



NEWSLETTER



“Making memories that last a lifetime – Count on Minikani.”

When you get a chance to stroll through your Minikani memory bank, which memories seem to always push their ways to the top?

Remember the food? The Closing Campfires? What you learned at skills? Smells after a rainstorm? Vespers? Games? Songs? Swimming in Amy Belle? Your Explorer trip?

I would guess that your strongest memories are about people at camp.

Counselors, cabin-mates, friends from home, LT’s, fellow staff, camp crushes and more. It’s what Minikani does best.

Almost all camps have lakes, trips, dining halls, campfires, cabins and sports. Yet Minikani stands out because they hire people who are energetic, passionate and fun.

Look at the photo (above) from earlier this summer. You can see it in their faces. Memories that last a lifetime are being made this summer at Minikani.



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CAMP NEWS

Minikani Summer 2022

We've all been through a lot the past couple of COVID years, and Camp Minikani is no exception. The summer of 2020 saw day campers only, no swimming pool, no overnights, no Leadership Program. Skill activities went on, but masks were worn whenever indoors. Last year overnight camping returned, but specific protocols were put in place to insure everyone stayed safe. All of those efforts were well worth it. Here is a quote from the current Minikani COVID Guide: "We've been through two summers of COVID with only one positive case on camp, so we're confident in our seasoned staff and campers to continue safe practices while we move closer to 'normal' camp."

As you know, COVID is still around, so using certain safety protocols are still necessary. Camp

is once again using a large tent on the tennis courts as the dining hall. "D-Tent", as it is called, stands for Dining Tent or Dancing Tent, depending on the time of day ☺

More Protocols:

Again, from Minikani's Guide: "All campers and staff will be tested when they arrive on camp regardless of vaccination status. Day campers will be tested their first day and halfway through the week. We will still be using the cohort system to separate cabins, but will be expanding our cohorts to include entire units."

"Masking will be required for campers only when they are closely interacting with groups outside of their cohort, or when entering certain spaces on camp (inside Halquist Lodge, the Dining Hall, Coffman Lodge, the Health Center, or outside when groups outside of their cohort are all together at Council Bluff)."



"If a positive test is confirmed on camp with a PCR test, all unvaccinated campers in that cabin will be picked up and have to remain off camp for at least five days. If those exposed have no symptoms and test negative after the fifth day, they may return to camp. All vaccinated people may stay at camp and will be tested again, separated from their cohort, asked to mask and socially distance from other campers and staff, and be closely monitored for symptoms of COVID."

Yes, all of this is a move closer to "normal" camp. Kudos to all those responsible for keeping kids safe and healthy while giving them the best camp experience possible.

When you think of it, with strong traditions gathered over the past 103 years, would you expect anything less of Minikani?



Alumni Weekend

What are you doing September 10 & 11? How about spending the time back at your favorite camp?

It's been 5 years since the MAC has reserved the entire camp just for alumni. Here's the Information:

When: September 10-11.

Where: YMCA Camp Minikani.

Who: You and your family.

What: A weekend of good old fashioned camp fun, including open skill areas, a silent auction, and more!

How: Sign up using this [Google Form](#) by September 3rd.

Cost (includes meals and activities, see lodging options below)

- Adults (16+): \$25
- Kids (5-16): \$10
- Kids (Under 5): FREE
- *Please bring cash or a check (made out to Minikani Alumni Community) to the event.

Lodging Options

- Cabin Rental (limited): \$50
- Bring a tent to pitch in Norris Field: FREE

More Information: The Minikani Alumni Weekend will be a chance to reconnect with camp and our strong and growing alumni community. On Saturday, we'll have work projects and a few skill areas open during the day, and at night



we'll have an evening activity (including a silent auction!) and dinner, after which folks can 'choose their own adventure' at night (cabin campfires, open bar at council bluff). If you want to reserve a cabin, we recommend booking early - they're first come, first serve.

Questions?

Reach out to Austin Cox (austincox1123@gmail.com) or Joe Alioto (j.aliot011@gmail.com). Can't wait to see you there!



Spring Workday

We want to give a big shout out to everyone who came to Minikani for our Work Day on June 4th.

Projects included painting and building the new slingshot range behind the lodge for GNR and putting a fresh coat of paint on the garden fence! We had a solid group of with people of all ages involved. It was really fun!!



Next Spring ('23) you'll have another opportunity to join us at camp and help get things ready for the summer season. You won't want to miss it!



