

Sketch of a West Pointer: Jim Trotter

Whether you are a long-time or relatively new member, you will have noticed the quiet gentleman working at the Captain's Table. Jim Trotter has been volunteering in this role for 9 years (since 2008) and has been one of our most reliable and efficient scorekeepers and taskmasters!

Jim didn't start playing golf until he reached retirement age, thinking it would be a good thing to try! He began at Eaglequest (Musqueam) and later progressed to McCleery and other public courses. He recorded his scores and eventually calculated a handicap. He felt it would be nice to have an 18 handicap (easy arithmetic in getting the net on each hole), but never achieved it. The lowest he got was 22 and is currently just over 30. Don Clancy introduced him to West Point in 2005 and Jim joined with a group of 10 (Ron Babcock, Brian Ciccozzi, Lorne Lindsay, Jim Mackie, Don Rotherham, Jim Selley, Dave Stephens, Garry Watson and Bill Wilson).

Jim has shot his age on executive courses, but claims those don't count! Although never experiencing the luck or good fortune himself, Jim has played with golf companions who have had a hole-in-one: his wife Ann, at Canoa Hills in Tucson (also ladies' KP hole that day) and former West Point member Michael Alms (8th hole at Langara). Ann and Jim were paired up one day at Langara with Norm Groman (weatherman with CTV years ago) and his wife. At the par-3 14th, all four hit nice tee shots, but when they reached the green there were only 3 balls visible – Norm's was in the hole.

He recalls another memorable round that occurred in his first or second season with West Point. He made the final of a net match play tournament at Langara (B or C flight) and was playing against Dave Fairweather, who was giving him a few strokes. After 14 holes, Jim was 4 up (i.e. dormie 4), but managed to lose the next four holes and a putting play-off. Jim remembers that he did not try to throw the match, but subconsciously felt that he did not deserve to win over such a nice golfer and gentleman as Dave.

Jim's three favourite golf courses are the local ones, and feels we are very fortunate to have such nice public courses. He likes to gaze around on the 14th fairway at Fraserview, for example, and think how lucky we are to have all this space just for four golfers, and maybe the odd coyote or eagle. His most memorable course is a little 12-hole course on the Isle of Arran in Scotland – spectacular scenery – and any of a few in New Zealand.

Jim used to play tennis, classical guitar, do a little hiking and cycling (cycled to UBC every day in the summer), was a jogger for about 20 years, and especially liked skiing at Whistler (65 days in the year he was 65). He still skis a little at age 82. Nowadays Jim has become an avid crossword solver (Globe cryptic and NY Times). I recall the days at the Captain's Table when Jim and Paul Levy busily solved difficult puzzles while waiting for golfers to come in with their scores.

Born in Dumfries, Scotland (home of the poet Robert Burns), Jim moved to central Scotland in his teens, attended school in Stirling, and then the University of Glasgow (1950-1957), studying Chemistry. He came to Canada to work at National Research Council in Ottawa, and finally to Vancouver in 1960 to teach Chemistry at UBC for the next 38 years. He loved his time at UBC, saying it never felt like going to work. There was also the opportunity to take leaves to study and teach elsewhere, so visits of a few months up to a year were spent in Oxford, Cambridge, Zurich, Christchurch (NZ), Ottawa, Edinburgh, Guelph (Ontario), Hong Kong and Glasgow.

Jim and Ann were married one week before sailing for Canada in 1957, have two sons and five lovely grand-daughters. Vacations could often be added on to attendance at scientific conferences, so Jim and Ann visited various places in the US, Europe, Japan and Australia. In recent years, favourite vacation spots are Palm Desert and Hawaii.

Jim admires almost everyone who plays golf, and very seldom encounters a golfer he does not feel comfortable with. He says that the game seems to make us all humble and likeable.

Prepared by Lorne Lindsay - May 2016