

# THE COMMUNITY NEWS

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ALEDO ISD

## Henze named new Coder principal

Has served at McAnally Middle school

By Mercedes Mayer  
Aledo ISD

Gina Henze, assistant principal at McAnally Middle School, has been named the new principal at Coder Elementary School.



Gina Henze

Henze has been at McAnally for one year. Previously she served as an assistant principal at Miller Elementary School in Arlington ISD. She also served as an elementary summer school principal, a support interventionist, a science enrichment teacher, and a sixth-grade teacher in Arlington ISD. Henze has a bachelor's degree from Texas Tech University and a master's degree from the University of Texas at Arlington. Henze and her husband have lived in Aledo for 12 years and have two elementary-aged Bearcat students.

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POLITICS

## Rogers votes for impeachment of Paxton

Trial to be held in Senate

By Randy Keck  
The Community News

State Rep. Glenn Rogers, whose district includes Parker County, was among 121 members of the Texas House of Representatives who voted to impeach Attorney General Ken Paxton on Saturday, May 27.

The overall vote was 121-23, with majorities of both Republicans and Democrats voting for the motion.

Under Texas law, Paxton is suspended from office pending the outcome of a trial on that will be held in the Texas Senate on charges of bribery, abuse of office, and obstruction. In all there were 20 articles of impeachment.

The Texas House Committee on Investigating began the investigation that led to the charges in February, after Paxton requested the state pay a \$3.3 million lawsuit judgement against him for wrongful termination of whistleblowers in his office. Paxton has also been under ongoing investigation by law enforcement on bribery allegations.

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## Congrats grads



KRISTIN MORALES

Aledo ISD handed out about 540 diplomas on Friday, May 26, signaling the end of the 2022-2023 school year. Look for extended graduation coverage in next week's special graduation section.

BUSINESS

## Fort Worth prepares last remaining swaths of vacant land for major development

By Sandra Sadek and Seth Bodine  
Fort Worth Report

Cattle still graze along the rolling hills of what used to be the Historic Veale Ranch. They won't be there forever.

Taylor Baird, a partner at PMB Capital Investments, considers the 1,500 acres of remaining vacant land as a development gold mine. His company already developed a 492-acre master-planned community known as Ventana adjacent to the vacant property.

As Baird drives along the dirt roads his company now owns, he shows a map of what the land could become. Homes. Mixed-use developments. Parks and open space. And enough room for industrial megasites that could employ hundreds.

"Very rarely do you have this much land that is so close to a city center. And that has been a key selling point to the users that are coming in," Baird said. "The other thing is just how fast and big this place is and how much growth you can really accommodate here."

The space also has the City of Fort Worth's attention. The economic development department sees it as a prime opportunity to attract a large employer that wants to expand. There's just one

problem: The land isn't ready to build on.

The U.S. government is offering incentives for companies to produce their products domestically, but manufacturers are also facing a problem. There's not enough land with roads, water, sewer, and utilities ready to accommodate large plants.

The city sees areas such as Walsh and Veale ranches as prime real estate for a manufacturing mega-site, according to Robert Sturns, the city's economic development director. Much of the land does not have the infrastructure like roads and water capacity to sustain such a facility. That's why the city is investing \$88 million to make these sites "shovel-ready."

### The importance of 'shovel-ready' land

About 30% of Tarrant County's land is vacant, according to 2020 data from the North Central Council of Governments. Most land is used for housing in Tarrant County – about 30% for single-family and a little over 2% for multifamily. A relatively small percentage of land – 7% – is used for industrial purposes such as manufacturing plants.

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SANDRA SADEK/FORT WORTH REPORT

Veale Ranch has about 1,500 acres of open land ready for industrial or commercial development.



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as well as contact information in case we  
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We welcome letters, articles and guest opinions from our readers. Opinions expressed in this newspaper will be labeled as opinions, editorials or letters, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the ownership. Letters should be signed, and limited to approximately 300 words. All submissions to the newspaper should include a telephone number in case we have questions. Letters are due by Monday at noon for that week's paper. Community announcements, achievements and obituaries are due by noon Friday for the following week's paper.

Photos submitted should include names of the people in the photograph.

The Community News does not charge for timely wedding, engagement and birth announcements provided they are of reasonable length. Lengthy announcements will either be edited to a reasonable length or, at the discretion of the person submitting the announcement, be charged a fee.

## Capital Highlights

# Texas House impeaches AG Paxton



**Gary Borders**  
gborders@texaspress.com

The Texas House voted overwhelmingly to impeach Attorney General Ken Paxton Saturday, only the third time in the state's history that has occurred.

The *Austin American-Statesman* and numerous news outlets reported the chamber voted 121-23 to remove Paxton, 60, from office while he awaits a trial in the Senate during a special session yet to be called.

Last week a House investigations committee heard evidence from investigators and sent 20 articles of impeachment against Paxton.

The evidence presented by investigators against Paxton included a 2015 state securities case, an ongoing federal probe into his connection with campaign donor Nate Paul, an Austin real estate developer, and an extramarital affair he tried to conceal from his wife, state Sen. Angela Paxton, R-Allen.

Adding to Paxton's legal woes, a \$3.3 million settlement with some of his former employees who were whistleblowers fell apart after the House refused to approve paying it with taxpayer money. The case remains pending.

Rep. Andrew Murr, R-Junction, chair of the investigations committee, in closing remarks Saturday urged House members to vote in favor of impeachment.

"The evidence is substantial. It is alarming, and it is unnerving," he said.

Paxton called the bipartisan vote — 61 Democrats and 60 Republicans voted for impeachment — "politically motivated."

"The ugly spectacle in the Texas House today confirmed the outrageous impeachment plot against me was never meant to be fair or just," Paxton said in a statement.

## Bill ending vehicle inspections heads to Abbott

Vehicles registered in Texas would no longer be required to pass safety inspections under a bill headed to Gov. Greg Abbott's desk, the Houston Chronicle reported.

House Bill 3297, sponsored by Rep. Cody Harris, R-Palestine, also creates a new annual \$7.50 inspection replacement fee that will be added to annual vehicle registration fees. Thus, owners

won't save any money but will not have to take their vehicle to a licensed inspection station.

The measure passed the Senate along party lines, 20-11, with the Republican majority arguing the annual inspections are a burden to residents without making Texas roads safer.

Sen. Nathan Johnson, D-Dallas, told his fellow senators that a recent study by the American Society of Civil Engineers found fewer highway fatality deaths in states with an inspection program.

"It found that states that have vehicle safety inspections have 5.5% fewer fatalities per year than states that don't have inspection programs. In Texas, that's 261 dead people every single year," Johnson said.

If Abbott signs the bill or allows it to become law without his signature, it will go into effect Sept. 1.

Texas is currently one of 15 states still requiring regular inspections. Although the statewide inspection rule is on its way out, vehicle emission inspections will still be required in 17 metropolitan counties.

## House approves changes to university tenure policies

The House last week gave approval to a bill changing tenure policies at the state's colleges and universities, the *Statesman* reported. The lower chamber's measure differs somewhat from the Senate version, which would completely ban public colleges and universities from grant tenure to faculty members beginning in 2024.

The House version "provides a framework to the state's universities about what the Legislature

expects regarding tenure, including how tenure is granted to faculty members, how tenured faculty are reviewed and when tenured faculty can be dismissed," the *Statesman* reported.

The bill now goes back to the Senate in an effort to work out differences in the two measures.

## Budget writers strike \$321.3 billion two-year deal

Budget writers for the Texas House and Senate have come to agreement on a \$321.3 billion two-year budget that includes \$12.3 billion for property tax cuts and provides considerable new funding for higher education, the energy grid, mental health, and broadband, according to the *Texas Tribune*. The property tax reductions are dependent on passage of a constitutional amendment in November.

A \$15 billion supplemental spending proposal uses some of the state's record surplus to provide funding for a higher education endowment, enhanced retirement for public school teachers, border security, Medicaid costs and state debt reduction, according to the *Tribune*.

Both plans were expected to get floor votes in each chamber before session adjournment on Monday night.

## Boaters urged to 'Clean, Drain and Dry'

Texans have begun heading to state lakes and waterways as Memorial Day weekend kicked off the summer boating season. Officials with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department urge boaters and paddlers to protect

Texas lakes from invasive aquatic species.

"Memorial Day weekend is the unofficial kick-off to boating season in Texas, and while we want everyone to have a great time, we also want them to avoid giving free rides to invasive species and helping them travel to new lakes," said Brian Van Zee, TPWD Inland Fisheries regional director. "The best way to prevent the spread of many harmful aquatic invasive species is to clean, drain, and dry your boats and equipment — every time."

The biggest threat to Texas lakes is zebra mussels and giant salvinia, which continues to spread to new areas of Texas. Other invasive species that can be spread include quagga mussels, crested floating heart, and water hyacinth.

Giant salvinia is now found on 27 East Texas lakes and numerous creeks, marshes and rivers between Houston and Beaumont, according to TPWD. Zebra mussels are now found in 36 Texas lakes and in rivers downstream of infested lakes,

TPWD urges boaters to follow three simple steps to reduce the risk of spreading invasive species: 1. Remove mud, plants, and debris. 2. Drain all water from the boat and gear. 3. Once home, open all compartments and let everything dry completely for at least a week, if possible.

*Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches and Cedar Park. Email: gborders@texaspress.com.*



Read this  
story online



## Slings&Arrows

# Bond opponents still in the shadows

literally, for Lynn McKinney Elementary School, which will be located near the Morningstar subdivision.

The bond monies will also be used to purchase school buses, make technology upgrades, and provide other improvements around the school district.

I've been watching bond elections in this school district for more than 25 years, and in the more recent elections I have seen a pattern develop.

The school district discovered that it was advantageous to invite the entire community into the process, both by forming a committee of residents in the district to evaluate needs and develop a

plan, and to invite input from the community at large.

Throughout the process, they committee spends countless hours hearing from demographers, architects, and others to help them arrive at a decision that they feel is in the best interest of the students in the school district.

From there, the committee makes a recommendation to the school board, which then decides either to approve the recommendation or not, and a bond election is called.

The pattern I've seen develop is that there are people in the community, and it's pretty much the same faces every time, who do not heed the invitation

to participate and do not provide input, but once all the work is done they form organized opposition to the proposal.

It is our right as citizens to support or oppose a bond election, but time after time when I receive alarming mailers about taxes going up, I have to ask myself, "if they are so passionate about it, why don't they participate while the decisions are being made, rather than waiting until all the work is done?"

Why don't they attend the meetings and suggest alternate strategies?

It certainly calls into question their sincerity in wanting to keep  
**Turn to BONDS, page A3**



**Randy Keck**  
rkeck@community-news.com

The May 6 Aledo ISD school bond election is about a month behind us but that doesn't mean all of the business of the election is complete.

The results are final — voters in the school district voted to approve the bond issue, paving the way, both figuratively and



# Rainwater Harvesting Tips and Tricks

## Harvesting alleviates stress on groundwater systems

By Jill Garcia, P.G.  
Upper Trinity Groundwater Conservation District

With recent showers dotting the north Texas landscape and hopefully more precipitation on the way, the Upper Trinity Groundwater Conservation District is here to provide the best tips and tricks to maintaining your very own rainwater harvesting system. Parker County receives 32-35 inches of rain annually, and just a fraction caught from a roof or barn can sustain landscaping, livestock, or family homes. Apart from reducing weathering of soils and streets, rainwater harvesting helps alleviate stress on local groundwater systems.

Rainwater systems can be all manner of shapes and sizes. A small barn, apartment rooftop, or single-family home all have suitable catchment surfaces for harvesting. Not sure how much rain you want to catch? Consider what you're hoping to use the volumes for, be it a garden, irrigation,

or potable household use. This will help you decide on a storage container material and type. A great rule of thumb is for every square foot or roof or surface, you can catch .62 gallons for every inch of rain. That means a 2,000 square foot home could catch 1,240 gallons in a brief thunderstorm!

