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### Minnesota Futurists

*by Earl C. Joseph, Futurist, MN Futurists Coordinator, and Futurics Editor*



The Minnesota Futurists, the first Chapter of the World Future Society, was formed in 1967 by its cofounders Earl Joseph, Brian Toren, and William Bergen. We now meet every Saturday morning for two and a half hours. On the first Saturday of any month, we hold a class on future studies; on March 4, 2006 we held our 62<sup>nd</sup> class. Its topic was Postmodern Forecasting. On the other Saturdays, we conduct Special Interest Group meetings (SIGs).

During the second Saturday of a month the SIG topic area deals with alternative long-term economic futures. In February, 2006 the topic was GDP futures. The third Saturday covers Science and Technology alternative futures. In March, 2006 the topic was Physics Futures. The fourth Saturday deals with Society, Management, or Education alternative futures. The February, 2006 topic was Peter Drucker's Legacy for the Future. If a month has five Saturdays, the fifth-Saturday discussion deals with Peace Futures. For April, 2006 the Peace SIG topic is Peace Strategies and Best Practices.

Members decide the topics to be discussed on a quarterly basis, and they are announced on our Web site, <http://www.mnfuturists.org> by Brian Toren, our Web master. We have found that by meeting every Saturday, the attendance has been more stable and larger than when we were meeting once a month in the earlier days of our chapter. Sperry Univac (now Unisys) funded the first 15 years of our existence. They provided a meeting place, edited, printed, and mailed our newsletter, *Future Trends* (now published on the Web) and our journal. Our international refereed journal, *Futurics*, is in 2006 its 30<sup>th</sup> year of publication. Since its inception, the subscription rate pays for all activities of the Minnesota Futurists.

To recap and answer the question, "Why has the Minnesota Futurists been successful?", consider the following top ten most important factors:

1. Obtain early support and funding from a corporation.
2. Do "marketing" to gain members and maintain a large mailing database of people interested in the future.
3. Have a few dedicated people who keep the chapter going over the long-term and who are able to present or find speakers on interesting topics about alternative possible futures.

4. Produce and mail out a newsletter. The Minnesota Futurists published *Future Trends*, which was also our marketing tool that contained many articles on future studies.
5. Start with monthly meetings and move to weekly meetings relatively soon.
6. Have a product or service that produces funds. In the Minnesota Futurists case, it is the International Journal *Futurics*.
7. Encourage members to participate locally to improve the community's future. The Minnesota futurists worked with the local city councils, legislators, schools, businesses, and other institutions to assist in planning desirable futures.
8. Have an active speakers bureau.
9. Have Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to attract meeting attendees; make them primarily discussion meetings, the Minnesota Futurists use a "speaker interruptus" philosophy.
10. Have at least seven to ten participating officers who are elected for multiyear terms.

*Earl Joseph is a professor at three universities: Walden University, Metropolitan State University, and University of St. Thomas. He is the emeritus President of Anticipatory Sciences. He has been a futurist, professor, management consultant, and computer scientist for more than 50 years. Earl's credits include being featured in the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Business Week, U. S. News & World Report, Science News, and many other national publications. The Wall Street Journal claims Earl was the first in Corporate America to have the title of "Futurist," Business Week claims he was one the first to use the phrase "smart machine" and forecasted that the central processing unit (CPU) of computers would become a "bulge in the cable" (now chips). The holder of three computer patents, Earl was a member of an early 1970's team that initially studied and outlined the design of the Internet. He convinced the Defense Department at a Naval Academy workshop to fund the development of Very High Speed Large Scale Integration circuit chip technology that led to today's chip advances. An invited keynoter at 100s of conferences, Earl has published approximately 1,000 articles and papers in various journals, magazines, and newspapers.*

*Your chapter has its own success story and winning ideas to share with other chapters! Let's continue this exchange of ideas that can benefit all WFS chapters. Send your "words of wisdom" to [chapterscorner@futuretakes.org](mailto:chapterscorner@futuretakes.org) for publication in "Chapters' Corner."*