

May 2022  
Volume 14, Issue 2



# NEWSLETTER

## Inside this Issue

- 1 Decisions & Ideas
- 2 Hosts Needed  
2022 Ad Staff
- 3 Spring Workday 6/4  
Alumni Weekend
- 4 Competition at Camp  
Re>Connect 2022
- 5 Myles Hayes's  
Re>Connect Songs
- 6 Spotlight on Alumni  
Michael Luckey
- 7 Nature Notes  
"Creepy Bugs"

Thanks To: Rachel Kornetsky,  
Alex Hushek, Myles Hayes,  
Michael Luckey

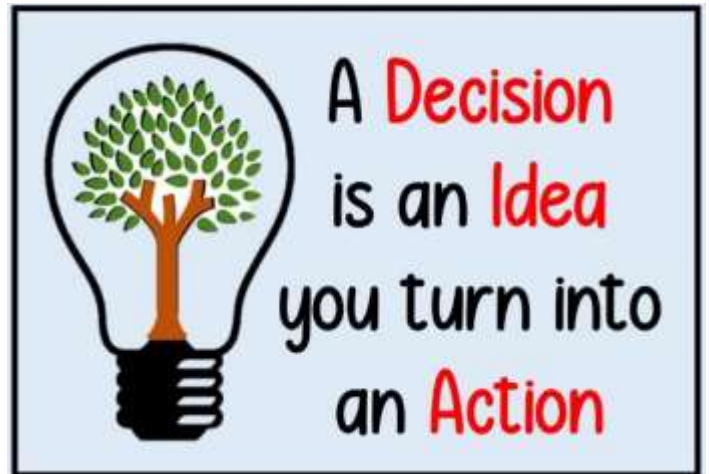
Bruce Rasmussen, Editor  
[BruceRass@gmail.com](mailto:BruceRass@gmail.com)

Most decisions are not made on the flip of a coin. More than 100 years ago some people at the Milwaukee YMCA got an idea: Let's buy 40 acres of land along Lake Amy Belle with a house and a barn and use it as a summer camping spot for boys.

In 2020, with the idea to keep kids safe, a decision was made to cancel resident camping and go ahead with a modified Day Camp. The following year lots of ideas were put together to get kids and staff safely back to Minikani.

Ten cabins eventually replaced the tents and a dining hall (now Fireside Lodge) was built connected to the house. During WWII someone got the idea to plant pine seedlings in one of the back fields. 50 years later ideas included making the camp co-ed and developing a Leadership Program.

The ideas kept coming. A new dining hall with a pool and showers, Minicamp, family camps, new KYBOS, new buildings, more acres, new programs and skills, new corrals, personal camper reports, explorer trips, Equestrian Program, Day Camp, Expeditions, re-naming the girl's unit, even more new buildings and programs.



This year, 2022, offers Minikani the way most of us remember, yet ideas and actions keep coming and Minikani keeps getting better and better.

"Action" is a word that goes right along with Minikani. Everyone is encouraged to do their best and provide a great experience for the campers. Here's to Minikani 2022: Have a great summer!

## Hosts Needed!

From Rachel Kornetsky,  
Summer Camp Director

This year we have 15 (that's right, 15!!!) brand new international staff coming to spend the summer with us. A huge part of ensuring that these staff feel a sense of belonging at camp is to provide them with comfortable spaces for them on their time off.

In addition to reaching out to our staff, we would also love to invite our incredible Alumni Community to support camp by hosting for a weekend or two.

If you live in Milwaukee area and would be interested in providing some amazing new international staff with a safe place to sleep and a fun Wisconsin experience, check out the form below. Hosting an international staff member is a great way to reconnect with camp this summer! Feel free to email me at [rkornetsky@ymcamke.org](mailto:rkornetsky@ymcamke.org) if you have any questions.

The need for volunteer families is great. If you multiply the number of days off this summer times the number of international staff (11 X 15 = 165) you can get an idea of the need.

When you click on the link at the end of this article you will access the Volunteer Hosting Form. Potential hosts will be asked for their contact information and the date or dates they would be available to host an international counselor. There are 11 dates listed and you are asked to check all that you can accommodate. You also have the option of hosting more than one international counselor.

