

# COWIN CHIRO NEWS

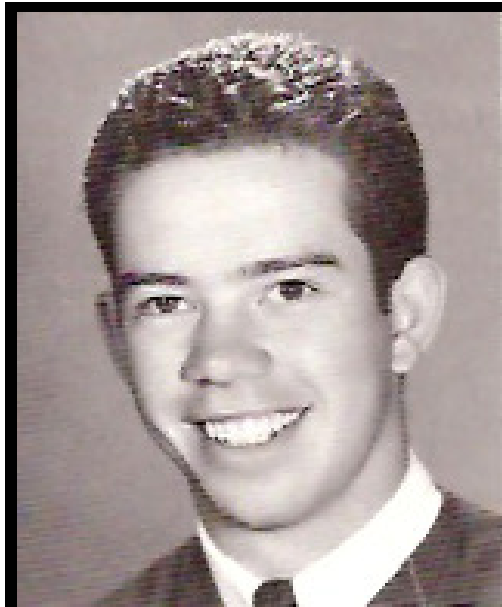
Chiro - Polio "folio" November 2011

## Newsletter No.9

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## James L Smith and Polio



James in 1965

his job as a test pilot and moved our family to Davenport, Iowa. There he attended Palmer College of Chiropractic (PCC) and graduated as valedictorian in his class in 1956. We then moved back to the Fair Oaks, Ca, area where he practised till shortly before his death in 1993.

About 10 family members as well as about 10 of his patients followed Dad's lead and attended Palmer College of Chiropractic. In his generation there were three of his four brothers, and one or two cousins. Then there was me, my brother and a couple of cousins. This year a third-generation family member, a grandson of Dad's brother Huey, has begun practice. I think the Smith family chiropractors are here to stay.

Not me, though. A year or so after beginning chiropractic studies in 1965 I discovered in clinic that I was no good with sick people. So, instead, I went into the exciting early days of computer programming.

It's been a full life so far, with the early sickness of polio, then continuing health, work, marriage, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I have continued receiving chiropractic care for the 63 years since 1948, and feel terrific. Nowadays, I have regular "tune up" visits from my cousin Keith Smith in Auburn, Ca, [<http://www.smithchiropractic.net/>] and my brother William is still in practice in Anaheim, Ca.

Semi-retired for the past few years, I enjoy, among many other things, part-time work teaching in two unrelated areas, guitar and computer skills. I don't regret not becoming a chiropractor all those years ago, but remain grateful to all the ones who did, including former Palmer classmates, Robert Cowin and his sister Kathleen (Cowin) Bras.



James in 2010

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### In attendance:



Robert Cowin  
Chiropractor

Julie Rodgers  
Chiropractic  
Assistant



**I CONTRACTED POLIO** back in 1948, when I was one year old. We had just moved to a new town, Fair Oaks, California (a village of about 30,000 souls).

Please feel free to use my story. I lived it and have no regrets. If it helps someone else, that would be great.

Family recollections are that Mom & Dad were new to the area; Dad was in the Air Force, so money was beyond tight, and none of the local medical doctors would take me on as a polio patient. The only doctor who would touch me was an old chiropractor named Dr Brevik. He worked on me and taught my mother the Sister Kenny (an Aussie, by the way!) method of hot compresses and "patterning" (passive instruction of the limbs in movement by the rehabilitator).

Because I was the first child, Mom had the time to devote to the Sister Kenny treatment.

I recovered with no residual paralysis and later developed no symptoms of Post Polio Syndrome. My life has been active and has included riding bicycles, running and even sword fighting in full steel armour in an international hobbyist group, The Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA). I attribute all of this to that initial chiropractic care that kept me out of braces.

My father, James W T Smith, was so impressed with my recovery that he later left

## Comments on James' story

According to the Polio Australia organisation poliomyelitis (infantile paralysis) epidemics between the 1930's and 1960's have resulted in polio survivors becoming "the largest single disability group in the country".<sup>[1]</sup> There is evidence that the disease has been around for millennia, with the first record of a case thought to be an Egyptian carving from around 1200 BC.<sup>[2][3]</sup> The most-recent case in Australia seems to have been in 2007, imported by a 22-year old man who reported having received at least three doses of oral poliomyelitis vaccine as a child.<sup>[4][5]</sup>

An unlucky minority of perhaps 1 in 200 polio-infected people develop serious symptoms, i.e., flaccid paralysis, which can lead to death for 2% to 5% of children affected and 15% to 30% of adults. For many of those who survive, some weakness or paralysis remains. Then, three or four decades later, 25% - 40% of the survivors will relapse, and symptoms of muscle pain, weakness and paralysis recur, worsen or develop as a post-polio syndrome.<sup>[6]</sup> (See Aleita's story: P3; Louella's on <<http://uppercervical.org>>).

