

The

Avoda Alumnus

Winter 1989/90

Camp Avoda
Alumni Association
P.O. Box 661
Cambridge, MA 02140

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It's springtime for Avoda alumni!

There is a new look to the *Avoda Alumnus*. That is a reflection of the Alumni Association as a whole. There is a new look, a clearer vision and a more streamlined and efficient organization.

At a recent meeting of Camp Avoda's Board of Directors, it was decided that the Alumni Association would be better served by a group of officers who could advise and assist the Board, contribute to the welfare of the camp and provide a social and informational foundation for alumni.

Over the past few months, nominated alumni were contacted and when all the acceptances were in, the Camp Avoda Alumni Association suddenly had a group of dedicated officers committed to building a strong alumni association.

This reorganization means that there is a sharper focus on the purposes and capabilities of the Alumni Association. With the pledged active and concerned involvement of the officers, both Camp Avoda and its alumni will notice a renewed commitment to caring.

The Camp Avoda Alumni Association has three main goals and purposes: 1) to raise funds for scholarship of children needing tuition assistance; 2) to help recruit new and potential campers; and 3) to maintain the alumni association through communications, the newsletter and social functions.

Be assured that the officers are working toward consistent realization of these goals, and that your input, support and participation are both welcome and necessary.

As for the *Avodian Alumnus*, the newsletter will be published at least twice a year and will be the main vehicle for sharing camp news, information about social events and communicating among alumni. As always, contributions of articles, photos, memories, news and business cards (\$20.00 fee for latter) are appreciated.

FROM THE EDITOR

"Next year in Jerusalem!"

So goes the traditional Jewish toast/blessing/wish. Implied in the expression is an acknowledgement that Jerusalem is the homeland, spiritually as well as physically, of all Jews. That's why visiting Israel is so special for Jews.

With this in mind, I set out for my annual visit to Avoda. There was no summer event this year but I can't let a summer go by without taking that familiar journey to Middleboro, to taste the smells I grew up with and see the place I spent nine excellent summers.

And returning to Avoda is like going back home. Home to where you made friends, home to where counselors guided and taught you, home to where you learned to do things for yourself but also learned to trust and rely on others.

Some of us cannot so easily visit Avoda each summer. It's only a 45-minute drive for me. For others it would be an expensive seven-hour flight. For all alumni, however, this newsletter is a way to bring the Avoda experience that we all shared home to all, no matter how far away you may be.

It is regretful, then, that the *Avoda Alumnus* has been swinging in limbo for so long. But as you can see, it's back and better than ever! And since the last time we spoke, much has happened with the organization of the Alumni Association. These happenings will insure that we will stay in touch regularly, that summer events will be planned and executed for the convenience and enjoyment of all alumni, and that the Alumni Association will be able to make a strong and necessary contribution to the Avoda of today.

There is much to be done and more than enough opportunities to get involved, either physically or financially. We know your Avoda Spirit is behind us and trust that you will come forward with any comments, suggestions or criticisms.

As things are decided, you will be made aware of them through the newsletter. And anything you need us or any other alumni to know, just send it in. The *Avoda Alumnus* should be a dialogue, not just a list of news updates. Until we see each other again at a summer event or a chance meeting, this newsletter is our way to communicate with each other.

"Next year in Avoda!"

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is with much enthusiasm that I accept the Presidency of the new Camp Avoda Alumni Association. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to work with the other nine appointed officers who are all dedicated Avodians, and together we look forward to building a strong Alumni Association.

Camp Avoda has been in existence for 63 years and there has to be thousands of Avodian alumni out there somewhere who I know would want to become part of the Avoda alumni family. Our first goal is to establish an effective mailing list and we need your help to accomplish this task. If you know of anyone who spent any time at Camp Avoda in any capacity (camper, counselor, kitchen staff, etc.), please contact an officer or send the information to the Camp Avoda Alumni Association, P.O. Box 661, Cambridge, MA 02140, so our secretary, Jason Rubin, can verify whether or not the name is on our mailing list. Thank you in advance for your help.

We all have fond memories of the summers we spent at Avoda. During that time we developed character and discipline, which played an important part in our lives in future years. Now we have a chance to give back a little something and make Camp Avoda an even better summer haven for future generations. I promise you that through this organization, I will keep you aware of what is going on at camp. I will bring your ideas and suggestions to the Board of Directors to be reviewed and considered.

Through our fund raising efforts, we will be able to provide summer camping to some young boys who otherwise would not be able to experience a summer at Camp Avoda. The extent of our scholarship money will depend on your generosity and the success of our fund raising efforts. You are encouraged to call upon myself and any other officer to answer any questions.

