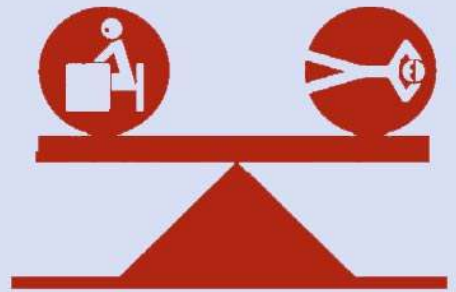


# POST POLIO PACER

Conserving Strength and Energy through Pacing  
July 2017 — Madison, Wisconsin

Madison Area Post Polio Support Group Newsletter  
MAPPSG formed in 1985 — This Is Our 32nd Year!



## Why the weight? Losing a few pounds is possible ... right now. Why wait?

By Sunny Roller, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Reprinted with permission from Post-Polio Health Vol. 32, No. 3 Summer 2016

Even if one uses a wheelchair full time and has a metabolism that is a bit slower due to aging, losing weight is possible. I had almost given up, but then 14 months ago, my doctor fiercely demanded that I lose 10 pounds. If I did not, she threatened to infuse me with some creepy medication. How terrifying!

At that time, since I had quit walking with braces and crutches two years before, I was close to 50 pounds overweight. And I knew that the extra weight was not only undesirable; it also made my abilities to transfer and move about so much more strenuous and dangerous. As I pushed, twisted and lifted my body around every day, my hands, arms and shoulders were at imminent risk for injury and worsening carpal tunnel syndrome.

Looking back, I started to struggle with overweight issues at the age of 11. As I grew into womanhood with an obvious physical disability and a polio survivor's drive to succeed, losing weight was usually on my mind. It plagued me like a whispering snake, reminding me that I was too fat, which magnified my shame.

I sincerely wanted to shed the pounds, but could never figure out how to do it. Or maybe I wasn't scared enough to do it. My thoughts ranged along a scale from "why this weight?" to "oh, why not wait?" Throughout my busy adult life, I ate when the other girls were out dancing or flirting. I ate at social events with friends. It was easier to meet for dinner than to go roller skating together. I also ate poorly; grabbing fast food when I was super-achieving to meet my latest professional work deadline.

But now, in my retirement years, "why not wait" had abruptly turned into "don't wait; too much weight!" For 58 long years, I had not been caring for my body properly. I didn't know how. My halfhearted attempts had always failed.

Somehow, though, I had actually hung onto hope. A spirited twinkle inside me knew that, "All things are possible." I did believe that for me there had to be a key to success. Other people lose weight, why can't I? I wasn't born overweight nor was I overweight as a little girl with a disability from polio. I wanted to get back to who I really am — innocent and unburdened — free from obesity and that incessant snake murmuring in my ear.

So, optimism in hand, with the ironically "blessed threat" of some freaky new medication propelling me forward, I began arduously searching. My deep inner resolve arose. I hunted for a logical strategy and a little magic to help guide me on a new path to weight loss. One that was feasible and effective. De-

*But now, in my retirement years, "why not wait" had abruptly turned into "don't wait; too much weight!"*

lightly, I found both — the strategy and the touch of magic.

The first step was to pay attention to the process of caring for myself. Really taking good care. What a lovely goal. Polio survivors do know how to set a goal and achieve it and I was now adamant. Focus, focus, focus. Then re-focus when focus wanes. The next step was to choose a strategy that involved a comprehensive set of tactics. I needed to go at it from all angles — exercise, healthful eating and cognitive/emotional support.

The exercise opportunity already existed. I just had to tweak it a little. I had found a gym program at our local rehabilitation center that would help me. After a time of physical therapy for an arm injury a year before, I attended what was called a “post-rehabilitation gym clinic.” For a monthly fee, former patients could work out at the gym with the assistance and support of enthusiastic rehabilitation technicians. I could go every day of the week and work out on the NuStep machine or stand and walk at the parallel bars. They also would help me weigh myself to track weight loss.

Here’s where the magic of kindness appeared first. When they found out I was working to lose weight, they lifted their established rule of short-term membership. They agreed to let me work out for as many months as I wished; knowing that my goal had moved from rehabilitation to weight loss. So, I keep working out at the gym.

