

Summer 2013  
Volume 5, Issue 3

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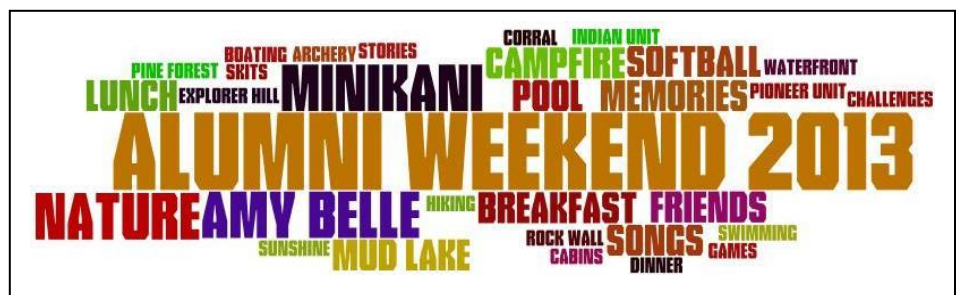
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Thanks To: Mike Auda, Hillary Lobenstein, Myles Hayes, Emily Tremel and Matt Sullivan

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# NEWSLETTER



The much-anticipated Alumni Weekend 2013 at Camp Minikani is almost here! August 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> will be your opportunity to once again "Come Home to Minikani".

This awesome Alumni event is only held every other year - so you won't want to miss out this year, or you'll have to wait until 2015! Family, friends and significant others are more than welcome to join us at Minikani. We have plenty of fun activities planned again this year. Lake Amy Belle and the pool will be available for all your waterfront enjoyment, the rock wall will be ready to be rocked, and every other skill that you did 'back in the day' will be available. Camp fires, camp songs and a softball game are just some of the activities planned for the evening. There are no extra fees - All meals and activities are included with the registration price.

Alumni can choose to come for the day on Saturday or stay for the whole weekend through Sunday. Accommodations will be made for you to stay in the Minikani cabin of your choice! Whatever your plans, we promise you'll have a great time at our summer homeland!

Prices for this year's Weekend are a real bargain. Registration for the weekend is available through our website. "Early Bird" prices are available now through July 31<sup>st</sup>, when prices go up by \$5.

Check-in time for the weekend is 11:00 a.m. at the new Leadership Lodge on August 24th. Should you have any questions about the weekend please contact Michael Auda at [michaেলাuda@gmail.com](mailto:michaেলাuda@gmail.com). We hope to see you there!



## Minikani Museum

*By Hillary Lobenstein*

To All Former LTs, Boys Unit,  
Girls Unit, Explorers, Expeditioners:  
**We Need Your Stuff!**

The Minikani Museum needs your help! We would like to open the Minikani Museum this fall in Log Roller's Den inside of Fireside Lodge. In a few years, the Minikani Museum will be relocated to the new dining hall as part of the entrance. Personally, I love looking at the old staff pictures; the Minikani Museum will be added to that area in the new dining hall.

No one seems to remember where the idea for the Minikani Museum first came from. Perhaps it was Perry LaRoque. We do know that campers and staff have been collecting memorabilia for as long as there has been a camp, and now it is time to start getting it together and sharing it with others.

We are in need of your Minikani memorabilia. Maybe you have tossed out all of your Minikani LT and staff t-shirts years ago, but you may have some small items tucked away at your family's home. Here are a few ideas of items you could donate: clothing--camper, LT, and staff shirts, photographs, copies of written vespers, knife cards, Explorer cards, nature key chains,



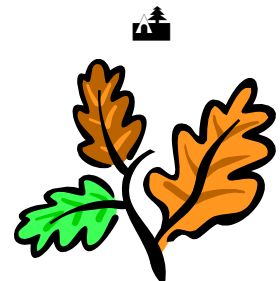
World Service picture, staff pictures, songbook, drinking cup from the Peshtigo, LT candles, mugs, coffee cups, mix tapes, Explorer items, Expedition items, belt webbing, tie dye t-shirts from the craft porch, boxer shorts, pajamas, jackets, sweatshirts, brochures, stuffed animals, patches, books, poems, writings, songs, and reflections. I might still be able to find my high school essay entitled, "What I learned as an LT at Camp Minikani."

