

Ray's Mainstreet Lanes

Committee to meet

The Judiciary, License and Cemetery Committee will meet at 6:50 tonight in the executive conference room in City Hall Plaza to consider a Class B combination license for Ray Wojcik for Ray's Mainstreet Lanes, 550 S. Central Ave. *(From the Marshfield News-Herald, Marshfield, Wisconsin, 26 May 1992, Tuesday, Page 12)*

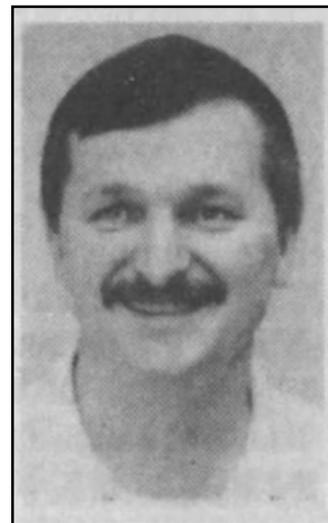
Wojcik to Run Center City Lanes

Local bowling standout Ray Wojcik recently purchased Center City Lanes and has been overseeing its day-to-day operations since June 1.

Long one of the most consistent and respected bowlers in the area, Wojcik said the chance to own his own establishment was too good to pass up.

"It's something I always wanted to get into," said Wojcik who will run the bar and lanes with his wife Kathy and two sons Scott, 17, and Steven, 16. "The opportunity came up so we took it"

Run by the Rose Bowl last year. Center City Lanes will now be known as Ray's Mainstreet Lanes. Wojcik currently operates the Haider Bridge Bar near the Big Eau Pleine Flowage. He will end his duties there at the end of the month.



Ray Wojcik

Wojcik admits running a bowling alley will be a chore, yet it will be a welcome one.

"I think it's going to be a real challenge. We're up to it" he said. "I've always understood the game of bowling, and maybe I can improve my game by learning about conditions out there and what causes them."

Once settled, Wojcik and his family will likely be tied to their new endeavor for the long haul.

"I think we're going to be there a long time. That's what my plans are," he said. "It's something that may be passed down to my family as we go on."

A grand opening for Ray's Mainstreet Lanes is tentatively set for sometime in August prior to the beginning of the fall bowling season. *(from the Marshfield News-Herald, Marshfield, Wisconsin, 10 Jun 1992, Wednesday, Page 11)*

Wojciks Open Business

Ray and Kathy Wojcik, along with their sons Scott and Steven, stand outside of Ray's Mainstreet Lanes, which recently had a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 550 S. Central Ave. The new business features 12 bowling lanes, pool tables, video games and a bar, plus one of the



area's best bowlers. Ray Wojcik recently passed the required tests to join the Pro Bowlers Association. (from the Marshfield News-Herald, Marshfield, Wisconsin, 22 Oct 1992, Thursday, Page 13)

Bowling Has Lot To Offer

By Dan Kohn of the News-Herald

The sport of bowling may not be new, but it sure is holding its own in popularity in the Marshfield area.

Bowling remains the No. 1 recreational indoor winter sport in the area with thousands of bowlers taking part

in leagues in several different area centers.

"Bowling (popularity) right now is probably the same as it has been the last couple of years," explained Jerry Leonhardt, owner of Rose Bowl Lanes. "It's not really going up or down. Our bowlers are up (in numbers) this year because of the Spencer fire. Our bowling numbers are higher than the past couple of years."

Ray Wojcik, owner of Ray's Mainstreet Lanes, agreed.

"I don't think it is (losing in popularity)," Wojcik said. "A lot of other things have come along — volleyball and stuff like that. But bowling seems to hold its own. It seems you have more families coming out to bowl. It's a place you can take your kids."

So why do people like to bowl?

"You get out and you meet a lot of people," Wojcik continued. "Over the course of the year there are new bowlers on different teams. By the end of the year you know everybody. You make more friends and it's just enjoyable."

