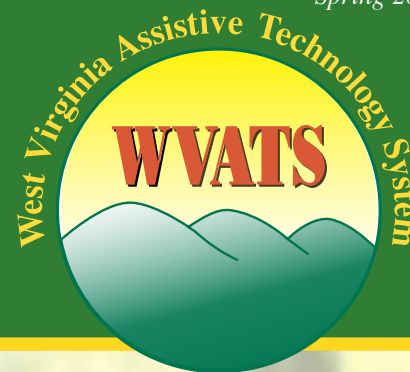


# WVATS

## Newsletter



# Assistive Technology

Gardening is a great way to grow healthy food, save money and reduce stress. Over time, gardening may cause pain as you grip tools, plant seeds, turn soil, and kneel, stoop or bend. Accessible gardening, such as raised beds, growing plants upside down and hydroponic gardening (growing plants without soil) can make gardening easy.

## In the Garden

### Gardening Tips

Here are some tips to common gardening troubles:

#### Gripping or Squeezing Tools

Put foam grips around the handles. This makes the tool's handle bigger, making it easier to grip. Many tools that make you grip and squeeze at the same time, like pruners, are now being made with ratchets. Ratchets make gripping and squeezing easier because you can let go of your grip while the ratchet holds the tool (pruners) in the squeezed position. This lets you keep the tool squeezed but you do not have to use a constant grip.

#### Digging or Breaking Up the Soil

Hydroponic gardening lets you garden without soil. There are many kits available, or you can grow plants using a soil substitute such as peat moss, gravel, perlite, sand and saw dust.

#### Small Seeds

Some seeds are so small it is hard to see them or plant them one by one. Hand held seeders are easy to use assistive technology devices that can help plant seeds of all sizes.

#### Bending, Stooping or Crouching

Planting, weeding and harvesting all require a lot of bending, stooping and crouching. These movements can be lessened by using steerable rolling seats. These seats are on wheels so you can garden while sitting without having to get up.

Raised beds, vertical gardening and container gardening are other ways to reduce stooping and bending.

The WVATS Loan Library has many gardening tools available to try. For more ideas on accessible gardening, using assistive technology in your garden or ergonomic tools, call Green Thumbs, Healthy Joints at **800-841-8436** or your local extension agent.

# The Adventures of Frank Young

## Where There's a Will There's a Way

Fifty-seven years ago, Frank Young's life took a turn when he was in a car accident. The accident left Frank paralyzed from the chest down and with limited use of his arms and hands. While his day-to-day life may have changed, Frank's love for life has not.

For the first fifteen years of his life, Frank enjoyed the same things typical boys enjoy: hunting, fishing, football and chasing girls. After spending two years in the hospital, Frank returned to his life and high school with the same interests. While playing football was not an option, Frank did not give up his passion for the outdoors and continued to hunt and fish with his friends and family.

Through the use of assistive technology, much of which he made himself, Frank makes his way into the woods every year to enjoy one of West Virginia's most popular past times, deer hunting.

Frank has designed and created many hunting chairs. His current chair lets him turn completely around while staying in the same spot. Frank gets dropped off for the day at his hunting location by friends or family using an ATV.

At the age of 72, Frank is finding assistive technology even more useful as his body ages. This year, he was worried he would not be able to pull the trigger on his rifle because his fingers do not bend as well as they used to. Frank made a splint-type device that he can tape to his finger to place it in the trigger-pulling position. This lets him fire his rifle by pulling his arm back. Frank's self-made assistive technology was successful; he killed an 8-point buck during the 2010 hunting season.

For more information on adapting devices and assistive technology call WVATS at **800-841-8436**.



## What's New for Exchange?

The **WVATS Exchange System** lets people find assistive technology for sale or giveaway. To place an item on the WVATS Exchange System or to find devices, visit [vll.cedwvu.org](http://vll.cedwvu.org). For more information, call WVATS at **800-841-8436**.

