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NEWSLETTER

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Thanks To: Mike Auda, Jenny Risch, Tom Cramer, and Matt Spelman

Bruce Rasmussen, Editor
BruceRass@wi.rr.com

Welcome to a New Year. 2014 is already shaping up to be a great year for the MAC. We hope you will find something you like that will keep you connected to Minikani and all of your alumni friends.

Here are some of the things you can count on in the coming year:

- ◆ A couple more Newsletters you can download, read and enjoy.
- ◆ An invitation or two to 'come back' to Minikani, help out, and see what has changed and what has stayed the same.
- ◆ We'll offer you plenty of opportunities to support the MAC with your time, talents, and gifts.
- ◆ You'll have a chance to enjoy a meal with old (and new) friends.

◆ If you wish, you'll be able to take a walk along memory lane, hopefully full of good memories of the times and people you associate with Minikani.

This edition of the Newsletter contains a report on our very successful Gala 2013, letters from the MAC's Director and the Summer Director at Minikani, a look into Minikani's past, a "Spotlight on Alumni", Nature Notes, a very sincere "Thank You" or two, and various other bits of information.

As we begin the 6th year of MAC Newsletters, no one really knows what 2014 will have in store for them. Let's hope it will be everything you want it to be.



MAC Director Mike Auda

Hello Minikani Alumni
Community!

I hope everyone had a wonderful Holiday with family and friends. It was great to see so many of you at the Minikani Alumni Gala on December 21st. We had over 100 people of all different ages who turned out for the event. It was great to catch up with old friends. Because of everyone's generosity that evening we raised over \$11,000! Every one of those dollars will help make it possible to send kids to camp through our Campership Program. These are kids who normally wouldn't be able to afford a week or two at Minikani, but will benefit greatly from the experience. Having been a camper at Minikani ourselves, we know how important that can be for a kid.



It is pretty spectacular how far this group has come. As many of you know the Minikani Alumni Community was created 5 years ago. The group actually started as a social group that would meet at Minikani one weekend during the summer. I still remember the meeting we had during the very first Alumni Weekend reunion at Minikani. We had so many ideas floating around from such creative people. At that first meeting in

Fireside we all decided we wanted to be more than just a social group. We wanted to give back to a place that had given us so much.

Through the years the membership of the Minikani Alumni group has skyrocketed. The number of events we offer to our alumni has also increased. We are in a very healthy position because of the generosity of all of our members. Not just the generosity from your wallets but also your time. Participation at our events has been greatly appreciated and inspiring. I urge all of you to get involved in one way or another. In the Spring and/or Fall we have work projects at Minikani to help support Camp. Our Gala every winter around the Holiday Season helps send children to Camp. The Dinner Around the World in March encourages Minikani Alums to get together in their respective cities and have dinner together. And finally, every other year we host an Alumni Weekend reunion at Minikani for Alums and their families. We hope there is something for everyone in the activities we plan throughout the year and we are always open to new ideas from you.

Today the Minikani Alumni Community is making a difference at Camp Minikani because of you. We are funding much needed repairs, influencing programming and most importantly making a difference in children's lives. I urge you to stay involved with our community so it will continue to grow and become stronger and stronger.
Best,
Michael "MAUDA"
Auda



MAC Gala 2013



“Reflections by Jenny Risch”

Back in August, The Minikani Alumni Community Board reconvened at our summer homeland to look ahead to our winter event, where we would celebrate the 5 year anniversary of our organization's official start.

Fast forward four months, lots of planning meetings and hard work and we found ourselves back at The Charles Allis Museum, where we had convened 5 years before. With a blizzard on the horizon and Christmas a few days away, over 150 alumni gathered and turned a windy December night into a warm celebration that captured the spirit of our group and our summer homeland.

