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NEWSLETTER

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Thanks To: Lloyd LaRoque, Peter Drews, Kendall Dowsett, Lauren Haack, Julia Goebel, Kathy Swift, Hillary Lobenstein, and Carl Fuldner

Bruce Rasmussen, Editor
BruceRass@gmail.com



History (n) 1. The study of past events, particularly in human affairs. 2. The whole series of past events connected with a particular person or thing.

Welcome to the 33rd 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 what's going on at Camp Minikani.

With that in mind, we take a look at some of camp's history with stories of past skits, our camp song, and air quality. There's also a summary of MAC's own history and accomplishments. For more recent history you can read what happened this summer at camp, all about our four campership kids, and our Reunion Weekend last August.

Stay tuned for future Newsletters for a look into the future at camp. (Don't forget - the 100th year celebration of camp's founding is coming up quickly... **Save the date: July 20, 2019 = Huge. Giant. Party.**)

Of course you know what people say about say about history: It repeats itself. With any luck (and a lot of hard work) Camp Minikani and its Spirit will continue to repeat itself over and over for thousands of kids and staff for many years to come.

"If you can read the past, you can read the future – for they are both ends of the same thread, with the present positioned firmly in the middle."



Camp Skits

By Bruce

Remember this classic skit? One kid is already ‘on stage’ when another walks past him. “Nice shirt – where is you get it?” the first kid asks. “Marshall Field” says the second kid. Then another kid walks by and the first kid says “Nice shorts – where did you get them?” “Marshall Filed” is again the reply. The kids keep coming (depending on how many kids you have in your cabin) and the first kid admires a different article of clothing, which always comes from “Marshall Field”. At the end of the skit the first kid is the only one standing there when a last kid surprises him running across Council Bluff wearing nothing but his underwear. The first kid asks him “Who are you?” and the nearly naked kid answers “Marshall Field”.

I think I first saw that skit in 1970, only the kid’s name was Robert Hall. Through my 22 years at camp he became J. Riggins, J C Penny, Joseph Banks and LL Bean, to name a few. I even saw one rendition performed by a girl’s cabin. Each of the girls had a pillow stuffed under their obviously large clothing items that came from Lane Bryant.

As you are probably aware, clothing styles have changed a lot over Minikani’s 98 years. My first couple of years at camp the whole male waterfront staff (about 8 people) wore matching speedo swimsuits. Back then, wearing a bandana was an important part of any self-respecting counselor’s look.



In 1982 when the new camp director, Emil Haugen, outlawed ‘flip-flops’ at Minikani because of safety reasons, no one knew what he was talking about – we had always called them ‘thongs’.

Hillary (Phelps) Lobenstein has come up with a great idea. She suggested we survey the alumni (you) and ask you to share some of the items that were important to wear back when you were at camp. What kinds of ‘styles’ did a camper or counselor need to be cool? She suggests that Texas (*Footwear Built For The Adventurous Spirit*) and North Face jackets were essentials in the 1990s. Apparently, today’s staff wears their Chaco sandals even in the winter (with wool socks) because they think they are so cool.

How about it? Send us a quick email with your ideas about the fashions and styles when you were at camp, and you may get your name in the next Newsletter!

minikanistafflodge@gmail.com



Helping Kids

University of California Global Health Institute recently honored Lauren Haack as an advocate for Latino kids. She is a 2016-17 GloCal fellow and was recently appointed to the UCSF faculty as an assistant professor and attending psychologist in the Department of Psychiatry.



She spent time in Culiacán, Mexico, with a research project that offered a model for helping kids with ADHD: treat their parents, caregivers and teachers. She recruited students in first through fifth grades, along with families and school personnel, in a six-week program aimed at developing “positive strategies” to manage kids with ADHD. (See story [here](#)). In the end, “the outcomes and improvements were significant,” said Haack.

When asked, Lauren reported that her interest in child health is rooted in her experience as a summer counselor at YMCA Camp Minikani. Congratulations on keeping the positive spirit of Minikani with you as you continue to support and help kids today.



