then congratulates itself for being kind.

Raising people up takes work.

Lowering the bar takes excuses.

And excuses are cheap.

The hardest truth about erosion is this: it never eliminates consequences. It just delays them. And when they finally arrive, they land on someone else.

When adults won't hold the line, kids inherit confusion.

When leaders avoid conflict, chaos fills the space.

When standards disappear, accountability doesn't. It just shows up later, louder, and more expensive.

We don't live in a vacuum. Every decision to stay quiet, every choice to look the other way, every moment we tell ourselves "it's not that bad yet" becomes part of the load someone else carries later.

This isn't about pointing fingers. It's about ownership.

Every generation is a caretaker. We didn't build everything we benefit from, and we won't be the ones who live with all the consequences of what we allow. That should make us careful. And it should make us honest.

Holding the line has never been popular work.

It doesn't earn applause. Most of the time, it earns labels. Difficult. Rigid. Old-fashioned. Those words get thrown around when someone refuses to trade long-term strength for short-term peace.

But leadership has always required a thick skin. The men who slowed erosion in the past weren't celebrated in real time. They were challenged. Questioned. Pressured to loosen their grip.

They held anyway.

They understood that peace bought with silence doesn't last. That avoiding discomfort

doesn't make it disappear. That lowering expectations may feel merciful in the moment, but it's often cruel in the long run.

The real danger with erosion is timing.

By the time the damage is obvious, it's expensive to fix. Painful. Public. Everyone suddenly wants to know how things got so far off track, as if the warning signs weren't there years earlier. As if the cracks didn't show up slowly, while we told ourselves there would be time to deal with them later.

The work that matters happens early. When the problem still feels small. When speaking up feels awkward. When holding the line feels unnecessary because everything hasn't fallen apart yet.

That's exactly when it matters most.

Men are supposed to notice these things. To pay attention before failure becomes unavoidable. To understand that standards aren't barriers to progress, they're guardrails that keep progress from turning into decline.

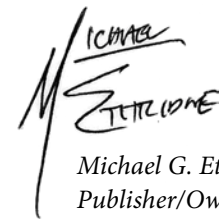
This isn't about nostalgia. It's not about going backward. It's about remembering what actually works: Clear expectations. Accountability. Discipline. Responsibility treated as something earned and carried, not avoided.

Erosion doesn't stop on its own. It only gets faster when ignored.

So the question isn't complicated.

Will you be the man who notices the cracks early, or the one who explains them away until the structure fails?

History has a way of remembering the difference.



Michael G. Ethridge
Publisher/Owner

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2/18/26

The Forum IX + Chamber Ribbon Cutting

The Swing Lab
635 State Highway 46 E, Ste 204,
Boerne, TX 78006

We call it a men's mixer, but everyone is welcome. This is a time to gather, connect, and enjoy the kind of community that doesn't need an agenda to matter. 5:00-8:00pm.

2/21/26

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2/28/26

VFW Post 688 Presents a 1940s Night at the USO

The Cana Ballroom
202 W Kronkosky St
Boerne, TX 78006
www.eventbrite.com/e/vfw-post-688-presents-a-1940s-night-at-the-uso-tickets-1511236401759
VFW Post 688 is bringing a nostalgic evening of music, dancing, and vintage flair to The Cana Ballroom with A 1940s Night at the USO, happening February 28, 2026.

3/7/26

Veterans Coffee

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

3/7/26

Power of the Past 40th Anniversary Show

The AgriCultural Museum & Arts Center
102 City Park Rd., Boerne, TX 78006
www.theagricultural.org
The Power of the Past 40th Anniversary Show

celebrates decades of history, machinery, and music at The AgriCultural Museum & Arts Center in Boerne.

3/9/26

American Legion Post 313 General Membership Meeting

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)

3/10/26

VFW Post 688 Business Meeting

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

3/16/26

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

3/21/26

Open Bowling

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3/28/26

The Old Jail Museum

208 E. San Antonio Ave
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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.

3/30/26

Entrepreneurial Journeys: A Lunch & Learn Series at Das GreenHaus

The Phil & Karen Hunke Foundation
Das GreenHaus
7 Upper Balcones Rd.
Boerne, TX 78006
www.dasgreenhaus.org
Local founders share real-world insight during Entrepreneurial Journeys, a monthly Lunch & Learn series hosted at Das GreenHaus.

Tuesdays

Trivia Night

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Boerne, TX 78006
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Boerne Farmers Market

Old City Hall
402 E Blanco Rd.
www.boernefm.com
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Wednesdays

Mens Bible Study

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

Thursdays

Karaoke Night

Salvador Dobbs
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KG

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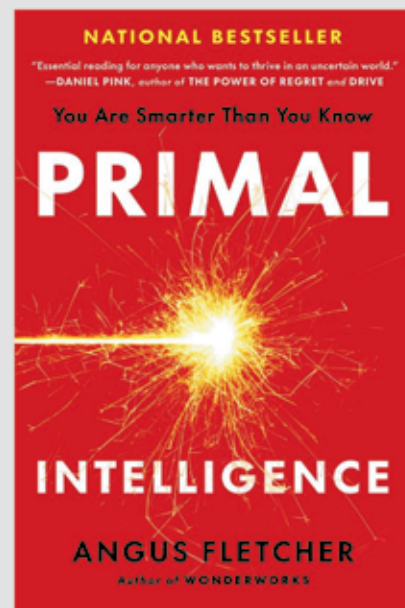
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CELEBRATING
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The Importance of Dialogue

By Dale Adams



One stereotype of men is that we don't talk much. While that is a major overgeneralization, we do sometimes focus more on doing rather than connecting. And when we do connect, conversation may not be as prominent as when women interact. I think this comes from our goal focus and hunting drive. If the conversation doesn't help to achieve our goal, what's the point? And on the hunt, extraneous talk can be distracting and alert the prey. In addition, many studies have shown that men talk considerably less than women. Having said that, communication is important in two of my other strong drives: understanding the world and improving my family and community. Both endeavors require connecting effectively with others. And I have found that having deep conversations on topics of importance to me is rewarding and helps me understand other people.

My role as a member of my family and community means I influence how we interact. Whether I intend it or not, my behavior is an example of how I think our society should function. That's a big responsibility. If I believe our leaders should talk things out, I should talk things out. If I believe others should seek to understand my perspective, I should seek to understand theirs. It's not just an issue of hypocrisy; how I connect with others is how our community connects. Our leaders get the hint and connect in a similar fashion. Imagining what I believe to be a healthy model of community interaction then becomes my own aspirational communication habits.

Aspects that I desire in my community are: civility, a desire to understand each other, the freedom to express opinions, an acknowledgement that all have valid concerns, a willingness to compromise, a minimization of the drive to be "the victor" in a discussion, and a touch of forgiveness for each other.

So how do I consistently interact in ways that I want our community to emulate?

Civility might be the easiest habit to take on: resist denigrating others and be courteous. We are all taught this, and Kendall County is a pretty civil place. Acknowledging its importance helps newcomers fit in and our

children adopt civility as their own habit. A desire to understand each other can be challenging when we really want to get our point across. It helps to remember that our point can be heard a lot better when it is framed around something the listener considers important. And we can only do that framing if we understand those priorities. A technique I use is to listen for their values. Consider a conversation about gun control where I have figured out that they value female empowerment and safety, but are not that interested in the minutiae of constitutional rights. I will focus on my belief (and I actually do believe this) that all women should train in the use of firearms and carry one regularly. I may not convince them about the importance of constitutional restraints, but on that particular issue, we can have a discussion that includes both our values. Ron Cisneros and I started a radio show, Cease Fire, specifically to help our community understand various governmental processes and the multiple sides of important issues.

