



MONTANA STRIKE ZONE

Message from the editor

This is the first issue of the Montana Strike Zone since the pandemic happened, so this is an attempt to catch everyone up on three of the most unusual years in history.

For those, who don't remember, it all started in late March of 2020. I'm the secretary of a short season mixed league and we had one week to go - our fun night and payoff week. Needless to say, it didn't happen. I ended up paying off the league in the parking lot of Town & Country Lanes in Billings a week later during a horrible rain storm. We were the lucky ones, for most leagues were cut short by 4 to 6 weeks. Closely contested league championships never got any closer and payoffs were less than expected. Most people thought this hiccup in their lives would be short lived, for pandemics were new to almost all of us except the centenarians, who were around for the one in 1918, but too young to remember it anyway.

It didn't take long to know that the pandemic wouldn't be short lived. People started dying at alarming rates and non-essential businesses were forced into lock down including bowling centers. Most centers didn't open until June 2020 and some even later. And when they were allowed to open, the restrictions were incredible. House balls and rental shoes had to be cleaned and sanitized after every use. Only every other lane could be used. Masks were required along with 6 foot social distancing. To put things mildly, bowling centers took a bath along with their bowling equipment. Some never recovered.

The Montana USBC had to cancel all of their 2020 state tournaments, which included the Open in Missoula, Women's State in Billings, Youth State in Great Falls, Senior State in Cut Bank and Pepsi YBC in Helena. All were rescheduled in the same locations in 2021, but received much fewer entries. I remember having to process all the entry fee refunds from those tournaments in 2020. It was tougher than processing the tournament payoffs. There is computer software specially programmed to pay off a tournament, but not for sending refunds. It took me forever and is one of the reasons the Montana USBC started looking into an online entry system.

It was a terrible 15-month period from March 2020 through May 2021. League bowling was allowed to start in September 2020, but with many restrictions. The number of league bowlers in Montana dropped from 9800 to 8000. So, it came as no surprise that the Montana USBC lost over \$50,000 those two years. Yet, we were the lucky ones. We had \$50,000 to lose. Some state associations suffered bigger losses that they didn't have to lose.

The same could be said for our bowling centers. Sure they suffered huge financial losses, but nothing like the ones in Washington and New Mexico where most centers weren't allowed to open for over a year.

As mentioned, our state tournaments started back up in 2021 in the same locations as 2020, but with much lower expectations. Our entry fees were supposed to increase that year, but couldn't since it was a repeat of 2020. Everything that could go wrong did. It was a perfect storm of evil events. It truly was a pandemic of catastrophic proportions that none had ever experienced and, hopefully, will never see again.

I received my first Covid vaccine in April 2021 and got my booster in December 2021. By then a huge percentage of people in the country had theirs. That was the start of the newer normal, which came very close to the original normal. I consider the first new normal to happen during the summer of 2020 when businesses were allowed to reopen with restrictions. Now that there was a vaccine, people were allowed to go back to almost what they did prior to 2020. The biggest difference now is that people are still dying from Covid and that the flu is back rearing its ugly head plus one other thing - we will never forget the horrors of the pandemic. It literally changed the lives of all of us and our businesses. If you had Covid, and most of us did, then you should be extremely grateful to be alive. If you never had Covid, then consider yourself one of the lucky few.

The Montana USBC cancelled its spring meeting in May 2020, but since it was an election meeting, a modified version of it was held in late June 2020 in Helena. From that meeting a new president emerged - Robyn Barker of Missoula. Robyn was a wonderful president during her 2-year term. She was transparent, honest and fair in all that she did. Since she is the general manager of the largest bowling center in a 3-state area, Westside Lanes, her plate was always full and she chose not to run for re-election in May 2022.

Nancy Collick of Helena is the new president of the Montana USBC. She has been on the board of directors for several years, the 2nd vice president for the last six years and also chairperson of the Hall of Fame committee for the last six years. She is highly qualified and will do an excellent job. I look forward to working with her.

For those, who heard that I was resigning at the end of 2022, you heard right. However, I changed my mind about six months ago and asked to stay on. I enjoy what I do and am not quite ready to retire. I feel there is still much good to do for the state association. Please enjoy the rest of this issue.

