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ON THE COVER



Gus Chavarria has taught catechism classes at St. Jude Catholic Church for 26 years.

Photo by Vanessa Polozola.

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Editor's Note

Happy Halfway, Friends!

Here's hoping I'm halfway through this life. Many moons ago, while a student at Rice University, I learned my takeaways depended upon what I put into my classes. Yes, they were hard. But the more effort I put into academics and extracurricular activities, the more stimulation I received and pleasure I felt. Life is not easy, but it sure can be fun.

All around Mansfield, I meet people proactively engaging their family and friends in enriching their world. Meanwhile, they're enjoying their community intensely! What a great city!

We're halfway through 2016. Can we look at this year and see how many more opportunities it holds? Or, can we look back and see how beneficial we've been to all those we've come into contact with? Can we think of ways this year could be a more satisfying experience? What are you and your friends doing to enhance 2016?

Have a great month!

Melissa

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— By Virginia Riddle



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Amazing is one word used often to describe Gus Chavarria, although in person, he is very humble about his many accomplishments and the numerous activities he loves today after a lifetime of work. "I tell the kids I teach today, 'Sink into whatever you choose to do and speak out. This country is great,'" Gus said.

Gus has lived a life that reflects that advice. When he was 14 years old, his family immigrated from Monterrey, Mexico, where his father had been a successful businessman, to San Antonio, Texas. "My dad sold everything and moved to give us a better future, but it was really hard at first. I spoke no English, so I was placed in the sixth grade," Gus remembered. A classmate translated for him until Gus became proficient in English. Gus became a naturalized citizen while in high school, from which he graduated in 1961.



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His parents had opened a small gas station/convenience store in San Antonio, but he went another direction and enlisted in the U.S. Navy. "A friend of mine had an older brother in the Navy, and the Navy promised to keep my friend and me together," Gus explained. "However, my friend was sent to the Pacific, and I was sent to the Atlantic. But this is my country, so I wanted to serve." He was assigned to the *USS Randolph*, which was a Navy flagship carrier with an admiral on board. "I had no experience with bodies of water, except for the San Antonio River before I boarded a ship in Norfolk, Virginia," Gus laughed. "Regardless, I was then a seaman. The ship was all lit up and enormous, and I had to climb a rope ladder to board."

During his two years on the *Randolph*, Gus took part in several historic events. He witnessed Astronaut John Glenn board his carrier just after his capsule was retrieved from the sea. Glenn had just flown around the Earth three times. "I climbed the mast and took pictures of Glenn. It was thrilling to be so close to the space race!" Gus enthused. The *Randolph* and its crew were often visited by celebrities and country leaders, but the most fun was when the ship was chosen to appear in the movie *Follow the Boys*. "We didn't know what was going on when we were ordered to appear on top deck in dress whites, but this was the scene that appeared at the beginning of the movie," Gus remembered. "We knew nothing about the movie until one day, while on a weekend R&R, I decided to go



to the movies. My fellow shipmates and I had a great laugh when the movie started and, suddenly, there we were on the big screen!" he laughed.

Gus recalled another event that his carrier was involved in — the Cuban Missile Crisis. "For a month, we were at our stations and on high alert, as we blocked the Russian ships from Cuba. This was the closest the U.S. came to being involved in a full-scale nuclear war. We could see the Russian ships. We didn't know what was going to happen, and we realized everything could go wrong very quickly," Gus said. "We went through a wide range of emotions, from fear of impending battle to elation when it was all over. It was an honor to serve in our military, and I'm proud of our country," Gus said.



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While home, Gus married his high school sweetheart, Delfina, with whom he has shared 52 years of marriage. "She's a wonderful lady. We make a great team. Delfina makes my day and my life a joy," he said. The couple has three sons. They are graduates of Mansfield High School. Two have civil engineering degrees from The University of Texas at Arlington. One son is a pharmacist and a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin. "We have four granddaughters who are beautiful and smart!" Gus said proudly. "They live nearby, and we spend a great deal of time with them. They call me Poppy."

Gus had an interest in the environment, which led him to attend The University of Texas at Arlington, where he received a civil engineering degree. After graduation, he began a 33-year career as a supervisor with the Environmental Protection Agency in its Superfund Division, the Water Division and the Enforcement Division, while cleaning up contaminated sites. He was also named the EPA representative with Pemex in Mexico and to Ecuador and Chile. He also worked directly with the chief of the Osage Indians in Oklahoma.

Staying busy and being of service is central to Gus' being. "I'm a hyperactive kind of guy, I guess," he said. For the past 26 years, he has taught sixth- and seventh-graders in catechism classes at St. Jude Catholic Church. Currently working with the older grade students, Gus said, "It's fun to work with kids. They're great, and I love them. They call me Mr. C. I try to tie the church curriculum to their life today. The kids feel comfortable and talk with me, and we have tackled a broad range of important topics, from self-worth to bullying." Two of Gus' three boys graduated from his catechism classes. He has also had two of his grandchildren in his classes.



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Gus continues to love issues involving the environment. He is a member of the Sierra Club and the Environmental Defense Fund. He has even written science fiction novels based on the environment. For the last seven years, Gus has written a series of young adult level novels featuring a superhero that cleans up Earth's environment after having been kidnapped by aliens who are from a totally environmentally friendly galaxy. "I use a lot of physics in each book to make it more real and thought-provoking," Gus explained. He has five completed books and is working on the sixth. His goal is to have them published. "Besides sharing what I love, I want to pass these books down to my grandchildren," Gus said happily.

Proud son, United States citizen, military veteran, husband, father, college graduate, career professional, teacher, volunteer, grandfather and writer — all are words describing Gus. He has immersed himself into these roles, spoken out and made the world a better place in which all of us can live. **NOW**

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A full-page photograph of a female police officer, Officer Sonia Brannen, standing next to a dark blue patrol car. She is wearing a dark blue uniform with a 'MANSFIELD' patch on the sleeve and a duty belt. She has blonde hair tied back and is smiling at the camera. The background shows a parking lot with other vehicles and a clear sky.