We have a number of great LT and staff t-shirts donated by Bruce Rasmussen and Andy Mendelson. But, we need a lot more to open the museum!

It is important to have a sense of Minikani history located at camp.

Even as a camper, I loved looking at the old pictures and brochures located near the staff pictures in the dining hall. Current campers and staff will get a sense of history from the Minikani Museum.

What can you do? Register for the Minikani Alumni Weekend on August 24th and 25th and bring your items to donate to the Minikani Museum. If you are unable to make it to the weekend, please contact me at [Hillary.lobenstein@gmail.com](mailto:Hillary.lobenstein@gmail.com)



(Editor's Note: The article below is about one of the campers that the Alumni Community sponsored at Minikani this summer. Thanks to your efforts and generosity this year, we were able to sponsor a total of **seven** campers!)

## Thank You MAC

By Emily Tremel

Hello Minikani Alumni!

I am writing to thank you for helping send Jason to camp! He had such a spectacular time! I cannot thank you enough! Camp was such a great place for Jason to go to escape everyday life and really enjoy himself. Jason has wonderful supporting parents that want the best for him but are divorced so Jason does not see his Dad as much as he would like. When I called Jason's mom to tell her he was going to get to go back to Minikani she said, "This is the greatest news ever! I have been trying to figure out how to get him back there but I just can't afford it but saw how much he grew last year!"



Jason was born premature and is very small for his age. It is a constant struggle for him to fit in at school, make friends, and keep up with his peers. At school Jason was part of a mentorship program and just loved to meet with his high school buddy once a month! Jason would look forward to this day for the whole month and it would motivate him throughout the day.

I immediately knew Jason would love to have a role model, specifically a Minikani Counselor. When I came to the closing campfire Jason and his counselor Joe Harris greeted me. Jason told me it was the best week of his life, just like last year! I had numerous staff members come up to me telling me that Jason had a great week and was so happy to be at camp! Joe, his



current counselor shared with me that his favorite part of the week was getting his blue rag and that he hopes he can come back to camp next year to get his silver rag! I think that Jason embodies what we love in a camper and truly soaked up the Minikani Spirit!



## Staff Training

A dozen alumni joined the Summer 2013 staff at Minikani for an evening of Staff Training in June – and what a wonderful opportunity it was. After a meal of fried chicken (yum), we split up into 6 discussion groups to share experiences and answer questions from the staff. They wondered about 'special days' we had and if there were radios at camp back then.



## Vision & Values

Here's a project that may seem simple at the start, but involved many hours of individual and group work that lead to its final completion. Beginning last year, the staff at camp set out to establish a Mission Statement for everyone at Minikani. Throughout the fall and winter input was solicited from everyone, and early this summer the list of Vision and Value statements was completed. Hopefully these statements will help staff members set and reach their personal goals, and help everyone remember why they are at Minikani.

### Our Values

- ◆ Be an inclusive community
- ◆ Celebrate creativity and diversity
- ◆ Strengthen a connection with nature
- ◆ Cultivate growth, welcome change
- ◆ Pass the torch of tradition with humility
- ◆ Live with passion and integrity

### Our Vision

We are a family – a family of supportive, creative individuals embracing diversity and providing the tools to navigate growth. Through an emphasis on self-awareness, the Spirit of Minikani inspires people to be their best selves and a positive influence within their





# SpotLight

## On Alumni

### Myles Hayes

#### ◆ What is your history at camp?

I was an 8 year old camper in 1986. I returned every summer through second Explorer year and 3 LT years, working as an LT 3 at the old ½ Rafter Corral in 1995. In 1997 I was a Boys Unit counselor and worked as Nature Staff for skills, and in 1998 I was an Explorer counselor for one session and led a great staff as Wilderness Survival Director (formerly known as Camp Crafts). Finally in 1999 and 2000, I returned as an Expeditions counselor, where I lead teenagers on white water canoeing and rafting, rock climbing, mountain biking and backpacking expeditions to many places up north and incredible places like Isle Royale, Grand Tetons, Yellowstone, and Wind River Mountains Wilderness Area.

