



# AVODA ALUMNI BUGLE

THE BIENNIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CAMP AVODA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

FALL 2006

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## Building Friendships That Last A Lifetime

By Lou Dennis — A sequel to Lou's Spring 2004 Article

More than 25 years have passed since I graced the grounds of Avoda, but I would say that not a day has gone by in those 25 years that I haven't had at least a thought of camp. If my wife would let me, I would still be there.

The experience and effect that Avoda has had on my life has been unbelievable, and I know that many alumni feel the same way. I have high school friends, college friends, and new friends, but nothing comes close to Avoda friends. Little did I know that when I was a counselor of Bunk 3 at the ripe old age of 17, that my first campers who were 10 at the time would become good friends. That's what happens at Avoda.

I have not missed an Avoda Reunion weekend since the beginning. This year we had close to 100 Alumni attend including many new faces I'm sure will be back. We're still looking for some of our other long time Avodians to come back such as Art, Rosey, Goody, Benny, Cory, Stoochie, George, Tuna, Wilensky, Frenchie, Irv, Richard Blank, Hymie, Gumby, Shiff, Jerry Gordon, Larry and David Blau, Ernie, Ferris and others. I know you'll enjoy the feeling of driving up Gibbs Road again - it's like no other feeling in the world. Everyone who reads this knows what I'm talking about, and Jeff Vetstein's article in this newsletter captures the feeling perfectly. Whether you are coming for the Alumni weekend or just to spend a day

at Dear Old Avoda, you are always welcome.

I'm so fortunate to still be involved with Avoda as my 13 year old son will be a camper for his fifth year this coming summer. When he came home from camp his first summer I knew he was hooked, and he loves camp just like I did. In the 4 years he has spent there, Jake hasn't said a negative word about anything. In every letter we get from him we can feel his excitement, and when he calls us from Fenway Park or Water World we can hear the passion in his voice. Like many of us back in the day, his letters count the days until Color War starts. His passion and feelings for Avoda are exactly what Karen and I had hoped for when he started camp.

For the past four years I've been in charge of recruiting for camp. When I speak to prospective parents they can tell from my passion how special a place Avoda is. The counselors who run Avoda are truly amazing, and Camp would not be what it is today if it weren't for the fabulous staff we have. If you ever get a chance to read an Avodian you will see how every counselor feels about Avoda. A few of their comments were:

- "Thank you for all that you have given me."
- "Spending two months at the best place on earth is unbelievable."

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## Secretary's Letter — An Appreciation

I've been on the Avoda Alumni board for a few years now, and I consider myself fortunate to have been able to work with Lou Dennis and Russell Sherman. To the great betterment of Camp Avoda, both Russell and Lou will be joining the Camp Avoda Board of Directors. I would be remiss if I didn't dedicate some space in this newsletter to an appreciation of both as they move on.

Lou Dennis has been an Avoda legend to me for as long as I have been an Avodian. I started at Avoda in 1980, and Lou was finishing his run at camp as Bunk 14 counselor with Chubes. To a nerdy nine year old, I assure you Lou was bigger than life. In the years I have spent on the Alumni board with Lou, I have found that his legend at camp was well deserved. He is unafraid of taking on responsibility, and always does what he says he's going to do. His Herculean efforts in the recruiting area will be his Alumni Board legacy, and the Camp Board couldn't be luckier to have Lou Dennis join its ranks. Like a retiring Bill Russell, other people will take on Lou's jobs, but he will not be replaced.

What can I tell you about my dear friend, Russell Sherman, that you don't already know? Russell has been a superb Alumni Association president, taking the baton from Mike Ross and Jason Rubin and moving the Association forward in a myriad of positive ways. The Alumni Association has become a respected and relied upon resource for the Camp Board, tackling such vital responsibilities as scholarship fundraising and recruitment. Even as we have expanded into more significant roles, we have also stayed true to our mission of bringing Avoda alumni together for good times. Russell has always seen to it that this part of our mission remained an important focus.

I cannot overstate the Board's and the Camp's good fortune at having Lou and Russell on the Board of Directors. In many ways, I feel it is also a validation of our alumni board, and symbolic of the work all of us have done to make Avoda better. So it is with the heartiest of congratulations that I wish Messrs. Sherman and Dennis the best of luck in their new roles, but also with a hint of wistfulness. We will miss them.

