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# NEWSLETTER

## A Letter From Jen Feltz *Executive Director, YMCA Camp Minikani*

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Thanks To: Jen Feltz and Stew Brown

Bruce Rasmussen, Editor  
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Greetings from Camp Minikani,

We are busy preparing for another memorable year! A few of these preparations include:

- **Life-changing discussions with over 200 families who are thrilled to hear us say, “Yes, we can provide a scholarship for your child to attend camp this summer!”**
- **Developing over 150 future leaders as they continue their three year journey in the LT and OLT Programs building character, leadership and a commitment to service above self.**
- **Putting the finishing touches on the Fireside Lodge facelift including the completion of a new floor as well as external and lighting upgrades.**
- **Enlisting the help of new “camp ambassadors” who are helping spread the good word about Minikani in their communities.**
- **Monitoring the new solar panels at the entrance to camp that will provide over 10% of camp’s energy needs.**

As we continually strive to improve camp and provide amazing opportunities to our camp families, I wanted to pause and say, “Thank You for helping make Minikani such a special place. I hope you take pride in your support of Camp and know that we appreciate you. Minikani is a better place because you have chosen to be involved!”

One of the best ways to experience the Spirit of Minikani is to personally visit Camp. I would like to encourage you to join us at one of our events this summer. All the details are included on the following pages. We would love to welcome you, your family and friends to spend some time with us.

Please feel free to contact me at anytime to let us know you’ll be joining us for an event or just to chat about camp. I’m always happy to come and talk with you closer to home as well! Thanks again!

Jen Feltz, Executive Director  
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## 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! Our fabulous staff will lead you on a guided tour including the cabins, lodge, dining hall, lakefront, activity areas, equestrian center and more!

### Alumni-Staff Dinner & Robertson Lodge Rededication Wednesday, June 13, 5:30-8:30

It has become our tradition to invite Minikani Alumni to join us for a very special evening during staff training. Come and enjoy a traditional camp meal with our staff. Share your memories of camp and the wonderful history and traditions that have made Minikani such a wonderful experience for over 90 years!

On June 13<sup>th</sup> we will also be celebrating the return of Robertson Lodge as the Staff Lodge. Matt (Sully) Sullivan, the Summer Program Director, would love to hang old pictures of staff hanging out in "Robby" for the current staff to see. Send pictures to [msullivan@ymcamke.org](mailto:msullivan@ymcamke.org)

*(continued next column)*



### Friends of Minikani Wednesday, July 25, 6:00-8:00 pm

If you can visit Camp only once this year, make it July 25!

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 brings the Spirit of Minikani to life!

Don't Forget – please contact Jen at camp if you are interested in attending any of these upcoming events at Camp.



## Reminder: No Alumni Weekend This Summer

The next Alumni Weekend will be held during the Summer of 2013.

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.



## Porcupine Picnic

Sunday June 10, 2012

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual "Porcupine Picnic" will be held at Camp Minikani on Sunday, June 10<sup>th</sup> from 1-5:30 p.m.

All proceeds from this family event will support Southeast Wisconsin's only camp dedicated to children who have experienced a loss - Camp SOUL (Supporting Others, Understanding Loss).

Here's what you can expect: 1-5 p.m. **Activities** include canoeing – row boating - water trampoline - arts & crafts - rock wall - high ropes - archery - bb guns and air rifles - nature walks - soccer - Frisbee golf . **NOTE:** All activities will be supervised by YMCA Camp Minikani Staff Members.

3:00 – 5:00 **Meal Time** with food and beverages for all.

5:00 – 5:30 **Campfire** with singing and skits.

The cost is \$20 for Adults - \$15 for Kids (children 4 and under are FREE!). Registration increases \$5 at the door.

