



Check out the 3-3
Tourney from Alumni Weekend
on page 5!

The Camp Avoda Alumni Association extends its condolences to family and friends of the victims of the September 11th tragedy. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and we wish for peace.



Avoda Alumnus

THE BIENNIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CAMP AVODA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

History in the Making: Archives to Be Built

by Jason M. Rubin

Much of what makes Camp Avoda special is transient and intangible – a memory, a spirit, a sense of bonding and brotherhood. To date, that is all we have had to keep the past alive. And while that has always been a wonderful source of connection both among alumni and between alumni and the camp, it is not enough. The passing of time erodes the fine edges of our memories and, one by one, ends Avodians' lives. With each loss, there are stories, memories, and histories that we can no longer retrieve.

For at least a decade, there has been talk among the ranks of the Alumni Association about the need for an archives, a place where we can embrace and preserve that which is physical and permanent about Avoda history – trophies, t-shirts, songbooks, score cards, photographs, and other artifacts. Such a site would make the past real and near, something one can see, touch, and return to.

For the past several years, the Alumni Association has been informally collecting materials to be displayed at camp. Spurred by generous seed funding from Tom Leavitt, a formal Archives Committee has worked hard over the past year to develop a comprehensive plan for a permanent and dedicated Camp Avoda Archives. We first announced our intentions at this past summer's Alumni Weekend; since then, we have received a highly enthusiastic response from alumni.

Now we need your donations – of both materials to exhibit, and money to build the space in which those precious artifacts can be cared for and displayed. More about this later.

At a meeting held at camp in August, the Avoda Board of Directors unanimously voted to accept and adopt the Alumni Association's Archives Plan. The Archives will be located in the Lodge (formerly the Library), in a space in the back that will be renovated and dedicated for its exclusive use. This prime real estate, in one of the first major general-use buildings one sees when entering the camp, will ensure that the Archives will be a much-visited and greatly honored addition to the Avoda campus.

We are excited about this project but we are facing a time-crunch. We need to design and build the Archives before June 2002 so that it will be open and operable by the start of Avoda's 75th anniversary season. Clearly, no 75th anniversary celebration would resonate without the Archives. You'd be able to talk about the past, but you wouldn't be able to touch it. You could relate our history, but you couldn't relive it. That's why we say: *The Archives is the right thing to do and this is the right time to do it.*

AUTUMN 2001

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President's Letter

by Michael Ross

After yet another successful camp season amidst the whispering pines, my thoughts turn to next summer's 75th Anniversary Celebration of Camp Avoda, a monumental achievement by most accounts. I admit the summer of 2002 is a ways off yet. Perhaps my pondering is a bit too soon for some. But in playing an active role in the Avoda community, a true honor in my mind, I am exposed to many Avodians' thoughts and emotions about this special place many call our second home. Candidly, I am amazed by the amount of enthusiasm this imminent event is generating.

I was in Bunk 14 in 1977 when we celebrated Avoda's 50th. Were you there?!? It was one of the 'hottest' days in camp history. So many heroes I had heard and read

about were 'In the House'. I returned to the camp as an alumnus for Avoda's 60th celebration. There was less food and less hoopla at the 60th, but take a look at the human spirit that emanates from the commemorative picture residing in Paul Davis' cabin. Realize that great people and personal friendships make Avoda truly extraordinary.

As for the 75th Anniversary celebration, I feel the excitement of those who speak of it:

"It will be the most people ever at the camp at one time!"

"Where will we put all of the cars?"

"Do you think – *you fill in the name* – will finally return for this event? It would be awesome to see him after all of these years."

The Avoda family has created

a lot of positive momentum. A living, breathing Archives is soon to be a fixture on the campgrounds. www.campavoda.org actively provides information to the entire Avoda community – alumni, staff, campers, and campers' parents – throughout the year. Each summer a new generation of Jewish leaders develops on the shores of Lake Tispaquin.

The Camp Avoda 75th Anniversary Celebration will be a milestone event. It will honor a venerable institution that has not strayed from its roots, has bridged generations of Jewish men and Jewish families, and has established a spirit of camaraderie many organizations can only dream of achieving.

