



May 2013
Volume 5, Issue 2

NEWSLETTER

May is Membership Month *Become a Contributing Member of the MAC*

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Thanks To: Matt Sullivan, Hillary Lobenstein, Jen Feltz, Mike Brown and Steve Hasbrook

Bruce Rasmussen, Editor
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Eleven months of the year the MAC is working hard on your behalf. The Board holds conference calls to organize and keep things running smoothly. Emails are sent out to our members to help them stay up-to-date with alumni activities like the Dinner Around the World, Workdays at Camp, Invitations received from Minikani to join staff training and other events. We meet with summer staff members and plan the annual Pizza Party. There are alumni who meet with the Minikani Board of Directors. We sponsor and organize our Holiday Event, which acts as a reunion for alumni and a fundraiser for our Campership Fund, which we used last summer to send 7 kids to camp. This summer we've already committed almost \$8,000 to sending kids to camp. Last year we made a \$900 donation to Minikani's Capital Campaign, and have accepted the challenge to finance the re-establishment of the lakefront Chapel area. All of this is done as your representatives, helping you keep connected to Minikani.

One month a year we ask you to reach into your pocket and help support the MAC. We don't put a price on your membership – it's free for anyone who has worked at camp. But we ask you to become a "Contributing Member" and make a donation. Any amount is appreciated – from \$5 to \$1,000+. We'll use that money to give back to camp through all of our activities and programs.



If you haven't already, please consider making a donation. It's simple to do – go to our website (minikanistafflodge.com) and click on the "Membership" tab. As a 'Thank You', we will send you a letter and a Camp Minikani magnet.

Up Coming Minikani Events

Summer Camp Open House Sunday, June 3, 1:00-4:00 pm

A great, casual way to learn more about Minikani or introduce a new family to Camp! There will be guided tours including the cabins, lodge, dining hall, lakefront, activity areas, equestrian center and more!

Alumni-Staff Dinner Wednesday, June 12, 5:30-8:30

It has become a tradition to invite Minikani Alumni to join the summer 2013 staff for a very special evening during staff training. Come and enjoy a traditional camp meal and have an opportunity to share your memories of camp with others.

Friends of Minikani Wednesday, July 24, 6:00-8:00 pm

If you can visit Camp only once this year, make it July 24!

There's no better way for supporters and friends of Camp Minikani to truly capture the camp experience and understand the importance of their contributions than attending our Friends of Minikani event. A good old fashioned cookout, tours of Camp and the opportunity to see camp kids participating in a number of fun camp activities bring the Spirit of Minikani to life!

For more information or to R.S.V.P. for any of the above events, contact Jen Feltz at camp 262-251-9080 jfeltz@ymcamke.org



Reminder: Alumni Weekend This Summer August 24 & 25, 2013 Camp Minikani

Hey Alumni: You can now order Minikani Alumni T-shirts, sweatshirts, caps, kid's clothing, mugs, and lots of other stuff. Go to the alumni website to access the Camp Store. minikanistafflodge.com

Porcupine Palooza Friday June 14, 5:30 – 10:00 pm

The Porcupine Foundation will hold its first ever **Porcupine Palooza** at YMCA Camp Minikani in Hubertus, Wisconsin. Your entire family is invited to come for dinner and enjoy the great outdoors while taking part in activities supervised by YMCA Camp Minikani summer staff. Parents, while your children engage in activities with camp counselors, you can enjoy music by international recording artist **Grace Weber**.

Here's the schedule for June 14th:

Buffet Dinner time — 5:30 – 6:30

Activities — 6:30 – 8:00
Select skill areas will be open and staffed by the outstanding Minikani counselors

Family concert — African musician Lucky Diop will entertain listeners with his interactive Senegalese music fun for the whole family from 8-9 pm. Parents leave at 8:30 p.m. to enjoy Grace Weber; kids stay with counselors for more music and a campfire.

