



To the Unisys Blue Bell Retirees' Group from the VIP Club Board:

Greetings: In our May newsletter, we reprinted Joe La Viola's President's Message announcing the dissolution of the UBBRG at the end of 2016 {see page 2}. The reprint was because some of our members have Blue Bell ties, just as some UBBRG members have ties back to Minnesota. We can empathize with your decision reasons as we too have seen a decline in membership as well as some difficulty in enthusing retirees to volunteer to serve on our board, albeit not to the degree that your board has experienced. We chose to reprint your 'closing' announcement for our current membership as we too may have to make a similar decision within the next decade or so.

Your corporate beginning with Eckert Mauchly Computer Corporation (EMCC) and our beginning with Engineering Research Associates (ERA) are linked for eternity! Most computer historians know that Bill Norris was one of the founders of Control Data Corporation. There is an interesting paragraph Mr. Norris' writings: "ERA was one of two companies that launched the computer industry. The other was Eckert-Mauchly in Philadelphia which was established during June 1946, six months after ERA. Interestingly; Engstrom and I met with J.P. Eckert during our search for funding. He and John Mauchly were also having difficulty arranging for financing. We offered to join forces, but Eckert declined. Ironically, we came together later when Remington Rand acquired EMCC in 1950, and in 1952 acquired ERA. These two companies constituted the Univac Division of Remington Rand. In 1955 Remington Rand was acquired by the Sperry corporation to form Sperry Rand. I was given the job as general manager of the Univac Division of Sperry Rand." Of course, after Burroughs bought Sperry to form UNISYS, a St. Paul person said that the UNISYS acronym meant **Univac Is Still Your Supplier**.

Yes, both of our retirees' organizations have many, many members with careers that have spanned parts of the evolution of computers from the vacuum-tube behemoths to today's smart phones. Your retirees' organization had medical benefits as a driving purpose in its early days. Our organization focused on social activities and volunteerism until 2005 when we began to focus on 'telling the untold story' of our heritage companies. A primary method of 'telling', was/is to get people to tell his/her part of the story and to put those parts into a website anthology. Some of those story parts came from your organization, take a look at "<http://vipclubmn.org/BlueBell.html>" and "<http://vipclubmn.org/UNISYS.html>". Our products have come and gone - however people and memories of them are forever. An example of person who worked at both of our locations; a few of the UBBRG members may remember Albert 'Bert' Meuleners who passed away in 2004. He retired from Blue Bell after a career that started in St. Paul in the Antenna Coupler manufacturing organization, went to Rödelheim Germany for several years, then onto Blue Bell. Even while living and working in Germany and in Blue Bell he kept his ties to Minnesota by participating via phone and mail in the Growth Stock Investors club with other Univacers and as a member of the VIP Club. His widow, Francis, maintains their VIP Club membership to this day. There were many others who had worked in both locations, you know who you are.

We want to thank Al Rollins for facilitating the UBBRG contributions to our web site. And thanks to the UBBRG board for exchanging newsletters with us for a couple of decades. We archive our newsletters two months after distributing them to our active members – take a look at <http://vipclubmn.org/Newsletters.html>. And, if you would like to keep in touch by sending articles to our newsletter editor or by joining us to get notification of the latest newsletters, our website has contact and membership information.

Good luck to each and every one of you as you enjoy your retirement years.

*LABenson* for the VIP Club Board

**From the UNISYS, Blue Bell Retirees' Group (UBBRG):** For the edification of our VIP Club members, we have copied the President's message from the UBBRG March newsletter.

President's Message by Joe LaViola:

For five and a half years I have been privileged to serve as president of the UBBRG. Since the passing of Joe Campbell, Jerry Feldscher, Mary Pacifico, and John O'Brien; the executive board has been functioning without a Vice President or Travel Chair. These officers were a stabilizing force which has been sorely missed. For the future of UBBRG, this is a matter of great concern.



The Blue Bell Retirees' formed in 1988 originally as a social group. It soon took on the matter to settle a dispute over medical coverage for Unisys retirees'. With this incentive, membership grew to approximately 1800 members which resulted in substantial turnout for the meetings. The dispute has long been resolved and interest in the group has waned.

Membership currently is at 637. This is because, "long time faithful members", whose numbers are declining, have continued to renew their membership. The marked reduction in Blue Bell retirees' and the lack of interest has greatly impacted the recruiting for new members. Although these numbers are impressive, the executive board has not been able to find anyone willing to become a member. To replace any of the executive chairs requires significant time and effort. This involves learning programs to: publish NEWSBITS, record membership details, keep the Website up to date, and manage the Treasury.

The executive board has not been able to overcome the afore-mentioned problems and met in January to discuss these issues. The following, while not easy to make, are steps the board has voted to take:

- UBBRG to be dissolved by December 31, 2016.
- Discontinue general meetings at Plymouth Mall.
- NEWSBITS and the <http://www.ubbrg.org> Website will remain active through 2016.
- The executive board will remain active and will meet at regular intervals through-out 2016.
- Communication to the membership will continue through NEWSBITS and the [ubbrg.org](http://www.ubbrg.org) Website.

If you would like to send comments, questions or suggestions to the executive board, they will be published in the June edition of NEWSBITS. I will attempt to answer your queries as best I can. Please provide your name, phone number, and comments and send to Jack Staub. Email: [jfmrstaub@verizon.net](mailto:jfmrstaub@verizon.net) - Or for USA mail:

Jack Staub 5 Bowes Lane Reading Pa 19606

*Joe LaViola* – President