I remind you that this is your association and together we can make it work for the betterment of Camp Avoda. I appreciate the confidence that the Camp Avoda Board has placed in me and my officers, and we thank them for this opportunity to serve the youth of our communities.

Sixty-three years ago, a small group of men, including Judge Samuel Barnet, started Camp Avoda. Over these years, it has developed into an outstanding Jewish summer camp. Together we can keep the dream alive. The strength of the camp is its campers - without them we have no camp. We ask you to help us in recruiting prospective campers. If you know someone who is interested in attending Camp Avoda, please supply us with the name and address so we may send off an application and brochure.

I look forward to meeting many of you personally in the future. You are welcome to call or write me at any time.

Work: (401) 751-3700
 Home: (401) 351-9185
 7 Westford Road
 Providence, RI 02906

The state of the camp, 1989

The state of Avoda 1989 was sound. Or should I say sounds? A visit to the familiar Gibbs Road haven this summer revealed an Avoda that was healthy, beautiful, vibrant and full of sounds.

The sounds of swimmers and ball-players. The sounds of camp songs. The sounds of a mess hall, a rec hall, an athletic field, all alive with the bodies and voices of the Avodians of today. The Avodians who animate the camp with their experiences and energy.

The Avodians of today are no different from the Avodians of yesterday. And probably no different from the Avodians of tomorrow. Avoda creates its Avodians and Avodians in turn create Avoda.

The campers and staff who contribute to the camp and take away memories from it do so not to fulfill a destiny or further a dynasty. Rather, they are broadening their experiences, forging their identities and acquiring skills. They are there, naturally, for themselves, not for the history of Avoda.

Speaking as an alumnus, that was exciting to rediscover. Looking from the outside in, it's easy to forget what makes Avoda special. It's not the exquisite body of water on which it borders. It's not the upscale cabins, the lush athletic field or the logo-emblazoned items you bring home. It's the people. Good kids make a good camp. Good staff makes a good camp. Good administrators make a good camp. When all three are good, the camp is great.

Camp Avoda 1989 was great. The spirit was there and it did a past Avodian's heart well to know that despite the passing of years, Avoda is revived each summer into a special place that accrues wonderful memories.

Physically, the camp underwent a major facelift. The

chapel site was redone, the infirmary was improved, there are shrubberies and flowers all around, new archery targets, a new raft and a new truck are apparent. In the cabins, all bathrooms and lockers are being redone, as are the porches and steps. Paul's cabin and the shower house are all newly renovated.

There is also talk of a new hockey court behind the junior and senior bunks, new floors and ceiling fans in the mess hall and the kitchen, a complete resurfacing of the tennis and basketball courts, and a pumping system to water the field from the lake. Clearly, the folks in charge are not letting Avoda atrophy.

Speaking of the folks in charge, there is a new organization of the administrators. Paul Davis is now Executive Director, Bob Stone is the Director and Bruce Silverlieb is the CIT Director as well as being the Head Chef, as he has been for the last 10 years.

As Executive Director, Paul has "non-field duties," such as financial, operational and administrative concerns. The Director is responsible for "field duties" during the camp year, which includes programming, staffing and supervision. Year round, Bob is responsible for recruiting.

This summer, Avoda was full and the number who expect to return appears to be quite high. More scholarship money was given out this year than ever before. With the help of the Alumni Association, the administration hopes to do even more for kids who want to come to Avoda but have need for financial assistance.

That was Avoda 1989. Judging from how the camp is operating, it looks like the '90s will be a good time to be an Avodian.



CAMP AVODA

AT THE GATEWAY TO CAPE COD

On Beautiful Lake Tispaquin
Middleboro, Massachusetts 02346

Founded 1927
For Jewish Boys
7-15 years old
Entering Grades 3-10



A hearty welcome...



When last we met: Family Day 1988

Avoda alumni and their families had a great time at last year's Family Day, held at the camp.

All activities were open to Family Day visitors and a great barbeque lunch was served.

Summer 1990 will see another throng of alumni pounding the shores of Lake Tispaquin. Stay tuned for more details!



...a sumptuous feast...



...and a prayer to give thanks for Family Day!



**Past and future Leadership Trophy winners
(Jerry Hill and family)**



Always a good time at the waterfront.



Taken with a hidden camera.