As the night began to wind down, and Myles Hayes transitioned from “Baby It's Cold Outside” to “Feliz Navidad”, a few of us stepped back
(Continued on page 3)



(Gala Reflections Continued)

to reflect on the night and the last five years. We are so proud and grateful to be part of a group of kindred spirits, dedicated to sharing an experience that was so transformative to us with kids who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford the opportunity. We raised over **\$11,000** that night and more kids are on their way to Minikani next summer thanks to that evening. As some of our newest alumni danced the rest of the night away, we smiled knowing that most certainly the kids we send to Camp summer after summer will dance with us many years down the road, ready to open doors for the generations that will come after them.

Thank you for a wonderful evening, we can't wait to see everyone again soon!



“Thank You” to our Generous Sponsors

- Sommer's Automotive
- Debbie and Camp Van Dyke
- The Siegel Family
- The Harari Family
- Mansfield Hall
- Erik Herbst Insurance
- Owen's Office Products and Printing
- The Myles Hayes Quintet



Minikani News

By Tom Cramer

(Editor's Note: Tom is the new Summer Camp Director at Minikani)

Greetings from Camp!

I am honored to be writing to my Minikani family from the desk of the Summer Camp Director. I'm only nine days into my new role and everything is still novel and exciting. Paperwork, email, scheduling... nothing is dull when you are doing it for Summer Camp. It's hard to believe that fourteen years ago I took my first trip up to Minikani, sitting nervously in the back seat of my parent's car, as a group of exuberant LTs cheered us in to Norris Field. That nervous 9-year-old Boy's Unit camper never thought that he would end up as the Summer Camp Director. I'm now lucky enough to make that beautiful drive out to Minikani every single day, and, between you and me, I still get butterflies in my stomach every time and drive down Amy Belle Road. The magic of this special place never wears off.

As I write this I'm looking out at 3 inches of fresh, untouched snow, ready for Winter Camp. I can't wait

to have a group of excited campers and staff members back out for Winter Camp, ready to reconnect with Mama Minikani. We've planned an action packed 4 days of skiing, tubing, snowboarding, snow-forts, snow-shoeing, broom-ball, and of course, generous portions of hot chocolate.

Once Winter Camp wraps up it will be a long wait until Summer Camp, but I will be lucky enough to sit out at camp every day, dreaming up new magic for another summer at Minikani. I'll watch the snow melt. I'll watch the ice thaw. I'll see the grass grow back in Norris Field, the flowers bloom around Fireside Lodge, and the pinecones start to fall in Pine Forest. And I'll count down the days till that first day of camp, when cars pile in, Ts cheer, campers smile, and dreams become reality. In the Spirit,
Tom Cramer



Websites

www.minikanistafflodge.com

This is the main site for the Minikani Alumni Community.

www.minikani.org

This is the official web site of YMCA Camp Minikani. You can get information on dates for summer camp, check out Minikani's blog, and enjoy a collection of Alumni Photos.

“Dinner Around the World”
Saturday
March 1st

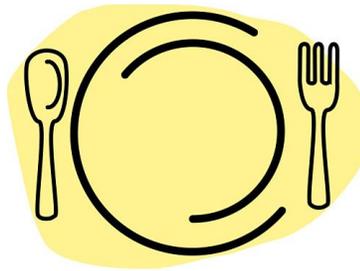
Yes, it’s that time again. Minikani Alumni Community’s 4th annual “Dinner Around the World” will be held on Saturday, March 1, 2014. For those of you who are new to our community, this event gives alumni all around the world a chance to connect with other alumni who live in their area. Last year we had 18 dinners in 6 different countries.

Now, to be honest, most of the dinners were held in just one country, the United States. And to continue with this honesty thing, most of the dinners should actually be called ‘get-togethers’, ‘coffee’s’, ‘lunches’, or ‘bar-hopping’. So don’t let the name of the event throw you off. The ‘dinner’ is an event that will bring Minikani alumni together. Period.

So now you know that the event doesn’t actually take YOU around the world, and it doesn’t always feed you DINNER. But it does give you an opportunity to reconnect with Minikani.



