

MINIKANI

ALUMNI COMMUNITY

NEWSLETTER

January 2010
Volume 2, Issue 1

Inside this Issue

- 1 A Message From The Director
- 2 MAC Board Members
- 2 Nature Notes
- 3 Jen Feltz, Executive Director of Minikani
- 3 Check Out These Websites
- 3 Fall Workday
- 4 Stew Brown 2010 Update
- 5 I Didn't Know That
- 5 Future Events

Thanks To: Stew Brown, Jen Feltz, Perry LaRoque, and Matt Sullivan.

Bruce Rasmussen, Editor
BruceRass@wi.rr.com

A Message From The Director

I had the unique privilege of being raised alongside Minikani. In fact, my earliest memories of camp are from a high chair in the Dining Hall. Since that time, I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to attend camp and continue on to serve in various roles -- counselor, waterfront director, boy's unit director, and now, alumni director. Upon returning to camp, at first glance, it would appear so much has changed over the past several decades -- new buildings, new faces, and new programs. Anyone who has come home to visit, however, knows how much the essentials have remained the same: the feel of the water in Lake Amy Belle, the smell of Pine Forest, the kindred spirit of fellow Ragers, the feeling of being home, and the deep connections to those special places that you could never explain in words. Minikani has always been more than a camp to me. It's been a family and a way of life. I know it remains a special place for each of you.

The revival of the Minikani Alumni Community has given me a special gift that I once feared I would never get back -- being

connected to my summer homeland. The Spirit of Minikani has always lived strong in my heart, my family, and my friends. However, the opportunity to share this gift collectively through the Alumni Community has reignited an "opening campfire" in my heart. I am confident that the embers of the Minikani Spirit in each of you will be reignited, but for this to happen, it will take a commitment to open your heart to Minikani and let her back into your life. I have witnessed the impact and magic of the Minikani Spirit, and I want to help revive these feelings for all willing Alumni. We can still have Minikani in our lives. We never have to say goodbye forever. Let us light that fire once again. I'm asking you to commit to making time for you (and your family) to attend an Alumni event and share in the Spirit together. I am confident that you will leave with a smile on your face, a warm feeling in your soul, and one question on your mind: "How 'bout that fire?"

In the Spirit of Minikani,

Perry LaRoque

If you have any ideas, suggestions, or comments about the Minikani Alumni Community that you would like to share, please e-mail me at perrylaroque@hotmail.com.



MAC Board Members

Here is a list of the Minikani Alumni Community Interim Board Members and their goals for the coming year:

Director- Perry LaRoque: "To help create a strong foundation and structure for the MAC to endure and prosper for future generations. I also hope to help renew the Minikani Spirit in those that have known it before."

Assistant Director- Mike Auda: To support the board in our initiatives for the 2010 year. This includes working with each board member to assist them in their specific department. I look forward to working with Minikani Representatives to create the ultimate Alumni experience. I also look forward to planning the 2010 Alumni weekend, which will be held August 21& 22"

Secretary- Amy Owen: "To keep accurate minutes of meetings and conference calls of the group"

Treasurer- Andy Gehl: "To set up a system of financial management and accounting for the organization and to properly manage the organizations funds for its first year. This goal will involve setting up various accounts, systems, an annual budget, and an expense approval and reimbursement system for the organization."

Development- Jenny Risch: "1) To determine fundraising initiatives that will offer the most substantial impact to Minikani, 2) Work with PR and Marketing to develop materials and messaging for fundraising initiatives, 3) Establish a

group of initial key donors that are engaged in the MAC mission, 4) Design an exciting fundraising campaign that will engage both alumni and supporters in our mission, and 5) Plan and host the 2nd Annual MAC Holiday Ball."

Marketing/Public Relations- Julie Goebel: "To increase awareness and interest in the MAC. I plan to reach out and share information with people in the places they seek news. I also want to map out the ways that members will receive communications, and help long-range planning for the years ahead."



Camp Liaison- Mike Whitcomb: "To further establish our relationship with Camp's Executive Board by sharing information regarding the Minikani Alumni Community's and the Camp Board's activities, respectively. I also plan to assist the MAC by providing legal guidance as we continue to develop our organization."

