

WESTMINSTER'S ENTRY INTO THE WORLD OF LEGO

Each one of us has youth inside us. It's not just a memory. Rather, it's a part of our being that sometimes lies dormant, and is just waiting to be reactivated. The Monday Morning Seniors League's George Luhn is one who allows his love for bowling to be accompanied by the enthusiasm that comprises fun and imagination.

Luhn is a fan of the growing wave of adult LEGO disciples. This world famous Denmark toy company was originated in 1932. The Danish term "Lego" translates as "play well", and as with many success stories, the company endured a few setbacks, some due to the Great Depression of the 1930s. But it hung in until 1958, when the now infamous, interlocking plastic Lego brick was introduced. It was a widespread favorite of children in numerous households all over the world, bringing to the forefront one of the healthiest instincts of young human beings – the concept of "building".

George has a magnificent collection of Lego displays that he built from kits he acquired. Luhn states that "Target" is one of the better resources near the Carroll County area for obtaining "Lego", although Walmart has a modest inventory also.

George's mini-museum is impressive, with a variety of themes, ranging from the Space Shuttle, to Star Wars, and a host of others. His most ambitious project to date is shown in the featured photo, which is a replica of the Titanic. The final



product is 53" long, with a lot of interior compartments that mimic the real Titanic. 9,090 separate Lego pieces went into the making of Luhn's Titanic, which took him approximately two weeks of diligent effort to complete. George states that on some days, he would work 9 or 10 hours on the Lego ocean liner.

The Lego wave is one that has a huge following. There are large theme parks devoted to Lego, mostly geared for pre-teens who like rides that are not too hair-raising. But for adults, the parks are interesting to peruse to see the work involved in creating the different exhibits. There

are life-sized sculptures on display, such as a Darth Vader figure, among other popular characters. There are even "cities" within the 150-acre park in the state of Florida that are created totally of Lego pieces. LegoLand Florida is the 2nd largest Lego theme park, while LegoLand Windsor in the United Kingdom is the biggest. There's even a reality show on the FOX network called "Lego Masters", featuring grown-ups competing with elaborate themed builds, which started its 3rd season in the Spring of 2022.

George and his wife, Dolores, reside in Westminster, and they keep their home in immaculate condition. The Luhn's basement "rec room" is spotless, and is a wonderful haven for George's entire collection of Lego and other classic TV and movie memorabilia.

George and Dolores will be celebrating their 23rd wedding anniversary in August of this year. As I chatted with them about their



*Part of the Luhn Lego collection:
R2D2, Yoda, and the Space Shuttle*

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23 years of marriage, in speaking of his adoring wife, George stated, "I could have put in all the information into a computer, and it couldn't have come up with a better wife than Dolores. She's been perfect". And Dolores shared the same feelings toward her husband.

To complement her influence as a fastidious co-caretaker of their lovely home, Dolores is also a most accomplished seamstress. One of her talents in that regard is in making clothes. Shown here are a couple of beautiful jackets that Dolores made for George – one with a bowling motif, and the other being a Maryland Terrapins winter jacket, complete with quilted lining.

In his earlier years, George worked for the United States Postal Service. He began his employment

there in 1975 at the Owings Mills location. In 1989, he was offered a transfer position to the Westminster facility, which he readily accepted to be closer to home. George retired after 30-1/2 years in 2005. He also

worked for the A & P food store in prior years. Dolores was employed by the Carroll County Detention Center for 16-1/2 years, and also worked for "Easy Industries" for 20 years during her prime stint.



A LONGER LANE

The normal length of a bowling lane is 60 feet from foul line to the headpin. This has been a spec that's been in existence in bowling for well over a hundred years. But in the decade of the 1990s, I remember reading in a bowling magazine about a bowling lane that was constructed in one of the casino alleys in Reno, Nevada that was expanded to an astounding 100 feet in length. The Reno Hilton was the casino that first had the lane, and it was later moved

to the Grand Sierra hotel.

A few people reported about bowling on this 'long stretch' of an alley. A pro shop owner by the name of Steven Vance said that the lane was oiled down to the first 60 feet, which left the remaining 40 feet pretty dry, I'm assuming. For those rolling a hook ball, this would have been a tough challenge to try to get the ball into the pocket.

When I last bowled in a tenpin league around 1995, I basically

rolled a straight ball. My ball probably moved no more than 3 or 4 boards from right to left. But I was fascinated by the idea of trying out a straight ball on a lane that was about 66% longer than the norm. I seriously considered making a trip out to Nevada just to give the alley a whirl, but unfortunately, I never was able to schedule a trip. I read that the lane was apparently taken down around 1998.

POP WHITTEN PRO TOUR CROWNS TWO CHAMPIONS

The Pop Whitten Pro Tour held its monthly duckpin event at AMF Southwest bowling center this past weekend. The tournament corralled a staggering 262 entries. The PWPT normally draws a healthy turnout, averaging around 170 entries on a normal weekend. However, this

weekend it was promoted that the event would crown two champions: one victor being from a 'scratch' (no handicap) division, while the other side of the tourney would be based on Pins Over Average to qualify for the Sunday semi-finals. Once the Sunday format of 5 games of match

play ensued, then it was a 'no handicap' proposition in the head-to-head match play for both divisions.

Chris Kruger was the ultimate winner in the 'Scratch' division, while the 'Pins Over Average' title went to Logan Williams.

LITTLE THINGS (and a Bowling Tip)

The smallest things can mean the most. Life is tremendously complex, and we aren't meant to see the overall picture of why everything happens. That would be way too much, too soon, for us to comprehend. In the complexity of life, it must be understood that the most basic principle is that the combination of the planet earth when factored in with the element of time brings forth the domino effect – one event leads to another, and that's how history is formed. Often, however, it's the little, and seemingly unrelated things that evolve into big events.

