



THE BUGLE

SPRING 2022

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AVODA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

And the Winner Is? Camp Avoda Campers! By Ken Shifman

After watching the Oscars, like everything else in my life, I couldn't help but think about camp! We have a code of conduct that we follow at camp and have rules. Hitting is not allowed, of course. We pride ourselves on developing respectful, strong, citizens who do the right thing. We also tell prospective parents that having disagreements is normal, and we are good at teaching kids conflict resolution. And we are!

So when I watched the Will Smith/Chris Rock incident, my mind wandered. Imagine during a Color War play, someone got so offended that they attacked the performers. No one is safe from parody and mocking during the plays, and you need to have thick skin in life. At Camp Avoda, we are resilient, strong, and know how to keep things in perspective.

Speaking of keeping things in perspective, we will have yet another summer of not only fun, unique programs, friendship building, and memorable moments, we will also have Covid protocols in place. We are hopeful that like the summer of 2021, we will have a safe and successful campaign. With some procedures already in mind, we are hopeful that things will be even more open this summer. Ronni, Leon and I have been busy planning field trips (already bought the Red Sox tickets!), inter-camp competitions, and more.

One thing that struck me last summer while "stuck in camp" was just how varied and exciting our program is. We have traditions and games that we have played for years. We have relatively new traditions like Bubba Day and are constantly coming up with new games and events. (Continued on pg. 2)

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HELPING KIDS GO TO AVODA

And the Winner Is? Camp Avoda Campers! continued

This summer we will be bringing in SNL Sports Academy to run flag football for two days, where they coach, have playbooks and run quality football periods for the boys. For the first time we will be hosting a Water Carnival where we will invite other camps to join us on the lake for the day. We even have a special day planned: Pickle Day!

We are bringing in another company to teach us and run pickleball games all day. We will serve pickles at all meals. Other pickle ideas welcome!

Camper numbers are strong despite the two-year pandemic. Staff numbers are solid too and we have three Israeli staff joining us this summer as well. We have 19 CIT's enrolled and for the fourth year we will be sending them out for five days on an outdoor adventure/excursion and leadership training in the woods of New Hampshire with the Appalachian Mountain Club.

We are making meaningful improvements to camp too. The number one thing on my radar was to clean and renovate the Shower House. It's happening! We gutted it and are not only making the inside modern and clean, we are adding six more outdoor showers in the back of the building. (We added four to the back of Bunk 3 and 4 a few years ago and they are a hit!)

So before we step into the on deck circle for the summer, we take a step back to admire the crowd that is Camp Avoda. We are proud of where we are: an ongoing community of leaders and down to Earth,



fun, and successful campers, CIT's, staff, and alumni. It all starts at Avoda where we teach simple lessons of respecting one another and learning how to deal with adversity on and off the field. Thank you to our incredible, talented, and dedicated cadre of lay leaders: board members, alumni committee members, and trustees, all of whom give their time and energy to ensure Camp Avoda will have yet another amazing

summer. Like that moment at this year's Oscar Awards, we will be creating moments that we discuss for years at camp like so many others, literally for a lifetime.

I hope to see you at Alumni Weekend in June:
June 17-19, 2022!

Ken Shifman: 1984 Bunk 14

**President's Letter
by Dan Gollinger**

Recently I was lucky enough to combine two of my favorite things: Avoda hangouts and March Madness. I joined a group of alumni, ranging from the 2011 14 to the 1998 14, at JJ Foleys in Boston to watch the games. After another covid winter, this was much needed.

One of the joys of March Madness, especially the first weekend, is the mayhem: overlapping games, players giving their all, buzzer beaters, rising stars, and unexpected upsets.

It reminds me of a similar mayhem: Color War Day 4 and its intense four periods of division play.

I remember my first taste of that day on the Blue Dynasty in 2000, my first summer and first color war. We had just won junior basketball. Mike Fiorentino, one of our LT's, and head of woodshop, greeted the team on the sloping grass next to the courts. He carried with him two items, a huge team flag he made to wave around and boast after big victories, and one of the smaller flags he made for each division. He handed me the smaller flag. "Let's run on to the field," he told our team. I had no idea what we were doing. (Continued on pg. 3)

President's Letter continued

We followed as he screamed and yelled in celebration and we joined in the noisemaking to cheer on our other divisions. Fiorentino realized all our teams were doing well and that's when he yelled "we're winning everywhere!" I'd learn, of course, that is the classic Avoda line that summarizes the hopes and dreams, and chaos, of Color War.

I feel lucky to have such a memory and lucky to lead an Alumni Committee helping new generations make their own memories. I'm very proud of our work assisting Camp, from placing older staff in flexible internships, funding camper scholarships, and even cleaning the camp grounds on occasion.



Our work will now be bolstered by two great additions to our group, Ben Kassiff, '06 14 and Jared Fixler, '10 14. Their energy and enthusiasm will raise the bar for alumni social events and more.

Social events/alumni, alumni/social events! We have a very exciting calendar this year. Don't be shy!

JUNE 4 - Bubbafest [newly designed]

JUNE 17-19 - Alumni Weekend [<https://campavoda.org/alumni-weekend-2022/>]

AUGUST 29 - Avoda Golf Tournament at Wedgewood CC [<https://campavoda.org/alumni-golf-tournament/>]

NOVEMBER 26 - Thanksgiving Football Game [played with sock pulls]

Dan Gollinger: 2002 Bunk 14

Glory Dazed & Back Again by Jay Yampolsky

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By the time you read this, we will have returned to some sense of normalcy. Perhaps you have had the chance to see an Avoda brother or two in person.

With the pandemic's end, one of the things I'm looking forward to most is attending live events. Be it sports, plays, music, you name it, I'm in. How about you?

