

GUTTER GANG BRINGS NEW DIMENSION TO MONDAY MORNING SENIOR LEAGUE



*The Gutter Gang's
Jim Whiting and Jean Allinger*

One of the new additions to the Monday Morning Senior league for the 2022-2023 season is the close-knit group of "The Gutter Gang". The original team of Mary Garcia, Jean Allinger, and Jim Whiting have been an asset to the league's robust collection of players and personalities and have fit right in to the morning time duckpin festivities at Thunderhead Bowl and Grill.

Several weeks back, as the league reached its halfway mark, the team's anchor bowler, Garcia, had just come off a week in which she spared in the 10th frame to win a closely-contested Game 3 for her

team. But later in the week, Mary suffered a setback after experiencing a fall near her residence in which she was pushing her shopping cart through an exit door that opened too abruptly. Mary injured a rib as a result of the accident, but is on the mend and looking to return to bowling in the near future.

The Gutter Gang has picked up the gauntlet in Mary's absence and has managed to carry on admirably in recent weeks. The balance of the team, Whiting and Allinger have been steadily improving throughout the year. But the bowling isn't the only activity at which each team member is proficient and an active part. Jean stays fit each week at the Westminster Senior Center, taking part in Yoga classes and group walks along the scenic trails that are a part of the landscape of the senior center. She also continues her walking program at the local mall in close proximity to the activity center. Jean's Yoga class is a 10-week

offering that convenes later in the week from 10:00 to 11:00 am, and costs a mere \$50.00. There are approximately 17 members that take part. Some do the yoga exercises at ground level (on the floor), but Jean is a part of the group that does the fitness from a chair. Also at the activity center is an Arthritis class that puts a focus on stretching to keep the affliction at bay.

The "Gang's" lead-off bowler, Jim, enjoys playing Pickleball on Wednesdays and Fridays at the Westminster senior center. The game is similar in concept to tennis, but uses a flat paddle and a projectile very similar to a wiffle ball. The game can be played on indoor or outdoor courts. If played outdoors, a slightly different version of the wiffle ball is used, altered slightly from the indoor variation with there being smaller holes in the plastic sphere. The game can be played in singles or a doubles team format. At the senior center, "doubles" is more



A series of Pickleball matches going on at once

popular, but the singles game is enlisted by the more experienced and active players.

Tennis shoes must be worn on the court, and the swing of the paddle is generally that of a tennis 'forehand', but players do employ a backhand swipe. Overhead smashes used as 'kill shots' as seen in tennis aren't a part of the game of Pickleball. Whiting states that when he serves a ball, often he will just use his normal forehand stroke to get the ball in play.

"You have to learn where to position yourself on the court when a point begins", Jim states.

Pickleball at the Westminster senior center is scheduled three days a week – Mondays, Wednesdays,

and Friday, starting at 8:30 am. Sessions run for about 3 hours, and a game takes 20 to 25 minutes to complete. Use of the courts are on a first-come, first-serve basis, in which players sign up on the 'register' to be on the first available court, and single players can be matched together to form doubles teams.

Anyone who is 55 years of age or older is welcome to participate. Jim says there are usually around 20-25 players present to play each day. There is a one-time "forever" fee of \$10.00 to join the Pickleball group at the center.

Whiting also has played ice hockey for nine years, and attended the Gordie Howe hockey school in

the Washington, DC area. On several occasions, he participated in 'pre-skating' before games with the Washington Capitals.

To round out the resumes of Allinger and Whiting, before retirement, Jean was a library aide at the U.S. Military Academy for 21 years, often interacting with cadets from West Point in New York. Jim was a technician for Johns Hopkins and Northrup Grumman for 23 years. The Gutter Gang all live in the same retirement community in Westminster. Jim's been there for 2 years, Jean for 7-1/2 years, and Mary has resided there for 17-18 years. This triple bonding is just one of things makes "The Gutter Gang" very special.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF BOWLING ALLEY: UNCLE BUCK'S FISH BOWL AND GRILL

Across the United States are a plethora of different kinds of bowling experiences. Shown here is one such entry.