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LARRY DEMERER
President

AVODIAN INTERVIEW

A look back with Mel Hyman

In this installment, we present Alumni Association President Mel Hyman. Mel first came to Avoda in 1948 as counselor of Bunk 1. He was Head Counselor in 1952-53 and served as Assistant Director in 1954. That year he got married and lived with his wife in the Lodge. He is presently Senior Vice President of ArtMold/Pierre Cardin, a specialty merchandise company in Cranston, RI.

AA: You went from counselor of Bunk 1 to Assistant Director in six years; that's a pretty good growth rate.

MH: I was counselor of Bunk 1 for three years. I enjoyed working with seven and eight year olds. They're easier to train. In those days, the bunks were divided up differently. Bunks, 1, 2 and 3 were the Freshmen; 4, 5 and 6 were Sophomores; 7, 8 and 9 were Juniors; and 11-14 were the Seniors. I was head of the Freshmen division before I became Head Counselor.

AA: As Head Counselor, what did you impart to the staff as their mission in regards to the campers. What were the campers to get out of a summer at Avoda?

MH: Our main concern was that all campers had the opportunity to participate in all activities. The goal was to not give the top athletes all the attention; let others have a chance to enjoy all that the camp offered.

Another priority was the safety of the campers. I told the counselors to make sure they always knew where their campers were. Each counselor was made to understand his responsibilities and the seriousness of his job.

AA: What were some of the usual activities?

MH: We didn't have as many programs as there are now. The main sports were basketball and softball. Nature and Arts & Crafts were very popular. We always had animals at camp: rabbits, a goat or sheep donated by the farmer down the road. The campers would learn to feed and take care of the animals and we would return them to the farmer at the end of the summer. The waterfront was always a popular area, though we didn't have all the equipment they do now. We just had a few rowboats.

In the evenings, we would have skits or music. A movie every once in a while. There were campfires, where the counselors would tell stories and sing songs. There were no overnights and very few outside trips. The older bunks would have a couple of dances with Pembroke but there was usually

just one all-camp trip per four-week period. Typically, we would go to Plymouth Rock and Edaville Railroad. The grand finale of each summer, of course, was the famous Camp Avoda Color War.

Of course, the camp had a lot of kids from low income families and while it may seem that we didn't have much, a lot of these kids would never have had an opportunity to experience these things or learn the skills we taught. The Judge was very concerned with sponsoring campers, in whole or in part, who otherwise would not have been able to attend.

AA: Your first year at Avoda was also Israel's birth as an independent state. How did that affect the Jewish Education program at camp?

MH: There was a very heavy emphasis on Jewish education; the Judge saw to that. I don't recall specific issues we discussed relating to Israel's statehood but the Judge made sure there was a strong program and a qualified staff member to lead services and teach the campers. In those days, the Judge and Sarah Barnet were very involved with the camp. Sarah was the registrar and bookkeeper and also handled administrative things. The Judge was usually at camp two or three times a week and always either at Friday night or Saturday morning services.

AA: When you look at Avoda today, what stands out as the biggest difference from the way it was in your time and what has remained the same?

MH: The bunks are all new. In my day, each bunk was a separate structure whereas now there are two bunks to a cabin. Also, we didn't have bathrooms in the bunk. The mess hall, obviously, is new from my era. What has stayed the same is the athletic field. It's the same size, same place as it always was. The waterfront hasn't changed too much except for the docks and all the equipment, and there are now many more diversified activities.

AA: What was your main impetus for becoming involved in the Alumni Association?

MH: There were six of us (counselors) who were very close. That includes Stan Miller, Herb Bamel and Marty Wolf, all of whom are on the Board of Directors. Every few years we would try to get together at someone's house for a reunion. We haven't done that for the last several years but the Alumni Days have more than made up for it.

HELP! HELP! HELP!

We need your help to expand our mailing list and our treasury. Without your support, we will not be able to reach our goals, so we ask you the following:

1) If you are in contact with anyone who spent time at Camp Avoda, please ask them if they received this newsletter. *IF NOT*, send us their name and address immediately so we can add them to our mailing list.

2) A donation to our scholarship fund in any amount would be greatly appreciated. Please make your check payable to the Camp Avoda Alumni Association and send it to us at P.O. Box 661, Cambridge, MA 02140.

Remember, your gift is tax deductible as we are a non-profit organization.

All of the officers of the Camp Avoda Alumni Association thank you in advance for your support.

I was never a camper at Avoda but I was at other camps. Camping was something I really enjoyed both as a camper and counselor. I would have stayed with it had my business career allowed it. Now with my family grown up and a business established, I wanted to get back involved in what I liked doing when I was younger. Also, I wanted to make sure my grandchildren have the opportunity to go when they're ready.

AA: And now the clincher: What stands out as a particularly good memory?

