

Orlando, Fla.—Talk about jumping into the frying pan, but happily not getting burned.

Jerry and Renee Lee purchased Southwestern Lanes, an eight-lane center in tiny Weatherford, Okla., in October and basically started from scratch. Jerry is a full-time pharmacist and Renee is a recreational therapist and they have three young children.

“I am a recreational bowler, and Renee is the lifetime bowler,” Jerry stated. “There is not a lot to do where we live and we were looking for a family-friendly activity, so we decided to buy the center. We have a smoking room, but we’re basically smoke-free.”

They became aware of the Bowling Proprietors Association of America and Bowl Expo through the former owner and decided to attend. “We are very interested in small center focus, food and beverage information, parties and promotions, but we’ve learned that talking to proprietors from any size center gives us more good ideas,” Jerry added.

The hands-on training includes becoming the mechanic and chief bottle washer as well. “We got the center up and running and we are learning as we go,” Jerry said. “We’re looking at data bases of former bowlers and encouraging them to come back and bowl. Renee actually runs the center and we’re happy we made the decision.”

Headquartered in Arlington, Texas, the 76-year-old BPAA represents the business interests of bowling centers worldwide.

By Steve James