

# Pure Facts

Newsletter of the Feingold® Associations of the United States



April 1987

Vol. 11, No. 3

## Seizure Disorders — Does Diet Play a Role?

“My name is Brewer Wilder and I don’t eat additives.”

“**T**his is the way my 8 year old son introduces himself,” commented Lundy Wilder of Memphis, Tennessee.

These eight years have been very difficult for the Wilders. Brewer not only had the classic symptoms of the hyperactive/ADD (attention deficit disorder) child, but he suffered from several kinds of seizures.

“He was always active and getting into everything,” recalls his mother, “and if he had a seizure while he was up in a tree it meant a fall. He always seemed to be bloody!”

The Feingold diet improved his behavior “about 100%” according to Lundy . . . so much that most people refuse to believe Brewer has ever been hyperactive.



**Brewer Wilder**

The diet has not had any effect on the seizures; that is under control through a combination of surgery and medication. But Lundy is enthusiastic about the help the Feingold Program has provided.

“When you have a child with a problem as serious as seizures,” she told Pure Facts, “the last thing you need is to add in hyperactivity.”

*Quite a different experience was shared by the parents of one of our Feingold teenagers. Unlike Brewer, she prefers not to be named, so we shall call her Carrie Smith.*

**C**arrie was an impossible baby. The youngest of four, neither her mother, who is a teacher, nor her father, a physician, were able to comfort or control her.

The seizures started slowly, and by the time Carrie was eight they had her parents and pediatrician gravely concerned. A ten day hospital stay, countless tests, and consultation with experts in several fields did not yield any answers as to why Carrie had seizures. They found only that the neurological signs were not there.

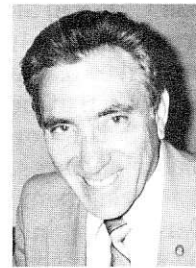
While the tests indicated “nothing wrong,” the truth was that everything was wrong; Carrie’s destructive behavior created havoc in the family.

“Out of sheer desperation,” Dr. and Mrs. Smith tried the Feingold Program. Within two weeks Carrie’s behavior became normal and she has not had a seizure since. In her case the seizures were strictly “psychomotor” episodes. Today Carrie is 19 and is an honor student in college.

## A New Kind of Teacher

**S**al Nicosia has been a teacher, a counselor and a teacher of teachers. He is also a long-time Feingold booster who has been involved with the Association since its formation. (“The Feingold diet is near and dear to my heart.”) He has a way of seeing tired, gloomy problems as exciting opportunities.

How much interest does a junior high school teacher take in his 30 homeroom students? Sal made a point to pay a “house call” to each student’s home before school began. In half an hour he was able to pick up valuable information which, in his words, “changed the dynamics of the class.”



**Sal Nicosia**

He not only enjoyed it, but was better able to understand and help those students. “Thirty years later,” he recalls, “some of those kids still remember it.”

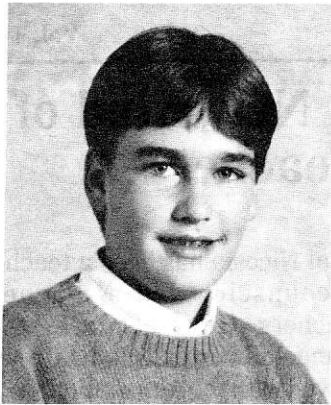
*Continued on page 4*

**Editor’s Note:** The Feingold Association does not consider diet management to be a cure for seizures. A thorough neurological workup is essential. However, the Feingold Program may be helpful as an adjunct to medical treatment.

The Feingold® Associations of the United States, Inc., founded in 1976, are non-profit volunteer organizations whose purposes are to support their members in the implementation of the Feingold Program and to generate public awareness of the potential role of foods and synthetic additives in behavior, learning and health problems. The program is based on a diet eliminating synthetic colors, synthetic flavors, and the preservatives BHA, BHT, and TBHQ.

## Seizures — Another Aspect of the Problem

Stewart is not our “Feingold” child, but he needs the diet as much as his younger brother.



*Stewart Crawford*

Following a severe viral infection, our 12 year old son had a seizure. The doctor put him on Tegretol, and he seemed to do quite well on the medication. When the white tablet was changed to pink, I knew synthetic dye had been added, but wasn't too concerned since it's our 10 year old, Michael, who is on the Feingold diet.

The seizures were now under control, but Stewart wasn't. He had always received top grades in school; he really liked it, and thrived on the competition. It was clear that he would be going on to the top academic high school in our area. Suddenly, he began to bring home failing grades; he was getting into trouble in school; he became very loud, walked into things, and began slurring his words.

Maybe it was a “slump,” maybe it's just his age. (Stewart was now 13.) My husband and I tried to make sense out of this drastic change, as did his teachers and principal. Testing by a psychologist brought a chilling message. Our son had developed a permanent learning disability, she told us. We had better forget any thoughts of an academic education and look for a skill he could be trained in. She also suggested we have his neurologist put him on Ritalin. (This was totally out of the question. Michael had a terrible time with it.)