We are kicking it off with concerts and some of my favorite memories with Avodians have been while attending concerts. Please share some of your favorite memories as well.

Masks off or on? COVID over? - Pigeons Playing Ping Pong 4/1/22 House of Blues in Fenway

Long-time friends, Executive Director Ken Shifman, Mark Pee Wee Glovin, and Jay Sweet Potato Yampolsky were likely the oldest in the crowd and some of the few wearing masks. The show proved to be a super spreader of great live jams and music—and kicks off a spring and summer of many shows to follow.

(Continued on pg. 4)



Left to right: Ken Shifman, Jay Yampolsky and Mark "Pee Wee" Glovin

Glory Dazed & Back Again continued

King of Pain - 8/10/1983 - The Police

"Every Breath You Take" was the biggest song in the world, topping the charts for eight weeks. Avoda counselors were anticipating this show for days and it seemed like virtually every counselor was out of camp that night. Coincidentally, Greg Smith and Larry Gold received a "message in a bottle" stating that Camp Yomechas was having a girls camp out and the renegades of what is the last known Bunk 13 decided it would be fun to sneak out and join the girls camp out.

While most of my bunkmates swear, they had some fun with Yomechas girls, it was "Murder By Numbers" upon our return to Bunk 13. We thought we pulled it off, but Andy Stone, aka Stoney or Age, was dubbed the "King of Pain," as he delivered our eulogy and banishment from Color War for sneaking out of camp. The Fixx was in and we were "saved by zero" as Mickey Lopatin tried to make like a Flock of Seagulls and "run so far away." Sand rolls, crab-walks, bat spins and more from our Avoda idols left us wondering if it was worth it. The counselors now had us "Wrapped Around Their Fingers," and we promised to not tell of the consequences for leaving camp, if they promised we could participate in CW. A win-win for everyone.

Everybody Have Fun Tonight - 7/19/1984 - Wang Chung and the Cars

The Cars were hot that year and Magic was topping the charts. The greatest Bunk 14 ever, '8414, was given the privilege to see what was for many, our first rock concert. We were psyched for this event, bought our Cars concert t-shirts and got drunk on soda. It was the opening act, Wang Chung, that stole the show though. The Cars were so boring that their set list isn't even searchable on line. Can anyone actually remember a Wang Chung song today?

Glory Days - 1/27/1985 - Springsteen

As if turning 16 and getting a driver's permit wasn't cool enough, Russell "Hondo" Katz invited me to see Bruce Springsteen in the Syracuse Carrier Dome with him. This served as an epic start to my nearly 40 years of being a Springsteen fan. Thank you, Hondo, for one of the best birthday gifts ever.

Long night, outta here - July 9, 1986 - Dylan/Petty

Bob Dylan and Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers toured together and came to Great Woods in Mansfield. The show was particularly memorable because of the quarter-pound Roaster shared among the sold-out crowd on the lawn. Petty inspired Dylan to step up his live gigs and a great time was had by all. As the show ended, Guff realized he lost his car keys. No Ubers back in the '80s, so we scoured the lawn and miraculously found the keys and, in another miracle, made it back to camp.

Eyes Estimated Day off - July 14, 1990 - Grateful Dead

The Temp was hot and we were jamming up close to the stage. Bobby Weir implored us all to "Take a step back." Ah, to be young, hot, and sweaty. The second set opener with Eyes into Estimated was killer. Side note, Eyes of the World was the 1986 Senior league team champions. Thank you, Hondo, for not only coaching that league team to victory with me, but for taking the left-over Sabbath chicken dinner and feeding the masses in Foxboro that night. (Continued on pg. 5) Below: Shif's Pontiac Lemans



Qua, Benji, Russell, Jay



Avoda Board Member Delivers Big - September 29, 1989 - Stones

The late, great Stanly Miller, former President of the Avoda board, delivers for a dozen of the 1989 Avoda staff. Following the bankruptcy of the Sullivan Family, Sullivan Stadium and the Patriots were up for sale. Stan was the mediator managing the sale of what was then Sullivan Stadium.

I remember Stan came to camp to see how the summer was going. While visiting, he shared with me, that he could have gotten staff tickets to the Who concert that recently occurred in Sullivan Stadium. At the time, I was curious why he shared such news after the show occurred, so I asked, "do you think you could get some tickets for the Rolling Stones concert in September?" To which he replied, "Sure, how many tickets do you want?" I said, "as many as you can get. Thanks."

Later that summer, at Banquet night, Stan said, "Jay, here are 12 tickets to the Stones show. I'll be in a box, come see me there too."

Pregame festivities started at Bones' house where his dad, Seymour, was heard saying, "have fun, and don't get stoned with the Stones." The precursor to an epic evening and many epic concerts to follow.

Comfortably Numb - May 8, 1989 Pink Floyd

Bones scored some tickets to Pink Floyd in Foxboro. It was my freshman year of college and his junior year. We hitched a ride in the back of a pick up truck with friends of friends. While the show was amazing, we were both more like uncomfortably numb by the time we returned to Amherst.

Greatest tailgates - June 22, 2019 Dead & Co

Two tailgates in less than 24 hours. First, Smirkin' Sammy Mirkin and Jimmy Sklaver delivered a late-night feast on the beach during alumni weekend. Not to be out done, when 20-30 Alumni headed to Gillette Stadium for a Spider-led pregame tailgate to the Dead & Company show. I'm not sure if edibles were legal at this point but they are now. Great show (Eyes/Deal to open and The Weight to close) and better tailgate with Avoda brothers.

There are so many more concerts and memories with my Avoda Brothers.

Please share some of your favorite live event memories on the Avoda Facebook page.

