



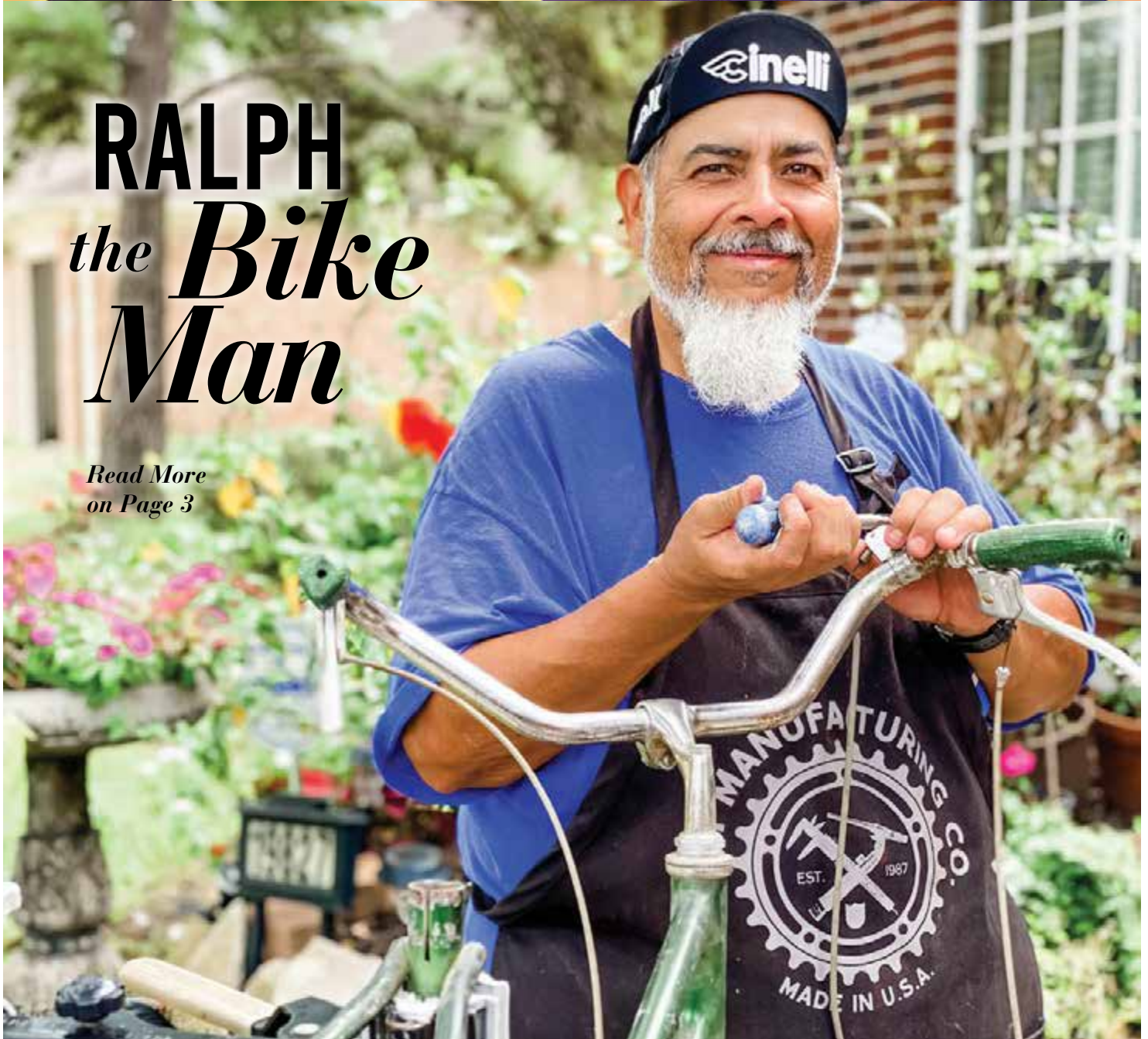
The Beacon

News For The Residents at Lakes of Fairhaven

www.lakesoffairhavenHOA.org

RALPH *the Bike Man*

*Read More
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RALPH THE BIKE MAN

by Jen Ramirez

As Covid-19 took hold of 2020 so did rampant shortages of toilet paper, paper towels and disinfecting wipes in our local area. But another shortage that was felt was the inventory of workout equipment, specifically bicycles.