Driving home, Stewart asked, “Mom, do you think I'm allergic to the red dye in the pills the way Michael is?” No. I was sure this wasn't it, but the next time we saw the neurologist, I asked him. “No.” He didn't think so, but did not entirely rule out the possibility.

I wanted to pursue Stewart's hunch, and tried to obtain a month's supply of the uncolored Tegretol, so I could test it. But nobody seemed to understand what I was trying to do. I called the manufacturer, doctors, and pharmacists. When I called the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy they informed me that the medication is available in the white generic form and told me where I could obtain it.

***“I thought he was just being a 13 year old.”***

Stewart began using the uncolored medication on a Monday. Tuesday afternoon I was at the school and saw his homeroom teacher. “I can't believe the difference in this child,” she told me. “Up until now he was so fidgety, touching everything and everyone; I thought he was just being a 13 year old.”

A few days later his English teacher sought me out and had a similar story. “I don't know what's going on, but Stewart is unbelievable. For months he has been sitting in my class staring into space . . . as though he had no interest in anything. Today he had his hand raised for every question.”

At the end of the week our “permanently learning disabled” son won the class spelling bee!

*Margaret Crawford  
Swarthmore, PA*

*FAUS would like to hear from readers who have a family member being treated for seizures.*

## Food Dyes Banned in England

Several school districts in England have banned any foods that contain the yellow dye tartrazine and another yellow dye called E-110. This is the first step toward a policy aimed at promoting additive-free school meals in England.

Many members of Parliament have signed a motion to prohibit the use of all unnecessary additives in food that may be eaten by infants and children under five years of age.

On July 1, 1986, England established new regulations requiring manufacturers to list all dyes, preservatives, and antioxidants by name. This ruling covers 300 of the 3,800 additives regularly used in processed foods.

In other countries, Sweden bans coal tar dyes. Norway bans all artificial dyes in food and specifies that all additives must be listed on packages. Finland banned the use of certain dyes in 1981. In the U.S. the Food and Drug Administration still permits the use of a number of dyes which have been shown to cause cancer.

*Today's Living Magazine, 2/87*



## Synthetic Statistics

Ten percent of American consumers have stopped buying foods with colorings and eight percent now avoid preservatives, according to a Roper poll of nearly 2,000 adults.

The 1986 survey also showed that fourteen percent have stopped using sugar substitutes and ten percent no longer use aspirin. These substances have been eliminated because consumers fear possible side effects.

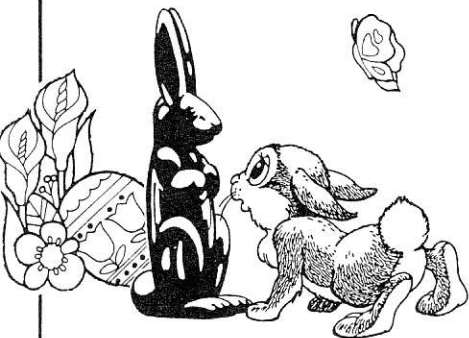
## Easter Baskets

There are many things besides candy that look good in an Easter basket.

Small toys, costume jewelry, hair accessories, action figures, books, cassette tape or a new set of markers/box of crayons will be welcomed.

Homemade cookies, miniature muffins, and dried fruits are more nourishing choices, and may be hidden inside of hollow plastic eggs.

A coupon from the Easter Bunny, good for an outing at a theatre or amusement park, can be tucked in among the cellophane grass. Or how about a coupon book to play videogames at the nearest shopping mall?



If you want to include candy in the basket, two acceptable brands are Palmer\* chocolate novelties and Rodda\* marshmallow candies. (See note below.)

We recommend you limit the amount of candy in the basket and encourage your child to wait until he/she has eaten a nourishing meal before getting into it. Don't spoil the joy of the day by starting it with a lot of sugar on an empty stomach.

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\*IMPORTANT: Carefully check the labels on the chocolate candy to be sure they do not contain "vanillin" (synthetic vanilla).

Only the WHITE marshmallow bunnies and peeps are acceptable.

## Snap, Crackle, and . . . BHT?

In conducting our product information research, ready-to-eat cereals are among the most difficult foods to learn about.

It's easy enough for the Feingold member to avoid the fluorescent sugar-coated concoctions which glare out at us from supermarket shelves. Synthetic dyes and flavorings can generally be found on the ingredient label. It's the antioxidant preservatives which cause problems for the Feingold label reader.

Despite the seemingly endless variety on the cereal aisle, there are only a few basic products. The majority of cereals are made from one of the following grains: corn, wheat, rice or oats. What appears to be a wide variety simply represents variations on a theme.

When these grains are milled, naturally occurring antioxidants are lost, and food processors replace them with synthetic ones such as BHA, BHT and TBHQ — which are prohibited on the Feingold Program. (See last month's *Pure Facts* for more information on antioxidants.)

In a recent conversation with an executive of a major cereal company, *Pure Facts* learned that the need for antioxidants depends in part upon which type of grain is used.

In the milling of wheat, for example, it is fairly easy to separate out the germ. This is the portion which is highest in nutrients, but it also is richest in oil, making it vulnerable to spoilage (oxidation).

