



Charles H. Featherstone/Columbia Basin Herald

Kelly Moore, son of Lowell Moore, one of the original investors in Columbia Industries, holds that company's biggest invention, the colored bowling ball.

Lucky strike

Ephrata's long-lost contribution to bowling

By CHARLES H. FEATHERSTONE
 Staff Writer

"Dad was a brilliant businessperson. Even in his mid-20s, he was starting to do some investing in things that didn't involve selling furniture every day."

— Kelly Moore

EPHRATA — All that remains of the place where Ephrata revolutionized bowling is a patch of weedy debris that has been sitting under the Columbia Basin sun for nearly 60 years.

"It's hard to believe this used to be a city of 7,500 people," said Kelly Moore, 56, one of the co-owners of Moore Furniture, of the former Ephrata Army Air Base.

The base was built in 1939, and was eventually used to train B-17 pilots. It was closed not long after the Japanese surrender was signed in September 1945.

Moore is walking across one of the few remaining concrete foundations of the old Ephrata Army Air Base — now the Port of Ephrata — that he believes was likely once the base hospital.

And the factory where Columbia Industries, which manufactured the first bowling balls made out of colored plastic, were made in the very early 1960s.

"It's hard to piece it all together," Moore said. "By the time I got interested in the story, the only (original investor) left was my dad, Lowell Moore, and even his memory was starting to fail."

Moore has pieced together some of the story, mostly from documents left by his father. Sometime in 1958 or 1959, Moses Lake inventor and plastic specialist Nick Mushkin had tinkered with old washing machine parts and figured out how to make bowling balls. He persuaded a group of investors, including Moore's father Lowell and Ephrata Bowling Center owner Howard Nessen to invest \$5,000 each to start making the new kind of bowling balls in Ephrata.

"Dad was a brilliant businessperson. Even in his mid-20s, he was starting to

do some investing in things that didn't involve selling furniture every day," Moore said.

And so Columbia Industries was born and by 1961 was using its brand-new technology to make a brand-new kind of bowling ball.

Before 1961, all bowling balls were made of a very hard rubber known as Ebonite, Moore said, in two halves that were glued together. The ridge created by gluing the two halves was then sanded off, he said, but the process was prone to error.

Mushkin figured out how to cast a bowling ball in one piece out of plastic on a spindle.

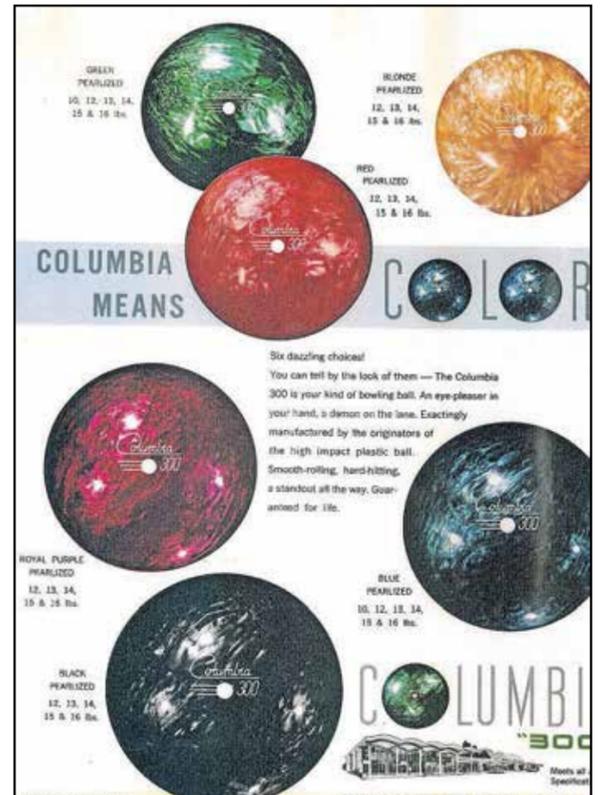
"A lathe system would turn these balls and make them perfectly round," he said.

Columbia Industries, with its still-recognizable multicolored Columbia 300 bowling ball, grew quickly, from total sales of \$105,210 in 1960-61 to \$1.6 million in 1963-64, according to the company's 1964 annual report. Three more factories and a corporate headquarters were built, all in San Antonio, Texas, and Nessen was named the company's vice president.

"Things happened really fast," Moore said.

But tragedy struck too. The Ephrata factory burned down, likely in 1962, though Moore isn't entirely sure when. And Brunswick Bowling — the industry leader in bowling equipment — decided to make its own plastic colored bowling balls, prompting Columbia Industries to sue for patent infringement.

