

75th Anniversary Celebration: August 4, 2002

Schedule of Events on Back

Camp Avoda

Paul G. Davis
Director

Camp Avoda Alumni Board

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President

Jeff Keselman
Treasurer

Ken Shifman
Secretary

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Louis Dennis
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Camp Avoda Board of Directors

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President

Thomas A. Leavitt
Vice President

James Singer
Secretary/Clerk

Martin P. Wolf
Treasurer

Joel Horvitz
Assistant Treasurer

Herbert Bamel
Carl Goldberg
Kenneth Schlossberg

Avoda Alumnus

Special 75th Anniversary Edition of the Camp Avoda Alumni Association Newsletter

Avoda Celebrates 75 Years of Friendship and Fun

*By Thomas A. Leavitt, 1965-1977
Chair, 75th Anniversary Committee*

In 1927, Charles Lindbergh completed his historic solo transatlantic flight. Calvin Coolidge occupied the White House. The price of a first-class stamp was two cents. *The Jazz Singer* became the first full-length “talkie.” And, of course, the New York Yankees won the World Series. But something else happened that year. That summer, on a modest parcel of land on the shore of Lake Tispaquin in Middleboro, Camp Avoda began its first season.

Today, 75 years later, Camp Avoda is still located at “the gateway to Cape Cod.” Today, 75 years later, Camp Avoda is still offering memorable and meaningful experiences to Jewish boys. And today, 75 years later, we are gathered at Camp Avoda to celebrate its diamond anniversary.

We have planned a largely unstructured day for you, so that you can focus your attention and energies on exploring the camp, catching up with old friends, and reveling in your own memories. Most camp facilities are at your disposal (with the exception of sports on the athletic field). The waterfront, volleyball court, tennis courts, and basketball courts are open, and you are welcome to walk around and explore the campus. You will notice that the full camp is in attendance today; nevertheless, feel free to visit any of your former bunks.

After lunch, there will be a short ceremony that will be capped with the dedication of the Camp Avoda Archives. This wonderful new resource is open for your perusal, and is located in the rear of – as it is known today – the Lodge. The Archives was developed and is maintained by the Camp Avoda Alumni Association with the support of the camp’s Board of Directors and alumni like you.

Seventy-five years ago, something called the Avoda Spirit was born. This real though indefinable quality is not found in the soil or the plants or the water at Camp Avoda. Rather, it is something that the camp has inspired in campers and staff for generations, and which continues to be felt by its alumni. You are the Avoda Spirit. You are the reason Camp Avoda is still here after 75 years. Welcome home.

Welcome from the Board of Directors

By Kurt Kleinmann, 1941-1952
President

On behalf of the Camp Avoda Board of Directors, I am pleased to welcome each of you to our 75th anniversary celebration. Though the world has changed quite a bit since 1927, the essence of Camp Avoda has remained the same. Its mission has always been to provide deserving Jewish boys with a summer camping experience that emphasizes leadership, friendship, and fun. We certainly hope that today will be fun for you as you recall old memories and rekindle old relationships.

My first exposure to Avoda was in 1941. I was 11 years old and had arrived by myself from Vienna that March into the loving care of Judge Samuel Barnet and his sisters Sarah, Kate, and Esther. They became my foster family. "Uncle Sam," of course, was one of the founders of Camp Avoda, and he sent me there that summer in spite of my lack of English. Avoda

thus became the place where I not only felt safe but also made early friendships. I owe everything to Judge Barnet, and in a large sense, so do we all.

Thanks to him and Avoda's other "founding fathers," countless boys over the past 75 years have been able to call Avoda their home away from home. And today, we are gathered again on the field, by the lake, by the trees. In the middle of another exciting and successful summer, we are here to celebrate Avoda's proud past.

The Board of Directors has worked hard to provide a celebration for you that is equal to the occasion. At the same time, we are working to keep Avoda on sure ground for the future, so that continuing generations of Jewish boys can enjoy wonderful summers here in Middleboro. This is a great day in Avoda history, and I'm so glad you are here to enjoy it.