(For more details on the reasonable high intensity interval training that my post-polio specialist, Frederick M. Maynard, MD, recommended, refer to [www.sunnyrollerblog.com](http://www.sunnyrollerblog.com) and search for the post of May 15, 2015 titled “Recipes for Regeneration.”)

The second part of my strategy was to eat properly. This was a huge challenge because my kitchen is not very accessible and I don’t like to cook. But I knew I needed to start eating clean. Eating clean is the latest buzzword young people use to mean “include whole foods like vegetables, fruits and whole grains,

plus healthy proteins and fats; and exclude refined sugar and processed food.”

I had been to WeightWatchers numerous times throughout my life and knew they had the most widely acclaimed sensible eating program. So for \$20.00 per month, I signed up this time for WeightWatchers Online. It was convenient and I found a huge selection of recipes that were “clean!”

Not liking to cook was a problem. One day a friend was listening to me trying to solve the challenge of not cooking, when she suggested that I ask my current housekeeper, whose contract was only for cleaning, to prepare three WeightWatcher meals for me each week.

Here’s where the magic of kindness appeared once more. My housekeeper agreed to stretch her skills. She genuinely wanted to help and encourage me in my weight loss effort. The magic of her generosity and kindness made this part of the strategy work. And my world of “clean eating” joyfully became a reality. I choose the recipes, shop for the food and she cooks them up in my inaccessible kitchen.

I had found a way to exercise and eat healthful foods, but I knew I needed a third tactic — the psychological support to keep going and learn about my weight problem in greater depth. I asked my physician for a referral to a program at the University of Michigan called “The Hunger Within.” She said, “Oh, you don’t need that, but if you want to, I will.”

With resolve and referral in hand, I joined the 12-week support/counseling group. It involved a therapeutic technique called cognitive restructuring, which refers to any method that helps people think differently about a situation, event, thought or belief. “I needed to go at it from all angles — exercise, healthful eating and cognitive/emotional support” which shifts a person from irrational destructive thought to positive and healthy thinking about any given idea.

For class members, it was all about how we

see food and the meaning of food in our lives. When are we REALLY hungry, versus when do we simply WANT FOOD? We learned that, with practice, we could change our thoughts about food.

I discovered that I often automatically eat when I am bored or lonely. That kind of emotional eating alone can lead to unwanted obesity. Did you know that some people want to eat a lot of bread because it brings them closer to an important person in their past lives — like a mother or grandmother, whose homemade bread was irresistible and symbolized love and nurturing? Or that some people crave a lot of sugary products because there has not been enough sweetness in their lives; but perhaps abuse or harshness from those around them?

So I have learned that I can change my distorted thinking and practice more constructive ways to alleviate boredom or loneliness as I develop exciting new interests, and build deeper and more active friendships.

The magic of kindness also emerged from the class in a powerfully different way, as I continued my weight loss journey. “The Hunger Within” ultimately teaches that we must practice being kind to ourselves. If we want to become physically healthier, it’s our job to replace any self-criticism with self-compassion. As we forgive our mistakes, and nurture the inner joy and goodness that shone in our faces as little children, our thoughts about other people become kinder and more compassionate, too.

This class is only conducted at the University of Michigan, but Marilyn Migliore, the workshop’s creator and leader for 20 years, relays that there is a website ([www.autochair.com](http://www.autochair.com)) associated with it. This site describes the program in detail and provides an opportunity to purchase the book. She reports that many people across the country have formed monthly reading/discussion groups with weight loss in mind. They study the book, chapter by chapter and apply its premises.

Before my physician’s warning, I had nearly given up. Then I changed my mind. With fierce focus and fresh hope, I worked to adapt that three-part strategy to my unique situation. The kindness demonstrated by those around me has added the magical power that completes the equation. As others continue to teach me how to be kinder and more nurturing of myself, I believe the adipose tissue will continue to fade away. Funny how that works.

Since my physician’s warning in May of 2015, I have lost 15.5 pounds. Not dramatic. Not perfect. But moving in the right direction — about a pound a month. I slowed down during the cold, winter months, but continued to lose a little. Now I am focused on shedding ten more pounds by Thanksgiving.

