

# VIP Club Newsletter

VOLUME 46, NO. 01  
January/February 2026  
<http://vipclubmn.org>

## UPCOMING EVENTS ♦♦ SAVE THESE DATES:

- ✓ Holiday Party ♦♦ January 4, 2026
- ✓ Syttende Mai ♦♦ May 15, 2026
- ✓ Annual Reunion Picnic ♦♦ June 17, 2026
- ✓ Roseville Good Old Days ♦♦ September 10, 2026
- ✓ Old Timers' Reunion ♦♦ November 5, 2026

Watch the website and your e-mail/evites for details as they become available



## MEMBERSHIP

We have 480 paid members, 26 friends of the club, and 506 total active member units. There are 86 members whose membership expires on December 31, 2025. Check when your club membership expires in a listing of all members and membership expiration dates at [PaidMembershipStatus.pdf](#).

To RENEW your membership, mail your dues (\$7 per year; check, cash, or money order is ok) with your name and any change of address, phone number, or e-mail address to the address shown below.

To JOIN, new members are asked to complete the membership form found at [https://vipclubmn.org/ClubForms/MEMBERSHIP\\_FORM.pdf](https://vipclubmn.org/ClubForms/MEMBERSHIP_FORM.pdf) and mail it, along with the dues payment, to VIP Club MN, PO Box 21903, Eagan, MN 55121.

To REPORT any change of address, phone number, or e-mail address, e-mail changes to [membership@vipclubmn.org](mailto:membership@vipclubmn.org).

## UPCOMING EVENT DETAILS

### Holiday Party January 4, 2026, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

at the Lost Spur Golf and Event Center, 2750 Sibley Memorial Hwy, Eagan. Social cocktail hour with cash bar at 1:00 p.m. will be followed by dinner at 2:00 p.m. The Eagan Men's Chorus will provide entertainment after dinner. Reservations must be received by December 23. The cost is \$25/person, with your choice from three entrees: ❖Champagne Chicken, ❖Pecan Walleye, or ❖London Broil Steak. To register, [print out this form](#), fill it out, and mail it with a check as shown on the form. If you didn't get an Evite invitation but want to attend the event, please call Boni Westberg at 612-418-6206 and leave a voice message with your name and phone number and she will contact you.

*Jim Andrews and Boni Westberg are coordinating.*

## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

**Old Timers' Reunion Recap** Nearly 100 attendees at the Lost Spur Golf and Event Center on November 6 reminisced about the good old days at work and play. A third of them ate lunch from a \$13 sandwich bar that included choices of bread, ham, turkey, tuna fish, cheeses, tomatoes, pickles, and chips. The bartender reported that tap beer was by far the most popular drink, followed by a little wine and a few mixed drinks. A short business meeting to elect next year's board was conducted with all 2025 board members reelected, and two new directors, Bob and Mary Shutt, elected. Please thank them when you see them for getting involved! Check out event pictures on page 7, and in the website [Gallery](#). Thanks to *Boni Westberg and Harvey Taipale* for coordinating!

If you have photos to share from this or any event or individual group gatherings, send them to [clubnewsltr@vipclubmn.org](mailto:clubnewsltr@vipclubmn.org) and we'll add them to the [Gallery](#) on the website.

### VIP Club 2026 Scheduled Board Meetings:

Feb 4, Apr 1, June 3, Aug 5, Oct 7, and Dec 2 at the Dakota County Historical Society Lawshe Museum, 130 3rd Ave North, So. St. Paul. Club members curious about club business may join us. Contact the president two days prior for access.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It was good seeing everyone at the Old Timers' Reunion in November and reminiscing about the good old days! Close to 100 folks attended. We had a short business meeting reelecting current officers, and electing two new directors, Bob and Mary Shutt. Thank them when you can for being willing to step up and get involved. Remember, the board that keeps the club functioning!



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

At the December board meeting, we set a goal of keeping the VIP Club going until 2030, which would be our 50th anniversary. Our last club event will be a celebration of the 50 years in summer 2030; we are considering the June 2030 picnic to be the 50th anniversary event. If you have other ideas for the celebration, please share them with any board member.

For years the club has been documenting the significant contributions to the computer industry in Minnesota that we were a part of. Every Tuesday from 9:00 a.m. to noon, a few dedicated volunteers come to the Lawshe Museum where we have office space. They scan and catalog donated artifacts. They could use some help as there is a large backlog of items yet to be scanned. Please consider giving some of your time and knowledge to this effort; On-the-Job Training (OJT) is available. Contact Keith Myhre at [kmyhre@lightblast.net](mailto:kmyhre@lightblast.net) to get involved—as little or as much as fits your schedule.

