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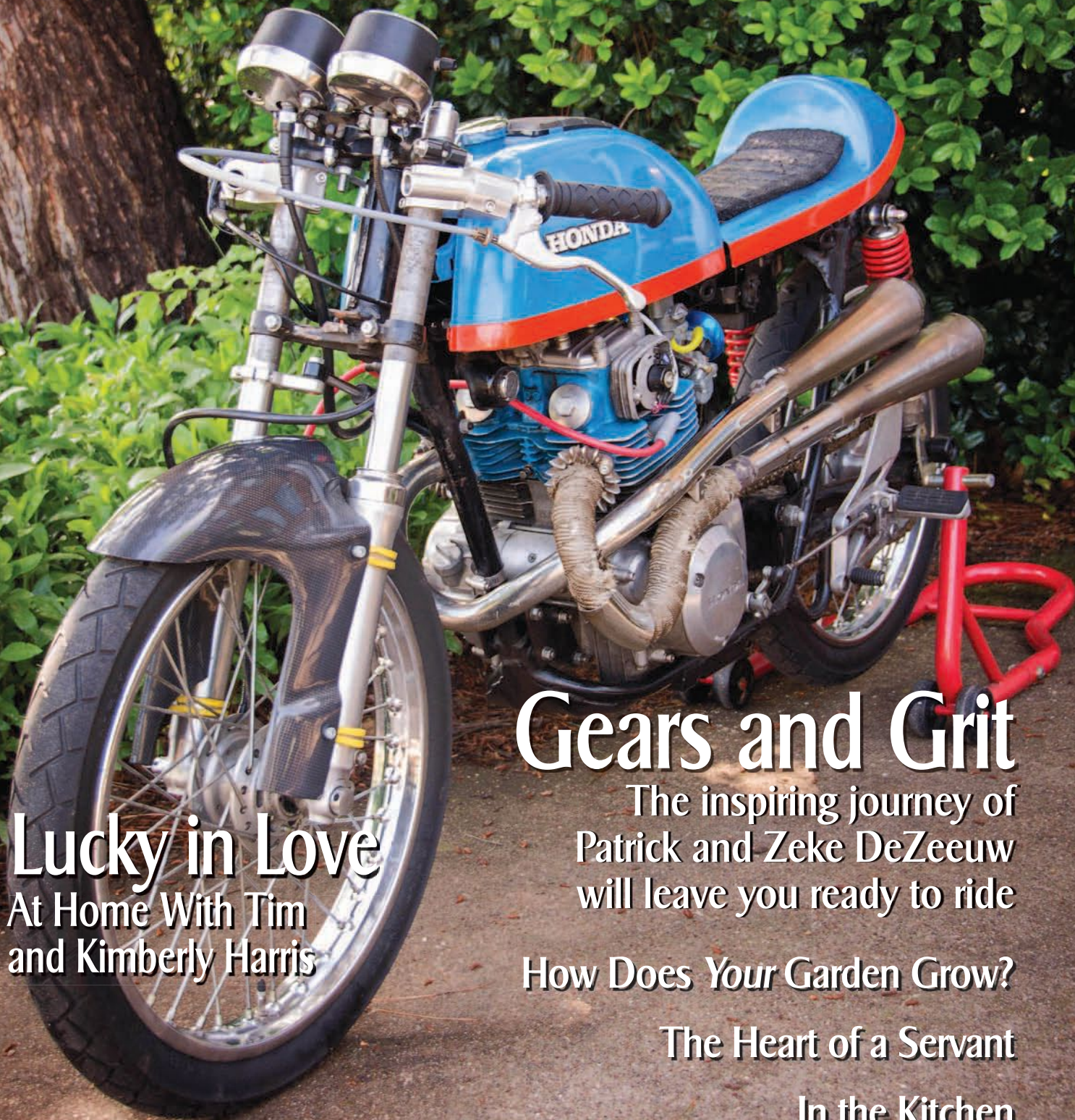
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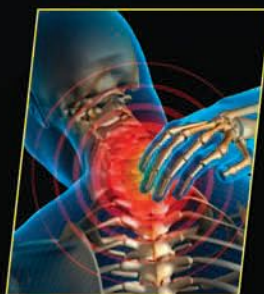
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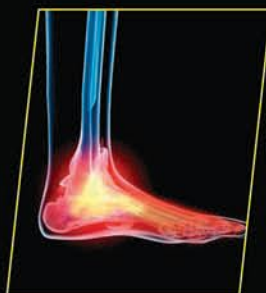
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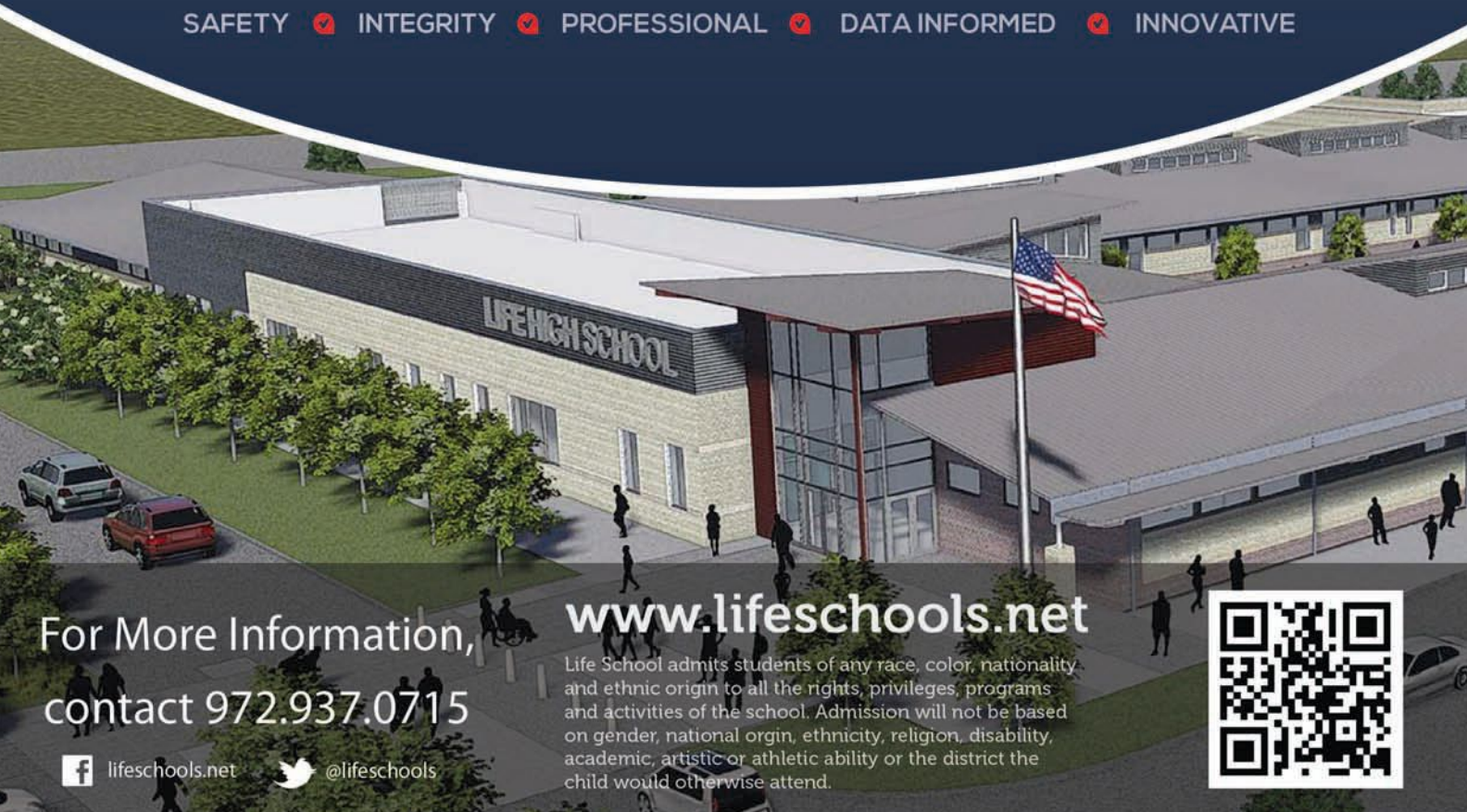
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North Ellis Co. Editor, Dianne Reaux

