

**5th Alumni Weekend!**  
*page 3*

**Photo gallery**  
*pages 4, 5*

**Camp news**  
*page 6*

SPRING 1995

# The Avoda Alumnus

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CAMP AVODA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

## A new beginning

IT HAS BEEN A YEAR since the last issue of *The Avoda Alumnus*. Since that time, a number of changes have taken place for both the camp's Board of Directors and the Alumni Association Board. Because the fallout from these changes was still unclear last fall, there was no issue published as is usually done in October. Well, needless to say, all is now known and we're glad to report that all is well. The 1995 summer season will be an exciting new beginning for all of us.

The Board of Directors has a new president, Herb Bamel. Herb and Alumni Association prez Jason Rubin met in February to create a more open channel of communication between the Board and the Alumni Association. This new relationship will benefit both the camp and its alumni.

The Board's changes are as follows: longtime Treasurer David Barnet passed away last year, and Middleboro Selectman Alton Kramer, a member of the Board for many years, decided to resign from active participation, though he continues to serve as the camp's liaison with the town – a very valuable role indeed. To restock the Board, and to ensure that future ventures are managed by people with the appropriate skills, the Board has added a few new members – all Avoda alumni. They are Carl Goldberg, Joel Horvitz, and Jim Singer.

Since Carl and Joel were members of the Alumni Association Board (plus the fact that another member, Jay Epstein, also has resigned), a significant reorganization seemed necessary. Says Jason, "I have borrowed the Board's committee model to ensure active participation of all members, something in which I believe very strongly and have stressed during my term as president. By the time of this summer's Alumni Weekend, we hope to add two or three more members, preferably from the ranks of those whose Avoda experience is five years removed or less."

For the Alumni Association Board, this reorganization still is a work in progress, and we hope to move forward with a range of activities in the fall, including efforts to recruit new campers to Avoda and to create a number of new and fun alumni events.

"There is a lot of work being done and more that still needs doing," says Jason. "I am committed to making the Alumni Association a visible and positive contributor to Avoda, and a valuable resource and service provider to alumni. The 5th annual Alumni Weekend (see story on page 3) will be the best ever; we hope you can make it, especially if you've never come before. And remember, the best thing about a new beginning is that the best is yet to come."

# It was 20 Years Ago Today...

*I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE FUN to go tripping through the Avoda Archives (read: my closet) in search of clues into the daily realities of Avoda life in the dark and distant past. Well, maybe 20 years isn't all that long ago, but it sure is a nice, even number. Ed.*

## Tradition

The following items all were found in the 1975 *Avodian*. First up, this touching and poignant excerpt from a touching and poignant article by Tom Leavitt, then the CIT Director:

"There were tears in his eyes and silence in his voice. All were still and then my eyes began to fill up. He left the podium and returned to his seat at the head table. Still the silence was deafening, and then all at once, thunderous applause broke out that 1973 Banquet Night. It was Peter Varga's last year at Avoda. Somehow after 13 years, he was an institution here. Although his generation, and those he grew up with at camp, were no longer here, he was a symbol of a past Avoda.

"It was then that Pioneering and Campcraft programs were big here. People wanted to build, to create with their hands. For them, that was the only thing needed for a 'good summer.' The Chapel Site was built by campers, the camp sites were cleared by campers, and towers and shelters used to be built on our wooded land by campers.

"As a camper and as a staff member, it seems as though you go through different eras. For example, how many Avodians now know who Tisch and Miller were, or Big Julie and Bobo? Whatever happened to the Bobo Sky Rocket Cheer?

"There are two qualities that make Avoda different from all the rest: tradition and friendship. Without the former, I doubt there would be the latter. This is why year after year I return."

## A Chest of Fish

The Dramatics program in 1975 went far beyond what most people would think of when considering

the repertoire of summer camp plays. As these excerpts from Dramatics Head Paul Fishman's report demonstrates, the inspired lunacy that he and Mark Chester inflicted upon the camp that year truly was something completely different:

"With the last resounding echo of the standing ovation ringing in our ears, the hurrahs and applause of yet another phenomenal dramatic season prompt us to nod our heads humbly and murmur, 'Yes fellas, we deserve it all!'

"The year started out quietly enough with *Jonah and the Whale*, a naughty nautical tale chock-full of blubbering puns, lewd allusions, brute sin, and verdant brouhaha, amidst the mad comedy of Paul Fishman and Mark Chester, whose comic gifts and skills constantly amaze me. Robert Satloff and Alan Burke deserve special thanks and kudos for their intense portrayal of an alcoholic corned beef on rye in Tennessee Williams' *She Was Only a Golfer's Daughter But She Knew Every Stroke*.

Finally, this interminable article wouldn't be complete without a warm hug and upper-cut to Mark Chester, my dear comrade and assistant director. Those endless nights we slaved over Dairy Queen sundaes, those fierce hours of endless labor over the Penthouse centerfolds, your unceasing days of sacrifice toiling thanklessly over tuna sandwiches, those heroic moments of courageous and unstinting peril as you risked life, limb, and salary to con a coke from Mr. Davis...rest assured Mark, you can rest assured."

