



Betty Haffner (left) and Maxine Hartzell have been bowling together for more than 50 years. They met when Haffner joined the Peppy Dog Food bowling team in the early 1960s and have been hitting the lanes together ever since. And though their scores aren't quite what they used to be, they're still enjoying it. "We show up every week, but we don't always do the best," said Haffner. "No, but we have fun," Hartzell chimed in.

## Buddies in bowling

**Haffner and Hartzell have been hitting the lanes together since the 1960s**

By BAILEY CLINE  
The Commercial Review

Betty Haffner and Maxine Hartzell have been bowling together since the 1960s.

In more than 60 years, some variables have changed. Haffner recalls when it cost 10 cents per game. Bowlers originally had to set their own pins after each frame.

They've also noticed their age has impacted their bowling abilities.

But one factor has remained constant through the years — their desire to keep playing.

Hartzell, 95, enjoys the socialization that comes with it. In the past, she spent her Friday nights at the Portland bowling alley.

"I started bowling in the '50s," she explained. "Women didn't bowl too much back then like the men (did)."

She remembered how players had to keep an eye on their shoes. (The lanes were susceptible to shoe thieves.) Her husband, Walter, had his own pair stolen at least once.

"They couldn't afford to go buy new shoes," she remarked.

As she became a more seasoned bowler, Hartzell often joined teams as a fill-in whenever a player was sick or unable to make a game.

That's how she met Haffner, 85, when she joined the Peppy Dog Food team in the early 1960s. They've bowled together ever since.

The long-time friends both carried mid-160 average scores when they were younger. They bowled in various teams and leagues and remember making the 600 Club, scoring more than



Photo provided

Maxine Hartzell holds a bowling ball as she prepares to roll during a game at Rollin J Lanes in Portland.

600 points in three games. Haffner also coached for a while.

Outside of bowling, Haffner remained active. A Portland High School graduate, she met her husband, Jack, while bowling in the Marsh league her senior year of high school in 1953 and '54. (He died six years ago.)

For 26 years, she drove a bus for Jay School Corporation. She had a job at Marsh for some time as well, although she did not work while her children were growing up. Haffner enjoyed camping, horseback riding and visiting state parks in Indiana as well as West Virginia and Ohio with Jack.

She currently volunteers in the gift shop at IU Health Jay.

In the early 1940s, Hartzell worked in factories during the war effort. She was only 15 years old when she started her first job in a Portland factory.

Hartzell remembers asking her parents to sign a waiver allowing her to work. Her father wouldn't sign it, but her mother did, and she only needed one parent to put ink to paper.

She met her late husband, Walter, while he was playing in a baseball game in the '40s. He offered to drive her home that day, she recalled, at a time when gasoline was limited.

They married soon after the war and stayed together until 1976, when Walter had a heart attack and died while coaching on the baseball diamond.

Their husbands' deaths didn't keep either woman from continuing their bowling careers. Haffner and Hartzell played together until last year, when Hartzell fell mid-roll and injured her knee. She's had a few other health problems since and isn't sure when she'll return to bowling.

Their age is starting to affect their skill, making it harder to practice certain techniques.

"I'm having a hard time giving it up, but I know I should," Haffner noted. She likes the challenge of improving her score through the season, although her average has decreased in recent years.

"I carried 160 until I got arthritis," she admitted.

Haffner once bowled with a 14.5-pound ball, but she has opted for lightweight balls in recent years. It's not the same, she explained.

"You can't bowl as (well) with a 10-pound ball," Haffner said. "We show up every week, but we don't always do the best."

"No, but we have fun," Hartzell chimed in.



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# Thankfully helpful

## Maryland geriatrician has found herself juggling the various needs of elderly loved ones

By **JUDITH GRAHAM**  
Special To The Washington Post  
The loss of a husband. The death of a sister. Taking in an elderly mother with dementia.

This has been a year like none other for Rebecca Elon, a doctor who has dedicated her professional life to helping older adults.

It has taught her what families go through when caring for someone with serious illness as nothing has before. "Reading about caregiving of this kind was one thing. Experiencing it was entirely different," she told me.

Were it not for the challenges she has faced during the pandemic, Elon might not have learned firsthand how exhausting end-of-life care can be, physically and emotionally — something she had understood only abstractly as a geriatrician.

And she might not have been struck by what she called the deepest lesson of this pandemic: that caregiving is a manifestation of love and that love means being present with someone even when suffering seems overwhelming.

All these experiences have been "a gift, in a way: They've truly changed me," said Elon, 66, a part-time associate professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and an adjunct associate professor at the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

Elon's unique perspective on the pandemic is informed by her multiple roles: family caregiver, geriatrician and policy expert specializing in long-term care.

