



It has often been said that if you really want to know a man, play a round of golf with him. Bellevue Club member Dave Butterfield, who has been playing golf for nearly 60 years, couldn't agree more.

"Golf teaches honesty, judgment and perseverance. These skills are not only good to apply on the golf course, but in one's own life," says Dave. "It really shows what kind of person you are dealing with and how he treats others."

From the age of 10, golf has held a special place in Dave's heart. But for many years he wasn't able to pursue his passion because "life" got in the way.

"I always wanted to pursue my golf game to the fullest extent, but found it wasn't convenient to be on the golf course on a regular basis because of other responsibilities requiring my attention," he says.

Born into a military family in 1935, Dave's early years were spent in Annapolis, Maryland, where his dad was on the faculty at the U.S. Naval Academy. When he was 6, his mother passed away. Shortly after her death, Dave's aunt moved in to take care of him, his two brothers, Ralph and Dan, and younger sister Linda.

"When my mother died in 1941, my father was away commanding various surface ships in the Pacific during World War II," remembers Dave. "It was a very difficult time for our family."

After World War II, the family moved to La Jolla, California, a little town north of San Diego. It was here that Dave got his first taste of golf.

"I was 10 years old when we moved to La Jolla," remembers Dave. "Dad had joined the La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club. Although the

surfing and tennis at the beach

club were great, I spent most of my time on the attached golf course."

To earn some extra money, Dave became a golf caddy at the club. He says he learned how to play by observing the players. "In between caddy jobs, I had free access to the golf course," recalls Dave. "It is amazing what you can learn by just watching and observing someone. While there are many things a person needs to know in order to become a good golfer, those early years of experimenting with the sport really helped me shape my game later in life."

Unfortunately, after Dave's father retired from the military in 1951, the family was uprooted to Claremont, California. Shortly after settling in Claremont,

THE

GAMER

OF LIFE

By Pam Knepper

Dave's father was promoted to sales manager for the Reynolds Aluminum Company in Seattle.

"We had calculated that we had moved a total of 18 times since my birth at Annapolis," says Dave. "However, Dad decided that Linda and I should stay behind to attend private schools. So he enrolled me at the Webb School of California, which was an all-boys boarding school, and Linda went to an all-girls boarding school."

Dave credits the rigid academic requirements at Webb School for his ability to pass the difficult Naval Academy entrance exams.

"I was a pretty wild kid who just wanted to play and have fun," recalls Dave. "The Webb School wasn't into having fun. They wanted you to do well and work hard. I was never quite able to grasp the idea that if I had only played by their rules my experience would have been much more enjoyable."

Dave applied to West Point and the Naval Academy and was accepted at both. He decided to attend the Naval Academy because his dad and uncle were graduates and his brother Dan was already attending the school. Dave thought this would be a great way for him to spend time with Dan and have some fun. Unfortunately, he couldn't have been more wrong.

Although Dave was convinced that he could turn the next four years at the academy into the fun and games like he and his brother had enjoyed as youngsters when they had lived there before, he was quickly educated into the extremely strict measures used at the academy to weed out the weak and undisciplined first year students.

"The Naval Academy has new students arrive at the beginning of summer so they have time to 'break you in,'" chuckled Dave. "I quickly learned that 'breaking in' meant doing push-ups over puddles of water, jogging around wherever you had to go, standing at attention for half an hour on one foot and obeying without question or suffering the consequences."

To make matters worse, Dave's high hopes of having fun with Dan were quickly dashed.

"Since Dan was two years ahead of me, I had to obey any order he

gave me," remembers Dave. "My brother and his roommates took great delight in this fact and they used devilish and creative imaginations to have entertainment at my expense."

"This may sound like cruel and unusual punishment, but I was forced to take and obey any order and to think about it later," says Dave. "It was fundamental that those serving in the military learn this rule because it might save your life some day."

When he was not taking orders, Dave did manage to work on his golf game, tennis skills and compete in gymnastics. But he says his time at the academy also taught him respect, integrity, cooperation and the ability to make good decisions.