## Where Will They Be?

Interestingly enough, there was a short feature in the 1975 *Avodian* called "Twenty Years Later – Where Will They Be.....?" Have any come true?

"Lewis Satloff will try out for the title of Mr. America...and will lose his citizenship.

"George Brockman will be a Good Humor man, later arrested for eating up the profits.

*continued on p. 8*

# 5th Alumni Weekend this June

THE 5TH ANNUAL CAMP AVODA Alumni Weekend will held Friday through Sunday, June 23-25, 1995. Like before, we'll be running, throwing, jumping, swimming, and sleeping in bunks...just like when we were campers and staff members!

And for the second straight year, we're not raising our prices, either – all proceeds go to our scholarship fund, which helps needy and deserving boys go to Avoda – because we want record numbers this year. We want 1995 to be the biggest and best yet. We need you!

Especially since the event almost wasn't going to be held at all this year.

## Good times, bad times

Since the first Alumni Weekend in 1990, this event has grown steadily. Returning "home" to Avoda for a lakeside weekend away from civilization has become a much-anticipated ritual for a number of alumni. Unfortunately, it seems, some appear to be taking the value and specialness of this event for granted.

No one who spent any part of his youth at Avoda would ever dream of vandalizing its grounds. Yet, with each passing year, we leave more and more garbage behind. Last year, bottles were left on the field, on the beach, in the cabins, and in the

other buildings. Staff, who have enough to do just getting the camp in order, had to clean up after us. Not to mention that the kind of trash we left behind, and the activities they suggest, can send an unfortunate message to the mostly teenaged crew.

## DATES AND RATES

*Friday, June 23*  
*Saturday, June 24*  
*Sunday, June 25*

*Friday-Sunday \$70*  
*Saturday-Sunday \$65*  
*One day only \$36*

*To register, use form on page 7  
or call Mike Ross at  
617-437-0399 or Jerry Hill  
at 617-527-4766.*

Even more significantly, none of us would ever want to endanger the camp's ability to be a good neighbor in its community or to give area residents an excuse to bring legal and political pressure to bear on Avoda. But thanks to a few unknown and highly irresponsible alumni, that's exactly what we did.

After alumni all went home last year, resident of Gibbs Road complained that cars sped down the street late at night, yelling, honking, driving without headlights – in short, being a

danger and a nuisance. The police and the Board of Selectmen (Alton Kramer's colleagues) were up in arms. The camp's Board and Administration had to work overtime restoring Avoda's good name.

More than a few people wanted the Alumni Weekend banned altogether. Others wanted it reduced to a single night or even just an afternoon. In addition to being a fun and special experience for respectful and appreciative alumni, the Alumni Weekend is our biggest fundraiser and supports a very important cause. This is an apt opportunity to remember that the consequences of our actions often are felt by others who are not even involved.

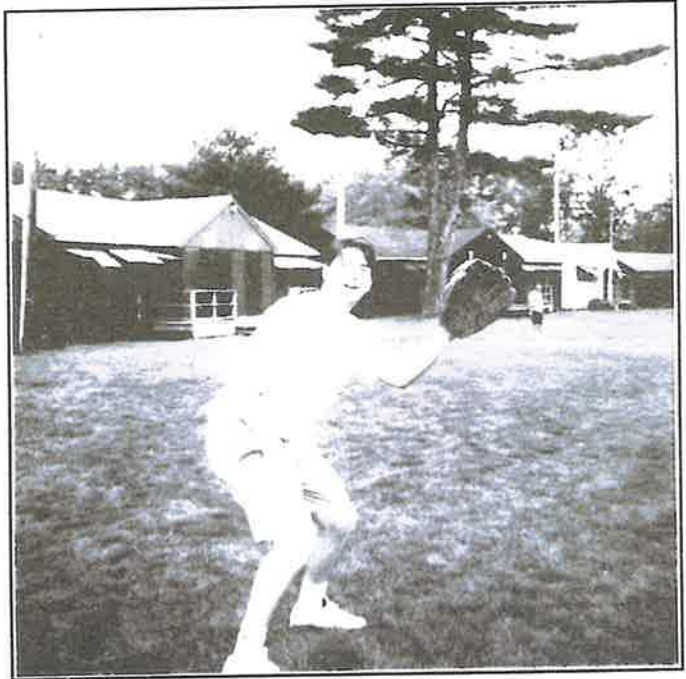
This issue was central in Jason's meeting with Herb Bamel last February, and because he gave his word as a man and as an Avodian that the unfortunate events of last year would never be repeated, we were given permission to go ahead with the Alumni Weekend.

