

MEET the BUTTEMINER (John Bowsher)



I was born in Denver, CO raised in Butte America (MT), the Richest Hill on Earth. Butte has a storied history of mining particularly in copper, hence its nickname. Coincidentally, I'm the middle part of 3 generations of Mining Engineers. My family was originally from Pueblo, CO and my Dad was a graduate of the Colorado School of Mines. After graduating from high school, not sure of what to do, I enrolled at the local college, Montana School of Mines (now Montana Tech) in Butte, initially in basic studies. The Vietnam war was in full swing and it was either enroll in school or enroll in the military, school being the best option until I figured out what I wanted to do.

My older brother Randy had returned from military duty in the Army the previous year and was also enrolled at school in General Studies prior to transferring to the University in Missoula. Our parents, particularly our mother, played party bridge socially but had never played any duplicate. I had never played bridge, but my brother had played some in the Army. At school, we found a group of guys who also

played some bridge and began playing in the Student Union Building between classes. This developed into a continuously running bridge game either in the SUB or the fraternity house.

In 1966, a fellow student asked us if we had ever played duplicate (no) and invited us to play in one of the local games downtown. The rest, as they say, is history and a group of 6 to 8 of us began playing duplicate. In Butte at the time you could find up to 5 games a week. After the games we would go to the local pub and review all the played hands from memory (much more theirs than mine). My only duplicate bridge notoriety from this was that one of my playing partners was Jerry Fleming, who went on to become a President of the ACBL. The other significant event was that the extensive bridge playing got me on Academic Probation, re-classified 1A, and a draft notice in 1967.

I enlisted in the Army in the Spring of 1967, and was sent to Ft Lewis, WA, then to Microwave School at Ft Monmouth, NJ; USTRATCOM at Ft Huachuca, AZ and finished my time in Thailand with the 1st Sig Brigade. I never played bridge during this time, only Pinochle.

After returning to Butte, I worked a year at the Smelter, and began playing duplicate bridge again with many of my former mates, enrolling in Mining Engineering at the College. I played during my college years, but not with the intensity of my previous tenure at the school. I was also now married to Genie and two of our 3 children (Elizabeth and John) were born in Butte. Priorities change.

Upon graduating in 1976, our family moved to Silver Bell, AZ and I took a position with ASARCO. While in Silver Bell our other son Jason was born. After assignments in various capacities at Silver Bell, Mission Unit (Green Valley), and the Ray Unit (Kearny, AZ), I retired for the first time

in 2001, and began my 2nd career as the Logistics Manager at Rincon Research in Tucson, finally retiring in 2016.

My children are all graduates of the U of A (the boys, of course in Mining Engineering), and we have 6 grandchildren.

From the time of my graduation until 2019, I did not play party bridge or duplicate. Time and opportunity didn't permit (although I did get an invite to play at Streams from Cindy Shoemaker). After retiring, my brother Randy picked duplicate up again and eventually became a Life Master. Planning a trip to Arizona in 2019, he kept pushing for us to play while he was visiting. I contacted Cindy who gave me a list of available games, and I contacted Adobe. From the very start, the people at Adobe have been friendly, helpful, and welcoming. I continue to play, and because of the pandemic and BBO play, I'm able to play with my Brother at least twice a week. Other than family, my other outlet is photography and I do have photos on my site at **TheButteminer.SmugMug.com**.