Thanks to the tremendous effort of Lowell Benson over the years, our website Legacy section contains significant historical information about Minnesota's computer industry and our part in it. This is our legacy and it should be preserved. The VIP Club currently spends almost \$200 yearly to host the website. The board is actively looking for a new sponsor for the Legacy portion of our website once the club is no longer able to pay for it.

Did you get an Evite invitation to the Holiday Party on January 4, 2026? There were 26 invitations that could not be delivered. I did some analysis to see why this happens and found that all 19 members having an email address with “@usfamily” or “@lightblast” could not receive it. The other seven were with seven different providers, yet most others with those providers did get their invitations. In these cases, there is probably a local e-mail settings problem or a filtering issue. I will contact those seven to further troubleshoot the issue.

Finally, put June 17, 2026 on your calendars for the summer picnic at the Eagan Central Park pavilion.

*Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!*  
*Jim Andrews, VIP Club President*

## **BITS & PIECES**

### **Letter from the PC & Electronics Club**

The club received the following letter from the PC Electronics Club via Bob Grueschow, acting president and treasurer. A \$400 donation was included:

*The LM PC& Electronics Club has folded. We have \$400.00 left in our account that we would like to donate to the VIP Club General Treasury. I talked to Jim Andrews and he said to send in a check for the donation.*

*The Club Checking account was closed when Hilary (Lary) Haupt died. Enclosed you will find a*

*personal check for the \$400.00 that was in the Checking Account. This is the reason for the personal check.*

*Robert A Grueschow*

Research on the club came up with this from 2017: “The PC & Electronics Club is a combination of active and retired employees of Lockheed Martin, Unisys, and all of the predecessor companies. This Club has monthly meetings the second Tuesday of each month at UNISYS MACS Bldg, Eagan in room MPR4 at 5 PM, September through May. We use the visitor’s entrance on the North side. A June scheduled meeting is usually a socializing picnic so that we can socialize (2017 plan is tbd).”

The VIP Club deposited the generous donation into savings for future use on club activities and events.

### **Semiconductor Building is Coming Down**

Gish Devlaminck shared that the old semiconductor building in Eagan is coming down, and included photos. The building had been used by Delta Airlines for servers.



Former Semiconductor Building

**LEGACY STORY**

**A New Chapter for Our Unisys Story:  
Moving Forward**

In early December 2025, we learned that the Unisys, Eagan facility had been sold. Some history: **In 1986**, when Burroughs bought Sperry to form Unisys, we collectively were in 28 places throughout the Twin Cities. The Unisys Eagan facility was built **in 1987**, north of Unisys Defense Systems/Plant 8, to house various disparate groups, and was known as the Metropolitan Area Consolidation Site (MACS) building. Plant 8 became a Lockheed Martin facility **in 1995** after Unisys divested itself of most of the old Sperry divisions. Lockheed Martin subsequently closed the Eagan operations **in 2013**.



The Sperry/Unisys/Lockheed Martin retirees VIP Club board meetings were held in the MACS building from 2017 until COVID in 2020 made access unavailable! **In 2017**, Unisys Roseville operations merged into the Eagan facility, including transfer of the historic shadow boxes.



Picture 1. Visitor Entrance of Unisys Eagan Facility

**In 2023**, Unisys put their Eagan facility on the market—it was the last Unisys-owned facility; all others are leased in various cities throughout the U.S. and internationally. **In 2024**, Unisys moved its Operations Center from Eagan to Woodbury, MN.

In response to the VIP Club board’s request for a newsletter article, Kris Wilmunen, Unisys Senior Solution Manager, wrote: *“I fed some of the facts about the shadow boxes into Microsoft Copilot. It generated a very nice newsletter article, both a long version and a short version.”* Lowell Benson combined the versions with inserted images, participant names, and associated links, as follows:

**Preserving our Legacy, Together**

Sperry UNIVAC in Roseville had an early sense of history in the 1980s, thus began to illustrate computer

technologies with a series of wall-mounted shadow box displays. Harry Smuda [Management] and Dick Petschauer [Engineering] led the creation of these shadow boxes. The first has the 1953 1103 computer components, including a vacuum tube logic module.



Picture 2. 1103 in 1953 to the IX5800 in 1996 – Roseville

Back in 2005, members of the Unisys VIP Club formed the IT Legacy Committee with a clear purpose: to preserve the history of our computer system technologies. Since then, the committee has captured five decades of innovation, beginning in the 1950s, in a remarkable shadow box series. Each box tells a story: the ideas we sparked, the breakthroughs we achieved, and the impact our work had across the industry.

