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Thanks To: Perry LaRoque, Jen Feltz, Lisa Albregts, Matt Sullivan, Perry Bump, and Grace Weber

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MINIKANI
ALUMNI
COMMUNITY
I'm comin' home to you...

NEWSLETTER

“Camp Dinner Around the World”

By Perry LaRoque, Alumni Board Director

I remember arriving to Madison as a freshman, and although I was excited to start college, I was nervous for this new chapter in my life. Just when that hint of homesickness set in, I received a call from Gabe Gross about the first Madison Camp Dinner of the year. I had remembered a monthly Camp Dinner held by my parents where people like Bruce Rasmussen, Greg Valde, and John & Joan Tompsett would come over to eat together and play games. But this was the first I had learned that these informal camp dinners were still happening across the country. Upon arriving at Gabe's, all the familiar faces from the summer were there and I once again felt at home. It seemed like no matter what city I moved to or visited, impromptu camp dinners were organized and no matter where I went, I always felt close to camp.

This year we will be hosting the Inaugural “Camp Dinner Around the World” on March 5, 2011. We already have 25 dinners planned in 4 countries and we want you to join us in your region. You will find a list of Camp Dinners happening around the world on page 6 at the end of this newsletter. You can also visit the website for an interactive map of the dinners around the world. We hope that you will R.S.V.P. to your local camp dinner host and join in the celebration of Minikani Alumni everywhere. If you can't find one nearby, it's not too late to host and/or cook up some Mock Chicken or Stew's Pot on your own and join in on the gathering. We will be creating several interactive ways for all of the dinners to be connected, including a live webcast. We hope you will find your way home to Minikani in your region and join us as we celebrate the Minikani Spirit around the world.



See Page 6 for a complete listing of dinner hosts and locations – You're Invited to join them!

“Minikani Night” Promotions

Jen Feltz, Camp Director, is looking for alumni to help her promote campers for this coming summer. She would love to have alumni consider hosting a “Minikani Night” sometime this spring. The night would consist of you, the alumni, inviting a group of your friends together who have kids who are of camp age, and then letting them learn more about camp. It could take place in your home or any other venue (school cafeteria, community room at your church, etc.). An hour of time would be spent by you, your friends, and some people from Minikani all talking about camp, answering questions and handing out brochures. There’s usually a little food and socializing thrown in for good measure.

Jen realizes that ‘word of mouth’ is the number one way to recruit new campers, and using the alumni network is a great way to make this happen. What better way for you to give back to your camp than to help others learn more about it? If you’re interested, call camp (262-251-9080) or email Jen (jfeltz@ymcamke.org) to discuss the possibilities. Do it now, before the summer sessions are all filled.



Best Friends

Book Review

Do you think your experiences at camp would ever help you write a book? Lisa (Martiny) Albregts was a counselor at Minikani in the late ‘80s. In 1998, she co-authored a book, Best Friends: Tons of Crazy, Cool Things to Do with Your Girlfriends by Lisa Albregts and Elizabeth Cape, Published by Chicago Review Press.

She says of her experience, “We wrote the book to give girls a resource for games and activities that encourage friendship and camaraderie. The book follows the seasons and offers up many ideas for fun parties and crafts--and along the way, offers up encouragement and advice on how to be a better friend to all. Liz and I pulled many of the activities from our own childhoods (and from camp too!) and did many workshops around the Chicago area (where we both lived at the time) that focused on how girls could nurture their friendships and be true to themselves at the same time.” →

The book is out of print now, but gently used copies are available from Amazon.com “for pennies on the dollar.” Lisa has since moved to New Jersey with her husband and four kids, but the two oldest boys, Sam and Jack, still go to Minikani in the summer.



Future Events

Camp Dinner Around the World

Saturday, March 5, 2011

See the article on page 1 and the list of Dinner Hosts on page 6 for information.

Spring Work Day

Saturday, April 16, 2011

Camp Minikani

Bring the whole family to camp for this bi-annual Work Day. This day coincides with the LT Weekend.

2nd Annual Fun Run

May, 2011

Camp Minikani

Staff Training Alumni Dinner

Wednesday, June 15, 2011

Camp Minikani

Come and meet the staff for Summer, 2011.

Alumni Weekend

August 20-21, 2011

Camp Minikani

Mark your calendar now!



