

WATCH YOUR HEALTH!

By Roy Bardowell, CDDC

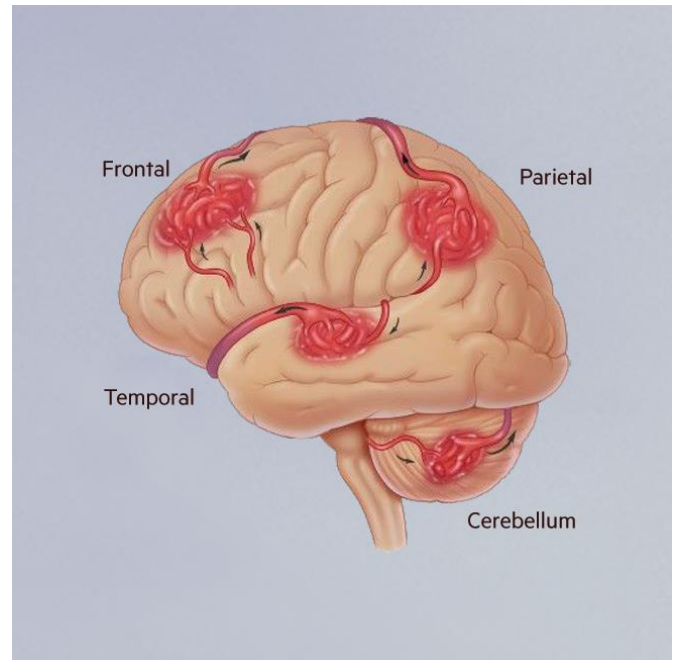
(I don't write this piece for any sympathy, but as a warning to my fellow door people.)

On March 10, 2014, I celebrated my 60th birthday at home in Arizona by throwing a Frisbee around with my two sons. I thought to myself—how fortunate I am to be 60 years old and still be able to run and horse around. Little did I know that in my body there was a time bomb ticking and ready to explode. Five weeks after that great birthday, the bomb went off in the form of an aneurysm. An aneurysm goes by many names such as a massive stroke, hemorrhagic stroke, brain hemorrhage, or cerebral hemorrhage. Regardless of what it is called, it is a very serious condition that is usually fatal. Any bleeding in the brain is a serious condition that must be treated and stopped immediately to give a person any chance of seeing another day.

It happened on April 14, 2014, only a few days before the IDA Expo in Las Vegas. I was aware I had blood pressure (BP) readings higher than normal and thought it could be treated by losing weight and eating healthier. However, my readings were way above normal and only medication would lower it to a safe level. Having high BP level creates more pressure in your arteries. As you age your arterial walls lose their flexibility and will not stretch as your Blood Pressure increases. They call this hardening of the arteries. Having this condition along with high blood pressure is the worse condition you can experience. If you experience both problems, you can expect a blood vessel will stretch to its breaking point and rupture.

Not getting on medication to lower my BP was my gravest error and still something I deeply regret! Because I didn't seek treatment, I am paralyzed on my left side. My best advice to everyone is to watch your own health because no one else is! And FOLLOW UP!

When an artery in the brain ruptures, the pulsing blood will actually grind away brain cells as the blood contact them. In other words, your own blood supply is chewing up your brain cells with every beat of your heart. When a doctor told me this; my engineering skills lead me to say; "that's a bad design". He laughed.



In my case after the blood did its damage it pooled into a mass and congealed in the cerebellum where the spinal cord connects with the brain. You can't pick a worse place for a brain injury. The blood mass which displaced the brain cells was the size of a

lemon, so I lost a portion of my brain the same size. I asked a doctor, "What happens to the blood mass? He said, "your body will break it down and it will soon dissolve and your body will metabolize it." He added, "when that happens you, will be left with an empty space or hole in your brain where there is nothing but air." No jokes please.

After spending six months in ICU and having gone through two 100-day comas at a hospital in Palm Springs, I returned to Phoenix and had another CT scan to check for other anomalies. In those days I couldn't hardly move and was in a vegetative state. When the techs were checking the images, they were both baffled and confused by the big white space on the image. After I told them what had previously happened, they understood that was where the blood mass had been. The images confirmed I lost a fist size portion of my brain, yet I am still talking, thinking, and breathing. That is weird! The area where I lost brain matter were responsible for balance, walking, and controlling left side motor skills.

They say you only use 10% of your brain, so there are spare brain cells which can replace the lost ones. The difficulty is training other brain cells to take over lost functions. There is no manual on how to do this and 6 years later I am still working on it. After 5 years of physical therapy, I have learned to stand and walk with the help of a cane. It has been the hardest thing I have ever done. Nevertheless, I am confident I will bounce back, but probably never at 100%. I know, I will never carry a commercial door operator up a ladder again so my only chance to stay engaged in

our industry is to take a desk job. Writing these articles is one of the things I can still do, so for now I have embraced educating he populous on garage door automation and how garage door things work. Enjoy my articles and write a post if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. Our GM; Brian or myself would be pleased to help you with anything garage door related.



Furthermore, check your blood pressure often and get on medication if it is too high. I know it works because during the last 5 years my blood pressure has not exceeded 115/ 90. Don't wait or you may make the huge mistake like I did. I knew I had high blood pressure and did nothing until a catastrophe occurred. Some health issues will be instant and without warning and may be too late for you to be saved, so please beware.

Good habits and watching your health will add to your years and provide more time to appreciate family and friends. Don't gamble with your health and life because you have only one life to live.

Your health must be Priority One!!!

Roy Bardowell, CDDC, served as Operations Manager at Guardian Access & Door Hardware until 2014. He has been in the door and operator industry since 1973 and is known as one of the industry's most experienced operator technicians and trainers. Roy received the IDEA Commitment to Excellence award in 2008 and IDA's Jerry R. Reynolds Volunteer Service Award in 2017. Contact him at roythedoorman@gmail.com