Sincerely,

*Sam Mirkin*

Secretary, Camp Avoda Alumni Association



**Russell, Mike Ross, Lou and Robble Coppel  
at Alumni Weekend**



# Anatomy of *The Turn*

By Jeff Vetstein

If you find 41 degrees 52 minutes latitude by 70 degrees 52 minutes longitude on Google Earth you'll see what seems to be a nondescript intersection of roads. It's a place where asphalt meets dirt, or in some years where asphalt meets gravel.

The intersection is where Tispaquin Street meets the mighty Gibbs Road.

To the local dwellers, the intersection is just a waypoint to get back to their dwellings or shanties. But, to the boys and men who went to camp at dear ol' Avoda, making the turn onto Gibbs Road for the first time of the summer means a whole lot more.



Google Earth Shot of Camp Avoda

For me, as a camper, making *The Turn* was a gastrointestinal seismic event. Butterflies, large birds, and small jet planes would simultaneously float around in my stomach. Every year like clockwork, I could feel the build up of nerves and excitement as my mom drove my brother and me down Tispaquin Street.

By the time our car had reached the CITs in the second parking lot, we would be dangling out of the open windows of our car with perma-grins firmly plastered onto our faces. We must have looked like caged animals on

loan from the zoo.

My brother Rich and I must have lost weeks worth of sleep leading up to the first day of camp wondering which counselor's names would be on those cards. Those cards must have been made up by Price Waterhouse Coopers under the vow of secrecy, just like those Academy Award envelopes.

You can't recreate that kind of feeling. *The Turn* is that special.

It's even more special as a counselor. Making *The Turn* as you arrive to pre-camp is magical. I made many a drive down to camp with Ken (Bubblehead) Freeman, in his red Jeep with the top down. We were twenty-one year old know-it-alls, with the Allman Brothers blaring on the cassette radio (love that technology).

I guess part of the excitement was knowing that I wasn't the only one getting butterflies. I knew that in about ten minutes, after a series of winding, and sometimes unpaved roads, I was going to see my best friends again. Sometimes I hadn't spoken with or seen them in ten months, but I knew we would all pick up our summer lives from right where we left off last year.

The jokes were funnier here. You ran faster here, talked louder here.

You meant something here. You had a place in the world, and it was just a mile away now. Right past the Dairy Queen, past the farm on the right hand side of Rt. 28 where the cows smelled like the vilest things on earth. God, I love that smell.

And now as an alumnus, *The Turn* is still special. It means that Alumni Weekend is finally here. And even if it's just for a weekend in June, we can all make *The Turn* again, and feel like we did as campers and counselors...sick to your stomach...and loving every minute of it.





## Heard it Through the Grapevine—Alumni Happenings

### Birth Announcements

Jeremy Sharp — 1991 Bunk 14, baby boy, Samuel, December 10, 2005

Josh Kaswell — 1991 Bunk 14, baby boy, Charlie, March 28, 2006

Rabbi Brian Plotkin — Camper & Counselor, baby girl, Talia, June, 2006

Ken Freeman — 1990 Bunk 14, baby girl, Tess Mae, July 8, 2006

Jeff Vetstein — 1990 Bunk 14, baby boy, Daniel, July 23, 2006

Russell Sherman — 1984 Bunk 14, baby girl, Maya, October 13, 2006



**Jeff Vetstein  
with Daniel**

### Weddings

Steve Peters — 1989 Bunk 14, married Rebecca Cohen, June 4, 2006

EJ Kimball — 1990 Bunk 14, married Allison Jainchill, August, 2006

Jonathan Zuker — 1996 Bunk 14, married Abie Littell, September 3, 2006



**Tess Mae Freeman  
Born July 8, 2006**

### Passings

Mort Sigel, February 2, 2006

Joel Horvitz, August 3, 2006

Joel Horvitz, age 62, died August 3rd after a five-year battle with cancer. Joel leaves behind his three children, Rebecca, Brian, and Melissa. He also leaves one grandson, Carter. Joel Horvitz was born in Fall River, MA. He is son to the late Edith and Jack Horvitz. After attending Providence College, Joel went on to earn a Business Degree from Northeastern University. He had a successful career as a CPA and started his own business in 1970 in Gloucester, MA. Joel had a sterling reputation, maintaining a very high degree of integrity. He was highly regarded in his profession and was known for adhering to ethical principles and unimpeachable standards. Joel was the quintessential volunteer giving back to his community in many ways. Joel had a longtime affiliation with Camp Avoda, attending as a camper in the 50's & 60's and as a counselor in his teen years. Joel went on to serve as Asst. Treasurer and a Trustee of the Camp Avoda Foundation. Joel will be greatly missed by his friends and family for his compassion, giving, drive and strength. May the soul of Joel Horvitz rest in peace and in eternity.



