

CELEBRATING A GIFT AND GIVER

A friend inquired of me recently as to whether I was “learning anything special” in spending time and thought with conservation-minded people. My response was, “O, my yes!” We then proceeded to have an interesting discussion about qualities of giving and long-term impacts we may find along the way. It prompts some thoughts I share with you as the season of much gift giving and receiving arrives.

First, I want to say that this is a discussion about a different manner of gift giving than we usually think about and experience. I have noted among some soulful conservation activists a willingness to prioritize their giving beyond a circle of family and friends. The folks I refer to see Earth, particularly that small piece of the land with its water and air qualities, as a recipient of how to choose to live in a caringly respectful way for all things natural. It’s a special kind of stewarding person who seeks to enhance and build up the qualities of soil toward an end of finer productivity. Likewise, the use and disposal of water available to us for daily living takes on a respectful attentiveness and avoidance of wastefulness in contrast to just taking water availability for granted. Anyone who experiences the emissions of the transportation systems we’ve created for our coming and going, our flying to and from, knows what fuel fumes are all about. I’m astonished in a most positive way by those rare persons who select a manner of living with a gentle footprint for their pathways. Choices of vehicular tool energy add to this picture as well. When we see those who enrich the quality of life-nurturing elements, it merits a loud shout out and WOW.

Secondly, I want to share a special effort coming in 2023 to do some celebrating and shouting out. The Comal County Conservation Alliance (CCCA) established The Jencie Madden Comal Conservation Award. In late Spring of 2022. The inaugural award was presented posthumously to honor the exemplary conservation work and diligence of Jencie Simms Madden who was integral to the formation of CCCA and guided conservation minded citizens toward a future strategy of caring and outreach in our County and beyond.

In looking for future award recipients, individuals, families and entities who meet criteria that are quite descriptive of a style of giving back and nurturing forward. Nominations of future recipients will note outstanding vision, leadership and dedication in efforts to protect land, water and wildlife in Comal County. Jencie’s personally effective traits of inclusive leadership, relationship building with community leaders and a commitment to active citizenship will be noted. No doubt the work and achievements of recipients of this Award will differ widely. However, they will be important and significant far beyond individual and group efforts, impacting the quality of life for us all in Comal County and beyond.

Whether any of us rise to the level of servant giver reflected in this Award, it is hoped that the Award and those lifted up for celebration will motivate our own efforts in special ways. Look around you and ponder what conserving changes are possible and achievable. Consider pouring energy and resource into measures that can and do make a difference. What about capture and use of rainfall right where you live? How better can drainage in your own space and immediate surroundings be put to smarter usage? For those privileged to have acres to tend, might a discernment about a conservation easement become possible?

Do have a blessed and giving holiday!