Tom Brendgord, Editor & Montana USBC association manager

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

from the: Montana State USBC Board of Directors

A Message From The President

By Nancy Collick, Montana USBC president

Welcome back to the newest edition of the Montana Strike Zone. Much has changed over the last few years with Covid interrupting one bowling season and limiting the next bowling season, but from everything I have seen bowling in Montana, is back on the rise. While sadly we have lost several bowling centers, those centers that are open seem to be thriving again. I know locally in Helena we have seen an increase in both adult and youth bowlers. I hope where ever you bowl you are seeing things improve as well.

As we move forward there have been a few changes in how our state tournaments are run. We have an online registration system that will hopefully make registering for tournaments easier, as you can see what is available when you actually register to bowl. Additionally, we have made changes so that when you pay with a credit card there will be no additional fees applied.

Just to bring everyone on board I would like to introduce you to our board this year:

President: Nancy Collick
1st Vice President: Mike Evjen
2nd Vice President: Danielle Bolan
Assn Manager: Tom Brendgord

District 1 Directors:
Teri Hodges
Ginger Ward
Rick Hagedorn

District 2 Directors:
Charlie Pepos
Jacki Huff
Terri Johnson

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Montana Strike Zone

The official newsletter of the Montana USBC Association

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Message from the president (continued):

District 3 Directors:

Dave W. Martinich
Keith Meagor
Brenda Shaffer

District 4 Directors

Jesse Warner
Iris Freeck
Rich Foran

Proprietor Director at Large

Ron Bolan
Barry Hodges

Lastly, I would like to wish you all Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Hall of Fame Applications

Many bowlers are not aware of the Hall of Fame process here in Montana. Hall of Fame applications can be obtained from MTUSBC on their website, www.mtusbc.com, or from the Hall of Fame committee chairperson, Jacki Huff, through email: jackihuff@aol.com or by calling 406-459-3207. This application pertains to all men, women and youth candidates, who meet the filing criteria. Contact Jacki or Association Manager, Tom Brendgord, with questions. The deadline for

STATE TOURNAMENT HOST LOCATIONS THRU 2027

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>OPEN</u> | <u>WOMEN</u> | <u>YOUTH</u> | <u>SENIOR</u> | <u>PEPSI YBC</u> | <u>HOF BANQUET & DELEGATE MEETING</u> |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|------------------|---|
| 2023 | BILLINGS | BUTTE | MISSOULA | HAMILTON | HELENA | Butte - Star Lanes |
| 2024 | GT. FALLS | HELENA | BUTTE | BILLINGS | MISSOULA | Gt. Falls - Heritage Inn |
| 2025 | BUTTE | GT. FALLS | HELENA | HAVRE | BILLINGS | Butte - Star Lanes |
| 2026 | MISSOULA | BILLINGS | GT. FALLS | RONAN | HELENA | Missoula - TBD |
| 2027 | HELENA | MISSOULA | BILLINGS | THOMPSON FALLS | BUTTE | Helena - TBD |

STATE TOURNAMENT INFO, ONLINE ENTRY SYSTEM CHANGE, STATE TOURNAMENT AVERAGES & JAMBOREE COMING THIS MAY

By Tom Brendgord

The pandemic may have affected many businesses adversely, but the Montana USBC state association took its punches and then rebounded in stride. After two dismal years of tournament cancellations, huge membership and financial losses and enormous heartbreak of both human life and business life, our state association is still finding ways to innovate and keep things exciting in Montana's bowling world.

Before going into the new news I want to bring up some very important old news - **January 1st averages**. Why are they so important to post? Because our state tournaments use January 1st averages for bowlers, who don't have a state tournament average of 21 games or more. So, if you are an adult league secretary, **PLEASE** report your January 1st averages to your local association manager asap.

Speaking of the 5-year state tournament average listing, the newest one has just been determined. It was done by Jesse Warner of Miles City, who is on our board of directors and also the son of Don Warner. **(Please read the article about Don on page 6. This is a sequel to that article.)** We are enormously grateful to Jesse, who graciously accepted Robyn Barker's appointment to fill his father's position on our board after his unexpected passing in August 2021. Jesse is an IT person like his father and is the perfect fit to carry forward Don's visions and his legacy.

For those who don't know, our 5-year state tournament average is a summary of all adult bowler's state tournament scores over the previous five calendar years. The tournaments used are the Open, Women's and Senior. Since we had no state tournaments in 2020, our current list includes the years of 2017-2019 plus 2021 and 2022. If a bowler has a minimum of 21 games composite in those 5 years, then he/she will use that average in the state tournaments mentioned above. If no 21-game average, then he/she must use the higher of their previous season's average of the current season's January 1st average. If no such averages exist, then a bowler may use their current 21-game league average at the time of bowling a state tournament.

