

# The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing up in Bandera

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Special to the Prophet

No matter how many times I see the ambulance pulling out of the EMS barn, as I've heard it called, I will always see that building as the Bandera Locker Plant. Across main street from there I can still visualize that small white house where once lived a girl who broke my heart many times before I finally convinced her I was the right guy for her. If only she could have seen our future with grandkids and great grandkids maybe she would have taken it easier on me. I think after 53 years of marriage she is going to keep me now. Sonic now has taken over that spot but not my in my mind's eye.

The jobs available in Bandera back in the day weren't offering much in the way of a meaningful career opportunity. Especially for someone like me who had no ambition to go to college. I was glad to finish high school and was thinking I might never have to sit in a classroom again. The years ahead would prove how wrong I was about that thought. I was accepted into the Plumbers and Pipefitters Apprenticeship School in San Antonio just about a month after graduation. Back to class I went. Five years more of schooling interrupted only by my stint in the U.S. Army where once again, yes, you guessed it, I went to school. Then as my professional career continued so did the training. It has even popped up a few times in my retirement years.

The out of school education I received here in the country helped prepare me for the hard life of construction work but failed in preparing this county boy for the ways of big city living. Now after all the life experiences I have endured over the years I sit here in our little town looking over my shoulder at a big city that is closing in fast.

Gone forever are the carefree days of a shoeless kid running the banks of the Medina River around Bandera. That shirtless kid riding his bicycle while doing errands for his mom and never once getting run out of a store with a demand to put on a shirt is a fleeting memory. He rode that bike over all of God's creation here in the Cowboy Capital of the World and his greatest fear at the time was having a flat or getting chased by a loose dog. Those were the best of times while I was Growing Up In Bandera.

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