If your home currently includes gutters, consider attaching a harvesting barrel at the base of your gutter system. Installing that along with a filter at the base of the gutter outlet will keep vegetation and debris from reaching your storage tank, increasing the longevity of your system.

Don't have gutters? No problem – go outside and look at the shape of your roof. Roof footprints allow you to anticipate the drainage pattern and determine where a rain chain could be installed to lead water to a storage system. While these are less efficient than a gutter, they save time and money for those looking to install something quick and less permanent.

If you're looking to catch from a barn or larger structure, consider the addition of a pump and filtration

system. Micron sediment filters can help reduce debris and ensure clean water is entering your storage systems. Multiple rainwater harvesting companies exist in the north Texas area – research your own contractor at ARCSA.org (The American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association) and find the system that's right for you.

Did you know the Upper Trinity recently completed our first annual rainwater harvesting program? Stay tuned to the news as we award funds towards two harvesting projects in the Parker County area. The sites will also have resources for residents to design their own systems and learn about the numerous benefits of harvesting. Remember, Texas supports rainwater harvesting by making materials tax exempt, and requiring certain new state facilities to be equipped with systems.

So, get brainstorming with your own system today, and call UTGCD or your local Master Gardener's Association with any questions or ideas.



Read this story online



## PAXTON

from page A1

"It was obvious that there was enough evidence regarding concerns about misuse of office and abuse of power that we had to take that into consideration," Rogers said. "There were 20 Articles of Impeachment that were brought forth. So it was not just a single, isolated article."

Rogers stressed that the investigation of Paxton might not have occurred had Paxton not attempted to utilize taxpayer money to settle his lawsuit.

In the case of impeachment, the Texas House acts more or less as a grand jury, determining whether there is enough evidence to have a trial. The Senate acts as jury in the matter.

Rogers also stressed that the impeachment vote is not a determination of guilt.

"The verdict rests with the Senate," Rogers said. "All that we've done is look at facts. And with those facts presented to us, a very large

margin ... something like over 70% of Republicans voted in support of this measure. And when I talked to many of the Republicans that did not vote for impeachment, the vast majority, I think, it was related to the process, not whether they thought there was sufficient evidence to move it forward to trial. I think they felt like the process just needed some more time."

During the proceedings on Saturday, Rep. Charlie Geren (R-Fort Worth) criticized Paxton for calling representatives on the House floor to "personally threaten them with political consequences in the next election" if they voted for impeachment.

Rogers said he received no such threat, but knows of at least one colleague who did. Rogers said the colleague shared a recording of Paxton's threat with him.

"I think there is some concern that would be considered witness tampering," Rogers said. "I want to emphasize that this is a very difficult thing for all the House colleagues. It's not something that we wanted to see happen. As a Republican, as a

conservative Texan, I really applaud what the attorney general has done to help help our cause in Washington to push back against some probably unconstitutional federal mandates and push back against some of the policies of the Biden administration, and I applaud him for that. But the bottom line is no one is above the law."

Rogers said it has also been a tough week for his staff, as they have had to field what Rogers termed as "threatening" and "vulgar" messages. "I can certainly understand the disappointment. I'm disappointed that this is happening as well. But in the end, we have to do what's right. I wasn't expedient, certainly politically. The easiest thing for me would have been not to vote for impeachment, as far as dealing with him, as far as dealing with some elements of the Republican Party, but but the right thing to do was [to impeach], and I stand by that."

Rogers said he thought most of those messages originated outside his district.

## BONDS

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taxes down when they make no effort to do so during the process.

But that's not the unfinished business of the most recent bond election.

Voters in the school district received mailers from political action committees supporting and opposing the bond.

We know who sent out the mailers supporting the bond. These folks were happy to have their names attached to their efforts, and they filed the legally-required paperwork making their donor list public.

We still don't know who sent out the mailers opposing the bond. Two different "groups" sent out mailers. Both groups had the same return mailing address, and both had the same postal imprint.

The big problem is that the group Concerned Parents of Aledo political action committee still hasn't filed its finance report that was due in April.

You may ask, "what's the big deal? The bond passed."

It's not about whether the bond passed or failed, it's about free, fair, and transparent elections.

The mailers sent out by the Concerned Parents of Aledo PAC stated that they did not receive any outside money — that it was funded by local parents. Yet for some reason they don't want us to know who they were.

If my suspicions are correct, the money may not technically have come from afar, but I'm betting the livelihood of the donors does.

So once again we'll ask the question: Concerned Parents of Aledo and Leading Local — come out, come out, wherever you are.

Voters deserve to know.



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SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Cindi Neverdousky of Willow Park took home top honors from the Woman's Club of Fort Worth 59th annual Art Show with her oil-on-canvas rendition of "Winter Melt." The painting won Best of Show and is now on display at The Woman's Club on Pennsylvania Avenue.



TOM MARVIN

The Aledo ISD held a reception on Thursday, May 25, for Assistant Superintendent Lynn McKinney, who has retired after 31 years of service to the district. Shown are (from left) former Superintendent Dan Manning, Jarrett and Logan (sons), Lynn and Randal McKinney, and daughter Leah Peev.

## LAND

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About 42% of Parker County's land is vacant, with another 32.16% being residential acreage and 12.81% single family homes.

The loss of a huge economic development deal with electric car-maker Rivian in 2021 forced the city to realize the importance of having infrastructure and land ready for manufacturers to start construction immediately.

Rivian eyed an area around Walsh Ranch for a new plant, but ultimately the company landed in Georgia, where the company has faced stiff opposition from residents.

Sturns cited water requirements as a reason behind Rivian's decision. The city was already constructing water and sewer lines, but Rivian needed a certain amount of gallons per day for the site, which Fort Worth was unable to provide within the tight deadlines the company set, Sturns said.

"Part of their big concern (was) were we going to be able to supply the necessary water utilities needed for the project?" Sturns said.

Despite the loss of that deal, the city is moving forward and investing millions of dollars out west to ensure adequate infrastructure is there to meet the needs of future clients.

The city, county, and Texas Department of Transportation

(TxDOT) are investing about \$162 million toward infrastructure work over the next two to three years. The goal is to add water and sewer lines by early 2024 while TxDOT works with the county to complete interchanges and roads that allow people to access the sites by 2025 or 2026.

The demand for megasites like Rivian's — a large plot of land, usually between 500 and 2,000 acres — has exponentially increased in the last few years, said Larry Gigerich, chair of the Site Selectors Guild, an association of professional site selection consultants.

Three years ago, megasites made up 5% of their projects. Now, Gigerich estimates about one in four projects are megasites.

"The last two years is the busiest time of our careers as site selectors," he said.

Vacant sites in the Midwest and Southwest are among the country's hotspots for manufacturers right now. The sites have a lot more requirements to build on: gas, electricity, roads, sewer, water. For manufacturing sites, electricity and water are critically important, Gigerich said. Water is the No. 1 issue, he said.

About 75% of the guild's clients prefer to move into existing buildings rather than build new ones because it's faster to get them operational.

"You get to a point in any deal, whether it's a megasite deal or not, whether it's new construction or going

to an existing building, where our confidence levels are at a point where we can move forward," Gigerich said. "You're still not going to see companies take unnecessary risks that really put them at the spot."

As the demand for vacant land continues to grow alongside the many federal incentives boosting a "Made in America" approach, the Dallas-Fort Worth area is poised to receive a lot of momentum as a top location.

"I think Fort Worth, because of that land being available (and) if the infrastructure piece can be figured out correctly, will take advantage of the fact that that land is there, and there's an opportunity for more development," Gigerich said.

### Planning for long-term growth

While the city is working to accommodate potential projects in the near future, it is also working with property developers like Veale Ranch on long-term planning as the area continues to rapidly grow.

The City Council approved an agreement between Fort Worth and PMB Capital Investments on Dec. 13, 2022. Some key points in the agreement include the annexation of more than 5,000 acres during the next 40 to 50 years.

The agreement also creates a public improvement district and tax increment financing on the Veale

property to help fund infrastructure improvements in the area over time.

PMG's Baird, which oversees Veale Ranch, said the agreement between the city and the company plays a critical role in delivering on promises.

"Before we had that agreement with the city of Fort Worth, somebody could say, 'I'm really interested in that 100 acres, let's build this,' and we didn't have an answer to say, 'How are you going to get water, how are you going to get sewer? How do we finance the construction of the roadways?'" Baird said.

While the city has yet to see the ultimate payoff from its long-term planning efforts, Sturns said, Fort Worth's investments out west prove the city has learned lessons from Rivian's decision and is ready to take on the next big project.

"We really took (the loss of Rivian) as, 'Let's not let up on the gas, let's continue to push forward, let's get stuff as ready as we can,'" Sturns said, "so we can put ourselves in the optimal position to attract some of these large users."

*Sandra Sadek is a Report for America corps member, covering growth for the Fort Worth Report. You can contact her at [sandra.sadek@fortworthreport.org](mailto:sandra.sadek@fortworthreport.org) or on Twitter at @ssadek19. Seth Bodine is a business and economic development reporter for the Fort Worth Report. Contact him at [seth.bodine@fortworthreport.org](mailto:seth.bodine@fortworthreport.org) and follow on Twitter at @sbodine120.*

## CODER

from page A1

"We are excited that Gina Henze will be leading our Coder Cats next school year as campus principal," Superintendent Dr. Susan Bohn said. "Mrs. Henze excels at building relationships with students, staff, and families, and also at creating and implementing systems that ensure student and staff success. She has great experience as a teacher, interventionist, and assistant principal at the elementary level, and I cannot wait to see the impact she'll have on Coder."

"I am so excited to be a Coder Cat!" Henze said. "I have had the opportunity to work under amazing leaders and mentors

who shared with me the importance of systems, relationships, and keeping students at the forefront of our work,

always. It is such an honor to serve Aledo ISD in this new leadership capacity. I can't wait to get to know the Coder community."



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GRADUATION

AHS senior ready to take on world

Kirby already won battle with cancer

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

Five years after the worst day of her life, Aledo senior Gracie Kirby is enjoying one of life's most memorable moments.

She is now a graduate of Aledo High School, ready to take on the world — a world that five years ago seemed anything but exciting. And even as she moves forward, challenges from her past have continued to resurface.

But she's not letting that stop her from enjoying life. Gracie is more vibrant and outgoing than most people who have never had a major health problem, especially one that affects the brain.

In 2018, at age 13, Gracie was diagnosed with a rare brain tumor. So rare, in fact, that she was only the 16th person in the world to receive such a diagnosis.

"Me and a girl in Germany, we had this friendly little controversy. She said she was the 15th and I said I am," Gracie said with a chuckle — something she's doing a lot more of these days. "We also had our surgeries on the same day."

Gracie was diagnosed with Central Neurocytoma. It blocks the flow of cerebral spinal fluid, causing fluid buildup.

While her tumor was benign, and not life-threatening, there were many times Gracie felt otherwise. She had constant headaches, nausea, vomiting, visual, and behavioral changes.

To deal with this, she had her original surgery on April 16, 2018.

"If the fluid had kept pushing I could have gone blind," Gracie said, also noting likely seizures.

The battle begins

Ironically, Gracie found out about her tumor after going in to see why her elbow was hurting. In the search for the source of that problem she said they did a scan of her entire body, which brought some shocking news.

"They said, 'We want to talk to your mom first,'" Gracie recalled. "Then, they called me in and my mom was bawling her eyes out. Then, they told me and I started bawling my eyes out.

"They saw the tip of it (the tumor). Had that not happened who knows when it would have been found?"

Then, in 2019 Gracie received some more disheartening news. She was told there were still some small remnants of the tumor.

She was also told it could probably be treated with radiation. That didn't make her feel any better.

"That broke me. I didn't want to do radiation," she said. "I'm a teenage girl and I didn't want to lose my hair."



