



MINIKANI
ALUMNI
COMMUNITY
I'm comin' home to you...

January 2015
Volume 7, Issue 1

NEWSLETTER

Inside this Issue

- 1 MAC's New Year
- 2 A Red Rock Affair
- 2 Waterfront Restoration
- 3 Dinner Around the World
- 4 Spotlight on Alumni
- 5 Nature Notes
- 6 Minikani Trivia
- 7 Trivia Answers

Thanks To: Jenny Risch,
Tom Cramer,
and Brett Andrews

Bruce Rasmussen, Editor
BruceRass@wi.rr.com

We hope the first month of 2015 has treated you well! We had a blast celebrating, gambling and toasting with such an awesome group of alumni in December at A Red Rock Affair, what a great way to end 2014!

Our Community continues to grow and we're excited for the year ahead! Below are few things for our Alumni to have on the radar in 2015 – keep your eyes peeled, it's going to be fantastic year!

What's ahead in for us in 2015

- **Launching in February:** Our 2015 Waterfront fundraising! As many of you know, we are making a big splash this year with our first ever capital campaign to raise money for the waterfront restoration. Look for exciting ways to participate and help us reach our goal in February!
- **March:** The Minikani Alumni "Dinner Around the World" Saturday, March 7th. (We're going to be challenging our Alumni to get creative this year, keep an eye out for details!)

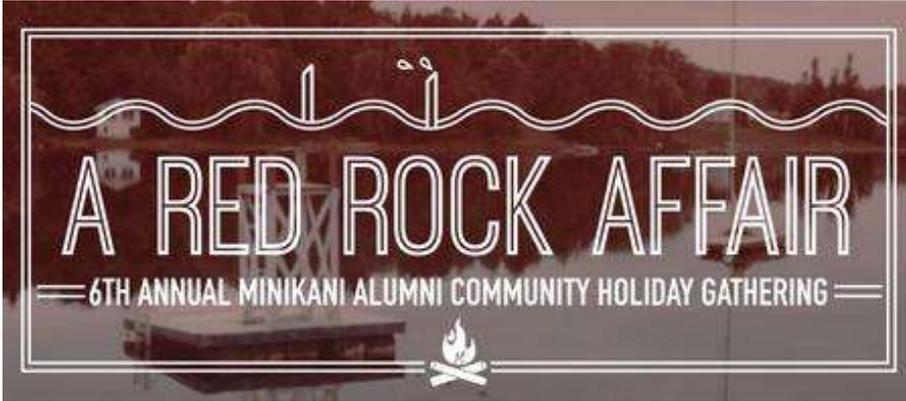
- **April or May:** Our annual service day, let's get our hands dirty at Mama Minikani together!
- **Summer:** We'll be providing fun options to support and engage with the 2015 staff prior to summer kicking off.
- **August:** Our biannual Alumni Weekend August 29-30. Get ready to have a blast with alumni, old & new at our Summer Homeland!
- **December:** By the time the holidays roll around, we'll have a lot to celebrate at our annual holiday party, including our first successful capital campaign. Start saving your energy now, we're already planning for an epic evening!

We are excited for the year ahead, can't wait to see and hear from many of you throughout the year.

In the Spirit

The MAC Board





One thing you've got to say about Minikani Alumni – we know how to have a good time. This was very evident at our 6th annual holiday party held on December 20, 2014. Over 80 people gathered to celebrate at Onesto's restaurant in the Third Ward. It is a beautiful place – we had the whole upstairs to ourselves, with four fireplaces, cream city brick walls, high ceilings, a long bar, a food table, and shoulder-to-shoulder alumni and friends of all ages.

A few people were happy to chat with others and just enjoy the gourmet appetizers, beverages and atmosphere. But most got right down to business: playing games. Not charades or Pictionary, but gambling games with the chance of winning great prizes. Blackjack, craps and roulette were all available, with very understanding dealers who helped even the most novice among us to try our luck.