When oat grains are milled it's difficult to remove the germ. Consequently, the oils are released, natural preserving agents are lost, and the flour is more susceptible to spoilage.

In some products BHA or BHT are added directly to the foods, but many cereal manufacturers prefer to treat the packaging (the inside of the bag containing the cereal). This allows the chemical to slowly migrate into the cereal.

The use of antioxidants raises interesting issues. Manufacturers see them in a positive light — protecting the food from spoilage. Some consumers counter that the antioxidants are added to protect the manufacturer. By prolonging the shelf life of cereal, the company does not lose money through spoilage.

### Cereal Notes

- The Feingold Association of the Bay Area reports that **Cheerios** boxes on the West Coast are beginning to appear with BHT listed as an ingredient.

Feingold members rejoiced years ago when General Mills removed the yellow dye from Cheerios. But our product information committee has never been able to get the company to fill out an inquiry form.

- There has been confusion in the past over whether Post **Grape Nuts** contains prune juice (a salicylate). General Foods has confirmed that Grape Nuts does not contain any fruit juice, thus it can be listed on Stage I (non-salicylate).

### Breakfast Isn't Just Cereal

Check page 24 of *The Feingold Handbook* for a wide variety of breakfast ideas.

The Feingold® Associations do not endorse, approve or assume responsibility for any product, brand, method or treatment. The presence (or absence) of a product on a Feingold foodlist, or the discussion of a method or treatment does not constitute approval (or disapproval). The foodlists are based primarily upon information supplied by manufacturers, and are not based upon independent testing.

# Pork Preservative Approved

A major pork processor has received USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) permission to use a preserving agent to keep fresh pork from becoming discolored.

The chemicals approved for use are: citric acid, sodium ascorbate and sodium citrate. None of these preservatives are excluded from the Feingold diet.

All have been approved for use by the Food and Drug Administration, but additives used in meat or poultry products must be approved by the USDA. As is their policy with additives used in meat and poultry, the USDA will require the pork to carry a label declaring which preservative has been used.

A USDA spokesperson told *Pure Facts* that only one producer (Wilson) has requested permission to use the acids, and it is not being done on a wide scale at this time.

According to Donald Houston, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, "The prescribed conditions under which the substances are permitted will ensure they do not mask signs of food spoilage."

## Pure Facts

Editor: Jane Hersey  
Contributing Editors

Detroit: Karen Dorries  
Fort Worth: Carolyn Allen  
Los Angeles: Colleen Smethers  
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St. Paul: Sue Maldonado

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For further information write to: Feingold Association of the United States, Inc., Box 6550, Alexandria, VA 22306. (703) 768-FAUS

## FDA News

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires that prescription drugs which contain **sulfites** must list this on the label. The agency has announced that as of June 3 such drugs must also carry a warning label that these preservatives may cause allergic reactions in some people. Many non-prescription drugs voluntarily list sulfites.

They are preservatives used in more than 1,100 drugs, most of which are intravenous. Sulfites prevent oxidation, a major cause of drug deterioration. They also are used in many foods, and are generally required to be listed on the labels of packaged foods.

Although sulfites are not eliminated from the Feingold diet, some members do not tolerate them.

Reactions to sulfiting agents vary from mild to life-threatening, and may include hives, itching, wheezing and shock in susceptible persons, including some asthmatics and those with allergies.



The Milk Industry Foundation, NutraSweet Co., and Beatrice Dairy Products, Inc. have asked FDA to permit **aspartame** to be used to sweeten refrigerated flavored milk beverages.

The NutraSweet Co. has filed a petition proposing that FDA allow it to be used as a sweetener in fruit spreads, toppings, and syrups.

Meanwhile, breath mints, ready-to-drink iced tea, frozen novelties, and frozen and refrigerated juices are the latest products to receive FDA approval for sweetening with aspartame.

NutraSweet and Equal are product names for the artificial sweetener aspartame. The Feingold Association recommends members avoid the use of aspartame.

Teacher, from page 1

Sal likes to go to students' homes for counseling as well. "I believe the office is an artificially contrived environment," he told *Pure Facts*. "When you go to someone's house defense mechanisms are lowered and you get a real picture of them."

As a history teacher Sal encouraged his students to become involved, then he took his own words to heart and ran for public office. This is the kind of rare teacher he is.

***By contacting parents before there were any problems, Sal no doubt prevented many of them.***

The parent-teacher conference need not be the yearly encounter dreaded by both. Having been in all of the roles — as parent, teacher, and counselor — Sal knows how they are run. But here, too, he brings a new perspective and innovative ideas. Why not have a summer conference between: parents, the new teacher and the previous teacher?

Feingold members will have the opportunity to hear Sal at FAUS's 12th Annual Conference to be held on Staten Island, NY, June 24-28. He will share his ideas on how we can more effectively work with the schools and help our Feingold children.

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For information on how you can attend, contact Judy Schneider, 240 Elverton Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10308.

## Free Pure Facts

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FAUS APR-PF  
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