



THE KENDALLTM GENTLEMAN

MAY 2026 | ISSUE 5 :: VOLUME 2

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KENDALL CO. HISTORY
Hermann Lange

MUSINGS OF JEV
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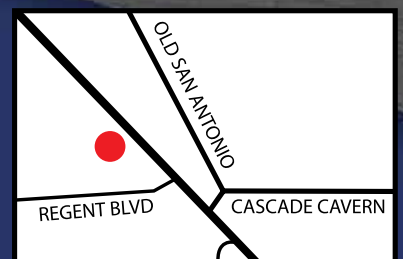
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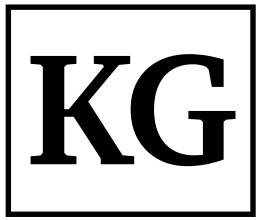
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GENTLEMAN

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THE KENDALL™

GENTLEMAN



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

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The Things We Inherited

If you spend enough time around Kendall County, you start to notice something. The things we're proud of didn't happen by accident.

They didn't just show up one day fully formed. The schools, the churches, the businesses on Main Street, the land that's

been cared for and passed down, even that quiet sense that this is still a place where people look each other in the eye and mean what they say. None of that is automatic. It exists because men and women before us made decisions, took responsibility, and stayed engaged long after the hard work lost its novelty.

Somebody built this place. And just as important, somebody kept showing up to take care of it. That second part matters more than we like to admit.

It's easy to enjoy a community like this. It's a good place to raise a family, to build a

business, to sit in a deer blind at first light and feel like you're part of something steady. But enjoying a place and taking responsibility for it are not the same thing, and somewhere along the way, we've gotten comfortable confusing the two.

Most of the men I know care deeply about what's happening here. You hear it in conversation without having to look for it. Around a tailgate, over coffee, standing along a fence line or leaning against the counter at a local shop, there's no shortage of opinions about where things are headed and what ought to be different. The concern is real. It's not shallow, and it's not hard to find. But concern, by itself, doesn't shape anything.

Communities rarely fall apart because bad people take over all at once. More often, they drift. The kind of slow, almost unnoticeable shift that happens when good people decide, one small decision at a time, to stay on the sidelines. A meeting skipped because it didn't seem important. A vote missed because life was busy. A moment where something should have been said, but it felt easier to let it go.

None of those choices feel significant on their own. But over time, they add up, and the direction of a place begins to be shaped by whoever is left in the room.

That's not a political statement. It's just reality.

You don't have to look far to see where this plays out in real life. Take our schools.

For most families, the school system is one of the biggest forces shaping the next generation. It's where our kids spend their days, where they're challenged or quietly passed along, where discipline is formed or avoided. It reflects what a community values, whether we say it out loud or not.

And yet, for something that important, most people stay at a distance.

We pay attention when something goes wrong. We talk about it. But very few people stay engaged long enough to understand how decisions are actually made, or who is making them.

That gap matters.

Because when good people step back, the direction doesn't pause. It just gets set by whoever is still paying attention.

Over time, that shows up in ways you can't ignore. You see it in how teachers are treated. In whether the people standing in front of our kids feel supported or stretched thin. In whether experience is valued or quietly pushed out the door.

For more than a decade, decisions have been made that shape the environment our teachers work in every day. Some were well-intentioned. Some were convenient. But taken together, they've had consequences, and you can feel it if you're paying attention.

That's not abstract. That's our kids. That's our future.

For a long time, being engaged in your community wasn't seen as anything unusual. It was part of being a grown man. You worked, you provided, you took care of your family, and you paid attention to what was happening around you. You showed up where you were needed, not because it was convenient, but because it was expected. Somewhere along the way, that expectation softened.

We've gotten used to staying informed without being involved. We follow along, we form opinions, we talk about what we'd do differently, but we keep a comfortable distance between ourselves and any real responsibility for the outcome.

It feels harmless enough. But responsibility doesn't disappear just because we choose not to carry it. It simply shifts to someone else, and over time, the people who are willing to step in end up making decisions that affect everyone, including those who chose to sit it out.

To be fair, it's not just men who are carrying that weight. There are plenty of women in this community who are engaged, who are paying attention, and who are doing the steady, often thankless work of holding things together.

But that doesn't let the rest of us off the hook.

Because the truth is simple. A place like this doesn't stay what it is on its own. It requires people who are willing to participate in it, to

take some ownership, to step forward when it would be easier to stay comfortable.

That doesn't mean everyone needs to run for office or become an expert overnight. Most of the time, it looks a lot more ordinary than that. It looks like paying attention and following through. It looks like showing up to something you would have skipped a few years ago. It looks like asking a question when something doesn't sit right, or supporting someone who is willing to take on more than their share of responsibility.

Sometimes it's as simple as making sure your voice is counted.

None of that is glamorous. Most of it won't earn recognition. But that's always been the nature of responsibility. The men who built communities like this weren't chasing attention. They were doing what needed to be done because they understood that the things worth having are also worth maintaining.

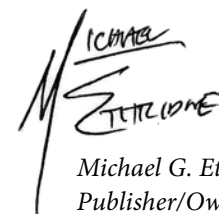
We didn't build everything we benefit from here. We inherited it. And one day, we'll hand it off to someone else. The only real question is what condition it will be in when we do.

I've been thinking about that more than usual lately.

And if you've been waiting for the right time to step in, this might be it.

Sometimes engagement starts with something as simple as making sure your voice is counted. Early voting begins April 20, and election day is May 2. It doesn't take long, but it does take intention.

From there, who knows where it leads. That's how places like Kendall County are built in the first place. And it's how they stay that way.



Michael G. Ethridge
Publisher/Owner

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

4/16/26

Whiskey & Wisdom Book Club

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

www.theboernebookshop.com/events

Thinking while drinking has never been more illuminating!

4/20/26

Early Voting Begins

Kendall County Elections Office
Kendall County Courthouse Annex
(and others)

221 Fawn Valley Drive, Boerne, TX
78006

www.tx.ag/wheretovote

Exercise your right to vote! Early voting for Boerne ISD School Board, Fair Oaks Ranch City Council, Comfort & Fredericksburg ISD Bond Propositions are on the ballots in Kendall County!