These and other items are available for free on the Exchange System:

### Emson Super Sewing Machine

The Emson Super Sewing Machine is a small, portable device that lets the user fix tears and rips. This device can be used to hem pants or mend shirts. Those with a flair for design can use the Emson Super Sewing Machine to add decorations to clothing or design their own patterns.

### iOne Trackball

The iOne Trackball has a large ball for precise fingertip control. It also offers three access buttons to let the user control their computer without lifting a hand.



## April is Fair Housing Month

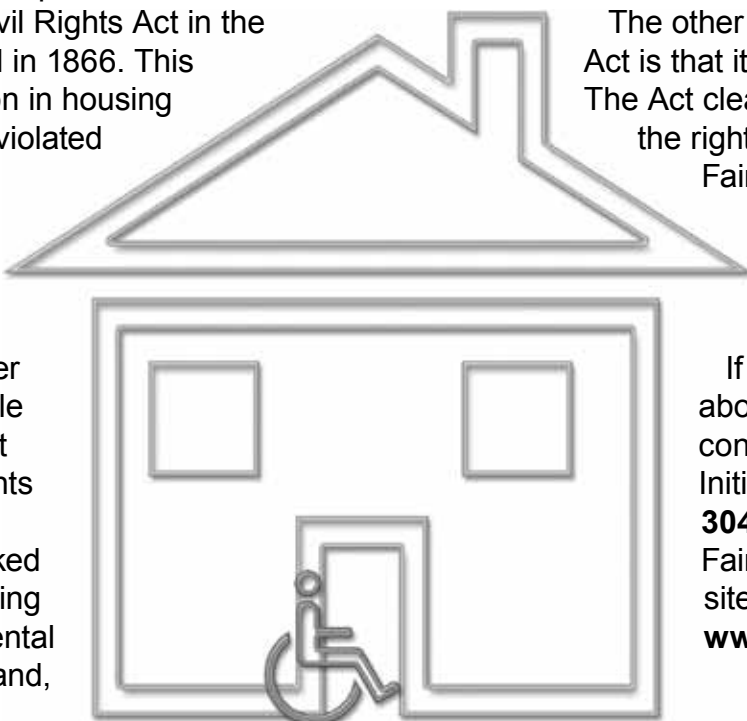
The Fair Housing Act is a big part of civil rights history. When asked, many people will tell you that the first Civil Rights Act was passed in the 1960's. But the truth is the first Civil Rights Act in the United States was passed in 1866. This act looked at discrimination in housing based on race but, if you violated the act, there were few punishments.

Over the years, other civil rights laws were put in place and other protected classes of people were added to race. But, it was not until the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (Fair Housing Act) that housing was looked at in detail. The Fair Housing Act addresses the sale, rental and financing of housing and,

most important, the act includes penalties for those who do not adhere to the Act.

The other key part of the Fair Housing Act is that it protects housing advocates. The Act clearly says that advocates have the right to help people exercise their Fair Housing rights and that it is against the law to strike back against the person or the advocate.

If you would like to know more about the Fair Housing Act, contact the WV Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) at **304-296-6091** or visit the WV Fair Housing Action Network web site at [www.wvfairhousing.org](http://www.wvfairhousing.org).



Call WVATS Toll Free 800-841-8436



## Intel Reader

The Intel Reader changes printed text to spoken word. The Intel Reader can be used to take a picture of text and the device will read the text aloud. The user can read the text or store it to listen to later. The Intel Reader weighs a little more than a pound and is about the size of a paperback book. The mobile Intel Reader can be used at school, work, home or on the go.

For more information or to purchase the Intel Reader, visit [www.humanware.com](http://www.humanware.com) or call **800-722-3393**.

## Faucet Light

The faucet light allows a user to check water temperature visually. The light turns “red” when the temperature hits 89°F and “blue” when the water is cold. No batteries or special tools are needed for this device; simply screw it on to your faucet. It works on most faucets and includes “universal” adaptors. A larger device is also available for showers.

