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Quality of Life on the Cumberland

An Ingram Barge-Vanderbilt Dayani partnership brings better health to people on the riverboats

Downhill all the way

BY WAYNE WOOD

Most of my family vacations growing up involved camping trips in the mountains of East Tennessee.

We would pack up the Chevy Bel-Air or (later) the Rambler and spend two weeks in a tent or trailer beside a creek.

Man, what great days! Playing in the cold, cold mountain water, hiking, fishing, reading, and sitting around a campfire (because it got chilly at night in the mountains even in summer).

It didn't occur to me at the time, because it just wouldn't, that this was not as much a vacation for mom and dad. They enjoyed camping, for sure, but there were still grown-up things to worry about, including the no-small-undertaking of providing for three meals a day using only a camp stove. If anything, mom's "vacation" was probably more actual work than being at home.

It is a great gift that parents can give children to allow them to be oblivious to the cares and responsibilities of the world. Most of the kids in the world don't have that, and those of us who did should never forget what a gift it is.

When my brother Tim and I were old enough to have bikes, we started bringing them along when we went camping. We would ride up and down the mountain roads, savoring the wind in our faces. In those pre-iPod, and even pre-Walkman days, I even rigged up a way to strap a cassette player in the basket of my bike so I could listen to music as I rode along. I pedaled up the shady cool roads, favoring the wildlife and other campers with selections from the Beatles' "Abbey Road" and Elton John's "Madman Across the Water." I'm sure both the people and the bears were very appreciative.

But the real highlight to having bikes on our camping trip was the

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Quality of Life on the Cumberland

Imagine stepping into your workplace and not leaving for three or four weeks. Welcome to the world of the towboat crew. Ingram Barge and Vanderbilt's Dayani Center work together to keep captains, pilots and other employees in the best health possible.

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Saying Thanks

Jerry Irons is a patient at the Shade Tree Clinic, the East Nashville clinic staffed by Vanderbilt medical students. He believes in its mission so much he decided to donate several hundred dollars to say thanks for the care he'd received there.



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Credit Union Expands Services

Checking accounts? Check. Debit cards and an ATM? Check. Home equity lines of credit? Check. The Vanderbilt Employees' Credit Union is now fully capable of being an employee's primary financial institution, says director Michael Bittle.