This Fundraiser is open to and welcomes everyone. For more information about the Porcupine Foundation and SOUL Camp, and to register for the Picnic go to <http://www.firstgiving.com/porcupinefoundation/porcupine-picnic-2012>



## Silent Auction Needs You !

It's not too early to be thinking of Silent Auction items that you can donate too this year's Holiday Fundraiser to be held in December. Items include food, clothing, artwork, travel, athletic events, tickets, lessons, jewelry, baskets, etc. Even toasters.

Last year we raised over \$1,800 from the Silent Auction. All of the proceeds went to our Campership Program. For more information or to make a donation, email Nina Shully at [nina.shully@gmail.com](mailto:nina.shully@gmail.com)



It's still not too late to become an "Official Member" of the MAC. Amounts from \$5 on up are always welcome. Go to the "Membership" Tab on our website and click on the "Donate" button. Thanks to everyone who has already donated during our May Membership month.

## Campership Update

Summer is almost upon us and we're pleased to announce that we presently have five 'candidates' for our Campership Program.

As we grow and evolve as a Community, we have included a 'Mentoring' aspect to our Campership Program. This means that the sponsor takes on a special role with the camper. It involves a commitment from both sponsor and camper to stay in touch both before and after the camping experience.

Sponsors (or Mentors) meet with the parents and make decisions together for the kids. It may also include transportation to and from camp, making a checklist of needed camp clothing supplies, or going over expectations for both the parent and child.

We are still accepting candidates for the Program. If you are interested in helping out as a sponsor/mentor, please email Jason Horowitz at [jasonhorowitz@gmail.com](mailto:jasonhorowitz@gmail.com)



## New Alumni Website

Once again we have a new website for our community. It was up and running the end of March, and has all the same favorite things you've enjoyed. What makes the new site different is how easy it is to access things, and how easy it is for us to maintain. Check it out and see if there's anything else you'd like to be included.



### Membership

The Mission of the Minikani Alumni Community (MAC) is to maintain a connection with our summer homeland, while also supporting traditions and current summer programming through acts of fellowship and service. Each year we work to raise capital in order to assist in this mission. Alumni are able to give back through their participation with events, dedication of their time, and to give annually through our membership program. Membership is not required to participate, but it will help us realize our mission and expand our efforts. Your annual membership will be dedicated to our mission in the following ways:

**-Campership Program-** The MAC offers numerous camperships to deserving children each summer. We assist in selecting, supporting, and monitoring each camp experience.

**-Capital Campaign-** As a Community, we hope to identify and assist in supporting Minikani to grow and improve. To this end, we will be identifying Capital Campaigns to raise money for specific goals, such as new buildings, programs, or other worthy efforts.

**-Annual Campaign (Formerly Strong Kids)-** The MAC has committed to supporting Minikani directly through their annual campaign. Each year we will be making a contribution to this cause.

**-The Minikani Alumni Community-** Each year we grow in size and must continue to improve as an organization. A small portion of the contributions will be used to help the MAC function, such as our website, events, Newsletters, and others.

\* When you make a contribution through your membership, you may choose to allow us to assign your money to the general fund, or you may choose to designate your contribution to a specific area.

## Alumni Dinner “Around the World”

What do shrinky dinks, bug juice, adult beverages, trivia, Johnny Appleseed, stories, coffee mugs, music, Maxwell the dog, totem poles, photos, happy alumni, and, of course, food, all have in common? That’s right, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Alumni Dinner Around the World, held on March 3, 2012 this year. Locations included Chicago, Madison, Brookfield, Scotland, Manhattan, Montana, Denver, Vermont, Milwaukee, and San Francisco, to name just a few.



Each celebration was unique and special. Our Facebook Group, Minikani Alumni Community, was very busy all day with postings and photos. The event can be summed up by this report from Stew Brown in Colorado: *(continued next column)*



“We had six out of our group of ten meeting in Idaho Springs yesterday for a late lunch or early dinner. We gathered at 2:00 pm, and visited till at least 4:00 pm, then one more person arrived, so we stayed another hour for continued great time of sharing our camp experiences, having memories together, and enjoying a great meal. The restaurant had a totem pole in our part of the restaurant, so for the group photo we all gathered around to add the totem to our group.”