You have no idea how difficult it is from an IT standpoint to determine those averages for that many bowlers. The state tournament average list has become very popular here in Montana, not to mention very fair. It eliminates the need to rerate bowlers. Many states envy us. For a brief while we thought we would have to abandon it until Jesse came to our rescue.

He has also recently taken over our website, www.mtusbc.com. It needs a great deal of updating of which he is in the process of doing. The download tab is full of many important files, documents and applications.

Some changes of importance that occurred in Montana USBC board meetings since May 2020 are:

1. Picture backdrops were purchased and are to be used as settings for bowler picture taking at our state tournaments. We will provide the backdrop. The bowlers can take as many pictures as they want with their own cameras. No charge.

2. A state membership dues increase from \$2 to \$3 was passed by the delegates in their May 2021 meeting, but not effective until August 1, 2022.

3. State tournament entry fee increases were approved for **all** state tournaments effective in 2022. The Open went to \$40 per person per event, Women's went to \$35 per person per event. Youth went to \$25 per person per event in divisions 1-4 and to \$20 per person per event for division 5. The Senior tournament went from \$55 to \$65.

4. Our online entry system that began two years ago with the 2021 tournaments will no longer accept ACH payments beginning in 2023. However, there will no longer be an upcharge on credit card usage, which is a **HUGE** improvement.

5. The large colorful postcard that displays all state tournament and special event information for the coming bowling season is discontinued.

In its place we will be sending mass emails to league bowlers in late winter using the service called mail chimp.

The 2023 Open State tournament will be in Billings starting April 15 thru May 14. Team event at Sunset Bowl. Doubles/Singles at Fireside Lanes. There will be three shifts available on all Saturdays @ 10 am, 1:30 pm, & 5 pm and two shifts available on all Sundays @ 10 am and 1:30 pm. Entry fees are the same as last year @ \$40 per person per event.

AGAIN this year in the Open, Women's and Youth tournaments: A bowler may enter doubles up to 3 times providing they change partners each time plus they also must enter singles each time. A person may cash only once in the singles. A bowler is allowed to multiple enter in doubles and singles in advance, but will not be allowed to cancel a second or third entry and receive a refund.

The 2023 Women's State tournament will be held in Butte starting April 28 and ending May 21 for a total of four weekends including a shift @ 6pm on every Friday night. Team, doubles and singles events will all be at Star Lanes. Entry fees remain the same as last year @ \$35 per person per event. Multiple doubles & singles entries up to 3 times will be allowed the same as mentioned in the Open tournament information. Emblems and souvenir pins have been discontinued. .

The 2023 Youth State tournament will be held in Missoula at Westside Lanes from April 15 thru April 23 for two weekends total. All shifts will be flex shifts. Entry fees will be the same as last year - \$25 per person per event for divisions 1-4 and \$20 per person per event for division 5. Division 5 (bantams) will include all youth who are age 8 or under as of August 1, 2022. Bantams will again be allowed to bowl up into higher divisions as well as enter their own division. Anyone reserving 4 team spots or more are required to have all entry forms and fees to the tournament director by or before March 4, 2023. The same provisions that allow adults to enter multiple times up to 3 doubles & singles entries in the Open & Women's tournaments also apply to the youths in this tournament.

The 2023 Pepsi YBC tournament will be held at Sleeping Giant Lanes in Helena on March 31 thru April 2. For more precise information regarding this year's Pepsi YBC, please go to bowlmontana.com, helenausbc.com or butteusbc.com.

The 2023 Senior State tournament will be held in Hamilton at the Ravalli Fun Center and running for three weekends starting September 29 thru October 15. This includes one Friday night shift each weekend. Future Senior tournaments include Billings in 2024 and Havre in 2025.

Standing Rules that apply to all adult state tournaments and to youth tournaments to some extent, will be posted on both websites, bowlmontana.com and mtusbc.com. Changes that were made during the pandemic regarding use of ball cleaners have been restored to the pre-pandemic era including **no ball surface changes of any kind** will be allowed once scoring has started. **Any violations will result in immediate disqualification.**

And last but not least the state association is going to attempt again to conduct a state Bowling Jamboree this coming May. It will be in Butte on May 19-21 primarily at Star Lanes. It will coincide with the last weekend of the Women's State tournament. This is actually the 10th anniversary of the last major Jamboree that was held in Livingston in September 2013.

