

ROLL & BOWL: FINAL THOUGHTS

We do not remember days; we remember moments.

~Cesare Pavese, *The Burning Brand*

April 15 & 16, 2011. The first - of what I dream will be many, many more - Roll & Bowl Parkinson's fundraiser is successfully pulled off. And I am proud, a brand new daddy, beaming ear-to-ear, deliriously passing out figurative cigars and literal warm smiles to anyone that I happen to encounter. I want to go up to complete strangers, hug them, share my euphoria. "Hey, you," I want to say, "Roll & Bowl is done, finished, in the books now." I don't however, for I haven't the strength. And so, I shall sit down - nope, I shall *collapse* into a chair, or just melt onto the floor - it really matters not. After 24 hours of Roll & Bowl, I am an Ace-banded physical wreck, groggy by it all, intoxicated with the realization of goal achieved, drunk and high as a kite with mission accomplished. I am proud. I am sore. I am - yes, it's true, I am - already analyzing the highs and the lows of this inaugural event, and somehow through my fog, already planning for the next one. I am driven that way, my reluctantly-confessed (although more benevolent?) type A-personality, nonetheless, long ago hard-wired into my genes. Somehow, I make it home that morning, end up in bed. I don't remember it though, don't remember how. Many of my memories from Roll & Bowl are, at just three months time, somewhat murky already. That's what happens when severe pain and exhaustion sets in. There are some things that need mentioning, however, and personal recollections that invite description and reflection.

The highlight of Roll & Bowl was a marathon bowling challenge to roll 100 games in a twenty-four hour period. I called it Dare to Bowl, reasoning that only a handful of people would dare to try this, but the ones who did, might actually be able to pull it off. Somehow, I managed to convince Guinness Book World Record holder for "Longest Ten-Pin Bowling Marathon," Stephen Shanabrook of Plano, to come roll at this event. He was so gracious, friendly and accommodating, and, as it turned out, a UT grad! My thought then was that Dare to Bowl was going to be a two man event, that 'normal' people apparently had more sense than to torture themselves so. Enter James Shrader, my ultra-competitive "brother" and fellow Parkinsonian. By God, if I were going to do something fantastic, challenging and crazy, well then, so was he. (Like brothers, we compete at everything, each driving the other to be ever better.) Then on event day, another 'madman,' Steve Burgess, a San Antonio-based Parkinsonian, showed up, donations in hand, said he was going to roll one hundred games. And so, it was on.

For the official record, Shanabrook finished the 100 games first, accomplishing his feat at 4:45 a.m.; bowling alternately with left or right hand, he never showed the strain of the competition, or the physical toll that the rest of us did. In fact, it seemed like a stroll in the park for him at times, but I know it was still a challenge. Finishing about 5:15 or so was Shrader, who by now, was semi-delirious, running on fumes, had battled and conquered, both a grotesque bloody blister on his bowling hand, *and* a PD freezing episode. Steve, from San Antonio finished next at 5:40 or so, in much the same low-key way he began. The strain was evident upon him too - let's face it, the human body was not designed to absorb a hundred games' worth of bowling punishment over twenty-four hours - but within the next half hour, he was driving back to SA. Finally at 6:45 or so, I put the ribbon on my own 100 game challenge. My biggest concern was a strained muscle in my left thigh - an adductor

muscle, or, as it is more commonly known, a pulled groin. I first felt this pain in about game 60, found the pain considerably amplified by games 75-85, when finally I had to take a break to wrap an Ace bandage around the area. The last fifteen games, I hobbled to the lane, let the ball fly. How I rolled a 202 in game 92 is beyond my comprehension. For that game, the ball flew true and straight. A precious memory for all of us rolling that morning – indeed we have talked about it - was Mimi, our beautiful Young Onset member and fellow Team Dopamine bowler, bringing us shakes from either Dairy Queen or Sonic at 3:45am! Mimi, that was the greatest tasting strawberry shake of my life. Thank you!

I remember other things too. Original Team Dopamine(r), Herman Caviel, who had not picked up a bowling ball in over a year, faced that beast, stood up and ticked off fifty games! Astonishing, Herman! I remember big James Webb, rolling seventeen games - I believe - a stupendous effort from him. James, I was, and remain so, very proud of you. Also, through the haze, I remember that as the event went on, that we had over half the bowling center filled with people rolling for CAPS and Hope Young's Center for Music Therapy. A cash till filled with money, families having a great time, hugs from friends upon completion of my 100th game – these images linger for me, retain their power to this day, make me eager for Roll & Bowl 2 - “We're Back!” to descend upon us quickly.

Three months have elapsed now. Three months to reflect, analyze, remember. I honestly don't know of any similar challenge – rolling 100 games in twenty-four hours – that has ever been pulled off by four people before, at the same time. I know for certain, that no three people with PD have ever done it before. That must count for something. I am as proud of this event as I am about anything in which I participated. Ever. Roll & Bowl, garnered over \$7100 dollars, netting \$4400 or so. I am proud that we did it, proud of the support that showed up to work this event. I am forever indebted to you, Kitty, Susie, Shirley, Mimi, Jeff, Joyce, Ashby, Claudette, indeed, all of the wonderful people from CAPS and our Young Onset group. I am proud of and deeply grateful to Highland Lanes manager, and friend, Dennis Spikes. Dennis believed in this event, believed in my conviction and determination to pull this off, ultimately took the chance and believed in me. With his support, the wonderful and gracious Sue Barry, gave us the imprimatur to go ahead with the event. Without them, Roll & Bowl probably would not have happened *this year*. Of course, all of the pledgers who came out to bowl are forever in my heart's good graces too. Thank you for stepping onto the lanes, making a statement, supporting Roll & Bowl, supporting CAPS and the Center for Music Therapy, or for just showing up, contributing so generously from your wallets and purses, and the infinite goodness of your hearts. You made this event into a success. Emily, my “agent”, thank you for your help with the press; your generosity of time and sharing of contacts was vital. To Rino, *buon amico mio, grazie mille!* Your photograph for the poster rocked, made even me look good! If that's not art....

And finally, to my most intimate circle of friends, family and advisers -you know who you are – thank you for your faith in me, your patience, your encouragement. I am, by and large, a confident person, but I battled many demons of my own in birthing Roll & Bowl, from the occasional and paralyzing self-doubt and insecurity, to torn ACL ligaments, to the slow, ongoing healing necessitated by a recent divorce and broken heart. Thank you all. I love you.

Can't wait for next year! How about you?

A.J. Hernandez