



# BOWL • • PINION

by Jim Goodwin

The editorial opinions expressed here are offered to provoke thought on important and sometimes controversial or provocative issues.

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## Bowl Expo Still Growing and Going Strong

If someone asked the question "What is the most positive thing that has happened in bowling in the past decade?", what would your answer be? Some might say the merger of ABC and WIBC; others would point to the new ownership and operation of the Professional Bowlers Association.

Those were big stories, but I sincerely believe the best and most positive story about bowling in the past ten years has been the growth and evolution of BPAA's International Bowl Expo. It has become THE event for people involved in the bowling industry worldwide.

Over 5000 people attended the 2006 Bowl Expo in Las Vegas, from all around the world and all walks of the industry. As a comparison, that's more than triple the attendees at the inaugural USBC Convention held in Orlando.

All of USBC's top officials were there, and USBC made big news by announcing their sponsorship of Gary Beck's USBC Women's Challenge. It's not a new women's pro tour, but it does put a few top women bowlers back in the spotlight, at least temporarily.

Beck's Killer 'B' Promotions will stage the made-for-television women's event in perhaps the most unique venue ever chosen for a bowling competition – Las Vegas' Fashion Show Mall on the famous Las Vegas Strip. Lanes will be installed where there is normally a fashion show runway.

The show will feature 16 women – 4 each for the first four weeks with the four winners returning in week five for the championship. Each show, to be aired on ESPN2, will run 90-minutes. Players, both amateurs and pros, will be selected based on their talent, personality, and ability to portray a positive image for the sport. Full makeovers and special high fashion outfits will be a part of the show.

Two pros and one amateur have already been chosen because of their affiliation with USBC - pros Carolyn Dorin-Ballard and Kim Terrell will join amateur Diandra Asbaty for the competition

against 13 others, some from outside the USA. All five shows will be taped during National Bowling Week in August, and aired in October.

The Women's Challenge was only one of the headline stories emerging from Bowl Expo. The other big news item was the official launching of Steve Sanders' Generations Bowling Tour. Independent promoters had a good year.

In the well attended press conference, Sanders launched his new website live in front to the audience of writers and industry VIP's ([www.gbtour.com](http://www.gbtour.com)). He revealed a very ambitious 36-event schedule for 2006-2007, and said the new senior tour could have over \$5 million in prize money if the events have full fields. The absolute guarantee, according to Sanders, is that 31 events will have a minimum of \$25,000 added to the entry fees paid by the players, and five major events will have a minimum of \$35,000 added.

The tour starts September 29 with an eleven-event fall swing. The first event is at Bay Lanes in Bay City, Michigan September 29-October 5. Several top seniors have committed to bowl – among them are legends Mark Roth, Johnny Petraglia, Dave Davis, Bob Chamberlain, Pete Couture and Dave Soutar.

Celebrities were omnipresent throughout Bowl Expo, with more than 20 pro bowling stars and famous people from sports, politics, and entertainment. Most noted was former New York Mayor and 9-11 hero Rudy Giuliani, who may be a viable presidential candidate in 2008.

Giuliani's keynote speech to Bowl Expo attendees was about leadership. He mentioned 9-11 a few times, but chose instead to focus on the present and the future.

He outlined what he believes are the six character strengths needed to become a good leader – 1. strong beliefs 2. optimism 3. courage 4. preparation 5. teamwork and 6. communication. And, he said, "You must love people." Without good people, the greatest goals in the world cannot be realized.

The Tonight Show's famous sidekick Ed McMahon also talked about people in his one-hour show,

put on exclusively for guests of Bowl Expo. McMahan shared inside stories from his 35-year friendship with Johnny Carson, and shared clips from the show.

Football superstar Jerome Bettis was also there to accept the honor of entering Bowling's Hall of Fame in a new celebrity category. Bettis loves football, and he is proud to be a bowler. He recently retired from football after his Steelers team won the Super Bowl, and will begin a new career as a TV analyst this fall.

There is simply not enough space in this publication to fully document Bowl Expo, but very good coverage of the event can be seen in the next issue of *Bowlers Journal*. Pick up a copy to see Jim Dressel and Bob Johnson's extensive coverage.

The BWAA Awards Dinner, sponsored by Columbia, was another great evening at Bowl Expo. It was there that *Bowl Magazine* editor Bob Cosgrove and I had the privilege of presenting the 2006 Sam Levine 'Flowers for the Living' Award to our dear friend, writer and cartoonist Walt Steinsiek (see story page 3).

Other awards presented were the usual BWAA recognitions – the Luby Award went to Dallas Bowling News publisher Joe Gennaro. Al Matzelle won the Rip Van Winkle Award for his work on the Bowling Hall of Fame. The Martino Award was presented to the great Carmen Salvino, and the Remo Pichetti Humanitarian Award was given to California's Connie Marchione, who does a wonderful job writing the Deaf Bowling News column in the *Cal Bowling News*.

A new award was announced and presented by *Bowlers Journal* editor Jim Dressel – it was the Glenn Allison Hero Award, to be given annually to someone in the industry who displays outstanding dignity and integrity. The first one went to Allison himself. He endured the devastation of having his 900 series rolled in 1982 turned down by ABC, and he has maintained a dignified demeanor all these years despite his indescribable disappointment of that action. He has been a 'man of the people', and deserves the title 'Mr. 900'.

Many believe Allison rolled the only legitimate 900 in bowling history.

The highlight of Bowl Expo for me this year happened on the first day. It was the inaugural Southern Bowling Writers 'Just Deserts' Roast of a true bowling legend – Mrs. Jeanie Hulsey.

The evening before the roast, CJ and I had the very special privilege of going to the Celine Dion Show with Jeanie and her daughter Debbie and granddaughter Ashley. It was great, and so was the roast the next evening.

Over 100 people attended the roast, including some of Hulsey's best friends – great people like CC Bearden and Bill Lillard. John Berglund and Joe Schumacker were also there, and we thank them for BPAA's generous support of this very special event.

The emcee was the amazing Chuck Pezzano, and his cast of roasters included Jamie Brooks, John Jowdy, Pat Costello, Johnny Petraglia, and 'The Phantom', Lenny Nicholson. It was an evening filled with laughter and a few tears of nostalgia. And it was only a small down payment on the gratitude this industry owes Jeanie for her work in bowling. For more, see the story on page 9.

I've been lucky enough to have attended dozens of BPAA Conventions and every Bowl Expo since it started in 1996, and they just keep getting bigger and better.

Now, if we can only get the rest of the world to notice this world class event.

And finally – another giant of bowling's rich history passed away this month – Frank Esposito. Frank was a great promoter, an innovator, and a pioneer in the formation of professional bowling. I met him during his time as TV coordinator with the PBA, and we had many wonderful conversations about bowling. He is a true legend of our sport, from whom we learned so much. All of bowling will miss him.