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STATEN ISLAND SUNDAY ADVANCE ■ SEPTEMBER 21, 1997

BOWLING

After closings have trickle-down effect

■ Every time a center closes, the sport loses legions

Eighty-year-old Tony Anarumo Sr., a lifelong Staten Islander and bowler, shakes his head when he reads stories about the Department of Motor Vehicle's eventual move to Showplace Bowling Center and the uncertainty surrounding Columbian Lanes which is up for sale along with the Columbian Lanes.

"It's crazy. There used to be a bowling alley on just about every busy street corner on Staten Island," remembers Anarumo, a Port Richmond resident. "What's happened to all those alleys?"

Anarumo, who has a memory as sharp as a razor blade, rattles off places like Central Bowling Lanes, Clove Lanes, Club Davis, the Columbia Bowling Center, Knotty Pines, Liberty Lanes, Lucci's Gramercy Lodge, Madison's Bowling Center, Park Lanes, Sunset Lanes and Village Bowling Academy that were in existence in the late 1950s.

There were others, of course, according to an aging 1958 phone book in the Advance library, such as Robert's Post Tavern, Templeton Lanes and Victory Recreation. In 1958, the phone book listed 15 places at which Islanders could bowl.

Ten years later, only 10 alleys — or centers as we call them today — existed with a lot of the smaller places giving way to places like Columbian Lanes, Bowling on the Green and Coral Lanes.

By 1974, there were only seven bowlers — one more than the number we have today and 26 fewer than the total number of bowlers Staten Island has had since the early 1960s, according to long-time Island kiegler Mike Marigliano.

Although there were a lot more bowlers in 1958 as compared to today, there were 60 fewer lane beds than the 208 the six island centers now contain. The only catch is the island's population has nearly tripled since the late 1950s.

Of the 208 present lane beds, at least 20-30 are expected to be lost in the DMV's move into Showplace. Then there's also the cloudy outlook at Columbian Lanes, the second smallest house on the island with 12 lane beds.

Although most of those leagues figure to relocate to one of the other establishments or the bowlers themselves will join existing leagues, the sad truth is that for many others, the game will be lost forever.

"Every time a center closes, it's bad for bowling in general," said longtime Island kiegler and Columbian Lanes manager Bobby Spatone. "You may get bowlers to go to other houses, but there's also a lot of bowlers that just stop bowling."

"And when bowling doesn't do well, centers don't do well because when you run tournaments you aren't going to get all those bowlers that left the game."

"If you don't have centers flourishing, it just hurts bowling."

There's also a trickle-down effect — which could last many decades — when it comes to the

game's lost legions. The feeling of this writer is that when people — mainly parents — leave the sport there's a good chance their kids won't be interested in the sport, either.

"Like anything else, it's carried down from generation to generation," said Anarumo, who still competes in the Senior Men's Club twice a week at Rab's Country Lanes.

"The bowlers are gonna come to bowl, but you're still gonna have X-amount of people that were just bowling because the place was conveniently located that won't bowl anymore," added Anarumo.

Country house for Ray Lauren, on the hand, likes the emergence of bigger bowling centers — that have swallowed up the smaller ones — to that of malls, taking the place of neighborhood stores and shops. In fact, he thinks all the closings and Showplace's consolidation has to do with supply and demand or simple economics.

"When Brunswick did its market analysis for Showplace and said Staten Island can handle another 40 lanes, I thought they were crazy," said Lauren. "I didn't think there were enough bowlers for all the centers that were open plus one that size."

"If there were more bowlers than lane beds, Showplace wouldn't be doing what they're doing."

As for all the alley closings over the years, Lauren doesn't think the sport has suffered much from it.

"If the city decided it was going to build condominiums on a softball field in Stapleton," said Lauren. "I don't think guys would stop playing softball. They would go some place else."

That's where Lauren may be wrong — at least when it comes to the casual kiegler.

The once-a-week bowler is looking for the convenience of going to a place nearby," said Jack Serrro, president of the long-running Security Plus loop, which disbanded because of all the uncertainty at the West Brighton center.

"He doesn't want to travel across the island to bowl."

If the 60 kieglers in Serrro's men's loop, he estimates that at least half of them aren't bowling this season.

"For whatever reason, most of the guys have just lost interest in the sport," said Serrro. "There just wasn't enough teams and a lot of people were afraid that if the place closes in the middle of the season they would be left out in the cold."

Not all people, though, are being turned off by the recent alley closings and uncertainties. There's also outside factors — as Lauren calls them — that have to be figured into the overall equation.

"Bowling is competing with a lot more recreational sports and times than we ever had before," said Lauren. "Now you have roller hockey, soccer, men's basketball, darts, golf... There's just so much disposable time and income that people have now."



JOE D'AMADIO
SPARE TIME

Below is a look at the number of bowling sites on Staten Island in 1958 and 1997 with their respective number of lane beds as researched by one-time Island kiegler Mike Marigliano. Although there were 60 fewer lane beds on Staten Island in 1958 compared to the 208 the six island centers now have, the island's population has nearly tripled since the late 1950s.

1958
Central Bowling Lanes (8)
Clove Lanes (4)
Club Davis (4)
Columbian Bowling Center (12)
Knotty Pines (12)
Liberty Lanes (8)
Lucci's Gramercy Lodge (4)
Madison's Bowling Center (28)
Park Lanes (14)
Puzzlehouse Bowl (8)
Robert's Post Tavern (2)
Sunset Lanes (28)
Templeton Lodge (4)
Victory Recreation (10)
Village Bowling Academy (6)

1997
Bowling on the Green (42)
Coral Lanes (52)
Columbian Lanes (12)
Country Lanes (48)
Showplace Bowling Center (64)
Victory Lanes (10)

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YOUTH SOCCER

Hat trick lifts Eagles over St. Charles Bullets

ADVANCE STAFF REPORT

Danny D'Albera's hat trick lifted the ELS Eagles to a 3-1 victory over the St. Charles Bullets in an S.I. Soccer League under-12 division 1 contest yesterday. Brian Tepler and John Williams split time in net.

Kurt Larsen kicked three goals to lead the Our Lady Star of the Sea Rams to a 4-0 victory over the St. Teresa's Spiders in division 5. Joseph Kettle chipped in with a pull pass.

Tim Hederman's goal propelled the Petrides Panthers to a 1-0 win over the Holy Child Chevrons. Andrew Botelho and Robert Petrucci had two goals apiece as the St. Charles Panthers defeated the Our Lady Queen of Peace Indians 4-0 in division 6.

Louis Acimmino and Peter Patanaga each registered a hat trick in the Holy Trinity Olympians 7-2 division four win over the SLA Tigers.

Richard Zawany's three goals highlighted the St. Joseph Hill Toros' 4-0 division 3 victory over the OLCG Warriors.

Division 1
ELS Eagles 3, St. Charles Bullets 1
Holy Child Chevrons 3, St. Adalbert's Wildcats 0

Division 2
St. Rita's Seabirds 3, OLCG Islanders 0
St. Ignace 2, St. Charles 0

Division 3
St. Joseph Hill Toros 4, OLCG Warriors 0
St. Ignace 2, St. Charles 0

Division 4
St. Ignace 2, St. Charles 0
St. Ignace 2, St. Charles 0

Division 5
Our Lady Star of the Sea 4, St. Teresa's Spiders 0
St. Ignace 2, St. Charles 0

Division 6
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