

CCCA H-Z SEPTEMBER COLUMN

"LET'S TAKE A DEEP DIVE INTO COMAL'S RURAL HERITAGE"

By Frank Dietz, for the H-Z November 4, 2023

Conversations through a number of decades with heritage farm and agriculture families have been impressive and revealing. Many such visits have been with our neighbors in and around Comal County and the beloved Texas Hill Country. Others are rooted from a long period of dialogue in a program sponsored by the Rural Sociology Department of Texas A&M University and the Extension Service (now known as AgriLife). Professional ordained clergy and laity in the state's rural communities were brought together as part of the Town and Country Church Conference each fall. Such conversations generated a host of interesting words growing out of the rural heritage of Texas families. Some of the words that come to mind are: interesting, inspiring, courageous, informative, revealing, provocative, concerning, challenging and more. My impressions and learnings rooted in these encounters form the basis for my inviting you to join CCCA (Comal County Conservation Alliance) in a special adventure of discovery and information.

On Tuesday, November 14th from 6-7:30 pm at McKenna Center we will have an opportunity to hear from an impressive regional archeologist, Tiffany Osburn of the Texas Historical Commission and Cindy Coers who chairs our Comal County Historical Commission. Each of these resource presenters brings a host of information, a collection of stories and descriptions of family legacies and the value of the rural heritage so rapidly disappearing with the rapid pace of development all around us in every corner of our County. Bring your questions and inquiries.

My own experience in sitting with varieties of Texans endeavoring to continue productive life on family heritage acreage always has left me astonished, impressed and amazed. The wealth of life lessons drawn from those endeavoring to be productive on acreage in many regions of our state is astonishing. That only gets magnified in the small but blessed boundaries of our own Comal County. The early tools for working and enhancing the land and its gifts prompt explanations that exhibit reverence for the natural world, bright ingenuity to "figure things out" and an amazing array of respectful restorative practices that invest in the future. Much of what we now would describe in sophisticated terms about eco-friendly practices were a part of the learned and practiced behaviors from early on.

Our visit with our specialists on November 14 regarding our rural heritage will help us see the pathways open for our own endeavors going forward. What about water, its careful use and capture for further utilization? What ways would enhance and encourage biodiversity rather than abuse and destroy the natural gifts too often taken for granted?

If this description supports protections for wildlife, pollinators, land kept in more natural and productive forms as opposed to just providing more expansive growth corridor settlements, you're absolutely correct. How we honor and appreciate the rural heritage and protect it while welcoming those appreciating and enhancing the heritage in dynamic Comal County shapes an agenda we can share for the future.

While speaking of an agenda for the future, I would be remiss to not remind you that this Tuesday, November 7, you will have an opportunity to show support for precious water and parks. Two of the several amendments are important onetime funding from current surpluses. A yes vote on Proposition 6 establishes the Texas Water Fund. Likewise, a yes vote on Proposition 14 will similarly assist funding future parks. Vote wisely on the several options but be sure to help affirm items 6 and 14! Thanks in advance.