The Camp Song

By Lloyd LaRoque

Minikani, like all camps, has had a long tradition of singing and always had more than its share of songs that were loud and fast, not exactly melodic. Almost all the songs that I can think of, even "Titanic", ended up with shouting in a key never heard before. In reality a lot of the songs were screamed more than sung. From what I can still hear in the summer at this end of the lake, not much has changed, except perhaps that they are even louder and last longer. I had thought when I was at camp that the Minikani Spirit was often **Minikani Loud**. But, of course that isn't true. The screaming was fun.

In my 35 years at Minikani I had plenty of opportunities to spend time at both girl's and boy's Unit Campfires. Often the boys would be chanting cheers or screaming "Three Black Crows or Boom Chicka Boom", two good screamers. Meanwhile, the girls would actually be singing quiet melodic songs which made listening a pleasure.



Once I complimented the girl's unit director on the campfire the previous night and the nice singing. She told me that a lot of the girl's staff called Minikani "Camp Shout-a-lot" and suggested I should change the name of the camp from Minikani to "Shout-a-lot"

The original camp song, "Minikani, Minikani, Camp we Love So Well" was written in the 1930's. The melody was taken from the Wisconsin Fight Song, but the person who wrote the lyrics remains unknown today. On the other hand, I wrote the lyrics for the song, "Among the Woodlands and the Rolling Hillsides" in 1967. Here's how it came to be:

One night I was stuck being all camp O.D and was sitting on the steps listening to Taps. The popular song "This Land is your Land" had caught on across the country in the turbulent 60's. I went back to the office that night and wrote the words for "Among the Woodlands." The next day I introduced the new song in the dining hall singing and it caught on right away. For me, the words express my feelings even after all these years. "And the fun I've had there and the friends I've made there, will last my whole life through."



2017 MAC Holiday Party

WHEN: Saturday, December 23rd

WHERE: Third Space Brewing
(1505 W St Paul Avenue
Milwaukee, WI)

WHO: All alumni and friends

CLICK on the link below for more information and to buy tickets.



The Minikani Song

Among the woodlands and the
rolling hillsides
Stands Minikani my summer
homeland
And the fun I've had there and the
friends I've made there
Will last my whole life through.

Chorus:


Now I'm a rambler and I'm a rover
But Minikani's my camp forever
And though I leave her, I won't
forget her
Minikani, I'm coming back to you

Round the glowing campfire in the
evening stillness
'Neath the starry brightness I've felt
a rightness
And I know my dreams there, what
I've said and done there
Will be my joy for evermore

Chorus

From the 1st MAC Newsletter,
October 2009

"I Remember" by Tom Trester

◆ In the late sixties, I remember celebrations revolving around the 50th anniversary and heated discussions regarding the proposed building of a new dining hall and attached pool area. The years may pass by quickly, new structures may be built, programming may change, but Minikani's spirit continues to weave its thread through our memories. 



Progress Report 2017

MAC Progress Report

We've had a great run. Started in 2009 at the very first Alumni Weekend, a group of very interested former staff members (alumni) started the Minikani Alumni Community. Membership, which was open and free to anyone who ever worked at camp, quickly rose to over 350. With the primary goal being to maintain a connection with our summer homeland, we became a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to giving back to Minikani in many ways.



Through acts of fellowship and service, we've been very successful in living up to our mission. The following is a summary of some of our successes, all made possible by the hundreds of volunteers, participants, benefactors, and supporters of the MAC.

Our financial efforts have allowed us to raise over \$36,000 from our generous members. We've collected an additional \$26,000 from



our annual Holiday events. We've given this money back to Minikani through

sponsoring 35 camperships (\$37,000), gifts to Minikani (\$17,000), special projects (\$7,000), and staff appreciation parties (\$1,700). We no longer ask our members to make donations to us, but instead to focus on giving gifts directly to Minikani. (See "Donations" next column.)

We've maintained a website with Events, a Camp Store, Staff Lists, and easy access to our 32 quarterly published Newsletters. Our 9 annual Holiday Events have brought together alumni in the spirit of both celebration and fund raising.