As afternoons and evenings fill the sidewalks with walkers and joggers, the streets also hear the hum of kids' freedom throughout the neighborhood as they roam by bike. There's also the usual family out for an after dinner ride. And because of the shortage of bikes available, we were lucky to find a 22 year Fairfield resident, Ralph Villalpando.

I came across Ralph on my journey to restore a 1972 Schwinn Breeze. After reaching out to the community, Ralph was the first to respond, and instantly upon meeting, his genu-ine love for the bicycle was more than apparent. "Working on a bicycle is therapy for me; it keeps my hands moving and thinking," he explained as he looked over what would become his newest project.

Ralph's ability to see life in a rusty bicycle that once was, has brought back so many smiles to people with emotional con-nections to those antiquated bikes. From the man who kept the first bike he ever bought with his first paycheck, to the family who watched as Ralph repaired their children's bikes in their driveway, while they packed for a camping trip, he has become a lifesaver for many in the neighborhood.

"I can typically beat the price and turn around time of most bike shops" he said. This allows the smiles to return to chil-dren's faces and places them back on the pavement sooner rather than later. "It gives me satisfaction to finish something," he smiled.

His love for bikes started when he was a young boy in San Antonio. He was joined by his wife, Carol, and she elaborated on his love for treasure hunting bikes in old country barns and local garage sales. Ralph's push for bike riding continues into the many health benefits that naturally derive from riding.

Besides being the "Mr. Bike" of Fairfield, he is also a strong advocate for biker safety. He emphasizes how important the road rights of cyclists are, and he wishes all drivers would con-sider every rider they come across as their own family member and proceed with the same caution. Ralph is truly a treasure and always eager to help his local community because for Ralph, eve-ry bike and part has a story.



CICADA KILLER WASPS



Cicada killer wasps are very large wasps reaching up to 1 ½ inches long and can be somewhat frightening if you see them flying about your lawn. These wasps have a reddish-brown head and thorax, a black and yellow abdomen, and wings with a rusty tinge. Females are capable of stinging, the stinger is a modified egg laying structure, but are rarely aggressive. Males look similar to females and are territorial; they will buzz near you if you enter their territory. Once you leave the male's territory, the wasp will ignore you.

Cicada killers can be considered beneficial insects since they help to control cicada populations. Cicadas, common in Texas trees in the summer, are stung and paralyzed by female cicada killer wasps then carried back to a burrow dug in the ground by the female wasps. The female wasp pulls the cicada into the burrow where it is tucked into a side tunnel and has an egg deposited upon it. When the egg hatches,

the cicada killer larva eats the cicada(s) provided.

Cicada killers usually do not warrant any control methods. If people are uncomfortable with large wasps flying over their lawn or do not like the holes caused by the wasps, then insecticidal dust can be sprinkled around the opening of the burrow. Tamp the dust around the opening with your shoe and as the wasps work on cleaning out the entrance to the burrow, they will pick up the dust on their body and eventually die.

Please note that cicada killer wasps are often mistaken for Asian giant hornets (AGH), also referred to as "murder hornets". AGH have not been found in Texas and have only been located in Washington state within the U.S.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

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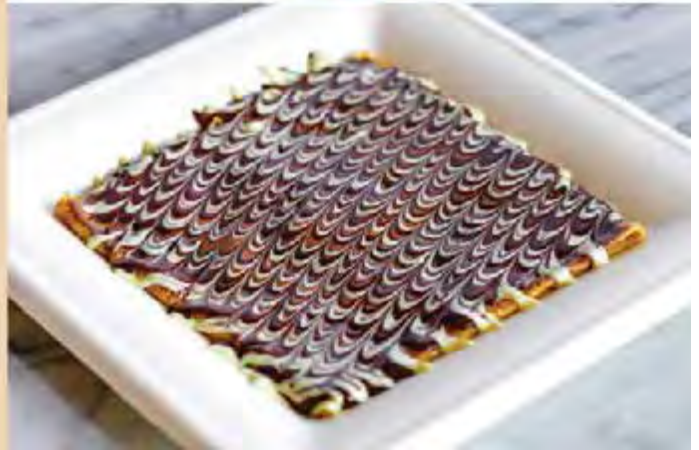
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