

## Chapter Fourteen:

# Happy Hearts Sports and Special Olympics



*1968. Boys of Happy Hearts School display their new uniforms given to them by Reliance Electric Company. Representing Reliance are (far right) Mrs. Sally Davis, publicity chairman; chairman Francis Howe and Mrs. Charlotte Barchanowicz. Athletic director Mrs. Jacolyn Louys and John Buchtinec, assistant coach (far left) prepare to meet the invading West Junior High Reserves.*

The Fair Share Committee of Reliance Electric Co. has donated new uniforms to the boys of Happy Hearts School basketball team. The boys appropriately played their first game of the season in their new gym.

Chairman of the committee was Francis Howe. He was aided by Mrs. Sally Davis, publicity chairman and Mrs. Charlotte Barchanowicz.

Athletic Director Mrs. Jacolyn Louys said the team will play three or four games before entering a state tournament in Springfield March 1.

John Buchtinec, Assistant Coach, aids in teaching the boys, ranging from 16 to 21, the fundamentals of basketball.

The uniforms are blue with gold trim and are accompanied by matching practice jerseys.

## Happy Hearts Organizes Cage Team

November 26, 1968

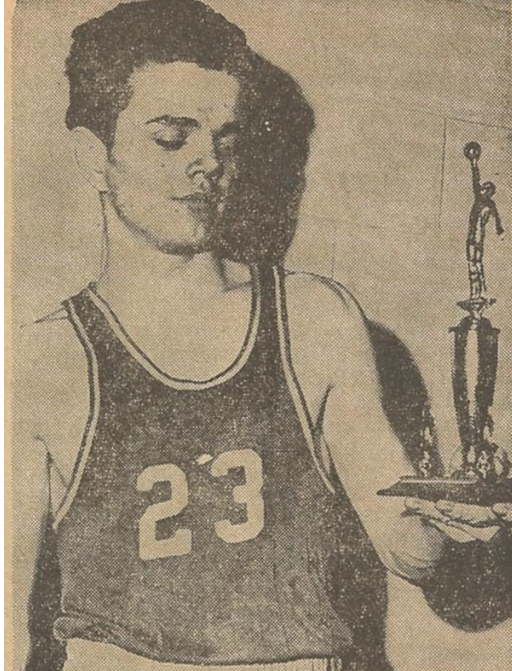


*These Happy Hearts School basketball players were awarded a trophy for participating in the Central Ohio Retarded Persons Basketball League. They are (front) Ronald Whelcehl; Wendell Henricks; Mike Sabados; Richard Bowers; and Danny Brunell. (Back row) Tommy Utter; Paul Conners; Orville Pickett; Larry Phelps; and Coach Mrs. Jacolyn Louys, holding the trophy.*

Happy Hearts School formed a basketball team and by invitation played at the Central Ohio Retarded Persons basketball tournament at Springfield on two February weekends. The boys had only four weeks to prepare for the meet under the supervision of Mrs. Jacolyn Louys, who acted as their coach. Mrs. Louys is an instructor at the school.

According to Wayne Reese school director, this was a totally new experience for the boys and the school itself for taking part in this type of program. Since the trips to Springfield were so

successful, efforts will now be made by Mr. Reese and the school to localize a program in the Northeastern Ohio area. The boys practiced at Edgewood Junior High School.



*Most valuable player of the March 8<sup>th</sup> Third Annual State Invitational Basketball Tournament was Kenneth Tryon from Happy Hearts School in Ashtabula. Ken netted 40 points for his team.*

### **Happy Hearts Nets Awards**

March 19, 1969

The basketball team of the Happy Hearts School captured two trophies in the Third Annual State Invitational Basketball Tournament at Springfield, Ohio.

The event was held March 8. It is sponsored by the Central Ohio Retarded Children's Athletic Association.

The county team received a trophy as runner up and one for the best performance by an individual player. Kenneth Tyron was acknowledged as the most valuable player of the tournament at which he was high point man. Kenneth tallied 40 points for his team.

The trip for the team was financed by the Jaycees.

In addition to their coach, Mrs. Jacolyn Louys, and escorts, the school had six cheerleaders at the tournament to cheer the team on. The cheerleader's way was arranged by the Ashtabula Council for Retarded Children.

Happy Hearts teams have played in the tournament all of the three years the tournament has been held.

## **Sports Activities, 1986**

New Directions, June 1986

Anne Zeitler, Physical Development Instructor, reported on some of the sports and development activities at Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries in the June 1986 issue of New Directions, the community newsletter of the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. She reported that athletes from across Ohio would be converging on Columbus for the State Special Olympic Games from June 27-29<sup>th</sup>, including 34 athletes from Ashtabula County.

Over 100 local Special Olympians participated in local events. After competing in the winter cross country ski competition in Perry, the local competitors fielded a team of six skiers for the Winter State Meet at Boston Hills Ski Resort, bringing home five medals and a sixth-place ribbon. Jerry Kangas won the gold at the winter event, and Marcos Rios, Vicki Hippely, and John Hurley won silver medals. Benji Sullivan captured a bronze in the meet and Missy Feke finished in sixth place.

Bowling took over the spotlight in the spring and 13 local keglers gained berths on the state team by virtue of their local first place finishes. The local tournament took place at Kings Lanes in North Kingsville.

Following the local tourney, the Ashtabula Special Olympics program hosted the Area Bowling Meet for the first time ever. It was held at St. Angelo's Lanes in Ashtabula and hosted over 120 bowlers from four counties.

The track meet on April 26<sup>th</sup> at Edgewood High School field topped the year's activities with an all-day event with over 70 athletes competing.

As in the past, support for the Special Olympic program continues to grow. This year 33 Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries staff members volunteered, along with 39 volunteers from the community.

# Happy Hearts Cheerleaders



*Happy Hearts with blue on blue*

The sun shines down on you,



Happy  
Hearts  
with blue on blue,

Our colors proud and true!

Through the years we grow and grow,

Our pride and love will always show,

Happy hearts with blue on blue,

Our hearts lift up to you!



## Happy Hearts Cheerleaders Smile and Cheer



*Happy Hearts cheerleaders (from left) Mary Almasy, Ricarda Reynolds, and Victoria Hippely are part of a 12-member squad which has helped boost team and audience enthusiasm this season. March 24, 1991. Ashtabula Star Beacon photo by Carl E. Feather.*

Pam Keep, physical education teacher at Happy Hearts School discovered that the mischievous smile of student Ricarda “Nicie” Reynolds had some meaning behind it. Nicie, confined to a wheel chair because of cerebral palsy, has a secret agenda.

Earlier in the semester, Nicie asked Pam who is cheerleading advisor, if she could watch a cheer leading practice session. Her teacher agreed and within a few minutes Pam realized what Nicie had in mind all along. “She started vocalizing and doing all the cheers. She moved her chair in the same direction as the girls,” Pam said.

Boldly Nicie went one step further and asked if she could become a

member of the squad. She left the gym as a Happy Hearts cheerleader. “Nicie did this for herself. It was her own self-confidence, her determination to stand up for herself, that got her on this squad,” Pam said.

Pam said the squad was formed last year to motivate the crowd and boost the morale of the Roadrunners, the boys basketball team. The cheerleaders do two floor cheers and about ten sideline chants. They wear blue and white outfits which are a combination of purchased sweaters and socks with skirts made by teacher assistants Barb Scott and Marian Flickinger.

The students on the squad range in age from 14 to 20. According to Pam, the handicaps of the squad members vary, ranging from slight mental disability to Down's Syndrome and cerebral palsy. She said none of the 12 girls are alike. She said that cheerleading provides many therapeutic benefits, including learning to articulate and practicing voice control through the cheers. Nicie's speech therapist is provided with a copy of the cheers to use with her during therapy sessions.

Nicie's mother Sandra says there have been psychological benefits as well. "I really feel that it has helped her overall on her self-esteem. It's helped her confidence," she said. She said that her daughter is very independent. "In spite of her birth defect she's always been involved, and I've tried to keep her involved in extracurricular activities."

Pam Keep said that the members of this year's squad had to go through a mock tryout, but everyone ended up being on the team. She said the squad has become very popular and she expects a flood of applicants next year. "I have already told the girls there will be official tryouts next year," she said.

## 1992 Sports Awards

Principal Mary Ellen Higley along with Pam Keep, Barb Scott and Liisa Nurkka presented Sports Achievement Awards at a 1992 Awards Assembly.