There is an Ice Breaker social planned for Friday night, a youth tournament on Saturday morning followed by a youth awards luncheon. Then a 2-game adult tournament Saturday afternoon followed by the Hall of Fame banquet that night. And, hopefully, on Saturday morning USBC will conduct a Workshop with much worthwhile news and information for local association managers and board members.

Jamborees have always been fun in the past. There is no reason why this one can't be fun too, especially in Butte. **Mark this on your calendar.**

2022 MT USBC Senior State Championships Results - Miles City, MT

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------|---|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------|
| <u>Mixed-Super Senior</u> | | | | 16 entries | <u>Super Senior - (Women)</u> | | | | 19 entries |
| <u>Name</u> | <u>City</u> | <u>Score</u> | <u>Prize</u> | | <u>Name</u> | <u>City</u> | <u>Score</u> | <u>Prize</u> | |
| 1. | Tom Brendgord | Billings | 1340 | \$206.00 | 1. | Sandra Jones | Fort Benton | 1377 | \$176.00 |
| 2. | Richard Van Scoik | Glendive | 1312 | \$123.60 | 2. | Elaine Lohrenz | Billings | 1366 | \$100.00 |
| <u>Mixed - A</u> | | | | 7 entries | 3. | Kay Vetch | Billings | tie 1250 | \$ 57.70 |
| 1. | Donald Deeds | Libby | 1338 | \$144.20 | 3. | Carole McNulty | Billings | tie 1250 | \$ 57.70 |
| <u>Mixed - B</u> | | | | 26 entries | <u>A - (Women)</u> | | | | 7 entries |
| 1. | Ed Hodges | Missoula | 1517 | \$215.00 | 1. | Robin Sullivan | Belgrade | 1385 | \$144.20 |
| 2. | Kent Losett | Miles City | 1393 | \$160.00 | <u>B - (Women)</u> | | | | 8 entries |
| 3. | Jack Ahern | Butte | 1391 | \$110.00 | 1. | Pamela Rogge | Miles City | 1298 | \$164.80 |
| 4. | James Daniels | Anaconda | 1383 | \$ 50.60 | <u>C - (Women)</u> | | | | 16 entries |
| <u>Mixed - C</u> | | | | 19 entries | 1. | Susan Kittelmann | Miles City | 1384 | \$206.00 |
| 1. | Bernie Groshong | Thompson Falls | 1443 | \$190.00 | 2. | Peggy Certain | Miles City | 1374 | \$123.60 |
| 2. | Mark Kump | Butte | 1393 | \$114.00 | <u>D - (Women)</u> | | | | 11 entries |
| 3. | Curtis Reed | Miles City | 1385 | \$ 87.40 | 1. | Lori Reed | Miles City | 1394 | \$140.00 |
| <u>Mixed - D</u> | | | | 12 entries | 2. | Teri Hodges | Missoula | 1373 | \$ 86.60 |
| 1. | Monte Haugen | Ashland | 1543 | \$150.00 | <u>E - (Women)</u> | | | | 8 entries |
| 2. | Kirk Askin | Broadus | 1228 | \$ 97.20 | 1. | Danielle Bolan | Helena | 1344 | \$164.80 |
| <u>Mixed - E</u> | | | | 6 entries | Total entries: 155 @ \$20.60 prize fee = \$3,193.00 Prize Fund paid | | | | |
| 1. | Glenn Whitewater | Ronan | 1389 | \$123.60 | Complete standings are posted on BowlMontana.com | | | | |

Senior Tournament Sidenotes

The 2023 Senior National Championships will take place at The Ashwaubenon Bowling Alley in Green Bay, Wisconsin, from August 1-4. As of this printing it appears that most all of the divisional winners in the Montana State Seniors tournament are planning to attend.

Tuesday, Aug. 1, is check-in, a free practice session plus an optional singles sweeper that night at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 2, is qualifying round #1 plus an optional doubles sweeper that night at 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 3, is qualifying round #2. All qualifying rounds consist of 3 games. Friday, Aug. 4, is the Advancers Round for the top 6 scores in each division. Champions will be determined after those 3 games. An optional 3-game sweeper for non-advancers will be held starting at 9 a.m.

