

VIP Club Newsletter

VOLUME 39, NO. 06
November/December 2019
<http://vipclubmn.org>

Alert: If your e-delivery message subject line has ‘membership list 2019 x => y’ or if your address label has 2019 after your name, your membership expires on December 31st, 2019. Use the page 7 form to renew now!

Bernie Jansen Passed Away 10/11/19: The Club has been blessed with his guidance and counsel for two+ decades. He served as our president thrice; 1998, 1999, and 2006. In 2008 he was awarded *member emeritus* status for coordinating dozens of Volunteer recognition surveys, breakfasts, and programs. In 2012 he was influential in establishing a permanent legacy display at the Lawshe Memorial Museum. Bernie’s wife Kathy regularly worked at Club event check-in tables. In 2015 we created “The Annual ‘Jansen’ Volunteer Extraordinaire Certificate”, recognizing their decades of support to the Club as well as their volunteerism for the Dakota County Historical Society.



Our sympathies are with you Kathy; may you rest in peace Bernie! From/for the Club board, by **LABenson**

The Club’s Future: As members of the VIP Club board get older it is becoming more challenging for some to continue to perform their duties. If you want something to fill your free time in retirement, join the VIP board! Being a VIP board member requires very little of your time; meetings are only every other month. If the VIP board gets to the point where we no longer have a quorum; we will be required to disband the club. The Blue Bell retirees’ [group disbanded in 2016](#) because younger retirees didn’t step up. Please help keep our great VIP Club organization going; we provide social gatherings for former heritage company employees, etc. Byline **Gish Derlaminck**.

NOVEMBER PROGRAM Unihogs’ & Technologists’ Reunion.

November 6th, 11:00 AM to ~ 1:45 PM: All Club members and your ‘technologist’ friends are invited to Casper’s Cherokee of Eagan - 4625 Nicols Road, Eagan, MN 55122. Back room seating capacity is limited to ~65; email board@vipclubmn.org



before **October 30th** for a chair/table reservation and a pre-printed name-tag. Luncheon cost is just \$15 per person, pay at door then order Entrée w/two sides from the Express Lunch menu. Or mail a pre-pay check per the on-line [announcement](#) instructions. Cash bar too.

AGENDA: Emcee will be Lowell Benson [Unisys and U of MN retiree.] **1)** 2019 Club President Harvey Taipale [LMCO retiree] will present the 2020 Club Officers and Directors slate. Attending VIP Club members will then ratify the slate. **2)** Lunch served. **3)** As is our tradition, ‘head hog’ Fred Vihovde [Univac, CDC, and Army Reserves MI retiree] will memorialize technologists who passed away during the past year. **4) Featured speaker is Charles ‘Chuck’ Lefebvre**, UNISYS Director at Eagan. Chuck is also a Minnesota High Tech Association (MHTA) board member. He’ll give us an MHTA overview and speak about their role in developing the TPT ‘Solid State: Minnesota’s High-Tech History’ documentary. **5)** Open mike for questions and attendee comments.



This annual ‘UNIHOGS’ gathering pre-dates the VIP Club; originally a group of 490/494 and 1108 engineers who left UNIVAC Roseville to form other companies – which companies started when, see <http://vipclubmn.org/Spinoffs.html>. And, <http://vipclubmn.org/Social.html#Hogs> has event history. Byline **Lowell Benson**



THE VIP CLUB IS FOR RETIREES AND FORMER EMPLOYEES OF OUR GREAT HERITAGE COMPANIES

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Solid State – Minnesota's High Tech History.

That's the name of a new TPT documentary a bunch of us got to preview in early October. By now, most of you in the Twin Cities have had a chance to see it on TPT. For the rest of the world, the streaming link is listed on our website home page. Worth a watch – a good deal of attention is given to the early ERA/Univac days.



