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NEWSLETTER

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Thanks To: Matt Sullivan

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Winter Holiday “Monte Carlo Madness”

Friday, December 23, 2011

Mark your calendars right now for Friday, December 23, 2011. That’s the date of this year’s Winter Holiday Event – an evening of fun at Potawatomi Casino in Milwaukee.

This is our annual fundraiser, and all the proceeds will help send kids to camp. “Monte Carlo Madness” will have something for everyone, and that’s why we are inviting all alumni, their families, and all of their friends to join us on the 23rd.

We have reserved a beautiful room at the casino - the “Wild Earth” - for our gathering. You’ll find it is the perfect venue for our alumni and their adult friends. (Guests must be 18 years old to enter the Bingo Hall, and 21 to enter the gambling floor.)

Here’s what you can expect on the evening of December 23rd: A reunion with all your camp friends,

delicious tasting *hors d’oeuvres* and snacks, music, a private bar, a Silent Auction and a 50/50 raffle. The casino will provide free covered parking, holiday decorations, free shuttle service to downtown hotels, and over 3,100 slot machines and various table games of chance.

We are asking for a \$25 donation from everyone to cover expenses and help provide a camp experience for kids. In the same spirit, Potawatomi will give each of us a \$10 “free play” certificate to use in their casino. Who knows, you might get lucky. Registration will begin soon on Eventbrite – watch your email for information.

One more thing – we will be looking for contributions for the Silent Auction. Please consider making a donation. As a non-profit organization, all donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by the IRS. 

Fall Workday

October 8, 2011



Next time you're at camp in the pouring rain and you need to go up the Norris Field hill on the way to Cabin 10 and the parking lot, you can thank these guys. They spent the day making your life a little bit easier.

For the Fall Workday this year, camp had a special request: "Can you build a set of steps that makes Norris Field more accessible to people both in the summer and during the off season?" Apparently too many have slipped down the hill due to the morning dew or its slippery slope.

The weather was great for the Fall Workday this year – instead of snow or rain it was sunny and 70's – picture perfect. But we completed only 8 of the 11 steps – because **you** weren't there to help. Please consider volunteering for our Spring or Fall Workday next time. You'll be glad you did.



Letter from Camp

Summer, 2011

Dear Alumni Group,

Thank you for the chance to go to Camp Minikani this summer. My favorite activities and skills were archery, bush crafts, and BB rifles. I also had fun at the camp fires and doing rock climbing for the first time. I made good friends in Cabin 16, Bar X, and Make and Ian were fun counselors. I got to keep a Minikani wrist band and I wear it on my arm everyday still. Camp Minikani was a fun time and I hope to go again next year.

Sincerely,

Mike



Alumni Weekend

August 27 & 28, 2011

Put together beautiful summer weather, a helpful volunteer staff of future Minikani Alumni (see photo) and your favorite camp in the world and what do you get? The Alumni Weekend, this year held on August 27 & 28. Almost 75 people enjoyed the food, fun, activities, and camaraderie that only camp can offer. Kids of all ages enjoyed the afternoon activities: Amy Belle lake (swimming, trampoline, boating), horses, nature, crafts, adventure challenge, archery, and BB. A social time by the lake with snacks and bug juice allowed different generations of alumni to visit with each other. The after dinner softball game was great fun, with players as young as 3 included in the line up. These same small children provided a light show during the evening campfire at Council Bluff, with singing, skits and stories making it a perfect event.



Future Events

**Winter Holiday Event –
"Minikani Monte Carlo
Madness"**

Friday, Dec. 23, 2011

Potawatomi Casino

See the article on page 1

**Dinner Around the
World**

Saturday, March 3, 2012

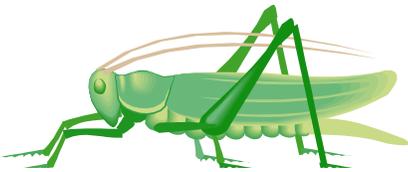
Various Locations around the
world!

Nature Notes

By Bruce

Wither the Insects

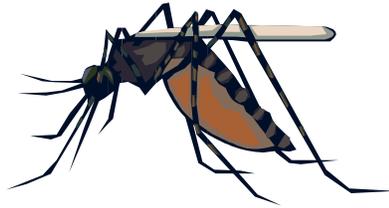
Have you ever wondered what happens to the insects at camp in the winter? Most of them have mated and laid their eggs, so they simply die, knowing that the eggs will hatch with warmer weather in the spring and re-populate their habitats. This is true of the crickets and grasshoppers we see at camp.



Bumblebees and wasps try to just lay low during the cold of winter. They find hiding places like attics, barns, leaf piles, holes in trees, rotting logs, under bark, or in underground tunnels. Many moths overwinter in the pupa stage — the reorganization phase between larva and adult — in cocoons or in the soil. Many of these insects produce a natural “antifreeze” that allows them to survive colder temperatures until spring.