Editorial Coordinator, Sandra Strong

Writers, Callie Revell

Virginia Riddle . Betty Tryon

Editors/Proofreaders, Pat Anthony

GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

Creative Director, Chris McCalla

Artists, Kristin Bato . Julie Carpenter

Morgan Christensen . Martha Macias

Brande Morgan . Shannon Pfaff . Felipe Ruiz

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography Director, Jill Rose

Photographer, Amy Ramirez

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ON THE COVER



A love for tinkering helped a father and son duo work together to build this beauty.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Editor's Note

Hello, North Ellis County Residents!

Summer is officially here! There are so many things we love about June. Baseball, golfing, camping and fishing are all outdoor activities we enjoy, which is apropos because June has been officially designated as Great Outdoors Month. Hello! Road trip, anyone?

We'll also celebrate Father's Day. Many people are busy working and raising families. Times have changed, though, and a 50/50 division of responsibility between parents doesn't always compute. Often, one parent must carry a heavier load to help things run smoothly. But today's fathers are coming in clutch! They fix breakfast, braid ponytails, do laundry and grill on rainy days to make everyone happy. To all of the fathers who work hard helping to raise strong, grounded and well-rounded children, we salute you! Now, how about firing up that grill?

Happy Father's Day!

Dianne

Dianne Reaux
North Ellis Co. NOW Editor
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GEARS & GRIT

— By Callie Revell

Patrick and Zeke DeZeeuw, a father and son duo from Red Oak, caught a glimpse of the thrill motorcycles can bring, and there's no going back now. Zeke, an 11-year-old student at Life School Red Oak, knows he's a little young for motorcycles, but he doesn't let that stop him. "I'm not actually mechanically inclined, but Zeke is," Patrick said. "He's an experiential learner. Ever since he was young, he has been taking things apart and putting them back together." Patrick has embraced his son's natural curiosity, and they're pushing the limits to see what they can accomplish together.

"I'VE GROWN GRIT, SO I DON'T STOP. I KEEP GOING. THAT'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO HAVE MY WHOLE LIFE, AND PERSEVERANCE IS SOMETHING A LOT OF KIDS DON'T HAVE."





Their journey began in January 2013 when Zeke was 9 years old. After attending a motorcycle show the previous November, motorcycles were on Zeke's mind. Patrick was driving in Dallas one day when something on the radio caught his attention. "The radio said the problem with this generation was that they weren't tinkerers and that tinkerers become inventors," Patrick recalled. He immediately turned into a motorcycle shop he'd previously visited. One particular motorcycle caught his eye, and he immediately decided to go get Zeke to check out the bike he'd found.

