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Deborah Dawicki, shown with her husband Bill McArthur, moved to Solvang a little more than a year ago. Now she'd like to create a meeting ground for valley people interested in technology.

Meet other busy folks in Solvang

Newcomer looking to start two clubs

By NORA K. WALLACE
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

Deborah Dawicki's interests run a diverse gamut — from computers and technology to hiking and socializing.

Relatively new to the Santa Ynez Valley, Ms. Dawicki figures maybe others share her interests, and she's hoping to form two groups to foster those pursuits. She's seeking others to join and help organize a technology group and a social club, both geared to valley residents.

Ms. Dawicki, who moved to Solvang a little more than a year ago from the South Coast, is a senior database administrator for Medtronic Neurosurgery in Goleta. Before she moved, she helped start a chapter of the national Women in Technology group. Guest speakers would visit meetings and talk about their particular industry or specialty, and the group served as a networking avenue.

A similar model, open to men and women, is what she envisions

for the Santa Ynez Valley. While some social clubs or technology groups may already exist in the valley, Ms. Dawicki said that many seem geared toward people who are retired or do not have full-time jobs during the day.

"Because I work full-time, I wouldn't want it to impact my job too much," she explained. "I'm just concerned about it getting off the ground. I'm not sure it can. I want to see if there's interest in this."

Because the valley has a number of technology-oriented companies, Ms. Dawicki thinks a technology group is "a great opportunity to find out what is up there."

Like her South Coast venture into technology clubs, Ms. Dawicki also was involved in a social group called the Santa Barbara Congenials. Fashioned after the Newcomers Club — but with no mandatory time limit for membership — the Congenials at one time had about 70 members. It was event-oriented, and members broke off into special-interest groups, such as those interested in board games, rucking, hiking and the like.

"I figured it was a great way to meet people," she explained.

The Santa Ynez Valley Social Club, she said, would be in the similar vein.

"It is not going to be an exclusive, hard-to-get-into club," said Ms. Dawicki, a native of Massachusetts. "It's going to be normal people, all age groups, singles and married people. It'll be open up for different social activities."

She recently married co-worker Bill McArthur, but she said it's been hard to get to know people in the valley, especially since the couple commute each day. And despite her tall, blond look, she's not Danish — so she "can't join the Danish Club," she laughed.

"It's very hard to meet people. I'm a big zipper. I zip, zip, zip. I'm not the type to stop and talk to everybody. So where are you supposed to meet people — El Rancho Market? It's hard to get to know someone."

She's hopeful that other people in the community will feel the same way and will consider helping set up monthly meetings for both groups. For more information, call her at 938-6477 or e-mail debor3071@aol.com.

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