For more information or to purchase a faucet light, visit [www.flaghouse.com](http://www.flaghouse.com) or call **800-793-7900**.



## CamScanner Free

CamScanner Free is a free application for the iPhone. CamScanner Free is a scanner that lets your iPhone scan and save all of your paper documents, receipts and notes. The application comes with a free tutorial that explains how to use it.

For more information search **camscanner free** in iTunes.



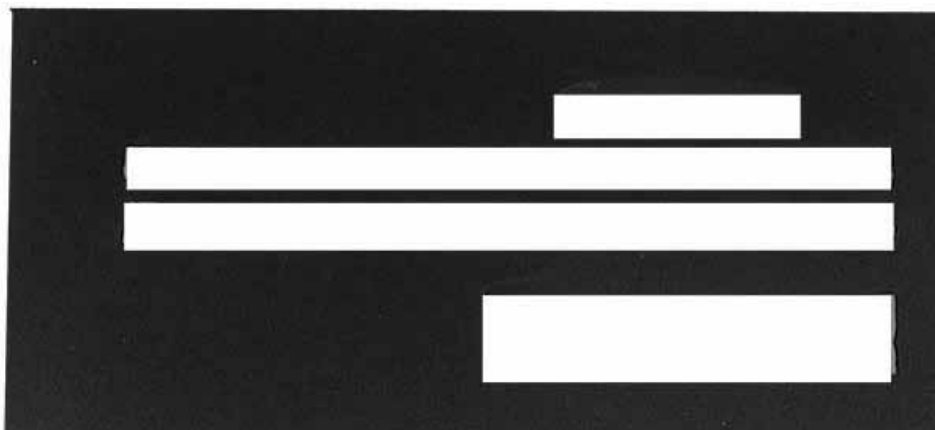
## Talking Photo Album

The Talking Photo Album can be a tool for creating and maintaining activity schedules, social stories, sequencing tasks or reminders. The book has 24 pages and offers up to 10 seconds of recordable sound for each page. This tool can be changed to meet each individual's needs.

For more information or to purchase a talking photo album, visit [www.difflearn.com](http://www.difflearn.com) or call **800-853-1057**.

## Writing Guides

Writing guides can be useful to individuals with low-vision. This plastic check writing guide is made of heavy-duty plastic and has cutouts to help in writing the information on a standard 2 3/4" x 6 inch check. There are many writing guides for writing letters, addressing envelopes and for signatures. Writing guides can also be made at home using the cardboard from a cereal box, ruler and box cutter.



For more information or to buy a writing guide, visit [www.independentliving.com](http://www.independentliving.com) or call **800-537-2118**.

## AT Clinic Success

WVATS demonstrates assistive technology at the Assistive Technology Clinic at the Center for Excellence in Disabilities at WVU. The Clinic provides consumers with clinical assessments for computer access, environmental controls, adaptations to living and work environments, activities of daily living and leisure activities. Mary came to the clinic because her vision is limited and she was looking for assistive technology that would help her around her house.

WVATS was able to show her devices that she could use in her home, including a large button telephone, magnifiers and writing guides. Mary used the loan library to borrow a large button telephone and a magnifier to try out at home. The Clinic staff also provided her with a large, desktop magnifier and a bookstand from the WVATS Exchange System.

During a follow-up call, Mary stated, "I'm going to get a big button phone and I'm thinking about getting the writing guide kit." When asked if the magnifier and bookstand were working for her, she replied, "They work and help me a good bit."



Call WVATS Toll Free **800-841-8436**

## Spotlight: Upcoming Events

### Special Ed Law Training

West Virginia Advocates will be hosting “Wrightslaw Special Education Law and Advocacy Boot Camp” on April 20-21, 2011 at Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, WV. The training will be led by Pete and Pam Wright, national experts in the field of special education law and advocacy. Wrightslaw programs can help parents, advocates, educators, attorneys and health care providers who work with children with disabilities.

During the training, participants will learn about changes in **IDEA 2004**. These changes include new requirements, new eligibility issues for students with

certain learning disabilities, and new procedural requirements and timelines.

