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# NEWSLETTER

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Thanks To: Jon Fleming McLaren, Jen Feltz, Matt Sullivan, and all the "Dinner Around the World" hosts

Bruce Rasmussen, Editor  
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## "MARC Run June 4, 2011"

*By Jon Fleming McLaren*




On Your MARC! Get set and head-on out to YMCA Camp Minikani's inaugural Minikani Adventure Race Circuit. The MARC is organized by your Minikani Alumni Community with one mission in mind: to raise money, and have fun doing it, to assist with scholarships for kids going to camp.

The MARC is a one-of-a-kind adventure race. Teams for 3 or 4 will crisscross Minikani completing various challenges - some physical, some mental - and all of them fun. There will be prizes for the family division, staff/alumni division and the most hardcore division. The

MARC will be competitive, but in a fun atmosphere. Equipment lists will be provided.

In addition to the MARC, there will be an all-terrain kids fun run held. This race is approximately 2k and will be a great way to get out and be active for the afternoon. Volunteers will be on hand to play field games with children of those parents racing in the MARC. Can't make the MARC? Join as a Virtual Racer and help make memories for the most deserving of kids.

To sign up for the MARC, get more information, or become a 'Virtual Runner', go to the following url: <http://www.eventbrite.com/event/1518340397>. 

## New Date for the Alumni Weekend

Because camp is running longer this summer, the Alumni Weekend will be held on August 27-28, 2011.

## Minikani News

By Jen Feltz, Director

Our 92nd summer is just around the corner and so far it looks AMAZING! The Ad staff and counseling staff are the cream of the crop once again and the buzz surrounding plans for 2011 is palpable! The bugle will signal opening day on Sunday, June 19 this year. We will run Session One and then take a short break and roll into the "Summer Starter"—a shortened week over the 4th July—followed by Sessions 2, 3 and 4 wrapping up on August 20.

If it's been awhile since you've been to camp—don't worry, some of the ol' camp favorites like the Runt Hunt and Kangaroo Court will make an appearance during the summer! We'll also spend some time playing newer favorites like Ga-ga ball, Carpetball and Ninja! We are looking forward to adding some new elements to the waterfront as well as some GREAT arts and crafts projects, tons of safe fun at Gun n' Run as well as lots of excitement in Adventure Challenge and Wilderness skills. The equestrian center will be busy with riding camps for day and overnight campers of all abilities and the Cross-Country course will be used by our most advanced riders. Enrollments are growing each day, but there are still plenty of spaces in

overnight camps and our last Explorer session, so send your registration in our direction!

If you are interested in being involved with camp, here are a few ways to pitch in or hang out with us this summer!

- Share the word about camp—whether in your school, church, business or neighborhood, talking about your experiences at Minikani makes an impression—we hear all the time that first time campers heard about us through word of mouth! We would be happy to come speak to a group you are affiliated with or send brochures in your direction for you to share, just let us know! We also have these spiffy new business cards (see below) that are handy to give to someone when you end up chatting about camp when you are a child's baseball game or run into someone at the mall!

- Be a Minikani Ambassador—join us for check in or out during the summer and we'll outfit you with a snazzy "Minikani Ambassador" t-shirt! Help people find their cabin, calm the nerves of first time camp parents eat free cookies ☺

- Join us for Friends of Minikani on Wednesday, July 27 or for the Staff-Alumni Dinner on Wednesday, June 15.

For information about any of these opportunities, or if you just want to chat about camp, please feel free to call me anytime—I'd love to hear from you! [jfeltz@ymcamke.org](mailto:jfeltz@ymcamke.org) or 262-251-9080.



The business card at the left is available for you to give away. Contact Jen Feltz (above) for more details!



## Minikani Summer Staff

Camp Minikani's staff members are carefully chosen for their genuine love of children, maturity and youth programming experience. Most of the Camp Minikani staff are former campers themselves, and have received three or more years of extensive hands-on training and evaluation through our nationally recognized Leadership Training programs.

