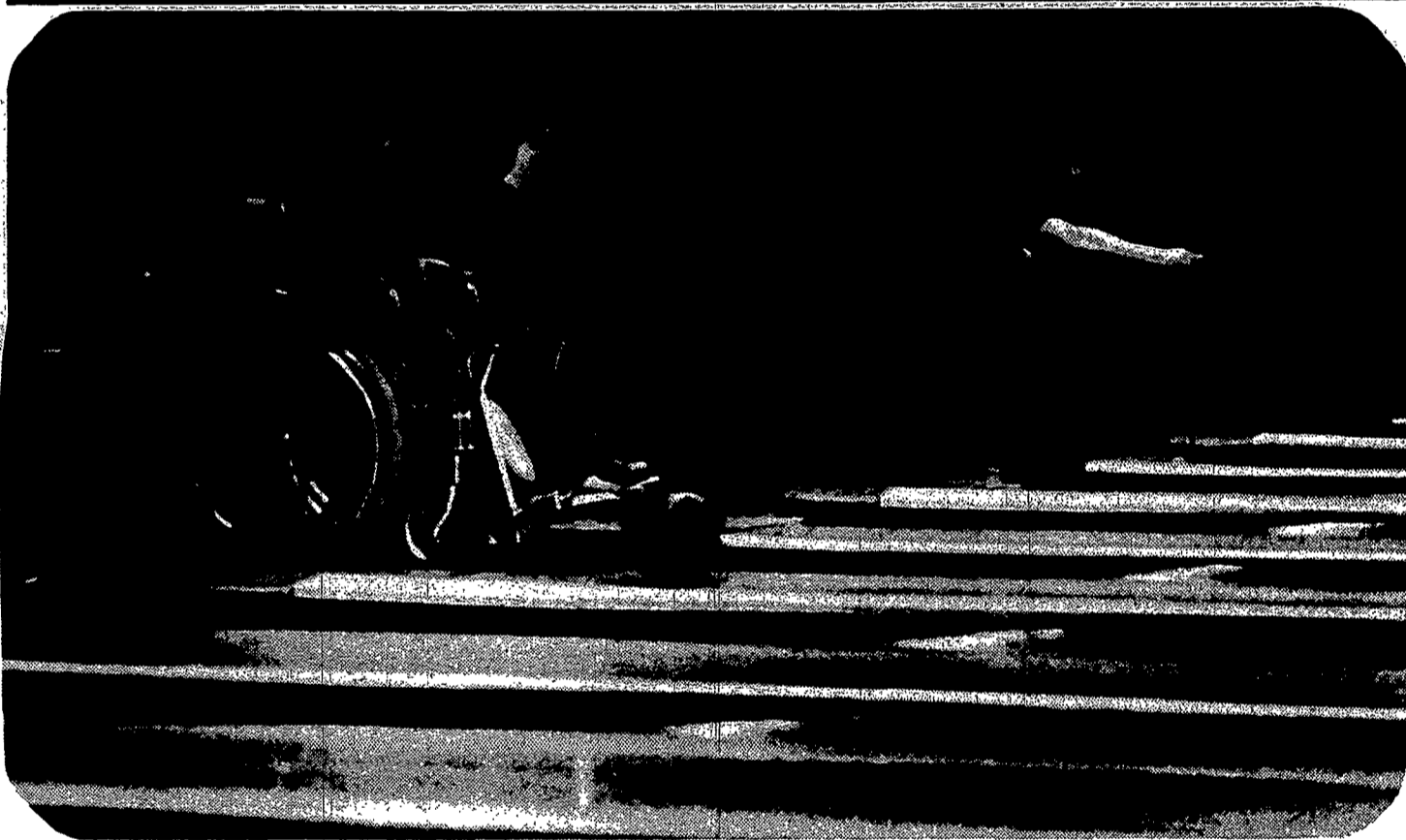




Mike Bartlett, wheelchair, gets an assist with his bowling ball from Alan Skinner during the youth group's recent outing to Olympic Bowl in Scottsville.



The ball is off and down the alley as a youth group member aims for a strike.

People First,

This is a celebration of children enjoying themselves, a celebration of playing, of having fun. This is a celebration of people dedicated to the idea that "persons come first and disability second."

The children on these pages share a distinction. They are working through the world's second most common birth defect, Spina Bifida (SPY-na BIF-ida), with the help of the Greater Rochester Spina Bifida Association.

The five-year-old association, chaired by Martin and Nancy Cullen of Fairport, presently boasts a membership of 125 families and issues a news letter to more than 600 addresses.

Literature distributed by the group states that the defect occurs early in the unborn child's development. One or more of the spinal vertebrae fails to close completely and leaves an opening in the spine. Through this opening, part of the spinal cord protrudes, forming a sac. Its effect can range from mild weakness to complete paralysis, and hydrocephalus frequently accompanies the condition, the association's bulletin states.

But the condition aside, the association feels "Anyone with a disability should be looked on as a person," Mrs. Cullen observes. "The association is open to anyone with any disability. We try to help both the family and the individual."



Colleen Gullen takes her work up to her fourth grade teacher, Patricia Gasbarre, to be corrected.



Jennifer Dobosz takes time out from her reading for a photo to be made.



"Seal" Floyd Seely, a frequent entertainer at parties for the children, works his magic for, from left to right, Tom Turner, Kevin Schwartz and Scott Lempert.