

BurlesonNOW

M A G A Z I N E

MAY 2026



Hustling in the Infield

Phoenix Thompson dedicates her time to softball

2026 Hot Sounds of Summer Shopping Guide

Also inside ...
Scavenger Hunt

Featured Business
Mama's Pizza

Postal Customer

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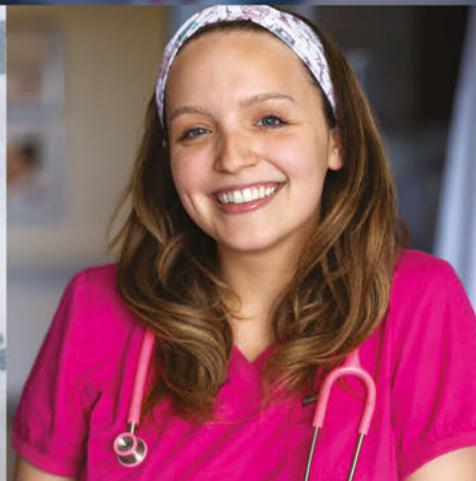


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Dr. Monconduit is a resident Texan by way of New Orleans, Louisiana, which means she equally likes a rodeo as much as a crawfish boil. She is a Hampton University alumna and a graduate of the inaugural class of Touro College of Dental Medicine at New York Medical College Class of 2020. Dr. Monconduit has experience treating patients in the traditional dental office setting and has previously traveled all over Texas providing care to patients in senior living facilities and in patients' homes.

As a little girl, Dr. Monconduit always enjoyed going to the dentist, so much so that at 3 years old, she dreamed of one day becoming a dentist. That dream was solidified the summer of her collegiate freshman year when she worked at a camp for people with special needs. There she was able to assist the campers with brushing their teeth, and she absolutely knew then that dentistry was her calling. The most common feedback from patients is that she is gentle and that they can tell she cares for them. Dr. Monconduit works as if working unto the Lord and strives to make dentistry as fun and painless as possible.

Outside of work, Dr. Monconduit enjoys volunteering as a videographer at church, drawing, line dancing, and running an occasional 5K. She is happy to serve the Burleson community at Stonehaven Dental and Orthodontics!



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MANAGING EDITOR'S NOTE



Becky

Becky Walker
Managing Editor
NOW Magazines

Dear Readers,

This is an exciting time of year, full of transitions and changes. Congratulations to the Class of 2026, as they walk the stage to receive their diplomas and take their first few steps into adulthood! We are so proud of you!

The weather is warming up, as spring begins to give way to summer. But before the real summer heat arrives, there are many fun things to do outside in Old Town, including a Cinco de Mayo celebration, the BTX Honey Tour Carnival and the Hot Sounds of Summer concert series. Check out the city website for a full list of events and details!

BurlesonNOW Magazine is also in a season of change. Emma McKay has stepped down as our community editor to follow other pursuits. I'd like to personally thank her for the great job she has done

over the past few years in bringing your stories to life!

Our new community editor is no stranger to Burleson. Jordan DeWald has lived and worked in Burleson for nearly 17 years. We are excited to have her on our team! She'll be on the lookout for good stories about good people who are doing good things in town. If you have a story idea for her, send her an email at jordan.dewald@nowmagazines.com.

Have a great month!

May 2026
Volume 20, Issue 5



Jordan DeWald
BurlesonNOW Editor
jordan.dewald@nowmagazines.com
(979) 229-3676

ON THE COVER

Phoenix
Thompson
turns setbacks
into strikeouts.

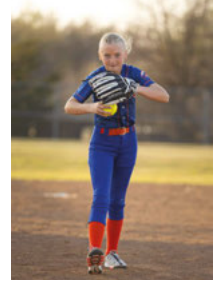


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HUSTLING IN THE INFIELD

— By Emma McKay



"I feel like softball helps a lot of life lessons," 11-year-old Phoenix Thompson said. "Like discipline, being successful, being gritty, hardworking." At age 5, Phoenix joined a peewee softball league, following in the athletic footsteps of her mom and her grandma. She fell in love with the game and has been playing ever since.