## Come alive in '95

Let's make the most of this opportunity, another "new beginning." We can still party, still celebrate the old times and the new times, but we need to do it safely and responsibly. We should be setting an example for the

*continued on p. 6*

# CAMP AVODA ALUM NIWEE KEND 1994



*I'm here to catch up on old friends!*



*Five alumni, outstanding in their field.*





*“Come into my web,”  
said the spider to the fly.*



*Shadoop shadooby doop,  
shadoop shadooby doop...*

*Photos courtesy of Harold Poverman  
Newsletter editor: Jason M. Rubin*



*I love playing basketball at Avoda THIS much!*

# Avoda bursting at the seams

THESE ARE GOOD TIMES INDEED for Camp Avoda. Enrollment has been solid for the last few years and shows no sign of abating anytime soon. As of mid-January, the camp had exactly two camper openings for the first month, and only 25 open for the second. By opening day, every bed, dresser, and locker will be occupied.

The Senior division, in fact, is so full that the Bunk 14 cabin is being expanded to accommodate additional campers, and director Paul Davis has recommended that the same be done with Bunks 11 and 12. Septic tanks have to be removed in order to make such construction possible.

Mitchell Stern returns as #2 man, but longtime administrator Bruce Silverlieb has called it quits after 15 summers. Taking his place will be Lee Kaiser, a 12-year veteran of Avoda. His last year was 1991. For the past two years, he has been teaching 6th grade in the Fairfax County school system in Virginia. After discussing the offer with his wife, who works full time there, he decided Avoda was important enough a reason to make him return for the summer. Lee will oversee the CIT program, among many other responsibilities.

Besides the senior bunks, other new construction planned on campus includes making an additional shower house out of the men's side of the Men's and Ladies' Rooms (the ladies side will remain a rest room for female visitors). Also, Paul has proposed to the Board building a real street hockey court, to be located in what is currently the parking lot across from the infirmary (many years before, it was the archery range and eons before that, who knows?) (If you *do* know, please write in and share the info. You may want to include any special memory you have of something that took place there.)

Each year, capital improvements have kept Avoda in great condition. It really is even more beautiful than you remember. Come to the Alumni Weekend this year and see for yourself!

## Alumni Weekend '95

staff. So let's go there with our hearts full and our minds intent on fraternity, and let us leave behind on Sunday a camp that is clean, that is enhanced spiritually by our having been there, and that is eager to welcome us back in 1996.

If you have never attended before, give it a try. Sure, the beds aren't as comfortable as what you have at home, but there is so much to do: swimming, boating, water skiing, softball, basketball, tennis, it's like being camper again, only better: you can come and go as you like, you can stay up after "Taps" and arise after "Reveille," and you don't have work detail! Alumni of all ages and eras come. At a camp full of Avodians, you'll have something in common with everyone. Don't let what happened last year scare you off. This is good, clean fun and your spirited participation will ensure a successful weekend.

If you have attended before – especially if you were present last year – we all need to rely on each other to make sure one or two bad apples don't spoil the whole bunch, girl (wow, I just had an Osmonds flashback!). Let's pull together and show everyone what the Alumni Association is made of. This could be the best year ever – or it could be the last. It's all in our hands. Let's do it!

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**YES!** Please register me for the 5th annual Camp Avoda Alumni Weekend. Check made out to Camp Avoda Alumni Association is enclosed in the amount of (check one):

- \$70 – Friday, June 23 through Sunday, June 25 (2 nights)
- \$65 – Saturday and Sunday (1 night)
- \$36 – One day only

If address has changed, please check this box and make corrections on address label on the back.

Enclosed is \$25. Please print my business card (enclosed) in the next issue.

Please remove my name from your mailing list.

Please add the following to your mailing list:

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## 20 Years Ago...continued

"Mike Rosenstein will still be sitting in Sadie's trying to finish his beer.

"Bobby Gilberg will be player-coach for the Israeli basketball team, The Gil-Sixes.

"Paul Davis will be a supermarket clerk, somewhere in San Francisco.

"Mark Sugarman and Steven Blau will be Director and Assistant Director, respectively, of Camp Avoda."

### Color War

Despite the fact that they had a Fight Song sung to the tune of "I Am Woman," the White Wizards were victorious over the Blue Tide. Here's how Color War broke that year:

"Tuesday evening, and the standing ovation for the hilarious Fishman/Chester production of *The Hairy Meat Monster* had just rumbled to a close in the Rec Hall, when suddenly Steve Cohen fell unconscious to the floor! Tom Leavitt and Mr. Davis heroically dashed to his aid, and the entire camp leaned forward, eyebrows furrowed with tension, as Steve's prostrate body was wrapped carefully on a stretcher and Ruth, the camp nurse, was called to give first aid. Then Tom hollered out the immortal words, 'Ruth, this is no ordinary break! It's the break of the 1975 Color War!' The camp cheered with glee, and the captains were announced: David Bamel for the Blue, and Jerry Gordon for the White."

### CAMP AVODA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 911  
Upton, NY 11973

*Address correction requested*