Bowling Award winners in the Intermediate Department were Trevor Lundgren earning the highest individual ramp game and highest average score ramp bowler, Ken Farley for the highest individual game and highest average score; and Mike Taylor for the most improved intermediate bowler.

In the Advanced Department Joel Eaton won an awarded for the highest individual ramp game; Randy Fails won highest average score ramp bowler; Bob Stewart and Jeff Schultz achieved the highest average scores and Jeff Schultz scored the highest individual game. Keith Henton was the most improved advanced bowler.

Swimming Recognition Award winners were:

Dylan Wludyga

Christina Mongell

Kenny Miller

Kevin Ecklund

Jeremy Weber

Charlie Smith

Andy Fields

Casey Vaughan

Junior Varsity Basketball Award winners:

Michael Barricklow

William Griswold

Ron Turner

Vicky Hippely

Rob DeCaro

Will Dudas

Kathy Fisher

Robert Shinaberry

Nick Marsh

Rik Kananen

**Individual Junior Varsity Basketball Awards**

**Most Improved J.V. Player – Ron Turner**

**Most Total Points Scored by a J.V. Player – Michael Barricklow**

**Most Valuable J.V. Player – Michael Barricklow**

**Varsity Basketball Awards**

**Benjamin Sullivan**

**Bob Stewart (Senior)**

**Mike Emory**

**Luis Perez**

**Keith Henton**

**Ken Farley**

**Frank Johnson**

**Tony Butler**

**Dan Hunt**

**Individual Varsity Basketball Awards**

**Most improved Varsity Player – Frank Johnson**

**Most Total Points Scored by a Varsity Player – Luis Perez**

**Most Valuable Varsity Player – Ken Farley**

**1992-1993 Athlete of the Year Award- Robert Stewart**

**Special thanks to Brent Woerner whose professional contributions to the swimming program greatly enhanced the student's skill levels.**

**Special thanks to all staff. Your personal contributions and professional attitude towards our student athletes is what made this school year a great success.**



Cheerleading Awards

Christina Pearson (Senior)

Mindy Martinez (Senior)

Angela Milbrandt (Senior)

Jennifer Richardson (Senior)

Rosemarie Perry

Becky Fortier

Jennifer Aldrich

Beth Harley

Kathy Fisher

Amy Maddox

Jane Good

Mary Almasy

Robin Rich

Nicie Reynolds

Jane Thomas

Carrie Stowe – Captain's Award

## **Robert Stewart Answers “Present” for 18 Years Straight**

May 27, 1993

Robert “Bob” Stewart, a 1993 graduate of Happy Hearts School, earned an unbroken attendance record by not missing a day of school in 18 years.

Mae Stewart, his mother says that when school was cancelled because of snow Bob would wait outside for the bus anyway.

Bob loved sports and had ribbons to prove it. He won 60 plus awards in the Special Olympics. He started in Special Olympics in 1983, as a member of the local ski team. Since then, he added power lifting, basketball, track and field, bowling and softball to his repertoire. Bob was on Ohio’s Special Olympics team which traveled to the International games in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1991, and on the ski team for the National Games in 1992 at Steamboat, Colorado.

Although he weighs only 128 ½ pounds, he can lift 255 and bench press 140. His bowling scores are equally impressive. He has bowled 205 and 202 games.

## **Find a Skate and Roll It Round, Round, Round**

August 26, 1995

Jeff Schultz likes “Round and Round” by Perry Como, because the song describes wheels. He admires wheels because he is a skater and a good one. Accepting a personal invitation, he will travel to Brookpark Skateland Sunday to participate in a Level 2 free-style skating exhibition. His program will be a patriotic number to “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.”

The only special Olympics artistic skater in Ohio, Jeff has been skating for six years. His grandmother, Lila Abel, remembered how Jeff got started roller skating. She said that back in 1987, he went roller skating on a field trip. At first, he crawled around the walls, but quickly grew to love it. He has autistic tendencies and is kind of introverted, but he really likes having four wheels on each foot, she said.

In 1991, Jeff competed in the World Games in Minneapolis as an artistic skater, winning a gold medal in figures and a silver in free style. “You go by lottery,” Lila explained. “You could get upset about the fact Jeff isn’t going this year, but this is a fair way of doing it.”

In his six years of skating, Jeff has won many honors, gold medals and trophies. He has progressed through the regular levels of skating in dance, free style and figures and is now at level 2 and 3 of all events. That class is for all skaters, not just Special Olympians. He calls his roller skates “heavy metal” because they weigh so much.

Jeff and his grandparents must travel to Boardman three times a week to receive lessons from his coach, Jack Muransky at Skate Connection in that city, but Jeff and the Abels don’t mind. John Abel, his grandfather, a former teacher and coach at Harbor and Lila, his grandmother worked as program director at the Y for 20 years are now retired.

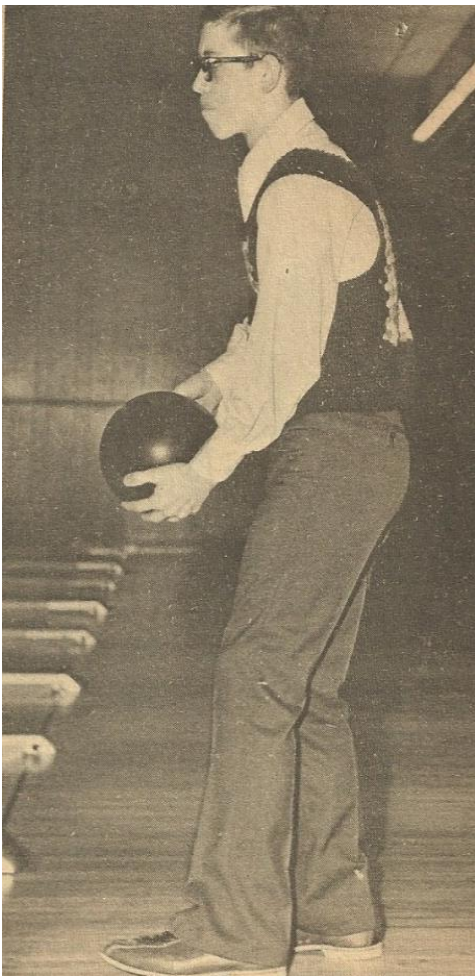
A Special Olympian since he was eleven, Jeff began with cross country skiing. He has won gold medals each year in the State Winter Games in the 500-meter and one-kilometer events. In

addition, Jeff bowls in the handicap league, averaging over 140. He also participates in track, competing in the 100-and 200-meter dashes events in which he two gold medals in regional meets in East Liverpool and Austintown.

Having graduated from Happy Hearts School last spring, Jeff is now seeking a job. When he applied for work at the soon to be opened Walmart store, he was pleased to discover that he won't start until November if he gets the job. This way, he'll still be able to pitch for the Special Olympics softball team, which will compete in the state softball tournament in Troy in September.

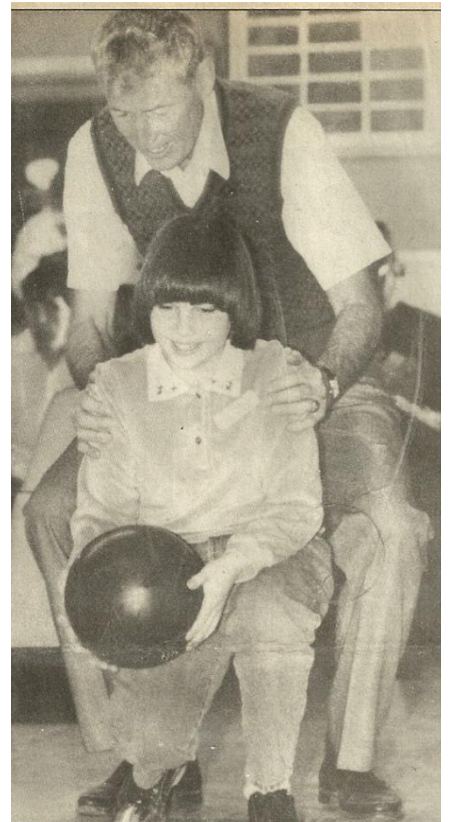
A confirmed Browns and Indians fan, Jeff says "I like both of them. Cleveland all the way." Informed that both were playing Friday and he might have to decide which to watch, he said, "I'll hook up two television sets, one with the Browns on and one with the Indians on."

