

## STAYING SHARP: A VISIT WITH JUDY JOHN

The finer things in life don't always pertain to the stereotypical caviar, crepes suzette, or glass of champagne. Peace and contentment are what satisfies each individual the most, and usually can be found in our everyday activities. With this in mind, it's also worthy of recognition that "Art" isn't limited to classical paintings and sculptures. Books, whether they be from centuries past or the modern day, are valuable art forms. Taking the time to enjoy a good book through the Gift of 'Reading' is one of the precious moments that Father Time doesn't mind affording to all of us. One individual who has traditionally exercised her talent for reading is a native and resident of the Westminster area – Judy John.

Judy is a member of the Monday Morning Seniors league at Thunderhead Bowl and Grill, and has participated in the league since she started bowling, approximately 10 years ago. She was a late starter in the duckpin game due to her busy life's schedule with work and the church. But when retirement came around, Judy finally had the opportunity to give the duckpin game a whirl, and has loved it from Day One.

In reflecting on her membership with the Monday Morning Seniors, Judy related, "I joined at the same time as Pat (Ourednik), and it's always been a lot of fun".

As a player, Judy made her mark at Thunderhead Bowl and Grill in recent times, adding her name to Thunderhead's "Wall of Fame" for



*'Monday Morn' Senior,  
Judy John*

duckpinners with a splendid 150 game that she authored in the Monday Seniors league.

However, just before the new 2022-2023 season began in late August, Judy underwent wrist surgery to repair a joint that was out of socket, in which a whole new joint had to be inserted. Prior to the injury, it was very difficult for Judy to grip a bowling ball. But after a 2-3 month recovery period, Judy was back to bowling, and her average has increased by 4 pins. A couple of weeks after her initial return, Judy decided to use a heavier set of bowling balls, and that made a big difference, not only in her average, but with her hand rehabilitation, as well.

Judy was a Building Supervisor

for 27-1/2 years in her primary vocation at Manchester Elementary school. Her daily duties served as an essential cog in maintaining a happy and healthy environment for the youths of the community that came and went out of 'Manchester'.

In her 'growing up' era, Judy worked on a dairy farm. When asked about her early experience, she light-heartedly stated, "I know which end of a cow to milk". But actually, she has a wealth of knowledge in that regard, having milked cows for 10 to 20 years.

Also of unique interest is that Judy has a twin brother, Jay. She is the elder sibling by 6 minutes.

John stays busy these days and is a very active member at Pipe Creek Church of the Brethren, serving on various committees.

One of her favorite duties is in the beautification effort for the church, which includes mowing the grass twice a week during the warmer months.

In her spare time, Judy is an avid reader. For John, reading has not only been fundamental, but it's been a cherished talent since childhood, and a Gift that she keeps honed. Judy enjoys visiting the public library, focusing mainly on the branch's healthy selection of large print books. She has an appreciation of many areas of literature, with an added fondness for western romances, as well as a special interest in reading about the Amish people and their contributions to society.

## **BOWLING TIP: The “Follow-Through”**

The follow-through is one of the most important ingredients in a successful bowling style. It's integral in the basic mechanics of bowling, but yet, often forgotten, even when giving instruction. The term simply means to have your hand in the direction of your target as a normal end result of releasing the ball.

While a casual observer might be thinking that the follow through is overrated since the ball has already left the hand, there's actually much more to it than just that. The follow through is almost like the controller for the entire delivery, even though it's out of the immediate equation. A good follow through is the aftermath of a well-delivered ball. There have been tips that say that you should essentially be 'shaking hands' with the headpin (or your target pin), when you're in the act of delivering the ball. It's a good tip. However, with the follow-through, if your hand ends up in a position in which it's in direct line with your target pin, that means that your armswing is straight toward your target. So, you've done your job properly when it comes to bringing your arm on a direct line. However, it should be remembered that the follow through isn't responsible for the release of the ball – it's only a confirmation that you've at least executed the most basic part of your game properly, and that would be the use of your arm to propel the ball forward.

It's not necessary to over-exaggerate 'following through'. There's too much going on during your delivery to put 150% effort into where your arm (or hand) ends up. Just keep it in mind that if your hand is in the direction of your target, you're on the right track in getting the ball to go where you want.

## **BOWLING ALLEYS ACROSS THE NATION**

During my travels over the years when playing or watching the game of bowling, I've been in large and small 'playing establishments'. However, the smallest houses in which I've bowled weren't the smallest that operate as a business, and the largest center in which I've played hasn't been the biggest.

