



Summer 2019
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NEWSLETTER

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Thanks To: John Bolger, Perry LaRoque, Grace Barlow, Hailey Proebsting, Sam Nord, Greg Valde

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100 years. What an honor to be associated with an organization that has served so many kids for so long. We've all benefitted from Camp Minikani. We're all lucky enough to have been on the staff at one time or another. But when I start thinking of all the individual campers who have been at Minikani over 100 years, it's difficult to put that number in my head. Heck, just thinking of all the marshmallows and bug juice blows my mind.

Minikani has invited all of us to help celebrate their anniversary at camp on August 24 and 25. They are asking us to "Honor Camp Minikani's past, present, and help to secure its future." For this Newsletter I've tried to do something very much the same. In this edition you'll have a chance to

play a History Game of camp's past, read about today's present Corral, learn what went into re-naming the girl's cabins, and more.

Your Alumni Community has another way to celebrate the 100th. **RamblerFest** will be held Friday night, August 23rd at Third Space Brewing. See Page 2 for all the great details. Save 20% and buy your tickets now on line <https://ramblerfest.bpt.me/>

All of this information is included in this MAC Newsletter. Enjoy the celebration. As you return to your "Summer Homeland" this summer or just think about Minikani, remember to *look up, and laugh, and love and lift.*



RAMBLERFEST

Friday August 23

RamblerFest is a celebration of Minikani’s 100 years and is open to the public. The biggest camp party of the century is being made possible through an alumni collaboration of **Third Space Brewing**, sound and lights by **Majic Productions**, stage sponsored by **Mansfield Hall**, and Music provided by the **Minikani Alumni Community**. All proceeds from the event will be donated for Minikani camperships.

Headlining the event will be Capitol Records artist **Grace Weber**, a Minikani alum whose work was featured on Chance the Rappers Grammy award winning album. Also, performing will be the **Whiskey Farm**, a folk rock band from Madison which features alumnus Jason Horowitz. Add to this the band **Life in a Tree** from Nashville featuring former camper Molly Lutz, Minikani's very own **Bradford Bradford** (Sam Ouimet) spinning records, and alum **Brett Andrews** from 95.7 BIG FM as MC... you’ve got yourself the camp party of the century.

Did I mention that all proceeds from the event will be donated to Minikani? Do yourself and your friends a favor and help support Minikani at the same time. Invite your friends, family, neighbors, workmates, and anyone else you know. The frosting on the cake? Third Space will donate all profits from the sale of their *Rambler Summertime Pale Ale* in honor of Minikani’s 100th.

The show starts at 6:00 PM at Third Space Brewing, 1505 West Saint Paul Ave, Milwaukee. General Admission includes entry into the event to see all three bands plus the DJ for \$20 (\$25 at the door). Tickets are on sale right now.

<https://ramblerfest.bpt.me/>



RamblerFest is Open to the Public - All proceeds go to send kids to camp

Minikani History Game: Below are 9 pictures of things that happened at camp. See if you can put them in chronological order. All the answers are on page 4. (Hint: Picture “C” shows the oldest...)

A: Ethel Athey began her first of 33 years as camp cook.



B: Older boys were moved to Explorer Hill platform tents.



C: The very first YMCA Camp started in New York.



D: Bear Claw challenge program was developed.



E: First African American campers at Minikani.



F: First girls at camp for their own 10 day session. (No Boys)



G: Canoe trip for older boys included Fox River & Wisconsin Dells.



H: Camp Director Bob Harlan brought the Ragger Program to Minikani.



I: Campers began saying “Grace” before each meal.



Put your answers here: C _____

History Game Answers (From the previous page)

“**C**” 1885 – Camping became a cornerstone of YMCA programming in 1885 when it started Camp Dudley, America’s first known summer camp program, at Orange Lake, New York. The longest continually operating camp, its aim was to provide children with a positive developmental experience through making new friends, building confidence and growing in self-reliance. (Sound familiar?)

“**T**” 1945 – In an effort to increase Christian emphasis, campers and staff began using the three graces we still have today. Words and Music are by H. W. Gibbon. The grace was followed by bowed heads and silent prayer. Also in 1945 a chapel was built beside the Nature Lodge and Camp Minikani celebrated their first 25 years.