Minikani Songbook Trivia Answers from page 5

Answer Key: 1) C, 2) B, 3) A, 4) B, 5) D, 6) C, 7) B, 8) D, 9) C, 10) D

10 correct: A Song Scholar
6-9 correct: Great Job!
3-5 correct: Thanks for playing
0-2 correct: Click [HERE](#) for your own copy the Minikani Songbook



MAC Gift to Staff



Christmas in July came early to this year’s summer staff. Amy (Shiman) Kolb and Matt Kolb, both MAC Board Members, surprised everyone at Council Bluff with a gift of a special MAC towel. (See above) The gift was made possible in part from an anonymous alumnus, but Amy and Matt did all the ‘leg work’ to select the gift and make it possible.

“Staff were certainly very excited about them.” says Amy. (See above again) “The towels were a great hit.” According to the seller: *‘Cooling Towels are great for the beach, sports, and even yard work! With its extremely absorbent and super quick drying fabric, this lightweight, easy-to-pack towel will certainly be a hit all summer long.’*

Since most staff carry a small backpack with them throughout the day, the towels will come in handy for spills, quick jumps in the lake,

wiping off a picnic table, and more. Similar to a ShamWow, it’s like a Chamois, Towel, and a Sponge, all in one!



Camperships 2022

Most alumni don’t know this, but Kendall Dowsett has almost ‘single handedly’ kept the MAC Campership program going the past 10 years. When she was working and teaching in Chicago she identified some kids who she thought would be great as Minikani campers. It started with one, Miguel, who was able to keep coming back to camp for eight years. Each year more deserving kids were added to the campership list. The plan in 2020 was to have 10 kids from her school, between the ages of eight and fifteen, come to camp that summer! Unfortunately, COVID got in the way and it was difficult to keep in touch with all the families.

This year there are 6 kids at camp -- two kids are in the Master Explorer program, two are in the regular Explorer program, and two are spending two weeks in their beloved Boys Unit.

In recent years the Executive Directors of Camp Minikani have been willing to fund our Campership kids with money from the YMCA’s annual Strong Kids campaign. We let Camp cover the camp costs so that the MAC can dedicate funds to help transport to and from Camp (from Chicago), and make sure the kids have necessary camping gear, clothing, and of course, a little fun money to spend at the Camp Store.

MAC’s previous fundraisers at Holiday Galas and 2020’s Polar Plunge has helped bring in money for the campership program. We continue to receive donations from our MAC members through our website minikanistafflodge.com. (We are 100% volunteer and a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, so your donation may be tax-deductible.)

As we look to the future, one of our goals is to expand our reach into the Milwaukee area. We hope to secure new partnerships with local groups and organizations that will help us send more kids to camp from diverse backgrounds.

2022 Campers



Songbook Trivia

How well do you know Minikani Songs? Here are 10 trivia questions from the song book. Answers to these questions can be found on page 3, or you can click on the icon here and download your very own .pdf copy of the song book. Enjoy!



- Where were we when Mrs. Leary's cow started the fire?
A) in the barn B) watching TV
C) in bed D) drinking milk
- What do you do when you have only twopence left?
A) go rolling home B) spend them
C) send them to your wife
D) save them
- What did Johnny Rebeck's machine make?
A) sausages B) cats & dogs
C) sauerkraut D) whistles
- Obadiah had a head like what?
A) bowling ball B) ping pong ball
C) softball D) balloon
- Which one did the Old Lady NOT swallow?
A) cow B) spider C) goat D) hog
- When the Titanic was sinking, why didn't the captain wire for help?
A) he was too sad B) Mrs. Astor's husband said he would do it
C) the lines were all afire
D) the sides were about to burst
- What did the Good Fairy turn Rabbit Foo Foo into?
A) a field mouse B) a goon
C) a worm D) rabbit stew



- Which is NOT a part of the Noah's Ark's song?
A) the ark was built of hickory bark
B) it rained for 40 days C) animals came aboard in pairs
D) unicorns were nowhere to be found
- What trees are named in the Minikani Spirit Song?
A) old oaks B) apple trees
C) tamaracks D) pine trees
- When I saw a great big bear (a way up there) which did I NOT do?
A) size up the bear B) run away
C) jump into a tree D) shoot it with my gun

Check Your Answers on p. 3



Closing Campfires

By Eli Fyksen

Hey Alumni! I wanted to make sure that you know you are invited to a closing campfire this summer! The last two campfires are on Friday Aug 5th and Friday Aug 19th.

We do ask 2 things: 1. Let either [Rachel Kornetsky](#) or [Elijah Fyksen](#) know that you are going to attend. 2. We ask that you either socially distance/or mask at closing campfire in order to protect our "bubble." Reach out to us by email if you have questions.

Looking forward to seeing everyone! Eli



White Ragers

Six staff members are accepting the challenge of the White Rag this summer.