When she first started pitching, she'd let frustrations overcome her. "My mom was like, 'Girlfriend, you can't do that. You're gonna get kicked out,'" she shared. "So, in those moments, I take a deep breath, look at the catcher's glove and I pitch. I think the thing that most helps me is my teammates who are behind me."

Since the conversation with her mom, Phoenix has become "the most annoying person on that field" due to how much she cheers on her teammates. Phoenix does this because she recalls how good it feels to receive encouragement. "[One time] my whole team gave me a hug, and my coach was, like, 'Oh, yeah!' That was the most heartwarming moment ever. I felt so loved and so appreciated."

Phoenix prides herself on all she's achieved in her six years of playing on various softball teams. Last year, she pitched 130 strikeouts. "I was very excited!" she said. With her impressive pitching record and her time playing the game, Phoenix's confidence on the field has grown. During a big match in Tennessee, she competed against a team with girls who were much taller than her. "I have always been so scared of big girls. I had to pitch them all with purpose." During that game, she calmed herself down, saying, "You can't be scared. There's going to be other [tall] girls." Despite her team losing, Phoenix looks back on that game with a sense of accomplishment. "I feel like now I'm not as afraid," she shared.

Although Phoenix achieved a record of 130 strikeouts last year, 2025 proved to be unlucky for her. A week after fully recovering from a month-long ankle injury, she broke her wrist during practice. "We were with all the organizations, like 14U, 16U. And so this 14 or 16U girl comes up. I'm playing left field. There was a [pitching] machine, and the girl kept on hitting it to left field. The last one that she hit, I went to dive, and my arm just went like this," she said, bending her hand back toward her arm. Thinking she was fine, Phoenix brushed it

off and finished out practice. “We didn’t do anything after practice was done. I slept the whole day, and then it was purple.” A trip to the ER confirmed the wrist fracture. “That was not fun.”

Since recovering, Phoenix has jumped right back into being active by training for a marathon with her mom. “We run every morning. We maybe take one day off a week,” she said. On weekdays, the two run 3 to 5 miles, and on weekends, they’ve been building up to 10 miles. “People say my parents are strict, but I think they just want me to have a healthy body.” After school, Phoenix spends her time training and finishing her homework before having a healthy meal and turning in early, so she can be well rested for the next day. Through this routine, she practices self-discipline, which will benefit her throughout her life. “You have to work hard. There’s no other way. You can’t cheat yourself. If you cheat yourself, you’re not helping anyone. You’re not helping yourself.



You’re not helping your team.”

For some games, Phoenix and her team travel out of state. During their free time, she gets to explore the local area with her mom or her team, creating long-lasting memories. “We were in Tennessee, and we had a five-hour rain delay. It’s wet, and it’s muddy, and it’s slippery. So my mom’s like, ‘We should go climb a mountain to go see a waterfall.’ We ended up falling on our butts! It was the worst. We had to use so much leg strength.

We had to hold on to the trees. We almost fell down the mountain!” she laughed. “We got to see the waterfall, though. When we got back, I pitched a whole game and only one batter hit off of me!”

Following in her mom’s footsteps, Phoenix involves herself in many other physical activities in addition to softball, such as volleyball, basketball and track. She also tries out a new sport each winter break, with the most recent one being boxing. “I feel like all of them kind of have aspects leading up to one another.” Phoenix has found that when she practices pitching, she’s working the same muscles she uses to serve in volleyball. When she runs track or dribbles a basketball across the court, she’s practicing footwork and hand movement for running the bases and catching softballs. “It gets me faster. You have to be on your toes.” Phoenix hopes to continue playing sports and making memories with her friends and family into middle school and beyond. **NOW**

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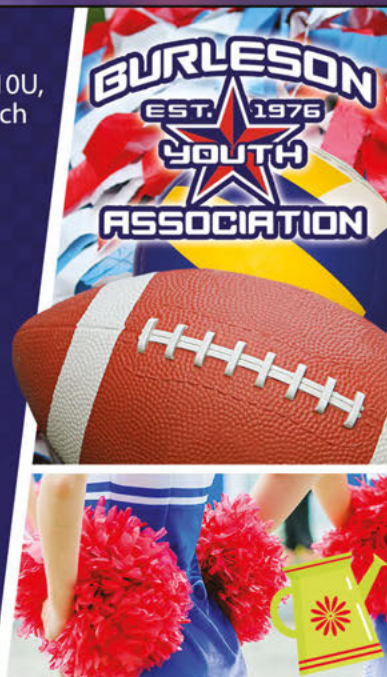
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Stebbins' mother-in-law, Elizabeth Biggs, who joined the staff in 1970 and became the legendary "Mama" behind the counter.

