

The Bugle

The Newsletter of the Avoda Alumni Association

Summer 2023



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David Bacdayan
Jared Fixler
Seth Fox
Mark Goldberg
Ben Kassiff
Justin Lukoff
Andy Stone
Sam Watman



New Opening Day Tradition?

Our logo was painted on the athletic field to greet campers and parents this year

Helping kids go to Avoda

President's Letter

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As an active member of the Avoda community, Avoda is present in my life year-round. In the summertime though, it's present even more... camp visits, alumni weekend, and the golf tournament of course, but also dinner dates, golf weekends, basketball, bar nights, and backyard bbqs with my camp crew. I try to stay in close touch but the older we get, the harder it gets as our lives are busier and free time is harder to come by (and even harder for all my friends with babies and toddlers right now).

Yet I make sure to see people, often after months go by. Sometimes, like at alumni weekend, weddings, and other events, years go by. But without a doubt, the conversation picks up right where it left off, regardless of how long ago. That's because of the underlying link of going through overnight summer camp together and the great people that made the experience so incredible.

I know I'm preaching to the choir here, but Avoda doesn't thrive without the exceptional collection of humans that hail from it. It's about the people: the Avoda greats / Avoda legends. There's too many to list. I think about the characters and personalities in my generation and the bonds created between them. I think about the awesome alumni whom I didn't know while at camp but whom I now call friends. We're a network of people who share something magical, who share a secret hidden gem.



Characters from the 2007 Staff Bombardment (left to right):

Dave Fine, Cory Brine, Adam "Bubba" Miller, DJ Glaser, Erik Silevitch, Matt Schwartz, and Dan Gollinger



That hidden gem is in great shape in 2023 as the "State of Avoda" is strong: The Board of Directors has done a tremendous job at putting Camp in a position to succeed in both the short term and long term (capital improvements, marketing/recruiting efforts, fundraising, etc), Ken and the Administration are on top of their game with a propensity to experiment and evolve with programming and operations, our new social media manager (Deena Guttin) is raising the bar for our online presence, our youngest alums have infused new energy into events and the Avoda community, and our Alumni Committee has added two more Avoda greats: David Bacdayan '15 Bunk 14 and Justin Lukoff, '05 14, who have already contributed enormously to our group efforts.

Hope you enjoy this edition of the Bugle and the Avoda greats mentioned in it!

See you around,
Dan Gollinger, 2002 14

The Avoda Internship Program

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We all know what it is like to pull up on Opening Day and find out that one of your favorite counselors is not going to be at camp that summer. Many parents of staff are giving their sons ultimatums to get a “real internship” or to not return to camp. These are often members of senior staff.

This affects camp negatively. As we all know, there is always a need for as much experience and maturity on staff as possible to keep things rolling for the whole summer.

This issue got significantly worse because of the corona summer. With JCs a year older, and internships more and more important to our career paths, more and more staff are going to have to choose internships over camp.

Generally speaking, companies only offer internships June-August. Good luck finding an internship that offers both quality professional experience and doesn't require any time from the second week in June to the second week in August.

In October a team of Dan Gollinger, Jared Fixler, Mike Pemstein, Aaron Agulnek, Willie Wilkov, and myself formed a team to add a little more structure to the staff-internship placement process, which has traditionally been handled by Ken.

Thanks to Ken and Ronni, we were able to gauge interest among staff members. Thanks to the team, we were able to find alumni willing to carve out roles in their organizations for a month or so in between the end of spring semesters and the beginning of pre camp.



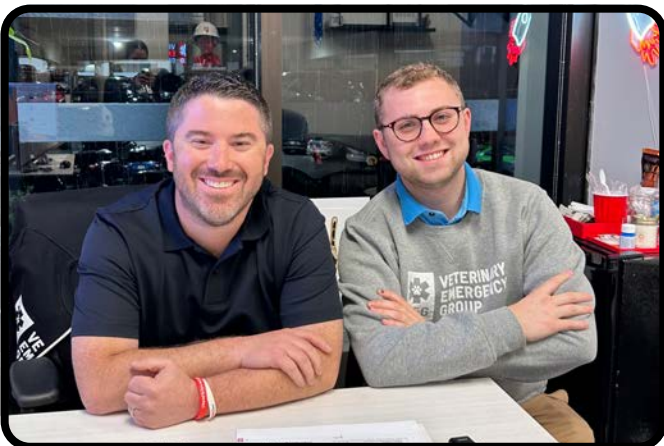
Luckily, there was a lot of interest -- it was awesome to see the love for Avoda on display. Our team played a matchmaking role, telling both sides a little bit of what to expect - but that they were basically going to figure it all out for themselves. Classic Avoda.