"My dad was like, 'Hey, do you want to go pick up this motorcycle I saw?' I said, 'Yeah, but let's ask Mom first,'" Zeke said. "So, once we got permission from Mom, we picked Lucky up and got started the next day. When we started Lucky up for the first time, I had the biggest grin on my face. It was one of the most exciting moments of my life." The bike's name, "Lucky," comes from the DeZeeuw's family history. "Our family crest is from the Netherlands, and the motto is *Luctor et Emergo*, which means, 'I struggle, I rise,'" Zeke explained. The crest is now featured on their workshop door and on every bike they build. The challenge of rebuilding their first bike led to bigger and better things.

Lucky is a Honda CB200T originally manufactured in 1975. It was designed to be slow, heavy and fuel efficient, but Patrick and Zeke had different plans for her. When they first found Lucky, she was rusty and dirty, and they had to rebuild her piece by piece. They started with no knowledge and learned along the way with the help of online forums like Do the Ton and Honda Twins. That summer, Zeke and Patrick took Lucky to the 2013 Barber Vintage Festival in Alabama. At the festival, they were featured in an interview for *Café Racer TV*, a TV show on the Velocity Channel. The following year, the channel invited them to be featured on *Naked Speed*, another show featuring vintage

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LUCTOR ET EMERGO



motorcycles. That invitation led them to search for their second bike.

For the television show, Patrick and Zeke bought a 1971 Honda CB175 and modified the engine and aerodynamics to make it significantly faster. "We picked her up from the same shop where we picked up Lucky," Zeke said, adding that they begged the owner of the shop for months before he finally agreed to sell it. "I felt victory when I took her home, so Victoria was her name."

Rebuilding Victoria would've been a challenge under normal conditions, but the added pressure of the television show made the project that much more intense. "When we were asked to do the show, they initially gave us a year," Patrick said. "Then, they came back and asked if we could get it done in 16 weeks." That meant they had to spend the entire summer working long days to finish the bike in time. Since Patrick had to work during the day, he would leave Zeke to-do lists every morning with tasks to finish





to keep the project on track. “Zeke had to not only be an adult and man up, but he had to do it in an accelerated time frame,” Patrick said.

All of their hard work paid off, and they finished Victoria just in time. First the crew asked the DeZeeuws to re-enact finding the bike, and then they came back a month later to film them working on it. The crew returned in August to recap the finishing touches. “Having to do 12-hour days in the middle of summer in Texas in that shop with no air conditioning was tough,” Zeke said. The last day of shooting was at Circuit of The Americas, a racetrack in Austin. There, a professional tested Victoria on the track and reached 99 miles per hour, adjusted for error to 104 miles per hour.

Many fathers struggle to connect with their sons in an age of video games and smartphones, but Patrick is thankful he and Zeke can share a hobby that is so hands-on and involved. “I think it has brought us together,” Patrick said, recounting their struggles of learning the overwhelming amount of information and skills required to build their motorcycles. “Zeke had to learn how to weld using a difficult welding technique not many people in the United States know how to do,” he said. “But those who struggle are the ones who have to persevere. We call that ‘grit.’” The idea of grit is a lesson Patrick made sure to impart to his son, adding that “failure is part of the equation of success.”

Zeke couldn’t agree more. “I’ve grown grit, so I don’t stop. I keep going,” Zeke said. “That’s something I’d like to



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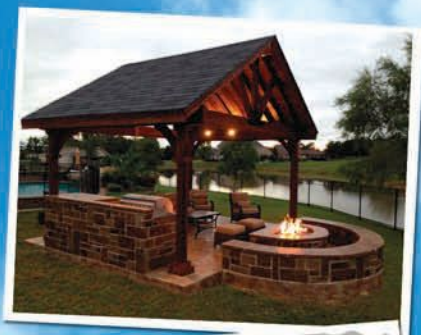
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have my whole life, and perseverance is something a lot of kids don't have." Zeke hopes through the television show, his YouTube channel and his website, zoomwithzeke.com, he will be able to inspire kids his own age to push their limits and aim high. "That was the point of the show, to push my generation to get out and find their passion — to go do it and feel a sense of accomplishment. Sitting there for hours sanding a seat and painting it to become what we consider a beautiful piece of art — that's an accomplishment."



Zeke's passion is motorcycles, and most of his dreams focus on them. "When I get older, I want to make a bike to race when I'm 16. That's pretty much my passion right now," he said. "After high school, I definitely want to start my own shop." Zeke has a dream to build a public workshop where anyone can walk in and learn how to build motorcycles. He calls it a "school-shop," a place where he can teach classes and let others use his tools, so they can learn the skills he and his father had to teach themselves. "By the time I'm 20 or 30, the people who had firsthand experience with the bikes in the '50s and '60s are going to be gone. Their knowledge is going to be gone," Zeke said. "So, learning this and teaching it in the future will just keep that old motorcycle passion going." Zeke hopes to help others make the kind of memories he and his father have shared. **NOW**

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Left to right: Emily, Natalie, Trang and Sy.

Seeing Perseverance Through Helps Ophthalmologist Focus on Successfully Serving the Community

— By Hope Oriabure

Dr. Trang Le is a board-certified ophthalmologist who specializes in the treatment of glaucoma and cataracts. But before she was a doctor, she was a 10-year-old girl who emigrated from Vietnam. Dr. Le, her mother, grandmother and two sisters were all sponsored by a Lutheran Church in Baytown, Texas. Later, Dr. Le and her family would be joined by her father. When Dr. Le arrived in Baytown, she was met with several challenges and admits while it was a difficult process to learn the language and adapt to a new way of life, these challenges helped build her character.