◆ Any particularly ‘fond’ memories of camp? My times at Camp Minikani hold some of the fondest memories of my childhood and young adult life. The memory of taking the turn at the orchard and then the car speeding over the rolling hills on the final stretch toward Camp still gives me butterflies. The excitement to attend was overwhelming, and the fond memories are endless. I’ve included a partial list of my memories on the next page. Of all of these, the fact that I attended with my brothers, Hogan and Drew, and that we were able to share our memories obviously drew us closer, and that may have meant the most.

◆ Any particularly ‘unpleasant’ memories of camp? The only unpleasant memory I experienced was the tough, real-life feeling of rejection when I was not asked back to be a counselor after my summer as an LT3. I know hundreds, no thousands, of other LT's have experienced the difficult reality of not returning 'home'. In retrospect, I have learned that in the end this real life experience can work to one's advantage. I learned to draw self-confidence from within in such moments, which is maybe what I was meant to learn that summer. As my childhood buddies were called back by the bugle, I worked as a sauté chef at my Mom's restaurant, The Farmstead in Cedarburg. I spent time with her instead of my brothers and friends at Camp. It was there I listened to her music day after day after day...Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Nat King Cole, and Bobby Darren. It was there I learned the lyrics of the American Songbook, while busing or cutting vegetables or washing dishes.

It was during that summer that I began to find what I am meant to do in life.



I returned to camp the following summer as a counselor because of a

switch in staff mid-session. Eventually the 'first years' I joined, who were one year my junior, became an incredibly important part of my Camp Family. They are some of my best friends to this day. And the fond memories continue...

#### ◆ Were there any special skills you learned while at camp?

Every skill I signed up for as a kid I learned something new that I would later be able to use or relate to - collecting tinder for a one-match fire, turning a canoe, popping your ears while skin-diving to dive deeper, saddling a horse, shooting a bow and arrow, climbing a rock-wall. But it was also the every-day skills I learned that would prove so important....Being on time for lining-up, table manners at meals (I still use Horse-n-goggle), white-glove cabin clean-up, listening attentively to others at vesper. It was those day-to-day things at camp that taught me the disciplines to be a balanced person in my daily life.

But I think it's the personal skills that I learned, both from camp peers and in the Ragger's Program that may have had the largest impact on my life. How I interact with everyone around me, and how I strive everyday to live by the creeds and morals taught by not only the program, but by the mentors who lived by them...our counselors...has had an incredible impact in all I do, and who I am today.

◆ How did you make the transition from camp to the “real” world? Transitions are always difficult - going from what you know, supported by those you know and love, to all things new. However the strength in character I gained

*Continued on next page*

*Spotlight: Myles Hayes*

from Minikani and the incredible skill set I learned made it that much easier. Its fun when I realize I am using a skill I learned at Camp in my job or home. I can't use an "I need" statement with my wife - she knows about that one. But the way I interact with care and compassion and confidence stems from the best things I learned at Camp.

◆ **What are you doing now?**

I am proudly pursuing a career as a professional jazz vocalist in Chicago. Alums can visit me at [www.myleshayes.com](http://www.myleshayes.com) to see where I've been and where I'll be for them to catch a show. The beautiful songs and comedic antics performed every summer at Council Bluff instilled in me a love to make people happy for a moment at a time. For that I am eternally thankful to Minikani.

◆ **Do you think camp has had any influence in your present success?**

100%. Minikani helped to make me who I am today. How I interact with people, the daily discipline I try to attain to hone my skills, and the heart I pour into my art...my years at Minikani helped foster all of these.

After every show I perform, as I pack up my gear, I silently sing the lyrics to "Taps". On many occasions my musicians have asked, "What are you singing?" I say "Taps". They always respond, "I didn't know there were lyrics to 'Taps'." To this day, I don't know if there truly are. At this moment as I write this, I could Google it and find out. I've decided not to. I've decided that at the end of every show I perform, I instead will be transported back to Council Bluff, back to a closing campfire, and back to The Hills, The Lake, The Sky.