Adult concert — Grace Weber 8:30 – 9:30 p.m. International recording artist Grace Weber will share her music with the adults while the kids enjoy the campfire with the Minikani staff!

Campfire — 9:30 –
Parents join kids for a few campfire songs before everyone heads home.

This event is a fundraiser to benefit **Camp SOUL** (Supporting Others, Understanding Loss), a unique experience for children who have suffered the loss of a loved one. The cost of the event is \$25 for adults and \$20 for children 4-17 years (children 3 and under are free). A buffet dinner, activities and concert are included.

To register, go to <http://porcupinepalooza.eventbrite.com/>

For more information, go to <http://www.facebook.com/porcupinefoundation>



Dinner Around The World

By Hillary Lobenstein

On Saturday, March 2nd, my daughter—Audra—and I attended the annual camp dinner at Laurie Sargent Kalonihea’s house. We were greeted by old friends from camp in the early 1990s. Our children had a great time playing together, jumping on the couch, and sneaking M&Ms from the candy dish. The kids enjoyed running in circles around the house. Towards the end of the evening, they even sat down to watch a movie. Their wiggly selves soon subdued by the magic of a movie. We had a great time talking about past memories and our current lives. A huge shout-out to Laurie and Paki Kalonihea for hosting the event; we are looking forward to next year’s camp dinner!

As we drove back to Sun Prairie, I thought about the next generation of Minikani campers. Those kids now running circles in Laurie and Paki’s house will soon be the same kids playing Capture the Flag in Pine Forest, trekking through camp during a Runt Hunt, quietly walking to their Blue Rag ceremony, and someday, playing Staff Softball in Norris Field.

This year camp alumni enjoyed a variety of camp dinners. Some groups met at a restaurant, some enjoyed coffee, some groups—like ours—enjoyed the zaniness of kids, some enjoyed a potluck at Camp Minikani, and some enjoyed beverages together. We are looking forward to next year’s Camp Dinner on March 1, 2014. (It’s always held on the first Saturday in March.) You should

think about hosting an event in your area. There are lots of ways to celebrate Minikani together!



Alumni Work Project Day

They came from all over, representing all ages, with all kinds of abilities, and they all worked. And worked. And then they worked some more. On Saturday, April 27th, the MAC helped over 27 people give back to Minikani. Some said the weather was perfect; especially those who remembered the snow and rain of previous work days. Temperatures in the mid 60’s and sunshine helped keep everyone’s spirits up, so it’s tough to say who benefited the most from all of the work projects. Here’s what they did:



Some painted numbers to be used with the brand-new Scoreboard built on Norris Field. Others worked at the front entrance of the Waterfront Annex, landscaping, dumping gravel, and gardening. A lot of muscle power went into setting up the old totem poles on both sides of the large fireplace in the Halquist Great Room. (They look great!) A new Huck Finn raft was built for the waterfront. It took over two hundred 2-3 inch lag screws and lots of 8 foot boards to build, but it is now so solid that it could easily

survive a dozen trips up and down the Mississippi – although it will never leave the shores of Amy Belle, except in the imaginations of future campers. Tents were organized, wood chips were spread, and pizza was eaten. Altogether, it was a very successful day for volunteers and Minikani alike. A big ‘thanks’ to everyone who participated.



Update Your MAC Information

Have you changed your mailing address or your email address recently? If so, please send an update to the MAC so we can keep in touch with you. All you have to do is send your correct address(es) to minikanistafflodge@gmail.com. We’ll take care of the rest, and you’ll be able to keep connected with our community.



Minikani Museum

Do you have items from your days at Minikani that you’d like to donate to the Minikani Museum? Clothing, pictures, knickknacks, mementoes and more would be appreciated. Contact Hillary Lobenstein at hillary.lobenstein@gmail.com

SpotLight

On Alumni

Greg Branch remembers the first time he was a camper at Minikani. He was 8 years old during the summer of 1979, and he stayed in one of the waterfront cabins for 2 weeks. "I wet my bed the first couple of nights and I remember my counselor was superb at keeping it a secret from my cabin mates." He continued going to Minikani every summer for the next 14 years (1992) and was a counselor the last 4 years.