Right now we need people who are willing to volunteer as a sponsor for a dinner. You become our contact person, and we share your information with all of the rest of our alumni. Then it will be each alumnus’s job to contact a person living in their part of the world and invite themselves to their dinner activity. For example, if John Hyland, who lives in Chicago, volunteers to be a dinner host, people in Chicago will contact him through email to find out what he is planning for his ‘dinner’ on that Saturday.



So I hope you don’t sit around waiting for someone to invite you to dinner. It’s not like a middle school dance. Once we send out our list of dinner hosts, it is your job to invite yourself to one of the dinners. Come on, you’ve been through LT program. Take charge of your life and connect with others who hold a special place in their heart for Minikani, just like you.

Did you know we have two alumni who live in Greensboro, NC? They probably don’t even know each other, because one was at camp in the late 70’s and the other was there in the early 90’s. But they certainly both know Pine Forest, Norris Field, Lake Amy Belle, the Mud Lake Monster, Skills, Rags, etc. They have lots in common. “Dinner Around the World” gives them an easy way to connect and share their memories.

Sadly, some alumni live really far away from any other alumni. But they can contact old camp friend through the phone or email, and they can have a ‘dinner’ with their current friends and family on that date. They can bring out their old photo albums, their Ragger materials, favorite camp music, and reconnect with Minikani in that way.

What do you say – will you be a Dinner Host? Everyone can do it, no matter where you live or when you were at camp. Contact Perry LaRoque to volunteer.
<mailto:perrylaroque@hotmail.com>



Alumni Business

Please update your address changes. Have you changed your email address in the past five years? Do you have multiple email addresses that you seldom check? Has it been a while since you’ve heard from the MAC? Have you moved to a new address or changed your name? Do you know an alumnus who doesn’t hear from us? If you can answer “yes” to any of these questions, please let us know so we can still communicate with you. It’s very easy to do. Simply go to our website and click on “Contact Us”, or email us at (minikanistafflodge@gmail.com) P. S. Almost 30 alumni didn’t get an invitation to the Gala because we had an old address for them☹.



1926 Brochure

In 1926 the Minikani Y Camp put out a 12 page brochure for interested campers and their parents. It was the seventh season for the camp on 40 acres of land on Lake Amy Belle and already boasted the following equipment: “13 cabins, an assembly lodge, dining hall, doctor’s cabin, headquarters’ building, pier, tennis court, council ring, athletic field, row boats, horseshoe courts, and a baseball diamond.”

Our present Minikani brochure features lots of pictures of kids having fun at camp. The 1926 brochure doesn’t – it included mostly pictures of buildings and landscapes, with few pictures of people, with one exception. All 12 adult “Leaders” of the camp are pictured, including Camp Manager, Activities Director, Camp Doctor, Nature Study Director, and Athletic and Aquatics Directors.

Admission was open to “any boy over twelve years of age who presents an application properly signed by his parent, and by the director in charge of that period.” The camp fee was \$7.00 a week. Items to bring included “change of underwear, extra trousers, gym suit, sweater, tennis shoes, bath towel, socks, pajamas or night clothes, musical instruments, and Bible.

The brochure ends with a picture of the wide-open spaces at Minikani and the following poem by Edgar A. Guest, the same author who wrote the poem “Myself” which is part of the Blue Rag Study Material (“*I have to live with myself, and so, I want to be fit for myself to know*”).



Out of Doors

“Get out of doors! ‘Tis where you’ll find
The better things of heart and mind.
Get out beneath some stretch of sky,
And watch the white clouds drifting by,
And all the petty thoughts will fade
Before the wonders God has made.”

