

Avoda Alumni Bugle

Avoda Connections

By Jason Starr

When he's not hustling meat products throughout the vast New England supermarket network, my dear friend and Avoda Hall-of-Famer, Jeff Vetstein, is furthering the cause of the Avoda Alumni Association.

His workday internet activities are legendary among our group of friends. From instant-messaging to managing his fantasy football team to putting Google to use finding long-lost Avodians from our era, Vet is on the job.

So it was one weekday morning when into my inbox came two emails with "Avoda" in the subject line. It's easy to put off regular work assignments when you see a subject line like that, and I opened them without hesitation.

Vet had done it again. With the greatest of ease and in rapid succession, he had tracked down two Avodians who came to our bunk well after our Bunk 1 year and left well before Bunk 14. One email was a link to the online profile of the great Elijah Feinstein.

Last we saw Eli, he was hurriedly removing his headgear to indulge in some late-night Papa Timmy's that our Bunk 7 counselors had graciously returned with. Now, as I opened Eli's link – a huge smile on my face in anticipation – I saw a mature and confident Mr. Feinstein smiling back at me.

Eli, it turns out, is a real estate agent in Brooklyn, N.Y. Much more than that, he is a former Peace Corps volunteer, a pilot, an avid sailor, a competitive bicyclist and he speaks fluent French. His headgear was nowhere to be seen!

Next I turned to a note Vet wrote to our old grade-school and camp mate, Jeremy Grossman. "Jej" was my across-the-street neighbor on Framingham's vaunted Cider Mill Road, which has produced such great Avodians as Bruce French and Michael "Quahog" Cohen.

Jej had little choice but to come to Avoda with the rest of us Cider Millians. After moving from the neighborhood to Sudbury and subsequently not returning for our Bunk 12 year, Jej fell out of touch.

About two decades passed before Vet's wizardry produced an email address for Jeremy, now the Director of Leasing at Federal Realty Investment Trust in Somerville. Vet wrote Jeremy one of his no-pressure, "hey how's it going, it's your old buddies from Avoda checking in after 20 years" emails. Jej responded!

He is living just minutes away from Tispaquin and asked about any upcoming alumni events or reunions. He was thrilled to hear from us.

My own story has taken me, finally, back to the greater Avoda region after 12 years in the Rocky Mountains. One of the things I look forward to most about being back in New England was exemplified perfectly that weekday morning by Vetstein's effort in tracking down Eli and Jeremy—the Alumni Association's ceaseless energy and efforts at reconnecting old friends.

The newsletter, the billiards nights, the hoops tournaments and of course Alumni Weekend all make camp a living and breathing entity for former Avodians, even as we mature into middle age.

When I left camp as a counselor for the last time, I thought I was saying goodbye for good. Avoda had been a huge part of my life, and I was moving on. It was heart-wrenching and sad and I could barely see Gibbs Road as I drove away one final time, my eyes welling up with tears. The alumni association and all its great work keeping former Avodians in touch, was the furthest thing from my mind.

Now I realize I'm not just a former camper and counselor, I'm still an Avodian. So I say thank you to all the alumni who have worked so hard to keep Avoda alive for us in our adult years. You've created an association that's so much more than just a reminiscing society. It's a group that continues to create memories year after year.

And to Eli and Jeremy, we'll see you on the shores of Tispaquin June 20-22, 2008!

Michael Roth
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Jeff Keselman
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Aaron Agulnek

Jeff Blocker

Ken Freeman

David Glattstein

Eddie Klayman

Greg Lazaroff

Ken Shifman

Paul Simon

Andy Spear

Jeff Vetstein

David Wertheim

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Avoda Alumni Bugle

President's Letter

It was a busy 2007 at the Avoda Alumni "House," with those involved in planning and running events and projects taking things to a whole new level. We are always striving to find ways to improve events, expand our social schedule and increase our fundraising efforts, and it was fun to witness a new influx of creativity and energy that resulted in positive growth across the board.

