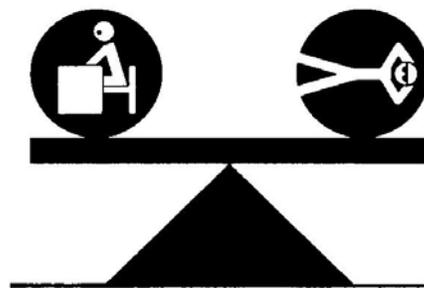


# POST POLIO PACER

*Conserving Strength and Energy through Pacing*  
*July 2009 — Madison, Wisconsin*  
*Madison Area Post Polio Support Group Newsletter*  
*MAPPSG formed in 1985*



## DON'T MISS THIS SPECIAL EVENT

**Sat., August 1, 2009, 3-4:30**

Did you wish you could have attended the Post Polio Health 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference in Warm Springs, GA in April?

Well, you can have the next best thing if you come to Oakwood-East to hear Holly Nickeson Mirrell, polio survivor, from Champaign-Urbana, Illinois share her experience at the event. She will have many pieces of literature from the conference available for your perusal.

You will also be able to participate in a question and answer session following her presentation.

Directions to Oakwood-East:

Take E. Washington Ave. (Hwy.151) to American Parkway exit. Follow around on American Parkway to Tancho Drive (on right). Signs are there for Oakwood-East. Turn at the first left into parking lot and enter canopied entrance-5565 Tancho Drive.

Someone will be at the door to open it as no one is at the desk on weekends. The room reserved is the chapel--upon entering, turn left and go down the ramp to the chapel. Please be prompt as the room is reserved for our group from 3-4:30.

Why Oakwood-East? Holly's mom, Ginny Nickeson lives there and has graciously made the arrangements for us.

Come and meet Holly Mirrell and her mom, Ginny. Learn the latest in equipment, medical care, and treatment for post polio survivors.



*Put Sat., August 1 on your  
calendar now.*

## Congratulations, Gail

*The following article is reprinted with the permission of UW-Platteville. Gail Kempfer was one of several people presented with a Distinguished Alumni award on May 9, 2009.*

### KEMPFER HONORED FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

#### **Polio could not slow down her life or career**

Gail Harvey Kempfer contracted polio at the end of second grade, which resulted in the use of leg braces and crutches for many years.

Undeterred, Kempfer completed her schooling, graduated from DeForest High School in 1960 and enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville.



This was long before the Americans with Disabilities Act and accommodations for students with disabilities. Kempfer found a helpful student body and campus community, which provided support and assistance. She earned her UWP degree in education in 1964.

Kempfer was hired as the middle school librarian at Patrick Marsh Middle School in Sun Prairie. She enhanced her professional development by attending UW Madison to earn the credits necessary to get a Wisconsin DPI library media specialist's license.

Kempfer made the library a welcoming place for the children it served.

One of her greatest accomplishments was designing the library media center for the Patrick Marsh Middle School. In recognition of her outstanding work as an educator, Kempfer was awarded a 2001 Crystal Apple Award, presented by NBC Channel 15, Madison.

Kempfer served the Sun Prairie School District for 41 years, retiring in 2005.

In the late 1990s, Kempfer began to develop post-polio syndrome. Her new challenges led to her working with others to co-found the Madison Area Post Polio Support Group. MAPPSPG is an organization for polio survivors, spouses, family members and friends with a mission of building relationships, sharing polio related information, and gaining new knowledge about the disease and syndrome. MAPPSPG publishes a newsletter, the Post Polio Pacer. Kempfer serves on the executive planning committee.

Kempfer is active in her community. She is a church moderator and board member and has taught Sunday school for 30 years. Additionally, Kempfer has been a 4H leader and a guide at the state of Wisconsin Executive Residence. She is involved in children's activities, assisting with Puppet PALS, an early esteem building program through Head Start; First Book, a reading incentive program through the American Association of Univer-

sity Women; and an intergenerational book discussion group, sponsored by the RSVP organization.

Residing in DeForest, Kempfer is the mother of two children and has two grandchildren. She enjoys attending plays, reading, music and bridge.

