

May 2015
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NEWSLETTER

May is Membership Month

Become a "Contributing Member" of the MAC

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Thanks To: Jon Fleming McLaren, Jen (Feltz) Hense, Tom Cramer, Dinner Sponsors, Jenny Risch, and Jim Frohna

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Eleven months of the year the MAC is working hard on your behalf. The Board holds conference calls to organize and keep things running smoothly. Emails are sent to keep you up-to-date with all kinds of activities – there's truly something for everyone.

Here's a quick list of some of the things we have coming up:

- You can help out at Minikani during Staff Training and throughout the summer.
- Our "May Membership" Campaign continues to solicit donations from our members.
- We help send 8 great kids to camp.
- Celebrate the staff of 2015 with a Pizza Party later in the summer.
- Join us at the Alumni Weekend held every other year at Minikani on August 29 & 30 this year.

All of this is done as your representatives, helping you keep connected to Minikani.

As you know, every gift comes at an expense. One month a year we ask you to reach into your pocket and help support the MAC. We never put a price on your membership – it's free for anyone who has worked at camp. But in May we ask you to become a "Contributing Member" and make a donation to help support what we do. Any amount is appreciated – you can even make a recurring donation each month. Please support our community and give back to camp through all of our activities and programs.

If you haven't already, please consider making a donation. It's simple to do – go to our website (minikanistafflodge.com) and click on the "Gifts" tab. You'll receive a Thank-You letter from us and your name will be added to our "Contributors" page.



Welcome New Camp Executive



Jon Fleming McLaren

I sat down with new Camp Executive (Operations Executive) Jon Fleming McLaren and the first words out of his mouth were “I have to pinch myself”. He is the first and only person who has been a Camper, LT, Counselor, Ad Staff and now Camp Executive. “This is my dream job” he admits. It’s hard to not get caught up with his enthusiasm for the job and its possibilities. Jon was an LTI in 1988 and recently moved back to Wisconsin from out East. His wife, Julie Nitka McLaren and two children, Aubrey (Explorer this year) and Ian (1st year at camp) are all very excited to be a part of the camp family. Here is a summary of our talk together:

1) Camp’s never had an Executive who has come up through its ranks. Do you see this as an advantage or a disadvantage?

Definitely an advantage. All of my life, I’ve been learning and working up to this job at Minikani. All of my previous experiences have

helped me become the person I am today. I hope to use all of my skills to work with kids, motivate others, and help move Minikani forward into the future. I think each alumnus looks back at their time at camp as a “Golden Era” when things were great. I want to continue that movement and make every year “Golden” for campers and staff. My work at Minikani will be focused and purposeful toward that end.

2) What special skills do you bring to Minikani?

As a counselor I always encouraged my campers to do their best and to work toward success. I think that’s possible by providing strong, positive teams. In this job I hope that I can continue to empower people to be successful and to want to do their best. Another facet of this skill is encouraging the love of adventure in others. Make it a safe environment for them to try something new - a new skill, meeting new friends, or challenging themselves to be the best they can be.

3) Can you remember a “Learning Moment” you had at camp?

I have many to choose from, but one that helped me grow was learning that “Structure gives you Freedom” from Troy Lange. My cabin activities weren’t very well planned out, and sometimes they bombed. He suggested that I plan ahead – even in 15 minute blocks, and then I would have something to fall back on if I needed it. This skill has helped me in my career and continues to help me today. I get more satisfaction by organizing and structuring my goals, my activities, and my adventures rather than doing

something “by the seat of my pants”.

4) Do you have a favorite place at camp?

There are two places that have special memories for me. One is at the waterfront, specifically being at the boating area and teaching skills with Jeremy Welland. I look back at that time and all the fun we had making a skill like boating a great adventure for campers. The other memory is being in Pine forest on the first day playing “Capture the Flag”. I look forward to being able to play C.T.F. once again this summer.

5) Do you remember a special Password you gave at camp?

One that comes to mind I would title “Facing Your Fears”. I dressed up as a clown and used different fruits as my props. I used a marker to write on the fruits words like ‘frustration’, ‘fear’, ‘conflict’, etc. Then, one at a time, I smashed the fruit, and talked about how camp was a safe place to overcome your fears, whether personal or skill related. I ended up smashing a whole watermelon, in the style of Gallagher.



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6) Any new summer programming plans?

I think Minikani needs to continue to look for new skills to offer campers. This summer we are working at bringing the Skateboarding skill that was successful at Matawa as an option, and also offer fencing as a skill.



7) Any plans for Minikani’s natural resources?

