

'ROUNDING OUT' THE SENIORS: THE BUCKET LIST

Debbie Campbell

As the 2022-2023 season comes to a close for the Monday Morning Seniors league at Thunderhead Bowl and Grill, the team of Debbie Campbell, Larry Brown, and Rod Weaver take their place in the interview spotlight this week for SpareTalk, the Newsletter.

It seems only fitting to open the lid on the "Bucket List" biographies this week with the team's anchor bowler who also holds the office of League President, Debbie Campbell, who has effectively managed the Monday Morning Seniors "overseer" role since 2011.

Campbell was born in Hagerstown, Maryland, but for her, the Stork's drop-off point in Washington County was more of a temporary lay-over when it came to Debbie establishing roots on planet Earth. Throughout her early years, Campbell lived in the Washington metropolitan area, including Alexandria, Greenbelt, and of particular note, Beltsville, which is where she attended High Point high school. It was around this time, more specifically in 1969, that Debbie picked up the duckpin game.

Debbie's father was a printer, and when she graduated into the world of 'working stiffs', her aspirations followed a path that were more toward the ever-changing field of Information Technology, which led her to attending a trade school for computer programming. She soon landed a job with Chesapeake and Potomac (C & P) Telephone at



*Rod Weaver, Debbie Campbell,
and Larry Brown*

Fairland Data Center, where she worked in the Data Processing department, manning her post in the facility's computer room. C & P, which later became Verizon, had a duckpin league at White Oak Bowling Center in Silver Spring. This was a great connection for Debbie, as she was soon to become a member of the duckpinning sect. It was in this league that she rolled her highest game of 163. (Although "White Oak" is in a rebuilding phase right now, the C & P league still exists to this day).

Debbie got married in 1971, and remained with C & P for 13 years, but left the job (and the bowling) when the first of her two daughters came into the world.

Family came first for Debbie, but she would return to the work force, touching down upon a number of areas, such as engaging with the public as a bank teller, attaining employment in an orthodontist's office, and working in a nursing home – just to name a few of her missions.

As life changed for Campbell over the years, resulting from her job and family, the 'relocation bug' was a natural part of her own personal landscape, sparking moves to White Oak, Columbia, Eldersburg, Hanover PA, and finally her latest two stops in Carroll County – those being Westminster, and now New Windsor.

With adaptability being a bi-product of her busy lifestyle, it naturally follows that Debbie loves to travel. She's visited several countries in Europe, including such places as Germany, Slovakia, Austria, and Hungary, and has taken in famous landmarks 'up close'. While touring Italy, Campbell visited the Trevi Fountain and the Leaning Tower of Pisa, and in France, she saw the Eiffel Tower. On cruises, she went through the Panama Canal, and had a distinct liking for Monaco. She is very much looking forward to a trip to London, which is on an upcoming agenda.

Regarding her bowling comeback, in 2009, Debbie returned to the lanes, joining the Monday Morning Seniors league, along with her husband. She has

four grandchildren – 2 boys and 2 girls, ranging in ages from 6 to 15, and they are the most important parts of her life.

During her more grounded moments of daily living, Debbie has a most fascinating outlet. She is a member of the Westminster Ringers, which is a collection of gifted musicians that comprise handbell choirs. Campbell had to audition to be accepted in the community group and she rings in two choirs.

Debbie also is a season ticket holder for the NFL's Washington Commanders. In 1971, she got on the waiting list for the hard-to-get Redskins reserved seats, and finally in 1997, she was dealt in to the public attendance game. Debbie also is a fan of Orioles baseball. She enjoys mini-golf, and likes the challenge of jigsaw and crossword puzzles. Debbie prefers action adventures on the big screen, and her favorite TV series is "Fast and Furious". She isn't fussy with food, but does have an allergy to shellfish.



The hand bells of the choir

Larry Brown

The “center seed” of the Bucket List team is Larry Brown. Larry was born and raised in Thurmont, Maryland. He got into bowling around the age of 10 to 11 by a most interesting means – as a manual Pinsetter at the Thurmont Bowling Center. Back in those days, before electric pinsetting machines came along for duckpins, the manual system used a rather ingenious device which was operated via a person stepping on a plate that would in turn raise 'spike-like' prongs up through the pin deck. Then, Larry would place the wooden bowling pins, which had holes in their bottoms, onto the projectiles. Once the pins were all placed, the spikes could then be lowered to their resting place underneath the pin deck. "You had to be quick," Larry says. He was paid five cents a game by the player(s), and did the job for the bowlers for a couple of years.

After growing into his teen years, Brown worked as a dishwasher at Thurmont's "Cozy Inn" restaurant. When it came time to focus on a career, Larry's aptitude for numbers would lead him to the field of Accounting. Brown received college training for his destined line of work at Hagerstown Junior College and also at Towson State College.