Three years ago, we took a shot at inviting Alumni to watch a Patriot's away game at Gillette Stadium. It sounded like a good excuse to see the clubhouse and watch the game together on the Jumbotron. From that first year when we drew about 15 guys, we now have over 100 alumni, family and friends together to enjoy themselves and kibbitz while the Pats thrash an unfortunate opponent (in this case the Cowboys...sorry "America's Team"). Ideas to further develop this event have surfaced since October and plans are already in the works to increase the fun while helping those in need in the Boston area Jewish community...we'll keep you posted.

Beginning in May of this year, we held the first Avoda Alumni Red Sox Game at Fenway Park. Everyone knew this was going to be a home run, we just wondered why it took us so long to put it together (thanks Paul and Paul). We had 50 tickets sold right out of the box. I can't remember the score of the game, but I do know the Sox won. I do remember reading "The Red Sox welcome Avoda Alumni" on the Jumbotron (I'm beginning to think that if you throw a Jumbotron in, you guarantee a successful Avoda Alumni event. Ed.—See photo, page 7). This year's game is going to be on Wednesday Night, May 21—watch your email inbox for an announcement.

Speaking of winter, we are trying something new. Billiards Night is giving way to Bowling Night this year. Call it change for the sake of change. But all we can say is that Avodians have a great bowling tradition. It seemed only logically that we "tap" that tradition at a bowling alley and pub near you. Those of you that won bowling trophies at camp will have a chance to yet again add another Avoda trophy to your shelf. Should be fun.

The cornerstone of social schedule is the Alumni Weekend. Years ago, we established the Alumni Weekend as a way to reconnect with our Avoda past. This event has evolved over the years, and something new seems to creep in each season. This year, "The Weekend" drew more alumni than any previous weekend. Pick-up softball and basketball, and scheduled Poker and B-Ball tournaments were well-received as usual. But the inclusion of a band on Saturday afternoon and the "Tailgate" on Friday night brought things to a new level...great ideas. If you thought it was fun this year, wait 'til you see what Vet and Bubblehead have in store next.

During Alumni Weekend, we took time to dedicate the Archives to a true Avodian—Tom Leavitt. Those of you that were there will agree, this was an emotional event with just the right amount of comic relief. Tom is an "indefatigable" Avodian, and well-deserving of such an award. I was amazed at the number of alumni from the 60's, 70's and 80's that showed up to support Tom including Neal Goldberg, David Goodman, and Peter Varga to name a few. I had the honor of being on stage, which gave me the opportunity to look at many of the 100 plus faces packed into the Lodge (aka the Library for some of you). It was truly a moment to take in. While listening to the praise people have for the things Tom did for them over the years, I realized that those things still impact their adult lives today. This, in turn, made a number of us think about how much staying power the relationships we've developed at Avoda can have. Later, many guys who had never met Tom before told me that the dedication ceremony brought to light the importance of their own relationships with friends and mentors they established at camp. As a result, generations aside, everyone there felt the bond they still have with Avoda.

2007 was a great year, and the Avoda energy and spirit is alive and well. We recognize that our success as an alumni organization depends on providing touch points throughout the year. Thank you to those of you who have participated and supported these events. To those of you who have not been to an alumni event recently, we welcome you to sign-up and see some old friends from your Avoda past. See you in 2008.