The 2023 Montana Senior State tournament will be held at the Ravalli Fun Center in Hamilton, Montana. It will run for 3 weekends starting Friday, September 29 and ending Sunday, October 15. Future Montana Senior State tournament sites have been awarded to Billings in 2024, Havre in 2025, Ronan in 2026 and Thompson Falls in 2027.

National News.....

2021-22 USBC NATIONAL HIGH AVERAGE, SERIES AWARDS

| National Hi Series | Bowler | Score | Home Town | National Hi Avg. | Bowler | Average | Home Town |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------|----------------|------------------|------------------|---------|-----------------|
| Adult Male | Cody Sschmitt | 900 | Plymouth WI | Adult Male | Jesse Hawkins | 257 | Pikeville, KY |
| Adult Male | Stephen Kosela | 900 | Ambridge, PA | Adult Female | Liz Kuhlkin | 247 | Schenectady, NY |
| Adult Male | Bryan Deck | 900 | New Castle, IN | Youth Male | Wyatt Honecker | 242 | Rochester, MN |
| Adult Female | Breanna Clemmer | 879 | Clover, SC | Youth Female | Melia Mitskavich | 237 | DuBois, PA |
| Youth Male | Drue Hutmacher | 857 | Rapid City, SD | | | | |
| Youth Female | Claire Jacobson | 844 | New Prague, MN | | | | |

MONTANA BOWLING PROPRIETORS ASSOCIATION NEWS

By Tom Brendgord

The Montana Bowling Proprietors Association has experienced many changes since 2020, but none more significant than the rebirth of their Lifetime Membership Club. The MBPA was formed in the early 1970's by a small group of bowling center owners. As it moved forward into prominence and as a few of their charter members aged and passed, it became obvious that there needed to be a special category of greatness for their predecessors.

The Lifetime Membership Club originally consisted of 6 members - George Schneider of Helena, Bill Morrison of Missoula, Stan Olson of Great Falls, Ned Newton of Dillon, Chet Moran of Columbus and Audrey Ryan of Butte. All owned their own centers except for Audrey Ryan, who was the MBPA executive secretary for many years after the passing of her husband, Steve. I had the honor of working for two of them - Bill Morrison and Stan Olson. Audrey Ryan was the last one inducted into this elite club in 1999.

In 2019 it suddenly dawned on me that the Club had been forgotten. So, as their executive director I attempted to resurrect it. I came up with three categories for potential membership with strict requirements to be met for each one. In essence, the Club became a Hall of Fame for Montana bowling proprietors. The new system and requirements were approved by the membership at their annual meeting in July 2020.

Two new members were inducted in May 2021 - Dan Fix and Robyn Barker, both from Missoula and both highly qualified. Of equal importance, both were still alive, unlike the previous six, and were available to receive their awards.

In July 2022, two more were elected into the Club - Jack Harrington of Billings and Gary Gerhardt of Bozeman. Unfortunately, both were selected post-humously. One more person has already passed the rigid requirements, Ken Brubaker of Havre, but has chosen to postpone his induction until May 2024. There are at least a handful of eligible persons that, hopefully, will apply in the near future bringing new life to an elite club that once saw death as its only option.

(Continued on next column)

NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE

MONTANA STATE 600 CLUB & 500 CLUB TOURNAMENTS

The Montana State 600 Club & 500 Club will hold their annual mail-a-graphic tournaments once again in 2023. The tournament dates are January 30 - February 10. The entry fee for singles is \$15 and for the optional blind doubles is \$10. This is a handicap tournament in which bowlers use their scores bowled during their regular league play using their league average as of the date bowled. One of the best things about this tournament is that there is no need to travel in order to participate as well as being inexpensive to enter. Please contact Eileen Nelson in Missoula at (406) 529-1819 or email her at: enelson@mso.umt.edu to enter or for more information. Entry deadline is January 23. Entry forms are available online at bowlmontana.com.

Montana Bowling Proprietors Association News (continued)

Every year there are changes in ownership and/or management to many bowling centers in Montana. One very significant change occurred a little more than a year ago when Pick's Bowling Center in Bigfork was purchased by professional bowler, Rhino Page. He changed the name to Grizzly Lanes and has been conducting several tournaments & promotions ever since.

This past summer, J.W. Eaton, owner of Glacier Lanes in Cut Bank, decided it was time to retire after over 30 years in business. He sold Glacier Lanes to Christina Fitzpatrick of Browning. He and his wife, Lynn, moved to California in August. They were heavily involved in the MBPA and will be greatly missed.

