



AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

March 2004

Vol. 6, No. 3

MARCH MADNESS

CONTENTS:

- MARCH MADNESS
- RESOURCES
- ABOUT TRANSPORTATION
- CARM'S COMMENTS
- UPCOMING EVENTS
- NEWSLETTER THOUGHTS

MARCH MADNESS

Let's get ready to rumble! March Madness is the time for basketball fans everywhere to support their favorite teams and dig into all the hype that surrounds the games. This month we decided to find out a little more about the recreational activities that our consumers enjoy – including basketball. Our *AgrAbility Final Four* share their championship experiences in this March Madness edition of Chit Chat.

Wheelchair Basketball, Water Skiing, Hand Cycling, & Snowmobiling – Jon Jeffers

Hand cycling, water skiing, wheelchair basketball, and snowmobiling are just some of the things that keep Jon Jeffers active. Jon's injury in a motocross accident resulted in T4 paraplegia. Since the fall of 2001, Jon has been regaining his strength and abilities so that someday he can compete in a triathlon, much like one of his favorite motocross racers - David Bailey.

Hand Cycling: Since getting his hand cycle in October of 2002, Jon estimates that he's ridden almost 1000 miles. Some of that was getting ready for RAGBRI 2003, which he rode in a couple of days. Cycling is not something that comes easy because Jon only has use of his arms. Some hand cyclists are able to take advantage of the muscles in their stomach and back, but perhaps it's that added challenge that keeps Jon striving to move forward!

Wheelchair Basketball: Jon has played wheelchair basketball with a group he became involved with through Covenant Health System in Waterloo. The group practices in Waterloo and Jon has traveled to tournaments with them in St. Louis, Kansas City, and Lawrence. Although Jon likes playing, it involves a lot of travel for the team to come together.

Water Skiing: For the past couple summers Jon has traveled to the Waterloo area for skiing events he learned about through Covenant. Using special equipment and some helping hands he was able to water-ski. Jon says it wasn't pretty, but he did it!

Snowmobiling: Upon encouragement of one of his close friends, Jon transferred himself onto a snowmobile, got some help strapping himself onto the machine, and

AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

carefully rode off. Because of the way snowmobiles are designed, with controls on the handle bars and a long bench that's low to the ground, riding wasn't too difficult.

What's next for Jon? Shifter carting. The Full Circle Foundation has plans available to make a shifter go-kart (along with the ability to buy or donate one). Jon plans on using his motocross connections, go-karting friends, and mechanical ability to build a shifter cart. Life wasn't boring for him when he could walk and he doesn't intend for it to be now. There is no greater drug than adrenaline!

For more information on the Full Circle Foundation, write to them at 7551 Angels Alcove Court, Las Vegas, NV 89131 or go online to www.fullcirclefoundation.com. If you would like to contact Jon about any or all of the things he is doing, call Erin at 515-294-8522 to obtain his phone number.

Therapeutic Horseback Riding – Sandy Strum

Due to multiple sclerosis, Sandy Strum can't stand or walk and has trouble balancing – but that didn't stop her from riding a horse. In fact, with some help onto the horse and a few people at her sides, she rode for an entire hour for the first time in years! Sandy says it was “a lot of work” trying to get her body to balance – but she enjoyed the experience nonetheless. Because she was at a therapeutic riding center, she was secure knowing she was riding a specially trained horse and that volunteers were there to help her if she needed assistance. If you wish to contact Sandy, her phone number is 515-388-4488 and her email address is sjstrum@hotmail.com.

According to the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA), therapeutic riding is safe and accessible. For more information contact NARHA at 1-800-369-7433 or online at www.narha.org. To

find a center near you, go to www.narha.org/centers/findcenter.asp.

In addition, Chuck Larson, Rural Solutions, was in charge of a therapeutic riding center near Boone for nine years prior to working at Easter Seals. He would be happy to give you more information about his experiences and answer any questions you may have. His number is 515-289-1933 ext. 225.

Hunting – Chris Lemke

Chris Lemke lives north of Adair, Iowa and has always enjoyed hunting. For the past 10 years though, he's been deer hunting from his truck after experiencing a T-6 T-7 paraplegia. He shares that when you are limited in your mobility (in the cab of a truck) and shooting space (through the window) you have to be a much smarter hunter and know the paths deer take and the speed they travel. You also have to take a friend along to load your catch of the day! Chris would know – he has an 11 point, a 13 point, and a 14 point buck to his credit.

Noteworthy Advice: Chris realized that his pump shotgun made hunting difficult with his injury because of the pump action and switched to a semi automatic shotgun, which helped him be, in his words, “Way more accurate in the short time I've been shooting out the window.”

Call Chris at home between 5:00pm and 10:00pm to learn more, but don't call during hunting season because he won't be home! His number is 641-742-3211.

Basketball & Golf – Tony Wernimont

Tony Wernimont, Easter Seals Rural Solutions, says he's actually a better athlete without his left hand, which he lost in a farming accident during November of his senior year in high school. Just three weeks after his accident he started practicing again and two months later nailed a long 3-pointer against the defending state champions,

AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

among other contributions, as his team's top reserve player.

