

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

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Special to the Prophet

It's funny how some of the simple little habits from back in the day will suddenly pop into my head. City folks might not understand because it was a country thing. Recently a friend recalling one such country habit brought a big smile to my morning face as I sipped my first cup of coffee.

Strangers or infrequent visitors would come to your front door and knock to see if anyone was home. Family and close friends would come walking in the back door hollering, "Knock!!! Knock!!!". We never felt the need to be too formal back in the day. Or to lock doors for that matter.

The meetin' greetin' and visitin' was usually done at the kitchen table in those early country homes. That certainly was the normal gathering place at my mom's house right up to the time of her passing. The kitchen was always full of people and lots of love during the holiday seasons. Sitting at the kitchen table one night just before Christmas while we were visiting with my older sisters and brother we decided to try out a game that my wife and I had gotten for my youngest sister, Debbie. It was called "Ants In The Pants." It got to be a bit rowdy, which was normal for our gatherings, and the party soon broke up when one of the ants was injured. Well, to be truthful, it died.

For our family, Christmas habits from back in the day always included a trip out to Granddaddy Kindla's pasture on the Tarpley Highway in search of the perfect cedar tree to take home for decorating. Sometimes the search was long and fruitless and we then went to Uncle Phil's pasture to continue the search for the ideal tree.

Of course the perfect size and shape was never the end result which was discovered after we returned home. It then became a customizing job. Without fail the tree was always too tall so that meant trimming the top a bit. Trees always look smaller in the pasture as we proved yearly. Turning the tree every which way to get the perfect side to the front and then adding in some extra branches to fill a gap were required in the final positioning. Here I am 60-plus years later Growing Up In Bandera and still driving down the road and judging the suitability of cedar trees along the roadside. Old habits do die hard.

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