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The Avoda ALUMNUS

SPRING • SUMMER 1994

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CAMP AVODA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

The sounds of silence

Shh.
Whoosh. Whir. Splash. Creak.
Listen.
Can you hear it?
Whoosh. Whir. Splash. Creak.
It's Avoda. In the wintertime.

The field is still there. Sometimes white with snow, sometimes wet with thaw. The sand, the lake—sometimes swirling, sometimes standing still. Always still there.

The bunks, the buildings, the courts, the chapel. All, all are there. And all are still. Quiet. Waiting.

Waiting for summer. Waiting for campers. For counselors. For Jim. Waiting for songs, for games, for laughter. For life.

It is strange to see Avoda in the wintertime. It is a stage with no actors, just a backdrop to a scene yet to be played. It is surreal, dreamlike. Familiar but not quite accurate. Something is missing that keeps it from ringing true.

Years ago, that something was you. It was all of us. We are what made Avoda more than just a place, more than just a promise. It has always been us. Humans. Boys and young men, kids and a few adults. Avoda would have been nothing without us. Avoda right now is nothing until

summer comes and the annual transfusion of campers and staff revives its soul and its spirit. We are what is important about Avoda. Us and them. The alumni and the current crop of Avodians.

We are no longer the lifeblood of Avoda, but we are still important to the camp. We help send boys each year to be that lifeblood. We help the camp cover the hit it took when it needed to replace the Rec Hall due to a hurricane's mischief.

We keep Avoda alive in our hearts. Some of us have sent our sons there, others of us hope to do so in the future. This is important. Some years ago, registration was dangerously low. More than a few people wondered if Avoda could survive. Today, business is booming. But economics, birth cycles, and ever-increasing recreational options must cause even the purest optimists to wonder how long these good times will last. We who represent the past must also be mindful of the future. We brought Avoda to life once, we must work to sustain her life over time.

Avoda is quiet in the winter. But not silent. Avoda must never be silenced.

Listen.

Can you hear it?

Whoosh. Whir. Splash. Creak. ✧

Jason M. Rubin

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I've been thinking lately about what it means to be an alumnus of something. Is it simply that you were part of an organization at one time in your life? Or is it deeper than that? Having *been* someplace doesn't necessarily make you *of* it. And yet belonging to that place means more than just having been there.

**Are you
hardcore?**

If you're reading this newsletter, you've probably been to Camp Avoda or at least someone you know very well has. What does it mean to you to be an Avoda alumnus? Do you feel linked with the

generations of Avodians who came before and after you? Do warm memories of magic moments experienced during an Avoda summer flood your mind when the subject is raised?

Or do you feel that the only reason for you to get this newsletter is because in addition to leaving behind a bathing suit and your favorite t-shirt, you also left behind your address when you said goodbye to the camp for the last time?

Think about this. There are a number of what I would call hardcore alumni, who maintain friendships with people they met at Avoda; who talk regularly about trips they took, raids they executed, meets they competed in; who go back to visit whenever possible; who remember the names, dates, teams, scores, songs, and smells so clearly that their dreams are often host to such images. They are active in alumni events, they donate money for scholarships and the new Rec Hall, they write letters just to let us know that they remember.

Many of these people live in New England, which may help explain their relative visibility. Even so, out of a mailing list of a little less than 1,000 names, there are probably less than 100 that I can consider hardcore, based on their feedback and participation over the last four or five years.

Granted, not everyone who goes to Avoda enjoys it. Not everyone who enjoys it, adores it. Even people who go for five or more years don't necessarily consider their time at Avoda to be a pivotal part of their life experience. And there are certainly many people who go for one year and bow out unnoticed. But not forgotten. We have the names and addresses of people who came, saw, and never came back.

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The Avoda Alumnus

The newsletter of the
**Camp Avoda
Alumni Association**

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WE'RE GOING BACK!

Yes, you heard right: We're going back. Back to Avoda for the 1994 Alumni Weekend.

