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August 2021

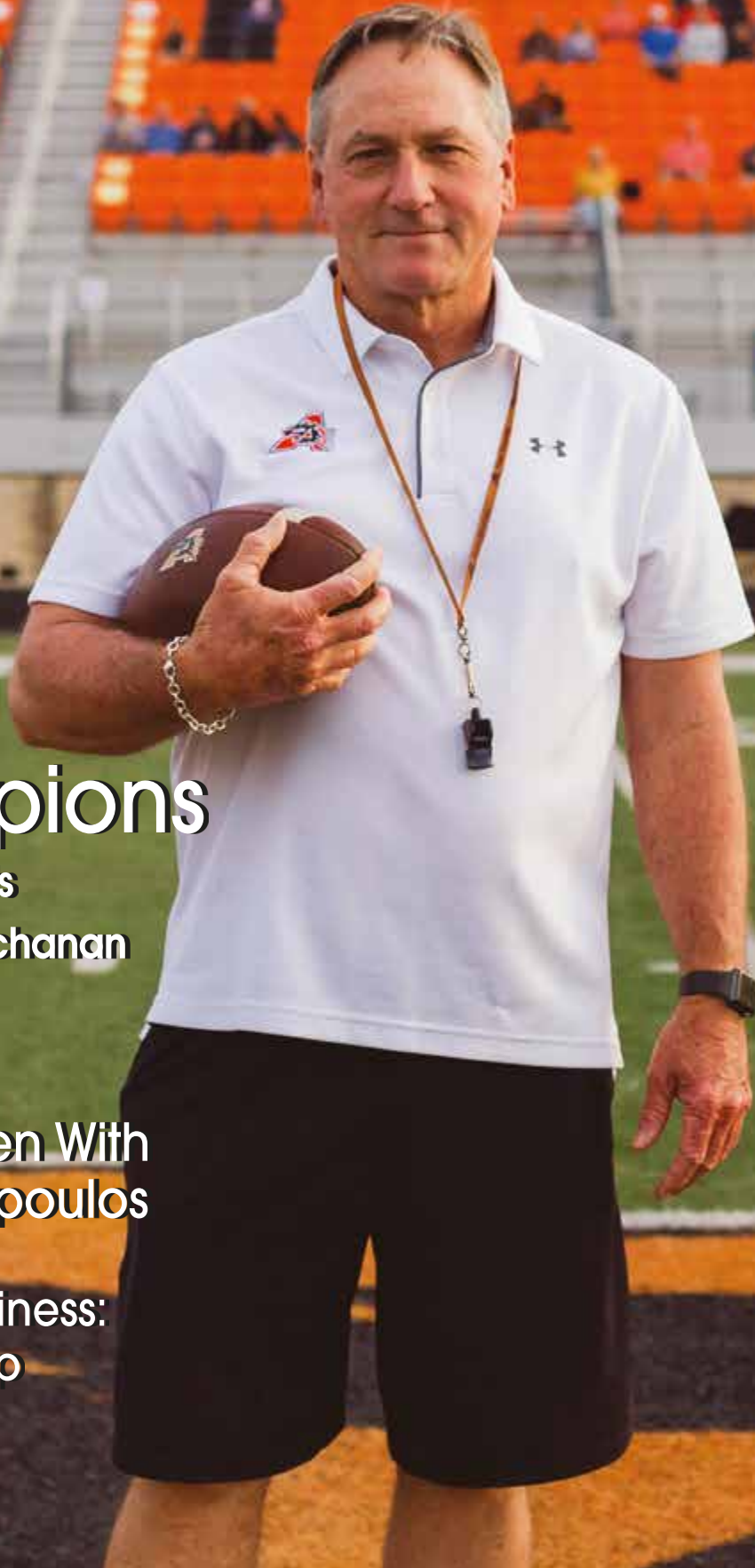
## True Champions

Aledo Bearcats

Coach Tim Buchanan  
shares secrets

In the Kitchen With  
Susie Vlahopoulos

Featured Business:  
The Malt Shop



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## ON THE COVER

*Coach Tim Buchanan teaches athletes to win beyond football.*

**Photo by**  
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*Lisa*

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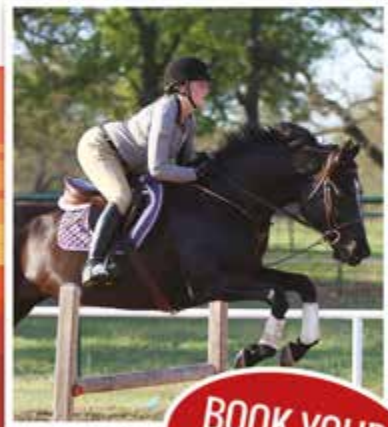
*August — the holiday of ...*

Wait a minute. August has no holidays — not notable ones, does it? How do we celebrate in a month where all we really want to do is sit inside an air-conditioned building? When the sun beats so hot, a quick dip in the pool feels more like we dove into a hot tub. How do you celebrate that? Of course, school starts again, and parents of young children perhaps already have a private celebration planned for that day. The rest of us? Not so much.

