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NEWSLETTER

3rd Annual Alumni Weekend August 27 & 28, 2011

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Thanks To: Jason Horowitz and Hogan Hayes

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Here is a tentative schedule for the weekend:

Saturday, August 27

- 11:00 am - Arrival and move in
- 12:00 - Lunch
- 1:00 - 3:00 - 1st & 2nd Skills
- 3:00 - 4:00 - 3rd Skills (Alumni Board Meeting - all are welcome)
- 4:15 - 5:15 - Social Hour for Alumni (Group games for kids)
- 5:20 - Group Picture at the Bluff
- 5:30 - 6:20 Dinner
- 6:20 - 7:05 Softball Game
- 7:15 - Camp Fire

Sunday, August 28

- 8:30 - Breakfast
- 9:30 - Password
- 9:45-12:00 - Free Time
- 12:00 - See you next year!

It's time to sign up for the 3rd annual Alumni Weekend to be held at Camp Minikani on Saturday, August 27th and Sunday, August 28th.

Signing up for the Weekend is easy. Go to the Alumni website (www.miniknaistafflodge.com) and click on "Events", or go directly to the Eventbrite website (<http://minikanialumniweekend.eventbrite.com>).

When you go to the Eventbrite website, you will see that you have many options to attend the weekend – the full weekend, single days, adult and child rates, etc. Options include all activities during that time, and meals in the dining hall. Overnight accommodations can be selected at the website as well. As before, Mike Auda is coordinating the weekend. You can contact him at michaেলাuda@gmail.com

This year's Reunion Weekend promises all the fun of previous reunions, plus more. There's plenty of things to do as a family – you'll be able to do all the activities you

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Alumni Weekend

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enjoyed as a camper and counselor. In addition, you'll be able to spend some time with other alumni just "catching up". Thanks to alumni feedback, we've planned a Social Hour, before dinner, for adults only. (The kids will be busy playing games with the LT's.) It will be a little like 'Staff Snack' at the 'Staff Lodge', without the kids. You'll have a chance to talk about your day, your camp memories, and your life since camp with other alumni, all the while munching on light appetizers and drinking bug juice. Now doesn't that bring back memories?

Also new this year are plans to get together on Friday night outside of camp. Please watch your email for more events for the weekend, including Friday night on the town with other alumni, featuring live music.

We hope to see everyone at 11:00 am on Saturday, August 27th at the new Leadership Lodge. 🏕️



Staff Training Dinner

June 15, 2011

On Wednesday of the 2011 Staff Training, a group of Alumni joined the busy staff for dinner, followed by small group discussions and Q&A sessions. Here are some of the responses from the Alumni:

- I had a great time. A nice group of kids for sure. It was really nice to see.
- It was a pleasure to rekindle the spirit of Minikani this evening. I appreciated the invite to share dinner/stories/feelings with Minikani's Summer of 2011 staff. The future campers are very fortunate indeed.
- It was fun reminiscing. My how things have changed in 30 plus years. What a great group of kids!
- Any chance I can get to get back out to mama minikani, I'll take it. It is incredible to see the campers I had when they were 8 take over the reigns and do such a great job.
- It was a great event.
- I am always amazed at the feeling I get when I step on camp property...great kids, special place. Seems like only yesterday we were there. 🏕️

Minikani Memory

By Bruce

In all my years at Camp Minikani, I never lost my enthusiasm and excitement for opening day. I remember one opening day in particular. By 2:00 p.m., the line of cars waiting to enter camp stretched way beyond the turn in the road. Each car contained at least one camper, eager and excited for the start of camp. Counselors were waiting in their cabins with just as much excitement. With the sound of the bugle, the gates opened, followed by the typical hubbub: cars, parents, campers, LT's, duffle bags, "goodbyes," and lots of dirt road dust. Soon counselors and campers got sorted into "Cabins," whose separate and diverse members would grow together over the next days with all the experiences camp had to offer.

But on this particular day, a number of campers arrived late and had to be placed in their cabin groups later than usual. At assembly time before our first evening meal, each group had quietly lined up to go into the dining hall. As Unit Director, I wanted to make sure that every kid was accounted for and every counselor had been matched up with his campers. So I shouted to the group, "Is anyone missing anybody?" After a long pause, from the back of the lines a small, tentative voice spoke what many were probably thinking: "I miss my Mommy." 🏕️

Do you have a favorite Camp Minikani memory to share for the Newsletter? Send it to BruceRass@wi.rr.com.



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.

Campership Update

Summer, 2011

Thanks to many generous members and to fundraising events such as the Winter Event and Something Nice, the Minikani Alumni Community is sponsoring 4 campers this summer – Kaila, Kieara, Mario, and Mike. Here’s a little information about the campers.