Jay Yampolsky: 1984 Bunk 14
(Additional photo on pg. 6)



Bones Wertheim, Alex Sherman, Lee Kaiser, Jay Yampolsky, Ken Shifman; Hondo profile too



Glory Dazed & Back Again continued

Avoda Legends: (Left to right) Paul Simon, Nat Phillips, Jay Yampolsky, Eddie Klayman, Grayson Kimball, and Russell Sherman

Brotherhood, Leadership, Spirit, Tradition by Andy Stone

There are four words that hold so much meaning alone, but when grouped together, the meaning they hold is so powerful, so AVODA!

Brotherhood: Webster’s Dictionary defines brotherhood as “the quality or state of being brothers. 2: fellowship, alliance. 3: an association (such as a labor union or monastic society) for a particular purpose.”

Forty-eight years ago, I spent my first summer at Avoda. The year was 1974, and I was in bunk 2. Little did I know then the major role in my life that Avoda would play. I spent 13 summers in total at Avoda as a camper (shout out to the 1980 Bunk 14), CIT in 1981, and counselor from 1982 to 1986. Those 13 summers were some of the best summers I have ever had.

The friendships we all make at Avoda are guaranteed to be the longest-lasting friendships of our lives. The closest friends I have today are fellow Avodians.

My wedding party was made up of Avodians and every Alumni Weekend you can find us in Center Field soaking in the Avoda experience. Every couple of months we get together for our current version of a long night, a Thursday night where anywhere from 4-12 Avoda buddies show up—“The Thursday Night Avoda Boys”.

Leadership: Webster’s Dictionary defines leadership as “the office or position of a leader, the capacity to lead, and the act or instance of leading.”

Avoda Leadership is defined in so many ways. The first thought that always comes to mind when mentioning Leadership at Avoda is the Leadership Trophy winner. This special fraternity of Avoda men who were recognized as the leaders of not only their Bunk 14 (and in one case Bunk 13—Jay Yampolsky ‘83), but leaders of the entire camp. It is evident to me that Avoda fosters leaders.

(Continued on pg. 8)

Alumni Happenings

Larry Rubin: 89' 14 daughter Sadie's Bat Mitzvah, April 9
Evan Yampolsky: 80' 14 son David's Bar Mitzvah, April 30
Ken Freeman: 90' 14 in his first year of coaching the Stevenson Girls High School Basketball Team won the Illinois State Championship
Ken Sandberg: 77' 14 son John 14' 14 college graduation and heading off to Chicago to work at Kraft Heinz
Jeremy Agulnek: 89' 14 son Levi's Bar Mitzvah, May 7
Jonny Bamel: 72' 14 and **Harrison Bamel** 11' 14 birth of his first Granddaughter/Niece Sadie May Ruben
David Bamel: 75' 14 birth of his first Granddaughter Lily Picardo
Geoff Davidson: 09' 14 became engaged to Jessica Bren
Jason Kaplan: 90' 14 daughter Perri's Bat Mitzvah, May 21
Joey Sherman: 08' 14 married Alissa Sherman, October 31, 2021; Alissa is a Camp Pembroke Alum
Michael Spiller: 04' 14 married Stephi Spiller, April 2, 2022; Stephi is a Camp Pembroke Alum
Jon Wilcon: 01' 14 baby boy James, July 2021



Above: Larry Rubin's daughter Sadie's bat mitzvah. Below: Evan Yampolsky's son David's bar mitzvah



Left: Ken Freeman coaching Stevenson Girls High School Basketball Team
 Right: Jeremy Agulnek's son Levi's bar mitzvah



Left: Joey and Alissa Sherman's wedding
 Right: David Bamel (left) with granddaughter Lily and Jonny Bamel with granddaughter Sadie



Social Committee Update

What a year it's been on the social front! After a year off from in-person events in 2020, we were able to come back strong in 2021 with the return of several in-person alumni events, including alumni weekend and the first annual Avoda golf tournament. We also continued to leverage the benefits of a virtual environment, hosting a virtual Avoda-themed trivia night for Bubba-fest and holding various bunk Zoom calls and catch-ups.

Thank you all for your participation and continuous support and help in continuing to build the Avoda alumni community!

Some highlights from 2021 include:

Over 120 attendees at Alumni Weekend!

Over 40 attendees at virtual Bubbafest!

Over 40 attendees at the first annual Avoda golf tournament held at Shaker Hills!

With things back in full swing, we are looking forward to continuing on with these events, welcoming even more alumni into our community, and continuing to make the Avoda golf tournament bigger and better!

As we look forward to summer 2022, please save the dates on the following events:

Bubbafest: June 4th

Alumni Weekend: June 17th - June 19th

Avoda Golf Tournament at Wedgewood Country Club: August 29th [Register at: <https://campavoda.org/alumni-golf-tournament/>]

We look forward to another great year ahead! Please feel free to reach out to Jake Alexander, Jared Fixler and/or Sam Watman with any questions.

Brotherhood, Leadership, Spirit, Tradition continued

Being involved with the Alumni Association has allowed me to keep up with many fellow Avodians that are outside of my immediate "circle" and it's clear to see how successful so many Avodians became in the "real world." These successes are due in part to what we learned at Avoda.

Spirit: Webster's Dictionary defines spirit as "a special attitude or frame of mind."

The Avoda spirit is an undeniable force. I think of the following when I think of Avoda Spirit: a rally in the Mess Hall prior to an athletic meet with a rival camp (in my day it was always Camp Bournedale—they were the arch rival, and more often than not, we kicked their ass!), or it's the breaking of Color War and announcing the teams and staffs, or it's a pivotal game in

League Competition, or it's singing the camp alma mater after an evening activity, or it's countless other moments that live in our thoughts.

Tradition: Webster's Dictionary defines tradition as "the handing down of information, beliefs, or customs from one generation to another."