**Joel Horvitz**

**Share your news with us: [campavodaalumniassociation@hotmail.com](mailto:campavodaalumniassociation@hotmail.com)**



## You oughta be in pictures...



**Alumni Weekend with Dave Benjamin, Peter Glovin  
Andy Aronson, Steven Poverman, Mike Ross, Jay Yampolsky  
Andy Stone, Lou Dennis, Mike Roth and Russell Sherman**



**Pee Wee and  
Hondo at  
Alumni Weekend  
as observed by  
Mark and Gary Solomon**



**Maya Sherman  
Born October 13, 2006**

The Avoda Alumni Association relies on the donations of its members to generate scholarship funds to send worthy campers to Avoda who might not otherwise be able to attend, sustain the Avoda Archives and fund our other ongoing activities. We offer our heartiest thanks to our donors, listed here, for their outstanding generosity.

### *Thank you!*

Steve	Alperin	Lou	Dennis	Russell	Katz	Ritchie	Mintzer	Alex	Sherman
Michael	Alter	Steve	Ferris	Todd	Katz	David	Morse	Larry	Sherman
Andy	Aronson	Steven	Finn	Adam	Kaufman	Steve	Pearlman	Russell	Sherman
Steve	Aronson	Seth	Fox	Jeff	Keselman	Marv	Peiken	Ken	Shifman
David	Bamel	Ken	Freeman	Irving	Kessler	Seth	Peters	Paul	Simon
Herb	Bamel	Stuart	Glass	EJ	Kimball	Norm	Plotkin	Josh	Sobol
Jonathan	Bamel	David	Goldberg	Grayson	Kimball	Harold	Poverman	Mark	Solomon
David	Basok	Steve	Goldsmith	Bert	King	Josh	Ravit	Andy	Spear
Daniel	Bauman	Jeff	Golumbuck	Eddie	Klayman	Andrew	Rubin	Adam	Udell
David	Berkowitz	David	Goodman	Bill	Kleinmann	Larry	Rubin	Ariel	Waldman
Jeff	Blocker	Jeremy	Gordon	Kurt	Kleinmann	Mike	Rutstein	Jerry	Waters
Lester	Blum	Robert	Could	Paul	Kleinmann	Ed	Salzman	Ken	Wilensky
Erik	Brenner	Phil	Greenspan	Fred	Landy	Barry	Samuels	David	Wilkov
Scott	Brody	Morton	Grosser	Saul	Lieberman	Ken	Sandberg	Eric	Yaffe
Josh	Chadajo	Mel	Harris	Steve	Litner	Lewis	Satloff	Jay	Yampolsky
Benjamin	Cohen	Barney	Horowitz	Sam	Lobar	Robert	Satloff	Randy	Zamcheck
Josh	Cooper	Irv	Horowitz	Steven	Matfis	Daniel	Saval	Arnold	Zieff
Robbie	Coppel	Joel	Horvitz	Arthur	Mendelsohn	Ken	Schlossberg	Bobby	Zuker
Jake	Dennis	Daniel	Jacob	Billy	Mintzer	Jeremy	Sharp		



## Avoda Day at Gillette Stadium

By Ken Shifman

It brought me back to when I was a CIT and I was in charge of directing the on-coming cars and greeting the parents. It started slowly — just sitting under the pines on folding chairs from the Mess Hall with a buddy. One car. Another car. 10 minutes. Then the onslaught and more people than we knew what to do with!

The same thing happened September 17, 2006 at Gillette Stadium, the home site for an alumni event, but away site for the Patriots who were visiting New York to face the Jets. Gillette opens up the stadium on away games to those who have club seats, and the Avoda Alumni Association has connections!

We had 80 people including campers, counselors, administrators, alumni, parents, prospects, moms, dads and friends. What a fun day!

Upon entering the stadium, Avoda affiliates signed up, received name tags, kids got Topps football cards and all family



**The Avoda Crew at Gillette Stadium**



members picked score “squares”. Each quarter the corresponding scores won such prizes as a Patriots football, a Pats glass and keychain, a Pats trash can or tickets to a Boston Celtics game!

From there, people migrated to our seating area. We literally took up a whole wing: couches, tables, and concession stand. People flipped through the copies of the Avodian. They went outside to watch the game on the Jumbo-Tron. And it was so nice out! We all shared skittles, and ate enough junk food to make our moms proud.

