

# Gleanings

THE OFFICIAL NUMBER ONE NEBRASKA POST-POLIO NEWSLETTER

APRIL

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## VOTING ACCESSIBILITY LAW HELPS HANDICAPPED VOTE

With the coming of the May 2 deadline for registering for the May 13 primary election, handicapped voters are being encouraged to exercise the franchise by the newly enacted Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act which obligates election officials to ensure disabled persons equal access to the electoral process.

See page 3, column 3

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## BARGAIN JOURNAL ARTICLES AVAILABLE NOW FROM NPSA

Thanks to the generosity of Don and Sally Peterson, Omaha support group members, NPSA has 30 copies of the nine articles from ORTHOPEDIC Journal to give away.

If you have not yet ordered these from us, now is the time to do it at a bargain! We urge all of our members to read these articles, written by today's leading polio doctors, and then give them to your doctors to read.

One of the main objectives  
See page 2, column 2

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## MRI: SCIENTIFIC MAGIC

A new high-tech imaging technique has been available in Omaha for nearly a year. This most recent and most exciting way to view the interiors of the body is magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

The process uses a powerful magnet and a radio transmitter to produce signals from the hydrogen atoms in our body's cells which are then picked up by the magnetic resonance scanner to create images that can reveal disorders as small as one millimeter in diameter. No x-rays are used.

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It does a spectacular job of displaying the soft tissues of the body. Areas previously difficult to view can now be revealed, such as the brain beneath the bony structure at the back of the head, the spinal cord, bone marrow.

One doctor describes the picture produced by saying, "It's like nothing you've ever seen-- it's as though you were Superman looking through someone's skin and seeing the tissue beneath ...we've never been able to see this sort of anatomy."  
See page 2, column 2



Magnetic Resonance Scanner

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EXPOSITION A STAND-OUT WITH DISABILITY NEEDS

by Marlene Orton

The Abilities Expo which will take place April 11-13, 1986, in the Los Angeles Convention Center, is the nation's largest show of products, services, computer hardware/software, employers, organizations and publications for the physically disabled.

The 1986 Expo will have an estimated 250 exhibits and more than 10,000 visitors. It gives persons who are disabled, seniors who have physical limitations, and the professionals who work with them the opportunity to see, try, and buy the latest products designed to make their lives easier and more enjoyable.

This is the only show in the nation devoted exclusively to the needs of the disabled, and annually attracts visitors from nearly every state and many foreign countries.

For further information, contact RCW Productions, Inc., 1106 2nd Street, Suite 118, Encinitas, CA 92024, (619) 944-1122.

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Man blames fate for other accidents, but feels personally responsible when he makes a hole-in-one.

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IRS HOTLINE  
1-800-424-1040

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MRI--from page 1

tomy before. Nothing in books comes close to it."

Patients having the scan are placed in the tunnel inside the scanner for the procedure, which can take up to two hours. They simply lie still in the machine, unaffected by the process, except for the small percent with claustrophobia who cannot tolerate being so confined and so are released. "A lot of people just fall asleep," says Debbie Plettner, a Technician at the Medical Center unit.

Since there are no known side effects and no radiation involved, many people are enthusiastic  
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BARB FOX MARCH SPEAKER AT LINCOLN AREA MEETING

Barb Fox, Coordinator for Self-Help Groups and Human Services for Lincoln is scheduled to be the March 29 speaker at the Lincoln area NPSA support group meeting at American Lutheran Church 42nd and Vine.  
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ARTICLES--from page 1  
tives of NPSA is to spread the word, to provide information about the late effects of polio, and these articles present the picture excellently.

No charge for copying-- just send \$1 for mailing to Nebraska Polio Survivors Association, P.O. Box 37139, Omaha 68137.

about MRI, says Debbie. People who have had certain surgeries using clips, those with pace-makers, and those with metal parts in the area to be scanned are not given the scan.

According to Debbie, the Medical Center has done about 750 MRI's since the equipment was installed last July, and now does six to eight a day. A second magnetic resonance scanner is operated jointly by Methodist, Children's and Bergan Mercy Hospitals.

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HANDICAPPED TRAVEL EASED BY FLYING WHEELS COMPANY

Now's the time many of us start making plans to get away from the daily grind for a few glorious days--VACATION TIME!

Catering exclusively to the needs of the disabled, Flying Wheels Travel, Inc., offers more than a dozen domestic and international tours and cruises in their 1986 line-up.

Providing accessible travel for 16 years, owner Judd Jacobsen, a quadriplegic, makes arrangements for independent travel for those wanting to go their own way, in addition to the tours.

Write for free booklet at 143 West Bridge, P.O. Box 382, Owatonna, MN 55060, or call toll-free 1-800-533-0363.

GABY'S GLIMMERINGS

by Cynthia Gabrielli Haag

Having had polio, a lot of humorous, interesting and odd things have happened to me. They are experiences unique to the handicapped. When I was in school, I fell almost daily. I fell up stairs and down stairs. My classmates got used to my scabby, wounded knees, I guess.