PATROLLING WITH HEART

— By Debbie Durling

She is a beautiful, petite lady who stands only 5 feet tall. Her smile envelopes her tan complexion and brightens the world around. Yet each morning, she gets up, pulls back her lovely golden hair into a bun and becomes a figure of authority, one of Mansfield's finest.

Officer Sonia Brannen wanted to be in law enforcement as long as she could remember. "In my teen years, I personally witnessed police officers giving counsel to victims, putting them at ease in their time of crisis," she said. "I wanted to do that, to



Officer Sonia Brannen teams up with Patrol Captain Jason Turpinat and Officer Brandon Blansit.

be there and help people when they were in difficult situations.”

She hired in at the Mansfield Police Department in 1999. Never for a moment did it dawn on her that her size might not fit the career. Before long, Officer Brannen faced her first physical conquest. The suspect was larger than her and high on drugs. She took down the suspect, administered the handcuffs and secured her in the car. One of her fellow officers at the scene looked at some of the others and said, “I don’t think we have to worry about her.”

“It is rewarding that I have a part in making a difference in the lives of others.”

One night several years ago when she was on the midnight shift, Officer Brannen began patrolling a public area and noticed a door slightly open on one of the buildings. Three males took off running into the woods at midnight. She jumped out of her squad car and took

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off behind them. Her only thought was doing her job. Somehow, in the pitch dark of the woods, she apprehended all three, and they were taken into custody.

After nearly two decades on the force, she has more than proven she is capable of carrying out the physical demands of her career. But there is more. Officer Brannen stands out as a policewoman, not just because of her size, but also because of her empathy and care of those in her charge. As a police officer, she handles calls of domestic disturbances, traffic violations and traffic accidents and files offense reports. She takes great care in approaching people with respect and kindness, even when they are on the wrong side of the law. Many times after writing a traffic fine, people have thanked her for the way she treated them, for being nice. One of the businesses on her beat is the Eterna Health Food Store. The owners are very fond and appreciative of Officer Brannen. "She serves the community and looks out for the citizens, treating them with respect, no matter what," said co-owner, Kay Ray.

Officer Brannen stops by businesses often, and in her caring manner, makes sure everyone knows the police department is helping keep the community secure. Kay remembers a time she was going through a very difficult situation, Officer Brannen



often went out of her way to stop in and check on her personally, not just the business. Her listening ear made Kay feel she was important and understood. Sometimes, she stops in to check on people or businesses even when she is off duty. "Recently," Kay said, "there was an armed robbery in a store on the same strip as ours. Officer Brannen checked on us and helped us formulate a plan in case something like that happened to our store."

Many times people expect to see a male officer, but Officer Brannen feels that, at times, being a female officer can de-escalate certain situations in the community. A female just changes the dynamic somewhat. She always tries to connect with the person she has the opportunity to help and make that person see past her uniform. She feels it is important that they see her as a person, too. "Sometimes I walk away thinking, *why did I share so much of myself and experiences with that person?*"



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Officer Brannen takes care of local businesses and their owners, including, Susanne Englebert and Kay Ray.

Officer Brannen admitted. Some people she helps may be having a traumatic experience. Others may just need to talk. "It is rewarding that I have a part in making a difference in the lives of others," she said warmly.

She is also the PIO (Public Information Officer). When something is happening and the press arrives, she is one of the officers who is called upon to speak to them. She remembers a recent incident in which the suspect had barricaded himself in a building in Mansfield. She was one of the officers on the perimeter. She was in total tactical mode. Her hair was a mess, no makeup and she was carrying a rifle. In a moment, she had to transition from tactical officer and stand in front of a TV camera to address the public, answering questions from the press. She said she got numerous emails and texts from her friends saying, "Nice hair, LOL." "The real challenge," she added, "was to remain calm and focus my mind on what needed to be said to everybody watching on TV, after being in the tactical mindset."

Serving as a Defensive Tactics Instructor is, at times, part of her duties. A male officer said he attended a self-defense course with Officer Brannen. He was amazed as he watched her take down her 6-foot-tall partner.

Her husband is also in law enforcement, as a sergeant with the



Officer Brannen enjoys a safe Mansfield with her children, 11-year-olds, Lily and Ty, and 23-year-old Jake (not pictured).

Grand Prairie Police Department. When they worked different shifts, they would sometimes meet at a convenience store during their shift change. One night she saw something that just didn't look right. While waiting for her husband, she checked the situation out and found a suspect with an arsenal in the vehicle waiting for someone to come out of another building. Her painstaking servitude saved someone from being shot and possibly killed that night.

Officer Brannen has a tremendous heart for the elderly. Because she is very conscientious about the people and the area she works, she has stopped to help when an aged person was in distress from an accident, or trying to drive when they shouldn't. In some cases, she has given a ride to a doctor's appointment. When an elderly person was being scammed, Officer Brannen took time to help the lady get out of the situation that was robbing her.

The people she serves are a blessing to her, too. One blistery cold day when she was directing traffic, a lady and her son brought hot chocolate to the intersection. It made her day. Despite her small stature, Officer Brannen has a huge heart and incredible dedication to the people she serves. A wife, mother of three and woman of faith, she gives her all to make other lives better. Mansfield is blessed to have her as one of its "finest," and she more than fits the bill. **NOW**

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— By Melissa Rawlins

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Just this side of the stairwell, sweeping past a rounded wall, Adam operates from his ground-floor office. During regular business hours, he works for CGI, the world's fifth-largest technology company, doing consulting and sales. Dark wood shelves flanking his desk are filled with colorful mementoes of a life filled





with wonder. From crocodile heads to armadillos, every item represents the sentimental side of this fun-loving, dedicated husband, father and grandpa.

Believing a loving family is a basic necessity for children everywhere, Adam volunteers for the Texas chapter of a nonprofit called The Gift of Adoption. "Funds raised in Texas go directly to Texas families who need financial help to adopt a child," said Adam, who organizes fundraising from his home office. "We have zero dollars overhead. After paying expenses for an event, the rest goes to a financially needy adopting family in Texas."