Summer Camp Director - Matt Sullivan; Assistant PD - Casey Cox; Girls Unit - Kara Gritzmacher; Boys Unit - Charlie Blumberg; Explorers - Molly Knutson, Andrew Gebel, Catherine Kistler; LT Directors - Kendall Dowsett, Tom Kraemer; OLT Directors - Grace Edquist, David Ruiz; Day Camp Director -: Amanda Hendrickson, Sarah Whaley; Adventure Challenge - Nate Kohlenberg; Waterfront - Michael Luckey; Wilderness Skills - Chris Davies; Crafts: Jeremy Ledbetter; Corral - Hannah Nesvold; Mini-camp - Morgan Cox; Gun n' run - TBA 



## Hello Alumni

by Matt (Sully) Sullivan

My name is Matt Sullivan but many of you might know me as Sully. This summer I have the honor of being the Summer Camp director. I started my Minikani career when I was 12 years old and have returned every summer since. I was an LTIII in '04 and a counselor for three years, I then joined the Ad staff team in '08. Last year I was the Assistant Summer program director to Brian Siegel, and will carry the knowledge I learned from him into this summer.

In this new year-round role as summer camp director, I have been able to speak with past directors and Alumni about their styles and what Minikani was like during their glory days. It has been inspirational learning about Minikani's history and I am looking forward to reintroducing some of that history to this year's staff. I will maintain an open door policy and welcome any ideas that can benefit the well being of camp.

With the growing strength of the Alumni Community, I look forward to seeing you at many of the events and hope that everyone will get a chance to visit Minikani during the magic of summer. We will be having our third annual Alumni dinner Wednesday, June 15<sup>th</sup> during staff training. If you are able to make it to camp it is a great evening to meet the current staff and reconnect with other alumni and share Minikani's rich tradition. I am very excited for this summer and look forward to fostering the present and future generations of Minikani Alumni.



## Nature Notes

By Bruce

I'll always remember it. Early Spring, 1974. It was Sunday morning of an LT weekend, and one of our projects was to plant seedling pine trees at the far end of the old corral, next to Cabin 19 and along the lake. The spring flowers were up, but most plants hadn't started to leaf out yet, including the poison ivy. So the fact that we were planting trees in the middle of a giant poison ivy patch never occurred to anyone. By mid-day I began to itch, and by the next morning my face and hands were



covered with a burning red rash. Two trips to the doctor and a week later, I had recovered from my poison ivy nightmare.

"Leaves of three, let it be. Berries white, take flight!" If you've spent any time at all at camp, you've probably seen poison ivy growing "among the woodlands and rolling hillsides". Your best defense against the plant is to stay away from it as best you can. Not only the leaves, but the stems, roots, and berries all contain the oily substance (urushiol) that causes an allergic reaction after the first sensitizing exposure. Even last year's decaying

leaves may cause the rash, as I discovered that fateful spring.

Experts say that if you wash off the oil within 30 minutes, using cold water, you may be spared the rash. But after it soaks into your skin, washing doesn't help. If you develop the poison ivy rash like I did, the best thing to do is to seek medical attention. Some people appear to be immune to the oil, while others become immune later in life. However, you can gain or lose immunity with age, so it is best to give any poison ivy you encounter the respected distance it deserves. You'll be glad you did, believe me.



## Future Events

**MARC Run**  
**June 4, 2011**

10:00 A.M. Camp Minikani  
See the article on page 1

**Staff Training**  
**Alumni Dinner**

Wednesday, June 15, 2011  
Camp Minikani  
Come and meet the staff for Summer, 2011.

**Alumni Weekend**  
**August 27-28, 2011**

Camp Minikani  
Mark your calendar now!

## Spring Workday

April 16, 2011



These alumni braved the rain and snow on Saturday, April 16th, 2011, to help give back to Minikani. They are shown in the process of building a welcoming 'Arbor' at the sidewalk that connects the parking lot with Halquist Lodge. Volunteer Alumni-Foreman Travis King (supported by Minikani Facility Director Steve, Jerry, and the 8 alumni volunteers pictured above) helped build the 8 posts, dig 4 foot holes, and position them in cement both square and true. (Sounds kind of like a Rag ceremony.)