In addition, we ask that hosts:

- ◆ Are able to pick up and drop off at camp.
- ◆ As needed, provide transportation to and from excursions within Milwaukee (Summerfest, County/State Fair, museums, etc.).
- ◆ Help provide meals for counselors.
- ◆ Provide space for sleeping.

Click [HERE](#) to access the Volunteer Hosting Form.



## 1976 - 1991

Were you a Minikani camper or counselor during these 16 years? Click [HERE](#) to download a list of International Counselors from these years. Their countries of origin include Denmark, Germany, France, Sweden, Senegal and Honduras.

## Camp Skits

*Skit* (n.) A very short play, usually performed in an informal setting.

Let's say you have "X" amount of time to come up with a skit for tonight with your cabin. After lots of false starts, twists and turns, suddenly a tiny seed of an idea begins to take life.

It's as elusive as a unicorn, yet you do your best to grab it and make it work. Now it's "X - 10" minutes and your ideas start to gel. We've all been there. I guess it's just how the creative skit process works.

## Summer Ad Staff 2022

### Assistant Summer Camp Director:

Chris (Cricket) Malicky

### Wellness Coordinator

Aly Morton

### Trailblazer Unit Director:

Olivia Holbrook

### Pioneer Unit Director:

Robby Gral

### Explorer Unit Directors:

Jane Hudson, Willem Caster,

Aubrey McLaren

### Day Camp Directors:

Alex Danielewski, Anna

Rooney, Aubrey McLaren

### Minicamp Director:

Brooke O'Connor

### LT Directors:

Josie Morkin, Will Moran,

Sam Judd, Hailey Collins

### Crafts Director:

Kate Kuse

### Gun and Run Director:

Ryan Lam

### Wrangler:

Ellen Abad Santos

### AC Director:

Catherine (Cat Tap) Taphorn

### WSA Director:

Zach Honzik

### Waterfront Director:

Maggie Kosterman

### Trips and Leadership Director:

Joey Rampolla

### Flex Director:

Margo Kurth



## June 4<sup>th</sup> at Minikani

Everyone is invited to Minikani on Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup> to help get things ready for the summer.



- **Who:** MAC members, current staff, current LTs, camp families, anyone who loves camp!
- **What:** Spring Work Day
- **Where:** Camp Minikani
- **When:** June 4<sup>th</sup>; starts at 9am--concludes as projects are completed
- **Why:** To help with Summer preparations
- **RSVP:** to Haley Robertson ([haley.robertson@snc.edu](mailto:haley.robertson@snc.edu)) BY May 29<sup>th</sup> with your full name, anyone you're bringing and your phone number
- **To Bring:** Work clothes & appropriate shoes, refillable water bottle, sunscreen & bug spray if desired

Here are the tentative projects:

- ◆ Clear garden, repair and repaint the fence
- ◆ Build a new Huck Finn raft
- ◆ Build a new Backstop for air rifles
- ◆ Build/Move Slingshot Range from the Corral to Day Camp archery site
- ◆ Stuff take home packets / Put together first aid kits (Great for kids/folks who need an easier project)



## Alumni Weekend

“Wouldn’t it be great if we could get together at camp sometime?”

Can you believe it’s been 5 years since the last Alumni Weekend? This family friendly event is designed to give everyone a chance to come back to Minikani and enjoy what camp has to offer.

Activities will include select skill areas being open, auction items, possible service projects and of course a great evening activity.

September 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> are the dates. Mark your calendar now. Come for the day or stay for the weekend! Online registration will be available soon. Both cabins and campsites around camp will be offered. (Bring your own tents!)

We held our first Alumni Weekend in 2009 when over 100 people enjoyed what camp had to offer, including these 2 happy kids who were too young to be campers that year.



Over the years we’ve had more than 400 people at six Alumni Weekends. So many campfires, skits, and meals in the dining hall, not to mention the hikes, swims, songs, and laughs we’ve had.

Make plans now to join us at the best place on Earth – Minikani!



## Prayer of Thanks

O God, I thank you for my friends and all the joys they bring.

I thank you for the happiness of sharing work and problems and laughter, and for the joy of adventuring and learning together.

I thank you for the chance to love and be loved, not because of cleverness or goodness, but in spite of faults and differences.