Be a part of this special event.
Be a part of this institution.

Scholarship Update

by Jeff Keselman

Welcome to PGD.COM – the only source for on-line Canteen shopping. This week's special: 2oz. Baby Powder - \$17.95! Also on sale, Camp Avoda Beanies – 2 for the low low low price of \$27.50. Have a sweet tooth? How about assorted candy bars for \$.95 each. Just think PGD.COM for all of your campers' needs.

Sure this is an exaggeration but we would all agree that prices for just about everything have escalated in recent years. Avoda remains a non-profit organization but even the camp is not immune to the rising prices we all feel in our daily lives. With that in mind, I am pleased to report that through your generosity to the Camp Avoda Alumni Association Annual Fund, we successfully raised enough money to assist three families with

the cost of tuition. For the summer of 2001, the Alumni Association donated more than \$8,000 to the camp to provide two boys with one month's tuition and canteen and one boy the full summer experience. In the past two summers, your donations have provided just under \$15,000 worth of assistance to young men and their families whose financial situations preclude them from experiencing Avoda as we have all known it from summers past.

Scholarship was one of the founding principles on which the camp and the Alumni Association were founded and it continues to play an integral role in our day-to-day operations. If you have already made a pledge to the Annual Fund for 2001, thank you. If you have not had the opportunity as of yet,

I would encourage you to make a contribution as we hope to extend the same generosity to other families and their sons in the future.

If you are interested in making a contribution, simply make your check payable to the Camp Avoda Alumni Association and mail it to:

PO Box 65
Newton MA 02459

Please include your name, e-mail address, bunk 14 or last year at Avoda, and your day and evening telephone numbers.

Thanks again for all of your support!

Archives

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The only way we can make this happen is with your support. We have a bunch of materials – we need more. Including Tom’s seed funding, we have raised about \$5,000 – we need more. And we need it all now. Thanks in advance for your participation. I’ll see you at the ribbon-cutting ceremony in June.

To donate money:

Send your checks, made out to the Camp Avoda Alumni Association (write “Archives” in the memo line), to our address as listed on page 8.

To donate items:

Send items of any size to Jason Rubin, 301 Upham Street, Melrose, MA 02176. Please include a letter with as much information about the item(s) as you can: year, bunk number, significance, etc. Also include your name and the years you were at Avoda. Each item will be credited in the Archives to the donor. If you have questions about shipping, or wish to make other arrangements, please feel free to call me at 781-662-2290 or email at jalaha@gis.net.

Note: you retain ownership of your items and can ask for their return at any time. All items will be stored and displayed securely. The Archives will always be locked when not in use and campers, staff, and visitors can only enter accompanied by an authorized person. We will take care of your items as best we can but are not liable for any items that are lost, stolen, or damaged due to weather or human error.

Donors to date:

We greatly appreciate those alumni who have donated money and/or items to the Archives as of August 10, 2001 (and apologies to those we inadvertently left out). Please join them!

Jonathan Bamel
David Benjamin
Matt Bridges
Paul G. Davis
Sawyer Emmer
Gary Epstein
Jay Epstein*
Paul Hantman
Lee Kaiser
Jeff Keselman
Mike Kreppel
Tom Leavitt
Lee Lukoff
Sam Mirkin
Harold Poverman
Steven Poverman
Mike Roth
Andy Rubin
Jason M. Rubin
Michael and Adam Schindler
Eric Shaff
Paul Simon
Eric Steiman
Jeff Vetstein
David Wertheim
Jay Yampolsky

*“I have donated my memories and a bit of cash to the Avoda Archives in honor of Jerry and Mrs. Hill, Irv S.B. and Baaaney Horowitz, Billy Jack Samuels, Paul Ephrim and Mr. Zieff, Mark ‘Birdbro’ Chester, Mike ‘Roscoe’ Ross, Jasontis Rubin, Daniel ‘Sudden Impact’ Bauman, and Paul ‘Speedo’ Davis.”