"In my situation, I had to grow up faster (than other 10-year-olds), but it helped me be self-sufficient and adaptable," Dr. Le said. "When I left Vietnam, I had to leave friends behind, so when I made new friendships here, I appreciated them more."

Eventually, Dr. Le and her family left Baytown and moved to Massachusetts. Both Dr. Le and her sister graduated valedictorian of their high school classes. Their success was not a surprise but a destination, with a road paved by education and the belief that self-motivation determines one's future in life. As a family practitioner and surgeon in Vietnam, her father, Dr. Lan Le, provided a wide range of medical services. With Vietnam's doctor shortage, he worked very long hours ending with rounds at the hospital seven days a week. Upon coming to

America, Dr. Lan Le was unable to practice medicine here and made the challenging decision to continue his profession in the United States. Despite his medical experience and background, this decision required Dr. Le's father to complete a medical residency. She was inspired by her father's dedication and knew she wanted to be a doctor, too. Both Dr. Le and one of her sisters are medical doctors today. Her husband, Sy Le, is also a physician.

Dr. Le attended Rice University for her undergraduate degree, then Baylor University for medical school and completed her residency in Arizona. Dr. Le then completed a fellowship or training in a medical specialty at UT Southwestern in glaucoma. She started working at EyeCare Associates of Texas and has been with the practice ever since. Here, Dr. Le continues her belief in the vital role education plays in our lives by educating patients to ensure that they understand their conditions, as well as the risks and benefits of treatment options. She continues to instill in her children the value of education. "We encourage our children to take their education seriously, because it's valuable and can never be taken away," Dr. Le said. These are not just feel-good words but a legacy that helped a little girl from a war-torn country navigate her path to success.



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Lucky in Love



— By Dianne Reaux

In 1994, Tim and Kimberly Harris worked in the betting industry, but the “odds” of them making a love connection weren’t favorable. If they were ever going to have a shot at happily ever after, Lady Luck was going to have to intervene.



“Tim first saw me on June 7, while I was working in Harrah’s casino as a slot host,” Kimberly shared. Then Tim gently interrupted her.

“Actually, my buddy first saw her. We were

At Home With **Tim & Kimberly Harris**

bartenders, and he told me he was going to introduce himself, but I told him to hold up!" Tim admitted laughing. "I liked what I saw — I loved what I saw." Tim gave Kimberly his number, and two days later she called but couldn't ever reach him.

"I felt like I was getting the run around, because he was either at work or asleep," Kimberly explained. "So, I just gave up." Then Lady Luck stepped in.

During a chance conversation with her sister's new friend, Kimberly mentioned working at Harrah's. Unbeknownst to Kimberly, she was chatting with Tim's sister! Kimberly shared that she'd been unable to reach Tim and thought she'd been given the brush off. But Kathy vouched for her brother, sharing that he really was busy or sleeping. Tim worked with his father in their landscaping business during the day and at Harrah's in the evenings. "That evening,

I called him again," Kimberly shared, and this time, Tim answered.

"It was June 10, my birthday," Kimberly recalled smiling, "and Tim arranged an evening out for us." After an





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evening of cocktails, Tim announced that she would be his wife. "Of course, I was like, yeah right!" Kimberly laughed. But on June 7, 1996, exactly one year after they first met, Tim and Kimberly were married.

In 2006, they decided to move to Red Oak with their young daughter, Kassidy. "I loved the area, because it was really quiet," Tim stated. "It reminded me of our neighborhood in Shreveport."

Red Oak appealed to Kimberly for similar reasons. "I liked it, because it reminded me of country living," she said. "In Shreveport, we lived on about an acre of land, so I didn't want to live in a neighborhood where the houses were really close together. Our lot isn't as big,

but it still feels like we're in the country. It reminds us of home."

Their beautiful 2,500-square-foot home is primarily decorated in warm earth tones. Guests are greeted by a beautiful, olive-toned hue, which accents the entryway. The dining room features an unexpected cinnamon color painted above the chair rail. A neutral egg shell color painted on the bottom third of the wall balances the contrasting colors in the area. The china cabinet displays cinnamon and gold place settings, which help tie together the color palette chosen for the room. An ultra-modern, multipendant light fixture hanging above the dining room table provides cozy ambient lighting.

For the living room, Kimberly chose a chocolate-colored sofa sectional, with a matching coffee table, and the area is decorated with cinnamon throw pillows. The sectional is framed by a large window with cinnamon-colored window

treatment panels with brown accents. A round mahogany mirror, enhanced with decorative silver trim, hangs above the fireplace.

A four-seat dining table, with a small, ornate floral centerpiece, sits just off the kitchen. The open floor plan lets visitors enjoy television or keep an eye on dinner preparations during large family get-togethers. "Summer is a favorite season," Tim shared, "because we enjoy having barbecues and fish fries."

A professional decorator's influence appears throughout the Harrises' home, but Tim is quick to give credit where credit is due. "It's all Kimberly," he stated proudly. "A repairman recently came inside to do some work. He looked around and asked, 'Man, who does your decorating?' I laughed, because I hear that all the time!"

Kimberly decorated their master



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bedroom with a Villa Sonoma-style queen bedroom set, which features ornate details in the wood of the four-poster bed. The matching dresser and bureau have ball-and-claw feet, and their cozy space features more of Kimberly's favorite brown and green earth tones. Throughout the house, gentle hints of a lush, tropical safari theme may be found. "I have all kinds of elephants, tigers



and palm trees," she admitted. Kassidy's trendy bedroom is painted with a slate color, and dark gray curtains cover the window. The four-poster canopy bed is decorated with plum-colored bedding, and plum and silver decorative pillows provide a nice contrast.

