

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

By Glenn Clark

The Bandera Prophet

The "Life of Riley" for me nowadays is sitting on my front porch watching the deer and birds, along with just letting my mind wander back to a time when life was less complicated. Scanning the neighborhood reveals some old homes with a new look and other houses that didn't exist at a time when I would have been cruising around looking for adventure on my bike. It's hard to believe, but I never would have seen a deer in this area of town where they now come running out of the brush to greet people in hopes of getting fed.

Crossing the bridge over the Medina River on Schmidtke Road and looking upstream you can see the area around the old bridge that led to the Mayan Dude Ranch. That's where I spent countless hours as a kid. Just a one-block walk from our house and then down the bluff and I was in paradise. My mother often told me, "Glenn, you can't just live on that river." But I gave it my best shot. It is a shame that modern day kids will never get to experience that kind of freedom. We were truly a blessed generation.

I often think of and I am grateful for the education that I received at St. Joseph's Catholic School. The nuns who were our teachers could be strict to the point of what some might call abusive in current times. It was a valuable tool for encouraging students like myself who lacked self motivation. Without that boost, I'm not sure how high school would have worked out for me where there was less one-on-one interaction with the teachers.

Since porch sitting has become a pretty common pastime around here, I reminisce a lot about associating with the elders that I had around me in

early life. I can say with utmost confidence that those relationships aren't reflected in what takes place now when my great grandkids are around me. Due to the way I was raised, I know that I was harsher with my son than I ever was with my grandkids. When it comes to the great grandkids I have finally discovered some patience that had been totally missing in my life up until recent years. Habits, spawned by a lifetime of hard living that were passed down through the generations to me, have finally begun to soften. Looking back from my advanced years, I know now that even the harsh things were done out of love and caring. Hopefully, by the grace of God, the kids in our family won't have harsh memories of me.

I find myself now living in a community that is changing so rapidly that it is hard to keep up with, even as I try to stay engaged while continuing my Growing Up In Bandera. The constant influx of new blood guarantees that things will never be the same. New ideas from new people will require changing directions in all the problems facing our growing town. Change is inevitable, but not always necessary. If only we could stop fixing things that aren't broken.

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