



# The Bugle

## THE AVODA ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

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SPRING  
2025



THAT'S LINEUP! ALUMNI TO THE NEXT PAGE!

# President's Letter

## Page 2

*Hello Avoda Alumni,*

2025 is set to be a great year for Avodians of all generations: camper numbers are strong, the administration and staff are thriving, and, on the road to our 100th anniversary, planning has already begun for exciting improvements that will strengthen Avoda for decades to come. On top of all that, alumni are energized! They're involved in committees, events, fundraising, reminiscing about the past, planning the future, connecting on LinkedIn and on social media (shout out Deena Guttin!), and more. No other camp can talk about their alumni the way we can.

Our strong alumni network is vital for Camp's longevity. For one, Camp is an independent non-profit, and we're relied on to fund improvements. Two, we send our kids there which make up a good portion of camper enrollment. Three, we keep the stories, traditions, and culture alive. Four, and becoming more important, our strong alumni network is a great selling point to prospective families and a huge point of differentiation. So when you text a former counselor or you're reading this newsletter, it may seem ordinary, but it's actually giving back to Camp (first pound, brother!).

Giving back is why I volunteer my time and why I'm writing this letter. I want to see Camp continue to flourish. During my first summer in 2000, it never crossed my mind that I might stay involved 25 years later. I was just a kid who loved camp as many kids do. After Bunk 14, there was no question whether to continue on as a CIT. Of course, the natural next step was becoming a counselor. When that time had passed, no way was I done with Avoda. As an alum I knew I would stay in touch with friends. Lucky to be invited to the Alumni Board (now Alumni Committee), I felt zero hesitation. Likewise, currently in my first year as a member of the Board of Directors, it was an easy decision for me to join.

I've had no plan or specific goals related to staying involved, each step just felt right. It's happened organically and I've been inspired by the dedication of many other alumni along the way. Something that brings so much joy, you want to keep around in your life. Now, with a son on the way, and my nephew embarking on his first weeks ever at Camp this year, I'm thankful I get to pass on the joy of the best summers imaginable to the next generation.

Thank you Alumni, keep doing your thing.

*Dan Gollinger, 2002 14*



**SAVE THE DATE**

**2025**

**ALUMNI  
WEEKEND  
AUGUST 15-17**

# Miracle on Tispaquin...

## Page 3

### February 1980 - Lake Placid, NY (Miracle on Ice)

Great Moments are born from great opportunities and that's what you have here tonight... Americas guest Mike Eruzione with the game winner USA 4 Russia 3

### August 1979- Middleboro, MA (Miracle on Tennis Courts)

Color War Senior Hockey Game. Injured first pick Steve Rosenberg is forced to play goal, hurting the offensive power of the White Warriors. In a tight back and forth game, A legend is born. Some people are born into greatness, others have it thrust upon them... Nat Phillips takes the feed off the face-off from Mike Rutstein and snipes a shot top corner. White Warriors 4 Blue Cyclones 3.



