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# NEWSLETTER

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Thanks To: Jen Feltz, Matt Sullivan  
Lindsay Foster, Hillary Lobenstein  
& Drew Maxwell

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## Winter Holiday “Monte Carlo Madness II”

*Saturday, December 22, 2012*

The MAC is very pleased to announce its 5<sup>th</sup> annual Holiday Fundraiser Event to be held on Saturday, December 22, 2012. Once again the Potawatomi Casino in Milwaukee will be the place for friends, food, fun, and fundraising!

As you probably already know, all the proceeds will go help us send kids to camp next summer. “Monte Carlo Madness II” will have something for everyone, and that’s why we are inviting all alumni, their families, and all of their friends to join us on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

We have reserved a new room at the casino for our event. The “Tribal Room” offers a view of downtown Milwaukee (with its floor-to-ceiling windows) and a cozy fireplace. You’ll find it is the perfect venue for our alumni and their adult friends. (Guests must be 18 years old to enter the Bingo Hall, and 21 to enter the gambling floor.)

Here’s what you can expect on the evening of December 22nd: delicious tasting *hors d'oeuvres* and snacks, a private bar, a Silent Auction and a 50/50 raffle. The casino will provide free covered parking, holiday decorations, free shuttle service to downtown hotels, and over 3,100 slot machines and various table games of chance.

We are asking for an ‘Early Bird’ donation of \$25. In the same spirit, Potawatomi will give each of us a \$10 “free play” certificate to use in their casino. Who knows, you might get lucky. Registration and more information is now available at <http://macholidayfundraiser.eventbrite.com>

One more thing – we will be looking for contributions for the Silent Auction. Please consider making a donation. As a non-profit organization, all donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by the IRS.





## “Minikani 100” Project

by Jen Feltz

Greetings Minikani Alumni!

I hope that you have all enjoyed a wonderful Autumn! Camp was absolutely beautiful this year as the leaves changed! Thanks to the Minikani Alumni Community Board for the opportunity to share some updates and plans with you.

First of all, a HUGE thank you to everyone who has supported the MAC and its endeavors to share the camp experience with more kids this summer! Through your generosity, 5 amazing young people: Mario, Jason, Xavier, Michael and Tania were given a precious gift, the opportunity to experience and embrace the Spirit of Minikani. Special thanks to the alumni who recruited and, in many cases, personally brought the campers to camp this summer!

Secondly, many of you may have heard through the grapevine about some preliminary work being done on the “Minikani 100” project. The Minikani 100 project is a Master Site Plan that 1) supports our primary program goal of offering an outstanding overnight summer camp program and 2) meets the facility needs required to reach that goal.

We hope that this vision will come to life and be fully funded by the time we celebrate our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019. The projects encompassed in the plan include:

- Significant renovation of the current Dining Hall and Swimming Pool to meet our current camper capacity needs and create an aesthetically authentic camp space.
- Completion of the Halquist Family Lodge East Wing.
- Address downtown camp (b-ball court area) and upper parking lot to determine options for more natural gathering spaces.
- Renovation of Indian, Pioneer and Explorer Hill KYBO’s (bath houses) including addition of boys facilities on the Hill.
- Chapel and Waterfront Reinvigoration Plan including removal of current stone at chapel and landscape improvements. (This project has been identified as a funding priority by the MAC board—we are thrilled by the support!)
- Expansion of the Equestrian Center to accommodate therapeutic riding programs including Wounded Warriors and Equine Therapy.
- Relocation of maintenance shop to west side of camp near Amy Belle Lane.
- Significant growth in endowment to provide for the future of Minikani.

The Minikani Board and staff are looking forward to putting together very specific plans around each of these projects in 2013. We would **LOVE** to hear from alumni so that we can put your feedback alongside the comments and concerns of our current staff, campers and families and create a product everyone is proud of!

If you have questions, comments or concerns that you would like to share, or if you think we’ve missed something on the project list, please contact me directly at 262-251-9080 or [jfeltz@ymcamke.org](mailto:jfeltz@ymcamke.org). I’d love to hear from you!

In the Spirit,

Jen Feltz  
Executive Director



## Future Events

**Winter Holiday Event –  
“Monte Carlo Madness II”  
Saturday, Dec. 22, 2012**

Potawatomi Casino  
See the article on page 1

**Dinner Around the World  
Saturday, March 2, 2013**

Various Locations around the world!

