

Pure Facts

Newsletter of the Feingold® Associations of the United States



May, 1989

Vol. 13, No. 4

Feingold: The Next Generation

This newsletter offers a tribute to "our kids" who have been following the Feingold Program for a decade or more.

It is a tribute to their parents, as well, particularly the moms who have traveled what has often proven to be a rough road, who have fought for their children and have won. It's also an acknowledgement of those who have fought just as hard, but whose kids would not stay on the diet and didn't make it — at least as of now. There are only a handful of these stories compared to the countless successes, but we salute these parents as well on this month which celebrates both Mother's Day and the anniversary of the formation of the Feingold Association of the United States.

Why did these kids make it, while others have not? We have found that the parent's determination to follow the program closely is a crucial factor. In the stories we proudly present, one or both parents was an active Feingold volunteer. (There are many, many more and we are limited just by space.)

The successful parent gained much of her knowledge through her work in the Association. Volunteering brought her in close contact with others who were also acquiring expertise.

The Feingold mom learned to speak up for herself by speaking up on her child's behalf. Many times she was called to defy the conventional wisdom because she knew her child better than anyone else — whether it was a neighbor, teacher, doctor, or mother-in-law. "Her teachers were no help at all," notes one mother. "They thought I was a raving lunatic."

Others found professionals who were sympathetic, or at least open minded, and taught them about the diet.

Through their involvement in the Association, mothers of the children described here gained the motivation and confidence to pursue challenging careers they would not otherwise have considered.

Whether it was in their Feingold work or in their personal lives, when they saw something which was askew, they did what was necessary to put it right.

These moms learned from many sources, including their Feingold kids. Meeting the challenge of caring for their difficult child helped give them a better perspective on what's really important; it enabled them to be better parents for their other children.

The message from the veteran moms to the new members is this: There may be times when you feel like you're at war with the world, including the child you're trying to help. But don't give up; there's too much at stake, and there's a good chance that you are his best hope for the kind of happy endings you read about here.

The Drug Scene

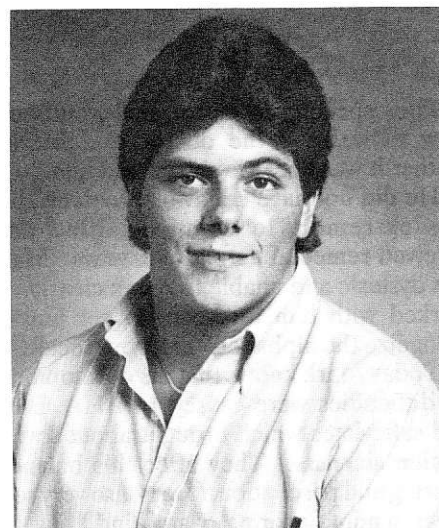
These Feingold parents expressed gratitude that their children had been spared the disaster of drug abuse.

The common thread seems to be that our youngsters recall how it felt to be out of control, and they don't want to be in that position again. Not only do they resist taking medications of all kinds, they seem to understand that their bodies, which have been sent out of control from a colored Life Saver, would be especially vulnerable to the effects of illicit drugs.

Michael

At 5 years of age, Michael Gelardi was diagnosed as dyslexic and suffering from visual perception deficits in five areas. He was a terror to live with, and his parents were advised to place him in a school for brain injured children. Instead, his parents began using the diet shortly after the publication of *Why Your Child Is Hyperactive*.

Today Mike is a junior in college. A major in communications/business/public relations, he is successful both socially and scholastically.



Michael Gelardi

He copes well with whatever comes his way, enjoys working with people and is very much in control of his life.

Michael still has an abundance of energy, but channels it productively. He is involved in many sports, and in high school, had a unique technique for winning football games. Before the game, he chewed red bubble gum, which brought on the aggressive, hyper behavior that got goals. Then, he'd wear himself out in the game. "Michael didn't do drugs," his mom noted, "he did red bubble gum."

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.