Of course, the “solid state” tag is a double entendre – referring not only to the high tech image of electronics, but also to the solid citizens of Minnesota. The film (if that's the right term anymore) documents how innovation and a great workforce came together to create the early technology industry in Minnesota. For all of us who were a part of this history – which includes virtually everybody in the VIP Club – it's a pleasant look at our origins. I have always felt that the Minnesota computer industry was overlooked in the history of computing, and this project is an excellent first step in correcting this oversight.

As I was watching the film, I was struck by all the stuff that wasn't there. As the producer, Kevin Dragseth of TPT remarked, his biggest challenge was parsing from all the material they collected into a 56-minute video, a typical TPT time slot. Lots of important stuff didn't get included, either because the sources just weren't there (there were practical limits to the number of people they could interview) or because there just wasn't time available in the film. There was no time to talk about how the early computer and system architects learned their craft nor about all the effort to secure reliable parts needed to make reliable systems; not to mention a lot of stuff in between. There was no real discussion about the hundreds of small spinout and supplier companies that were spawned by ERA/Univac and others, which is another big historical story. [Our Stories #259 & #260.](#)

All of this leads to a plea – please take some time to add a career summary to our web anthology. The term “career summary” might be a bit daunting to some. From a legacy standpoint, it does not necessarily have to be a blow-by-blow account of your work history (although that is more than welcome), but all of you participated in some significant projects, recall some important events or people, or had some key insights about the company during your career. It's important to capture and document these so that future Minnesota technologists can appreciate their “solid” historical legacy.

The VIP Club also has another legacy – next year we will celebrate our 40th anniversary. The club founder, Millie Ginac, had a vision that this organization would allow the (dare I say “solid”) relationships developed at work to continue after retirement, and that's what the VIP Club has been doing for the last 39 years. If we are going to make 50 years, our “solid” members need to pitch in for the future – if you are willing to help coordinate an event, work on the newsletter, serve as a board member, or have a new idea, please contact any one of the current board members. Its not a huge time commitment, and leads to more “solid” relationships for retirees.

Harvey Taipale, VIP Club President.

DECEMBER PROGRAM Old Timers' Gathering!

December 5th, 11 AM – 2:30 PM. Annual UNIVAC/Sperry/Unisys/LMCO Old Timers' reunion at the Lost Spur; lower level party room. We request a \$2.00 donation per attendee to cover the room rental and name-tag costs. Please register and order (none, beef, ham, or turkey) a sack lunch - delicious at a mere \$8.00 **before December 1st** via email to paul@paulhove.com.



Don't have internet nor email? Mail your name, sandwich choice (none, beef, ham, turkey) and phone # to VIP Club, Old Timers - P.O. Box 131748 - Roseville, MN 55113-0020 **before December 1st**. Please come and reminisce! Many of your work friends will be at this party. Club membership is not required to participate – however encouraged.



Driving Directions: Set your GPS to St Paul, 2750 Sibley Memorial Hwy, 55121 or take exit #98 off I35E onto Lone Oak Road. Go west across Pilot Knob Road and then down the hill to Hwy 13. Turn right and proceed north ~ ½ mile to the Lost Spur (City View) entrance on the right. Coordinator is *Paul Hove*

WELCOME NEW MEMBER(S)

No new members during August nor September. Point your former co-workers to the web page, <http://vipclubmn.org/Membership.html> or just cut the application form from page 7 for her or him.

OTHER UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

December 4th, 10 AM: **VIP Club** Board Meeting in Roseville at Lowell's home. Email him if attending by **December 2nd**; he needs a muffin baking count.

December 11th, 9 AM: Roseville retirees' 314th meeting at the New Brighton Eagles Club. Send a note to Marv Brown at mdbrib@comcast.net or call 763-416-3903 **before December 5th** if you plan to attend.

2020 Venues Reserved: January 5th at the Lost Spur for the Club's holiday party which includes entertainment by the Eagan Men's Chorus, April 8th at Joseph's for Volunteer Recognition luncheon, May 1st at the Mermaid for Roseville Good Old Days, and May 15th at Casper's for Syttende Mai.