4/25/26

Antique Tractor Pull

The AgriCultural Museum & Arts Center

102 City Park Rd., Boerne, TX,
78006

www.theagricultural.org

The AgriCultural Museum & Arts Center in Boerne is hosting a series of antique tractor pulls and a trail ride throughout 2026. These events celebrate farming heritage with powerful antique tractors in action, making for a fun-filled experience for the entire family.

4/27/26

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.

5/2/26

ELECTION DAY!

Kendall County Elections Office
Various Locations

www.tx.ag/wheretovote

Today is Election Day - Get out and Vote in the Boerne ISD School Board, Fair Oaks Ranch City Council, Comfort & Fredericksburg ISD Bond Proposition elections in Kendall County!

5/2/26

Music on the Mile

The Hill Country Mile
Main St, Boerne, TX 78006

www.musiconthemile.com

The Mile is back—bigger than ever! Join us for the 4th Annual Music On The Mile, now a two-day experience featuring multiple stages, standout artists, and a full Main Street takeover designed for music lovers.

5/2/26

Boerne Lemonade Day

Greater Boerne Chamber of Commerce

www.lemonadeday.org/boerne

Attention Boerne Lemonheads, Lemonade Day in Boerne is scheduled for Saturday, May 2, 2026! Boerne Lemonade Day Presented by Sonora Bank is a community program hosted by The Greater Boerne Chamber of Commerce that teaches young people the entrepreneurial skills they need to start, own and operate their own business; a lemonade stand!

5/2/26

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

5/11/26

American Legion 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)

5/12/26

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

5/13/26

Tiki In Texas Cocktail Workshop

Assemble Cocktail Workshop
322 S Main St Building B, Boerne,
TX 78006

www.assemblecocktail.com

This fun and interactive class blends island-inspired mixology with Texas flair as guests learn to craft two iconic tiki cocktails: the classic Mai Tai and the exotic Jungle Bird. Participants will gain hands-on experience mixing, shaking, and balancing flavors using select Texas-made ingredients.

5/18/26

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

5/23/26

Open Bowling

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

5/25/26

Memorial Day Ceremony

VFW Post 688

Boerne Cemetery - By The Flagpole
820 N School St, Boerne, TX 78006
Join us this Memorial Day at 11:00 AM as we gather to honor the men and women who gave everything in service to our country. This is a time to slow down, stand together, and remember that freedom has never come free. Bring your family, take a moment, and pay respect to those who never made it home. KG

Job change?

Whether retiring or changing jobs, you'll want to know your retirement account options.

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- Move it to your new employer's 401(k) plan, if you've changed employers and your new employer plan allows for it.
- Roll the account over to an individual retirement account (IRA).
- Cash it out, which is subject to potential tax consequences.

We can talk through your financial goals and find the option that works best for you.



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Being Present *is the* Present *for* Your Family

By Brian T. McVey

Being Present Is the Present for Your Family
There's a challenge most dads don't talk about enough—the difference between being physically present and being actively present. You can be in the room, sitting on the couch, at the dinner table, even on a family outing—and still be somewhere else entirely. Your body is there, but your mind is on work, stress, bills, responsibilities, or whatever tomorrow is going to bring. And in today's world, that's become normal.

Even when you're doing well and providing, it feels like dads are working more than ever. And if you're fortunate enough to have a spouse at home, that responsibility can feel even heavier. For a lot of men, days off are

rare—and when they do come, you're so mentally drained that being fully present isn't easy. If you're reading this, you probably know that feeling.

The money may be good. The work may be necessary. But it's worth asking—what would mean more to your wife and kids? Another missed dinner, game or a full day with you, truly present?

Because the truth is simple: your presence is the present. It's the gift they remember. And sometimes, the best thing a dad can do is take a step back and give his family something that doesn't cost a dollar—his time, his attention, and his energy.

If you feel like you can't afford to take a day off, it might be time to ask a harder question: what are you prioritizing, and what are you sacrificing in the process?

In my own life, going through a divorce taught me something I didn't fully understand before—Time. Time is a treasure; time is also a thief! It goes by so fast, time with your kids isn't guaranteed, and it's not unlimited. When you don't have your children every day, you start to see things differently. You realize just how valuable the small moments are. The conversations in the car to school, soccer, baseball games. Playing catch with your

kids outside. Going for bike rides, walks, etc. It forces you to be intentional.

Because being a dad isn't just about loving your kids—it's about showing up for them. And showing up takes effort. In today's culture, kids are becoming more and more comfortable being alone. Alone in their rooms, alone on their devices, alone in their own world. And if we're not careful, we too can fall into the same pattern—sitting right next to them but disconnected.

More dads need to be reminded: get up off the couch, turn the TV off, put the phone down, and engage. Not perfectly. Just intentionally. Because being present doesn't just happen—it's practiced. For some of us, this doesn't come naturally. Maybe our own fathers weren't present. Maybe they were working all the time, or maybe they just didn't know how to engage. And like a lot of things, that pattern can carry over from one generation to the next. But it doesn't have to. You can break that cycle. You can choose to be the dad who shows up differently.

I was fortunate in one important way—my father was present. Now, that didn't mean we were sitting around talking about feelings all day. That wasn't his style. His version of being present looked like work. My brothers and I spent weekends with him painting parking lots. Early mornings, long days, hands-on work. At the time, it just felt like what we had to do. But looking back, it was a gift.

We learned discipline—getting up before sunrise.

We learned responsibility—finishing what we started.

We learned math—reading blueprints and measuring layouts.

We learned the city—driving around without GPS, figuring things out.

But more than anything, we learned what it meant to be present. We were with him. We were engaged. We were learning life, not just being told about it. And after those long days, we'd sit together and watch a

game—football, hockey, basketball. Simple moments, but meaningful ones. Those are the memories that stick. Not the big events. The consistent presence.

Here's something else worth thinking about—being present doesn't only apply when you're home. It also matters when you're away. If you're traveling, working long hours, or just not physically there, small intentional actions can still make a big impact.

A handwritten note left by the sink.
A message on the nightstand.
A simple "I love you" written down.

There's something different about that compared to a quick text. It's tangible. It lasts. It shows effort. It tells your spouse and your kids, "I was thinking about you, even when I wasn't here." That kind of presence carries weight.

One of the biggest obstacles to being present today is something we all deal with—distraction. Phones. Tablets. Notifications. Constant noise. We all know they're a problem, but most of us underestimate just how much they pull us away from the moment. Even hearing your phone buzz can shift your attention. It doesn't take much. And over time, those small distractions add up to missed moments.

