

# Avoda Alumnus

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CAMP AVODA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

SPRING/SUMMER 1991

**Mel Hyman**  
*President*

**Phil Greenspan**  
*Treasurer*

**Jason M. Rubin**  
*Secretary/Editor*

**David Bamel**  
**Carl Goldberg**  
**Jerry Hill**  
**Joel Hurvitz**  
**Ira Rosenberg**  
**Michael Ross**  
**Michael Roth**  
*Vice Presidents*

## IN THIS ISSUE

**Mel's Message**  
*page 2*

**Editor's Essay**  
*page 2*

**Avodian interview:**  
**Jay Epstein**  
*page 3*

**Alumni Association**  
**sponsors a camper**  
*page 6*

**Registration form for Alumni**  
**Weekend and Alumni Day**  
*page 7*



## 1991 will be a great year for Avoda, alumni

Another easy "greenhouse-effect" winter has passed and before an unbearable greenhouse-effect summer hits us, we have the spring to make us start thinking about the joy and fun we had in the warm weather of past summers at Avoda. The camp administration has been making plans for the 65th season, and the Alumni Association has also been working to contribute to the camp's welfare and provide events for its alumni.

Planned improvements at the camp for 1991 include resurfacing of the tennis courts and possibly the basketball court, new flooring in the kitchen area, two new windsurfers, and two new motorboat engines.

Camp registration for the summer was ahead of schedule as of the end of January. Tuition was raised eight percent to \$2,475 for the season (still a bargain, believe it or not). And with an influx of fourth and fifth graders, it looks like the camp will be filled for the next several years.

The annual Alumni Family Day will be held on Sunday, July 14 (rain date is August 4), so mark your calendars. This year the

campers are not going to a Red Sox game but to another location, so they may be around for the early or later parts of the day. As usual, there will be a barbecue lunch and activities open for everyone.

And the first ever Alumni Overnight Weekend is slated for June 28-29, the weekend just before camp opens. Meals will be provided from Friday night dinner to a Saturday night banquet.

The camp will be fully staffed and there will be activities and the thrill of actually sleeping in the bunks. If you haven't responded yet, please do so soon. There is more information inside.

Summer's coming and Avoda's calling. Don't stay away! ☺

## MEL'S MESSAGE

---

As the camp's 65th season rapidly approaches, I am pleased to report that Avoda is very close to being filled: the first month is sold out and as of this writing, the few openings for the second month are going fast.

This is great news considering the economic problems we are all experiencing. We, as alumni, can certainly share in this good fortune. Paul, Bob, and Bruce have worked hard in their recruiting efforts over the winter months and the results are showing.

The Alumni Association continues to grow. It is important that many more of you take an active part in the association. How can you do this? It's easy. First of all, write to me at our P.O. Box and let me know of your interest. Plan to attend our first annual Alumni Weekend at Avoda in June. Reserve Sunday, July 14, to spend the day at camp with your family.

We need volunteers to help with planning social events, working with the fund raising committee, taking part in recruiting campers, staff, and alumni, assisting with the newsletter, and many

other activities. I can assure you, this work is both fun and rewarding, and I look forward to hearing from many of you.

Remember, it makes no difference what age bracket you are in. We welcome you to become an active member whether you were in camp in 1939 or 1989. We all have taken something with us from the time we spent at Camp Avoda. We now have a chance to give just a little something back.

The Alumni Association has a number of very worthy projects that cannot be realized without funding. If you can donate, please do so—it's tax-deductible. Let's all get back into that tremendous Avoda Spirit. We can help make sure the tradition continues.

The *Avoda Alumnus* now goes to 994 Avoda alumni and our mailing list continues to grow. An Alumni Association of this size should be capable of contributing greatly to the continued success of our camp so that your sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons can enjoy summer fun at Camp Avoda in the future, just as you did a few short years ago. ☺

## EDITOR'S ESSAY

---

When spring arrives, I find that memories of Avoda come back with far greater frequency than complete pairs of socks did from the camp laundry.