Avoda Tradition is just how Webster defines it, and so much more. Avoda is full of tradition. What is not a tradition at Avoda? Counselors delivering Pizza or DQ after taps to their bunks. Tuna fish and egg salad every Friday for lunch. Fish and fries on Wednesday night, with Mrs. Boom Boom delivering the fresh fish from New Bedford.

(Continued on pg. 9)

Brotherhood, Leadership, Spirit, Tradition continued



Shabbat services on Friday night followed by Shabbat dinner, and the knish eating contests at most Mess Hall tables. Thursday Trip Days, Kosher Cabin, Color War, Desert War, Flag Rush, Zoo Ball, Blue and White, Pink Flamingos, and Banquet Night with the CIT's waiting the tables. The breaking down of the benches in the Lodge (The Library as it we knew it back in our day) with Blue and White uniting as one after the Color War Song Fest to sing the Camp Alma Mater.

Two awesome traditions that I did not get to experience in my years at camp, but was fortunate to witness on visits, are the Chip Ceremony at the 4th of July Bonfire on the Beach, and Bunk 14 walking arm in arm up to the final line-up of Color War for the winning team to be announced. I am certain that every Avodian has their own traditions—old and new. That's what makes Avoda so special and great.

I am so fortunate to still be involved with Camp Avoda forty-eight years after my first summer. Avoda truly is the GREATEST PLACE ON EARTH!

Andy Stone: 1980 Bunk 14



Editor's Letter

by Andy Stone

It is hard to believe we are putting together the 2022 Alumni Spring Newsletter already. Where did the year go?

Well, it is time to deliver the second installment of Tidbits from the Avoda Alumni Pu Pu Platter:

First and foremost, I want to thank the guys that contributed to this edition of our newsletter. Those that preceded me as editor all told me the toughest part of delivering the newsletter is getting content. Well, special thanks to Shif, Golly, Tom, Larry Rubin, Jay Yampolsky, Robby Coppell—the greatest CW general of all time (that may get a rise out of some of you, but you had to be there!)—my uncle Billy (Steve Zaidman), Jake A. and Sam W., and Jay Epstein and Jason Rubin, for pitching in and delivering great articles. Also, a shout out to my daughter, Sam, for doing what her dad could not do and formatting and copyediting this newsletter.

Trivia Question: Name five father/son combinations to win the Leadership Trophy (answer below)

If you have not recently paid a visit to the camp website, campavoda.org, check it out! We have updated the Alumni page with some really great stuff. For starters, you can view the Fall 2021 first edition of the Digital Age—our new digital newsletter. This new newsletter format will come every fall and will feature camp updates, alumni updates, and other fun things from fellow alumni. We have also added newsletters from the past 30 years. It's a great way to walk down alumni memory lane! We even added over 900 photos going as far back as the 1920s. These are a must see! If you have any old photos, please send them to me, andy.stone65@yahoo.com, and I will be sure to add them to our new photo library.

This past year has been a very active year for alumni; Alumni Weekend in August was a huge success, and it was so great to get back to camp after the lost summer of 2020. We followed Alumni Weekend with our first annual Golf Tournament at Shaker Hills in Harvard, MA.

SEND OLD AVODA PHOTOS TO ANDY
STONE AT
ANDY.STONE65@YAHOO.COM

Kudos to Jake and Sam for putting together a great Alumni Weekend and outstanding inaugural Golf Tourney. We launched our first fall digital newsletter, and we are happy to say this will be an annual newsletter going forward. And of course, the annual Thanksgiving Football Game was held on Thanksgiving weekend.

I am pleased to report that Alumni Weekend is moving back to June. The dates are Friday, June 17 to Sunday, June 19. The planning process is well underway. Bubbafest 2022 will be held on June 4, so keep an eye open for the details. The second annual Alumni Golf Tournament is planned for Monday, August 29 at Wedgewood Pines Country Club in Stow, MA. Pencil the date in, with details to come.

The best news is you don't need to wait for Alumni Weekend, or any of the planned alumni activities to get together with fellow alumni. I lived in South Florida for 13 years. I was fortunate enough to be able to fly up to Middleboro for most of those years to attend Alumni Weekends past. In 2013, a new job opportunity brought me and my wife Lisa back to MA. It didn't take me long to realize that living back in MA afforded me the opportunity to see my Avoda buddies on a regular basis. The first thing I did was set up a text group of guys, and we began to meet every couple of months for dinner and adult beverages. I am happy to say 9 years later we still get together consistently.

I encourage all of you to reach out to your "inner circle" of Avoda Brothers, and if you are not doing it already, plan times to get together with each other. It will not only be a great time but it will also certainly bring back great memories—and you are sure to have a ton of laughs!

Quiz Answers: Jim (1967 bunk 14) and Michael (2000 bunk 14) Singer, Jon (1972 bunk 14) and Harrison (2011 bunk 14) Bamel, Robert (1976 bunk 14) and Benji (2012 bunk 14) Satloff, Mike (1978 bunk 14) and Zac (2016 bunk 14) Roth, and Bobby (1990 bunk 14) and Charlie (2019 bunk 14) Zuker.

Looking forward to seeing you at Alumni Weekend and the Golf Tourney.

Andy Stone: 1980 Bunk 14

Kurt Kleinmann, Avodian

1930 - 2022

by Tom Leavitt

When I was in Bunk 14 in 1970, I sort of knew of Kurt. I knew he was the father of three young (then) Avodians, that he attended camp as a kid, and that he was somehow connected to the Barnet family. Judge Samuel Barnet of New Bedford, along with his brother Phillip and other men from the Brockton and New Bedford YMHAs, founded the camp in 1927. Still, I never understood what the connection was between Kurt Kleinmann and the Barnet family.

