



THE AVODA BEANIE

THE BIENNIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CAMP AVODA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2005

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Pay It Forward — By Andy Spear

As an avid reader of the Alumni newsletter, I have enjoyed the varied opinions on what makes Avoda so great. I have found that most, in one form or another, discuss an optimal environment for helping boys grow into men. (As an aside, any Alumni Weekend attendee will agree, it's also an ideal platform for turning men back into boys.) Some alumni discuss the making of life-long friends who remain part of your everyday lives. Lastly, others site the attainment of important life skills such as the ability to lead and to overcome obstacles.

I agree with each of these, but would add that Avoda taught me to understand and appreciate the importance of charity. Without scholarship support, my Avoda experience would not have been possible. A number of my dad's personal challenges and my parents' subsequent divorce resulted in my dad moving to California, leaving my mom to support and raise my brother and me on her own. My mom was up to the task, and excelled as a single parent. The high cost of summer camp tuition, however, was not something her own hustle and determination could overcome without a little help from the camp scholarship committee. The door to my Avoda career opened with a scholarship, helping to make the challenge of growing up in a single parent family a lot easier.

My early years at camp, bunks 3A to 6, provided me with some of my most cherished childhood memories. I remember the excitement leading up to camp when my fellow Needhamites and I would start the countdown to opening day. I remember July 4th Bomb Pops, getting McDonalds after taps, Red Sox games and fishing with Benji. It's hard to forget the bitter-sweet feeling of closing day when we reminisced about the summer past and began to anticipate the adventures the next summer would hold.

During my middle years at Avoda, bunks 9 to 14, I began to learn some of my most valued and utilized life skills and morals. Chief among these are the importance of hustle and competing to your best. Early on these values showed up during athletics such as League soccer games and evening Flag Rushes. Later in my Avoda career, they helped me learn to successfully balance competing tasks as a General for both Desert War and Color War. Even today, they help me succeed in my role as a Merchandising Manager at Staples. Similar to Color War, I even find myself stopping at McDonalds on the Mass Pike to sketch out promotional strategies and create prioritization lists.

My campmates remain part of my everyday life and are in fact my closest friends. Whether at large get-togethers such as our monthly poker games or at

In This Issue

Pay It Forward	1
President's Letter	2
Old School Avoda	3
Just Because	5
Avoda Grapevine	6
Like Father, Like Son	7
2 out of 3 Ain't Bad	8

Continued on Page 4 —>

President's Letter

By Russell Sherman

Dear Fellow Avodians,

It is that time of the year again? Can you feel it? “The flowers open up and the birds come home, and the school year starts to come to a close” (Copyright, 1984 Blue Express Alma Mater). Spring is here, the summer is fast approaching, and in just a few months Avoda will be filled with the sights and sounds of another vibrant camp season.

Unfortunately we aren't all so fortunate as to be able to spend our summer months on Lake Tispaquin. Instead most of us sit in our offices, toiling for the man, working to bring home the (kosher) bacon. All hope is not lost, however, as there are a variety of ways in which we each can have some Avoda spirit infused into our lives this summer. Consider it a little taste of the good life.

First and foremost, we hope each of you will join us at Alumni Weekend at the end of June. Come for a day or for the entire weekend. Either way you'll get the opportunity to catch up with old friends and enjoy one of the most relaxing weekends you have had in a while. The dates are June 24, 25 & 26. We want to extend a special invitation to those of you who are celebrating Bunk 14 reunion years – 1995, 1990, 1985, 1980, 1975 etc. If you haven't been in a while, it would be a great time to check in at A-V-O-D-A. If Alumni Weekend doesn't fit into your schedule, consider stopping by to visit camp on your own during the summer. You can bet you'll find PGD there ready to welcome you with open arms.

Another option is to live the Avoda life vicariously through someone you know by sending your son or nephew. You'll love seeing the Avoda experience through their eyes and smile at the stories they will tell you of their time at camp. Finally, if you don't have a child or nephew, we'll give you one. Well, not exactly, but through our scholarship program we can identify a deserving young boy that you can sponsor for either one month or the entire summer. It is hard to imagine a more rewarding gift for a young boy. Feel free to contact Jeff Blocker, chairman of the Alumni Scholarship Committee, at (508) 231-1455 or via email at jeffblocker1@yahoo.com.

As you peruse this newsletter make sure to check out the articles by a couple of new contributors. Jason Starr's piece on music bringing back memories of Avoda is excellent, and Greg Lazaroff's article on “New Avoda and Old Avoda” underscores that the more things change, the more they stay the same. Also, be sure to check out the list of second and third generation Avodians on page 7—very cool!!!

Finally, it is my great pleasure to welcome three new members to the Alumni Board. Greg Lazaroff, EJ Kimball and Andy Spear bring a great mix of youth, enthusiasm and passion to the group, and we look forward to their contributions in the years to come. Make sure to introduce yourself to the guys at Alumni Weekend if you don't know them already.

While you may not be able to actually attend Avoda this summer there are plenty of ways you can experience the magical place that we know so well. See you at Alumni Weekend.