There is a chain of restaurants that offer bowling lanes in a unique motif that appeals to those who like being on the water. Although the surroundings look like an underwater adventure, the design of the establishment is above ground.

Uncle Buck's Fish Bowl and Grill has five locations across the country, spanning the states of Connecticut, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Texas. *(Note the clever ball return below)*



Website Promotional Description

"Twelve full lanes of bowling offer a unique underwater ocean experience! Custom bowling balls that bear the likeness of octopus, mermaids, camouflage and more! "Dock" wooden lanes feature underwater scenery of sea turtles, sharks, stingrays and other saltwater species! Handpainted murals and fish hanging from the ceiling bring everything together for a deep sea dive like no other. You have to see it to believe it!"

HAVING A PASSION

The world is filled with people from all walks of life. Civilization is dependent on individuals. And each person has desires and interests. So intriguing are these interests to certain persons that these healthy obsessions, when nurtured and given undivided attention, ultimately sprout into becoming 'talents', whether they be from a love of botany, painting, or simply watching re-runs of older TV, like Gunsmoke or Gomer Pyle USMC. Dedication to one topic or hobby over an extended period of time can lead to a person becoming – not just an expert – but moreover, an individual with a much sought-after skill. This painstaking and relentless time and effort that you invest in a particular subject often is classified as 'having a passion'.

A passion sometimes results in foregoing the basic drives that control us on a daily basis, such as when it comes to sacrificing eating or sleeping in the name of satisfying this healthy lust for learning. Being passionate, however, should not be confused with being fanatical. A fanatic will tend to go overboard at times, proclaiming his/her unyielding interest to outsiders, whereas those with a passion are more like analysts, concerned more so with getting to the core of their interest, and going the route alone and 'under the radar'. For those with a passion for anything, it should be

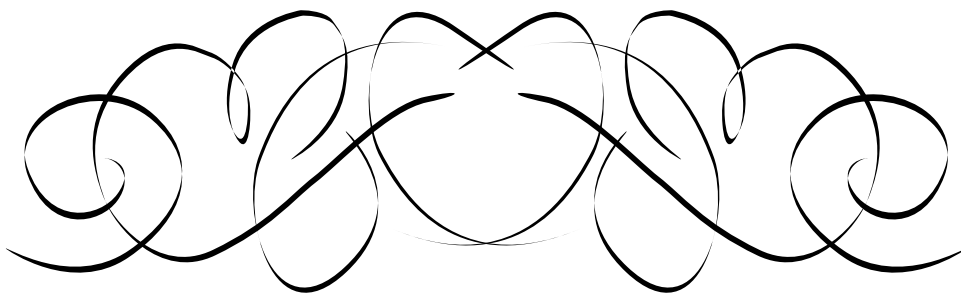
understood that they are not the only ones with such a determined admiration. Often, people are influenced by others with a similar interest when they embark on the road to exploration and understanding. When someone is passionate about something, s/he usually welcomes others who have the same interest. And thus, an empathetic bond is developed in which each individual can feel the ups and downs of like-minded disciples of this "cause" that is the focus of your passion.

Eventually, there will arise a yearning to not only envision and learn more, but also to get to the heart of the matter of questionable things that preceded your interest that just don't seem right. It's an involved process to cover everything that's in the past to what lies ahead, but satisfying your passion sometimes throws challenges at you. There will be times when you might hit an impassable stumbling block in which you feel like just abandoning your project. But, at one time or another, we've all found things that were either lost or unsolvable, just when we were ready to give up. Your passion will find a way to relieve your frustration by presenting you with a catalyst to keep you going – if you've been diligent.