### February 2025- Lake Tispaquin, Middleboro, MA (Miracle on Pond Ice)

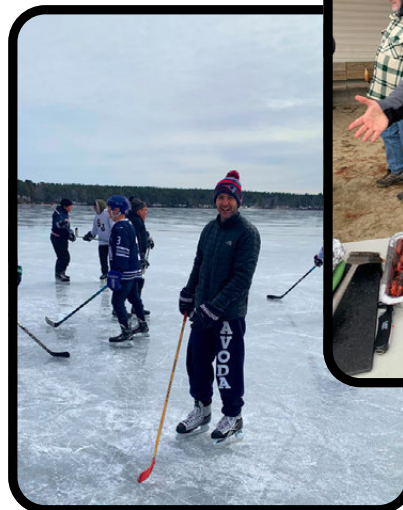
The first annual pond hockey tournament is inaugurated with Glory Days playing in the background. A good turnout of seasoned veterans vs, and I'm using this term loosely, Youngbloods. The stage is set for what could be an all time hockey classic. The veterans made up of the Sherman (ie. Hanson) Brothers Russell and Alex, Drew "A Brain" Aronson, Mike "Morty" Roth, Gary Rabinowitz, Steve "Rosey" Rosenberg, Nat Phillips and some others. The youngbloods led by Bobby Zucker and Jesse Fanuel along with Owen Fanuel in net, or as we call him "The Brick Wall", Eric Steinman, Ethan Shifman, Danny Blumenstein, Herr Director Ken Shifman, Dylan and Brennan Agulnek who also had time to ice fish with the locals. Providing much needed fan and medical support from the shores was Jeff Vetstein, Hondo Katz, Aaron Agulnek, Bones Wortheim, Adam Becker, Gabe Rosen and honorary alumni dad Marc Rosen, and Lou Dennis. And of course, in his comfort zone, manning the concession stand was Sam Mirkin with the best boneless chinese chicken thighs you'll find this side of Beijing.

The game started out like an Ali Frazier heavyweight bout as both teams were feeling each other out. For many, this was the first time they had laced them up in years and it took some time to dust off the cobwebs and get the juices flowing. Once the muscle memory kicked in, the game was fast paced with both teams showing off their offensive power. Up and down both teams went like a NHL all star game, defense was not a priority. Through all the mayhem, Owen Fanuel stood taller in net then his 4' frame would have you believe. Flashing pads, blocker, and glove to come up with several acrobatic saves vs the Veterans. Back and forth the game went, sadly for this writer, the Youngbloods prevailed in the end as we could not stop the tandem of Zucker/Fanuel. In the end, a good time was had by all and the skating much easier than a swim!

Stars of the game #3 star -Nat Phillips Groin, it was left on the ice after an ill advised slap shot not during the game but after, #2 Star Zucker Fanuel duo it was like watching Phil Esposito and Wayne Cashman out there, and finally the #1 star goaltender Owen Fanuel, take your pick Martin Brodeur or Patrick Roy for comparison sake.

If Mother Nature can cooperate, I suspect this will be an annual event for years to come on the shores of Tispaquin.

Hat Trickingly Yours,  
Nat "Gretzky" Phillips





# Avoda! To the Golf Carts!!

## Page 4

### Avoda Alumni Golf Tournament!

The morning sun will cast golden light over the rolling greens. A warm breeze will stir the trees, carrying the distant echoes of summer laughter from the shores of Tispaquin. Golf carts will hum to life (instead of the Red Truck), clubs will clink and clonk (instead of gink and gonk), and the Avoda brotherhood will once again gather—not around a campfire, but on the fairways, united by a love for the game and a shared history that binds us together.

Last year, our annual Camp Avoda Golf Tournament was nothing short of extraordinary. Over 100 golfers—each with a direct or secondary tie to Avoda—teed off in a day filled with camaraderie, competition, and charity. Together, with help from our sponsors, we raised over \$20,000, a testament to the unwavering support of our alumni and friends who continue to invest in the camp that shaped so many of us. It was truly a magical day, made evident by the 100% chance of rain storm clouds that hit everything east and west of us, but left the skies above Wedgewood Pines Country Club clear and dry.

The only downside was having to award Vetstein/Charton/Nathanson/Isaacson their 2nd championship in as many years (just kidding, congrats guys). Will someone please stop them from the coveted three-peat??

**This year, on Monday, June 30, 2025**, we're setting our sights even higher. More golfers, more memories, and an even greater impact.

Events like the Golf Tournament and Alumni Weekend aren't just dates on a calendar; they are lifelines for our Avoda community. They allow old friends to reunite, new bonds to form, and, most importantly, they help sustain the mission and spirit of Camp Avoda for generations to come.



**Please note** that we're having this year's tournament in **June** instead of our typical August date due to scheduling constraints.

All that means is that at the end of June, we'll be lining up putts instead of lining up at the flagpole, driving the fairways instead of driving to Village, and tending the flag instead of defending the flag. Thanks in advance, your participation strengthens the very fabric of our community.