Avery Brooke

## 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. Please give it some thought. Send your email to [minikanistafflodge@gmail.com](mailto:minikanistafflodge@gmail.com).

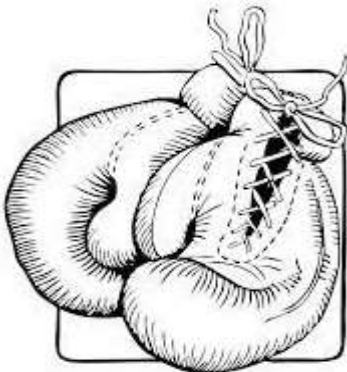
## Our Mission Statement

The Minikani Alumni Community is a group of former staff members dedicated to maintaining our connection with our summer homeland. Through acts of fellowship and service, we strive to honor our past experiences, support current summer programming, and preserve Minikani traditions for the future.

## Competition at Camp

**Editor’s Note:** *The following excerpts were taken from John Bolger’s “Camp Minikani – Growing and Changing: The First Seventy-five Years”.*

“In the 1930’s there were competitions for nearly everything and various prizes and ribbons were awarded. There was a morning swim before breakfast and competitive swims in the afternoons”



Throughout the 40’s and 50’s a boxing program was one of the most popular programs in the YMCA. “At Minikani, any camper, or series of campers, could challenge any other to a fight in front of the whole camp. Often the two participants were blindfolded. Although heavy gloves were used and the activity was safe, it was occasionally a humiliating activity for those cowed into fighting before the camp.” The program was phased out during the 60’s.

“The problem with the YMCA’s emphasis on competition, with regards to camping, was that there was rivalry that sprouted into anger and often violence between campers, cabin units, and even counselors of different units, fierce

loyalty to one’s unit was the code, and making fun of others was encouraged as the mark of one’s dedication.”

“In the early 70’s ‘Competition’ was replaced by ‘Challenge by Choice’. Over the next years, a gradual change would be made in the camp program, as it shifted from a ‘competitive activities’ based program to one which focused on the camper’s needs and offered the option of challenges without the emotional pressure of competition.”

Today we can look back and be aware of the gradual evolution of “competition” at Minikani over the years. The “toughen-you-up” philosophy of camp faded away and was replaced by encouraging campers to set and surpass their own personal goals. What competition existed at camp was friendly. Whether a camper was swimming, sailing, singing silly songs, or making arts and crafts, their primary responsibility was to have a good time rather than try to prove they were better than others.



**Wisconsin Camps**

Most of us would agree that Minikani is worth its weight in gold – for its ability to serve kids and have an impact on their lives.

The American Camp Association recently released a report on the economic impact of all Wisconsin camps. Using a sample of camps and their historical data, they found that WI camps serve 603,200 campers and contribute over \$717 Million each year in economic activity to the state. On top of that, camps contribute 7,844 jobs annually.



## Re>Connect 2022

The weekend of April 1-3 was an opportunity for alumni everywhere to Re>Connect with the Spirit of Minikani. By choosing to do various activities they were able to bring back thoughts, memories, actions, and feelings from when we were at camp.

People posted on Facebook, contacted camp friends, shared memories and friendships, ate ‘camp’ food, told a story, sang a song, and spent some quiet time just remembering what it was like. Some “Winikani” fans even competed to see who could score the most points for their Re>Connect actions.



All of us belong to a very privileged group: People who can look back at their camp days and surround themselves with the warm thoughts and actions that come with it. It helps us remember how important that time was to each of us, and also how important it is for the current and future campers and staff to have similar great experiences.

Most of the time we put the ‘book’ of our days at Minikani on the back shelf of our minds. But you must agree – it is fun to be able to take that book down occasionally and revisit the best parts. Thanks to everyone who joined us to Re>Connect with Minikani in 2022.

## Myles Re>Connects

By Myles Hayes

*Taking advantage of the "Re>Connect with Minikani" weekend back in April, Myles Hayes shared the following on Facebook:*

The soundtrack during the whole weekend was my Spotify playlist 'Minikani Campfire' (link below). Like the scent of sunscreen or bug spray in January, the music instantly brought me back to memories of Minikani. Songs and sounds are brilliant that way.