**Editor's Note:** *The Madison Area Post Polio Support Group was started in 1985, not in the 1990s as indicated above, by Gail Kempfer, Fayth Kail, Betty Leiser, Pat DesNoyers and JoAnn Ulvestad, with assistance from Cleo Eliason, then with Easter Seals, and Jane Clay, RN, then with University Hospital.*

*Thanks to Fayth Kail for sending us the above article published in the DeForest Times-Tribune.*

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## Be Thankful for What Is By Kathleen Blair

On September 30, 1955, Dr. Meyer at the Medford Clinic ordered a spinal tap and then told me, "You have polio." I was terrified. My golden birthday had been 11 days earlier, September 19th. I was 19 years old.

This was one of those bad things I thought would never happen to me. I thought of everything I had heard about people dying from polio, living in iron lungs, wearing braces or using a wheelchair and being crippled for life, while lying there alone waiting for transportation to St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield 35 miles away. Those four dull green walls closed in on me—I was dangerous—contagious—and no one wanted to come near me.



A few short weeks later the Salk vaccine became available. I had contracted the disease at the very end of the last polio epidemic.

The next four walls – I don't remember the color, but at least they weren't dull green – were Room 235 at St. Joseph's Hospital. It was the last available private room in the hospital. Polio patients that came later were held in the hall until rooms became available. That must have made isolation difficult.

While I had the fever I was isolated and considered contagious. The fever had started when I was struck with a fierce headache in church on Sunday morning, so I was isolated until the following Sunday, seven days from the onset of symptoms. When hospital staff and visitors came into the room their faces were half covered with masks, they had caps on their heads, wore gowns, and were unrecognizable. The only person who didn't wrap up so I couldn't see him was the hospital chaplain who came to visit me every day. He washed his hands before he left the room as did everyone else, but at least he didn't make me feel like a leper.

The following Sunday, seven days from the onset of that splitting headache, I woke up lying on my stomach. What a shock to discover I couldn't move my right leg! In fact, it was hard to move at all, and I struggled for what must have been a half hour to turn over onto my back.

I was crying when the too-cheerful nun came in and greeted me. "Good morning, Mrs. Blair."

I wailed, "I can't move my right leg!"

"Oh, can you move your left leg? How about your right arm? Show me how you move your left arm." I showed her and she exclaimed, "Oh, that's wonderful!"

I didn't think it was so wonderful, but I learned later that I was lucky to have had only one limb affected. Often paralytic polio caused paralysis in two limbs, either both legs, or one leg and the opposite arm. I am grateful now that I didn't lose the use of my arms and hands. That would have meant no writing, typing, knitting, crocheting or sew-

ing – all activities important to me then and now.

When the doctor checked me that morning, he told me to move my feet and my arms as much as possible all day. Fortunately, my right foot still moved. So I wore myself out moving my feet and arms all day. I WAS NOT GOING TO LET ANYTHING ELSE GET PARALYZED!

With the fever ended, therapy began. Every morning I would be taken down to the Hydrotherapy Room where the patient escort and Sister Christiana would slide me onto a rack, move me over and lower me into a large whirlpool tub. Sister would turn on the water and the heat would be gradually increased. To this day I can tolerate hotter water in a Jacuzzi than most people can, because my skin became accustomed to it.

Sister would put a towel over me, wink and say, "We have to be a bit modest."

I lay on that rack terrified that I might drown, because the water was left running for a considerable time. Once I was lowered into the tub I couldn't see anything but the sides of the tub and the ceiling, or hear anything but running water. I was scared to death. Once in a while Sister Christiana would come over and show me one of her African violets and I would shakily smile my acknowledgement. I really didn't like African violets all that much. Being the timid, polite little country girl who was raised to always be nice, I couldn't assert myself enough to tell Sister of my fears and ask her to let me see her a bit more often.

After the water got to a certain level it shut off (maybe automatically?). Then Sister Christiana turned on a motor and I would feel water beating against my right leg for thirty minutes. That was great. To this day I love whirlpools and hot tubs, and thanks to my sons, Dan and Todd, I have one in my house.