"I don't think we, as a nation, are going to make needed improvements [in long-term care] until we take responsibility for our aging mothers and fathers — and do so with love and respect," she told me.

Elon has been acutely aware of prejudice against older adults — and determined to overcome it — since she first expressed interest in geriatrics in the late 1970s. "Why in the world would you want to do that?" she recalled being asked by a department chair at Baylor College of Medicine, where she was a medical student. "What can you possibly do for those [old] people?"

Elon ignored the scorn and became the first geriatrics fellow at Baylor, in Houston, in 1984. She cherished the elderly aunts and uncles she had visited every year during her childhood and was eager to focus on this new specialty, which was just being established in the United States. "She's an extraordinary advocate for elders and families," said Kris Kuhn, a retired geriatrician and longtime friend.

In 2007, Elon was named geriatrician of the year by the American Geriatrics Society.

Her life took an unexpected turn in 2013 when she started noticing personality changes and judg-



Kris Kuhn

Rebecca Elon's unique perspective on the pandemic was influenced by her multiple roles: family caregiver, geriatrician and policy expert specializing in long-term care. Elon — seen here with her husband, William Henry Adler III — had to deal with Adler's decline and death because of frontotemporal dementia.

ment lapses in her husband, William Henry Adler III, former chief of clinical immunology research at the National Institute on Aging, part of the National Institutes of Health. Proud and stubborn, he refused to seek medical attention for several years.

Eventually, however, Adler's decline accelerated and in 2017 a neurologist diagnosed frontotemporal dementia with motor neuron disease, an immobilizing condition. Two years later, Adler could barely swallow or speak and had lost the ability to climb down the stairs in their house in Severna Park, Md. "He became a prisoner in our upstairs bedroom," Elon said.

By then, Elon had cut back on work significantly and hired a home health aide to come in several days a week.

In January 2020, Elon enrolled Adler in hospice and began arranging to move him to a nearby assisted-living center.

Then, the pandemic hit. Hospice staff members stopped coming. The home health aide quit. The assisted-living center went on lockdown. Not visiting Adler wasn't imaginable, so Elon kept him at home, remaining responsible for his care.

"I lost 20 pounds in four months," she told me. "It was incredibly demanding work, caring for him."

Meanwhile, another crisis was brewing. In Kankakee, Ill., Elon's sister, Melissa Davis, was dying of esophageal cancer and no longer able to care for their mother, Betty Davis, 96. The two had lived together for more than a decade and Davis, who has dementia, required significant assistance.

Elon sprang into action. She and two other sisters moved their mother to an

assisted-living facility in Kankakee while Elon decided to relocate a few hours away, at a continuing care retirement community in Milwaukee, where she had spent her childhood. "It was time to leave the East Coast behind and be closer to family," she said.

By the end of last May, Elon and her husband were settled in a two-bedroom apartment in Milwaukee. The facility has a restaurant downstairs that delivered meals, a concierge service, a helpful hospice agency in the area and other amenities that relieved Elon's isolation.

"I finally had help," she told me. "It was like night and day."

Previously bedbound, Adler would transfer to a chair with the help of a lift (one couldn't be installed in their Maryland home) and look contentedly out the window at paragliders and boats sailing by.

"In medicine, we often look at people who are profoundly impaired and ask, 'What kind of quality of life is that?'" Elon said. "But even though Bill was so profoundly impaired, he still had a strong will to live and retained the capacity for joy and interaction."

If she hadn't been by his side day and night, Elon said, she might not have appreciated this.

Meanwhile, her mother moved to another assisted-living center outside Milwaukee to be nearer to Elon and other family members. But things didn't go well. The facility was on lockdown most of the time

and staff members weren't especially attentive. Concerned about her mother's well-being, Elon took her out of the facility and brought her to her apartment in late December.

For two months, she tended to her husband's and mother's needs. In mid-February, Adler, then 81, took a sharp turn for the worse. Unable to speak, his face set in a grimace, he pounded the bed with his hands, breathing heavily. With hospice workers' help, Elon began administering morphine to ease his pain and agitation.

"I thought, 'Oh my God, is this what we ask families to deal with?'" she said. Although she had been a hospice medical director, "that didn't prepare me for the emotional exhaustion and the ambivalence of giving morphine to my husband."

Elon's mother was distraught when Adler died 10 days later, asking repeatedly what had happened to him and weeping when she was told. At some point, Elon realized her mother was also grieving all the losses she had endured over the past year: the loss of her home and friends in Kankakee, the loss of Melissa, who had died last May, and the loss of her independence.