I recently interviewed Greg about his camp experiences and what he's doing now.

◆ **Any particularly 'fond' memories of camp?** "A tapestry could be woven with all the fond memories. The highlights would be the dining hall filled with song, the serenity of the lake that housed the frogs we used to catch, the wisp of sparks from campfires as young campers torched their marshmallows aspiring to be LTs, the hero's journey of explorer trips in the mystical northern Wisconsin woods and most of all the campers and staff I spent time with there, many of whom I remain friends with today."

◆ **Any particularly 'unpleasant' memories of camp?** "The only unpleasant memory that remains a vivid day in my mind is the windstorm of 1991. We were in the middle of pine forest playing a camp wide game of capture the flag. The sky turned yellow and the air became eerily still. Troy Lange came running down the trail and told all the counselors that there was a tornado warning and we needed to

get all the kids in the designated shelters. I remember looking around at all the kids spread out in the woods. There could not have been a more inopportune moment to deal with such an emergency. We began yelling for kids to find their counselors and once they had, follow their counselor to safety. Then the wind began to blow. Trees and branches began to snap. Those next 15 minutes were the unpleasant memory. We were fortunate that no kids were seriously hurt and everyone got to safety."



◆ **Were there any special skills you learned while at camp?** "There are so many. 'Quit an activity while you are still having fun' was advice I learned from other counselors. I still use that today!"

"I was a LT III under the best counselors I could have had as mentors. Dave Pincus, Matt Hawley, George Doty and John Bolger. The Leadership Training Program is exceptional by design and couldn't have come at better time in my development as a teenager."

◆ **How did you make the transition from camp to the "real" world?** "The summer of 1993 was the first year away from camp after 14 years. I spent that summer hiking the Canadian Rockies logging 450 miles in 60 days. All that time in the woods helped me realize that camp was as real as the world can get."

I still have a poem I wrote at camp on July 23, 1992:

The children know - how to let it go.
 The children see - how to just be.
 The children play - to become here today.
 Help me to learn from them - so I may teach them
 To keep what they already know.

◆ **What are you doing now?** "I have been living in Central America for the past 15 years, employed most of that time with the US Peace Corps. I was in El Salvador for three years as a volunteer working with water and sanitation health promoter. I then created and managed an environmental health program in Panama for five years. I went on to the Programming and Training Officer for Panama for two years and then Latin American Regional Officer. My wife is currently the Programming and Training Officer for Peace Corps Costa Rica and I am supporting her as Mr. Mom for our two kids here. I like the gender role reversal."



Continued on next page

Spotlight: Greg Branch

◆ Do you think camp has had any influence in your present success? “Yes – it’s hard to imagine where I might be today without it. It taught me how earn leadership, follow deliberately, feel confident in my abilities and work effectively with people. This except from my purple rag dedication is a cornerstone of my success:

“I believe that all things share a greater love. By understanding that love inside myself, I then create a gateway for others through providing a reflection of that love which is inside them. I pray for continued health in my body, mind and spirit. I also pray that I may always be more positive, more challenged, more expressive and more receptive.”

◆ Anything else you’d like to share with other Minikani alumni? “When you are on your way to the kybo to brush your teeth, always sing the song ‘somebody pooped in my mouth last night.’” 

Stew Brown Receives Award

Stew Brown, former Minikani Camp Director, was awarded the **Cornerstone Award** at the Heart of the Rockies Chamber of Commerce community awards on February 2, 2013. The award was given for “long term volunteerism, generosity, dedication and support of the community.”

Stew, who has volunteered at the chamber for the past 17 years, has spent a lifetime of “giving back.” At present, in addition to his

activities in his home community, he frequently drives veterans to the VA hospital in Denver, a 280 mile round trip. He also maintains a section of the Colorado Trail, works on a model railroad museum he has created in his home, and volunteers at the chamber one day a week. Stew received a standing ovation from the audience when given his award. Congratulations!