All in all, the first year of the program was a success. We managed to place 4 staff members, including one who was a 14 counselor & CW general this year, who all otherwise probably would have needed to miss camp for an internship.

Placing counselors into these internships is key to retaining senior staff and ensuring that camp is an awesome experience.

If you read this newsletter article and want to learn more about potentially having an Avoda intern at some point over the next 12 months, please reach out to Golly, myself, or Mike Pemstein. Here's to enabling more counselors to have more summers at Avoda.

Here's to more summers on staff,
David Bacdayan, 2015 14



"Color War" Golf Trip

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The Generals, Kassiff (06' 14 which was hurting) and Lukoff (05'), scouted out their teams. 8 Avodians. 2 teams. One destination. Hilton Head.



Path walks commenced at AW 2022, with each team getting an envelope with the color of their team. Tears of joy walking out of that mess hall door, knowing this war was on and each team had everyone they wanted! Kassiff and Lukoff jumped to their teams (this really happened), with golf chants being targeted at the other team. "At the end of this hole, we will be, in the cup. In the cup. In the cup." Or "par, birdie, eagle. Par, birdie, eagle!" and last but not least "we will one putt! we will one putt!".

Negotiations in the grove lasted a long 3 minutes, with General Lukoff giving Kassiff the clear one pick in Jake Dennis (08'), and then snagging Bamel (2011) and Michael Shale (2011) in the 2-3. Watman (2010) at the four was the sleeper, as he was just a one month camper the summer before! But all in all, Lukoff's picks proved to be wise, as you will read below.

After years of deliberation, a group ranging from the 2005 bunk 14 - 2011 14 decided to have a color war style golf outing for 3 intense days. 54 holes...think deadzone...just with a refreshment after each quarter. General Kassiff and 1st LT Jake Dennis led the White Tees in negotiations, battling it out against General Justin Lukoff and 1st LT Harrison Bamel.



Lukoff decided to pick heavy on keeping the 2011 14's together, which paid dividends in the end. While Lukoff's team, the Blue Birdies struggled to dominate on the greens, they took their talents to the Rec Hall where the group of 8 focused on Avodian loved competitions.

With calls such as "all Blue Birdies, to the bunkers. Birdies, to the bunkers" being chanted on the megaphones, this war was truly a replica of the days at good ole Avoda. All in all, Mike Shale took home the General shirt (Lukoff actually gave him the shirt he wore during the relentless 54 and smelled just like the lounge he negotiated for). He birdied for the Blue Birdies on four separate occasions, leaving Kassiff's White Tee's in the South Carolina dust.



Similar to color war, this golf war had bouts of intensity, screaming matches, camp vans for evening activities outside of camp (aka the Airbnb), and Ben Rubin (07') even managed to get a porch penalty (meaning he had to sit in the golf cart the entire hole) for not picking up and cleaning his divot. Boo that man!!!

The White Tee's General and First Lieutenant were duking it out over a missed putt, similar to how you would see a General and his staff argue who should take the next penalty kick! This war had everything, and even ended with the Blue Birdies jumping in the Airbnb's hot tub. The White Tee's surrounded as makeshift lifeguards. Good times were had by all, and just shows to all the Avodians out there the war never really ends. Will there be a war next year? Will Ben Rubin decide to take a team? Will Jared Fixler get the keys to 14 (aka will he be able to take a spot)? Until next year!

Justin Lukoff, 2005 14 & Ben Kassiff, 2006 14

I have had the privilege to be the Editor for the Alumni Newsletter for the past two years. Unfortunately, work and life circumstances forced me to step away from this role. For those of us who have held this position, we know the biggest challenge is getting content. I volunteered to write an article to help support the effort.

