

Keizertimes

SECTION A

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Big Leaguer

ONE KEIZER LITTLE LEAGUER'S EPIC JOURNEY TO BECOMING A 32 YEAR-OLD ROOKIE IN MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

Austin Bibens-Dirkx warmed up six different times in the Rangers bullpen before he was finally called to the mound to make his Major League debut on May 17 in Texas.

As a 32-year-old rookie, who spent more than 11 years in the minors, Bibens-Dirkx was used to waiting.

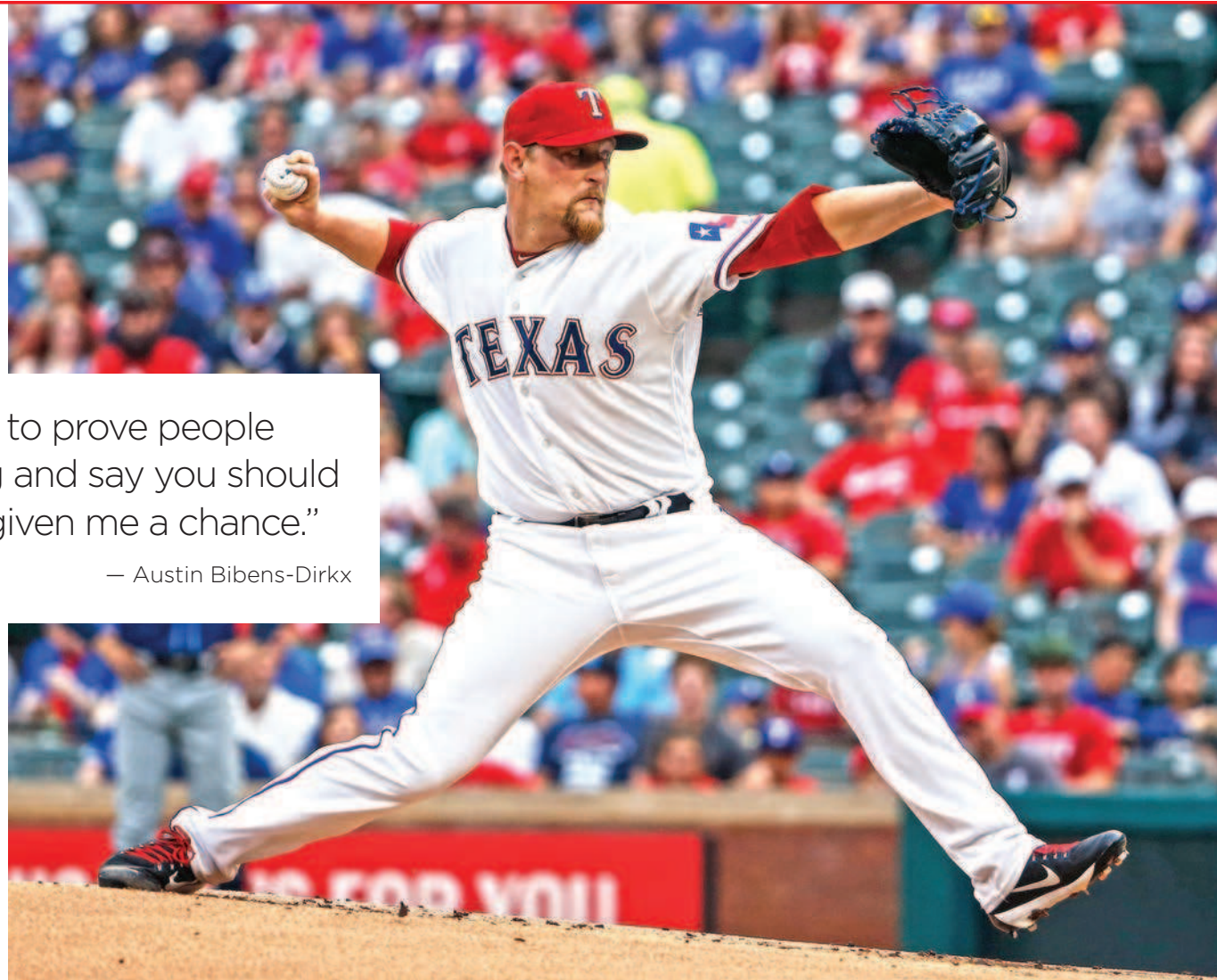
"I had a smile on my face pretty much the whole time," Bibens-Dirkx said of his first appearance in the big leagues, which came in the top of the ninth inning with the Rangers leading 9-2. "It was the perfect time. They always try to give you a soft landing when you make your debut and not put you in a high pressure situation. I had to take a step back after my warmup pitches off the mound to take everything in, take a deep breath and then get back on."