Welcome from the Alumni Association

by Michael Ross, 1973-1981
President

During the planning stages of this momentous occasion, my thoughts wandered back 25 years to that hot and steamy day in 1977 when the Avoda family gathered for the camp's 50th anniversary. I was in Bunk 14. The crowd was huge. Many of my "heroes of the past" were there in the flesh. At the time, my Bar Mitzvah aside, I thought it to be the best day in my life. Today, I hope many will experience the same feelings I felt 25 years ago.

As we gather for the 75th anniversary of this venerable institution, one realizes little has changed at Avoda since 1977. For that matter, little has changed since 1927. Year in, year out, the spirit has remained the same. This sacred place amongst the whispering pines continues to offer the chance for all who attend to make lasting friendships, to learn about being a leader, to have such a good time that coming back year after year for 5, 10, or even 15 summers makes perfect sense. For this, our entire Avoda family should be thankful.

A special place like Avoda does not retain its quality, its appeal, through the many changes of

75 years – both good and bad – without the extraordinary efforts and special contributions of a number of heroes. Without the dedication of Judge Barnett, Stan Miller, Herb Bamel, Marty Wolf, Tom Leavitt, Paul Davis and the individual contributions of far too many to cite in this space, the legacy of this venerable institution simply would not exist today. All shared the same common understanding and put forth their extraordinary efforts because Camp Avoda is, always has been, and always will be about "the boys."

So here we are, celebrating the glory that is Avoda. Many like myself already realize why people came back for so many summers, why they are here today, why they are still involved. Some are simply taking the opportunity to experience the emotions they once cherished, the opportunity to rekindle the spirit. A few are seeing and feeling the special nature of this place for the first time. For all, it is clearly a time to honor the tradition that is Avoda.

Memories of the 50th

By Jay Epstein, 1965-1977

My first memory of the 50th anniversary event in 1977 was the purchase of a weed-whacker that Paul Davis used to spruce up the area in front of his cabin. His attention was distracted and the string “whacked” his leg. A welt began to develop the size of Rhode Island. As the day went on, the wound became more noticeable against his dark-colored socks and white loafers. It did not hinder our brave leader, however. He was still able to sing “Hatikvah” on key.

My next memory of the 50th was that I lost the coin toss and was given the job of guiding visitors and their vehicles to a proper parking space; specifically, to the area in front of the “Camp Avoda” sign made out of tree branches. As I was waiting for the cars to arrive, I remembered how Paul Zieff and I, as JCs in 1971, had been assigned to hide under the sign during the 2-4am shift to watch for a Middleboro motorcycle gang that had recently spray-painted anti-Semitic slogans on the tennis courts.

Happily, the first two cars that drove up contained such star Avodians of yesteryear as Barney “Judge” Horowitz, Irv “Soul Baby” Horowitz, Saul Lieberman, and Jimmy Singer.

The most memorable part of the 50th, though, was the heat. It was so hot that even people without cleavages were dripping sweat. It was so hot that the “50” cake made by Peter Palumbo (who stole my trumpet) and Gregg Sulkin (who substituted as my date to see Judy Collins at the Cape Cod Melody Tent) began to decompose.

Even with sweat filling up in my ears, I remember hearing Judge Barnet tell us that the original intention of Avoda was to provide a “safe haven” for hard-working Jewish parents to send their kids to experience a summer of Jewish culture, sports, nature, and biweekly hair cuts. Stan Miller mentioned that the friends made at Avoda would truly become some of the best friends and/or business contacts we would ever find.

Now, at the 75th, those two Avodians – *Avenu shalom* – have been proven correct. In honor of one of my heroes, Arnold Zieff, I hope we are all still standing to celebrate the 100th.

Memories of the 100th

By Ken Shifman, 1980-1990

Wow! What a great time; I’m exhausted just thinking about the day I just had. I am writing it down now while it’s fresh in my memory. First the Red Sox win the World Series four times in a row (2020-2023). And now? 100 years of Avoda! These are great times indeed.