## Happy Hearts Bowling



*Robert Hunter, a handicapped student at the Happy Hearts School, shows what he's learned in bowling class in the past year just before the start of the Kingsville Area Lions Club Bowling Tournament. The bowling class, sponsored by the Lion's Club and Kings Lanes, has given instructions to 50 Happy Hearts students. Robert Hunter rolled a strike.*

*On a roll. March 28, 1988. There were plenty of competitors at the local Special Olympics Bowling Competition at Kings Lanes in North Kingsville. Amy Maddox, with a little help from local Special Olympics coordinator Dick Flower, rolls her bowling ball down the lane trying to get a strike. Amy is a student at Thomas Jefferson Elementary and the daughter of Cindy and John Maddox of Ashtabula. Ashtabula Star Beacon phot by Jim Matthews.*

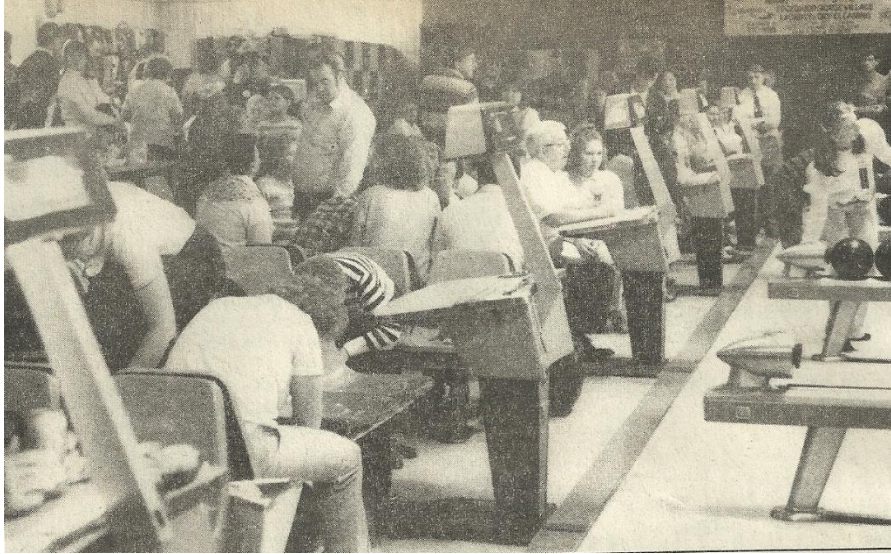




Nancy Banner, a physical development instructor at Happy Hearts School and special Olympics coordinators gives Matt Theiss some instruction during a Kings' Lanes bowling session. Photo by Chuck Reinhart.

Beth Fogle bowls for a strike.

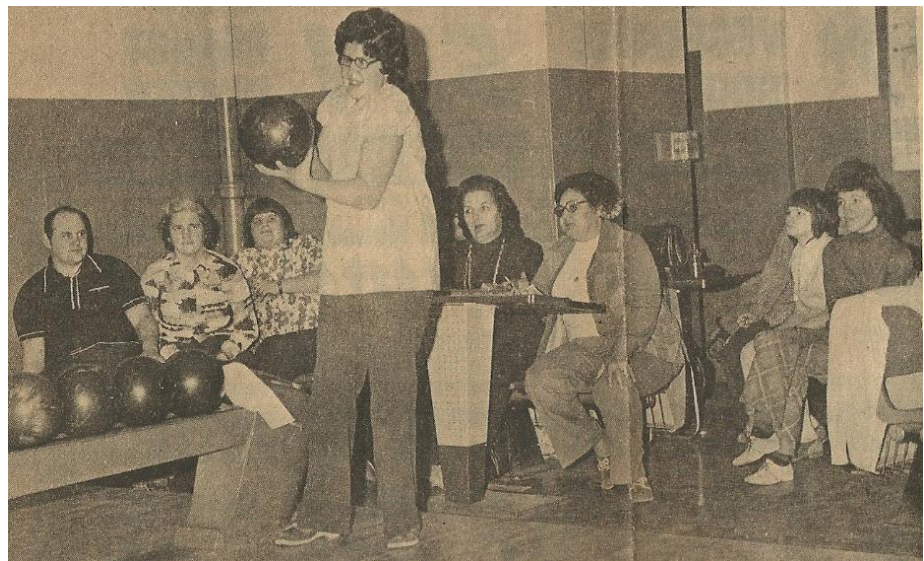




*April 24, 1988. Students from Happy Hearts School enjoyed a day of bowling April 10 at Lake Shore Lanes. The annual bowling party is sponsored by the North End Club. While they bowled, the group was also treated to pizza, donated by Pizza Villa.*

## **Happy Hearts Bowlers Learn Many Skills Besides Bowling**

*Watching team member Teri Church take her turn to bowl are members of her team. They belong to Happy Hearts Bowling team in Conneaut. Three mothers, two of which bowl with the youngsters, are sponsors for the team. A banquet is held and trophies awarded each year after tournaments.*



When local students from Happy Hearts School gather every Saturday at Conneaut Recreation Center Bowling Lanes, they learn more than just how to bowl.

They share friendships, team support, learn more skills and improve coordination, experience winning and losing, confidence and joy for fellow bowlers, competition, and a desire to strive for improvement.

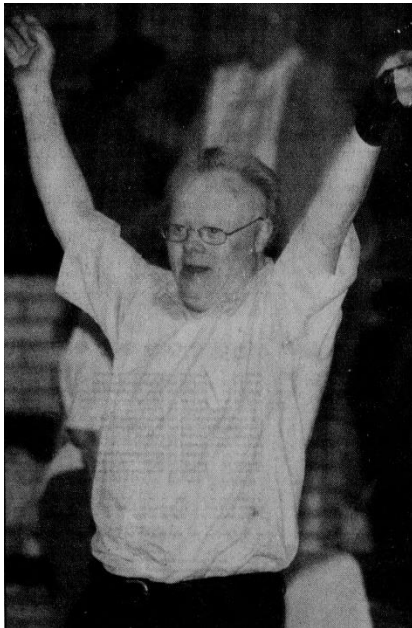
Mrs. Duane Dickson started the team in the summer of 1974 to give the children an extracurricular activity. At first students from Ashtabula area and Conneaut bowled on the same

team at the REC, but now Ashtabula area students have their own team at a nearby bowling alley.

The Conneaut team has eight members, male and female, and three parent chaperones, two of which bowl on the team. They include Mrs. Dickson, Mrs. John Kehoe and Mrs. Dottie Baumgardner.

The team membership is open to all students of all ages attending Happy Hearts School. They bowl three games each Saturday beginning at 12:20 p.m. and then compete in tournaments each January. They also hope to have spring tournaments. The season ends with a banquet where trophies are awarded. This year a banquet is being planned with the Ashtabula team.

### **Ash/Craft Clients Enjoy a Bowling Outing**



*Mike Spore of Geneva rejoices Sunday after making a good shot during a day of bowling for Ash/Craft employees at St. Angelo's Lanes in Saybrook Township.*

April 28, 2000

by Warren Dillaway

High fives and leaps of joy ran rampant Sunday afternoon as developmentally disabled athletes enjoyed a day of bowling at St. Angelo Lanes.

“They look so forward to this,” said Ken Robbins, who runs a company that provides services for Ash/Craft Industries clients who live independently. “As soon as spring hits, they start asking when the event will be held.”

“This is a yearly thing,” said Bruce Campbell, president of the North End Club that has sponsored the bowling event for 20 years. “Eighty-seven disabled athletics bowled two games and received trophies and meals,” he said.

Bowling styles were varied, from a two-hand drop shot to a more traditional approach, but the pure joy of bowling was evident on the participant’s faces.

Bowling ramps were available for wheelchair-bound competitors. Bruce Campbell said one participant kicked the ball off the ramp and bowled a 158, insisting on not having anyone help him.

Bruce Campbell said the North End Club, a private social club, has been supporting local charities since 1934. “We take everything we make and give it back to the community,” he said.

He went on to say that the Young Men's Social Club; The East End Club; Pizza Villa; Nicky's Place; Topps and several other businesses helped make the event a success. He said that St. Angelo's Lanes also provided access to the bowling alley at a reduced cost.