Special Anniversary Issue

Dawn

Aggressive, whiny, strong, wild, fearless, spacey, frequently sick, uncontrollable, in constant motion, destructive, erratic sleep pattern, uncoordinated, disruptive, ear infections, stuffiness — all these describe Dawn prior to going on the Feingold diet — at the ripe old age of two!

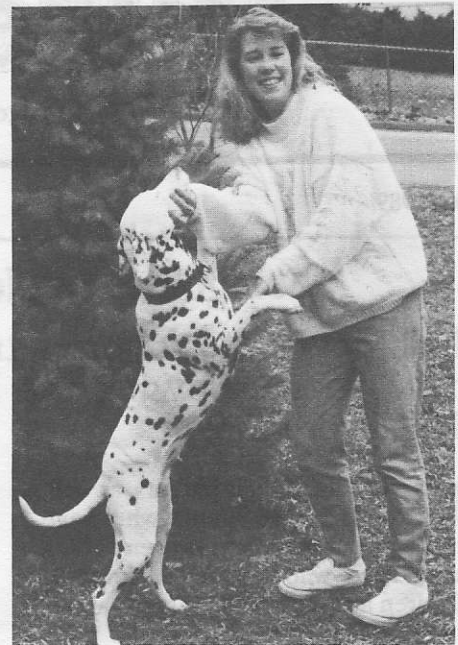
"Dawn was the focus of attention in our family," her mother recalls, "and we rarely went out. When I took her into the drugstore, they would assign a clerk to her. The doctors recommended drugs to sedate her; and they prescribed Valium and Librium for me."

That was thirteen years ago. Today Dawn is an honor roll student in ninth grade, and a talented athlete. She is treasurer of the National Junior Honor Society and a member of the Washington Area Soccer League. A very competitive teenager, she sets high goals for herself and pushes to meet them.

She is still strong and determined, but today these are assets — Dawn received the President's Fitness Award. In addition to playing year-round soccer, she swims and plays lacrosse. Dawn has many friends, and enjoys music and art. She also loves to write, and tutors children in math.

Dawn has long accepted responsibility for her diet; she knows what to eat, when she can cheat and when she needs to be careful (during exams). Like many experienced Feingolders, she has learned how much she can get away with before she will have a reaction.

It's hard to believe this healthy, vibrant teenager is the same person who, as a toddler, spent hours stooped over in the corner of the living room, sedated by drugs.



Dawn Frederick

Mark

Poor speech, no motor skills, and very slow to walk — the doctor told Mark's mother it was because she babied him.

He did not have behavior problems, but was extremely learning disabled and received remedial help for six years. Mark was dyslexic and unable to speak clearly. "I worked with him for years to get him to recognize the alphabet," his mom recalls.

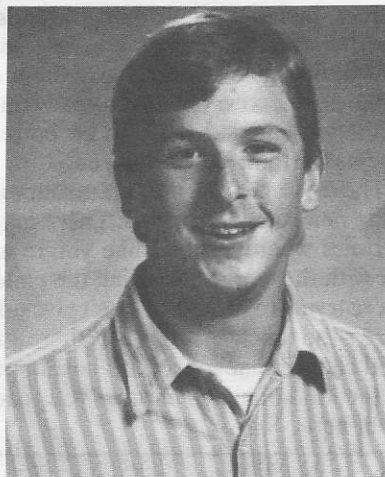
Today Mark knows that his developmental difficulties were caused by BHA, BHT and salicylates which brought about severe motion sickness. They affect his balance, hearing and perception. (He is also very sensitive to mint flavoring of any kind.)

It is difficult for anyone to believe that Mark once had any learning problem at all. He is enrolled in advanced classes in high school, earning A's and B's. His teachers have noted he is able to store and retrieve enormous amounts of information. He also writes well.

His motor skills are fine, he runs track, is very personable and doing well in all areas.