Back for more fun in the sun at our home away from home. Sleeping in the bunks, playing on the field and the courts, swimming in the lake, drinking at the Pub. Back again.

The Alumni Weekend Committee, co-chaired by Mike Ross and Jerry Hill, would like it known that this is the year for the way to finally take the plunge. No excuses, no regrets. An opportunity like this is just too good to pass up.

Last year's introduction of the Friday night option proved extremely popular, so we are offering it again this year. No meals are included on Friday night, but it's a great way to get the bed you want,

meet your fellow alumni, and do some reflecting before the activities start.

The dates are Friday through Sunday, June 24, 25, and 26. Meals are included Saturday and Sunday; blankets and pillows are your own.

The cost for the Full Weekend package is \$70; Saturday and Sunday is \$65; and either Saturday or Sunday (no sleep-over) is \$36. If the prices sound familiar, they should – they are exactly the same as last year. Where else can you get a bargain like that?

REGISTER NOW! Use the form on page 7. Make your check payable to the Camp Avoda Alumni Association. Remember, ALL MONIES GO TO SUPPORT THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND. ☆

Bunk Agents to aid outreach

In an effort to improve outreach and keep Avoda alumni closer and more involved, the Alumni Association has launched a network of Bunk Agents, each one representing and responsible for their particular Bunk 14 year.

The Bunk Agents will be in charge of coordinating communication among all bunk members, as well as organizing and promoting alumni events, reunions, and the like. Bunk Agents will play an important role in increasing the effectiveness of the Alumni Association in providing information and services to the nearly 1,000 people on our mailing list.

If you are from a Bunk 14 that already has a Bunk Agent assigned, you can expect a call from him soon. If not, why not volunteer for the job? To the right are the names and numbers of the Bunk Agents, as well as the years that are still open.

If you would like more information about the Bunk Agent network, call Russell Sherman at 212-874-9313. ☆

Bunk Agents

1992	Mark Sokoloff	914-793-5709
1991	OPEN	
1990	OPEN	
1989	Jeremy Agulnek	215-573-8703
1988	Stu Glass	313-930-2190
		or 508-879-5726
1987	OPEN	
1986	OPEN	
1985	Sam Mirkin	314-872-8632
		or 617-469-2736
1984	Lee Kaiser	703-922-6497
1983	Richard Lefkowitz	617-266-7317
1982	Alex Sherman	908-688-1913
1981	Gary/Mark Solomon	617-769-0298
1980	OPEN	
1979	OPEN	
1978	OPEN	
1977	Ken Sandberg	617-630-1035
1976 - 1927	OPEN	

THE PROTEAN AVODIAN: MISCELLANY, ETC.

Milestones

Weddings:

Jason Rubin to Laura Sternberger – 10/17/93

Alex Sherman to Ramona Baran – 11/14/93
(see photo below)

Ken Sandberg to Emily Berkowitz – 4/24/94

Lee Kaiser to Kate Armfield – 6/25/94
(moderately decent excuse for missing
the 1994 Avoda Weekend)

Richard Lefkowitz to Barbara Nordell – 7/30/94



Top row, L-R: Gary Solomon, Lee Kaiser, Jay Yampolsky, Ken Shifman, NA (non-Avodian), Russell Katz, NA, Mark Solomon, NA.

Bottom row, L-R: Paul Davis, Bobbie Davis, Bruce Silverlieb, Alex, Ramona, Russell Sherman, Adam Becker, David Wertheim.

Businesses:

Paul Simon recently opened a second Simon & Sons clothing store in Newton, MA (he's also a client).

Jerry Hill is proud owner of an AlphaGraphics print shop in Wellesley, MA.

And judging from this coupon from a direct mail pack I found in my mailbox recently (see next page), Marshall and Phil Lukoff are up to their ankles in business. Quite a feet, I'd say.

