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# NEWSLETTER

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## OCTOBER 2016

Welcome to the 29<sup>th</sup> edition of the MAC Newsletter. Since October of 2009, we've tried to keep you up-to-date with what is happening with your Alumni Community and at Camp Minikani.

As the seasons change, our lives change, Camp Minikani changes, and so does the MAC. We all know change is inevitable, and this fact seems to be reflected in this edition of the Newsletter.

Your Alumni Community board has a pair of new Co-Directors, Sean Demet and Ryan Derus, who are introduced on the next page. Camp's Summer Program Director has changed, with Peter Drews replacing Tom Cramer. The MAC's financial policy has changed, asking member to make general donations directly to Minikani. Early this year the Chapel Area at camp

changed, thanks in part to the MAC. Many experts say that our climate is changing, and this may be reflected the survival of present animal species on Earth.

Confucius said "Only the wisest and stupidest of people never change". I hope that puts us somewhere in the middle. Recent Nobel Prize winner Bob Dylan says "There is nothing so stable as change." Hopefully some things at Minikani never change – the spirit, campfires, friends, nature, etc. At the same time, let's hope that future changes bring new opportunities and growth, and continue to make our "Dear 'Ole Camp" a great place for kids and staff alike.

"Change is inevitable – except from a vending machine." *Robert C. Gallagher*



## MAC's New Co-Directors

*By Sean Demet and Ryan Derus*

Dear Minikani Alumni Community,

We are honored and excited to assume the directing responsibilities of the Minikani Alumni Community. We have been board members for the past year and have enjoyed many MAC events throughout the years. We look forward to guiding the MAC into the future.

We are keen to foster communication across the generations of camp alumni. Sharing memories, lessons, and inspiration can keep camp alive for all of us. We look forward to incorporating new alumni and growing the MAC family. We are eager to continue the campership program to provide the opportunity to experience Minikani.

Sean currently resides in Nashville with his wife Maiken. He first attended Minikani in 1999 with Erik Herbst and Kevin Wright as his counselor and LT 3. After spending five summers on staff, Sean joined the Minikani Alumni Community in 2009.

Ryan started attending camp when he was eight years old and was able to spend fourteen amazing summers at camp. Ryan spent his last summer as Explorer Unit director in 2009. Ryan and his wife Evann (who was a member of Ryan's LT group!) live in the heart of downtown Milwaukee.

From co-counseling in 2005 (Hey John Opgenorth & Michael Kushner) to co-directing the MAC. Ryan and Sean are grateful for the opportunity to further the MAC and its mission.

In the Spirit, Ryan & Sean



## Tom's Tree House



Summer Camp Director Tom Cramer has left Minikani for new horizons. We know he'll be missed. Peter Drews, his replacement as Sumer Camp Director, has taken a very active role in fundraising to be able to build a tree house at Minikani in his honor. People want to get him a treehouse because it symbolizes what Tom believes in, **Imagination, wonder, and play.**

Kevin Jennings, who set up a gofundme site for Tom's Tree House, shared this thought about Tom: "That beautiful aerodynamic organized Scandinavian man has done more for camp than any of us know. He worked long hours because he loves camp. I asked him once how he stays focused in the off season 'I just picture different faces of staff'. What a guy."

Mike Herman said "Unbelievable leader and role model. Thank you Tom for all you have done for Minikani!" And Jan Valde said "Fun idea for a very creative guy!" You can see more comments and add your own to the webpage with your donation at [www.gofundme.com/2jy6yuk](http://www.gofundme.com/2jy6yuk)



# Support Camp

By Sarah Kurtz McKinnon

## 10 Easy Ways to Support Camp

The official title of this blog by Sarah Kurtz McKinnon is “10 Easy and Free Ways Alumni Can Support Camp During the School Year” Sarah is a professional camp consultant that has come to Minikani Staff training the past two years. She has consulted with over 20 camps in the Midwest and has spoken at numerous conferences. (She admitted to me that she “loves” Minikani!)

### 10. Always have a supply of camp brochures on hand.

Be sure to give them out when you see any friends who are parents or any kids in your life. Explain to them how camp changed your life, and tell them you’d love for them to have the same experience. Leave them on information tables or displays at your place of worship, local school, community center and anywhere else you can think of!

### 9. Have a supply of the camp’s business cards on hand.

When you meet a person you think could be a great camp staff member—whether that’s your neighbor’s grandson who always comes over to mow the lawn or the friendliest ice cream scooper at the neighborhood shop, tell them about working at camp and hand them a card. Invite them to apply.

### 8. Clean your house and gather items in good condition that would help camp.

Generally helpful things include: sleeping bags, magazines used for collage (like *National Geographic*), age-appropriate books, quality art

supplies and costumes. Generally unhelpful things include: boats that sink and extra copies of *50 Shades of Grey* (true stories).

### 7. Be sure to “follow” your camp on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

When the camp makes a post, be sure to like or love it. On Facebook, share! On Twitter, re-tweet!