One set (Pictures 2 & 3) traces the unfolding sequence of the Unisys computer systems story into the 1990s, showing how each generation built on the vision and engineering of the last.



Picture 3. IX5800 End of 1100 Series Shadow Boxes in Eagan

A seven-box set spotlights the Twin Cities Sperry UNIVAC era—our local computer and semiconductor development achievements—covering the seven years leading up to the 1986 Burroughs buyout of Sperry.



Picture 4. Technology Boxes on Wall in Eagan

### Historic Shadow Boxes Find a Home

In November 2025, Unisys sold the Eagan facility. With that change, the company finalized a permanent steward worthy of the collection’s significance—the Ramsey County Historical Society (RCHS). The donation discussions started in 2023 between then Unisys VP Chuck Lefebvre and then RCHS President Chad Roberts. The transfer in December 2025 is coordinated by Unisys’s Kris Wilmunen and RCHS’s Mollie Spillman. We’re proud to share that the shadow boxes are being donated to RCHS, ensuring that our Unisys heritage will be properly preserved and that the historical value of this unique collection will be retained for the future.



Picture 5. The RCHS Office is in St. Paul’s Landmark Center

This is more than a change of address to St. Paul. It’s a commitment to education, community, and history. At RCHS, the shadow boxes will be cared for by museum professionals and made accessible to students, researchers, and the public—allowing new audiences to discover how Twin Cities teams helped shape the trajectory of modern computing.

Thank you to everyone—committee members, facility teams, and countless contributors—who helped create, protect, and now pass along this legacy. Here’s to honoring the past, inspiring the present, and encouraging the innovators of tomorrow.

*Kris Wilmunen and Lowell Benson*

### Our Stories References

- 171, August: *Atlas Evolution* by Lowell Benson records the Roseville history wall shadow boxes, <https://vipclubmn.org/Articles/ATLASevolution.pdf>.
- 174, November: Sperry History Boxes by Lowell Benson records another seven Roseville history wall shadow boxes, <https://vipclubmn.org/Articles/UNIVACHistoryBoxes.pdf>.
- 179, April: *The Plant 8 Closure* edited by Lowell Benson using inputs from Dan Carlson, Dick Lundgren, Kristen Maloney, Tom Montgomery, and John Westergren; plus photos by Mike Eischen’s team, <https://vipclubmn.org/Articles/PLANT8CLOSED.pdf>.
- 192, April: The evolution of Unisys and their primary ‘commercial’ computer line is sequenced in this slide set from Ron Q. Smith, <https://vipclubmn.org/Documents/HistorySequence.pdf>
- 193, May: The Unisys, Roseville facility has a history wall. One set of shadow boxes thereon shows the ERA to Unisys computer systems technology evolution, <https://vipclubmn.org/Articles/ERA2unisysWeb.pdf>
- 194, June: The Unisys, Roseville facility has a history wall. One set of shadow boxes thereon shows the computer systems technology of the 80s, <https://vipclubmn.org/Articles/univac2unisys.pdf>
- 195, July: We add another commercial computer history document with an ERA/UNIVAC/Sperry/Unisys 1100-2200 hardware design paper from Richard J. ‘Dick’ Petschauer, <https://vipclubmn.org/Articles/HISTORY1100series.pdf>
- 233, August: *Through the Ages* – A handout developed for visitors at the September 13, 2017 Open House and Legacy Exhibit in Eagan, <https://vipclubmn.org/Articles/ThroughTheAges.pdf>

### Our Stories for January 2026

#### Enduring Legacy: 80, 40, 20!

In 1946, almost 80 years ago, ERA opened their St. Paul doors. In 1986, Sperry recognized ERA’s 40-year history. In 2026, 20 years of telling the story! This article is a preserving history status report! Our legacy was and is the people, mostly working in teams, with team leaders given credit for their successes. The unsung

heroes of each success story were the spouses and families who tolerated employees' long working hours, erratic short-notice travel calls, and out-of-town work assignments. A few people may recall the Energizer Bunny ads that had a bunny's battery that "keeps going and going and going..." Our employees were like that. Or you may recall the Timex ads that "took a licking and kept on ticking." Our products and systems were like that! People innovating solutions to customer problems with worldwide results.

This article has descriptions of multidecade topics:

- The 1100 series of computer systems
- Naval Tactical Data Systems (NTDS)
- Air Traffic Control (ATC)
- Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW)
- Maintaining, Preparing, and Producing Executive Reports (MAPPER)
- Next Generation Radar (NEXRAD)
- The retirees VIP Club
- Special thanks to those who made Legacy Committee things happen.

