

This league secretary is a real computer wiz

HENRY FANKHAUSER

Bowling

Mastering the mysteries of computer science has made Rod Weaver of Silver Spring's Aspen Hill section one of the most proficient and amazing bowling league secretaries in the area.

His weekly standings sheet of the Men's Maryland Suburban Traveling Duckpin League contains an array of statistics that are difficult to comprehend fitting on one weekly resume.

A computer specialist with the Department of Navy, Weaver says composing the sheet each week is fun. And what makes the finished product even more amazing is that the league bowls at two houses, White Oak Lanes and Fair Lanes College Park. Which means Weaver has to gather the information from both centers after bowling on Fridays before he can start compiling it into his weekly sheet. He then distributes the finished product to each center the following Friday.

What makes his sheet different than any other I've seen? Let me try to explain.

■ It is printed on 14-inch-by-8-inch paper and folded, making four "pages."

■ The front page contains the standings of the 22 teams with the following information in columns: points won and lost, total pinfall, high game, high set; each team's win-loss point total the past 12 games; their three games and set the previous week plus the total wood lost; and the center and lanes where each team will bowl the next three weeks.

Also on the first page are lists of the top five individual averages, games, sets, spares, strikes and the most 10s — plus the five bowlers with the best average count on spares and the five with the best average count on strikes.

■ Pages 2 and 3, the inside pages, contain each of the 110 regular bowlers' composite statistics through the previous week: entrance average, games, pinfall, spares, strikes, 10s; their three games, set and wood lost the previous week. The name in all capital letters on each team is its valuable player the previous week based on pins over average.

■ Page 4 lists the previous week's outstanding performances: top seven individual sets at each center, the 170 (game) Club, bowlers with the most strikes, spares, pins over average, and least wood lost; top three team sets, games, most strikes and most spares. Also listed are available alternate bowlers with averages and phone numbers (more than 50 are listed).

■ Then, to top it all off, photos of the top bowler the previous week at each center, plus cartoons or a crossword puzzle or a writeup on a particular bowler, are sometimes featured.

All of this on four pages that measure 7 by 8 each. Can you believe it?

How is all this done? How long does it take? Is there a magic key on his computer that calculates all this? Those are some of the questions I asked. These are some of his answers.

Weaver, 33, a 6-foot-7 bachelor, collects the plastic telescopes from the center where he has bowled, then travels to the other center to pick up the same. The next day he enters the box-by-box figures of each bowler into his computer. This takes about two hours. Then he presses that "magic key" and the computer does the rest — all the calculating, the columns, the lists, etc. — in about two minutes.

Who got the idea and did the amazing programming for this bowling secretary's dream? Weaver did, of course.

He formerly bowled in a tenpin league during the era when computers were in their infancy. Fascinated by the new craze, and after taking a computer class in high school, he got involved and played around with his idea for about two years.

Finally, after much trial and error, in 1983 he perfected the tenpin bowling secretary's program. When he switched to duckpins in 1992, and became secretary of the league, it took two more weeks to convert the program to the small-ball game.

But what about those photos printed on his sheets every week — does he have a file of all of the 110 bowlers? The answer is no. And how does he convert them from his computer? And older brother, Ray, who is also a computer specialist for the Department of the Navy and who also bowls in the league, helps with this by videotaping bowlers at the center about six times a year.

He runs a cable from his VCR to his own computer, which stores the tapes. When Rod needs a photo, Ray freeze-frames that bowler from his videotape, then sends it over a telephone line by way of a modem from his home in Washington to Rod's computer, which also stores it anywhere Rod wants to on his standings sheet.

If all this amazing computer technology is hard to comprehend, I agree. But if you'd like proof positive, Rod has about 150 extra sheets printed every week and leaves extra copies at Fair Lanes College Park and White Oak every Friday. Pick one up. Or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to him at 3834 Bel Pre Road, Apt. 1, Silver Spring, Md. 20906.

Weaver's final standings sheet, given out on payoff night, usually consists of eight pages, which includes a complete financial report and more individual statistics you wouldn't believe. The sheet is so comprehensive space here doesn't permit describing it fully.

And, by the way, Weaver is also treasurer of the traveling league, which is in its 36th year. It started in 1960 at three centers, the former Hyattsville lanes, the former Woodmoor lanes, and Fair Lanes University when it was a duckpin house. At one time it had 44 teams. Today the league bowls Fridays at 6:15 p.m.

Each bowler pays \$14 a night, of which 55 cents goes to Weaver. The top three teams in the final standings win \$6,000, \$4,750 and \$3,625. The five-member team entrance average limit is 625.