Missed conversations.
Missed laughter.
Missed connection.

So if you want to become more present, you have to be intentional about creating space.

Start small.
Put your phone away during meals.
Leave it in the car during short trips.
Take a walk with your family without it.

Pay attention to what's around you. Listen.
Engage. Be there. It sounds simple, but it takes discipline.

Another powerful way to build presence is through routine.

Make it a habit to eat dinner together as a family when you can. If that's not possible,

create another routine that works—reading with your kids before bed, talking through the day with your spouse, spending time together without distractions. When something becomes routine, it becomes part of your life. And over time, those routines become memories.

Here's the reality every dad needs to hear: At the end of your life, nobody is going to ask how many hours you worked. What awards you have in your office. Nobody is going to ask how many deals you closed, how much money you made, or how busy you were. But your family? They'll remember if you were there. They'll remember if you listened.

If you showed up. If you made time for them. That's what lasts.

So, create those moments now. Put the phone down. Turn off the noise.

Be intentional with your time. Carve out what I like to call "airplane mode" for your family—time where nothing else matters except being together. Because those small moments you create today? They turn into the memories your kids carry for the rest of their lives.

Being present isn't about being perfect. It's about being there.

Fully. Consistently. Intentionally. Because at the end of the day, your presence isn't just important — It's the greatest present you'll ever give your family. **KG**



*Brian T. McVey, MAPP
Proud father, former Chicago Police Officer, Adjunct
Professor and writer focused on men's mental health,
leadership, and living with purpose.*



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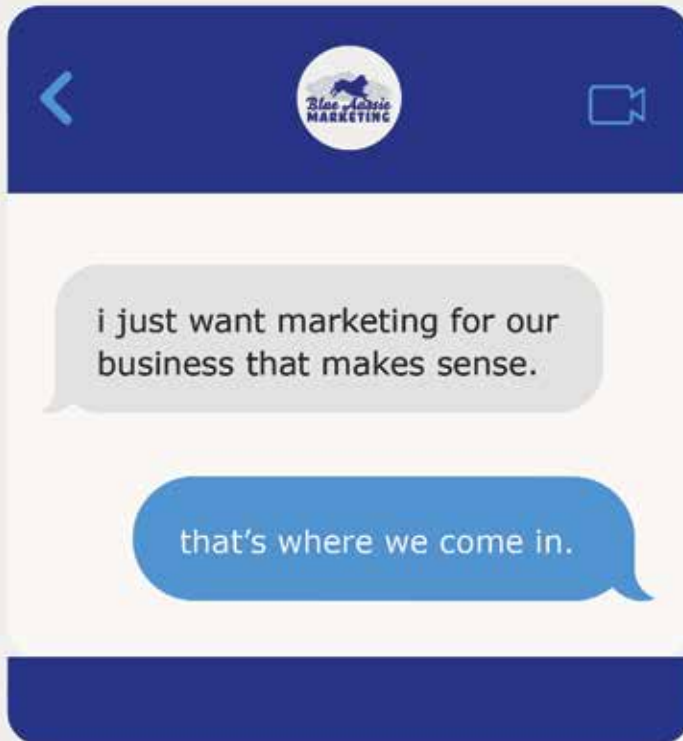
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Rooted in Boerne, Committed to Serve

By Jonathan Mallard



**SERVING THOSE
WHO GO FIRST**

For Officer Jacob De Anda, law enforcement was never a backup plan. It was something he felt called to from an early age, shaped by growing up in Boerne and seeing firsthand the trust between the community and its officers.

“My family has been in the Hill Country for over 30 years,” De Anda said. “Growing up here, the respect for law enforcement really stood out. I knew that’s where I wanted to work.”

The officers he had known growing up, including former school resource officer Jason Abbott, gave him a clear picture of what the job could be.

“Those guys were amazing officers,” he said. “That’s who I strive to be.”

That connection stayed with him through his time at University of Texas at San Antonio, where he studied criminal justice. After completing the police academy in 2022, he began his career with the Shavano Park Police Department before returning home to Boerne.

“God was telling me Boerne was open,” he said. “It was time to move on.”

Serving in the Moments That Matter

For De Anda, the job is rooted in connection. “I’m a very personable guy. I love talking to people,” he said. “Being able to calm someone down and make them feel at ease is when I knew I was where I needed to be.” Those moments often come when people are at their lowest.

“We’re the worst part of their day when we show up,” he said. “So letting them know we’re here for them makes a big difference.” Serving in his hometown adds weight to that responsibility. Many of the people he encounters are not strangers.

“I grew up with a lot of these people,” he said. “Being able to relate to them matters.”

The Weight Behind the Badge

Over time, the job changes how you see the world.

“I’m always aware of my surroundings now,” he said. “I’m always watching.”

But the deeper impact comes from the calls themselves.

“Things involving kids, bad accidents, it

takes a toll,” he said. “We hate to see anybody get hurt.”

Even routine enforcement carries weight. “If we have to take someone to jail, it’s not because we hate them,” he said. “We just want to make sure everyone goes home safe.”

Faith, Brotherhood, and Reset

De Anda leans on both faith and the people around him to carry that weight. He is active at St. Peter’s Catholic Church Boerne and describes his faith as central to how he processes the job.

Within his department, support is immediate.

“We check on each other after hard calls,” he said. “If you need a break, you take it.”

At the end of a long shift, the reset is simple. “Going home and being able to hug my wife and relax, that’s the best reset,” he said. When he does get time off, it often looks familiar. Time outdoors, a round of golf at Buckhorn, or a meal at the places he has known for years.

“My wife and I love going to Suced and China Bowl,” he said. “And we’ll go to Cibolo or Hamby’s too.”

For De Anda, this is not just the place he works. It is home.

Hope for Heroes Texas

De Anda first connected with Hope for Heroes Texas through a luncheon and quickly noticed something different.

“Seeing Brad go around, shake hands, and talk to everyone, it makes you feel appreciated,” he said.

For him, the impact goes beyond meals or events.

“It brings peace knowing there are programs that understand what we go through,” he said. “Not everyone understands what we see every day.”

That support can take different forms. De Anda pointed to opportunities like Hill Country Men on Fire, a local men’s retreat experience that focuses on faith and personal growth.

