

Jan and Duane Hinrichs' bridge to mental healthiness

As I sat across the room from Jan and Duane Hinrichs in their modern Rila Renaissance condo, I was struck by two things – how bright they seem and how completely in tune they are with each other.

I was eager to find out why.

Jan and Duane fell in love 34 years ago in Iowa. At the time they were both chief executive officers of different credit unions.

Their partnership has evolved since then, but one thing that has remained unchanged is their commitment to each other and their combined family.

Every fall, in Iowa, Jan and Duane gather as many of their burgeoning brood together as they can for a holiday banquet. It is combination of Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year celebrations rolled up into one happy gathering.

Their motive is transparent – it's all about family unity.

It's not always easy to organize, but it's always worthwhile.

It's also their last get-together before the couple head for sunny Clearwater.

When they are not hosting family, the Hinrichs enjoy volunteering their time for meaningful causes.

In those early days together, their financial expertise made them an obvious choice to teach monetary skills to kids in Junior Achievement class. They taught everything from basic bank account management to budgeting and basic investment strategy.

Who knows how many financial success stories were conceived during those days?

While they're here at On Top of the World, you can find Jan and Duane slugging behind the scenes at the Clearwater Jazz Holiday or right out front serving beer.

You might also find them at a Thanksgiving soup kitchen living out their thankfulness in a real and tangible way.

Jan and Duane were enticed to buy in OTOW by Jan's sister who was a full-time resident at the time. She had noticed a condo for sale and called the couple to alert them.

After dangling the free golf carrot in front of their noses, she convinced them to take the plunge, even though they had not yet retired.

The move to OTOW turned the duo into committed golfers during the Florida winter until Jan's back finally forced her to look elsewhere for entertainment and enrichment. That's when



Jan and Duane relax under the live oaks of their Florentine Way back yard

Getting to Know You

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On Top of the World community

by John Koning

she started playing bridge.

Duane, who had taken contract bridge as an elective in school, was right there with her. He had serious doubts about his ability to play bridge because he had always considered his memory to be sketchy.

Now, several years later, he credits bridge for improving his memory skills and enhancing his cognitive ability.

Jan and Duane began their progressive bridge adventure right here at OTOW and have many fond memories of games with the Canadian Club as well as others. Eventually though, their vigorous pursuit of improve-

ment as players drew them out of the community games and into the highly competitive world of the Clearwater Bridge Club and beyond.

These days, Jan spends about five days a week learning, evolving and teaching. Duane is right there with her, as a partner and also as a supporter.

Their combined thirst for personal growth and improvement has taken Jan and Duane from Daytona, Fl., to Omaha, Neb., and has earned them several Life Master titles by the American Contract Bridge League.

They have played in the same room as Warren Buffet and Bill Gates,

both of whom are duplicate bridge advocates and addicts.

While Jan and Duane remain ambivalent about their own mental prowess, they are convinced that bridge is a great way to improve cognitive ability and stave off neurological disease.

Besides, what's wrong with being surrounded by genuinely smart people?

If you are a bridge player already or if you are new to the game, you might benefit from the eight week course Jan teaches at the Clearwater Bridge Club. Perhaps it is just the thing you need to keep your cranium in tip top running order.