

Vermont Midrange User Group



March 21, 2016

To VTMUG Members,

Welcome to VTMUG's first newsletter of 2016!

2015 was a very good year for VTMUG. We welcomed two new Board members, jointly hosted the annual June meeting with our sister user group – NHMUG, and in September had our best annual technical conference to date. And to continue the 2015 trend we are planning another great year for 2016

Put these dates on your calendar now – June 8th and Sept 24th – see below for details

Stay tuned for updates!

- Like us on Facebook
- Connect with VTMUG on LinkedIn

Newsletter Summary

New VTMUG Board Members in 2015

Ryan Eberly – Member at Large
Rich Ollari – Marketing Director

VTMUG Events in 2015

Joint VTMUG-NHMUG meeting June 23, 2015
Annual VTMUG Conference September 24, 2015

VTMUG Events Planned for 2016

Joint VTMUG-NHMUG meeting June 8, 2016
Annual VTMUG Technical Conference September 22, 2016
VTMUG is Looking for a Conference Photographer

VTMUG State of the Union

Membership
Finances
2016 will be Skip's last year as President

New VTMUG Board Members in 2015

Ryan Eberly became a Member at Large on the VTMUG Board in January. Ryan joined the RPG programming community two years ago, coming from a decade of java programming. He works remotely for Goodville Mutual, a regional P&C insurance carrier based in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where he grew up. He now lives in Johnson, Vermont with his wife and four children. Ryan taught two excellent web programming sessions at 2015 VTMUG conference in September.

Rich Ollari joined the VTMUG Board as our new Marketing Director in December. Rich is the Sales and Marketing Director for Accur8 Software in Brattleboro VT and lives in Rhode Island, and I've known and worked with him for many years. He is well respected in the IBM i community and brings to VTMUG an extensive technical IBM i (AS/400) sales and marketing background serving the New England area. Given that all but two of our monthly Board meetings are conference calls, I've assured Rich that living in Rhode Island will not be an issue and we will try and conference him into our face to face meetings.

His goal is to develop broader marketing programs that will focus on increasing VTMUG membership and attendance at VTMUG's annual conference and the joint VTMUG-NHMUG June meeting - concentrating on the Northern New England IBM i community. Rich plans to do this by increasing VTMUG's use of Facebook, LinkedIn, and possibly other social media; and reaching out to the IBM i community in western Massachusetts, upstate New York, and Montreal. If you have any suggestions to help increase awareness of VTMUG we'd love to hear from you. Email Rich at rjollari@gmail.com.

VTMUG Events in 2015

The annual VTMUG – NHMUG Joint Meeting was held at the Fireside Inn in West Lebanon, NH on June 23, 2015. Thirty-seven people attended this free event to hear Steve Fier of IBM, Robin Tatam of Power Tech, and David Andruchuk of CSDA present various IBM i sessions.

VTMUG's 11th Annual Technical Conference was held at the DoubleTree Hotel in South Burlington on September 24, 2015. Fifty conference attendees, vendors, and staff and speakers were at the DoubleTree to hear six different speakers present twelve 1¼ hour sessions covering RPG and RDi, DB2 and SQL, and Web Programming.

It was very clear from the session evaluations and overall conference evaluations that the 2015 conference was the best educational event we have had to date. The new conference format (more time for networking) received high marks and the Vendor Showcase was a success. If you missed last year's conference, detailed information is still available on the [2015 Conference](#) web site

One of the highlights of the conference was the announcement of the results of the Great Oreo Cookie Debate and the prize drawings at the end of the conference, followed by the Post Conference Social held out on the patio in the beautiful warm and sunny afternoon weather.

The Results of the Great Oreo Cookie Debate:

Thirty-one people voted that Oreos are a major food group, and from this firmly grounded group Marty Kilgallen won a package of Oreos.

Fourteen people voted that Oreos are not fit for human consumption, and from this slightly deranged group Richard Bragg won a box of kale wafer crackers (sounds yummy!).

Prize Drawing Winners:

2016 RPG & DB2 Summit Registration - provided by VTMUG:

Darcy Peters of VIP

2016 NEUGC Registration - provided by VTMUG

Owen Williams of VSAC

Prize Drawing Winners - Continued:

\$50 VISA Gift Card - provided by VTMUG

Josh Wayford of Burlington Drug

Starbucks Gift Cards - provided by Fresche Legacy:

Brandon Arnold of VIP

Tom Beckwith of VIP

Brian Garland of VIP

\$50 Amazon Gift Card - provided by Lansa

Caroline Hancock of VIP

\$50 VISA Gift Card - provided by Midrange Dynamics

Michael Paige of VSAC

VTMUG Events Planned for 2016

Annual VTMUG–NHMUG Joint Meeting is planned for June 8, 2016 at the Fireside Inn in West Lebanon, NH. The speaker line up will include Steve Fier presenting on the latest IBM product offerings and Pete Massiello presenting one session on iNext (more details after IBM's 4/12 announcement. Dan Cruikshank will be presenting 2 sessions based on IBM's application modernization Redbook. The sessions are an Overview of Data Modeling and Using Embedded SQL in HLL Programs. Detailed meeting information and agenda will be provided as soon as they are available. Stay tuned!