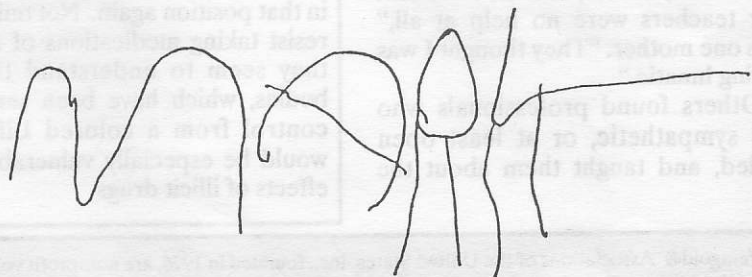
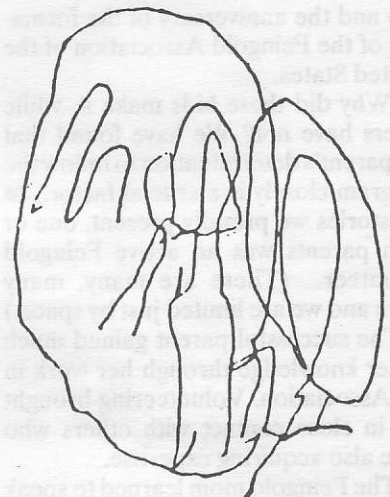
"For us, it's a miracle," his mother relates. "But he'd lose it all if he went off the diet." Mark is aware of this and monitors what he eats.

This month is the 10th anniversary of their experience with the diet. The phrase which best describes Mark is one his mother never expected to hear as she sought out help for her little boy: today Mark is "perfectly normal."



Mark Gabriel

In the handwriting sample above, Mark tried to write his name as he started the diet. The sample below was written when he had been on the Feingold Program for 5 days.



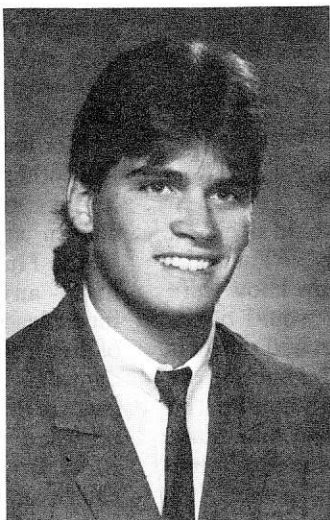
Tommy

People who know Tommy Syron today find it very hard to believe he had been a toddler who needed constant attention, was always fussy, crying, and in perpetual motion. He didn't sleep easily or well and had a chronic problem with rashes.

As a senior in high school he is well liked by everyone who knows him, and was nominated for "best dressed," "best smile" and "best looking." An exceptional athlete with excellent motor control, he plays varsity basketball and ice hockey. His teachers like him too, and refer to Tommy as a "class leader."

Like so many Feingold successes, Tom isn't interested in experimenting with drugs. "Having to say 'no' to Hi-C in Kindergarten made it easier for him to say no to the bad stuff," his mom observes. "In fact, he went into kindergarten reading labels."

Tommy will be starting college in the fall, and his family is glad he won't be far from home. Not only do his parents like having him around, but (the ultimate compliment) even his sisters enjoy him!



Tommy Syron

Andrea

"It all should have gone so smoothly." Andrea's mother recalled. "John and I waited over seven years for our little girl. I was a registered nurse, with experience in pediatrics, and an advocate of wholesome foods. Andrea was nursed, and later fed homemade baby food — I was a real Earth Mother! Why, then, were we worn out by this incredibly strong and active baby who scarcely ever slept?"

"Some of my most vivid memories date back to the time Andrea was 18 months old:

"The time she had a bath with dyed, perfumed Mr. Bubble and became wild, banging her head against the side of the tub.

"A small drink of Kool-Aid at the coffee hour after church, and then she ran around biting people.

"When I put her out in the back yard to play she'd strip off her diaper and be over the fence in no time. And more than once I saw her at the top of our neighbor's 30 foot tree!

Named "wiggle butt" by the neighbors, she could get out of just about any restraint.