When a person takes the time and effort to go the extra mile for his/her passion, reaching one's limit

can actually be a starting point to go farther than others have gone. The road ahead might seem dark at times and you might not know what to do to initiate the next phase of your journey. But if you just take a moment to look back at what you've accomplished, inspiration will set in and a vacuum of new ideas will begin to formulate to get you moving forward. The road ahead will be rocky, but that's understandable – if no one in your immediate circle has ever taken the next step, it's up to you to lay a foundation to pave the way. Unexplored territory will be dark until you shed your light upon it. Keep moving forward.

The price of pursuing your passion isn't measured in materialistic gain. There will be times when it's inescapable that you're morally required to take a stand and do things that are contrary to public opinion and sentiment. But keep in mind that you're not obligated to always work on behalf of the 'little man', nor anyone else, for that matter. If what you're doing benefits the affluent, then so be it. Going the extra mile is your own journey, and even if your efforts are going to help those who might not need it financially, hard work that fulfills a goal is never a waste of time.



BOWLING TIP: Pin Bowling, Spot Bowling, and a Compromise

For the most part, there are two definable methods of bowling: "Pin Bowling" and "Spot Bowling".

With "Pin Bowling", a player pretty much just eyes the pins and rolls the ball at the flock, basically lining up the angle from the foul line to the target pin, roughly 60 feet away. This method essentially is a "do what feels right" type of approach to the game, and is the simplest way to confront the target triangle down the lane. The concept is employed mostly by the casual player, but there are higher averaged, well-established competitors who won't stray from this approach to the game.

"Spot Bowling" is a technique of bowling that is used more by serious players who participate in tournaments and competitive leagues. The idea here is for the player to basically pretend that his/her target is only about 10 or 15 feet down the alley, and then pick

out a spot on the lane at which to aim that is this shorter distance away, with the point that if you can roll a ball to hit your mark a short distance in front of you, the ball should continue on this path the rest of the way down the alley.

To properly execute when rolling at a 'spot' on the lane, the player will need to compensate, however, if either rolling a curve ball, or rolling at an angle. For example, if you stand in the middle of the approach and you are aiming at a corner pin, obviously you can't pretend that the corner pin is only 10 feet away – you would need to draw an imaginary line from foul line to the corner pin, and then try to hit the 'mark on the imaginary line' that is on its way to the pin 60 feet down the lane. The only issue with "Spot Bowling", which is not a criticism of the style, is that you need to be consistent on your walk-up to the foul line, and not stray too far left or right.

My approach is a little different. I was originally a "Pin Bowler", but for whatever the reason (probably converting from tenpins to duckpins), when I started getting serious about the small ball game as I approached my early twenties, I could not discipline myself in those years to walk up and slide in the same place every time. So, I developed more of an "Area Bowling", or perhaps a better descriptor would be a "Channel Bowling" approach to the game. My idea was to keep the ball in a somewhat loose but narrow path when aiming at a pin at the end of the lane. Maybe a better analogy would be to associate this narrow path with the idea of combining a narrow-beamed flashlight with a wide-beamed laser light.

In summation, all of these styles have merit, and it's just a matter of which method makes you feel more comfortable.

BOWLING PINS AND THEIR SIZES

Did you know that a New England candlepin is actually taller than the traditional "tenpin"?

Shown in the photo here, just to give a perspective of the size differentials of the three pins found on the east coast of the United States, are a duckpin, a tenpin, and a candlepin. The duckpin is roughly 9 inches tall (actually a fraction taller), a tenpin is 15 inches tall, and a candlepin is 15-3/4" in height.



MARCH IS ARRIVING

And a reminder that St. Patrick's Day is near. Barbara Childs' children's story is scheduled sometime soon, and I failed to report on a couple of other tidbits that she has accomplished in past times.

Barbara is skilled in Calligraphy, as well as having a talent for making teddy bears. Both are fascinating addendums to her story from Issue 1 of SpareTalk, the Newsletter.