I went to a Catholic elementary school which required uniforms and daily attendance at Mass. Eighth graders sat in the back of the church and lower grades sat in front. There was always a dirty slush which we children carried in on our boots in the winter time that trailed up the aisle. Communion is that somber and holy time of reverence. One day as I piously returned from the communion rail with bowed head and folded hands, my feet flew out in front of me. Plop I went in the slush and whoosh my skirt flew up over my head and there I sat. With all faces watching, I got a chagrined, sheepish expression and rose to my feet bowing my head once more and ambling back to the privacy of my seat. My dignity is what got the biggest shaking.

Those were the days of the girdle and three minutes to get to the restroom and class. It was like being a one-armed bandit trying to make a pit stop and not be late. All was done

in rapid Charlie Chaplin fashion. Only I doubt if Charlie Chaplin ever had the unique experience of walking down the hall with his skirt stuck into his girdle in back!

When I was younger, I'd cry when I fell. When I was a teenager, I blushed and got to my feet like lightning. By the time I got to college, I had it mastered. A friend said, "Gosh, you fall so gracefully, like a ballerina or something!" I'd always come up laughing which made everyone else laugh too. It relieved the tension. I met the nicest looking fellows this way. They'd extend their hands to help me up and laughing we'd chat on the way to class.

What did I gain from this besides skinned knees and big purple bruises? I learned to lose with dignity, something many people can't do. I learned to laugh at myself. I learned to reach out to others. So many people will suffer alone when pride is the only thing between them and love and solutions. CHADRON MEETINGS SUCCESS WITH AREA POST-POLIOS

Chadron area representative Cheryl Marchant reports a lot of interest in NPSA's support group meetings in Chadron. Dr. Alderman is the scheduled speaker at their March 16 meeting.

DISCUSSION HELD ON HOW TO TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR

Florence Hansen, University Medical Center Director of Social Work led a lively discussion regarding HOW TO TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR at the March meeting of NPSA's Omaha support group.

Suggestions that evolved during the session:

1. Write down what you want to discuss with the doctor and refer to the list when talking with him.
  2. Be concise, direct. Don't ramble.
  3. Be assertive.
  4. If the doctor refuses to listen to you, will not answer your questions, and does not seem interested in working with your problems, seek another doctor.
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VOTING--from page 1  
According to Steve Witala, Douglas County election commissioner, "Essentially, polling places need to be handicapped accessible."

Check out your polling place. If it is not accessible, contact your election commissioner or County Clerk and try to work with this person to develop satisfactory accessibility at the polls.

NPSA members can be a positive force behind carrying out this law. Let's all get out and vote this year!

IS THIS TRIP REALLY NECESSARY?

It was a trip I didn't want to make. I had been down similar paths before, and I knew it would be difficult. This time I had consented to have an MRI (Magnetic resonance imaging). Chances for new results were slim, but this was the one last test that I had never had--the cherry on top that would be the final touch of proof that I do not have SOMETHING ELSE, that my Warm Springs diagnosis of post-polio syndrome is accurate. And so I said yes.

As they pushed the narrow slab on which I had been carefully positioned into the capsule, a soft whirring sound from somewhere sent a steady brush of fresh air to my nostrils. "You o.k., Nancy?" came the distant voice from mission control. "Here we go. There's going to be a

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NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE

DON'T MISS THIS MEETING!

F. Miles Skultety, M.D., Director of the Pain Management Center at Nebraska Medical Center and Chairman of the Neurosurgery Department, will speak on PAIN MANAGEMENT at the April 6 meeting of the NPSA Omaha support group, 2 p. m., Rejoice Lutheran Church, 138th & Center.

Make every effort to be there--you'll be glad you did!

knocking noise now."

I opened my eyes to see my image reflecting from a mirror not six inches away. Tight quarters in there--no place for the claustrophobic. The face was slightly distorted, shorter and wider, lips drawn thin across my chin. With my hands folded over my chest to protect my weak shoulders, I saw myself as looking out from a coffin.

Within minutes my shoulders went into spasms. "Hang on," I told myself. "You can do this. Hang on." I tried to imagine I was lying on a soft, fluffy cloud, wafting through lazy blue skies on a bright Spring day. Easy does it. Relax.

The spasms continued. The promised 45 to 60 minute test stretched into one hour and 40 minutes. When it was over at last, I was zapped. By the time my friend got me home, I was into total fatigue, shaking uncontrollably into the night, shoulder

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muscles twitching, with much pain in the right and weaker shoulder. Two weeks later my right arm is still in a sling, greatly complicating my life.

What was the problem here? Obviously, I was the problem. An MRI is an easy experience for most people. Yet, I knew my shoulders don't do well in situations like this. I knew my body has no reserve. I knew there would be consequences to pay.

Still, I convinced myself that this was something I should do, whether or not I COULD do it. A nagging doubt remained in my mind-- what if this really WAS some heretofore unearthed neurological problem that only an MRI could pick up.

It's something I have to come to terms with. When is enough enough. When do I decide the risk of harm outweighs the knowledge to be gained, and finally let my body rest in peace.

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