## **Kings Lane Proprietor Dorothy May Dies**



Dorothy C. May, 77, bowling best Friend of Happy Hearts School, Ash/Craft, and community bowlers died on February 28, 2003.

The principal owner and operator of Kings Lanes in North Kingsville, she chose bowling as her favorite sport and practiced it to perfection. She set many records in Ashtabula County, including 16 time all events champion, nine-time singles champion and five-time doubles champion for the Women's Bowling Association Tournament. She has been enshrined in the National Bowling Hall of Fame in St. Louis, Missouri.

## **Remembering Dotty May**

December 8, 2003

Theresa Spang, a competitor in the Ash/Craft Bowling League, holds a portrait of Dotty May, a founder of the league, and owner of Kings Lanes who died earlier this year. Theresa and her mother Wilma, (right) presented the picture to new owners (from left) Donna, Bill, and Lisa Scoville. Ashtabula Star Beacon photo by Warren Dillaway.



## **Karl Pearson's Bowling Beat**

Karl Pearson summarized the bowling scene of May 10, 2006 and Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft bowlers were in the center of the action.

### **Busy Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft Bowlers**

Bowling with Deputies Tournament at Kings Lanes

May 10, 2006

Bowling with Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft people at Kings Lanes in North Kingsville has become an important rite of spring for deputies from the Ashtabula County Fraternal Order of Police No. 106. Each year in late April or early May the deputies and the Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft bowlers participate in their Bowling with Deputies Tournament.

Besides providing their bowling facilities, Kings Lanes proprietor Bill and Donna Scoville supply lunch and drinks for the bowlers. Giant Eagle also donated cakes for the tournament.

High score bowlers received first, second, and third place trophies, but none of the bowlers left the lanes empty handed. They all received an Olympic-style medal from Rob Rich, proprietor of Play All Awards and Engraving of Ashtabula.

Carol Tryon, first place and first tie winner, bowled the high single game with a 175 and she also bowled a 156 game. Her 486 series score proved to be the highest of the tournament.

Bobby Stewart, another first-time winner, finished second in the final standings and tied for the second-highest game turned in with a 158. Third-place finisher Jim Flower, a frequent participant in the tournament, also tied for the second-highest game with Bobby Stewart and William Griswold.

Other bowlers receiving special awards included Linda Bennett, Claude Gaumer, Beth Harley, Tammy Hayes, Steve Hinkle, Danny Mast, Chris McGuire, Larry Moroski, Jerry Russell, Jeff Schultz, Tammy Shaw and Mike Spore.

The event is funded in part by sale of 50-50 raffle tickets during the lodge's annual Golden Oldies Show. Many off-duty deputies come to the tournament dressed in their uniforms and also bowl along with the Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft participants.

"Kings Lanes has agreed to once again hold next year's tournament in their facility," FOP Lodge president Brian Hubbard said. "We're thankful to Donna and Bill for their cooperation in the past. We looking forward to being there again."

"We also thankful to Rob Rich for his assistance with the medals and trophies," FOP lodge secretary-treasurer Julie Petro said. "We're also thankful to Giant Eagle, especially the bakery staff there. Finally, we want to thank all the citizens who purchased 50-50 raffle tickets."



"The bowling tournament this year was a great success. We are looking forward to returning to Kings Lanes and making it even bigger and better than it has been before."

### Annual Kings Lanes Handicap Tournament

Another event that has become a tradition at Kings Lanes is the annual Kingsville Area Handicap Tournament. Started by late Kings Lanes proprietor Dotty May, thousands of bowlers from northeastern Ohio and northwestern Pennsylvania have participated in the tournament during its 35-year run.

There is still time to get involved in this year's tournament. Competition continues through June 4. Events are held for five-person teams, doubles and singles handicap. The tournament is based on 80 percent handicap. A \$1,000 prize is offered to any member of a winning team based on 200 teams entering, while the runner-up team or individual earns \$500. Entry fee is \$26 per person per event. All entrants must be United States Bowling Congress sanctioned bowlers.

Those bowlers wishing consideration for the all-events title are charged an additional \$4 fee and their standing is based on their scratch score. Entry forms are available at all area bowling centers. Entry fees should be made out to Kings Lanes and mailed to P.O. Box 247, North Kingsville 44068. Entries can also be made by calling Kings Lanes at 224-2148.

### Summer action

Even though virtually every bowling center scales back considerably during the summer, at least three area houses are hosting at least one league. A Friday night mixed league for the summer will be held at Lake Shore Lanes. League winners will receive new bowling balls.

A banquet will be held at the end of the season.

Sonny Lanes will be holding a summer league on Wednesday nights from June 7-Aug. 9. A fun night will also be held Aug. 16.

A Summer Sizzler League for senior bowlers is being organized at St. Angelo's Lanes. Bowling will take place each Tuesday at 10:30 a.m.

# Happy Hearts and the Special Olympics

The special Olympics motto: “Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.”



## Two from Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft Workshop Compete in Chicago

A Happy Hearts School student Julie Morse, 15, and Richard Miller, 22, of the Ash/Craft Workshop, are participating in the Special International Olympics in Chicago today and Saturday. Almost 4,000 people, including the athletes, coaches, and chaperones will attend the meet at Soldiers Field.

Julie will run in the 50-yard dash and is entered in the softball throw. Richard will compete in the 50-yard dash and the 300-yard run. Both were chosen after competing in the Ohio Special Olympics held in the Cleveland Stadium on June 19 and 20.

Julie is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Morse, Rome, and Richard is the son of George Miller of Sheffield. They are accompanied by Robert McCartney, physical education teacher at the school and Mrs. Vincent (Dorothy) Bishop, supervisor.



The purpose of the Special Olympics is to provide athletic competition for the mentally retarded and to stimulate development of recreation programs for the retarded across the U.S. and Canada. The Olympic are sponsored by the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation.

Mrs. Bishop said the value of exercise and games for the retarded cannot be over emphasized.

## Two from Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft Workshop Win in Chicago

August 17, 1970

Three fourth place ribbons were won in Chicago by two Ashtabula County competitors Friday and Saturday at the Special International Olympics.

Julie Morse, 15, of Happy Hearts School won a fourth-place ribbon in the 50-yard dash and Richard Miller, 22, of the Ash/Craft Workshop took fourth in the 50-yard dash and 300-yard run.

According to Mrs. Vincent Dorothy Bishop one of the two chaperones, there were over 2,500 competitors from all of the 50 states, Canada, and France.

There were many celebrities at the event, Mrs. Bishop said. Both county representatives shook hands with former astronaut John Glenn. Julie had her picture taken with Mrs. Eunice Shriver and Mr. Glenn, Mrs. Bishop said.

Robert McCartney, physical education instructor at Happy Hearts, said, "The treatment we receive was the best that could be offered. The Chicago Jaycees did a wonderful job of running the Olympics."

Julie is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Morse, Rome Township. Richard is the son of George Miller of Sheffield.

The two county representatives were chosen following competition in the Ohio Special Olympics held at Cleveland Stadium in June.



### Special Olympics Coming

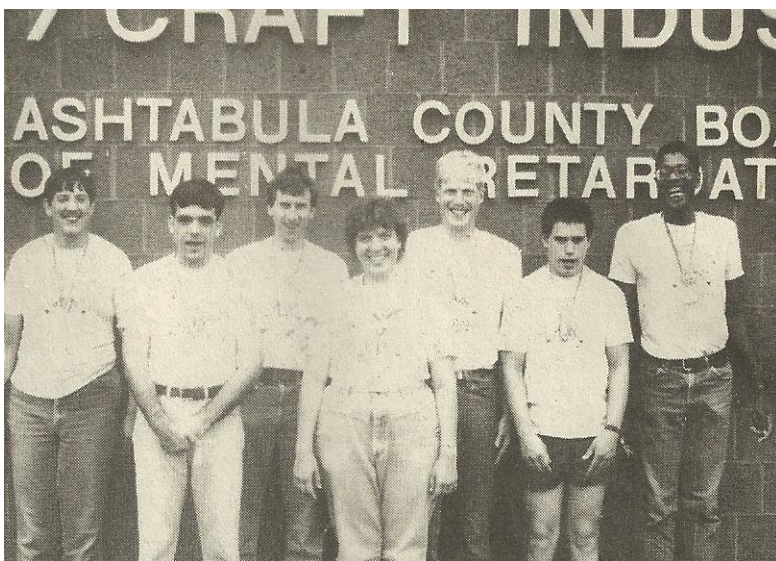
*April 24, 1984. Several Ashtabula County Masonic groups will sponsor 12 participants in the Special Olympics this summer. The Rising Sun Lodge 22; Harbor Lodge 558; Western Reserve Chapter; and Columbian Commandry 52 each are contributing in cooperation with the statewide Masonic organizations which have sponsored Special Olympics participants for five years. Members of the organizations include (standing left to right) Martin Hakala; Robert Robertson; and William Mullen. Getting ready to participate are (kneeling left to right) Claude Gaumer and Jeff Spencer, both employees at Ash/Craft Industries. Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft will send 50 participants to the games in June. Photo Ashtabula Star Beacon.*