"These are all characteristics of good leaders and that is what the Naval Academy does best, molds future leaders," says Dave. "The academy literally saved my life. It took a kid who only wanted to have fun and helped me to focus on a productive, rewarding and responsible life."

After getting his naval commission in 1957, Dave reported for his first assignment onboard a destroyer, which was being refitted in Yokosuka, Japan.

"My first job was weapons officer," recalls Dave. "Although I was entirely new to the program, it didn't take long for me to get into the swing of things and get my sea legs."

For two years his patrols on the destroyer took Dave all over the western Pacific and into such exotic ports as Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the Philippines.

"I enjoyed surface ship duty, but I knew the real excitement was in submarines," Dave says. "After being accepted into submarine school in 1959, I knew that I was starting out in an entirely different kind of Navy life."

Dave served onboard two different submarines for a total of six years. He served in many capacities and eventually had his taste of being the executive officer. It was a rigorous life, without the luxuries that are normally taken for granted.

"We were allowed one shower a week, whether we wanted it or not," jokes Dave. "I learned to be satisfied with the '30 second' Navy shower.

Everyone on shore knew we were submariners because of our unique aroma."

In 1965, Dave realized that he had to get some deep draft surface ship experience if he wanted to continue up the promotion ladder. He was assigned to serve in Vietnam as the third officer onboard the heavy cruiser, USS St. Paul.

"During my time in Vietnam serving on the St. Paul, I really began to see life from a different perspective," says Dave. "It is amazing what a war will do to make you realize how precious life really is."



One incident, in particular, that still stands out in Dave's mind was when the USS St. Paul was hit by enemy shore fire.

"Our main objective was to get close to the shore and fire as many broadside salvos with our big eight-inch guns as we could," recounts Dave. "We were doing that one evening in the Gulf of Tonkin in North Vietnam when the enemy zeroed in on our salvo flashes and managed to hit our ship with several of their own 155 mm salvos.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Navy Commander Dave Butterfield in 1967, serving as third officer on a heavy cruiser in Vietnam.

ABOVE: Onboard the USS St. Paul in North Vietnam in 1967. Dave, pictured far left, shows his commanding officers a nut from one of the ship's broken propellers, which he then fixed, saving the ship from enemy fire.

It was when we tried to make a hasty withdrawal that we realized one of our four propellers had been damaged."

Realizing something needed to be done quickly, Dave drew upon his submarine experience and volunteered to dive under the boat to check the condition of the damaged propeller to see if it could be repaired. After scuba diving in snake-infested waters for an hour, fortunately, Dave was able to fix the propeller problem, enabling the cruiser to move out to sea before the enemy attacked again. For his honorable efforts, the Navy awarded Dave with the Navy Commendation Medal.

"The skills I learned at the Naval Academy gave me the courage to step forward that day in Vietnam," says Dave. "I will be forever indebted to those who taught me what it takes to step up to the plate when needed."

In 1968, Dave left the Navy in order to try and save a failing marriage.

"Marriage while in the military was extremely difficult when I was at sea for so much of the time," Dave admits. "After the divorce, I poured myself into work as a salesman for EG&G, a nuclear contractor in Los Angeles.

Dave also used the Veterans Administration Education Benefits package to get his commercial aviation pilot's license. With a good job and a plane to fly, he was able to travel all over the country for both business and pleasure. Eventually, Dave was promoted as an EG&G sales manager in the Washington, D.C. area.

"By that time I had a fleet of three airplanes at my disposal," remembers Dave. "I was paid to fly golfers and vacationers down into the Bahamas for quick weekend trips. Of course they paid all expenses, including my many golf outings."

It was during this wild lifestyle that Dave met his future wife, Barbara.



"When I met Barbara she was working as a speech pathologist for the Fairfax County School District," says Dave. "She was the perfect person that I had always hoped to meet."

Barbara grew up in Spokane and had always wanted to return to Washington State. So when Dave proposed marriage and asked her where she wanted to live, Barbara immediately told him she wanted to move to Seattle.