He and Tammy did not have to adopt to create a loving family for a child. They got a grandchild when neither they nor their daughter, Kami, were expecting it. Fortunately, they had already invested in their five-bedroom



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house, containing more than enough space for Kami and Riley, who is now a rambunctious 4-year-old. The two share the Jack-and-Jill suite upstairs, just across the way from Adam's man cave outfitted with brown leather movie seats, surround-sound and a large flat-screen television. To honor the Dallas Cowboys, Adam made sure each blade of the overhead fan is either blue or silver. The walls are lined with shelves containing signed softballs and trophies representing the three Pfeils' softball-playing days in England.

Texas born and bred, Tammy is from Fort Worth and Adam from El Campo,

southwest of Houston. They were college sweethearts while attending DeVry University in Irving, and after having Kami, they lived in apartments until getting their first house in South Arlington. Following Kami's kindergarten year in Mansfield ISD, Adam's jobs moved them to Memphis for two years and then England for three. While there, the entire family indulged in their favorite pastime, while teaching the Brits how to play a good game of softball.

Kami wanted to be in the United States for high school. "We decided to come back to Mansfield, primarily for the

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school system and the great community, including our family,” Adam said. In 2007, they returned to where they were comfortable. Kami graduated in 2011 from Timberview High School and now works on the clinical staff at a local doctor’s office. Riley is in Walnut Ridge Pre-K and starts kindergarten at Elizabeth Smith Elementary in August.

This beloved boy plays coach pitch baseball and practices at the MYBA fields, as well as at home — either in the backyard or in the center of the living room. “Here’s the pitch: Smack! Smash. Hit it up to the second floor, and that’s a homer,” Riley exclaimed, while running around the brown leather sectional. “The couch is my diamonds!” Riley decorated the far end of the formerly formal family room with his toys. The framed family pictures that Tammy and Adam had placed artfully against the wrought-iron banisters all the way up the stairwell have, well, no more glass in them.

“We moved here when Kami was a freshman in high school and decorated without thinking she’d have grandkids for us anytime soon,” Tammy said, looking around at her home’s stripped-down elegance with a laugh. “But what makes this home is that we’re a family who believes in staying together.”

“Riley’s a boy! When I was a child, my brother and I played handball with a piece of paper wrapped in tape. We actually broke things quite often,” Adam reminisced. “Riley’s tactics were passed down inadvertently via the competitive baseball nature we enjoy. We haven’t broken a window yet, but I’m sure the future holds many broken things for us.”

For now, there’s softball every Friday, Saturday and Sunday and, maybe, a few Rangers games in store for the family, too. Riley’s room testifies to the family’s hobby. Near his bed sits the signed ball from Riley’s first baseball game on April 29,



2012, when the Rangers played the Tampa Bay Rays, and Riley's great-grandparents joined him, thanks to Nolan Ryan's help. Hanging above the dresser Adam's dad made for him — revived by Tammy and Riley from dark brown to Ranger red and blue — is a Christmas present Adam got Riley when he was 1 year old: a baby football scholarship to The University of Texas, plus a scholarship letter of interest from the UT basketball coach.

Through the adjoining bathroom, Kami enjoys her haven, while learning money management from Adam and preparing herself to step out on her own. Kami's room is filled with comfortable pillows, so when Riley comes in they can cuddle while he plays Spongebob and golf video games. The green and brown "K" wreath on her door was made by Tammy's mom, Linda, who taught Tammy to be crafty.

Tammy has filled a guest room with stainless steel shelving, a wreath, fabrics and ribbons, a table and a sewing machine. "I'm in the craft room a lot, making baby items for friends and family, scrubs for Kami, blankets for Riley and wreaths for the charity," Tammy said. Most of her finished wreaths are Christmassy, but her Texas Rangers wreath won't come off the front door until baseball season is over.

By that time, the family will be busy in their dark-paneled kitchen. Spread out on the chocolate-colored granite island and counters, they engage in a family ritual of baking Adam's family recipe for six dozen ham and cheese kolaches, or his famous Mom's Texas Trash. Kami likes making Peanut Butter Clusters, another recipe from her grandma. Through all the fun, Tammy keeps the kitchen and pantry well organized.

From the kitchen, Tammy can gaze at a grand total of 13 archways promoting the wide-open feeling she loves. Protected from Riley's trajectory behind home plate, she can see his favorite glass dolphins and the Hungarian crystal Adam brought home from a business trip to Budapest.

A hexagonal tray indentation capping the 25-foot ceiling mimics that in the dining room, where Tammy keeps the brandy snifter and wine glasses that were gifts for her wedding. Here they entertain those they trust, who rejoice to observe the foundations of the Pfeils' home: basic necessities like quality, longevity and family. **NOW**

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Oftentimes, intelligence is associated with simply the accumulation of knowledge. However, Donyea Grayson has shown that true intelligence is accompanied by grace and humility. At 15, this high school graduate has accomplished impressive feats, which fall second to her genuine kindness and compassion. “I knew something was special about her when she was 2 years old,” her mom recounted. “I explained Daylight Saving Time one night in the car, since it was dark when I got her from day care. A year later, after never having discussed Daylight Saving Time again, Donyea explained the process with accuracy and understanding.”