So, mark your calendars, dust off your clubs, and rally your foursome. Let's make the 2025 Tournament the biggest and best one yet. We can't wait to see you there!

Ben Kassiff  
2006 Bunk 14



Registration  
Details

# Rodman Ride

## Page 5

### **The newest and greatest Team Avoda: The Rodman Ride for Kids**

Many of you might not have heard of this event yet, but I'm here to tell you that in only our third year, we're already turning heads. What began in 2023 with Team Bubba raising more than \$40,000 for the Adam "Bubba" Miller Memorial Scholarship Fund has now grown into four teams representing four immensely deserving priorities at camp. This year's ride is happening on May 17, a major calendar change from the previous years' September timeline, but one that will ultimately benefit Avoda by bringing in needed support earlier in the year.

Our 2024 riders braved the harshest elements (low temps and pouring rain) to make good on their commitment, and we couldn't be prouder. A very special thank you to Jesse Faneuil, Todd Miller, Derek Wade, Sam Frank, Joe Frank, Ken Shifman, Bobby Zuker, Mike Ross, and our parent MVP Jeff Hurwitz. Credit to our Virtual MVPs Dave Glattstein, Adam Silevitch and Charlie Zuker for pushing us along from afar.

We also want to recognize our camper riders who really stepped up! Thank you to Ben Afergan, Roman Sabitov, and Micah Schechner for making this a priority and raising powerful funds to help other boys enjoy the same experiences they have had.

2025 Team Avoda Rodman Ride takes place in just a few weeks on Saturday, May 17. If you're local to eastern MA and want to hit the road with us, we'd love to have you! The 25 mile ride is a very manageable, mostly flat route. And the kicker? BBQ and frosty beverages to follow, staffed by our own incomparable volunteer team led by Ronni Guttin and with the one and only Sam Mirkin manning the grill.



If you're not available to join us on May 17 in Foxboro but still want to help, register as a "Virtual Rider." You can ride the miles, or not (many folks do Peloton), but the important part is being part of the fundraising effort for camp! QR code below!

Nate Cohen, 2000 Bunk 14



Registration  
Details



# Neil Bornstein Tribute

## Page 6

If you went to Avoda and never knew who the camp doctor was, you “won.” You were never sick or injured enough to make it past the infirmary steps—though for some, the promise of a Dairy Queen stop on the way back made the trip feel like less of a loss. At camp, the medical staff is best when they’re heard about, not seen. Beginning with my father Neal, there’s been a “Dr. Bornstein” looking after Avoda for nearly 50 years.

A summer at camp is a lot like a stage production.

Campers and parents experience the fun without seeing the months of preparation behind the scenes. There’s a lot of planning and responsibility that goes into keeping hundreds of boys healthy and safe. Over the years, we’ve been lucky to work with incredible nurses and staff, all committed to that same goal: ready when needed, but quietly in the background.

My father grew up in Swampscott, Massachusetts. He was an Eagle Scout, but never had the chance to attend an overnight camp like Avoda. After medical school and Army service, he and my mom moved to Lakeville in 1977, where he opened his pediatric practice in Middleboro. Back then, Lakeville was a town of about 2,000 people—and we may have been its first Jewish family. Sometime in the late '70s or early '80s, Mr. Davis learned there was a new local pediatrician in town, and brought him in to work with camp. My father cared for campers either in his office or at nearby hospitals.

As I got older, I’d tag along for Friday night services and dinners at camp. One of my earliest memories is sitting on the field after Shabbat, playing cards with Andy Stone and some campers. My parents loved those evenings with Paul and Bobbie Davis and the rest of the staff. In 1982, I officially joined Bunk 1 as a seven-year-old “day camper,” dropped off each morning and picked up after evening activity.

During my 15 summers as a camper and counselor, I heard plenty of legendary medical stories. There were broken bones, water slide mishaps, even some dangerous Jell-O encounters—and my father was always there to help get kids back on their feet.