Tony also got involved with the Iowa Amputee Golf Association in Iowa and plays with them whenever he gets a chance. In addition to basketball and golf, Tony likes to play volleyball, paintball, swim, and weight lift – all of which he did throughout college. You can reach Tony at 515-289-1933 ext. 262. (EH)

RESOURCES

Challenged Athletes Foundation

A goal of the Challenged Athletes Foundation is, "to encourage youth and adults to discover their capabilities and realize new heights." One way they meet that goal is by sponsoring grants to help permanently disabled athletes of all ages and abilities. To find out more, visit them online at www.challengedathletes.org or call 858-793-9293.

Access to Recreation – Don Krebs

A source for purchasing recreational equipment is Access to Recreation. This company's president and founder, Don Krebs, is disabled himself and encourages everyone to be as active as possible. You can get more information online at www.accesstr.com or by calling 800-634-4351.

AllAbilities.Com

The website www.allabilities.com includes disability links for people of all abilities. More specifically, if you go to www.allabilities.com/sports.html there are numerous links for sports and recreation opportunities.

National Sports Center for the Disabled

With specially trained staff and its own adaptive equipment lab, the NSCD teaches a variety of summer and winter sports to individuals with almost any mental or

physical disability. Go to www.nscd.org/ or call 970-726-1540 to learn more.

ABOUT TRANSPORTATION

Carmen Schacht decided to offer her perspectives on independence, isolation, and transportation for her column as part of a series. Last month she wrote about purchasing her modified van. She will continue this month with problems she had and next month with some of her transportation fears. (EH)

CARM'S COMMENTS

It seems that just like with a normal vehicle, there can be problems with modified vehicles. The first problem I had with my new van was that the recommended feature to make steering easier for me broke. The feature was removed and I was able to drive without it.

The second problem was the time it took to open the doors of the vehicle. Mechanics tried moving the receiver, but I was told that airwaves were interfering with the remote controls. Third, my husband Everett and I were in a neighboring town when the door to the van wouldn't open. Everett had to manually open the doors with a little jack that was provided in case of a malfunction. Again, we went back to the dealer who had done our work, but this time found out that they had not allowed the proper amount of slack for the electrical equipment and the wires had been cut when the door closed.

The fourth and most frustrating thing that happened was that I would head for work and my van would only go about 35 miles an hour and then all of a sudden it would go at normal speed. We went back to the dealer several times and they tried to fix it but we still had the problem. We went to another dealer and they found that the hand controls were simply worn out. New ones were

AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

installed and have worked fine ever since. While we were visiting with the new dealer, he suggested a tie down for my scooter. I didn't know they even made such a thing! We were able to get one and I feel more secure using it.

When we purchased our second van, the 6 way seat, hand controls, scooter tie down were transferred to the new van but the lift was new. The only thing I don't like about it is that I can back over the side of this lift and my old one I couldn't do that. Luckily, it is not a safety danger because it is always on the ground when I back on.

With my experiences, I have gained knowledge on accessible transportation. It's obvious that not everyone has these experiences. The people who worked on our first van were friendly and tried to be helpful. However, after we bought our second van, my feeling is that the people we dealt with the first time around just did not have a lot of expertise on doing adaptations for accessible vehicles. Lesson: have your vehicle work done by someone with experience in accessible transportation!

Next month I will deal with some fears I always had if I should ever have an accident. (CS)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Freewheeler's Friends and Family

April 3, 2004 - 1:00 p.m.

Pizza Party (everyone share expenses)

Chickasaw Center

301 N. Water Avenue

New Hampton

Call Carm if you have questions or need directions at 563-547-2932.

Come join us!

Opening Doors: An Introduction to Iowa Able Loan Programs and other Opportunities for Iowans

Are you or a family member in need of assistive technology? The Iowa Able Foundation's goal is to put assistive technology within the reach of everyone who needs it, with the launch of two new loan programs:

Alternative Financing Program – A loan program for the purchase of assistive technology

Access to Telework Program – A loan program for the purpose of assistive technology that enables an individual to be self-employed or telecommute to work

To find out more about these programs and other opportunities attend this FREE training conference:

April 22, 2004

9:00am-3:30pm

Hotel Fort Des Moines

10th and Walnut, Des Moines

Contact Deb Kazmerzak at 515-243-2000 to register or with your questions.

NEWSLETTER THOUGHTS

Sun Safety will be the theme of the May 2004 newsletter. Please call or email me with your ideas for safe sun practices. I would be happy to write your remarks, suggestions, and experiences for others to learn from or be encouraged by in the upcoming Chit Chat Newsletter! My phone number is 515-294-8522 or send me an email at ehaafke@iastate.edu. (EH)

AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

IOWA AGRABILITY - A joint effort of ISU Extension and the Rural Solutions 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:

Erin Haafke, AgrAbility Program Specialist
96 LeBaron Hall, Ames, IA 50011
E-mail: ehaafke@iastate.edu
Phone: ISU Answerline at 1-800-262-3804
TDD: 1-800-854-1658.
Web site: www.extension.iastate.edu/agrability/

... and justice for all. The Iowa Cooperative Extension Service's programs and policies are consistent with pertinent federal and state laws and regulations on nondiscrimination regarding race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, and disability.

Iowa AgrAbility Project

Iowa State University
96 LeBaron Hall
Ames, IA 50011