

This monthly article highlights one of our branch members. We hope that you enjoy knowing a little more about your fellow members and the interesting life they have had. If you have someone you would like to nominate or if you would like to help author an article, please email the editor, Ron Nakamoto, at ron.nakamoto@yahoo.com.

FRED SCHWALBACH - Bocce Co-chair



Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act 3, Scene 3:

Dogberry, a bumbling constable, instructs his watchman, Verges, to be extra vigilant because of the important wedding in the morning.

Dogberry: Are you good men and true?

Verges: Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.



Fred is on the left as Verges

Dogberry and Verges provide welcome comic relief to the serious plot of love, betrayal and court politics in what is considered one of Shakespeare's best comedic plays written in 1598.

Fred Schwalbach played Verges, sidekick to Dogberry as part of the Palo Alto Players repertoire in Mountain View, CA (*Editor's note: now known as TheatreWorks*). Fred was 19 years old, loved life and theater as a single, carefree and happy soul living in the Bay Area. Recently discharged from the U.S. Navy, Fred acted in plays such as *My Sister Eileen*, *Rain*, and various one-man Shakespeare plays.

Fred was born in San Francisco in Sept 1935 at the old Stanford Hospital. Fred's early life was joyous and eventful. When he was two years old, Fred was in the sixth car to cross the Golden Gate Bridge when it first opened on May 27, 1937. Around the summer of 1937 Fred won "The Cutest Baby" award in the San Francisco Lions Club baby contest held at the St. Francis Hotel. He recalls walking around in his cowboy outfit as his parents visited the Worlds Fair on Treasure Island that same year. (*Editor's note: The Golden Gate International Exposition was a World's Fair celebrating, among other things, the city's two newly built bridges. The San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge opened in 1936 and the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937.*) His parents owned two restaurants in San Francisco, which they eventually sold in 1940 to move to San Carlos to open the "Horseshoe Café". Fred went to kindergarten in San Carlos and matriculated to St Joseph's Military Academy in Belmont, CA. He boxed and played piano throughout his elementary school years.

In 1946 Fred's father took him to the first All American Football Conference (AAFC) held at Kezar Stadium in 1946. (*Editor's note: The AAFC was a professional football league that challenged the established National Football League (NFL) from 1946–1949 but was ultimately unable to sustain itself in competition with the NFL. Three of its teams were admitted to the NFL: the San Francisco 49ers, the Cleveland Browns and the Baltimore Colts.*) Fred saw such stars as Otto Graham of the Cleveland Browns and Elroy "Crazy Legs" Hirsh of the Chicago Rockets.

In the summer of 1947 while he was in the 6th grade, his dad took him on a 10,000-mile trip to New York and back in a 1929 Model A Ford car. (*Editor's note: The Model A was the successor to the Model T. The Tudor model sold for \$500.*) He saw Joe DiMaggio play at Yankee stadium against the Chicago White Sox. His father wanted to stop by and visit his mother and stepfather. Whether it was closure or destiny soon after they got back Fred's father passed away from a brain hemorrhage. Fred was 11 years old.

Back in the Bay Area, Fred attended Junípero Sierra High School for two years and played quarterback for the Junior Varsity freshman and sophomore teams. One of his classmates was John Robinson (*Editor's note: John would become the future coach of the Los Angeles Rams and University of Southern California Trojans*). He transferred to Sequoia High School in his junior year where most of his St. Joseph's Military Academy friends were. He continued boxing as well as playing in football, track and basketball. Fred remembers running the mile in 4:54 and placing 3rd in the Peninsula Athletic League. He also recalls one of his boxing matches being televised from the San

Francisco Boy's club in 1950 where he was paired against a much older teenager. When he was about 16 yrs. old he along with a friend went to a 49ers- Chicago Bears game. Fred took his mother's box camera and walked through the west end of the tunnel to sit on the Bear's bench. He recounts; "What a feeling! I was sitting on the same bench that Coach George Halas sat on. On the same bench sat the "3L's" referring to Quarterbacks Sid Luckman, Johnny Lujack and Bobby Layne. Also, on the Bears team was George Blanda who played longer than any other NFL player. What a thrill!" (*Editor's note: George Halas was one of the original founders of the NFL initially, playing, then coaching, then owning the Chicago Bears. He is credited with recruiting the top quarterbacks and training them to effectively employ the "T" formation against their opponents. Under Halas, the Chicago Bears dominated the NFL and became known as the "Monsters of the Midway".*)

After graduating, Fred joined the Navy. For almost two years he boxed in the Navy and won the Navy Regional trophy. When he was discharged, Fred enrolled at San Mateo Junior College for two years and received an AA degree in English. He loved acting but it did not pay the bills so he worked for the Post Office in Redwood City and later Menlo Park for about six years.

Fred met his wife Barbara in a bar in Redwood City. He stopped by the bar after a play to wind down and his bartender friend introduced the two as he was about to leave. They were married in June 1965 in Jacksonville, Illinois and then went on a 9,000-mile trip for their honeymoon. One of the highlights of his trip was his visit to Niagara Falls and to the 1964-65 World's Fair in New York. As marriage and a family often does, Fred settled down and worked for Safeway for the next thirty-one years as part of the United Federation of Culinary Workers Union. Fred and Barbara have lived in Cupertino for almost 42 years and have three sons, one daughter and six grandchildren.

Fred says; "I've been in SIR for 19 years. Joe MacIntosh sponsored me. I have a love of chess and have been playing for over 65 years. I love poetry and have written many poems with my best titled 'Shakespeare's Lament'. I'm also working on a novel about my trip with my dad titled *The Trip of a Lifetime*."

Fred's parting message to his fellow SIRs is a challenge. "I have a lot of movies and am a real movie buff. I also have a great affinity for sports and would match my knowledge on movies and sports against anybody." Next time you see Fred give him a challenge and maybe he will get a free glass of wine out of it.

At 80 years young, you will be hard-pressed to find Fred sitting around. He serves as Co-chair of the Bocce Ball activity, walks the golf courses, bowls every Tuesday and recently signed up to play Bridge every Wednesday. His favorite saying when he bowls and his ball nears the strike position is a loud "THERE IT IS !!!" as his arms go straight up as if to signify a field goal. It is a treat to see either his sour face when he misses or

his big smile when he strikes. Here's wishing Fred many more "THERE IT IS!!!" in bowling and in life.