Andrea Roley

This bright little girl, who spoke in sentences at 21 months, grew to be more and more frustrated. By the time she was two and a half, Andrea's temper tantrums were becoming increasingly frequent — up to ten in a day. Her parents found spanking was totally ineffective and "time out was a joke."

While they were shopping, Andrea pulled off one of her typical disappearances, but her mom delayed the search just long enough to copy down the phone number on a flier advertising a diet for hyperactive children.

The family went on the Feingold diet — most of the way — and saw a big improvement in their toddler. But it wasn't until they gave up the unapproved brands of cheese and crackers that they had complete success.

David

"On Monday, Wednesday and Friday David took Ritalin. On Tuesday and Thursday he took Dexedrine. And on Saturday and Sunday I took phenobarbital," explains his mother.



David Gerstl

She remembers how bad it was, before her son went on the Feingold diet at age 7. Even after that there were problems until she realized how unusually sensitive he was to salicylates.

One year she made his birthday cake with a recipe which called for a small amount of orange juice.

After he had eaten a piece, David went outside to play. Cindy found her son pushing a playmate on their swing. David was perseverating — pushing and pushing, with a glazed look in his eyes. The other child was holding on for dear life as the swing looped all the way around the frame of the swing set.

Today David is a senior in college, majoring in psychology. He is a computer whiz, and loves working with children. "Kids are attracted to him like a magnet."

He hasn't had a problem with drug abuse as have so many people his age. "These kids who have been through this (behavior modifying medication) know about medicine; they know how it affects them and don't want to have to go through that again. David avoids all kinds of medicine, and has to be really uncomfortable before he'll even take a Tylenol."

Her parents were astonished to find that the tiniest amount of an additive could have a profound effect on their child. Andrea was 4 1/2 when they moved to a new location. She began to have episodes of severe depression, which were blamed on the move. It turned out that the culprit was the brand of milk they were now using, which had preservatives in the vitamin A fortification.

Now in ninth grade, Andrea has made her family proud of her and of her accomplishments. Last year she won the Scholastic Writing Award for the region of her state. She is making A's in advanced math, is a talented artist and loves dramatics.

Andrea has had to cut back on basketball, soccer and band in order to have time for a new interest — jazz dancing. She is active in her church youth group and has a busy social life.

In addition to her regular classes, she teaches German to elementary aged children and has participated in the writing and filming of several videotapes for her school.

Neighbors may have called Andrea "wiggle butt", but the name her teachers use is "a joy."

Lita

"The day she was born, the nurse warned me she was hyperactive" Lita's mother recalls. "But she was such a bright, lovable baby that we didn't even realize she was hyperactive until she got on the diet at age 4.

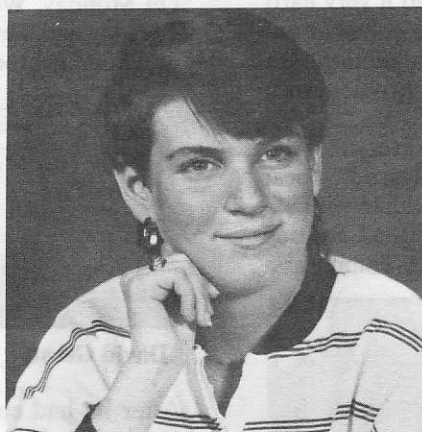
"Lita didn't play with toys, didn't watch TV, couldn't sit at the table for a meal, and never slept for more than 30 minutes at a time — even at night. But she really was sweet, and I guess we just got accustomed to the level of activity.

"Developmentally, she was slow in most areas, but because she spoke in full sentences by the age of 18 months, we didn't consider the possibility of retardation.

"Lita had done well in her home, and on a one-to-one basis with other children, but nursery school brought more frustration than this three year old could handle, so we began the search for answers.

"We followed the diet to the best of our ability for a week, and then on Saturday I gave her a glass of Hawaiian Punch. She made me think of a dog chasing its own tail. She chased around in circles, with no place to go; her reaction was so extreme we became fully committed to the diet that day.