In 1965 James Smith and I became friends when living in the Palmer College Men's Dormitory. His recovery from polio was one of thousands reported by patients of Kenny-method practitioners, osteopaths and chiropractors. According to the historians, that got the practitioners a lot of thanks and a lot of trouble.

**KENNY:** The attacks on Sister Elizabeth Kenny's methods involved a "struggle to define who can assess the authenticity of evidence presented as 'scientific'".<sup>[7]</sup>

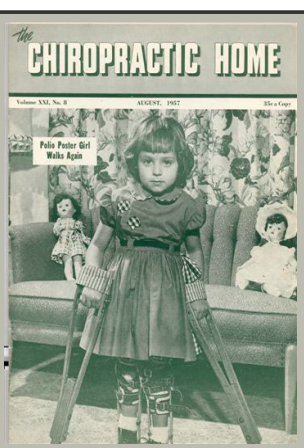
**OSTEOPATHS:** "The history of Osteopathy shows a great many actions in the courts against it... (where) the proceedings partook more of the nature of persecutions than prosecutions".<sup>[8]</sup>

**CHIROPRACTORS:** "Prosecutions and persecutions were part of the occupational career outlook for newly-graduated chiropractors".<sup>[9]</sup> Thousands were jailed between 1906 and 1974 "for practising medicine without a licence".<sup>[10][11]</sup>

Also, the early chiropractors would not or could not<sup>[12]</sup> publish their work in the peer-reviewed, indexed literature of the day. Nowadays they publish much and seem much ignored. However, in the journal *Philosophy, Ethics and Humanities in Medicine* (2006), surgeon Grant Gillett writes that organised medicine is a partner in a "regime of truth that defines its own scientific standards, disciplines, rules, and methods of validation and can effectively exclude all apart from the orthodox and privileged."<sup>[13]</sup>

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO CHIRO? A Brief Polio - Politico - Chiro Timeline

Winifred Gardella, a 1952 and 1953 *March of Dimes*, USA, Poster Child, pictured before she received chiropractic care and featured on the cover of *Chiropractic Home*, a journal for chiropractic patients.<sup>[34]</sup> [Public domain]



**Pre-history:** There is evidence that polio epidemics<sup>[2][3]</sup> and bonesetters pre-date recorded history, with the latter described by Imhotep in Egypt about 3,000 BC and by Hippocrates in Greece about 400 BC.<sup>[14][15]</sup>

**1847:** In a "cacophony of competing claims, a group of physicians founded the American Medical Association (AMA)" and "were accused by rivals of being merely another competing sect, the hard drugging 'allopaths'".<sup>[16]</sup>

**1874:** Andrew Taylor Still began the practice of osteopathy.<sup>[17]</sup>

**1895:** D. D. Palmer began the practice of chiropractic.<sup>[18]</sup>

**1897:** D. D. Palmer reported the restoration of feeling, movement and competence in the left leg of one A.S. Drescher, who had come to him on crutches after being told by nine previous doctors that he was a "helpless paralytic".<sup>[19]</sup>

**1901:** Fifty four years after the formation of the AMA (USA), "all states had delegated authority to the medical profession to police itself."<sup>[20]</sup>

**1905:** Chiropractic began in Australia.<sup>[21]</sup>

**1906:** D. D. Palmer was prosecuted and jailed for practicing medicine without a licence. In the

next few decades, there were thousands of similar prosecutions of chiropractors.<sup>[10][11]</sup>

**1908:** Osteopathy began in Australia.<sup>[22]</sup>

**1910:** 25 cases of polio were treated at Palmer Chiropractic Clinic.<sup>[23]</sup>

**1916:** A pamphlet protesting medical/political discrimination against chiropractors' treating polio was published.<sup>[24]</sup>

**1918:** Osteopath, F P Millard published a monograph on polio recoveries following osteopathic care.<sup>[25]</sup>

**1938:** U.S. President F D Roosevelt launched the *March of Dimes*,<sup>[26]</sup> a fund-raiser for polio research and treatment which excluded chiropractic cases.<sup>[27]</sup>