We enjoyed a lunch together with the Leadership (chicken patties), but the rest of the time we battled strong winds, rain and snow. We missed the rest of you at the Workday, and were only able to complete one side of the Arbor. But don't worry – your chance is coming. There will be a Fall Work Day, sometime this Fall, and you'll be able to come to camp and help with the work project(s). The date in October hasn't been determined yet – we're waiting to see when the first snow will fall at camp..... ☺



## Check Out These Websites

### [www.minikanistafflodge.com](http://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](http://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](http://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.

## New Alumni Website

The address is the same as before ([www.miniknaistafflodge.com](http://www.miniknaistafflodge.com)), but the new website is much bigger and better. One visit and you'll be sold. On the home page you'll notice a changing slide show of Minikani photos from yesteryear. You'll have a chance to click and become a member of the Minikani Alumni Community (MAC) if you haven't already. And you'll see an updated blog that will keep you informed with what's going on in the community. But that's only the home page. Use the tabs at the top of the page to connect to Events, Photos, Newsletter, Staff List, Membership, and Camp Store.

Be sure to check out the other articles in this newsletter to help you explore the new website. We hope you like it, and want to thank Perry La Roque for all the work that went into developing it.



## Annual Membership Drive

The time has finally come. The MAC is asking you to become an "Official Member" of our community. While every person who ever got a paycheck from Minikani is already considered part of our Alumni Community, we would like to ask you to go beyond that and consider making a donation to the group. With your support, we can continue to sponsor alumni events, send deserving kids to camp, give back to Minikani, and keep our website up and running. We are a 100% volunteer organization, and are now asking for your help.

The Minikani Alumni Board would like to thank you in advance for your gift. Since we are a registered 501(c)3 Non-Profit organization, you may be glad to know that all contributions are tax deductible. Please consider making a yearly gift to the MAC. You're already a member, so how about  
(Continued next page)



backing up that membership with a gift from \$1 to \$1,000? Please go to the "Membership" page of our website to see the many levels that are available to you. Then you can easily click to make your donation through PayPal, or you can send a check made out the Minikani Alumni Community, C/O Bruce Rasmussen, Treasurer, S68 W20707 Stonecrest Road, Muskego, WI 53150.



## Register for "Staff List"

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. You could even communicate with them through email, if you wanted.

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](http://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

(Continued next column)

(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](http://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.

What are you waiting for? Go to the Staff List site, register your name, and start reconnecting with your Minikani friends now.

P.S. If you are impressed with [classcreator.com](http://classcreator.com) and are thinking of actually using it for your own high school graduating class, please use this address for more information: <http://www.classcreator.com/index.cfm?M=M4087661> or the Promo Code M4087661. If you get your site set up, then [classcreator.com](http://classcreator.com) will donate \$50 to the MAC for the referral. Thanks.



Do you have a favorite Minikani memory to share for the Newsletter? Send it to [BruceRass@wi.rr.com](mailto:BruceRass@wi.rr.com).

## 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 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”

It was a simple idea that Perry La Roque had – get Minikani Alumni to share a meal together, on the same date (March 5, 2011), all around the world. Groups as small as one and as large as 16 (Chicago) met for appetizers, pizza, mac and cheese, pot-luck, grilled cheese and tomato soup, marshmallows, and, of course, bug juice of all kinds. Grace was sung, waiter bells rang out, and memories of Minikani came flooding back. There were camp songs, both the after dinner kind and the campfire kind, along with the campfires themselves. There was even horse-n-goggling, with a prize of \$25. Thanks to all those who hosted a dinner, and an extra thanks to the following Alumni who shared their dinners with the rest of us. Here are some of their stories:

**Jason Horowitz** (Madison), The Madison dinner was a wonderful event. We built a fire and shared a pot luck dinner and a few drinks. Everyone there met a least one fellow alum for the first time, and plans were made for a repeat in the future at Andy Feldman's condo. Andy attended despite an invitation to a Manitowish-affiliated dinner, which showed exceptionally good judgment on his part. We



reminisced a bit about camp memories, ate too much, and solved Wisconsin's budget crisis.