Being willing to express our opinions can be a vulnerable place to be. It may not be taken well or even be understood as we intend. If this is a challenge, as it is for me, I highly recommend Toastmasters. A Toastmasters club is a perfect place to practice speaking in general because they provide feedback that is focused on effective delivery rather than content.

Acknowledging other people's concerns is frequently seen as removing the focus from ours. While true, that may be a good thing. Focusing exclusively on our own concerns blinds us to other issues that, if we thought about them, could also become our concerns. One way I acknowledge a person's concerns, and clarify them for me, is to paraphrase them back during the conversation. This actually serves two goals, I gain a better understanding of their values, and they feel that I understand and respect their opinion.

A willingness to compromise is most difficult when we feel our values are not being upheld. But frequently, if we look, we can find common values that can be upheld. Thomas Sowell once said that "there are no solutions, only tradeoffs". His point was that every decision or action involves

giving up something to gain something we value more. We work so we can have money, we study so we can pass a test, we cook so we can eat. Once we realize that compromises are everywhere, it is easier to approach a discussion thinking "what is the most important issue for me" and maybe give a little on something that is of utmost importance to the other party. There is a new group, the Boerne Civic Roundtable, that specifically seeks to bring all sides of issues together to discuss, find common ground, and reach acceptable solutions.

Everyone wants to "win," and sometimes we let that get in the way of success. A winner requires a loser, and the losing side is naturally hesitant to engage again, particularly in a spirit of understanding and compromise. Ways to avoid this include conceding something once you achieve your goal, seeking a gain for the other party, and, of course, refraining from gloating.

Finally, we are all flawed and don't always behave in ways that we would like to. It is important to recognize that, and give a little forgiveness to others. When someone says something that makes no sense to you, let them rephrase it or approach the issue from a different angle. The goal should be to try to understand them, and sometimes it takes a few tries. I know I have made statements that, upon reflection, did not convey the point I wanted to make.

All this starts with just being there. In the conversation, at the event, engaging others. Everyone contributes to our culture, and building a community culture that we can be proud of is the responsibility of all. Let us join in the dialogue with intention and purpose.

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

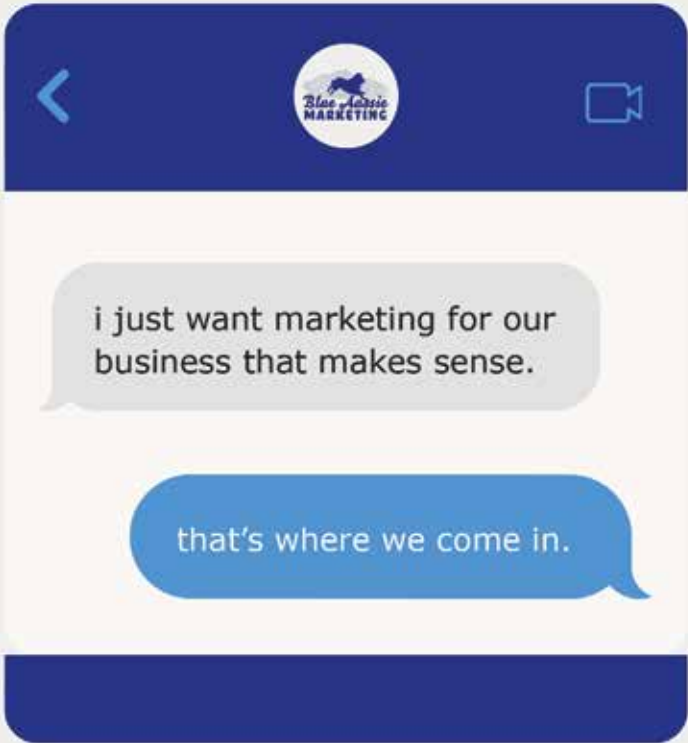


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HOPE FOR HEROES TEXAS



**SERVING THOSE
WHO GO FIRST**

Serving Where It Feels Like Home

By Jonathan Mallard

For Officer Cody Shelton, service has never been about the spotlight. It has always been about showing up when it matters most, often when no one is watching and no one is keeping score.

Shelton grew up in Quincy, Illinois, a small, close knit community where relationships and accountability mattered. When he later arrived in Boerne, Texas, he felt a familiar pull. “That small town feel,” he said, describing the sense of home he recognized almost immediately.

The path into law enforcement began early. As a teenager, Shelton watched his school resource officer interact with students. “I thought what they did was awesome,” he recalled. “They were super cool with us.” It showed him that authority and care did not have to be at odds.

In 2016, Shelton joined the U.S. Army. Drawn by a family connection to military service and a long standing interest in history, he committed himself to something larger than his own ambitions. His work in human intelligence collection required patience, empathy, and the ability to build rapport. Those skills would later translate naturally into police work. “You have to be a very personable person,” Shelton said. “A lot of interviewing, a lot of listening, and a lot of report writing.”

Shelton has served in the Army Reserve for nearly a decade. His service included extended periods on orders while remaining a reservist, balancing military responsibilities with civilian life. His significant other is from Boerne, and the pull toward building roots at home became clear. He enrolled in the regional police academy in San Antonio and applied to the Boerne Police Department. “Law enforcement has always been an interest of mine,” he said. “It just worked out.”

What confirmed the calling was not a single dramatic moment, but a pattern of quiet clarity. Shelton describes himself as deeply empathetic, someone who can easily place himself in another person’s shoes. That disposition found its purpose in policing. “I love being able to talk to someone, de-escalate things, bring them back down to earth, and find ways I can help them,” he said.

That help comes in many forms. Sometimes it is rescuing a cat trapped in an engine bay. Other times it is changing a tire on the side of the road. And often, it is being present on what may be the worst day of someone’s life. “You go from one call to another,” Shelton explained. “You have to push aside what you just dealt with and make the next person the focus.”

The weight of that responsibility is something the public rarely sees. Traumatic scenes linger long after reports are written, and emotional whiplash is part of the job. The vest stays on. The responsibility remains. Despite the burden, Shelton speaks with gratitude about serving in Boerne. He describes the community’s support as exceptional. “I’ve never seen anything like it anywhere I’ve lived,” he said. From holiday meals dropped off at the station to small gestures of appreciation, those moments matter. “Even knowing someone cared goes a long way.”

That sense of being supported is what connected Shelton to Hope for Heroes Texas. Rather than focusing on recognition, the organization emphasizes presence, consistency, and community. For Shelton, that support has meant knowing there are people who understand the demands of service and are willing to walk alongside those who carry them. “It means a lot knowing there are people who genuinely care about what we do and how we’re doing,” he said.

Service, for Shelton, is simple and demanding all at once. “It’s knowing what’s right and leaving a situation better than how you found it,” he said. Recognition is not the goal. Peace of mind is. Giving back to a community that gives so much in return. In a time when public service is often misunderstood, Officer Cody Shelton represents the quiet consistency that keeps communities strong. He serves without expectation of thanks, carries the weight without complaint, and continues to show up because it is the right thing to do.