After hydrotherapy I would be limp from exhaustion by the time I got back to room 235. Then the physical therapist, Jane Grey, would

come in and exercise my leg. My muscles were so atrophied that by the time she had my right leg six inches off the bed I would be crying out in pain. It took several weeks – even after I was discharged from the hospital – to get my leg straight up in the air.

The above paragraphs are excerpts from my memoir “Kathleen’s Journey” that I published in 2006 for my children and grandchildren and generations to follow.

Today the whirlpool tub my sons installed in my home five years ago is my favorite pain remedy. Unlike Sister Christiana’s hydrotherapy tub that had a single beater, my tub has eight jets that massage my feet, legs, joints, back, and nerve endings in all the right places.

I closed the chapter of my memoir which I called “Polio 235” with the following paragraphs:

After 50 years as a polio survivor I feel very lucky to be able to do all the things I do. So I can’t walk a mile, or run a step, or climb stairs normally, or lift anything heavy, or walk on slippery surfaces without falling, and have a disabled parking permit, and been diagnosed with Post Polio Syndrome, I can still raise beautiful roses, care for my fish and pond, tend my flower garden surrounding the pond, wash the exterior of my house with vinyl siding wash and a garden hose, clean my garage, and enjoy my home.

I can’t pick up my grandchildren to get a hug, but they do a good job of hugging my knees or whatever else they can reach. As they grow up they bend over to hug me.

In a later draft I wrote: After 51 years the Post Polio Syndrome has advanced, and I often need a cane to walk safely, especially when I’m away from home. But with or without a cane I’m happy to be walking, and I don’t intend to stop.

Now 54 years later my “Pollyanna attitude” is beginning to slip. My legs are growing stead-

ily weaker and lower back pain makes walking almost impossible at times. I’m frustrated about all the things I can’t do. It’s Memorial Day as I write this story and I know it will take me another two or three weeks to weed and mulch the flower garden surrounding my pond, I can only work on it a half hour a day before putting my feet up with an ice pack on my back. At times light household tasks feel like major spring cleaning.

After raising seven children and caring for my disabled husband the last 17 years of his life, I had become a workaholic, a real type “A” personality. If it had to be done, I figured out a way to do it myself. So it’s very difficult for me to stop what I’m doing, rest and relax in the middle of a house that looks too “lived in” and a flower garden cluttered with weeds.

As I reclined in my whirlpool this afternoon recovering from planting and hanging two “topsy-turvy” planters from the soffit above my deck – a project I should never have tackled – I came to the conclusion that I must replace projects that stress my physical strength with less stressful, more rewarding endeavors. After a serious talk with myself, I decided to put “count my blessings” at the top of the list.

Blessing #1: I just received a telephone call from my granddaughter, April, telling me I will become Great Grandma for the second time in January 2010.

Blessing #2: I have family, good neighbors and friends for which I am eternally grateful.

Blessing #3: God has blessed me with talents I can pursue even if I eventually need to spend the rest of my life in a wheelchair.

The list goes on and on and ends with my newly-adopted mantra: “I must be thankful for what is and stop thinking about what is not.” (Nancy Wood quotation from “Out of the Ordinary” by Joyce Rupp)

**Editor’s note:** Kathleen attended her first MAPPSP luncheon meeting in May. Many

thanks to her for volunteering to share her story when we were talking about the Pacer.

What's your story? How about sharing it with the Pacer readers? Send your story, long or short, to the editor via e-mail or regular mail.

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## POST-POLIO SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

### Madison Area Post Polio Support Group

**Saturday July 11** Holly Jellinek, Ph.D, Licensed Psychologist topic will discuss and answer questions about "Living with Post Polio and Good Mental Health".

**The Post Polio Resource Group of Southeastern WI** meetings are held at the Easter Seals Kindcare Recreation Center located in Holler Park at 5151 S. 6th St., midway between Grange & Layton Ave., Milwaukee (just north of the Airport Spur). Social time from 1:00 to 1:30 pm.; meeting from 1:30 to 3:30 pm.

The **Janesville Post Polio Support Group** meets from 1-3 p.m. at the Mercy Health Mall, 1010 N. Washington St., Janesville, WI on the first Friday of May, June, August, October and Nov. Contact Art Arnold at UncleBunks@aol.com if you wish information on speakers.