And yet TBD dates are the June picnic, a September Gala event, November Unihogs, and December Old Timers. Contact any board member to help plan these events and make them happen! Perhaps even suggest then lead some new Club events!



CELEBRATIONS

SOCIAL REPORTS & ARTICLES

Happy Hour on September 18th at Jensen's in Eagan. We had 62 sign ups as "Yes" and 12 sign ups as "Maybe". 11 "Yes's" were no shows and 11 "Maybe's" did not show up. There was 1 "walk-in" giving us 53 attendees. We had committed to and paid for an hors d' oeuvres order for 65 attendees. There were 211 Evite "No" replies, and 83 invitees who did not even view the Evite. The Evite system is very good in that it gave us a lot of information and made communication very easy for the event coordinator.



☺ Hairline comparisons? ☺

Those that attended felt it was a good location and very good food. Page 7 has more pictures. By *Keith Behnke*

Adventure for Santa-Credible Grandchildren: A unique experience is offered annually by the *Friends of the 261*, a society for the restoration, preservation, and fun trips on the 261 Steam Train. What could be more fun than a train ride from the St. Paul Depot to the "North Pole" to visit you know whom.

LMCO retiree *Lee Sheldon* and others put on this event each year. Tickets went on sale in September; there are yet times available during the weekends, Dec. 6-8 and 12-15. For all the details, browse to their site <https://261.com/npe/>. This could be a lifetime memory for children, parents, and grandparents! Byline *Richard 'Dick' Lundgren*



Solid State: Minnesota's High Tech History. The Minnesota High-Tech Association (MHTA) invited last year's TPT interviewees to an October 8th premier pre-view of their Solid-State documentary. Unisys, Eagan was one of this premier's hosts (\$\$\$). Club members who appear in the documentary are Bernie Jansen, Dick Erdrich, Don Weidenbach, Harvey Taipale, Keith Myhre, Lowell Benson, Mike Svendsen, Millie Gignac, and Patricia Myhre. The cameramen were observed at the Lawshe Memorial Museum as well as at our June picnic. So, members not mentioned as interviewees do appear in the documentary. MHTA President Jeff Tollefson emceed the event.



Keith Myhre and Harvey Taipale presented *ERA* lapel pins to Kevin Dragseth and Dr. Jeffrey Yost.

As this newsletter went to press, several Oct./Nov. dates were identified for viewings on TPT channels. Live stream from: <https://www.tpt.org/solid-state/video/solid-state-minnesotas-high-tech-history-35848/>. Thanks to TPT's producer *Kevin Dragseth*.

Behind the scenes – A very special thanks to *Keith Myhre* who selected many of the 'UNIVAC' photos used in the documentary and who provided TPT with a timeline of topics on which to build the documentary as well as some candidate interviewee names. Thanks to *Dale Weeks* who worked persistently to obtain funding for the documentary. Byline *LABenson*

2020 Election Slate: We need a new director!

- President – Harvey Taipale, 3rd term,
- Vice President – Steve Koltos, 2nd term,
- Secretary – Boni Westberg, 3rd term,
- Treasurer – Paul Hove, 4th term,
- Director – Gish Devlaminck, 4th term,
- Director – Jim Andrews, 3rd term,
- Director – Dick Lundgren, 2nd term, and
- Director – *call Harvey or Steve or Keith B.*

According to the Club’s constitution section V, Immediate Past President Keith Behnke continues as a board member, his 3rd term.

Don’t Let the Presses Stop! After leading the newsletter production since 2000, Joe Schwarz retired in 2018. (<http://vipclubmn.org/History.html#Officers>) Now, Lowell Benson has resigned from the board after doing the newsletter during 2019 and co-chairing the legacy committee since 2005. We need a Chief Editor and a distribution manager – one or two volunteers. And we will need reporters and photographers at each event to provide newsletter inputs. A template and guidance for ensuing newsletters will be available for a new volunteer or two in December. By *LABenson*

Newsletter Articles Request: If you have something to share about a former co-worker or a group activity or a heritage company milestone, email it to newsletter@vipclubmn.org. For example, has anyone ever written a brief history of each or any periodic social group listed on page 8?