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— By Mira Rollins



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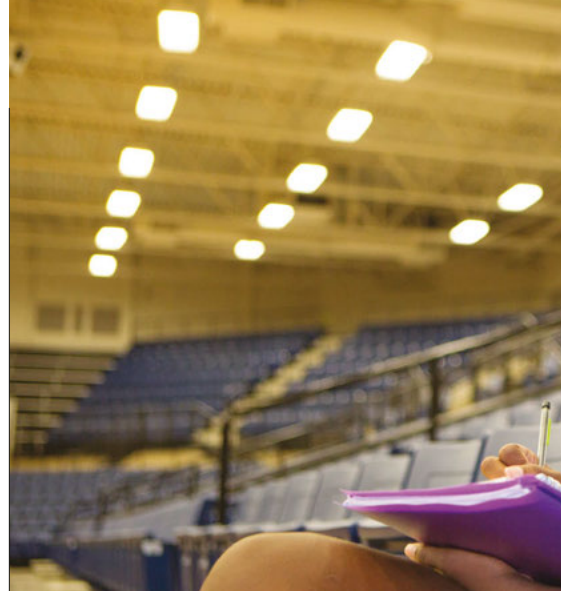


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Beginning in pre-kindergarten, others began to take notice of her exceptional ability to retain and process information. In pre-K and then again in fourth grade, Doneya's teachers encouraged her parents to move her up a grade level in order to appropriately challenge her. These two advances would ultimately place Doneya in high school as a 12-year-old with high school freshmen.

Doneya continued to excel in all of her classes, finishing high school in the top of her class. Although she has a remarkable memory, making good grades does not come automatically or effortlessly. She has made a habit of intense dedication and study. "Studying is not one of my favorite things to do, but I understand that it is a necessity," she stated. Over the years, she has tailored her study habits to fit the specific subject and its level of difficulty. She has been intentional and creative about her various study methods. As a senior, she created a mobile study group between her and various members of a challenging AP calculus class.

Academics is not the only area where Doneya strives to maintain excellence. "I have been a cheerleader since I was 5 years old. I really love cheering because it allows me to motivate others to do their best," she fondly expressed. "I'm also a flyer, the one the other cheerleaders lift and toss high in the air." Through cheering, she has learned the value of practice, teamwork and trust of others.

Her academic and athletic course has directly merged with her older brother's. The two years that separates them became nothing but a number when Doneya and Donovan began taking classes together in fourth grade.



Doneya finds a lot of support in her brother, Donovan.

"My brother has never had an issue with me being in his class. Many times, he would be my only friend until I could meet other people," Doneya explained with sentimental gratitude. It's clear by the time they spend together, encouraging conversations and bonding through laughter that they are more than siblings — they're friends. "The highlight of my senior year was cheering for our football team at the state championship game in Houston, as well as for the basketball team when my brother broke the school record by shooting eight three-point shots," she shared.

The bond between her and her brother is a reflection of the close-knit environment her parents have created. "God knew the family I needed. We all fit together perfectly," Doneya expressed. Her parents, Donald and Tonya, support both of their children and have encouraged them to pursue their talents and dreams. Neither parent wavered on their commitment to allow Doneya to choose her own life path.

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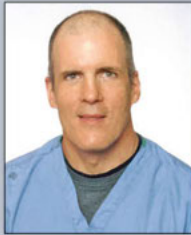


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"I know her," Tonya confidently stated. "Donyea is mature, very structured and not easily influenced. So I am not worried about her going off to college even though she will only be 15." Though her mother was comfortable with Donyea choosing any college or university, her father quietly hoped his little girl would attend college close to home. But he has never discouraged her from considering all her options.

Although Donyea was accepted to many top-25 colleges and universities, she chose to attend University of California, Los Angeles, starting in the summer semester at the age of 15. "I was looking for a school with history, that made me feel comfortable and that allows me to be active while getting a good education," she explained. In mid-May, she learned she was one of only 10 who made the prestigious UCLA Cheer Squad.

The encouragement and direction given her by her parents has been complemented by many caring and invested teachers. "Over the years, I have had teachers challenge, push and support me. They tell me they believe in me," she stated thankfully. While attending Lake Ridge High School, four specific teachers played an extra instrumental role. "Mr. Brandon Austin is so fun and makes me want to learn. Ms. Melanie Beckett is super supportive and pushes me to strive even higher. Mr. Karl Kindt challenges me by competing with me to solve problems. And Coach Marissa Bonner is an amazing person and friend."

The combination of natural ability, intentional study, supportive family and caring teachers has propelled Donyea to rare academic heights. In addition to being in the top of her high school class, being on the Academic Decathlon Team and being part of the National Honor Society, she also scored within the top 9 percent of all SAT takers.

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Doneya Grayson shares her successes with her mother, Tonya Sadler Grayson.

Doneya further attributes her success in life to her faith. Her belief in God inspires her to use her God-given talents to the fullest capacity. Showing consistent maturity and initiative, she and Donovan joined a church they felt best fostered their spiritual growth. Soon after joining Crossroads Christian Church, she chose to be baptized. "I also asked my parents for a sexual purity ring," Doneya shared. "Some kids thought I was weird for wanting to do this, but it was very important to me."

"People always expected her to be the whiz kid, when she just wanted to be treated like any other kid," her mother added.

Despite these challenges, Doneya never shied away from taking them head on. At age 13, she made the varsity cheer squad and was tutoring her much older classmates in all subjects. Her goal was never to prove who she was, but just be who she was by continuing to move in her giftedness.

Despite a busy schedule with school, tutoring and cheering, she makes community service a priority. For the past few years, she has faithfully served at Mission Arlington and volunteered her time at other shelters, schools and in the community. "I have done things from organizing food and supplies for the homeless to entertaining residents at nursing homes. It's a lot of physical work, but it keeps me humble," she said, "and helps me keep my life in perspective."