Mike "Morty" Roth

Heard it through the Grapevine...Avoda Happenings

Births

- Jason Rubin – baby girl (Stella Rose), August 8, 2006
- Stu Glasser – baby girl (Beatrice Rae), November 15, 2006
- Larry Rubin – baby boy (Jonathan Isaac), February 8, 2007
- David Silver – baby boy (Jack Ellis) May 4, 2007
- Josh Rovner – baby girl (Sara Flynn), May 11, 2007
- Josh Sobol – baby boy (Jacob Andrew), May 23, 2007
- Greg Smith – baby girl (Addyson Bridget), June 13, 2007
- Jeff Davis – baby girl (Una Ellen), June 22, 2007
- Jeff Vetstein – baby girl (Kayla Anna), July 19, 2007
- Bobby Gould – baby girl (Jordyn Isabel), July 20, 2007
- Eric Shaff – baby girl (Sara Gabrielle), August 13, 2007
- Andrew Bramson – baby boy (Jonah Alexander), August 18, 2007
- David Goldberg – baby boy (Tyler Joseph), August 25, 2007
- Jeff Blocker – baby boy (Adam Shai) October 2, 2007
- Justin Kaufman – baby boy (Evan Anthony) September 25, 2007
- Steve Peters – baby boy (Jonathan Noah) October 23, 2007
- Jeff Freedman – baby boy (Joshua Eric) November 14, 2007
- Larry Crasnick—baby boy (Logan Quinn) December 15, 2007

Passings

- Larry Bornstein – February 28, 2007
- Stanley Epstein – May 29, 2007
- Arnold Zeiff—December 7, 2007



Tyler Goldberg, August 25, 2007

Weddings

- Andy Rubin – June 16, 2007 (Amy Banghart)
- Gary Solomon – July 7, 2007 (Lisa Shames)
- Jonathan Cooper—July 29, 2007 (Emily Berntsen)
- Jamie Sasson – August 4, 2007 (Lia Castellano)
- Jake Cohen—August 12, 2007 (Rose Chaffee)
- Grayson Kimball – August 26, 2007 (Robin Daman)
- Dan Goldstein – September 10, 2007 (Shabnam Merchant)
- Lee Kaiser – September 16, 2007 (Nadine Drago)
- Ariel Waldman – October 7, 2007 (Rachel Levinson)
- David Glattstein – October 13, 2007 (Amanda Sallen)



Jonathan Peters



Adam Blocker



A Kimball Wedding: Papa Tyler, Rick Daman, Groom Grayson, Bride Robin Daman, Spencer, EJ

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Alumni Weekend 2007...



*From the halls
of Camp Avoda...*

Richard Samuels, Richard Osness, Peter Varga, Steve Zaidman, Paul Davis, Ira Rosenberg, Neal Goldman, Jim Singer



Victorious 3-on-3 Squad: Sam Bazar, Dave Foreman, Jim Singer



The Grounds Crew Prepares

Special Thanks
to Jim Sklaver
for taking these
great Photos!



From Left to Right...well...everyone.

...The Best Weekend of the Year!



Neal Goldman and Tom Leavitt at the ceremony naming the Avoda Archives for Tom in recognition of his many years of devotion to Avoda—Congratulations!

A-V-O-D-A



Canteen bills may be paid at the lodge.



Paul "Moose-Lite" Hantman and Richie Mintzer enjoying a cold one.



Avoda is a state of mind. Will you be there next year?

*...to the shores
of Tlspaquin*

Avoda Alumni Bugle

Bad Idea Jeans...Avoda Style

By Jeff Vetstein & Sam Mirkin

We all loved camp...but sometimes an idea so bad, so misinformed came around that you just had to shake your head. In the spirit of full disclosure, we here at the Bugle now give you ideas so retched, so incomprehensible that they deserve their own "Bad Idea Jeans" Commercial.

The Neutral Zone – During certain Desert Wars, the powers that be decided to split the camp from The Rec hall to the Men's & Ladies Room, but left the entire grove area/basketball courts a "no man's land" or a Neutral Zone...a Free-For-All Bad idea

Mudmarines – In 1985, the powers that be decided to forego Desert War in lieu of this Scavenger Hunt/Flagrush/Indian Relay Pu Pu Platter. Equally bad? Desert War Classic—not classic in any way. Worse? Starting Desert War Classic over the PA. Come on guys, you weren't even trying.

Inviting Camp Yavneh to the Basketball Tourney – Yavneh did manage to score a couple of buckets, albeit on the wrong hoop. It's not all about winning, right?