Avodaself

by Jon Starr

I used to believe Avodians were a superior group of people. After all, not everyone can turn a painfully boring activity into a rally of 7-21 year olds chanting “scouts, scouts, scouts.” Who but geniuses can see that a broken-down bus is a pitch tournament waiting to happen? Couldn’t only renaissance youth be so versatile as to go nuts when they see which of the two generals they got and get equally psyched when they learn they got the other? Bottom line, Avodians could make anything at camp great. We lived true to the saying that when life deals you bunks, make Bunk-Os.

My view of Avodian superiority has since gone into the same bucket that has the Malamutts ranked top athletic family in Massachusetts and Tispaquin as the world’s best lake (I’m still holding on to Ken Shifman as the funniest human alive**). First off, except for a few legacies we couldn’t be born with superior Avodian blood because we weren’t born Avodians. We are generally Jews from Newton, Framingham or Worcester and anyone who has seen a larger portion of these populations knows those groups are superior to no one save Long Islanders. Of course this only proves we don’t have superior genes; it does not mean Avoda didn’t breed us to be superior people. Unfortunately the better breeding argument is probably weak as well since it seems Avodians only wear their supermen capes while at

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***Editor’s note: He was my camper. You know how impressionable they can be...*

Alumni Weekend 2001

by Russell Sherman

Once again the Camp Avoda Alumni Weekend was a huge success! Approximately 70 alumni turned out for a weekend filled with plenty of good times, good laughs, and even a few bumps and bruises. It was a great opportunity to reminisce with old friends and meet plenty of new ones. As the sun shined on the weekend we enjoyed a healthy dose of athletics, a dip in Lake Tispaquin, some cold beverages and plenty of good food.

Among the highlights of the weekend: a Color War to decide the age-old Avoda Mess Hall question of "Kill it, Fill it!" or "Want it, Get it!" After the staffs ran down the path - General Morty led the Blue (Kill it, Fill it) while General Shmed lead the White (Want it, Get it!) - the events began. The Blue team looked like they would win in a route as they easily captured victory in bombardment and tug-o-war. But the White stormed back. Thanks to excellent goaltending by Louis Dennis and Lee Kaiser and some

photos by Bobby Zuker and Russell Sherman



(above) 1981 Bunk 14: 20 year reunion



(above) We're number one!



impressive drop kicks from Doug Charton and Bobby Zuker, White routed the Blue in zooball. With Color War all even, an all-camp relay race was run to decide the final outcome. The White blew out of the gate (a little early, I might bitterly add) thanks to the explosive speed of Doug Charton and Blue could never recover. Steve Peters, Lee Kaiser and David Wolbarst maintained the advantage for the White team and took the race. The victory meant White won Color War and forever settled the debate at Avoda; remember, if you Want it, Get it!

Another highlight of the weekend was the 2nd annual alumni 3-on-3 Basketball tournament. (See page 4!)

In the end, it was pretty much a perfect weekend. Special thanks to the staff of Avoda, and of course Paul Davis, for making us feel so welcome. We are looking forward to next summer for some more excitement and another great Alumni Weekend!!!



(above) Talk about a tough game...



(above) The 1990 Bunk 14

(bottom left) The Rubin Brothers

(bottom middle) Blue showing their brawn

(bottom right) The White Want-it-Get-it All-Alumni Relay Team

photos by Bobbie Davis



(above) Co-commishes Bones and Bobby



(above) "Try to stop this, AJ..."



(above) Air Bubblehead!!

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(above) Morty shows off a sporty jay



(above) "OK, whatever Kess..."



(above) Alex lobbs one down low



3 Spot:

Sam Mirkin has captured the essence of the 3 on 3 tournament. The link to the full article is on-line at http://www.campavoda.org/new_final/alumni/alumni.php3 Here is an excerpt from the story:

"The two teams took another break to regroup and strategize while the fired-up crowd buzzed with anticipation of a one game, winner take all final match-up between two ultimately deserving teams. The final game was everything the crowd expected and more. A pitched battle between noteworthy warriors. Stu Glasser continued his hot shooting to open the game, while Blocker and Rollo hit improbable jumpers to counter. EJ found his stroke and drained a turnaround while Rib fought valiantly on both ends of the floor. His suffocating defense and Stu's shooting forced the game into overtime, with no cap to end things. It was win by two no matter what."