### 6. Go through your old camp photos and share them with camp.

If they’re printed photos, scan the best ones. Label each with the year and the people in the photos, then digitally send to the camp office for their archives.

### 5. Once you have those photos scanned, also upload a few to Facebook or your social media of choice.

Or, just use Facebook’s convenient “Memories” function. Tag your fellow alumni and go crazy reminiscing about your {appropriate} memories in the comments.

### 4. Write, video-record or audio-record your “camp story”.

Oh, there are stories to tell!! It doesn’t have to be fancy--just honest and heartfelt! Send it to the camp office for their historical records.

### 3. When you travel, wear your camp gear.

Take a picture of yourself in front of a landmark in your camp shirt, and send it to the camp office. They’d love to post it on their social media or in their newsletter. You also never know what other camp alumni you will see in airports or places around the world!

### 2. Write online reviews for your camp.

Here’s a good place to start: Google your camp’s name. Summarized information about the camp should come up on the right side of the screen. Scroll down past the basic information about the camp, and click the grey box that says “Write a review.” Hopefully you’re feelin’ the five-star option. Also post your review on other sites like Facebook and Yelp!

### 1. Send the year-round camp team a thank-you note (and, maybe some cookies, too).

Tell them thanks for all that they do—all 12 months of the year!



**SAVE THE DATE**  
for the 2016 MAC Holiday Party

**WHEN:** Saturday, December 17th  
**WHERE:** Third Space Brewing  
(1505 W St Paul Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI)



Tell your family, friends and fellow alumni. We're going to pack the Joint!



# SpotLight On Alumni

By Matt "Sully" Sullivan

Sully was at camp from 1999-2013. He contributed the following answers to my questions:

◆ **What's your history at camp?**

I started as a 12 year old camper in cabin 13. I joined the LT Program in 2002 with Colleen Leadley and Aaron Bell. I was a Boy's Unit counselor for 2 years, and in 2007 I was on Explorer Hill and took kids to the original explorer site. In 2009 I was the Explorer Director along with Christine (Tighe) Broder and Ryan Derus. That year I helped scout out and transition to the new Explorer site at Camp Birchrock, where we switched from an over - night hike and day canoe trip to an overnight canoe trip down the Wisconsin River and some day hikes near base camp.



The next year I returned to Minikani in a year round role as an AmeriCorps member. Being assistant to Brian Siegel (Summer Program Director) the following year showed me the ins and outs of year-round camp! After that summer Jen Feltz offered me the new role of Summer Camp Director, where I learned a ton. I had two more years in that role, and in my final year



I helped revive the Expedition Program, sending campers to Camp Chief Ouray (CCO) in the Colorado Rockies. Before my last summer at Minikani I went to Colorado to visit my family (who lived there) and meet the CCO staff to see firsthand were Minikani's kids would be going. Little did I know that in September of 2013 I would be offered the Summer Camp Director position at CCO.

◆ **Do you have a favorite place at camp?**

I have so many Favorite places and fond memories at Minikani that it's hard to pick just one, so I'll pick two. 1) Being at Council Bluff with all the evening activities, campfires and songs, and 2) Being in Pine Forest with my lucky Diop drum memories and all the games played there.

◆ **Any particularly 'fond' memories of camp?**

So many - but my first memory was with my best friend Brett Komisar getting me into my first cabin with Patrick Drayna as my counselor. We had a blast on the MINI HILL that week!

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

I'll say!!! I learned so many skills and lessons that I still use to this day. I can honestly say camp changed my life and helped transform this quiet, pudgy 12-year-old camper into a fully functioning Summer Camp Director.

◆ **How are things going for you at Camp Chief Ouray in Colorado?**

The last 3 years have been wonderful! Though I miss Minikani and all the Milwaukee folks dearly, I have been closer to my family who live in Denver and Bolder. Working for YMCA of the Rockies has been great. They have given me career development opportunities and experiences that I find invaluable. CCO is currently in the process of expanding from 270 to 500 campers per week. Also, I find winters here a lot nicer than Wisconsin's.

◆ **Are there any similarities between the 2 camps?**

There are many similarities and I think that's why my transition went as well as it has these past 3 years. The main difference is that the song lyric are a little different - instead of Amy Belle, CCO has the Mountains.



◆ **Does Camp Chief Ouray have an Alumni Group?**

We are in the process of building a stronger Alumni Group. The experience I gained watching the Minikani Alumni develop and grow has helped me when it comes to getting things started here.

*Continued on next page*

◆ **What’s in the future for Sully?**

Future Sully is a little scary to think about. But I can see myself staying at CCO for a few more years. After that - who knows? Maybe moving to another camp and being their Summer Camp Director, or even being an Executive Director someday. But for now I plan to stay at CCO with my one year old boxer puppy “Susie” and my girlfriend, who I’ve been dating for two and a half years now.

◆ **Do you have anything else you’d like to share?**

At Minikani I saw how an Alumni group can help a summer camp be more successful. Sometimes I wish I was closer to Minikani so I could give them more of my time, my talents, my treasures and (once I get more of it) my \$\$\$\$. I think we can learn more from Mamma Minikani and help kids get the same experience that we got as kids. My advice? No matter how involved you are with Minikani or the Alumni Community, make sure you are giving back to the campers!!!



