



Summer 2017
Volume 9, Issue 3

NEWSLETTER

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Thanks To: Perry LaRoque, Jan Valde, Brian Siegel, Elizabeth Rees, Jen Hogervorst, and Amy Shiman

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I am O.D. for the day, and I've just played the 'Call to Quarters' bugle from Headquarters on the hill behind Kossow. It is mid-summer, maybe 1985, and the days have been busy and full. I step outside for a minute to see the afterglow from the sun setting over Lake Amy Belle. I pause and think about my day.

Then comes 'Tatoo' and 'Taps', and all the light from the day is slipping away. I just have enough time to check the Boy's Unit before I set out Staff Snack.

I don't need a flashlight, my feet know every step to take. As I round Cabin 10, I hear the last 'bang' of

the kybo door. All is quiet now. I pause in front of each cabin to eavesdrop on their vespers.

As I pass the cabins I can see flickering candles and a sporadic flashlight shine through the window. Occasionally laughter erupts. I can also hear soft music coming from some cabins, and various discussions of the day's activities and plans being made for future events. "Can we build a pillow fort tomorrow during rest period?" "We'll see how well you do at Cabin Clean-up in the morning." At another cabin the topic of personal goals is led by "What would you do if..."

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At still another cabin I hear “And just then a cold wind blew and the boy with the red eyes disappeared into the woods.”

I know that some kids are already sound asleep, the day's activities have caught up with them. But this is a magical time for both the counselor and camper, a time of quiet, a time to assess the day and think about the future.

As I round Norris field, I can hear the bull frogs from Mud Lake and see both the tiny lights of fireflies at the edge of the field and hundreds of tiny stars up in the sky. No time to pause, there are things to do and it's already getting late. How quickly the time goes by – an event, a camper, a day, a session, a summer. Each one is precious in my memory.



Alumni then had a chance to share with the big group at Council Bluffs, including telling the Staff what the MAC does for them each summer.

Following that there was some kind of game at Norris Field for everyone. But after that the Staff had to get back to their training, and the alumni mingled a little before heading to their non-Minikani homes.



Staff Training

June, 2017

About a dozen alumni shared their time, talents, and experiences with the Summer Staff at Staff Training. It was a great opportunity to mix and share with each other.

There was a dinner of pasta & cookies, with bug juice, of course. Dinner was followed by singing some good ‘ole camp songs, and an opportunity to visit and chat.



Please update your address changes.

Have you changed your email address in the last couple of years? Do you have multiple email addresses that you seldom check? Has it been a while since you've heard from the MAC? Have you moved to a new address or changed your name? If you can answer “yes” to any of these questions, please let us know so we can still keep in touch with you.

minikanistafflodge@gmail.com

White Ragers

7 staff members are included in the challenge of the White Rag this summer. One ceremony was held in July and another in August to accommodate everyone.

Congratulations to the newest White Ragers:

July 23rd

Amy Schiman
Grace Barlow
Paige Harari

August 6th

John Opgenorth
Chris Fink
Meredith Jeffers
Rachel Kornetsky



Prayer for the Gold Rag

From the Study Materials

O, God, give me clean hands, clean words, and clean thoughts. Help me to stand for the hard right against the easy wrong. Save me from habits that harm. Teach me to work as hard and play as fair in Thy sight alone as if the whole world saw.

Forgive me when I am unkind, and help me to forgive those who are unkind to me. Keep me ready to help others at some cost to myself and send me chances to do some good every day. Amen



Staff Pizza Party

Question: What do you get when you deliver almost \$200 worth of pizza, fresh fruit and veggies to the Minikani Summer Staff?

Answer: Lots and lots of smiles, and happy counselors, too!

The MAC recently made such a delivery using previously contributed funds from generous alumni. What did the staff have to say? THANK YOU MAC!!! 🌲



Parent's Perspective

By Jen Hogervorst

It's Sunday at one p.m. and the cars are lined up to enter into camp. The LT's are yelling excitedly, "Welcome to Camp!" I feel like I am a kid again. The excitement is infectious and I am almost bouncing in my seat.

My daughter, Sophia, has a humongous grin on her face. She can't wait to hear which cabin she will be spending the next 2 weeks in. We get her cabin assignment and the excitement is building as we park on Norris Field and drag her belongings to the entrance of the GU, where we will wait for the bugle.