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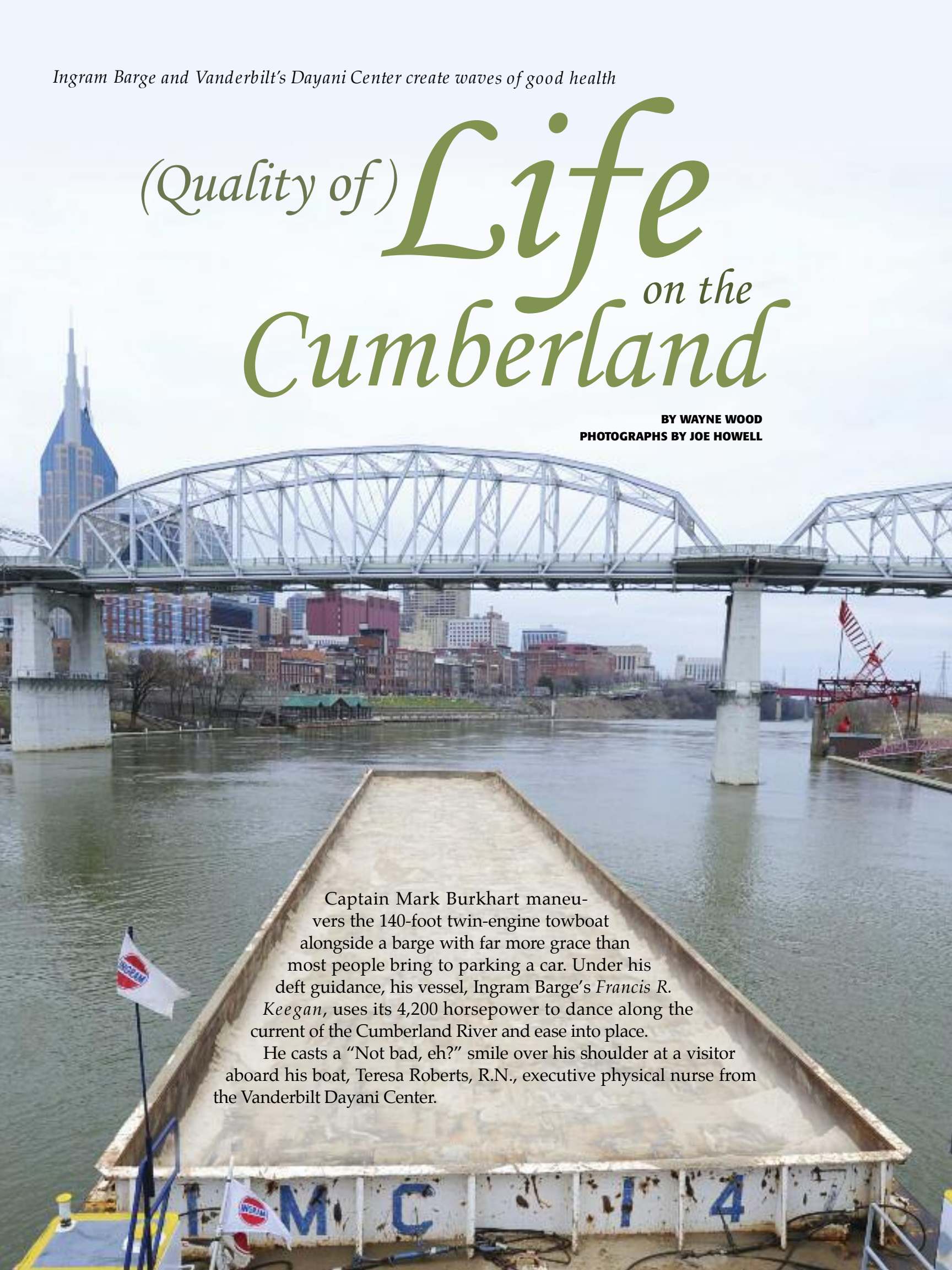
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Ingram Barge and Vanderbilt's Dayani Center create waves of good health

(Quality of) *Life* on the *Cumberland*

BY WAYNE WOOD
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOE HOWELL



Captain Mark Burkhart maneuvers the 140-foot twin-engine towboat alongside a barge with far more grace than most people bring to parking a car. Under his deft guidance, his vessel, Ingram Barge's *Francis R. Keegan*, uses its 4,200 horsepower to dance along the current of the Cumberland River and ease into place.

He casts a "Not bad, eh?" smile over his shoulder at a visitor aboard his boat, Teresa Roberts, R.N., executive physical nurse from the Vanderbilt Dayani Center.



As he takes the *Keegan* downriver, **the murky green water** unfurls its way toward the Nashville skyline, but from **an angle unfamiliar to non-river travelers.**

The traffic on the Interstate 24 bridge passes overhead, most of the drivers unaware of the traffic below on **the original “highway” into Nashville, the Cumberland.**

Roberts isn't just some random visitor to Burkhart's riverboat workplace. They are partners in an innovative program, called Partners in Towboat Wellness, in which captains, pilots, and other personnel from Ingram Barge get comprehensive physicals, treadmill tests and healthy living guidance under a corporate agreement between the company and the Dayani Center.

The partnership began January 2004, developed with input from both parties and updated each year to add additional programs, services and wellness outreach, Roberts said. The Dayani team includes, in addition to Roberts, two part-time physicians (Robert Workman, M.D., and Mark Jakes, M.D.), an exercise physiologist (Zafer Karabulut, Ph.D.), and other health care professionals, including registered dietitians. Roberts has been involved in the program since its beginning. The Ingram program, which has more than 600 participants, is the largest of about 40 corporate health contracts managed by Dayani.

