

Living It Up in NW Arkansas

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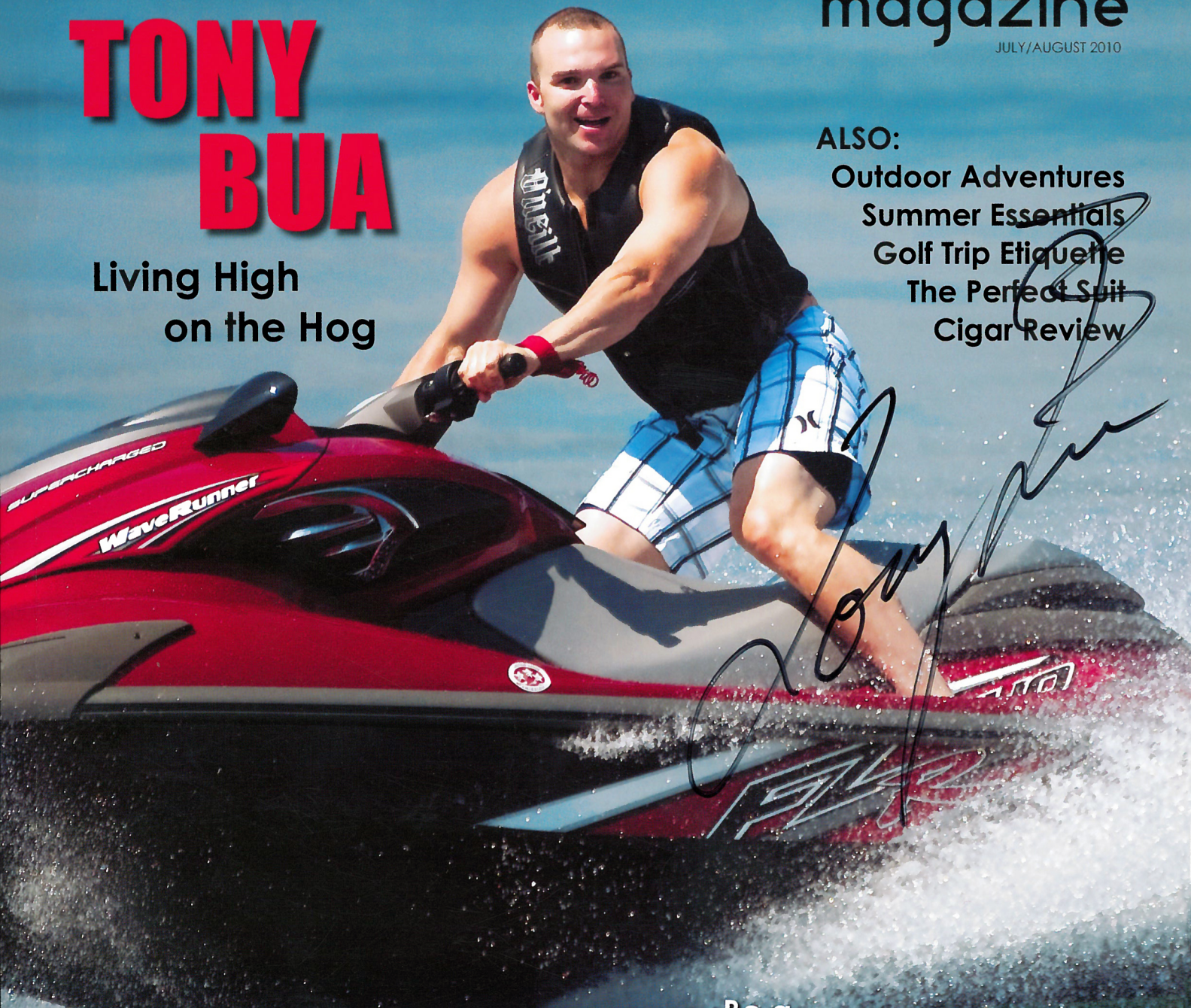
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FOUNDATION of HOPE

By Art Haddaway

We all face a number of considerable challenges throughout each day.

Between working long hours, balancing our finances and maintaining our homes, there's certainly no doubt that life can throw us a few curve balls from time to time.

For Gwen and Terry Matthews however, life threw one too many in April of 2003. Only 20 weeks into her pregnancy, Gwen was given the heartbreaking news during a routine test that her son Beau was diagnosed with Trisomy 18, an incurable chromosome imbalance with a very low rate of survival through delivery.

Also known as Edward's Syndrome, after John H. Edwards who first identified the deficiency, Trisomy 18 occurs in approximately one out of every 3,000 conceptions with a 70 percent mortality rate. Of the infants that are born, only 10 percent actually survive beyond one year, and those that do have many physical defects.

"We didn't know if he would even make it through delivery" says Terry. "Sometimes they live a month but very rarely do they live that long. You can't imagine the anxiety in the last month of trying to figure out if our baby was going to live or die; it was a rollercoaster."

On August 23, 2003, Gwen gave birth to Beau, who had no outward deformities. He weighed nearly four pounds, and he lived for 11 days.

"You read about it in the paper, you