"Lita stayed on the diet most of the time, but after she had been good for as



Lita Hoffstein

long as she could, she would decide it was time for a 'holiday'. Then the nightmares (which we now know were actually hallucinations) would begin. She was terrified of them and this fear would make her want to get back on the diet. She just couldn't handle the temptation on her own, and sometimes I would come in to school and eat lunch with her to bolster her will power.

"Another consequence of going off the diet was the change in her school work; Lita was unable to read or write after she had consumed the forbidden additives. Salicylates had as severe an effect on her schoolwork, and she must still be careful not to overdo them."

Gerrik

For Gerrik's parents, the hardest part of dealing with their 3 1/2 year old was his sleeplessness and nightmares. Their day started at 5 am with a toddler who experienced everything with enormous intensity — whether he was eating, playing, laughing or crying. This went on daily until about midnight.

Worn down by the nonstop activity, his mom recalls how it felt before their preschooler began the Feingold diet, "When you're in the trenches you think you'll never make it through."

At 16, both Gerrik and his parents are seeing their time and patience paying off. After trying many sports, Gerrik has discovered his remarkable ability as a cyclist. The sport enables him to put his abundant energy to good use, and the rigors of training have brought out a remarkable ability to discipline himself.

Gerrik's tendency to focus intently on just one thing created problems in school, but in cycling it's a great advantage.

The ultra-healthy diet required in training is not too much different from the food he is accustomed to at home. And he stays away from the green sports drinks, which make him physically sick. Today, Gerrik is very healthy, with the endurance necessary to cycle 170 miles in a day.

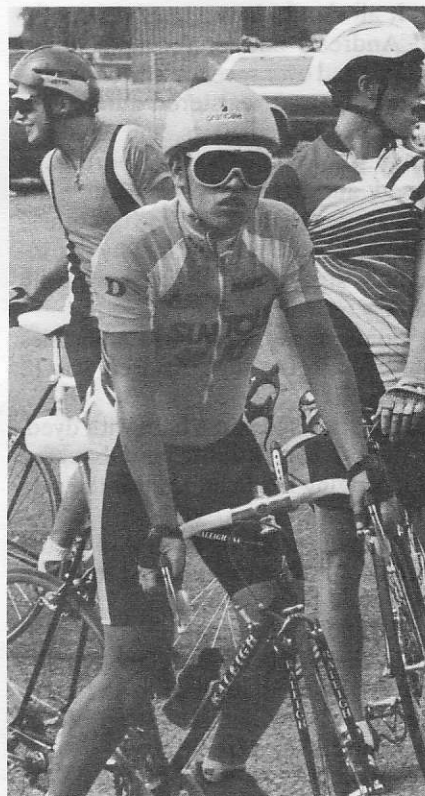
His biking has taken him all over the United States, and he expects to qualify for the U.S. Junior Pam American team. If he does qualify this could be a big step toward the American Olympic team.

When you see the Olympic cycling event on T.V. in 1992, watch for this outstanding young man who gained control of his body and his life.

Today

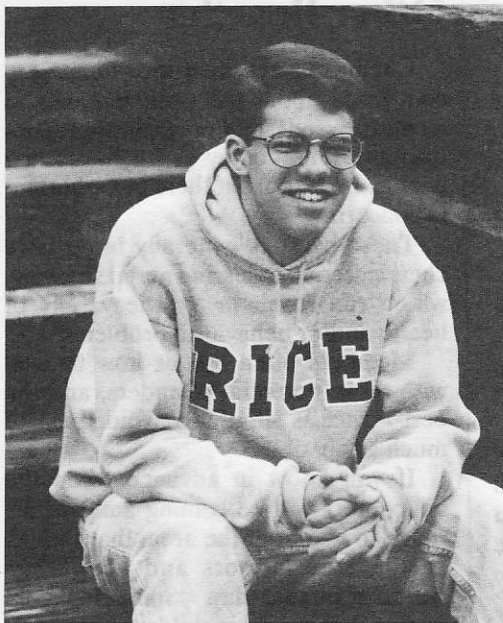
Lita has just learned that she has been accepted into the college of her choice. Her ambition is to study law. It may not be possible for a high school senior whose reading ability is only at the 8th grade level, but Lita is bright, articulate, and blessed with a great memory. She so successfully uses these talents to compensate that she has been an honor roll student throughout junior high and high school, and is receiving top grades in her honors English course.