Participants will also learn about **No Child Left Behind**. These requirements include reading and research based instruction, highly qualified teachers, parental rights and options and high stakes testing.

For more information call WV Advocates at **800-950-5250** or visit [wvadvocates.org/wrightslaw-2011](http://wvadvocates.org/wrightslaw-2011).

### Higher Ed Conference: Better Learning by Design

The Higher Education Access Project at the Center for Excellence in Disabilities at WVU will be hosting a Universal Design conference for West Virginia University, Potomac State and West Virginia University Institute of Technology educators, professors, departmental deans and faculty members that work with students with disabilities. The conference will take place April 6-7, 2011 at the Waterfront Place Hotel.

PATHS, Inc. will have a vendor fair at the conference. **The vendor fair will be open to the public at no charge on Wednesday, April 6<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm.** This will provide families and professionals with the opportunity to speak to assistive technology vendors and see the devices they have to offer.

For more information call Todd Rundle at **800-841-8436** or e-mail [higheredaccess@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:higheredaccess@hsc.wvu.edu).

## Resources

### Dictionary.com

The Dictionary.com web site lets users search for the meanings of words. It has a dictionary, thesaurus, flashcards, quotes, encyclopedia and translator. The dictionary feature also allows the user to hear the word spoken aloud. For more information visit [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com).

### Adaptive Technology Help Desk

The Adaptive Technology Help Desk at the Chicago Lighthouse for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired can help people who are blind or visually impaired, as well as people who work with this population such as employers, teachers, counselors and others. The help desk helps with a variety of technology issues. The service is available free of charge. For information or assistance call **888-825-0080** or e-mail [ray.campbell@chicagolighthouse.org](mailto:ray.campbell@chicagolighthouse.org).

## FEMA Changes

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has new emergency sheltering guidelines to help state planners and non-profit organizations. These suggestions make sure people with access and functional needs get fair assistance after disasters.



Photo courtesy of  
Jocelyn Augustino/FEMA

The Functional Needs Support Services Guidance, or FNSS, gives ideas to state governments to help them with emergency sheltering services. These ideas help them to meet the needs of their communities and make sure they follow federal laws that put a stop to discrimination on the basis of disability. The FNSS helps emergency managers plan for meeting the needs of the whole community.

The FNSS is under Preparedness Resources on the FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination website [www.fema.gov/about/odic](http://www.fema.gov/about/odic) or call **800-621-3362** for more information.

## HUD Section 811

On January 4, President Obama signed the Frank Melville Supportive Housing Investment Act of 2010 into law. This law updates the HUD Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities Program. Section 811 helps people with disabilities and low incomes under the age of 60 live in their community of choice.

The new Section 811 program will:

- Create more affordable housing options
- Increase access to community services and supports
- Provide housing where there is accessible transportation
- Protect renters from being removed from their homes without cause

For more information visit [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov) or call **304-347-7000**.

## A Day of Accessible Recreation

**What:** Pittsburgh Pirates vs. Baltimore Orioles

**Where:** PNC Park

**When:** June 21, 2011

**Cost:** \$40 includes a ticket to the game, accessible bus ride from Morgantown and a t-shirt.

For more information contact Regina Mayolo at **304-293-4692 ext. 1142** or e-mail [rmayolo@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:rmayolo@hsc.wvu.edu).



## Mountain State APSE



Employment leaders in West Virginia started a State chapter of the Association for People in Supported Employment (APSE) in late 2010. APSE is a national program that works for fair

employment. West Virginia's Mountain State APSE chapter plans to raise the number of West Virginians with disabilities who have jobs. The chapter also promotes the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.

Mountain State APSE had a disability awareness training in November 2010. Disability rights advocate Rich Pimentel spoke at the training. Dr. Pimentel is a Vietnam Veteran. He played a large role in getting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) passed. His life story was made into the film "Music Within."