Winter Camp

Past & Present

Winter Camp 2010 was a ‘blast’. It included a Marshmallow party, Clubs, frozen fun on Lake Amy Belle, and a trip to Sunburst Ski Hill for tubing, skiing and snow-boarding. There was also a New Year’s Eve-Eve-Eve party with lots of carnival booths, snacks and a guest appearance from Buzz Light Year.



Winter Camps in the 70’s and 80’s were always fun. Every December 27-29 was set aside for a ‘Reunion’ time, when campers, Lt’s and staff would get together for a couple days at Minikani. Sometimes there was snow (about 50% of the time), but it didn’t seem to matter much.

The first afternoon back then was always Cabin Activity time. If there was no snow for sledding, etc., there was always Winter Capture the Flag in Pine Forest and sliding on Mud Lake ice for fun. In the evening we’d watch 16 mm films in the Dinning Hall. (For those of you born after 1980, ask your parents about watching 16 mm films!)

After a couple of too-scary vampire movies in the early 70’s, the titles were all PG rated Disney type movies. We even saw the original “Tron” movie one year. After the movie it would be snack time. Who can forget the re-heated frozen hot dogs that Ethel provided? →

The next day usually included an open swim time at a local high school’s swimming pool, and an exciting game of All-Camp Bingo. The much sought after prizes of candy bars and T shirts helped clear out the previous summer’s inventory at the camp store. The last day of Winter Camp always featured the Winter Olympics, planned and run by the next year’s LT III’s. Events included sled races, fire building, shovel pulls, human pyramid building, and card-houses built in the warm Dinning Hall.



There are two memories of Winter Camp I’ll never forget. One Winter Camp we got permission to sled and toboggan down Carter Well’s Hill, the giant hill across the road from Indian Hill. Boy, could you get going on that hill. Unfortunately, there was a steady stream of customers to the emergency room in the Falls for x-rays and stitches. It was memorable, all right.

The other memory comes from one of the Winter Camps without snow. Brad Seibel got his cabin up extra early one morning. Later, when the whole camp reported to the flagpole for breakfast, they were greeted by a family of snowmen, made out of cardboard boxes, milk crates, broom handles, and white mattress covers taken from their bunks. Who says Minikani counselors don’t know how to turn a negative into a positive?



New Alumni Website Coming

First of all, thank you to everyone who had accessed the Alumni Website at minikanistafflodge.com. In the near future, when you go to that ‘url’ you will see a brand new website. This ‘state of the art’ site will include everything the old site has and more. Watch your email for announcements about the new site.

Alumni Fund Raiser – Winter Event 2010

‘Twas the day after Christmas, and all through the bowling alley, every creature was stirring, and having a great time. There was bowling, billiards, eating, drinking, visiting, football watching, and more. Almost 100 alumni gathered together to raise over \$2,500 for summer camperships.

Our thanks go out to everyone who supported the Winter Event on the 26th -- to the Silent Auction donors (and receivers), to those who couldn’t attend but sent a donation anyway, to Perry Bump who supplied liquid refreshment, to Erik Herbst Insurance Company for the football raffle, to the committee who worked so hard to plan the event, and to everyone in attendance who made it so memorable. Thanks.



SpotLight On Alumni

Grace Weber was a camper at Minikani the summers of 2001 and 2002 went through the LT program in 2003-2005, and was a girl's unit counselor for 2006-2007. She graduated from NYU last spring and is currently pursuing a career as a singer/songwriter and recording artist.

Many of you may remember her from her appearance on the Oprah Winfrey Show, having been handpicked by Oprah from hundreds of thousands of entrants in a national video contest. I had a chance to interview Grace and ask her about her "Minikani" connection.

1. Any favorite memories of camp? My LT2 trip definitely sticks out as a favorite. Not only did we have an absolutely incredible time at the camping ground we went to, but it was on that trip that I bonded with a group of people I still call my best friends to this day.

Another one of my favorite memories was singing at the closing campfire for the first time. As a camper, I was so nervous to sing in front of the entire camp, but my counselor was so supportive and encouraging that I only felt excited by the time I stepped in front of Council Bluff. The reaction after I sang was one of the coolest things I had ever experienced and I just felt so happy and proud. That also stays as one of my favorite singing memories.

