Sketch of a West Pointer - Stephen Loomer

Stephen was raised in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, a small university town that afforded many advantages not found elsewhere. He eventually attended Acadia University to study Engineering and managed to complete three years and then moved on to NS College of Art. He just couldn't master a slide rule!

After that, a few months in Europe and then he decided to see what the other coast held for him. A marathon hitch-hike got him to Vancouver. Hitch-hiking was cool and safe back then. The west coast was love at first sight!

It didn't take long to embrace the wealth of outdoor activities surrounding him. Stephen worked odd jobs to afford him the time off to play. One interesting job was on the docks where the Granville Island Market is now. Back then, the area where people now sit outside with their snacks, was his territory with his forklift. His job was to sort used boom chains before they were sent out to logging companies. He always finds it a memory jog to walk around that dock today.

That was a period when he got into hiking, mountaineering and rock climbing. His main "claims to fame" would be a few ascents of the "Squamish Chief" and that was way before it became the too commonplace thing it has become today. Pilgrimages to Yosemite were the epitome of adventure for him. “Such an amazing place!” It was during that period that he got involved with the embryotic Mountain Equipment CO-OP and helped build the first store on West 4th Avenue, one that some folks may remember. To quote Stephen, “I was kind of hanging with the guys who first conceived of it, so when they decided to open an actual store a friend and I took on the task of fitting it out. That included things like the general interior, fixtures, etc. I’d never have guessed then that it would grow into the mega business it became.”

All of the above being warm-weather activities, Stephen decided he needed something for the cold weather. Skiing seemed like it would fill the bill so off he went to another addiction. There were years he skied over 100 days a year and made a trip one summer to ski in Argentina, just for good measure.

Stephen had been painting off and on at that time, working on anything from houses to cars to airplanes. Then the flying bug hit him, so he decided to get his pilot’s license. Once he got that he needed his own plane so bought a 1946 Taylorcraft. Thing was, it was just a steel frame and a lot of boxes of parts. It took him a few years, but he finished building it and it flew! It got him off the ground, but it was extremely slow, so not very exciting. It was now time to join the aerobatic club. He had some great instructors and was soon comfortable flying straight up and down or inverted...and loved it!

The aviation connection led him into a job opportunity with the airlines. CP Air needed painters, so he signed on for 30 days which ended up lasting almost 30 years. It was definitely a different job. He likes to compare it to painting a custom car the size of an apartment building. It was also dirty, stinky, dangerous and for sure, a young man's thing. He lasted through several airlines as some changed names and others were sold. He went to work at the same place every day, just in different uniforms and a different paycheck. Near the end he got more into the computer graphics end of things and that was what he enjoyed the most.

While there he met his wife Colleen. The two of them enjoyed travel so tried to take advantage of the travel perks available to airline employees. Standby travel was relatively easy back then. One of their most fun little adventures was on the spur of the moment, hopping a flight to Hawaii, spending the night and returning the next day...great fun. They made many trips to Mexico and Central America and ended up buying property in Honduras - Caribbean waterfront. Sadly, the dream there didn't pan out, but Stephen and Colleen had a good time trying to make it work and eventually sold the property.

Meanwhile back here it seemed that the only area they hadn't indulged in was the water world. They decided to try scuba diving and that opened up a whole galaxy of things they didn't know existed. The underwater world here is nothing short of incredible and they enjoyed every dive no end. Of course, you need some kind of boat, too, so they purchased a kayak. This one folded up into a couple of bags that would fit in a car trunk...super easy to take anywhere, even as baggage on flights. They paddled and camped up and down the BC coast and took their kayak to Hawaii and Honduras. Stephen points out that you see a lot more when you move slowly.

So, there he was after all this, looking at his upcoming 60th birthday. Colleen decided he needed GOLF lessons. He gave her a bewildered look but said OK. The idea of playing golf had never crossed his mind. He says, “Maybe she thought I was ‘mature’ enough by then...who knows. So anyway, I gave it a try and the rest is history.” Obviously it was a very late-in-life start but he was sure he’d have his PGA card in no time. How hard could it be? The answer became very clear very quickly but he’s sure everyone will agree that the game gives you just enough to keep you interested and teased that you can do better. The only thing he can think of as more sinister is a gambling addiction, but at least golf is so much better for you.

His golfing career has been short but not without its sweet moments. The Golf Gods have smiled on him and granted him 5 holes-in-one...not all pretty, he admits. That's 3 at Langara, one on #8 and two on #12. Two at Fraserview - #3 and #13. “I’ve got to say the shot on Fraserview’s #3 was probably the best shot I've ever made, and boy did it feel good! It was smooth off the club and headed directly for the hole and straight in...slam dunk. The cup had filler in it so how it didn't bounce back out is nothing short of miraculous.” He says, “Obviously the Gods are in control of holes-in-one and skill doesn't seem to be a factor.” The lowest he’s managed to get his handicap was 18 and admits he hasn't seen that in a long time.

As for courses in the city, Fraserview would be his favourite, but he enjoys them all. He and Colleen have spent some time in the Scottsdale area and just kind of like most of the courses they played, for their variety.

Stephen’s golf clubs joined him for a few trips back home to Nova Scotia where he got in several rounds at different courses. The "local" courses were fun, but the highlights were Cabot Cliffs and Highland Links. He got lucky and by chance got on The Cliffs before it was officially opened. “What a phenomenal layout and we were blessed with a sunny, windless day. Highland Links was a magical trip down memory lane on an amazing course that has stood the test of time.”

Stephen’s introduction to the West Point Golf Club is interesting. He and Colleen were playing Langara and got paired up with Ed Bobinski and his lovely wife, Norma. During the round, course marshal Joe told him he ought to ask Ed about the West Point group he played with. “Ed filled me in, and the rest is history. It's been great being in the club and I’ve enjoyed meeting and playing with all the characters involved...great stuff!”

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