Roberts, who has been at Vanderbilt since 1986 and at the Dayani Center since 1997, is the nurse dedicated to assisting with the comprehensive physical and U. S. Coast Guard (USCG) license renewal process. She works closely with the National Maritime Center in West Virginia, and recently became the Dayani Center's first certified health coach.

“In my health coaching role, I partner with Ingram Barge associates to empower them to take control of their health through meaningful lifestyle changes that can reduce their risk factors for developing chronic, many times preventable, diseases. And, along the way, they discover that they are not just healthier, but they feel better!”

The reasoning behind Partners in Towboat Wellness is simple. Captains and

pilots of riverboats have to meet certain health standards to renew their USCG licenses every five years, much as airline pilots need health clearance to fly. The Coast Guard requires all applicants that have a merchant marine license to complete a comprehensive medical and physical evaluation. Through Partners in Towboat Wellness, interventions are implemented to decrease and/or control health problems that could lead to disqualification as a licensed mariner. Adhering to strict guidelines affirm that mariners can perform their job without underlying medical conditions that may potentially disqualify them for service or may lead to unsafe practices on the inland waterways.

Keeping captains and pilots healthy is good for them, of course, and also good for the company, which loses fewer employee workdays to delayed license renewals.

Since the license renewal cycle is five years, the Dayani program checks each participating Ingram employee every two-and-a-half-years, providing plenty of time to work on correcting any health concerns that show up.

“We are seeing a reduction in risk fac-

tors and improved health among the Ingram Barge associates,” Roberts says.

She cites statistics from the program documenting that response:

- 40 percent have improved their exercise tolerance as measured by treadmill time
- 23 percent have reduced their blood pressure
- 35 percent have reduced their cholesterol levels
- 20 percent have reduced their fasting blood sugar
- 10 percent have quit smoking

“Our priorities are safety, prevention and reducing risk factors so they can get out there, be healthy, and be safe,” she says.

And sometime Roberts gets “out there” as well. So on this day, she is aboard the *Francis B. Keegan* along with Dayani staffers Regina Trainor, coordinator of corporate wellness, and Karabulut, who is director of Dayani's exercise testing lab. Joining them are Dave Brown, vice president for human resources and safety at Ingram Barge, as well as a Vanderbilt News and Public Affairs writer and photographer.



Opposite: Captain Mark Burkhart has worked on the river since he was a teenager. He and his crew work 21-day shifts aboard the Francis R. Keegan, right.



Half of their lives on the river

If Burkhart, 38, is fazed at all these extra people in his wheelhouse, he doesn't look it. The view from up here is commanding and perspective-changing. As he takes the *Keegan* downriver, the murky green water unfurls its way toward the Nashville skyline, but from an angle unfamiliar to non-river travelers. The traffic on the Interstate 24 bridge passes overhead, most of the drivers unaware of the traffic below on the original "highway" into Nashville, the Cumberland.

The material on the Ingram barges are most commonly sand, which is dredged from the river further downstream and primarily used in construction projects, and coal, which is mined in the Western United States and shipped by river for use in TVA power plants. On this morning, Burkhart is taking the *Keegan* to pick up an empty

barge and move it to a sand yard where it can be filled for later transport.

