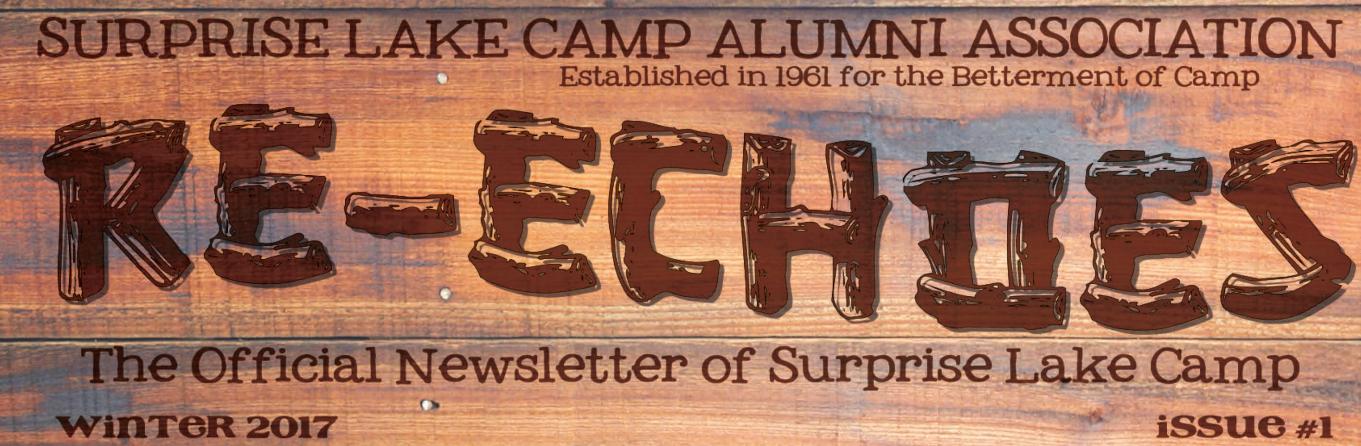




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# THANK YOU, SLC!



important, all the memories that I got to create... Thank you SLC for being a great home the past eight years, I will never forget any of it. – Sam M.

My first year at SLC I spent crying and wanting absolutely nothing more than to go home. Eight years later, I would do anything to spend even one more week here. I've learned everything that's important to me at camp and have made friends that I want to spend forever with. I know it's basic to say that camp is my second home, but it's the only place I'd want to spend my summers. Without camp, I never would have made the lifelong friends that I have and, even more