“**E**” 1946 – Although the first YMCA to serve the African-American community was founded way back in 1853 by a freed former slave, Minikani was all white until 1946. When this change was made and everyone could enjoy what camp had to offer, the camp director wrote “The boys mixed in all activities as if there were no color lines between them.”

“**G**” 1949 – Canoe trips along the Fox River and through the Wisconsin Dells were offered for the older boys. These boys moved up to facilities on what we now call Explorer Hill with their own Kybo.

“**B**” 1953 – It wasn’t until the late 50’s that the units were created for different age groups – Indian (9-10) Pioneer (11-12) and Explorer (13-15). In 1953 these groups gave themselves names like “Westerners”, “Jolly Rogers”, and “Champions”.

“**H**” 1956 – In 1914, Thomas Caldwell in California wanted to reward positive character traits that his campers conveyed and came up with an idea. He bought some very simple blue kerchiefs which he called “Rags” for 10 cents each from a local store. During an evening campfire program, Caldwell called several of the boys forward. As he tied the Rag around each boy’s neck, he explained to him, and the camp, the reason for receiving it. Thus a tradition was started. In 1956 Minikani Camp Director Bob Harlan brought the Ragger Program to Minikani.

“**A**” 1962 – Ethel Athey was a head cook for Milwaukee Public Schools. As a single mother, she knew she could spend her summers at Minikani cooking and giving her son David a healthy environment to grow up in. As camp added more and more weekend programming during the off season, she spent most of her weekends and summers cooking at camp. She finally retired in 1995 after working at camp for 33 years.

“**F**” – 1967 – The first 10 days of that summer a “Girls Only” session was held with 145 campers. The rest of the summer was exclusively for boys. This pattern continued for the next couple of years until 1970 when a ‘trial’ 1 week at the end of the summer was open to both girls and boys. (Girls in the Indian Unit, Boys in Pioneer and Explorer.) Then in 1971 Minikani became totally co-ed.

“**D**” – 1982 – Lloyd LaRoque and Bruce Rasmussen revamped the Ragger’s program for younger campers. They replaced the green, yellow and orange rags with plastic Bear Claws on a string of lanyard, with additional beads signifying years of experience. They also adapted the material from the Rags to the Bear Claw Challenge. This gave the youngest campers a program of their own that lead into the Ragers program.



Re-naming Cabins in the Trailblazer Unit

Re-naming the cabins in the Girl's Unit was a process that was many years in the making. I asked Grace Barlow and Hailey Proebsting to fill us in on its history.

They both first heard the idea that the name "Indian Unit" was outdated when they were young staff members. Grace remember as an LT3 hearing Carly Shanley talk about how it was something that they should consider updating because the name was inappropriate. As 1st and 2nd year counselors the GU all talked about it, but nothing was done. It was almost like people were taking about it in whispers like "oh how cool would this be".

When Lauren Scheondorf was GU director the staff tried to find a happy medium between honoring the tradition of the Indian Unit and trying to incorporate education about each cabin's Native American tribe during a vesper or cabin activity. With their busy camp schedule it was easy to let the practice fall by the wayside.

Grace: "I personally remember feeling as though reading the Wikipedia page of the Seminole Tribe (Shout Out Cabin 3) wasn't quite good enough, and that I was not a credible source to be teaching my kids about the rich and important history of the tribe."

By the next summer, it seemed like everyone in the unit wanted to

see a real change. The following summer they found themselves in a position to be able to organize the energy of counselors and begin the process. They both look back and agree.

Grace & Hailey "We just happened to find ourselves in leadership positions at the right place at the right time to capitalize on an idea that female staff already shared."

They had two objectives: 1) to rename the GU in a way that was reflective of the diversity and interests of our campers and staff, and 2) to do so in a thoughtful and intentional way that honored the voice of the current staff and alumni. They also wanted to maintain the integrity of the Unit. "The Girls Unit will always be the Girls Unit no matter what name is on the sign or the cabins. Strong, Proud, Loud and empowerment is what GU Pride is. These traditions of the GU weren't going to change just because the name does."



During the winter of 2017/2018 they sent out emails to counselors (and alumni as well) to encourage support. They also got the approval

of the year-round Minikani staff. They sent out a poll to see what new name/theme people would want. The suggestions were narrowed down to three choices, and in the end the theme of "influential female leaders" was overwhelmingly favored.