By day, Kimberly works as a clinical nursing manager at Hospice Plus in Dallas. "My mother is a nurse, and growing up, it was the only profession I ever really knew," Kimberly explained. "But I've always loved decorating," she shared. "I've always really wanted to be an interior designer."

Kimberly may be the inspiration behind the designs, but when it comes to execution, it's a team effort. "I'll usually tell Tim what I want. For example, I



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told him I wanted texture on some of the walls. At first he was reluctant," she admitted, "but we went to Home Depot, picked out the color and got the supplies we needed." Arriving back home, Tim was even more skeptical. But he had two women on his hands who wouldn't be deterred. "Kassidy and I started on a really small section of the kitchen bar, because we really didn't know what we were doing," Kim said laughing. "And before we knew it, Tim had taken over, and the room came out beautifully."

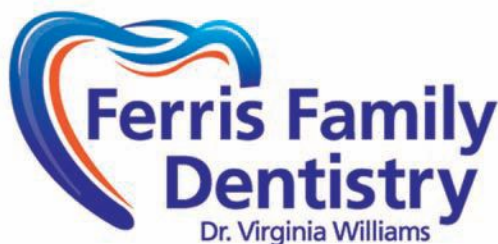
Tim enjoys making his own decorative contributions to their home. He is a skilled painter and landscaper, and he credits his parents



and his grandfather with his handiwork. "Growing up, my mother would take me to my grandfather's on the weekends, and I'd spend time working with him. He was a skilled craftsman, and he taught me a lot of what I know."

Kassidy recently graduated from the University of North Texas, majoring in psychology. And after a long day, the Harrises enjoy spending quiet evenings together at home with Ashton, their adorable Shih Tzu. For Tim and Kimberly, nothing is more important than family. "It's nice to have a comfortably decorated house," Kimberly shared. "But it's even more important to be able to come home to a space where everyone is loved and respected. It's what makes a house a home." **NOW**

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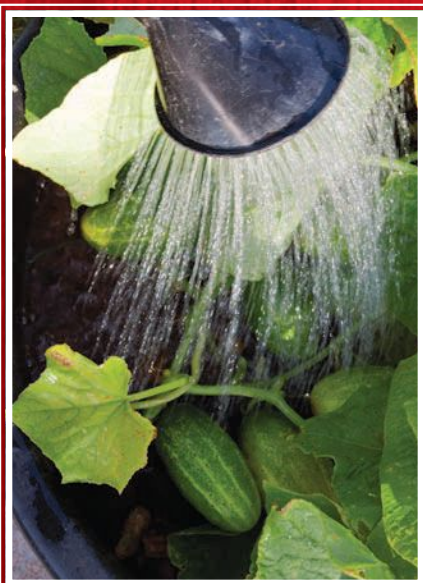
— By Virginia Riddle



By June, vegetable garden rows or containers full of your favorites should be standing at attention in full flower or should be producing the beginning fruits of your springtime labors. But if you are to keep your kitchen stocked with fresh produce, you must master the challenges your thriving young vegetable plants will face during these Texas summer months.

Weather and Watering

Summer high temperatures for our Blackland Prairie Region average around 95 F, with the possibility of 100-plus F successive days. Nights rarely cool below 75 F, and typically, the prairie gets about 30-35 inches of moisture a year, mostly in the spring and fall seasons. Additionally, the soils are generally shallow. We love our cold drinks, and our plants need to drink also. Compare a tomato that is about 95-percent water to a human body that is about 75-percent water, and you will appreciate your plants' summer watering needs.



Some helpful watering hints include:

1. Watering too much or too little is a problem. When soil is dry to the touch, water to a depth of 1-2 inches at least once a week. Remember, leaves can wilt from being too wet or too dry.
2. Use drip or trickle irrigation to avoid waste. Run hoses slowly in furrows so every costly drop soaks in, and use overhead irrigation only as a last resort, since watering in this fashion allows water to evaporate rather than soak in and promotes disease on leaves and rot of fruit. Use wicking or refillable watering bottles available at your garden center for container plants.
3. Water early in the morning or early evening to avoid greater evaporation during the heat of the day.
4. Keep your garden weeded since weeds drink precious and expensive



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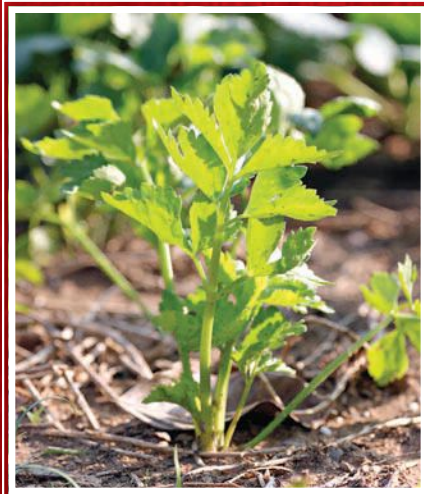
water. Use a Cape Cod weeder, swan hoe and/or collinear hoe for weeding.

5. When plants are at least 4-6 inches tall, add more mulch around the stems. The best types of mulches are organic — bark, compost, pine needles or shredded leaves. However, if you use a black plastic liner, cover it with a thick layer of organic mulch, since it will soak up the summer sun's heat if left bare. Organic mulches lower or moderate soil temperatures.