“I know Brad has talked about sponsoring first responders to go through it,” he said. “It’s something that can really help guys.” That local connection stands out.

“With Hope for Heroes Texas, they know who they’re helping,” he said. “They know the officers and their families.”

As the county grows, that support matters more than ever.

“It’s going to keep growing,” he said. “And it’s going to help a lot of people.”

A Legacy of Presence

When asked what he hopes others will say about him, De Anda kept it simple.

“That I always had their back,” he said. “That I was respectful and helped people.” It reflects the heart of the work. Showing up, treating people well, and serving the community that raised him.

Brad Cornell, founder of Hope for Heroes Texas, sees that kind of service as central to the organization’s mission.

“Jacob represents the kind of officer every community hopes for,” Cornell said. “He grew up here, he knows the people, and he genuinely cares about doing the job the right way.”

Cornell emphasized that supporting first responders is about more than resources. It is about relationships.

“At Hope for Heroes Texas, we are building connections with these men and women and reminding them that their community sees them and supports them,” he said.

In a growing county, that support remains essential.

“If we can come alongside them and make sure they know they are not alone, then we are doing exactly what we set out to do.” **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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Mashbills

The Agricultural Recipe for Whiskey

By Renita Reavis

Our whiskey grain choices reflect our agricultural history. Whiskey preferences are closely tied to the grains used in production. Mashbills show the mix and amounts of different grains in the whiskey. The location helps identify various styles within whiskey categories, but mashbills are what truly define whiskey.

****Barley**** is fundamental to many Scotch, Irish, American Single Malt, and international whiskeys. It plays an essential role in whiskey production because it contains crucial enzymes that convert stored sugars into alcohol. During fermentation, a mash bill should include 5% to 15% barley; without it, enzymes need to be added. Malt houses soak the barley in warm water for two days to promote sprouting, and maintaining the proper temperature is vital to releasing the enzymes without destroying them. The term “malt” is flexible since any cereal grain can be malted. Many older generations might remember the taste of malt milkshakes.

During Prohibition, malt houses saw a decline in demand for malting barley for beer and whiskey, leading to increased popularity of malt products as dietary supplements and in thicker dairy products. This shift became a financial lifeline for barley farmers and malt houses.

The American whiskey journey, especially through Kentucky and Tennessee, introduced us to ****corn**** and the sweetness it adds to whiskey. Canadian whiskeys also often feature corn heavily. “Corn whiskey,” defined as having a mash bill of at least 80% corn, is

very sweet — this is likely why corn syrup was created for sweetening food. In many local stores, bourbon stands out as the most popular corn-based whiskey, and one of the federal rules for bourbon is that it must contain at least 51% corn in its mash bill.

Our country’s whiskey journey also began with ****rye****, which adds a spicy note to whiskey, reminiscent of baking spices, anise, menthol, eucalyptus, dill, and other herbal flavors. Rye is never subtle, as different strains have distinct flavor profiles. People searching for a “smooth” whiskey might mistakenly think that rye or high-rye bourbon is inferior because the baking spice provides a tingling sensation. By law, rye whiskey must be made from a mash bill that’s over 51% rye grain. Interestingly, in Canada, many refer to all whiskey as “rye,” like how many people refer to carbonated beverages as “coke.”

* Wheat isn’t as common as the big three grains but offers a delightfully sweet flavor on its own. Wheat whiskey is harder to find because it’s less popular in distillation and is often used as a secondary grain. Bourbons that include wheat as a secondary grain tend to have a softer mouthfeel, which some link to “smoothness.” However, it’s important to remember that “smooth” isn’t a sign of quality; it’s just a trait of wheat.

Finally, we have other ****cereal grains****. Rice, oats, triticale, and even spelt are increasingly used in whiskey mash bills. Distilleries are now sourcing heritage grains grown locally, working with farmers to cultivate traditional

crops suited to the regional environment. This focus on terroir is becoming more important in whiskey production.

The art of blending grains in different proportions makes each distillery distinctive. Recipes are seldom top secrets; visiting a distillery's website can reveal mashbills, such as a 95% rye and 5% malted barley mix, known as a 95/5. Terms like "Wheated Bourbon" show that wheat is the secondary grain after corn. Personally, I enjoy High Rye bourbons because the rye spice adds complexity, enhancing the sweetness of the corn, whether sipped neat or used in cocktails.

****Garrison Brothers**** is a local distillery in Hye, Texas, known for its beautiful setting where visitors can relax under the trees while enjoying their wheated bourbons along with tasty snacks. The distillery is situated away from the hustle and bustle of the city, overlooking the scenic beauty of the Texas Hill Country. The legendary Garrison Brothers Bourbon is the first legal bourbon in Texas once Texas allowed it to distill! Thank you, Garrison Brothers, for the hard

work in bourbon experimentation and for starting to figure out how different Texas whiskey distillation is from the rest of the country. Garrison's distinctive and colorful wax tops help identify their various offerings. They recently added a Bottled-In-Bond to their lineup, and their double-barreled Balmorhea bottle sales support Balmorhea State Park, which happens to be my favorite. Their yellow wax-topped Honey Dew, with a lower proof of 80%, is delightful in their classic John Daly cocktails.

Garrison Brothers John Daly Cocktail

****Ingredients:****

- 1.5-2 ounces Garrison Brothers bourbon
- 2 ounces lemonade
- 2 ounces iced tea
- Lemon wheel or mint sprig for garnish

****Directions:****

1. Fill a tall glass with ice.
2. Pour in the bourbon, lemonade, and iced tea.

3. Stir gently to combine.

4. Garnish with a lemon wheel or mint sprig.

This cocktail is ideal for batching and serving at parties. Just remember to label which one is the non-alcoholic Arnold Palmer and which is the boozy John Daly.

Mashbills are essential to whiskey production. Some prefer to stay loyal to their grain flavor profiles, while others explore the full range of nuances in different grain combinations. Learning the "recipe" of your favorite pours can help you discover others with similar recipes. Heritage brands have varying percentages for different labels; do a side-by-side comparison to see if you have a preference or can tell the difference. Explore the 4-Grain bourbons, where sweetness, spice, and softness come together. Think of the fields where the grains were grown and the effort it took to bring it to your hands as the liquid we call whiskey. Sit and sip. The weather is perfect. **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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Stone *in the* Road

By Coach Stan Leech

“What’s this world coming to? A stone in the road.”