Losing weight is a feasible goal, even if one is a polio survivor in later life who uses a wheelchair full time.

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## It’s the Little Things

*By Kathleen Blair*



In the April Pacer I talked about bringing light to each other with the small gesture: the smile, the kind word and gentle touch. I feel deeply grateful for all those kindnesses I have received over the years from strangers and acquaintances alike.

As the song that we are all probably old enough to remember says, “Little Things Mean a Lot.” It seemed to me that May and June have been full of little things.

One Friday morning in mid-May I was touched by the kindness of our own Fayth Kail who attended the wake of my granddaughter’s Grandma Renee. My heart warmed to see

Britney's smile of recognition as she realized here was a friend of both her grandmothers. A comforting moment at a sad time.

At my grandson's recent baseball game in Monona I chatted with a very elderly lady who was sitting on a bleacher in the shade where my son parked my wheelchair. She proudly told me she is 88 years old. It was fun hearing her cheer when a player on their team made a grand slam homerun. And it was fun listening to the camaraderie with her son as he teased her about eating a whole bag of peanut butter cups. (*I think she had a lot of help from her grandson and his friends.*) "When your team comes to McFarland to play I will have peanut butter cups for you," I chimed in.

"Really, Mother," my son said under his breath. (*Well, sometimes it's okay for us octogenarians to embarrass our kids a little. It's called getting even.*)

After the game ended and we were headed to the car, I heard her yell, "Hey, don't forget the peanut butter cups!" My calendar is marked for the evening this Monona team plays Kaeden's team here in McFarland. I will have peanut butter cups at the game.

Later in a telephone conversation with my sister in Palatine, Illinois, I mentioned the spunky lady I had met. Her response, "Hey, that's what we octogenarians have to do for each other. Take the peanut butter cups to the game – it might just make her day or be the hi-lite of her week."

Last week I had a long telephone conversation with my writer friend, Patsy. She is lovingly caring for her husband of 60 years, making his life as comfortable as possible as he lives out his days with dementia. We took turns talking and listening as we shared our joys and concerns about our daily lives and our families. An hour and a half later Patsy said, "Thanks so much for calling. It has been a tough week and I really needed to talk. This is the bright spot of my week."

Talking with my friend made a difference to me, too. Reflecting on the past month I realize more clearly how those simple little things can make a big difference in the lives we touch as well as in our own.

### **Those little things *do* mean a lot.**

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### **What Did You Miss on May 13?**

Thanks to Sheryl Shaffer who asked her daughter-in-law, Sara Shaffer, a Registered Dietitian, if she would be willing to speak on "Managing Your Weight through Small Diet Changes".

A University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point graduate, Sara has been an RD for about 5 years and currently works at Aurora-St. Luke's Medical Center in Milwaukee, where she primarily covers the cancer units. Previously she was an Outpatient RD providing nutritional counseling and education for weight management including Bariatric Surgery (weight loss surgery).

After introducing her husband, Josh and daughter, Grace to the group, Sara asked everyone several questions about nutrition and dieting before starting her presentation.





There were many questions and answers regarding the handouts she provided, titled "Estimated daily calorie needs"; "Building a healthy plate", and "Liven up your meals with vegetables and fruits" which are from Aurora Health Care-Nutritional Services and the USDA Center for Nutritional Policy and Promotion.

**What is a serving?** Protein should be the size of your palm, carbohydrates the size of your fist and vegetables an open handful. Refer to "A beginner's Guide to Portion Control" on page 6 of the April *Post-Polio Pacer* for more information.

The information below is from "Build a Healthy Plate at a Glance."

**Foods & nutrients to increase**

**Vegetables & fruits:** Eat a variety of vegetables, especially those that are dark green, red and orange. Eat whole fruits of all kinds.

**Whole grains:** At least half of you daily grains should be whole grains (brown rice, oatmeal and whole-wheat products).

**Fiber:** Read the label and opt for foods with at least 3 grams of fiber per serving.

**Dairy:** Switch to fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese.

**Protein:** Choose lean meat and poultry, and increase the amount and variety of fish and seafood you eat per week. Use beans and to-fu as meat substitutes.