Point your browser to <https://vipclubmn.org/OurStories.html> to read this paper and some of the previous 235 monthly articles.

#### Shadow Box Donation Background:

The Unisys shadow boxes donation to the RCHS just occurred in December 2025. Before Unisys Roseville was merged into Unisys Eagan in 2017, there were discussions about what to do with the 1100-series product displays. At that time, the RCHS was the primary candidate, with the Minnesota Historical Society second. The Charles Babbage Institute was mentioned; however, they were only accepting paper history. The Dakota County Historical Society (DCHS) Lawshe Memorial Museum was already cataloguing and displaying our defense industry history objects.

So, to ascertain whether RCHS might be willing to accept a donation of shadow boxes, then Unisys VP Charles Lefebvre and Legacy Committee Chair Lowell Benson invited RCHS President Chad Roberts and RCHS Director of Collections and Exhibits Mollie Spillman to view the boxes in the Roseville hallways. A decision was made to move the shadow boxes to Eagan. Unisys retiree LeRoy Larson et al did some minor repairs to the boxes before they were wall-mounted in Eagan. When the Unisys Eagan facility was put on the market, Unisys and RCHS donation discussions restarted.

As we view or review the shadow boxes, the majority of the designs depicted therein took place in Ramsey County: First at ERA on Minnehaha Avenue in St. Paul, then on Shepard Road in St. Paul, then in the Roseville facilities. Some of the Large Scale Integration

(LSI) and gate array technologies integrated into the later 1100 series computers came from the Sperry Semiconductor facility in Eagan (closed by Unisys after the Burroughs Sperry buyout).

LABenson

**Club Newsletter Readers:** If you have comments, please send to [webmaster@vipclubmn.org](mailto:webmaster@vipclubmn.org) or [la.gj.benson@comcast.net](mailto:la.gj.benson@comcast.net).

#### IN REMEMBRANCE OF:

*The obits hereunder are redacted from funeral home postings or Pioneer Press, Star Tribune, or applicable local listings. The VIP Club board extends its sympathies to the families and friends of those who have lost loved ones.*

***"A life that touches others goes on forever."***

**David A. Butzer** — Age 86, of Shakopee, MN passed away November 22, 2025. David graduated from Mankato State University with degrees in economics, business administration, and mathematics, all while working full-time to support his family. David was recruited by his brother, Jim, to work for UNIVAC, ultimately Unisys, as a field support director. He was the youngest recipient of the UNIVAC Award of Excellence and was well respected throughout his career. He once oversaw 400 employees charged with switching IBM systems over to UNIVAC systems. David often traveled for business; his favorite trips were those in which his wife, Norita Register, was able to accompany him. He retired after 31 years with the company. A patient father, he often stayed up late helping the kids with homework and projects, served as a Cub Scouts Webelo leader, and taught Sunday School. He also served as a church elder, and he and Norita prioritized spending lots of time with their grandchildren. The family enjoyed weekends at his brother's lake home, and time spent camping with extended family and enjoying the sailboat. David was an avid reader, and he enjoyed puzzles, the game Scramble, and woodworking, including projects with his grandchildren. While living at St. Gertrude's and the Gardens, he was quite involved in the community; he acted as a liaison between the food director and residents, doing surveys to determine residents' desired meal choices. David was preceded in death by his wife, Norita, and is survived by three children, six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.



**Kevin Paul Illa** — Age 69, left us November 14, 2025 after a lengthy illness. The family is grateful knowing that he is at peace. Kevin was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend to everyone who knew him. A coworker recalls that Kevin worked/transferred to Owego when the Eagan plant shut down. He worked on the



Capabilities Upkeep Program (CUP) program where he sold P-3s to the Dutch, and was also a program manager, worked subcontracts, was in Integrated Logistics Support (ILS), and did field engineering in the late 70s/early 80s. Other coworkers remember Kevin as well-loved and respected at Lockheed Martin; as very tolerant, such a nice person to work with, and one of the best! Kevin had a deep love for his family and friends. His spirit will live on in the hearts of all who knew and loved him. Kevin was preceded in death by his parents, as well as his twin brother. He is survived by his wife, Loralie (Otte) Illa, three children, four grandchildren, his sisters and sister-in-law, as well as many in-laws, nieces, and nephews.

**James George Kzaley** — Age 80, of Apple Valley, MN passed away peacefully November 16, 2025, surrounded by his loving family. Jim studied electrical engineering at the U of MN, after which he began his career, remembered as working in Quality Assurance (QA). Jim had a deep love for the outdoors and was happiest surrounded by nature, whether he was fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, or simply exploring. Family vacations to the cabin on Big Pine Lake were a treasured tradition and became a beloved gathering place filled with years of memories. Jim is survived by his loving wife of 55 years, Cheryl Lynn Thorsett, three children, six grandchildren, and many nieces, nephews, other relatives, and friends.