**c1940:** The Chiropractic Foundation for Infantile Paralysis was formed. Results of chiropractic for 1,551 (662 acute and 889 chronic) polio cases were published by the Public Health Council of the National Chiropractic Association (USA).<sup>[23]</sup>

**1944:** Sister Elizabeth Kenny wrote: "Before my arrival in the United States the percentage of recoveries according to statistics published in the *Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery*, Oct., 1941, was 13%. Since my arrival...the recoveries are 88%."<sup>[28]</sup> Seventy years later controversy on the Kenny treatment continues.<sup>[29][30][31][32]</sup>

**1948:** James L Smith contracted polio (See story P1).

**1951:** "A Study of 300 Acute Poliomyelitis Cases under Chiropractic Care" was published by the International Chiropractors' Association.<sup>[33]</sup>

**1952:** Aleita McNeice, aged 6, contracted polio (See story P3).

Winifred Gardella contracted polio. [See photos on this page].<sup>[34]</sup>

**1954:** Jan Groves, aged 17, contracted polio (See story P3).

**1954:** The American Medical Association (AMA) boycott on chiropractors was not only professional but also personal. Its Code of

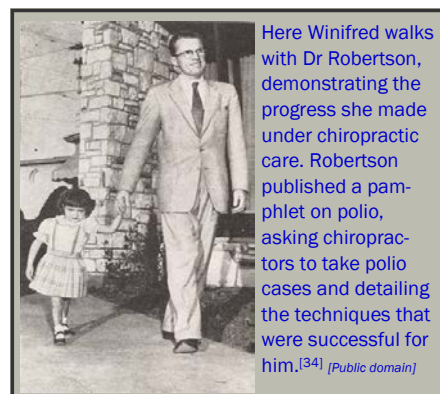
Ethics even discouraged its members "from being a member of a Rotary Club, a church, or a golf club if a chiropractor was also a member".<sup>[35]</sup>

**1975:** AMA (U.S.A.) whistleblower "**Sore Throat**" sent copies to the Public Citizen Health Research Group of confidential documents on the AMA's continuing program to "contain and eliminate" chiropractic.<sup>[36]</sup>

**1984:** Travis Powell, aged 4, began chiropractic care (See story P4).

**1990:** The Seventh Circuit Court (Appeal) upheld the ruling that the AMA and co-defendants (including the American College of Surgeons and the American College of Radiologists) had conspired to destroy the chiropractic profession.<sup>[37]</sup>

**1996:** Louella Harris, of Florida, USA, was vaccinated at 2 years of age, contracted polio at 3 and post-polio at 38. In severe pain, bed-ridden and getting steadily worse, she had to be fed, dressed and washed by her husband Richard till receiving a course of adjustments from Dr Stan Pierce, St Petersburg, Fla. Her improvement was so life-changing she and her husband then founded the *National Awareness Campaign for Upper-Cervical Care*.<sup>[38]</sup> <<http://uppercervical.org>>.



Here Winifred walks with Dr Robertson, demonstrating the progress she made under chiropractic care. Robertson published a pamphlet on polio, asking chiropractors to take polio cases and detailing the techniques that were successful for him.<sup>[34]</sup> [Public domain]

## Jan Groves and Polio

In January 1954, age 17, I contracted polio. My muscles were severely weakened, especially on the left side, and my throat was affected in a way that made it hard to swallow. After three weeks in hospital I found myself falling over a lot and being unable to rise again without crawling to something stable and hauling myself upright.



Jan after her bout with polio. Some lines have been drawn in to show a scoliosis that followed and is still evident 50 years later. See next pic

Notwithstanding months of physiotherapy, my legs never recovered their former strength and I remained unable to rise from a sitting position without using leverage from

my arms.

By my mid-thirties, my head was turning involuntarily to the left. By 1986, aged 49, the movement was constant and uncontrollable and I could not turn my head to the right at all. I had no rest, was exhausted and had bad headaches. My GP wasn't very interested. My first chiropractor had helped me with low-back pain previously but said there was nothing wrong with my neck, my second said I had a "neurological problem" but thought nothing else could be done. My next chiropractors, Drs Cowin and Bras, specialised in neck problems and their first treatment, an upper-cervical adjustment, relieved much of the neck pain, improved movement and improved my sleep. (See "My Restless Neck", Newsletter No.4, Volume 3, Issue 1, December 2005.)

