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MARCH 2005

# Chicago

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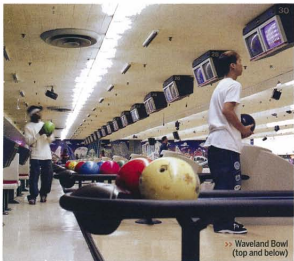
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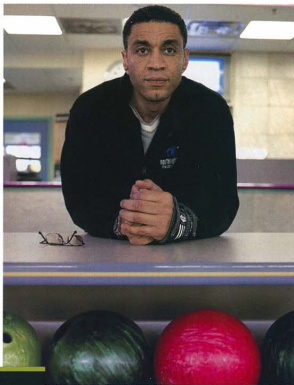
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Waveland Bowl  
(top and below)



ON SCENER

## Memory Lanes

We bowled with actor Harry Lennix at some of his beloved boyhood haunts. BY KEVIN MCKEOUGH

**"SUPERFLY" WAS PLAYING** over the loudspeakers as Harry Lennix entered Skyway Lanes, a nearly 50-year-old bowling alley on Chicago's Far Southeast Side named for its location near the Chicago Skyway. He wandered past the diner to the main counter, where he affectionately greeted Skyway's manager, Diane Lewis, whom he's known for years.

"It feels like home," Lennix said.

A much-in-demand movie actor best known for his roles in the two *Matrix* sequels and most recently seen in *Ray*, Lennix started bowling at Skyway (and the now-defunct Stars and Strikes) when he was growing up in the city's South Shore neighborhood. He now divides his time between pursuing a film career in Los Angeles and doing theatre work in Chicago. Currently starring in *Permanent Collection* at Northlight Theatre in Skokie, Lennix took me to some of his favorite bowling alleys.

He takes the sport seriously—he bought a new custom-drilled ball and shoes for our tour—averaging a 172 score on the forgiving lanes in L.A. (a 200 qualifies for the Professional Bowlers Association). But in Chicago, he told me, the character of the lanes varies widely from alley to alley, encouraging competitive bowlers to develop a strong all-around game.



### HARRY LENNIX'S TOP 5 BOWLING ALLEYS

**1 Skyway Lanes**, 9915 S. Torrence Ave.; (773) 731-4535

**2 King Bowl**, 8010 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr.; (773) 488-3000

**3 New Park Manor Lanes**, 100 E. 75th St.; (773) 651-2895

**4 Waveland Bowl**, 3700 N. Western Ave.; (773) 472-5900

**5 Diversey River Bowl**, 2211 W. Diversey Ave.; (773) 227-5800

We had begun our tour the previous afternoon at Waveland Bowl, the popular 24-hour spot just north of Roscoe Village, where Lennix dispensed tips. He demonstrated where to stand and how to position your fingers to curve the ball as it rolls down the lane, and explained the finer points of etiquette. "Don't step onto the lane when someone in the next lane is already up," he cautioned.

If his detailed observations made bowling seem like a science, Lennix's long arms and legs, fluid movements, and sweeping southpaw delivery made it seem like an art. Still, at Skyway Lanes, he began by rolling two gutter balls on the alley's dry, natural wood. Once we moved to freshly oiled lanes, he laid down a respectable 167. "If you can bowl well here," he said afterwards, "you're one hell of a bowler."

We finished up at New Park Manor Lanes, on the Southeast Side. The bright lighting and high-tech video scoreboard impressed Lennix. But the slick, heavily waxed lanes stole the curve from his ball. "This is without a doubt the toughest house I've bowled in," he said. "If you wanted to be competitive and work on your game, you definitely want to come here." Although Lennix's coaching improved my scores, I didn't beat him once in nine tries. But then, for me it was only a game.

#### OUR GUIDE

WHO: Actor Harry Lennix, 40  
LIKES: Familiar places  
DISLIKES: Slick lanes