

New mower is answer to "Christmas Wish" for local man

Don't be surprised if lawn-mowing season arrives a little early to the 100 block of Nevada Street in Glidden. Although it's January, it may be a little difficult keeping Jack Tryon from firing up the brand new John Deere 176 riding mower Nate Puck of Horizon Equipment in Manning delivered on Jan. 3.

As you may have guessed, there's more to this story than another guy getting a new lawnmower. The mower was a Christmas Wish that was granted as part of Carroll Broadcasting's "All I Want For Christmas" program where listeners sent letters making requests to Carroll Broadcasting. Through public and private donations, as many wishes as possible were granted.

This particular letter was sent to the radio stations by Tryon's sister, Sandy, who is also Jack's legal guardian. The brother and his younger sister lived the early part of their life in this area then the family moved to Colorado where they grew up. Their mother, Maxine Tryon, moved back here and lives in an apartment in Glidden. Sandy and Jack moved here in November 2005 and live together in a house.

"I call him Amazing Jack," the letter began. The letter explained how five years ago, at age 47, Jack suffered a serious stroke that affected the left side of his brain, the side that controls thought process and speech. Sandy stated, "It was so bad that they gave him only 12 hours to live. His brain was so damaged that the doctors had to have a meeting to decide if they would take him into rehab. They did only because he was so young. They left basically no hope for any recovery."

After six weeks in rehab, his siblings picked him up and drove him to Sandy's home at the time in Missouri. Jack went from being totally bedridden and needing maximum assistance to one day surprising Sandy by flinging the bedroom door open. Jack had gotten himself into the wheelchair in the room and had figured out how it worked. "He was all smiles," Sandy wrote. "I cried," she added.

Once in-home therapy stopped, the family drove him to get help in learning again to walk, dress himself, etc. "Speech was his biggest obstacle and still is. He has taught us how to communicate. 'Show me' is a term I use a lot when he gets frustrated. Next step is 'draw me a picture.' Words are hard, but he is very sharp with numbers on paper."

She wrote how Jack pushes himself daily with exercise on both an exercise bike and a stepper. "He takes on jobs around the house to help. He was an active person before the stroke and needs to be needed." The stroke left his right arm and hand inactive, but Sandy wrote how Jack washes dishes with one hand and always has coffee made.

The letter went on to explain how Jack worked his way up to mowing the yard last summer after a cousin donated an old push lawnmower. "Jack wanted to mow. He figured out how to start it. He did about two sweeps and was worn out. Mind you, he does this with one hand. At the end of the summer he could do the whole yard and was very proud of what he did!"

Sandy tried to buy a good riding

The Tryon family received a phone call from Carroll Broadcasting telling them their wish had been granted, and then some! Not only were they receiving, free of charge, a riding mower with controls on the left side, but it was a NEW John Deere!

crete slab where a car is normally parked.

Puck was asked why his company agreed to become involved and grant this wish. "Lynda called and read the letter. We thought it was a worthwhile project."

Dukes said this was the first time



In the Driver's Seat!

Jack Tryon sits on his brand new John Deere riding lawn mower moments after it was delivered to his Glidden home. Looking on (l-r) are his sister, Sandy, Nate Puck of Horizon Equipment in Manning and Kim Hackett, General Manager of Carroll Broadcasting. The mower came from Horizon Equipment through Carroll Broadcasting's "All I Want For Christmas" program. The gift was delivered on January 3.

Moments prior to the mower's arrival, Jack, Sandy, Maxine, and a cousin, Paul "Frosty" Walkup, were in the kitchen of Sandy and Jack's home. They were discussing how excited Jack was to be receiving such a coveted gift and mentioned his excitement kept him from sleeping all that well the night before. Before long, Sandy looked out the front door and yelled, "It's a John Deere, Jack!" Jack, whose vocabulary of less than 10 words includes some profanity, not unusual for stroke victims, exclaimed, "H-e-e-y! G _ D _!"

The gathering moved outdoors on an unusually warm afternoon. Kim Hackett, General Manager of Carroll Broadcasting, and Lynda Dukes of Carroll Broadcasting introduced themselves and Mr. Puck. A moment later Jack was sitting on his brand new riding lawnmower. He started it up and drove it a short distance forward and back on the con-

crete slab where a car is normally parked. Puck was asked why his company agreed to become involved and grant this wish. "Lynda called and read the letter. We thought it was a worthwhile project."

Dukes said this was the first time in the eight years of the program that wishes were opened up to adults. The outpouring of letters from the public was so massive all requests simply couldn't be met. Upon seeing Jack on that lawnmower, she was asked how she felt knowing she helped his wish come true. "There are no words," Dukes responded.

Hackett said the mower was one of the biggest items ever received through the program and she reiterated thanks to Horizon Equipment. On-site visits with the recipients of "All I Want For Christmas" gifts have not been common, especially when the program was only for children. Parents would go to the radio station and pick up the gift. "This is awesome! It makes it all worthwhile," Hackett added.

Jack can't say the words "Thank You," but he and his family showed their appreciation with hugs and smiles, and perhaps a tear or two. And why not? It was an "Amazing" kind of day!