I love walking and running through camp’s trails, especially using the new boardwalk around Mud Lake. To maintain its ecological diversity, I think we need to organize an attack on the invasive species that are beginning to overwhelm camp. Removing buckthorn, poison sumac, and sun-blocking grape vines while at the same time re-establishing open areas and native prairie plants would make it a better place. Long term erosion control of the trails is also needed.

8) What can the MAC do to help you and camp?

I truly believe that camp is as strong as it is because of all those who have been here before – including you, the alumni. I want to maintain this strong connection and use it to make camp even better. Because camp facilities always need

attention and updating, alumni are welcome and encouraged to support camp with their donations – money, needed items, and time. I would also hope that alumni would feel comfortable sharing their idea about camp and how we can make it better.

9) Anything else you would like alumni to know?

I want you to know that your passion for camp is my passion. Anything and everything you can do for camp is important. I encourage you to come back to camp – for a visit, for a meal, to teach a skill, to mentor the staff, to share ideas. I’m very excited to be back at camp in this job. I’m happy to report that every day I wake up an hour before my alarm eager to come to work. I don’t think too many people can say that, but I know what a wonderful opportunity I have in front of me. To be a part of it, I encourage you to share your thoughts and idea with me. Drop me an email anytime (<mailto:jmclaren@ymcamke.org>) or call (262) 251-9080.



What is Jen Feltz up to now?
By Jen Feltz

Less than 6 months. It seems like a lifetime since I took a slow, slow drive out of camp. I am so thankful for the amazing years I spent at Minikani and the wonderful relationships I had the opportunity to build. Like many of you I’m sure, I spend a lot of moments thinking of my time at camp with a little lump in my throat and knowing that those times will always be some of the most special.

The next chapter of my professional life finds me spending my days as the Executive Director of the Tri County YMCA in Menomonee Falls. I have the pleasure of leading a great staff team and serving a nice group of kids and families. I even get a glimpse of the LaRoque/Hasbrook clan from time to time and a few of the neighbors on Amy Belle Lake!

On a personal note, Brady and Ellie and I are looking forward to blending our family with my longtime partner, Mark Hense and his daughter Allie, as we head to Yosemite in May to get married! We are getting settled into a new house in Germantown and all is going great!

We are all counting the days until we drive into camp for Session 2 as Ellie spends her first two week session in the GU (are you ready Rachel Whaley!?) and Brady heads into the Explorer Unit for the first time. Allie follows them a week later to trek with the Master Explorers to the Apostle Islands!

I am so thankful for the amazing staff team that will greet us this summer. Tom Cramer has assembled a fantastic AD staff and counseling team and I know Jon McLaren-Fleming will lead the group with the Spirit of Minikani in his heart that will continue to impact the lives of our kids and so many families across the community. I’m proud to be an alumni and have the chance to watch it all unfold.

In the Spirit,

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Help Out at Staff Training

Tom Cramer, Summer Camp Director, extends the following invitation to all alumni:

We would LOVE alumni to come to camp during staff training from 4:30 - 8:00 PM on Tuesday, June 16th. We need your 'experience' and 'ideas' to help develop our various skill areas. Here's what we're planning: For the first hour alumni will join the various 2015 skill staff at their areas and help set-up, share stories, etc. They will then join us for dinner (please RSVP), and after that we will do something similar to the rotating groups and conversation topics from last year. To RSVP contact me at tcramer@ymcamke.org – Please be sure to include what skill area you were on as a staff member.



Where Have All Alumni Gone?

Did you ever wonder what happens to Minikani Staff once they 'grow up' and leave camp? Here is a map showing where our alumni live right now. Add to it our members that live outside of the US and you can see just how far the "Minikani Spirit" can travel.



Alumni Spring Work Project Day 2015



A great big "THANKS" goes out to everyone who participated in the Spring Workday on May 9, 2015. We had about 25 people who gave up part of their weekend to help us help camp get ready for the summer. The weather was great (no snow or rain this time) and spirits were high.

Some people helped get the waterfront set up and got the docks ready for kids. Others spent the day painting wooden signs for the cabins. We also got a couple great carnival games set up for this

Summer, and worked on some Adventure Challenge activities. Finally, we built a plastic tubing game for cabin groups to play a 3-D four-square game. It's hard to describe - you'll have to see it in action at camp!

Update Your MAC Information

Have you changed your mailing address or your email address recently? If so, please send an update to the MAC so we can keep in touch with you. All you have to do is send your correct address(es) to minikanistafflodge@gmail.com. We'll take care of the rest, and you'll be able to keep connected.



Dinner Around The World 2015



New York City
Grace Edquist

“Our dinner went really well! There were six of us in attendance, including a surprise appearance by JC Hauser, who lives in DC but happened to be in town for the weekend. We had a blast toasting to Mama Minikani and sharing stories of crazy camp memories (including Open Mic Night at the old corral and when Grace Weber had a tiny and terrified six-year-old camper for a week in the Girls Unit). We sang the Evening Grace and then dug into some pasta with homemade tomato sauce and meatballs. A terrific night. How great to be surrounded by familiar faces in a city so huge.”