◆ Kaila is a 10 year old wonder. She is one of the most kind and thoughtful people I have ever met. She loves shopping, cooking, bike riding, painting nails, and going to the Children's Museum, the library, and sometimes even the dog park. She is often quiet, and when she does talk, it is often to express curiosity, generosity, or thankfulness. I have truly felt fortunate to know Kaila. She is a special soul.

◆ Kieara is 12 going on 16. She is kind, fun, and responsible, often handling the making of plans and the coordinations of a day. She loves to shop, laugh, eat, paint nails, and go to the movies. Kieara also likes to spend time with her friends listening to music. She someday wants to go to cosmetology school. When speaking of her last summer "going camping" (at camp) it is refreshing to hear her talk about her fond memories making friends, singing songs, and swimming.

◆ My husband and I have been mentoring Mario Hardwick (Moe) for 5 years. This will be his fourth summer at Camp Minikani. Moe will be 12 years old in July. He lives with his grandma. He has three brothers and one sister who live with his mother. He will be in 7th grade next year and was just accepted to Rufus King Middle

School. His favorite subject is reading and his least favorite is science. Moe enjoys playing basketball and baseball. He hopes that people think he has a good sense of humor. He wants to be an actor when he grows up. His favorite activity at camp is drama. One thing he has learned at camp is "be the best that you can be".

◆ Mike is 11 years old and he and my husband have been matched as his 'Big Brother' for a year and a half. Mike lives on the Northwest side of Milwaukee with his mom and 3 siblings and attends the Bethune Academy. Besides Big Brothers Big Sisters he is also involved in the Boys and Girls Club of Milwaukee, the School Drumline, and a youth football team. Mike is shy at first, but very friendly and extremely smart. His hobbies include playing football and basketball, WWE wrestling, and being an expert at various Xbox games. Brandt and I are so excited for Mike to experience Minikani for the first time. He has never done anything like this in his life and we are so excited for all of the new experiences that he will encounter through the magic of Camp. We can't wait to hear all of his stories when he returns!



Staff Appreciation Night

We all know what it's like to be on the staff at Minikani during the summer. Your days (and nights) are spent making sure the kids have a great time. You certainly don't get a chance to enjoy all the comforts of being home with your family and friends.

So in honor of all the hard working staff, the Minikani Alumni Community is sponsoring a "Staff Appreciation Night" the first week in August. Can you think of a better way to 'honor' the staff than to deliver fresh, hot pizzas for everyone? Congratulations to all of them for a job well done. All of their time, efforts, energy, and caring are greatly appreciated. And thanks to the MAC for providing pizza for over 60 people!



Nature Notes

By Bruce

Just a few hundred feet from the hustle and bustle of summer camp activities lies a jewel in Minikani's crown – Mud Lake. Bounded on two sides by hills and on the other two sides by bogs, it offers a tranquil place to observe and appreciate nature at camp. Along the edge of the lake, mature hardwood trees give way to tamarack, poison sumac, and other shrubs, which forms a 'mattress-like' mass of roots. The middle of the lake is open water, a sure sign that it is deeper than the 6 to 8 feet that water lily stems can reach.



Most people can easily identify the flower of the white water lily (*Nymphaea odorata*) along with its circular floating leaves, or pads. But look closely, and you'll see another lily, native to Wisconsin, that enjoys the same Mud Lake habitat. It is the spatterdock, (*Nuphar polysepala*), also commonly called the yellow pond lily, cow lily, or bullhead lily. The spatterdock has bright yellow, ball-like flowers that bloom from June through August. Unlike the white lily, these flowers can stand just above the water surface. Look carefully at the leaves, and you will see each leaf is sharply cleft and divided into two lobes, which gives it a 'heart' shaped appearance. The

fleshy roots, usually buried in the mud, can be up to six inches in diameter and many feet long! Spatterdock reproduces by seeds and spreads by growth of its large roots.



Both water lilies were utilized in many ways by Native Americans. Roots were used medicinally as a poultice for sores and tumors, internally for many ailments including digestive problems, and a rinse made for sores in the mouth. The leaves and flowers were used as cooling compresses. In addition, the roots were occasionally used as food and the young leaves and lower buds were eaten as a vegetable. Even the seeds were used, either ground into flour or popped like popcorn. The leaves and roots contain tannin which was put to use in dyeing and tanning.

Spatterdock is a valuable plant for fish and wildlife habitat. Its large leaves provide shade, cover from predators, and a home for many tiny invertebrates which fish use for food. The seeds are eaten by ducks and other birds, and muskrat will eat the roots. Next time you visit Mud Lake, be sure to take notice of this helpful water plant, the spatterdock.



Future Events

Alumni Weekend
August 27-28, 2011
11:00 A.M. Camp Minikani
See the article on page 1


"Staff List" Is Growing!

Our numbers are growing, but we still need you to join us on "Staff List". Here's how it works: We currently have the names of 405 people who have worked at Minikani. Their names are listed under "Staff List" on our MAC website. But only 58 have logged into the site. It's easy and free, and will only take a few minutes to do.