**Maria Chambers Lambing** (St. Louis) Celebrated the camp dinner last Saturday with my family, no other alum in the St. Louis area. . . but it was the first time I was able to be sung to on my birthday in Minikani fashion. I stood on a chair and was serenaded by my dad, hubby and brother ♥

**David Taus** (San Francisco) I'm sure you're responsible for the camp dinner around the world, and you should know that it was brilliant. We had a great time in the bay area: sang grace, rang waiter bells, even played 'Susie' after dinner and made Bremner kiss that bird. It stoked fires long dormant and reminded me what is important in life. So thank you for putting it together, bringing people all over the world together, allowing us to remind ourselves that we have a very big family and a mama. More than work, more than phish tour, more than the friends I have now I will always look at camp as the most central aspect of who I am and what I'm about, and even though I've been out for over 10 years and probably will never go back, that spirit is alive and well.

**Kelsey Madges** (Kettering, OH) Tonight our camp alumni community participated in a camp dinner around the world. Camp alums held dinners in cities across the United States and even internationally. We hosted the dinner in our part of the country but unfortunately weren't able to find any other camp alumni in our area. Not one to be easily discouraged I made the members of my own family participate.

We modified the idea a bit, as our time zone was supposed to begin dinner at seven. That's a little late for my kiddos so we ate a regular dinner and followed it up with a living room campfire. We turned out the lights, turned on the fireplace, and sat on the living room floor singing camp songs.



Tonight's festivities were Matt's first experience with my camp tradition. When I was working at camp there was a part of me that couldn't imagine marrying someone who wasn't also a Minikani alum. I'm sure that sounds silly, but I just couldn't imagine sharing my life with someone who didn't understand that experience. Of course this idea shifted over time and now it is enough to know that my camp experiences are large part of who I am. I do wish Matt could go back in time and see me in action at camp. Given my distaste for spiders and having dirt under my fingernails it is sometimes hard for him to imagine that I spent many weeks of the year living largely outdoors.

**Jeff Borling** (Duluth, MN) The dinner in Duluth was small and quiet. There must not be any alums this far north, so it was just me, my wife (Amanda), and our daughter (Autumn). I told Amanda all about camp and we ended up looking through old pictures all night and forgot to do any of the online interaction with the other dinner hosts. It was a deeper experience for me now, as we thought about a time not too far off when our newborn will be old enough to go away to camp. We got a jump on teaching her some of the best camp songs and my wife saw an even goofier side of me than she knew existed. We even broke out the Lucky Diop playlist on the iPod! With any luck, Amanda drank the kool-aid (or bug juice, as the case may be) and the whole family is now indoctrinated into the Minikani spirit.



**Andrew Herman** (Houston) Thank you for organizing this great event. It was an awesome idea and it sounds like it went very well. Even though Michael and I were the only ones attending our Camp dinner, it was a great time. With our busy schedules, we don't always see each during the week, so this was a great chance for us to catch up and talk about camp. We spent

several hours laughing and sharing memories about good friends, following the Facebook posts, camp in general, particular campers, and how even after all these years (and distance) camp is still a part of our lives. We even started talking about how we can get our nephew, Brendan, who turns 8 this summer, to camp the following summer. Since it was such a great experience in our lives, we felt like it was something that we wanted to share with him. Overall, it was a great chance for us to connect to our camp friends, visit old camp memories, and each other. A Saturday night well spent!

**Callie Herbst** (Milwaukee) At the Milwaukee camp dinner, we enjoyed the old favorite camp meal grilled cheese and tomato soup, while listening to "The Sweet Spot" (a recording of a Minikani campfire circa 2004). It was just nice to catch up with everyone and a good time was had by all!