During the summer of 2018 they set their timeline and methods for gathering data from current staff and as many alumni as possible. It was exciting - they were finally doing it! They held an All GU/All female staff vesper in order to make the announcement. At the vesper they had different Ad staff members, counselors, and campers stand up and talk about 2 influential females in their lives - someone that they knew personally and someone that they didn't know, but admired, and why these people were important to them.

Grace: "This is one of my top 3 favorite moments from my 2 summers as GU director. It was a weirdly magical vesper and the collective excitement of the staff was absolutely amazing."

Last winter Hailey and Grace did some serious behind the scenes legwork combing through all the different submissions, tallying, getting approval, categorizing, etc. They then unveiled the project over 3 weeks on a Facebook page accessible to any female alumnus. It included a doc explaining the 14 names chosen with their backgrounds and a link explaining

each cabin's 'personality' in order to guide the pairing process. Staff had 1 week to actually pair the names to cabin numbers. At this time a Trailblazer "Compass" replaced the Indian "Hatchet", long associated with the Indian Unit.

The reaction to the name changes has been very positive. Each cabin has a binder with a quick fact sheet on the new name, a picture, and their respective accomplishments. The cabins now have a very positive teaching tool featuring female leaders in different areas of society. This manifests itself most in vespers and questions prompted by the campers.



Hailey: "The most powerful part of this process has been the camper reaction. On opening days I take a few minutes to explain to cabins why we are the Trailblazer Unit and point to some different names around the unit, asking if anyone recognizes any of the names. Every single time there are campers who recognize multiple names and are visibly excited about identifying with role models from so many different backgrounds."

Camp is the only place where "You're so weird" is considered a compliment.

- Girls Unit**
- 1 (Winnebago) Thunder
 - 2 (Sioux) Kahlo
 - 3 (Seminole) Nightingale
 - 4 (Dakota) Angelou
 - 5 (Comanche) Ride
 - 6 (Fox) Fitzgerald
 - 7 (Mohegan) Parks
 - 8 (Crow) Truth
 - 9 (Navajo) Goodall
- Indian Rec became TB**
- TB1 (Ojibwe) Tabei
 - TB2 (Potawatomi) Carson
 - TB3 (Chippewa) Curie
- Kossow**
- K1 - Knight
 - K2 - Storey (Zuni) Nooyi



100th Anniversary At Minikani

It's not too late to start planning to join Minikani at her 100th anniversary. Saturday and Sunday during the day are free (with a suggested donation) for everyone. You'll need to register to get an on-line ticket for \$50 for the grand celebration from 6-10 Saturday night. (See the links in the next column.)

SATURDAY (9 AM - 3 PM)
Camp is open for everyone to come and experience the magic of Minikani. Enjoy camp activities, skills, local food trucks, and tours led by staff and alumni. Free, but a suggested donation is welcomed and appreciated.

SATURDAY NIGHT (6 -10 PM)
Join us for the 100th Anniversary Party on the shores of Amy Belle Lake to celebrate 100 years of tradition and comradery! Heavy appetizers, cash bar, paddle auction for YMCA Camp Minikani, music, and more!

Cabin Rental: \$500 each. Limited cabin rental available. Cabin rental includes two tickets. Must register by calling the camp office at (262) 251-9080.

Adult Ticket: \$50 per ticket. Includes meal, bands, and festivities. Child Ticket (12 and younger): \$10 per ticket. Includes meal and supervised kids' programming from 6-9 p.m. Please register for Saturday Night by August 12th.

SUNDAY (9 AM -2 PM)
Pancake breakfast, skills, and staff/alumni tours. Free, but a suggested donation is welcomed and appreciated.

Register at <https://www.minikani.org/100th-anniversary/>

Can't attend, but want to support Minikani? Go to <https://www.minikani.org/100th-anniversary/>

*** All proceeds from the event will benefit YMCA Camp Minikani***



Highlight: CORRAL

Salutations form the Corral!

The hundredth summer possess great promise for the Corral! The celebration of our long and storied history allows us a time to reflect on the past and look on to the future. The Corral's history at Minikani helps us frame where we are going and gives us a torch of tradition to carry on to wherever the Corral skill area leads.

Since day one we have been wranglin', tackin', and ridin' horses; however, a few new skills have become integral to the Corral program. Most recently, we've been graced with FOUR lovely, wholesome, and energetic goats!