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Five years ago Gracie Kirby was surrounded by a plethora of machines and in the hospital as she was fighting a rare brain tumor. In fact, she was only one of 16 people in the world ever to be diagnosed with this particular kind.

However, she did undergo radiation treatment, something she is now proud of.

"At the beginning of this year I wrote that was my greatest accomplishment," she said with a smile.

But still she and the tumor weren't through with each other. Late last year she received news that there still four small spots, one of which was actually malignant.

Even the way she learned was shocking. It came after she underwent a routine spinal tap checkup.

"A lady came in, and I guess she thought we already had a meeting with the doctor, but she said, 'There are three spots we are watching,'" Gracie said. "I thought, 'Oh crap! It ended up being four.

"I said, 'Okay, let's do it again.'" So she underwent another radiation treatment.

In fact, she may be in store for more down the road, she said.

"I guess I'm not done yet. They grow super slow," she explained.

Gracie said the original tumor was about the size of a ping pong ball. The subsequent ones have been smaller than a penny.

"They might not grow again because of the previous radiation, but if they do I'll have to do radiation again or surgery," she said. "I keep thinking I'm done and I'm not."

Living life

Gracie did not let the tumor keep her from enjoying life as a student. She returned to Aledo, where she

was a member of the dance team her sophomore year.

Then, she transferred to Weatherford Christian School for her junior year and was more active than she had ever been. She participated in several sports and was a cheerleader.

"I used my brain tumor as an excuse to get out of tumbling," she said with a chuckle. "They'd ask, 'Can you tumble?' and I'd say, 'I can't because I have a brain tumor.' Of course I can tumble, but it worked to get me out of it because I don't like tumbling."

However, she missed her friends at Aledo and returned for her senior year. She's now a member of Leading Ladies, a community service program.

Academically, she's solid. Though she is still not a fan of math.

"I think if anything I got better (after the treatment)," she said, chuckling. "I asked the surgeon if, when they were in there, could he add some math facts. They didn't. I'm not better at math."

Gracie plans to attend the University of Oklahoma to study nursing with a minor in psychology or speech pathology.



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Five years after being hospitalized and undergoing surgery for an extremely rare brain tumor, Gracie Kirby is now an Aledo High School graduate.

“Her strength and dignity are a testament to her unwavering might.”

Annie Walker

Among those Gracie has inspired are Aledo High School counselor Annie Walker, who called her “the picture of perseverance.”

“Her strength and determination are to be praised. Despite the numerous intense medical procedures, her will to overcome remains strong. Her strength and dignity are a testament to her unwavering might,” Walker said. “When she walks into any room, the room becomes brighter with her smile and infectious personality. Despite her continuous setbacks, Grace has never faltered. Aledo High School has been fortunate to have Grace as a representative of our school.”

Family and community

Gracie said something that kept her strong was knowing her family and folks in the Aledo community were by her side every step of the way. She said it even tightened an already strong bond between herself and her older brother Brooks.

"As soon as he heard I was getting admitted, I think he was the first to show up at the hospital," she said. "He was always bringing me food to the hospital. He babysat me."

The iconic Paint Shack, once a local staple for years, was painted twice to honor Gracie. That was just one of many ways the community rallied behind her, including folks at her school raising some money to help her and her family.

"That's another reason I had to come back to Aledo. Everyone here was just so good to me," she said.

Outlook on life

Gracie admits there were some dark times emotionally during her battle.

"My sophomore year I was diagnosed with depression. I just wanted to sleep," she said. "But I prayed and got back into my small group. I got baptized right after radiation in 2019."

That, she said, has helped greatly with her finding a sense of focus in moving forward. Now, the depression is behind her and she's embracing every day.

"I had a teacher ask, 'Why are you always so happy?' It's because of God. He has a plan for me," Gracie said.

And she's not letting little things bother her anymore. For example, she laughed and told the story of how she would have previously been little uneasy about getting a deep cleaning from a dentist.

Not now.

"I don't really let things scare me anymore," she said. "I just say, 'Oh, I've had a brain tumor.'"



Read this story online



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

While she still has to undergo regular checkups and has had surgery and two radiation treatments stemming from an extremely rare brain tumor, life is good for Aledo graduate Gracie Kirby.





WEATHERFORD

DAR chapter celebrates 120th anniversary

State regent was guest speaker

By Harriet Helm  
Special to The Community News

The Weatherford Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution celebrated its 120th anniversary on May 23 with a tea at Northside Baptist Church.

Texas State Regent Marcy Carter-Lovick was the guest speaker. Harriet Helm, Honorary Chapter Regent, shared a pictorial history of the chapter. District II Director Vicki McComack and Robin Gill, Vice Regent of the Jane Douglas Chapter of Dallas, were other special guests that honored the chapter's Lantern Chapter status.

Alice Egelhoff, the Organizing Regent of Weatherford Chapter joined the Jane Douglas Chapter in 1899. Alice was appointed by the State Regent of that time, Cornelia Henry, to organize a chapter in Weatherford where she lived. Because of Mrs. Egelhoff's dedication to those efforts, the Weatherford Chapter and the Jane Douglas Chapter were designated Lantern Chapters by National



WEATHERFORD DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Carol Livingston, a 31-year-member, served as greeter when the Weatherford DAR celebrated its 120th birthday.

Society Daughters of the American Revolution.

At the tea Linda Schmidt, Weatherford Regent, honored ten long time members with certificates. Refreshments, including a lantern cake, were enjoyed by all.

For more information about the Weatherford chapter, visit <https://www.texasdar.org/chapters/Weatherford/>.



WEATHERFORD DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Shown from left are Harriet Helm, Marcy Carter-Lovick, Linda Schmidt, Vicki McComack, and Christine Collins (cake designer).

ART

Weatherford Art Association announces Artists of the Month for May 2023



DEBRA STRANDBERG/WEATHERFORD ART ASSOCIATION

Michael McCarty (left), Carolyn Young (center), and Carmen Davailus were the top award winners in the Weatherford Art Association May contest.

The Weatherford Art Association recognized three dynamic entries in the Artist of the Month competition at its May 22 meeting.

Michael McCarty garnered first place for his memorable graphite drawing, "Three Tenors." Michael said he edits his images down to essentials and then "he leaves some white space in his works to engage the viewer so that they can fill in the blanks themselves." "Three Tenors" and other works by Michael will be on view at the Doss Heritage and Cultural Center during June.

Second place went to Native American Artist Carolyn Young for "Defending Friendship." Her acrylic painting depicts a medicine shield with symbols from Choctaw legend. "This shield

would have been given as a gift and would have been made by a loved one or perhaps a medicine man," Carolyn explained. "The turtle is a storyteller and protector and the crossed arrows represent friendship." Carolyn's painting will be displayed during June at First Bank Texas in downtown Weatherford. You can see more of her work at [carolynbernardyoung.com](http://carolynbernardyoung.com).

Third place was awarded to Carmen Davailus for her photograph on metal, "Pretty Red Petals." In this image Carmen said she was experimenting with new techniques with camera and lens to show off the flower's unique petals. The results have "quickly become my go-to for

flowers with so many petals and raindrops." Carmen's photograph can be viewed throughout June at the Fort Worth Community Credit Union on South Main Street in Weatherford. You can see more of her work at [carmensfineart.com](http://carmensfineart.com).

As part of its mission as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, the Weatherford Art Association provides monthly demonstrations to increase the knowledge of its members and support arts education for the community at large. Meetings are held from 6 to 7:45 p.m. on the fourth Monday of each month at 125 South Waco off the square in Weatherford. For more information, visit [weatherfordart.com](http://weatherfordart.com).



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# Events

June 2, 2023  
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www.community-news.com

More events can be found at [www.community-news.com/calendar](http://www.community-news.com/calendar)

**JUNE 3**  
**PCSP Frontier Days Rodeo Parade**  
Kick off Rodeo Week with the 76th PCSP Frontier Days PRCA Rodeo PARADE in Weatherford at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, June 3. SPECTATORS the Parade will start at 9th Grade Center, 1007 S Main St., head North on S Main, around the Courthouse, West on Palo Pinto (Mineral Wells Hwy), Left on Waco St. to Cherry Park area (long route). Saturday afternoon we will have a good ole' fashioned FREE family friendly Street Dance, with opening band Tyler Bond, at 5 p.m. Feature band, Albert Leon Payne & Friends, will play at 7 p.m. Street dance will be on the corner of Dallas/York Street on the Northwest Quadrant of the square in Downtown Weatherford. Food trucks will be available. Coolers welcome and bring your chairs! For more information visit [pcsp.net](http://pcsp.net).

**JUNE 8 - 10**  
**Parker County Sheriff's Posse Frontier Days PRCA Rodeo**



**2023 SUMMER ART CAMP**  
**K-5TH GRADE**

June 12-15 & June 19-22 10am - Noon  
June 12-15 only 6-8pm (3-5th graders only)

Location: Central Christian Church, 1602 S Main St, Weatherford

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Classes fill up Fast so Register Now at: [Weatherfordart.com/community-service](http://Weatherfordart.com/community-service)

**Cost:**  
\$60/week for 1st Child  
\$40/week for 2nd Child or more  
All Supplies Included

**JUNE 12 - 15, 19 - 22**  
**Summe Art Camp**  
Weatherford Art Association is offering art programs to all ages in Weatherford. Classes are from 10 a.m. - noon June 12-15 and 19-22 at Central Christian Church. Art projects are hosed by member artists of the Weatherford Art Association. Register now at [weatherfordart.com/community-service](http://weatherfordart.com/community-service).

**JULY 4**  
**Spark in the Park**  
Join Weatherford Parks and Recreation for Spark in the Park 2023, 6 - 10:30 pm on Tuesday July 4 at Heritage park. Come enjoy music, food, waterslides and fire-works. Texas country's modern-era founding fathers, Pat Green, will be the headliner at the amphitheater starting at 7:45 p.m.. Opening act will be Chris Colston starting at 6 p.m.. Following



artist concerts will be the famous fireworks show. The event is FREE TO ATTEND! Checkout the webpage for Facebook for event/parking maps: <https://www.facebook.com/events/757972976023061>

**JULY 8**  
**Parker County Peach Festival**  
The 38th Annual Parker County Peach Festival returns to Weatherford from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Saturday, July 8th, 2023. Come enjoy and shop the more than Over 200 arts, crafts, food and activity booths, Live music, chil-

**ACROSS**

1 San Antonio hot sauce maker  
5 TXism: "brains in \_\_\_\_" (computer)  
6 TXism: "is the \_\_\_\_ Catholic?"  
7 mama dog's litter  
8 TXism: " \_\_\_\_ some gravel" (fell)  
9 cow talk  
12 TX Ed Sedgwick directed \_\_\_\_  
17 exerts  
19 TXism: " \_\_\_\_ of his own shadow"  
21 TX Guy Clark 1992 album: " \_\_\_\_ Build"  
22 Upshur County seat  
23 this herbicide was put on Austin's "Treaty Oak" in 1989  
28 Adam & Eve son  
29 small Eurasian deer  
30 TX Charley Pride's "Then \_\_\_\_"  
31 TXism: "wipe the slate clean"  
35 "three," south of the border  
36 TXism: "does a \_\_\_\_ the woods?" (yes)  
42 TXism: " \_\_\_\_ death" (pleased)  
44 Delon of "Texas Across the River"  
46 in Austin: " \_\_\_\_ Texas Book Festival"  
48 tea dribbles  
49 nevertheless

50 TXism: "a day late \_\_\_\_ dollar short"  
51 big health insurance provider  
52 TXism: "can't make a silk purse out of a sow's \_\_\_\_"  
53 worry  
54 TXism: "squeaks like a rusty \_\_\_\_"  
56 Abilene's Dyess \_\_\_\_ Force Base  
57 " \_\_\_\_ pig's eye"