Her maturity and ability to interact with others has brought a long list of honors and obligations. Lita was chosen as her school's representative by the Hugh O'Brien Youth Foundation — an organization which identifies future leaders. At 15 she was president of her religious organization's youth chapter, and the group won many awards that year. Lita has been vice president of the regional council of B'nai Brith and is now membership chairman. For several years she was her class's representative to the school's student government association, is a member of the law club, and was selected to attend the Goucher College mock senate.



Gerrik Latta

Chris



Chris Nixon

"He was always wound tight, all helter skelter, into everything, and wore everybody out."

In addition to dealing with the problems of hyperactivity, Chris has also overcome some of the symptoms of Tourette Syndrome.

This year he will be graduating 1st in his high school class, a National Merit Commended Scholar with a better than 4.0 average.

Chris is president of the United High School Council for the Fort Worth Independent School District.

In a letter of recommendation to Rice University, the principal of his school called him "one of the most outstanding students I have encountered in my career."

He has received an early admission to Rice, but will have to make some hard choices as his interests and abilities cover so many areas: pre-law, international business, journalism and architecture.

Music has been an important part of his life, so it wasn't a surprise that he had the lead in the school's musical this year. What was a surprise was that the part also required dancing; as a preschooler Chris had been diagnosed as having gross motor disabilities.

His parents believe that his experience in travelling all over the world with a choir group has enhanced his maturation. He holds down two part time jobs: lawn care service and working in a gourmet grocery store. Chris especially likes the gourmet food, and having spent most of his life on the Feingold diet, his palate "knows the difference between real food and the synthetic stuff."

Michael

He was a happy, likeable child — not defiant or hard to live with. But Michael had a great deal of trouble coping with his schoolwork. He became a real charmer, and learned to talk his way out of just about any tight spot.

His parents reluctantly tried Ritalin for a year, but couldn't stand to see their son turned into a "zombie".

They learned of the Feingold diet just when the support groups were first forming, and fourteen years later are profoundly grateful for the help and moral support they received. This support gave Michael the courage to stick with the diet even back then when there were so few prepared foods allowed.

His mother tells of him being given a cupcake by his teacher. He wouldn't eat it, but kept it on his desk all day, explaining, "I just want to look at it."

Today, at 21, his proud parents note that Michael is as sweet-natured as ever. He takes a great deal of pride in himself and in his new career in the Navy.



Michael Schwartz

Laura

When she was only four, and out of control, Laura's parents used to ask themselves what it would be like when she became a teenager.

At 19, she's a calm, caring young lady who is in college studying early childhood development, and hopes to become a children's librarian.

Laura exhibited some behavioral problems, but she was far from "hyperactive". This was a dreamy little girl, bright, but whose thoughts seemed to always be floating off on a cloud.

Her mood could quickly change from charming to irritable, irrational or destructive for no apparent reason. The only thing about her which was consistent was her unpredictability.



Laura Hersey

The schools have no tag for children like this, and no tidy slot in which to place them. These youngsters are bright and precocious, so they cannot be retarded. Their behavior is rational, but not all of the time.

Parents believe they are at fault until they learn what is actually in the foods their children are eating, and see what happens when petroleum-based additives are removed.

Laura can still remember how it felt before she went on the diet at 5 1/2. And her parents often think about where she would have ended up had it not been for Dr. Feingold.

Pure Facts

Pure Facts is published ten times a year and is a portion of the materials provided to members of the Feingold Association.

For more information, contact the Feingold Association, P.O. Box 6550, Alexandria, VA 22306 (703) 768-FAUS.