Though influenced by several different people and forces, one driving component remains constant — her personal desire for excellence. Since pre-kindergarten, Doneya has made bold moves and taken huge leaps. Her internal drive has taken her far. Her courage to continue jumping will take her to unimaginable professional and personal heights. As it stands, Doneya plans to be a lawyer, then a judge and eventually a politician. At 15, the sky is the limit. **NOW**

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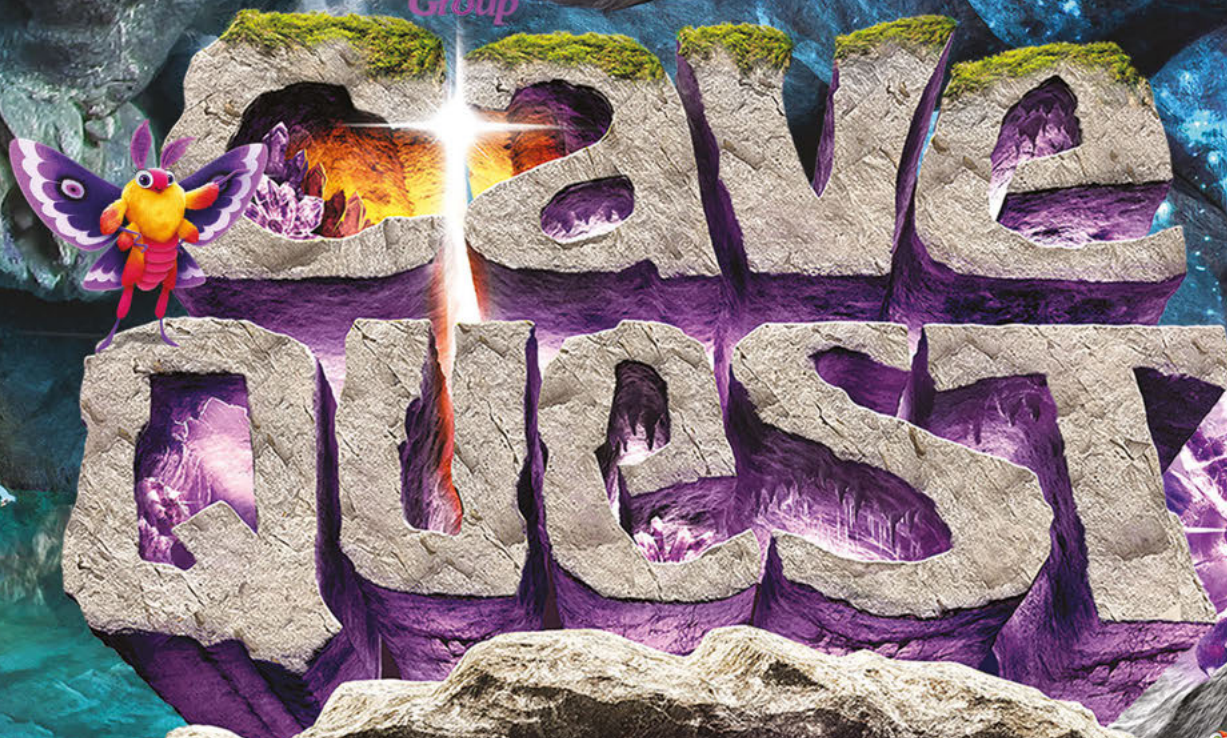


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Bountiful Harvest

— By Melissa Swedoski

The bounty of fresh fruits and vegetables during the summer is one of the great delights of the season. With a little effort and planning, you can enjoy flavorful fare at meals all year long with canning, which is fun and economical, but there are a few things to know to prepare for the process.

Acidity Levels and Canning

Knowing the difference between high- and low-acid foods determines the canning process used. Low-acid foods include meats and vegetables, with the exception of acidified tomatoes and pickled products. High-acid foods include fruits, pickled vegetables, relishes, salsa, pickles and sauerkraut.

Canning requires extreme heat to kill mold, yeast, bacteria or other organisms that cause spoilage. Low-acid foods require pressure canning to destroy the bacteria in temperatures that reach 240 F or higher. High-acid foods can be safely processed by boiling water canning. In general, boiling water canners take less time than pressure canners.



Choosing Produce

Fresh produce is best from a backyard garden, but scouring the local farmers market can yield real gems. Overripe fruit isn't recommended, but if the fruit is fresh, small bruises can be removed and discarded.

- **Fruit** – It is generally better to hot-pack fruit, including apples, pears, apricots, nectarines and peaches. Unless you are making a jam or jelly, berries should be frozen. Tomatoes are a popular item to can and should be cooked before canning.
- **Vegetables** – Asparagus, beets, carrots, green beans, okra, peas, peppers and potatoes are eligible for canning, along with cucumbers, beets, beans, turnips or bell peppers. Tender lettuces, however, can't stand up to preservation techniques.



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Jars and Lids

Mason jars are the best choice for home canning, since they come in pint and quart sizes and, if used properly, can be reused in future seasons. To pack whole fruit and vegetables, use a wide-mouth jar, which makes the process easier.



Two-part lids are necessary, as the screw band will secure the canning lid to the jar during processing. Screw bands can be reused as long as they aren't bent or rusty, but lids are designed for a one-time use since the sealing compound can lose effectiveness over time.

Jar lifters are good for moving hot jars, while jar funnels will help reduce spills during filling. A magnetic lid wand allows you to drop lids and bands into the hot water of the canner to sterilize them and soften the sealing compound, combining two steps in one.

General Guidelines

Make sure the food is thoroughly washed and trimmed and practice arranging produce in a jar. Once you've cleaned all the tools and sliced and diced the produce, use a large spoon or ladle to put the produce loosely into jars. Fill the jars with boiling water, pickling solution or sweet syrup. Use white grape juice for fruit.



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Use proper headspace to ensure that all the contents reach the appropriate temperature for safety and sealing. Juices, jams, jellies and relishes need 1/4 inch. Fruits, tomatoes and pickles need 1/2 inch. Meats and vegetables need 1 to 1 1/2 inches.

Remove air bubbles with a nonmetal utensil, frequently found in a canning kit, by working down the jar sides. If the headspace changes as bubbles release, add more hot food or liquid to maintain the balance. Clean the jar's rim, put the lid on, screw the band on and tighten. Place the jars into the canner and position so they are not touching.

A boiling water canner resembles a big pot with a lid and a rack in the bottom. Fill the pot halfway with water and preheat to 140 F, for raw-packed foods, or 180 F, for hot-packed foods. Insert the canning rack and jars, cover and bring water to a slow, steady boil. Allow to process for the designated time.

Pressure canners use a heavy pot with a rack, tight-fitting lid with a vent, dial or weighted pressure gauge and a safety fuse. Heat foods to 240-250 F and hold that temperature for as long as necessary. Put 2 to 3 inches of water in the bottom, insert the jars, put the lid on and increase the pressure. When processing is finished, let the pressure drop before opening the canner.