Trying to get past Mutta with a flag – Brian Malamut was the Mike Singletary of Flagrush Defense, sock pulling was not in his repertoire.

Martha's Vineyard Field Trip – No comment.

Blue Avoda Shirts in the bleachers on a 100 degree day – MMM...heat stroke. Good idea for the concession guy selling Italian Ice though.

Dutch Auction – This evening activity was as about as popular as raking the beach, with cleaning the latrine coming in a close second.

Raffi – Who was this oboe playing madman? And why did he run the bases backwards?

Not serving Knishes to Alumni at Alumni Weekend 2007 – terrible idea. Just terrrrrrrrrrrrrrible.

Nude Slide—Hondo to the infirmary, Hondo to the infirmary.

Announcing the huge junk food haul you got on visiting day to your counselor—beneficent bad idea.

Looking into the Black Hole—horrifyingly bad idea.

Jello Wrestling sans refrigeration – Some people like to refrigerate Jello prior to wrestling in it, other people like to recreate diseases long since eradicated.

Movie nights without canteen – What? No candy with my 90 degree movie in the lodge? You gotta be kidding me!!! And to think, I was saving up for toothpaste and D Batteries.

Using Trash Liners as Rain Gear – That's a \$2 raincoat in PDG's eyes. Don't even think about mudsliding!!

Diving into the shallow end – Staff who watched CPR training videos know what happens to Shooter in those videos. "Shooter, no!!!!" Debilitating bad idea.

Bucket Brigades concluding Indian Relays (err Native American Relays) – In 1984, certain Bunk 14 members who have chosen to remain anonymous filled the buckets in more creative ways.

RBI Baseball + Air Conditioning - What if I told you that Nintendo and air conditioning lead to a lack of counselor productivity? Would that be something that interests you?

Mike Jarrett's headfirst slide into home after hitting his first bunko—counselor encouraged bad idea.

Bob Stone playing on the "skins" squad in hoops – a sweaty, hairy, slimy idea, much like guarding a bag of seaweed covered rocks.

Unnecessarily storing 8,000 pound swim docks under the old rec hall— let's drag the biggest, heaviest item in camp under a dilapidated building with support posts every four feet. A knuckle-scraping, hernia-inducing bad idea.

The Honor Roll— isn't everyone on this thing? Why not just call it the "Paid Tuition Roll" or "Customer List."

Giving Bruce French Camper-Beater while you are still a camper— painfully bad idea.

Telling everyone you hate your new camp nickname— bad idea, Sackowitz.

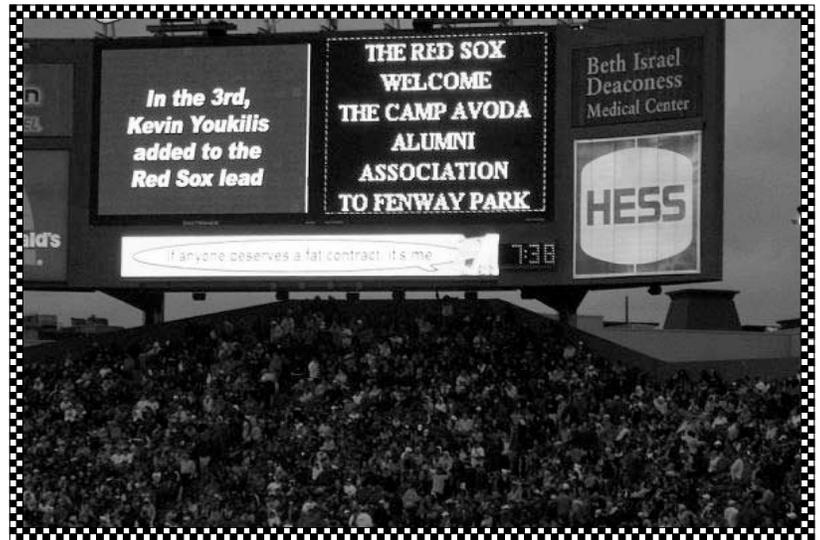
Installing "close-tight" doors in the bathroom stalls—a guy likes to spread out a bit when he's doing his business.