Today, many parents might bring their kids home to see a familiar doctor, but back then, they trusted that my dad would get them through it. For most campers, though, he was just the guy they’d see briefly on Friday nights or at Banquet.



When I returned to Massachusetts in 2005 to join Middleboro Pediatrics, I also stepped into his role at Avoda. People assume I followed his path because he was a pediatrician—but really, it was my camp experience that inspired me to work with kids. Now, I get to watch my son Jonah grow through the same Avoda journey. From Bunk 1 to his upcoming CIT summer, he’s building the same kind of lasting friendships and memories. My father was proud to see a third generation of our family become part of the Avoda story. After his passing, the outpouring of support from both the local and Avoda communities meant so much to our family. It reminded us how deeply camp is woven into our lives—and how it continues to shape and support us across generations.

## To a healthy and fulfilling life!

**Aaron Bornstein, MD – '88 bunk 14!**





# Alumni Happenings

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Matt Schwartz, 2003 Bunk 14 with his triplets! Laura, Emma, and Madison. Good luck Matt!



Braden Lukoff (09'), Brandon Lukoff (10'), Harrison Lukoff (02') and baby Viviana Lukoff!



Sam (10' Bunk 14), Abe (14') and their father during a visit to London where Sam is living!



Sam Shuster (07') and his beautiful Bride!



Alex Sherman (82') and Russel Sherman (84') taking in all the Tispaquin feels!



Emily Feinberg, daughter of Danny (06')

# PGD Celebration

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## PGD

On June 15, 2024, we held a wonderful tribute, celebration, and memorial event in honor of Paul G. Davis at Camp Avoda. It was a special event and a big success. We had 200 people from all generations of Avodians join this special celebration of life.

We had a great service at the Chapel Site. Longtime Photographer and good friend of Paul, Abe Klein, played guitar. Director Ronni Saltzman Guttin led us in a prayer and song to kick off the tribute. We then had commemorations and words by Board President Russell Sherman, Board Member Sam Mirkin, Seth Jacobs, Jake Alexander, Barney Horowitz, Mark Goldberg, Aaron Bornstein, Benji Satloff, and Bobbie and Jeff Davis. We heard stories and warm sentiments about and for The Man. Josh Cohen, Zac Roth, and Benji Satloff played some music for the crowd. Board member Dan Gollinger and I led the camp alma mater. All in all it was a fitting homage to Mr. Davis.

We then made our way up to the fire pit next to the Lodge. Tom Leavitt unveiled a bronze plaque for PGD's Path (which is now proudly on display next to the Main Office), we threw sacred woodchips into the firepit, said some private prayers, laughed, cried, and remembered the one, the only, Paul G. Davis. To conclude the ceremony, Gary Epstein led a toast to "The Big Guy." Bobbie, Deb, and Jeff Davis were in attendance, of course, and spoke beautifully. Jeff played guitar and sang Ripple, as Paul loved music. As Jeff sang, we looked out onto the lake as the sun crept down behind us in the grove, taking us to late afternoon.

**After the event, Bobbie Davis sent us a warm, lovely letter, which we've included in the following column. We truly have an incredible community!**

"Dear Avoda community,

Since last Saturday's celebration of Paul's life, I have thought often about your deep, collective sense of love for and loss of Paul as a caring mentor, compassionate leader, and sometime "willing co-conspirator." He was a constant in your lives, and you knew you could count on him to be a trusted friend. Your devotion to him is best described by that very familiar line in the Camp Avoda Alma Mater, "There's none that can compare."

Under sunlit skies at Avoda, your latest salute to Paul was incomparable in every way, starting with heartfelt tributes at the chapel site and ending at the giving circle with the unveiling of a lovingly inscribed bronze plaque for PGD's Path. Your admiration and affection for Paul were genuine and overflowing, exquisitely expressed, and illuminating...

...We could not ask for a more generous group of friends to preserve Paul's lifelong legacy or find a more beloved place than Avoda to bless his now resting heart.