Brad Cornell, founder of Hope for Heroes Texas, reflected on why stories like Shelton’s matter:

“Hope for Heroes Texas exists because service does not stop when the uniform comes off or the shift ends,” Cornell said. “Too often, the weight carried by first responders, law enforcement officers, and veterans goes unseen once they return home. Our mission is simple. We come alongside these men and women and their families, offering support, community, and a reminder that their service still matters. Not for recognition or applause, but because strong communities are built by people who continue to show up quietly, day after day.”

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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Photo Credit: Terry Eward, Svalbard, Norway 2008



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The Mighty Pecos and The Singing Shaman

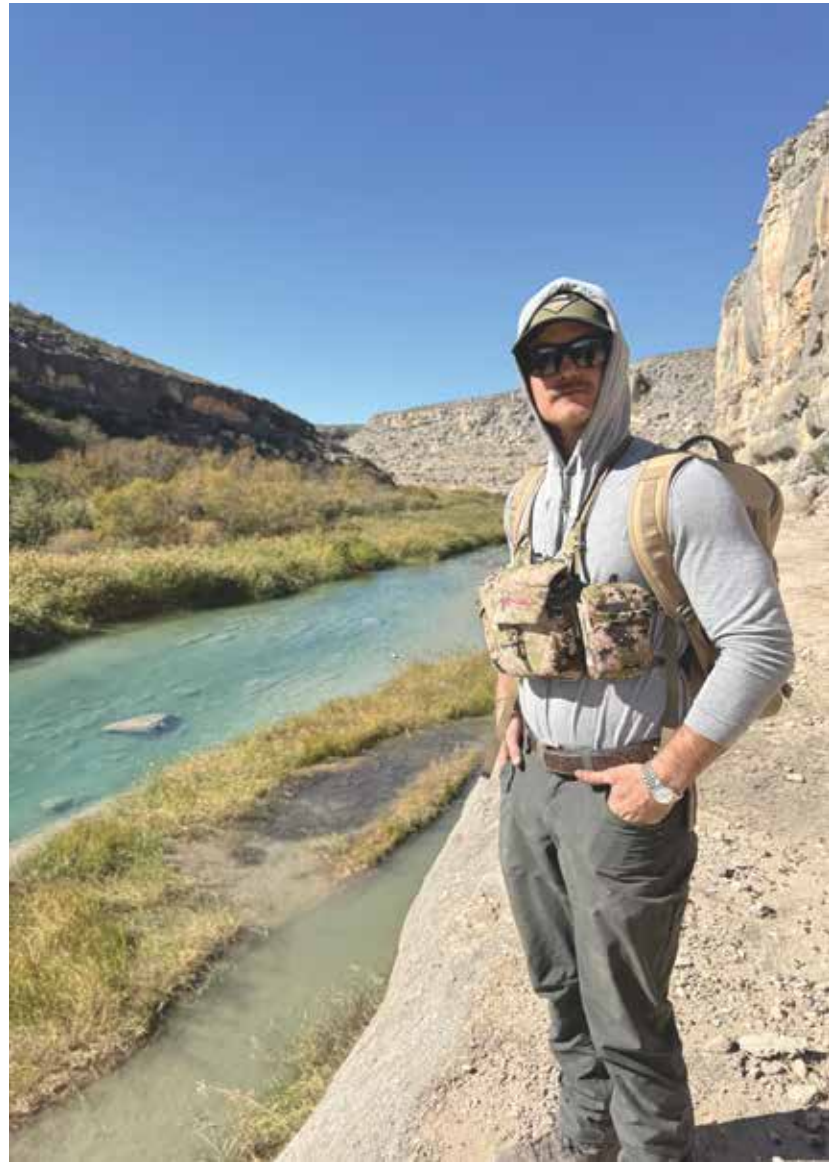
By *Jed Mazour*

The 30,000 acre Continental Ranch sits just outside of Comstock Texas. Flanked by the mighty Pecos River on her west and no man's land on her east. In 1836 Texas won its independence and the battle to settle a claim of your own was an appealing offer to young, tough ambitious men. It's thought that sometime around the 1880's is when Mr. Prosser was granted the land, now the Continental Ranch, from the Republic of Texas. Although this would make him the first owner on record, the ranch was inhabited by a few feral homesteaders. Mr. Gobel and a man they called Julio. As the story goes, Mr. Prosser let these men continue to live their time out on the ranch. Maybe as payment for help in the infancy stage of the ranch's development but nobody knows for sure. In 1883 the Transcontinental Railway was under construction through Comstock. This would bring an influx in Chinese labor as well as the first time goods like grains, lumber, tools and other necessities needed for a homestead would be accessible in such a remote area. This was the beginning of a new Texas frontier and the nation's second largest economy.

I've had a special hunt in my mind for a long time. One I dreamed would take me to the most wild places in the state. I dreamed of panoramic views without civilization in sight. I dreamed about terrain so rough it would test my mental fortitude. I wanted the ability to take my best and my longest shot. I didn't want any guarantees but rather, all the risk. All of these requirements would lead me to a conversation with Bryan Fischer of Texican Outdoors. Bryan and I grew up together here in Boerne and we have been following each other's adventures for years. His hunting career has taken him all over the Western United States, into Canada and Alaska. Every so often we will meet at Cibolo Creek Brewing Co. and tell stories of our past season hunts and our future aspirations.

Texican Outdoors holds the lease for Aoudad hunts on the Continental Ranch and Bryan was convinced this was what I was waiting for. After conversations about Indian camps, giant free range sheep, and the vast landscape I was convinced myself. It's mid-January and whitetail season is quickly coming to a close. Instead of packing away all of our gear, we were prepping for a trip to the Del Rio area. The border lands of South West Texas are not new to my family. We have been fishing Lake Amistad for years, kayaking the Devils River, and had a deer lease in Mexico. Even with that amount of experience in the area, I would find myself feeling as if it was the first time I had stepped foot in the region.

The Aoudad sheep. Originally from North Africa, was introduced to Texas, specifically Kerr and Llano county, in the late 1940's after World War Two. Fast forward 80 years, Aoudad are now in game ranches across the entire state and the free ranges of South



and West Texas. Their resilience has allowed them to thrive in the harsh desert conditions of Val Verde county. An area that just closed a chapter on a 22 month drought. Surviving on chamizo, yucca plants, mesquite leaves, and even prickly pear cactus, with the ability to go days without water. This animal is well suited for survival. What is so appealing? Well, take a look for yourself. A mature



Aoudad can weigh around 300 lbs. Rams are known for their 30+ inch horns and golden blonde chaps running down their chest and legs. They have a very masculine and dominant presence.

Comstock Texas January 7th 5:30 AM – JT is in the kitchen making biscuits and gravy. Bryan looks like he's been ready since yesterday! Everyone sits at the table for a hot meal before we hit the dusty trail. It could be dark by the time we make it back. Lights off, stars out, we advance into the great wide open plains of the Continental Ranch still under the cover of darkness. A few miles down the trail, Bryan finds a spot to stash the Ranger so we can position

ourselves. The sun will rise soon and the sheep will be looking to warm up, making them visible while we still keep a good distance. This is a much farther and exposed pursuit than I am use to and that's exactly what I wanted! Hunter spots a herd about a half a mile or so out. Bryan get on the spotting scope to investigate. No mature rams. This was the first time I had seen a herd of over 60 sheep! They moved in a tight formation across the land effortlessly, as if it were free of any cactus or other obstacles. Over the course of the next few days this would be a common scenario.