**The Western Wisconsin Post-Polio Resource Group** will meet on October 17 for "open discussion" from 12:30 to 3:30 at the Tri-County Memorial Hospital Community Room, Whitehall, WI. For more information call Betty Marsolek at 715-985-3801 or e-mail at bmarsolek@trivest.net

Editor's Note: If other Post-Polio Support Groups within Wisconsin would like publicity about your group, please send me an e-mail with meeting site, dates, speaker's name and topic.

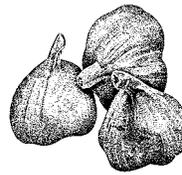
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## Thoughts about Food

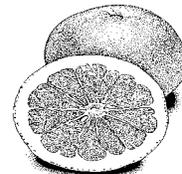
**Editor's note: Susan Smith Jones, Ph.D., of the American Holistic Health Association** provides much information about using food as medicine in this four page online article. This is the last section of her article. Part one was printed in the April 2009 *Pacer*.

**Flaxseed**—Often referred to as "nutritional gold", flaxseed is a rich source of essential

fatty acids, in particular Omega-3's. As well as playing a critical role in normal physiology, essential fatty acids are shown to be therapeutic and protect against heart disease, cancer, autoimmune diseases such as multiple sclerosis and rheumatoid arthritis, many skin diseases and others. Numerous studies have uncovered the benefits of flaxseed to help alleviate constipation and bloating, eliminate toxic waste, strengthen the blood, reduce inflammation, accelerate fat loss and reduce depression.



**Garlic** - A veritable treasure chest of nutrients, garlic is a rich source of unique sulfur compounds that keep your body chemistry in balance. Well documented studies from major medical universities around the world have found aged garlic extract to be effective in its ability to resist and fight cancer, cardiovascular disease, other respiratory ailments and infections and fatigue. It also shows promise against a major risk factor in Alzheimer's disease and atherosclerosis.

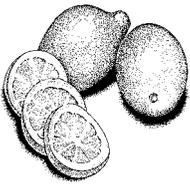


**Grapefruit** - As with all other citrus fruits, grapefruit is rich in vitamin C and potassium and very low in calories. This fresh raw juice eases constipation and improves digestion by increasing the flow of gastric juices. One whole grapefruit has only 100 calories and it makes a perfect snack food. Deep inside the white rind and membranes of this fruit (lemons and oranges, too) lies a miraculous group of plant compounds -- bioflavonoids, citric acids and pectins -- which protect against cancer and heart disease. Grapefruit pectin reduces the accumulation of atherosclerotic plaque in patients afflicted with atherosclerosis and strengthens blood vessels and capillaries.

**Kale** - One of the most nutritious greens in the garden, kale is part of the cruciferous family and is a rich source of indoles, glucosinolates and isothiocyanates, a group of potent phytochemicals that help prevent breast and lung cancers. Kale helps prevent

age-related macular degeneration of the eyes, oxygenates the blood, improves red blood cell counts and aids the fundamental processes of cell circulation and respiration. It also is an outstanding source of beta carotene, vitamins C and E, and calcium.

**Kelp** - A stellar, nutrient-dense sea vegetable, kelp is especially rich in potassium, iron, iodine, riboflavin, dietary fiber, and vitamins A, B, C, E, D and K. It also contains a natural substance that enhances flavor and tenderizes. Kelp contains an element that helps remove radioactive particles and heavy metals from the body, plus works as a blood purifier, relieves arthritis stiffness and promotes adrenal, pituitary and thyroid health.



**Lemon** - Although acid to the taste, the juice of a lemon is a great alkalizer for the body. When our bodies are too acid, our immune systems are compromised and our energy abates. If taken in the morning on an empty stomach diluted with water, lemon juice is known to improve liver function and has been used to help eliminate kidney stones. The organic acids in all citrus fruits stimulate digestive juices and relieve constipation. Added to water or fresh juice, it helps relieve colds, coughs, and sore throats. If you have dry mouth, licking a lemon or sipping unsweetened diluted lemon juice can stimulate saliva flow.