Jon Starr tries to alter Bubblehead's drive

Warm Salami Sandwiches

A Memoir of Food at Avoda through the Ages

Our Avoda Sports Guy, Sam Mirkin, takes a lunch-break to shares his thoughts as the The Avoda Gourmet.

At most summer camps, the food is some horrible combination of USDA sanctioned food or food substitutes. Who can forget the movie *Meatballs* where the winner of the daily "guess what dinner was" contest responded with "Some kind of meat."

At Avoda, we have been lucky to receive our gastronomic satisfactions from a higher caliber of chef and kitchen crew. With the ongoing support of the good folks at Sysco along with some help from DQ, McDonalds and Papa Timmy himself, the boys of Avoda have always been well nourished. Here, then, is one gourmand's recollection of food at Avoda through the ages.

Mmm...grilled cheese. I have traveled far and wide, my friends, and sampled grilled cheese in such exotic locales as London, England and Nantasket Beach. Never have I had grilled cheese as expertly prepared as the glorious grilled cheese at the mess hall. Thinking back on seeing my friend Mr. Keselman manning the griddle and preparing hundreds of grilled cheese sandwiches (and that was just for me and Rez), makes my stomach rumble and my heart sing. Back in the day, I used to go into the kitchen before lunch to throw down a couple or six grilled cheeses, then have a few more at lunch. If you never had Jeff's grilled cheese sandwiches at Avoda, I weep for you.

The walk-in is one of my favorite places in the entire world. On a hot summer day, the cool relief provided by the refrigeration coupled with the unbridled joy of uncovering delicious leftovers was one of life's great pleasures. If you were ever lucky enough to discover that some poor sap

had been to the Golden Gate the night before and brought leftovers back, that was truly cause for celebration. I recall one occasion when Barry Locke (of blessed memory) actually reheated the leftover Gate booty for the best breakfast I have ever had. And I mean ever. Many late nights were spent devising ways to get into the kitchen just so the walk-in would be at our disposal. If you're wondering why there are boards between the top of the window area and the ceiling, it's because of all the times someone climbed over there to get us into the kitchen. For those of you who know me, you know it wasn't me climbing over that wall, so I have immunity to say these things now.

That brings up our next subject – The Golden Gate. If you have not been to the Gate shame on you for calling yourself an Avodian. Chicken, Shrimp, Brocoli, Pea Pods, black bean sauce soft noodles in a bowl. Amen. Throw in some of the world's greatest chicken fingers to start and you have the greatest late night food ever. Two specific memories I have of the Gate: I was there with Ken Shifman, Jeff Keselman (and Peewee?) and the people next to us left 2/3 of their chicken finger order on the table. In the same moment Jeff said, "We really should think about taking those" I was already out of my seat and retrieving the golden chicken fingers. The other one was at the Gate with Hondo (among others) when a very drunk couple in the restaurant made one of the greatest spectacles ever seen. The woman had long hair which her boyfriend held above her head in a sort of ponytail. He then sang the theme song to *I dream of Jeanie* (Dah-

dah, dah-dah-dah-dah-dah....) while she danced around like Jeanie herself. Priceless.

Another camp food memory has to be individual bunk cookouts (only for those at camp during 1981? and before). Every week we would alternate between the whole camp cookouts we now have and individual bunk cookouts. If you had Benji as a counselor you were all set because he'd have that fire going in no time and you'd be cooking burgers and roasting marshmallows with glee. If, however you had the Gurv as a counselor (like I did), he couldn't build a fire and you had to rely on the ten year old apeman (Brad Rubin) to get your fire going. What a horrifying scene. I have never wanted to eat less than that. Except of course for the food that used to get packed for us to take on trips. By the time we got to Rocky Point after an interminable bus ride, warm bologna and salami sandwiches were handed out. Just take a moment to think about a warm salami sandwich.