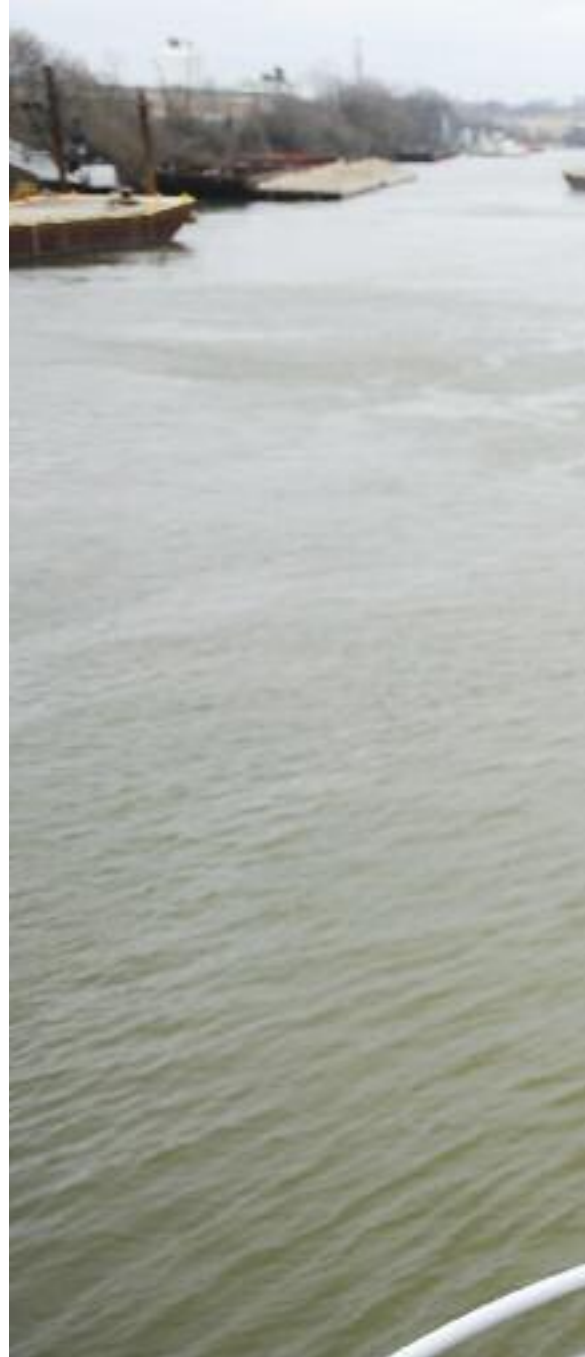
Burkhart is a genial man with a vague resemblance to a young version of the New Orleans musician Dr. John, if Dr. John had a large, two-pointed goatee and a spectacular array of tattoos—including a skull on his left elbow, a spider web on his right elbow, bright-inked flames licking up both arms, and his last name spelled out in large block letters on his left arm, which has more ink than the average copy of the *Tennessean*.

In other words, picture every boat captain you've ever seen on TV or in movies—well, Burkhart doesn't look like that.

But somehow he still looks like he was born to be a riverboat captain.

In a way, he was. He has been on the river for 20 years, starting out as a deck hand and working his way up. His father is a retired Ingram Barge captain, and his brother and cousin also work on the river. In fact, Burkhart's cousin Greg works with him as the pilot of the *Keegan*. Since captains and pilots alternate shifts in the wheelhouse, any time, day or night, there is a Burkhart at the controls.

That "day or night" thing is a key to understanding the health needs of a river crew, and a key reason why the Dayani Center was hired by Ingram Barge. The *Keegan*, which is typical of the 140 boats that Ingram runs on virtually every navigable river in the United States, has a nine-person crew that works for three weeks at a time, then has three weeks off.



Teresa Roberts enjoys the breeze and the sights as the



The captain and pilot work alternating six-hour watches for the three weeks the crew is aboard.

On the *Keegan*, Mark gets up at 4:30 a.m. and takes the wheel at 5:30 a.m. for his first watch, which ends at 11:30 a.m. when he hands the controls over to his cousin Greg. After Greg's six hours, at 5:30 p.m., Mark is back in control. Greg returns at 11:30 p.m. to ply the river through the wee hours until Mark is back the next morning at 5:30, when the cycle begins again. "They never sleep more than five hours at a time," Roberts notes.

The captain has a spectacular **array** of **bright-inked flames**



Keegan plies the Cumberland. Opposite page: Mark Burkhart and Roberts in the wheelhouse.