**DOWN**

1 former popular Houston eatery: " \_\_\_\_ House"  
2 Travis Tritt tune: "It's All \_\_\_\_ Change"  
3 \_\_\_\_ Cove, TX  
4 TX Strait's "All My \_\_\_\_ Live in Texas"  
9 water vapor  
10 TX Willie Nelson 1980 hit (4 wds.)  
11 "bear," south of the border  
12 periodical abbr.  
13 TXism for "mean man" (3 wds.)  
14 this Guthrie performed at TX Willie's Farm Aid III

**TEXAS CROSSWORD**  
*by Charley & Guy Orbison*  
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P-1638

15 Joan Crawford's Texas birth \_\_\_\_; Lucille Fay LeSueur  
16 TXism: "gives up the ghost"  
18 enjoyed dinner  
20 \_\_\_\_ Pepper  
23 German beetle?  
24 Elvin, of UH and NBA fame (init.)  
25 in Falls County on U.S. 77  
26 equality in the NFL  
27 Don of 1943 film "Heaven Can Wait" with TX Tierney  
32 QB Staubach (init.)  
33 George W.'s 2000 opponent, Gore

34 dir. to Coleman from Abilene  
36 TX golfer Hogan  
37 seat of Jackson County  
38 TXism: "he can't carry \_\_\_\_ in a bucket" (can't sing)  
39 Astro batting location: home \_\_\_\_

40 1924 slogan: "Me for Ma, and \_\_\_\_ Got a Dern Thing Against Pa"  
41 Foch of 1953 film "Sombbrero" with TX Cyd Charisse  
43 \_\_\_\_ Porte, TX  
45 Stormin' general for George H.W. (init.)  
47 Stephens of Dallas Cowboy cheer-leader films  
48 TXism: " \_\_\_\_ as a squirrel up a tree"  
55 serving platter

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online in June 2023!! \$10.00 for adults \$5.00 children 5-12, under 5 are free. For more information on [www.peachfestivaltx.com](http://www.peachfestivaltx.com)



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# Fine Arts Signing Day

Aledo High School held Fine Arts Signing Day on May 24. Eight students will continue their fine arts studies at colleges and universities.

- Zane Martin signed with University of Alabama in theatre.
- Luke Shelton signed with Texas A&M University in music.
- Garrett Gibson signed with University of North Texas in music.
- Victoria Duffey signed with Tarleton State University in choir.
- Elizabeth Miller signed with TCU in choir.
- Allison Maruschak signed with Texas A&M Corpus Christi in band.
- Jack Grimm signed with TCU in band.
- Gerry Olazaran signed with TCU in band.



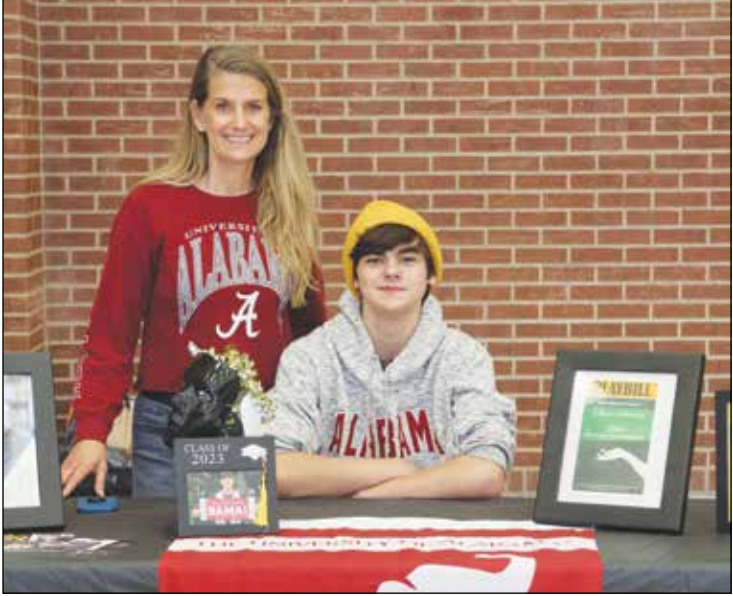
MERCEDES MAYER/ALEDO ISD  
Victoria Duffey signed with Tarleton State University in choir. She is shown with Cheryl Duffey.



MERCEDES MAYER/ALEDO ISD  
Garrett Gibson signed with University of North Texas in music. He is shown with Abby and Hal Gibson.



MERCEDES MAYER/ALEDO ISD  
Jack Grimm signed with TCU in band. He is shown with Jennifer and Eric Grimm and Madeline Grimm.



MERCEDES MAYER/ALEDO ISD  
Zane Martin signed with University of Alabama in theatre. He is shown with Lori Martin



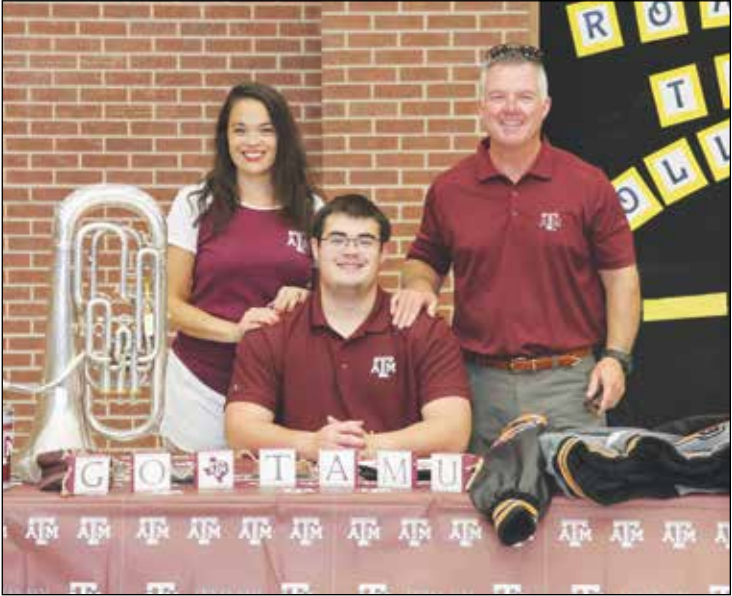
MERCEDES MAYER/ALEDO ISD  
Allison Maruschak signed with Texas A&M Corpus Christi in band. She is shown with Amy Jo and James Maruschak.



MERCEDES MAYER/ALEDO ISD  
Elizabeth Miller signed with TCU in choir. She is shown with Margie and Wayne Miller.



MERCEDES MAYER/ALEDO ISD  
Gerry Olazaran signed with TCU in band. He is shown with Elizabeth and Hector Olazaran and Amy and Adriana Olazaran.



MERCEDES MAYER/ALEDO ISD  
Luke Shelton signed with Texas A&M University in music. He is shown with Penny and Brian Shelton.

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Look at it This Way

TCA’s Camp a winner despite not being first



**Rick Mauch**  
sports@community-news.com

Whoever said winning is only about the person in first place never met Ben Camp.

Camp is the epitome of a winner. No, he didn’t win a state championship this season — though he did as a junior. But, with all due respect to those who made it to the top of the medal stand, what he did was so much more inspirational.

Camp suffered a double ACL tear during football season. The injury was so bad that most thought his competitive playing days in high school and college were over.

Most, that is, except Camp.

Though he missed the rest of football season and all of the swim season, he set his sights on competing again before leaving Trinity Christian Academy. That would be track season, and he was determined to try and defend his state championship in the discus.

While there would be no gold medal repeat, Camp did make it back to state and finished sixth. That prompted his coach, Cody McKenzie, to say of his comeback “It’s an amazing story of determination to get back to competition.”

Well said, coach.

Camp’s career could have ended on that night in the debut of the Eagles’ new stadium, and no one would have thought less of him had that been the case. But Camp believed he could fight back, that he had more.

“It was all due to hard work and the grace of God,” Camp said humbly.

Funny how those two things so often work hand-in-hand. It also didn’t hurt that Camp’s mother is a doctor — and a mom who also had faith in the strength of both her son and the Lord.

“She pushed me. She wouldn’t let up on me,” Camp recalled.

When Camp did make his return, his first competition was in a junior varsity meet. However, he kept getting stronger and stronger.

“With every meet that passed I was able to do more with my throws,” he said, adding with a smile, “I didn’t finish in the top four until the right time.”

The top four finishers in each event from district and regionals qualified for state, which Camp said brought the word “nostalgia” to mind.

“It was something I’d done before that I never thought would happen again,” he said.

I think, though, in the back of his mind, he couldn’t see his season ending any other way than competing in Waco one final time.

“This year means more to me because of my injury. Last year I was pretty sure

Turn to **CAMP**, page B7

BASEBALL

Coyotes crush No. 1 seed

WC now 2-0 in JUCO World Series

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

The Weatherford College Coyotes are making quite the impression in their first-ever appearance at the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division I World Series in Grand Junction, Colorado.

At press time the Coyotes (52-9) had won their first two games, scoring two dozen runs in the process. They opened with a thrilling walk-off 10-9 victory against Delgado Community College of New Orleans (45-12) on Saturday, May 27. They followed with a 14-6 drubbing of top-seeded College of Central Florida (52-7) on Monday, May 29, a game that was ended after seven innings by the tournament’s mercy rule.

The fourth-seeded Coyotes, who ran their win streak to 20 games, were set to play third seed Wabash Valley, Illinois (55-11), on Wednesday after No. 3 seed Wabash defeated Blinn 16-6 on Tuesday.

*Editor’s note: the Wednesday game time was after our press time. Please check www.community-news.com for updates.*

The Buccaneers (Blinn) are in the World Series for a seventh time, the most of any of this year’s entrants, but it is their first time since 2014. Wabash is in for a fourth time and a second straight season.

“I’ve heard about Grand Junction for many years. It’s exceeded expectations,” Coyotes head coach Jeff Lightfoot said. “A phenomenal atmosphere.”

As for his team’s explosive offense in the series so far, Lightfoot said with a chuckle, “Hitting the ball over the fence kinda helps.”

The Coyotes banged out 15 extra-base hits in their first two



TODD BENNETT

Weatherford College pitcher Davin Ronquist delivers during the drubbing of College of Central Florida on May 29.

wins, including nine home runs, five doubles, and a triple. They also showed patience at the plate, drawing 13 walks.

“That’s what our lineup has done over the past 50-60 games,” Lightfoot said. “We’ve had contributions from all of the lineup.”

In the victory against Delgado, the Coyotes built a 7-2 lead through five innings before the Dolphins, who were making their sixth JCWS appearance and first since 2016, stormed back to lead 9-7 entering the bottom of the

ninth. Jack Arthur tied the game with a two-run home run and Robin Villanueva ended the contest with a solo blast.

Villanueva, Arthur, Jack Clark, and Kevin Duran each hit a pair of homers in the first two games. Clark had two against Delgado and Duran had two hits against Central Florida.

In defeating the top seeded Patriots, who were making their fourth appearance in Grand Junction and a second straight, the Coyotes scored four times in

the first inning and pulled away with six in the fourth. After their fireworks came fireworks following the game, which wrapped up the day’s action.

“Win or lose this one you’ve got to enjoy the atmosphere,” Lightfoot said. “You’ve got to enjoy the crowd, the fireworks show.”

“I’m just proud of my team. That’s a good team in the other dugout. Excited to come out and play well.”

