

# Candlepin bowling still scores with many locals

By Matthew Haraden

If you ask someone from another part of the United States about candlepin bowling, there's a good chance they've never heard of it, but in this area it's a staple of local entertainment.

Outside New England, bowling is known as tenpin or "duckpin" bowling, with larger balls and pins that are wider at the bottom. Candlepin bowling is a variation of bowling that uses a smaller ball, and the player gets to use three balls per frame, instead of two. Also, in candlepin, the pins are thinner (similar to candles), and the downed pins (called "wood") are not cleared away between balls on a player's turn. This form of bowling is prominent only in the New England area and Canada.

Many Hull bowlers travel to the South Shore Country Club in Hingham, where the Pumphrey family has been involved in bowling for decades.

Lou Pumphrey Jr., the secretary of the Thursday night men's bowling league at the country club, has been bowling in leagues since he was 5. He competed in the World Candlepin Tournament, which, he explains, cycles between the United States and Canada. There are 12 teams from each country included.

He describes the tournament as "grueling at best," consisting of nine strings (games) a day for five days. The Pro Tour for candlepin bowling takes place in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts, usually in 10 strings.

"It is physically demanding," Pumphrey says of bowling in the tournament. "Stop laughing!"

The lanes at the South Shore Country Club were originally owned by Pumphrey's father, Lou Sr. He started the business in 1954 with his former partner, Joe Fitzgibbons. Originally, it was called Webster Alleys, and it was located on Dudley Street in Roxbury but closed in 1959.

"They were forced to close it after a run in with Whitey Bulger's gang," Pumphrey notes.

The business moved to Hull and opened as the Webster Shore Lanes, which was on the first floor of the old Surf Building (now part of the Nantasket Beach Resort). The building was then sold by the Spence family in the 1980s, when condominium development began in Hull. The developer eventually filed for bankruptcy.

"They gave my father 30 days to vacate the building and tore down the side that contained the bowling alley only," Pumphrey recalls. "My father reopened at the South Shore Country Club



**Right up his alley – Lou Pumphrey, Jr. inherited a love of candlepin bowling from his dad and, decades later, still competes through league play. [Photo use courtesy of Greg Grey]**

using the equipment he had placed in storage in 1988."

In 2015, the business was sold to the town of Hingham, due to Lou Sr.'s health; he is now 92. Originally there were 20 lanes, but the town removed 10 to put in a golfers' locker room.

Pumphrey says candlepin bowling has a wide demographic because the weight of the bowling ball allows young and old to enjoy the sport.

"My dad had great participation in the junior bowling program all his years in Hull," he said. "Each Saturday we had junior bowling leagues at 9, 11:30, 2, and 4:30. We had over 120 kids in each season, bowling in leagues. Many kids remember my dad as 'Lou at the bowling alley' growing up. He had a great reputation in the town and was probably the best babysitter for two hours every Saturday."

Pumphrey currently bowls in a league with 10 teams in it. They usually bowl three strings during the winter season and five strings during the summer season. Each team in the league has a captain, who is in charge of creating his or her team's roster. They then compete on a weekly basis.

Regular league seasons last 13 weeks in the summer and 36 or more weeks in the winter.

"Our league consists of two 15-week halves, with the winner of each competing for the league championship and their name on the coveted league trophy," Pumphrey says. "We conclude each season with a two-week free-for-all tournament, which they truly get downright bloody about!"

Skill levels vary greatly within the league. A

Candlepin Hall of Famer, Don Richmond, participates in the league and continues to bowl on the Pro Tour.

Although bowling remains popular, participation levels peaked in the 1970s. Pumphrey remembers when weekly bowling shows on television, including Don Gillis's "Candlepin Bowling" and Bob Gamere's "Candlepins for Cash," kept the sport alive at that time. Both shows have not been on television for years.

Still, the weekly bowling leagues at the South Shore Country Club continue to draw interest. Of the 40 members and nine spare bowlers, 30 live in Hull, Pumphrey says.

The bowling alley at the South Shore Country Club, 274 South St., Hingham, is open to the public as well as hosting league play. For information, call 781-749-8400 or visit [www.southshorecc.com](http://www.southshorecc.com). **HT**

## Police log

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Atlantic Avenue, services rendered; 8:22 p.m. medical emergency, Nantasket Avenue, transport; 9:04 p.m. 911 call, Samoset Avenue, services rendered.

**Tuesday, February 19:** 4:58 a.m. arrest following motor vehicle stop, Hull Shore Drive; 5:10 a.m. **John M. Farrand**, 55, of Bates Street, is under warrant arrest (default OUI); 12:33 p.m. animal call, Sagamore Terrace, services rendered; 1:40 p.m. medical emergency, Douglas Avenue, transport; 2:30 p.m. motor vehicle complaint, Russell Street, citation issued; 2:37 p.m. animal call, Whitehead Avenue, services rendered; 4:11 p.m. well-being check, Main Street, good intent call; 4:18 p.m. traffic/road hazard, Kingsley Road and Revere Street, services rendered; 4:52 p.m. traffic/road hazard, Nantasket Avenue, services rendered; 6:09 p.m. medical emergency, Western Avenue, lift assist; 6:15 p.m. fire investigation, Nantasket Avenue, services rendered; 7 p.m. arrest following motor vehicle stop, A Street; 7:08 p.m. **Bryan Scott Kinnear**, 33, of Cadish Avenue, is under arrest on charges of operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, unsafe operation of motor vehicle; 7:43 p.m. fraud call, Oceanside Drive, services rendered; 7:50 p.m. disabled motor vehicle, Main Street, log entry only; 9:29 p.m. police investigation, Nantasket Avenue, services rendered; 10:14 p.m. 911 call, Edgewater Road, services rendered. **HT**

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