

## Sketch of a West Pointer – Dave Thomas



Dave's father was in the Royal Navy, so the family lived at navy bases all over what was formerly called the British Empire: Inverness, Scotland; Sliema, Malta; Chatham, England; Auckland, New Zealand, and Portsmouth, England, where Dave was born. He figures he went to 15 different schools!

On graduation from the last one, Dave worked as an electronics engineer in England for a few years until he and his wife, Jenny, were lured to Ottawa in 1969 to begin a 25-year electronics career with Computing Devices of Canada. Dave retired from the company twice, the first time in 1972 when he and Jenny bummed around North America and Europe for a year in what else, a VW van! Money ran out so he had to get re-hired and eventually ran one of their four divisions, specializing in displays used in equipment of various NATO forces. His second and final retirement from the company was in 1997.

Dave is an avid skier, tennis and squash player, but stayed away from golf until he retired, knowing he would get hooked and that would be the end of his family life! However, by 1997 his two children had left home and Jenny was busy travelling across Canada and the US with her consulting business. So with only the dog to keep him company, there was no reason to dally further. He admits that although it's difficult to play golf in Ottawa for more than 6 months of the year, it is a very golf-friendly area. There were lots of courses and green fees were less than \$20. During the winter months there were excellent simulators where he could play famous courses from around the world. What could be better than having a beer between swings on Torrey Pines!

Dave and Jenny's two children were living on the west coast. In 2005, their daughter pregnant, Jenny said that she was moving out west and told Dave he could come if he wanted! Originally reluctant to leave Ottawa, he weakened, and now embraces the west coast life style. He emigrated to get away from damp sunless climes, but concedes that -35 degrees does have its limitations.

According to Dave there is an advantage to starting golf later in life; playing partners are mostly getting worse and hopefully, you are getting better! He has maintained a handicap around 20 but thinks some lessons might bring improvement. He has scored one hole-in-one, on Langara's second hole, about 5 years ago. Unfortunately, it was not a West Point event so has not made it to the official Club annals. Dave recalls a memorable event that involved friend Nick Atkinson mis-hitting his second shot on the difficult 10th hole at Fraserview – they watched his worm-burner run the last 60 yards into the hole for an eagle!

Dave joined West Point Golf Club in 2006 and remarks that it is a fabulous organization, comprised of a band of happy men! After a while, Dave asked me if there was anything he could do to help the Club. He joined the Captain's Table in 2010 while I was the Vice-Captain, and then assumed the important role of VC – Draw for two years. After a break from the Board, he returned as our Social Director in 2017. Dave has capably coordinated our Putting Jamboree since 2014.

His golf hero is Bubba Watson. He loves the way his golf is so unconventional and his swing nothing like any instructor would promote. In addition, when he won a recent event, Bubba gave his Mom a big kiss, as opposed to embracing a trophy wife and perfect precocious children! Three favourite courses are Cloverdale in Ottawa, Pebble Beach (played on a simulator during an Ottawa winter) and McCleery.

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Dave is still keen on skiing, but only cross country these days. His big hobby is food – both the cooking of it, and the eating – which is why Italy and France are preferred places to visit. However, he plans to spend more time exploring BC in the future.

We'll end with this story from Dave: Four ladies were playing golf and while on the 6<sup>th</sup> tee, saw a man taking a pee behind a tree near the 5<sup>th</sup> green. One lady said, "That's disgusting! I tell you something – even though I can't see much of him – that's not my husband." Another lady remarked, "I tell you something else – he's not even a club member!"

*Prepared June 2018*