After a called strike on his first pitch, Bibens-Dirkx hit Philadelphia Phillies outfielder Aaron Altherr with his second. But Bibens-Dirkx followed up with a strikeout on a curveball and got outfielder Michael Saunders to pop out to the catcher. With two outs, third baseman Maikel Franco hit a slider to center field to score a run. Bibens-Dirkx then got a line drive to third base for the final out to finish the first inning of his MLB career, something that had been a long-time coming.

Bibens-Dirkx weighed about 150 pounds and threw in the low to mid 80s when he graduated from McNary High School. If he didn't get a baseball scholarship, Bibens-Dirkx was probably going to enlist in the Navy. But Chemeketa Community

"I want to prove people wrong and say you should have given me a chance."

— Austin Bibens-Dirkx



ABOVE: Austin Bibens-Dirkx, a McNary graduate and former Keizer Little Leaguer, pitches for the Texas Rangers after more than 11 seasons in the minor leagues.

STAR-TELEGRAM/Paul Moseley

RIGHT: Bibens-Dirkx, right, played on Roland Herrera's, left, Keizer Little League Junior All-Star team in 1998. Submitted

College offered and Bibens-Dirkx took advantage. Then after one season at the University of Portland, Bibens-Dirkx was drafted in the 16th round by the Seattle Mariners in 2006.

In the Mariners organization, Bibens-Dirkx quickly worked his way up

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Veteran remembers fallen on July 4

By DEE MOORE
For the Keizertimes

Lou Nordyke stoops over a broken flag that lies next to a grave at Claggett Cemetery.



KEIZERTIMES/Dee Moore
Lou Nordyke will put out flags at the graves of deceased veterans on Independence Day.

The retired Marine, a Master Gunney Sergeant, moves slowly, as he replaces the damaged flag with another. It's a duty he has taken upon himself, honoring the deceased veterans who are laid to rest here.

The new flag flutters in the gentle breeze under the noon sun. Since the early 1990s he has gone out to the cemetery on Flag Day, Memorial Day, Veteran's Day and July 4th to place flags on the soldier's graves.

"I am 85 years old and getting younger every day," he said with a self deprecating chuckle. He served in both the Korean and Vietnam wars.

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Nordyke makes a pilgrimage to the cemetery several times a week to visit his wife and mother-in-law and care for their graves. While he is there he will check on the military graves, and like today, he will remove and replace the broken or damaged flags that remain from visits made by family members.

He is often joined by his friend, John Anderson, also a veteran. Nordyke and Anderson have been friends for many years getting to know each other

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McNary goes local for drama director

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

After four years of a two-hour commute to Parkrose High School in Northeast Portland, Tom Cavanaugh is looking forward to working just five minutes from his front door.

But that's not all that drew him to McNary High School. "I knew the reputation of McNary theatre," Cavanaugh said. "I've known Dallas (Myers) for years and years and years. I knew a lot of what they had going on there. It was all really exciting. To have that many kids interested and participating in theatre is amazing."

Cavanaugh is replacing Myers, who stepped down after seven years as McNary's drama director. Cavanaugh and Myers were at Western Oregon University at the same time and acted in many shows together. Cavanaugh's



Tom Cavanaugh

wife, Jessica, now a teacher at Roots Academy in Salem, did her student teaching at McNary under then drama director Linda Baker.

"She was able to speak to the fact that there's this amazing community of support in theatre," Cavanaugh said.

Cavanaugh was introduced to theatre as a high schooler at Westview in Beaverton when athletics didn't go his way.

"I thought I was a three-

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Keizer man turns 100
PAGE A3

Claggett Creek maestro retires
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Summer Basketball
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