2. What skills did you develop? I think the most valuable thing I learned from camp was how to be selfless. As a counselor, you need to be able to put every single need of every kid in your cabin before your own and it's really an amazing experience to have as a young adult transitioning into the "real world." Learning how to be selfless for the kids, my friends, and co-workers at camp gave me a greater sense of empathy and I think made me a deeper and fuller person overall. It helped me grow into the person I am today.



3. What are you doing now? I am currently working on my first solo album. I spent a lot of time this past summer and fall writing and preparing for this record and I'm so proud of all the material that will be on it. I have a Grammy Award winning producer, Mike Mangini, producing the record and he's doing an incredible job. We'll be releasing the record in May or June and will have a big release show in Milwaukee around the same time.

4. How would you describe your music? I think I dabble in a couple different genres, including pop and jazz, but at the core my music always comes back to the 'soul.' I tell stories through my lyrics that I hope can touch people in some way and I always try to sing from an honest place. I like to describe my music as "Indie-Soul" because it's

soul music with a quirky, indie, pop/rock touch. It's very much who I am.

5. Has camp had an influence in you success? Camp had such a huge influence on the person I am today and any successes I've had. Camp taught me lessons about being focused, driven, and creative. Something as simple as putting on a skit at the campfire taught me how to work in a group, be a positive leader, and be confident in myself.

But of all the things I've learned from Camp, I think the most important was how to fully embrace life. I think the best way to describe any Camp Minikani counselor is to say that they absolutely love living life. To be around people like that is so inspiring. When we're at camp, we wake up every morning and spend the entire day finding new ways to have fun and be creative, and expend every resource of energy we have. How many people get to experience days like that? I am so lucky that I got to go to camp.

6. Do you have anything else you'd like to share with Minikani alumni?

Can't wait to see everyone at the next alumni reunion!

Make sure you check out Grace's website at www.graceweber.com. You can stay up-to-date about her new record and its release, listen to some of her songs, and sign up to be on the mailing list.

"Grace has everything going for her, the gift of song and the beauty with which she carries it off." - Ginny Mancini (Wife of the late Henry Mancini and Co-founder of the Society of Singers)



Nature Notes

By Bruce

What would camp be like without fires? No Opening or Closing campfire, no Unit campfire, and no cooking fires when you're camping out. Not even a Cabin campfire on the first evening of the session. It's hard to imagine. But I'm wondering, with all those fires in our collected history, what we've learned about wood-burning fires. We know that not all firewood is created equal. There's the tinder, kindling, and fuel we learn about in skills. We also know that there are big, roaring fires for all camp to enjoy, and the hot-bed of glowing coals that's just right for marshmallows.

For over 90 years the woods at Minikani have provided people with an assortment of trees that have been used for fires. Usually, most of us will take what we can get. The fallen branches from the off-season provide most of our supply. We don't think much about what kind of tree (or bush) it comes from – as long as it will burn. →



The following chart comes from the Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, WI, and might help you if you ever need to buy wood for your home. You see, just like fires, wood comes in many shapes and sizes. But one thing remains true to us alumni – we'll never forget our experiences with others when sitting around a fire. There's an old saying that cutting your own wood will warm you twice – once from the exertion of cutting, chopping, and hauling, and second when you enjoy its heat. Hopefully your memories of fires that once burned at camp will continue to warm your insides while you're away.



Camp Memories

By Perry Bump

I have too many wonderful memories that I cannot just share one, so I am going to share two. The first is singing songs. I remember singing songs passionately, at the top of my lungs, with absolutely no inhibition or concern about what other people thought. I cannot think of another environment where I felt so free to "go with the moment", especially as a self-conscious child and young adult. That to me represented the "magic" that Minikani created.

Second, I remember serving dinner the first night of camp as an LT 1. I could not believe the responsibility I was given or at least felt. The impact on me was huge and of course was fostered throughout the entire LT program. I did not realize it at the time but it changed me forever. I feel indebted to Minikani for that opportunity.



This space is reserved for your camp memory in a future Newsletter:

Don't you have a favorite memory to share? Send it to the Newsletter at BruceRass@wi.rr.com.