"Brunswick was like, 'Who are these guys? We're not selling any balls, so let's just do the same thing,'" Moore said.



Courtesy photo

A page from Columbia Industries' 1964 annual report.

"Columbia sued, and won, but they spent too much money to win. They had to spend pretty much everything they made

See BOWLING, Page B2



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Health

Feeling extra anxious these days? Study says you're not alone

By GARY WARTH
TNS

SAN DIEGO — A new study conducted by a UC San Diego research team has found that anxiety caused by the COVID-19 pandemic prompted a surge in people seeking help for panic attacks over the past few months.

The study by the university's Center for Data Driven Health at the Qualcomm Institute was published Aug. 24 in JAMA Internal Medicine and shows that Internet searches about panic attacks were 11% higher than would be expected over 58 days, beginning with President Donald Trump's declaration of a national health emergency on March 13.

Research team leader John Ayers said the spike was an all-time high for searches about acute anxiety and represented about 375,000 more searches than expected. In all, there were 3.4 million searches in that period, with spikes coinciding with specific related events.

The largest spike was a 52% increase in searches about panic attacks on March 28 as anxiety grew following the March 16 announcement of national social-distancing guidelines, Ayers said.



Dreamstime/TNS

Low levels of B-12 and other B vitamins such as vitamin B-6 and folate may be linked to depression.

Other spikes occurred around the time the U.S. passed China with the most reported cases on March 26 and when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended using face masks on April 3. Another surge happened on April 11 when the U.S. passed Italy for most pandemic-relat-

ed deaths. Ayers said studying Internet searches gives real-time information about what people are experiencing and could be more accurate than the anecdotal information that officials often respond to. Such information could lead to cities creating help lines for people seeking information

about panic attacks just as they already have emergency lines for people contemplating suicide, he said.

"There were all these speculations that mental health is declining during COVID-19," Ayers said. "Suicides are up. Drug use is up. What we needed was to see what the needs of the public are. We looked at one specific case: panic attacks."

Ayers said acute anxiety is the most common form of mental illness, and his team researched 15 years of searches for terms such as "Am I having a panic attack" and "How to treat a panic attack."

The paper recommends continuing similar surveillance of queries about panic attacks as the pandemic continues because there may be new incidents that spark acute anxiety.

It also recommends that resource providers pivot services to better address acute anxiety. As an example, the researchers note that Illinois launched a Call4Calm hotline specifically to help people cope with anxiety related to the pandemic.

Finally, they suggest Google include help lines for panic attacks at the top of search results for the subject.

Ayers said giving greater insight to what people are

experiencing in a crisis also could be useful to legislators debating which programs to fund.

"It could be the way we're spending money now is based on randomness and opinion," he said.

The latest study was the third the researchers had conducted related to the pandemic.

In April, JAMA International Medicine published their paper on a study about a surge in searches for gun purchases during the pandemic.

According to the study, Google searches related to guns reached an unprecedented level, corroborating media reports that gun sales were increasing during the pandemic.

The study found 2.1 million searches about guns over 34 days. The number was about 40% higher than spikes that followed the 2012 Sandy Hook school shooting in Connecticut and the 2018 Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, Florida.

Another study published in April by JAMA International Medicine was about a surge in Internet searches about chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine after President Trump and entrepreneur Elon Musk endorsed their use as a COVID-19 treatment.

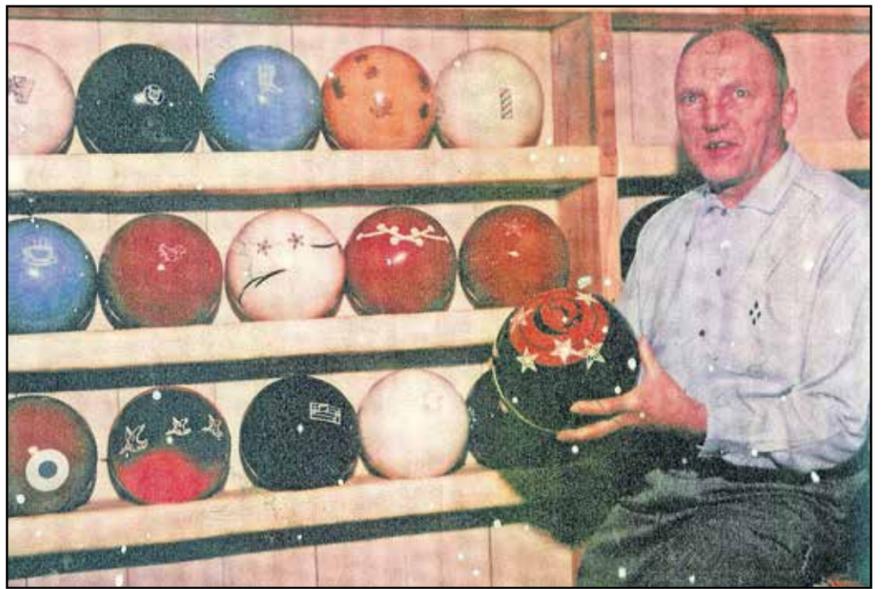
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Howard Nessen, owner of the Ephrata Bowling Center and vice president of Columbia Industries, holds one of his company's bowling balls in the early 1960s.