Shortly after their marriage in 1978, the couple piled into one of Dave's airplanes and moved to the Seattle area. They settled in a home in the Newport Shores community and started a family. In 1979, daughter Anne was born. And in 1982, son Erik joined the family.

"I remembered how much I enjoyed the La Jolla Beach Club when growing up," Dave recalls. "So I joined the Bellevue Athletic Club as soon as it opened its doors." During this time, Dave began playing tennis at the Club and golfing on many courses in the Pacific Northwest.

Dave also worked selling mobile MRIs and CAT scans to hospitals on the West Coast. He loved being involved with cutting-edge technology and flying his airplane for business to any of the 13 states in his territory. Eventually, he was ready for a change.

"It was a revelation for me. I was sitting in the hot tub at the Club when I realized golf was my one true passion," Dave fondly remembers. "It was always an

area that I wanted to pursue further, but I simply didn't because life had gotten in the way."

It was too late to golf on the competitive circuit, so Dave contacted the United States Golf Teachers Federation (USGTF) to apply for one of their courses. In February 2004, Dave became a professional golf instructor.

With certification in hand, the next step was finding a place to teach. Dave started looking around the Bellevue community and noticed that Crossroads Golf Course was in serious need of a golfing professional.

"Here was a nice golf course in



my own backyard desperately needing someone who could teach golf lessons to the general public," explained Dave. "So in the spring of 2004, I approached the city of Bellevue to put forward my ideas for installing a driving range and teaching golf lessons at the city's Crossroads Golf Course."

The first thing Dave had to do was register his golf business with the city. Next he chose the name "Golf n Go" because of his previous flying and golfing activities.

During the summer of 2004, Dave taught more than 600 half-hour golf lessons at Crossroads, sometimes for 12 to 14 hours a day, seven days a week.

"It was a lot of work, but it was definitely the best experience of my life," says Dave. "I particularly enjoyed teaching the children."

While teaching at Crossroads, Dave met Gordy Graybeal, Director of Golf for The First Tee of Greater



ABOVE: A group of First Tee kids at Crossroads Golf Course smile for the camera with Dave and Gordy Graybeal, Director of Golf for The First Tee of Greater Seattle.

LEFT: Megan Hildebrand learns about the game of golf.

BELOW: Dave gives Bellevue Club member Malcolm Hickey a few pointers, as wife Mary looks on.

OPPOSITE PAGE, RIGHT: Dave and Barbara, along with their children, Erik and Anne, grab a bite at Splash.

OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT: Dave and his son, Erik skiing in Vale, Colorado in 1994.

Seattle (www.thefirstteeseattle.org). With Gordy's help, Dave introduced The First Tee program to Eastside children during the summer of 2004.

"The First Tee is a World Golf Foundation initiative that is dedicated to providing young people of all backgrounds with an opportunity to develop, through golf and character education, life-enhancing values,

such as honesty, integrity and sportsmanship," explained Dave. "It is a wonderful organization that is doing great things for kids."

Impressed by the organization's mission, during the

fall of 2004, Dave began a full-fledged campaign to make Crossroads the next First Tee location in Western Washington.

"I knew about the great work The First Tee was doing in the Seattle area and I felt it would be wonderful

if the organization could have a presence on the Eastside."

In May, the city of Bellevue and The First Tee of Greater Seattle finalized making the Crossroads Golf Course a full-fledged facility. Dave is currently serving as facility coordinator and golf coach.

"We offer three classes every day, five days a week," says Dave. "I could never help that many children learn golf and life skills without the support of The First Tee program."

Along with teaching the fundamentals of the game of golf, Dave has taken classes from The First Tee headquarters in Florida that enable him to teach the Par level of The First Tee life skills curriculum to kids. This level focuses on fundamental communication and self-management skills.

"God has truly blessed me and my family," says Dave. "I now have the opportunity to give back through the children by teaching them the game of golf and instilling in them some life skills along the way. I may not have had the time before, but this time around I am not letting anything get in my way."