As you may know, anyone in the world who has access to the internet can go to our website (minikanistafflodge.com). Once there they can click on "Staff List". If they click anywhere on the next page, they'll see the list of 405 people we know have worked at Minikani. (We realize that the list is only a beginning – please contact us if you have additional names to add.)

If you click on your name and log in (with an email address and a password), you will be free to read the other 58 staff member's profiles that they wrote about themselves. These profiles can include as much or little as you like: where you live, what you do, your family, your favorite camp meal, etc.



This free service of your MAC is designed to help you stay connected with Minkani through the people you've met and the friends you've made at camp. Please take advantage of it – and tell your camp friends about it too. 

Something Nice

By Hogan Hayes

Money was collected last year to help send kids to camp. The Event was called “Something Nice”. I asked Hogan to give all of us a little background information on the event:

I got an Evite from Christine and Jeremy Welland late last year. They were celebrating their one-year anniversary and wanted to do “Something Nice.” Those are not ironic quotation marks. The name of the event was “Something Nice.”

I’m going to tap a Camp memory from 1998 to explain the depth of the “Something Nice” Christine and Jeremy were aiming for. That year, I spoke to Jeremy

about a rag challenge. We were sitting at a picnic table beside a sapling between the pool and the lower parking lot. It was important, Jeremy explained, that the challenge I undertake remain meaningful for a lifetime. The Rag would not present a set of personal challenges that I could check off of a list, but instead it would serve as a reminder that whenever I acted, I was to act with my community and the values of a ragger in mind.

So last November, I drove over the Coastal Mountains and into San Francisco because Christine and Jeremy decided to celebrate their first anniversary by holding a Campership fund raiser. It was a graceful turn: To celebrate a happiness that started at Minikani, the couple wanted to help kids get to Minikani.

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. This is also the place to go to sign up for the “Staff List” online.

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 what’s happening now at camp, check out Minikani’s blog, and enjoy a collection of Alumni Photos.

I should mention that the party itself was something nice. They held the event at The Hive, a great little gallery space in North Beach. I was greeted with a hug from Maureen Bremner. There was a crafty campfire, food, and drinks. Jeremy and Davis Taus played some closing campfire favorites. Chris O’Dell gave me an appropriately hard time for secretly moving to California. It was lovely. But what I will remember best is this: A reason to celebrate with friends became a reason to do something bigger, something generous, something nice.



The Rest of the Story...

The last issue of the Newsletter contained two pages of stories from the Camp Dinner Around the World held in March. But I've saved this one for last. It is, as you'll see, the rest of the story...

Seven Alumni from the '70s & 80's and their spouses gathered at Bruce's house in Muskego, WI, to enjoy a pot-luck dinner and share stories about camp. They enjoyed appetizers, salads, spicy meat balls, and ice cream cake as they reminisced about the good old days. "It was fun", "It was a great time", etc. were the general comments. Most of the discussion centered on memories of camp and questions about what's happened with other alumni. A few stories were told, places in clamp were mentioned, names were recalled, and vivid memories from almost 40 years ago surfaced from the depths of our minds.

Half-way through the evening there was a telephone call. Mary Miner, who suffered a near fatal bicycling accident 20 years ago, called to say "hello" to Bruce. What makes this an unusual story is that Mary lost all of her memory in the accident. Her family has told her about being at camp for over 10 years of her life, but she has no memories of camp. She now lives in Colorado at a group home for people disabled with traumatic brain injury. She has exchanged Christmas cards with Bruce, but they have never talked on the telephone.



So it was a special treat to have all of her old friends say "hello" to Mary on the phone, even though she remembered none of them. And on the other end of the line, it helped her old friends to appreciate what they still have - memories to share with each other about a place that is so important to them. Was it a coincidence that Mary Miner called on the evening of the Camp Dinner Around the World? Yes. Was it also a great reminder of how special our camp friends are to us and how lucky we are to have memories of Minikani? Most definitely. And now you know, the rest of the story.



New For Alumni: You can now order Minikani Alumni T Shirts, sweatshirts, caps, kid's clothing, mugs, and lots of other stuff from cafepress.com. Go to the MAC website for more information.



Ragger History

In 1919 the Oakland CA YMCA was holding its summer camp at Morgan Hill near San Jose, and it was decided that another step for the Rag was needed. Kenneth Lowell, a high school age leader, wrote the Brown Rag ceremony. Robert Hutchison, another alumnus of the 1914 camp, suggested the poem "Four Things a Man Must Learn to Do" as part of the ceremony. A minor point of interest is that although this step was always called the Brown Rag, the first kerchiefs used were actually olive drab. They were made of surplus handkerchief material from World War I.

"Four Things"
 Four things a man must learn to do,
 If he would make his record true:
 To think without confusion, clearly;
 To love his fellow man sincerely;
 To act from honest motives purely;
 To trust in God and Heaven
 securely.