It might surprise you, however, to learn that August holds numerous reasons for celebrations. From raspberry cream pie day to ice cream sandwiches, watermelons and root beer float days, it quickly becomes a trend to celebrate with something cold. We also have days for celebrating the Coast Guard, Purple Hearts, nonprofits, aviation and more. One day in particular, August 19, boasts World Humanitarian Day, Aviation Day, International Bow Day, National Soft Serve Ice Cream Day (yum), and the unofficial World Photo Day, plus Lisa Bell's Personal Gratitude Day.

All days should be ones of gratitude, but this year marks a four-year anniversary of a traumatic event for me — the day I suffered a hemorrhagic stroke. I'm fortunate in surviving and not having endured more strokes or other related issues. On August 19, I will celebrate another year of life, not taking the next breath, peripheral vision and use of my left hand for granted. And, yes, I might enjoy a bit of soft serve ice cream.

*Celebrate the last month of summer!*



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*With a historic 10 state-championship titles, you might think Coach Tim Buchanan drives his football players to win. “We seldom talk about winning,” he admitted. “We take care of little things. Winning takes care of itself.” Little things include cleaning lockers, picking up trash and dirty clothes and acting responsible in all areas of life, not football alone.*

Tim grew up in Killeen, one of seven children. His parents didn’t finish high school, although his dad earned a GED and joined the Marines. Only Tim and one sister finished high school. He was the only one from his family to attend college, although all his siblings became successful. “If it hadn’t been for football, I would have done the same. It kept me in school, motivated,” he said.

During school, Tim loved mechanical drafting and planned on becoming an architect. Unfortunately — or perhaps fortunately for Aledo — he didn’t do well in math. A wise advisor asked why he chose architecture. Then he asked an even more poignant question. “If you could do anything, what would it be?”

The question changed the course of his career. Beyond football, Coach Buchanan wanted to help kids be the best they can in life. He said, “99.9 percent of boys want to become the best man possible. Good daddies, bosses, employees. The main thing — be good people.”