Back in the wheelhouse, Mark has slowed the barge as the craft nears a railroad bridge near downtown Nashville. The bridge is too low for the *Keegan* to pass without it being opened like a gate, and right now a train is passing over. Mark has to bide his time until the train passes and the bridge operator, who is in a little booth attached to the bridge, can swing it open for the tug to pass.

Mark regularly enters information about the *Keegan's* location and what it is doing in a computer to his right; the information is sent to the Ingram main

office, which tracks the location of the boats in its fleet.

Mark is the father of a daughter, 20, and a son, 17. He says his life during his three weeks off between work are spent "taking it easy. I piddle around the house. I do whatever my wife wants me to do."

Greg's children are much younger, 4 years and 4 months.

"Being on the river for three weeks at a time never bothered me until four years ago," he says. Sometimes during his middle of the night watch in the wheelhouse,

his wife phones him if the baby is awake. "I can hear her," he says of his infant daughter, and it hits him: he's been away from his children for half their lives.

The challenges: good sleep, healthy diet, exercise

Sleep is important to good health. So are diet and exercise. All three are a challenge when aboard a 140-foot boat for three weeks at a time. The crew members eat all their meals in the galley, and although a deck hand's job has a lot of exercise built in, a captain or a pilot's does not.

y of tattoos—including a skull on his left elbow, a spider web on his right elbow, **licking up both arms**, and his last name spelled out in large block letters on his left arm, **which has more ink than the average copy of the *Tennessean*.**



Greg Burkhart realized that he had been away for half his children's lives.

The quest for a healthy lifestyle can be a challenge.

Ingram Barge provides exercise equipment, either a treadmill or elliptical machine, for all boats. The Dayani Center provides exercise prescriptions for all Ingram Barge associates who request one. Additionally, the boat engineers and cooks have now been added to the Partners in Towboat Wellness program, the theory being that by increas-

ing the awareness of personal health of the captain and pilot, along with the engineers and cooks, that all members of the crew have a chance of improving the overall health of all the maritime personnel. Last year Roberts solicited and collected favorite recipes from the cooks and Dayani Center dietitians, then took those recipes and, with substitutions, made them heart healthy.

The cook on the Keegan, and the only

female in the crew, is Barbara Durbin, a former restaurant owner who has been with Ingram for two years. Her galley is so homey that over the sink is a window through which a visitor half expects to glance out and see a back yard with kids, dogs and a swing set, instead of the expanse of the Cumberland River leading to a wooded bank.

Durbin follows the same three weeks on, three weeks off pattern as the other crew members, and provides three meals a day for the crew of nine. Her workday starts at 4 a.m., although after breakfast is over, sometimes she can grab a quick nap in her quarters.

"I look out that window a lot of days and I'm thankful for my job," she says. "This is a lot less stress than having your own restaurant."

"This program is fabulous," says Brown, the Ingram HR man. "[Ingram] would be so far behind where we should be without it. And it's the personal relationships that make the difference."

By personal relationships, he means the dedication of Teresa Roberts, who is



Barbara Durbin, the Keegan's cook, is also a participant in the Ingram Barge-Dayani partnership.

"Since I've come to work at Ingram, the quality of my life has definitely improved.

Nurse Teresa makes you feel like part of the family.

I just can't say enough about what she does for us."

sitting with him at a communal table sharing a hearty lunch with the group in Durbin's cozy galley. Roberts' only job at Dayani is working with Ingram Barge employees, and her enthusiasm for her work and for the Ingram Barge people is obvious.

Giving people the tools

A few weeks earlier at the Dayani Center, another participant in the program, Tom Montgomery, an 11-year Ingram employee who is general manager for Human Resources, came from his Paducah, Ky., home for his physical at Dayani. Many Ingram Barge employees live in the area around Paducah, because it is a major center for river shipping, due to its location on or near four major rivers: the Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee and Cumberland.