Delivered in the flattest, most monotone voice imaginable--by a tall second grader in a construction paper costume--those words

made Carla and I look at each other and do everything in our power not to laugh out loud. Her college roommate and our lifelong friend Jo Ann Tubbs was with us too, and even she gave one of those tight-lipped

smiles that says, “This is funnier than we’re allowed to act right now.”

We were standing in the back of my mother’s Oak Grove Elementary classroom that had been transformed--sort of--into a stage.

Her students in oversized T-shirts acting out a moral tale from long ago. My mother had invited us to see her second-grade class perform a play. She was proud of her students, as she always was.

We were there to support her, but what we didn't expect was to walk away with a quote that would stick in our family for years to come.

The play was based on a classic story about a king who placed a heavy stone in the middle of a road. He wanted to see who would stop to move it—who cared enough to clear the path for others. Most people just walked around it, complaining. Finally, a poor man came along, wrestled with the stone, and moved it off the road. Underneath it, the king had left a bag of gold. The moral was clear: effort brings reward.

But the lasting lesson for us wasn't in the gold— it was in the delivery.

That one line. That voice. That unforgettable timing.

“What's this world coming to? A stone in the road.”

From that day on, it became a private joke between Carla and I. Every time something small went wrong—a cracked windshield, a burnt dinner, a long wait at the pharmacy—one of us would say it, and the other would nod in solemn agreement. “What's this world coming to?”

It started out as a joke, but the phrase aged well. It came to mean something more. Because life has a way of showing you that there really are stones in the road. Some are small. Some big enough to block your way entirely.

But over time, I've learned something: It's not about the stone, it's about what you do when you reach it.

The old fable from the play had truth in it. The king wasn't punishing his people—he was testing them. Giving them a chance to rise. A chance to care. A chance to grow.

Some people avoid every challenge, every burden, and every inconvenience. But the ones who stop to engage, the ones who sweat

a little, who hurt a little, who lift...they're the ones who find something of real worth. Sometimes it's gold. More often, it's wisdom. Or strength. Or grace.

Years later, I've carried that phrase into deeper places. It's no longer just a line from a child's play—it's a quiet reminder when I face difficulty. “A stone in the road” can show up in the form of loss, illness, disappointment, a hard decision, a broke relationship, a prayer that feels unanswered.

And when it does, I still hear that 2nd grader's monotone voice in my head. Only now, I don't just laugh. I lean in, because I know there's something beneath it.

And then there's the stone.

The real one.

The one that matters most.

“They found the stone rolled away from the tomb.”—Luke 24:2

When Christ was crucified, all hope seemed sealed behind that stone. His followers were devastated. Their friend, their teacher, their Messiah—gone. And then...the stone rolled away.

Not just moved.

Removed.

The tomb wasn't empty because someone passed by and complained. It was empty because heaven stepped in. That stone was in the road between life and death—and it was rolled away forever.

There's something holy in that image.

A rolled-away stone.

A blocked path made clear.

A burden lifted by hands not our own.

And because of that, every stone we face carries a little less fear. Because the biggest one has already been conquered.

That doesn't mean the road is always easy. Some stones still hurt. Some still bruise your shins. But none of them are at the end. Not anymore.

Carla and I still say it sometimes. When life throws us a curve.

“What's this world coming to?”

And without fail, one of us will answer.

“A stone in the road”

But now, behind the humor, there's a quiet understanding. A little more maturity. A little more faith.

Because we know that sometimes, the stone is the lesson.

And sometimes, the stone is the test.

And sometimes, the stone...

Is already gone.

So, when your next trial comes, and you find yourself staring at something heavy in your path, don't be too quick to walk around it. Don't assume it's the end. Bend down, feel the weight. Try to move it.

And as you do, remember the truth buried beneath:

Effort matters.

Faith matters.

Christ has already cleared the biggest road of all.

Yes...this world came to a stone in the road.

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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SET IN FAMILY

By Jonathan R. Mallard

Photography by Jonathan R. Mallard

When Danny Phillips bows his head before we begin, we are not in a sanctuary. We are in his office. A small, curly-haired black dog wanders the room, settling and resettling as if this is a familiar rhythm.

Outside the window behind him, an enormous oak tree fills the frame, its branches stretching wide across the front yard, older than the conversation taking place beneath it.

He gives thanks for the opportunity “to reflect and remember all of your goodness and beauty that takes place in this place, in this city.” He prays that God’s work, not his own, would be what is evident in the conversation, and asks for guidance, wisdom, and discernment.

The prayer is brief. It does not draw attention to itself. It sets a posture.

“See this tree behind me?” Danny Phillips says. “It’s got a lot of limbs and branches. That’s my family.”

Roots and Belonging

When Danny talks about where he comes from, he does not simplify it. His parents were previously married. His family includes half-siblings, cousins, and overlapping households that never fit neatly on paper. “I’ve got two older brothers, both four

years older, and they’re not twins,” he says. “They’re twelve days apart.” Those brothers, Johnny Johnston and Brent Keith, grew up alongside him in a family where proximity mattered more than labels.

What mattered was not how the family was described, but how it lived. “We were just always brothers,” Danny says. “There was no half-brother talk. There was no, ‘well, he’s not your real brother.’” He remembers one of his brothers coming home from school in tears after being told otherwise. The family never accepted the distinction.

The roots ran deep, intentionally so. Danny’s mother spent decades serving children as a weekday preschool director, and his father served the community for years in municipal court. “They wanted to find a spot and plant deep roots,” Danny says. That posture shaped the household.

“We traveled together. We went on trips together. I’ve performed all of their weddings like we were best men in weddings,” he says. The relationships remained practical and immediate. “I can call John or Carmen right now and be like, ‘Hey, I’ve got this leak downstairs,’ and they’d be like, ‘I’ll be right there.’ And on the other side, they can call me and say, ‘I’ve got an issue. I need you,’ and I’m coming.”

Around Kendall County, the connections are known, if not always easily explained. “If you ask people around town, like, ‘hey, the Phillips Johnston Wade connection,’ what is it?” Danny says. “Every once in a while somebody can explain it to you. It’s complicated.”

He says that without embarrassment. Like the oak tree he gestures toward, the family has grown outward in multiple directions, shaped by time, proximity, and shared life. The roots held. That sense of belonging, learned early, would later become both a gift and a tension when his identity was tested elsewhere.