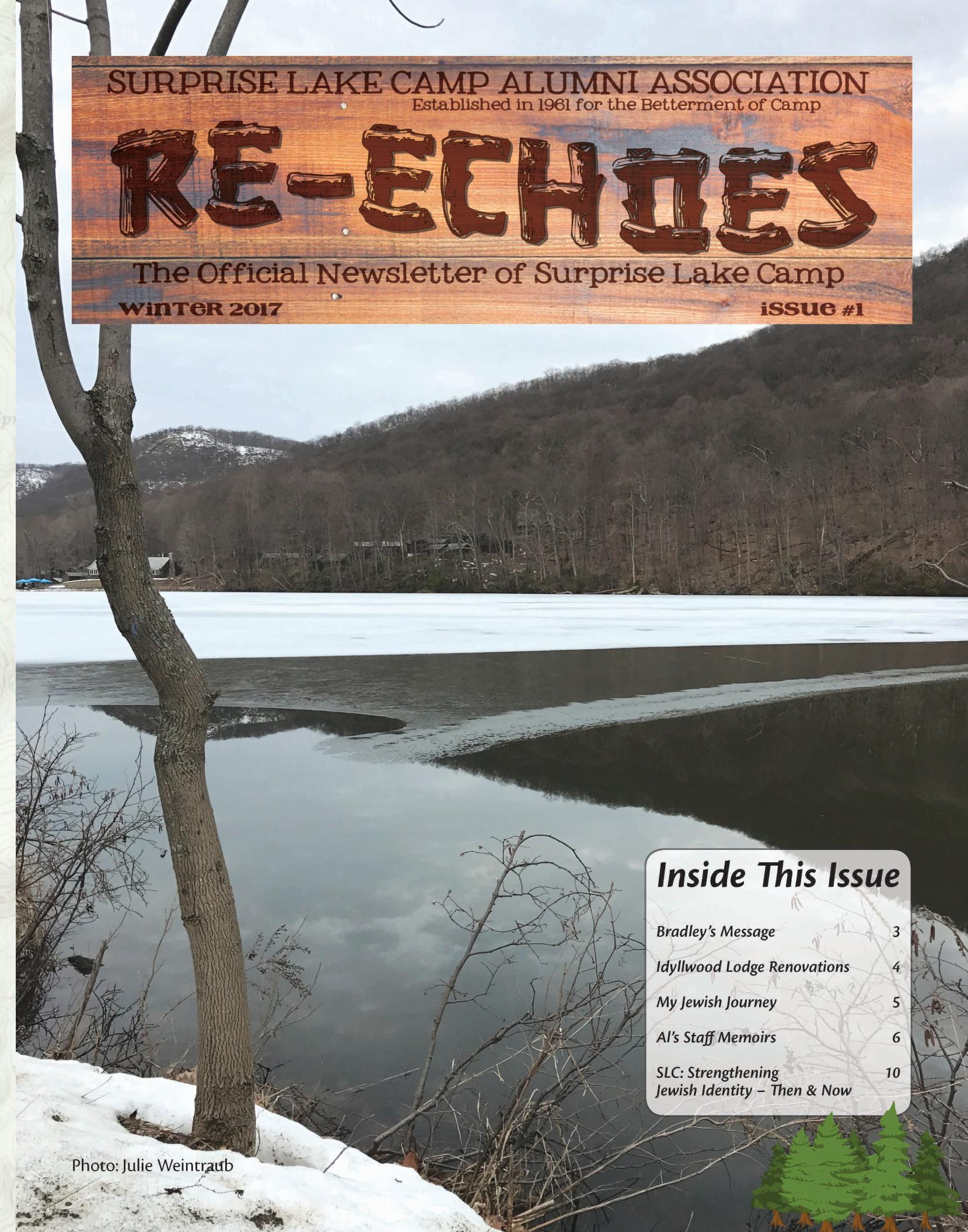


Photo: Julie Weintraub

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**SURPRISE LAKE CAMP  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**  
Established in 1961 for the  
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307 Seventh Ave, Suite 900  
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Fax 212.924.5112  
Email: [alumni@surpriselake.org](mailto:alumni@surpriselake.org)

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Any newsletter submissions may  
be mailed directly to the editors.  
Please notify us of any errors.

Design & layout by James Dinn

# Upcoming EVENTS

## April

April 30: Volunteer Day

[www.surpriselake.org/volunteerday](http://www.surpriselake.org/volunteerday)

## May

May 7: New Camper Orientation & Tour Day

[www.surpriselake.org/maytourday](http://www.surpriselake.org/maytourday)

May 20: Spring Shabbat Program

[www.surpriselake.org/springshabbat](http://www.surpriselake.org/springshabbat)

May 20-21: Alumni Party

[www.surpriselake.org/springalumniparty](http://www.surpriselake.org/springalumniparty)

## July

July 30: Alumni Day

[www.surpriselake.org/alumniday](http://www.surpriselake.org/alumniday)

## August

August 13: 1902 Society BBQ

[www.surpriselake.org/1902bbqrsvp](http://www.surpriselake.org/1902bbqrsvp)

## SUPER BOWL BOX POOL WINNERS!

1st quarter: Bryan Salz

3rd quarter: Gene Kelly

End of Game: Jason Hoffman

2nd quarter: Laurence Helpern

4th quarter: David Friedman

## In Memoriam

Our deepest condolences to alumnus and Board Member Jerry Meyer, and his family, on the loss of Jerry's mother, Estelle. Although not an alumna herself, Estelle was a member of camp's 1902 Society, and her legacy will be remembered by future generations of SLCers.

