

Three • Eight • Five



Contents



Soap Box Derby

After coming in second four times, Molly Allison finally wins the Cookeville Soap Box Derby and a trip to Akron and the national race.



Stroke Recovery

For Terry Burckhard, a stroke lasted just a few seconds, but the recovery has taken more than five months, and there's still work to do.



Two Worlds

Monterey Senior Center director recalls 'The Good Old Days' and enjoys the convenience of technology.



TH

Quick outpatient



ULCEP

General Surgery



Andrea and Terry Burckhard show their love for the community and for one another.

Cookeville couple tells their story of stroke recovery

Story by **Lindsay McReynolds** | Photos by **Jack McNeely**

So Much Love

The afternoon of Tuesday, May 7, Cookeville resident Terry Burckhard was shopping at Lowe's in preparation for a high school graduation party for his son, Blake, when the active lifestyle he'd enjoyed for decades quickly changed.

"I remember walking down the aisle," Terry said. "All of a sudden, I could barely stand. An employee came walking by. He asked if I was okay. I couldn't answer."

Until that moment, the only time Terry had been in the

hospital was when he was born, but that May day was the start of an 80-day stay in three different medical facilities to recover from something neither he nor his wife, Andrea, knew much about — a stroke.

"I thought I was in excellent health," Terry said.

Andrea, who had suffered a heart attack in 2014, said she didn't have any idea about stroke.

"A stroke is more debilitating," she said. "It affects your brain — that's the challenge."

When Terry arrived at Cookeville Regional Medical Center, one of the nurses in the emergency room, Susan Ashburn, recognized him, Googled Andrea's name and called her office.

Andrea said she was starting a meeting when her assistant told her she needed to get to the hospital.

She then called the principal of Cookeville High School to get their sons out of school. Their son, Blake, was taking his final exams and an IB test.

Terry was airlifted from CRMC to Vanderbilt, where he spent a week before being transferred to St. Thomas Midtown, where Andrea was allowed to stay.

"I was there probably 75 days," Andrea said. "The boys stayed some too. It was an important part of his healing."

Terry underwent months of speech therapy, physical therapy and occupational therapy to regain some of the functions he lost with the stroke.

"When he transferred from Vanderbilt to St. Thomas, he couldn't move anything on his right side."

After his time at St. Thomas, Terry spent almost two months at Life Care in Sparta and has been recovering at home since July 30.

He's still going to physical therapy and occupational therapy three times a week at Life Care in Sparta.

"I remember reaching out to close friends, tennis players," Andrea said of how she reacted when the stroke happened. "It rocked Cookeville because he was in great shape."

Both Andrea and Terry have been champions for non-profits like the Cookeville Regional Charitable Foundation, which helps 2,000 families per year.

But hundreds of people turned to help them when the couple needed it the most.

"Modifications to our bathroom, gift cards — lot of things had to happen for him to come home, and a lot of that was donated," Andrea said.

Terry said, "I can't stress enough how the community has really stepped out and been supportive and helped us."



Physical Therapist Meghan Sloggett puts Terry through his paces during a rehab session at Life Care Center in Sparta.

'I never knew you loved me so much'

— Terry Burckhard



Andrea and Terry walk through their neighborhood almost every night with their black lab, Zoey.

For the first month, only a few close friends knew about Terry.

"I was emotionally distraught," Andrea said. "I finally put something on Facebook. That's when it really opened up."

But in addition to the generous help of friends, Andrea said their previous decision to purchase long-term care insurance was a lifesaver.

"The important thing is the planning," Andrea said. "We planned as a family for a life-changing health care event, but we never thought it would happen."

Terry was 59 years old, and Andrea was 46 when the couple decided to get extra insurance for a health care event like the one Terry had.

"Eleven years later, we've had to use it," Andrea said.

Of the six functions of daily living — dressing, bathing, eating, transferring, toileting and continence — not being able to perform at least two of those without assistance

qualified Terry for the long-term care that they'd been paying for.

"You pay a premium and then get \$4,500 per month for home health care," Andrea said. "For most people, it's \$100 to \$300 per month, and the premiums don't go up every year like health insurance."

Andrea said the ideal time to begin paying for long-term care is in your 40s and 50s. Terry celebrated his 70th birthday Aug. 10.

For the Burckhards, that has assisted with Terry's care through Home Instead.

"I've been promoting long-term care for years, but it's more the emotional strain," Andrea said. "Caregiving is hard. Sometimes you don't know what to do."

"People don't realize the financial strain on the family," Andrea said. "We're not wealthy."

Having a plan in place for a spouse that isn't in a position to make decisions also helps.

"I had the financial power of attorney in place," she said. "When it came time to making decisions at Vanderbilt, I

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was able to handle the financial affairs where he was the only one on the account."

Ninety-five percent of the people who come in my office don't have that in place," said Andrea, who's an agent with New York Life Insurance.

Prior to the stroke, Terry said he didn't take good care of his blood pressure.

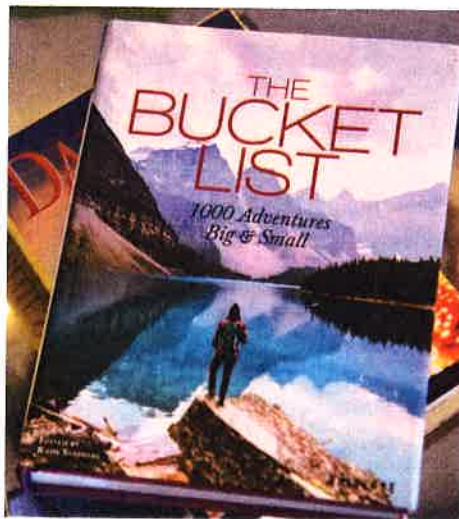
"A lot of people don't," Andrea said. "After I got back, I scheduled doctors' appointments.

"We check his blood pressure twice a day now. Fifty percent of strokes, they don't know why, but we think that's why," Andrea said.

What's Andrea most proud of?

"His courage and strength," she said. "If I was in his shoes, I don't know if I could be as graceful and positive. I've never seen him angry or depressed or bitter. He's a joy to be around."

In the immediate moments following Terry's stroke, Andrea said medical personnel told them the majority of the recovery is your ability to press



forward.

"But I think that's with most things in life," she said.

"You always hear God never gives you more than you can handle," she said. "I didn't know I had this in me.

"He said to me the other day, 'I never knew you loved me so much,'" Andrea said. "That's what marriage is all about."

Terry said he's most proud of his wife.

"She's been rock solid," he said. "She's had to keep everything going."

Right next to "The Bucket List" book on their coffee table inside the living room of their Cookeville home, Andrea said Terry's stroke and subsequent recovery have made them realize they don't want to wait to do things together.

"Your 10 years post-retirement are the 'go go years,'" Andrea said. "Sometimes they don't come when you think they're going to come, and they may look different."

Andrea said they recently took an overnight trip to visit friends in Lexington. And they also make nightly walks together a priority.

"The moral of our story is I'm thankful Terry is here. We take it day by day. I'm also thankful we had planning in place."

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