Baseball and Readiness

Baseball arrived early and stayed long enough to matter. Danny played through high school and into college, carrying the familiar weight that comes with competitive sports. “I enjoyed it,” he says. “It was a gift. It was a lot of fun. It taught me a lot.”

One moment still stands out, not because of a stat line, but because of how it happened. During a high school tournament in Boerne, Danny was sitting in the stands when a player was injured midgame. He was not dressed to play. He was not listed on the lineup card. “I was literally in the stands watching the game,” he says. Someone asked

if he was there. He ran to his truck to grab his gear, returned, and was briefly told he could not enter because he wasn't on the lineup. Moments later, he was called back again.

"I throw a jersey on," Danny says. "Number sixteen was the manager's jersey. And I go in and end up playing the rest of the game." The moment stayed with him. Not because of the outcome, but because he had been pulled from the stands, unannounced, and asked simply to be ready.

He remembers places as clearly as plays. A grand slam at Antler Field. The lights. The grass. The feeling of being part of something local and temporary at the same time.

Over time, though, he began to notice the quiet pressure underneath the game. "My emotional and mental state would rise or fall based on how good I did on the field," he says. "That's an awful way to live, especially offensively. In baseball, you're meant to fail a lot."

A turning point came when he began traveling with Athletes in Action, a sports ministry that took him through Latin America for multiple summers. "That was the first time I was around a group of men that didn't treat baseball as a god," Danny says. "I got to experience people that

loved Jesus and didn't place their identity in the sport."

That shift mattered. "I actually relaxed and played the game more freely because I possessed a different type of freedom," he says. Baseball did not disappear, but its authority did. The lesson was subtle but lasting. Readiness was good. Performance as identity was not.

He remembers his final game clearly. "I knew that I was done, and I was okay with it," Danny says. "I don't want to be done yet, but I got to experience that. And that made it easier to let go."

Even now, when asked what he misses, the answer surprises people. "I don't miss the games," he says. "I miss practice. Honing a skill. Giving everything I had that day. That was the part I loved." That posture, effort without spectacle, would follow him into the next season of his life.

Leadership, Loss, and Restraint

Years later, those same lessons resurfaced under very different pressures.

Danny helped lead a young church community during a season marked by growth, expectation, and intensity. What began with energy and conviction slowly

took on a different shape. Decision-making narrowed. Authority centralized. The pace quickened in ways that left little room for disagreement or rest.

The work carried genuine beauty. It also carried weight.

"My world had been completely disoriented," he says. "I was doing my best just to stay above water. There are seasons where you are just trying to remain present."

When that chapter ended, it did not resolve cleanly. It ended abruptly, leaving unanswered questions and fractured relationships in its wake. What followed was not relief so much as exhaustion. Grief without ceremony.

In the months that followed, former leaders and members gathered for evening worship services in borrowed spaces around Boerne. The meetings were sincere and unstructured, shaped by shared history and a collective need to breathe. There was no agenda beyond being together. No attempt to explain what had happened.

Even there, Danny felt the pull to slow what others were eager to organize.





“We had no business trying to start something out of brokenness,” he says. Healing had to come before direction.

What he resisted was not faith, but momentum. He had learned earlier that willingness is not the same thing as readiness. That urgency can disguise itself as obedience. That not every call is a summons to build. Sometimes it is an invitation to stop, to listen, and to let the ground settle before anything new is attempted.

That restraint would become formative rather than corrective.

Work, Study, and Orientation

After stepping away from public leadership, Danny did not step away from formation. His days are now shaped by operational work marked by schedules, logistics, and responsibility rather than visibility. The work is grounded and demanding, and it clarified what kind of attention his life now required.

Alongside that work, Danny is pursuing a Doctor of Ministry degree at Northern Seminary, with a focus on contextual theology. It is a way of studying faith that pays close attention to place, culture, and the lived experiences of the people in front of you. The decision was not a return to prominence, but a commitment to remain teachable.

“I signed up for the doctorate program because I want to be a continual student and learner,” he says. “From a real practical standpoint, I learn best when I have a teacher and a curriculum and a pathway.”

Experience alone, he believes, is not enough. “Just because you’re a pastor doesn’t absolve you from learning and growing,” Danny says. Over time, he has become wary of intellectual comfort. “We can sit in our own

echo chambers of the people that we like, the people that we agree with. There’s no shortage of people that we agree with, and we can find them anywhere.”

What he sought instead was friction. “We will be sharpened when we push outside of those and allow this friction point to take place,” he says.

He entered the program during a season of uncertainty. “Cynicism would have been a super easy path,” he reflects. Instead, the structure of study provided orientation. “The program and the people that I’ve been on the journey with have provided so much orientation and an opportunity to learn through that in a rather disorienting season.” The theme is consistent. Slowing down did not diminish his calling. It clarified it.

Vocation, Practiced

Danny’s current work does not look like ministry in the way people expect it to. He works in operations for Churchill USA, a roofing and restoration company. The shift took time to understand, even for him. “It’s been such a gift to my family,” Danny says. “The people within that space have been a healing presence. A place where people show up day in and day out and draw things out of you that you didn’t think you had left to give.”

He pauses, then asks the question himself. “Now all of that I just described to you. Does that sound like a roofing company?” For Danny, the answer is not about industry. It is about vocation.

He points to a distinction articulated by author Karen Swallow Prior, between a hobby, a job, a career, and a calling. A job can be given. A career can be ended. Vocation is different. It is a divine invitation.



“No one can give your vocation to you the way a job can be given,” Danny says. “And no one can take your vocation from you the way even a career can be ended.”

The work changed. The invitation did not. “I’ve switched jobs a couple of times now,” he says. “But the invitation to shepherd, to walk beside people, to pay attention to where the Lord is at work and join Him there, that hasn’t changed.”

That invitation now takes place in conference rooms and job sites rather than sanctuaries. In listening before fixing. In showing up consistently. In remaining attentive to the people directly in front of him.

“It happens to take place within a roofing company right now,” Danny says. “But it’s the same calling.”

Family, Time, and Staying

The commitments Danny describes are no longer theoretical. They are practiced at home.

He and his wife, Lindsey, are raising two daughters in Kendall County, in the same



place that formed him. Staying has given his life a longer view. It has allowed him to remain part of the community in ordinary ways, not as a figure moving through it, but as someone rooted inside it.