Larry and his wife, Martha, got married in 1971, and it was at that time when the Browns would relocate to Westminster. Professionally, to complement his expertise as an Accountant, Larry also was well-experienced with Budgets, and worked with these fields of figures for approximately 38 years, which included a 6-year stint with the Rowan Controller Company (near Finksburg), and 32 years employed by the Carroll

County government. Brown retired in 2011.

Larry shares a very close bond with his wife. They will be celebrating their 52nd wedding anniversary in November. The Browns live on a 3-acre home, where they share the gardening chores. The tandem have been collecting antiques since they were first married, such as Roseville Pottery, and Oak furniture. Martha and Larry enjoy acquiring antiques via auctions and visits to shops, although they tend to prefer the auctions and the act of bidding against other people.

Brown has been quite active throughout his life and in his retirement. He has traveled to Deep Creek Lake for relaxing outings of fishing and golf. A nagging shoulder injury does tend to limit his golf game, but Larry has found a compromise in an alternate source, as he loves to play mini-golf. He often partakes in the game at Westminster Island Green. Brown has been able to parlay his love of the traditional game of golf with his Accounting background by successfully organizing and running 17 county golf tournaments for county employees. His soul-mate, Martha, has been involved in the venture, as well, by helping to select prizes for the events.

When it comes to bowling, the duo have been active with the game of tenpins. Larry bowled the 'big ball' game on Tuesday nights at Thunderhead Bowl for 4 years, while Martha currently rolls in a Wednesday morning ladies league. Larry's high game in tenpins is 258. And although he had experience with the duckpins as a “pinboy” in his early years, Brown didn't really become involved with league bowling for the small ball game until he was asked to substitute in a duckpin league a few years ago. The

2022-2023 season is his 2nd year in the Monday Morning Seniors league. He pitched a fabulous 177 game a few months ago, but his high game of 181 occurred in the 2021-2022 season.

The underhand motion for bowling fit right into Larry's athletic background, as he did play softball for 12 years. Outside of bowling on the sports scene, he is a fan of NASCAR. Larry also likes horses.

Brown does have a daring side to his demeanor, as well, being that he loves gambling. He plays poker once a month with fellow retirees, and when he takes trips to enjoy the games, Larry likes visiting Charles Town in West Virginia, and the Harrington Casino in Delaware. In general, the games that he fancies at the professional venues include slot machines, poker, and Texas Hold'em.

In his more passive moments, Larry enjoys solving crossword puzzles and Sudokus. Brown is also an avid reader, with a yen for the "Whodunits" in mystery novels and movies.

Rod Weaver

NOTE: I'm more comfortable writing this auto-bio in the '1st person' perspective.

Bringing up the rear on the biographies front is "Yours Truly" – the "Lurch" of the Seniors league, at right around the 6 and a half foot tall mark. I was born and raised in northwest Washington, DC, beginning in the autumn of 1962. I started bowling with both duckpins and tenpins at the age of 10, but it wasn't until age 12 when I was able to break 100 for the first time in the small pin game.

In school, I was the stereotypical, book bag-carrying 'square'.

Although I do author the SpareTalk newsletters, when in school – and up to around the age of 40 – I disliked reading books, but managed to get by, when it came to writing book reports. To this day, there have been only 2 or 3 books that I recall reading from cover to cover (one of them being a large manual on web programming). It wasn't until high school with Expository Writing class, that I really started to enjoy journalism, although I did have a preference for math.

At home, being the youngest of 4 boys, I pretty much hung around my brothers and their friends, when the acquaintances would visit our house. When reaching adulthood, I tended to prefer being around middle-aged people, and the elder generation.

My first full-time job came in 1980, immediately after graduating from high school, as a Data Technician in the Information Technology field at the Washington Navy Yard. After a couple of years, I got into computer programming, which coincided with the era of home computers reaching the consumer market. The job with the Department of Defense lasted 17 years, until the Activity relocated to southern Maryland. Ensuing employers included a software provider company, a health insurance firm for retired FBI employees, a programmer for a trucking company, another programming position for a bakery, and a web developer for another healthcare firm.

I started bowling in adult leagues at the age of 12. My first league was a tenpin league, and the following year, in the '75-76 season, I rolled duckpins. The tenpin rolling lasted about 5 or 6 years, with a few scattered leagues in the 1980s, and then a work league in the 1990s.

After laying off from the duckpins for a couple of years after 1976, I joined another league about 3 years later, and stayed with the ducks from around 1979 to 2010. Tendonitis halted the bowling after 2010, and I didn't return to the game as a league bowler until joining the Monday Morning Seniors league in the 2022-2023 season.