But don't underestimate the value, or the power, of small things in life. They can be the missing link between two ends of a strong chain. There's that one insignificant and unnoticed moment of the period in time when a child learns to walk that makes all the difference – s/he starts with a crawl, then stands, and then moves up to little steps. Before you know it, that little one is eventually running. And somewhere in the process is something seemingly unsubstantial that happens which makes it all work.

Consider the scenario that one of the smallest words in the English language is "if". It may be small, and everybody knows what it means. But it goes hand in hand with infinity. Every great invention or concept has involved that little word. For example, "If" a flat stone were to be rounded, then it can be used as a wheel. Without that little word, new methods aren't tried, and plans don't grow into solutions. And so goes that little word on its way to other innovations.

So, the point here – as may have been mentioned in a previous article – is that the smallest acts of kindness may be overlooked, but to someone, somewhere, they're appreciated. Even if it's just a case of listening to someone. Giving them a little bit of your time might be all the satisfaction and a feeling of importance that s/he needs to carry on throughout the day. And then somewhere along the line, that satisfied person does something to affect someone else positively, and thus the chain reaction of life's strings are woven, even if it doesn't affect you directly. You will have done your part, and it costed you nothing – yet it gets written in the Cosmic Record, so to speak.

And now we arrive at our "Tip of the Week" – it's a short one, and a pointer that's actually intended to help the younger players, but it's still useful for the mature bowler to keep in mind. In the game of bowling, what seems insignificant is often important. You might be on your third ball in duckpins, or your final ball in the 10th frame in tenpins. Don't just half-heartedly roll the ball to be done with it. Taking that little extra time to try to knock down that one additional pin might be what you need to either correct your timing for future frames, or to make sure that you don't lose your confidence. At the very least, your muscle memory won't be compromised by a loose toss of the ball. Apply the same effort to each ball in a frame and you're doing your part to keep consistency in your game.

SPARETALK CONTEST UPDATES



Three weeks have now elapsed in the SpareTalk tournaments. The Eliminator has notched 8 games amongst 417 bowlers, and 89% of the field has been erased from the event. 45 bowlers remain as we head into Week 4. Just a reminder, to remain in the event, a bowler has to avoid bowling 10 pins or more under average in any game, which has proven to be a difficult task.

In the Bracket Madness competition, the four divisions are now down to the "Round of 16" in each bracket. With the tournament format operating under 100% handicap, the remaining contestants are of an uncannily, consistent balance of low, medium, and high average players, and the leagues that are a part of the event are equally diverse in regard to casual vs. serious leagues, indicating that anyone who puts his/her mind to their own game, can excel on such a level playing field.

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



ARROWS AND DOTS ON A LANE

Bowling lanes are the avenues for a rolled ball's destination toward those elusive pins, whether they be the tall, slender tenpins or the short, squatty duckpins. Contrary to its visual appearance of being a flat piece of wood, a bowling lane is actually a series of approximately 40, one-inch thick boards, glued together and stood on their sides, and sanded so that they're all uniform in height. This is why upon close examination, you'll see vertical lines, all about 1 inch apart, all the way down the 'alley'. So when you're walking on a bowling lane, you're actually standing on boards that are turned up on their edges.

Of a more obvious nature, there is also a series of arrows and dots on a bowling lane. Essentially, these are guidelines to benefit the bowler when attempting to aim the ball at a certain area on the lane.

For the most part, bowling centers are pretty much universal, when it comes to sets of dots and arrows being close to a player's line of vision when s/he walks to the foul line to roll the ball. From the foul line, about 15 feet down the alley, are 7 arrowhead markings on the lane that coincide with each frontal pin that a player sees when peering down the entire 60 feet from foul line to headpin. The 10 pins have "number identities" all their own, depending on where they stand at the end

of the lane, although only 7 of them are clearly seen, which when going from left to right, we see the #7, #4, #2, #1, #3, #6, and #10 pins.

However, at the foul line itself are 7 dots that correspond to the 7 arrows, and these dots are to be used as either a general launch point from where you release the ball, or a guideline on where your slide foot should be, so that your armswing will be over the appropriate dot – that is, if you intend on using these dots in conjunction with the arrows.

When I started bowling the game of tenpins back in the mid 1970s, I rolled a straight ball, and so the

easiest concept was to stand in the middle and try to roll the ball straight down the center of the lane in the direction of the middle arrow when aiming for the #1 pin. When faced with trying to hit the lone #7 pin (the left corner pin), the instruction I received was to move to the right side of the lane and roll the big ball cross-alley on a diagonal line in an effort of using the entire alley to start the ball on its roll from the right side, with the ideal plan being to take the left gutter out of the equation, and allow the ball room to drift into hitting any pin part that wasn't on the 'gutter side' of the lane. If the ball

did happen to cross over to the gutter side, there still would be room for connecting with the pin before dropping into the channel.

One thing I will say is that this instruction worked well for tenpins, and I have employed it for duckpins, as well. But one of the old-time duckpin bowlers later explained that *with the small balls*, it's probably better to go more direct at the corner pins. For example, regarding the 7 pin, to maybe start a little bit left of center, and roll on a diagonal line that's not as extreme as using the entire lane. That's just one of the differences between the two games – less angle for a small ball.

At any rate, using the foul line dots for body positioning, and the arrows for aiming at a distance of only 15 feet away rather than 60 feet, might make your job a little easier when hitting those pins.