**With great affection and gratitude,  
Bobbie, Deb, and Jeff Davis"**





# On the Shores of Tispaquin

## Page 9

Lake Tispaquin is, among other things, the perfect measuring stick. Chestnut Hill Reservoir? Maybe a third the size of Tispaquin. Lake Massapoag? About double the size of Tispaquin. Nearby Assawompset Lake? More than ten times Tispaquin. Whatever landlocked body of water Avodians may encounter, there's always an easy comparison to our beloved Middleboro marina.

Big enough to provide spacious small-crafting highways, yet small enough to see from one end to the other, Tispaquin is the ideal size for a camp lake. And we had the best seat in the house, a mystical sliver of beach with exactly enough room for a fishing dock, swimming docks, and boating docks. Yes, the water sometimes needed chemical encouragement to satisfy local health standards, but looking at Tispaquin, you'd swear it was a painting.

The Mona Lisa, in fact. Seriously. You know how they say the Mona Lisa's eyes follow you around the room? Well, the rock follows you around the lake. Whether you're playing volleyball, waterskiing near the chapel, or sailing on the far side of the lake, the rock is always watching. It's a north star in the water, a symbol of swimming self-determination, and, likely against its will, an avian commode.

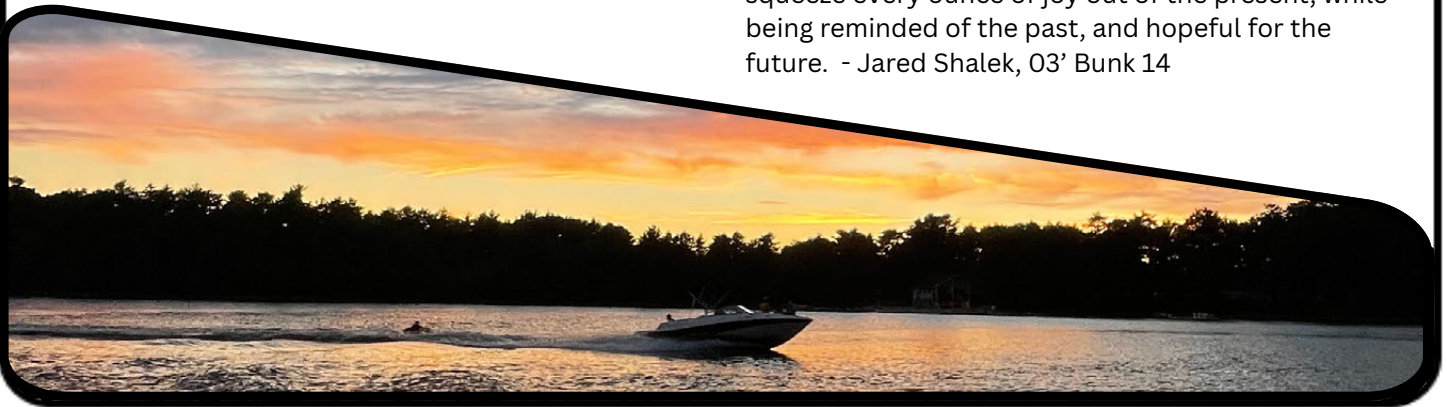
There's an irony in this Tispaquin tribute being authored by a longtime member of the athletic staff. The truth is, waterfront staff always seemed cooler. They could do stuff.

Anyone who made it to staff had, at some point in their camp careers, swung a bat, or shot a basketball. But not everyone had learned to sail or drive a boat. Athletic staffers, if they're being honest, would admit a hint of envy towards their buddies who spent summers chilling, tubing, and boobing on the lake.

And yet, we still had to help with the docks! The less muscular among us struggled or just pretended to be lifting. But you'd always get called out. It was a bonding experience. During the first few days of pre-camp, the docks go in. Everyone gets their blood flowing, friendly insults are hurled, and we celebrate our achievement with grilled cheese. It was important getting the docks in, though—the lake looked naked without them. Standing on our beach and looking out on the lake without those heaving green hunks of metal in the foreground was unnatural. Kind of like camps who have pools.