“I can still be a part of this community because of this job,” Danny says. “I still get to grab a meal or meet for coffee or go to games, lead a Bible study, because I have a job that recognizes the value of investing in people.”

What he describes is not efficiency, but continuity. “If we’re around a spot long

enough,” he says, “you get to see the compounding result of that.”

He has watched children grow from middle school to graduation, from marriage to parenthood. “Then they’re walking in with their babies and toddlers and elementary school kids,” he says. “And I’m like, this is weird. I remember you as a twelve year old.”

The moment lands with humor, but also gratitude. “This is the beauty of what a community should be,” Danny says. “Man, what a gift.”

That perspective now shapes what he is building at home. The restraint he learned through leadership, loss, and study has

become intentional. It informs what he wants his daughters to inherit. Not urgency. Not performance. But presence, belonging, and the freedom that comes from being known over time.

Staying

Danny does not speak about Kendall County as a destination. He speaks about it as formation.

“When I think about what formed me growing up,” he says, “I think about family. I think about my friends’ families. And then my third layer was the people within church, within the field or the court. Those relationships happened in different spaces, but they were all formative.”

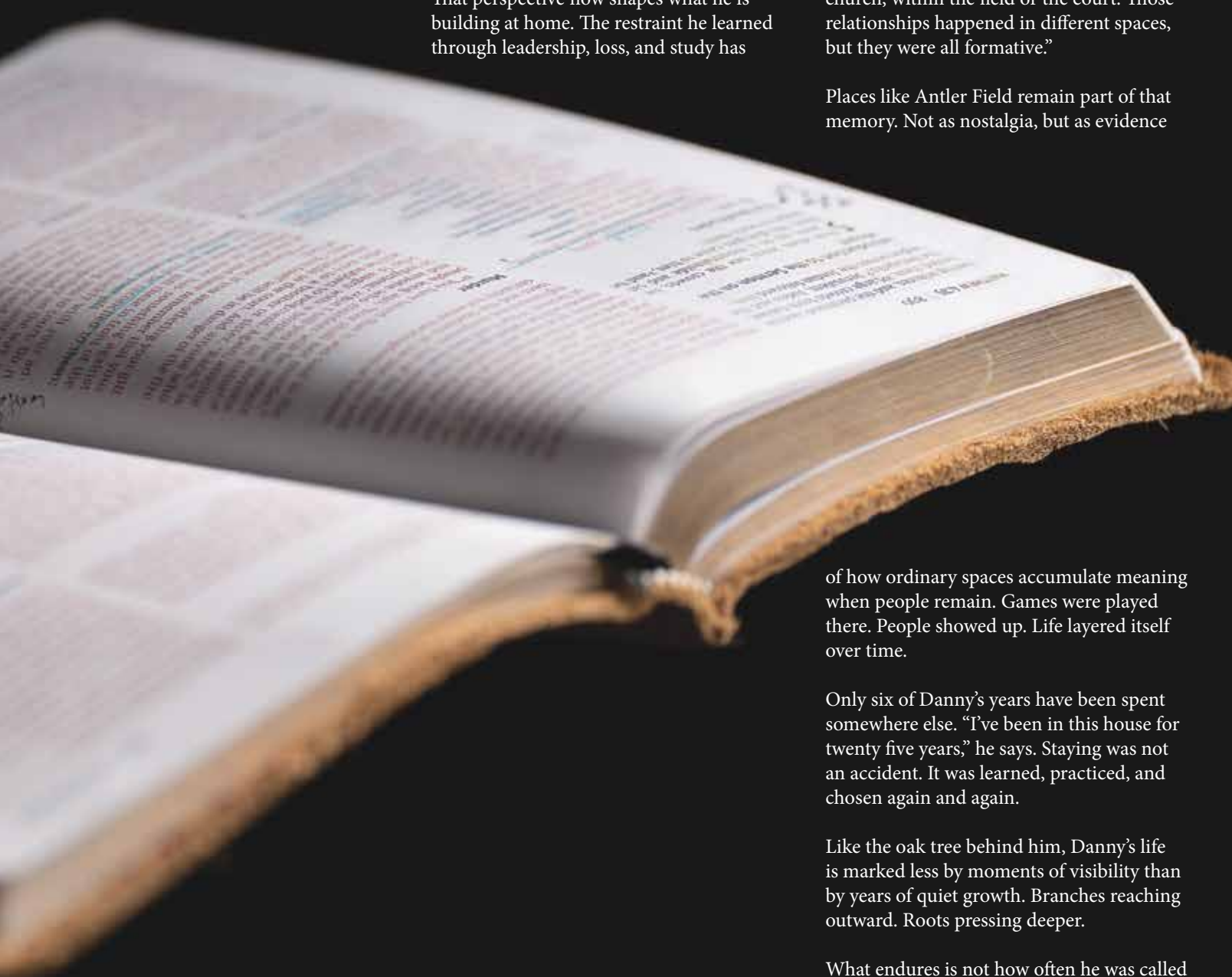
Places like Antler Field remain part of that memory. Not as nostalgia, but as evidence

of how ordinary spaces accumulate meaning when people remain. Games were played there. People showed up. Life layered itself over time.

Only six of Danny’s years have been spent somewhere else. “I’ve been in this house for twenty five years,” he says. Staying was not an accident. It was learned, practiced, and chosen again and again.

Like the oak tree behind him, Danny’s life is marked less by moments of visibility than by years of quiet growth. Branches reaching outward. Roots pressing deeper.

What endures is not how often he was called forward, but how faithfully he stayed. **KG**





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School Days, School Days Dear Old Golden Rule Days, Part 2

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.

I still remember many of my teachers. There was Miss Toepperwein in the first grade. She wore a long, to the ankle, dress with long sleeves. She would tuck her handkerchief in the cuff of her sleeve. There were several children in the class that could not speak English, only German. Miss Toepperwein would give us instructions in both English and German. Then she would explain in both languages that she would do this for one month and then we would all talk English. And lo and behold, this is what happened.

Lucy Saxon was our teacher in the second grade. She had just recently married Gerald Saxon, who later became Boerne's postmaster for a number of years. Lucy liked dramatics and hoped to make each of her students into performers. For a number of years, she and my mother would assist in putting on plays with children as the actors. These plays would usually be presented in the high school auditorium at Christmas and possibly the end of school.