6. Keep plastic buckets handy and use them to cover your smaller plants before occasional hailstorms occur.

Insects

By including cilantro and mint in your garden plantings, you will attract beneficial insects, which include: bees, lady bugs and green garden spiders. For grasshoppers, spider mites and other problem insects that eat what you love, purchase horticultural oils and soaps that are sold at garden centers and use them as directed. If you use heavily based chemical sprays, be sure to scrub your veggies well before eating them!



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Animals

Bambi is cute until he consumes your nearly ready-to-eat corn. Deer, raccoons, skunks, wild hogs and/or rabbits can be discouraged by installing small-charge electric fencing that can be turned off and on. Additionally, a live animal trap can be used to capture, relocate and release small animal poachers into a more suitable habitat. Finally, mesh netting can be laid on the ground for about 10-15

feet surrounding the garden. Secure netting with ground staples. Deer and other four-footed hooved animals don't like poor footing. They are less likely to walk on something that might entangle them. Old CDs can be hung to scare away animals and birds.

Beneficial animals include: nonvenomous snakes, toads, frogs and earthworms. Be sure to know your snakes, and always stick your long-handled hoe under or into plants to check for their presence before you risk a snake or spider bite!

Fertilizing and Feeding

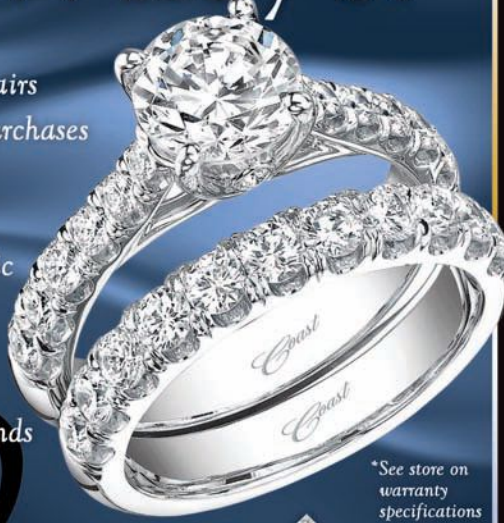
Feeding vegetables during this growth spurt season is important, especially if your plants are growing in containers. Choose an organic or nonorganic, soluble complete-and-balanced plant food or high nitrogen fertilizer that is



the right complement for your soil, based on its previous test. Your garden center expert or county extension agent can advise you. Follow the package directions for application and frequency. It's best to spray early in the morning, keeping the fertilizer off leaves, and water thoroughly right after feeding to avoid fertilizer burn from the hot sun. Organic compost tea or manure tea can be made by mixing a bushel of either with 20 gallons of water in a plastic garbage can. Let the tea brew for at least four days, agitating it once a day. Apply at plant roots with a spray bottle used only for this tea, then water thoroughly.

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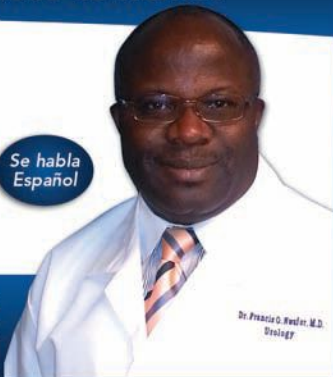
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If your tomato potted plants have branched out and are looking a little ragged, transplant them to larger pots, after trimming their roots slightly. If the pots have been used previously, be sure to clean them with a 10-percent solution of laundry bleach to kill any organisms or insect eggs before you refill the pot with new potting soil.

Harvesting

Pick your mature vegetables during mid-morning hours, just after dew has dried but before the sun causes the wilting of leaves or saps the flavors. Harvest herbs before the plants have gone to seed.



Plan Your Fall Garden

Our first freeze is normally about November 15. Count back the days from that date to establish a second summer planting early enough for the crops to mature before the first freeze. Favorite fall starters that go into the winter months include: lettuces, spinach, leeks, kale and collards. Start these from seeds and plant them in the garden or containers in October. **NOW**

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The Heart of a Servant

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— By Dianne Reaux

Kevin McDonnell has a passion for learning and serving. “After graduating in 1996 with a Bachelor of Science in accounting from the University of New Orleans, I decided to continue my education,” Kevin shared. But he felt that pursuing a master’s degree in the same field would have been redundant. So, Kevin’s next move was impressive. “I decided to go to law school.” Kevin enrolled in Tulane University Law School and graduated with a Juris Doctor degree in 1999. An academic at heart, Kevin would have continued his educational pursuits. “But I realized that being a professional student doesn’t pay very well,” he said smiling.

Kevin started his career as an accountant with a large firm in Dallas and was then recruited to work for a firm in Ft. Worth.

But it didn’t take long for a strong work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit to persuade him into opening his own business. “I opened my office in 2003, and we’ve been blessed to experience growth each year,” he shared.

Jim Richardson, a partner in McDonnell Richardson, has his own interesting professional journey. “I was a student at The University of Texas at Arlington. My father is a physician, so I decided that I would major in biology. But it was a lot of memorization, and it just wasn’t a good fit,” Jim shared. He took an accounting course, which was based on logic and computations. “It all clicked for me, and I found my major.” He graduated in 1994 with a bachelor’s degree in business administration.

Jim started his career as an accountant, and with a background in programming, he also developed tax software. He continued studying and passed the CPA exam in 1996. Jim has solid experience as a corporate controller, and in 2014, he obtained the professional CGMA designation, which stands for Chartered Global Management Accountant.