## Bob Stewart, Jr. Wins 50-Meter Dash



*May 13, 1985. Easy Winner. Bob Stewart, Jr., representing Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft at the Special Olympics Saturday at Memorial Field in Geneva crosses the finish line first in the men's 50-meter dash. The Special Olympics, sponsored by the Geneva Jaycees, had 125 participants from four counties, including 40 from Ashtabula County.*

## 1988 Special Olympics



*Ash/Craft's double gold medal winners at the 1988 Special Olympics are (left to right) Jim Flower of Ashtabula; Dan LaManna of Geneva; Pat Nappi of Ashtabula; Mary Licate of Ashtabula; Jeff Spencer of Kingsville; Ralph Hammond of Conneaut; and Tony Turner of Geneva.*

July 24, 1988

Photo and story by Scott Fagerstrom, contributing editor

A group of 43 Ashtabula County contestants, including 10 from Conneaut, turned in a special effort during the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Ohio Special Olympics Summer Games in Columbus recently.

The Ash/Craft based Ashtabula County Special Olympics team collected 65 medals (31 Gold, 22 Silver and 12 Bronze) under the guidance of coach and chaperone Dave Lovejoy. Dave and about 15 other chaperones shared the glory in what has become a yearly highlight for all those involved.

“That is the best we’ve done since 1982 when I got here,” Dave said. “And it’s one of the best ever.”

“We did just great. Over 75 percent (38) of our athletes won medals and I think that would be great for anybody especially when you’re competing with 88 counties.”

There were about 3,200 athletes from around the state competing at the Ohio Stadium and St. John Arena on the campus of Ohio State University, and Dave Lovejoy said it is an experience the athletes will not soon forget and are already looking forward to going again next year.

Ash/Craft had seven athletes grab two gold medals in their respective competitive divisions.

Conneaut’s Ralph Hammond, 17, won his division in both the 200-meter run and softball throw; Ashtabula’s Jim Flower, 22, was victorious in the 50-meter dash and soft ball throw; Ashtabula’s Pat Nappi, 31, captured the 100-meter dash and the softball throw; Geneva’s Dan LaManna, 30, won the 50-meter dash and softball throw; Ashtabula’s Mary Licate, 30, took top honors in the 50-meter dash and softball throw; Kingsville’s Jeff Spencer, 26, won the 200-meter and 800-meter runs; and Geneva’s Tony Turner, 31, won the 50-meter dash and the long jump.

There are five age groups each for men and women beginning with 8-11 year- olds; 12-15; 16-21; 22-29; and 30 and over with athletes also grouped into performance divisions, Dave Lovejoy said.

Other Conneaut medal winners include: Terri Church, 26, first in softball throw, second in standing long jump; Ed Cook, 32, second in the 50-meter dash and the softball throw; Robbie DeCaro, 9, first in Frisbee throw and second in bowling; Diane Dickson, 39, second in the standing long jump and the softball throw; Tammy Hayes, 27, first in bowling and second in the Frisbee throw; Mary Kehoe, 37, second in the standing long jump and third in the softball throw; Walter Kightlinger, 18, first in Frisbee throw; Jeanne Litchfield, 50, second in the standing long jump; and Linda Strong, 48, first in Frisbee throw and second in bowling.

The Summer Games included nine sports, movies, recreational clinics, and the colorful Opening Ceremonies.

Ohio State football star and two-time Heisman Trophy winner Archie Griffin led the Ash/Craft Olympians into the stadium for the traditional lighting of the Olympic Flame.





*Special Olympics. August 4, 1991. Ohio Special Olympics Roller Skating Team members posed with baseball great Harmon Killebrew during the 1991 International Special Olympics Games in Minneapolis. Harmon Killebrew (back row), a Minnesota Twins legend and a member of Baseball's Hall of*

*Fame. Pictured are (front) Amy Turner of Pierpont; Joanna Lawson of Cincinnati (back); Carmen Cronley of Kenton, coach; Murray Gallagher of Cleveland; Jeffrey Schultz of Ashtabula; and Sherry Goodson of Cincinnati, coach.*

## **Special Olympians Prepare for Winter Game Ski Races**

January 16, 1992

by Nancy Erikson

North Kingsville. The snowy weather that has been late in arriving in Ashtabula County came in time this week for the Ashtabula County Winter Special Olympics.

Ski races were held Wednesday afternoon on the field between Ash/Craft and Happy Hearts School on Green Road. The 21 skiers from both Ash/Craft and Happy Hearts will compete Saturday at the Perry YMCA from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Those who place at Saturday's meet will go on to compete at the state event at the end of the month at Cuyahoga Valley.

Ski coach Molly McCarthy said the team has been practicing since Nov. 4 and when the snow was lacking, they would exercise in the gymnasium.

"We have a great time," McCarthy said. "They're very excited about going Saturday."

The team raced across the field against some of the staff at Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft with the encouragement of Special Olympics head coach Dave Lovejoy and assistant ski coach Jodie Fowler.

The first winter games in Ashtabula County were in 1988 and are played every year weather permitting. A summer Olympics is also held.

For this year's game, the El Kadir Grotto donated \$360 worth of gloves and mittens for the skiers and Sports n' Sports in Ashtabula took 35 percent off the price for the mittens and gloves.



After the races were completed Wednesday afternoon, skiers, coaches and spectators were treated to hot chocolate while the winners received first, second, and third place ribbons.

The first place winners of this year's games included: Vickey Hippely, Rob DeCaro, Jeff Shultz, Scott Mather, Nick Marsh, Tammy Shaw, Melissa Feke, and David Baker.

### **Ash/Craft and Happy Hearts School Special Olympics Ski Team Members Sliding to Steamboat Springs**

February 29, 1992- These Ashtabula County Special Olympics Ski Team members are among eight Ohio athletes who will travel to Steamboat Springs, Colorado for the National Nordic Skiing Championships for Special Olympics April 5-10. They are Lela Holcomb of Ash/Craft and Vicky Hippely of Happy Hearts; Michael Emory and Bob Stewart of Happy Hearts School. Scott Mather is also going.

### **Special Olympics Ski Team Earns Medals**

April 11, 1992

Jefferson. The Special Olympic Nordic Ski team for the Ashtabula County Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Board with Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft has earned various medals and awards from the national competition.

Ashtabula County Nordic Ski Coach Molly McCarthy said Team Ohio, which has five members out of eight from Ashtabula County, has accumulated seven gold, five silver, one bronze medals and one sixth place at the national competition in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

### **Ashtabula County Special Olympics Coordinator Jill Jenner, Describes Special Olympics**

March 4, 1993

Letter to Editor, Ashtabula Star Beacon

On January 28-30, members of the Ashtabula County Special Olympics Ski Team traveled to Brandywine Ski Resort to compete in the Ohio State Special Olympics Winter Games.

On behalf of the athletes, coaches, parents and fellow supporters of Ashtabula Special Olympics we would like to thank your newspaper for the excellent local coverage at the events.

For those unfamiliar with Special Olympics, ours is a year-round sports training and competition program for athletes with mental retardation. Our athletes train locally with volunteer coaches who prepare the athlete in his given sport for area competition. Area competition involves competing against other programs such as ours. Ashtabula County athletes compete against Mahoning, Columbiana, and Trumbull counties. Those placing first, second or third at area competitions are entitled to compete at State Competitions in Columbus in June; or, as with skiing State Winter Games, usually held in Cuyahoga Valley, in January. Athletes from all over the state compete at Winter/Summer Games.