Sunday July 24th

- ❖ Olivia Holbrook
- ❖ Joey Rampola
- ❖ Sam James

Sunday August 7th

- ❖ Aly Morton
- ❖ Wil Foote
- ❖ Sam Judd

Congratulations to the newest White Ragers



Highlight: ADVENTURE CHALLENGE

Anyone who has been at Minikani the past 30 years knows what Adventure Challenge (AC) means to staff and campers. The very first elements were originally designed and built by Stew Brown in the late 80's. This very popular program has grown and developed into an integral part of the Minikani experience.

AC includes High Ropes, Low Ropes (also known as the Low Initiatives), a Zip Line and a climbing Rock Wall.

High Ropes activities take place anywhere from 25 to 40 feet off of the ground! They are a combination of both vertical challenges and horizontal challenges, constructed from wood, cables and ropes installed between wood poles.

Ropes challenge courses can be seen as the ultimate group or team challenge. When cabin groups or individuals go on a high ropes course there's a great opportunity for them to learn about risk taking,

their own perceived limits, how they perform under pressure, how they give and receive support from other people, and how working with others can help an individual achieve more than they thought they could accomplish by themselves.

This summer's AC Director is Catherine Taphorn ("You can call me Cat Tap!"). AC was always her favorite skill as a camper, so she feels that working with AC this summer is a VERY full circle moment for her.



Cat Tap

Cat Tap shared the following information before camp started: "As far as programming updates go, the new and old rock walls both have auto belay equipment in addition to traditional belaying, meaning counselors can focus on cheering campers on and offering support, rather than focusing on holding the ropes!"

"The high ropes is still as great as ever, and the Giant's Ladder will still be climbed by explorer cabins before going on their trips, as the ultimate teamwork activity. The low ropes will still be climbed in the

magical forest, and campers will get to swing on the Tarzan rope all hour long. Finally, the ZIPLINE!! Campers will get to zip over the disc golf course and feel like they're flying, while their cabin mates cheer them on from below."



Here is her most recent AC update: "We've had so much fun running the high ropes challenge course, both sides of the rock wall, and the low initiatives every day at skills! The zip line is a very popular afternoon activity for cabins to do together, and I've personally loved facilitating that for them and getting to see campers challenge themselves and grow through climbing and facing fears." Next Page →





“A new high ropes challenge course is set to be built over the course of the year and will be running next summer, so after 30+ years of climbing the one we have now, we’re all soaking up every moment we can with it! We’re SO excited to see the new challenge course next year and take campers to all sorts of new heights.”

AC staff this summer include Clayton Holbrook, Nick Nolan, Cole Batchelor, Zion Zarwell Robinson, and Maggie (Muggs) Vorlop. There are also 3 international staff members, Zofia Kaniewska from Poland, and Diana Gazso and Aron Lengyel, both from Hungary. Six LT3’s round out the complete staff: Molly Franzen, Mandy Lam, Colin Foley, Grace Shean, Clara Hayes, and Ainsley Regner.

“I’m so excited to see the magic all these wonderful counselors create this summer! Overall, Adventure Challenge is nothing short of magical, and I’m so incredibly grateful to be leading such an amazing staff on skills every day! Climb Climb, baby!”



SpotLight On Alumni

Haley Adams

◆ What is your history at Camp?

I started going to Minikani in 2002, when I was 8 years old. I had a friend from school who was going, so I went with her on a whim. I had a blast and insisted on going back every year after!

I was on staff from 2012-2015, during which time I was a counselor in both the GU and EU and worked on the Adventure Challenge staff. I was the AC Director for half a summer and the Minicamp Director for my last summer at camp.



◆ Did you have a favorite “job”?

I loved all of the roles I had at Minikani, but I have a special fondness for the summer I was Minicamp Director. Minicampers are some of the sweetest and funniest people on camp, and it was such a blast to see them form some of their first friendships. I also really cherished the opportunity to be on AD Staff and lead a unit by myself.

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



Camp taught me all about working with people. I learned how to ask for expectations, how to provide and receive feedback, and how to play off of other people’s strengths. As Minicamp Director, I also got experience managing and mentoring younger staff members, which I was able to apply in managerial roles in my career.

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

Staying in touch with my camp friends made it easier to transition to the real world! I lived with a camp friend (Kate Berman) for five years in Chicago, so we were able to keep the camp spirit alive in our home. I also made it a priority to get outside every summer, whether it was a visit to camp, an LT trip, or a camping trip with friends. It’s not the same as being at camp, but being in nature always feels great!

◆ 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?

After camp, I spent about six years in Chicago working in political technology. Although I

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really enjoyed my job and life in Chicago, I realized I wanted to try something new, so I found a new gig down south in New Orleans! I now manage an artist-run boutique hotel called Travelers New Orleans (stayattravelers.com).

Some days I'm meeting guests from all over the world, other days I'm cleaning rooms. (Cleaning rooms always reminds me of white glove cabin cleanup!) I also work at a jam shop-slash-bakery. We make the best donuts in town! It's been a great change of pace and an awesome way to develop some new skills. Come visit!