### Some of Myles Memories of Minikani

- Boys Unit Counselors' morning race to the showers at the morning bugle
- Getting your first Barlow or Kamp King
- The nature lodge snake, toad and turtle pits
- The Ol' Tree House
- Guest appearances by Unit Directors for vespers
- Tip, tip, bow, grip, curve, recurve, shelf, hey!
- Feeding the constrictor while having a ring of kids chant, "Two men enter, one man leaves!"
- Taps
- Singing all ten verses of "Kumbaya" at Bear Claw ceremonies
- Wilderness Survival's Mud Lake swims...and that methane smell with them
- Rain on the cabin roof during rest-period afternoon thunderstorms
- Mud-sliding in Norris Field
- Waking up after rest period and putting on hard shoes for an afternoon of Pine Forest capture the flag
- First period skin diving...on the cold days
- Ethel's cinnamon toast or grilled cheese and tomato soup
- Teaching campers the skills of roasting the perfect marshmallow
- Writing camper reports till late in the kybo
- As a camper, reading your camper report with your parents on the ride home from camp
- As a camper, going to McDonalds on the ride home from camp
- Apple cider from the orchard
- The smell of the woods in camp after a long rain
- "Give a Yell! Give a Yell!..."
- One-match fires
- "Hands are up, guys."
- Every morning, my explorer counselor Greg Branch singing "Someone pooped in my mouth last night, someone pooped in my mouth."...then getting to sing the same song to my campers
- "Why am I a whipper-will, whipper-will, whipper-will..."
- The smell of smoke from any camp fire
- Acre's Edge
- Telling kids on the first day of corral, "You know a horse poops an average of 8 times a day."
- Boys-unit counselor's after-lunch poop time
- Choco-tacos
- "Ready to rock." "Rock on"
- Playing Frisbee 500 after cabin orientation and shouting out non-sense points like "This one's worth the square-root of 7008!" or "Pi!"
- Tamarack Trail sunsets on the way home to cabins 18 and 19
- At midnight, walking by moonlight on the way back from the staff lodge to the O.D. table, sharing deep, true discussions with counselors who would later become life-long friends
- The quiet, meditative hike back from receiving, or giving, a Rag
- In late January, taking out bug-spray and sun-screen just to enjoy the smells of camp, one more time

## Nature Notes

By Bruce

Water – Camp’s most valuable resource?

We live on a ‘water-based’ planet where all living things need water, but in varying amounts. Chemically water is a very simple molecule, composed of two atoms of Hydrogen and one atom of Oxygen. Add an atom of Carbon, and you’ve got the basis for all carbohydrates. Add another atom of Nitrogen, and you’ve got the basis for all proteins. Yet because the earth is a closed biosystem, the overall amount of water on our planet has remained the same for two billion years!

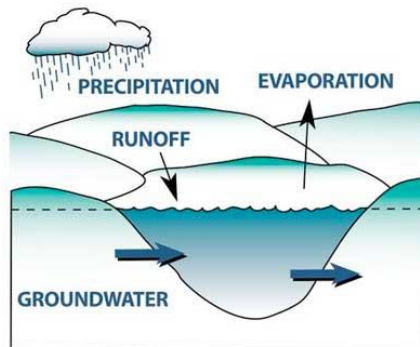
We can divide the water on earth into two kinds – fresh water and salt water. While the latter is necessary to sustain marine life, only freshwater can sustain plant and animal life on land. Did you know that over 90% of the world’s supply of fresh water is frozen right now in Antarctica? Only a small amount of the total water on earth is fresh water that is available for us to use. If you used a gallon jug to represent



all the water in the world, the amount of fresh water we can use would only equal one tablespoon!

At Minikani we are lucky to have our 2 lakes and a clean water supply. Water constantly moves around the earth in a water cycle with 5 parts – evaporation, condensation, precipitation,

infiltration and surface run-off. Both Mud Lake and Lake Amy Bell are considered to be ‘Seepage Lakes’.



This means there is no inlet or outlet, so the lakes fill up through precipitation or runoff, supplemented by groundwater in the immediate drainage area. For this reason, the levels of both lakes fluctuate from season to season and year to year.



Our water supply at camp, however, comes from the groundwater supply, not the lakes. There are a couple of deep wells on camp grounds that pump water from the underground aquifer into pipes and supply the kitchens, kybos, and bubblers with clean, fresh water.

What do we use the water for? First of all, it sustains our lives when we drink it as a beverage. We also use it in our play - from water balloons to slip-n-slides and games like ‘Drip, Drip, Splash’. We water gardens and irrigate with it, where it’s needed for food to grow.

