

## MEET BILL SCHELSTRATE



I grew up in Rock Island, Illinois, the proud home of Augustana College and part of an area also referred to as the Quad-Cities. I was raised the 5<sup>th</sup> of 6 children in a very Catholic family. However, I had a very diverse education in that I attended public school kindergarten through 7<sup>th</sup> grade, then Catholic school 8<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>, then Augustana College which is Lutheran. At Augustana I received my BA in Psychology. For graduate school, I went back to public school where I graduated with a MA in Counseling from Sangamon State University in Springfield, Illinois (now known as University of Illinois at Springfield). Later I graduated from Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California with a diploma in Russian, received a certificate in computer system applications from USC computer training center and much later a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh (a Catholic university).

Folks often find my work history interesting. You might say I was never afraid to roll up my sleeves and work hard. I started working at 15. Prior to my professional careers I worked as an usher, dishwasher, prep-cook, cook, corridor adviser, child care counselor, spot-welder, waiter, desk clerk, sales clerk, bartender, orderly, and billing clerk.

Following graduate school and during my 4-year enlistment in the U.S. Army, I served as a Russian Voice Intercept Operator ,eavesdropping on Russian troops in East Germany (obviously during the Cold War while the Iron Curtain was active).

While living in Germany I studied German in my spare time. With that background, I was hired by the National Security Agency, given more Russian training and set to work transcribing various Russian recordings. (Transcribing, that's listening to Russian and typing in Russian.) Sadly, it was not at all satisfying, many of the tapes were already five years old. I went back to night school to computer programming and this led to a 17-year career as a programmer-developer with Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

When the legacy mainframe computer systems that I supported started being replaced, I was given a package and left for nursing school at 50 years of age. I attended Duquesne's accelerated BSN program and completed it in 12 very rigorous months. Retiring from nursing after 7 years, I decided to just work for fun. I drove and narrated on the Sabino Canyon shuttle for 2 years, drove as an Uber and Lyft driver for 2 years, sold Toyotas for about 5 weeks and called it quits. Phew!

I started learning bridge when I was 11 years old. My parents both took bridge lessons from the local YMCA and upon returning each evening enlisted my younger sister and me to complete the foursome. As they learned so did we. It was the Goren style and very unsophisticated. My recollection is that every bid was natural -- no conventions whatsoever. Later in my 40's I encouraged a friend to take lessons with me through the park's programs in Northern Virginia. Our instructor encouraged us to play in a local tournament, a 49-er game, and we placed, earning about .28 master points. I was hooked but due work and studies had about a 10-year hiatus from bridge and only got serious upon arrival in Tucson in 2005. I found the Adobe bridge club through a

Google search and have been an active member ever since. Any questions?