

*Choosing*  
**HOPE &  
FAITH**  
*Over Fear*



A Pennsylvania Couple  
Create Their Dream Home  
in the Face of Adversity.

**BY CHARLES BEVIER**  
**PHOTOS BY ALLEN MOWERY**

THE FRONT PORCH OF THE HOME IS A FAVORITE SPOT FOR THE FAMILY TO SIT IN THE EARLY MORNING OR EVENING TO SOAK UP THE SERENITY OF THE EIGHT-ACRE LOT AT THE FOOT OF STONE MOUNTAIN. (INSET) THE RUSTIC FRONT DOOR WELCOMES VISITORS WITH A "WELCOME" MAT AND A "WELCOME" WOOD-CARVED BEAR.





**ABOVE/RIGHT:** APRIL AND REED CHOSE RUSTIC LODGEPOLE PINE ACCENTS FOR THE STAIRS, RAILING, RAFTERS, AND DECORATIVE TRUSSES, AS WELL AS CHARACTER TREES, JUST OFF THE GREAT ROOM.

**OPPOSITE:** REED AND HIS TWO SONS ARE AVID OUTDOORSPeOPLE, SO IT IS FITTING THAT THE GREAT ROOM SHOWCASES A FEW TROPHIES. THE WOOD-BURNING HEARTH IN THE GREAT ROOM MAKES THIS SPACE COZY ON COLD WINTER NIGHTS.

Ask April Henderson-Rhodes what advice she would give other homebuyers on how to create their own dream home, she pauses then says, “Just do it. It is a leap of faith. But whether it’s a dream home, a boat you have always wanted, taking that once-in-a-lifetime cruise, just do it. Because our time here is finite, and no one knows what tomorrow holds.”

While April also advises for fiscal caution, she says don’t let fear hold you back from choosing to make your dreams come true.

April and her husband Reed, decided to make their dream home a reality in November of 2016 in Belleville, Pennsylvania, on an eight-and-a-half acre parcel at the foot of Stone Mountain. The couple signed a contract with a local Amish builder they had used to construct a conventional home in the past.

In December of the same year, Reed was diagnosed with colon cancer. The cancer had also metastasized to his liver. Naturally, this was devastating news for April, Reed, and their two boys.

“This Amish gentleman came to our home and advised that he’d heard about the diagnosis. He was willing to hit pause on the project if we didn’t want to proceed with construction of the home. We are religious people and faith is important to us. We told him







we would think and pray on it," April recalls. Ultimately, they decided to proceed with construction.

April and Reed had chosen the land years before, when they skipped church one Sunday to inspect land that had recently been listed for sale. "After walking the property, we knew. We went down there first thing Monday morning to file," April recalls.

Because Reed and their boys are avid hunters, they planted crops each year on the land to provide deer, turkey, and other animals ample forage. Over time, they built a road to the property and brought in a power line. "Having that infrastructure in place, kept the budget from being too onerous when we finally did get started with construction," April recalls.

The couple had originally purchased a design from a log home company as their starting point. "We would tweak the plans from time to time. Then we took the plans to Timberhaven, to have them tweak them some more."

The couple worked with Brad Mercer, sales manager at Timberhaven Log & Timber Homes (Middleburg, Pennsylvania), to fine tune the design and choose the building materials. "My job is to eliminate the 'buts,' so at the end of the project our clients don't say, 'We love the home, but.' So, we educate them on

**ABOVE:** THE KITCHEN IS APRIL'S HAPPY PLACE, A SPACE TO COOK UP DELICIOUS MEALS FOR HER FAMILY.

**OPPOSITE:** WHEN THEY WERE DESIGNING THE HOME, APRIL AND REED WERE ADAMANT ABOUT HAVING A SEPARATE DINING ROOM TO SHARE MEALS AS A FAMILY WITH THEIR TWO BOYS. THE FOREST-GREEN CABINETRY PROVIDES PLENTY OF STORAGE SPACE FOR BOARD GAMES AND KITCHEN APPLIANCES.

their options, then we take the next step. Then the next. It's like that old saying, how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time."