Canning Shelf Life

Some foods don't require canning, including carrots, turnips and rutabagas, while green or lima beans, peas, okra,



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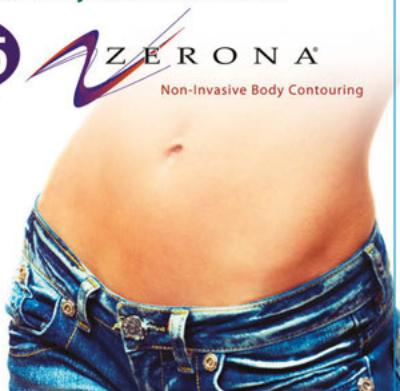
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cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, summer squash, green tomatoes and most fruit will remain good for about a month in dark storage. Other crops, such as kale, collards, parsnips, leeks and Brussels sprouts are hardy enough to survive cold weather and can be left in a garden into the winter. Kale, chard and spinach can be frozen, as can summer squash, but only after it's been baked.

Generally, canned items are good for a year and are best stored in a cool, dry place, ideally at 50-70 F. Items should also



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be stored in the dark, so if closed cabinets aren't available, jars can be stored in boxes. Always double check for any signs of spoilage before eating your canned items. Things to check for include:

- Popped lid, where the can lid is bulging, or obvious bubbles in the liquid
- Mold or a strange odor
- Broken seal, rusted lid or leaking fluid
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Powering Forward

Performance Heat and Air has solutions for all your air conditioning issues.

— By Melissa Rawlins

After many years performing HVAC design, installation and service for prominent air conditioning companies in the Metroplex, Richie Blackman and Dwayne Sieben decided to open their own company. Since both owners have an ear for high-performance engines and are interested in classic/sport cars, they decided to name their company Performance Heat and Air Inc. Once they decided on the name, incorporating the checkered flag into their logo just seemed natural.

Performance Heat and Air took an opportunity in its first year to serve a homebuilder. "This customer built 10 houses their first year. This is their sixth year in business, and they're striving to do

500 houses," said Dwayne, who is looking forward to working with them on all their ventures.

"The homes we have designed have very few problems because of the design of the system," Richie stated. "If the design is done right, it should be quiet and comfortable in the home."

With 30 years' experience, Richie and Dwayne are successfully into their sixth year in business. Performance Heat and Air Inc., is speeding its way down the track to becoming one of Mansfield's leading air conditioning companies. In their first year, Richie and Dwayne performed HVAC design, installation and service in homes and businesses with one truck. Now, they own nine trucks, employ

Business **NOW**

17 men and women and are looking to hire more technicians and installers. The company is also preparing to build a 10,000-square-foot office warehouse off FM 1187 in Mansfield. "Our goal," Richie said, "is to provide a working showroom for clients to come see and hear the differences in units that are running."

One look at the customer reviews on the company's website reveals how effectively Performance Heat and Air services systems throughout Mansfield and the Metroplex. Integrity is top of mind for every employee, so customers can trust diagnoses offered by technicians. "We make sure honest service and a warranty accompany every product we install," Dwayne said.

In 2015, Performance Heat and Air was one of the top 10 Trane dealers in North Texas. Proud to be a Trane Comfort Specialist, Dwayne enjoys helping people improve their quality of life. "My way of doing that," he stated, "is by making them comfortable when they get home."

Education is a large part of Dwayne and Richie's job. Rather than hard selling, they bring their experience of helping others to the table. "We will come and look at what you currently have, and then give you options," Richie said. "We love to install new systems for customers because new equipment has a lot of advantages. When it comes down to it, we feel strongly that we only repair or install what our customers ask for."

Many want to know about options for cutting costs and improving comfort in all seasons, and Performance Heat and Air has access to equipment that is extremely efficient. Both owners feel that owning their own company allows them much more control and the ability to concentrate on high integrity, quality and educating their customers on how to choose what's best for their needs and comfort, at the best price.

After 30 years, Richie still feels he's helping people every day. "It's a tough trade. We all work 10- to 12-hour days in the summer. It's going to happen. Customers will have issues," he admitted with a smile, "and Performance Heat and Air will have solutions." **NOW**

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Eden Maley enjoys shopping with her mom, Christie Maley.



Lake Ridge student Daniel Juarez serves Melissa Rawlins a purple chai tea popsicle during his part time job at Helados.



Dr. Sullivan disguises herself as The Tooth Fairy for visits to 18 schools during Dental Health Month.



Dr. Susan Collini gives practical advice about careers in the health field to National Honor Society students from Timberview High School during the Career Path Discovery Forum at Mansfield Chamber of Commerce.



During the Texas Trust Credit Union Financial Reality Fair, Malcom Chakery teaches Phoenix Academy students how to make sound decisions.



Mistie Underhill, co-owner of Creations Baking Company, welcomes her friends Heather Eggleston and Crystal Ramirez to her baked goods paradise.



Carmin MacMillan, executive director of Wesley Mission Center, honors Mary Cox, who has volunteered as a clothes sorter for over 5 years.



Facebook friends Antvanette Taylor, Betty Clowdus, Amanda LaFerney and Deana Griffin unite at the ZigZag grand opening.



Chain saw carver, Jason Emmons, shows off his intricate carving skills at Classic Turf Equipments' Open House.

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Should You Retire in Stages?

For many people, the concept of retirement can be scary, both emotionally and financially. If you, too, feel somewhat anxious about what awaits you, you might feel more comfortable in knowing that, depending on where you work, you might be able to retire in stages.

As its name suggests, retiring in stages typically involves reducing one's work hours from full time to part time, and then, eventually, to complete retirement. If you enjoy the social relationships of work, and you define part of your identity with what you do at your job, this type of gradual transition may be easier for you to accommodate than the abrupt transition from "worker" to "retiree."