In the early 1980s I was appointed to the camp's board and soon thereafter Kurt was too. We worked together on the board for many years, bound together as Avoda alums. I suspect that some time before Kurt and Diane married, he had "the talk" with his bride to be.

From then to the current day, I have seen many Avodians have the same pre-nuptial "talk." After Kurt said to his bride-to-be, "Diane, if we have children and we have a boy(s) you understand he/they has to go to Camp Avoda, right?" Thankfully for us all, Diane agreed and the marriage gave Avoda three Kleinmann boys; Jim, Bill, and Paul. And they would have the same pre-nup discussions with their mates as the third generations of Kleinmann boys have flourished at Avoda.

As a board member and time as board president, Kurt was unassuming, unpretentious, and unentitled. During board discussions, Kurt would offer his thoughts on an issue with grace and respect for all.

And those thoughts, his contributions to a discussion, often gave his colleagues pause...for Kurt always seemed to add another dimension for us to address an issue, that there was often more than just one way to get from here to there.

He may have been soft spoken but this gentle man seemed to view Avoda (and life) from a slightly different perspective than did we. While our goals were shared, he would turn the prism just ever so slightly so that we may see a new (and often improved) way to move forward. He was courtly, respectful, wise, and

passionate about Avoda. During those years our then nascent friendship and mutual respect would remain true.

There are some Avodians who are curious and eager to learn about Avoda's past. Some can list the names of every color war team during a 20 year run and who won. When the Avoda Archives became a

reality, it was the place to hold and honor the past of all things Avoda. It is a place that the Avoda history of brotherhood, leadership, spirit, and tradition be held for all generations. I remember Kurt in particular was thrilled about the archiving of our history. For like so many of us, he knew that Avoda contributed to shape his life, his values, and heart of generosity. Kurt knew best that knowledge of the past must be remembered to support better tomorrows.

In 1938 the Nazis invaded Austria-where young Kurt and his family lived. Then in 1942, Kurt's mother Tina, and sister Herta, were rounded up and shipped to Minsk. (Continued on pg. 12)



Kurt Kleinmann, Avodian
1930 - 2022
continued

Kurt's father and brother survived seven years of forced labor in concentration camps. His mother and sister were killed three days after arriving in Minsk. Fortunately his mother and Kurt's older sister had the foresight to send Kurt to the United States and his older sister to England. Kurt's family story is chronicled in the 2018 book *The Stone Crusher* and in the 2020 book *The Boy Who Followed His Father into Auschwitz*. It is the story of two families—his birth family and then the family that helped raise him here in the US.

You see, Kurt was taken in and raised by Judge Barnet of New Bedford and the Judge's three sisters Sarah, Esther, and Kate. He was taken into the family of the same man who help start Avoda just 13 years earlier. Kurt's first summer of many was at Avoda in 1940. Beyond Vienna and beyond New Bedford, soon Avoda became his third family—his family of choice, as it is for many of us.

Knowledge of the past must be remembered to support better tomorrows. As his quiet mantra might have been "Never again," he must have also thought for Avoda, "Again and forever."

May his name be inscribed in The Book of Life and may his memory provide solace to us all.

l'dor v'dor

Tom Leavitt: 1970 Bunk 14



Peter Dov Varga, Avodian

1948 - 2021

by Tom Leavitt



Peter was born in Cypress though later he moved to Kew Gardens in the center of Queens, New York. Peter came to Avoda as a camper in the 1950s. Like many of us, he grew up at Avoda. Prior to 1965 guys who graduated from Bunk 14 would spend their next summer as a kitchen boy to then return the following year as a bunk junior counselor. In 1965 Avoda inaugurated its first CIT program. Men from Bunk 14 would apply to this new counselor-in-training program. Some were accepted while others worked that summer in the kitchen waiting to return next year too.

In the mid 1960s, and seemingly for decades to follow, the counselor of Bunk 1 had to possess extra skill sets and a lot of patience—more than any other bunk counselor. As much as being a member of Bunk 14 was for some the pinnacle of their Avoda experience, those who grew up at camp starting in Bunk 1 had a singular experience just as worthy of any Bunk 14er's. Just like the Bunk 14ers, those in Bunk 1 often had their bunk-only activities with their counselors. In the early 1970s, the value of the Bunk 1 experience was formally recognized with their own alma mater.

Peter was one of those special men who became a Bunk 1 counselor...for three years. The camp trusted the most vulnerable among us to him and his successors (Mel Siegel, Steve Matfis, and others). With his Avoda experiences, from the values he gained during those summers, Peter was the natural and best selection. During those Bunk 1 years, and for those that followed, Peter set a tone and created an environment for all many campers to find the beginnings of their self-confidence, self-esteem, and other developing values. But there was something more. Peter was cool. Very cool.

You look up the definition of cool, and it will say “the state of being Varga.” For some like me, Peter was a bit of an enigma shrouded in mystery. His Hebrew middle name “Dov” was often used as his first name. He wore sunglasses most of the time. His slight accent was one not easily identifiable. And when he spoke, all listened.

After being a bunk counselor, Peter was the Waterfront Director for +/- eight years; long after his college graduation. As a camper, I looked up to Peter. At times I even felt intimidated by him. After all, he was Varga. While waterfront director, Peter lived with me and my fellow CITs in 1971. He was not our CIT Director and spent most of his time at the waterfront. For the summers that followed, he lived in one of those cabins between the Infirmary and Library (today's Lodge)—off the main campus and on his own.

As a CIT and JC, I learned about small craft from another counselor to whom I looked up (and who was a Bunk 1 counselor himself for several years) Steve Matfis. As a staff member, I was on the waterfront from 1971 to 1975 and that's where I got to know Peter well.