Ashtabula County has 214 athletes on its roster. These athletes compete in basketball, powerlifting, aquatics, cross country skiing, softball, roller skating, track and field and bowling. We hope to offer bocci, volleyball and cycling as coaches become available.

Because Ashtabula County Special Olympics is a non-profit organization, we must rely on the generosity of others in our fundraising efforts. Fundraising takes place all year long. These will be published in area papers so please look for them and their locations. Monies collected from fundraising are used to purchase equipment, transport and house athletes and pay entry fees at area and state competitions. If any entry fee is charged, Special Olympic rules dictate that an athlete may not be charged to compete in an event, so the fees must be paid by the club.

Fundraising also takes place at the state level throughout the year, throughout the state of Ohio, through magazine subscription sales, coupon redemption and donations. This money is also important because it enables the State Special Olympics which sponsors events for 88 counties to run the whole Olympic program. We do not directly receive any money from this source to run our local program. Through the generosity of the Masonic Lodges, our athletes can attend Summer Games at relatively no cost to our club.

Jill Jenner, Ashtabula County Special Olympics coordinator.

“We will continue to represent Ashtabula County in the proudest way we know how.”

## **Area Skaters Excel in Meet at Boardman**

April 22, 1993

Four Ashtabula County Special Olympic roller skaters excelled in an invitational meet at Skate Connection in Boardman.

Randy Hershey finished first in the 300-meter race and third in the 100-meter race.

Rose Mauro finished in a 100-meter race and placed second in a 300-meter race.

Amy Turner finished first in a 300-meter race and was third in a 1,000 meter race.

Mauro and Turner also teamed up for a second place in the 200-meter relay in a time of 56.4.

Jeff Schultz participated in a school figures exhibition and Figure 1B Serpentine Change 8. He also skated a solo dance to the “Progressive Tango” and a freestyle routine to “Beauty and the Beast.” He received a participation ribbon and a Special Olympics pin for his effort.

The Ashtabula County skaters are coached by Bill and Jill Jenner of Ashtabula and Jack Muransky of the Skate Connection staff.

## **Special Olympics, Fall 2000**

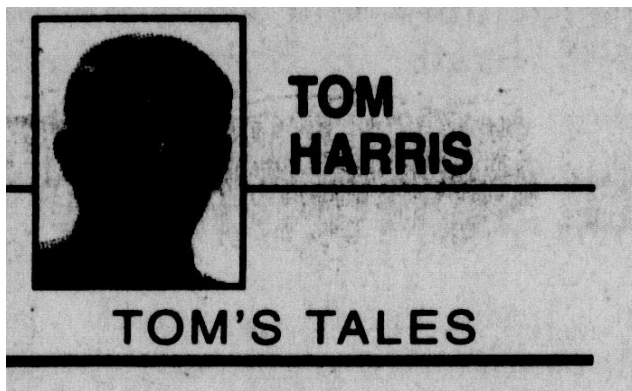
Jill Jenner, Local Special Olympics Coordinator, congratulated all the athletes competing in the 2000 Summer Games held at Ohio State University in Columbus in June 2000. Competitions

were held in aquatics, track & field, bowling, and roller skating. Many gold, silver, and bronze medals were taken

The State Softball Tournament took place in Troy, Ohio on September 8-10th. Ashtabula County Special Olympics placed third in the competition.

Basketball try-outs began November 2<sup>nd</sup>, and cross-country ski practices are scheduled to begin November 28<sup>th</sup>.

## **Jeff Schultz Skis Off to Alaska, 2001**



### **February, 2001**

Off to Alaska

Special Olympics Athlete Ready for Ski Competition

by Tom Harris, Staff Writer, Ashtabula Star Beacon

Jeff Schultz's skis will carry him to Alaska this spring for the 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games, where he will represent the United States in Nordic Skiing.

Schultz speaks slowly, clearly and distinctly in a rich, baritone voice.

"I'm thrilled," he said. I'm very thrilled. I'm looking forward to meeting new people and making new acquaintances."

More than 2,750 athletes and coaches from over 80 countries will participate in the seventh World Winter Games, the largest international sporting event ever staged in Alaska, and the first large scale event to be held in the state in the new millennium.

The competition will take place March 4-11 in major venues in Anchorage, Eagle River, and Girdwood.

Schultz will compete in the 3-kilometer, 1-kilometer and 500-meter events and as a member of the 400-meter relay team. The 3K is a new event for Schultz, but his times in the 1K and 500 meters are the best in Ohio.

He is coached by his grandfather, John Abel, and Dick Flower. Schultz is also getting help from Brent Bunnell, an experienced Nordic skier, who will be skiing with Schultz once a week while the snow lasts.

“He does everything you ask him to do” Flower said. “He’s very coachable, just as all our skiers are.”

“I just do what the coaches tell me to do,” Schultz said.

“But work comes first.” Schultz has worked at the Ashtabula Township Walmart since the store opened.

“Right now, I’m concentrating on improving my skills and coming in in first place,” he said. “I need to remember to kick and glide, take diagonal strides and to ski with a lot of power. I’m going to go for the gold But I won’t be a sore loser.”

In addition to the two one-hour ski practices Schultz has each week, he has a number of workout videos at home, including 8 Minute Abs, 8 Minute Buns and Torso Tuner.

“I’ve got to be in shape,” he said. “I’ve got to be fit.”

It will be Schultz’s second trip to the World Games. In 1991, he and three other Ashtabula County athletes competed in at the Summer Games in Minneapolis with Schultz bringing home a gold and silver medal in artistic roller skating.

His poise and accomplishments belie the struggles the 27- old has faced.

“He has lived with us since he was two,” said Schultz’s grandmother, Lila Abel. “He was extremely hyperactive. He walked on the ceilings. He started in public schools, but they 86ed him in five minutes.”

Still, Schultz benefited from his time in the Buckeye system, learning to read and mastering the multiplication tables. Because of behavior problems, however, it was suggested Schultz go to Happy Hearts School.

“He did beautifully,” Abel said. “There was no peer pressure and no teacher pressure. He just flourished.”

After graduating from Happy Hearts, Schultz secured his position at Wal Mart through the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation.

“I return shopping carts from the parking lot,” he said. “Sometimes I have to dig them out of snow banks. That gives me a good workout. I also fill all the pop machines. I’m sort of half stockman and half vendor.”

Besides working 25 hours a week at Wal-Mart and practicing twice a week with the ski team, Schultz bowls every Saturday and travels to Boardman every Sunday to hone his roller skating skills under coach Jack Muransky.

The artistic skating is a special source of pride to his grandparents.

“The first time Jeff went to King’s Skating Arena, he couldn’t even stand up on the skates,” Lila Abel said. “But he just loved skating.”

For several years, Schultz was the only artistic skater in the Ohio Special Olympic Program. His success helped spur the growth of the sport and there are now 15 skaters in the Ohio program.

And his interests aren’t limited to sports. Among other things, Schultz is very knowledgeable about astronomy. In fact, one recent “Who Wants to be a Millionaire” contestant might regret not having Schultz on his phone a friend list.

“They wanted to know what Jupiter’s largest moon is,” Schultz said. “He decided to walk away. The answer is Ganymede. He would have guessed Europa.”

### **Polar Bear Plunges for Special Olympics**

Since 1996, human polar bears have been plunging into the frigid winter waters of Lake Erie to raise money for Special Olympics. A story in the Jefferson Gazette by Emily R. Eberlin, explored the February 26, 2003, Polar Bear Plunge.

More than 300 plungers lined the shores of Lake Erie off of Ashtabula’s Lake Shore Park Saturday afternoon. Now, it was not a large gathering of tall sticks with rubber suction cups attached, but a sight that was equally humorous perhaps.

Polar Bear Plunge participants wearing anything but ordinary attire, Penguins, hula dancers, bathing suits, pajamas and American flag wearers along with police officers, students, and community members jumped into the frigid Lake Erie water around 3 p.m. for the seventh Annual Ashtabula County Special Olympics fundraiser. The weather was miserable with its bitter temperatures, wind and icy rain, but there was not a spot of gloom seen in the participant’s attitudes.

“We are here for a good cause and it is always a great time no matter what,” Ashtabula County Sheriff Deputy Jim Baehr said out of his penguin suit. “It is great to see how people dress for this thing.”

“I would not miss this event,” Dennis Mathieu, a Cuyahoga Falls police officer added while tying on the American flag bandana that matched his patriotic outfit. It’s fun to give the event a little flare.”