Turn to **BASEBALL**, page B7

Aledo Bearcats Fall Varsity Football Schedule

Date	Time	Opponent	Place	Notes
August 17	6:30 p.m.	Stephenville Scrimmage	Home	
August 25	7:30 p.m.	Parish Episcopal	Home	
September 1	7 p.m.	Denton Guyer	C.H. Collins Stadium	
September 8	7 p.m.	Northwest	Home	District begins
September 15	7 p.m.	Azle	Azle	
September 22	7 p.m.	Saginaw	Home	Homecoming
September 29	7 p.m.	The Colony	The Colony	
October 5	7 p.m.	South Hills	Clark Stadium	Thursday game
October 13	7 p.m.	Burleson Centennial	Home	Band/Dance Parent Night
October 20	7 p.m.	Denton Ryan	Home	Football Senior Parent Night
October 27		Open		
November 3	7 p.m.	Brewer	Brewer	

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The City of Aledo (the "City"), is pleased to issue this Request for Proposals ("RFP") to identify a partner and master development team ("Developer") to successfully rehabilitate, relocate, and develop the City-owned structure currently located at 200 Old Annetta Rd, Aledo, Texas 76008, commonly known as the Aledo Depot (the "Depot"). The City requests responses detailing a Developer's experience in similar projects, if any, with a preference given to Developers who have demonstrated successful historic revitalization projects. The Developer will be expected to support the planning, financing, development, construction, and ownership of the building.

The City's preferred development vision includes the relocation and rehabilitation of the Depot in a manner that will allow the Depot to be a feature of downtown Aledo. The relocation of the Depot must be completed by August, 2023

Submittals are due prior 3:00 PM on June 14, 2023. Sealed proposals (an **ORIGINAL PLUS SEVEN COPIES, PLUS ONE (1) ELECTRONIC VERSION ON FLASH DRIVE**) subject to the Terms and Conditions of this REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS and other contract provisions ("RFP"), will be received by the **City Manager at 104 Maverick St, Aledo, Texas 76008**, before the closing time and date shown above. **Proposals must be returned in a sealed envelope, addressed to the City Manager, City of Aledo, and have the RFP number, closing date, and company name clearly marked on the outside of the envelope.** The City will retain late proposals; however, they will not be opened nor considered in the evaluation of the proposal. Proposals may be withdrawn at any time prior to the official opening. Proposals may not be altered, amended or withdrawn after the official opening without the recommendation and approval of the City Manager.

For more information, email City Manager Noah Simon at nsimon@aledotx.gov or call 817-441-7016.

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RODEO

Two from area win NTHSRA titles

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

Two competitors from Weatherford came home with championships in the recent North Texas High School Rodeo Association Finals in Saginaw May 19-20.

Reagan High captured the top spot in breakaway roping with 182 points, topping the runner-up by 14 points. In ribbon roping, teammate Taygan Bertsch won first place with 196 points, 35 ahead of runner-up Haiden Smith of Weatherford.

High entered the finals as the No. 5 seed in breakaway following the season's 22 rodeos. Bertsch was seeded second in ribbon roping entering the finals.

Bertsch also finished second in calf roping, in which he was seeded fourth following the regular season. The title went to Brock's Dylan Barrett, who held onto his top seed from the regular season.

Weatherford had the top four finishers in ribbon roping. Following Bertsch and Smith were Caleb Lewis in third and Clayton Praytor in fourth.

Praytor was also sixth and Lewis was 10th in calf roping. Praytor placed 11th and Smith 12th in Chute Dogging.

Other top-five finishers for Weatherford are Kassidy Klein and Kadyne Klein, who were third and fifth in barrel racing. Jesus Villa placed fifth in bull riding. Kassidy

was seeded eighth coming into the finals and Kadyne climbed from a 14th seed.

Kassidy also finished 16th in poles.

The top finishers from Aledo were Gunner McCraw, seventh in chute dogging, and Ashtyn Coufal was 10th in walk-up goat tying.

Weatherford also won the team championship with 10,164 points, with Azle second with 9,107.

Other finalists from the area and their respective finishes are:

Noah Lee, Weatherford, ninth in bull riding.

Sienna Pendergrass, Weatherford, 13th in walk-up goat tying.

Savannah Letson, Weatherford, seventh in poles.

CAMP

from page B5

"I'd finish in the top three, but just getting back there this year made me so happy," he said.

Camp recalled the night of the injury. Though his season ended, he was happy it lasted as long as it did and that he played in the new stadium TCA players and fans had dreamed about for so long.

"I'd heard about it for many years. I'm so glad I got to play that one game in it," he said.

Camp admitted the next couple months following the injury were hard, both physically and emotionally. While his faith is strong, he was nonetheless told repeatedly his high school playing days were over.

"You always look forward to your last football game, but it was over so suddenly," he said. "It shifted my focus. How could I make others better?"

So, though he never played football again in the stadium, he was part of the team as a manager. He did the same for his swim team.

"I never really left sports, I just took on another role," Camp said.

When he graduated on May 19, Camp left a legacy of success at TCA both on the field and in the realm of integrity and class. If ever an athlete deserved to be looked up to by those coming through after him, it is Camp.

Camp said he believes the ordeal has made him a better person.

"I would always do the service ahead of me. This injury made me look at the bigger picture," he said. "God's plans aren't always the same as our plans. I believe this injury



Ben Camp

was God showing me how I can re-shift my focus."

Camp is now headed to Texas A&M University to study aerospace engineering. His brother, Jacob, is a junior there and is majoring in industrial distribution engineering.

Oh, Camp competed at state while still not 100% recovered — which he will be mid-June, he said. After that, he hasn't ruled out trying to compete in college.

"If anything else, if my body continues to recover, who knows? I might just decide to walk on," he said.

Whatever the future holds for Camp, it would be wise to at least give him a chance. The world could use a few more folks with his kind of positive willpower.

BASEBALL

from page B5

A victory Wednesday would move Weatherford College into the semifinals at 8 p.m. Thursday, June 1, Central Standard Time. A loss would send them into a losers bracket matchup Thursday at 3 p.m. CST, where they could reach the finals with a victory in the double-elimination tournament.

Should the survivor of the losers bracket defeat the team from the winners bracket on Friday at 8 p.m. CST, a winner-take-all contest would be played Saturday at the same time.

All Weatherford College games can be heard with the broadcast team of Dave Cowley and Brent Baker on The Coyote radio station, 88.5 and 102.5 FM or on the Coyote app.



Read this story online

La. (45-12) 9

	R	H	E
Delgado	001	101	231 - 9 13 0
WC	112	210	003 - 10 10 1

WC hitting: Jack Clark, 2-for-3, 2 HR, BB, 4 RBI; Jack Arthur, 2-for-5, 2B, HR, 2 RBI; Robin Villanueva, 2-for-4, 2B, HR, BB, 2 RBI; Joey Baran, 1-for-4; Dayton Tockey, 1-for-3, RBI; Eddie Calzonciti, 1-for-3, BB; Kanon Sundgren, 1-for-3, 3B, BB, RBI; Josh Zapata, HP.

WC pitching: Ryne Rodriguez, 6 IP, 9 H, 3 ER, 1 BB, 5 K; Davin Ronquist, 1.1 IP, 2 H, 4 ER, 1 BB, 1 K; Cole Brody, 0.1 IP, 1 R (0 ER), 1 BB, 1 HP, 3 Bk., 1 K; Cody Morse, 0 IP, 2 BB; Charlie Giese (W), 1.1 IP, 2 H, 1 ER, 1 K.

WC (52-9) 14, College of Central Florida (52-7) 6

	R	H	E
WC	400	612	1 - 14 12 1
CFla	011	002	2 - 6 8 1

WC hitting: Villanueva, 2-for-3, HR, 2 BB, 2 RBI; Baran, 2-for-3, 2 BB, 2 RBI; Tockey, 2-for-5, HR, 4 RBI; Duran, 2-for-3, 2 HR, BB, 4 RBI; Chase Pendley, 2-for-5, 2B; Arthur, 1-for-5, HR, RBI; Sundgren, 1-for-4, 2B; Clark, 3 BB; Calzonciti, BB.

WC pitching: Robert Fortenberry, 1.2 IP, 2 H, 1 ER, 2 BB, 2 K; Ronquist (W), 2.1 IP, 3 H, 1 ER, 1 BB, 2 K; Garrett McLaughlin, 2 IP, 2 H, 2 ER, 2 BB, 1 K; Brody, 1 IP, 1 H, 2 ER, 2 BB, 2 K

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Six athletes from Aledo High School recently signed letter of intent to continue their athletic careers beyond high school.



MERCEDES MAYER/ALEDO ISD

Penner Unruh signed with Arkansas State Mid-South Junior College to play baseball. He is shown with Darren, Teri, Mac, and Isaac Unruh.



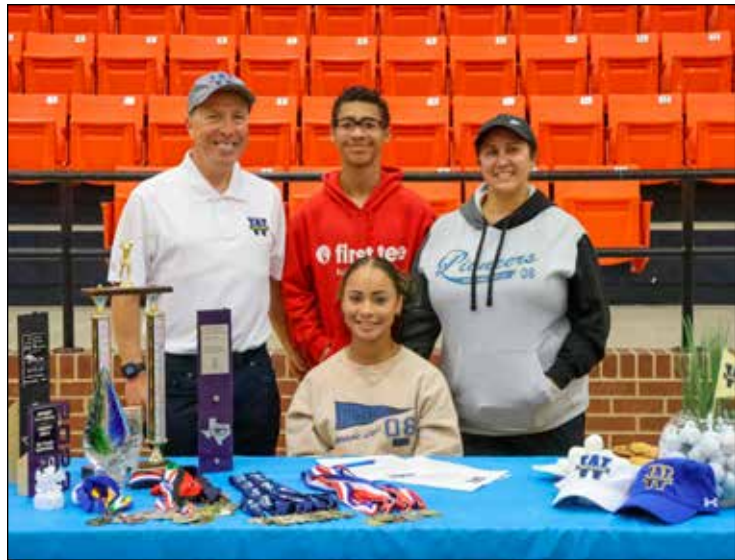
MERCEDES MAYER/ALEDO ISD

Presley Clayborn signed with McMurry University to play soccer. She is shown with Casey, Brittany, and Payden Clayborn and Marilyn Filipek.



MERCEDES MAYER/ALEDO ISD

Sean Gribble signed with Texas Tech University in pole vaulting. He is shown with David, Sharon, Morgan, Alyssa, and Kyle Gribble.



MERCEDES MAYER/ALEDO ISD

Sana'a Lemen signed with Wayland Baptist University to play golf. She is shown with Andrea and Keydan Lemen and Wayne Lemen.



MERCEDES MAYER/ALEDO ISD

Connor Mitchell signed with Ottawa University to play baseball. He is shown with Austin, Stephanie, Evan, Grant, and Kyle Pittman and Diana Pittman.



MERCEDES MAYER/ALEDO ISD

Henry Zedler signed with John Brown University to run cross country. He is shown with Sarah and Doug Zedler.

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# Aledo Bearcats

# Legacy Coaches

Celebrating the careers of coaches Tim Buchanan and Steve Wood, and the most recent road to State

## Steve Wood Wood says goodbye after creating his own legacy

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

Steve Wood took over for a legend and created his own great legacy.

Wood is retiring as Aledo School District's athletic director, effective June 1. He has been in education 42 years, with exactly half of that being served in Aledo.

He's a Bearcat through and through — and he's earned the love and respect of Bearcats the nation over. From those who played football for him to many in other sports he oversaw as athletic director, Wood has given them so many reasons to be appreciative of the impact he made on their lives.

"I will miss the relationships, you come in contact with so many people in this job," Wood said. "With kids, some of my best friends are people I once coached. With coaches, they are like family."

"I am very thankful to all of our administration just for having the opportunity to work here!"

No doubt they are thankful Wood chose to come to Aledo 21 years ago when Tim Buchanan asked him to join his staff. As defensive coordinator he helped build a dynasty, which he later added to as the Bearcats' head coach from 2014-18 when Buchanan retired from coaching and became athletic director.

The Bearcats won state championships in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2013 with Wood as an assistant coach. Then, when he took the helm, he had

one of the most incredible runs of any coach in Texas — or even national history — over a five-year span.

Wood's Bearcats posted a 75-4 record in that time, winning state titles in 2014, 2016, and 2018. Year-by-year they were 15-1 in 2014, 13-2 in 2015, 16-0 in 2016, 15-1 in 2017 and 16-0 in 2018.