Glad Tidings

The manufacturers of Glad products are conducting a promotion of their new trash bags and have offered the Feingold Association an opportunity to earn money by collecting and sending in proofs-of-purchase from any Glad trash bags.

Glad will pay us 75 cents for each proof of purchase we submit through the month of June, 1989. FAUS will use the funds earned to help finance mailing literature to professionals throughout the United States.

Remove the "tear strip" — the piece of the box which comes off when you open it — and the **universal price code bar** printed on the bottom of the box. Please send these two items from any size or type of Glad trash bags to your local association or to: FAUS, P.O. Box 6550, Alexandria, VA 22306 before June 30th. (Note: food storage bags and plastic wrap are not included.)

The company is also offering a pamphlet for consumers. It addresses the issues of litter prevention and containment and the proper handling of solid waste at the household level. For a copy of this publication, contact FAUS.

Getting It Together

One of the workshops to be given at the **FAUS 14th Annual Conference** will teach us how to manage our time. It will be presented by the Support Center of Chicago, one of a branch of organizations devoted to helping nonprofit groups.

All of us need to know how to find the time to do all we want to do. The time management information to be covered in the workshop has helped many of the top volunteer organizations become more productive with less stress. These techniques will be of value at home or at work.

FAUS Conferences are open to all Feingold members. Refer to your April issue of *Pure Facts* for information on our conference. This year we will be meeting in the Chicago metropolitan area June 22-24.



Gypsy Moths and Other Beasties

Chemically-sensitive individuals are concerned about the problems caused by pests, weeds, and other unwanted intruders. They enjoy green lawns and healthy trees too, but there are additional concerns.

These beasties generally bring lawn chemical companies and aerial spraying, which can result in a wide variety of health and/or behavioral problems.

Members often ask us how to deal with these potential offenders, and the best advice is simply to avoid them as much as possible.

If you know in advance when the helicopters will be coming and can arrange to be out of the area, that's ideal. If not, stay indoors and keep your children in that day. Some Feingold parents believe their children can safely play on the grass after it has rained ("and the pesticides have seeped into the ground and into our water supply!")

But be careful to keep barefoot kids off the grass shortly after the spraying, or when it is still wet with rain.

Sweet Subjects

Information from the Food and Drug Administration

New Sweetener Approved

A new no-calorie sweetener called acesulfame* (pronounced ay-see-sul-fame) potassium has received FDA approval as safe for tabletop use in packets or tablets and for ingredient use in chewing gum, dry drink mixes, gelatins, puddings, and nondairy creamers.

Also known as acesulfame K ("K" is the chemical symbol for potassium), the product is about 200 times sweeter than sugar. It contributes no calories to the diet because it's not metabolized, or broken down for use by the body.

The manufacturer, Hoechst Celanese Corp., of Somerville, N.J., plans to market its new sweetener under the name Sunette. Hoechst sought approval to use its product in confections, including hard and soft candy, but FDA deferred action pending further review. In the past, FDA has interpreted the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act as barring the use of nonnutritive sweeteners in candies to reduce calories.

** At this time we do not know enough about acesulfame K to make a judgement about its use by Feingold members.*

Dr. Feingold cautioned us to be wary of synthetic sweeteners.

More Low-Cal Foods on the Way

"Sugar-free" foods will soon include ready-to-serve yogurt-like snacks, refrigerated flavored milk drinks, wine coolers, fruit juice drinks, gelatin desserts, and frozen dairy and non-dairy desserts. FDA has added these six food categories to 16 others approved since 1981 in which aspartame can be used as a sweetener.

Approximately 1,250 products are now sweetened with aspartame, according to its maker, The Nutra-Sweet Company, a subsidiary of Monsanto Company. The U.S. Department of Agriculture projects that aspartame consumption in the United States this year will average 14 pounds per person.

For information on the controversy over aspartame, see the Dec. 1987/Jan. 1988 issue of Pure Facts. You can contact the Association for a copy. The Feingold Association recommends members avoid the use of aspartame (Nutra-Sweet).

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.