Recruitment- Jason Horowitz: "To make as many Minikani alumni as possible aware of our organization and encourage all former staff members to sign up to receive updates at our website."

Service Project Coordinator- Bruce Rasmussen: "To identify possible Service Projects for the Spring & Fall Workdays that reflect the abilities and needs of our group."



Nature Notes

By Bruce

Snow, snow, snow. Did you know that most snowflakes don't look like the lacy decorations that kids cut from folded paper? They are generally bunches of perfectly symmetrical hexagon crystals stuck together. And yes, it is possible for you to see two snowflakes that look alike (if you look at enough of them), but deep down inside they are probably different.

Snowflakes are really ice crystals that are formed in the clouds. At the center of almost every snow crystal is a tiny bit of dust, which can be anything from volcanic ash to a particle from outer space. As the crystal grows around that speck, its shape is altered by humidity, temperature, and wind.

The history of a flake's fall to Earth is recorded in its intricate design. But take note - freshly fallen snow is typically 90 to 95 percent air. Try to remember that the next time you raise a shovelful of the stuff from your sidewalk or driveway.



Jen Feltz

Minikani Executive Director

Greetings from Minikani to the Alumni Community!

I hope the New Year has started off well for all of you! 2010 looks to be a very promising year at camp. I am thrilled to share with you that our summer camp enrollments are well ahead of this time last year – 200 weeks ahead to be specific! Coming out of a year where enrollments struggled, this is great news and has all of us very excited to see a bustling camp this summer.

As you make your plans for the summer, you may want to consider hosting a “Minikani Night” to help us spread the good word about camp! For more details, please feel free to contact me, but the general idea is Camp meets Tupperware party! Invite some friends, we’ll bring some great staff and help tell the story of camp! We know that 80% of our enrollments come from the referral of a friend, and what better group to do that than the people that know us best...you!

Most importantly, I hope you will stop by sometime soon! We’ll have details soon regarding our Alumni Dinner during staff training and our Spring Clean Up Weekend will coincide this year with the Spring LT Weekend April 17-18. Check out our NEW website for more details! www.minikani.org



Check Out These Websites

www.minikanistafflodge.com

This is the main site for the Minikani Alumni Community Website. 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. Other headings include Calendar, Alumni Board, Photos, and Alumni Weekend.

www.facebook.com

You can join the social networking and become a member of Facebook. Be sure to join the “Minikani Alumni Community” at this site. Your Minikani friends will grow by leaps and bounds right here.

www.minikani.org

This is the official web site of YMCA Camp Minikani, which has recently been updated. You can get information on dates for summer camp, check out Minikani’s blog, and enjoy a collection of Alumni Photos.

Fall Workday 2009

October 10, 2009, was a cold Saturday. Cold on the outside, that is. But hearts were warm as about a dozen Alumni arrived at camp for the Fall Work Day. There were 3 main projects involving cutting trees, working on boats at the lake,

and finishing the new playhouses for Early Childhood. It was a wonderful way to give back to camp. The next Alumni Workday will be on April 17, 2010. Mark your calendar now, and watch the website for more information. Everyone is welcome – the more, the merrier! 🌲



Stew Brown

A 2010 Update

Stew Brown was Minikani's Executive Director from 1975-80 & 1986-94. During these years he was responsible for many changes, but might be best remembered for creating the Adventure Challenge Course and building many of camp's informational signs. I asked Stew what he's been up to since his retirement to Colorado, and he responded with the following:

I've been asked to report on my "retired life" since I left Minikani. The bottom line is that there hasn't been time to relax on my deck to enjoy my views of Mt. Princeton, over 14,000 in elevation, just a few miles away. So, let me share some of my adventures.

◆ 14 years of adopting 14 miles of the Colorado Trail that runs 350 miles between Denver and Durango. My section is located in a remote part of Colorado, near nothing, and along the Continental Divide. Awesome scenery.

◆ Building a \$400,000 home with two other guys. Wow, did I ever learn a lot.

◆ Building about 18 decks or deck additions. They are just like camp "rafts and docks".



◆ Working with a caterer for 12 years, who is an extreme wilderness athlete and I've supporter her in various 100 mile running competitions and mountain climbs, but not doing them myself.