Milwaukee
Evann Derus & Emily Tremel

“Had a great dinner in last night. We served mac and cheese, but served on plates not on Wonder Bread as we used to on campouts. We had eight alumni plus one spouse, including one alum who just moved back from abroad. Shared memories of campouts, staff parties, and funny skill traditions. I was personally struck to realize how many alums are still working with kids in their careers today (5/8 at our dinner)”.

Chicago
Amy Owen

“About 20 of us came together for deep dish pizza and a whole lot of fun. Carl was the mastermind behind a new party game, called "Chief's Cup." The game had us planning skits, singing camp songs, and pranking one another well into the night. It felt like we were transported back to camp for a night”



Capital Campaign Update

The MAC Board would like to share a quick update on our Capital Campaign plans. As a community, in addition to funding camperships each year, we've always planned to fundraise for a larger project that is a priority for Mama Minikani and would provide critical updates to her grounds or facilities.

This past Fall, the MAC Board was asked by the Minikani leadership and Board to raise \$30,000 to help make the restoration of Minikani's waterfront possible. We hosted A Red Rock Affair in December to raise awareness for our upcoming fundraising campaign and had a blast! Shortly after, Camp underwent a few changes, including an adjustment to the footprint of the new waterfront to meet zoning requirements and ultimately, an adjustment to the project's budget that required it be put on hold. As we know, these things happen and the leadership at Camp prioritizes updates and funding in the best interest of Mama Minikani.

As a community, we are uniquely positioned to assist Minikani in getting funding over the finish line for a large project or entirely funding a smaller project that traditional donors might be less interested in but still need to get done. We're honored to be in that position and are working with Camp over the next 12 to 18 months to select a project that most needs our effort. We will stay in touch with our alumni and hope you know how much your support, financial and otherwise, means to our treasured summer homeland.

The MAC Board 



Alumni Weekend Is This Summer August 29 & 30, 2015

The MAC Alumni Weekend at Camp Minikani will be held August 29th and 30th this summer. This awesome event is only held every other year so you will not want to miss out! Family, friends and significant others are more than welcome to attend. We have plenty of fun activities planned again this year. The lake and pool will be open, 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. All meals and activities are included with your registration.

Please mark the days on your calendar and plan to be there! Whether you come for the day or stay the night and enjoy the whole weekend we promise you'll have a great time at our summer homeland!

Check-in time for the weekend is 11:00 am at the Leadership Lodge on August 29th. We hope to see you there!

To register for the weekend or for more information, use this link to Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/alumni-weekend-2015-tickets-16741054946>

Should you have any questions about the weekend please contact John Hyland at johnnyhyland@gmail.com.



SpotLight

On Alumni

Jim Frohna and I share a bond – we were never Minikani campers, but came to camp later in our lives. Jim was on the staff from 1986-89, two years as a counselor and two years as crafts director.

◆ Do you have any particularly ‘fond’ memories of camp?

I have a long list of vivid and fond memories, including but not limited to: Disco Night, the hike to the apple orchard, cabin talks after lights out, hanging out in the staff lodge, Ethel and her beautiful, fiery spirit, Lloyd’s hat and smile, singing songs at the top of our lungs in the dining hall, Password, singing “Taps at the end of campfires, and watching the candlelit cross float out across placid Lake Amy Belle.

◆ Did you develop any special skills while at camp?

I learned so much about myself, how to work as a team, the value of commitment to a shared purpose, the joy of working with kids, in the great outdoors, with a group of like-minded, goofy, hard-working, big-hearted people.



◆ While you were at camp one of your friends used part of the Pioneer Unit to film a movie.

What ever happened to it?

Over winter break in 1987, my best friend Kris Kachikis and I shot a 40 min “period piece” romantic comedy called “The Twelfth Stroke of Midnight” and needed a cabin in the woods for a scene in which two dim but kind hunters advise a lowly stable boy on how to woo a lady. I’m sure I have a DVD of it somewhere. It’s cheesy and silly and mostly shows how ambitious we were. By the way, Kris also moved on to Los Angeles and we both ended up becoming cinematographers.

◆ How did you make the transition from camp to the “real” world?

I remember it was a very tough decision to not return to Minikani after graduating college from NYU. But I also knew it was time to move into my post-collegiate life. I made up for my withdrawal by visiting whenever I was in Wisconsin.