No discussion of food at Avoda is complete without highlighting the work of Bruce Silverlieb, the first real chef Avoda ever had. The food his team served during the season was very solid, especially for camp food. The food he turned out during pre-camp was the stuff of legend, however. Pasta with pesto, delicious roast chickens, and all sorts other delicacies were turned out for the staff. Bruce really is responsible for bringing the camp from mystery meat to repeated chants of, "We want the chef, we want the chef." Plus he gave us ice cream on

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Hoops Night

May 11, 2001

photos by Ken Shifman and
Russell Sherman

The Stats:

2 full courts

32 Avoda Alumni

1 superstar: Nat Phillips

0 dunks

1 large lounge to hang out in after the games

7 quarters that Paul Simon sank in a row

7 slices of pizza, "because I just exercised."

1 Miss America pageant on TV

4 people hacking in the parking lot

22 alumni hanging out in the lot



(above) Spencer growls...



(above) Alumni grooves...



(above) Bob shines...



(above) Lou follows-through...



(above) Guff and Benjga pose..



(above) Bones and Sam weep...

Avodaself

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Avoda. I could be wrong but I'm willing to bet the same people who turned Notes the Clown into David Copperfield and the Gate's waiter into the Iron Chef are unable to morph post-camp life so easily. Do you get all aggravated when they screw up your order at a fast food restaurant? An Avodian spirit wouldn't. The guys I went to camp with would start singing quietly or rally the whole restaurant into "Burger King just ain't what it used to be." Sitting in traffic might seem like a curse to you now but to a Bunk 14er it was an opportunity to nail down pitch signs. I've seen a ton of data points over the years that show Avodians are not the same people outside of camp as they are in.

I'm not saying that post-camp life isn't more difficult since it is filled with so many more unpleasant things and people. What I do know is that while at Avoda we naturally held an attitude towards making life wonderful that I have never felt anywhere else. I also know the feeling had nothing to do with that place in Middleboro, MA. The magic of Avoda that countless articles have described was all driven by the attitudes held in its campers and counselors. Camp was the greatest because we made it the greatest. We were surrounded by a contagious optimism that even the most mediocre of campers couldn't help but catching. There is no question that everyday life lacks that great momentum but there must be a midpoint for alumni and current campers during the 10 bad months. The more we let the Avoda spirit guide us the better off we all should be.

Warm Salami

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fish night – a stroke of sheer genius.

What of dessert at Avoda? Jello with whipped cream is always a favorite (just ask Lee Kaiser), and brownies that can be rolled up to resemble a _____ and then left on Mr. Davis' door mat are also popular. But my favorite has to be spice cake with powdered sugar on top. The annual rite of asking a new camper if the cake smells funny then blowing the powdered sugar onto his face is one of timeless simplicity and great comedy. If you never got the chance, I would suggest making some for your family then doing this to your kids. It's that funny.

One final memory of food at Avoda. In Jeff Kesleman's last year at

camp (1991) we were out doing what counselors do at night, when he told us that it had always been his dream to do a raid where we moved the entire mess hall out onto the field. With the proper liquid motivation, we did just that, moving every table, bench, chair, tray stand and even the podium out onto the field. When the camp awoke the next morning, we were treated to brunch al fresco by Barry Locke and his staff, who did not flinch at the change of venue.

These are some of my many culinary memories of Avoda. Some others (in the classic "dot-dot" format) include locker shopping with a power screwdriver...Spider eating all but one of Dan's yodels and leaving a

thank you note...acquiring the other walk-in key through fraud, deceit, trickery or any other necessary subterfuge...Scott Brody sneaking across from bunk 8 to bunk 9 for a slice of pizza only to have Schmed catch him and make him run laps until he "returned" the pizza...pigeon Olympics with Brimma and Al Goldman...brrrrr, is there a cold front rolling in?...hamburger home run hitting with Lee and Kess...Birds of Prey with Dan Reiser (we are the birds of prey)...third grade lunch room crap at Poor Richard's pub...getting cheap pizza and dirty looks at the pub...going for the knish record.

Hope you have some tasty memories of your own.

Camp Avoda Alumni Association

PO Box 65

Newton, MA 02459

<http://www.campavoda.org>

- Do we have **your correct address**?

If not, email Ken Shifman at kshifman@elmsquare.com.

- To receive the **Avoda Alumnus electronically** rather than by snail-mail, please send email to Russell@Sherman.com with your name and bunk 14 year.

Were you there?