1926 Daily Schedule

7:00 A.M. – Reveille, set-up drill, flag raising, plunge.
7:20 A.M. – Cabin group Bible study.
7:45 A.M. – Breakfast, announcements.
8:15 A.M. - Camp duty. Everyone at work.
9:30 A.M. – Period for Council Ring, camp, group, and individual projects.
11:00 A.M. – Morning swim and instruction in aquatics.
12:00 M. – Cabins cleaned for inspection.
12:30 P.M. – Dinner. Cabin inspection.
1:30 P.M. – Rest hour.
2:30 P.M. – Games, meets, hikes, and other organized sports.
4:30 P.M. – Afternoon swim.
5:30 P.M. – Leaders’ meeting.
6:00 P.M. – Supper
7:00 P.M. – Group and mass games.
8:00 P.M. – Campfire entertainment.
9:15 P.M. – Tattoo.
9:30 P.M. – Taps, lights out for 9 hours’ sleep

Your Newsletter

Do you have a favorite camp memory? “Do you know an Alumnus who we can ‘Spotlight’ in a future edition?” “Do you have questions about camp that we can research?” “Can you suggest a future topic for the Newsletter?” You get the idea. This is your Newsletter – feel free to make a contribution. The next Newsletter will come out in May. Please give it some thought. Send your email to minikanistafflodge@gmail.com.

**Dinner Around the World
March 1, 2014**
Contact Perry LaRoque to volunteer as a host
perrylaroque@hotmail.com

**Wear Your Camp Shirt to
School Day**
Thursday, March 20, 2014

Alumni Dinner at Minikani
Wednesday, June 11, 2014
R.S.V.P. Camp Minikani
Come and meet the staff for Summer 2014.

SpotLight

On Alumni

By Matt Spelman

◆ **What is your history at camp?**

I didn't spend my first summer at Minikani until I was 12 years old. As soon as I arrived I could not believe what I had been missing out on. I fell in love with Minikani immediately. That love would lead to many fun-filled and life changing summers to come. I was a boy's unit camper for two years, an explorer for one year, an LT for three years, and a counselor for three years. I was at Minikani from 2001 to 2009.

◆ **Any particularly 'fond' memories of camp?** I have many fond memories of camp. I miss singing in the dining hall, accumulating as many "bendo" points as possible, and making the trek out to Acre's Edge with a cabin of campers who are attempting to carry over-sized sleeping bags. The only slightly unpleasant memory of camp I have was the time I struck out in staff softball. My peers never let me live that one down.

◆ **Were there any special skills you learned while at camp?** I took away many skills from camp - from how to light a one-match fire or throw a Frisbee to how to be a leader while also listening to and collaborating with others. Camp gave me the social skills and taught me the life lessons that have been the building blocks of many relationships, my education, and now my career.

◆ **How did you make the transition from camp to the "real" world?** That transition from camp to the "real" world was a difficult one for me. I remember feeling trapped spending my first summer indoors in years. I always knew how special my time at camp was, but it was in that first summer away that I really discovered how much I loved Minikani.

◆ **What are you doing now?** I recently moved from Milwaukee to Chicago. I am an accountant at a CPA firm called Shepard Schwartz & Harris and I have been busy working and studying for the last sections of the CPA exam.

◆ **Do you think camp has had any influence in your present success?** I don't believe that I would be where I am today if it weren't for my experiences at camp. Camp taught me at a young age how to problem-solve and work through difficult situations. Camp taught me how to work hard while having fun. Most importantly, camp gave me what have proved to be crucial social skills. I believe that camp taught me how to relate to others despite differences in personality or point of view. Camp showed me how to focus on what matters most in life.

◆ **What does Camp Minikani mean to you?** To me, Camp Minikani is more than a place. Camp Minikani is a community and a spirit. Those who have had the wonderful opportunity to experience Camp Minikani share many of the ideals, experiences, and memories that make Camp Minikani what it is.



◆ **Do you have anything else you'd like to share with other Minikani alumni?** I love seeing the Minikani Alumni Community grow each year. I am so happy to be part of a community that is able to band together for the betterment of camp and to give many children the opportunity to experience the Spirit of Minikani. It is exiting to think that those children who otherwise would not have the opportunity to attend camp may find themselves sitting around ten or twenty years from now recounting all that camp has given them.