Taking a break midday, Bryan wanted to do a little show-and-tell. Radio on and a

few cold libations, we kick back a bit for a relaxing cruise across miles of the ranch and eventually down into the Pecos River valley. As we make our way, he tells us stories of the early homesteaders, shows and identifies the vegetation these animals survive on and tries to convey the sight we are about to see. As we come down the ridge, the Pecos comes into sight. I have seen a lot of miles of rivers across the country. I have kayaked down the Devils, fly fished across the Idaho Rockies, and just about everywhere in between. To be completely honest, this was one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen. Her banks are flaked on both sides by sheer 200-300 foot cliffs in what seemed to me like a form of protection. Lush green grasses and small shrubs hugged the banks. Most impressive of all, her clear, yet rich, emerald green waters nourishing an abundance of thriving fish. As if a treasure for whomever braves the hellacious land. A lifeline for history's survivors. Some of them leaving behind their own stories of the area in the nation's largest petroglyph sight and multiple caves bearing the limestone canvas pictographs.

The three of us hiked for hours exploring the carvings and paintings, trying to wrap our minds around what they might be telling us in these ancient artifacts. Who knows, we sure don't. But I am pretty certain they felt as if they found a treasure, security and lifeline when settling on the river's banks and caves. It would be impossible to sit at the river's edge or cliffside peaks and not wonder what it might be like to be in the exact same spot 600 or even 6000 years before. Probably the most intriguing thing is that almost nothing has changed.

It's around 6 AM Friday morning. Stomachs are full of chorizo, huevos y queso tacos, courtesy of JT. The sun rises and immediately Hunter spots a herd across the canyon. The morning starts with a quick pace! Bryan glasses and spots what seems to be a decent ram but it's difficult to be certain with them on the move. These sheep can cover ground at an incredible pace. Even if we were to go high diddle diddle, straight up the middle, we would never catch up to them in the mine fields of dog pear cactus and almost zero cover. We decided to head around them a few miles to try and catch the rear of their movement. Seemed like a long shot to me

but Bryan was fully engaged and in motion. We tore down the trails in the Ranger like a Comanche onto their foe. Pulling up to a ridge above their last known location, we drop any gear we can in order to move as quick as possible. This would catch up to me later... Much to my surprise, we caught up with the rear of the herd completely undetected and I still don't know how that was possible. The sheep made their way to a ridgeline, warming up in what they thought was a secure spot. We stayed below the horizon, behind a large Spanish dagger and groups of smaller yuccas. As long as we didn't give our position away, we had the time needed to examine the herd and gauge the ram's size. The ram in discussion was over 500 yards away at this point. It became very apparent that if I was going to take a shot, not only would it be a long shot but potentially my furthest, something I was hoping for but nervous about. A week or so before this hunt I had just completed putting together a new long range rifle and optics. Christensen Arms Modern Carbon 300 PRC, a light weight rifle perfect for this situation! The only catch was I had one day in the field to zero this rifle before coming, so my confidence as rifle and rifleman hadn't been developed yet. We hid there for a bit working on a decision to squeeze the trigger or wait for another opportunity. As the saying goes, "don't pass on something the first day for something you would shoot on the last".



That was it, that's all I needed to think about. After all, I did not come for a "trophy", but for the whole experience and here it was. My mind was set. I pushed up another 50 yards or so. Hunter and Bryan both ranged it, 465 yards. This would be my furthest shot I have ever taken and if I land it, my best shot. I take a few slow breaths to control my breathing and time my trigger squeeze with my exhale. Slow squeeze. Aim small, miss small. The rounds sail across the canyon, finding its way directly into the side of the ram. "Hit", Bryan yells! Bringing my barrel back into control, I am trying to re-acquire the ram in my scope. Not taking my time, I send another round and miss. "Directly in front of his face!" Hunter and Bryan yell. "he's sick, take your time" says Bryan. I settle down and think about my movements. Breath and slowly squeeze the trigger. This round knocks him completely off a rock and onto the ground. In full transparency, it was 6 shots total, 3 hits, 3 misses. We briefly celebrate then eagerly make our way to the ram. Down one end of the ravine and back up the other through the dog pear and myriad of other cactus. Coming up I can see the ledge he was standing on when he took the last shot. There he was, laying right behind it! As soon as we see him, any concern about aging or size was gone. He was a beautiful mature ram, 31 1/2" with golden blonde chaps running down his chest and legs. We sat there and celebrated, talk about the play by play, our decision to shoot, the ground we covered and everything in between. Then it was time to get him cleaned up, head strapped to a pack and hiked out. This part might seem insignificant or small but it's actually a "pride of the hunt" moment. Whether it's a mule deer, elk, ram or any other big game, strapping the skull and horns to your pack and hiking it out is the closure every hunter wants. You might have miles of pure exhaustion and misery in front of you but that is completely insignificant in this moment. For me, a few cactus covered hills and ravines but nothing too harsh. The three of us collect back at the Ranger for an ice cold yellow belly! There are only a few times a beer can taste this good and I can't think of the others.

We spend the next day and a half glassing sheep in the distance, exploring the Indian trails and dwellings, taking some hasty shots at quail and just grounding ourselves at the



tops of 300' cliffs. Like any successful trip, we celebrated into the night telling stories and sending smoke up and into the celestial landscape just as the Indians did after a successful hunt, or at least I'd like to think so.

"The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred with dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly... who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievements, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat." Teddy Roosevelt **KG**



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



Bottle-In-Bond:

The First Whiskey Guaranteed to Be Safe to Drink

By Renita Reavis

Wandering the numerous bottles in the American whiskey aisles of any whiskey store can be overwhelming, with label graphics and words that catch the eye and grab your attention. One of the boldest typefaces and words out there is “Bottle-In-Bond”. Whiskey menus will shorten it to “BiB”. What does this mean? Why is the whiskey bonded? What makes it special compared with any other offering by the same distillery? Are you just as confused about why this might be important or where it even started?

Many are familiar with, or have read, *The Jungle*, by American author and journalist Upton Sinclair, published in 1906. The disturbing accounts about the meat industry sparked such an uproar among consumers that action was required. Under public pressure, President Theodore Roosevelt helped broker a deal with Congress that led to the passage of the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act in 1906. The latter established the Bureau of Chemistry in 1930, which was later renamed the Food and

Drug Administration. If you think this is the first time the government has stepped in to ensure that what we consume is safe, you will be shocked to learn that it was not!

The early 1800s saw a range of interesting economic methods to stretch or even produce products for sale. The intermediaries who took barrels of whiskey from distilleries and sold them to various levels of consumers were known as rectifiers. Rectifiers were not always considered the most honest of professionals, diluting known whiskeys with neutral grain spirits (vodka-like distilled spirits) and other ingredients to enhance color and flavor. Popular flavorings included creosote, wintergreen, glycerin, and caramel. Caramel is still permitted in some whiskeys, such as Scotch, and is listed as E150A. The additive is intended to balance color between batches for uniformity and should not affect flavor. Dalmore is a Scotch whisky known for using E150A.



- 1 distillery to make sure the distillery that sells it is the one that made it. This could mean the distillery is based in Kentucky and transports it to Texas for the remainder of the process.

- 1 season (January–June or July–December) to make sure all are the same age; yes, it can be blended on different days and weeks.

- 1 distiller. If the distiller has left the distillery, it is no longer eligible for the Bottle-in-Bond label and must undergo standard date-range labeling.