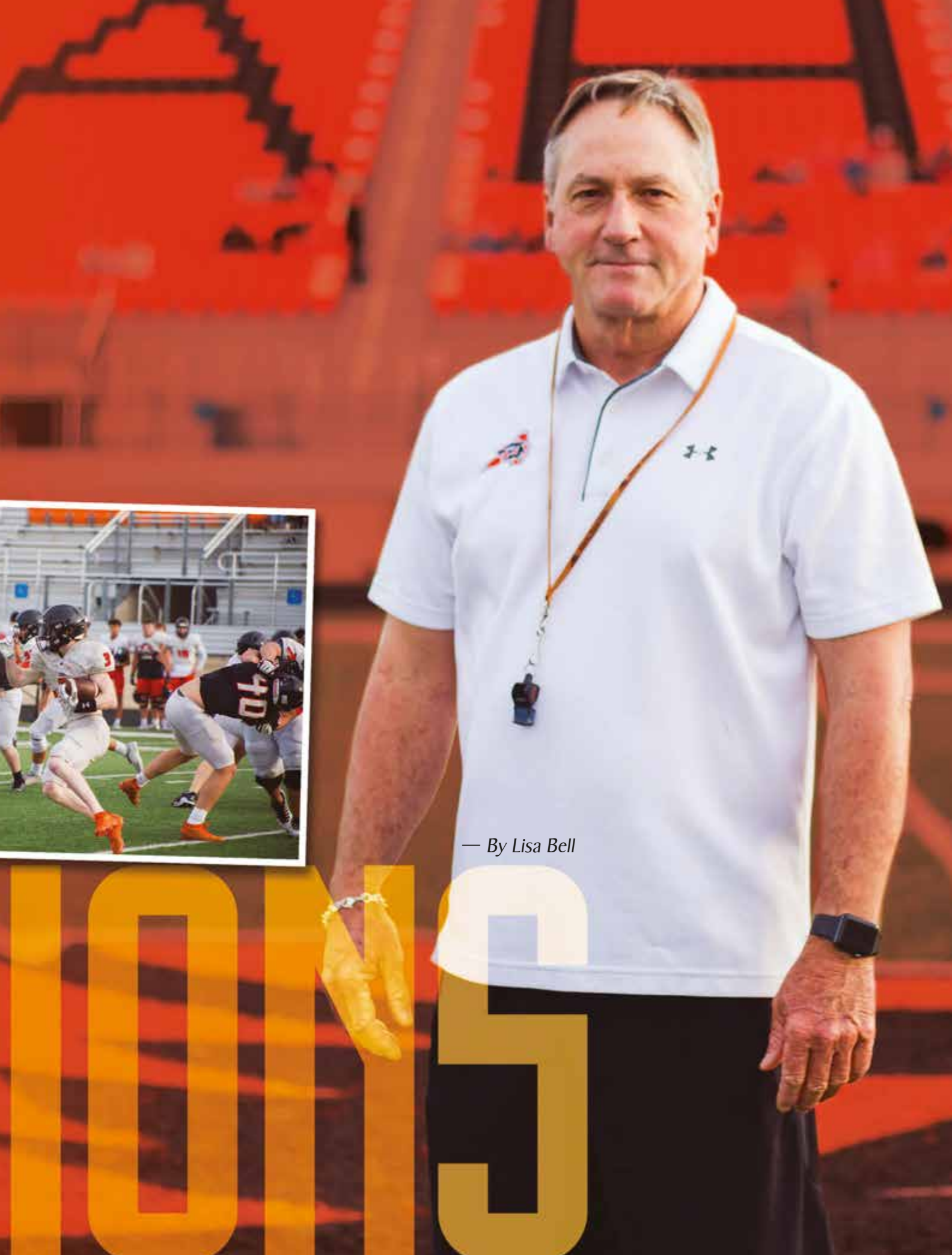
The Aledo High School football program began in the late 1940s. During the 1960s and 1970s, they had talented teams, and then they fell off. Finally, in 1993, the school board decided to reemphasize athletics without deemphasizing academics. That year, Coach Buchanan moved to Aledo as head football coach. “If you want to be a head coach, you go to a place that’s struggling. Lots of hard work and dedication from kids, parents, school administration, teachers and community,” he shared. “The kids worked hard without complaining.”

# TRUE

# CHAMP







— By Lisa Bell

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Over time, everything improved for the Bearcats — both athletics and academics. Coach Buchanan said, “Academics is where you get money for college. Not athletics. Only Division 1 players get full scholarships.”

While he understands that every kid wants to land a spot in the NFL, seldom do they end up there. In 28 years, he had one student play for the NFL, and one went to a Canadian team. “You don’t play for scholarships or the NFL. You play because it’s fun, and you love playing football. You have to love the game to last in college or the NFL,” he stated.

Although UIL stipulates no more than eight hours per week of practice, his team members often “volunteer” time at home. They watch videos, study plays and lift weights. He admits that football players at the high school level work harder now than NFL players did 40 years ago.

“Football is the ultimate team sport,” Coach Buchanan said. “What other sport would you play if you never touched the ball? You must be an unselfish person to play football and extremely disciplined.” Both qualities serve the athletes through the rest of their lives. The value of working as a team also proves valuable as they grow into adulthood.

Previously working for Gene Rogers and then Ross Rogers, Coach Buchanan learned from their words and actions. The Rogers coaches never blamed a kid for a loss, and Tim strives to continue that philosophy and practice. “Gene always said, ‘If you’re not successful, look inside yourself. Never blame a kid.’ I do that,” Coach Buchanan said. “I look at where I made mistakes. If a player makes a mistake, correct it, but it’s my job to make sure the player learns and improves.”

Despite the years of repeated championship seasons, Coach Buchanan is quick to point out that success does







not equal winning. "I seldom talk about winning," he said. "Be there, be on time, and work every day. You're teaching kids success for life, not just athletics."

Besides football skills, the coach stresses taking care of their bodies and schoolwork. He discourages over-training, which often results in stress fractures from overuse. While private trainers have become a big deal, he doesn't tell the students whether to use them. He has concerns over their bodies not getting enough recovery time and ending up with injuries. Loving football and wanting to be the best are great goals. As a coach who influences many young men, he wants to see them excel in academics and use that avenue for scholarships to college.