Yes, that's right, WE'VE GOT GOATS-- How exciting! Our goats are two pairs of siblings, the youngest pair, a brother-sister combo, Bri and Asiago (I try not to play favorites as the Wrangler, but these two are just the bee's knees), and brother-brother duo, Scooby and Shaggy.



The newest infrastructural addition to the Corral has been a roomy paddocks with four holding pens. One of the pens is currently used for the goats, and the other



three are for possible further expansions (wow! If the Corral is not on the up and up, I don't know what is).

Another new addition to the Corral program outside of horse related things is our double-pronged chickens program. The two prongs to this poultry rod are: A chicken coop with five chickens (named: Orwell, Vonnegut, Muir, Leapold, and Steinbeck).



And two, we also raise baby chicks. Both of our chicken based programs allow for campers to interact with

the most common farmed animal in the United States. Furthermore, our incubator, and chick raising skills give campers a spectacular experience and knowledge of what needs to be done to care for life.



The third and final animal often spotted on the Corral are our equine friends-- Horses! Horses still remain at the center of the Corral program. Every sign up we offer Trail Rides of some degree, and campers still have the ability to rise to the rank of Jr. Wrangler (very prestigious, some may say even more than a Waterfront Seal (but don't tell that to any WF staff (for the record, I'm a waterfront seal, so I can make this determination))).

Some other skills we commonly offer are Ranch Hands-- where campers learn how to tack, groom, and care for horses; Classic Tugboat-- normal corral, where campers learn how to groom and get to do short trail rides; and Advanced Corral-- here campers learn how to ride with reigns and trot.

As a Corral staff we tend to walk our horses on four different trail rides, allowing for campers to experience something new every day and at the same time granting our staff the ability to become comfortable with how horses interact in certain places.

Furthermore, our horse program holds a couple surprises. One being we currently have **two mules**, one which we ride often named Tym, and another used mainly by our Equestrian Program named Buttercup.



A third variation of equine creature on the Corral is the always-loved donkey, Priscilla.

Outside of skills we offer Trail Rides, Pasture Walks, as well as time in both the Paddocks (with the goats) and the Chicken Coop. Counselors and staff can utilize planned times, such as Cabin Acts, to come out to the *Rral* and explore the wonders we have to offer. At most every sign up, I, the Wrangler, will be present to help shed light on any information the counselor or campers may not know. This allows us to have a genuine moment of learning not too many other places at camp can match.

While there is A LOT to be said about the impactful moments that

happen throughout and beyond Minikani’s property; at the Corral, campers get to experience the joys/wonders of raising and connecting with animals. Campers walk away from skills and sign-ups with (hopefully) a new found prospective. One that leads to positive interactions with animals and life broadly.

However, none of this could be fully accomplished without the help of our amazing Corral staff, or *Porch Kids*, if you will. While we pride ourselves in the abilities of our two older staff members, Will Ouimet and Ruby Lou, our current batch of first year counselors present great promise for the future. Corral was graced with five returning counselors this summer, Maggie Narave, Aidan LaRoque, Joise Morkin, Meredith Randall, and Molly Ryan-- this means that (granting that they choose to stick around) by the time they are Explorer Counselors they’ll have fifteen years of wrangling experience between them.. WOAH, what a recipe for future success!

On the topic of future success... let’s speculate. Now, my thoughts, dreams, and aspirations for the



Corral reach far and wide. Often times they are farmed as “unrealistic” by the boss-man; However, I’ll give you all a line onto some future possibilities (only hopes, not too many hard promises). Foremost, we all have been tinkering at the idea of FARM. Yes that’s right, a full-fledged agricultural program! Now, wouldn’t that be a hoot? The beta staged ideas for the program entail cultivating and harvesting crops from fields located on the Corral.

Thankfully Corral, unlike most skill areas, has a lot of room to expand; and the addition of crop fields will not only be super-duper fun, it will also add a very tangible learning skill to our already spectacular program. The dream is campers will learn the basics of how to plant crops, raise them, and harvest them. This will allow for kids leaving the Corral to have a better understanding of how food gets to their table. Moreover, it will give campers significant awareness of the complexities of farming.

As we come together as a Minikani family to celebrate one-hundred years of camp. It is important to reflect on how the world has changed around us. A centennial has passed and horses are still ridden here. The Corral has changed locations, but the Wrangler still runs the show. Countless kids have come and gone from the *Rral*, yet every day, still, campers receive the amazing experience of their first ride. While many things throughout camp, the world, and Corral have changed, the Spirit lives on.