- Aged at least 4 years in a bonded warehouse. All warehouses are bonded now, so this is simply an age statement.

- 100 proof or 50% Alcohol by Volume (ABV) exactly. Nothing more and nothing less. It was intended to prevent further dilution of the whiskey with disgusting things.

- Nothing added except water to proof it down to the 100 proof or 50% ABV. This means that the flavored whiskey liqueurs or E150A.

Distilleries went to Washington, D.C., to seek assistance in protecting the whiskey. The first piece of legislation was the bonded warehouse, enacted in response to the Whiskey Ring scandal of 1875 in St. Louis, Missouri, under President Ulysses S. Grant. It established government oversight and regulation of warehouses. The second piece of legislation, enacted in 1897 to protect distillers, was the Bottled in Bond Act, which made the government a guarantor of distilled whiskey.

Now, what is the legal definition of Bottle-in-Bond once the government got involved to protect and define what we are enjoying? All the standard rules of whiskey distillation apply to various expressions, such as bourbon, rye, corn whiskey, and American Single Malt. Let us add the following several rules:

The Texas whiskey industry has celebrated reaching 4-year age statements, which seemed like a distant dream over a decade ago. Many distilleries include a Bottle-in-Bond in their core offerings or offer a rare special release. Still Austin Distillery, based in Austin, Texas, has mastered its Bottle-in-Bond program. Still Austin has a cult following, the Order of Nancy, who chase every seasonal Bottle-in-Bond release each year, along with many other notable releases. A trip to the distillery lets you gaze up at the height of Nancy, their column still that reaches the heavens. Order a whiskey flight from their Bottle-in-Bond to experience precisely what changing grains can do when everything else is the same. Do you find red corn, blue corn, bourbon, or rye your favorite? I know I have a challenging time picking one each time, as they are all delightful in their own special ways. Chasing down a bottle of red or blue corn at the store

is almost impossible. You can easily find the bourbon and rye bottle-in-bond at any store that carries Still Austin. Each Still Austin offering has a unique label that tells the story of what is in the bottle. Local artists create the art. Marc Burckhardt is the creative genius behind the Bottle-in-Bond series. Prints of the label art are also available for purchase.

The New Fashioned is a riff on the Old Fashioned with ingredients to make you feel like Spring has arrived.

2 ounces of Still Austin Bottle-In-Bond bourbon

½ ounce of Mint Syrup (Simple syrup with a few mint leaves added to the water before stirring in the sugar.)

4 dashes of Chocolate Bitters

Lemon

Stir the mint syrup, bitters, and bourbon together until well incorporated.

Pour over a large ice cube in a rocks glass.

Express the lemon essence over the glass.

Enjoy

It is always amazing to see how intertwined whiskey is with United States history. Our tax laws, food and drug safety, agricultural changes, and so much more. To some, it is a simple adult alcoholic beverage. To others, it is not only our personal memories, but the memories of our nation. Raise a glass and thank our fantastic distillers for pushing for safe whiskey for us to drink. **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.
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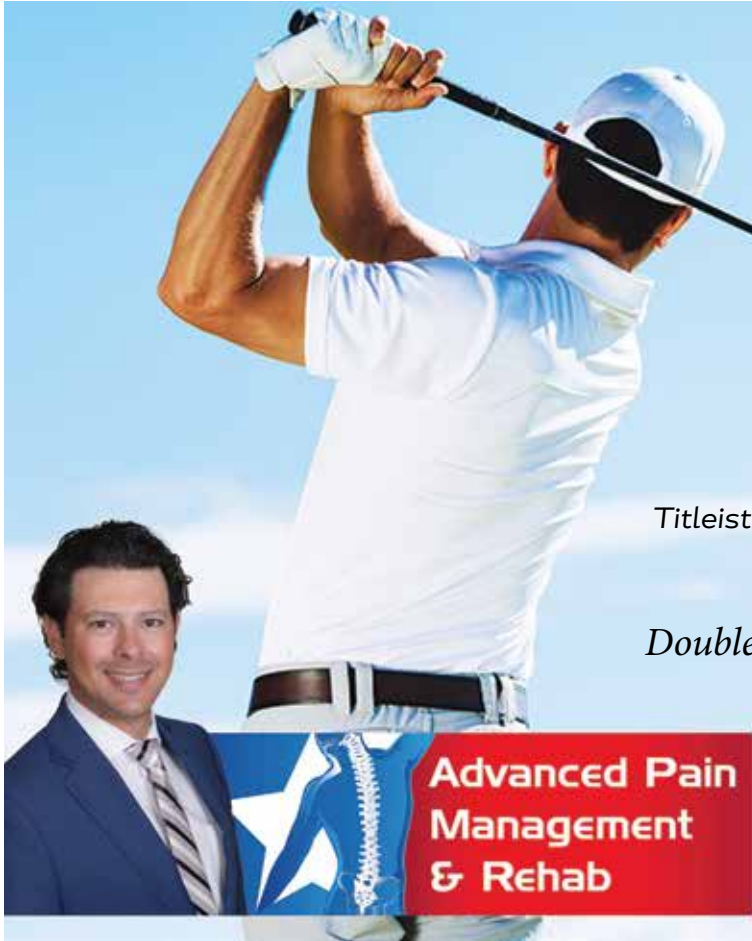
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Mountain Laurel

By Coach Stan Leech

It was sometime around 1995 when my former next-door neighbor, Joe Fuller, gave me a nudge that would end up shaping the next season of our lives. We'd been living nearly ten years in our first home at Cibolo Crossing - a classic starter house that had done its job well. It sheltered us, gave us our footing, and served its purpose. But Joe, who was preparing to move his family to Fair Oaks Ranch, looked at me one day and said:

"You ought to think about moving into a larger house. This house has done its job. It's time to step forward."

I wasn't exactly looking to move, we were comfortable. Settled. And frankly, it felt like a stretch. But something about the way Joe said it stuck with me. He wasn't trying to impress or push - he just spoke the quiet authority of someone who had already made the move and knew what it meant to grow into a new season.

Not long after the conversation, Bruce Baker, a friend and a reputable local builder, approached me about a lot he had available. Bruce wasn't just known for his craftsmanship - he was known for doing things the right way. He offered the lot to us at a reduced price. Even with the discount, it was a financial reach, but Carla and I talked, penciled it out - and then said yes.

Now, thirty years later, we can both say with full hearts: we're sure glad we did.

That home, nestled just behind what is now the Currey Trail, has become more than a house. It's where our family grew up. It's been our base, our landing place, our haven. And Bruce? He didn't just build a structure. He helped build a foundation for the next chapter of our lives.

What made the process so special was the team Bruce had around him. His sister, Brenda, was the interior designer, and she was a joy to work with. She made every detail feel personal. She didn't just decorate - she listened. And her gift turned ideas into spaces that felt like home.

Bruce's foreman, Larry, was steady and skilled - the kind of guy who made sure things got done right without ever making a fuss. He had that rare ability to keep a job moving without rushing the craftsmanship. You could tell he cared about the work, and he cared about the people living in what they built.

Their landscaping contractor was cut from the same cloth. Thoughtful, experienced, and wise. He laid out his vision for the yard - Japanese boxwoods to anchor the front, Saint Augustine grass to bring life to the lawn, crepe myrtles to color the front, and in the back, three oak trees - trees that now tower with shade and quiet strength.