OK Lanes in Sidney emerged from bankruptcy recently with a new name, ABC Lanes, and new owners, Dennis & Robin Trudell. Victory Lanes in Deer Lodge has undergone an extensive renovation and is incredibly beautiful. Bruce Hruska recently purchased Little's Lanes in Great Falls and is the new president of the MBPA.

Youth Scholarship Application Deadline March 1st. Bowling Proprietors and the Montana USBC to Again Share Same Application

By Tom Brendgord

The scholarship application process for the 2022-23 season is essentially the same as last year. Once again the Montana USBC and Montana Bowling Proprietors Association are sharing the same application and that application needs to be submitted as one copy to only one person. The Montana USBC has \$3,500 in scholarships to award and the Montana Bowling Proprietors will be awarding \$2,000. High school seniors in Montana, who have strong scholastics, community service achievements and a willingness to be involved in our sport as well as have a great competitive bowling resume will have a great opportunity to receive college financial support in their future.

After having undergone many changes in the past, the scholarship application is unchanged this year. Pictures are no longer required and also no social security numbers. But gender designation is required. Although it is always admirable to be a youth officer or delegate or assist with state tournaments, points will no longer be given for those accomplishments mainly because not all youth bowlers have the opportunity to participate in those things. A 150-word essay is still required and up to 10 points can be earned.

This application is normally available from your youth program director. For those who don't want to wait, you can download it from mtusbc.com. (continued next col.)

There is a March 1st deadline for submitting this application, which again goes to Tom Brendgord in Billings this year. Applications may be mailed, faxed (406-252-3220) or scanned and emailed (t.brendgord@att.net). Regardless of how submitted, the March 1st deadline still applies. The following list shows the scholarships that are available through this process.

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1 - Don Warner Memorial (High Pts. Scored) | \$1,000 |
| 2 - MTUSBC (one boy and one girl) | \$ 750 ea |
| 1 - MTUSBC Harvey L. Pierce (boy) | \$ 500 |
| 1 - MTUSBC Isabel Cummings (girl) | \$ 500 |
| 2 - MBPA/Steve Ryan Memorial (boy & girl) | \$ 500 ea |
| 2 - MBPA/Gary Gerhardt Memorial (boy & girl) | \$ 500 ea |

Eligibility requirements for consideration are:

1. Be a graduating senior.
2. Be a current member of a certified USBC league in Montana and be in good standing for the current season.
3. Have unimpaired amateur standing in all athletic participation.
4. Bowled at least three years in a USBC league in Montana.
5. Not bowled or participated in Adult leagues or tournaments, jackpots, Monte Carlo's etc. **EXCEPTION:** *It is acceptable to bowl an adult singles league/tournament as long as any prize money is sent to SMART.*
6. Plan on attending a college, university, vocational-technical school or other accredited school of higher learning.
7. To be eligible for the proprietor's scholarships, a youth must bowl league in an MBPA member center with a current average of at least 21 games. A list of member centers is shown on the website, bowlmontana.com

On My Mind.....

A Tribute To Don Warner

By Tom Brendgord



I need to tell my story of one of the greatest persons I was fortunate to know and be a friend of - Don Warner from Miles City. However, to tell it properly I have to start at the end and work backwards. To preface my tale, you need to know that Don was on the Montana USBC board of directors for over 11 years, but his longevity was far exceeded by his intelligence, foresight, humbleness and love of bowling.

My story starts on Saturday, August 28, 2021. I had just received a phone call from J.W. Eaton of Cut Bank, who was the tournament director of the 2021 Montana Senior State tournament scheduled to start in a few weeks. He couldn't get logged into our server, which was critical in order to process entries for the senior tournament. He knew that if he encountered server problems he had to contact Don, but this time Don didn't answer his cell phone. Don had recently been admitted into a hospital in Billings and I knew that, so I told J.W. that I would contact him and have him get the server working.

I then called Don and was surprised by the answer on the other end of the line. It was a lady, so I asked her if she was Don's wife. She replied "yes". I then proceeded to tell her that we needed Don to help J.W. get into our server. She then said, "Don died this morning". My heart sunk in stunned silence.