Miss Kessler. The terror of third grade. She loved to yield a leather strap to all who did not follow her demands. Her aim was good, but her backswing was horrible. Margaret Ann sat across the aisle from me and, bless her innocent bones, she received the worst end of my whippings. I liked to wear corduroy trousers to school because they were thick and absorbed the shock better.

Along came the fourth grade. Olie (Viola) Wilson. Olie had also just been married, to Bob Wilson. Olie's maiden name was Georg.

When the weather was bad and we couldn't get outside to play, Olie would read to us from the book Black Beauty. She made us look forward to what otherwise would be a dreary day. Mrs. Wilson was a beloved teacher for many generations of Boerne families.

Then there were Annie Wendler, Aunt Jessie Theis, Miss Helen Theis and several other I cannot recall. There were even a couple I don't want to recall. Aunt Jessie and Miss Helen each only taught for a short period of time. Miss Helen had us for the period right before lunch, or right before daily dismissal. My only clear remembrance was that all us kids were ready to tear out when the bell rang. There is a "however" to this story. The moment the bell rang, Miss Helen would have us stand by our desks and recite in a singsong voice, "God be with you 'til we meet again". **KG**



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Hermann Lange (1844–1862):

A Hill Country Unionist Remembered

By Tom Allred, Sr.

A Young Life Lost in the Struggle for Principle

In the Hill Country town of Comfort, where the cypress trees lean over the Guadalupe River and the limestone hills glow gold in the late day sun, history is never far from view. It lingers in the old stone buildings, in the German street names, and in the quiet dignity of the Treue der Union Monument.

Among the names carved into that monument is Hermann Lange, a young man whose life was cut short in one of the most tragic episodes in Texas history.

Though only eighteen when he died, Hermann Lange's story embodies the ideals, struggles, and moral courage of the German settlers who shaped the early Hill Country. His life — brief but meaningful — offers a window into the values that defined Comfort's earliest families and continue to influence the community today.

A Childhood in the German Hill Country

Hermann Lange was born in 1844, part of the first generation of German children raised in the Texas Hill Country. His parents were among the many immigrants who arrived in the 1840s and 1850s, drawn by the promise of land, freedom, and a new beginning far from the political turmoil of Europe.

Growing up in the Comfort area, Hermann would have lived the life typical of a frontier farm boy: tending livestock, helping with crops, learning to hunt, and absorbing the rhythms of rural life. But he also grew up in a community unlike most others in Texas at the time.

Comfort was a center of the German Freethinker movement, a community shaped by intellectuals, craftsmen, and political refugees who valued:

Democracy and civic participation
Secular education
Freedom of thought and speech
Opposition to slavery

These ideals were not abstract concepts. They were woven into daily life — in the reading societies, the debates, the schools, and the conversations around kitchen tables. Young Hermann would have heard these ideas from his parents, neighbors, and teachers. They formed the foundation of his worldview.

A Community at Odds with the Confederacy

When Texas seceded from the Union in 1861, the German communities of the Hill Country found themselves in a precarious position. Many opposed secession. Many opposed slavery. And many refused to swear allegiance to the Confederacy.

The Confederate government responded with increasing pressure:
Mandatory military service
Loyalty oaths
Surveillance of German communities
Arrests of suspected Union sympathizers

For young men like Hermann Lange, the situation was especially dire. At eighteen, he was of conscription age. But serving in the Confederate Army would have meant fighting for a cause he and his community believed was morally wrong.

Faced with this impossible choice, Hermann joined a group of roughly sixty German Unionists who decided to flee to Mexico in the summer of 1862. Their plan was to escape conscription, reach Union controlled territory, and eventually join the Union Army.

It was a decision rooted in conscience — and one that would cost him his life.

The Battle of the Nueces

On the night of August 10, 1862, as the group camped along the Nueces River, Confederate forces launched a surprise attack. The German Unionists were outnumbered and caught off guard. The fighting was chaotic and brief. Hermann Lange was among those killed. He was only eighteen years old.

Some of the wounded were executed after the battle — a grim detail that has haunted

the Hill Country's memory for generations. A few survivors managed to escape into the brush and eventually reach Mexico, but most of the young men, including Hermann, never returned home.

The news of the massacre devastated the Comfort community. Families mourned sons and brothers.

The tragedy deepened the resolve of the German settlers to honor the principles for which the young men had died.

A Name Carved in Stone

Four years later, in 1866, the people of Comfort erected the Treue der Union Monument — a simple limestone obelisk bearing the names of the men who died at the Nueces. Hermann Lange's name is among them, carved into the stone alongside his friends, neighbors, and fellow Unionists.

The monument is one of the only Union memorials on former Confederate soil. It stands as a testament to the GermanTexan commitment to liberty, conscience, and democratic ideals.

For the Lange family, the monument became a place of mourning and remembrance. For the community, it became a symbol of the values that defined Comfort from its earliest days.

The Legacy of a Young Unionist

Hermann Lange did not live long enough to build a ranch, start a family, or become one of the civic leaders whose names fill the early records of Kendall County. Yet his legacy is no less significant.

He represents:

The courage of the Hill Country's German settlers

The moral clarity of the Freethinker tradition
The willingness to stand by one's beliefs, even at great personal risk

His story reminds us that history is not only shaped by those who lived long lives or held positions of power. It is also shaped by young men and women whose convictions guided them in moments of crisis.



Why His Story Still Matters

In today's Hill Country, where the past is often celebrated through festivals, museums, and historic sites, the story of Hermann Lange offers a deeper kind of reflection. It challenges us to consider:

What does it mean to stand by one's principles?

How do communities preserve the memory of those who sacrificed for their beliefs?

What can we learn from the GermanTexan experience during the Civil War?

For Comfort and Kendall County, remembering Hermann Lange is a way of

honoring the values that shaped the region — values that continue to influence its culture, politics, and identity.

A Life Not Forgotten

Walk through Comfort today, and you'll find the Treue der Union Monument standing quietly beneath the shade of live oaks. The names etched into its limestone surface — including that of Hermann Lange — speak across the generations.

They remind us that the Hill Country was built not only by pioneers who cleared land and built homes, but also by young men who stood firm in their beliefs, even when the cost was high.

Hermann Lange's life was short, but his legacy endures. In remembering him, we honor the spirit of the early Hill Country — independent, principled, and unafraid to follow conscience wherever it leads. **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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