All of us who worked with him at the waterfront had a great time with Peter. He was a lot of fun to be with. He was “just one of the guys” telling stories who happened to have a great sense of humor (who knew?). Several times he got PGD cackling at the head table. Not to be lost is if you screwed up, particularly around camper safety, he let you have it with both barrels. And he was right. He was still cool.

One day I hear Peter on the PA from the waterfront saying, “Whoever has borrowed from the waterfront the right-handed monkey wrench and who took 50 feet of shore line, please return both to the waterfront now.” Circa 1973 he called all campers to come to the field near the fence next to the waterfront ramp. He had a bull horn in his hand. We counselors had no idea what he was doing—we just stayed on the then Rec Hall porch. He starts giving kids instructions, their moving around, it seems as though the 120 kids were getting in a straight line from the fence to the CIT cabin.

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Peter Dov Varga, Avodian
1948 - 2021
 continued

He was organizing kids by height—the smallest camper at the head of the line and the tallest at the end near the CIT cabin. He inspected the line to see that his instructions were followed. Peter always did everything with great precision. Next, over the bullhorn he tells everyone to stand shoulder-to-shoulder facing the Bunk 1 side of the field. He walks to the head of the line and through the bullhorn he tells everyone to remain shoulder-to-shoulder. The guys comply. He then says, “When I say ‘go’ everyone, while remaining shoulder-to-shoulder, is to squat down. Ready? Go!” Peter then pushes the smallest kid at the head of the line. The camp goes down in a domino run. Who comes up with these things?

During one summer I see Peter on the camp’s pay phone (look it up) in the then OD shack or the front part of the cabin visible from the field. While on the phone I see that he wrote something on the wall. After he left the OD shack, I went in to see what he had written in small letters in pencil: “Make Avoda your life’s work.”

Avoda’s first Alumni Day was in 1987 and Peter returned to visit. He was easy to talk with, funny, and enjoyed trading Avoda stories. We had the best time talking together. And while he was still “cool,” it was like talking to any other Avodian; it was great. I found him less enigmatic, easy to be with, and still having that great sense of humor. We had the best time together.

Circa 2009, I meet Peter in New York for lunch to tell him some of the great plans for Avoda’s future. It was a long lunch. Sitting across from him I said, “You know, some kids in camp were afraid of you. You know this, right? And others like me looked up to you as a role model? You know this to, right? You know you were the king of cool.” And I made sure to tell him how his mentoring of me were great gifts which I still carry with me. He taught me a lot.

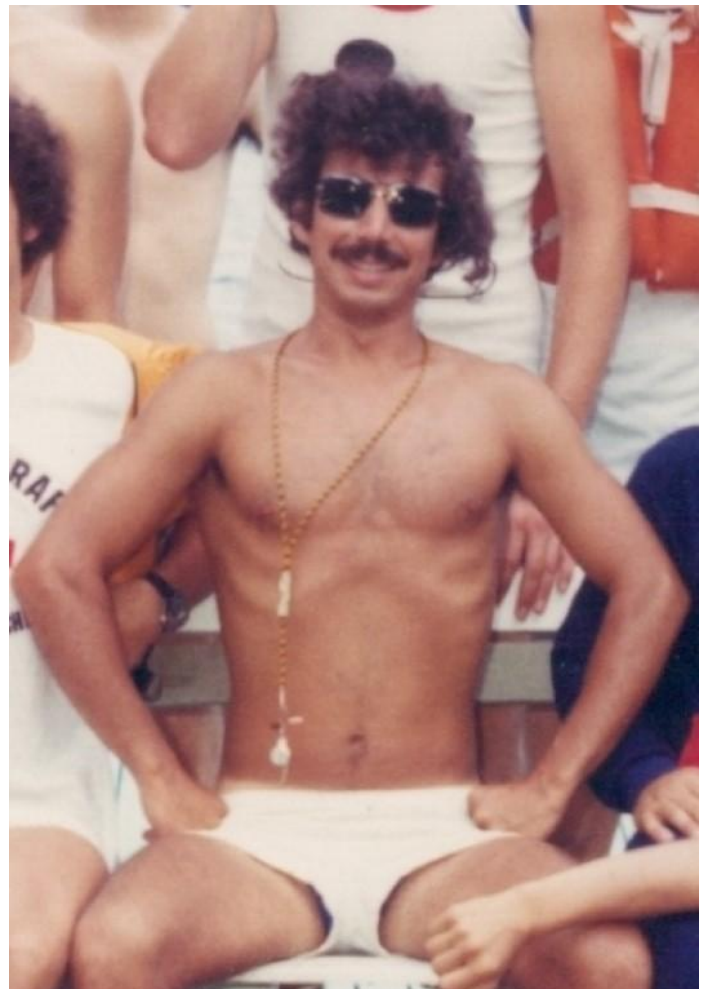
This humble and gentle man knew none of this. He truly didn’t. He seemed shaken by this. This gracefully then aging fifty-something year old father of two was stunned. He had no idea that people saw him that way, let alone that he was a mentor to anyone. It took him a while to get it. He finally did, but still didn’t understand why. He then looked at me in silence for a moment and said, “Did I screw up any one?” he asked. I assured him that he did not and that there were hundreds of men in whose life he made positive and lasting marks.

After that lunch, I would see him again the next decade at an Avoda Senior Class Reunion (at which I admitted to having stolen the missing 50 feet of shoreline). I did not know that would be the last time I would see him.

On January 1, 2021, this healthy, active, and vibrant 72-year-old man, this man who had no idea that he was a mentor to many and who positively affected so many for so long was taken from us unexpectedly and with no warning. He would pass while efforts at the hospital to save him were of no use.