But then came a detail I'll never forget. He pointed to the spot just outside our washroom window and said, "Right here - this is where we'll put a Mountain Laurel."

I had never heard of a Mountain Laurel. He smiled and explained: "It won't get too big. Won't block your view. But for a week, maybe two, in March, it'll give you the most beautiful purple blooms you've ever seen."

We trusted him. And he was exactly right.

Every spring since, that little Mountain Laurel has held its promise. It sleeps for most of the year, blending into the green background. But then March rolls around, and for those brief days, it becomes the most beautiful tree on the block. Deep purple flowers burst onto the branches, and the air fills with the sweet scent of grape bubblegum - rich, soft, unmistakable.

And then, almost just as suddenly, it's gone again.

It took me a while to realize the quiet wisdom in that tree. These days, I see it as one of the best teachers we've ever had.

That's how life is. And that's how leadership is.

Most days aren't filled with big moments or applause or vivid color. Most of the time, leadership looks a lot like the Mountain Laurel in January-steady, green, quiet. Not trying to be impressive. Just rooted.

But then come the moments when people are watching-when decisions matter, when influence shows up, when your character is called forward. And if you've stayed rooted...if you've prepared beneath the surface...something beautiful blooms. It may only last a short while, but it leaves a lasting impression.

Some of the best leaders I've known weren't flashy. They didn't bloom year-round. But when their season came. They showed up with wisdom, clarity, and grace. They didn't force it. They didn't announce it. They just bloomed.

Spiritually, it reminds me of a verse I've come to treasure-Galatians 6:9

"Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."

There's a reason Paul wrote "in due season," Not every season. Not right now, but in due season - in God's perfect timing - the fruit appears. The bloom comes.

We live in a world addicted to visibility, we're pushed to be in bloom constantly - to stay on stage, to always be producing. But I've come to believe that constant bloom isn't the mark of a healthy tree - or a healthy leader. Real strength grows slowly. Real beauty shows up when it's supposed to, not when it's demanded.

That Mountain Laurel doesn't compete with the oaks. It doesn't envy the crepe myrtles. It doesn't try to be more than it is. It just blooms when it's time - and when it does, the whole yard pays attention.

I think God calls us to live the same way. Be faithful. Stay rooted. Don't rush your season. And when your time comes, bloom with grace - not to impress, but to bless.

So now, every March, we pause at that window. We look out and remember Bruce's leadership, Larry's craftsmanship, Brenda's gift, and the team that helped make that house a home.

And we give thanks for a tree that only blooms for two weeks a year---

But teaches us something every time.

The Mountain Laurel. **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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Bill Whitworth and the **QUIET** **WORK THAT** **HOLDS A** **COUNTRY** **TOGETHER**

By Michael G. Ethridge | Photography by Jonathan R. Mallard

There are men whose names end up etched into stone, and there are men whose work becomes so foundational that no one remembers who laid it in the first place. William “Bill” Whitworth belongs firmly in the latter group. His life does not read like a résumé. It reads like a ledger. Work done. Responsibility assumed. Problems handled before they became disasters.

Bill is a lifelong rancher in Sisterdale, a veteran, the first chief of the Sisterdale Volunteer Fire Department, and a former Kendall County Judge. Those titles matter, but they are not the story. The story is how those roles were carried. Quietly. Consistently. Without expectation of recognition.

Spend time with Bill and you quickly understand that he does not think in terms of legacy. He thinks in terms of obligation. What needed doing. Who was willing to show up. Whether the job got done right. Everything else is secondary, bordering on unnecessary.

Bill grew up shaped by the land and the work it demanded. Ranching was not something he discovered later in life or adopted as a lifestyle. It was the environment that raised him. Days were structured by weather, livestock, fences, water, and time. The land did not care about intentions. It responded only to attention.

Ranching teaches lessons early and often. Things break. Animals get sick. Fences fail. Water runs dry. Droughts arrive without apology, and storms arrive without warning. If you ignore a problem because it is inconvenient, it will return larger and more expensive. Over time, the land teaches you to see what matters and to act before small problems grow teeth.

Those lessons form a particular kind of man. One who does not panic easily. One who understands that consistency beats intensity. One who knows that real responsibility rarely announces itself.

That mindset followed Bill everywhere. Whether managing livestock, organizing volunteers, or navigating county government, he approached challenges the same way.

Learn the terrain. Understand the people involved. Do the work yourself before asking others to do it.

“The land will tell you what it needs,” Bill says, “if you’re paying attention.” He could just as easily be talking about a community.

Like many men of his generation, Bill left home to serve his country before returning to build a life. Military service did not change who he was so much as sharpen what was already there. Discipline mattered. Structure mattered. But more than anything, accountability mattered.

When something failed, someone owned it.

When a job needed doing, someone stepped forward. Bill carried that expectation home with him.

Returning to Kendall County, he did not retreat inward or focus solely on his own ranch. His sense of duty extended beyond his fence line. Ranching teaches you to take care of what is inside your gates. Community service demands that you care just as much about what lies beyond them.

That belief became action with the formation of the Sisterdale Volunteer Fire Department.

At the time, rural fire protection in much of western Kendall County was thin. Response

times were long. Equipment was limited. Fires were often handled by neighbors with whatever tools they had on hand. It was not ideal, but it was reality.

Rather than complain about the gap, Bill helped organize a solution.

The department was built the old way. Volunteer hours. Donated equipment. People willing to leave dinner tables, jobs, and beds when the call came in. Bill became its first chief not because he wanted the role, but because someone had to coordinate the effort.

“We didn’t have much,” he says, “but we had enough people willing to show up.”

That sentence tells you nearly everything you need to know about how rural institutions survive. They do not survive on budgets alone. They survive because people decide that the safety of their neighbors is their responsibility.

Bill’s path of service eventually led him to the role of Kendall County Judge. In some places, that position comes with ceremony and political theater. In Kendall County at that time, it came with practical expectations.

This was a period when growth pressure from San Antonio was beginning to creep up I-10. Roads, emergency services, land use, and infrastructure all demanded attention. The Hill Country was changing, and not all of that change felt thoughtful or well considered.





Bill approached the job the same way he approached ranching and fire protection. Learn the ground truth. Listen to the people who live there. Make decisions that make sense on the land, not just on paper.

He governed close to the people. Folks knew where to find him, and they knew they would get a straight answer. More importantly, they knew whether he had done the work himself before asking others to do it.

In a place like Kendall County, that matters. Titles might earn you a chair, but competence earns you trust.

“You don’t lead from behind a desk out here,” Bill says. “People know if you’ve done the work or not.”

Bill was not interested in politics as performance. He was interested in outcomes. Roads that worked. Emergency services that responded. Decisions that could be explained face-to-face without spin.

One of the clearest windows into Bill’s character comes not from him, but from his daughter, Wynne. She joins the conversation occasionally, not to correct him or embellish his story, but to quietly confirm it.

“That’s just how he is,” she says. “He never thought of it as special.”

It is not said with irony or pride. It is said as a matter of fact.

For Bill, service was never an identity. It was continuity. You did what needed doing

because it was your turn to do it. You did it well. And you trusted that the next generation would learn by watching.

Bill worries about what gets lost when growth outruns memory. Volunteerism. Local knowledge. A sense of mutual obligation. These things cannot be rebuilt once they are gone.

Bill does not romanticize the past. He is not interested in going backward. He is interested in not forgetting what works.