Reed and April chose Timberhaven's engineered timbers to build with. These timbers are laminated, made from layers of kiln-dried Eastern white pine. These strips are glued together and then milled to a specific profile and size. Brad compares this building system to the construction of fine furniture.

The result is a 3,460 square-foot home with four bedrooms and two-and-a-half baths. It's built with elegant 6"x8" D profile, kiln-dried white pine engineered logs with dovetail corner assemblies. The couple opted for rustic lodgepole pine accents in the stairs, railing, rafters, decorative trusses, as well as character trees just off the great room.







**ABOVE:** THE HENDERSON FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHED SHORTLY AFTER MOVING INTO THEIR NEW HOME IN JANUARY 2018.  
**LEFT:** REED AND APRIL CHOSE BOLD AQUAMARINE COLOR CABINETS FOR THE UPSTAIRS BATH.  
**OPPOSITE:** THE MASTER BEDROOM FEATURES A SLIDING, BROWN-STAINED BARN DOOR TO THE MASTER BATH, AND MATCHING OVERHEAD BEAMS TO DRAW THE EYES UPWARD UPON AWAKENING EACH MORNING.

Reed's cancer diagnosis interrupted a full life for the Henderson family. In addition to caring for Reed and their two boys, and helping make design decisions for their new home, April is the supervisor and owner of two area funeral homes. Reed's printing business, Kish Printing and Promotional Products, served large and small businesses up and down the valley. An avid outdoors person Reed loved hunting, fishing, and coaching at all levels. April says Reed educated their boys on hunting and chainsaw safety, teaching them how to fell trees safely, as well as how to cut, split, and stack firewood for the wood-burning hearth in the great room of their home. They also added another wood-burning hearth on a large patio outside in the area between the home and the detached garage. The Hendersons moved into their new home in 2018. It provided a sense of sanctuary during Reed's ongoing cancer treatments. "I was there with him the whole way. Chemo treatments every two weeks, the infusions, I supported him every step of the way," April recalls. Reed and April loved to begin and end each day spending time on the wrap-around porch, just soaking up the serenity of their home and its special setting. "Reed would light up his pipe and rock in his rocking chair. In the mornings, we'd talk about that day's doings. In the evening, we'd review the day." April finds solace in the home's kitchen, making delicious meals for Reed and their two boys, Tristan, and Elijah. "It's my happy place," April says. April says she is still in awe of Reed's spiritual, mental and physical toughness while battling cancer, while cramming in all the life they could in their new

home. "He basically outlived all the treatments they had," April recalls. Despite these efforts, Reed passed away February 17, 2022, peacefully just after midnight, in their wood home at the base of Stone Mountain. "We had five years together in that home, and he got to die there. I have no regrets," April says. Life keeps chugging along. April remarried in January of 2023, to Eddie Rhodes, a friend of Reed's from his coaching days. "When I was at work, Eddie would come by and mow the lawn, or take my youngest son to football practice. One thing just kind of led to another." In May of this year, April's oldest son, age 22, got married at their local Mennonite Chapel. It was a beautiful day until the skies opened up at 4 p.m. to a ferocious downpour. "The farmers in our community have been struggling with drought, so the rain is needed. But we think it was Reed just reminding us that things don't always go according to plan," April says with an infectious laugh. "Stone Mountain is appropriately named," April says. "So, we've got a home built on stone with the toughest building materials on the market. It's going to be here for generations to come." 🍀

**Log home producer:** Timberhaven Log and Timber Homes, Middleburg, Pennsylvania  
**Builder:** Yoder Construction, Belleville, Pennsylvania  
**Two-story home** 🍀 **Square footage:** 3,460  
**Bedrooms:** 4 🍀 **Baths:** 2.5