

MEET RAM (Sundaresan Ram)



I was born and raised in Chennai, India. As the oldest of three boys, I was expected to “set the bar” for my siblings to follow. Neither of my parents got to college. My dad finished at the top of his class in high school, but had to join the military to support his parents and siblings. My mom had just finished junior high, when she got married. My parents were determined that this would never happen to their children – they scrimped and saved, so they could send all of us to a private school (with an English-based curriculum) from Kindergarten. My dad’s only skill was the Morse code, so he decided to work on ships as a Marconi (radio officer) – he would be gone for six to eight months at a time, so he could earn enough to send us to school, and support his family. I am so grateful to them for all the sacrifices they made: my brothers and I owe everything we have in life to their selfless commitment and love.

I loved school, and especially enjoyed reading and math. I had many inspirational teachers in high school: they sowed in me the love for teaching that would eventually blossom into my career. After finishing

high school early, I pursued an engineering degree. It was a five-year program, and almost all the students lived on campus in dorms. During my first year, the campus shut down for three weeks due to a Labor Union strike. There were no classes, but we still got our meals every day, so it was a three week vacation. One of our classmates introduced us to bridge: about twenty of us got together, and started experimenting with Goren, Culbertson, Blue Club and Precision Club for the next 3 weeks. There were at least 3 tables of bridge in someone's room or the other, 24 hours a day, for the entire three week period. It was heaven! Classes resumed, the strike ended, but our foray into bridge had just begun. Six of us got together, and formed a team. We played together for the next five years, representing our College, and competing in Regional and National events. Suffice to say, I learned more about the Italian Blue Team and the Dallas Aces than Metallurgy.

My parents knew nothing about bridge – they just knew it was a card game. They were worried because I had an uncle who was addicted to gambling, and they thought I would squander my life away. It took a long time for them to accept my fascination for the game.

After completing my Engineering degree, I was not yet ready to go to work. I entered into an MBA program (majoring in Marketing). I ran a bridge class for students on campus. It was during my MBA that I met my wife (she was a year junior to me). Three years later, we had a grand wedding. Four weeks later, we flew to the US (via Paris) to start our postgraduate studies at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. We both graduated in the summer of 1985, and joined the School of Business at University of Arizona as faculty members.

In the mid-80's, I played a few duplicate games in Tucson at the club run by John Puscas. Life then got in the way of bridge. We had to pay attention to our careers and family, so I took a 25 year hiatus from bridge. Our two sons are native Tucsonans, now gainfully employed in the Silicon Valley. My wife is still going strong in her 36th year as a

professor at the University of Arizona. I retired in 2016, after a fulfilling academic career at the Thunderbird School of International Management in Phoenix. It was then that Sunny Bal introduced me to the afternoon Open game at his club.

I was delighted to return to the game I love dearly. But, I knew none of the modern conventions: 5-card majors, transfers, 2/1 bidding, RKC etc. First, Sunny Bal and Ray Grady taught me their version of Precision. Then, Bill Howard was the first partner to teach me the basics of 2/1. Finally, Marty Schiff took me under his wing, and taught me most of everything I know about the modern game. I am extremely grateful to Marty for his (ongoing) mentorship. In the first couple of years, I had the good fortune of playing on a regular basis with several wonderful players: Ann Economidy, Jared Boulds, Tim Tilton, Nic Minenko, Jeff Lesser, Mike Levy, George Good, Greg West, Max Limbocker, Ron Vickery, and Steve Maltzman: I have learnt several nuances of the modern game from each one of them. My thanks are also due to all my other Adobe partners, with whom I have enjoyed the game.

I am so glad to be a part of the Adobe family. I have served as the Treasurer of Adobe Bridge Club since the Fall of 2017. I hope to give back to the game (and our community) by continuing to teach classes, and help our club become a welcome haven for all bridge players. I look forward to seeing you all, face-to-face, at the bridge table soon!