◆ **If you could go back in time and re-live just one Special Day, what would that be?**

On my last trip as an Explorer counselor, we took the kids to Goodman Park, a park that we used to visit on the old Explorer trip. It was so special to share that important place with the next generation of camp, and knowing that it was our last trip as Explorer counselors made it even more emotional. When I was driving the Startran back to base camp, I remember thinking that I would never forget that day!



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

"Soak Up The Sun" by Sheryl Crow! My year sang that at a closing campfire when we were Explorer counselors. I'm sure we didn't sound great but we had a lot of fun doing it.

◆ **What was your favorite meal at Minikani?**

Grilled cheese and tomato soup will always be my favorite!



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

Reach out if you're ever in New Orleans! I have a whole hotel's worth of rooms for you to stay in and will show you a great time!



MAC + SLACK

The MAC Board is excited to announce a new way for all of us to communicate -- Slack! It's totally optional to sign up, but it will provide another way to connect with the MAC for those who are interested. It's free and easy!

We'll be sending out Slack invitations to all of our members in the near future. Don't worry -- it's just an invitation. We know some folks won't use Slack, and that's OK.



What is Slack?

Slack is an app that helps organizations communicate better. With Slack, you can communicate directly with other people, or in channels with large groups of people. In addition to Facebook and email, the MAC Board plans to use Slack to communicate about events happening within the MAC and Camp.

What do I do?

Once you get signed up with Slack, you can access the program through their website or by using an app on your phone or computer. From there you can communicate by using separate **channels** for things like MAC Events, Specific Cities, LT year, and more.



Nature Notes

By Bruce

Sumac at Camp

Camp Minikani has 2 kinds of sumac plants – staghorn sumac and poison sumac. They look similar, but it's easy to tell one from the other. (Think about snakes – it's pretty easy to tell a rattlesnake from a garter snake, don't you think?) Both sumacs grow 8 to 20 feet tall and have leaflets that are arranged around a central stem. The staghorn sumac has fuzzy red 'berries' that stand upright on the branches and leaves with saw-toothed edges.



Staghorn Sumac

Poison sumac has clusters of white or light-green berries that sag downward on its branches, with smooth edged leaves.



Poison Sumac

OK – I'll make it easier for you. If you're standing near a sumac and your feet are getting wet, chances are you're looking at poison sumac. If your feet are dry, it's a staghorn sumac. The staghorn prefer to grow

in dry soils of fields, roadsides, and fencerows. You've probably seen it in early Fall as its leaves are one of the first to turn a bright red.

At camp I could always find staghorn sumac along the upper parking lot, the edge of Norris field, at the end of the corral, and on Slippery Hill. The second half of the summer we collected the red fuzzy berries and made "Sumac Punch" with the campers at Nature Skill. See the box at the right for more about the punch.

Now about the 'evil twin', the poison sumac. In the early '70s I thought I would discover a path through the marshy area behind the girl's unit to Amy Belle. I had never heard of poison sumac, so I eagerly walked from shrub to shrub, grabbing the branches to steady myself. Since it is marshy there, I got my shoes and legs wet in the process. It was about 12 hours later that I discovered something else – an irritating, stinging rash on both of my legs.

Now I know that the poison sumac contain an oil called **urushiol**, the same oil found that is in poison ivy. For some people any contact with the oil causes a rash to erupt with itching, stinging, and sometimes blisters. If you've ever had either poison ivy or sumac, you will do everything you can to avoid them both. I know I do.

One more thing about the urushiol oil. In addition to poison ivy and sumac, it's also found in the 'shells' of cashews and the skin of mangos. That explains why you can never buy cashews with their shells on! As for mangos, you should always wash a mango and peel the skin before eating the delicious fruit.



Sumac Punch Directions

Sumac Punch (also called lemonade or tea) is made from foraged sumac berries, hot water, and sugar to taste. It tastes like lemonade without any lemons! Lightly floral, tart and refreshing, it's delicious as-is.



Here's how we made it back in Nature Skill: To make sure the sumac you've found is flavorful, look for a white covering on the berries – this is the 'flavor'. Roll a couple of the velvety berries between your fingers and then give your finger a lick – you'll taste the tartness! To harvest the sumac we simply broke off the clusters and dropped them into a bucket. Give them a quick scan and remove any bugs, spiders, or weird looking things.

Next, pour hot water over them and stir gently with a wooden spoon. Ah, you'll smell the lemon-y brew. Pour off the punch into a serving container, leaving all the berries behind. (Using cheesecloth to strain the juice works well at this point.) Sweeten to taste with sugar, add a sprig of wild mint and you've got a tasty Nature treat.