The bowling center in which I've bowled that had the least amount of lanes was Walkersville Lanes, which isn't too far from Thunderhead Bowl and Grill (about 30 minutes). 'Walkersville' has 10 lanes of duckpins. Most of the large bowling centers where I've played have 'maxed out' at 48 lanes, and were mostly AMF/Fair Lanes centers. However, I did bowl a few times at a place known as Greenway East in Baltimore back in the late 1980s, and it had 68 lanes (51 duckpin and 17 tenpin). But a fire ended up closing down those lanes in the 1990s, I believe.

Although a 10-lane bowling establishment might seem on the small side in comparison to what we see at Thunderhead Bowl and Grill, there are quite a number of alleys across the United States that have less lanes. As of 2019, there were around 195 6-lane centers in the nation, and about 460 8-lane houses. Conversely, on the larger side, there were over 130 establishments with at least 50 lanes. To give an approximate breakdown, there were a little over 65 centers with 50-58 lanes, about 45 or a little more that housed 60-68 lanes, and around 8 or so that had 70+ lanes, and an additional 9 with 80+ lanes. In regard to the 70+ lane centers, three of them exist in the state of Indiana – 1 alley has 70 lanes (Chippewa Bowl in South Bend), and 2 centers with 80 lanes (Western Bowl and

Woodland Bowl, both in Indianapolis). Topping the list, however, Michigan had the only 90-lane center at Thunder Bowl in Allen Park.

In 2019, I compiled info on the bowling establishments on the North American continent. Overall, there were over 4,300 bowling alleys in North America, and more than 3,800 of these were in the U.S. There actually may have been more than 500 in Canada, however – I was doing a mass mailing and didn't go too deep above the northern border of the USA.

Thunderhead Bowl and Grill, with its 28 lanes, ranks around 1,100<sup>th</sup> of these 4,300+ bowling centers in regard to size, so Taneytown is well-represented with its accommodation of the sport of bowling to the community.

The most common sized bowling center is that of a 24-lane center, in which there were roughly 562 of them across the country.

Other approximate figures that might be of interest are as follows:

10-lane centers:	200
12-lane centers:	450
14-lane centers:	60
16-lane centers:	486
18-lane centers:	85
20-lane centers:	215
22-lane centers:	50
24-lane centers:	562
26-lane centers:	60
28-lane centers:	63
30-lane centers:	40
31-lane centers:	5
32-lane centers:	390
34-lane centers:	32
36-lane centers:	106
38-lane centers:	18
40-46 lane centers:	310
48-lane centers:	74

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BOWLING CENTERS

In a manner of speaking, bowling alleys are somewhat like "Emissaries for Peace". These hosting sites for competition succeed in bringing people together, at least initially, with the intention of congenial and cordial exchanges, even though vices can sometimes cause these gatherings to turn into something negative. Back in the Middle Ages, there were skirmishes due to alcohol and gambling coinciding with the game, but gaming back then was often used as a dependency for material gain. Nowadays, there's probably no other comparable activity that better instills get-togethers with a peaceful and fun purpose.

In a recent newsletter, we discussed crossroads in people's lives. Bowling establishments serve as hosting points for these intersections, leading to many walks of life coming together to meet with each other, exchanging ideas, making acquaintances, and learning from each other in different aspects of each other's daily existence. Bowling centers can be wonderful exposure for children, where they can interface with their elders who can set good examples for the kids, and in turn, the adults can become role models – a figure-head that's sorely lacking in today's society. Bowling alleys allow people with similar talents to pit their skills against one another, deriving not only healthy exercise, but also in the stimulating manufacture of adrenaline at times, which rejuvenates the body, in its own way. That rush of excitement that you experience in the periodic triumphs

throughout a session is in its own way, a fountain of youth – even if it's only for a brief instance.

This watering hole, known as a bowling alley, is a host site for the most important part of life – people needing people in their daily activities. We're not put on this earth to be alone. Friendships through bowling, even if only for the short time that people are together in a league, builds self-esteem and a feeling of belonging.

What other sport provides an opportunity for those who aren't so experienced to compete with those who have put in a lot of years, and yet each person contributes the same amount of effort, based on his/her skill level, to attain the same goal?

There are a lot of variables and limitless possibilities when you lace up the shoes to take part in a game of bowling. When you step up on the lane, with each rack of pins standing in the same place each frame, it might seem easy to roll the ball into the sweet spot from time to time, and be awarded your just desserts. But the complexities of bowling are overwhelming. Getting your speed, timing, balance, and confidence all working together is a real challenge. But that's why there's the exhilaration rush, when you perform well. So, feel good about yourself when you do well, and keep striving for perfection. We're all only human.