If the camp were to get up to the podium to talk, I’d imagine that the speech would have sounded like this: “This is my 100th year in existence. I am very pleased with myself. And Lake Tispaquin, Bunks 1-14, Athletic Staff, and Waterfront Staff are all number one!”

The actual celebration was wild. Since Spencer Kimball is still at camp, chasing Paul Davis’ record of years at Avoda, we were able to use his connections from the XFL, which he resurrected and bought from Vince McMahon about 10 years ago. Instead of setting up a wrestling ring, like we did way back in the day, they set up a hovering, 100-yard football field above the athletic field. Then they gave the current staff those actual-weight NFL player “bodies” that allow you to move like real players. The scrimmage was fun, but the XFL players have come too far. They won by three touchdowns. (The XFL declined the offer to play Flagrush. We can beat them on that field....)

I’d say that since I was a camper, some 40-odd years ago, the camp has almost doubled in physical size. The place still looks great – just a little more spread out – and up! Each bunk and building has a second story. Similarly the hoop and tennis courts have “upper decks” to accommodate all the campers. The Bungalow, Athletic Shack (formerly the Trunk House) and Shower House have been moved back and the field has been extended about 35 more yards.

I’d say that the main constant through the years is what takes place there on a daily basis during the summer. If you were there in the 1930s, the 1970s, the year 2000, or even today, in the Re-Roaring Twenties, you’d see the same activities, system, traditions, spirit, and friendships. That’s the beauty of Avoda: no matter how much technology advances, the times change, or the number of choices for summer vacation grows, sports, games, and competition still provide a strong, proven, and successful foundation for growth, relationships, and character in young boys and men.

I’m proud to have been a part of Avoda’s first 100 years!

Schedule of Events & Information

Lunch – BBQ Pit

12:00-2:00pm

Ceremony/Archives Dedication – Miller Hall (Rec Hall)

2:00pm

Welcome Remarks

Thomas A. Leavitt

Chair, 75th Reunion Committee

Opening Remarks

Kurt Kleinmann

President, Board of Directors

Reflections on the '40s-'50s

Marty Wolf

Treasurer, Board of Directors

Reflections on Stan Miller

Herb Bamel

Board of Directors

Reflections on the '60s-'80s

[unknown as of press time]

Reflections on the '80s-present

[unknown as of press time]

Reflections on 36 years of service

Paul G. Davis

Director

Statement of Recognition

American Camping Association

Remarks

Michael Ross

President, Alumni Association

Dedication of the Camp Avoda Archives

Jason M. Rubin

Archivist

Closing

- Bunk 12 alma mater
- Bunk 1 alma mater
- Bunk 14 alma mater
- Camp Avoda alma mater



Important Information

- The following activities are available for alumni and family: basketball, tennis, volleyball, swimming (to second area only), and rowing and canoeing.
- Due to the number of people at camp today, there will be no sports activities allowed on the Athletic Field.
- Men's and Ladies' Rooms are located on the field next to Bunk 1, and may be used for changing clothes.
- Shuttle buses to Middleboro High School are available all day at any time, and will leave every 15 minutes starting at 3:00pm.
- Please wear your name tag. Current campers and staff will be recognized by their Avoda T-shirts. Campers have recorded the names of alumni written on the walls of their respective bunks. They will have a list of names with them. They may be eager to seek you out to introduce themselves, to ask about "the old days," and to maybe show you one of your previous bunks.



Credits

- Thanks to 75th committee members Michael Ross, Jerry Hill, Jeff Keselman, Jeff Blocker, Ken Schlossberg, Jim Singer, Bruce Silverlieb, and Paul Davis.
- Special thanks to Jason Rubin, Bobby Zuker, Marty Wolf, Ernie Varnum, and Paul Davis for their tireless efforts to build the Archives.
- "CA 75" caps designed by Judy Carter, Dickinson Associates, Boston, MA.
- Finally, thanks to the Board of Directors, the Alumni Association, and alumni like you for supporting our efforts to save and record the past so that the present and future maintains that which is the essence of Avoda.