Winning chips were exchanged for raffle tickets, and a grand prize winner (Mike Auda) was drawn at the end of the night, winning two deluxe tickets to a Packer game in Green Bay.

Lesser prize winners went away happy, and those who tried hard but didn't win a prize still enjoyed a fun event together with alumni. Finally, future campers will be winning for years to come enjoying a safer, more functional waterfront. Thanks to everyone who attended, supported, organized, and delivered a great time for Minikani alumni.

Waterfront Restoration

Just imagine a completely re-designed waterfront on the shore of Amy Belle. Easy access for everyone, natural plantings, a sandy beach, access to safety features, and a small craft storage area.

Now imagine how much it would cost. Higher. Higher. Higher still. But the restored waterfront would serve Minikani campers for many, many years, and add so much to the camper's experiences.

The MAC Board is hard at work and is planning to announce details for the 2015 Waterfront Restoration Fundraising Project soon. You can be part of the restoration and help us reach our goal. Stay tuned for special announcements in February!



Websites

www.minikanistafflodge.com

This is the main site for the Minikani Alumni Community.

www.minikani.org

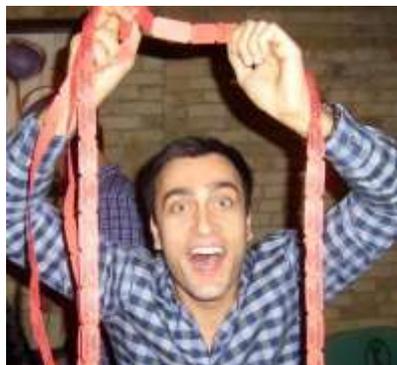
This is the official web site of YMCA Camp Minikani. You can get information on dates for summer camp, check out Minikani's blog, and enjoy a collection of Alumni Photos.



The main purpose for the gathering was to kick off fundraising for Amy Belle's Waterfront Restoration. In addition to ticket sales, we received \$1,380 from on-line donations, a check for \$500 from a grateful alumnus, and a

sponsor check for \$750 from Sommer's Auto in Mequon. We also received \$1,000 from the sale of the 2nd specialty brew created by Kevin (Fathead) Wright, an India Pale Ale appropriately named "Buddy Check".

What did we do for four hours? We enjoyed ourselves, that's what.

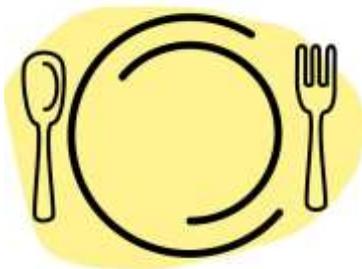


“Dinner Around the World”
Saturday
March 7th

Yes, it’s that time again. Minikani Alumni Community’s 5th annual “Dinner Around the World” is coming right up. For those of you who are new to our community, this event gives alumni everywhere a chance to connect with other alumni who live in their area.

Now, to be honest, most of the dinners last year (21) 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.

Right now we need people who are willing to volunteer as a ‘host’ for a dinner. You become our contact person, and we share your email address 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.



Sadly, some alumni live really far away from any other alumni. But they can contact old camp friends, 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.

Once we send out our list of dinner hosts, it is your job to invite yourself to one of the dinners. Come on, we know you can do it. Take charge of your life and connect with others who hold a special place in their heart for Minikani.

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 us right now to volunteer to be a ‘host’ at minikanistafflodge@gmail.com



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, a “Special Edition” will focus on our Waterfront Restoration Fundraising Project. We’ll be asking for your help to make it a success. Then another Newsletter will come out in May. Please give it some thought. Send your thoughts and contributions via email to minikanistafflodge@gmail.com.