"Dinner Around the World" each March has connected many 100's of alumni in their own



part of the world. We've sponsored Workdays at camp, with a handful of alumni putting in 1,000's of 'people-hours' of work to make camp an even better place. Finally, our 5 Alumni Weekends/Reunions have given members a chance to come home to Minikani and re-connect with old and new friends.

As a group that's completely voluntary and non-professional, we've organized, met, fund-raised, worked, planned, shared, and created a Community of Alumni who treasure their Minikani memories and continue to live in the Spirit of those memories. We all care about campers, staff, traditions, and the continued successful future of Minikani. Though we leave her, we won't forget her, and this is our way to keep coming back to her.



Donations

Members have contacted us (minikanistafflodge@gmail.com) and asked about donations to the MAC. For the past 2 years we have not had a membership campaign during the month of May. Instead, we've asked our members to consider giving directly to Minikani. That allows us to focus on planning great activities to keep you connected to Minikani, and gives camp the opportunity to accept your donations. Here's part of a recent request from Minikani:

Dear Alumni,

Please continue to support camp and ensure the Minikani Magic reaches as many children as possible. You are each a vital part of camp and I look forward to working with you as we head towards our 100th Anniversary in 2019. If you are able to give a gift, use the link below and be sure to choose Minikani from the drop down menu. That will ensure each dollar raised goes towards camperships.

In the Spirit,

Jon F. McLaren

Make a Gift to Minikani



Camperships '17

By Kendall Dowsett

Hello MAC! For the fourth summer in a row now, I've been lucky enough (thanks to all of you!) to send some of my awesome students up to Minikani to experience the magic we all know so well. This year I sent FOUR kids to camp, a couple veterans and a couple first-timers, and they had an absolute blast!!! Before I give you a little info about each one of these wonderful kiddos, I want to say a special thank you to Jon McLaren, Peter Drews, and all of the current staff members who made this an amazing summer for my students. You are truly changing lives!!

The oldest of my kids, Miguel, returned for his FOURTH summer this year as a two-weeker in the boys unit!! Miguel absolutely loves camp, and I think this was the best year yet for him. Miguel's mother is in jail and his father has not sought guardianship, so he lives with his grandma and sister. Miguel is in desperate need for positive role models, and the reason I wanted to send him to camp in the first place was because I knew he'd find the examples he needs at camp. Adding

to an awesome list that began with David Demet, he had yet another wonderful counselor this year in Cabin 12, Eric, who tied his first rag! We all know how special that Blue Rag is when you're 12, and he was proudly sporting it at the campfire on Friday when I visited. So awesome to see!

Ivan was my other "veteran" camper, returning this year for his second summer but his first time as a two-weeker in the boys unit. He had an absolute blast!! Ivan can quite simply be characterized as "that camper." He's quirky, he's funny, he gobbles up camp lore like it's nobody's business, and he's clearly established quite a reputation for himself. Special thanks to Crafts Director Amy Schiman, Wellness Director Rachel Whaley, and Waterfront Director Grace Leonhardt for fueling his intrigue in all the staff legends, particularly Ed Foot, the Bugle Boy, and Belunda. I think spending two weeks on the waterfront in Cabin 18 was a dream come true for him, though that ever elusive whale is quite frustrating at times!!! ;)

Yurem was one of my first-timers this year and he had an absolute blast in the Boys Unit as a one-weeker! Yurem is the kind of

kid who is down for anything, and camp really brought out his active spirit! He shot bbs, played disc golf, and had a blast on the tramp-op-oline with his cabin. His counselor Adam in Cabin 11 made sure all the dudes got along, and when I asked at pick up who is best bud in the cabin was, he replied, "I can't pick just one, they were all my best buds!" How cool is that?! There was also a lot of talk about Mr. Smooth (BUD Ryan Ballentine) on the way home, too, another male role model for the history books!! :)

Last but not least, Evelyn, my first GUber, had a great time with her counselor Sheila in the girls unit! Evelyn is the youngest in a family from Togo, Africa. Her eldest siblings are much older, and her sibling David, who is closest to her in age, is on the spectrum for Autism. Evelyn needs a lot of work with accountability and responsibility, and I knew she would get the social therapy she needed at camp!! Special thanks to GU Director Grace Barlow for taking special time to work with Evelyn and ensure that she and her cabin mates had the best week possible. It was so much fun reliving life in the GU with her when the week was done!!! :) (Continued next page)