Volunteer fire departments matter. Local leadership matters. Neighbors knowing one another matters. These are not abstract values to him. They are practical ones. They are the difference between a fire contained and a home lost. Between a county that functions and one that fractures.



Ranching teaches that stewardship is active work. Fences need checking. Water needs monitoring. Land needs rest. Communities are no different. They weaken when responsibility is outsourced entirely to systems instead of shared among people.

Leadership, in Bill's view, is proximity-based. You cannot lead people you do not know. You cannot make good decisions about land you have never worked. You cannot serve a community you only engage with during meetings.

At the end of the interview, Bill is asked the same two questions that every cover subject of The Kendall Gentleman is asked.

What advice would you offer to the men of Kendall County?

And what would you offer to the young men coming up behind them?

Bill answered thoughtfully in the moment. But like many men who are more comfortable doing than talking, the questions lingered.

Later, after some time had passed, Bill's daughter sent me a message. She explained that Bill had been turning the question over in his mind. He wanted to sharpen his response.

"There is no end to the good you can do if you don't care who takes the credit."

It is a simple sentence. It is also a demanding one.

It asks men to act without applause. To serve without branding. To build things that may

never carry their names. In Bill's case, it is not aspirational language. It is a description of how he has lived.

Bill Whitworth will likely never think of himself as remarkable. That is fine. Kendall County does not need more men chasing recognition. It needs more men willing to do the quiet work that keeps everything standing.

Fire departments. County roads. Ranch fences. Community trust. These things endure because men like Bill decide they matter.

The work continues. And because of men like him, so does the county.

Although our work continues as we search each month for the next cover story. For now, we pause to recognize William "Bill" Whitworth as The Kendall Gentleman. **KG**

“There is no end to the good you can do if you don't care who takes the credit.”





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H.O. ADLER AND THE BOY SCOUTS

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, The Kendall Gentleman is honored to share excerpts from his book for your enjoyment.

H.O. Adler owned the biggest store in town (where Bergmann Lumber Company is today). It was a general merchandise store where you could buy anything from soup to dynamite.

H.O. was a Scoutmaster of Troop 102. The troop was founded in 1922 or 1923. H.O. was the Scoutmaster until the mid-40s when he had a stroke and had to give it up. Bernard Cartwright took the troop over for a couple of years and then I became Scoutmaster for quite a few years. Troop 102 is still going strong in Boerne.

During the war (WWII) the Boy Scouts were very active in the war effort. H.O. had a vacant warehouse he let us use for storage. We would spend every Saturday with our red express wagons gathering up paper, bacon grease, old razor blades, tin foil, scrap iron, old tires, and anything else for our boys in the service. I still have a little pin for gathering 1,000 pounds of paper.

Several different times some of us guys would take off down the railroad tracks from Boerne to Van Raub and gather up the railroad spikes that were laying along the track and bring them in for the war effort. Lordy, lordy did they ever get heavy before we got them back to town.

I could almost write a whole book on just Scout Troop 102.

Publisher's Note: The H.O. Adler building today is the home of Tusculum Brewing Company, one of our original partners at The Kendall Gentleman. **KG**



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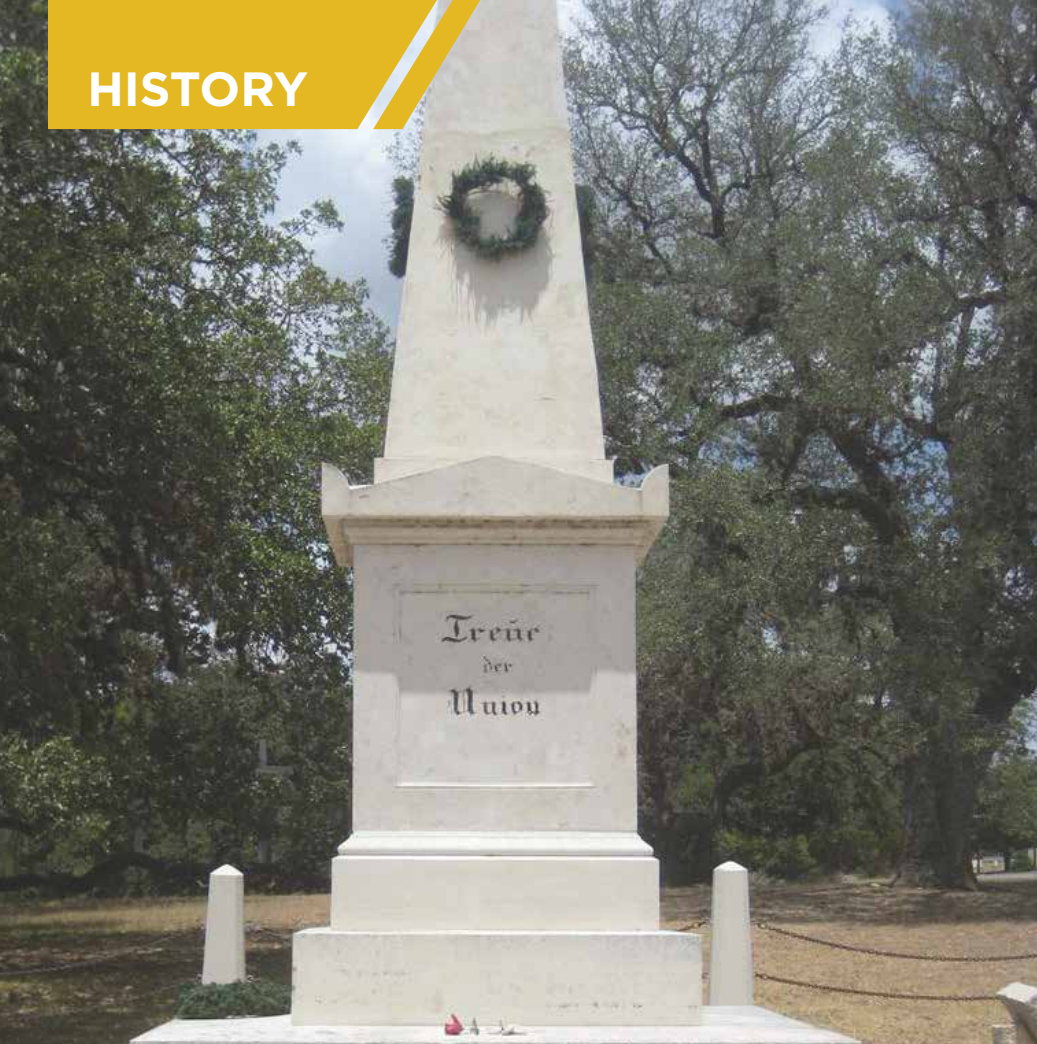
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Ernst Beseler (1841–1862)

A Young Life, A Lasting Legacy

By Tom Allred, Sr.

A Hill Country Unionist Remembered

In the quiet folds of the Texas Hill Country, where limestone bluffs rise above clear creeks, and the breeze carries the scent of cedar and wild grass, history often hides in plain sight. It lingers in the names of old families, in the weathered stones of pioneer cemeteries, and in the stories passed down through generations. Among these stories is the life of Ernst Beseler, a young German immigrant whose brief time in Kendall County left a mark far deeper than his twenty-one years might suggest.

