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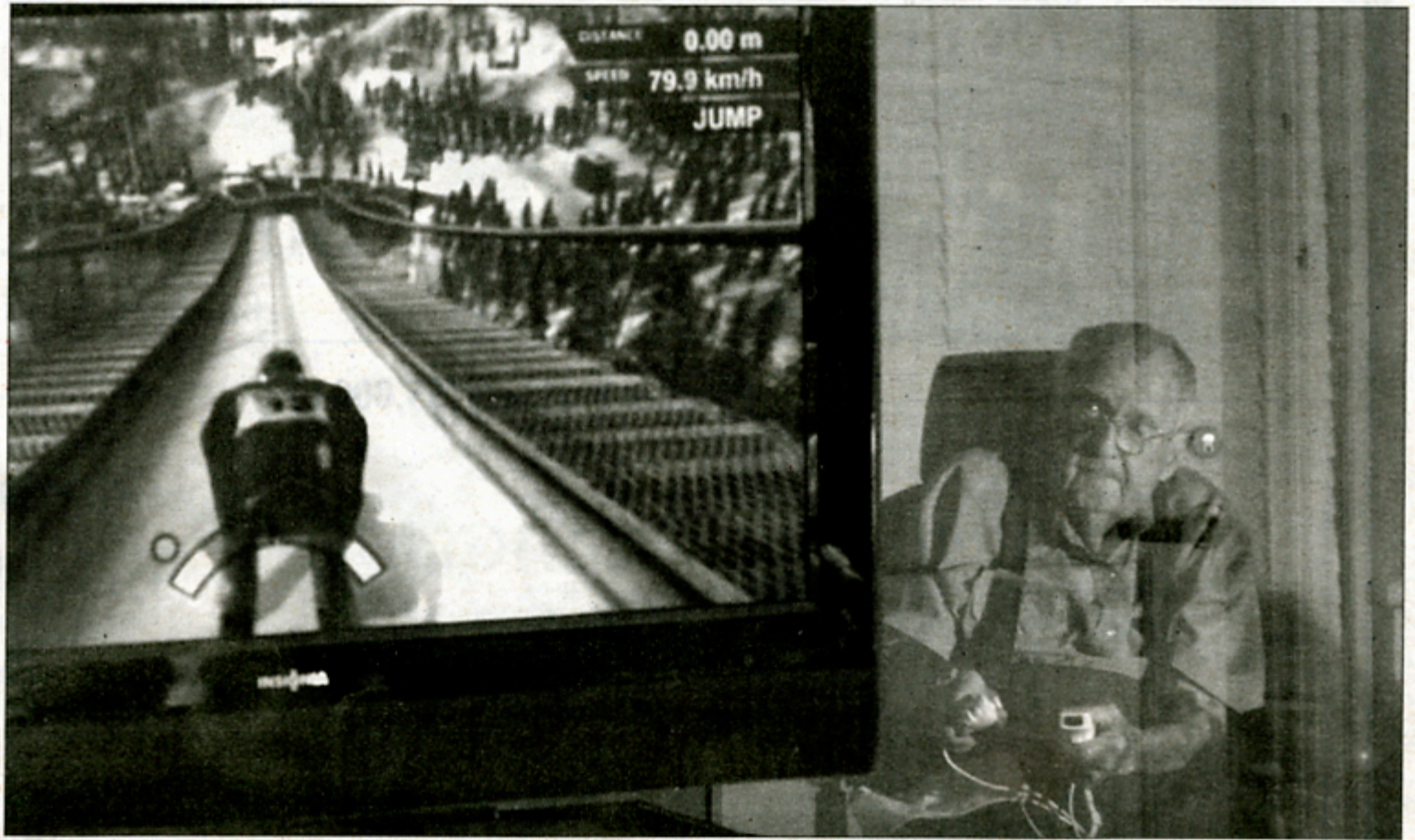
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ELSA

Phil Click, seen reflected in a window, tries his hand at the ski jump in Nintendo Wii's Winter Sports 2008 game. Sonora at Splendido uses the Wii game console to exercise residents' minds and bodies.