**Foods & nutrients to decrease**

**Calories:** Consume foods and drinks in portions that will allow you to maintain your weight over time. Eat the right amount of calories for you.

**Sodium:** Reduce daily sodium intake from processed foods and added table salt to less than 2,300 milligrams.

**Added sugars:** Limit calories from desserts, sugary beverages, syrups, soda, sports drinks

and other foods high in sugar.

**Solid fats:** Decrease the amount of saturated fat in your diet by limiting butter, cream, regular cheese and fatty meats.

**Portion sizes:** Enjoy your food, but eat less of it. Make smart choices from every food group.

Go to [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov) for more information about making smart choices.

In addition to an enthusiastic discussion with many questions answered, the group had a rare opportunity to see a baby at the meeting.



Grandma Sheryl Shaffer with Grace

**Golden Rule of Post Polio Syndrome**  
**"If something you do causes you fatigue, weakness or pain, you shouldn't be doing it!"**

**F.Y.I.**

**On October 14, 2017 the Whitehall Post Polio Resource Group** will meet at Gundersen Tri-County Hospital, 18601 Lincoln Street, Whitehall, WI, in the Community Room. Enter through the Emergency Entrance.

The meeting will be from 12:30 to 3:30.

**SENIORS UNDER ATTACK**  
**THIS IS HAPPENING RIGHT HERE IN**  
**OUR OWN COUNTRY!**

**We Must Stop This Immediately**

Have you noticed that stairs are getting **steeper**. Groceries are **heavier**. Everything is further away. Yesterday I walked to the corner and I was dumbfounded to discover how **long** our street had become!



People are less considerate now, especially the young ones. They speak in **whispers** all the time! If you ask them to speak up they just keep repeating themselves, endlessly mouthing the **same silent message** until they're red in the face! What do they think? that I am a lip reader?



I also think they are much younger than I was at the same age. On the other hand, people my own age are so much **older** than I am. I ran into an old friend the other day and she has aged so much that **she did not even recognize me**.

I got to thinking about the poor dear while I was combing my hair this morning, and in doing so, I glanced at my own reflection. Well, REALLY NOW - even **mirrors** are not made the way they used to be!

Another thing, everyone drives so **fast** these days! You're risking life and limb if you happen to pull onto the freeway in front of them. All I can say is, their brakes must wear out awfully fast, the way I see them **screech and swerve** in my rear-view mirror.



Clothing manufacturers are **less civilized** these days. Why else would they suddenly start labeling a size 32 waist as a 40? Do they think no-one notices?



The people who make **bathroom scales** are pulling the same prank. Do they think I actually "believe" the number I see on that dial? HA! I would never let myself weigh that much! Just who do these people think they're fooling?

I'd like to call up someone in authority to report what's going on--but the **telephone company** is in on the conspiracy too: they've printed the phone books in such small type that no one could ever find a number in there!

All I can do is pass along this warning:

**WE ARE UNDER ATTACK!**

Unless something drastic happens, pretty soon everyone will have to suffer these awful indignities.

**PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO EVERYONE**  
**YOU KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SO**  
**WE CAN GET THIS CONSPIRACY**  
**STOPPED!**

Reprinted from Polio Epic Inc., Newsletter of the Arizona Post Polio Support Group.

Editor's note: Original source unknown.

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Do you have suggestions 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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**To get your Pacer in color on line, set your email program to always accept messages from mchwgh@gmail.com**

**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: mchwgh@gmail.com**

**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.**

**Please request permission from the editor to reprint articles from the Post Polio Pacer.**

*Pink lemonade, anyone?*



*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!**

**2017 meeting dates:**

**July 8, Sept. 9 & Nov. 11**

**LOCATION:**

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

**July 8, 2017**

**Scott Wegner, Stoughton Fire Chief,**  
will speak about fire safety and  
emergency preparedness.

**Sept. 9, 2017**

**Scarlett Hayes from Independence**  
First Mobility Store will talk about  
available new and used durable  
equipment.

Printing and postage  
is provided by:

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