Although Coach Buchanan received offers to coach at colleges in his younger years, he didn't accept them. "I never found a better opportunity for my kids," he explained. "I have yet to find a better place than Aledo to raise a family. People move here because of the school district, but it's a great place to live and raise kids."

Although 2020-2021 proved a challenging year, Coach Buchanan pointed out the benefits of the pandemic. Starting the season later avoided Texas summer heat. They reduced overall illnesses because of wearing masks. They all learned new virtual tools, although the team and school already used Google Classroom and Huddle. "Kids should never have another absence," he said. With online tools, he theorizes they can take care of schoolwork even with minor illnesses.

As a competitive coach, Coach Buchanan enjoys winning. But genuine success comes from influencing students to become the best they can whether on a field or in life. Their long-term accomplishments represent the measure of his success and why he continues coaching. **NOW**

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## Zoomed In: Judy McLeeran

By Lisa Bell

After injuring her ankle, Judy McLeeran came from Fairfield, Texas, to Weatherford where her daughter's family lives. "There comes a time when you need help," she said. "You think you can do it on your own, but sometimes you can't. I decided to stay." A few months ago, she made the move, thrilled to be near her daughter and grandchildren. The feeling is mutual. They all love spending more time together whenever they want without a long drive.

"We got Lucy [the dog] in the mix," her daughter admitted. "She's little but has a big personality. A hot mess that rules the roost."

"She's a good companion," Judy shared. The small dog simply smiles in agreement. Welcome to Weatherford Ms. Judy — and Lucy.



After 442 victories at Weatherford College, Coach Mark Osina hangs up his whistle.



Manager Christy Hall welcomes fresh peaches to the Farmers Market.



Students from seven area high schools compete in the first WC weld-off.





After seeing Weatherford's new boardwalk on TV, a group of friends check it out.



The Martinez family loves getting outside even with the heat.



Sisters, Shauna Rice and Katie Shell, take the kids for a picnic and fishing trip.



Micaela and Campbell Koudelka stop with their family for lunch before going to the lake.

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BusinessNOW

# The Malt Shop

— By Lisa Bell

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Since June 16, 1958, the small pink building on Fort Worth Highway stood as a reminder of simple pleasures. Today, Janie Williams keeps The Malt Shop the same on the outside. Inside, a few things might be slightly different, but the same commitment to quality food, friendly service and fun remain.

Long before Janie became the owner of The Malt Shop, she worked there. “I started at 19. They had an old Coke box,” she reminisced. “I brought my baby in and sat her on that box. The older ladies played with her while I worked for a whopping \$1.35 per hour.”



When the previous owner sold, Janie jumped at the chance to own the restaurant. Coming out of a 25-year job working at a nursing home, Janie admitted, “No place I’d rather be. I never dread coming to work — except for keeping up with paperwork.”

Even with a full crew, most of whom worked for her from the beginning, Janie shows up almost every day. Through the years, she worked nights and weekends at The Malt Shop while holding down her full-time job until she became the owner. Now, she truly enjoys spending the days with her employees and customers.

“Many of the customers are regulars we see almost every day. People come back who had first dates here. One couple comes every year for their anniversary, celebrating the place they met,” she shared. “The bus driver used to stop sometimes if the kids were good, so they could get ice cream. So many amazing stories.”



The Malt Shop became a local hangout after Weatherford Lake was built. A great place for breakfast, lunch or dinner, several groups still enjoy an occasional day of hanging. The restaurant doesn't have indoor seating, but plenty of picnic tables accommodate those who want to sit outside and chat. With drive-through and walk-up windows, people can order and sit in their cars and eat or take food to go. During the pandemic, that kept business stronger than ever, with double or triple the usual numbers. "I'm very blessed and thankful," Janie said.

"MANY OF THE CUSTOMERS ARE REGULARS WE SEE ALMOST EVERY DAY. PEOPLE COME BACK WHO HAD FIRST DATES HERE. ONE COUPLE COMES EVERY YEAR FOR THEIR ANNIVERSARY, CELEBRATING THE PLACE THEY MET."

Burgers, shakes, malts and ice cream top the list of favorite menu items, but they have many other options, including fried bologna sandwiches. Offering 11 flavors of homemade ice cream and multiple flavors of malts and shakes entices customers to return. During the summer, they use local peaches to whip up a seasonal favorite flavor. When the community celebrates the annual Peach Festival, they celebrate, too. "We have our own peach festival out here," Janie said, laughing. "It's my Christmas. We make tons of peach treats that weekend."