Some of the other parents look nervous, I am downright jealous. I know the fun and magic that awaits these children. The bugle blows and there is literally a stampede into the GU as the girls run to their prospective cabins to claim their bunks.

The parents drag their girls' belongings to the cabin and meet the counselors. A wave of nostalgia washes over me as I enter the cabin and immediately get hit by what I call, 'the camp smell". It smells like home and a million happy memories. Sophia has claimed a bottom bunk, just like I used to do. I settle her in and look around with a sigh. I have to leave and she gets to stay.

I will miss Sophia, but know that she is going to have an incredible 2 weeks filled with laughter, new experiences and friendships that will last a lifetime. I hug her and tell her bunkmates, "It's a great day for a swim check!" I leave the cabin and head over to Cabin 20, to see some old friends, meet some new ones and share some memories. It's one of the perks offered to alumni and a new camp tradition for the parents.



Only 12 more days... I email her every day, no snail mail, like when we were campers, and tell her the mundane stuff that has been going on at home while she is gone. I can't wait to hear about her last bear claw ceremony, the skit they did at opening campfire, the new start to the GU cheer, Unit day, what skills she took and all the stories that come home from camp.



It's different for us to hear these stories, because we get it. We are camp people.



SpotLight

On Alumni

By Elizabeth Rees

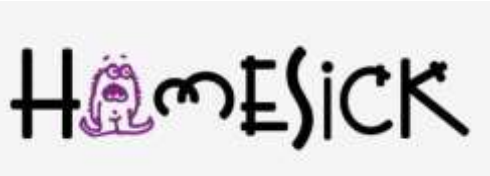
Elizabeth started going to camp when she was 9 years old in 1993 and continued until 2004. I was able to interview her via email and through a questionnaire published in [Teen Vogue April 11 2017](#).

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

I remember going to Pine Forest as a kid and thinking, “this looks like a movie.” The trees and the way the light came through the forest that was so special. Years later I spent a lot of time in the corral with the horses which also gave be a sense of belonging beyond my LT group.

◆ **Do you have any special memories from camp?**

Like a lot of others, I struggled with homesickness the second year I was at camp, and remembered how amazing my counselor Jen was with me.



She didn't go overboard with leaning into it, she gave me a secret code to say if I was feeling like I was missing my mom and wanted to sit with her or needed some time on her side of the cabin wall. This stuck with me and when I would have homesick campers when I became a counselor I always thought about her. Camp was really

this magically place of joy and problem solving.

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

Initiative! As a business owner now, the biggest thing I use that I learned from camp is to not wait for someone to tell you what to do. If you see an opportunity to help someone or try a new thing or vocalize an idea, do it!



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

For me it was pretty seamless, as I was in college when I worked at camp and went from there to living abroad. The next summer I spent interning in NYC which was like being an LT1, knowing very little but being very eager to help. Lots of mistakes were made and I got a lot of great feedback to help better my performance and shape my summer.

◆ **What happened then?**

I worked at National Geographic in the corporate partnerships division. I traveled Asia for a year before moving to Paris to get my Master's degree. For me, my 20s were a great mix of working for phenomenally smart women, traveling, and seeing the world on my own terms and



studying and living abroad. So when I came back to the States and settled into NYC. I felt ready to create something of my own.

◆ **Tell us about your company, “Chasing Paper”.**

As the third generation in my family’s printing company, ink has always been in my blood. A little over four years ago I started [Chasing Paper](#), a removable wallpaper company. The company ethos is really built around the idea that design should be for everyone. Since launching we have started relationships with Bloomingdales, West Elm, Urban Outfitters and were covered by the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Better Homes & Gardens, Real Simple and most recently Inc Magazine.

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What exactly is removable wallpaper?

Prepare to be amazed. Removable wallpaper is the answer to your prayers. It has the look and feel of real wallpaper with none of the headaches. No glue, no rolls, no hiring someone when you realize just how big of a job it really is.

What makes it stick?

If we told you, we would have to kill you. Kidding, it’s a low-tack adhesive that is non-toxic and will make you want to paper everything in your life.

Can I reuse it?

One of the greatest features of Chasing Paper is that it’s forgiving – if you hang it crooked (not that you ever would, you perfect thing, you) or decide that “Tri-angled” would be better on your south facing wall, go for it! Re-stick that sucker!

◆ Any advice for alumni just starting their careers paths?