IN REMEMBRANCE OF

The obits hereunder are redacted from funeral home postings or Pioneer Press or Star Tribune listings.

Baber, William - Died March 22, 2019. Grew up in Detroit Lakes, MN. Joined the Navy and served on an airplane carrier in the Pacific Ocean. After his Navy career, returned to MN and worked for Unisys and lived in Forest Lake. Upon retirement, moved to Alaska where he enjoyed fishing, hunting and the beauty of nature. Submitted by *Paul Dickson*



Burch, Michael – Age 69 of Spring Lake Park. He is survived by wife of 45 years, Sheila, two daughters, and six grandchildren. Mike was a U of MN EE graduate who had a lifelong career with Sperry Univac Unisys. He enjoyed being in the outdoors, traveling, his famous “short-cuts” and adored spending time with his family. Michael was a VIP Club member.

Byrne, Virginia S., “Ginny” age 77 of Apple Valley, passed away on August 17, 2019. Ginny is survived by her loving husband of 58 years, Vincent; four children, six grandchildren, and a great grandchild. She was an LM employee at Eagan plant 8 for years and a temp at the same location for additional years. Ginny was a Club member – submitted by brother-in-law *John Byrne*, also a club member.



Girardin, Joel – Age 80 of Cannon Falls passed away September 14, 2019. He is survived by his wife, Coleen, four children, 11 grandchildren, and three siblings. He was a longtime Unisys employee – his avocation was growing grapes and garlic.



Jansen, Bernard – Age 92, WWII & Korea veteran, tribute on page 1. He was a great newsletter editor too!



Weber, Duane Robert – Age 82 passed away September 6th. Duane was a Navy Veteran, a NASA Spacecraft engineer Tech and an electronic engineer Technician for the Sperry Rand Corporation. He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Karen – their children, grandchildren, and great children.

He lived life to the fullest through simple pleasures; fishing, reading, and building ideas family dreamed up.

Williams, Robert Deane - Robert Deane Williams, better known to all as “Bud” died Friday, Sept. 6. He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Caryl, his son Erik, and family. He enlisted in the Marine Corps before he could complete College. After his discharge he began working for Sperry Univac which evolved



over many name changes and years into Lockheed Martin.

Bud retired in 2007 and being ever the Marine and never really wanting to be doing nothing, he went back to school to become an EMT. He worked for AMR (American Medical Response) in Hemet for nearly 5 years driving an ambulance and providing help and healing for a lot of people. He was a VIP Club member. Submitted by *Keith Behnke*.

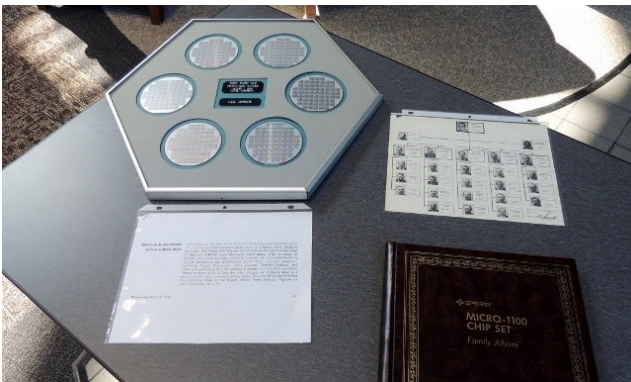
LEGACY TIDBITS

Legacy Status Review & Planning: A dozen volunteers met at the Lawshe Memorial Museum on September 17th: In total these participants have had about 400 years of computer industry experiences at our heritage companies. In chronological order; Carl Johnson started in 1954, Keith Behnke in 1957, Mike Svendsen in 1958, Lowell Benson in 1960, Earl Vraa in 1961, Harvey Taipale in 1966, Bob Pagac in 1967, Dick Lundgren in 1967, Jim Andrews in 1967, Les Nelson in 1969, Keith Myhre in 1972, and Gish Devlaminck in 1976.