Here's a list of songs that remind me of my fellow Minikani alums I thought about over the weekend. Please know, whether on this post or not, all of you provided priceless memories for me, and have made (and still make) my life more incredible:

"Sometimes" by James...Brett Haydin performed this tune during a rainy evening in Fireside Lodge.

"House at Pooh Corner" by Loggins and Messina...Patrick Dreyna performed this at Council Bluff.

"Paradise" by John Prine...Andy's Friends (Troy Lange Dean Kaplan Jim Flint Jeremy Welland ) playing songs like these at Closing Campfires was the best.



"Danny's Song" by Loggins and Messina...performed by someone at a closing campfire, it reminds me of the first time I held a girl's hand; a true camp crush. Her name is lost with time, but that moment never will be.

"This Must Be the Place (Naive Melody)" by Talking Heads...one morning Hogan Hayes played this song for Password while flipping through the lyrics on cue cards Dillon-style...brilliant.



"It's the Hard-Knock Life" from Annie...while cleaning the Staff Lodge, Eric Peetz blared this from the stereo dancing with the broom he was sweeping with. He became one of my camp-comedic heroes at that moment.

"Mona Lisa" by Wyclef Jean... although Perry LaRoque was full-on in his Phish phase (and always will be), one summer Wycleff's album "Carnival" blared daily from the Annex on the Waterfront while he was WF Director.

"This Kiss" by Faith Hill... at the end of our first summer, Nick Creton helped us all move out of our cabins with his Jeep Wrangler, blaring this tune the whole time.

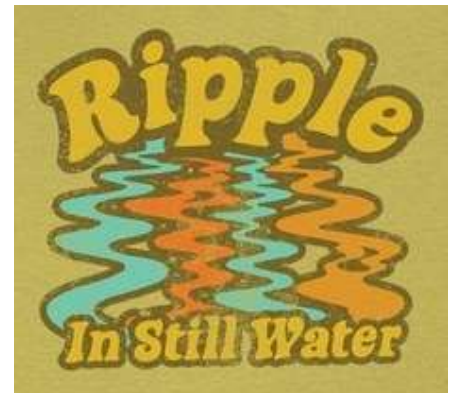
"Intergalactic" by Beastie Boys...On a Saturday off, Chris Hayworth and I drove to Alpine Valley for a Dave

Mathews Concert together, playing the new Beastie Boys album the entire time.

"Killing In The Name" by Rage Against The Machine...I'll always remember Matthew Armstrong being first on the dance floor for this one at staff trainings.

"You Shook Me All Night Long" by AC/DC...the Boys Unit counselors rolling around playing "leg guitar" at camp dances.

"Watercolor Sunrise" by Willy Porter...attending his shows with fellow LT's provided epic coming-of-age moments.



"Ripple" by Grateful Dead... Andrew Mendelson was my counselor during my first summer at Minikani when I was nine. His kindness paired with the music he played in his cabin made me know this was a magical place I wanted to be a part of forever.



'Minikani Campfire'  
Myles's Playlist on Spotify  
Click [HERE](#)





Michael Luckey

What is your history at Camp?

My first experience at Minikani was as a second-grader at USM, on the school’s annual overnight trip. I don’t remember having a particularly wonderful time, but I must have enjoyed it enough for my parents to send my twin brother John and me for winter camp in 2001. I’ll forever be indebted to one of the LTs or counselors in that cabin for shaking my parents’ hands, looking them in the eye, and telling them how much fun we were going to have over the next 3 days.

My mom said she decided right then and there that whatever it cost, whatever it took, she’d send her kids through the same program that gave that teenager (he seemed a lot older at the time!) the confidence and professionalism he displayed that day. And, it worked! My twin brother John, younger sister Jennifer, and I all went through the LT program (though they were OLTs... and probably had more fun!).

I was a camper starting in 2002. After completing the LT program, including a summer when my brother John and I were “Kitchen Threes,” I became a first-year counselor in 2009.

For people who don’t remember, 2009 was a summer full of changes. The Great Recession was hard on Minikani. At one point all returning

LT IIIs were told there was a possibility that camp would not be making any new hires. It was also the first summer when counselors staffed Minicamp, Day Camp, and Residential Camp on the same rotation. Thankfully, there were enough spots to hire each of us for a partial summer. This was the time of four kids in a cabin with three counselors – talk about a time to practice those one-on-one skills!