Although they don't open early, The Malt Shop now serves breakfast. Janie cautions, "If you're in a hurry, we may not be the best place to stop." Because they make everything fresh, never precooked, it takes time to complete an order, which always tastes better. The entire team strives to welcome each customer and enjoys chatting with the regulars and newcomers alike.

"It's a great place to work," Janie said. "Truly family." One of her daughters works with her, and Janie's mom still pitches in when needed. Watch for monthly coupons, and visit them soon to experience a touch of nostalgia. **NOW**



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CookingNOW

## *In the Kitchen With* SUSIE VLAHOPOULOS

— By Amber D. Browne

Whatever type of food is on the menu, Susie Vlahopoulos is up for the challenge. “Whether it is cooking baklava for my husband’s work, weeknight dinners, Sunday breakfast — it does not matter,” Susie confessed. “I love to cook, and it started with seeing my mother, father and grandparents cooking when I was growing up.”

Susie instilled a love of cooking in her children, especially her eldest daughter, Kaila Barker, who would write down recipes as a child and make delicious treats for the family. “All three daughters are great cooks,” Susie shared proudly.

Susie is at home in the kitchen, but she could do without one responsibility. “I am not really a neat cook,” she shared. “I hate to do the dishes afterwards.” **NOW**

### **Papou’s Greek Grape Leaves (Dolmadakias)**

**1 16-oz. jar grape leaves**  
**3/4 cup olive oil (divided use)**  
**1 medium onion, chopped**  
**1 1/2 lbs. ground beef**  
**3/4 cup uncooked rice**  
**1 Tbsp. dill, chopped**  
**Salt, to taste**  
**Pepper, to taste**  
**1 Tbsp. parsley, finely chopped**  
**1/2 cup lemon juice**

**1 cup beef bouillon**  
**1 cup water**

1. Remove the grape leaves from the jar; pat each leaf dry. Place the leaves on a paper towel, shiny side down.
2. Add 2 Tbsp. olive oil to a skillet; add the onions and sauté.
3. Add the ground beef, rice, dill, salt, pepper and parsley. Cook until the meat is completely cooked; set aside. Cool for 15 minutes.
4. When cooled, place 1 Tbsp. of the mixture in the center of a grape leaf. Fold the

end of the leaf to cover the filling, then fold in the sides and roll. Continue until all of the mixture is used.

**5.** Place the rolls into a deep pot, arranging in layers. Sprinkle each layer with lemon juice and 2 Tbsp. olive oil.

**6.** Pour the beef bouillon, water and remaining olive oil over the rolled grape leaves. Place a plate on top to weigh them down; simmer over very low heat for 40-50 minutes. Drain and cool before serving.

### **Grandma Fields’ Sausage Balls**

**1 lb. sausage, room temperature**  
**1 15-oz. jar Cheez Whiz**  
**2 cups Bisquick**

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F. Mix all the ingredients in a large bowl until blended.
2. Roll into 1-inch balls; place them closely together on a parchment-lined cookie sheet. Bake for 25 minutes, or until brown.



## Mawma Hamilton's Egg Bread

- 1 1/2 tsp. yeast
- 5 tsp. sugar
- 3/4 cup warm milk
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 3 Tbsp. butter, melted
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt
- 3 cups flour

1. For bread mixer: Add all the ingredients to the mixer; use preferred settings.
2. For handmade bread: Preheat the oven to 350 F. In a large bowl, stir together the yeast, sugar and warm milk until dissolved; set aside until bloomed.
3. Whisk together the eggs and butter; add to bloomed yeast mixture.
4. In a separate bowl, mix the salt and flour; slowly add to yeast-egg mixture until a sticky ball forms.
5. Flour the counter; pour out the dough ball. Knead for 5 minutes. Return to an oiled bowl; cover with plastic wrap. Set in a warm place until the dough doubles in size.
6. When doubled, punch down; knead for 2 minutes, and then place it in a greased bread pan. Place the pan in the center of the oven; bake for 20-25 minutes, or until golden brown.

## Mama's Round Boys

- 1 8-count pkg. hamburger buns
- 2 lbs. ground beef
- 1 1-oz. pkg. onion soup mix
- 8 Tbsp. barbecue sauce (divided use)
- 8 slices cheese
- Mustard, to taste

1. Preheat the oven to 400 F. Place the bottom half of the buns on a foil-lined cookie sheet.
2. Mix together the ground beef and soup mix; roll the beef mixture into balls, place onto each bottom bun and flatten. Bake at 400 F for 35-40 minutes.
3. When done, turn off the oven; remove from oven. Spread 1 Tbsp. barbecue sauce onto each patty; add 1 slice of cheese to each patty.
4. Return the pan to the oven to melt the cheese. Once melted, remove; add mustard on the top buns. Place the top bun on each and serve.

