

The Bandera PROPHET

November 26, 2019

Growing Up In Bandera

By Glenn Clark
Special to the Prophet

Those of us who have been around these parts since childhood have many great memories of a simpler life back in the day. By today's standards they were unbelievable at times. Some of the old habits would be unthinkable in our modern times.

I recall many pastures had a place where unwanted items were hauled for disposal as households updated their furnishings. Some of the old furniture and other things I saw discarded would make a modern day antique dealer cry in their beer. Maybe crying in their wine might be a more appropriate saying today.

The wine craze seems to be sweeping the hill country in recent years. Rest assured the mustang grape wine made by Tom Anderwald is greatly missed by the natives like myself. He was the designated master winemaker in earlier times. Bottles of his wine were sometimes donated as prizes during the St. Stanislaus Church Festival. It would be an understatement to say they were the most sought after prize offering.

I can recall the years when an overabundance of crops from a garden in the backyard was readily shared with family, friends and neighbors. I have memories of big gardens all around town in addition to some fields of corn in the city. I wish I had the room and the "want to" for a large garden in my yard now. All I can manage is a few tomato and pepper plants and it is a challenge just to keep the deer out of them. Deer in town was never a problem back in the old days.

Service station attendants to pump your gas, check your oil and air in addition to cleaning your windshield are as gone as the pay phones in every public establishment in town. The city landfill out the Hondo highway is no longer even visible.

Billy Clyde and Gerald Ray making sure my garbage was picked up even if I had forgotten to put my cans out on the street the night before is a cherished reminder of just how great life was in an earlier Bandera.

Clarence or Helen Rhodes telling me at the Country Shopper checkout counter to go back and get the less expensive item on my mom's list because they knew what she wanted and it would save me a trip back to the store later. Frank the butcher knew just how thick my mom wanted him to slice the bulk baloney from the meat market without me having to tell him. A good part of my younger years involved a hardy appetite for baloney and catsup sandwiches.

Sometimes it only required a short trip around the neighborhood on my bike to collect a few soda water or beer bottles to finance a trip to McGroarty's store for a little bag of penny candy and bubble gum. It was a lot easier on Saturday morning after a Friday night home football game. The pea gravel around the concession stand was a true honey hole for finding change if I was early enough to beat John Rico. I did have the advantage by living closer to the stadium.

We didn't have a life controlled by political correctness or environmental friendliness during the Growing Up In Bandera years of my youth. I never worried about peer pressure or what others thought of my clothes or shoes. I sometimes became concerned when I thought we might be running out of baloney but I had a remedy. I would simply eat a catsup sandwich.