

The Bandera PROPHEET

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The View From Dry Creek Hill

By Charles Prokop

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I'm sure everyone felt our first real cold front blow in. It's a misty, breezy 38-degree day as I write this, and the view over the valley reminds me of the Smoky Mountains in miniature.

I love October here in the Hill Country and the changes it brings. But October is also the month I miss other places I've been. I spent 10 years in Asheville, North Carolina, nestled between the Smokies and Blue Ridge. I miss my annual October drive down a favorite stretch of the Blue Ridge Parkway. I would sneak away from the office on a crisp afternoon and cruise with the windows down, the sunroof open, and views of valleys and mountains looking like God had spilled his breakfast bowl of *Trix*.

But those turning leaves were the preamble to shoveling snow out of my uphill driveway. I don't miss dawn snow-shoveling and I don't miss walking up the hill carrying my groceries when our road iced over. There were times I lay in the snow in the dark as I struggled to get chains on my car. Asheville isn't the North Pole and that didn't happen often, but I had enough of those days to need regular injections of Jerry Jeff Walker and Gary P. Nunn singing *What I Like About Texas*.

The first time I ordered a barbeque sandwich in North Carolina I got quite a shock. I grew to like (well, sorta like, anyway) that vinegary, mustardy, pork barbeque, but it can't replace good Texas smoked brisket. And I had to learn to order my hamburger "deluxe" if I wanted lettuce and tomato. I grew up a Texan who thought of lettuce and tomato as standard issue at Dairy Queen and Whataburger, not deluxe extras. A

cheeseburger dressed with chili and slaw was another North Carolina shock, but it's pretty good if you see it coming.

October gives me a little shot of nostalgia and some fond memories, but more than anything it brings contentment. I may miss things about where I've been but I'm happy they are where I was, not where I am. A day or two of Texas Hill Country cold reminds me that I'm glad it will warm back up in a hurry.

I have to be careful listening to James Taylor singing *Carolina In My Mind* in October but I have a Texas music collection full of antidotes. Rest in peace, Jerry Jeff.