My first reaction was of total embarrassment to think I had just asked a favor from the wife of a person, who had just died. My second reaction was to apologize and ask what happened. You see, Don had cancer for over a year, but was responding well to treatment. This was also still in the middle to latter part of Covid. So, it was easy to assume he died of cancer or Covid. She told me that he died of pneumonia, which the hospital never checked for until it was too late. It truly was a senseless death. After we hung up, I wept and then went upstairs to tell my wife.

We went to Don's funeral in Miles City that following Friday. It was held in a huge church that was full of mourners. Don obviously was well liked and respected. During the funeral I found out the many lives that Don touched. I knew he was the lead IT person at Miles Community College and that he devoted much of his time to helping the state bowling association. But I didn't know how many other non-profit organizations he helped in his "spare" time. They were countless.

I always wondered why Don sent me so many emails after midnight. Now I knew. He spent all of his waking hours helping others. I once asked him when he slept. He just smiled.

Don was appointed to the Montana USBC board of directors by president, Laurel Walker, during the 2009-10 bowling season. That was when I first met him. We became friends immediately.

It didn't take long to realize what an extraordinary person he was. He was very soft spoken and didn't speak much, but when he did, he spoke volumes. A person couldn't help but hang on his every word. His voice exuded confidence and his words were full of common sense and logic. And to top it off, there was no doubt that he loved bowling even though he himself wasn't an expert bowler - a 170 average at best.

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I already mentioned that Don was an IT person, but what needs to be emphasized is that he was the best at computer knowledge of anyone I've ever known. He knew all about software, hardware, the internet, website building and computer repair. He could literally build a computer from the ground up.

One year the hard drive in my PC crashed. He immediately drove from Miles City to Billings, took my computer back to Miles City and saved every file on it. Then he ordered me a new computer and updated software, installed everything including my old files and brought it back to me in less than a week.

But I digress. Don was elected 1st vice president of the Montana USBC in the 2013-14 season. It was also in 2013 that I became state association manager. Our board had been floating the idea of having a state tournament coordinator at that time, so I became the guinea pig. The coordinator's main job would be to process all entries for the Open, Women's and Youth state tournaments - a massive undertaking to say the least.

I immediately turned to Don for help. He knew exactly what to do. We acquired a server, on which he set up and installed our software giving access to all of our onsite tournament directors. It sounds simple, but believe me it was anything but that. To this day we still use a server, albeit a newer and bigger one, that was set up and programmed by Don.

It was during the 2013-14 season that my and Don's friendship and respect for each other's abilities flourished. He knew my computer limitations, but never looked down on me for them. He always answered his phone when I called no matter where he was, nor what he was doing. He was like a father to me, which was odd, since I was 13 years older.

Don's knowledge of technology and vision for the future of the Montana USBC was unstoppable. He is the person, who developed our 5-year state tournament average listing, which is something most states don't have to this day. He devised the spectacular memorial presentation shown at our spring meetings. And he is responsible for us being able to now take online state tournament entries.

It has been 16 months since his passing and I still miss him.

Rest in peace, Don.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE MONTANA USBC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

| <u>OFFICE</u> | <u>NAME</u> | <u>CITY</u> |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| PRESIDENT | NANCY COLLUICK | HELENA |
| 1ST VICE PRES | MIKE EVJEN | MISSOULA |
| 2ND VICE PRES | DANIELLE BOLAN | HELENA |
| 1 YEAR DIRECTOR | TERI HODGES | MISSOULA |
| 2 YEAR DIRECTOR | JACKI HUFF | HELENA |
| 1 YEAR DIRECTOR | RICH FORAN | BILLINGS |
| 2 YEAR DIRECTOR | KEITH MEAGOR | BUTTE |
| 2 YEAR DIRECTOR | BARRY HODGES | MISSOULA |
| 2 YEAR DIRECTOR | RICK HAGEDORN | THOMPSON FALLS |
| 2 YEAR DIRECTOR | BRENDA SHAFFER | BUTTE |
| 2 YEAR DIRECTOR | GINGER WARD | THOMPSON FALLS |
| 1 YEAR DIRECTOR | CHARLIE PEPOS | GREAT FALLS |
| 1 YEAR DIRECTOR | DAVE MARTINICH | BUTTE |
| 1 YEAR DIRECTOR | JESSE WARNER | MILES CITY |
| 1 YEAR DIRECTOR | RON BOLAN | HELENA |
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| 1 YEAR DIRECTOR | TERRI JOHNSON | HELENA |
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