

Playing games have their benefits

Late the other afternoon I simply required ten minutes to let off steam, and Candy Crush Saga on my iPad was my go-to escape route.

Don't tell me that I am the only one. I know that I have allies in conquering yet another challenge to the top of Candyland Mountain.

There is an appeal to the colorful game that touches all walks of life like an equal opportunity gig with its blips and beeps. Who couldn't love those fish swimming across the screen with extra bonus points for you? And the repetitive tune can drive someone near you bonkers if you don't have the sound turned off.

Sauntering the aisle on an overnight airplane flight, I've observed it sporadically illuminated by Candy Crush screens from businessmen to casual travelers.

Why, the other day I watched as someone "crushed" while shopping at Wegmans in the natural foods row. Talk about multi-tasking, here's a great example. I saw the woman in the candy aisle breezing by a few minutes later, and apparently, she had gotten her sugar-high from her game instead.

Bored? Addicted? Somewhat in the middle of both of those states?

Playing like I do for spare moments in between larger tasks is way different than someone who is addicted for hours on end. There is another life out there that could be user-friendly interacting with real people if you give it a go.

If you've read my column in the past and have learned a couple things about me, then you know that I am fortunate to have a varied daily

existence which includes exercising, reading, writing and traveling. Depending upon Candy Crush Saga is all the virtual excitement that I require.

Besides, I remind myself that I will not venture into the paying aspect of the game. It could become costly. As I said before...addiction.

Growing up, I was a big board game fan. I would spend hours on the front porch with Monopoly and checkers along with talking with my friends. My dad taught me backgammon, although I am no wiz at it to this day.

Games are healthy lessons in problem-solving, strategies and imagination, too.

I've noticed of late that pinball machines and game stations have been re-introduced into bars, restaurants. They have been fixtures forever in bowling alleys, too. Social drinking accompanied by other activities instead of just drinking for its own sake is a better approach to hanging out.

When it comes to the hokey music and sounds from Candy Crush Saga, it certainly adds to the rush one gets from them, and by no means do I play them right before bedtime.

Now just because you've read this column, please don't request me to be a virtual player partner. I'm a solo participant in the magic world of games, and I will leave it at that.