Experts calculate that it takes 6,800 gallons of water to grow a single day’s food for a family of four. Just imagine how much water it must take to supply a whole camp full of people with food each day! In addition to this, a large amount of water we pump out of the ground is used to take our wastes away. We brush our teeth with it, wash our clothes and dishes with it, and use it to flush our toilets. (Where all that water goes when we are done with it is the subject for another Nature Notes!).

Finally, think about this: In a 100 year period, a water molecule



(H<sub>2</sub>O) spends 98 years in the ocean, 20 months as ice, about 2 weeks in lakes and rivers, and less than a week in the atmosphere. Aren’t you glad that so many molecules decided to spend their 2 weeks at Minikani, filling our lakes and giving us places to swim, boat, play, watch nature, day dream, and just enjoy?

For more information about water, go to [www.lenntech.com/water-trivia-facts](http://www.lenntech.com/water-trivia-facts)



Do you have someone you would like to recommend for the “Spotlight on Alumni”? How about a Minikani Memory you’d like to share with us? Comments about the Newsletter? Silent auction items to contribute to the next fundraiser? Send your suggestions and comments to [minikanistafflodge@gmail.com](mailto:minikanistafflodge@gmail.com)



## Missing Members

As the Minikani Alumni Community begins its 5<sup>th</sup> year, it is time to take a look at how much we have grown and look ahead to our future. It's easy to see that our membership has not reached its full potential - yet. Since anyone who has ever received a paycheck from Minikani is already a member of our community, there must be thousands of people out there who don't even know that we exist. The problem is that we don't know who is missing from our list, but you do!



It would be great if we could double our number of members. So here's the deal. We are asking every member of the MAC to 'recruit' one more member. As you look at the "Staff Lists" section of our website, can you find a name of a person you know who has not completed their profile? Then they are probably not receiving any information about the MAC. Send them an email, call, or write then and point them toward our website and the simple registration link on the home page.

Why should a former staff member join the MAC? Here are a couple of good reasons: 1) Membership doesn't cost anything – it's free. 2) Previous friends from camp can reconnect with each other. 3) It helps you stay connected to

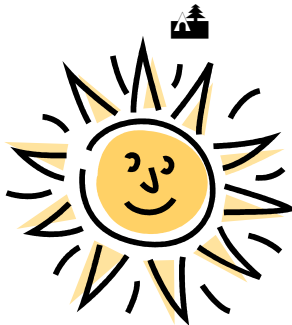
Minikani emails, website, newsletter, camp activities, and more. 4) Anyone can 'unsubscribe' at any time (but we don't like to think about that!).

So what do you say – can you help us grow? Give other staff members who may not have heard about us a chance to join our group. And just think – if every person just brought one person into our community, our numbers would double. Thanks in advance for giving this matter some thought.



## Update Your Profile

While we've got your attention, how about updating your profile information with the MAC? Has your mailing address or email address changed in the last 4 years? Are you wondering why you're not getting regular information about the MAC? Have you changed your email address from AOL to gmail? There's a simple solution: Update Your Profile. You can go to our website home page and click on the box "*Are you a former staff member? Click here to Come Home to Minikani*" and enter your new information. Or you can always contact us through our email address, [minikanistafflodge@gmail.com](mailto:minikanistafflodge@gmail.com). Either way, it will help you keep connected with the MAC.



## White Raggers

There are 8 staff members who will be taking the challenge of the White Rag this summer. Ceremonies will be held on two different dates to accommodate everyone.

Sunday, August 4th Ceremony:  
Morgan Cox – Explorer Director  
Ryan Costello – Crafts Director  
Sharon Cross – OLT Director  
Dane Mantia – OLT Director

Friday, August 9th Ceremony:  
Wyatt Caldwell – LT Director  
Jen Feltz – Executive Director  
Lauren Schoendorf – GU Director  
Ryan Wnuk – Day Camp Director

For more information about the White Rag Ceremonies, contact Matt Sullivan at (414) 750-3333 or [msullivan@ymcamke.org](mailto:msullivan@ymcamke.org).



Hey Alumni: You can now order Minikani Alumni T-shirts, sweatshirts, caps, kid's clothing, mugs, and lots of other stuff. Go to the MAC website to access the Camp Store.

Minikani Alumni Community is a 501(c)3 organization, independent from the YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee. <http://minikanistafflodge.com/>