But since Ingram Barge has employees all over the United States, not all of the participants in the Dayani-Ingram partnership come to Vanderbilt for their physicals. Five off-site clinics are contracted with and participate in Partners in Towboat Wellness, all working under Roberts' oversight.

Montgomery says he has a history of heart problems in his family and elevated cholesterol and blood pressure, but he is

taking steps to counteract that history.

"If you eat a lot of saturated fat food you're going to clog up and need heart surgery," he says. "I don't want heart surgery."

Another Ingram Barge captain, John Newmann, 54, who works the upper Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, credits his Dayani physical with catching a major health problem.

"I had a heart problem that ran in my family. During my checkup at Dayani I found out my heartbeat was irregular. They were on top of it and told me I needed a pacemaker," he says.

Now he says his energy and endurance have improved, and he is keen to maintain those changes. "I've increased the frequency of my workouts. I'm hitting on all eight cylinders.

"Since I've come to work at Ingram, the quality of my life has definitely improved. Nurse Teresa makes you feel like part of the family. I just can't say enough about what she does for us."

Back on the *Francis R. Keegan*, Mark and Greg Burkhart also say that the Dayani program has been helpful to them, although they both admit that health concerns continue to be a challenge.

"I'm glad Ingram took the time to set it up for us," Greg says. "I can't say that I

stick with it, but they give us the tools. Teresa sends e-mail tips and reminders. I've always had a good experience."

"At first I was resistant," Dave says. "But it's been good. I try to park a little farther away when we go to Wal-Mart. I try to cut down on red meat. It's a process. As good as Teresa has treated us—that makes a difference, too."

The next phase of the partnership will be determining not only the effectiveness of the program and the wellness interventions, but to discover the relationship of health to boat safety.

"I have definitely found my passion. It's challenging, but definitely rewarding, to walk their health journey with them," Roberts said. "The relationships we've developed over the past six years are what make it successful. There is a real sense of trust. I love working with the Ingram Barge associates. I consider it an honor, and definitely a pleasure, to be their partner in towboat wellness. It's just the coolest thing!" Watching the sun glinting off the water, she has a big smile on her face.

For a slide show of Joe Howell's "Life on the Cumberland" photos go to www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/houseorgan/cumberland.htm

Ingram employee Tom Montgomery takes his treadmill test with Robert Workman, M.D., left, and Zafer Karabulut, Ph.D., an exercise physiologist.



Shade Tree patient believes in giving

BY LESLIE HAST

■ Though he admits he is not a rich man, Jerry Irons found a way to reach deep into his pockets and make a donation to the Shade Tree Family Clinic in appreciation of the care he has received there.

The free health clinic, run by Vanderbilt medical students, serves the acute and chronic health needs of uninsured and underinsured patients in East Nashville. Irons has attended the clinic for more than a year to treat high blood pressure.

"I'm not well-off financially, but most are way worse off than I am. This is at least some sort of payment for what they've done for me," he said.

Irons made monetary gifts totaling \$300 along with toys and clothing his grandchildren no longer needed.

"After I saw what they do and how good they are, I just gave them all that I

could," he said. "The clinic is outstanding. I tell everybody, even if I was a multi-millionaire, I would pay them before anybody else."

Irons is humble about his donation, saying, "It wouldn't even come near paying for the medication they've given me," but hopes it will help continue the outstanding care of the clinic.

"Those are top of the line people. They are donating their time and go out of their way to do an excellent job. Most people there don't have anything, but they treat everyone really good," he said.

Volunteers at the clinic do not expect payment for their services, but are appreciative of Irons' generosity.

"Although we don't expect anything in return for the services we provide at Shade Tree, it is extremely touching and rewarding when someone shows their



Irons with granddaughter Lexi Carpenter, 4, whose uniform signals her future profession.

appreciation in the way Mr. Irons has. It is especially meaningful that he felt compelled to contribute to the clinic for the care he has received considering his limited means to do so," said Adam Wegner, a second-year medical student and executive director of the clinic.