Reporting to the trunk house when you are paged there—sharp thinking, Señor Samsonite.

The Sports Page



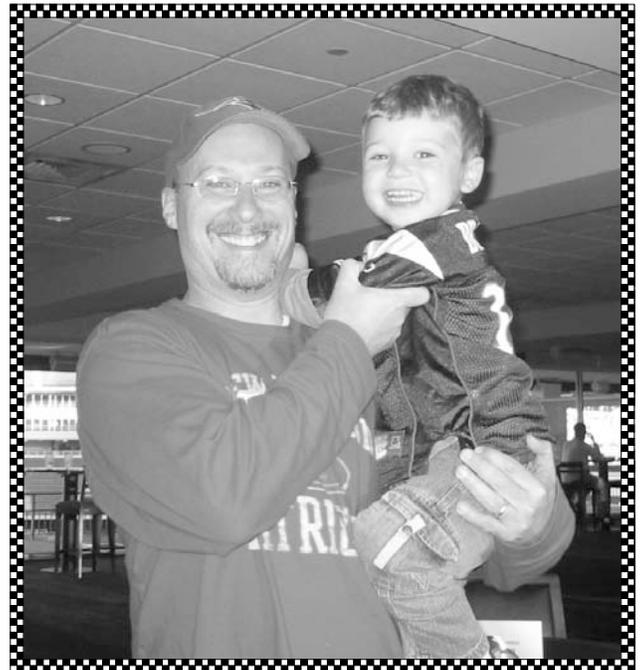
Kenny, Kenny, He's The Man!!!



Avoda Alumni Night at The Red Sox—May 17, 2007.
A Great Time Was Had By All.



Mark Solomon and Alex Sherman
in Bob Kraft's House.



David "Bones" Wertheim and son Ben.
Go Pats!

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

We are always looking for good content for the newsletter. If you want to contribute a piece to a future newsletter or reach the alumni association for any reason, please send an email to: campavodaalumniassociation@hotmail.com.

Thank you for your support!

Mail to: Camp Avoda Alumni Association,
PO Box 465, Needham Heights, MA 02494

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Phone (Home) (Work) _____

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Annual Fund Giving Levels

\$ _____ Lake-O (\$2,000 +)

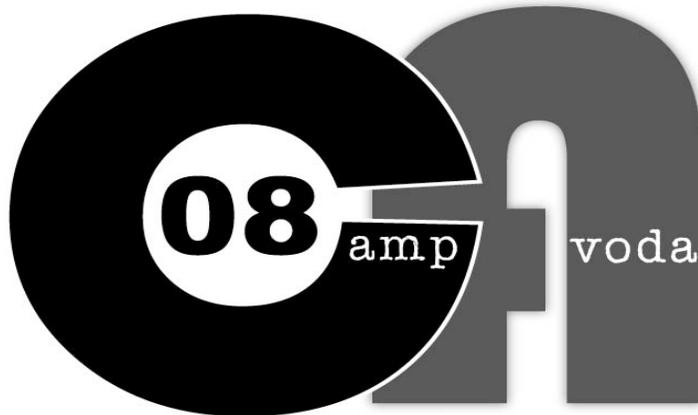
\$ _____ Hall of Fame (\$1,500 - \$1,999)

\$ _____ Dedication (\$1,000 - \$1,499)

\$ _____ Kosher Kabin (\$750 - \$999)

\$ _____ Betty Grable Commando (\$500-\$749)

\$ _____ Rec-O (\$250-\$499)



alumni weekend

6.20-6.22

www.campavoda.org

(0110K Alumni)

Avoda Alumni Night at The Red Sox

—>> Wednesday, May 21 <<—

Watch your email inbox for info.

Camp Avoda Alumni Association
PO Box 465
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www.campavoda.org