As for the financial aspects of such a move, you will want to plan ahead. A "phased-in" retirement can affect your investment and income strategies in several areas, such as these:

- **Social Security.** You can start collecting Social Security as early as age 62, but your monthly payments will only be about 75 percent of what you'd get if you wait until you reach 66 (assuming that 66 is your full retirement age). And the payments get larger from there, until they max out at 70. So, if you had planned to retire at 62 but instead retired in stages, you could possibly afford to delay taking Social Security until your checks were bigger. You could work and receive Social Security, but if your earnings exceed a certain amount, some of your benefits may be withheld, at least until you reach full retirement age — after which you can earn as much as you want with no withholding of benefits. However, your Social Security could still be taxed based on your income.
- **Required minimum distributions.** During your working years, you may well have

contributed to tax-deferred retirement accounts, such as a traditional IRA and a 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored plan. But once you turn 70 1/2, you must start taking withdrawals ("required minimum distributions," or RMDs) from these accounts. You can't delay taking these payments, which are taxable. But if you did retire in stages and continued to work part time, past when you expected to completely retire, you may be able to stick with the required minimum withdrawals at least for a while, rather than taking out larger amounts immediately. In this way, you could potentially keep more of your retirement funds growing in your tax-deferred accounts.

- **Investment mix.** If you planned to retire at a certain date, you might have created a specific mix of investments designed to provide you with sufficient income to last your lifetime. But if you continue to work, you may not have to rely so heavily on your portfolio — that is, your IRA, 401(k) and all investments held outside these retirement accounts — to help you meet your income needs. Consequently, during these extra years of work, you may be able to withdraw less from your portfolio, thus potentially having more assets to provide for your income needs down the road.

As you can see, a phased-in retirement could help provide you with options in making a variety of financial decisions. So, plan carefully before you exit the workforce. A gradual departure may be a good way to say goodbye. **NOW**

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Jeff Trentham is an Edward Jones representative based in Arlington.



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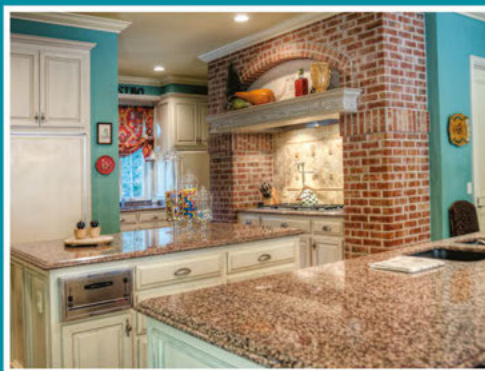
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June 4

Health Festival Methodist: 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Katherine Rose Park. Free, old-fashioned fun for the whole family, including your pets. In addition to puppet shows and face painting, enjoy dance, boot camp fitness and yoga. Call Mansfield Area Chamber of Commerce, (817) 473-0507.

Bingo: 6:00-9:00 p.m., St. Thomas Hall, St. Jude Catholic Church, 500 E. Dallas St. Lots of good food and family fun. Call ahead: (817) 473-6709.

June 7

Plaid for Women: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., The Tuscan, 601 Strada Circle. Inaugural meeting empowering women to support one another.

Lunch provided. Stephanie Gillis, (214) 770-4684, or Kay Ray, (817) 703-8141.

June 9

Business After Hours: 5:30-7:30 p.m., location TBA. Sponsored by Golden Air Conditioning. Free. Call (817) 473-0507.

June 10

Cornhole for Kiwanis Tournament: 4:00-8:00 p.m., Hawaiian Falls, 490 Heritage Pkwy. S. \$100 team entry includes all-day park access, 2 (or more) matches and dinner. Sign up at www.cornhole4community.org, but mail payments to the Kiwanis Club of Mansfield, P.O. Box 25, Mansfield, TX 76063. Email Todd Simmons, tasmaniac54@yahoo.com.

June 11

Household Hazardous Waste Drop-off: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Mansfield Environmental Collection Center, 616 S. Wisteria. Bring your hazardous wastes, electronics and recyclables along with proof of Mansfield residency. Free. Contact David Macias, (817) 276-4239.

June 15

Robin's Wings: 5:00 p.m., The Wesley Mission Center, 777 N. Walnut Creek Dr. (817) 473-6650.

June 16

Rockin' for the Ribbon: 7:00 p.m., Mellow Mushroom, Historic Downtown Mansfield. Get info from Jenny Conrad, info@theultimatehealingkit.org.

June 18

3-on-3 Basketball Tournament: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., The MAC, 106 S. Wisteria. Double-elimination games in men's and co-ed divisions will be officiated. \$75 per team, 4-player maximum. (817) 728-3680.

June 28

Meet n Learn: Noon-1:00 p.m., Mansfield Chamber, 114 N. Main St. Let's talk about money with a panel of experts. Free. RSVP to (817) 473-0507.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to melissa.rawlins@nowmagazines.com.



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In the Kitchen With Kim Mullins

— By *Melissa Rawlins*

Initially a stirrer, chopper and ingredient fetcher for her grandmother, Kim Mullins recalls childhood summers containing lots of time preparing meals for everyone Grandmother Beasley loved. “My granddaddy was self-employed and would come home every day for lunch to a big spread,” Kim said. “I learned so much from her in the kitchen: patience, laughter when things didn’t turn out as she planned and the importance of eating meals together.”

Kim moved to Mansfield for its exemplary school district just before having her son. The city became home. Although her son is away at college, she is surrounded by friends who feel like relatives. They sometimes receive her late-night deliveries of baked goods and other times enjoy her hard-to-beat, down-home cooking. Here are just a few of Kim’s favorite family recipes. **NOW**

Hot Broccoli Dip

Kim’s mother considered this comfort food.