Russell Sherman

New Avoda and Old Avoda — Still the Same

By Greg Lazaroff

Whether it's the 4th of July Bonfire, Indian Relay, Sunday Night Staff Meetings, Day-off, Rest Period, (Ed. – a “full house”), or Bunk 14, it doesn't matter what decade you spent your summers at Avoda because all of those things and many other Avoda traditions mean the same thing to you. Avoda's been around for many years, and while the people come and go, the traditions, values, and integrity tied to Avoda will always remain the same.

My first year as a camper was in 1990 and last as a counselor was in 2003. Throughout that period, I witnessed “old Avoda” turn into “new Avoda”. Sure, in 1990, campers couldn't instant message their counselors in the off-season like they do today, but I've always been able to pick up an old Avodian yearbook in the winter months to reflect on what I thought was the best summer ever (only to be surpassed by the upcoming summer). So when you say new school or old school, what's the difference?



New School Avoda - Nate "Lepus" Goldberg

As a camper in the early 90's, the one thing my bunkmates and I always did was look up to our counselors with envy. It's safe to say it's the only time in my life I ever looked up to a bunch of twenty-year old college kids, but the impact an Avoda counselor has on his campers is something that I'll always remember. When I was 13, I was already saying to myself that I would be in Sigma Alpha Mu (Sammy) when it was time to attend college, and one day be a color war general because that's what Avoda counselors did in



New School Avoda - Alex Shifman

my mind. Importantly, the current counselors at Avoda still understand the impact they have on campers. The reason they understand? Because all of Avoda's counselors were once campers - that hasn't changed. So when you say new school or old school, what's the difference? If you're still not convinced of the similarities, take a look at color war. It's still six days long. Aides are still useless. Some kids are praised for

winning Canoe B worth 10 points, while other others are remembered for nailing a penalty shot in Zooball. The team plays are always a comedic culmination of the jokes that surfaced that summer, while the songfest turns into a tearjerker. And, of course, one team ends up in the lake, while the other is left to reflect on defeat. So when you say new school or old school, what's the difference?

As time goes on, “new school” Avodians will become a larger part of the Avoda Alumni Association. In fact, they will one day take over the reigns of our fine organization. (Don't worry, Binsky, you still have your day job!) But there's nothing to worry about because when you say new school or old school, there is no difference at all.



Old School Avoda - Guffa & Schmed

“When you say new school or old school, there is no difference at all.”

Pay It Forward...continued

smaller events such as the Steiner-Spear brothers' annual run to Foxwoods, these friends' help make life more spectacular.

Given these examples of how Avoda helped shape my life, it's only natural that I would support the Alumni Association's Annual Fund. In one respect, I feel an obligation to pay back a cause that so impacted my life, but I also give because I know Avoda can help other kids in a similar situation. If you don't already, please consider supporting this worthwhile cause.

Five years ago, *The Camp Avoda Alumni Association Annual Fund* was established as a means to raise additional funds to provide financial assistance to Avodians who otherwise would not be able to attend camp. Response to the Annual Fund has been tremendous. Through your generosity, the alumni association has been able to support two to three campers for each of the past four summers at an annual cost to the Alumni Association of approximately \$10,000. To date, our 2005 fund raising efforts have been very solid with more than \$7,500 already received. As we mentioned in our Annual Fund mailing, we would like to grow this program to the point that we are assisting at least five campers each summer – a goal that we believe is quite attainable.

We also wanted to take this opportunity to thank those generous Avodians who have already contributed to the drive this year:

Michael Alter	Robert Gould	Barry Samuels	Steve Aronson
Morton Grosser	Ken Sandberg	Jonathan Bamel	Mel Harris
Lewis Satloff	David Bamel	Barney Horowitz	Daniel Saval
Herb Bamel	Joel Horvitz	Jeremy Sharp	Jeff Blocker
Jeff Keselman	Russell Sherman	Benjamin Cohen	EJ Kimball
Larry Sherman	Robbie Coppel	Bert King	Ken Shifman
Lou Dennis	Eddie Klayman	Paul Simon	Steve Ferris
Fred Landy	Josh Sobol	Steven Finn	Saul Lieberman
Mark Solomon	Seth Fox	Sam Lobar	Andy Spear
Steve Gladstone	David Morse	Adam Udell	Stuart Glass
Seth Peters	David Wilkov	Steve Goldsmith	Andrew Rubin
Bobby Zuker	David Goodman	David Basok	Ken Freeman

If you have been considering making a contribution to the annual fund but have not done so as of yet, now would be a great time. Please make all checks payable to the *Camp Avoda Alumni Association* and mail to PO Box 465, Needham Heights, MA 02494. We thank you in advance for your support



Just Because...

Heard it Through the Grapevine—Alumni Happenings

Birth Announcements

Jeff Blocker—1987 Bunk 14—Mia—2/4/2005

Adam Kaufman—1988 Bunk 14—Jacob—Born 10/5/2004

Richie Mintzer—1980 Bunk 14—Tess—Born 11/2004

Harold Poverman—Adam—Born 12/24/2004

Aaron Bornstein—1988 Bunk 14—Madeleine—Born 3/22/2005 (Ed.—in New Zealand!!)



