

GUEST VIEW

Quarantined for the very first time

Nearing the line of demarcation for achieving “octogenarian,” it has been a shock to the system to face the necessity of “quarantined.”

Even as a youngster in a household of several children and on a city block populated by many more suffering from measles I remember being “one of the ones” able to go and come. With so many others, my spouse, Karen, and I have honored the urgent requests of our adult sons that we take all deliberate precautions and significantly modify our “running all about” behavior and socialization.

The shifting implication in generational “in charge” added to the dramatic depth of the moment, with public restrictions of several weeks and counting!

It hasn't been all negative. Karen and I have had the opportunity to rediscover why we are good friends and companions in many forms of endeavor and mischief. Soon, however, Karen withdrew to her sewing room to experiment with masks from quilt fabrics. Since the first editions, re-



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quests of “can you do another” have grown exponentially.

Meanwhile, from the earliest days of distancing, a spring unlike others nurtured by exceptional rainfall has been a wonder with treats to behold!

Walks on our lane and through just one pasture on the historic ranch where we are privileged to dwell have offered a kaleidoscope of springtime wonders.

First it was the burst of the agarita blooms in abundance attracting honey bees in impressive numbers.

Soon thereafter was the burst into bloom of the wild

plumb accompanied some yards away by mountain laurel. Deciduous trees and shrubs began to leaf out and intermittently, star-like rain lilies covered vast areas. The open sunny areas welcomed a dense crop of bluebonnets followed soon with Indian paintbrush. More recently the gaillardia (Indian blankets) have come along with tiny yellow slender leaf daisies. More recent blooms of lavender verbena and prickly pear add their colors.

Along with the flowering seasonal signs have come butterflies in rich, colorful varieties. Seasonal birds, some migrating with brief pauses and others furiously building new nesting quarters, abound.

Concurrently, we have our regular wildlife in considerable variety, some utterly nocturnal, others more curious daytime visitors. Among the wildlife come the pasture rotations with livestock newborns adding to their number and their zestful frolic. Some cattle and goats watch and gaze undisturbed, though curious.

Quite a life for one who

spent most of his decades in close urban quarters with fence neighbors and friends to chat with several times a day. Now in quarantine and with all the cautions of this “Selah time,” as I'm prone to speak of this pause in our frenzy, I have found myself in a much deeper, richer dive into what surrounds.

Karen's and my good fortune to have a small parcel on an historic ranch property in the precious Texas Hill Country underscores why we have committed to protecting and setting aside some space to retain the green (when not in drought!) and wild before all land gets developed. Comal County is developing so rapidly it has captured national attention.

The solace I and others have found in nature during these stressful times accentuates the value of the open space and natural gifts around us. I hope this lesson of the current crisis remains with us and motivates us, as a community, to action so that future generations will also have the opportunity to find comfort in the quiet strength of nature during times of trouble.