

REUNION PLANNING 101



**MINNETONKA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
HOW TO PLAN A REUNION**

www.minnetonkaalumni.com

The Minnetonka Alumni Association (MAA) was started in early 2000 in part to plan the All School Reunion, now held every four years. The Association seeks to help individual classes with their reunion planning. If you have any questions, please reach out to us.

In this guide you'll find a suggested timeline followed by ideas, and resources for your event.

LET'S GET STARTED!

12-18 Months in Advance

1. Develop a committee of 6-10 classmates
 - ★ Set a schedule to meet. Start meeting once a month; more meetings may need to be added.
 - ★ Have an agenda and minutes for each meeting to stay on task and keep discussions organized.
2. Pick a date range for your reunion (summer, Homecoming, etc)
3. What do you want the reunion to look like and consider your budget.
 - ★ What would you like to offer for food and drinks?
Plated dinner, buffet, hors d'oeuvres only, open bar, drink tickets?
 - ★ What would you like music/entertainment?
Live band, DJ, CDs, photographer, photo booth, other entertainment?
 - ★ Will your event be one evening?
A weekend of events, Friday night classmates-only gathering, Saturday with partners, Sunday informal family day? Auxiliary events of golf, school tours, another idea?
4. Develop committees to oversee pieces of your event. Some ideas:
 - ★ Venue/food & beverage
 - ★ Ticket sales/reservation
 - ★ Finances/treasurer
 - ★ Program (event details)
 - ★ Event promotion/finding classmates
5. Book your venues. Venues for large groups can book far in advance, contact your location early.
6. Consider creating social media pages or an event website to make announcements, reminders and organize ticketing for the future.

6-12 Months in Advance

7. Once a date and location/s are confirmed, announce your event with a save the date.
8. Secure food, beverage, and any other professional services, including rentals.

4-6 Months in Advance

9. Send out official invitations and advertise the full event details. Use multiple methods to announce the event, social media, paper invitations, newspapers, etc.
10. Put out an initial request for memorabilia and photos from classmates. Repeat as needed.
11. Depending on your event location/s, consider an inclement weather plan and any additional items you may need to acquire and consider how to communicate any changes.

1-2 Months in Advance

12. Create/finish event documents and arrange orders for custom decor and printing as needed.
13. Continue event promotion through social media and email. Send reminders to registered attendees.

1 Month-Event Day

14. Confirm vendors, determine point person, arrange delivery times as necessary.
15. Finalize decor and event details
16. Confirm volunteers and provide instructions for their arrival details as necessary.
17. Remind registered attendees with reminders to any special details for your event.
18. Monitor the weather and make adjustments and announcements if necessary.

Suggested Venues (2023)

Some venues will have food and beverage packages available. Be sure to understand what may be included and what you need to supply (linens, centerpieces, table settings, etc.). Also make note of what items your venue may not allow (ie. candles, confetti, etc).

Al and Alma's cruises	(Mound)	www.al-almas.com
Bavaria Downs	(Chaska)	www.bavariadowns.com
Bull and Wren	(Excelsior)	www.bullandwren.com
Cast & Cru	(Excelsior)	www.castandcru.com
Chanhassen Dinner Theatre	(Chanhassen)	www.chanhassendt.com
Chanhassen Legion	(Chanhassen)	www.alpost580-chanhassenmn.org
Country Inn and Suites	(Chanhassen)	cx.chan@countryinnamaricas.com
Deer Run Golf Club	(Victoria)	www.deerrungolf.com
Excelsior Legion	(Excelsior)	www.legionpost259.org
Gillespie Center	(Mound)	info@gillespiecenter.org
Gold Nugget Tavern & Grill	(Glen Lake)	www.gntag.com
Hazeltine National Golf Club	(Chaska)	www.hazeltinenational.com
Hazelwood Restaurant	(Tonka Bay)	www.hazelwoodfoodanddrink.com
Lafayette Club	(Minnetonka Beach)	www.lafayetteclub.com
Lord Fletcher's on the Lake	(Navarre)	www.lordfletchers.com
Minnetonka Community Center	(Minnetonka)	www.minnetonkamn.gov
Mound American Legion #398	(Mound)	952-472-9582 Facebook
Paradise Charter Cruises	(Lake Minnetonka)	www.twincitiescruises.com/lake-minnetonka
Parley Lake Winery	(Waconia)	www.parleylakewinery.com
Pique Travel	(Excelsior)	www.piquetravel.com
Private Home		
Spasso restaurant	(Minnetonka)	www.spassomn.com
Southshore Community Center	(Shorewood)	www.southshore-center.org
Wayzata American Legion #118	(Wayzata)	952-473-7678 Facebook
Wayzata Cruises	(Wayzata)	www.wayzatabaycharters.com

Food & Beverage

Some venues will have food and beverage packages available. Be sure to understand what is included, what you need to provide, and what you are allowed to supply.

Will you use drink tickets? How many come with each ticket? Can more be purchased? Will you offer an open bar? For how long?

If having a sit down dinner, consider starting with hors d'oeuvres and cocktails 1-2 hours prior so classmates can mingle. Once they sit down for dinner, people will usually stay at their table.

Finances

Note, some classes have money held by the MAA. Contact us to verify.