Hiraeth

Hiraeth is a Welsh word pronounced as "here-eyeth" (roll the "r"). There is no direct English translation; an approximation would be the longing, or yearning for home.

Hiraeth is the sense of being so much a part of a place -- and the place, a part of you -- that you feel forever incomplete when separated from it.

Gillian Thomas best describes this feeling by saying, "it's not homesickness. Homesickness is too weak. You feel hiraeth. A longing of the soul to come home."

Hiraeth is an expression of the bond one feels for a place when one is away from it. "As soon as I return to Minikani, my hiraeth evaporates. I am home again."



Nature Notes

By Bruce

We've been having some pretty cold weather in Wisconsin this winter, as has most of the US this season. So you might be wondering how some of Minikani's favorite (and maybe not so favorite) animals have adapted to these below freezing temperatures. (The ones who can't stand the cold have two real options – either move to a warmer climate or die from the cold.)

Deer will spend their 'cold' times in sheltered areas, away from the wind, where the temperature may be 10 degrees warmer. During the severest weather, they 'hunker down' and wait for the poor weather conditions to pass. They accumulate fat during the summer and fall to provide the nutrients they need to exist during winter. They also develop highly insulated winter coats. Dense inner fur and long, hollow outer hairs create a coat 10 times thicker than their summer coat.



Deer will also produce hormones that regulate their body activity. You might think deer would

“crank up the heat” to stay warm, but the opposite is true. During winter the deer you see may appear normal, but internally they are operating in slow motion. Body temperature is lowered, particularly in the legs and ears. As the quality and quantity of the food declines, body functions such as digestion are also slowed.

Most species of **mosquitoes** freeze to death in the Wisconsin winter. That's the good news. The bad news is that they survive the winter by laying cold resistant eggs. These eggs sit underneath the snow layer and hatch in the spring when the snow melts and forms a pool ideal for the developing larvae. The adults we are so familiar with over the summer lay more eggs in moist areas likely to form snow melt pools the next spring. In some species, these eggs can lay dormant for 5 or 10 years until they are activated by a wet spring.



Painted and snapping **turtles** don't actually hibernate, but spend their winter months in shallow water. They slowly walk under the ice, lie on top of soil and muck, or burrow themselves into the bottom mud, submerged debris or overhanging banks.

When the turtles are under the ice — sometimes for months at a time — their body temperature mimics that of the water, and their bodily systems slow down. They also switch how they breathe and are able to absorb oxygen from the water right through their skin.

I'm always amazed at how active the little **chickadee** birds are at my feeder in the winter. They actually have three things going for them: they're insulated, they're active, and they have a good memory. When the weather gets cold, chickadees



physically adjust to the cold by shivering. Although it's not visible at the bird feeder, Chickadees' chest muscles repeatedly flex to generate heat. The warm air is trapped within their downy coat, while their feathers rise to create an inch-thick coat that provides a feeling of warmth when it's way below zero outside. The chickadee maintains its body temperature at 100 degrees Fahrenheit, even when the air is 0 degrees.

Finally, the ever-industrious chickadee has another behavior that helps in the winter. During the summertime they wedge seeds, dead insects, and other food into tree bark and other crevices within a half-mile range of where they live. Later in the winter they are able to find the seeds they harvested months earlier.

Chipmunks actually do hibernate in winter, but they don't sleep all the way through the season. They retreat to their burrows but wake every few days, raise their body temperatures to normal, feed on stored food rather than fat reserves, then go back to sleep.

When chipmunks are in the deep sleep phase of hibernation, they may be very difficult to arouse. Their heart rate declines from about 350 beats per minute to perhaps 4. Body temperature may drop from 94 degrees F to whatever the temperature of the burrow—as cold as 40 degrees F.