Nature Notes

By Bruce

Spring has come late to Wisconsin this year, with cool temperatures and lots of rain. Unfortunately, mosquitoes are all set to take advantage of the wet weather and will multiply in numbers, probably just in time for the first Opening Day at Minikani, June 16th.



But camp is ready for this insect onslaught. For one thing, they have put up bat houses on “just about every available surface”, according to my source. Hopefully, the bats will have a nice, quiet, safe place to spend their days, and then be ready to emerge in the evening with an appetite for mosquitoes.



Unfortunately, some scientific research has suggested that bats might not make much of a dent in the mosquito population, preferring to feast on larger insects like moths, June bugs and box elder bugs.

But Minikani already has a large arsenal of mosquito eaters in its amphibian population. And that’s good news. Both frogs and toads eat hundreds and hundreds of mosquitoes each day.



And there’s one more critter that already calls camp its home that will eat twice the number of mosquitoes than a frog or toad does – the dragonfly. These insects are real “mosquito eating machines”. While dragonflies may look like scary biters to us, they can’t hurt humans. But they can do a real number on mosquitoes, both the larva and the blood-thirsty female adults.



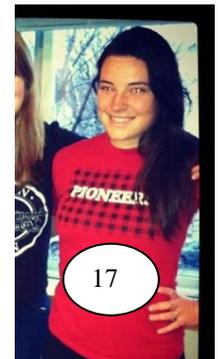
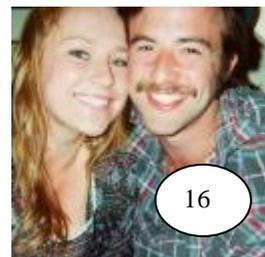
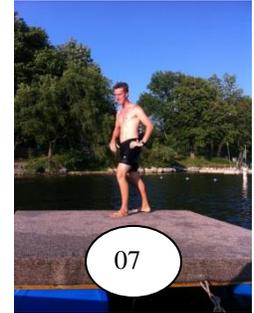
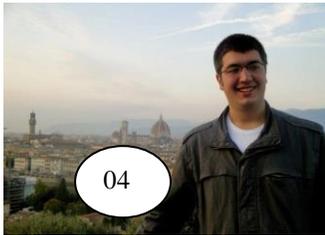
You see, the dragonfly larvae, or nymphs, also feed on the mosquito larvae while they are developing in the same shallow bodies of water. Then they return as adults to grab more of the little suckers just as they emerge from the water, having completed their pupa stage.

Will the new Minikani bats eat the dragonflies instead of the mosquitoes? Probably not. Bats are active in the evening, and dragonflies are active during the day. And the dragonflies generally fly too low to become bat food.

Let’s hope Mother Nature finds a way to keep the pest population fairly low this summer. 

Summer 2013 Ad-Staff

Summer Camp Director: Matt “Sully” Sullivan 01
Skills Director: Amanda “Mander” Hendrickson 02
Girls Unit Director: Lauren Shoendorf 03
Boys Unit Director: Tom Cramer (not pictured)
Explorer Unit Directors: Michael Lucky 04, Carly Shanley 17 & Morgan Cox 06
Day Camp Directors: Ryan Wnuk 07 & Rachel Whaley 08
Mini Camp Director: Peter Drews 09
Leadership Training Directors: Wyatt Caldwell 10 & Sarah Whaley 05
Outdoor Leadership Training Directors: Sharon Cross 11 & Dane Mantia 12
Crafts Skill head: Ryan Costello 13
Adventure Challenge Skill head: Kaitlin Theder 14
Water Front Skill head: Chris Fink 15
Wilderness Skills Area: Michael Kushner 16
Gun and Run skill head: Third year counselor.
Wrangler: Maggie Shannahan 18



Camp Minikani
 Summer 2013