Caddis flies, dragonflies and damselflies lay their eggs in Mud Lake and Amy Bell Lake before they die. Their larval forms, called ‘nymphs’, can survive the freeze in the lower parts of the lake, safely below the ice.



Most northern mosquitoes, however, 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 during 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 in the grass for 5 or 10 years until they are activated by a wet spring. That’s why the condition of the spring (either dry or wet) can determine if Minikani’s summer mosquito population is big or small.



Honeybees, which have become harder to find at camp due to possible health problems, have been studied during the winter and are found to remain semi-active in hollow trees through the generation of body heat. The queen bee, the only one who can lay eggs, is kept from freezing to death by the worker bees. They may use up to 30 pounds of stored honey during the winter months to make this possible. By constantly fanning their wings, night and day, they create heat and circulate it through the hive. Outside it may be close to zero degrees, but inside the hive the bees can maintain a comfortable 60 degrees.

Some butterflies manage to survive over winter by hiding out in tree holes, such as the Mourning Cloak butterfly, always the first one to be seen in the spring.



But the Monarch butterfly actually migrates by flying south about 2,000 miles to central Mexico. Unlike birds that make the return trip the following spring, the Monarchs will begin to head north, but will die before they make it very far. Luckily, their children and grandchildren survive and make it back to Minikani in time for camp the next summer. Recent droughts in Mexico where the Monarchs over-winter may prevent them from finding enough food to eat, and may result in many fewer Monarchs to watch and enjoy next summer.



Alumni Dinner “Around the World”

March 3, 2012. That’s the date for the next “Alumni Dinner Around the World”. On this date we hope all alumni will seek out other alumni in their area. It’s a time to get together, share, and reminisce about our dear ‘ole camp. You might get together for dinner, pizza, or just coffee. Please start thinking about how you can be part of the celebration.



Register for "Staff Lists"

Imagine a website where you could see the names of all your old friends who ever worked at Minikani. You could click on a name and instantly reconnect with them. You could find out where they are living, what they are doing, what their family is like, and what some of their finest memories of camp are.

Does that sound like a dream? Well, all of this is **now** possible. All you have to do is go to the alumni website (minikanistafflodge.com), click on "Staff List" at the top of the page, and then click anywhere on the next page. If you click on "Staff list" one more time on the left side of that page, you'll see the entire list of all the former staff members who have registered with the Alumni Community. Click on your own name, and you'll be able to register and fill out your own profile page. Only people who register through the site will be able to see other member's information. And you can choose to give as much or little of your own information. If you know of any missing alumni (and we know we're missing a lot of alumni, going all the way back to 1919), enter their e-mails in the box on the right and we'll get in touch with them.

This service, provided by classcreator.com, was originally set up to work with high school graduating classes, but it works great for our community, too. There is no advertising, no cost to register, and the MAC only pays a small monthly fee to operate the site.



Check Out These Websites

www.minikanistafflodge.com

This is the main site for the Minikani Alumni Community. Once here, you can click to join the official mailing list. You can also keep up-to-date on all the current happenings of the Community.

www.cafepress.com/alumnicampstore.com

CafePress is where the world shops for custom T shirts and other unique gifts – all with the Minikani Alumni logos.

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.

Summer 2011

I asked Matt (Sully) Sullivan, Summer Camp Director, if he had anything to share with Alumni about how camp went this summer. He replied with a list of comments he collected from 8 and 9 year olds in 2 cabins the 4th session. It was the usual list you'd expect: "It's fun to be at camp" "You make new friends" "I'm lucky to go to camp" "You can learn new things" and "Everyone is so kind at camp".

But there was one comment that really stood out. The young boy had said, "Its most of my life."

As I thought more and more about his comment, it began to haunt me. How could a little kid have hit the nail so squarely on the head? I would expect such wisdom from a mature, seasoned counselor or ad staff, but not from a neophyte 9 year old.

So I got to thinking – I'd easily agree. My camp experiences were "Most of my life". And I wasn't the

only one. I remember a fellow staff member telling me that she loved coming back to camp every summer because it was the place where she could be her real self. Camp has a way of bringing out the best in everyone.

A comment like "Its most of my life" includes all the fun, friends, new skills and kindness shared that the other kids listed. I can't imagine what my life without camp would have been like - all the fun, friends, skills and kindness I would have missed.

It's always refreshing to know that camp continues the tradition of becoming a big part of kids' lives. I know that doesn't happen by accident, and I'm happy to know that it's the unwritten goal of every skill, activity, counselor, campfire, and vesper.

Keep up the good work, Minikani. Thanks for doing what you do so well. You're most of my life.