Ten years after leaving Minikani, I returned to camping life working for two summers as “Poppa Fuzz”, the Program Director for Camp Heartland. The camp, serving children impacted and affected by HIV/AIDS was founded, single-handedly by former Boys Counselor

(and an LT of mine), Neil Willenson. The training and experience Neil and I had at Minikani was essential in our ability to lead the Heartland staff (including several Minikani alum) and we modeled much of the structure and spirit of the new camp after Minikani.



◆ Tell us about your family.

I am coming up on 18 years of marriage to an amazing woman named Diana Kunce, who is an artist, designer and incredible mother to our two daughters Sofia, 17, and Zoe 13. Sofia loves theatre and music, has an indie folk band and just starred as Maria in her school production of West Side Story. Zoe loves writing, doing improv comedy and challenging the status quo and plans to be a novelist.

◆ Please tell us about your career successes.

After graduating NYU Film School, I moved out to Los Angeles to pursue a life in the movies. My first credit upon moving to LA was as an electrician on *The Usual Suspects*. I worked on hundreds of commercials and a few movies as a Gaffer (head of the lighting department) before I moved into the camera department and became a Cinematographer.

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After years in commercials and shooting such projects as music videos for The Red Hot Chili Peppers and John Mayer, I started pursuing features and TV. This past year has marked a career high, working as cinematographer on what has been the most personally and creatively satisfying project: a new episodic series called *Transparent*. The show, which is part of the new wave of TV and can be streamed at Amazon Prime, just won two Golden Globes. We will shoot the 2nd season this summer and I'm really looking forward to it.



◆ **How often do thoughts of camp and Minikani people ‘pop’ into your head?**

I think about Minikani and old friends often. I have told many a camp story to my daughters over the years as well as taught them many camp songs. One of the people I think of a great deal is Mary Miner, former Girls Unit Director, who was the one who introduced me to Minikani. I had never heard of the place nor gone to camp as a kid and owe Mary a huge debt of gratitude for bringing me into the Minikani family and providing me with one of the most significant and influential experiences of my life.

◆ **Anything else you’d like to share?**

Thanks so much for the memories and for giving me this chance to share a little bit about my life in the 26 years since I last sang “Taps” at closing campfire at summer’s end.



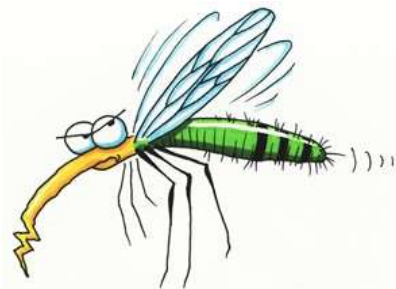
Nature Notes

By Bruce

Mosquitoes are insects that suck your blood. They don’t actually ‘bite’ you, because they have no jaws. But they pierce your skin with their proboscis and use a well-designed pumping system to force their saliva into you as they pump your blood (just a few drops) into themselves. (It’s their saliva that causes our itching.) Only the female needs blood – it insures that her eggs have a protein supply for her developing embryos. Males live their whole life sucking on plant nectars, which the females also consumes when they are not reproducing.

The average life span of a female is 3 to 100 days (for males its 10 to 20 days). One female mosquito may average 1,000 to 3,000 offspring during her life span. You can probably see where the problem comes in when you learn that it only takes 5-7 days for the eggs to hatch, go through the larval and pupal stages, and emerge as more adults to continue the attack on campers.

Mosquitoes are attracted to you (and other animals) by a variety of smells you give off. The most important one is carbon dioxide, which they can detect from a distance of up to 100 feet. Their sense of smell is about 10,000 times better than yours. The larger you are, or the more you’re breathing from activity, the more CO₂ you give off. In addition body odors and other secretions can also attract her,



as does your blood type – mosquitoes are most attracted to blood Type O and least attracted to Type A.

A mosquito's wings beat 300-600 times *per second*. This explains that irritating buzzing sound you hear just before a mosquito lands on you for a snack.

Eggs are laid in clusters either in stagnant water or in areas that may become flooded in the future. Mosquito eggs can survive for more than 5 years, so you can be pretty sure that Minikani, with all of its swamps, bogs and marshes, has plenty of potential for a healthy mosquito crop each summer.

Here are a few ways to avoid mosquitoes: Use insect repellents when you go outdoors. Wear long sleeves and pants from dusk through dawn when many mosquitoes are most active. Install or repair screens on windows and doors. Help reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home by emptying any standing water from containers such as flowerpots, gutters, buckets, etc.

Scientists say there are over 100 trillion mosquitoes in the world today. It probably seems like about half that number shows up as soon as you head out into the woods for a hike, but by following the useful hints above your outdoor experience should prove to be much more pleasant. And this might make you feel better: Although she can bite and suck up three times her body weight in blood, it would take something like 1.2 million bites to drain your body of all of its precious blood.

