

'Thursday's Girls' just keep rolling along

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOEETTER
Post Staff

DALLAS - The ball races down the alley with gusto, crashing into the pyramid of pins and knocking every last one down. Ruth Evans, 89, smiles widely and quietly takes back her seat as scorekeeper.

Evans is one of 24 women who make up Thursday's Girls, a non-competitive bowling league that meets every week. Like most of the women, she is an unsuspected powerhouse.

The women range in age from 55 to 89. Many are grandmothers and some are widows. They don't show up for the competition, they come for the fun, exercise and camaraderie.

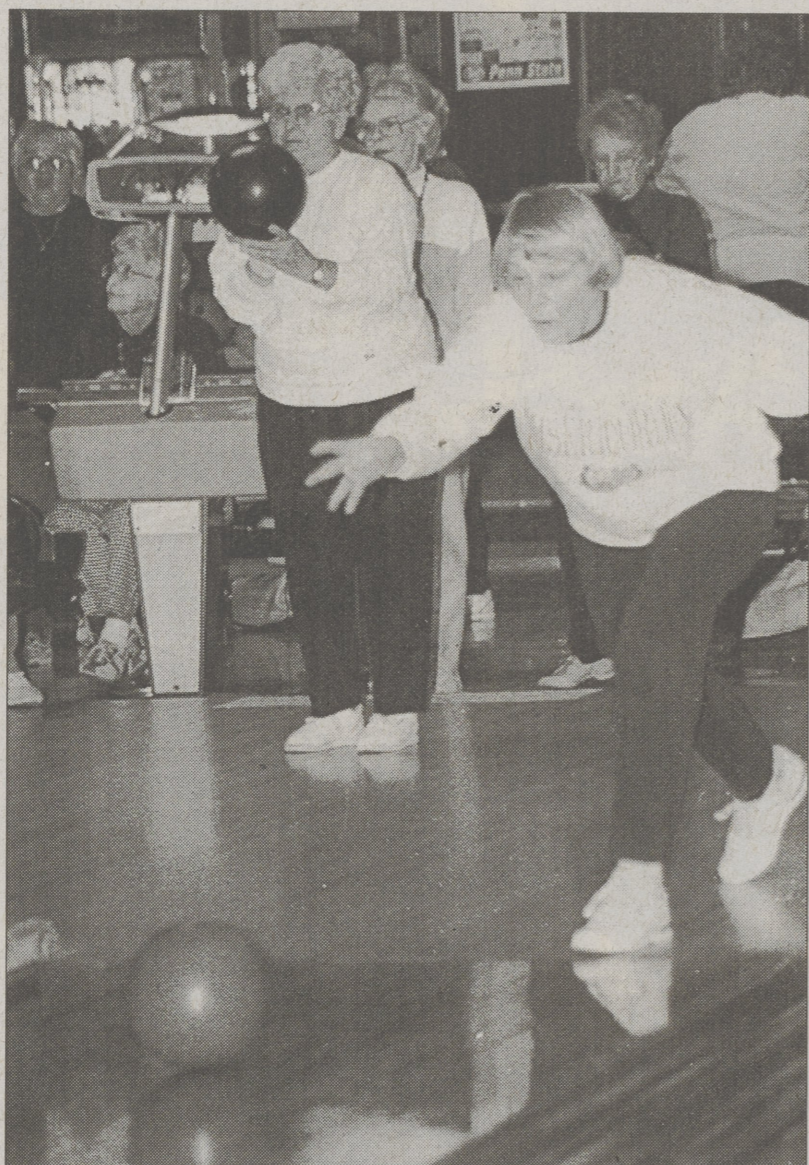
"It's nice to be out with the ladies for the day," said Evans. "It's an afternoon away from the house."

Jeanne Richards, who has been in the league since it started, said she absolutely loves to bowl. "I'll bowl until I'm 100 if I'm alive and kicking," she said after mowing down some pins. "We're not good, but we bowl anyway," she said with a laugh.

The league was started in 1956 by the Senior Women's Club from Irem Temple. The women bowled at Crown Imperial lanes, now Back Mountain Bowl. They moved down to Chacko's Bowling Lanes in Luzerne for a short while, but soon moved back up the mountain.