Taking (over) the Bar

Boston and New England area alumni should plan to spend the night of Friday, May 13 at Faneuil Hall. From 6:00 - 10:00pm, at Lord Bunberry's, Avodians will meet for a night of drinking and socializing. A mere \$5.00 donation to the Scholarship Fund will get you in the door and into our private room downstairs (for an extra dollar, you can bring your wife). Organized by Louis Dennis, this will hopefully become a semi-regular event in Boston and, perhaps, elsewhere as well.

Alumni \$ brings boys to camp

For the fifth consecutive year, the Camp Avoda Alumni Association will make a gift to the camp to be used to help send needy boys to Avoda.

The money that is given comes from one source: you. Your past and continued support is greatly appreciated, not only by us, but by the fortunate boys who otherwise would never be able to attend a summer camp.

**Send your news, notes, milestones, letters, and spare change to Jason Rubin,
17 Boylston Street, #1, Boston, MA 02130. Deadlines are April 1 and October 1.**



Letter of the Month

Dear Camp Avoda Alumni Association:

I only recently began receiving *The Avoda Alumnus* and what do I see but names of people like Marty Wolf, Kurt Kleinmann, and Stan Miller on the camp's Board of Directors. Now, come on! These kids were my campers, for crying out loud! My campers! And then I trained them as CITs and JCs (I almost fired one of them, but I'll never tell you which one; besides, he turned out all right).

My own association with Avoda goes back to a period before World War II. I started in Bunk 12 and over the years was in Bunks 10, 5, 9, and 8. Once the war took everyone who could shave into military service, the camp began scraping the bottom of the barrel to fill out the counselor staff and that meant signing on people like Sooky Wolk, Chet Simmons, Mutt Levin, Dave Rosenberg, and me.

I left Avoda in 1949 to become program director of Bradley Brook Camp near Syracuse, NY. That was my last year in camping unless you want to count the two I spent in service during the Korean War. But I still have pleasant memories of Avoda and Bradley.

A lot has happened since then. Maybe it was my training as editor of the *Avoda Camp Crier* that sent me into journalism, where I have remained over the years. I was a reporter for the old *Springfield Morning Union* and, after coming out of the army, became television columnist and entertainment editor for the *Syracuse Herald-Journal*. I moved on, in similar jobs, with the *Buffalo Courier-Express* and the *Philadelphia Bulletin*. After the *Bulletin* folded, I headed west, landing here just outside Los Angeles as TV columnist and entertainment writer for the *Riverside Press-Enterprise*. My column has a small syndication and is occasionally carried by the *Standard Times*.

Along the way, I found time to get married and we have a son who is old and tall enough to tower over me. A lot of time and distance has passed since my Avoda days, but I would still like to hear from any of my old friends who still have the eyesight and faculties to drop me a line.

Sincerely,

Bob Sokolsky
3080 Saratoga Street
Riverside, CA 92503

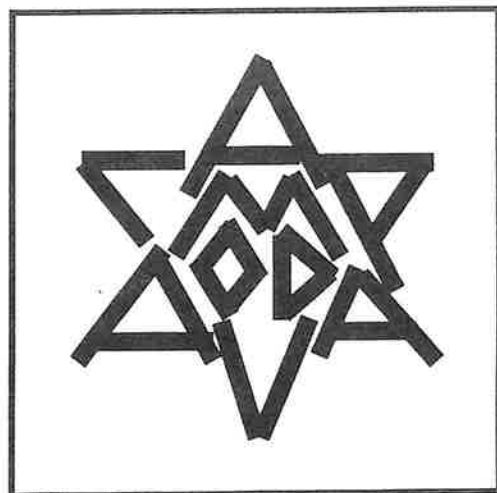
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Logo by Jason M. Rubin

An alumnus is gone

Barry Locke, who served in the kitchen at Avoda for several years, working his way ably and patiently up to the position of Head Chef, passed away on January 27. He was 27 years old.

Barry came from Randolph. He apparently always knew that he wanted to be a chef. His experience at Avoda was a stepping stone to getting a degree from Johnson and Wales Culinary School in 1988. That same year, he opened his own business, Barry Alan Catering Solutions.