Robert Miller, M.D., assistant professor of Pulmonary Medicine and medical director for the clinic, said most patients show their appreciation for what the students do, "but there are a few individuals such as Mr. Irons whose appreciation is so notable and energizes us to do even more."



Jerry Irons at the Shade Tree Clinic with Roy Kiberenge, a Vanderbilt medical student.

Credit Union becomes full-service financial institution

BY WAYNE WOOD

■ The Vanderbilt Employees' Credit Union has grown up.

During the next year the employee-owned financial organization celebrates the 50th anniversary of receiving its charter, and Michael Bittle, the credit union's director, can't contain his enthusiasm for the changes under way.

"After 50 years, it's like a whole new world," he said.

The credit union has since its beginning offered savings accounts and consumer loans for staff and faculty, but in the past few months the new services have been coming quickly, including:

- Interest-bearing checking accounts, with no monthly fee, no minimum balance, unlimited check writing, and the ability to see images of cleared checks online
- Visa check cards
- Online bill paying
- ATM access, including a dedicated Vanderbilt Credit Union ATM at One Hundred Oaks, and free use of the Presto! Network of ATMs at Publix stores all over the Southeast. The credit union does not charge a fee for ATM use, although networks other than Presto! likely will.
- Online and telephone account access
- Electronic statement option
- Home equity lines of credit, which can lend up to 90 percent of equity at 3 percent or prime minus 1.50 percent, whichever is greater. There are also no closing costs or appraisal fee.
- Credit Union representatives are available at One Hundred Oaks in the Vanderbilt Valet office every other Friday, to coincide with Vanderbilt Medical Center's biweekly payday for hourly employees.

When these services are combined with the still-available credit union staples such as savings accounts, personal pre-approved lines of credit, and loans for cars, boats, computers and even plastic surgery, Bittle says that many staff and faculty can get full financial services without leaving campus.

"The credit union is one the benefits of working at Vanderbilt. We can now be your primary financial institution," Bittle said. "We can and we want to be. We offer personal services, lower fees and better interest rates. And we still want to know your name—you are a member and an owner of the credit union."

He said that he believes that the services of the credit union increase employee satisfaction and productivity,

and may be one of the reasons that Vanderbilt was named one of *Fortune* magazine's "100 Best Places to Work."

"Money and finance are the biggest stress in anyone's life," he said. "We have multiple ways to help alleviate that stress—and by doing that, we make Vanderbilt a better employer. And by not being stressed, people are better employees."

Membership in the credit union is open to all full-time and regular part-time staff and faculty and their immediate family members, with a one-time membership fee of 25 cents. The credit union office is on the first floor of the Oxford House. Its phone number is 936-0300, and its Web site is www.vanderbiltcu.org.



Michael Bittle, director of Vanderbilt Employees' Credit Union, says home equity loans are one way the credit union seeks to be a primary financial institution.

Go for the Gold recognized by State

■ Go for the Gold, the annual program designed to encourage better health habits among staff and faculty, has been awarded a Shining Star award by the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Health.

Several leaders of Health Plus, Vanderbilt's Health Plus employee wellness

program which manages Go for the Gold, accepted the award last month from Gov. Phil Bredesen.

Among the goals of Go for the Gold cited in the award application were:

- The program's high participation rate
- Keeping the low-risk population at low risk

- Coaching the high-risk population to improved health
- Minimizing the rise in health-care costs

The Vanderbilt program was one of 10 statewide to receive the award.

day we went home. We would get up and work at all the tasks needed to break camp: taking down the tent, packing up and picking up. And then, dad would say, with a big smile on his face because he knew this is what we were waiting to hear: "Take off."

And Tim and I would get on our bikes and begin riding down the mountain on the winding, downhill road that, 20-some miles later, emerged into the small town of Tellico Plains. We would meet up, dad would attach the bikes to the camping

trailer, and home we would go.

