



Photo of Jan by Gary Silverstein

Using Computer Games to Stay in Touch

By Gary Silverstein



Photo of Marlene by David Dunwoodie

In Santa Barbara, CA some 300 miles from Palo Alto, CA, Jan Silverstein, 65, within minutes of waking up, opens her iPad.

You see, every morning she is anxious to see if her friend, Marlene Dunwoodie, 75, of Vi of Palo Alto (formerly Hyatt Classic Residence), has made her move in Words With Friends (a Scrabble®-like e-game).

It's a free game they can play with anyone they choose, anywhere, on an iPad, iPhone or Smart Phone. For them, it has rekindled their friendship to an active level as when both couples lived in Los Altos, CA.

Marlene has a beautiful Scrabble game table at their vacation home in Pebble Beach waiting for

the times Jan visits but this Internet game keeps them sharp for those face-to-face meetings.

"I love being connected with Marlene again, in touch on a daily basis," Jan says. "It makes the miles that separate us disappear. And the challenge of the game exercises my brain every day—should I play a high-count word that sets her up or should I make the safer choice? And what in the world am I going to do with 7 vowels?"

It's been a great way to work their minds and their continuing competitive spirits. It has been addictive. Their husbands are trying to set some ground rules by limiting moves to three times a day.

During the matches, they're

able to "chat" with each other online within the program while playing the game so it's almost like being together.

Marlene says she is excited each time her iPad (and iPhone) signal that Jan has played and can't wait to see what word her friend has added to "the board." The battles are fierce and the games are close. Maybe Gary and Duane will have to declare vacation time for these wives of theirs.

With the Internet and the many applications available for "smart" devices, the Words With Friends application, along with numerous online dictionaries to assist, are just one of the many fun ways to stay in touch no matter where you live.

CURRENT EVENTS

Saratoga Senior Health Fair

Friday, Oct. 21
3:30 pm to 7 pm
Saratoga Senior Center
Saratoga, CA
Free admission
Booths available
Info: 408.868.1257

Adult Services Resource Fair

Tuesday, Oct. 25
9 am to 1 pm
Timpany Center
San Jose, CA
Free admission
Booths available
Info: 408.975.4999

Avenidas Village Open House

Monday, Oct. 24
2 to 4 pm
Thursday, Oct. 27
10 am to noon
Avenidas, Palo Alto
Info: 650.289.5405

Silicon Valley Village Vendor Event

Saturday, Nov. 5
The Terraces of Los Gatos
Los Gatos, CA
Info: Berdeen Coven
408.812.8128 or
SiliconValleyVillage.org

Poets of Aging Conference

Nov. 16-19
First Unitarian
Universalist Church
San Francisco, CA
Info: poeticsofaging.org