So as you can see, MAC, your support goes a long way for these kids. I *so, so* appreciate it, and so do they!! Driving up to camp with the four of them, the two veterans giving FULL run downs of what to expect to the newbies, was such a rewarding experience. The excitement was overflowing out the windows of the car as we raced up to Wisconsin for that opening bugle! Furthermore, it was a particularly special year for me, because the kids who filled my cabins as a counselor, and the Ts who filled the bunks in the lodge during my summer as LT director, were now the ones running camp. They were in charge of the BU and GU, (wo)manning skill areas like waterfront, AC, WSA, and the craft porch, and killing it as LT, Minicamp, and Day camp Directors. It was truly a full circle summer for me as I left my students at a camp that was managed and run by those kids who were now adults, who I looked at 8-10 years ago and saw as "the future of camp." Now that future was really here, and those adults I knew as kids were preparing to leave camp themselves, entrusting it to the next "future." I was touched at password on Saturday morning, the last password of the summer, as Max Leonhardt said good-bye after so many years. I was reminded of one of my last trips to Bear Lake as an explorer counselor in 2008, when I watched my brother counselor Casey Cox wrestle little Max into the sand without mercy. I was also reminded of my own last day at camp in 2011, and how hard it was to say good bye. And I reminded myself that 8-10 years from now, another kid will be saying good bye to Camp for the last time, maybe even one of my own. Camp is a constant cycle of friendships, personalities, and experiences shared by different

people within the same space. The faces change, but the magic and the spirit stays the same. If you've had the pleasure of picking up a child, or a student, or even a younger sibling after a week or two at camp, you know what I'm talking about. And I hope everyone gets the chance to experience it someday, just like I believe every kid should have the opportunity to experience camp the way we did. It's an incredible thing to witness!! :)



Summer 2017

By Peter Drews

Dear Minikani Alumni Community,

I write to you from a Minikani creeping towards full Fall color, but it still feels like summer just left. What a summer! I'm consistently asked the question "How was your summer?" I find that question so hard to answer. In so many ways, this summer was just like the last summer, which was just like the one before. Sure, maybe there were some different skills offered, or we added a few more campers, but the most elemental content of camp stayed exactly the same. Campers were empowered to try something new. They lived with people that they otherwise would never have interacted with. They set meaningful goals for themselves about themselves, maybe for the first time in their entire lives. That all happened, and will keep happening as long as we are fortunate enough to live in a world with Minikani. But you all know that already! So in the next paragraphs, I will try to highlight a few things about camp that gave unique color to summer 2017.

Norris Field Festival

In recent years, our unit directors have banded together once a summer to put together an all-camp unit day. This year, they invited a professional band from New York called "Let's Be Leonard" out to perform a set. Some current camp performers performed as openers (notably, "The Blazing Guitars," featuring a first year counselor, the Boys Unit Director, an LT Director, and the Assistant Summer Camp Director), other administrators ran field games, face painting, a dunk tank, and other activities. The band came in a giant pink bus, and even performed a song for us after dinner. It was an awesome time, and a memory our campers and staff will both share for a long time.



Slingshots, Mountain Bikes, Jungle Quest

Camp played host to over 3,000 day and overnight campers this past summer. That's a lot of kids, and they need a lot of skills. To that end, we introduced two new skills this summer: slingshots and mountain biking. As I'm sure many of you know, the slingshot range was largely built during our Alumni Work day this past spring. The Wilderness Skill Area staff led that particular skill, and many pots and pans were dented, desserts wagered, and good times had. Our mountain biking skill was made possible by Fyxation Bicycles out of Milwaukee.

(Continued next page)

They donated bikes to us, and our kids made the most of them. Trails were shredded all over camp, and even better from a summer camp director's perspective, there weren't any serious injuries.

A core part of why the Minikani experience is special is the counseling staff. We have incredible counselors that plan really cool things. Like Jungle Quest. For 3 days, hundreds of campers spent a skill hour completing challenges all across camp, leveling up their own personal character, designing swords out of cardboard (or whatever else they could find), and battling bosses. The amount of effort our staff went to in order to make a magical experience for our kids was immense and definitional. That skill showed how talented our staff is, and what lengths they are willing to go to make sure kids have unique experiences here.