**Help at Camp**  
*Summer 2017*

How would you like to help out at Minikani next summer? Amanda Hendrickson did it last summer, and so did Alison Walthers Pickert. She had a great day helping out on the Craft Porch (below). For more information, contact Amanda at [hendrickson.amanda@gmail.com](mailto:hendrickson.amanda@gmail.com)



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? Ideas for our next campership fundraiser? What else have you got for us? (We even accept criticisms.) Send your suggestions and comments via email. ([minikanistafflodge@gmail.com](mailto:minikanistafflodge@gmail.com)) Thanks!



**Our Mission Statement**

The Minikani Alumni Community is a group of former staff members dedicated to maintaining our connection with our summer homeland. Through acts of fellowship and service, we strive to honor our past experiences, support current summer programming, and preserve Minikani traditions for the future.

**Minikani History**  
*1926*

**From the Camp Minikani Brochure 90 years ago:**

What to Take – Wear to camp second-best or outing clothes. Take two heavy blankets and a small pillow; change of underwear, extra trousers, gym suit, sweater, tennis shoes, bath towel, comb, tooth brush and paste, socks, small mirror, pajamas or night clothes, soap, musical instruments, and Bible. Valuable watches, etc. should not be taken to camp. Mark everything with your name. Roll your blankets and pillows and tie the ends. Pack your things in a strong grain sack or old suit case.





# Nature Notes

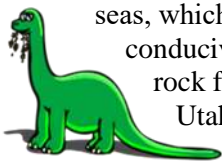
By Bruce

News Headline I saw recently: Good news for the world's threatened wildlife – the Giant Panda has just been downgraded from 'Endangered' to 'Vulnerable' on the list of species at risk of extinction. That is good news, and I wish the Giant Panda and the World Wildlife Fund, which used the Panda as its logo, the best of luck. That got me thinking about all the animals that once lived where Minikani now calls its home, and what may have happened to them.

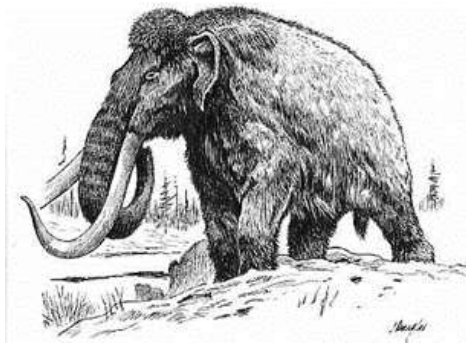


Now, the bad news. 99% of all mammals and other species that have ever lived on Earth are now extinct. Gone forever. Extinction is always happening, it's a natural part of the history of life.

Trilobites were arthropods that lived in Wisconsin perhaps 340 million years ago. Their fossils formed when Wisconsin was covered by warm, shallow seas. Unfortunately, no dinosaur fossils have ever been found in this state. Remember, fossils are rocks that formed over millions of years. There are certainly no dinosaur bones, flesh or skin left over from 65 million years ago. During 'prime' dinosaur times on Earth, Wisconsin was covered with warm



seas, which wasn't conducive to fossil rock formation. Utah, yes, but not Wisconsin.



About 2 million years ago, scientists believe that relatives of the Mastodon, related to today's elephant, crossed a land bridge from Eurasia. About 100,000 years ago the Woolly Mammoth found success living on land surrounding the ice sheets as far south as the mid-US. There have been quite a few partial mammoth skeletons found in Wisconsin, so it is very possible the large animals lived around Minikani. The last glacier disappeared from southern Wisconsin perhaps 12,000 years ago, and with that the Mammoths became extinct. Humans first arrived in North America perhaps 15,000 to 20,000 years ago, and their presence may have something to do with the animal's disappearance. Joining the Mammoth on the extinct list are the saber-toothed cat, dire wolf, short-faced skunk, and the giant beaver, which grew to the size of a bear.

If we fast forward to just 200 years ago, we learn about the Passenger Pigeon, one of the most tragic extinctions in modern times. Before that, the Passenger Pigeon was actually the most common bird in North America, and some reports counted single flocks numbering in the billions. Pigeon meat was commercialized and recognized as cheap food, especially for slaves and the poor, which led to a hunting campaign on a massive scale. Furthermore, due to the large size of their flocks, the birds were seen as a

threat to farmers. For habitat, they needed to live in the vast forested land that covered the Eastern US, including Wisconsin. At the same time farmers needed to remove the trees to plant their crops. The last Passenger Pigeon on earth, named Martha, died at the Cincinnati Zoo at about 1:00 pm on September 1, 1914.



So the story goes on. During the past 500 years, at least 75 mammal species are known to have died out, with many more barely hanging on. Today, about 25 percent of living mammal species are threatened with extinction. Hunting has always been a source of food for humans, but when you add habitat destruction, disease, and climate change, you can see why, unfortunately, extinction will continue to be a part of the story of life on Earth.