Keith Myhre summarized the Club volunteer cataloging work at the museum since 2012 when LMCO closed their Eagan facility:

- Almost 24,000 photos have been catalogued.
- Approximately 4,149 documents have been cataloged, most of which have gone to CBI.
- Approximately 1,873 “publications”, primarily newsletters, have been cataloged.
- The artifact collection started with approximately 20,000 35mm slides of which 7,231 have been scanned. 4k to 6k were discarded as duplicates or irrelevant. There are probably 5k to 10k slides yet to review, organize/toss and then catalogue and scan the ones that make the cut.
- We have 12,733 scanned photos on the Synology Disk-station.
- All publications and newsletters received to date have been cataloged.
- We continue to receive donated items from past employees that are cataloged as we receive them.

Carl Johnson showed data about the micro-1100 chip set that became the basis for the 2200 commercial series. His information needs formatting for both web posting as well as for stand-alone displaying.



Earl Vraa volunteered to donate a PC to be used for displays and accessing scanned photos.

Looking forward for 2020 and beyond: Finish our Legacy story! There is yet between three and six years

of work to complete the cataloging and to develop an interface for on-line access to photos, documents, etc.

Need # 1, New Tuesday morning volunteers at the museum to key in photo/slide/documentation information at the five workstations. Attrition has reduced the team size thus a help need, training is simple OJT [send a message to the Lawshe Support leaders listed in the Contact Data, page 6 of this newsletter.]

Need #2, Local networking: What we will need is server software to interconnect the five laptops with a Windows XP Pro & the desktop PC with Windows 7 Pro. AND, we need a skilled networking person to set up the server. The server hardware will be a never used PC (Linux OS) and display that we already have at the museum.

Need #3, volunteers with manufacturing experiences to identify contents of some pictures and slides.

Need #4, volunteers with UNISYS/Sperry commercial knowledge to identify some photo & slide contents.

Need #5, *Harvey Taipale* pointed out that even though the TPT documentary and website tell (told) some of our legacy, we could use more career summaries in the Legacy Anthology. If your name isn't listed in section 2 of <http://vipclubmn.org/People.html>; please send a brief bio to webmaster@vipclubmn.org. Free form is OK; we'll edit and format before posting. Click to read a simple example, [Harvey Taipale](#), or see [Lee Granberg's](#) for a staff data sheet, or see [Lowell Benson's](#) for an elaborate, egotistical chronology. ☺

Thanks to Matt Carter and Rebecca Snyder for the museum facility use. Byline *Keith M & Lowell B.*

Another YouTube gem from Mark Greenia! The Computer History Archives Project (CHAP) has produced an 18-minute ERA video using inputs from Tony Buglione, UNISYS; Amanda Wick, CBI; Don Weidenbach and Lowell Benson, VIP Club; the Hagley Museum archives; and other publicly available data.



Lowell asked Mark, “Why an ERA video now?” He replied: “That’s an interesting question. What drew my interest to the current ERA history project were several factors. First, I have had a long-time interest in the Remington-Rand/Univac history, and its links back to the ENIAC project spearheaded by Eckert and Mauchly. Years ago, when I came across pieces of the original 1946 ENIAC “silent movie”, I was surprised to find it had not been fully restored nor expanded to help preserve and explain that piece of computer

history. I purchased the best available copy of that film, restored it digitally, then scripted and added professional narration. Viewer feedback was quite positive.