They compiled a 31-game winning streak that was ended with a heart-breaking 20-19 loss in the 2017 state championship game.

Ask him the secret to the success, and Wood will humbly reply, "It's hard to believe, there are so many reasons for all of the success I think. Great kids, great coaches, unbelievable support from administration, community. I feel like the luckiest man on earth to be a small part of it."

A part of it, yes. Small part, no.

Wood had other stops in his career as a teacher and assistant football coach at Port Lavaca High School (1981-1984), Pasadena Dobie High School (1985-1992) and Saginaw Boswell High School (1993-2001). But it was in Aledo where he blossomed - as so many do in what is arguably the capitol of high school athletic success in Texas.

As athletic director, Wood oversaw a plethora of success in all sports. Buchanan returned to coach the Bearcats to state football championships in 2019, 2020 and 2022. Softball reached the state tournament in 2021 and 2022, girls golf made their third consecutive appearance

at state this year, and boys golf got there in 2019 and 2022 with Braylon Mahanay making a solo appearance this season. Likewise, boys and girls cross country advanced to state under his leadership as athletic director and track had several qualifiers and medalists.

When asked about his favorite memories as part of Bearcats history, he understandably was stumped.

"There is no way I could pick just one. We have had so many great times here," he said.

Aledo ISD Superintendent Dr. Susan Bohn said of Wood, "To know him is to love him."

"I am so grateful for the impact Steve Wood has had on our athletics program in Aledo," she said in an announcement when he announced his impending retirement in January. "We'll definitely miss his leadership but wish him well in his much-deserved retirement after 42 years in education and his 21 years in service to his Bearcats."

As for what he'll do in retirement, Wood said he will "spend more time with my family. I have plenty to keep me busy. We love the outdoors."

And, he added with a laugh, should he find himself missing work, "I may find a job, if anybody will hire a 66-year-old."

Not that he will, but if Wood decided to lead another football program — or even an entire athletic department — again, it's a good bet he'd have his choice of options.



From left: Aledo ISD Superintendent Dr. Susan Bohn, AISD Board member Hoyt Harris, player Jake Gillespie, Tim Buchanan, Steve Wood, and player Brett Turner were on the stage as it was announced that athletic facilities would be named for coaches Tim Buchanan and Steve Wood. The players had artist renderings of the new facilities.

## After 30 years, legendary coach walks away for good this time

By Tony Eierdam  
The Community News

*Editor's note: This story was originally written when Tim Buchanan retired for the first time in 2018 only to return as football coach in 2019. It has been updated and edited to include Buchanan's retirement earlier this year.*

In the past three decades, either as head coach or athletic director, Tim Buchanan has led Bearcats and Ladycats teams that have won 11 state football championships, three state softball titles, and a state championship each in baseball and boys' golf.

And that's only the team titles. There are also several individual championships, such as a pair of girls state golf championships by now LPGA golfer Cheyenne Knight. Also among his work since joining the Aledo School District in 1993, he has overseen the building of a new football stadium, softball field, and baseball field, not to mention a new high school and its gym.

And now, Buchanan — the man most call 'Coach Buc' — has left it all behind for a second and final time. This time he promises it's "for real and for good."

Buchanan previously retired in 2018, only to return shortly after to the sidelines in football, leading the Bearcats to three more state titles in 2019, 2020, and 2022.

Buchanan held dual roles of AD and head football coach from 1993-2014 and was only AD from 2014-18. Given the choice nine years ago to choose one position, he chose to go only AD in part because "I did not want to work for anybody else."

The move also kept the outstanding Bearcats coaching staff intact, and long-time assistant Steve Wood — Buchanan's defensive coordinator — accepted the head coaching job. Wood subsequently went 75-4 in five seasons, which included state championships in 2014, 2016 and 2018, along with a state finals appearance in 2017. He and Buchanan then switched jobs, with Wood becoming the AD when Buchanan returned to coaching.

Ironically, at the time of his first retirement, Buchanan said, "But who knows? In a year from now I might change my mind and coach again if I don't like (working in private business). I am still young enough to do something different, and if I don't like that I can do what I have always done."

Which is exactly what he did — and no one has done it better. Aledo has more state football championships than any other school in Texas and is the only program to twice threepeat (2009-11 and 2018-20).

### Stadiums - then and now

Buchanan recalled his first day on the job as a young, up-and-coming assistant. He was in a successful program at A&M Consolidated and came highly recommended. He was also the fifth head football coach in the last four years at Aledo — with one only lasting two days. Looking back, he said he is surprised he lasted one year, much less 30.

"I was 32 years old when I took this job, and the first day on the job Mrs. (Lynn) McKinney was the high school principal and she was showing me around," he recalled. "The high school and middle school were all in one building, and we had more kids in portable buildings than we did in indoor classrooms."

Buchanan said he was hoping to last three years. It was actually his fourth season before the Bearcats reached the playoffs, but when they did, they became one of the most prolific programs in the nation.

Buchanan never lost a first-round playoff game — nor did Wood. Many times more often than not, they were still playing after Thanksgiving, a common goal among high school football teams in Texas.

A familiar joke is that the Bearcats have won more playoff games in AT&T Stadium than the Dallas Cowboys have played there.

Buchanan said one area he is most proud of is the new facilities that

Turn to BUC, page C2



Steve Wood gives an interview after a state championship game.



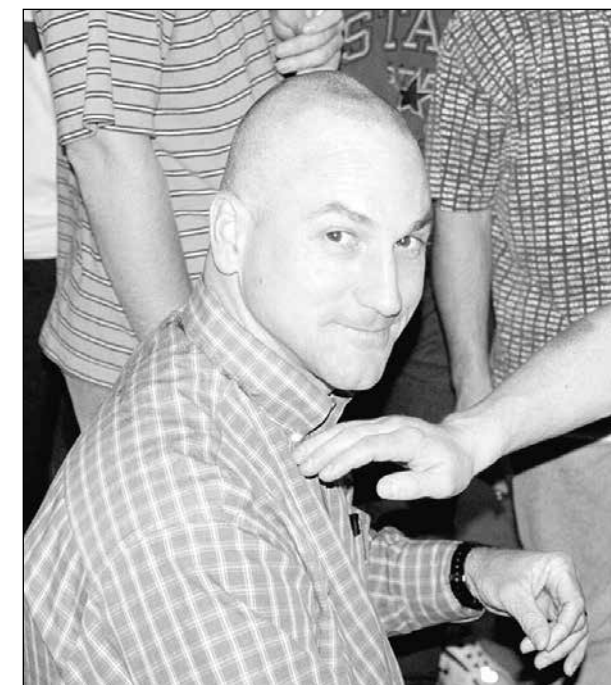
In his third year as Aledo Bearcats' head coach, Steve Wood is shown giving instructions during a practice.



By his fourth year as Bearcats head football coach, Steve Wood had a 60-3 record.



Tim Buchanan and the Bearcats celebrate after the first state championship in 1998.



Coach Tim Buchanan in 1998 told the team they could shave their head if they won state.



A happy Tim Buchanan addresses his team after a win in the 2022 season.

# Leaving a lasting Legacy in Aledo...

*Congratulations to coaches Tim Buchanan and Steve Wood*



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## BUC

from page C1

were constructed to replace the old stadium and ball fields.

“I am proud of the facilities we built,” he said. “My first day on the job I had to inspect the visitors bleachers at the old Bearcat Stadium. I called an engineer, and the engineer came out and looked at it and he condemned the bleachers and put yellow caution tape around them.

“We had to buy another set of bleachers about half the size of the condemned bleachers because we didn’t have enough money to replace what we had. That facility would have been a good Class A facility, but we were 3A.”

And the school district continues to grow. The most recent championship was in Class 5A Division I, the largest division in which Aledo has ever played.

Buchanan tells a funny story about the first game at “new” Bearcat Stadium, a Bearcats’ win over county-rival Weatherford.

“I was proud of the new stadium and sports complex,” he said. “It was a neat deal. But I was so focused on coaching that I honestly did not know that first game at the new Bearcat Stadium was sold out until somebody showed me a picture. If you are a coach you don’t see anything outside the white lines on game day.

“There was only one game in my career that I noticed the stands during a game – the 2009 second-round game at Cowboys Stadium when we played Stephenville. I went out to midfield to do the coin toss for the overtime, and I walked over and looked up and saw all of those Stephenville people and thought to myself, ‘Wow, there are a lot of Stephenville people here.’”

It was estimated that more than 31,000 people were in attendance. “Then,” he continued, “after the coin flip, I am walking to our sidelines and I see all the Aledo people and I thought, ‘Wow, there are a lot of people from Aledo here.’ That was the only time I ever noticed anything like that until I became a full-time AD.”

### Good advice

Buchanan also recalled a phone call his first year from then-superintendent Willard Stuard, the namesake of Stuard Elementary School. Buchanan found out in Aledo the head coach is required to do a little more than just coach football. Stuard’s phone call clued the coach in.

“Willard grew up in Aledo, and he was a great guy,” Buchanan said. “But he wanted to know why I wasn’t going into the coffee shop every morning. I said to him, ‘What do you mean?’ and I really didn’t know what he meant. I was working my tail off. I was in seventh- and eighth-grade athletic periods, the ninth-grade athletic period and the varsity athletic period. I didn’t have a whole lot of help back then.

“But long story short, Willard calls me and told me, if I wanted to make it in this town as a coach, I had better get my tail to Pete’s Deli. He wanted me to spend a minimum of 30 minutes a day – every day - at the coffee shop.”

Puzzled, but not about to shun Stuard’s advice, Buchanan drove to Pete’s Deli the next day after second period athletics.

“I drove down to Pete’s Deli – the coffee shop – at about 9:45 a.m. and walked in and sat down, had a cup of coffee and I just listened to

people talk,” Buchanan recalled. “All of the old-timers were there. Some of them knew who I was and some of them didn’t.

“We talked for a while every day, and I would go back to work. I stayed at the coffee shop about 15-20 minutes a day, and sometimes 30 depending on what everyone was talking about. It was a daily deal where I would eat breakfast and have coffee.”

Buchanan said it might have been the best advice he has ever gotten at Aledo.

“It really helped,” he said. “I learned a lot about the community, and I learned what people expected and didn’t expect. I learned why people were voting against bonds, and I learned what they liked and didn’t like about athletics.

“There were times when I went in there and people told me who they wanted me to fire, and sometimes they were right – I had already planned on firing them. I learned a lot. I learned a lot about Aledo, and I learned a lot about the history of Aledo.

“I would go to G.L. Lowe’s and get my haircut at his barber shop, and he had books with clippings and football magazines that dated back to the 1960s. I researched Aledo, and I discovered Aledo had a history of winning in all sports.

“Aledo had that history of winning, and we needed to get it back on track. That’s when we started the ‘History Repeats Itself’ motto to try and convince the kids that they could win.”

### First title

Buchanan’s first state championship was in 1998 with the Bearcats defeating Cuero, 14-7, at the Houston Astrodome. He feels that was the springboard to success in all sports.

“When we started winning in football, all of the sports started winning,” he said. “But (winning state in football in ’98) actually made us better in every sport, and really everything from band to athletics to academic teams.

“Success breeds success, and it doesn’t matter if it’s football, band or academics. And the thing about football winning is that football involves so many more people. We do not have another activity that will put 12,000-15,000 people in the stands.

“That includes players, cheerleaders and band. Our band is a big deal. But what winning that state championship in ’98 did more than anything else was bring attention to Aledo. Us winning state championships in football, other sports and academics have put Aledo on the map. Our fans want to see us win, and they come to support us.”

### Buchanan coaching tree

The “Buchanan coaching tree” has seen many of his assistant coaches hired off his staff to become head coaches. Buchanan said he has not counted how many of his assistants went on to become head coaches, but said he is proud any time one of his coaches gets a head coaching job. Many current assistants who have had head coaching offers have opted to stay at Aledo, another reason for football and the athletic department’s overall success.

