

The view is as good as the bowling in Bay Area centers

I look out at the vast blue Pacific Ocean, the breakers coming in on shore as myriads of sea gulls soar overhead. Then I turn around to the approach of lane No. 9 with ball in hand ready to



AL HARRISON

roll a strike. This is the scenario at Sea Bowl in Pacifica, Calif. It was only a short drive down the coast from San Francisco where I was visiting my son, Don, last weekend. Sea Bowl is one of only a handful of bowling centers located in the Bay area. Sea Bowl was voted as the bowling center with the best ocean view on the West Coast.

It is a redo of an older center with some very attractive design features with a nautical theme. But inside they mean business with 32 synthetic lanes, each with a wood approach. Even on a busy Sunday night the lanes were well cared for. There was a mix of young adults, some kids and a few seniors — all having fun. They had a nicely stocked Pro Shop, not open at the time.

Even though West Coast rates are higher than locally, they offer a lot of specials, with special rates for league bowlers. We also visited the Lanes at The Presidio, located on an old Army base. This 12-lane house called Presidio Bowling Center is on a historic site, no longer part of the Army. The bowling center was recently remodeled and overlooks San

Francisco Bay, right by the Golden Gate Bridge. Our odyssey also took us to the Yerba Buena Ice Skating and Bowling Center in the heart of the downtown area. It seemed odd to see people walking in and out with ice skates or bowling bags, not both. The transformation to non-smoking put a severe damper on the bowling centers in California.

The only other bowling, of sorts we experienced was the electronic kind, a really wild game played on a giant screen called "HyperBow", in which the player rolls a giant bowling ball all through the streets of San Francisco, dodging around the cable cars, and finally coming up to a set of pins to knock down. If you have a chance to travel to the San Francisco Bay area, bring along your bowling gear.

Dobson 7th in Forrest Wood Open; lands \$25,500 in prizes

Scott Dobson knows Lake St. Clair. A regular on several local bass fishing tournaments, circuits and a local fishing guide, he has been around the 420-square mile lake more than twice. Dobson, of Waterford, parlayed that knowledge into his biggest payday yet by finishing seventh last week in the prestigious Wal-Mart FLW \$200,000 Forrest Wood Open. He earned \$23,000 for his finish, and an additional \$2,500 for representing one of the tourna-



BILL PARKER

ment's sponsors, Snickers Cruncher, on the weigh-in stage. "It was an awesome week and something everyone should experience, either as a pro or a co-angler," Dobson said. The tournament features 175 of the top professional bass fishermen from across the country, paired with 175 amateurs, or co-anglers. The pros drive the boat and make all the decisions while the co-anglers fish from the back of the boat. Total weight accumulates for the first two days of the four-day event. The co-angler standings are determined after the first two days. For the pros, the top 10 after the first two days advance to the semifinals. In the semi's and final, all previous weight is erased and everyone

starts from scratch. The top five placers from the semifinals advance to the finals, where the winner walks away with \$200,000. Dobson advanced to the semifinals by placing sixth after the first two days of competition with a limit of 10 fish that weighed 30 pounds, 7 ounces. "I was pretty excited then," he said. "I was nervous to an extent, but I just knew I had to go out there and fish." The third day turned out to be the toughest day of the tournament. Dobson slipped to seventh when he caught just two keepers that totalled 6 pounds 11 ounces. "It was absolutely my worst day on Lake St. Clair," Dobson said. I didn't have a keeper until 2 o'clock, and I caught the other

one right in front of Metro Beach while I was going in to the weigh-in." Dobson said he caught most of his fish on a soft plastic jerk bait called a "Fluke" and a 6-foot-8 extra fast St. Croix casting rod. Larry Nixon, of Bee Branch, Arkansas, won the tournament. He was tied for first after the first two days and wrapped up the title on the final day by bringing in the heaviest five-fish limit of the tournament, 18 pounds, 2 ounces. "I was pretty happy with the finish. I'm not disappointed at all," Dobson said. "It was an awesome experience and they're coming back here next year, so hopefully I'll be back in it again." Fly fishermen helping out

Fly fishermen take note, here's a chance to provide direct assistance to children with special needs while enjoying your favorite pastime at the same time. Created by fly shop owner and author Kelly Galloup and his wife Penny — who have a three-year-old son, McKenzie, who has autism — the McKenzie Foundation was established to raise money for direct assistance to the children of families in the fly-fishing industry. In an effort to raise money for the foundation two fund-raisers are taking place. Wildlife artist Richard Forrest is donating all the proceeds of the sale of a limited-edition steelhead print to the foundation.

In addition, the inaugural McKenzie Foundation Fly Fishing Tournament is scheduled for July 14 and 15 at Ranch Rudolph on the Beardman River. All proceeds from the tournament will benefit the foundation. For more information about the print, the tournament or the McKenzie Foundation, call The Troutman at (800) 308-7658 or visit the shop's Web site at www.troutman.com. (Bill Parker writes a weekly outdoor column for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Hunters and anglers are urged to report their success. Questions and comments are also encouraged. Send information to: Bill Parker, c/o Outdoors, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009.)

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