Dr. Pimentel told stories about being poor when he was a child and the hard times he had as a veteran with a disability. He also spoke about his friendship with a person with cerebral palsy and his fight for the rights of people with disabilities. The event brought people together who want to make sure all West Virginians have a chance at fair employment.

In 2011, the 20 founding board members plan to build on the success from the Dr. Pimentel event. The board is looking for members-at-large to join the Mountain State APSE chapter. Anyone with a disability or in the disability services field can become a member. Student memberships are also available. For more information on membership, contact Russell Sickles at **304-848-0850 x104** or **rsickles@jobsquadinc.org**.

To learn more about APSE, visit **www.apse.org**. To learn more about the Mountain State APSE chapter, visit **www.apse.org/chapters/**.



### Top Five Reasons to Join APSE

1. Be part of a growing national employment movement for people with disabilities.
2. Advocate for the rights of people with disabilities.
3. Change public policy to make sure there is fair employment for ALL West Virginians.
4. Meet people and businesses with the same goals.
5. Know about new employment materials, trainings and conferences.



## Job Accommodation Network



The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a national source of free information on workplace accommodations. JAN staff is trained to give information on many disability employment issues. JAN's services help people with disabilities and their families, employers and individuals working with people with disabilities.

The JAN web site includes:

- An **ADA Library** that explains the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its changes
- **Publications** sorted by disability, occupation, product/service and topic
- **SOAR (Searchable Online Accommodation Resource)** lets people see accommodation options for work and educational settings
- **A to Z of Disabilities and Accommodations** provides accommodation ideas for specific disabilities.

### Individuals with Disabilities (<http://askjan.org/individ/index.htm>):

JAN offers free sessions to talk about job or education accommodation options and rights for people with a disability. JAN does not help people find jobs. It does have information for people looking for jobs, such as links to places that help find or have jobs for people with disabilities.

### Employers (<http://askjan.org/empl/index.htm>):

JAN is also a resource for employers. Employers can call JAN with questions about the job accommodation process. They also provide help with compliance and other issues. JAN can recommend products for accommodations.

### Others (<http://askjan.org/others/index.htm>):

JAN has free services for professionals working with people with disabilities. The JAN web site has information for many service providers.

### Training (<http://askjan.org/training/index.htm>):

Anyone who wants to learn more about employment and accommodations for people with disabilities can use one of JAN's training options. JAN offers training for the workplace, or people can attend a JAN presentation that is part of the "JAN On-the Road" tour. Trainings are also online through free webcasts and podcasts. Anyone can get training materials online.

For more information visit <http://askjan.org> or call **800-526-7234**.

## Nat'l AgrAbility Training Week in Charleston



West Virginia AgrAbility hosted this year's National AgrAbility Training Week (NATW) at the Charleston Marriott Town Center. The conference had the highest number of people on record, 186. Thirty farmers came to the conference. This set another record. Most farmers who came were clients of AgrAbility services. A big draw for farmers was the small farmer/rancher information track, which was new for NATW this year.

Staff came from AgrAbility projects all over the nation. NATW was happy to welcome re-funded projects as well as new state and regional projects: Arkansas, Kentucky, Maine, Tennessee and Texas. People from Idaho, North Carolina and Guam also came to find out how to bring the National AgrAbility Project to their area.

State and regional projects talked about issues and challenges facing farmers with disabilities, general project management and project outreach. The group talked about funding sources for making farms accessible, using assistive technology, safer farming habits and avoiding secondary injuries. Outreach for veterans, caregivers and people who have traumatic brain injuries was also a group topic. New to the agenda were formal discussions on small farm operations; creating peer support networks for farmers with disabilities; and increased interest and demand for accessible gardening.

Staff from WVU's Extension Service Small Farm Center put on the small farmer/rancher information track. This track talked about challenges facing small farm businesses and managing methods. Some examples of topics were: marketing, financial and business management, season extension, irrigation, and small farm risks and taxes.