Now that it is time to sit down and actually write the article, I found myself at a loss of what to say (which for those of you who know me, is hard to believe). I decided to visit our website and look for inspiration from the past newsletters. What a great call! I combed through past newsletters, and literally got lost in Avoda past. It was amazing. Reading articles from the 90's, 2000's, 2010's and the newsletters from the 2020's, not only brought a huge smile to my face, but also brought back so many life memories that we all share. The old photos, mitzvah announcements, happenings from the years gone by are great to see and read. The evolution of the guys who were running the alumni committee, to now running the camp, whether on the Board of Directors, or our Executive Director, Shif, is really cool. And to think, I know those guys, and as my buddy Chubes would say, "showered with those guys". Do yourselves a favor and visit campavoda.org and go to the alumni section. There are over 20 past newsletters that are all must read!

Avoda means so much to so many. The brotherhood and lifelong friendships we all share are truly amazing. Alumni weekend is right around the corner, and the buzz has already begun. The text chains are lighting up with plans for Friday golf, the Friday night midnight tailgate, Saturday fun in the sun, with the Alta Kaka's (me included) occupying our spot in center field, hoping we don't get hit with a softball or kickball.

I cannot wait to make the ride down Gibbs Road and pull into camp.

Andy Stone, 1980 14

Avoda Internship Program

Support our counselors with career guidance



Ways to get involved:

- Offer internship opportunities
- Offer to review resumes / cover letters or counselors that are interested in your field
- Offer an informal networking conversation

If you're willing to help, reach out to:

Mike Pemstein

Golly

mjp02002@gmail.com

dan.gollinger@gmail.com

Join **the Avoda Network** group on LinkedIn:





The 3rd annual Camp Avoda Golf Tournament will be held on Monday August 28th, 2023, at Wedgewood Pines Country Club in Stow, MA.

The tournament was created in 2021 to serve as another social outing for alumni with the benefit of being a fundraiser for camp as well. It's planned and organized by Benny Abrams (04' 14), Jared Fixler (10'14), Dan Gollinger (02'14), Ben Kassiff (06'14), and Sam Watman (10'14).



The 1st annual Camp Avoda Golf Tournament was held on October 1st, 2021, at Shaker Hills Country Club in Harvard, MA. Nearly 45 golfers attended the inaugural event on a beautiful day for golf.

The 2nd annual Camp Avoda Golf Tournament was held on August 29th, 2022, at Wedgewood Pines Country Club in Stow, MA. Nearly 65 golfers attended for an incredible Avoda golf atmosphere.

Tournament Winners: Ben Edry, Greg Hoffman, Jason Oppen, Kyle Shuman

Closest-to-the-Pin Champion: Joe Frank

Long-Drive Champion: Jason Oppen

Tournament Winners: Benny Abrams, Meredith O'Brien, Jordan Smith, Steve Tasho

Closest-to-the-Pin Champion: Jeff Vetstein

Going forward this event will grow even bigger and better and cement itself as a staple for the alumni community with expected attendance of 100-plus golfers each year. Please get involved as a player, sponsor, or volunteer:



Registration Link



Sponsorship Link

Alumni Happenings

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Jessica Yampolsky - Daughter of Evan Yampolsky '80 14 and Niece of Jay Yampolsky '84 14 graduated from Ashland High School.



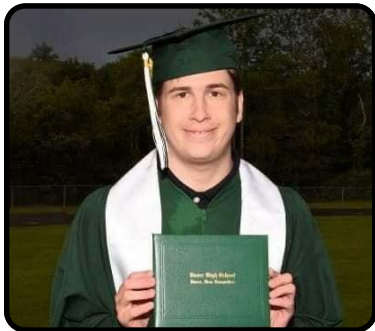
Jacob Poverman - Son of Steve Poverman- 83, 84 staff graduated from Florida State University with his Master's degree in Sports Management



Max Poverman - Son of Harold Poverman graduated from Framingham State University



Adam Poverman - Son of Harold Poverman graduated Marlborough high school



Carter Epstein, son of Randy Epstein and Nephew of Jonny, Jay, and Gary "Chubes" Epstein graduated from Dover (NH) High School.



Samantha Stone- Daughter of Andy Stone '80 bunk 14 graduated NYU with her Master's in Education



Jon Wilcon '01 14 finally married Laura Small after many Covid postponements, July 23, 2022, and became a father to his second son, Jonah, April 2023



Luke Fine '01 14 became a father to his second child, Riley, November 2022



On July 15, 2023, Alumni dedicated a new life guard stand in memory of Avodian Peter Varga, 1950s-1970s, counselor and long-time waterfront director. Pictured with Peter's wife Suzie are his, children, grandchildren, and alumni Alan Chebot, Jim Singer, Phil Greenspan, and Tom Leavitt.