Hojo's Circus

We had a lot of rain this summer. Rainy days can be extra fun – who doesn't like puddle jumping? But multiple days of thunderstorms trapping you inside can be a drag. Enter our creative staff. Max Leonhardt and his exceptional team of skill heads brought camp a new indoor evening activity called Hojo's Circus. They designed a giant wheel, with each of our counselors' names occupying a space. Each round, three counselors were called (by the wheel, of course) to compete in an absurd spectacle of a challenge. For example, a characteristic challenge featured three kiddie pools full of grapes. Whichever of the three counselors could crush the most grapes with their butts in 30 seconds was deemed the victor. Before each round, each cabin got to guess which counselor would win, and by

the end we crowned a cabin champion of the circus. It was honestly the best rainy day I've had at camp since joining staff.

As I wrote at the top, these events were just some color of Minikani's 98th summer. The core of the camper and staff experience remains exactly as I've always experienced. Kids have a blast here, they learn here, and they grow here. I count myself extremely lucky to have spent this past summer at Minikani.

In the Spirit,

Peter Drews
Summer Camp Director



By Julia (Wehling) Goebel



(Photo by Myles Hayes)

◆ What is your history at camp?

I first came to camp as 10 year old, with my friend Erin Whitcomb. That was the only time I spent less than a week at Minikani! I fell in love with

this special place immediately. For the next nine years, Camp was the definition of my summers through 1996.

◆ Any particularly 'fond' memories of camp?

So many memories are fond...but I have special memories of being on the Waterfront as an LT and counselor. We played a lot of Weezer...music defines so much of camp, to me.

I also woke up my cabins every morning by playing the Jackson Five "A B C" and yelling "Good Morning Cabin 5!" They're scarred for life...in a good way, I hope!

When I think of kids – and there are so many memories – I remember a camper in swimming lessons who confided something personal. The trust in allowing me to help her float seemed to unlock a secret which had been weighing on her deeply – she had been abused.

◆ Do you have a special "place" at camp?

When I come back, I find seeing the lake always makes me feel a sense of calm... I like to visit the canoe drop-in on the way to Cabins 18 & 19 near Turtle Bay because it's tucked away and made quiet by the willow trees. And from there I walk back and think of all the crazy things we did as waterfront staff to help kids have an incredible experience.

◆ Please tell us about your family.

I have two kids, Nick (11) and Sophie (9), who my husband Ben and I think are pretty exceptional. Last summer was Nick's second and Sophie's first year and they had

(Continued on next page)



incredible experiences in Cabins 11 and 5. It's now their camp, our camp – not just Mom's camp. We sang camp songs as recently as two days ago; I know more than ever the impact counselors make on kids carries on through the school year. (Big thanks to Peter and Erica)

◆ Any special skills you developed at camp?

Certainly confidence, in so many ways. I was a somewhat shy 12 and 13-year-old Explorer who desperately wanted to come back to camp as an LT. My family had moved from Brookfield to Chicago over the summer between 7th and 8th grade, and in my view, if I made the LT program, the Camp experience and my "Wisconsin Life" could continue. The entire camp experience, goal-setting, and my counselors during these years – Amy Dowd Maxwell, Julie Nitka McLaren – helped me find confidence, to share more of myself and learn to shine.



◆ Tell us what work you do now.

I've been working in marketing and advertising for most of my career; nearly 20 years. I love the connections between technology and health – and at [Benefitexpress](#), we're focused on helping people understand and gain the most of their health benefits. I lead a team of marketers as

well as virtual team of freelance writers and designers.

Throughout my time as a marketer, the rewards have come in terms of growing a team, delivering results, mentoring others and occasionally giving advice when asked...I am also on the board of directors of a nonprofit called [The Network](#), which is a membership organization for almost 50 Chicago service providers and shelters focused on ending domestic and family violence.