**Parsley** - This culinary herb is a bona fide storehouse of synergistic nutrients that rejuvenate and detoxify the body. A good source of vitamin C, iron, calcium, sodium, beta carotene, vanadium, manganese and chlorophyll, parsley can be used in so many ways. Parsley contains nutritional precursors for the manufacture of adrenal hormones, so it's a great stress-buster. Studies show parsley to be effective in slowing the aging process, reducing depression, lowering cholesterol, strengthening the kidneys and detoxifying the cells. Many herbalists recommend parsley to relieve the symptoms of goi-

ter and rheumatism, and to facilitate menstruation.



**Tomatoes** - Over 90% of this beautiful, low calorie fruit is water. It's alkaline and jam-packed with nutrients and phytochemicals. Tomatoes provide vitamin C, potassium, chromium, biotin, lutein and zeaxanthin, alpha and beta carotene, the B vitamins and lots of lycopene, an important part of the antioxidant defense network in the skin. Numerous epidemiological studies have found that people who eat lots of tomatoes are significantly less likely to get cancer. Study results were strongest for prostate, lung and stomach cancer.

*Let food be your medicine and medicine be your food. - Hippocrates*

### Kitchen Korner

Mary Parks submitted this recipe for healthy snacking and since it is made with Splenda®, it is good for people with diabetes.

### Spiced Nuts

- |                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 3/4 cup pecans  | 1 egg white      |
| 3/4 cup walnuts | 1/3 cup Splenda® |
| 1/2 cup almonds | 2 tsp. cinnamon  |

Slightly beat 1 egg white and add 1/3 cup Splenda. Stir in 2 tsp. cinnamon. Mix nuts and cinnamon mixture together, coating nuts well. Spread in jelly roll pan that has been sprayed with Pam and bake at 300 degrees. Stir every ten minutes until done (about 30 minutes). Cool and enjoy.



**Remember Easter Seals Annual Madison Camp Appeal.** Any amount would help to cover some of the expense for a child to attend Camp Wawbeek. Make your tax deductible gift payable to "Easter Seals" and send to: Easter Seals, P.O. Box 259461, Madison, WI 53725-9461.

### EXECUTIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE

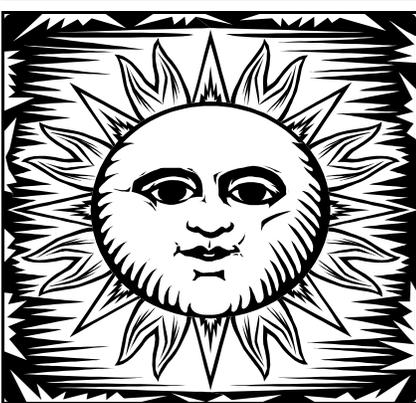
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Janet Niedfeldt 920-648-386  
Karla Smith 242-5690

We **need** people to bring new ideas for speakers, topics, books to read and discuss, etc. Call or e-mail (see e-mail list) one of the people listed above to suggest program topics or speakers, volunteer to organize one meeting program, share your knowledge (or find an expert) about becoming a non-profit organization or volunteer your talents (financial, organizing, etc.) as a committee member.

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**Names in bold are new to the list or have an address change.**

To add your name and/or up-date your e-mail address to this list, notify Marcia Holman at: wghmch@chorus.net

**POST POLIO PACER is a quarterly newsletter published in January, April, July & October for polio survivors, the Madison Area Post Polio Support Group, health care professionals and interested persons to share information and to promote friendships. Articles in this newsletter are for information; medical advice is always necessary.**

*Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual writers and do not imply endorsement by Easter Seals Wisconsin or the Madison Area Post Polio Support Group*



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**A NEWSLETTER FROM THE MADISON-AREA POST POLIO SUPPORT GROUP**

**Mark your calendars!**

**LOCATION:**

**Monona Garden Family Restaurant**  
6501 Bridge Rd., Monona  
Noon to 2:30

**Saturday, July 11, 2009**

**Holly Jellinek, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist**

**“Living with PP and Good Mental Health”**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Saturday, August 1, 2009**  
**Special Event —See page 1 of Pacer**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Saturday, September 12, 2009**  
**Open discussion—share your thoughts**  
**about the July meeting topic and**  
**the August Special Event**

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