“Minikani has always been a unique camp, in that most everyone starts out as a camper, then moves on to Explorers, the LT program, and on to the staff. Camp is totally a growing up period life experience. And listening to the memories, reflections, and experiences....and where people are today, Minikani had a very strong impact on each of the lives of those present, both in growing up, forming personal values, and selecting their vocations for the years ahead.”

“Now, rush out and get a 2013 calendar and save the first Saturday in March next year to get together again.”



## Chief Heineker

The following story is from 1936, when the camp was just 17 years old. The photo is a counselor with a big blanket around him, with the lake in the background.

On the following page, you can see a photo of Chief Heineker when the camp was 57 years old. Funny, the Chief never seems to age much!



Camp Minikani, in its tradition for holding nightly campfires, was unique in that the campers could expect a visit by the spirit of great Chief Heineker. This chief of ancient times, roamed the lands promoting peace, and it was known that he returned yearly to the beautiful Amy Belle lakeshores he loved so well. By the light of the fire, campers watched with anticipation for the figure of Chief Heineker, paddling alone in his canoe across the glistening lake water. As he cautiously drifted among the bulrushes, Chief Heineker searched the lakeshore for the welcoming light of the Minikani campfire. Near the shoreline and in view of his watchful audience, he raised his hand in the sign of peace to all, and then disappeared from view.



Dan Houlihan, 1976, took on the role of Chief Heineker for a MiniKamp activity. You can see the new dining hall in the background!



## Nature Notes

By Bruce

### The Turtles of Minikani

#### Painted Turtle

One of the most common turtles at camp is the Painted Turtle. It spends most of its time swimming in the water, and is usually seen in Mud Lake sunning itself on a lily pad, log, or just a floating root. You may even be able to see painted turtles in Turtle Bay at the west end of Lake Amy Belle. Being cold blooded reptiles, sitting in the sun helps them keep warm, speeds up their egg development, helps them digest food, and maintains their shells. Like humans, turtles need to



hold their breath when underwater, and then come to the surface to breathe. But turtles don't need to breathe as often as humans do. Some turtles take only one breath an hour!

#### Snapping Turtle

Snapping turtles have long tails, often measuring as long as or longer than the shell. They also have a large head, long neck, and a sharp, hooked upper jaw. They are nocturnal and spend most of the time underwater, lying on the bottom of the lake. Their dark-colored skin and moss-covered shell enables them to lie in wait and ambush their prey.



Usually docile in water, snapping turtles can be aggressive during the breeding season – anytime between March and November - when they are found traveling on land, especially near the Indian Unit. People say turtles are slow, but snapping turtles might say that humans are slow! She's probably looking for a place to lay her eggs, and it's best to just leave her alone, and she'll continue on her egg laying quest.

#### Musk or Stinkpot Turtle

The common musk turtle is one turtle you wouldn't want to anger. Like a skunk, this turtle releases a foul smell when it's disturbed. That's why it's often called a stinkpot. The stinkpot spends much of its time in the water. There it feeds on plants, carrion, snails, small fish, and insects. When



looking for food, this musk turtle often walks along the bottoms of streams or ponds instead of swimming. You can sometimes see it walking along the bottom of Amy Belle near the boating area. Stinkpots are small turtles. Few adults grow more than 6 inches long. These turtles may be tiny. But they have large heads, strong jaws, and very mean bites.

#### Euell the Tortoise

No story about the Turtles of Minikani would be complete without mentioning Euell, a red-footed gopher tortoise who spent summers at camp from the mid-70's through 1989. Many campers and staff remember him outside the Nature Lodge, grazing on grass with an occasional fruit treat.



What happened to Euell? No one knows for sure. One Saturday in July he simply disappeared, taken from his tank inside the lodge. Hopefully he went home with a camper's family, and still lives today with fond memories of all his friends at camp.

