

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

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Special to the Prophet

The debate about things changing or never changing in The Cowboy Capital of the World rages on. I think the answer may lie in the details. We still have things in general that have been around for generations but they may not be as some of us earlier inhabitants remember.

Vehicles on our streets are prime examples. I remember Frankie Caffel and his donkey drawn wagon when he provided a junk and trash haul off service for our town. It was a sight to behold as kids tagged along behind and often were allowed to jump on for a short ride. The carts I see passing my house almost daily here in modern Bandera don't come close in comparison.

Fancy golf carts loaded with people, kids and dogs go whizzing by with only a whisper from the electric motor to signal my dogs to start barking until it fades into the distance. Between them and the various delivery trucks in the neighborhood it's hard to get in an uninterrupted afternoon nap. If I had a choice I would prefer the clippity-clop of those little donkey feet passing by once more.

When I was a youngster there was only one delivery truck I remember seeing regularly in the neighborhood. It belonged to Basse Truck Lines and it was driven by a man named Bill. To this day I don't have a clue what his last name was but just ask any oldtimer about Basse Bill and they will know who you are talking about.

The back streets horse traffic was once limited to the Mayan Dude Ranch trailriders who would come up off the river at the intersection of 8th and Cherry Streets. There was a trail only used by them and a few kids playing cowboys and outlaws. The riders passed by completely unaware they were riding into our ambush. Of course we never attacked. We didn't want Don Hicks, who knew each and every one of us by name, to be calling our parents about kids spooking dude mounted horses.

I.G.Thetford who lived in his wagon on the river was the only other horseback rider we encountered with regularity. His horse and his boots were his only source of transportation. It would be a huge understatement to say his attire didn't resemble the duds worn by the horse riders of today. His was genuine authentic cowboy gear and what you see today is designed more for looks and comfort rather than work. We did have a few leaders in fashion design here in cowboy land. I recall Aubrey Turnipseed being the first local I observed wearing boots, a straw hat and shorts around town. Mostly he would be seen at the Bandera Icehouse where there was usually a domino game going on. There weren't any Wal-Mart's around back in the day to display the latest fashion trends.

Try to remain open minded when comparing the values attached to what once was and our current Growing Up In Bandera days. The old days around here weren't entirely different but they were very much simpler and more carefree.

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