Summer 2015 Ad Staff

LT Directors: John Opgenorth, Leah Harari, Jane Wierdsma, Gordy Goetz

Lead Day Camp Director: Kevin Jennings

Co-Day Camp Directors: Kelsey Strode, Ryan Ballentine

Waterfront Director: Maggie Aasen

Craft Skill Head: Matt Kolb

Adventure Challenge Skill Head: Oliver Wierdsma

Wrangler: Sam Smith

Gun N Run Skill Head: Max Leonhardt

WSA Skill Head: David Demet

Girls Unit Director: Rachel Whaley

Boys Unit Director: Peter Drews

Minicamp Director: Haley Adams

Leadership and Trips Director: Sharon Cross

Skills Director: Sarah Whaley

Explorer Directors: Michael Rooney, Maggie Shanahan, Kelsey Gusho



Thanks!
 Our sincere thanks to John Bolger, alumnus, for all of his help in setting up our legal status as a

Non-Profit and filing our annual reports with the state of Wisconsin. If you are looking for legal representation for a litigation or intellectual property matter, check out his website at www.bolgerlegalgroup.com



SpotLight On Alumni

Brett Andrews

Brett first discovered Minikani as a 9 year old, on the recommendation of his grandmother. His grandfather, Milton “Pinky” Mishelow, was a life guard at Minikani in his 20s. Brett spent all of his subsequent summers at camp, through two years as a Boys Unit counselor. His last year as a staff member was 2002. Here’s what he has to say about his experiences at Minikani and after:

◆Do you have any particularly ‘fond’ memories of camp?

At my age, many people think of “college friends” when they think of their early 20s...for me, as for many of us, I think of my “camp friends”, most of whom I’m still very close to today. More than anything, I loved the counselors...and I had some legends in my day - from Erik Peetz to Gabe Gross to Perry LaRoque. The way that kids all look up to the cool and confident counselors is still amazing to me to this day. It was such an honor to be able to call myself a Minikani counselor.

◆ Did you develop any special skills while at camp?

I think the skill that all good counselors develop is the ability to read people and situations and then adjust their leadership strategies accordingly. As we all know, each camper needs to be related to and mentored in a unique way. In the corporate world, I’ve learned that being a manager of a staff of employees works the exact same way as a cabin of kids. The leadership skills I developed at

Minikani have undoubtedly made me a more effective manager.

◆How did you make the transition to the “real” world?

I was all set to come back to Minikani for a third summer as a full staff member when I was afforded an opportunity to intern at a local Milwaukee radio station...so I hung up my Bearclaw and grabbed a set of headphones. That first summer away from camp was tough, but it was a huge step in launching my broadcasting career.



◆What work you are doing now?

I work as an on-air host and director of programming for several radio stations owned and operated by iHeartMedia. I’ve been all over the country doing radio and have recently relocated back to the Milwaukee cluster of stations after three years in Portland, Oregon and two years in St. Louis, MO. I’m currently Director of Programming and Imaging for 97.3 RadioNow and Oldies 95.7 in Milwaukee, and my radio show is currently on the air in five major markets in the country (Milwaukee’s 97-3 RadioNow, Z107.7 in St. Louis, Z100 in Portland Or, 104.7 Kiss FM in Phoenix, and 103.5 Kiss FM in Chicago).

◆ How have your experiences at camp helped you with your job?

The LT program and my years as a counselor really shaped my management style. Because of the size of my company, part of my team works directly in our Milwaukee office, but another part works out of other markets like Tampa, Austin, and St. Louis. So I deal with my staff both traditionally and digitally and communicate with them in a wide array of ways.

◆How often do thoughts of camp and Minikani people ‘pop’ into your head?

All the time. I miss the closeness and common bond that only a few people in the world can truly understand. I’ve got my rags hung proudly in my office and think of my old camp fondly.

◆ Anything at Minikani right now you’d like to change?

I’m a traditionalist when it comes to camp. My hope is that the current staff will continue to work with the alumni and safeguard the traditions of Minikani that makes it such a special place.

◆Anything else?