I recall the sewing on of name tags (so I knew whose clothes I would be coming home with), the frantic search for the trunk key (yes, it was locked inside), the long ride down to Middleboro (does it ever snow in Middleboro?), and the line outside the infirmary (yes, I've had my shots and the balance is paid; that's why this short guy never stops grinning).

Going to camp was such an ordeal. Being at camp was a breeze. And going home was easy, too, though sad. I always noticed that my house shrank over the summer. Wow, a refrigerator! Now I can have a Coke whenever I want to (how easy it is to take real life for granted, let alone the "real thing").

Getting back, though, to *being* at camp—smelling the smells, hearing the crack of a softball bat, washing the Tispaquin algae off your body, even lining up at the flagpole. . . these are the experiences that never leave the mind's

# Avodian interview: JAY EPSTEIN

---

*Depending on when you went to Avoda, you may know Jay Epstein chiefly as Gary's older brother or you may know Gary Epstein chiefly as Jay's younger brother. Or, if you went when they were there at the same time, you know them both as who they are. And if you didn't go when either of them were there, you may not know them at all. Regardless, there has always been something special (some would say twisted) about the Epsteins and their effect on Avoda life. Jay, now 37, was my S.C. in Bunk 10 in 1976. I was a very impressionable 13-year-old and he sure knew how to make an impression. As the years erode the kid/adult barrier that is built into the camper/counselor relationship, it is assuring to see that friendship remains, and sitting with him, one-on-one, I remembered why 1976 was my favorite year as a camper. Put on your seat belts, it's time to go inside the mind of Jay Epstein.*



*Jay and Gary Epstein, 1976*

**AA:** Tell us, please Jay, when did you go to Avoda?

**JE:** I was a camper from 1965-69, then I went to Israel in 1970, then I was a J.C. in '71, in Israel in '72, S.C. of Bunk 14 in '73, in Israel in '74 and '75, S.C. of Bunk 10 in '76, and Administrator in 1977.

**AA:** Tell us the history of Epsteins at Avoda.

**JE:** First there was me. Great time, obviously. I still miss it. Then Jonny, who didn't spend much time there. There were too many rules and regulations for Jonny. He needed a more open program, like the ones where they let teenagers loose in the mountains for a summer. He always liked that better. So he only went for one summer because it was too restrictive.

Then Gary, who started off crying every summer that he wanted to go home. Then he'd be happy, then he'd want to go home. Then he turned on to it and he still has a hard on over it. Like me.

Randy, the younger one, had trouble with it at the beginning. He was homesick, then he turned on to it. Then again, I think it was too restrictive for Randy, too. So out of the four boys, two didn't mind the restrictions here and there and two felt hemmed in.

We got turned on to Avoda by Jerry Hill. Mrs. Hill turned my mother on to it and that's how we first got the connection. I used to hang out with Hill because we went to Hebrew School together.

**AA:** In 1974, when Gary won the Leadership Trophy, he tearfully exclaimed, "I did it for Jay!" Why did he do it for you?

**JE:** I don't know, maybe because I turned him on to it. I got him through the homesickness at that time. I remember Phil Greenspan being a senior counselor of a bunk and I was in the same bunkhouse as Phil. So Gary, when he was homesick, would come over and hang around with us.

And the good thing about Phil and that whole bunk was that none of us threw Gary out. We all tried to get him through that rough time. And maybe that's why he did it for me, because I helped him when he was a kid. And he eventually turned on to camp and winning that trophy, for him, was very important to his development at that time.

**AA:** As one of the more spirited Avodians of all time, maybe you could define Avoda Spirit for me.

**JE:** Going into Camp Bournedale

*continued p.6*

## **Editor, cont.**

---

vault of familiarity. Sure, there's the special moments—the run to the showerhouse after a Color War victory, scoring the winning run/goal/basket/point, starring in a play, making the perfect candle—but it's really the ordinary, everyday life of the camp that forms the unique attachment to Avoda we all feel. Just being there was special.