I would say to follow your instincts. There is so much noise and categories are becoming so cluttered that it is hard to not look around you and watch what everyone else is doing and feel a pressure to do things the same way. I quit a “dream job” and sold all the furniture I owned to travel Asia on my own at 25 because I felt so strongly about seeing the world with my own eyes. So the other advice would just to be brave and not let adventure and opportunities to “live life in a big way” pass you by.

◆ If you could go back to camp, anything you’d do different?

I think that if anything, it would just be to treasure the days of being outside all day and sleeping under the stars more.



Note: Below is the Editor’s favorite removable wallpaper pattern. Find your favorite pattern at www.chasingpaper.com



Highlight: CRAFTS

Editor’s Note: This summer we chose to highlight the **Crafts Skill**. We plan to highlight a different skill in future summer editions of the Newsletter. Thanks to Amy Shiman, Craft’s Director, for contributing the following article:

The energy on the craft porch this summer is as wild and weird as ever. This is my second summer as Crafts Director, and it’s been pretty amazing to watch my staff grow and continue to push themselves creatively. We’ve welcomed a new group of LTHIs who fit perfectly into the crafts family.



Many traditional crafts are still around, such as shrinky dinks, friendship bracelets and candles. We’ve also been offering pottery every single skill sign up. This is probably the coolest skill we teach kids, even though we can only offer six spots per hour due to limited equipment. Watching kids get their hands on a wheel and develop a totally new skill is pretty awesome.



Kids get to create something that they’re proud to take home and show their parents and friends. It’s consistently the skill that fills up the fastest kids are always eager to get one of the few spots. We hope to continue to expand pottery and offer it to more campers in the future.



Fridays on the craft porch are best known as “Tie-dye Friday”, an all-time kid favorite. Last summer, this evolved into “Festival Friday” which entails sprawling the massive, dye-stained fabric across the floor of the porch, loading up as many bins as we can find with different colored dyes, bumping weird dance music over our semi-functional speakers, wearing ridiculous outfits, and always, always dancing on the tables while the kids have a hay-day with their white t-shirts. We didn’t plan on this being a weekly tradition, but after the ridiculousness of the first Festival Friday it definitely stuck. This is hands down the day of the week I look forward to most.



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One of our LTIII's, Olivia Schmitz, is wildly passionate about Harry Potter, so, naturally, we had a skill sign up where we went full blown Harry Potter Porch. We made wands and broomsticks, had the kids making goblets of fire on Harry Pottery – honestly, this was the same thing as normal pottery... we just did it for the name – and organized a combined game of Quidditch with Gun n' Run on the third day. It was a hoot because it attracted a very different crowd from our typical crafties.



I consider myself to be a pretty big Harry Potter fan, but woah... I had no idea how hard I would get schooled by some of these young fanatics. The funniest moment happened on the first day as I sat at one of the tables with my jaw on the floor as I watched two campers whip Harry Potter trivia back and forth. We had the soundtrack from one of the movies playing in the background and they were butting

heads about which movie one of the songs was from. Neither one would budge. I watched one of their faces go from a look Harry would give his cousin Dudley to the vicious glare in Peter Pettigrew's eye as he murdered Cedric Diggory. Just before I could intervene, this kid whips out her fake wand, points it at the other camper and spits, "Expelliarmus!" (That's the disarming charm, for those who aren't familiar.) It was truly one for the books and I now plan on offering a session during future staff training weeks that covers how to handle campers who meddle in dark magic.



CPT (the Craft Porch Team) feels like a little family. We all run to the porch at 9:00 am each morning excited to hang out with each other and have some crazy, funny scenarios with the campers. My first summer on Crafts Staff was in 2012, and I truly feel like I've "grown up" on the porch since then.



As a 17 year-old LTIII, older Craft's Staff members took me under their wing and acted as older siblings, showing me how much fun skills could be. I love Crafts because it feels like a close knit community. Spending time with my staff and continuing to foster that sense of family brings me so, so much joy.



We love teaching kids new crafty skills and sharing the opportunity to express creativity together. I feel like the purest form of myself when I'm on the porch. Crafts has been, and always will be, the part of camp that I hold closest to my heart.