"It's a night out" Leonhardt added. "It's also healthy. There's many parts of the body that muscles are being used during bowling. People don't realize that but it's a real good form of exercise for the body. It's also a chance to get together with friends, neighbors and teammates."



Madeline Bloczynski (right) and Doris Karo of the V.F.W. Auxiliary 1866 team of Marshfield high five one another during recent bowling action at Ray's Mainstreet Lanes. Bowling popularity in the area continues to be at a high level. (News-Herald Photo by Dan Young)

Though bowling's popularity is decreasing on the national level, Leonhardt said that's not unusual.

"Bowling on a national level was on a decrease," Leonhardt explained. "It was on a high point 10 years ago. Gradually it has gone downward. That happens quite often. There are so many things out there. There's volleyball, dart leagues, pool leagues —other forms of entertainment. Once everybody gets settled down in what they want to do, bowling will come back. It goes in cycles. You're starting to see the increase come back."

Bowling is also popular because virtually anyone can do it.

"Very, very broad mixture," Leonhardt added. "We have a tremendous amount of after school junior leagues on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday. We offer it to every school in the city. We have tremendous support from senior citizens who bowl throughout the day. It gives them something to do. It lets them get out with their friends. It's an alternative for bingo.

"I think bowling has a lot to offer. I don't think people realize it. Where else can you go for the money value? You can use a person's shoes and a ball and throw it at the pins for a small price. It's just a good value. It's a good game for the dollar. For the money that you spend it's well worth the money." *(from the Marshfield News-Herald, Marshfield, Wisconsin, 01 Oct 1994, Saturday, Page 11)*

Closing of Lanes Hurts Area Bowlers

By Jim Pryse of the News-Herald

When is the closing of one business not such a good thing for its competitors?

When it has an adverse effect on the industry.

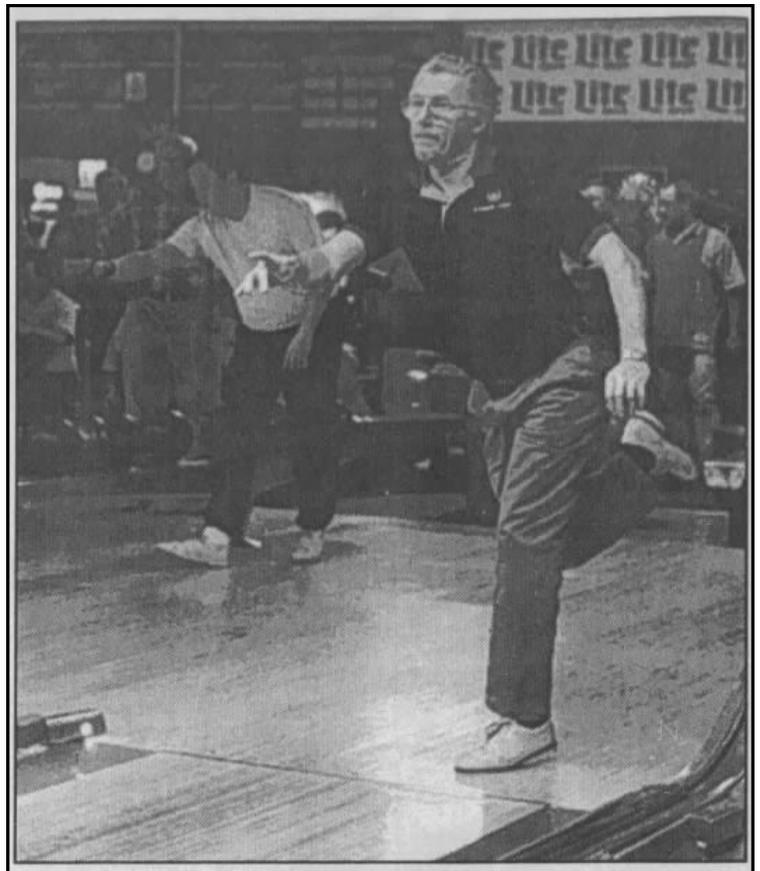
That's what a couple of local bowling alleys are finding out with the closing of Ray's Mainstreet Lanes last June.