Today, his name is carved into the Treue der Union Monument in Comfort - a solemn reminder of the German settlers who chose loyalty to conscience over loyalty to the Confederacy during the Civil War. For many in Kendall County, the monument is familiar. But the young man behind one

of those engraved names deserves his own remembrance. His story is not only one of tragedy, but also of courage, conviction, and the enduring spirit of the Hill Country's earliest settlers.

This is the story of Ernst Beseler (1841–1862) - a pioneer whose legacy continues to echo across Kendall County.

A New Life in a New Land

The mid-19th century brought waves of German immigrants to Texas, many of them fleeing political upheaval, economic hardship, or the rigid social structures of the old German states. They arrived with dreams of land, freedom, and opportunity. Among them was the Beseler family, who settled in the region that would later become Kendall County.

Ernst was born in 1841 in Germany, likely in one of the northern provinces that sent

so many settlers to Texas. He was still a child when his family crossed the Atlantic, joining thousands of others who made the long, uncertain journey to the New World. For families like the Beselers, Texas offered something rare in Europe: the promise of land ownership and the chance to build a community shaped by their own values.

The Hill Country they encountered was rugged, beautiful, and demanding. The land required hard work, but it rewarded perseverance. German settlers carved farms out of the rocky soil, built mills along the creeks, and established small but vibrant communities - places like Boerne, Comfort, Sisterdale, and Welfare. These settlements quickly became known for their industriousness, their music and festivals, and their strong commitment to education and civic life.

Young Ernst grew up in this environment. He would have learned to ride, hunt, and farm alongside other boys of the Hill Country. He would have spoken German at home and English in the growing towns. And he would have absorbed the values that defined the German-Texan communities: independence, reason, and a deep belief in personal liberty.

These values would later shape the most consequential decision of his life.

The German Freethinker Tradition

To understand Ernst Beseler's story, one must understand the unique political and cultural climate of the Hill Country's German settlements. Many of the early immigrants were Freethinkers - intellectuals, craftsmen, and political refugees who had participated in or supported the failed democratic revolutions of 1848 in Europe. They brought with them a strong commitment to:

Individual liberty
Secular government
Opposition to slavery
Freedom of speech and thought

Communities like Sisterdale and Comfort became centers of this Freethinker movement. They established debating societies, reading clubs, and schools that emphasized reason and civic responsibility. They were, in many ways, ahead of their time - advocating for ideals that would not become mainstream in America for decades.

When the Civil War erupted in 1861, these German communities found themselves at odds with the Confederate government. Many refused to support secession. Many opposed slavery. And many refused to take up arms for a cause they believed violated the principles of liberty and human dignity.

Ernst Beseler was among them.

A Difficult Choice in a Dangerous Time

By 1862, the Confederate government had imposed mandatory military service on all able-bodied men. For German settlers who opposed the Confederacy, this created a moral crisis. They could not, in good conscience, fight for a cause they believed was unjust. Yet refusing to serve carried severe consequences - imprisonment, confiscation of property, or worse.

In the summer of 1862, a group of approximately sixty German Unionists from the Hill Country made a fateful decision. They would flee to Mexico, where they hoped to avoid conscription and eventually join Union forces. Their plan was simple but perilous: travel south through the rugged brush country, cross the Rio Grande, and make their way to the safety of Union-controlled territory.

Among the young men who joined this group was Ernst Beseler, just twenty-one years old.

He was not alone. Many of the men were his neighbors, friends, or relatives. They shared the same values, the same fears, and the same determination to remain true to their principles.

Their journey would become one of the most tragic episodes in Texas history.

The Battle of the Nueces

On August 10, 1862, as the group camped along the Nueces River, Confederate forces launched a surprise attack. What followed is known today as the Battle of the Nueces, though many historians argue that "battle" is too generous a term. The German Unionists were outnumbered, outgunned, and caught off guard.

The fighting was fierce but brief. Many of the Germans were killed in the initial assault. Others were wounded and later executed by Confederate soldiers. A few managed to escape into the brush and eventually reach Mexico, but the majority did not survive.

Among the dead was Ernst Beseler.

He died far from home, in a remote stretch of South Texas, fighting not for conquest or glory but for the right to follow his conscience. His death, like those of his companions, sent shockwaves through the Hill Country's German communities. Families mourned sons, brothers, and husbands. The tragedy deepened the divide between the German settlers and the Confederate authorities.

Yet even in grief, the community found a way to honor their fallen.

Treue der Union: A Monument to Principle

In 1866, after the war had ended, the people of Comfort erected a monument unlike any other in the former Confederacy. They called it Treue der Union - "Loyalty to the Union." It stands today in the center of Comfort, a simple limestone obelisk bearing the names of the men who died at the Nueces.

Among those names is Ernst Beseler.

The monument is remarkable not only for its purpose but also for its location. It is one of the only Union monuments on Confederate soil, and it remains a powerful symbol of the German-Texan commitment to principle over pressure.

For many families in Kendall County, the monument is a place of remembrance. For historians, it is a testament to the complexity of Texas's Civil War experience. And for those who study the lives of early settlers, it is a reminder that the Hill Country's history is not defined solely by cattle drives and frontier hardships, but also by moral courage and political conviction.

A Life Cut Short, A Legacy That Endures

Ernst Beseler did not live long enough to build a ranch, raise a family, or become one of the civic leaders whose names fill the early records of Kendall County. He left behind no business, no homestead, no descendants to carry on his name.

Yet his legacy is no less significant.

He represents the young men whose lives were shaped - and in many cases cut short - by the turbulent forces of history. He represents the German settlers who brought new ideas and values to the Hill Country. And he represents the courage it took to stand by one's beliefs in a time when doing so could cost everything.

In many ways, Ernst's story is the story of the Hill Country itself: a story of immigrants seeking freedom, of communities built on shared ideals, and of individuals who chose integrity over safety.

The Beseler Family in Kendall County

Though Ernst himself left no descendants, the Beseler family continued to play an important role in the development of the region. Other members of the family became ranchers, merchants, and civic leaders in the communities of Welfare, Comfort, and Boerne.

Their contributions helped shape the economic and cultural landscape of Kendall County. The family's presence in the area

serves as a reminder that the story of one young man is part of a much larger tapestry - a tapestry woven from the lives of hundreds of German settlers who built the Hill Country into the place we know today.

Why Ernst Beseler Matters Today

In a world that often celebrates the loudest voices and the most dramatic victories, the story of Ernst Beseler offers a different kind of inspiration. His life reminds us that courage is not always found on the battlefield or in the halls of power. Sometimes it is found in the quiet resolve of a young man who chooses to follow his conscience, even when the cost is high.

For the people of Kendall County, remembering Ernst is a way of honoring the values that shaped this region:

Integrity

Community

Commitment to principle

Respect for individual liberty

These values continue to define the Hill Country today, just as they did in the 1850s and 1860s.

A Place in Hill Country Memory

Walk through Comfort on a quiet morning, and you may hear the distant echo of history in the rustle of the cypress trees or the creak of an old porch. Visit the Treue der Union Monument, and you will find Ernst's name among those who gave their lives for a cause they believed in.

His story is not one of triumph in the traditional sense. It is a story of conviction, sacrifice, and the enduring power of principle. It is a story that deserves to be told - and retold - in the pages of Kendall County's history.

As we honor the pioneers who built the Hill Country, let us also honor those like Ernst Beseler, whose courage helped shape the character of this remarkable place. His life may have been short, but his legacy continues to remind us that the strength of a community lies not only in its buildings and businesses, but in the values of the people who call it home. **KG**



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

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