Be on the look-out in next week's SpareTalk newsletter, in which there will be a feature on the 'dots and arrows' on the bowling lane, and what it all means.

## SPARETALK CONTEST UPDATES



For the past 2 weeks on the SpareTalk website, a free pair of contests were introduced to over 400 bowlers on the World Leagues network. "The Eliminator" is a 'just for fun' tournament-type event that will run over the course of several weeks, in which the idea is for a bowler to remain in the tournament as long as s/he can, without being eliminated. The player must simply avoid the prospect of bowling '10 pins or more under your average'. The tournament began in Game 2 of Week 1 of the bowlers' weekly sets across 11 leagues.

After 5 games, the field of 417 is now down to 93 survivors.

The other contest is called "Bracket Madness" in which 256 of the 417 player field qualified to advance to four 64-player brackets. These 256 are matched against each other in a contest running over several weeks, based on the bowlers' 3-game set for the night, with 100% handicap.

The four brackets can be seen at the website, <http://www.sparetalk.com>, under the link for "Contests".

It's shaping up to be a fun event.



## **EBONITE'S "MAKING OF A BOWLING BALL" (Conclusion)**

*(Continued from last week's "Inner Core Production Steps")*

The types of cores designed for balls used by social bowlers are created through a similar, single step process for all weight ranges.

### **Outer Core Production Steps**

The inner core is then placed in a larger, round mold, and sealed tightly. Material composed of silica bubbles and a denser filler material is then poured into this mold around the inner core. The density of the filler, in addition to the core shape previously mentioned above, determines the final weight of the ball (between 6 - 16 pounds). The knob created by the mold where the mixture is poured in, is then shaved off the ball.

### **Coverstock Production Steps**

Not all balls are composed of the same coverstock material (veneer), although the basic elements are similar. Most balls used by social bowlers are made of basic polyester and polyurethane materials, with pigments added for color. Raw materials are brought in, just as with ball cores, and used in various combinations to create designated coverstocks.

More advanced balls, like those used by competitive bowlers, are composed of a specially-formulated polyurethane base material. This material consists of a mixture of urethane molecules and other proprietary ingredients that are combined to create a chemical reaction, almost immediately upon being joined together. This chemical reaction within minutes causes the ball to harden. These special ingredients that are added to urethane based material are the

mechanisms that induce the performance differences between balls.

The combination of these components which make up the cover of a performance ball create microscopic pores that are designed to absorb lane oil. In essence, you can look at performance coverstocks as if they were a rigid polymeric sponge. This is important because it allows the ball to displace the oil that is on the lane, allowing the ball to see more friction/grab the lane in certain places to produce a desired ball movement (arcing sooner or later).

In addition, special effects pigments are used to create a variety of aesthetically appealing color and visual combinations.

After the coverstock has been applied to the outer core shape, cured and removed from the mold, it is then subjected to intense heat for a specified time period\*. This helps the urethane polymer to complete its reaction at a faster rate. After the specified period of time, the ball is cooled for another specified period of time\*, to slow the chemical reactions within the veneer.

One of the locations pins visible on the exterior of the ball is then filled with a brighter color of polymer material so that it is easily identifiable on the finished product.

### **Ball Finishing Production Steps**

Two sets of grinders reduce the size of the ball to a uniform size and shape, 27 inches in circumference. The size of the ball does not affect the weight of the ball. Balls are then sanded or polished based on the desired finished product. The outside texture of the ball has been determined by 'Research & Development' ahead of time, just as

the core shape and coverstock was determined. Again, the possible combinations are unlimited. The equipment and products used to sand and polish the balls on the finish line in the plant are the same equipment and products sold by Ebonite International to pro shops, giving pro shops the ability to recreate brand new ball performance after a ball has been used by a bowler.

BowlersMAP and DigiTrax can again be used to ensure that balls have been created to R&D's original specifications.

Throughout the entire production process, elements are weighed and measured repeatedly to ensure Ebonite's self-imposed high quality standards. Products which do not meet specs are removed from the process and discarded at each stage of production. This is a method of continuous improvement, which helps to keep quality high and waste low. Each member of our team is responsible for and charged with maintaining our production standards. Most team members have been with the company for years; many have been with the company for more than 20 years. It's this work ethic and dedication to the product that is passed along the line and down to the end bowling ball consumer.

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### **HOUSE SPECIALS FOR JANUARY 2023**

For senior citizens, the special rate of \$3.00 per game is in effect on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays, up until 6:00 PM.

This is for both Tenpins and Duckpins

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