Although Barry died of AIDS—as prolific and profound a disease as our stare-and-stutter society can bear—the circumstances of his life are far more notable than those of his death. In his short time, he established himself as an entrepreneur, served as President of the United Synagogue Youth at Temple Beth Am in Randolph (which honored him recently by establishing the Barry A. Locke Award for community outreach), spoke out on behalf of the AIDS Action Committee, and touched the lives of countless people from Middleboro to Boston to Randolph.

The Alumni Association has given a gift in Barry's memory to each of his two chosen recipient funds. Alumni wishing to send their own gift may send it to:

The Living With Group

Barry A. Locke Fund
P.O. Box 1386
Randolph, MA 02368

The Barry A. Locke Scholarship Fund

c/o Temple Beth Am Brotherhood
871 North Main Street
Randolph, MA 02368

Hardcore, continued

We are spending money to send them a newsletter they probably do not want.

But we can't stop because we don't know who they are. Perhaps one of them is you. If so, let me know. I don't want to send you something you don't want cluttering up your mailbox. I won't be offended. Trust me.

On the other hand, you may be a hardcore alumnus that we don't know about. Maybe you just never wrote, contributed, or attended anything that let us know how much Avoda means to you. Maybe due to distance or time you thought it wasn't important to share your feelings and your support. You're wrong. If Avoda was special to you, you are special to us. If so, let me know.

Of course, you may just be somewhere in the middle. "Yes, it was great, but come on, a camp is just a camp. I have great memories but I don't necessarily want to sleep in a bunk again." Fair enough. You're special, too. Special because you're honest and because you're probably in the majority. I hope you will continue to be responsive and supportive, and that this little newsletter is able to stir a little something deep inside you every now and again.

I remember the day that I left Avoda knowing it was the end of my tenure. I was sad, even knowing full well that I would go back to visit every year. What made Avoda special to me wasn't the lake or the field or the bunks or even the place itself. It was the life that was there. The actual living that took place. A living that had rhythm and motion, colors and feelings, teachings and mysteries. You can't get that just from visiting. You have to devote a chunk of your life to nurturing and being nourished by the Avoda Spirit. I did. It made me hardcore.

I want the hardcores and the simpaticos of the Camp Avoda Alumni Association to identify themselves. I want to know who is an alumnus because he left more than an address behind at camp, he left a part of his soul. Let me know. ☆

Jason M. Rubin

Kenneth H. Platter

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ACTORS WRITERS SUPPORTERS LEND ME YOUR TIME

If you would like to help create, produce, and/or perform in a joint camper/alumni play to be held (hopefully) at camp this summer, please let me know. Call Jason at (617) 524-9180.

Thomas A. Leavitt



One Bert Drive

West Bridgewater

Massachusetts 02379

Tel: 508.559.9896

Fax: 508.559.0044



ALUMNI WEEKEND REGISTRATION*

- Full weekend (F/S/S) \$70
- Saturday & Sunday \$65
- Sat. only Sun. only \$36

***FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL:**

MIKE ROSS 508-785-9839
JERRY HILL 617-527-4766



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:

CONTEST:

New name needed

FROM DAY ONE, THIS NEWSLETTER HAS BEEN THE AVODA ALUMNUS. WELL, TIMES CHANGE AND CHANGE IS GOOD. PUT ON YOUR THINKING CAPS AND DRAW A BUCKET OF GENIUS FROM YOUR CREATIVE WELL. COME UP WITH A NEW NAME FOR THE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER AND YOU COULD WIN A GENUINE CAMP AVODA T-SHIRT, CIRCA 1994. THE WINNING NAME WILL BE USED AND DULY CREDITED IN THE NEXT ISSUE, DUE OUT SOMETIME IN OCTOBER. ☆

TO ENTER:
Send your entry to
Jason Rubin,
17 Boylston
Street, #1,
Boston, MA
02130.
Deadline is
August 1, 1994.
GOOD LUCK!

Camp Avoda Alumni Association
P.O. Box 911
Upton, NY 11973

Address correction requested

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