

It's your move

Local game inventor strikes a home run
with SYNCROHEARTS – a game about love

BY DOREEN HOOVER
Chronicle Staff Writer
WELLAND

Couples are finding more love and laughter in their relationships thanks to a new board game.

SYNCROHEARTS was created by Welland native Bobby O'Neal as a way to help couples create more harmony, love and intimacy in their relationships while also having a lot of fun.

"The whole point of the game is to promote more love in our lives," O'Neal said. "It touches everyone a little bit differently, but the game will give you what you need at that time. The objective of the game is to learn to love and to laugh. Love is the strongest energy there is."

The "game you love to play and play to love" takes about an hour to complete as the two players progress along the gameboard which consists of two interlocking hearts. With each roll of the die the players receive instructions to be followed. The game comes with 300 cards that fall under four categories – 4Fun, Hot Stuff, Couple and Insights.

"The 4Fun cards encourage a lot of laughter and playfulness while the Hot Stuff cards explore sexuality with the idea of tastefully improving a couple's sex life," O'Neal said. "The Couple category is meant to help the two people learn more about each other. Even if you're with someone for years, there are still things you don't know about each other. Through the game couples end up sharing more and they rediscover each other."

"The Insights are the magic behind the game," he added. "The personal messages remind us about love and the need to cherish our relationship. They are just little reminders and both people hear the message during the game so it's synchronizing the hearts."

Because there are 300 cards provided the game is never the same and can be played over and over again. Blank cards are also included so any issues that players feel need to be addressed may be inserted into the game.

O'Neal has found that women usually purchase the game with the intent to then convince their partner to join in. Once involved the men have as much fun as the women.

"Men intuitively want to be able to express their love more," O'Neal said. "Unfortunately we're not taught to do this, but men get drawn into this game. Something triggers and they open up."

"It's totally amazing to me how this game is growing – it's like it has a life of its own," he added. "It touches people and people intuitively know it promotes love."

The idea for SYNCROHEARTS came to O'Neal late one night in 2001.

He woke up at 3 a.m. and had a strong desire to meditate. He soon found himself bombarded with ideas for a relationship game.

"I work in the forestry industry in British Columbia and have no experience in relationship training, but I had the feeling I had to get up and create a relationship game," he said.

Over the next few months ideas surrounding the game continued to come to O'Neal in his dreams and

meditations.

"I even had visions of the gameboard – the universe was telling me this game had to be created so I took the steps to do it," he said. "It was a real leap of faith, but it all fell into place and the right people came along to assist at the right time. It was synchronicity how things lined up and that's how the name for the game came about."

O'Neal then tried the game out with his wife, and got family members and friends in Niagara and Dunnville to give SYNCROHEARTS a try.