For 16 years, Mama Biggs took orders, trained managers and became an East Fort Worth institution. That dedication to quality and customer service set the standard that continues today across multiple locations, including the Burleson restaurant.

James Rose, general manager of the Burleson location, has spent over 38 years in the pizza business. He helped open the Burleson restaurant and works alongside Jake Rose and Lester Munoz to maintain the high standards Mama's has become known for. They train their staff to make quality food and serve it with a friendly spirit. "We're just like a

family," James shared. "We're a franchise, but it's like a mom-and-pop shop. We enjoy making pizza for customers."

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James Rose, general manager of the Burleson location, has spent over 38 years in the pizza business.

The menu keeps things straightforward: pizza, wings, sub sandwiches, salads and desserts. "We pride ourselves on keeping it simple, allowing customers to know what they are going to get every time they come in," James said. There are many regulars, and the staff is so familiar with their orders, they know them by heart.

"I've worked in the business for a long time, but Burleson is more like a hometown: like you know everybody. It's just got the family-friendly feel," he explained. "I've been doing it forever, and I enjoy what I'm doing. To see familiar faces, it feels good that they enjoy the food just as much as I enjoy serving it."

The Burleson location has been serving the community for five years. James stays involved with local schools and businesses, many of which order from Mama's monthly for employee meetings. He supports local schools, nonprofits and organizations whenever possible, maintaining the community-focused spirit that Mama Biggs embodied decades ago. **NOW**

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Zoomed In: The Diaz Family

By Emma McKay

Karen, Elisa and Yukari Diaz spent the afternoon with their parents, celebrating their dad's birthday. "We went out to eat," Karen shared. "There's this buffet that he likes to go to. That's where we went."

Originally from New Jersey, the Diaz family moved down to Burleson to be closer to family and enjoy the peaceful change of scenery. Karen, who lives in Alvarado, works in an accounting office, while her sisters finish high school.

"I'm going to graduate this year," Elisa said. "I want to do tattoos. I do a lot of art in my free time."

"I still have two more years," Yukari stated. "I'm in medical term. I'm very interested in how the body works. In my free time, I exercise and play with my dogs."



Amber Kelley reads her e-book by the lake.



Brian Yeager teaches his son, Boston, how to ride a balance bike.



Theresa Harris gathers supplies at the library craft swap.



Hannah and Jacob Young shop at the Farmers Market with their kids.



Gina and Tripp Merrett, Hallie Bauman, Alysse Myers and JD Escobar catch up at brunch at Old Texas Brewing Company.

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Zoomed In: Corben Branch

By Emma McKay

"Archery is a sport for everybody," Corben Branch, who goes by Branch, stated. In the five months since Korbin's Archery opened its Burselson location, Branch (unrelated to the owners of Korbin's Archery) has been allowing BISD archery players to use the space for practice. "It's hard to find places to practice. Having the kids here is great. BISD has a lot of shooters, and they've grown tremendously over the past four years. I think they're up to, like, 130. Archery as a whole is growing, so we want kids to be in it."

When he's not managing the store, Branch spends his time bow hunting or shooting a bow competitively. "I've been competitively shooting for four years or so," he said.

Branch enjoys working in Burselson. "It is a very pretty place. There are lots of trees. The people are great!"



Keira and Rembrandt Smith play in the great outdoors!



Maddy Hart and Julian Barragan go on a LEGO building date.



The Campbell family investigates the trains in Old Town.



The 2026 Lady Spartan Soccer Team finishes as the first team in the school's history to become State Semi-Finalists. Nice Job Lady Spartans!



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