

Bowled Over!

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The genuine friendships and camaraderie are what keep Paul bowling. For him, that's what it is all about. "I had never bowled before, and I'll be damned if I'm not having a good time!"

When Bob joined the league, he didn't know a soul and said he didn't know his right hand from his left. He was newly out,

in his late 60s and working through a divorce. In January he sent the following letter to Tom, which brings everything full circle—back to coming out, back to why the league was formed. This letter makes it all worthwhile.

DEAR TOM:

I want to congratulate you on 25 years of service to the PCBA...and thank you for

having the foresight to form such a league. Nice going!

About three months ago, I left my marriage of 37 years and entered the gay community. I lost family and friends and almost everything but my sanity. (I am sure many would question that.)

I was alone, scared to death and in search of peace of mind. All I knew is that I was on a journey, uncertain where I would end up and not having the slightest idea how to get there.

I had barely convinced myself, and I knew I needed friends to get through this, someone who just might understand. Mike and Don came to my rescue and introduced me to PCBA, but it was not until you invited me to join that I started to feel a sense of belonging.

It was the best move I ever made. It was like, overnight, I had all kinds of friends, people who actually understood, people who I could actually talk to, people who seemed to care. It was like taking on a new family.

Tom, thanks to you, I now have a whole family of friends. Hopefully someday soon I will find my niche, and I will always have you to thank.

Thanks, Tom, you have a great team!

—Bob

The PORTLAND GAY AND LESBIAN BOWLING ASSOCIATION plays 3:30 p.m. Sundays at Hollywood Lanes, 4030 N.E. Halsey St. Drop-ins welcome. For more information call 503-293-0438 or visit www.pdxbowling.com.

PAT YOUNG is a Portland free-lance writer and gay and lesbian historian.



Kacy Cederquist (left) and Kimberly Churchill drive from Canby every Sunday. "You know, Canby is not the hotbed of cultural diversity," says Kacy.

What Is IGBO?

AIn 1982 the Portland Gay and Lesbian Community Bowling Association joined the International Gay Bowling Organization (IGBO), which has about 14,000 members throughout the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and the Netherlands. Sort of a governing body for gay tournaments, it serves as a link to what's happening in other cities.

"It's supposed to be the largest gay and lesbian sports organization in the world," comments Joe Brown, IGBO's regional director for the Pacific Northwest. "That is what I am told."

When PCBA joined the organization, it had to adopt certain standards so a bowler's average would be recognized for various tournaments. One standard was white bowling pins, so the league had to give up its colored pins.

In 1990 in California, IGBO presented Tom Geil with its highest honor—the fellowship award—given to the person who best represents the organization's values of fellowship, community and communication.

"When I came back to Portland, I made sure that it was real clear that I didn't feel this award [was] for me," he states. "It was for our community—for what we've been able to accomplish here as a group of men and women who naturally feel comfortable with each other."

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