He is deeply missed by his wife, Susie, his children, and their families. He is missed by his Avoda family, too. For so many he was a remarkable man, a thoughtful, generous, and caring man. May we all find solace in the memories we have of him.

Tom Leavitt: 1970 Bunk 14



A Parent's Look into Avoda by Larry Rubin

Three months and counting until another camp season kicks off and I say goodbye to my son for 2 months. However, with today's technology am I really saying goodbye? Is he really "away"? With a few clicks on my computer keyboard I'm at campavoda.org, click the current families icon and then my old friend the camp InTouch log in and I'm back at Avoda! This new technology lets me read about each day's activities and see the photographs of the kids having the best time ever. I never miss reading the daily news articles, reliving the Avoda summer like it was yesterday. I'm always amazed at how similar the experiences are; my son's daily adventures mimic mine from '80s and '90s. Reading the daily news brings it all back, and Ken, Ronnie, and the rest of the team do an amazing job of relaying the day's events. The experience my wife gets when reading the articles and looking at the pictures is completely different, usually more confusion and puzzlement. Lots of updates on "League Competition" which I always need to explain, throw in that Capn' Crunch is playing He-Man in Man in the Middle to win the division and I get a blank stare. Then we have battle of the super teams, Flag Rush and Dead Zone, July 4 Celebration (seeing a small Bunk 1 camper throwing a wood chip into a huge bonfire could be concerning) and Desert War (not an actual war and no desert to be seen), all very confusing for the non-Avodian—maybe we need a glossary for new parents!

The other incredible technological advancement is the daily pictures. Not only can I read about what my son is up to, I can actually see pictures!

Every day close to 200 pictures are posted of the activities going on at camp. I find myself clicking on each picture and getting chills and flashbacks of when I was playing the same games. Then I'll come across a picture of my son making the same memories in 2021 that I created in 1987—it is AMAZING. We get to see the winning penalty kick at Zooball, The Harlem Wizards hooping it up on the Avoda courts, the walk down PGD Lane to introduce the CW staffs. The list goes on and on, as do the pictures with each one making me reminisce even more. Again, what I see and what my wife sees are completely different. She'll ask me why is that bigger kid drowning that little kid with a volleyball? Of course, to the trained eye that's a Bunk 4 camper taking the ball away from a Bunk 2 camper during a hotly contested league water polo game. Another one is why are those four boys guarding that empty white circle? We all would recognize that as Flagrush. Many "only at Avoda" photographs that definitely make no sense to the "outside world" ... mooseball, counselors dressed up crazy making announcements, kids celebrating big victories by running into the lake at night in their underwear, full productions of plays, the love for banana cake, and the list goes on and on. I usually have a big smile on my face as I explain these to my wife, and she understands what an amazing place Avoda is. She always comments that the Avoda boys LOVE to hug. It's a common theme throughout the summer pictures and we all understand why, Avoda is not just a summer camp, Avoda is a family, and you hug family.

Larry Rubin: 1989 Bunk 14

My Heart Will Always Have a Place for Avoda by Robbie Coppel

When Andy asked me if I was willing to write another article for the Alumni Newsletter, I readily told him I would, without really knowing what I would write about. Some ideas had been percolating in my brain, but I wanted to write something that would resonate with my fellow Avodians, especially from the '60s and '70s, but also strike a chord with those who have attended camp since I left in 1981.

My heart will always be with Avoda, but as it is now more than 40 years since I spent a summer at camp, with time and distance, not to mention very few opportunities to bond with my camp friends, Avoda is barely on my mind. Don't get me wrong, after attending an alumni weekend or my weekly chats with Gary Epstein, I think about how much fun I had at camp and how I miss the camaraderie of my Avoda brothers.

(Continued on pg. 16)

My Heart Will Always Have a Place for Avoda continued

I think about my first year at camp in Bunk 5, when I was ready to leave early after my first month, but the kindness and attention given to me by Steve Zaidman kept my spirits up and helped get me through the second month, which turned out to be my Avoda turning point.

I think about my second year at camp, when I was placed in Bunk 9, where none of the campers with whom I shared my first summer were in the bunk. I wanted to be with the kids I bonded with in Bunk 5 and after the first session, I was moved to Bunk 8 for the rest of the summer. The best thing about being in Bunk 9 for one month was the friendship and mentorship offered to me by JC Saul Lieberman.

Those two years were my foundation for spending 12 summers at Avoda, being together for 5 summers with the same kids through my CIT year and then getting the gift of 7 summers of being on the staff with life-long friends, who I might not see for years, but when I do see them, I feel joy.

My memories of camp are too many to share, but in a stream-of-consciousness moment: flag rushes, bunk nights, field trips to Fenway Park and the Melody Tent, Bournedale meets, bowling on Saturdays, college team competition, swimming to the Rock, movie night, Wednesday's fish fry, Pembroke socials, Bunk 14's Cape Cod overnight, nighttime basketball, counselor softball games and crazy and wild card games flood my mind. At the top of my list will always be Color War, an epic time during the summer for intense competition, much-needed creativity and fervent spirit. There was no stronger bonding experience during the summer than those times with your teammates and staff; songs we are still singing, plays we still talk about and crucial moments we will never forget.

So, you see when called upon, my mind fills with memories of Avoda that I can tap into with ease, but I don't often feel the need to think about Avoda as my life has entered a phase of retirement/sacred family time/keeping focus/less stress and still having a purpose. AVODA WILL BE IN MY HEART TO THE DAY I DIE.

Robbie Coppel: 1971 Bunk 14

Origin of Bunk 1 Alma Mater by Steve Zaidman

It was a rainy day, and we all knew we were destined for an indoor evening activity. It was a cold rain, the kind where it was jeans and sweatshirts, and the goal was to keep warm. So, it was lunchtime and as the meal ended, Mr. Davis, who was in his second season as Program Director, stood to announce the evening activity, and we all knew that it was doubtful that anything good could come of this announcement. High stakes bingo, no chance.