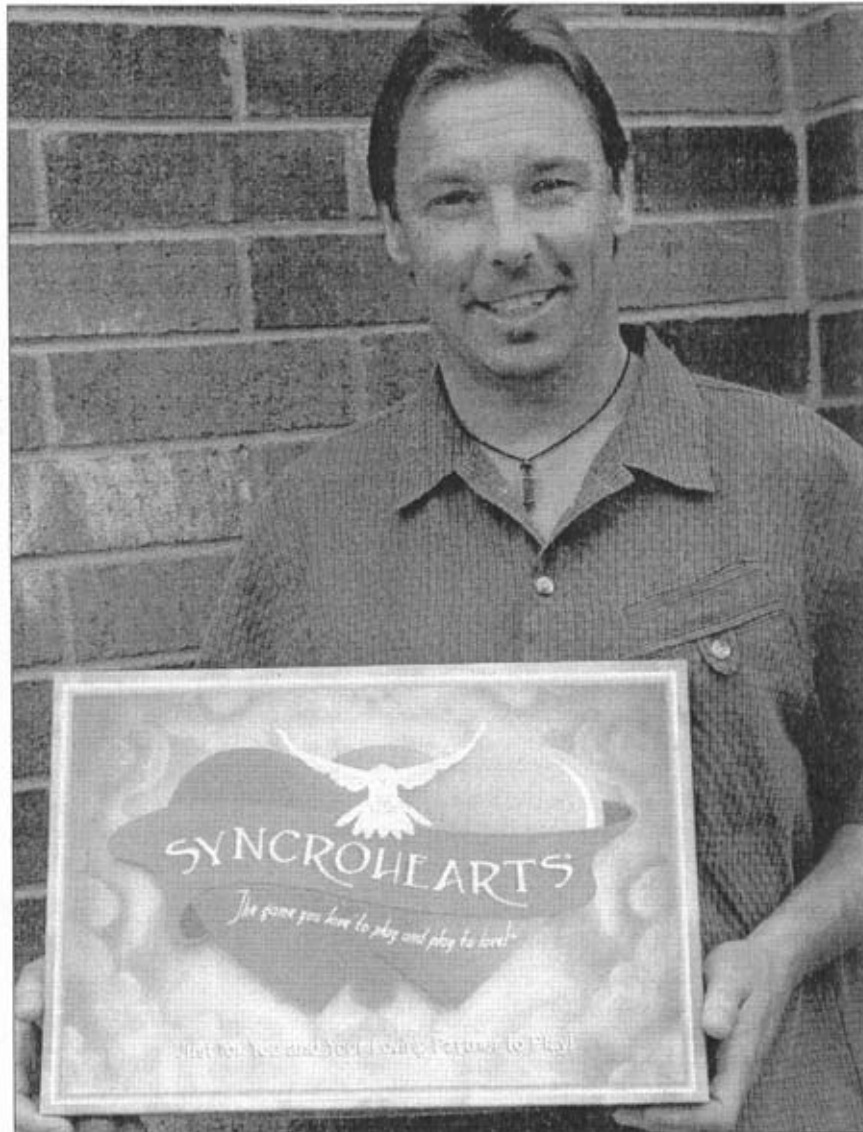
"They were all so supportive and encouraging of the game," he said. "The people in this area have given me amazing support."

While O'Neal now feels SYNCROHEARTS was "divinely inspired" he admits he initially questioned why the ideas for this game were coming to him.

"I figured that the angels had a sense of humour," he said. "But then it made sense because I'm just a regular guy who listened to his intuition to create this simple game."

"It's about trusting that intuition – listening to that little voice that is talking to us all the time," he added. "If I had listened to my ego – that negative voice – I would never have gone through with this. It's about trusting your intuition and looking for the signs."

Since its release in late 2005 SYNCROHEARTS has been receiving positive feedback and is now available in numerous stores across the country. The game sells for \$39.95. With the sale of each board game O'Neal is



Bobby O'Neal is spreading the message of love through his board game SYNCROHEARTS. The game helps couples create more love, laughter and intimacy in their relationships. DOREEN HOOVER/THE CHRONICLE

making a donation to Zajac Ranch in Mission, British Columbia which gives disabled Canadian children a chance to experience camp life.

O'Neal is currently looking for an investor to help take SYNCROHEARTS to the next level. He is also planning other games dealing with different relationships.

O'Neal is also completing work on a book about love geared toward men.

"It will help open them up and help them love easier, but in a fun way," he said. "It's a simple book to read with a powerful message of love behind it."

O'Neal said the whole experience of creating and promoting SYNCRO-

HEARTS has led to his own feelings being opened up.

"I've realized the importance of love in a relationship and of expressing emotions," he said. "I've become more compassionate for others and I've also realized not to take myself too seriously. I thoroughly love doing this. It has become my path to spread the message of love."

SYNCROHEARTS is available in Welland at Games-A-Lot in Seaway Mall and at Samurais - The Healing Place at 18 Cross St. It is also available at Bear Essentials on Main Street in Port Colborne.

Further information is available online at www.syncrohearts.com.