As I continued to explore Remington-Rand's 1950 to 1955 history, the name ERA kept appearing, but only in "bits and pieces." It was clearly obvious that ERA's origins went back into the 1940's which put it at the very dawn of the digital computer era. Its origins were not the ENIAC Army ballistics, but Navy cryptology! That was fascinating. Also, viewing the old Sperry film about ERA (courtesy of Hagley Library, https://digital.hagley.org/VID_1985261_B130_ID04?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=dbc9011924e46f2568a&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=3), it was clear that the depth of history with ERA was highly significant. The old Sperry video quality was quite poor, and it seemed fitting that it deserved at least an attempt to rework the material, so it was more "watchable" by those interested in ERA's history.

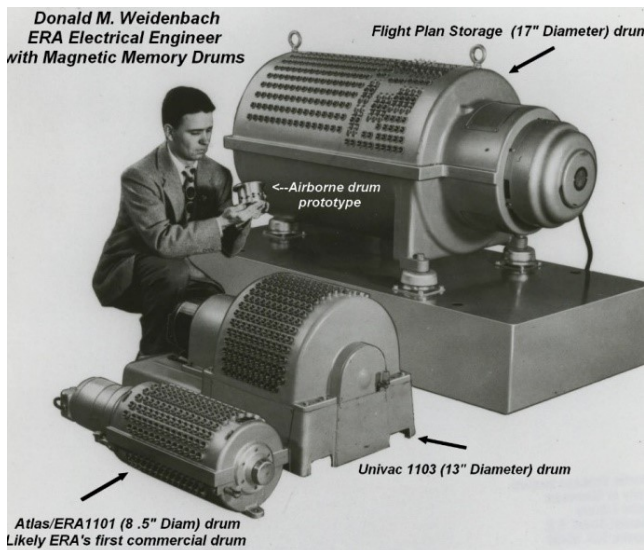
This brought me to email conversations with Lowell Benson and discoveries of the wealth of ERA material that the VIP Club had assembled and preserved.

Deservedly, ERA has received much more attention over the past decade, thanks to groups like the VIP Club who document and keep the memories alive."

ERA in Minnesota – the beginning story:

- CSAW to ERA - 5 min Prologue
- ERA to Sperry+, 8-minute 70s Sperry archive video from Hagley Museum w/notations.
- Credits and Epilogue - 5 minutes.

Drum memories are featured in this story, thanks to Don Weidenbach for identifying which was what.



Now - sit back, relax, and point your browser to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tk9DGpwmwA>.

Editor's opinion of points to ponder - not in the YouTube video.) Early computers had plug board programming with electrostatic memories for data. Each time power was shut off, the data had to be reloaded from tapes or other storage media to the electronic memory.

Then came the concept of 'stored program' computing, i.e. let the program be modified by the program itself based on results of computations, thereby bypassing the manual changing of plug boards. Then a drum memory obviated the need to reload both data and program after any powered off time – thus a real 'stored program' computer. Byline *LABenson*

CLUB CONTACT DATA

VIP Club 2019 Activity Coordination:

- CBI Liaison*; Dick Lundgren, rflundgr@aol.com
Golf Leagues; Keith Behnke, keithbhk@comcast.net
Lawshe Museum Support;
- Exhibits; Keith Myhre kmyhre@lightblast.net
 - Photo ID work; Bob Pagac rpagac@hotmail.com and Jon Simon jcsimon1st@frontiernet.net
- Legacy Committee* co-chairs; John Westergren, jwestergren48@gmail.com & labenson@q.com
Membership database; Gish Devlamincek membership@vipclubmn.org
Old Timers' Annual Reunion; paul@paulhove.com or steve.koltes@comcast.com,
Picnic planning & volunteer staffing; John Westergren, jwestergren48@gmail.com
Roseville Good Old Days; Paul Dickson paul.dickson@comcast.net
Syttende Mai; Dale Torgerson, dale.o.torgerson@gmail.com
Sunshine Cards; Lynn Lindholm lynnlindholm@comcast.net
UNIHOGS & Technologists; board@vipclubmn.org
Volunteer Luncheon; Frank King, kingx063@umn.edu
Webmaster; Jim Andrews, webmaster@vipclubmn.org

Retirement Status and Benefits:

Numbers to call if you or your heirs have death benefit or pension questions – you will need an SSN and a PIN.