For the adults, it would have made a lot more sense for us to hurry back to the city. It was a long day of driving, and there was a lot of work to be done once we got home to reopen the house, buy groceries, and generally get the household humming again. The most efficient thing would have been to get an early and quick start. Nothing was less efficient than allowing a couple of kids 20 miles of free downhill bike riding.

The bike ride from the campsite to

the bottom of the mountain really was downhill all the way. A free gift, really, since almost any other bike ride is a zero sum game: every bit of downhill you get to coast is balanced by the uphill you have to pedal to get back to where you started. Tim and I got a real rarity in life, the joy without the pain.

And a gift of love. I know that now.

To hear a podcast of *Watching the Wheels*, go to www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/houseorgan/wtwpod_8_09.mp3

Employee satisfaction survey coming in September

BY NANCY HUMPHREY

■ The Vanderbilt community survey, the Medical Center's annual employee satisfaction survey, will be conducted Sept. 8-25. The survey was postponed from the traditional spring slot in order to avoid the busy times of annual budgeting and job performance evaluations and to allow for the selection of a new vendor.

"Vanderbilt is committed to hearing from our employees through our faculty and staff survey. It's a critical tool in improving communication, providing employees the opportunity to have a say in how we continue to make Vanderbilt a great place to work," said Jeff Balsler, M.D., vice chancellor for Health Affairs and dean of the School of Medicine. "The information that comes from this survey helps us know what types of actions are needed to improve satisfaction and performance," Balsler said.

There is a new vendor for the survey this year—HR Solutions Inc., a Chicago-based company that conducts opinion surveys for more than 500 health care organizations.

The survey's data—employees will remain anonymous answering the questions—will be available to managers more quickly under the new vendor. Initial results will be back by Oct. 19 and available to all managers by Nov. 2.

Pam Brown, director of the Organizational Effectiveness Team for Vanderbilt's Human Resources, said the survey will give answers about employees' engagement, and is a "great starting point for further in-depth discussion."

"We want to know how our employees feel about the organization's strategy

and mission, communication within the organization, and their overall job satisfaction, as well as pay, benefits, training and development. Once we know that, then we can follow up with dialogue—conversations with employees to know what to do moving forward."

The simple survey will also be less repetitive. Reduced from 63 to 57 questions, it will take less time to complete (about 10 minutes) than surveys from past years. Also, previously, employees responded to each question twice in order to provide both a performance score and an importance score. In the new survey, only one response is needed for each question.

Most employees will take the survey online, although there will be some paper copies available for those who do not have regular computer access.

There is also no "not applicable or N/A" option on the list of answers this year. If an employee can't answer a question because they haven't had experience in that area, the answer should be left blank, Brown said. A glossary will be provided with the survey, helping to clarify any terms in the survey that might be confusing.

In 2008, there was a 70 percent response rate with 11,123 employees completing the survey.

"Since 1999, we have used our employee surveys as a process to help guide us, to help us understand what's important about the environment we work in and to make Vanderbilt a better place to work," said Marilyn Dubree, Executive Chief Nursing Officer.

Art requested for Critical Care Tower

Artists are being invited to submit works to be considered for the permanent collection of the Vanderbilt Hospital Critical Care Tower, which is scheduled to be opened this fall.

Deadline for submission is Aug. 30, said Donna Glassford, director of Cultural Enrichment for VMC.

The Critical Care Tower Art Committee will be selecting paintings, prints, drawings, mixed media and sculpture.

Artists wishing to submit works should e-mail a resume with attached images of works to artsubmissions@vanderbilt.edu.

The work should be easily identified by artist name, title, medium, dimensions and price.

Portfolios can be submitted to:

Critical Care Tower Art
Cultural Enrichment
1002 Oxford House
Nashville, TN 37232-4225

Portfolios should be 8.5 inches by 11 inches, and should have a self-addressed stamped envelope if the artist wishes it to be returned.

More information is available from Glassford at 936-1234.