<[http://www.chirocowin.com.au/index.php?p=1\\_11](http://www.chirocowin.com.au/index.php?p=1_11)>).

As well as the polio, I have had at least three memorable, jarring falls: from a Judo workout at 19 years, in a motor-cycle accident at 48 and on a slippery floor at 74.

Since 1986, regular adjustments have enabled me to recover and maintain a level of comfort and health that had seemed impossible. I am particularly thankful for all that has been achieved in those 25 years.

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Jan in her garden, 2011

## Aleita McNeice and Polio

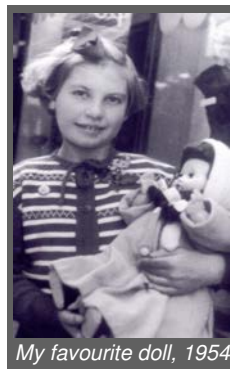
In 1952 I contracted polio. I was 6 years old and spent the next 18 months in hospitals, 6 months at La



Dark days in hospital

Perouse and 12 months at Margaret Reid, in St Ives. At La Perouse I was alone in a single room in an isolation ward. My mother and father visited once a week, on Sundays, but they had

to stay at a barrier outside my room. I can't remember how I spent the rest of the time there. Perhaps I slept a lot. At Margaret Reid Hospital I was in the Girls' Dormitory. Sometimes on nice days our beds would be wheeled outside into the sunshine. Our beds were also wheeled to the Boys' Dormitory for school lessons and on Sundays for a church service provided by the Salvation Army. Before I went to sleep each night, a temporary cast was put on my leg. My spine became permanently twisted. I had to learn to walk again. At hospital I had a doll. According to my mother, when I returned home I had many, many more and, pretending that handkerchiefs were blankets



My favourite doll, 1954

or bandages, I used to play "doctors and nurses" for hours and hours. Once discharged from hospital I had to wear a stiff-ribbed lower-trunk corset for my years at primary school and a moulded, fibre-glass, full-torso corset for a year or so at high school as well as a heel lift in one shoe.

My spinal twist and my way of walking remained quite noticeable. At the age of twenty when walking to the station on my way home from work a stranger tapped me on the shoulder. He said I should see his osteopath as he may be able to help me.

He did. When we moved to Wollongong I visited another osteopath, Mr Wright, of Figtree, till he retired. By the time I was forty I had had help from two osteopaths and three chiropractors. In 1987 I was introduced to a type of

chiropractic which didn't involve jerking of the neck and cracking of other parts of the spine. I prefer this and have been attending the Cowin Clinic for the 24 years since then.

Before marrying and having 3 children I worked in an office as a secretary. The words "I can't" are not in my vocabulary, only "I can" or "there must be a way to do it". Throughout my life I have attempted all things and have enjoyed the outdoors, camping, rowing and sailing. In the Girl Guides, for example, I was a Queen's Guide and later a Unit Leader. For 21 years I have taught cottage crafts and glass painting. Nowadays I teach scrapbooking and from time to time look after my grandchildren.

Going to osteopaths and chiropractors has kept me able to move with little or no aches and pains. I also go to Curves Gymnasium three times a week.

Lately, I seem to have lost some muscle strength, which can be a sign of Post-Polio Syndrome. I hope that the continuing visits to the chiropractor will continue to keep that loss small.

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My twisted spine, 1987



My 60th birthday, 2006



## Travis Powell – Letter from America

**My name is Travis Powell** and I'm in my final year as a student at Palmer College of Chiropractic, Florida. Dr Cowin has invited me to share in this newsletter some of my thoughts on my chiropractic education, health and family.

Over the years, I have seen the benefits of upper-cervical chiropractic (UCC) care on my own health and on my family's, and this has convinced me to pursue the education and training necessary to help the people around me in the same way.

I was first introduced to upper-cervical chiropractic two weeks before my fourth birthday when my parents took me to Cowin Chiropractic Clinic. They brought me in because of chronic tonsillitis. Now, 27 years later, I still have my tonsils. Thanks, Drs Cowin and Bras.

Before I started school at Palmer, my exposure to chiropractic was

primarily upper-cervical. Though that was my primary interest, throughout my studies I still wanted to have an open mind and learn whatever techniques were most beneficial and effective, not just what I already valued.

