



AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

May/June 2005

Vol. 7, No. 4

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

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A research team at Iowa State University has developed kitchen cabinets with *universal design* features that will be on display at the AgrAbility Family Fun Fest on June 18th. The goal is to have a kitchen that is appealing, convenient, and affordable for both disabled and non-disabled users. The modular cabinets are easy to adjust with a simple screwdriver to accommodate both seated and standing users, as well as persons of different heights and abilities. Mary Yearn, a member of the research team, will be demonstrating the special features of the cabinets and soliciting your feedback on the design ideas.

Universal design is design for the future. Manufacturers are learning that well-designed products make life easier for everyone—including people with disabilities. The Oxo Company makes a variety of kitchen products called “Good Grips” with large, easy-to-grip handles—everything from a potato peeler to a pizza cutter. More recent innovations include easy-to-read measuring cups and expandable dish drainers. “Good Grips” products can be found at local stores, such as Target, Younkers, or Bed, Bath, and Beyond. See the on-line catalog at: www.oxo.com or call 1-800-545-4411. See also the “Gadgets and Gizmos” section of the Iowa State

University Extension Web site on “Universal Design and Home Accessibility: www.extension.iastate.edu/universaldesign for more universal design ideas.

ANTHONY VANNONI

Anthony Vannoni has had a life-long passion for working with machinery. When he was growing up on the family farm, he loved climbing around on tractors. From 1967 to 1970, while serving in the Army in Viet Nam, he worked on heavy trucks and tanks. He continued his career as a diesel mechanic when he returned home to Iowa. Although his career was very enjoyable, Anthony stated: “The work was heavy, dirty, and paid little money.”

Anthony experienced a sudden life change after he had a cerebral hemorrhage in October of 2000. Anthony no longer has the use of his left arm and leg, and has left eye deficiency in both eyes. (Eyesight is a very complex issue and we have left and right vision in both eyes and Anthony no longer has the left vision in both eyes). Anthony has worked hard to regain his ability to speak and can now sit up again. Anthony stated, “Most of the things I enjoyed doing—including working as a diesel mechanic—are on hold at this time in my life.”

AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

Anthony has attended rehabilitation classes to learn about computers. As he family likes to say, he is learning “how to be in this century.” He practices eye therapy exercises, using a donated computer and special software programs he received. One program is called “Zoom Text for Humans,” which magnifies the screen 8 to 12 times. His long range goal is to be able to work in a parts store—using his newly acquired computer skills—so he can continue to use his mechanical knowledge.

The garage where his diesel mechanic tools are kept is now his favorite place to be. He enjoys easy-listening music on FM radio 104.1, although he is not into the “mushy stuff” that Delilah has in the evening. But when he talks about his wife, Mary Ann, you can tell the “mushy stuff” is in his heart.

Anthony currently uses two chair lifts, two standpoles, and a roll-in shower to help him be more independent. Anthony and Mary Ann are planning on selling their present home so they can find a house that is more accessible. AgrAbility staff will work with them to help identify features in a new home that would make daily life easier and more convenient.

Anthony and Mary Ann enjoy going out for breakfast nearly every morning at the Target Store Food Court in Ft. Dodge. Their favorite meal is scrambled eggs and coffee. His power wheelchair makes it easy for him to get out and talk with people and friends he knows. Anthony is proud of Mary Ann’s shopping ability, and says she is an avid bargain hunter. She likes the Repeat Boutique, Goodwill, and Salvation Army—all places where she finds very nice items at a good price.

Anthony and Mary Ann have been married for 39 years and have four children and five grandchildren. One son is following in Anthony’s footsteps as a diesel mechanic.

One daughter is a social worker in child services in Arizona. The youngest daughter still lives at home while working at Goodwill, attends Buena Vista College, and helps out her dad and mom at home. They belong to the Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Fort Dodge.

I really enjoyed visiting with Anthony over the phone for this interview. If you would like to visit with Anthony you can reach him at 515-576-5801. (Joyce Glenn).

TASTY NEWS!

May is beef month and Iowa State University researchers are working to make beef healthier for beef lovers to eat. Research has shown that the fatty acid composition (why beef tastes so good, but not good for us) of beef is inheritable. The researchers hope to establish the DNA markers so breeding stock can be selected to provide consumers with tasty and healthy beef. See: www.iowabeefcenter.org/content/maybeefmonth05releases.htm

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR FUN!

Remember the AgrAbility Family Fun Fest on June 18, 2005 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at Lon & Sandy Strum’s Farm, 59149 140th Street, Roland, Iowa. **Food, fun, and friends** will be order of the day. The **universal design kitchen trailer** will be at the farm for all to check out. Once you understand the concept you will be excited by the possibilities. We would love to see you there!

GREETINGS

I am Joyce Glenn, summer student intern, Iowa State University Extension. I was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa (a degenerative eye disease) and cataracts

AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

when I was 30 years old. That was almost 20 years ago. Now I plan to be graduating from Iowa State University in December 2005 with a double major in "Housing and the Near Environment" and "Child and Family Services," with the adult option, and a minor in sociology.

I use a variety of tools and techniques to read and deal with daily life and college, ranging from very simple and inexpensive to complex and expensive. I use a \$5 magnifying glass to check out words and numbers that are *fuzzy*. The "Jaws" computer program enables me to create, edit, and listen to documents on the computer and internet. It is a wonderful computer tool from the Freedom Scientific Company and costs around \$1,000:
<http://main.enablemart.com/productDetail.aspx?store=10&pid=483&dept=12>

I use a long white cane at night due to night blindness (one of the first signs of retinitis pigmentosa). I love my talking alarm clock; it has the sound of a crowing rooster for one of its alarm alerts.

I have received training at the Iowa Department for the Blind in Des Moines. The classes there included cooking, cane travel, writing and reading Braille, and woodworking (yes, I used power tools and enjoyed it). I also learned that being blind does not mean you stand on a street corner with a tin cup. Persons with low vision or blindness can work and raise children and LIVE a life. My ISU email address is onejoyce@iastate.edu

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:

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