

Grange Helps Hearing Impaired

BY
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Crawford Co. Correspondent
SAEGERTOWN — At their Annual Thanksgiving Dinner on November 22, a television, videocassette recorder and close caption decoder were presented to the

Hand Talk Club by Margaret Tau on behalf of Hayfield Grange. It was due to the Grange's Deaf Awareness program that the Deaf Club was first organized in Crawford County 10 to 15 years ago by Sally Demmler, a hearing impaired teacher for the NW Tri-

County Intermediate Unit. Demmler taught sign language courses to several members of Hayfield Grange and the club met for three or four years and then disbanded.

In the meantime, through Grange efforts, TTY's, telecommunications decoders, were installed in the Meadville City Police Department and Crawford County Fire Control to enable the hearing impaired to utilize emergency services. The Easter Seal Society also became involved when they purchased TTY's for members of the hearing impaired community and offered sign language courses.

Two years ago, after several years of dormancy, the Deaf Club was reactivated by Margaret Tau, Community Services Chairperson for Hayfield Grange. The group of 40 members changed its name to "Hand Talk Club," and now meets monthly at either the Saegertown United Methodist Church or at the Hayfield Grange Hall. Joyce Hannold, a member of the hearing impaired community, sends out post cards to notify members of

meeting dates. The only criteria for membership is interest; the club, whose main purpose is socialization, is open to both the hearing and the hearing impaired.

One family that regularly attends meetings of the Hand Talk Club is the Murphys of Conneautville. Joe and Peggy Murphy have four sons; two are hearing and two are deaf. Joe is a carpenter who enjoys raising 15 to 25 head of Hereford-Angus cattle in his spare time. The Murphys moved from Bucks County to their 64 acre farm in 1976. At that time, Joe hoped to make his living raising cattle, but now realizes that his operation would need to be a lot bigger to support them. For now, he is content to enjoy raising beef mainly for his family's use.

The Murphy boys help with the farm chores, but the younger ones "can't reach the pedals on the tractor yet." Murphy spoke of his oldest son Joey, 23, and 11 year old David who are both hearing impaired. Joey is very talented at fixing things. Said Murphy, "He can see what needs to be done...he can see the way things work." He

describes David as "a go-getter." David recently knocked at 84 houses to collect pledges for a ride-a-thon for St. Jude's Hospital sponsored by Northwestern Elementary School in Albion where he attends. David rode 26 miles in the contest and won first prize—a 10-speed bike.

The Murphys all enjoy the fellowship they find in the Hand Talk Club and describe Hayfield Grange Community Service Chairperson Margaret Tau as the "backbone of the organization." According to Murphy, Mrs. Tau is the one that keeps things going. Under her leadership, the Hayfield Grange asked the State Grange Deaf Activities Committee for funds to purchase a television, videocassette recorder and a close caption decoder in order to purchase the equipment for the Hand Talk Club to enjoy movies. Funds are sent to the State Committee by Subordinate and Pomona Granges and the State Committee then considers requests from different Granges throughout the state.

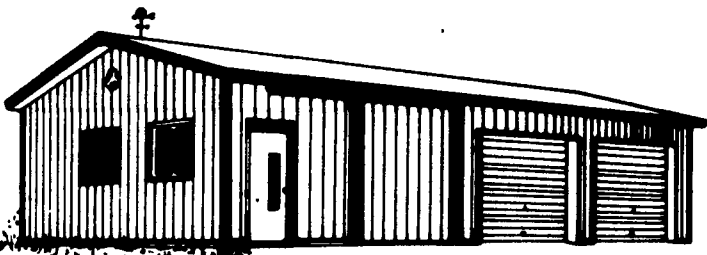


EQUIPMENT DONATED — Joyce Hannold, left, and David Murphy, members of the Hand Talk Club, pose with Hayfield Grange Community Service Chairperson Margaret Tau to show the television, videocassette recorder and close caption decoder presented to the club by Tau on behalf of Hayfield Grange. The equipment was purchased through funds donated by the State Grange Deaf Activities Committee.

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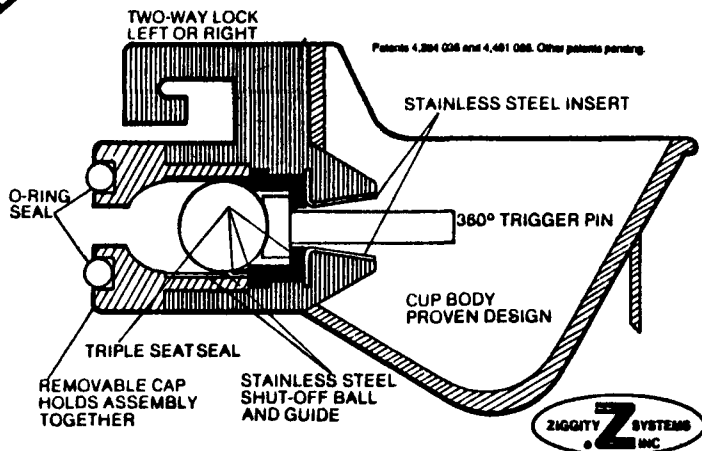
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