Being somewhat of a loner during my formative years, I was able to practice a good bit with both duckpins and tenpins. And so, with dedication to the game also came a certain amount of unavoidable skill due to repetition.

Of particular interest, not due to any feat that I accomplished, is that one of my earliest memories is when my mother mentioned that Stan Laurel had passed on. With Mr. Laurel passing in early 1965, this would mean that a person can conceivably remember events as far back as the age of 2-1/2.

Outside the bowling establishments, my tendencies are pretty basic. I love animals, and have picked up an interest in building things with saws and wood. In the past, I have been fascinated with magic tricks. Regarding TV and movies, I have a preference for films in and around the 1940s era, with my favorite 2 movies being "Son of Frankenstein" and "The Maltese Falcon". I am a fan of classic TV of the 1950s through the 1970s. "The Rifleman" would be at the top of my TV list, along with "The Flintstones" and "Perry Mason". In regard to personal makeup, I feel I inherited a certain amount of dexterity and the ability to build things from my father who was a carpenter, and patience and tolerance came from my mother who was a homemaker. 'People skills' came from my eldest brother, Ed, who passed in 2017.

DOUG SASS: CROSSING THE LINE BETWEEN TENPINS AND DUCKPINS



Walkersville's Doug Sass

SpareTalk recently conducted an interview with one of the unique players of the bowling game, Doug Sass. Doug is highly proficient at both tenpins and duckpins. He regularly bowls the tenpin game at Thunderhead Bowl and Grill on Tuesday nights, and then rolls duckpins at the Mt. Airy Bowling Center on Wednesday evenings.

Sass lived in New York for 27 years before relocating to the Maryland area. The big pin game was his starting point for bowling, which he first undertook in 1976 at the age of 3. Doug was exposed to duckpins via cable TV from Long Island, which aired Connecticut professional bowling. He then added rolling with the small balls to his repertoire in 1997 and was hooked on the game immediately.

When one of life's changes in the Year 2000 led Sass to a relocation in the Baltimore, Maryland area, the first thing he did was join a duckpin league. But by no means did Doug abandon his primary sport of tenpin bowling. He was well-established with rolling the large spheres on a professional level. In 1994, Sass was a part of the elite class, rolling in PBA Regional events, and it was during that year when he cashed for the first time in a "Regional".

Over the years, Sass has amassed between 22 and 23 sanctioned "300"

games, along with 6 or 7 times eclipsing the "800 Series" mark. His highest 3-game total for tenpins is 835, which he rolled at Perry Hall. Doug recently posted an 804 series at Thunderhead Bowl and Grill, along with a perfect game.

Sass has a high game of 202 in duckpins, and a best 3-game total of 502. In the 2021-2022 season, he averaged 141 at the Mt. Airy Bowling Center, and has been steady in the upper 130s at Walkersville Bowl. Sass has also rolled duckpins in various centers in the Baltimore area, including "Parkville", "Hillendale", and "Stoneleigh". In the tenpin game, he averaged 214 at "Taneytown", and was normally rolling in the 220s with his average at the Terrace Bowling Center in Frederick, before that house recently closed its doors for business.

Doug states that there are a number of parallels between the tenpin and duckpin flavors of the

sport of bowling, when it comes to the subject of 'general mechanics'. His recommendations for players who eventually get into a rut with their games are: 1) Slow down the approach, and 2) Be sure to keep your head still. As Doug relates, "When you bring your head up, your body goes with it. Follow your target, whatever the sport." Doug also suggests that from his experience in tenpin tournament play, it's important to stick with one weight ball throughout the event.

When he's competed in the PBA Regional events, Sass has crossed lanes with a number of PBA stars, including Jason Sterner, Tom Baker, Patrick Allen, Jason Belmonte, and a host of others. One of Doug's most prideful moments was when he made a critical shot at a key moment while cashing in a Regional event – and Walter Ray Williams was fully aware of his situation, and was very vocal in 'cheering him on'.

Although it's tough to see in these photos, Sass illustrates a pair of terms that the legendary Earl Anthony once described. Earl said that "Tenpins" has 2 types of bowlers: Crankers and Stokers.



A "cranker" would be a player who generates a lot of revolutions on the ball, whereas a "stroker" would be more of a finesse player. In the above images, Doug's tenpin delivery with his elbow ending in a cocked position hints toward a lot of turns being put on the ball, while his duckpin follow-through is more of a fluid motion, with his arm straight in front of him.

ONE MORE THING . . .

In last week's write-up on John Foreman, I neglected to mention that he also had met Loretta Lynn. He would periodically visit her ranch in the month of May during the Motorcycle and Music Festival.

NEWSLETTER NEWS

I will be attempting to merge highlights, and stuff, from our seniors and perhaps the Thursday night doubles leagues into a weekly booklet for the new Monday night league that will be upcoming.