Unisys	1-877-864-7972
Lockheed Martin	1-866-562-2363

LIGHTER SIDE

- Aspire to inspire before you expire.

VIP Club 2019 November/December Newsletter

- Every morning is the dawn of a new error.

What do cannibals get when they boil a funny bone?
A laughing stock-pot, that's humerus!

- The irony of life is that, by the time you're old enough to know your way around, you're not going anywhere.
- My wife and I had words, but I didn't get to use mine.

- Frustration is trying to find your glasses without your glasses.

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION or RENEWAL or CHANGE FORM

Please mark an **X** in the appropriate info/option boxes. *Submittal Date:* _____

Dues: \$7.00 1-year, or \$ 18.00 3-years, or free if age 90 or older.

Renewal, New Member (≥55), Associate member (<55), Life (>89), or Information Change.

Name (Last, First, M.I. – or attach an address label.) _____ Spouse's Name _____

Street Address or P.O. Box _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

(____) _____ - _____
Primary Telephone Number _____ E-mail address _____

Newsletter delivery default is electronic or select U.S. Mail if you have no email address.

Employer is/was UNISYS, Lockheed Martin, and/or predecessor company _____.

Include me in the Club's Directory? Yes or No. *DIRECTORY is only available to Members and Associates!*

MAIL FORM WITH CHECK* TO: VIP Club - Membership P.O. Box 131748 Roseville, MN 55113-0020
*not required if only changing information in our database or if renewing at age 90+.

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Photos from the September 18th Happy Hour Event at Jensen's in Eagan.



©Photos by Keith Behnke
Collage by Lowell Benson

VIP CLUB Newsletter

P.O. Box 131748, Roseville, MN 55113-0020
<http://www.vipclubmn.org/Newsletters.html>

Board of Directors - 2019

President Harvey Taipale	651-280-7332
Vice President Steve Koltos	651-303-9112
Treasurer Paul Hove	651-738-4908
Secretary Boni Westberg	651-429-2534
Director Dick Lundgren	952-288-5141
Director Gish Devlaminck	651-470-8905
Director Jim Andrews,	651-451-7502
Director Lowell Benson	651-483-3709
Past President Keith Behnke	651-894-2182

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Don Naaktgeboren	donfishn@yahoo.com
Joe Schwarz	jschwarzsr@centurylink.net

UNISYS Liaison

Kirsten Rasmussen; meetings, etc., 651-323-9543
 Judy Bornetun; Eagan print shop, 651-635-6792

PERIODIC SOCIAL GROUPS**Monthly Breakfast Gathering**

- 1st Thursday at 8 AM at the Capitol View Cafe, 637 Smith Ave. St. Paul.

Monthly Lunch Gatherings

- 1st Tuesday in Eagan at 11:00 AM - Rickey's Café at Stark's, 3125 Dodd Road, Eagan, MN
- 2nd Tuesday at 11:30 AM - Mall of America 3rd floor North Food Court, we meet by the tables between the elevator & Burger King. Coordinator, Paul Wennerstrom, 952-854-7855.
- 2nd Wednesday at 11 AM at Baker's Square, Northtown, 221 Co. Rd. 10 NE, Blaine MN.
- 2nd Saturday of odd numbered months at 11:00 AM, Baker's Square, 1881 West Highway 36, Roseville. Coordinator Urho Rahkola, 651-429-3319.

Quarterly Breakfast Gathering

- 2nd Wednesday at 9 AM in the Eagles Club, Old Hwy 8, in New Brighton., Mar., June, Sept., & Dec. Coordinator Marv Brown, 763-416-3903