I know the transition to working in business, marketing or sales is a different path than most from Minikani. I find I can relate well to alumni in these roles, and helping find the good in even tough work experiences. All the experiences – even hard ones – matter in shaping who you are.

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

Transitions are huge. When I went to the University of Missouri for Journalism school, I was happy to find Camp was here as well – Andy Mendelson, the longtime Boys Unit Director was completing his PhD in photojournalism. Seeing "BUD"

was a wonderful, welcome touchpoint on campus.

Following summers at camp, I began interning to gain business experience. My first job out of college was with the business consulting firm Accenture. I looked up to Matt "Tree" Gelb – not just for his height, but also for his advice that consulting was good field and they valued unique experiences like being a camp counselor. I liked the emphasis on diversity of backgrounds and that was a good launching point into other roles over time.

◆ If you could go back, is there anything you would do differently?

Quite frankly, I might have stayed longer as counselor! I began internships earlier than I probably needed to – but I think it makes me appreciate my camp memories more. Now I get to re-live camp as a parent, through my kids' eyes.

◆ Anything else you'd like to share with Minikani alumni?

I'd love to build a LinkedIn network for camp alumni to connect and help each other in business and life. One was started one about 10 years ago and the time is right to reboot.



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)

Reunion Weekend

By Kathy (Kay) Swift

Kathy (Kay) Swift left Minikani in 1988 and never came back – until the Alumni Reunion weekend last August. She brought her husband and 7 kids along with her and had a great time. Here's their story:

Our family trip to the Alumni Reunion weekend was a birthday present to me from my husband and children - Molly (14), Jerry (13), Max (12), Grace (10), John (8), James (7), and Jane (2). Over the summer I spent quite a bit of time and drove almost 3,000 miles shuttling kids to various camps from our home in Illinois. This trip was for mom, and we all had a great time. Knowing that the Alumni Weekend is bi-annual, I didn't want to miss it. This meant skipping our local county fair entirely. The children are in 4-H, it is a big deal to voluntarily not enter the fair. It was also a big undertaking, bedding and towels alone for 9 people for one night? Crazy. We brought more for 1 night that I used to bring for 2 weeks of camp. The tradeoff was not having to worry about meals!

I had not been at Minikani since 1988 – that's 29 years ago. That year is noteworthy as at least one staffer working the weekend told me that was 'the year she was born'. I kept many of the details of camp amenities and any pictures of camp from the kids to surprise them. I looked online and was amazed at the variety of camps/day camps and other offerings. It must be quite a busy place in the summer. When I was a camper, there was camp, and maybe an extra week specialty camp. I went to 'bike camp' twice after the regular season.



Despite MAC's careful instructions about the construction, I missed the old entrance to camp entirely and was very impressed with the new and updated facilities and welcoming drive. Overall, I was amazed at how much had changed and how much I had forgotten. I had to go into the Halquist Lodge and get a map! The horses moved (again). I had difficulty getting my bearings a couple of times and remembering where things used to be. The updated showers are very nice.

I resisted the urge to make the kids haul their own gear from Norris field and we drove up into the Girls' Indian Unit. The kids chose #4, Comanche. They quickly claimed the upper bunks, and we loaded up to go to the opening meeting and explore. After the meeting, we divided up between the waterfront with mom and adventure course with dad. The younger kids also played on the tennis courts and the boulder wall. My 7 year old had a sore back

from walking around in the lake bent over looking for the 'red rock'. I have since hidden a red rock in the yard and anyone who wants to help weed or water can find it. We regrouped together and spend the rest of 'free-time' on the waterfront. The paddle boards were a big hit with the older kids.

They loved the dining hall experience, but I missed the old, round tables. I forgot about the light up board in the Dining Hall. Best idea ever. I now have something similar (dry erase) to instruct the kids on what to set on the table for dinner. *(Continued on next page)*



There were a couple of after-dinner songs that were new to me, including what may be new ways to celebrate birthdays (serenade style!). It was fun to see the traditions that have emerged and appreciate that the culture of Minikani is always evolving.