The game wasn’t close at the onset, and it looked like a Pats landslide. A few nifty runs by the Jets combined with some lackluster Patriots defense brought the game down to the wire. As usual, the Pats held on for the win.

Paul Simon played the part of Julie McCoy, and was the vocal cheerleader for Avoda, although he wasn’t as attractive as the real cheerleaders! Special Thanks to Ed Klayman, and Mike Roth for also putting on such a great event.



**Jon Bamel, Lou Dennis & Avoda Parent Rod Shale at the Avoda at Pats Away Game Day**



## Avodian Profile—Jim Sklaver

By Sam Mirkin

1987 Leadership winner, Jim Sklaver, likes beer. He cooks with it. He drinks it. He makes hot sauces and ketchups with it. Yup — Jim likes his beer. While that's probably true for many Avoda Alumni, how many of us can say that it's actually our job?

Jim is the head chef at the Publick House bar and restaurant on Beacon Street in Washington Square, Brookline where he incorporates beer into almost every item he serves. The astonishing selection of microbrews and uni-brews coupled with Jim's often cutting edge recipes resulted in the Publick House being named the Best Beer Bar in America by Beer Advocate magazine.

Jim got his start in the chef business at the renown culinary institution frequented by all of us at some time—Friendly's. Jim was working as a waiter when the cook called in sick one day, and the rest, as they say, is history. Jim spent three years at the world famous Pillar House, and also cooked at Roggie's in Cleveland Circle and Fig's. His macaroni and cheese has been featured in Boston Magazine, and is a "go-to" selection for many patrons at the Publick House.

Like most Avodians, Jim has many fond memories of Avoda. As a flagrush star and dominating athlete, Jim enjoyed a high profile while a camper at Avoda. His camper experience reached its pinnacle when Jim won the Leadership Trophy in 1987, putting him in the company of an elite group of Avodians.

As the captain of the victorious White Cougars that year, Jim was awarded the Color War score book in accordance with Avoda tradition. Jim still has the book nicely preserved in a Ziploc bag. Being the pre-computer era, it is cool to note that the day's points were tallied by adding machine, and the adding machine tapes stapled into the book. Before adding machines, the head judges presumably mounted an abacus into the score book.

When asked to recount a favorite memory from Avoda, Jim quickly said, "Can I say jumping in the lake after winning Color War?" Yes you can. Many alumni would offer the same "first place" memory.

Jim returned to Avoda for alumni weekend in 2005, and quickly fell back into the Avoda lifestyle. A day spent running hoops and getting back on water skis left him, perhaps, a bit more physically taxed than during his younger days. Fortunately, Jim was able to recuperate to a sufficient degree to take part in both the poker and hoops tournaments. He said he hopes to make it back to alumni weekend soon if he can get time away during the restaurant's busiest night of the week.



**Head Chef Jim Sklaver  
with a loyal customer**

Jim recently got engaged to his fiancé, Nancy, and is due to be married next October. He lives in the St. Mary's area of Brookline, and is in preliminary discussions about getting his own cooking show with Comcast. A recent trip to Belgium and Scotland proved invaluable in keeping up with the latest and best types of beer, mead, grog, whiskey, scotch, etc. Jim continues to push the envelope of beer based cuisine, and enjoys his following of devoted fans.

So if you find yourself in Brookline and in need of good food and libation, head over to the Publick House. There's an Avodian in the kitchen, and he keeps his use of Sysco products to a minimum. Rumor has it Jim doesn't mind if friends send him a beer in the kitchen while he works — all in the name of research and improving the product, of course.

## Friendships...Continued

- “Coming to camp is a gift we all need to remember.”
- “Thanks for the best years of my life.”
- “This is the most unbelievable place in the world.”
- “Avoda is my home.”

I know we all understand exactly how these guys feel. To all the staff at Avoda, you guys are exceptional role models. We as parents and Alumni thank you for upholding the traditions of Avoda. As assistant director, Micah Fleisig said to me one day regarding the staff, “They are great kids and their parents should be proud.” Avoda is now thriving and you should all be proud. Lastly, thank you so much to Paul Davis for being at Avoda for 40 years. That is truly amazing.

Avoda really is the greatest place on earth.



**Billiards Night is Back!**  
**Sign up at [www.campavoda.org](http://www.campavoda.org)**



**Boston Billiards - 126 Brookline Avenue, Boston**  
**November 24, 2006 at 8:00**

Camp Avoda Alumni Association  
P.O. Box 465  
Needham Heights, MA 02494  
<http://www.campavoda.org>