Mia Blocker - Born February 4, 2005



**Andy Spear "Rib" & Andy "Oobis" Steiner
Wedding of Andy Spear - December 18, 2004**

Weddings

Andrew Spear—1986 Bunk 14—Married Gabriela Seidler—December 18, 2004

Passings

William Meyer passed away in August, 2004.

Carl Woolf passed away in Fall, 2004.



**Madeleine
Bornstein
Born 3/22/05**

Share your news with us: campavodaalumniassociation@hotmail.com

2 out of 3...continued

Like Father, Like Son

practicing them and I loved performing them with my team on the final night of Color War.

On this commute, Meatloaf on the radio reminded me that I still love these songs. And as he sang: "I want you ... I need you ..." I sang along, only I used different lyrics: "We kept on thinking of Avoda (Avoda) The summer (the summer), We're forced to leave, but we never will forget you ... Don't shed a tear (and have no fear) for we will return next year." Blue Express. 1984.

I don't think about Avoda every day. I settle for chatting with old camp friends now and then and the occasional dream when I'm back in Bunk 12 scampering with a flag through a raging Zooball game in Dead Zone. Otherwise it's work, home life and various real-world concerns.

So I appreciate these Color War songs now more than ever. Because now, when some familiar tune comes on the radio – maybe it's "When I'm 64" by the Beatles or "You've Got a Friend" by James Taylor – it's an instant time machine to an August of a gone-by summer. And it's an attitude adjustment of the highest order.

I turned off the radio after the Meatloaf song and drove the rest of the way in silence. I indulged my memory a bit and communed in my mind with the adolescent versions of my best friends. I remembered a time when we could do anything we wanted and I reminded myself that we still can.

Singing that Color War song from 1984 completely made my day.

Maybe I shouldn't depend on the radio to prompt me anymore. Maybe on tomorrow's drive I'll just start chanting: "Blue Express will speed by white, We will win this awesome fight, In the lake and on the field, Blue team's efforts never yield ..." (Ed.— "Blue team's brotherly bond, will destroy the magic's wand...")

This summer, several campers are second or third generation Avodians. There's still time to add your names and your son or nephew's name to our list.

Harrison Bamel, 2nd summer, son of Jonny Bamel, grandson of Herb Bamel

Jake Dennis, 3rd summer, son of Louis Dennis

Sam Roth, 1st summer, son of Michael Roth

Matt Schwartz, 8th year, father Michael

Bennett Propp, 2nd year, uncles Alex and Russell Sherman

AJ Felberbaum, 1st year, father Rickey, uncle Lenny

Eddie Bernson, 4th year, father Peter, grandfather, Stan Miller

Jason Camiel, 2nd year, uncles David and Steve

Zach Gulergun, 5th year, uncle Paul Simon

Justin Lukoff, 9th year, father Roger, uncles Murray, Marshall, Phil

Braden Lukoff, 4th year, father Marshall, uncles Murray, Phil, Roger

Joel Podolsky, 6th year, uncle Eric

Dan(2nd year), Matt (2nd year), Jacob Rosen (1st year), father Bob

Dan Feinberg, 6th year, father Peter

Oliver (5th year), and Oren (2nd year) Osness; father Richard, plus uncles

Brandon Mendelsohn, 3rd year, father, Gary, uncle Arthur, uncle Mike Schindler

Justin Schneider, 2nd year, father Ken

Josh and Jared Wolf, 1st year, father Michael, grandfather Marty

2 out of 3 Ain't Bad — Musical Memories of Avoda

By Jason Starr

It was a normal commute. And by normal I mean 50 miles through a winding canyon that follows the Arkansas River as it flows east out of Salida, Colorado.

I was far, far away from the shores of Tispaquin, both in distance and in other ways: I don't think there was a Jew within 100 miles.

Normally radio options on this stretch of southern Colorado highway are sparse. If I'm lucky, I can pick up an NPR feed or some sports talk show (If I'm really lucky, I'll hear a Broncos fan ramble in disbelief about how the New England Patriots are unstoppable. That always puts a bounce in my step.)

On this morning, I decided to scan the FM stations, which is often, not always, but often a fruitless exercise. There on 92.3 came a young Meatloaf crooning: "She kept on telling me, I want you (I

want you) I need you (I need you), but there ain't no way I'm ever gonna love you ... Now don't be sad (don't be sad) 'Cause two out of three ain't bad."

There are certain Color War songs that stick with you. For me, the further back in my Avoda career, the more ingrained the songs are. I remember lyrics from 1984 much better than 1990. It's probably because I was in such awe and admiration of camp's senior staff when I was 10 years old.

One of my favorite parts of Color War was on that first night of organization when my staff would reveal our tunes. I couldn't wait to see what they had come up with.

I loved these songs. I loved learning them, I loved

Continued On Page 7 —>

Alumni Weekend - June 24, 25 & 26

Camp Avoda Alumni Association

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<http://www.campavoda.org>