

Since I normally spend most of my time in the basement of our house doing web sites, perhaps I have a thing or two to learn regarding public speaking. I'm sorry I wasn't able to deliver the following speech at the reunion but as I said I would post it online

*Peace
Jeffrey Veltman*

I only want to say a few words. First, wow I can't believe how much work goes into putting one of these reunions together. When Andy Suth first contacted me saying that Bill Wagner needed some help with the reunion I was only thinking of putting together a website, I had no idea what I was getting into.

This reunion was made possible by a group of people and I need to pay them all thanks because this night wouldn't have happened if it weren't for them. This list is kind of long so please be patient. First I want to thank all 30 alumni for joining the reunion committee. We had a lot of emails going back and forth on the committee listServ and considering how busy our lives can be, not to mention all the other emails we get daily, it is most appreciated that you all hung in there over the last year of planning. I would like to give a very special thanks to a few select committee members who did more than just follow the email threads and provide helpful feedback. The following committee members went above and beyond by generously committing their time in attending meetings, voluntarily joining sub committees, placing phone calls, communicating with Reunion Team as well as with the New Trier Alumni Association. So kudos to; Lauren Rein, Lynne Havertine, Elliot Liebson, Alan Rubenstein, Victor Swerdlove, Bill Bogot, Jeffrey Barth, Jory (Rozner) Shure, Mark Wold, Susi (Venturini) Marchi, Tricia Blackwell, Claire Lane, Julie (Milbratz) Bender, Liz (Churchwell) Kunkle, Matthew Kaplan, Christina Ranvik, Bill Wagner, Andy Suth, Julie (Gelfond) Silver, Mark Buchmann and Gregg Helfand.

In addition, I would like to give a very special thanks to those who donated generous financial contributions as well as lent us their technology to make the music and photo slideshow happen. So thank you, thank you thank you to Jean Fischer, Julie (Milbratz) Bender, Jeffrey Barth, Bill Bogot, Jory (Rozner) Shure, Lauren Rein and Mike Movitz. Plus I want to thank those who submitted the flashback images to the website that have been on show this evening; Aaron Adilman, Annabel Bailey, Brian Keogh, Karen Backe, Patrick Pryor, Patrick Levins and Peter Sullivan. Also thanks to John Freedman's wife Janet who works at this hotel for getting us such a great deal!

In case you weren't aware I wanted to give you the heads up on the website we put together for the reunion, NT1986.com. Many of you who signed up through the Reunion Team website may not realize this but we created an alumni listServ which is linked off the homepage. This will enable all us to remain connected after today, at least via email. Currently we have about 150 alumni registered, so if you haven't done so please go to the website and sign up to stay connected. Again that's Triple W dot NT 1986 dot com.

I'd also like to make a special mention to Larry Bloom and his company ATIGraphics.com. He has generously offered to update our website with some advanced photo gallery programming. Once this work is complete you will be able to upload your photos from tonight as well as flashback images and it will automatically create photo galleries online. Make sure to check out the site once that is finished and then send us your images.

I know this is a long list of thanks but on behalf of the reunion committee I need to give a very thanks to Deirdre Marvin and Reunion Team for their superb efforts. They did most of the heavy lifting so a very big thanks to you for all your help! Last but not least thanks to all of you for coming out here today, it wouldn't be a reunion without you.

Now that I got all the "thank yous" out I wanted to say a few more words. I was thinking about the concept of reunion and how good things can be when we take the time to come together. It seems to me, all of us coming together tonight for this reunion is in stark contrast to the way things are in America today, as well as around the world. In my opinion our country and this planet has never been so divided. I think the answers for many of our problems today will only be discovered when we work together. The way I see it, each one of us is a small piece of a huge jigsaw puzzle. Each one of us holds a little bit of the answer. When all the pieces of the puzzle are working together only then will we see the big picture. This is why I am so happy to see us all here today, together again. I know that if we can make this evening happen after 20 years there certainly is hope for people everywhere to come together and as one. Peace!

Ok I know I said all the thank yous were finished but one last thanks needs to be said and that is to the band, Smoking Fish. This all New Trier band has generously donated their time to play tonight for free! So thank you to George Atkinson, Dave Mooney, Doug Fetkenhour, Dave Plante, Pete Wilson and Ed Stevenson. So without any further delay let's welcome to the stage, for the first time in 15 years with all the original members, Smoking Fish!