Type of Wood	Heat Output	Easy to Burn	Heavy Smoke	Sparks	Rating
White Oak	High	Yes	No	No	Excellent
Beech	High	Yes	No	No	Excellent
Birch White	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Good
ox Elder	Medium	Medium	Medium	No	Fair
Butternut	Low	Medium	Medium	No	Fair
Hickory	High	Yes	No	No	Excellent
Hard Maple	High	Yes	No	No	Excellent
Soft Maple	Medium	Yes	No	No	Good
Elm American	High	Medium	Medium	No	Fair
Basswood	Low	Yes	Medium	No	Fair
Yellow Poplar	Low	Yes	Medium	Yes	Poor
Tamarack	Medium	Yes	Medium	Yes	Fair
Spruce	Low	Yes	Medium	Yes	Poor
Ironwood	Very High	Yes	No	Few	Excellent
Willow	Low	No	Medium	No	Fair

Minikani Board Needs Help

Camp Minikani is in the process of revitalizing their board committees, as well as adding a few new short term task force groups. If anyone is interested in learning more, they can contact Jen Feltz at camp. Participation does not require you to be board member, just a helpful, friendly person :-)

Standing Committees--meet every other month beginning in February at a time and place convenient for those involved. This is a longer term commitment:

- Summer Camp Program
- Environmental Education
- Board Development
- Philanthropy

2011 Task Forces--will meet several times leading up to summer and possible once afterwards. This is a short term commitment to help us with these specific issues.

- Creating a more positive transition for Explorers who are not accepted into the LT/OLT program
- Healthy Staff Culture
- Long Term/Strategic Planning



Dinner Hosts for Saturday, March 5, 2011. Please email a host for your R.S.V.P

Brett Haydin	Salida, CO	bhaydin@hotmail.com
Lisa Martiny Albregts	Mountain Lakes, NJ	lalbregts@me.com
Julie Wehling Goebel	Lombard, IL	julia.goebel@gmail.com
Matthew LaForest	Hollywood, CA	m1a4est@mac.com
Perry Bump	Winfield, IL	pbump@assuranceagency.com
Kelsey (McCourt) Madges	Dayton, OH	cutiemadges@sbcglobal.net
Kevin Wright	Redlands, CA	kevinswright@gmail.com
Maria Lambing	St. Louis, MO	maria.lambing@gmail.com
Andy Mendelson	Philadelphia, PA	amendels@temple.edu
Bradley William Herzing	Austin, TX	chumpo@gmail.com
Heather Neuwirth	Saunderstown, RI	heather.neuwirth@gmail.com
Andrew Matranga	Longmont, CO	andrew.matranga@gmail.com
Bruce Rasmussen	Muskego, WI	brucerass@wi.rr.com
Jason Horowitz	Madison, WI,	jasonlhorowitz@gmail.com
Sean Demet	Vattenverksvägen, Sweden	deme0068@gmail.com
Matt Armstrong	Aliso Viejo, CA	armstrong618@gmail.com
Peter Jorgensen	London, England	oypaj@hotmail.com
Gabe Gross	San Mateo, CA	gabe144@gmail.com
Mike Auda	Chicago, IL	jennyrisch@gmail.com
Calie and Erik Herbst	Milwaukee, WI	caliejoy@gmail.com
Jeff Borling	Duluth, Minnesota	jboring@apexgetsbusiness.com
Erin Erlenborn	Washington, DC	eerlenborn@hotmail.com
Aaron Bell	New York, NY	aaron.morgan.bell@gmail.com
Perry LaRoque	Burlington, VT	perrylaroque@hotmail.com
August Herschede	Whitefish Bay, WI	august.herschede@gmail.com

Check Out These Websites

www.minikanistafflodge.com

This is the main site for the Minikani Alumni Community. Once here, you can click to join the official mailing list. You can also keep up-to-date on all the current happenings of the Community.

www.cafepress.com/alumnicampstore.com

CafePress is where the world shops for custom T shirts and other unique gifts – all with the Minikani Alumni logos.

www.minikani.org

This is the official web site of YMCA Camp Minikani. You can get information on dates for summer camp, check out Minikani's blog, and enjoy a collection of Alumni Photos.

New For Alumni: You can now order Minikani Alumni T Shirts, sweatshirts, caps, kid's clothing, mugs, and lots of other stuff from cafepress.com. Check out the website in the box at the left.

