

YOUR GIFT MEANS A LOT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY!

Someone in reflecting on his life remarked, "I still have trouble receiving gifts." My reply was to identify with deep understanding. I've come to appreciate giving and receiving in a more satisfying way for myself. I still get my greatest pleasure and satisfaction in pondering, preparing and presenting the gift.

Karen and I received a little book gift for our first Christmas together in 1963. Don's gift was a little essay from the late Paul Tournier about the MEANING OF GIFTS. Tournier wrote, "Gifts have many meanings, deep and subtle, both for those who give and those who receive." That framework has remained with me through the decades.

Permit me to describe two forms of quality giving that are rich with my current life in Comal County. The one, the gift of legacy land being placed in conservation trust in perpetuity, the other, a gift or gifts in support of an effort to assist those requiring some encouraging support to take the same action.

In recent years I have come to hold in awesome high regard the decision of a landowner or group of legacy land recipients to view their good fortune of a considerable acreage as something worth conserving. Whether endowed with the ability to acquire such a preserved parcel recently or to become the steward(s) of a parcel that has passed through generations, this is a notable gift to ponder. Some hold working acreage as a family in our Texas Hill Country for more than one hundred years. That makes such a parcel almost sacred.

Both some Asian as well as German/Euro theologians speak of "the gift and the task of the gift." Many who hold in our time a legacy of land or a recently acquired parcel understand in sweat and effort that the land and its gifts and challenges won't just happen with self-care. Each season shouts out for attention and the more recent intensity of weather extremes add to the headaches and puzzles for best strategies.

If the large acreage parcel is not to be sold or developed in some manner, a planning process to pursue a strategy for the future commends itself. For some this future may include "preserving for others" what a precious parcel might become. A potential partner through outright gifting or helpful grants can be one of our Texas or national Land Trusts to assist in "holding" a CONSERVATION EASEMENT. Such a partnership reduces the taxable basis while allowing conservation usage to go forward. We salute those who place such a value on the land and its preservation when such a gift is made. In my mind such giving represents a high order of sharing for generations to come. It also represents an eye toward holding on to some of the natural landscape of our precious Comal County and Texas Hill Country.

For those seeking to assist but without a legacy parcel for conserving, the Comal County Conservation Alliance (CCCA) provides another option. One time or an ongoing gift to support the work and advocacy of preservation is a viable option. Enabling technical assistance to those wanting to take steps with more limited means is available as well. Through such a gift you and many become partners! September 22-23rd's BIG GIVE represents such a time to help CCCA preserve land---allowing Nature to continue doing what it does best for us: providing clean refreshed air, filtered aquifer and spring flowing rainwater, wildlife habitat and settings for folks to refresh and rejuvenate. Check it out at comalconservation.org.