It's always fun to go back to visit on Alumni Day but even that is a poor substitution to sleeping under the stars of a Middleboro summer evening, rising to the sound of crickets, and drinking in the experience of a true overnight at Avoda. Well, now we have the chance.

Do you dare return to Avoda? How long has it been since you've slept with several other guys in a wooden shack called a bunk? How long since you showered with several other guys in a wooden shack known as a showerhouse? How long since you got up in the morning and had a field, a lake, a tennis court, all in your own front yard (if this is common experience for you, perhaps you'd like to donate a new rec hall to the camp)?

If you're man enough to put the real world behind you for a weekend and return to the place that was as much a second womb as it was a second home, then send off your sixty bucks, stitch on your name tags, get out your trunk key, and hit the road to Middleboro. The sequel is about to begin!

*AVODA: The Camp, Part II.* In which a group of guys return to the scene of their glory, so long ago though never forgotten. Will they discover that it has stayed the same after all these years? Will they have changed? Is there still a Nature Shack? Is there a Pembroke alumni weekend scheduled at the same time? *And what about canteen?* These questions and less will be answered, June 28-29, at the dark end of Gibbs Road. Be there, for *AVODA: The Camp, Part II.* Because in Middleboro, no one can hear can you scream (with delight). ☺

## **Alumni Association gives one-month scholarship**

As has become an annual tradition, the Alumni Association is providing a one-month scholarship to a deserving camper. Now a child who otherwise would not have been able to experience an Avoda summer, can do so thanks to your donations and support in Alumni Association activities.

Avoda was originally founded as a low-priced camp for needy Jewish youth. It is in keeping with the tradition of the camp and the vision of Judge Samuel Barnett that we provide assistance to those

who would benefit from the Avoda experience but cannot afford it without creating a hardship.

Perhaps in the future we can sponsor two or more kids, or provide for two-month scholarships. We cannot dream of those things, nor could we have accomplished what we have so far, without your support and commitment. You can donate by staying at home or you can donate by coming to the Alumni Overnight Weekend. Either way, your contributions are greatly appreciated. ☺

*Don't miss the 1st Camp Avoda*  
**Alumni Overnight!**

**Friday, June 28 - Saturday, June 29, 1991**  
*(Camp opens on Sunday, June 30)*

**Itinerary:**

**Friday**

- Arrive in the afternoon
- Dinner will be served at 7:00 pm
- Fun and games in the evening

**Cost:**

Full weekend - \$60.00  
 Saturday only - \$45.00

**Saturday**

- Breakfast, lunch, and banquet dinner served
- Camp activities open all day
- Leave after dinner

**Alumni only**

**No alcohol or illegal substances**

.....

**1991 Camp Avoda  
 Alumni Day!**

Sunday, July 14, 1991

Noon – 5:00 p.m.

*rain date: August 4*

All activities open for Avoda alumni and their guests  
 (family and intimate friends only).

BBQ lunch will be served at 1:00 p.m.

**Cost:**

Alumni: \$10.00  
 Guests: FREE

To register for either or both of these great events,  
 fill out the registration form on page 7  
 and return to the Camp Avoda Alumni Association.

## Jay Epstein, continued

and wasting those guys, considering they had maids and triple the cash for their card games that we had. Avoda Spirit was half the camp staying for that hurricane [in 1976]. Going to hang out in the basement of that old age home for the evening, that was Avoda Spirit.

The standing ovation. We showed the movie *The Graduate* to you all when you were young, and whether you understood it or not, you gave it a standing ovation at the end. The only movie in Avoda history that got a standing ovation. That was Avoda Spirit.

It's like, you know, years later, just in what you do in your everyday life, a piece of it is from that Avoda experience. That's the Avoda Spirit. Going back every year. Families went, neighborhoods went. The Hills turned on the Epsteins, and the Epsteins turned on whomever. It goes on.

