

Earl Anthony Speaks From the Grave

Our Supreme Being guides the Universe executing his plan in mysterious ways. Earthly directives are especially vexing, wars, tsunamis, hunger and sickness require large blocks of time and, of course, there are the small problems that must be dealt with.

As in this case, God thought. Something to do with that game involving plastic spheres and small poles. Spheres and poles...let's see...that would be Earl Anthony!

"Earl! Are you there?"

"Yes, Lord, I am here."

"Another dispute Earl!"

Beleaguered and somewhat bedraggled from the recent fall that led to his ascension, Earl Anthony laments his plight with silent thought, "God, will I never be allowed to rest?"

(Large voice, definite ring of Divinity to it, answers) "Yes, Earl, but later, after this dispute...maybe. Earl, this one involves a family unity issue, one of great consequence between a brother and a sister, earthly remnants of the Bouse clan. The disputed issue involves the number of small poles that are knocked down by a series of thrown cylindrical plastic spheres. These spheres are thrown the length of a smooth wooden structure called a 'lane'.

(A chastened voice replies) "Yes, Lord, you are describing 'bowling' and I welcome your reliance upon me as 'the Earl of Tacoma', the greatest bowler who ever lived, to once again, resolve a disagreement involving the mathematical equation regarding 'pinfall', an equation that will, upon spheres hitting poles, result in scores from 0 to 300."

"Yes, that's it Earl! Bowling!" says the Exalted One enthusiastically. "I have never understood that equation! I discussed it with Einstein but it seems he is preoccupied with the celestial physical proportions of two of the newly ascended. I believe their earthly names were Monroe and Turner but we just call them Norma Jean and Julia Jean."

"Hmmm..." replies the legendary Anthony, known among famous pin toppers as 'the Square'. "Earthly dalliance among the stars."

"What was that, Earl?" asks the powerful voice.

"Nothing, Lord. Just musing."

"So, you'll help me with this family bowling question?"

"Yes, Lord. It will be my pleasure! What is the Overview file name?"

"Alright Earl, here it is. I've included additional information that you'll need"

Thunder rolls through the heavens and a bolt of lightning flashes! Shards, needles and fragments whirl and leap, dart and dance...as the lightning breaks apart, dissembling into millions of illuminated celestial bodies. And then, wonder of wonders, the pieces fall divinely into a pattern. The 'not yet ascended' might call it...a headline.

"*Kryptonite Siblings Strike Again*", the headline reads and, curiously, there is an attribution credit to the Yakima Morning Herald. "God, borrowing headlines again", Earl surmises as he begins to read the 'additional information'.

The Yakima Junior Bowling League has annually turned out some of the finest young bowlers in all of Washington State. But this year, Rick Baumgartner, at just fifteen years of age, is rolling a 225 average and dominating the league as no other young kegler ever has. His 225 average exceeds that of ninety nine percent of all professional male bowlers.

Adding to the legend of the Baumgartner family is Rick's sister, JoAnn. She is one of the few local talents able to challenge her brother, a Davis High School athlete, at the ten-pin game. JoAnn averages 198 as a thirteen-year-old and frequently scores well over 600 in a three-game series. Their friends and fellow bowlers have begun calling them the 'Kryptonite Siblings'. They bowl at both Lincoln and Roza Lanes.

Earl speaks. "Lord, you have been toying with reality again, haven't you?"

And God hears and answers. "Why are you suggesting such a thing, Earl?"

"These averages can't be correct! A thirteen-year-old girl with a higher average than all but three of the adult women in the Yakima Traveling League, comprised of sixty of the best women bowlers in the state?

That can't be Lord, unless she has ascended and is only on temporary earthly loan! And her brother...averaging 225? Most of the years that I knocked down poles for a living, I didn't average 225. And remember, I was the greatest of all those who have ever thrown plastic spheres. Oh, and by the way, Lord, we call them bowling balls!"

God, slightly annoyed, answers, "Lecturing a superior can have dire results, Earl!"

Silence. More thunder rolls and Earl 'The Square' Anthony begins to quake and tremble. Beads of earthly sweat appear on his brow.

Then, "You're right, Earl, the story attribution in the Yakima Morning Herald is a divine plant. But I won't apologize. In the year 2005 that story is going to allow a deserving survivor of many of life's trials to have dinner courtesy of a know-it-all lout who will make a bet with his sister 'thinking' that he will *know* 'absolutely' the outcome of his wager! It's called Divine Justice and the deserving survivor is not the only one who has been the beneficiary of this celestial intervention. In the recent past I have exercised this Exalted Talent to create a more secure ascended state for you!"

"You have changed history for me, Lord?" asks Anthony, incredulous.

"Yes! You recall your many matches with Marshall Holman? The volatile and unpredictable Marshall Holman? The Marshall Holman who would swear, kick things, throw towels? The Marshall Holman who would scowl menacingly and threaten you physically when you beat him?"

"Yes, I remember him. Good bowler, marginal human being! What has Marshall Holman to do with my 'secure ascended state'?"

Silence once again, then, "Look around you Earl. Who is that recently ascended former bowler stretched out on the next cloud over?"

"Well, Lord, no question about who that is! That's Dick Weber!"

"I am fond of you, Earl! That cloud was originally assigned to Marshall Holman!"