Ride on, riders,

Sam C. Nord - The Wrangler



SpotLight

On Alumni

Greg Valde

◆ **What is your history at camp?**

My parents first took me to camp in their 1958 Rambler, so that should give you an idea of what's to come: this is a profile of an old fart – so if you're not interested in ancient history you should stop reading now. I started at camp in 1964. I was a camper, LT, counselor, Explorer director, boy's director, LT director, waterfront director, & program director. And I have been on the camp Board for the last 25 years. Yes, I am a camp lifer...



Young Greg in Fireside Lodge Dining Hall

◆ **Any particularly 'fond' memories of camp?**

Something "big" happened every summer, but I won't bore you with all the details. When I think of camp as a child I remember feeling free. Free to make noise and be a little crazy. Later came the subtler joys: the black of night illuminated by a campfire, sunsets over Turtle Bay, my first rag, the quiet songs,

close friends, and meaningful responsibility.

Suffice it to say I had some of my most profound interpersonal, spiritual, "nature-al" and carnal experiences at camp. If I mentioned that they served alcohol at the staff banquet in 1974 that might partly excuse the last one.

◆ **Were there any special skills you learned while at camp?**

Inflating pants into a life vest, washing dishes in a Hobart, driving a stick shift ("a 3-on-the-tree" on the old camp truck), using I-messages and active listening.

◆ **Do you have a favorite place?**

Explorer Hill. Boys unit director cabin (which is now gone). Lake Amy Belle.

◆ **You helped establish the Explorer Program. What was that like?**

Lloyd LaRoque & I redesigned the program around 1975 to be less like a vacation in the

woods and more like a challenging outdoor experience. (Before our changes there was just one big group campsite and cookfire and the kids floated on inflatable rafts down the Wolf River).

We wanted everyone to put up tents, cook over a fire, hike with a backpack, and paddle whitewater. It seemed like when kids returned from the new trip they felt like they had really accomplished something.

Self-esteem earned through challenge and accomplishment.

◆ **What is it with Valdes and Minikani? (Your sister Jan and daughter Katherine?)**

We all loved camp; and it continues to be something that ties us together.



Rolf Vegdahl (L) & Greg at a campfire 1977

◆ **How did camp effect your style as a musician?**

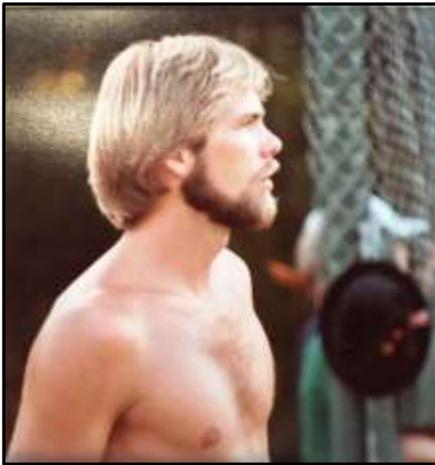
When I was a boy I saw these college kids playing guitars and singing songs of search, protest, and love. It immediately drew me in. The impact wasn't so much on my style as on the role that music can play in our lives. I saw how music could be intimate, poetic, political, and joyful. One of many great gifts I got from camp.

◆ **Tell us what it's like to be on the Minikani Board of Directors.**

All dressed up with no place to go. We are an advisory board with only the power of persuasion, so it's a bit frustrating when the powers that be have wanted to go "off mission." But I think we on the Board have made a difference over the years – keeping our eye on the prize: providing life-changing experiences for children and staff.

◆ **How has camp changed since you were a camper in 1964?**

They added girls in the late 60s (just when I was ready!) and the new dining hall a bit later (I grew up eating in Fireside). But mostly the camp experience is the same: the crazy songs, campfires, the peaceful lake, dedicated counselors, kids having fun while growing in important ways, staff learning to love each other.



◆ **Looking back at your camp experience, is there one thing that you feel the most proud of?**

When I was I counselor it was probably the hardest I ever worked. I'm grateful that camp taught me about the value of service and work. I'm proud that I took the Minikani Spirit with me to all my life's work. I'm glad to see some of my program inventions survived me.