Those who came out to simply dabble their toes or dive in head first into the water did so through a hole carved in the frozen lake by Kingsville’s Styzej Brothers Construction Company.

It was not what they wore or even how far they came that mattered the most to Sharon Bradley, Polar Bear coordinator and dispatcher for the Ohio State Highway Patrol Ashtabula Post. It was the funds the event raised. Each participant was required to earn at least \$100 and Sharon reported the total profit to be around \$91,000.

Jefferson Area High School Students earned a good chunk of these proceeds. The 36 polar bear wannabes wearing special “Jefferson Plunger” T-shirts were able to bring \$4,550 to the event.

They even received a trophy for having the most school aged participants this year to which they cheered, "We are Jefferson."

Other schools having participants totaling 30 or less were Pymatuning Valley High School, Edgewood High School and Lakeside High School. "We were able to raise the money through family, friends and community members sponsoring us," Jefferson High School plunge leader and permanent substitute teacher, Courtney Obermyer said. "We believe in the cause."

This is the third year Jefferson participated in the fundraiser and Courtney's fifth year.

"The event means a great deal to me because I have a brother and future brother in law who participate in the Special Olympics, she said.

Sharon Bradley said the money helps send individuals with mental retardation to the Special Olympics in Columbus, a competition geared especially for them. She said more than 150 Ashtabula County residents are scheduled to participate in the games this year.

Since 1968, Special Olympics has provided sports training and competition opportunities for individuals with mental retardation. Special Olympics is a source of pride and inspiration for the participants and supporters of the Polar Bear Plunge. More than 1,000 athletes participate in Special Olympics Ohio. Year-round training and competition opportunities are provided in 21 different sports. Ashtabula County has 157 Special Olympics athletes registered.

## Waiting for Snow, Nagano



*Jim Flower has been selected to represent the United States in cross-country skiing at the World Special Olympics in Nagano, Japan, February 26 to March 5, 2005. Ashtabula Star Beacon photo by Carl E. Feather.*

August 22, 2004

by Carl Feather

Jim Flower could use a few feet of snow and \$3,000. Jim, 38, has been chosen to go to Nagano, Japan, for the World Special Olympics in February 2005. As one of a handful of Special Olympians from Ohio, Jim will compete in cross-

country skiing events, most likely the 500-meter and 1K event, say his parents, Richard and Grace of Ashtabula Harbor.

Those are the events that helped get Jim into Team USA. Jim won a bronze in each event last winter at the state competition. The gold medalist was unable to travel to Japan because of family issues, and the silver medalist also had issues that eliminated him. The Flower family was on vacation in Hawaii when they received a phone call from Jill Jenner, Ashtabula County Special Olympics coordinator, informing them that Jim had been selected for Team USA.

“I was happy,” says Jim.

Marty Allen, program director for Special Olympics Ohio, estimates that there are more than 300 Special Olympians in Ohio who train for and compete in winter games, but only five of them have been selected to be part of Team USA. Overall, 2,500 athletes from 40 to 50 nations will be in Nagano for the games February 26 to March 5, 2005.

“We’re real proud of him representing Ohio and the USA,” Allen says of Jim. “The delegation that’s going over there is representing the United States and we’re real proud to have Jim be a part of that.”

Jenner says Special Olympics Ohio will pick up about half of the cost to train and send Jim to Nagano. The balance, estimated at \$3,000, has to be raised in the community. Although the county has sent Special Olympians to World Games in the past, the amount raised was smaller because the venues were held in the United States, says Jenner. “This is double of what we normally have to raise,” Jenner says.

Richard Flower says several local events have been scheduled and more are in the works to raise the local match. A benefit dinner is planned at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, the Flowers’ home congregation. A benefit breakfast is also in the planning stages.

Jenner says the Law Enforcement Torch Fund is pledging half of the proceeds from a golf outing at Hickory Grove on September 11 to go toward Jim’s trip. A reverse raffle the evening of October 16 at Jefferson Eagles will benefit him, as well.

A food vender raised money for Jim during last weekend’s Antiques Stroll in Ashtabula Harbor, and the “Weiner Wagon” charity project at Lowe’s raised money for him as well.

Donations can be made directly to the Jim Flower World Games Fund account, in care of Pamela Burnett, at Key Bank in Jefferson. Burnett is secretary/treasurer of Ashtabula County Special Olympics.

Richard Flower says neither he nor his wife will accompany their son to Nagano. “No, this is Jim’s trip,” says Richard.

Nevertheless, Jim’s selection to represent Ohio and the United States is particularly satisfying for Richard, who along with John Able, coaches the county’s cross-country skiing team. A down-hill skier, Richard introduced cross-country skiing to the local Special Olympics program nearly two decades ago when he asked for permission to clear a seven-acre field between Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries so the athletes would have a place to ski.

The land has evolved into The Park, a training complex for local Special Olympics athletes. The Park includes a ballfield, a 16-station fitness course and a pavilion.

The latter improvement was made possible by a gift from the John Mylagawa family, which owns Wheeler Manufacturing. Jim says one of the reasons he's looking forward to going to Japan is because Mrs. Mylagawa, who lives in Osaka, plans to attend the games and support Jim. The Mylagawa's son, Yoshi, stayed with the Flower family while he was a student in the United States.

Jim trains two afternoons a week in the winter months at the Park. His father says there are eight to ten children in the program, so he doesn't have a lot of time to give special attention to his son during these training sessions. To help Jim prepare for Nagano and improve his technique, he will travel to a ski resort in Colorado in December for a week of training with the team's coach, Pat Handy of Michigan.

In the meantime, Jim is working on strength and endurance by staying active in other sports, including softball and bowling. He goes to the YMCA three mornings a week.

"He works out for 45 minutes straight on the machines before he goes to work," Richard says. "I come home, crash, and read the paper."

Jim works at Ash/Craft and for the past nine years he has been assigned to Thomas Fence, where he is part of a crew that builds cedar panels.

An athlete who enjoys competing in many different sports, Jim has earned 138 medals and 118 ribbons. This is the first time he has been invited to participate in a world event, however.

Jenner says other Ashtabula County Special Olympics athletes who have competed in world games include Jeff Schultz, who did both roller skating in the summer games and skiing in the winter. Jeff Spencer, who was on the 1990 unified softball team; Amy Turner, a roller skater; and three athletes, Ralph Hammond, power lifting; Victoria Hippely, aquatics; and Michael Sabados, bowling; who went to the summer games in New Haven, Connecticut.

She says it's especially satisfying to see Jim chosen for the honor because of the family's friendship with the Mylagawas and Richard's work with the program.

"Jimmy's been in Special Olympics longer than I have, Jenner says. "This is the first time he's had the opportunity to be chosen in World Games. It's a great honor."

Sarah Bevan, a 17-year-old figure skater from Madison, will also be part of the Special Olympics Team USA at Nagano.

## **Jim Flower Skis for Team USA at the World Special Olympics**

March 20, 2005

Jim Flower. "I loved everything, the people were nice, the food was great, and I got to use chopsticks."

Jim Flower, 39, of Ashtabula, crossed the finish line earlier this month to win a silver medal in the 500-meter cross-country ski race at the World Winter Special Olympic Games in Nagano, Japan. The son of Dick and Grace Flower, he began his ski career when he was 20 years old.

"We enjoyed cross-country skiing as a family," Dick said.



Jim quickly proved his aptitude for cross country skiing and he began competing in Special Olympics at the local and state levels. Advancement to the World Games, which occurs only once every four years, is a long road that requires commitment and perseverance.

“Jim has been medaling for a long time,” Dick said. In 2004, he double medaled at the State Winter Games. “The state office called and told our local Special Olympics representative that Jim was eligible to go to the World Winter Games in Japan,” Dick said.

Jim’s 19-day adventure began in Columbus where the four other athletes from Ohio met up with him to board their flight to Los Angeles International Airport. It was in Los Angeles that the rest of the 274 Special Olympians from the United States met to begin their flight to Japan. Because of constant security concerns since September 11, 2001, the United States Defense Department chartered a jet for the athletes to fly safely to Japan. Once they landed at a United States Airforce Base, the athletes boarded buses that were first completely inspected by dogs, ensuring their safe arrival six hours later in Nagano.

“The bus ride was long, but Japan is very pretty, especially the mountains,” Jim said.