Long-time assistant Robby Jones is now the head coach of the Bearcats. Down the road, Former assistant Billy Mathis led Brock to the Class 3A state final in 2022.

Many, like Jones, chose to stay with the Aledo program instead of leaving for something less – and with all

due respect to others, they just don’t come more successful than Aledo.

“It is extremely hard to get a head football coaching job in Texas. But not many of our guys want to take a job like Aledo was when I took that job. Typically, you have to go to a program that is not as good as the one you are leaving.”

Buchanan also made sure the coaches he hires are also good teachers, feels the people he has hired – and everyone around him including teachers and administrators – are the big reason for his success in Aledo.

“I have been very, very, very fortunate to have been able to work with the people I have worked with, not just in football,” he said. “I was fortunate to work with good principals, teachers, administrators; we have some of the best in the United States.

“The coaches that have come through this place, going back to when I first got here, have been great and with strong work ethics, and the desire they have to mold kids and make kids into better human beings and productive members of society.”

Buchanan said Aledo ISD is the sixth district he’s worked in, and none others were quite like it.

“I think one of the reasons for that was when I hired a coach I did everything I could to hire a coach that I would have been excited to know would be teaching/coaching my kids,” he said.

### About the kids

Buchanan can tell a story about any player he has coached. Among his favorites is one about an offensive lineman who was a senior on the 1997 team who had quit football only to return.

“Matt Morris graduated in 1998, and he was a really good offensive lineman, but he was also all-state in band,” Buchanan recalled. “Coming out of eighth grade, Matt quit football. I didn’t try to talk him out of it, but when I asked him why he said he wanted to go straight band because he felt that was how he could get a college scholarship.

“I wished him luck, and I told him the door is always open if he wanted to play football again. A week later, he came back. Sometimes coaches take guys quitting football personally, and they can get ugly with those players.

“One thing I am proud of is I didn’t do that, and I did not make him think band wasn’t important. I also did not make him think athletics was more important than band. I let him make a decision and I tried to give him some guidance on it, and he came back and turned out to be one of the best football players to ever come to Aledo. He went on to play in college at Hardin-Simmons and is now an unbelievable businessman. “

Although eager to begin the next chapter of his life, Buchanan said there are many things he will miss when he hangs up his cleats.

“I will miss the most – and in this order – seeing the kids, coaches, and I will miss the parents, fans, reporters...everyone says that they think I won’t miss dealing with the parents. That’s not true. Ninety-eight percent of parents in Aledo are great people, and even when a parent has a complaint, 99 percent of those parents that have complaints are reasonable, rational people,” he said. “That is a pretty good percentage. Aledo is a great place when it comes to stuff like that. Out of the two percent that aren’t always rational – I will take that number any time. In



TONY EIERDAM/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Tim Buchanan chats it up with his former player, All-American running back Johnathan Gray, who has since joined the AHS coaching staff.



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Aledo ISD Assistant Superintendent Lynn McKinney hired Tim Buchanan as head football coach in 1993 when she was the high school principal. Both McKinney and Buchanan have retired this year.



MERCEDES MAYER/ALEDON ISD

Bearcats head coach Tim Buchanan shows his ninth state championship ring in 2017..

a lot of other places close by those numbers almost always completely flip. That is the reason we are so good – our parents expect their kids to work hard.”

One would think the many state championships – or at least the 11 state football titles or the facilities built – would be considered by Buchanan as his greatest accomplishments. Not so.

“If you ask me what my biggest accomplishment as an AD was, it

is seeing all of these kids turn out to be successful young men and young women, and some of them aren’t young anymore,” he said. “I have coached ‘kids’ who are now 40 years old.

“At every level – junior high, high school, college – it is all about the same thing: it’s all about the kids and helping them to be better. Those kids’ success in life are what I feel was my greatest accomplishment at Aledo.”

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# Last season was special for me also

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

When *The Community News* publisher Randy Keck asked me if I'd cover the Aledo Bearcats last football season, he was calling on me for a favor.

Now it is I who owe him the favor.

While I thought my days of sitting in a press box on a weekly basis were over, I was given a chance to be part of something special, an Aledo football season. There's just something cool about being connected to a program that stands out above the rest.

With all due respect to programs I've covered in the past, this is what greatness looks like. I'd caught glimpses of it before, but being along for the ride for an entire season was something I'd never experienced before.

Don't ask me to explain how the Bearcats do it year after year, contend - and more often than not win - state championships. Aledo football has more state championships now (11) than folks have fingers or toes - and at the rate they're going they'll someday soon have more than anyone has fingers and toes combined.

All I know is they did it again and it was the most enjoyable football season I've ever been a part of. Was it because they won a state championship? Well, it didn't hurt, but there were other factors that resulted in me having a great time this season.

The weekly visits with head coach Tim Buchanan were always fun. Sure, we talked football, but as is the case when two guys who just enjoy talking get together, other topics often found their way into the conversation and what should have been a 30-minute visit turned into much longer.

And, I gotta say, the press box food, as has always been the case in Aledo, was nothing short of fantastic again this season. Except, whereas before I was only occasionally able to partake when by chance a team I was covering

came to town to be their latest fodder, this season it was an every other week thing.

For the record, nothing offered by other other press boxes in the playoffs matched the Aledo menu - not even when they reached the state championship game at Jerry World. And don't get started on the one venue that didn't even offer water.

As a longtime sportswriter at various area publications I'd covered Aledo football games now and then. I even covered a couple of their state championships when the old "*Weatherford Star-Telegram*" was in business.

But now I understand why my late friend Tony Eierdam meant when he said to me one time, "There's covering football and there's covering Aledo. If you ever get the chance, you'll see the difference."

I understand now Tony, and I'm sure this championship has you resting a little more peacefully my friend.

Now, don't misunderstand, as a professional I always have and always will write what I see with no "homerism." You won't find me blaming the officials or saying the other team cheated, etc. There's no room for pom poms in the press box and you do NOT want to see me in one a cheerleader outfit (try getting that mental image out of your head now).

That said, any sportswriter would be spreading a falsehood if they were to say it's not more fun covering a winning team. It simply is. There are more stories, players and coaches are easier to talk to and life is just better for everyone when you're part of a winner.

The morning coffee tastes a little better. The sun shines a little brighter. The Dallas Cowboys don't seem as disappointing.

By the way, did you know the Bearcats have won more playoff games at AT&T Stadium than the Cowboys have played there?

But I digress. Back to the life is good for a winner stuff.

After all, can you blame a coach for not wanting to discuss how they "might" actually win a game this season when they've lost their last 26? Can you get upset at a quarterback who has thrown four touchdowns and 17 interceptions for not wanting to be in the spotlight?

I once covered a team whose best player to feature was a punter - and he wasn't even a great punter. However, compared to the rest of the team he might as well have been an All-American.

When I was covering minor league hockey I was on the beat of a team that won nine of 72 games one season. Each week I had to find a feature story and put together a notes column. The folks working in CSI have an easier time finding clues than reporters have uncovering positive stories in such scenarios.

And positive stories are always better stories. Sure, we have to write about negative news when it happens, but it's okay to hope that you have nothing but good news to report.

Along with the wins - again, they just make life more enjoyable - the Bearcats run a top-notch program. When you know you're dealing with classy, honest folks it makes the communication easier and brings out a mutual respect.

I've dealt with the opposite in the past and it's never good feeling as if you need a shower after interviewing the head coach.

In the end we can say it's just a job, but we all want our work to be something we look forward to, right? Believe me, the drive to Sweetwater or Frisco is a lot shorter when you know some good football is awaiting you compared to going there to see your team lose by six touchdowns.

So thanks Randy. Glad to oblige.



TONY EIERDAM/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Tim Buchanan symbolically turned over the keys to Steve Wood when they switched roles, Buchanan becoming head coach and Wood becoming athletic director in 2018.



THOMAS PEIPERT/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Head Coach Tim Buchanan tells a referee how he feels about a call during the Mineral Wells game in 2004. The Bearcats' beat the Rams 40-8.



ROSEALEE HOFFMAN/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Aledo head football coach Steve Wood proudly holds up the state-championship trophy as Aledo ISD Athletic Director Tim Buchanan flashes a satisfying smile moments after the Bearcats defeated Corpus Christi Calallen, 24-16, for the Class 5A, Division II state championship at AT&T Stadium in Arlington in 2016.



FILE PHOTO

Buchanan (second from left) with daughter Maddie, son Caleb, and wife Rebecca.

## “Huge Congrats to Coach Buc & Coach Wood... “Builders of Men”.



- From Matt, Sarah, Lily & Hannah Morris - AHS Class of 1998



# Thank you Coach Buchanan and Coach Wood

Coach Buc,  
It's hard to find the right words to express my gratitude for what you have done for me so I'll just say thank you! I was fortunate enough to learn from you as a player and as part of your staff. Thank you for teaching me how to be a winner, and how to make winners! Winners on and off the field, a winners at home as husbands and a parents. Thank you for making me and teaching me how to be a Bearcat!  
- Blake Christenson, **2001**

Coach Buc,  
is a builder if much more than Title Town. Buc is a builder of MEN. His habits, heart, and the coaches he molded through the years leave a legacy filled with great "built by Buc" men. Those men know how to get first downs in life. We know how to play hard through the whistle, and how to win and lose as a team, never placing self over team.

Thousands of Coach Buc's kids are now building families, businesses, and raising future generations to "focus on the little things, and the big ones take care of themselves" as Buc always preached. THANK YOU Coach Buc for your tireless sacrifice, amazing leadership, and for always surrounding yourself with coaches that truly helped your ultimate goal... "Builder of Men".

Title Town was simply one of many benefits to what was always your "end zone"... raising all of us to be incredible members of the families & communities we serve. We love and appreciate you Coach Buc!  
- Matt, Sarah, Lily, & Hannah Morris  
class of **1998**.  
Forever Grateful for Buc!

Coach Buc and Coach Wood,  
Congrats on your retirement! It has been an honor to be a part of your system and team(s). Support from both of you allowed us to produce a professional game experience for Bearcat fans that most D1 schools don't have. Thanks for growing our kids into fine young men! All my best in your next steps.  
- Rob Lowe, **Voice of the Bearcats**

Coach Wood,  
Thank you for all of the opportunities you gave me as a Bearcat! You have succeeded in not only winning state championships, but also turning football players into responsible and reliable men. I am the person that I am today because of the hard work that you instilled in me as a football player and I intend to apply the life lessons you taught me in my future career! We love you Coach Wood! Thank you for everything you have done for this town!  
- Ryan Anderson, **2018**

Coach Buc and Coach Wood,  
Thank you for all of the memories and for shaping me into the young man I am today, and thank you for helping our teams get some hardware along the way! Without your guidance and wisdom I wouldn't be where I am. I'm so thankful for both of y'all and everything you have poured into me and our teams over the years. I hope I can continue to make y'all proud both on and off the field, wherever life takes me. Love y'all!  
- Jason Llewellyn, **2022**

Coach Buc,  
Thanks for all your leadership and coaching. The mental toughness you taught us provided a resource I relied on throughout my year's long journey to become an Pediatric ER Doctor. Nothing is as tough as off-season. I also appreciate that we weee the best coached team at virtually any level. Congrats on your retirement!  
- Geoff Lowe, **2004**

Coach Buc,  
You developed us as men first and players second. He cared deeply about us and always wanted to know how we were doing. The life lessons of perseverance and hard work he taught us from football has greatly impacted my life, and without them I would not be the man I am today.  
-Jack Tregellas, **2022**

Coach Wood,  
Enjoyed our time together Coach. From riding to practice with you every morning, to hearing you tell about a missed coverage. I cherished it all. Thanks for everything Coach. Enjoy the LONG vacation time you earned!  
- Brannon Webb, **2019**