As a Board member I am proudest of getting the girls up on Explorer Hill and expanding the LT & Explorer programs so we could serve more teens. Now I just want to get the parking lot out of the middle of camp and see the next dining hall get built.

◆ **Anything else you'd like to share with alumni?**

See you at the 100th! 

White Raggers

Six staff members are included in the challenge of the White Rag this summer. Congratulations to them all.

Sunday July 21st

- ❖ Hailey Proebsting
- ❖ Martha Herrenbruck
- ❖ Haley Robertson

Sunday August 4th

- ❖ Hunter Daley
- ❖ Austin Cox
- ❖ Anna Edwards

Congratulations to the newest White Raggers



Update Your MAC Information

Have you changed your mailing address or your email address recently? No longer using your college or an old work email address? Wonder why all your Minikani friends receive email messages from the MAC but you don't? It could be we don't have your current addresses. 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 to minikanistafflodge@gmail.com. We'll take care of the rest, and you'll be able to keep connected with our community.



Do you know an alumnus you would like to recommend for a future "Spotlight on Alumni"? Send your suggestions to minikanistafflodge@gmail.com

Nature Notes

By Bruce

Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*)

In celebration of Minikani’s 100th, I thought I could compare the hard working bee with the hard working Minikani staff. From dawn to sunset, especially in the summer, both are busy keeping their hive (camp) up and running smoothly. You probably remember from biology class that bees come in one of three types: worker, drone, and queen. At camp we have campers, counselors, and staff. Camp has been around for 100 years, bees have been on earth for about 100 million years.

Now the more I think of it, the more difficult it becomes to keep the analogy going. Except from a few little chirps from a queen, bees never make a sound (no Unit cheers). Bees communicate with other bees in the hive with complex hormone-like chemicals called pheromones. They eat pollen – rich in protein – and honey (no pizza, burgers, taco Thursday, etc.) Finally, during the summer the typical honey bee colony contains from 30,000 to 60,000 bees.

So let’s just focus on bees. The queen, who lives 4 to 5 years, has just one job – to lay eggs, perhaps 2,000 a day. The workers do all the other ‘work’ of the hive. During their brief lifetimes they are nurses, guards, grocers, housekeepers, construction workers, royal attendants, undertakers, foragers, scouts, etc. The drones, the only males, spend their whole lives

waiting to mate with a queen, and then die shortly afterwards.

When it is time to mate, the queen flies up in the air and will mate with several drones. She stores this lifetime supply of sperm in special organs and never needs to mate the rest of her life. Later on when she is laying all those eggs the queen can control the flow of sperm to fertilize an egg or not. Fertilized eggs become female workers, whose ovaries never develop. Unfertilized eggs develop into a drone.



Why do the worker’s ovaries never develop? Basically it’s because they are fed different food as larvae. For their first 3 days, all larvae are fed royal jelly. After that, only the future queens are fed this royal jelly. Royal Jelly is made of digested pollen and honey mixed with a chemical secreted from a gland in a nursing bee’s head. That makes a world of difference.

Bees have one of the most complex pheromonal communication systems found in nature, possessing 15 known glands that produce an array of compounds. These chemical messengers elicit a response in other bees. For example, a pheromone is released from a gland on the stinger just as the bee stings. It elicits a defensive reaction in nearby bees which gets them all riled up. That’s why after being stung it is best to move away from the area to protect yourself

from additional bee stings. Unfortunately for the stinging bee, its stinger is barbed, and the stinging action causes a massive abdominal rupture that results in the death of the bee.

Honey bees were originally brought to the New World by European settlers because of their mild nature, easy going disposition, and large amount of honey they produced. Our honey bees work tirelessly each day to provide for and maintain their hive. “Selfish” is a word never used to describe honey bees - or Minikani staff, for that matter.



Interesting Bee Facts

The bee’s ‘buzz’ comes from the wings moving 100 times a second.

To make a pound of honey the bees have to visit over 2 million flowers.

A worker bee makes 1/12th of a teaspoon of honey in her lifetime.

Bees can carry nectar or pollen equal to 80% of her own weight.

Honey bees pollinate about 80% of all vegetables, fruit and seed crops in the US.

The “Queen Bee” was known as the “King Bee” until the late 1660’s, when a scientist dissected one and found ovaries.

Bees have two stomachs, one for eating, and one for carrying the nectar from flowers to the hive.

Wisconsin’s State Insect is the honey bee, not the mosquito!