Instead Mr. Davis announced that the evening activity would be a camper talent show, and we had until the end of rest period to come up with something and submit it for approval. Now, as the first-year senior counselor of Bunk 1, I had no idea of what to do with a group of kids who could barely tie their own shoes. None of the kids had any ideas, it's not as though we had a budding crop of talented kids, no Jerry Garcia's in the making. We were lost, we had to come up with something and it wasn't looking very promising, when one of the kids in the bunk, Michael Freedlander, offered a suggestion.

Let me offer a couple of words about Michael. He wasn't the best athlete, nor did he seemingly excel in any particular activity. He was that good kid and tried hard. He never bothered anyone, and on this day, he would offer up a suggestion that would become part of the lore of Camp Avoda. Michael suggested that he knew a song that he could teach the bunk, and that they could sing together that evening. It worked for me. Let's hear it, Mike.

(Continued on pg. 17)

Origin of Bunk 1 Alma Mater continued

It was a cute little tune that these wonderful 7-year-olds rehearsed for the remainder of rest period. It was gonna work, the mighty Bunk 1 came through. Now, please indulge me for just a moment, I think it's only fair to offer these words to any camper and counselor that's ever been lucky enough to have been a proud member of Bunk 1. Bunk 1 is as much a significant part of Avoda as Bunk 14, and on that evening their efforts became legendary, a legacy that would live for 53 years and counting.

"Gink Gonk went the little green frog." Now honestly, who would think that a little green frog would be something that made the toughest, proudest, kids would remove their beanies and raise their voice in jubilant song?

So, the campers and staff made their way to the old rec hall, with the voice of PGD bellowing over the loudspeaker, warning everyone not to use garbage bags as rain gear. Everyone filed into the rec hall, to take their seats on those old wood benches. Let the show begin! Bunks were not to be called up in sequential order, but instead by random selection. So, several bunks presented their talents, either as a group or individually. And then it happened, the mighty Bunk 1 got the call, and as these boys of Avoda made their way to the stage amid quiet applause, they stood before the camp, never knowing that what they were about to perform would be engrained in Avoda lore forever.

And they raised their voices in unison: "Gink Gonk went the little green frog one day..." We're number one! And with that campers rose to their feet, stood atop the benches and at that moment, embraced these voices of the night, and proclaimed to everyone near and far, that Bunk 1 had arrived!

It was a couple of weeks later during the evening meal, that the tiniest voices of Avoda did a "Quiet please." And it was then that I had the privilege of standing before the camp, and asked that any camper, CIT, or counselor who had ever traveled the halls of Bunk 1, rise and remove their beanies and join with the Boys of Bunk 1 as we sang the new Bunk 1 Alma Mater. I then got to look around the dining hall and see so many legends in the making stand, beanies in hand, join in with youngest members of the Avoda family as they sang Gink Gonk.

As the senior counselor of Bunk 1 (shout out to Jerry Waters, who was the JC, but away on his long night out) it has given me great pride to have been associated with that fine group of boys. And to Michael Freedlander, who never returned to camp but whose contribution to that talent show has lasted for more than half a century and will continue. As long as we drive down Gibbs Road, that little green frog will be looking out for us. I love you Camp Avoda!

Steve Zaidman: 1969 Honorary Bunk 14

A Walk Down Alumni Memory Lane by Jason Rubin and Jay Epstein

Editor's note: This article originally ran in the Spring-Summer 1991 edition of the alumni newsletter.

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.

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

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A Walk Down Alumni Memory

Lane continued

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.

(Right: Gary and Jay Epstein)

And he eventually turned on to camp and winning that trophy, for him, was very important to his development at that time.

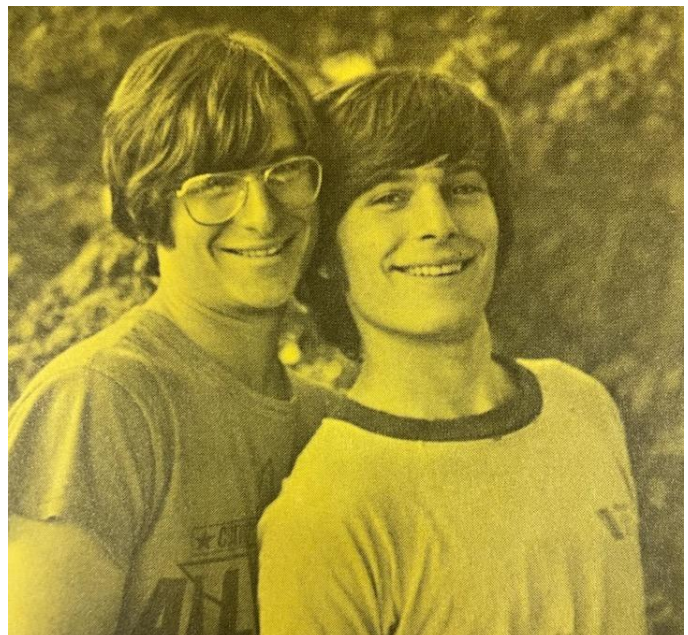
AA: As one of the more spirited Avodians of all time, maybe you could define Avoda Spirit for me.

JE: Going into Camp Bournedale 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?
(Continued on pg. 19)



A Walk Down Alumni Memory

Lane continued

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 is 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 hall! I would build a rec hall. I would establish what's almost started. Danny Bauman established that special Bunk 14 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 took them 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.

Interview by Jason Rubin



Jay and Gary Epstein, 1976

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