We went on a nice family walk to Pine forest. Hiking down from Explorer Hill in the dark with a toddler in a sling was interesting. We realized the next day that there was probably a more level path we could have chosen. Treehouse gone! Much sadness over that. The evening campfire was tamer (smaller) than I recall. Some seasoned Minikani youth organized skits, which was super fun to watch, both for their originality and their self-confidence in getting up in front of so many people. We had a small campfire for a few families spending the night in the Indian Unit.

In the morning, another great camp breakfast and hiking. The older kids went into Robertson Lodge early Sunday morning to try and get Reveille to play. They were very anxious to wake up the staff to open the waterfront. I had to remind them that this event was also for the younger alumnae too and they deserved to sleep in, as they were probably up a little later than us. So we hiked all over camp again in the rain. I was glad so many buildings were accessible to show the kids. I would have bet money that Kossow Lodge had a small galley kitchen. They liked the apple tree at the entrance to the Indian unit and enjoyed imagining the camper who tossed an apple from the orchard into the woods years ago and unknowingly planted that tree. We saw a pair of sandhill cranes on Norris Field. We played ga-ga ball in the enclosures.

My 14 year old apparently has a "bucket list". I am not sure how she even knows what that is. However, she was excited that in about 5 hours she eliminated at least half of the items on her list. We covered every inch of the camp, even in the rain. Twice. My husband's favorite moment was probably on the lake on Sunday. I was in a canoe with a child. He had a rowboat with the youngest and one other. One was swimming, others were kayaking

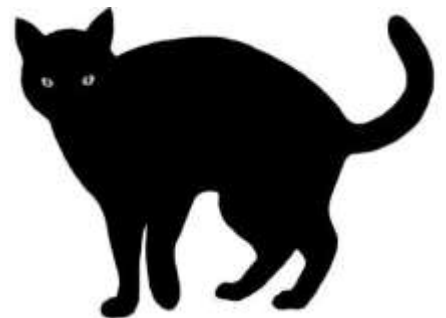


and/or paddle-boarding. He thought it was neat that we were all on the lake in one capacity or another, yet doing so many different activities.

We raised our kids in municipal Chicago until about 5 years ago. We lived on a corner lot on a busy street and while we spent a lot of time downtown, they were rarely outside. They embrace the outdoors now and were our county forest preserve's "volunteer family of the year" in 2016.



After the weekend, my husband said the van "smelled like camp", which was a good thing. Doing an epic amount of laundry (remember, 9 sleeping bags) the next day, I realized that camp does have a smell, damp cedar, pine and lots of memories? I was tempted to cut a swatch off of a sleeping bag and mail it to my fellow Minikani attendee sister as aromatherapy, but sadly, after a day or so the smell faded, while the experiences do not. I'm sure the kids are going to remember this weekend forever.



Nature Notes

"Dirty Birds" By Bruce

Whose name has recently been found in such prestigious publications as the Washington Post, BBC World News, New York Times, Popular Science, Discover, and now in the MAC Newsletter? That's right, Minikani alumnus Carl C. Fuldner.

Carl, a historian, and environmental biologist Shane DuBay, both graduate students at the University of Chicago, took a look at 1,347 various stuffed birds found in three "Rust Belt" museum collections. The birds had been collected, stuffed, and added to the museum collections over the last 135 years. Carl and Shane found varying degrees of black oily residue, or soot, on the birds' feathers, the result of varying air pollution. Their study helps to document how over the last 100 years the use of coal as an energy source has changed.

Below is a picture of 2 grasshopper sparrows, the top one from 1907 and the bottom one from 1996, that's worth 1,000 words:

The dirtiest birds were found from 1880 to 1929. When the Great Depression hit with its economic crash, there was a reduction in industrial activity and less soot to dirty the birds. But soot levels increased on the birds during WWII and through the late 1940's. At that time homeowners began to shift from heating their homes with coal to using cleaner natural gas and petroleum. The birds collected since the clean air legislations of the 60's and 70's have shown the cleanest feathers.

Probably none of the biologists who collected, stuffed and preserved these 1,000+ birds over time had any idea that one day they would be used by Carl and his partner to study atmospheric science. It makes you wonder what other things Carl can discover as he continues his historic research.

To see the full scientific article in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences use this link:
<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2017/10/04/1710239114>



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.