**Kevin Wright** (CA) Beer by Fathead. Chili by LaForest. Kids by Cassey. Vibe by Pincus. I love camp... -Armstrong

Mike Kodner (Chicago) We led off the evening reading the letters that were sent, and followed it up with grace. The looks on the non-camp



people's faces was priceless when we sang grace. We ordered pizza, people brought apps, and we had a bunch of other random things

to eat/drink. Hyland was very active on the Facebook page which we had connected to our TV so everyone could see. We re-enacted the old "Myles hug a tree," as he attacked



our massive living room plant. We tried to get Drew Dietz to carry on the family tradition, and re-enact the Dietz talking tree, but somehow that did not occur. I added several songs to our dinner playlist including one off Myles jazz album, one off Dave Taus's band Guella's album, James' Laid from the old waterfront days, and of course Sabotage...we all know how that ended up...We watched a You Tube video of some random dude playing his rendition of the Titanic song on his ukulele, and sang our own version as we marched our way to the bar down the street.

It was a good blend of age ranges present. It's neat to see people that you used to know as campers, and how they have grown older. All in all, good times with good people. Looking forward to next year's dinner.

**Gina Matranga** (Thailand) Love from Thailand everyone! I'm 13 hours ahead of you all, so it's 11:30 pm for you now and 12:30 pm the next day for me- sending all my love and hope you all had wonderful reunions!





**Bradley Herzing** (Austin, TX)  
How many Camp Dinners have I had in my life? My first Camp Dinner is a flicker of a memory. I can try to put myself back into a fading memory of being at 9 years old, walking silently into the Dinning Hall at Camp Minikani in 1985. I remember how large the Dinning Hall ...seemed, and how small and unsure I felt. By the end of the after dinner camp songs that first night I knew I had found my second home. Eleven summers of Camp Dinners later I had my last Dinning Hall Camp Dinner in 1996 without knowing it would be the last time I'd belt out an verse of The Titanic surround by hundreds of campers and the counselors who had become a second family. By my estimate that is around 330 camp dinners between 1985-1996. Finding the camp dinners in Madison 1997 or 1998 helped keep my ties with Minikani alive at a time in my life where I could no longer go back to camp in the summers due to year round schooling. When I moved to Texas in 2001 I was 1000's miles away from most of my camp family and the years of camp dinners came to a end. The only connection I would feel at this time with Minikani would be through seeing old Minikani friends around Christmas break every other year. I'd only get brief reminders of the Minikani spirit.

I was disappointed to learn that I'd be "alone" in Austin, TX for this new Camp Dinner in 2011. There would be no alumni at my dinner to swap memories with. No camp family would be near to help spark the Minikani spirit which has forever changed me into who I am today. I would go it alone then, alone in the sense that I'd be the only person from Minikani but not alone because I'd invite friends in Austin over for a pot luck dinner to share my Minikani memories with them. (In typical Herzing fashion I completely forgot about the online chat through Facebook). It would be easy to have friends over for a camp themed dinner seeing as our house had already been nick named Camp Mandachumpo by a friend because my girlfriend and I were once summer camp counselors.

For this new Camp Dinner I rummaged through my belongings, searching for Minikani relics to help remind me of what Minikani meant and continues to mean in my life. I found my Teva Guide sandals worn by almost the entire staff one summer that I still wear to this day (15+ years later), my Rags which remind me of challenges I've let slid over the years, staff pictures, a few humors notes that include quotes from campers, my minute man medal, a large lanyard totem, expedition maps and brochures and other objects that hold emotion filled memories. I took all these items and put them out on our kitchen table in order to soak up all the camp memories so I could better share them with my girlfriend and our guests. So the night of the camp dinner we...(SKIP TO THE END)  
We had a wonderful potluck dinner with plenty of food and fun for everyone closed by hearty campfire in the backyard complete with a successful boundary breaking

session. Minikani, I swear I'll be coming home to you some day, until then I'm making everywhere more like camp!

**Stew Brown** (Colorado) Hey there! We had a great Minikani staff alumni luncheon yesterday. Only four alumni were able to attend. But four were great. Andy took some pictures, mostly of his 1 year old son who enjoyed the event. We met at Beau Jo's Pizza in Idaho Springs, the same location that Minikani Expedition groups visited returning home from their Rocky Mountain back packing trips. So, lots of memories abound in there. We made some good connections, like having a future rag rededication ceremony at the Y of the Rockies in Estes Park, where last summer I renovated an old Raggers Point for the 125 Y-USA camping celebration.



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.