**James Leroy Miller** — Age 83, of Burnsville, MN passed away peacefully September 5, 2025. James graduated from the U of MN with a Bachelor's Degree in science, majoring in math. He first worked as a high school math teacher, then worked for Remington Rand, UNIVAC, Sperry UNIVAC, Sperry, Unisys, Paramax, Loral, and finally Lockheed Martin, Eagan, as a principal software engineer for Tactical Defense Systems, retiring after 34 years of dedicated service. James was a highly intellectual man who enjoyed problem solving in work and for fun. His passions included thrift store outings, and collecting stuffed animals, wood sculptures, and metal/wood disentanglement puzzles. He took pleasure in coaching his daughters' softball teams along with his son's umpiring assistance, and was dedicated to showing his kids a multitude of experiences including theaters, museums, trips, wrestling matches, cross-country skiing, magic shows, and more. James was a wonderful dad to three children, a grandpa to three grandchildren, and an uncle to a niece and nephew.



**Arleen Joyce Moren ("J")** — Age 72, passed away March 4, 2025 at her home in Lakeville, MN after battling cancer. Spouse of employee and VIP Club member Stanley (Stan) Moren, Arleen received a degree in Biology from the U of MN, also where she and Stan met. They would have celebrated 50 years of marriage this summer. Arleen worked at the Lakeville library for 18 years; was an avid reader and crossword enthusiast; and enjoyed being outdoors whether for biking, gardening, cross-country skiing, hiking, camping, or playing with her grandchildren. She lived each day with a gentle and quiet spirit, and her strong faith carried her through to her final moments. Arleen is survived by her husband, Stan, her three children, and five grandchildren.



**Darrell Nowak** — Age 85, of Otsego, MN passed away peacefully surrounded by family June 16, 2025. A VIP Club member, Darrell was preceded in death by his loving wife of 57 years, Sandra Nowak. His bright smile, warm presence, and unrewarding Minnesota Vikings Fandom will be deeply missed by his three children, seven grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.



**Karen Lynne Reischel (Sweetnam Herron)** — Age 82, of St. Paul, MN peacefully passed away November 4, 2025. Wife of employee Thomas Reischel, Karen worked a long career as a registered nurse for Blue Cross, the Minnesota Health Department, and Beverly Enterprises. Karen is survived by her husband, Thomas, three children, nine grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and other family.



**Larry Alan Roth** — Age 80, of Clear Lake, IA passed away peacefully November 3, 2025, at Oakwood Care Center. Larry continued his education after high school at technical school in Ottumwa, IA. He worked for many years as a computer technician with Control Data and later Sperry UNIVAC (now Unisys), before finishing his career at East Side Neighborhood Services. He retired in 2007. Both Larry and his wife, Cathy, worked in Roseville and attended the Roseville Good Old Days events after they moved back to Clear Lake, IA from Aiken, SC. Larry will be deeply missed and fondly remembered for his gentle nature, sense of humor, and unwavering love for his family. He is survived by his beloved wife of 60 wonderful years, Catherine "Cathy" Sue Katz, three children, five grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, as well as nieces, nephews and other family.



# Old Timers' Reunion \* Lost Spur Golf and Event Center November 6, 2025

Kudos to Doni Westberg for taking these snapshots!





P. O. Box 21903  
Eagan, MN 55121

### VIP CLUB Newsletter

VIP Club MN P.O. 21903 Eagan, MN 55121

<http://vipclubmn.org/newsletters.html>

#### Board of Directors – 2025

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#### Newsletter Editorial Staff

Mary Beth Ruhland [clubnewsltr@vipclubmn.org](mailto:clubnewsltr@vipclubmn.org)

### PERIODIC SOCIAL GROUPS

#### Monthly Breakfast Gathering

- **1st Thursday**, 8 a.m. – **Capitol View Cafe**, 637 Smith Ave., **St. Paul** (corner of Smith and Baker). 651-222-2435

#### Monthly Lunch Gatherings

- **1st Tuesday Engineering Luncheon**, 11:00 a.m. – **Casper's Cherokee of Eagan**, 4625 Nicols Rd. (off Cliff Rd.) **Keith Behnke**: 651-587-2591.
- **2nd Tuesday**, 11:30 a.m. (Unisys/Burroughs group) – **Mall of America** 3<sup>rd</sup> floor North Food Court **Paul Wennerstrom**: 952-854-7855.

### CLUB CONTACT DATA

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