

# The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

By Glenn Clark  
The Bandera Prophet

Just like today in Bandera when you needed the latest community news back in the day all you had to do was head to the OST for a cup of coffee. As the old farmers and ranchers gathered each morning to brag about their last rainfall amount or cuss the latest drought and the effect it was having on the livestock markets you might also get some tidbits of gossip they had overheard while their wife was on the party line at home the last evening. If you remember most of those folks you probably realize that some of their offspring continue the tradition of OST morning gatherings today.

There were probably even more events being discussed just outside as the daily gathering of oldtimers perched themselves on the wide concrete window sills in an attempt to have their opinion heard on just about everything. Every person walking by was subject to being drawn into the conversations because they rarely listened to each other. It wasn't unusual for three locals to be having two entirely different conversations going at the same time.

At that time there were no benches like you see today so the sidewalk was covered with tobacco stains due to the long spittin' distance to the curb. I know that sounds pretty gross but it's not much worse than the accumulations of cigarette butts and discarded floss picks of modern times. In their defense, there were no spittoons placed on the sidewalks like we have with the mostly ignored butt cans of today.

In my early teen years I would sometimes go a few doors down to watch my dad playing dominos in the back room of The Red Goose Pool Hall owned by Smith Wright. The conversations in there would get pretty

interesting at times. In fact, they would get so interesting that my dad would tell me it was time for me to go home. I suspect they were the real true stories behind those party line conversations I mentioned earlier.

My later teen years night visits to that room were usually to ask my dad to borrow the car to go drag main or to get a quarter for the movie at The Bantex while he tried to "shoot the moon" with his buddies well into the evening hours. During the day I would join Gary "Grunty" Richards or James Jacoby in a game of pool. The cost was 10 cents a rack. We usually did the ball racking ourselves because Shorty Fries, who was running the place for Smith Wright, was usually napping on the old couch near the back wall. If he was snoring and sleeping soundly that 10-cent rack would last a long time.

My mom wasn't too keen on me hanging around the pool hall as teen boys had a tendency to do back then. Swinging on those bars that held up the front canopy was a pretty common way to pass the time of day for us. By then my Growing Up In Bandera had progressed beyond riding my bike on the gravel roads along the river. This was about the time that Arkey Blue had taken over on the "Back Streets of Bandera."

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