Annual VTMUG Technical Conference: The VTMUG Board is pleased to announce that our annual Technical Conference will again be held at the DoubleTree Hotel in South Burlington on Thursday September 22, 2016.

Attendees at last year's conference rated it the best ever! They gave the DoubleTree excellent reviews for its meeting space and food and beverage service, and VTMUG is very happy to partner with them again for the third year in a row. Attendees also liked the new conference format that provided lots of time to network with other conference attendees, speakers, and the vendors

In addition, attendees gave outstanding marks to the speakers: Jon Paris and Susan Gantner from Partner400 and System i Developer, Rob Bestgen from the DB2 for i Center of Excellence, Ryan Eberly from Goodland Mutual, and Brian Garland from Vermont Information Processing (VIP). Detailed information for last year's speakers is still available at the [2015 Conference Speaker](#) web site.

To continue the positive momentum from last year, VTMUG wants to provide as many members as possible the opportunity to attend a session presented by these outstanding speakers. The good news is that Jon Paris, Susan Gantner, Ryan Eberly, and Brian Garland have all agreed to return and teach new sessions at this year's conference. And IBM has again agreed to send us another excellent speaker from the DB2 for i Center of Excellence in Rochester Minnesota.

The Board has decided the new conference format is a winner and will do it again this year. This means lots of time to network with other conference attendees and speakers, and at the end of the conference there will be the usual fun prize drawings followed by the post conference social. We are also planning to expand the Vendor Showcase so you will the opportunity to interact with more vendors.

And more good news – the registration fee for the conference will remain the same as last year. The early registration fee will be \$150 if your registration is received on or before end of business on Monday August 29, 2016. The registration fee after August 29th will be \$175.

So VTMUG's 2016 conference is shaping to be just as good – and our goal is to make it better – than last year's conference. So save the date of Thursday September 22nd for an excellent IBM i education experience and the opportunity to meet and network with other IBM i professional, the speakers, and vendors. We will let you know when more detailed conference information is available and when on line registration opens. Stay tuned!

VTMUG Needs a Conference Photographer

One thing we have tried to do in the past – with varying levels of success because of other conference commitments - is to take pictures at the VTMUG events to post on social media. So this year we're looking for a person who can focus on and will be dedicated to picture taking!

So if you are a reasonably good photographer and have the equipment – a good digital camera or phone with good picture resolution – and would like to be our conference photographer, please send an email note or call me at the contact info listed at the end of this newsletter.

VTMUG State of the Union

VTMUG is in reasonably good health – from both a membership and financial perspective.

Membership

We do not actively solicit members or charge an annual membership fee. Instead, anyone that registers for a VTMUG event – the joint VTMUG–NHMUG meeting in June or the technical conference in September – automatically becomes a VTMUG member. Currently we have just under 200 members in our database.

Finances

From a financial perspective we depend on the annual distribution we receive from NEUGC (New England User Group Conference) to fund the majority our activities – operating costs, the joint June meeting, and the annual conference. In addition, the annual grant we have been receiving from the IBM i Maxava Foundation help us keep the conference registration fee at a very reasonable (low) rate.

In 2015 VTMUG received a \$1,000 grant from Maxava and the NEUGC distribution was \$4,500. This coupled with the \$7,500 revenue generated by the conference allowed us to operate with a minimal loss for 2015 of approximately \$500 to \$750.

The conference by itself is a money loser, however VTMUG's goal is to provide cost effective IBM i education for its members. As long as we continue to receive the annual distribution from NEUGC, assisted by the Maxava grant, our current bank balance will allow us to absorb the \$500 to \$750 annual loss for several years.

If and when the NEUGC distribution - and to a lesser extent the Maxava grant - are no longer available, VTMUG will have some serious financial issues to deal with if it is going to continue to function.

2016 will be Skip's last year as President

And as I announced at last year's conference, 2016 will be my last year as President of VTMUG. I will have served as President for the past 7 years and it's time for a change in leadership. I plan to continue to work with the Board to produce the annual conference, and also teach others how to do so.

Two of my goals were to put VTMUG on a sound financial footing and grow the annual technical conference into a first class IBM i education event. I feel that with the outstanding support from the VTMUG Board and membership, both of these objectives have been accomplished.

VTMUG is always looking for volunteers to serve on it's Board of Directors – either as an officer or a Member at Large. If you know of anyone that is interested, please feel free to send an email note or call me to discuss at the contact info is listed below.

It's been a fun ride and thank you for your past support.

Skip Marchesani
VTMUG President

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