Wii shall

HIP COMMUNITY FOR RETIREES EMBRACES GAMING

By RANDY METCALF
The Explorer

In an era when video games are developed, used and mastered by the younger generations, places such as the Sonora at Splendido retirement community in Rancho Vistoso are finding other uses for home gaming consoles.

James Linder, who suffers from a form of dementia, sits in a light green chair in the common area on the second floor of the retirement facility.

Program director Scott Rydecki sits beside him. Both hold Nintendo Wii controllers in their hands, and two digital characters that slightly resemble them are displayed on a television screen holding golf clubs.

Playing the Nintendo Wii has helped Linder regain some of the functionality of his right hand and arm that has diminished with age. It also helps him exercise his mind.

Nintendo Wii is a video game console that features wireless

HOW TO GET ONE

What: The Nintendo Wii (pronounced "we")
Cost: \$249.99 for the console, \$19.99 to \$49.99 for video games
Details: Games cover sports, adventure and puzzles. The Wii is available from Best Buy, Amazon.com, Circuit City and other retailers.
Online: www.nintendo.com/wii



A pleased Pat Walton smiles after bowling a strike using Nintendo's Wii video game console. A digital character bowls a ball on the TV screen as Walton moves her arm as if she were actually bowling.

The GUIDE

The most complete source of what's happening, what to do, what to see, where to go and where to dine out!



Phil Click, a resident at Sonora at Splendido, maneuvers a skeleton sled down a run with a wireless motion-responsive controller on the Nintendo Wii.

Randy Metcalf/The Explorer

TECHNOLOGY

Nintendo Wii: Newest game to offer healthy play

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motion-sensitive controllers that mimic players' actions on a screen. According to VGchartz.com, which declares itself "the only tracking service in the world dedicated to providing point-of-sale retail estimates of worldwide videogame-buying trends to the public," Wii sales currently make up just under half of home console device sales in the world. Microsoft's XBOX 360 sales make up about 33 percent, and Sony's Playstation 3 accounts for about 22 percent.

Also, six out the 10 top-selling video games are made for Nintendo Wii.

At Sonora, the staff uses the popular game console to enhance the lives of residents who have Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

Rydecki said people who suffer with dementia have about a 15-minute window during which their attention can hold onto a concept and a concise thought process.

Due to this short-term attention span, he said, it's good to have a variety of games at hand, and Wii Sports offers many, including tennis, boxing, baseball, bowling and golf.

Sonora has a faux putting green the staff can unroll so residents can actually putt real golf balls, but Rydecki said he likes what the Nintendo Wii's golf game offers residents.



Program coordinator Scott Rydecki explains to resident James Linder that he can use the Wii's motion-responsive controller to mimic swinging a golf club, making a digital character on TV hit a golf ball.

"This one really gets them out on the field," he said. "You keep them involved and almost immersed in the golf course."

Nintendo Wii not only stimulates the minds of people with dementia, it also provides excitement for mentally sharp residents who, because of physical ailments, no longer engage in rigorous exercise.

Phil Click, who has Parkinson's disease and gets around in a wheelchair, enjoys playing Wii Winter Sports 2008.

Click said his favorite event right now is the ski jump, since it is "the only one I have yet to be able to master."

Steering through the skeleton race, Click manages not to

overturn his sled or hit the walls too many times and finishes with a time competitive with his opponent, Rydecki.

But when it comes time for Click to try out the ski jump, his character takes off from the jump fine but hasn't yet gotten the landing portion of the event figured out.

"This one really gets them out on the field. You keep them involved and almost immersed in the golf course."

Program Coordinator
Scott Rydecki

"If you want to see the guy in the game crash, I can do that for you," Click said after a staff member approached him to see how he was doing.

Due to the popularity of Nintendo Wii, Sonora at Splendido is looking to expand its video game collection.

The retirement community already has two Nintendo Wiis and plans to purchase a third as soon as the remaining portion of its building is completed and residents move in. Next is Wii Fit, Nintendo's new release, which offers players the opportunity to participate in activities such as yoga, strength training, balancing games and aerobics, all from the comfort of a living room.

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