As a camper I always loved the Waterfront, especially Skin Diving. My dad ran the Dive Team for the Milwaukee Police Department for many years, so I guess it was in my blood. Imagine my excitement then when I was chosen for Waterfront Staff. My favorite skills to teach were Skin Diving (obviously) but I had an incredible time teaching Boating as a younger counselor and really worked to make it fun!

I was asked to work as Waterfront Director in 2011, forgoing my third year as a counselor. I returned as WFD in 2012 and in 2013 I finally got to go on an Explorer Trip when I worked as EU Director during my final summer at camp.

Many camp alumni go on to teach or work with kids in some way. You’ve taken a different route and share your people-skills, mostly working with adults. Can you tell us what you’re doing now?

I currently work in Madison as Chief of Staff for State Senator Kathy Bernier. In that role I manage the short- and long-term priorities of her office. I supervise a staff of three as we assist constituents who contact the office, write and monitor proposed bills, and interact with the media. Every day is different, which is something I value about this type of work.

Were there any special skills you learned or developed while at camp that you are able to use today?

I learned so many ways to interact with people. “I need” statements top that list. It also helped me practice leadership and management skills, and how to recognize group dynamics. Camp was the first place I was presented with concepts about human development like Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. I learned so much at Minikani and I credit my time there with so much of my own growth.

If you could go back in time and re-live just one Camp Activity, what would that be?

Just one?? Honestly, the one that keeps coming to mind is the evening activity Predator/Prey. I really liked all the different strategies of being a bug vs. a snake vs. an eagle.

What was your favorite meal at Minikani?

Anything with chocolate milk. My year discovered that six cartons of chocolate milk fit perfectly in a napkin dispenser. Curiously, there were a lot of napkin dispensers hidden in the fridge in the kitchen that year.

Do you have a special place at camp?

Next Page →

The dock at Mud Lake. I love how peaceful it is.

**Is there a song that makes you think of camp?**

I have a few. J.C. Hauser made a playlist of the Waterfront “send-off” songs. Pretty much all of those make me think of camp. Our year’s song was Bob Dylan’s “Forever Young.” And during my bachelor party Wyatt Caldwell put on Ace Frehley’s “Back in the New York Groove” which instantly took me back to whatever summer that was ALWAYS playing in Robertson Lodge.

**Congratulations! I understand you’re going to be married soon. Care to tell us anything about your fiancée and your plans?**

Thank you! Our wedding is in a few weeks on June 4<sup>th</sup> and rest assured there will be a camp contingent there.

My fiancée Tara is an incredible woman. She is originally from Sauk City, WI. We met during the pandemic and five days after our first date I moved five hours away to Superior, WI. We put in a lot of effort to begin a relationship long-distance, and adding that onto some scary health diagnoses in both families and the challenges from the pandemic, we both knew after only a few months that this was something special.

When I met Tara she was working as a Child Life Specialist for the American Family Children’s Hospital in Madison. She and her coworkers helped kids and families deal with being in the hospital. She advocated for them, explained different procedures, and did a lot of teaching and play with the kids. Working in the Pediatric ICU she also helped children and families

deal with some immense grief. She’s since moved on from that position, but that work demonstrates her caring heart and that she would have thrived at Minikani!

I’m the “Luckiest” guy on the planet that she’ll soon be my bride! And, to make you camp people jealous, our honeymoon is going to be in Alaska where we’ll spend some time in Denali National Park.

**Anything else you’d like to share with Minikani alumni?**

You are all incredible people! I’m grateful for the impact you and the place we love has had on my life!

Other than that, I’ll just share that this has been a busy time in my life. On top of working and planning a wedding I am also pursuing my Masters in Public Affairs from UW-Madison and we bought a house in Lake Mills – if you’re ever in the area please let me know!



**Nature Notes**

*By Bruce*

We all know that insects suck. They also bite and sting. Some inject venom that can kill us outright or produce a deadly allergic reaction. Others, like mosquitoes, spread parasites that are responsible for the deaths of almost a million people around the world.