Just remember to always appreciate the special thing called Minikani that we all have the honor of taking with us as we travel through life. No matter what we ultimately end up doing with our lives and careers, nobody will ever be able to take away the Spirit of Minikani that will all have within us. Xoxxo 🏕️



Nature Notes

By Bruce



Nature at Night

Hopefully everyone has enjoyed a nature hike of some kind during the day. But have you ever tried exploring nature at night? By using some of our senses other than vision we open up a whole new natural ‘nocturnal’ world to ourselves and our families. Just like daytime hikes, night hikes can be done all year round – and they don’t take much preparation. It’s nice to have a flashlight for a back-up and to wear clothes suitable for the weather, but you don’t need much else. Night hikes don’t need to be long treks, either. Sometimes just walking out into your back yard is all you need to experience nature. Here are a few observations of Night Activities you may experience at different times of the year.

WINTER

Right now I’m sitting inside, but I can hear the Great Horned Owl

hooting away outside my window. Two of them, actually, possibly establishing their territories or looking for a mate. Owls mate and lay eggs in the cold of winter, with the chicks hatching a month later. Why so early in the year? Parents find it easier to hunt for food for the young before plants begin to leaf out and protect the intended prey.

While you’re outside in winter, make sure you look up on a clear night and do some stargazing. Orion, the mighty hunter of Greek Mythology, will surly greet you as you look to the night sky. The three stars of his belt make him easy to spot - one of which comes from a star 800 light years away that shines 100,000 times stronger than our sun. A simple stargazing guide will help you find a dozen more easily recognized constellations on a clear night.

While you’re hiking, enjoy the smell as you walk past a stand of evergreens – a smell that immediately takes me back to Pine Forest at camp - and listen to the tinkling of icy branches in the wind.

SPRING

A spring night hike when the temperature is warmer than 50° F. may include the sounds of a chorus of frogs singing their little throats out. As with the owls, the frogs have reproduction on their mind, and warmer ponds and swampy areas will make for safer tadpole nurseries than cold ones.



If you hike near a swampy or marshy area, you may also find the Skunk Cabbage plant, which is the very first plant to blossom in the spring. The flower is a reproductive organ of a plant, but don’t expect a colorful, sweetly scented flower. Because it is so early in the season, it’s too cold for bees to buzz around and pollinate the flower. Instead the plant makes a flower with the distinct odor of rotting flesh – a smell that flies can’t ignore – and the flies provide the pollination service the bees cannot.

SUMMER

Most of us are more familiar with summer hikes. In the early evening we can watch bats emerge and fly from their sleeping places, and delight to the flashes of light from the fireflies – which, by the way, is another example of males and females finding each other in nature. You sometimes hear coyotes howl or bark at a train whistle or ambulance siren. They probably think it’s another (coyote) family, and they’re just letting them know, “Hey, we’re here, too; you’re getting into our territory.”



Another common sound of a late summer night hike is hearing the chirps of crickets, which you can use to tell the temperature. To convert cricket chirps to degrees Fahrenheit, count number of chirps in 14 seconds then add 40 to get the temperature. (30 chirps + 40 = 70° F.) Spiders have awesome adaptations to nocturnal life. They have 8 eyes, but their vision is still pretty poor. Instead, they use

special chemical receptors to learn what is going on around them. Many spiders spin a completely new web each night, use it for hunting food, and then tear it down each morning.

AUTUMN



Listen carefully and you may even hear the sounds of mice as they scurry through the underbrush. Experts say there may be as many as 400 mice in an acre of woods, making them one of the most populous mammals.

With a strong light (flashlight or headlight) you may even catch the reflective glow of a deer in the distance. Deer, like other mammals, have a special reflective layer in their eye (the *tapetum lucidum*) that makes the light bounce back to your eye. This layer helps them see better in dim light, but it gives off an eerie glow to us. Humans lack this layer, and a strong light shined into a person's eye (such as from a camera flash) results in a red-eye reflection, easily removed from a photograph with modern day software. The red color, by the way, comes from the numerous blood vessels in the back of the eye.

There you have it: Four seasons and plenty of reasons to take a Night Hike. Start small, take it easy, give it a try, and you may open up a whole new world of nature for yourself.