Courtesy photo

daily CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Answer to Previous Puzzle

Z	E	B	R	A		E	N	D	U	R	O	
A	M	B	E	R	S		N	A	R	R	O	W
P	U	B	L	I	C		S	P	E	N	D	S
		A	A	H			U	S	S			
	H	A	Y	O	R	E		S	I	B		
R	O	I	M	O	A		F	E	D	U	P	
O	R	K	A	L	F		A	R	E	N	A	
O	N	I	O	N		F	I	T	A	Y	N	
T	E	D	D	Y		L	B	S	T	A	E	
	T	O	Y		T	E	E		Y	E	N	
			S	R	A		A	P	E			
B	A	L	S	A	M		M	I	A	S	M	A
B	R	E	E	Z	E		S	P	R	A	I	N
S	T	A	Y	E	D		E	N	T	R	Y	

ACROSS

- Like some alleys
- Reasoning
- Like many a Stephen King novel
- Space station view
- Jeweled coronets
- Caruso's first name
- Some sweaters (hyph.)
- Quaker word
- Nautilus locale
- "Exodus" character
- Leg part
- Tenant's payment
- Lunch
- Role for Arnold
- Historian's word

DOWN

- Casino action
- Flower adornment
- Novelist — Levin
- Bliss, to a Buddhist
- College VIP
- Part of the eye
- Dinghy's need
- Fine sand
- Yen
- Bok —
- Char
- Barely getting by
- Universe
- Strapped for cash
- Emergency
- Go over rapidly
- Little one
- Leggy bird
- State Farm competitor
- Quiz
- Fall mo.
- Bayou dweller
- More than touch
- Diamond or Armstrong
- West Coast campus
- Boyle and Kyser
- Miscalculates
- Small bouquet
- Practically forever
- Maude of TV
- Weeks per annum?
- Twilight, to a poet
- Tierra — Fuego

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Susan Freeman

BOWLING

from B1

protecting their patent." "Brunswick was bowling," Moore added. Columbia Industries President Roger Seller, in a 1965 letter to Lowell Moore, offered him and the other Ephrata investors \$6 per share for their portion of the company — more than the \$4 per share he said the firm was really worth. "They tripled their investment by the time they sold out," Moore said.

Columbia Industries, now based in Muskegon, Michigan, changed hands a few times over the years, is now called Columbia 300 and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Brunswick Bowling Products — the same company the founders challenged with their brand-new plastic ball 60 years ago.

Brunswick still is bowling. Moore said he has tried tracking Mushkin, the inventor, down to find out what happened to him. But he's had no luck.

As glass and construction debris crunches under his feet, Moore said that during one of his walks a few years ago at the old factory site he found a somewhat strange looking rock that, when he picked it up, was much lighter than ordinary rocks.

"I thought 'that feels like plastic,'" he said. "Sure enough. These were bowling balls that melted in the fire and baked in the sun."

Charles H. Featherstone can be reached at cfeatherstone@columbiabasinherald.com.

Sudoku DAILY PUZZLE

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

		8	3	2			4	5
				1	5			
3			6			7		
		4			9		7	
2			7	6	8			1
	1		5				6	
		2			3			6
1	8			7	6	2		

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Solution to Previous Puzzle:

7	6	1	2	4	8	9	3	5
5	3	8	6	1	9	4	7	2
2	4	9	7	3	5	8	1	6
4	9	3	1	5	7	2	6	8
1	7	2	8	6	4	3	5	9
8	5	6	3	9	2	7	4	1
9	1	4	5	8	3	6	2	7
6	8	7	4	2	1	5	9	3
3	2	5	9	7	6	1	8	4