Such an amazing place Tispaquin is, that plunging into its waters is considered both a reward and a punishment. Run afoul of the mess hall masses, you get thrown in the lake. Win Avoda's ultimate prize and you throw yourself in the lake. The temperature is irrelevant. It's how you feel when you go in.

And when you come out of the lake, or when you're by the lodge, or when you're leaning on the green fence by the flagpole, wistfully looking out on this aquatic sanctuary, the breeze is unlike any other in the world. It's an unmistakable gust that makes you feel alive, energetic, nostalgic. The rush of air reminds you of where you are, allowing you to squeeze every ounce of joy out of the present, while being reminded of the past, and hopeful for the future. - Jared Shalek, 03' Bunk 14



# Camp Avoda Update 2025

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## AVODA UPDATE:

### A Letter from Executive Director Ken Shifman



Hi Everyone!

Camp is ramping up – it starts early this summer: on June 22 – the earliest we can ever kick off, because we work back from Labor Day and that is on September 1<sup>st</sup> this year. So if you're a camp professional, buckle up - camp starts soon! But I am happy to report that we are in good shape! Summer of 2024 was a lot of fun. Camper numbers were great and we had the most staff we have had for some time. What do you remember from your days at Avoda? I would suggest that a lot of what you liked and recall is still intact and those things are many of the ingredients that current campers enjoy today.

Some highlights from last summer include:

- Battle of the Super Teams has changed into a truly competitive, fun, two-day event and last summer the Men in Black beat the Red Bulls.
- July 4<sup>th</sup> is always special – and the Annual Egg Toss (started about 12 years ago) is a big hit. And so are the Hot Dog Eating Contest, and the carnival, and bonfire, fireworks and Bomb Pops! USA! USA!
- Speaking of hot dog eating...We went to the Red Sox game and saw a W.
- Avoda came in first in the Tennis Tournament at YJ!
- We introduced the Avoda Council - a camper-led initiative to improve camp culture.
- Bucket Golf was an instant classic activity.
- We had a baseball theme lunch where we sang Sweet Caroline, had a live dance cam, served pretzels and even ice cream in little Red Sox helmets, and of course did the wave!
- And as always, Color War was a great event – although not so close... The Blue Revolution beat the White Flames.

# 2025 Update Continued

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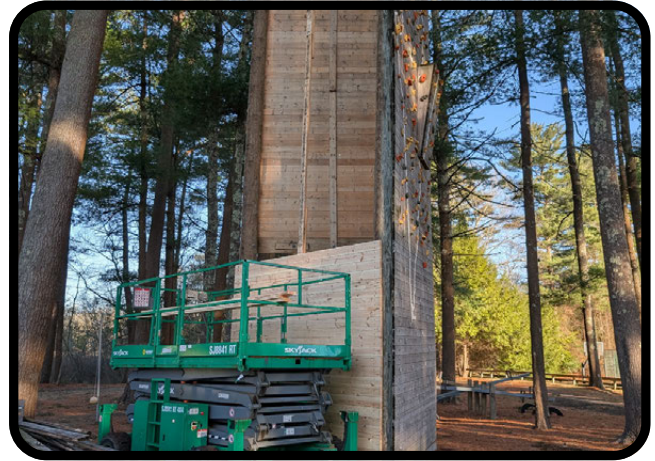
Even in the off-season, Avoda is buzzing behind the scenes. From camper recruiting and advertising to staff hiring, facility upgrades, program planning, and staff training—there's always something exciting in the works!

We're already looking strong for Summer 2025, with enrollment nearly full and some age groups completely booked. To keep up with demand and ensure a comfortable experience for both campers and staff, we're expanding several bunks. We've also made key facility updates, including reinforcing part of the Rock Wall—and we're thrilled to be adding a brand new Ninja Obstacle Course that's sure to be a hit!