As always, AgrAbility mixed a little fun with business. An auction was held during the conference to raise money for AgrAbility's Farmer Scholarship Fund. Scholarships help pay travel and conference fees for farmers who are consumers of AgrAbility's services to come to NATW. Each state project donated items to the auction. Staff of all state and regional AgrAbility projects made item bids. This year's auction made a record amount for the scholarship fund, \$4600.00.

Traditionally, the last day of the conference is a 'tour day' directed by the hosting staff. The purpose of the tour is to highlight the hosting state. The people who came to the conference had tours of the USDA Research Center outside of Beckley and the Exhibition Coal Mine. Tamarack was also visited for lunch and shopping.

Next year's conference will be hosted by the National Project in Indianapolis, November 7-11, 2011. 2011 marks AgrAbility's 20th year of being federally funded through the 1991 Farm Bill. Please join us to mark this milestone.



## Farm-Made Assistive Technology

Spring brings flowers and warm sunshine, but also gives us a lot of work to do in our yards, gardens and on our farms. Farmers and gardeners across the country have come up with home made assistive technology solutions for the hassle we all face this time of year: safely and easily transporting tools across our yards and fields. For more information on these ideas, please refer to *Farm Show* and *Progressive Farmer* or call WV AgrAbility at **800-841-8436**.

You never know when you will need your weed eater this time of year. Always have it on-hand by mounting it to your tractor or quad.

- Weld a hook near the top end of a 3 ½ foot long piece of square tubing. The hook will hold the weed eater's handle.
- Weld metal straps farther down the square tubing to keep the weed eater shaft from swinging back and forth.
- Either weld or bolt the square tubing to the tractor's fender.  
(Adopted from *Farm Show*, volume 34, no. 4)

Tired of running back and forth for tools? Arm yourself with your shovel, rake, hoes and other necessary tools by attaching a tool holder to your front end loader.

- Use a flathead bolt or weld 2x2 inch square tubing to the tower column of your front end loader.
- Insert a carriage bolt through the bottom end of the open tube to keep handles from going through the tube. The open end lets dirt and water fall through.
- To more easily insert handles into the tube, cut the top end of the tube at a 45 degree angle.  
(Adopted from *Farm Show*, volume 34, no. 3)

Make riding around on your ATV with your chain saw safer by building your own chain saw holder. All you need are wood scraps, wood screws and two bolts with wing nuts.

- Make your chain saw sheath from two pieces of plywood, with narrower pieces of wood being spacers between them. Make sure the opening is wide enough to slide the chain saw snugly inside.
- Screw the wood together with six screws on each side
- Attach the sheath to the outside rack frame with two wooden plates and bolts with wing nuts

If you mount the sheath on the outside of the rack frame and above the hitch, you can still carry other cargo and use the hitch.

(Adapted for *Progressive Farmer*, February 2010)



A modified ATV with a storage box and chainsaw mount. This one is constructed out of diamond plate instead of wood.



## Contact WVATS

Center for Excellence in Disabilities  
West Virginia University  
959 Hartman Run Road  
Morgantown, WV 26505  
304-293-4692  
Hotline: 800-841-8436  
TTY: 800-518-1448

Web site address: [www.wvats.cedwvu.org](http://www.wvats.cedwvu.org)



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## Green Thumbs, Healthy Joints

### Did You Know?

Digging in the dirt can help pain and soreness caused by arthritis in your hands and wrists. Amber Wolfe from the Arthritis Foundation, Indiana Chapter, explains. "The actual temperature of the soil (usually warmer than the temperature of the hands during gardening season) can actually help sore hands by warming the joints and allowing more blood flow. The actual act of digging, while physical, is very therapeutic because it only requires small movements and does not require any heavy lifting. Small movements can be managed by the larger wrist joints so the fingers and knuckles do not experience as much pain."



For a list of everyday things you can do to care for your arthritis, visit [www.arthritis.org/how-to-care-for-yourself.php](http://www.arthritis.org/how-to-care-for-yourself.php) or call **800-283-7800**.