Peace, Love, CPT,

Amy (Cramy) (The Criminal)
Schiman



**Minikani Alumni
Community
Mission Statement**

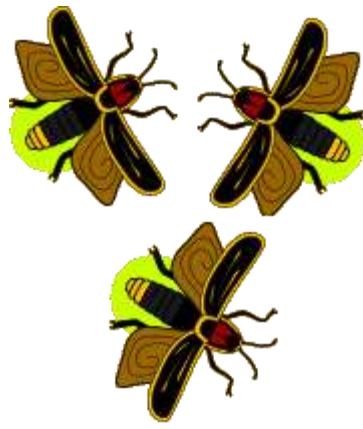
The Minikani Alumni Community is a group of former staff members dedicated to maintaining our connection with our summer homeland. Through acts of fellowship and service, we strive to honor our past experiences, support current summer programming, and preserve Minikani traditions for the future.

Nature Notes

By Bruce

Meg Jones writes in a recent Milwaukee Sentinel Journal article: "Fireflies* are back and they're blinking like crazy this summer. Many backyards, rural roads and fields throughout Wisconsin have turned into miniature versions of the flashing Vegas strip thanks to a soaring firefly population."

"It's a huge year for fireflies in many areas," said UW-Madison entomologist Dan Young, director of UW's insect research collection. "I've never seen this many in my backyard."



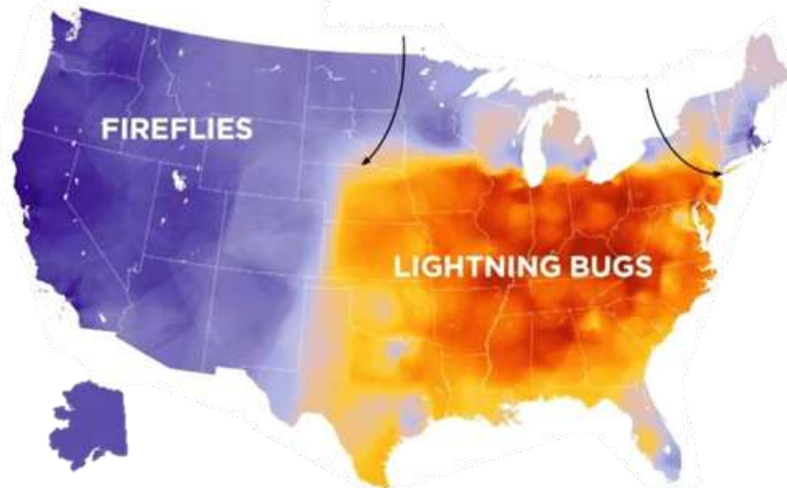
Fireflies like wet, moist conditions, particularly when they're in the larval stage. They prefer dining on slugs as well as millipedes, land snails and other soft-bodied invertebrates that thrive in dampness. So, if it's a good year for slugs, it's a good year for fireflies. And anyone who is in the area knows, it's been a great year for slugs!

Fireflies aren't just showing off with their bright lights. All that flashing creates the equivalent of a firefly single's bar. While females typically perch on grass or fly low to the ground, males zoom around above the females flashing a date-

seeking Morse code. Sparks fly when a female detects an attractive flasher and signals back.

Each firefly species, and there are roughly two dozen in the Great Lakes region, flashes a different signal to attract mates. Some flash only once, some flash multiple times, some flash while flying a pattern. And fireflies, which are beetles, also differentiate themselves with colors; some glow yellow while others are blue or sport a greenish hue.

After mating, fireflies lay their fertilized eggs on or just below the surface of the ground, with the eggs hatching about a month later. Larvae feed for the rest of the summer and then spend the winter still in the larval stage burrowed underground or under tree bark. In late spring, larvae pupate and transform into adults, who wait for warm summer weather to show their 'fireworks' display. Their light-making ability relies on a series of protein/enzyme reactions that produces a cold light, unlike the warm light we are familiar with from a light bulb.



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

*Fireflies Vs. Lightning Bugs: Since Minikani is on the border between the two different names for the same insect, both terms are used interchangeably. Since I grew up in Illinois, I remember catching "lightening bugs", not 'fireflies' as a child.



ALUMNI REUNION 2017

**1:00 p.m. Saturday August 26th
To Noon Sunday August 27th**

Come for the Day, or stay the Weekend

**Enjoy all your favorite Camp Activities:
Lake, Pool, Challenge, Archery, etc.
Activities for Adults & Children
Dining Hall meals, Late-Night Snack,
Campfires, Friends**

**Early Bird Tickets for Adults, Youth & Children until
8/12**

**Use the link below for Information
And to buy tickets.**



A Reunion of Old & New Friends