But are all insects bad? Of course not. With over 900,000 different kinds of insects, there are plenty of them that are not harmful, and many that are very helpful. Here are some insects (and close relatives) that you may think are bad, but have only gotten a bad reputation. They don’t bite, sting, pinch, or carry disease – so they can’t harm you in any way.



**Earwigs:**

This has probably happened to you. You go out of your cabin to get your swimsuit and towel from the clothes line. Because of rain or wind, they’re now on the ground. As you pick them up you suddenly notice something crawling. Yikes! It’s a couple of earwigs - with giant pinchers on their butts!

They certainly look mean and ‘crawly’, but those hard pincher-looking forceps are not stingers. And to top it off, they do not bite – people. They do bite other insects as well as organic materials and decaying matter. Earwigs are attracted to darkness, humidity, moisture, and shelter.

Next Page →

Another thing to know: Earwigs do NOT crawl in people's ears. This silly myth has been impossible for them to shake for some reason. You'd think that after what must be thousands of years of being around earwigs that we would have noticed by now that none of them have crawled into our ears!

Want to know something nice about earwigs? Females of some of the species actually care for their young -- watching over the eggs and even feeding the nymphs after they hatch. This is super-unusual in the insect world!



**Crane Flies:**

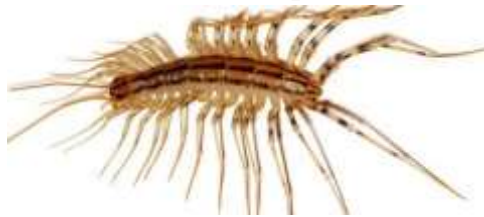
You may have seen these guys flying around inside your cabin, usually at a window or up on your ceiling. It's easy to freak out because they are so huge and terrifying-looking. To most of us they look like giant, super-clumsy, long legged mosquito that would take about a pint of blood with every bite.

Not true, not at all. Crane flies are among the gentlest of insects. Most of them are nectar feeders, sipping sweet sugars from plants and possibly helping out a little with pollination in the process. They use that long 'mosquito-like' proboscis on flowers, not people. In fact, some crane flies live such a short life as adults that they completely lack mouth parts and never eat.

Yep, short lifespans. They don't get long on this earth to bumble and

bang into things inside, maybe just a couple of days. If you want to be kind, trap them and send them outside where they can spend the rest of their very-brief lives.

**House Centipedes:**



These things are fast, have way too many legs, and look scary. It is like they were engineered out of all the scariest bugs into one super-scary bug. At camp you might have seen them when you turned over a rock or a log, or even in the KYBO. At home you may find them in your basement or bathroom. They may even show up in your bathtub. (They don't swim up through the drain, but slide off the edge when in pursuit of another pest.)

They are not dangerous at all. Not unless you happen to be a bed bug, a cockroach, a fly, a moth, or even an earwig. Actually these centipedes are unstoppable security guards, patrolling our homes and hunting down all the things that do damage to your home. And for free!

Running at about 16 inches a second, they're pretty hard to catch. 100 legs? Not even. About 15 pairs of legs is all they have, but on them it looks like many more!



**Cellar Spiders:**

It is cabin clean up time again, and you want to get mentioned this time. Unfortunately, the Inspector sees lots of webbing in your corners and window sills, probably due to the friendly cellar spider, also known as a cobweb spider. If you look closely, it's probably hanging upside down from its web. If you see one and disturb it, it may begin to shake its web violently to try to scare you away.

Don't worry - they are physically unable to bite humans because their jaws are too small. It's impossible for them to hurt you. Although many people just don't like spiders, these guys are hard at work when you don't see them - trapping and eating vast numbers of insect home invaders.

Even if your cabin or home has many cobwebs, it likely has very few cellar spiders. Other kinds of web-spinning spiders eat their discarded webs so that they can digest and re-use the silk, but cellar spiders can't. This means that you may see lots of webs that are made by very few spiders.



**Dragonflies:**

Mosquitoes, gnats, flies, and other insects are their primary meal, not you. Plus they live 90 to 95 percent of their lives under water as nymphs, where they are ferocious predators of all kinds of real pests. They definitely get two thumbs up in my book.