- 4 green onions, finely chopped
- 1 pkg. mushrooms, sliced
- 1/2 cup diced celery
- 3 Tbsp. butter
- 1 tsp. minced garlic
- 8 oz. Velveeta cheese
- 1 10.75-oz. can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 12-oz. pkg. frozen chopped broccoli, cooked and drained
- 1 tsp. Tabasco sauce, or to taste
- 1/8 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 1 bag Fritos corn chips

1. Sauté onions, mushrooms and celery in butter.
2. Add garlic, cheese and mushroom soup, stirring constantly until melted.
3. Add remaining ingredients, except chips, and blend. Serve warm with Fritos.

Bacon Spinach Crustless Quiche

- 6-8 slices bacon
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 6 oz. baby spinach
- 4 large eggs
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- Pinch cayenne pepper
- 1 1/3 cups milk
- 1/2 cup Monterrey Jack cheese
- 1/2 cup feta cheese

1. Cook bacon until crisp. Let cool; crumble.
2. Preheat oven to 400 F. Lightly grease a 10-inch quiche/tart pan or a pie plate.
3. In a medium-size frying pan, cook diced onion with a bit of vegetable oil over medium-high heat until translucent and tender. Add in fresh spinach and cook until it just starts to wilt. Set aside to cool.

4. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together eggs, flour, baking powder and cayenne pepper. Whisk in milk. Stir in spinach-onion mixture, bacon crumbles and Monterrey Jack cheese.
5. Pour quiche base into prepared pan. Top with feta cheese.
6. Bake for 25 minutes, or until center is set and the outside edge is golden brown.

Cream Cheese Tuna Bites

- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 12-oz. can tuna, drained and flaked
- 1 3-oz. can chopped black olives
- 1 loaf white, thin sandwich bread

1. Blend cream cheese, mayonnaise and lemon juice. Fold in tuna and black olives.
2. Cut crust from bread; spread mixture on thinly to make sandwiches. Cut into halves when finished.
3. Store in an airtight container.

Snickerdoodle Blondies

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 1/2 tsp. vanilla
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

Topping:

- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp. cinnamon

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Line a 9x13-inch baking pan with parchment paper, and then lightly grease.
2. Cream together butter and sugars. Mix in eggs and vanilla, followed by dry ingredients. Mix until smooth. Press mixture evenly into the pan.
3. For topping: combine ingredients; sprinkle over blondies. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes.

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

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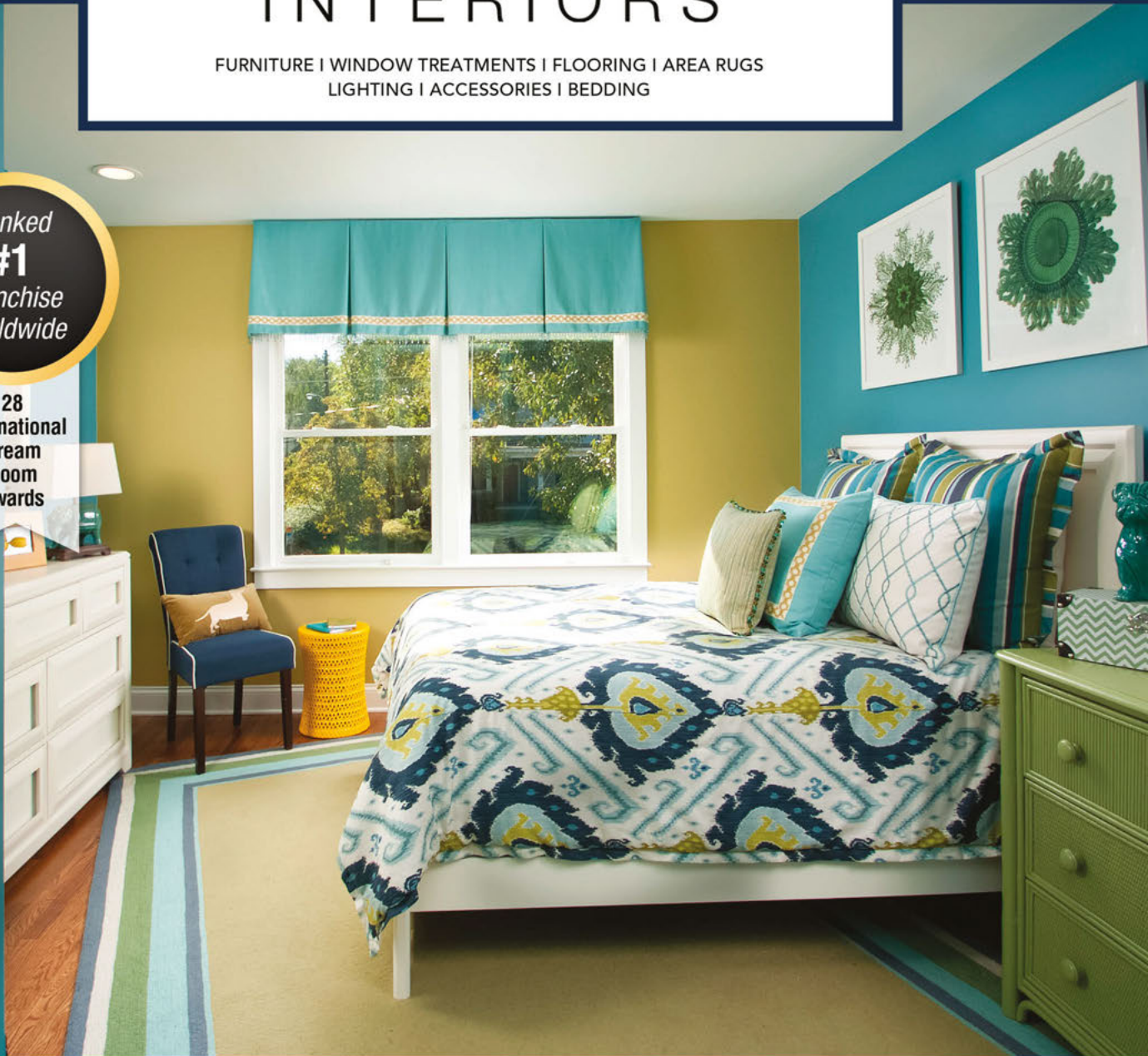
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