As I learned about these different techniques and philosophies, I understood the benefits that could be gained by their use. However, something was missing. I never once heard anything about holding one's alignment; never anything about it not being necessary to adjust.

This doesn't make any sense to me. If something is effective, shouldn't it last more than a day? More than a week? This is something upper-cervical techniques do well. Their purpose is to fix a misalignment, stabilize it, and then let the body do its thing unhindered.

It's not adjusting that heals; it's maintaining the alignment that allows lasting healing to take place.



Travis adjusting Ms Duyen Ngo, 2011

### Comments on Jan, Aleita, Travis and a postscript on fathers



Jan's first visit here was twenty-five years ago, in 1986, 32 years after contracting polio. She seemed to know a lot about health being a process one worked at, not a product one bought. Five years later she wrote a thank-you letter celebrating five years of relative freedom from the pains, falters and slumps that for decades had intruded into her busy life as an executive at Westfield, Warrawong. Then, in 2005, Jan wrote part of her story for one of our earlier newsletters (No.4, Volume 3, Issue 1, [Spasmodic torticollis] <[http://www.chirocowin.com.au/index.php?p=1\\_11](http://www.chirocowin.com.au/index.php?p=1_11)>). I hadn't known then of her polio as a teenager and the extra context that gives to her 2005 report and to this issue.

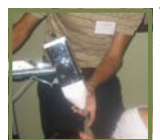
Jan's long-term organisation of self-help rests, exercise and judicious timing of follow-up visits has resulted in a twenty-five-year patient-chiropractor partnership that's addressed a polio legacy, jarring falls and ordinary stresses of everyday life. It seems as if we have both been getting right many of the trial-and-error decisions that sort of partnership needs and then rewards.



Aleita is slow to whinge and quick to acknowledge help. For the 24 years since we met, I have never heard her complain of polio, hospital loneliness or school-day corsets. Also, in that time, her mother, husband and children have attended chiropractors regularly.

Fourteen years after contracting polio, her spine permanently twisted, a stranger referred Aleita to an osteopath. Forty-three years later, she reports having benefited from both osteopathy and chiropractic. Historically, both these professions reported success with polio patients in the USA <sup>[25]</sup> and both were targeted by the medical establishment.

In NSW, osteopathy and chiropractic have survived much opposition and are independent, registered professions. Before being licensed to practise, their practitioners are required to complete five years of university education.<sup>[39]</sup><sup>[40]</sup> In contrast, another independent profession, physiotherapy, seems to have developed more gently, under the patronage and protection of the medical profession, from small groups of massage therapists around 1906.<sup>[41]</sup><sup>[42]</sup> Before being licensed to practise, its practitioners are required to complete four years of university education.<sup>[43]</sup>



Travis' tonsils story reminds me of Courtney Nudd's. She, too, was under four years old at her first visit. Her mother Allison, a pre-school teacher, reported, in our Newsletter Volume 1, Issue 2, October 2003, <[http://www.chirocowin.com.au/index.php?p=1\\_11](http://www.chirocowin.com.au/index.php?p=1_11)> that Courtney had "spent the first three years of her life battling with constant outbreaks of tonsillitis" and "I was about to agree to their removal". However, prompted by her other daughter Annalyse's improvement in school and in health since beginning chiropractic care, she brought Courtney here. A day or so after her first adjustment, Courtney told her mother "those muffins smell good", the first time in her young life, apparently, that she had ever mentioned a smell. When the family moved to Queensland 23 months later, Courtney, like Travis, still had her tonsils and seemed "to catch fewer colds, 'flu and bugs from school" and, when she did catch them recovered "much faster".



Courtney, 2003



**P.S.** As in James' case, it was our father, newspaper man Alexander George Cowin (AGC), who introduced Kathleen Bras and myself to chiropractic and encouraged us to become chiropractors.

I was again grateful to him when reading of another father, philosopher Raymond Gaita's, in the biography "*Romulus, My Father*". That book praises an "**openness to the voices of others when they spoke with disciplined honesty from their own experience...an openness to the possibility of being radically altered.**"

Our newsletters show how Kathleen and I have long worked with people like this, as our daily job, our daily bread. Thanks, Dad. Thanks, Aleita, James, Jan, Travis and all your predecessors and successors, both in our little newsletters and in our shared chiropractic history. At pages' end I salute you all, this day, this bread.

Robert Cowin, DC, November, 2011

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