**MAC Alumni Weekend  
August, 2013**

YMCA Camp Minikani



## Campership Report

Note: The following article was written by Lindsay (Quilling) Foster who has sponsored a camper at Minikani the past two summers. Remember: You, too, can become a Campership sponsor.

My husband, Brandt, is a Big Brother to an amazing 12 year old boy, Mike. They have been matched for 2.5 years and have shared some really great experiences, but nothing can compare to the two weeks that Mike has been able to spend at Camp Minikani over the past two summers. Brandt has always known that Camp holds a very special and sacred place within my heart. However, not being an alumnus, he had never been able to fully appreciate how much Camp really does mean to all of us. It has only been through giving another child the opportunity of Camp that both of us have been able to fully appreciate together the multiple ways that Camp touches lives each and every day.

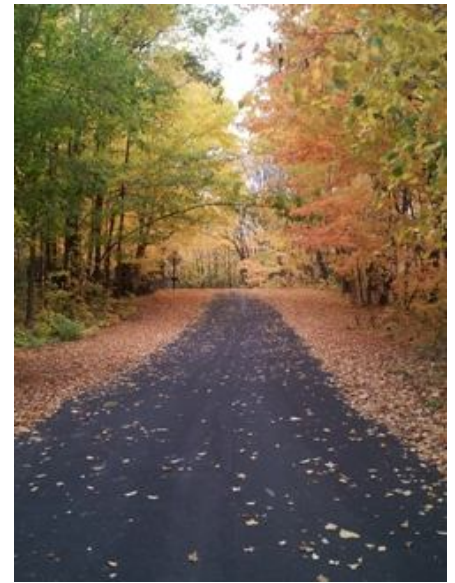
Mike would never have the opportunity to go to Camp if it weren't for the MAC scholarship. Both summers, he has received a week long scholarship from the MAC. Brandt and I paid the small registration fee and set him up with a small account at the camp store. (Minikani sweatbands are his favorite way to keep the spirit throughout the year.) The first summer I thought we may have made a mistake when we dropped him off at Camp - due to the look of complete terror on his face as we left the cabin. However, my fears

evaporated the minute we received his cabin photo in an e-mail the next day with Mike proudly wearing my 90's Camp Minikani baseball hat next to his new friends. When Nina Shully and I picked him up the following Saturday, I have never heard Mike talk so much or so fast about skills, his camp out, BU day, etc. He is a very shy kid, and Camp certainly brought him out of his shell.

This year, it was incredibly rewarding to see Mike walking through Norris Field on Opening Day with so much more confidence as he went to meet his new cabin. I've never been more proud than I was when we picked Mike up and he and his camp friends were having a full-out dance party while wearing their brand new blue rags. Mike's first question to me was, "Do you have all of your rags, Linds?" It's really incredible to now share the bond of Camp with a kid who is so deserving of these experiences.



Each year, Mike has asked if he can go back for two weeks next year. It is so rewarding to see him take new skills, meet new friends and experience so many "firsts" that he would never otherwise experience, including climbing the wall and riding horses. Mike has benefited so much from the brotherhood of the BU, which has given him such a confidence boost during this critical age. We are so grateful to the MAC for giving him the gift of Camp Minikani!



All Roads lead to Minikani

## Minikani Museum

The Minikani Alumni Board is planning to open the Minikani Museum on the grounds of Camp Minikani. We are in need of incredible camp memorabilia, t-shirts, relics, paddles, and items from your Minikani years. I opened up my desk and found my Minikani Explorer Card, a staff mug from 1994, a Minikani patch, and some "old school" Minikani webbing for a belt. One alumni board member has a Minikani beanie hat from 1928 from her father's years at camp!

We are excited to open up the Minikani Museum as part of the 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary (in 2014) and 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary (in 2019). If you have items or questions, please contact me—Hillary Phelps Lobenstein—at [hillary.lobenstein@gmail.com](mailto:hillary.lobenstein@gmail.com) or 920-285-0452. You can also send your items to Hillary Phelps Lobenstein, 1169 Gas Light Drive, Sun Prairie, WI, 53590.





# SpotLight

## On Alumni

**Atomic Fist Punch** is an on-going, work-in-progress, all-ages (5 and up) comic book/graphic novel created by Drew Maxwell. It is free to read online (or iPad & iPhone). Its Logline is: A brother and sister team are the only ones clever enough to rescue their kidnapped, zany scientist father from evil robots bent on conquering the world!

Drew Maxwell was at Minikani from the early 80's through 1995. I recently interviewed him about his camp experiences and what he's doing now.