When determining the ticket cost consider:

- ★ Venue rental
- ★ Food/beverage/staffing
- ★ Music/entertainment
- ★ Event photographer/photo booth
- ★ Advertising/event promotion/postage
- ★ Classmate booklet & document printing
- ★ Ticket printing
- ★ Nametags
- ★ Decorations
- ★ Signs/posters

Consider offering an “early bird” ticket. Early tickets can provide funds for deposits and supplies. Data suggests roughly 40% of graduates attend class reunions.

If putting together a classmate booklet, consider selling advertisements in your booklet.

Consider offering a raffle or fundraising game at your event as a way of defraying costs. See if any classmates have items they would like to donate to be raffled or even auctioned.

Example: The Class of 1970 had an artist, Bruce Miller, who donated a picture they had framed and raffled off. They made \$300 on the raffle.

Invitations & Locating Classmates

Announce your event date early using email, postcards, and social media. This does not have to include specific event details, just the date/s. Consider adding a website to announce updates.

Once you have event details confirmed, send formal invitations and make formal announcements.

Be sure your formal invitations include:

- ★ Dates and times of all events
- ★ Street addresses of the venues/events
- ★ Venue details so folks can arrive prepared (ie. boat cruise, outdoor patio, backyard event, etc.)
- ★ Where to RSVP/ purchase tickets
- ★ Website to stay informed
- ★ Where to contact your committee
- ★ Consider a list of local accommodations

Locating Classmates

The MAA can provide a list of current information for classmates. Contact us for help.

Provide your classmates with a list of the classmates you are having trouble finding.

Public Announcements

Information about your reunion can be posted on the MAA website. Contact us for assistance.

Free reunion advertisements can be put in the Star Tribune and the Sun Sailor.

Decor & Other Ideas for Your Event

- ★ Classmate booklet/program
- ★ Classmate questionnaire
- ★ Music & entertainment
- ★ Event posters
- ★ Decorations
- ★ Memorabilia
- ★ Photo boards
- ★ Nametags
- ★ Raffle/fundraising
- ★ Games/activities
- ★ Event signs
- ★ Volunteer tasks

Classmate Booklet/Program

If you want to offer a program, they take time to put together and have a cost to print, but can be a lot of fun. Many classmates have photo memorabilia to share.

When you request memorabilia, it is important to have a clear deadline. Lead time from your printing service may vary.

Content ideas:

- ★ Information about the reunion
- ★ Results from the “most likely to” section of the yearbook
- ★ Old photos from classmates
- ★ World events and how your classmates may have been affected
- ★ Classmate Statistics
 - ★ Who came the farthest?
 - ★ Who has the most kids? Grandkids?
 - ★ Who has been married the longest?
- ★ Questionnaire
 - ★ My most memorable moment in high school was...
 - ★ Would you believe in high school, I was...
 - ★ I knew I was grown up when...
 - ★ When I was in high school, I never thought I would...
 - ★ What exciting things have happened to you since graduation?
 - ★ Our senior class motto was “___”, how does that apply now?
 - ★ If you had a chance to be 18 again, what would you do differently?
 - ★ In the last ___ years, I have learned...

Consider mailing the classmate booklet before the reunion so classmates can read ahead. Also consider offering a booklet to classmates unable to attend in person. Postage may be expensive.

Decorations

- ★ Banners/flags
- ★ Blue and white daisies in white vases
- ★ Blue and white balloons
- ★ Blue and white candies/baubles in glass containers
- ★ Centerpieces of boats, anchors, etc.

Picture Boards

A picture board is a nice feature to have on site. Ask those that cannot attend if they'd like to send in a picture of their family. Those attending can bring a family picture with them to attach or send it in early.

Physical Memorabilia

Ask classmates if they'd like to provide any items (to be returned)

- ★ Jackets/uniforms/shirts
- ★ Trophies/team memorabilia
- ★ Pom poms/buttons/accessories
- ★ Photos

Name Tags

Consider using the classmate's senior picture on their nametag. Some really like this idea, others not so much. 😊

Volunteers

For the night of the event, ask non-classmate friends and family members to be your staff for the check-in process. Otherwise your committee will need to, which makes it difficult to socialize.

You may receive offers from classmates looking to help with the event but they cannot commit to the committee. These folks can be a great help on the event day getting the space set up and decorated.

Survey

We recommend a survey after the reunion for suggestions for the next event. This can be done on paper returned at the end of the event, or created online and electronically sent out after the event is over.

Additional Resources

Websites

- ★ Canva can help you create free designs for save the dates, invitations, emails, signs, etc.
- ★ Pinterest has many ideas for games, favors, decor and more.
- ★ Classmates.com has a cost to join, but it can be well worth the expense.
- ★ Survey Monkey to conduct electronic surveys
- ★ Google Forms for data collection from classmates for surveys, classmate booklet, etc.
- ★ Social media can be helpful for locating classmates (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn)

Companies to organize and find classmates for a fee.

Taylor Reunion Services at 1-800-677-7800

Reunion Organizers of Minnesota 612-557-0177

Books

Let's Have a Reunion. A How-to-Do-It Guide for your class reunion. (Second Thoughts, 63 West Burton Place, Chicago, IL 60610)

The Reunion Handbook by the National Reunion Assn, P.O. Box 295, Nevada City, CA 95959

One final word of caution, we have heard from some classes that they were over ambitious in their plans and they were stuck with a large bill when they didn't have the attendance they expected.

We are open to your feedback. Please visit our website: www.minnetonkaalumni.com