“Minikani Trivia” Answers on page 7

1. In 1942 the small trees that have grown into Pine Forest were planted. How much did it cost to come to camp for 2 weeks in 1942?
A) \$6 B) \$31 C) \$69 D) \$84
2. Although we think of Minikani as a camp for all children, for many of the 95 years campers were white, male, and Protestant. In what year did the 1st African American come to camp?
A) 1928 B) 1933
C) 1939 D) 1946
3. In 1924 the addition to the original farm house that we now know as Fireside Lodge was added as a dining hall. At the time, all campers stayed in tents. What Minikani structure that we still use today was added in that same year?
A) Totem Poles
B) Tennis Courts
C) Kossow Lodge
D) Health Lodge
4. The Ragger Program started in California in 1914. When did Minikani 1st offer Rags?
A) 1919 B) 1933
C) 1945 D) 1957
5. Where was the 1st Ragger's Point at camp?
A) Lakefront B) Pine Forest
C) Norris Field D) Indian Hill
- 6) Before 1959, campers and staff would take a bus to Joy Farms, located on the outskirts of Milwaukee County. What would they do there?
A) Learn to swim
B) Ride horses
C) Pick fresh vegetables for dinner
D) Sing songs for the elderly who lived there
7. Campers and staff celebrating a Christmas Holiday reunion on the 3rd floor of the downtown Milwaukee YMCA in 1969 were treated to a surprise guest. Who was the guest?
A) Elvis Presley, a friend of the Camp Director
B) Smokey Stover, who had been the Camp Director in the 1930's
C) Santa Claus, who bore a striking resemblance to the Camp Director
D) Roscoe, the donkey from the corral



8. In 1966 the Seabees, a part of the Engineer Corps of the US Army, changed camp forever by making improvements to some buildings at camp. What did they do?

- A) Added walls to the Rec Buildings at camp, which were just roofs with no sides.
- B) Added showers to the 3 KYBOs.
- C) Added insulation to the cabins
- D) Added screens to most of the cabin windows

9. Robertson Lodge, built in 1939, was used as 3 separate boy's cabins in the early 70's. What were the names of these 3 cabins?

- A) Robby Right, Robby Center, and Robby Left
- B) Aspen, Cedar and Tamarack
- C) Zeus, Apollo, and Poseidon
- D) Cabin 20, 21, & 22



10. What traditionally happens on "Sadie Hawkins Day"?

- A) You eat dinner at breakfast and vice versa.
- B) You do something nice for someone else.
- C) No one is allowed to talk until after dinner.
- D) Girls chase, catch, and marry the boys.

11. What traditionally happens at the end of a secret "All Camp Sneak-Out"?

- A) Fireworks
- B) Swim
- C) Ghost stories
- D) Runt Hunt

12. What is "Mud Lake Duty"?

- A) Building an outdoor latrine
- B) Supervising campers during free time
- C) A prize for cabin clean-up
- D) A make-out place in camp

13. According to the popular camp skit, what did Marshal Field wear while at camp?

- A) Izod sweater
- B) Nautica jacket
- C) Nike shoes
- D) Nothing

14. Before the Amy Belle family bought the land surrounding the lake, what was the lake called?

- A) Chief Hueniker Lake
- B) Lilly Crap Lake
- C) Sunset Lake
- D) Turtle Lake

15. According to the legend, where does the Mud Lake Monster come from?

- A) A World War I airplane pilot
- B) A camper who was bullied by other campers
- C) A counselor bitten by a radioactive frog
- D) There are no monsters at camp

Thanks to John Bolger's "Camp Minikani – Growing and Changing: The First 75 Years"

Minikani Trivia Answers

1-B, 2-D, 3-B, 4-D, 5-D, 6-B, 7-D, 8-A, 9-A, 10-D, 11-B, 12-B, 13-D, 14-B, 15-A



◆ Membership in the MAC is always free – for life – if you've ever worked at Minikani. Do you know anyone who hasn't joined yet?

◆ How are we doing? Contact us at minikanistafflodge@gmail.com. We'd love to hear from you.