MH: When I was at Avoda, all the campers called the counselors "Uncle..." whatever. I was Uncle Red (my nickname), for example. I think it demonstrated the close relationship that campers and counselors shared. A camper could feel that "This is my uncle for the next eight weeks." I don't know if that relationship exists today.

AA: So that's why I've never seen a picture of the Judge and Uncle Sam together!

Mail to: Camp Avoda Alumni Association, P.O. Box 661, Cambridge, MA 02140

Name _____
Address _____
Years/Bunks (if not previously given) _____
Occupation _____

- Please send information on how I can help with:
- Fund raising
 - Recruitment
 - Newsletter

 - Please note new address above

 - Enclosed is an article/photo(s)/memorabilia/etc. for the next newsletter

 - Enclosed is a contribution to the scholarship fund

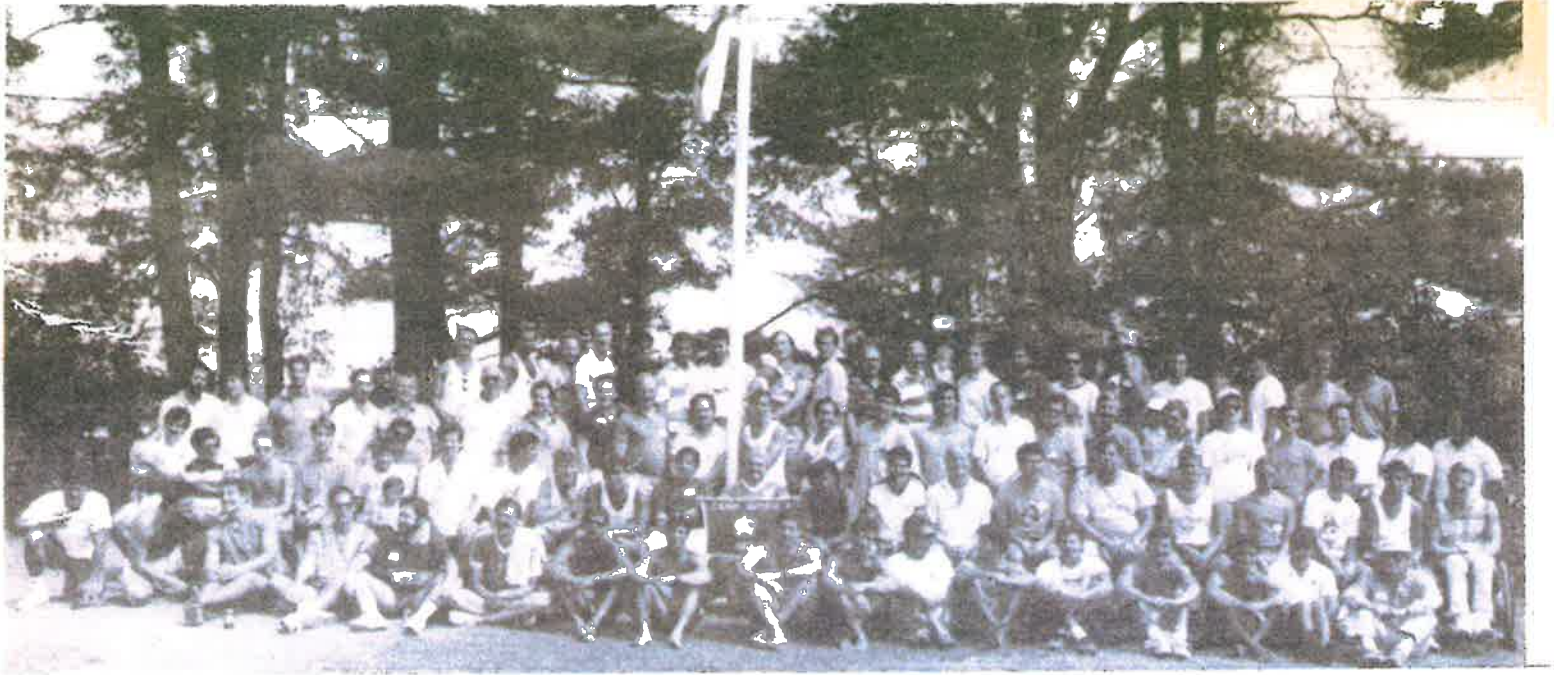
PLEASE ADD THE FOLLOWING ALUMNI TO YOUR MAILING LIST (use extra sheet if needed):

Name _____
Address _____

Years at camp _____

Name _____
Address _____

Years at camp _____



Hail, hail, the gang's all here...

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