After three days of orientation and opening ceremonies, the athletes were divided up to different neighboring villages by sport. The cross-county skiers stayed in a beautiful village called Hakuba. Jim spent an evening with a local Japanese family.

“I loved everything. The people were nice, the food was great, and I got to use chopsticks,” he said.

Originally scheduled to compete in three events, Jim first competed in the 1k cross-country ski race where he slipped on some ice and finished seventh. The second race was the 500-meter race that won him the silver medal. His last race, a cross county relay race, was scratched due to the illness of a team mate.

Besides standing up on the podium and receiving his silver medal, another exciting moment happened for Jim when he received a pair of brand new skis. They were given to the skiers by the ski manufacturer in appreciation for participating in the games.

As Jim returned to his full-time job at the Ashtabula Mall, he looked back on this time with fondness and pride.

## Conneaut Boosts Special Olympian

September 15, 2007.

*Michael Barricklow of Conneaut and the rest of his Special Olympics softball team will compete in the state tournament in Columbus. Ashtabula Star Beacon photo by Bill West.*

*Michael Barricklow, 27, shows prowess on the field. The Ash/Craft Industries employee is the starting pitcher for the Lakers. The team's 11-2 record in league play this summer earned a state tournament berth at this season's Special Olympics soft ball team. Barricklow's prowess on the mound is a big part of the team's success, said Head Coach Joe Allen. "This is Michael's second season, and he's had an immediate impact on the team."*



## Special Story: Dotty May



**DOTTY MAY**  
B: June 13, 1925  
D: Feb. 28, 2003

### With Dotty, others always came first

Over 25 years of covering sports in Ashtabula County, a variety of personalities are bound to be encountered. Some people come across as outgoing, bubbly, high-energy figures. Others are much more reserved, quiet types. Some burn with intensity. Others are carefree.

I have to admit that Dotty May, the long-time bowling proprietor of Kings Lanes in North Kingsville, who died Friday, was one of the more complex personalities I have encountered. Perhaps the most adequate way to describe her was she had an extremely strong personality.

On first blush, she seemed a formidable person, someone you didn't mess with under any circumstances. To use a term of a bygone era, Dotty May was a tough, old bird.

Once you got to know her, though, and she got to know you, it was discovered she had a very tender heart, especially for people who were among society's least regarded. If one was mentally, physically, emotionally or economically challenged, she was always willing to try and do whatever she could to make sure you were treated with dignity.

Perhaps that's because her life, especially when she was just a young girl, was a series of challenges she defied in resounding fashion. She overcame a physical challenge, which she contracted when she was just a few years old, to become one of Ashtabula County's greatest female athletes. Yes.

**KARL PEARSON**

See PEARSON, Page B3

### With Dotty, Others Always Came First

March 4, 2003

by Karl Pearson

Over 25 years of covering sports in Ashtabula County, a variety of personalities are bound to be considered. Some people come across as outgoing, bubbly, high-energy figures. Others are much more reserved, quiet types. Some burn with intensity. Others are carefree.

I have to admit that Dotty May, the long-time bowling proprietor of Kings Lanes in North Kingsville who died Friday, was one of the more complex personalities I have encountered.

Perhaps the most adequate way to describe her is that she had an extremely strong personality. At first blush, she seemed a formidable person, someone you didn't mess with under any circumstances. To use the term of a bygone era, Dotty May was a tough old broad.

Once you got to know her, though, and she got to know you, it was discovered that she had a very tender heart, especially for people who were among society's least respected. If one was mentally, physically, emotionally, or economically challenged she was always willing to try to do whatever she could to make sure you were treated with dignity. Perhaps that's because her life, especially when she was a youngster, was a series of challenges which she defeated in resounding fashion. She overcame polio which she contracted when she was just three years old, to become one of Ashtabula County's greatest female athletes. Years after passing from the limelight as a competitor, she is still talked about in reverent tones by those that witnessed those performances or heard about them.

By the time I got to Ashtabula County, Dotty had pretty much left the competition arena, so I didn't get to see those achievements myself, but the list is impressive. For instance, she played semi-pro basketball with Stella Walsh from Cleveland who had been an Olympic champion in her heyday. But most of her achievements were tied to bowling. They are legendary—holding the Ashtabula Women's Bowling Association average record for 18 years, winning the AWBA Tournament all-events title 16 times, taking the singles actual title nine times and taking the doubles crown with Evelyn Degman five times, earning induction into the National Bowling Hall of Fame and AWBA Hall of Fame, winning the singles title of the Ohio Inter-City Tournament and finishing in the top 10 of the singles at the Ohio Women's Bowling Association Tournament.

Having an inkling of her level of achievement, I figured Dotty was the kind of competitor who would cut an opponent's heart out and feed it to them. Her niece, Sandy Campagna, who followed in her aunt's footsteps as one of the key persons in county bowling at St. Angelo's Lanes, set me straight on that. "She was always encouraging other people. She always had respect for other bowlers."

"Most people would have said she was too nice out there," Sandy Campagna said. "She was a lot like Farina DiMare and Nick Fish (two male bowling hall of famers). She was always encouraging people. She always had respect for other bowlers."

"She was one of the greatest female athletes I've ever seen around here, Farina DiMare, who was one of her pallbearers, said after her funeral Monday. She was a great competitor, but she was a great sport."

Going back to her sport was a matter of importance to Dotty May. She was a director for the AWBA for many years, serving as the finance chairman for more than a decade. "She was good with money," Sandy Campagna said. Often, she represented the AWBA as a delegate to the state and national conventions.

Probably her biggest legacy to bowling was her management of Kings Lanes. Although she was in partnership with her brother, John, and Pasquale Sposito when they opened the facility in 1963, Dotty May was the person who was the face of the bowling center.

That was another display of her strong personality. How many women of the early 1960s had the courage to start their own business? Through the ups and downs of the economy in the last 40 years, how many proprietors would have stood the test of time and still hosted the bowling community so well?

That's when I first met, or a better term might be, ran afoul of Dotty May. Arriving at Kings Lane on a wintry day to explain what our plans were for bowling coverage I walked into the building and made the mistake of inadequately at least to her mind, wiping my feet. She let me known in no uncertain terms her displeasure, even though there were no bowlers in the building at the time. It put a healthy fear of her into me.

But she didn't reserve that kind of treatment for just one person. Several years later, I asked an unsuspecting colleague to pick up some material for me on his way to work. He made the same mistake and received the same greeting, a reception that earned her the title, "Dragon Lady."

As years have gone by, I came to realize and respect that Dotty's priorities were about her bowlers. No proprietor was ever more concerned about making sure those bowlers were well treated and received the recognition she felt they deserved. There was always a special strata of bowler at her establishment. She made sure the mentally and physical challenged had a place to come where their needs were met and they felt comfortable. She organized the Happy Hearts Bowling league, which will celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2004. One of the Happy Hearts Students was another pallbearer Monday.

In her own way, Dotty May was a bowling educator, too. In short, she was all about teaching the benefits of bowling. That was especially true in the early years of King's existence when many people came there who had never bowled in leagues before. She was a certified bowling instructor and Young American Bowling Alliance coach. She was all about kids. Many of the top area male and female bowlers owe their achievements today to her instruction. Even though they might not have continued bowling at her home, she met them on their way with her blessing and reveled in their accomplishments.

It wasn't all about bowling for her. A friend shared that she learned of a family in Conneaut which figured not to have Christmas at all. She gathered a huge basket of food and items for the kids and made sure they got it in time for the big day. I'm convinced these occasions were the norm, rather than the exception.

With her passing, area bowling, especially that in Ashtabula County, will be the loser. She joins the list of the old proprietors – Sonny and Judy Kosicek, John Elmer, Sam Monday and Pete Sposito – who have left behind a legacy of love for their sport and the notion of treating the public royally.

Today, I believe Dotty May has teamed with the Kosiceks, Monday, and Fish to organize one heck of a bowling tournament in heaven. The next thunderstorm you hear will be from that tournament, in which God will at least be throwing the first strike, if not actively participating. They're making sure the lanes are oiled properly, the automatic scoring and pin-setting machines operate efficiently, there's plenty of snacks to eat and good things to drink and everyone's nice and warm and smiling.

Aren't you all eager to get involved? I know I am. And this time, I'll be sure to wipe my feet properly, Dotty.