The women's club eventually disbanded and Thursday's Girls took its place as a non-competitive league.

Before the four teams start their games, the women sit and catch up on the week's events. Small bags of candy are placed between the seats at every lane



POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Amy Hoban let loose with a ball. Tess Polachek waited on the adjacent lane.

for everyone to enjoy.

Bettie Hanna of Dallas has been on the team for 30 years. Although her bowling arm is still sore from a fracture, she shows up weekly and bowls when she can. After her

husband passed away six years ago, Hanna turned to her bowling pals for support.

"If I didn't have these girls, I don't know what. You can always count on them. If you are down in the dumps, they

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Bettie Hanna
30-year member

pick you right back up," she said of her friends. The current members have all been on the league at least 15 years and have shared many things.

"When you live alone, you like the company of girls you have known for so many years."

Doris Meturi of Dallas, who has been on the team 39 years, agrees that each member genuinely cares about the other. "I come for the fellowship and the exercise," she said. "We're all friendly and outgoing and enjoy each other's company. If anyone gets sick, everyone is concerned." The league has lost a few members due to moving or illness.

Each member pays dues each time they play and substitutes are not used if someone cannot make it. The league has a banquet in the spring and a luncheon in the fall. For Christmas they meet for brunch and everyone brings a \$5 gift with no name on it. Each person must bowl a strike before getting one of the presents. "Sometimes the best

bowler is the last one to get the gift," said Hanna.

Although the women are not in competition with each other, some are definitely out to improve their game. Carol Banks of Shavertown recently

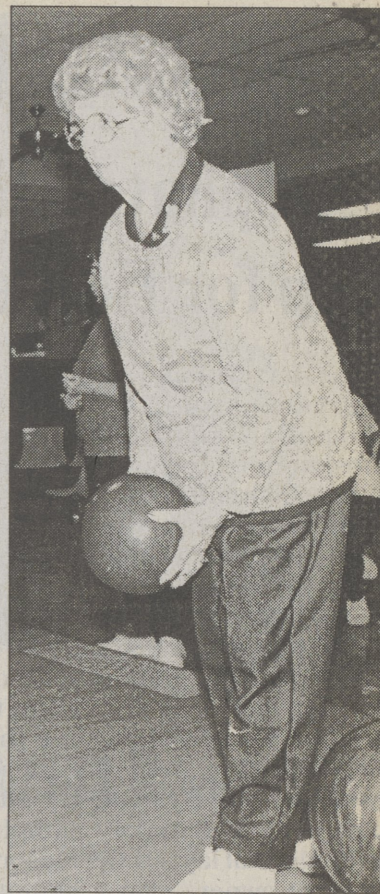
bowled a 263 and currently holds a 157 average. After Banks was interviewed, she joked that she would now throw a gutter ball. Instead, she threw a forceful strike.

Caroline Miller serves as president. Hanna is vice-president, Sally Shaffer is secretary and Connie Brongo is treasurer.



POST PHOTO/KYLIE SHAFFERKOEETTER

Bettie Hanna, Kate Richards and Doris Brobst have been hitting the lanes together for years in the "Thursday's Girls" league.



POST PHOTO/KYLIE SHAFFERKOEETTER

Ruth Evans lined up her approach.

"I'll bowl until I'm 100 if I'm alive and kicking."

Jeanne Richards
In league since 1956



POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Members of the Thursday's Girls league posed on the lanes. From left, front row, Vivian Ondish, Sally Shaver, Betty Lamoreaux, Tess Polachek, Kate Richards, Bettie Hanna, Doris Maturi, Ruth Evans. Back row, Ann Jordan, Marilyn Morris, Amy Hoban, Dorothy Kolankiewicz, Stella Bulford, Sally Maguire, Suzy Thompson, Olga Kostrobala, Mary Reese, Peggy Boyes, Connie Brongo, Carol Banks, Jeanne Richards, Doris Brobst.

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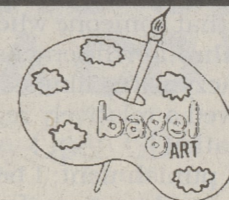
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