◆ Leadership volunteering in my own community as President (3 terms), Architectural Control Committee (6 years) and Board member (4 years).

◆ Leadership volunteering with the YMCA retired employee organization as president, Reunion chairman, and various task force groups.

◆ Serving on local Boards for or main town Performing Arts Center the 4-H Board, and decorating a 500 foot "hill" to be a Christmas Tree.

◆ Taking a tour of new YMCA's in Russia to return and help raise funds for their developmental support.

◆ Weekly summer mountain hikes and winter skiing. My longest day hike was 25 miles (up and down) and most challenging ski day was 44,000 vertical feet of downhill skiing.

◆ I accompanied a local woman who was running for U.S. President. We toured state conventions of the party so she could make a speech, participate in forums and debates, and get to know party members. It was a neat experience.

◆ And of course, my model outdoor railroad that runs outside around three sides of my house and attracts families each weekend to see and run some of the engines.

◆ And volunteering for 14 years at our local Chamber and Tourist Center to help people enjoy the 80% of our county that is National Forest.

◆ And let's include snow plowing, with 98 clients, in my neighborhood; fortunately they aren't all here at the same time.

◆ And driving for our County Veterans office, taking local vets to the Denver VA hospital.

◆ And finding time to visit with Troy Lange, in Glenwood Springs, CO, and welcoming Brett Hayden to our county as CEO of our County Boys and Girls Club. And there's Andy Matranga who works for Backpacker Magazine in Denver, and is hiking and mapping the Continental Divide Trail. Maybe we'll cross paths one of these days.

◆ One of my favorite assignments is trying to keep up with my three sons, Mike, Eric, and Shawn, and all the grand kids of which there are eight, three of Mike's attending Minikani for a few years.

In 2000 I managed to survive two heart attacks, then a triple by-pass surgery, and felt that God continued to have a purpose for me of service to others. Thus my activities and volunteerism are a result of being repaired and being allowed to continue a life of service to others.

You can contact Stew at :

stewspot@chaffee.net





Holiday Ball

A Great Success

Minikani Alumni of all ages attended the 1st Annual Holiday Ball on December 26, 2009. The location (Charles Allis Art Museum) was brilliant, the music (provided by Myles Hayes Jazz Quintet) was fantastic, The decorations were impressive, the food and beverages were outstanding, and the company was wonderful.

Actually, there aren't enough words in my Thesaurus to fully describe the Ball. Special thanks to Camp Minikani, Shully Catering, Owen Family Printing, Myles Hayes, and everyone who participated in the Silent Auction. And a special "Thanks" to Jenny Risch, who organized everything. Final numbers and amounts of money raised for scholarships will be available soon on the website.



I Didn't Know That...

"In 1942 the seedlings of Pine Forest were planted by Howard Kustermann and his staff. Prior to this, the area was a field, as it had not recovered from the farming in the early 1900's. These pine trees grew into a beautiful patch of forest, underneath whose limbs campers race during capture the flag games and accept challenges for personal growth during the Bear Claw ceremony. The forest is one of camp's greatest assets."

From Camp Minikani Growing and Changing: the First 75 Years by John Bolger.



RAGGERS' CREED

I would be true,
for there are those who trust me;

I would be pure,
for there are those who care;

I would be strong,
for there is much to suffer;

I would be brave,
for there is much to dare;

I would be friend to all,
the foe, the friendless;

I would be giving,
and forget the gift;

I would be humble,
for I know my weakness;

I would look up,
and laugh and love and lift.

Future Events

Spring Work Day

Saturday, April 17, 2010

Camp Minikani

Bring the whole family to camp for this bi-annual Work Day. This day coincides with the LT Weekend.

Staff Training Alumni Dinner

Come and meet the staff for Summer, 2010. Date and time to be announced later.

Alumni Weekend

August 21-22, 2010

Camp Minikani

Mark your calendar now!



Where O Where is Susie?

Have you had a chance to check out the MAC website for the list of "missing" alumni? They are listed by decades (70's, 80's, etc), and it sure would be great to have them register at the website. At the very least, they will be able to receive the next edition of the Newsletter! If you are in contact with any of them, please give them a call or send them an email, and ask them to register at www.minikanistafflodge.com.