That, too, was a revelation made possible by being with her every day.

"The dogma with people with dementia is you just stop talking about death because they can't process it," Elon said.

See **Helpful** page 4B

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# Farming and family

## Horn's life has been shaped by his two passions

By AMY SCHWARTZ  
The Commercial Review

At 89 years old, George Lee Horn still has two passions — family and farming.

Both go back to his upbringing. He was the second-youngest of six children born to William Harrison Horn, a farmer, and Hazel Marie Horn. And he and his siblings were regular help around the family's rural Jay County farm.

The need for their assistance expanded when he was a teenager after their father suffered strokes caused by high blood pressure.

"My junior and senior year in high school, I would milk the cows and feed the pigs then go to school," recalled Horn.

The roots of his ever-expanding family also began to grow during his teenage years.

Attending Pennville schools, Horn had been a student alongside Elnora Landon for virtually his entire life. In high school, she became more than a classmate.

They started dating and fell in love, getting married in December 1950, the same year they both graduated from Pennville High School.

Now, sitting in his room at Miller's Merry Manor, Horn shares story after story about their five children — Gary, Linda, Dennis, Brian and Cheryl — and their children and their children.

"I didn't count in the last year, since I didn't see them all at the same time, but I know it's well up in the 30s, from kids, to grandkids, to great-grandkids," said

Horn. "You can't imagine how time flies."

From helping out on the family farm as a youngster with his siblings, Horn moved on to a career in the fields of his own. Shortly after getting married, he began his operation on 200 acres.

It wasn't his only career.

After 25 years of farming, Horn moved on to driving semis. He continued that work for a dozen years before retiring. Or so he thought.

His retirement was cut short when a friend who drove a tour bus for singer/songwriter Bill Gaither offered him a position. So, he was on the road again.

Horn traveled across the country every Wednesday through Saturday for three months each spring and fall. He visited Miami, San Diego, Washington state and Maryland, and a long list of stops in between.

But, really, he never left farming.

Not surprisingly, it was his other passion — family — that kept him going.

Even after he stopped his own operation to move into driving, Horn continued to help with his son's farm.

"When I was home, I would be on the tractor," said Horn.

His son, Dennis, farms roughly 2,500 acres of land, a 1,150% increase from where Horn started all those decades ago.

Horn is amazed, too, by how much farming has changed since when he was young. Dennis first had a 16-row corn planter, then



The Commercial Review/Amy Schwartz

As he nears his 90th birthday, George Horn, a rural Portland native and resident of Miller's Merry Manor in Dunkirk, is happy to share his stories. Most of them revolve around two topics — farming and family.

two of them. Then he exchanged those for a 32-row corn planter.

"Farming has gotten so big," said Horn, who continued to help his son until he could no longer climb into the farm machinery. "Back when I started, it was a two-row corn planter. Then I got a four-row corn planter and said, 'Boy, I really have something now.'"

Just as it was physical limitations that led him to finally give up farming, those challenges also led to a move from his longtime home.

Horn had continued to live in the house where he and Elnora had raised their family for about 10 years after her death. (She began experiencing symptoms in 2003 that would develop into

Alzheimer's disease and died Sept. 28, 2008.) His own health issues manifested with a loss of balance, leading to a move to Miller's Merry Manor in Dunkirk.

He had just moved to a new room at the facility when the coronavirus pandemic hit.

That made life difficult for a man so focused on family. Though two of his children live in Jay County and two more live in adjacent counties, he didn't get to have in-person conversations with them. So close, but yet so far.

"I don't think I was out of the room, not even in the hallway, for two to three months, I suspect," said Horn.

Still, he seems to treat the Miller's Merry Manor staff like family. He jokes with the aids as they come and go from his room, bringing smiles to their faces.

"This is the ideal place," he said. "You can't beat it. They are so good."

"I wish ... I could thank the girls in here for everything they do ..."

And even when they couldn't see him, family members were always sending Horn new photos for the electronic picture frame that sits on his dresser. It rotates through slide after slide of images of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

As they change, he's more than happy to sit back and tell stories about the two things that have shaped his life — farming and family.

## Selfies have become legendary

By CATHY FREE

Special to The Washington Post

It's been more than a year now that churchgoers have been watching virtual streaming Sunday services on their cell-phones and computers during the pandemic. Many made a habit of tuning in while wearing cozy sweatpants or pajamas.

Then there's La Verne Ford Wimberly of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The 82-year-old retired educator decks herself out head to toe every Sunday, then — to the delight of fellow parishioners at Metropolitan Baptist Church — posts a selfie on Facebook after the service.