When Kevin first started his business, he worked as a CPA and as an attorney. "At that time, it was just me," Kevin shared, "and about three months later, I hired my first 30-hour-per-week employee to help as the practice grew." Kevin's wife, Jennifer McDonnell, also a CPA, joined the firm in 2006. Thirteen years later, the organization has grown to include three CPAs, three attorneys and approximately 14 supporting staff members. "Jim joined our staff in 2010 and became a full partner in 2011."

To accommodate the needs of their clients, the expertise and range of services offered by McDonnell Richardson, PC is diverse. "We're large enough to have departments and employees with expertise in specific areas," Kevin explained. "We provide payroll consulting, accounting and tax preparation services." Estate planning, asset protection planning, income tax resolution services, sales and use tax services and property tax reduction services are also available. "Attorneys are on staff to assist clients with criminal and family legal matters," Kevin stated.

The accounting and legal office that started with one employee has experienced solid growth, and their business philosophy is simple — it's centered on service. "I serve people, because that's how God made me," Kevin shared. And he doesn't consider himself as being self-employed. "I have hundreds of employers — because every customer is an employer. And we have a fiduciary responsibility and legal obligation to represent our clients as vigorously as possible. Our goal is to provide service that will exceed 110 percent of their expectations." **NOW**

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Greg Wolfe watches as his son, Major, swings to drive the ball down range at the Old Brickyard Golf Club.



Doctors and staff from HeartPlace gather for a photo at the Red Oak Business and Community Expo.



Young Ferris residents strike a pose during Earth Day festivities at Mutz Park.

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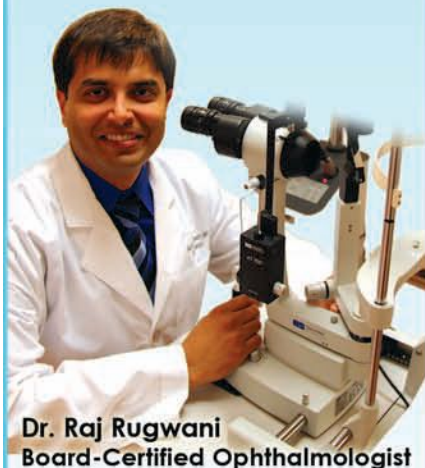
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Painful Crystals

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Your big toe feels as if it is spouting red-hot flames. Red and swollen, it seems to be holding on to the cauldron of fire. You may have gout. A veteran at a VA hospital said this about gout, "I've been shot, beat up, stabbed and thrown out of a helicopter, but none of that compared to the gout."¹ The good news is it's very treatable and even possible to lessen the risk of a recurrence of an outbreak, or at least to minimize the flare-ups.

Gout is the buildup of too much uric acid in the body, which causes it to solidify in joints. Uric acid deposits are crystals in a needle like formation, and they are very painful. Many times the big toe is the initial point of attack of the uric acid, but other joints can be affected, in addition to or even without involvement of the big toe. Feet, heels, ankles, knees, fingers, wrists and elbows are some, not all, of the joints that can be targeted. All of the joints affected are subject to swelling, inflammation and pain.

You can be predisposed to develop gout by some things you do and by who you are. Eating red meat, particularly large quantities of organ meats, such as liver, heart and kidneys, can raise the level of uric acid. Some seafood, such as anchovies, sardines and herring, can also raise the level of uric acid. Another consumption that can predispose one to gout is alcohol. Drinking more than two beers a day can raise your uric acid level. Men are more likely to develop

gout than women. However, after menopause, a woman's risk increases. Obesity poses a greater risk, because a greater amount of uric acid is produced, and people who are very overweight have the added burden of it developing at an earlier age. If you have a family history of gout, the chances are greater for you.

Treating gout is something your physician will discuss with you in order to prepare a plan that addresses your specific needs. Some of the medications used are nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). Some of these, such as Aleve and Advil, may be conveniently purchased over the counter. Stronger ones are available by prescription. Colchicine is sometimes prescribed to help with the pain. Corticosteroids may be prescribed to help with the pain and inflammation.

If you experience any of the symptoms of gout, seek the care of a physician with the first flare-up. Ignoring it can lead to joint damage. There is help out there to lessen the symptoms and the recurrence of this condition. **NOW**

Source:

1. <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/144827.php>

This article is for general information only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult with your physician if you have questions regarding this topic.



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June 1 — 7

10th Annual Paint Historic Waxahachie Plein Aire Paint-Out: For more information, visit www.elliscountyart.net.

June 6

Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-in: 8:00-11:00 a.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport, 131 Airport Dr., Midlothian. Free parking. Public invited. Breakfast tickets: adults and children 8 and older: \$6. Children under 8: \$3. For more information, call (972) 923-0080, or visit www.mid-wayregional.com.

Kid Fish Tournament: 8:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m., Valley Ridge Park Pond, 2850 Park Ridge Dr., Cedar Hill. Kids (ages 4-16) are invited to bring fishing poles, rods and reels, and experience the joy of fishing. Event will include a hot dog luncheon and prize drawings. For more information, visit www.cedarhilltx.com/calendar.

June 6, 7

47th Annual Tour of Homes: 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., "Revisit the Past, Preserve the Future." Tour five beautiful historic homes and the Ellis County Courthouse. Tickets are available at the Ellis County Museum and tour homes. On the day of the tour, adult tickets are \$20; children

tickets (ages 5-12) \$7. All proceeds from the Gingerbread Trail benefit the Ellis County Museum. For more information, visit www.gingerbreadtrail.net.