"With their closing people would say it's to your benefit," Rose Bowl program director Mary Buffington said. "Well yes and no. There were a lot of people who couldn't get into the leagues they wanted to and quit."

However, quite a few of the former Ray's patrons have found new homes at the Rose Bowl and Edwin Memorial Lanes, but those who haven't have in all likelihood left the sport.

And that's not good.

"I've heard a lot of people have thrown



Good Form—Jerry Falk of West Allis watches the ball roll down the lane during the Knights of Columbus team bowling tournament at Ray's Mainstreet Lanes Saturday. Falk's team, Pa Falk's Boys, consists of his brothers Willie, Don, George and Tom. (Marshfield News-Herald Photo, by Jim Pryse, 03 Apr 1995, Monday, Page 12)

their shoes and their balls in the closet," said Butch Spindler of Edwin Memorial Lanes.

Poor business did not necessitate the closing of Ray's, proprietor Ray Wojcik said. Rather, the owner of the building wanted to sell, and Wojcik wasn't willing to meet the owner's asking price.

When that happened, the owner would not renew the lease and Wojcik sold off the equipment.

The alley closed June 1.

Buffington said she's noticed a heavy influx of former Ray's bowlers in the Rose Bowl leagues, while Spindler said Ray's closing allowed EML to add one summer league.

In addition, leagues at EML which in past years haven't been full are now running at full capacity, Spindler said.

"We picked up a senior league from Ray's, three mixed couples leagues and a men's league," Buffington said of the Rose Bowl, which sports 44 adult leagues and about a dozen youth leagues.

But even with the increased number of bowlers these two houses have welcomed, there is some reason for concern.

"The town lost bowlers," Buffington said. "Everyone wanted to get in the 6:30 p.m. league and you can't get all those people out on the floor and you can't very well tell people who have, bowled in our leagues for 15 years that you can't get in the league because someone else wants to."

Both Buffington and Spindler admitted that the number of people participating in the sport is down, not just in Marshfield, but nationally.

Spindler said Green Bay has lost three or four houses and close to 100 lanes.

But that's a trend that Buffington and Spindler hope is tailing off, as they pointed to the cyclical nature of the sport as the source of the drop-off.

"It goes in cycles," Buffington said. "You probably have more people coming in for open bowling, but they don't want the commitment of bowling in a league.

"There's so many different entertainment choices now like the YMCA and other things that weren't around 10 years ago."

Spindler also subscribes to the cyclical theory.

"Brunswick Corp. said recreational sports hit a 10-year cycle and it should be on the bottom," said Spindler, who's noticed the trend before. "Hopefully it will get better in the next two years."

If it does get better in the next two years, could another area bowling alley pop up?

Wojcik, citing a large capital investment, said he has no plans to open an alley at the current time.

But that doesn't mean another alley won't emerge. For it to be successful, however, the bowlers would need to return.

"If everybody came back.. .that's the tragic part of this," Spindler said

"A lot of people may not come back and that's what we're looking at as proprietors."

Buffington, however, likened the current bowling dilemma with another troubling sports problem.

"It's like baseball," she said. "Once a person has something taken away from them, they quit going. Once a person quits, lots of times you can't get them back." *(from the Marshfield News-Herald, Marshfield, Wisconsin, 23 Sep 1995, Saturday, Page 11)*

If you have additional information or photographs regarding this business history or location, we would appreciate hearing from you. We will add information whenever possible.

For questions, or sharing information, please contact us at the North Wood County Historical Society, 715-387-3322 or by email nwchs@uphammansion.com Please reference this story in your email and attach your text information. Photos in a jpeg format if possible are greatly appreciated.

This Marshfield Business Profile is a collaborative effort of the North Wood County Historical Society and the Everett Roehl Marshfield Public Library as part of the Marshfield's 150th Anniversary..