## Xen and Susie's Green Chili Burros

- 1 3-lb. beef roast
- 1 1-oz. envelope onion soup mix
- 1 medium onion, chopped

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On Staff



**1/4 cup water**  
**2 4-oz. cans green chiles**  
**1 12-count pkg. flour tortillas**

1. Place the roast and the next 3 ingredients in a slow cooker; cook for 8 hours. When the roast is tender, shred it with a fork. Add the green chiles; stir.
2. Heat a skillet until very hot. Toast each side of the tortillas. Fill with meat mixture and roll. Serve with cheese, sour cream, salsa and chips.

## Kaila's Marshmallow Pie

*Filling:*

**1 6-oz. box cherry Jell-O**  
**3/4 cup heavy cream**  
**1 tsp. vanilla**  
**1 Tbsp. sugar**  
**1 cup mini marshmallows**

*Crust:*

**3/4 stick real butter, melted**  
**1/2 11-oz. box vanilla wafers, crushed**

1. *For filling:* Prepare the Jell-O as directed; set aside.
2. Whip heavy cream, vanilla and sugar until stiff peaks form. Fold whipped cream and mini marshmallows into the cherry Jell-O; set aside.



Papou's Greek Grape Leaves  
(Dolmadakias)

3. *For crust:* Mix together the butter and vanilla wafers; press into a pie plate.
4. Pour cherry filling into pie crust; place in the freezer for 1 1/2 hours, or until frozen. Serve frozen with a dollop of whipped cream

## Mrs. Linda's Monster Cookies

**1 lb. brown sugar**  
**1 cup white sugar**  
**24 oz. peanut butter**  
**1/2 lb. butter**  
**6 eggs**

**1 tsp. baking soda**  
**9 cups dry oatmeal**  
**1 lb. M&Ms**

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F
2. Cream together the sugars, peanut butter and butter. Beat in the eggs. Add the baking soda and oatmeal; mix well. Stir in the M&Ms.
3. Use an ice cream scooper to scoop the batter onto a parchment paper-lined cookie sheet. Flatten each scoop. Bake at 350 F for 10-12 minutes. Let cool slightly before removing from cookie sheet.



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Due to COVID-19, some events may have been cancelled or rescheduled while we were at press. Check with individual organizations or your city or Chamber websites to verify dates and times.

## 8/2-8/30

### A Matter of Balance:

AgriLife Extension free eight-session class, held every **Monday and Wednesday**, designed to reduce risk of falls, increase physical activity and sustain longer independent living. Limited space; register early online. 10:00 a.m.-noon, Parker County Extension Office, 604 North Main St. [www.nctcog.org/aging-services/classes](http://www.nctcog.org/aging-services/classes).

## 8/6

### Sugar Rush Event:

Fundraising event, set up as an

open house with appetizers, drinks and a band.

5:00-7:30 p.m., Children's Advocacy Center, 1224 Clear Lake Road. Cheryl Bullock (982) 615-1992.

For more information, visit [www.cacparkercounty.org](http://www.cacparkercounty.org).

### Night at the Museum:

A favorite night of the year, kids get the entire museum to themselves for an evening of fun, games, dinner and more. \$25-\$30. 5:00-10:00 p.m., Doss Heritage and Culture Center, 1400 Texas Street. For more information, visit [www.dosscenter.org](http://www.dosscenter.org).

## 8/6-8/7

### Fortunate Son:

Tribute to Creedence Clearwater Revival returns to Granbury for three shows. \$40-\$50.

**Friday:** 7:30 p.m.; **Saturday:** 2:00 p.m. or 7:30 p.m., Granbury Opera House, 133 E. Pearl St, Granbury, TX 76048. [www.granburytheatrecompany.org](http://www.granburytheatrecompany.org).

## 8/13

### Parker County Women's and Newcomers:

PCWN welcomes author of *Around Veal's Station* (Parker County beginnings), Laura

Chance Smith. \$11 for lunch.

Social hour: 9:30 a.m.; meeting begins: 10:30 a.m. FUMC Family Life Center, 301 S. Main Street.

For lunch reservation, contact Shirley at (817) 757-7379. For more information, visit [www.pcwnc.org](http://www.pcwnc.org).

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to [lisa.bell@nowmagazines.com](mailto:lisa.bell@nowmagazines.com).*



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