June 7

Down & Dirty Obstacle Race: 6:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m., Cedar Hill State Park, 1570 FM 1382, Cedar Hill. Test your athletic skill and endurance over two courses and more than 20 obstacles. Event will also feature a rockin' expo and a kid's race for ages 4-13. Registration for the Dallas race is open online and will close June 4 at 6 p.m. For more information, visit www.downanddirtyobstacle.com/event-cities/dallas.

June 18

The World's Largest Swimming Lesson: 10:00 a.m. Crawford Park Pool, 401 Straus Rd., Cedar Hill. Be part of the Guinness World Record for the largest swimming lesson. Every participant receives a free lesson and certificate. (972) 291-5230.

June 20

City of Oak Leaf Self-Defense Classes: 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. 301 Locust Dr., Oak Leaf. Instruction provided by members of Texas Civil Defense. For more information,

call (972) 617-2660 or send an email to rquintana@oakleaftexas.org.

June 20th Arts & Music Festival:

5:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m., Valley Ridge Park, 2850 Park Ridge Dr., Cedar Hill. Free family event featuring The Dazz Band, Memphis Soul, One Voice Community Outreach Choir and Rattle Tree Marimba. The Master of Ceremonies will be Big Al Mack of 106.1 KISS FM. For more information, visit www.cedarhillpard.wix.com/juneteenth.

June 23

Dallas Area Agency on Aging Benefits Counseling: 9:00 a.m.-noon, the Senior Life Center, 240 Veterans Memorial Pkwy., Lancaster. Counselors can help with questions on Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security benefits. For more information, call (214) 871-5065.

June 27

9th Annual Red Oak White & Blue Festival: 5:00 p.m., the Oaks Fellowship Church, 777 S. Interstate 35, E. Service Rd. Enjoy an evening of food, fun and fireworks!

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to dianne.reaux@nowmagazines.com.



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In the Kitchen With Peggy Zepeda

— By Dianne Reaux

Peggy Zepeda has always enjoyed cooking. “I started cooking when I was 12,” she shared. “I’ve never had any formal cooking lessons. My mom taught me to cook, and then I learned a lot of good recipes along the way from family and friends.” Peggy enjoys trying new recipes, and the Internet is one of her favorite resources. “When I find a recipe I like, I usually follow the recipe, and I don’t make very many changes.” But Peggy admits that there has been at least one exception to that rule.

“A couple of years ago, I was baking pumpkin pies, and I used the mix where you have to actually add all the spices,” she shared. “I accidentally left out one of the ingredients and tried to improvise. That particular recipe didn’t work out too well!” That’s one reason why sticking to the original recipe usually works best for Mrs. Zepeda! **NOW**

Tortilla Soup

- 2 qts. water**
- 4-5 large uncooked chicken breasts**
- 1 large onion, chopped**
- 1 stick margarine**
- 1 Tbsp. cumin**
- 1 10-oz. can enchilada sauce**
- 1 10-oz. can Ro-Tel tomatoes**
- 2 15-oz. cans Ranch Style chili beans**
- 2 15.5-oz. cans whole kernel corn, drained**
- 1 18-oz. bag Tostitos Original Restaurant Style Tortilla Chips**
- 2 7-oz. bags shredded cheddar cheese**

- 1.** In a 6-quart stockpot, add 2 quarts of water, chicken breasts, onion, margarine and cumin.
- 2.** Bring to a boil; reduce heat to

medium-high and cook for 35-40 minutes.

- 3.** Remove chicken and cut into small pieces. (Reserve broth to use as chicken stock.)
- 4.** Add chicken, enchilada sauce, Ro-Tel, chili beans and drained corn to reserved chicken stock and stir.
- 5.** Bring mixture to a medium boil and cook thoroughly for approximately 10 minutes, mixing occasionally.
- 6.** Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes.
- 7.** Serve over tortilla chips and top with shredded cheese.

Easy Beef Veggie Soup

- 1 lb. ground beef**
- 1/4 tsp. salt**

- 1/4 tsp. pepper**
- 1/4 tsp. garlic**
- 1 10-oz. can Ro-Tel tomatoes**
- 2 12-oz. bags frozen mixed vegetables**
- 1 15-oz. can Ranch Style Beans**
- 4 qts. water**
- 1 8-oz. bag small shell macaroni**

- 1.** Brown ground beef and season with salt, pepper and garlic.
- 2.** Put cooked meat in a 6-quart stockpot and add Ro-Tel tomatoes, mixed vegetables, beans and water. Bring mixture to a boil.
- 3.** Once the mixture is boiling, add the macaroni and cook for approximately 15-20 minutes, or until macaroni is cooked.
- 4.** Turn stove off and let soup sit for about 15 minutes before serving.

Spanish Rice

- 3 Tbsp. vegetable oil**
- 2 cups long-grain rice (uncooked)**
- 4 cups warm water**
- 2-3 Tbsp. Knorr Caldo de Tomate tomato bouillon w/chicken flavor**

- 1.** Put vegetable oil in a skillet and heat for approximately 1 minute on medium heat.
- 2.** When oil is hot, pour the rice into the pan; stir frequently until it turns medium to dark brown in color. (Be careful not to burn the rice! It will start to cook quickly once the stove heats up.)
- 3.** Once the rice is brown, slowly add water.
- 4.** Add Knorr seasoning to the rice and mix thoroughly.
- 5.** Bring to a boil. When water level has evaporated evenly with the level of the rice, cover with a lid for 2 minutes; turn the heat off and leave on the burner.
- 6.** After about 20 minutes, the rice will soak up the rest of the water and will be ready to serve.

To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit www.nowmagazines.com.

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