



AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

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LIVING WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

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CARM'S COMMENTS: Carmen Schacht

The theme for April is Multiple Sclerosis (MS). MS is a disease that is very baffling. I understand it is even hard to diagnose at times, except for the findings of brain and spinal cord lesions. Many of the people I know who have MS have not experienced the same progression or the same symptoms of the disease. I know several people who have had the disease for several years and can still walk, do most of the things they like to do, and function very well. Others have progressed to where daily functioning can be quite difficult without help. The one thing I hear from all of them is that fatigue is one of the most common and worst symptoms of the disease. I have also heard that if they get a secondary illness of some kind, the symptoms of MS can worsen, at least for a while. Hearing that you have MS can be very devastating and scary. Hats off to all of

you who deal with this on a daily basis. It isn't easy. (CS)

WALKING TOWARD MATRIMONY: Marcy Thomas

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a progressive disease of the nervous system, for which there is no cure. Over 2.5 million people in the world have MS. Kalinda Stadtmueller is one of those people.

At age 20, Kalinda awoke one morning with a funny feeling in her hands and feet, "kind of like when they fall asleep and you have that hot, burning feeling," Kalinda said. She continued with her normal work activities for a couple of days and found that she was having increasing problems. It was at that point that she went to the doctor.

Back in 1974 the process to diagnose this disease included many spinal taps. Today, MRIs are used to diagnose MS and many other neurological diseases.

Kalinda was first diagnosed with high blood pressure and yet the symptoms continued to present themselves. She was then referred to a neurologist. Over six months of testing and a trip to the Mayo Clinic ended with a diagnosis of MS, a week before her 21st birthday.

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During all of the testing and unanswered questions, Kalinda's future husband, Al, stayed by her side. Although Al and Kalinda had been dating for quite some time, it was during Kalinda's three weeks of intensive occupational and physical therapy that Al finally proposed marriage. She told Al that she would not marry him until she could walk down the aisle. That was in 1974. In June of 1975, Kalinda took her first step on the parallel bars and a year later on June 18, 1976, Al and Kalinda were married.

The Stadtmuellers contacted AgrAbility in the summer of 2002, after Kalinda was diagnosed with breast cancer. The house they lived in was not wheelchair accessible and Kalinda found it increasingly difficult to get into, out of, and around the house. AgrAbility staff met with the Stadtmuellers and set out to design an accessible addition that both Kalinda and Al had wanted for quite some time. Al and his dad, who are grain farmers, will start construction after the spring planting season ends. The new addition will include a master bedroom, bath, and a craft/office room.

Kalinda enjoys spending time with her family, which usually includes making different crafts with her mom and niece. Both she and Al have become very close to their nieces and nephews. However, their support system doesn't stop there. A very close friend of Kalinda's comes to help take care of the house and both sets of parents live close enough to offer assistance to Al and Kalinda when they need it.

When asked what has kept her motivated in the 29 years since her diagnosis, she replied, "Faith is very important to me and has helped me through all of it. Al is the greatest support of all. He encourages me to be independent, but is always there when I need him."

MS RESOURCES

For further information concerning Multiple Sclerosis please visit the following websites:

Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers
Provides leadership in clinical research and education.
www.mscares.org/

Multiple Sclerosis International Federation
Offers a variety of informational resources, research, and symptoms and treatment.
www.msif.org/

National Multiple Sclerosis Society
This website is a leader in promoting advocacy on critical issues surrounding MS, including the latest advances in basic and clinical research.
www.nmss.org/

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

The Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) program will become mandatory on September 30, 2004. Iowa State University agricultural economists and veterinarians will present information on the COOL program at a satellite program on June 10, 2003 from 10:00 a.m. to noon. The Iowa Pork Industry, Iowa Beef Center, and ISU Extension will sponsor the program and all producers of livestock are invited to participate. For more information contact your local county extension offices or log on to
www.extension.iastate.edu/ipic/events.html.

Since spring has sprung and fieldwork for planting season has begun, the issues of soil management practices are rising again. Many ISU Extension agronomists are urging Iowa farmers to be aware of soil erosion and water quality. You are encouraged to visit the extension website at
www.extension.iastate.edu for tips, articles,

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and other resources that may benefit and enhance your fieldwork decisions.

With the warmer weather starting to appear, many tractors are left without the benefit of air conditioning. A company based out of Texas has been building air-conditioned cabs for tractors. For more information please contact them at (972) 647-1056 or log on to their website at www.visionaire-inc.com¹

AGRABILITY FRIENDS AND FAMILY

FREEWHEELERS FRIENDS & FAMILY

The next gathering will be held on June 7 at the Pizza Ranch in Waverly at 1:00 p.m.

SE REGION FRIENDS & FAMILY

On June 7 an Annual Picnic of the SE Region Friends & Family will be held. We will have more details later.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

“To find in ourselves what makes life worth living is risky business, for it means that once we know we must seek it. It also means that without it life will be valueless.”

- Marsha Sinetar

¹ Disclaimer:

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IOWA AGRABILITY - A joint effort of ISU Extension and the Farm Family Rehabilitation Management (FaRM) Program of Easter Seals Iowa. The program can help farm family members with a disability stay in farming.

This newsletter from the Iowa AgrAbility Project will be sent monthly to AgrAbility families and other interested individuals. Please send comments and suggestions to:

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Iowa AgrAbility Project

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