Coach Buc,  
I greatly appreciate the lessons learned while playing for and competing against Coach Buchanan. He has been a great coach and a great representative for Texas High School Football.  
- Timothy Eason, **1997**

Coach Wood  
My senior year was the year we did titletown, Texas, and won state. In that series of episodes there was a portion where, Coach Wood made a statement about me talking about the young man I was at the time. He said "every team needs guys like Mason Jackson, Mason needed football more than football needed him." and he was right. The memories I created with that team and that Coach still live with me today and the things he taught us in the ways he crafted us in the young men still bleed into today. So my message is this and I hope it gets shared. "Every team needs a coach like coach wood, we needed him more than he needed us. Thank you for not only being a great coach, but a great role model as a man. Not only do your ex students and players thank you but this whole town thanks you. Congratulations on retirement."  
- Mason Jackson, **2017**  
Title town Texas year

I wanted to thank Coach Buchanan and Coach Wood for all the life lessons they have taught me in my 4 years at Aledo High School. Many of these lessons guided me in to a career of coaching football. I wouldn't be the man I am today without them. Thank you coaches for giving me valuable life lessons to pass on to the kids of future generations as well as coaching the game of football.  
- Caden Anderson, **2021**

I had the privilege of having both Coach Wood and Coach Buc as my head coach. While their styles are different, they both focused on what I believe are the two most important things in sports: character and championships. A lot of people say winning isn't everything, but at Aledo it is and it is because of these two men. Inspired by them, I now plan on being a coach with the same mindset.  
- Gatlin Johnson **2021**

Thank you, Coach Wood, for instilling that Bearcat work ethic in me and helping me achieve my dream of playing at the next level. Your coaching and guidance have not only made me a better player but also a better man. Enjoy your retirement sir, and God bless!  
- Cayden Glasgow, **2019**

Coach Wood is the perfect example of a coach and educator. I will always think back to the 2018 season and remember Coach saying this "You will remember tonight for the rest of your lives". He was intentional about everything he would say to us and knew how to get the best out of his players. The energy and charisma as well as his one liners are second to none of anyone I have ever met. He is one of the main reasons I am a coach. If I am half the coach he is then I will be happy. Coach Wood thank you for everything.  
- Cooper Thompson **2019**

Coach Wood was one of the best not only coaches I've ever had, but one of the best men I've known. I appreciate all he has done for me throughout my time at Aledo, and helping me get somewhere after. He was one of the most genuine guys that has ever coached me and I will take that with me throughout life. Thanks!  
- Devan Daugherty, **2019**

Coach Wood,  
Even though I didn't play for you, I wanted to say thank you for the impact you have had on me because you accepted me like I was one your players! I was so fortunate to be able to work with you and for you and I will never be express my gratitude for how you impacted me as a coach. Thank you for teaching me how to motivate and love kids!  
- Blake Christenson **2001**

Coach Buc,  
You have shaped my life. I am a high school coach because of you and your staff! You helped shape me and mold me into the man I today and I am grateful for that! I am also thankful for the friendship and advice you give as I journey being a head football coach myself. I also want to say thank you and I love you coach!  
- Marte Amrine, **1998**

Coach Wood  
Thank you for absolutely everything. The lessons you taught us daily about how to work extremely hard, have stubborn resilience, and have ultimate confidence in ourselves and our abilities have benefited me tenfold after school. Several years later out in the real world, these principles still apply to everyday life and it is easy to set myself apart by living out these values. I know hundreds of other former students have this same advantage after watching you personally demonstrate these traits on a daily basis. Thank you for everything coach.  
- Seth Strickland, **2017**

Coach Wood,  
From the moment I stepped foot out onto the field for my first varsity practice as a timid, little freshman, you and the rest of the coaching staff held me to the highest of standards. I remember missing a block running the Denton High scout offense for the 2015 Area playoff, and you lit my butt up like I had just got Dillon Davis killed. Fast forward to the 2018 Regional Final against South Oak Cliff, I was barely able to walk on a bad foot I hurt earlier in the game. You threw me out there to line up against a Texas Tech commit DE on the first drive of the rain delayed second half. I think we went 3 and out on that drive, and you made Coach Bishop put my backup in the rest of the game. Then Coach Little put me in a walking boot and made me wear it everywhere that wasn't a football field for the next two weeks. You and Coach Bishop and Coach Wheeler got every last bit of potential out of me, and you got me the opportunity to live my dream and play college football. I wouldn't be anywhere the man I am today without Aledo Football. Thank you so much for your impact on my life and all your players' lives. Congratulations on a stellar career that many other coaches would settle for just a fraction of your successes.  
- Cam Callaway, **2019**

Coach Buc,  
Congratulations on the retirement! You have touched countless lives of players regardless of their background. I was touched that regardless of my injury troubles and lack of polarizing skills that you continued to make me feel like a priority and a person. Enjoy this time off and let's see if you can really stay away from the game!  
- Jacob DeLeon, **2022**

## and Congratulations!



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# Spring questions brought surprising fall answers for Bearcats

## Last championship for Buc and Wood wasn't predicted.

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

In the spring of 2022 the Aledo Bearcats football program found itself in an unfamiliar situation.

However, when the fall season came to an end they were back in quite familiar territory with their 11th state championship, the most of any program in Texas history.

“Pleasantly surprised,” is how head coach Tim Buchanan assessed the season in retrospect. “Last spring we were so inexperienced. We weren’t picked to win our district, much less a state championship. It was a legitimate rebuilding year.”

The Bearcats have not had too many of those, but with youth at several key positions that’s where they were. The University Interscholastic League’s biennial realignment moved them up to Class 5A Division I — and placed them in District 3-5A with fellow perennial power Denton Ryan.

What’s more, the Bearcats’ schedule had them traveling to Denton to play the Raiders a week after traveling to Burleson to face what turned out to be another of the state’s top programs in Centennial.

Aledo won both of those challenges, but more on that later.

In addition to the lack of experience, not much happened in the first two games to enhance the confidence with a 24-17 road loss to Dallas Parish Episcopal and a 44-14 home setback to Denton Guyer. While those losses stung at the time, as the season progressed they would prove to be beneficial to the Bearcats.

Parish Episcopal, by the way, went on to win a fourth consecutive Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools Division I state championship and Guyer reached the 6A Division II state semifinals.

Still, it was the first 0-2 start in Buchanan’s head coaching career — all at Aledo since 1993, with the exception of 2014-18 when Steve Wood was head coach.

So, it’s certainly understandable when Buchanan said a state championship wasn’t exactly at the front of his thinking.

“Honestly, I didn’t think about the state championship side. Then,

the way the season started, we didn’t play well in either game,” Buchanan said. “But, looking back, I think not being picked to win district, not being picked to get out of our region was beneficial.

“Everyone thinking we were going to lose one or two district games, that was a big motivational tool for us as coaches.”

The Bearcats, who did go on to win district again last season, have now won their league 15 straight years and have 111 consecutive district victories. One has to go back to the first two games of the 2007 district season against Stephenville and Everman to find the last time Aledo was beaten in a league contest.

### The Turnaround

Then came the start of district. The Bearcats won 49-20 at Justin Northwest, which would go on to reach the postseason itself. It was the start of 14 consecutive victories for Aledo.

Next thing folks know, the Bearcats were 5-2 and taking a perfect league record on the road to Burleson. They left 64-21 winners in a district game in which they were underdogs for the first time since, well, probably before any of these current players were even born.

Ditto the next week in Denton, where they won 35-21. In those two games junior Hauss Hejny went from being a good quarterback to one who could take over a game against even the best of teams.

“The kids just kept getting better,” Buchanan said. “In a season there’s a point where you hit a plateau and you don’t get better. I can’t think of a game this season where we didn’t get better.”

Once in the postseason, the Bearcats’ momentum continued to rise. They defeated Killeen Shoemaker at home 37-0, withstood bitter cold with a wind chill in the mid-20s to defeat Lubbock Cooper 45-21 in Sweetwater, rallied late to defeat an undefeated Midlothian 27-21 in the Panthers’ home stadium, downed Centennial 42-21 in a rematch in Frisco, overcame an 11-point halftime deficit and a two-hour lightning delay to upend unbeaten Longview 17-14 in the state semifinals in Dallas and capped it all off with a 52-14 dismantling of College Station at AT&T Stadium in Arlington.

### Growing Up

“Our underclassmen grew up a bunch, but our seniors also grew up a bunch,” Buchanan said.

The Bearcats only had 45 seniors on their roster in 2022 and not many of those made their way into the starting lineup. Many, however, had a distinct impact on the season.

“Jalen Pope took the offense on his back,” Buchanan noted of the senior wide receiver who would set one 5A state championship game record (8 catches, 229 yards) and tie another (3 TD catches).

Pope is headed to Oklahoma State to play next season.

Gavin Olenjack, another senior, fought through a broken thumb for success.

“Not many receivers play with a broken thumb,” Buchanan said. “Now, that’s tough.”

Andrew Parkhurst moved from safety to outside linebacker and led the team in sacks (6). Safety Boston Eppley “just continued to get better,” Buchanan said.

Offensive tackle Isaac Sohn played a key role before suffering an injury late in the season. He signed a letter-of-intent to play at Texas-San Antonio next season.

Defensive tackle/end Ansel Din-Mbuh, often the subject of multiple blocking, was a force with

four sacks and a team-leading 16 tackles for loss. His next stop is with Washington State.

Linebacker Cap Mooney overcame an early season injury to finish with 40 tackles.

“There are a lot on special teams people didn’t see,” Buchanan said. “Andrew Chastain worked so hard to get fast. He led the team in tackles on kickoffs.”

Other notables in that regard were Skylar Frank and Cooper Bobbit.

“This group of seniors brought them along really well,” Buchanan said. “Now, they’re (juniors) going to have to lead the young guys.

“I’m extremely proud of this senior group of kids. Having 45 and most not being starters typically leads to a lot of problems, but they were 100 percent team oriented as a senior class. We had seniors running the scout team trying to make those juniors starting in front of them be better.”

### Looking Ahead

Buchanan said the work on the 2023 season began shortly after winning the state championship on Dec. 16, though next season will see the team led by Head Coach Robbie Jones.

Jones will have many starters returning, which does not bode well for the Bearcats’ opponents come next fall.

On the offensive side, Hejny is back to lead the title defense after throwing for 2,092 yards and 20 touchdowns opposite just seven interceptions. He also rushed for 1,276 yards and 15 touchdowns.

Hejny was named the Offensive MVP of the state championship. Junior defensive back Jake Gillespie (80 tackles, 7.5 for loss, 2 interceptions) will be back after being named the Defensive MVP at state.

Other high profile notable returners on offense will include junior running back Hawk Patrick-Daniels (1,385 yards, 21 TD), junior running back Caleb Pope (528 yards, 13 TD) and freshman receiver Kaydon Finley (25 catches, 417 yards, 6 TD). On defense, leading tackler junior linebacker Davhon Keys (102.5 tackles, 8.5 for loss, 73-yard interception return for TD) is back, along with fellow standouts junior safety Boogie Owens (43.5 tackles).

“The biggest thing is motivating them to do the little things to keep getting better,” Buchanan said, noting three key components of continued success. “Work harder on Tuesday than Monday, be accountable and do the little things.”



BREILEIGH MAYER/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

**TOP:** The Bearcats take the field for the 2022 state championship game. | **BOTTOM:** Coach Tim Buchanan celebrated with the 2022 State Champion Bearcats at AT&T Stadium.

A legacy that will endure. Congrats Coach Buc, Coach Wood, & The State Champions!

**PlainsCapital Bank is a proud supporter of the Aledo Bearcats, eleven-time state champions!**

We take pride in being part of the Bearcats legacy of excellence and serving all of the greater East Parker County. Giving back to our community and supporting the educational and athletic endeavors of the students of Aledo High School is an honor and a privilege.

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