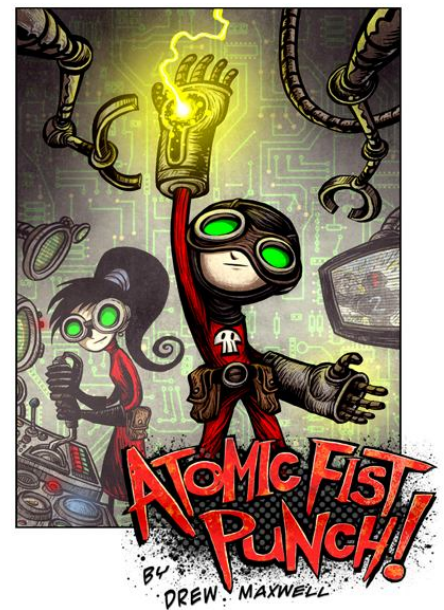
◆ “From day one at Minikani I was hooked! I loved everything about it. I really disliked school and would stare at the calendar wishing for summer and camp to come around faster. After the LT program I became a counselor in the Boys Unit for many summers. **This was the best job I will ever have in my life!** There is nothing like a bunch of zany eight-year-old kids that are ready for any kind of adventure you can throw at them! It was so much fun. I was an Explorer counselor a bit and that was fun - but I really liked the younger kids more. They didn't care about being cool or what the girls would think of them. They just lived in the moment and everything was **'AWESOME!'**. After that, I was the Crafts Director and ran the Mini-Camp program as well. I ended my run at camp in 1995 as the LT Director and really enjoyed that position. That was a great bookend for my time at Minikani.”

◆ Any particularly ‘fond’ memories of camp? ---- “There are so many wonderful times that I have a hard time singling out any one thing. I would say that I am most fond of the little moments between the fantastic friends I made through camp. It was the shared experiences that we all had that only happen at camp. My first rag ceremony when I took off the blindfold and my eyes were adjusting to the glowing candles - was like nothing else. One of the best days I've ever had was my first Commando Day, an all-camp water balloon war when I was a camper - we dominated all three flags! The pranks. The MF nights out. The vespers. The days off spent all together having a blast! The quiet moments spent in the woods at night under the stars. It was magical.”

◆ How did you make the transition from camp to the “real” world? ---- “I'm not sure that I have entered the ‘real’ world. I refuse to. I did leave camp with the love of my life, Amy Dowd. Soon after leaving camp, we got married and started a family. We have two wonderful kids, Zoe and Xander and I really could not ask for anything more. In so many ways camp has been a huge part of our lives. We have that shared experience that means so much. We took camp with us!”

◆ What are you doing now? ---- “I am a professional visual artist above all else. Amy and I own a film production company and that keeps us crazy busy as well. I recently decided I wanted to dive in to making graphic novels / comic books. I always loved comic books growing up and with Amy's encouragement, I knew it was time to create my own projects. This past summer I launched an all-ages, on-going, webcomic called: Atomic

Fist Punch! The comic is free to read and is updated every week with new pages and extra content such as fan art, games and activities etc. If you go online you can read it on your computer, phone or iPad etc. An iPad game based on the comic is currently in development as well as an animated production. The kid-friendly story revolves around a brother and sister team (based on our kids) that are the only ones clever enough to rescue their kidnapped, zany scientist father from evil robots bent on conquering the world! It is so much fun to make and the response has been humbling. I'm getting some adorable fan art from kids that I put up on the website. I love this project!”



◆ Do you think camp has had any influence in your present success? -- -- “Absolutely! Camp instilled a take charge, sleep when it's done, work ethic in me that I have taken into my professional life. Amy and I share this drive, so we make a great partnership but we don't sleep much! I also constantly look to see how I can improve what I am working on. This reassessing comes from camp.”

*Continued on next page*

*Spotlight: Drew Maxwell*

◆ What does Camp Minikani mean to you? ---- “Minikani is a huge part of my life and some of the best times of my youth. It was an experience I relish and always take with me in everything I do. I would not be the person I am today if it were not for camp. I would not be the father or husband I hope that I am if it were not for the principals I developed through camp. I feel so privileged to have Minikani in me.”

◆ Do you have anything else you’d like to share with other Minikani alumni? ---- “Don’t grow up! Stay full of wonder and be like an eight-year-old camper! Live in the moment. Ready for any adventure!”