Staffing is nearly wrapped up, but we're also focused on helping our dedicated staff grow professionally. This spring, we're supporting some of our returning bunk staff in finding meaningful internships during May and June—giving them valuable experience before they head back to camp.

### **This is where you come in.**

Are you in a position to offer an internship? Could your company or industry support a short-term opportunity for one of our outstanding staff members? We're open to creative, custom opportunities and would love to collaborate with you. It's a powerful way to support both the individual and the camp community. **Reach out if you can help—we'd love to hear from you!**



We're also proud to share that our incredible team continues to grow. This summer, we've got it all: nurses, chefs, office managers, facilities crew—and even a woodshop instructor, which just might be the hardest seasonal role to fill! Every piece of the puzzle is coming together to make Summer 2025 unforgettable.

The schedule is locked in, and we're now booking exciting outside entertainment, holding focus groups with staff to keep them engaged before the summer begins, and putting the finishing touches on our signature programs—while also experimenting with a few fresh ideas to keep things evolving.

As always, I invite you to think back—**what do you remember from your time at Avoda?** Was it a Color War showdown? An epic evening activity? A counselor who made a difference? That unmistakable feeling of stepping onto 23 Gibbs Road? I'd love to hear about it. Send your memories and stories to me directly at [Ken@CampAvoda.org](mailto:Ken@CampAvoda.org). I still remember every one of my Avodians from 1980–1990, and it fills me with pride to know we're still delivering life-changing experiences to today's campers and staff. We're not just running a camp—we're creating the next generation of Avoda alumni.

**Hope to see you at camp this summer!**

—Ken Shifman



# Avoda Legacy/Editor's Note

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## BUILDING A LEGACY:

Help Avoda Thrive for the Next 100 Years

Camp Avoda has been a formative and beloved place for generations of young men—a summer home where boys grow into leaders, build lifelong friendships, and strengthen their Jewish identity.

The Avoda Legacy Society was created to ensure that the magic of camp endures far into the future. With 33 members strong and a bold goal to reach 100 by Camp Avoda's 100th anniversary, we're calling on alumni, parents, and friends to help shape that future. We need you.

By making a planned gift through your will, trust, retirement account, or life insurance policy, you can help secure Avoda's next century. It's a simple, meaningful way to honor your own connection to camp while making a lasting impact on generations to come. Your commitment will help maintain our cherished facilities, fund scholarships, and keep our traditions alive—ensuring that

Camp Avoda continues to thrive as a vibrant part of the Jewish community. You're never too young to start thinking about your legacy.

To learn more or to begin the process, please reach out to Lee Kaiser ('80-'91, '95-'97, '14-current) at [LeesPositiveAttitude@gmail.com](mailto:LeesPositiveAttitude@gmail.com) or call 703.856.1360.

Help us preserve the spirit of Avoda—now and always.

# A-V-O-D-A!



## EDITOR'S NOTE:

That's Taps, Goodnight Alumni

In this year's newsletter, we were given the opportunity to venerate. So, what does that mean? A quick google search will yield "to worship, adore, be in awe of".

This 2025 version gave us two of our most beloved Avoda staples. The first, Paul G. Davis and a true celebration of life. Through generations of Avodians, PGD was the face of Camp Avoda. He will be forever missed.

This 2025 version also gave us an homage to our beloved Lake Tispaquin.

As Jared Shalek (03' 14) writes, "Such an amazing place Tispaquin is, that plunging into its waters is considered both a reward and a punishment. Run afoul of the mess hall masses, you get thrown in the lake. Win Avoda's ultimate prize and you throw yourself in the lake."

There is truly no other place like it. Enjoy its beauty in summer. And as the hockey gurus will explain, love it even more in winter.

Thank you to the entire Avoda community for all you do, and a special thank you to all the writers who volunteered their time to make this year's edition one for the ages. Enjoy your off-season!

*Until next year,*  
**Justin Lukoff (05' 14)**

# A-V-O-D-A!