Since March 29, 2020, she has taken photos of herself from her living room in more than 50 different color-coordinated outfits — each one carefully selected from the burgeoning closets, jewelry boxes and neatly stacked hat boxes that have satisfied her love of making a grand entrance since she was a young schoolteacher in the 1960s.

"She never skips a beat with the hats, the clothes and all that beautiful jewelry," said Robin Watkins, 54, the church's executive office assistant.

"If anyone is feeling downtrodden, they just



Photo courtesy of La Verne Ford Wimberly

One of La Verne Ford Wimberly's impeccably coordinated outfits that have wowed fellow parishioners at Metropolitan Baptist Church.

look at her [Facebook] page and immediately feel uplifted," she said. "Her heart is as beautiful as each outfit she has shared with us."

Parishioners often call Wimberly "Doctor." She has a Ph.D. in education and the years she spent as a school principal and superintendent after she'd

moved on from teaching, Watkins said.

She was already known at her church for the head-turning outfits she wore every Sunday, so when the pandemic hit last year and in-person services were canceled, Wimberly decided to up her game.

"In the 20 years I've been going to church there, I've always had my little routine that I learned from my mother as a girl," she said.

"I'd pick out a nice outfit and hat and lay it out the night before, so that I could be prepared and look presentable."

When she learned last year that Metropolitan's service would be streamed March 29 because of the coronavirus threat, Wimberly said she couldn't imagine wearing her bathrobe and slippers while tuning in from her living room, even if she was by herself.

"I thought, 'Oh, my goodness, I can't sit here looking slouchy in my robe,'" she said. "I didn't want to sit around alone and feel sorry for myself, so I decided, 'You know what? I'm going to dress up anyway.'"

Wimberly got up early to style her hair and put on some lipstick, then she slipped into a favorite white dress trimmed with eyelet, a sheer white ruffled hat, matching shoes and a beaded turquoise and gold necklace.

After she posted the photo and a Bible scripture for her friends, she was inundated with positive responses, she said.

"For years, everyone had known to look for me in the last row, section two, dressed to the nines," Wimberly said. "People always looked forward to seeing what I was wearing. So when I posted that photo, everyone told me it boosted their spirits."

See *Selfies* page 4B

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## Selfies ...

Continued from page 3B  
The following Sunday, she decided to do it again, this time selecting a bright blue ensemble with silver and white jewelry. And the week after that, on Easter Sunday, Wimberly chose a pink skirt and beaded sweater jacket, and a matching hat decorated with pink and yellow lilies.  
She soon decided to write down what she wore each week

on a calendar so that she wouldn't commit the faux pas of wearing the same outfit twice.  
When she was growing up, Wimberly said she cared more about climbing the tallest tree with the neighbor boys than trying on the latest frilly arrivals at fashion stores in downtown Tulsa. It wasn't until she became a teenager and noticed that one of her junior high teachers wore a different beautiful outfit to school each day that she gradually developed an appreciation for fashion, she said.  
After she graduated from the University of Tulsa and was hired in 1963 as a first-grade teacher in Chicago, Wimberly said she decided to emulate that teacher's example and dress up for the kids.  
"They'd rub my arm and say, 'Oh, Miss Ford [her maiden

name], you look so pretty,'" she recalled. "Pretty soon, I had so many clothes that I started a rotation and color-coding system, so I could keep surprising the kids with my outfits."  
When she moved back to Tulsa and pursued a career as a principal and administrator, she decided to continue that tradition at work and at church.  
She never anticipated that anyone outside her congrega-

tion would find out about her selfie Sundays, she said. But then, on March 22, a local television reporter who attends Wimberly's church decided to do a story about her colorful outfits.  
"I started hearing from people everywhere who said my photos made them smile," said Wimberly. "The whole point was to inspire people and make them feel good, so I'm happy that's working."



## Helpful ...

Continued from page 2B  
"But I think that if you repeat what's happened over and over and you put it in context and you give them time, they can grieve and start to recover."  
"Mom is doing so much better with Rebecca," said Deborah Bliss, 69, Elon's older sister, who lives in Plano, Texas, and who believes there are benefits for her sister, as well. "I think having [Mom] there after Bill died, having someone else to care for, has been a good distraction."  
And so, for Elon, as for so many families, a new chapter has begun, born out of harsh necessities. The days pass relatively calmly, as Elon works and she and her mother spend time together.  
"Mom will look out at the lake and say, 'Oh my goodness, these colors are so beautiful,'" Elon said. "When I cook, she'll tell me, 'It's so nice to have a meal with you.' When she goes to bed at night, she'll say, 'Oh, this bed feels so wonderful.' She's happy on a moment-to-moment basis. And I'm very thankful she's with me."



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