[www.AtomicFistPunch.com](http://www.AtomicFistPunch.com)



Do you have someone you would like to recommend for the “Spotlight on Alumni”? Send your suggestions to [brucerass@wi.rr.com](mailto:brucerass@wi.rr.com)

## Alumni Dinner “Around the World”

March 2, 2013. That’s the date for the next “Alumni Dinner Around the World”. On this date we hope all alumni will seek out other alumni in their area. It’s a time to get together, share, and reminisce about our dear ‘ole camp. You might get together for dinner, pizza, or just coffee. Please start thinking about how you can be part of the celebration.



## Nature Notes

*By Bruce*

This summer one of my subdivision neighbors had a service come out and cut down all the trees in his yard. Actually, all but one. Without the seven mature trees framing the yard, the house now looks strangely out of place. I don’t know the neighbor well enough to ask him “Why?”, but it got me to thinking about trees. And I thought - What would Minikani be like without any trees? No shade from the hot summer sun, no wood for the endless campfires, no beautiful autumn colors to enjoy in the fall. Not to mention what would happen to the micro-environment at camp without the food source and oxygen that trees provide for myriads of organisms.

Do I have a favorite tree at camp? Which one would I miss the most? To choose one tree would be like Sophie choosing between her son and daughter. Because, you see, I do have favorite **trees** at camp – lots of them. Following is a list of some of my favorites, along with my

reasons. See if you can add to my list... (Which, by the way, is listed in random order – don’t make me choose!)

1) The big Maple tree on top of Indian Hill. On nature hikes I would use this tree to explain that a tree’s roots extend down and out almost as far as the branches you see above ground. Many times I sat at its base waiting for Rag Ceremonies, eager with anticipation.

2) Any tree in Pine Forest. I remember the smell of pine, the memories of countless Bear Claw Ceremonies, finding mouse bones in the needle rich floor, and the endless games of Capture the Flag.

3) The last Apple tree survivor next to Fireside Lodge. It was part of the orchard planted by the original farm family that lived there before 1919. I’ll never forget the horror that everyone felt one afternoon when the other apple trees around it were cut down by the Camp Director to provide a better view of the lake.

4) The large Basswood tree just next to the buddy board on the waterfront that perfumed the air with its blossoms every June – a sure sign that camp had begun for the season.



5) The Spring LT weekend when we planted Pine tree seedlings along the old corral that are now a good 40 feet tall. It’s nice to know that something you did at camp lives on.



6) The “Story Tree” Maple next to Fireside that was the meeting place for hundreds of Mini-Campers. Now it’s gone, but the memories last. I still remember reading George and Martha stories there as kids finished their lunches.

7) The large dead Elm tree that stood on the hill between Explorer and Indian Hills. Many times I walked past it during moon-lit walks and thought of spooky things!

8) All the memorial trees planted around camp – from donations, celebrations, honorariums, memorials, weddings, etc.

9) The trees on the North side of Pine Forest that held up the Tree House built by Stew Brown – mostly single handed!

10) The Beech trees growing behind Cabin 13 and up towards Explorer Hill. In nature classes we called this the “Gremlin Grounds”. Sometimes a curious flying squirrel would poke its head out from one of the holes in the smooth trunk in response to us knocking on the tree.

11) The Osage Orange tree that dropped hundreds of smelly green fruits every couple of years on the hiking trail near Sleepy Hollow. I’ll never forget that smell!

12) The Butternut tree that grew in the middle of the Upper Parking Lot with its 7 sturdy trunks. “If your parents hadn’t arrived by 10:00 on closing day, carry your stuff up to the tree and wait for them there.”

You know, I could actually go on and on – but I’ll stop here. Have I forgotten one of your favorite trees? Let me know at [brucerass@wi.rr.com](mailto:brucerass@wi.rr.com).



## What’s New At Camp?

Summer Camp Director Matt (Sully) Sullivan sent us the following photos of new things around camp:



Ethel’s General Store has a new year-round sign on Coffman Lodge. It’s a favorite place for campers to ‘go shopping’ after dinner.



Norris field has a new Score Board, compliments of a service-day project by the Brady Corporation. Now if the staff could just get a decent pitcher....



Minikani received a grant from the NRA this summer and used part of the money to remodel the air rifle range. The rest of the money was used to buy 6 new .22 rifles for next summer’s use.



## New White Raggers

7 staff members accepted the challenge of the white Rag this summer. Congratulations and Best Wishes to them all!



Finally, if you haven’t watched Will Reiland’s video “The Camp Minikani Experience” you’re in for a real treat. Here’s the link: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-jz6Lr\\_OYc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-jz6Lr_OYc)