**AA:** Being the wild and crazy guy that you were, how did you approach being the head of Education?

**JE:** We felt, my staff and I, you throw a bunch of ideas at the kids, and if they remember one or two of them, we've done our job. I would always ask myself, "If I had to have Education, what would I want it to be like?" So we started giving out awards. We used media; you know, slides and films because kids like that stuff and so it wouldn't be that I was just talking to them.

We were fortunate a couple of times in the timing of world events. Like the Israeli raid on Entebbe, that was on July 4, and the massacre at the Munich Olympics, that happened after the summer of 1972. And with the Munich thing, we pushed the fact that they were athletes because kids at Avoda think of themselves as famous athletes. So to match up that idea, make a kid remember because he'd remember

that it had to do with sports, but it also had some kind of Jewish/Israeli content connected to it.

**AA:** Should Avoda go co-ed?

**JE:** NO! And for years I was one of the leaders in the women's liberation movement because all the girls my age were just turning on to it. I think there are certain times, you know, we're not asking too much for the little boys not to have the little girls around for two months of their lives every year. No, I am strongly against it and I will contribute to any organization that it against Avoda going co-ed. I think it's nice having a sister camp.

**AA:** What was your most memorable moment at Avoda?

**JE:** Paul Davis in a bathing suit at the waterfront. That's always been a memorable moment for me personally. Seriously, though, a memorable moment for me, if I can get corny, was a Tisha B'av service. That for a half an hour, they could get that serious and that they'd just and think for a half-hour or 45 minutes. I always thought that was nice.

Because it's during the summer and everyone's f\*\*\*ing around all the time. And then for one night—not that we fasted or anything, no one took it that step further—before they'd be f\*\*\*ing around and after they'd be f\*\*\*ing around but for that one night, everyone is together and serious.

Haircuts. That was memorable. They used to strap us down before Visiting Day. They cut our hair! Another memorable moment was getting a plaster shampoo from Carl Goldberg.

**AA:** If you could return to camp as the Executive Director, what changes would you make?

**JE:** *Build a rec ball!* I would build a rec hall. I would establish what's almost started. Danny Bauman established that special Bunk 14

### IMPORTANT NOTICE:

Please help us keep our costs down. If you want to continue receiving this newsletter, please check off the first box on the form on page 7. If you do not wish to continue receiving this newsletter, please write "Cancel" on the form and return it to us.  
Thank you.

# Jay Epstein

program years ago. He felt that 14 should be a special experience, the kids in Bunk 14 should feel like they were the big shits at camp, that just being in 14 was a big deal. So he organized that Wellfleet overnight and they did a lot of other things. I wasn't there, but I heard about it and I was impressed.

I would separate Bunks 1 and 2 from the camp a little. Tom Leavitt started to do something like that. He and I too-hem on a special tour, took them away from the camp, to break them into the scene, you know, so they wouldn't be so intimidated.

But they need a rec hall. When it rains, to have the kids in their bunks—it's a waste of time. In bad weather, you need someplace else to hang out and do something constructive. 🐻

## Camp Avoda Board of Directors

Martin Wolf  
*President*

Alton Kramer

Kurt Kleinmann  
*Vice President*

Thomas A. Leavitt

Stanley Miller

David S. Barnet  
*Treasurer*

Lawrence Sherman

Mel Hyman

Herbert Bamel  
*Clerk*

 Mail to: Camp Avoda Alumni Association, P.O. Box 1037, Cambridge, MA 02142.

I would like to continue receiving *Avoda Alumnus*. Please make any address correction below:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please add to your mailing list.

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Years at Avoda \_\_\_\_\_

Scholarship fund donation enclosed for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to attend the Alumni Weekend; enclosed is:

Full weekend - \$60.00

Saturday only - \$45.00

I would like to attend Alumni Day

\_\_\_\_\_ alumni @ \$10.00. Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ total guests (all non-alumni guests get in free of charge)