## SLC's Community Corner Advertising Rates:

	Fall or Winter Issue	Spring Issue	Three Issues
Business Card	\$36	\$54	\$120
Quarter Page	\$72	\$100	\$180

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# SLC: STRENGTHENING JEWISH IDENTITY – THEN & NOW

By Tracie Tricanowicz Basch

Ask almost any child about what they are looking forward to during the summer and the first response you will probably receive is “no school.” For many children in the Northeast U.S., the second answer will probably be “summer camp.” For me, this was always my response. For eight years, six as a camper and two as staff, I spent nine weeks ‘nestled beneath the shady trees’ at Surprise Lake Camp.

When I first arrived at camp, I was a 10 year-old girl who went to Yeshiva and only knew one way of practicing the religion. My eight years at camp taught me that there are many ways to not only practice Judaism, but to also identify as Jewish. I became friends (some of whom I still consider friends today) with other kids who spanned the spectrum from no Jewish experiences at home to those that were somewhat observant. Camp was the one place where we all came together on an even playing field and where we were able to learn from one another.



Friday nights and Shabbat were, and still are, really special at SLC. It is camp tradition that everyone – campers and staff – wear white on Friday night. Looking around, there was a sea of white shirts. I am not sure why this became the *minhag* (tradition), but looking back at it, this is another way that we were all put on the same level. Often, we held our Shabbat services at our open air theater, the Eddie Cantor (yes, he was a camper there), looking at the lake and up at the trees. What better way to speak to God, than in the presence of nature? Even better, the Shabbat services were led by campers, under the guidance of the camp Rabbi, who would meet with each group when it was their turn to teach us the prayers and the songs so that all of us were prepared. What better way to learn the songs and prayers than with your friends? No matter what our levels of observance at home, at camp we all came together as one to say the prayers and welcome Shabbat.

Learning about Judaism was not limited to religious practices, and here is where I really learned something new. With the large number of Israeli counselors and staff, we also learned about what a Jewish identity was and how to define our own, without the specter of religion. Every summer we had Israeli Day – where we played games that were played in Israel and ate Israeli food (who doesn’t love a good Falafel?). The interactions with Israeli staff were always interesting as many of the counselors were just coming off their years of mandatory army service. We learned what life was like for them in Israel and in the army. These staff members were not much older than we were, yet their experiences in Israel were so different from ours in Long Island, Westchester and New York City. It was definitely eye-opening to me and all my friends and made us appreciate what we had.

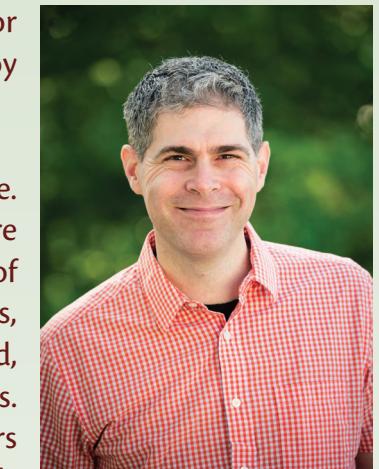
My years at camp not only taught me independence, compromise and problem solving skills – all good things - it taught me how to be a better Jew and a better person. It taught me how to be accepting of others, especially if they are not like me. It taught me that there is no one right way to do any one thing. Don’t get me wrong, I learned these things from my family as well. The difference is that at camp, I learned them from my friends and peers, and as all parents know, our kids often pay better attention to their friends than to us. My experiences at SLC were so meaningful to me, that now my two sons attend.

In many ways, things at camp have changed to meet current standards, but certain things have not changed. At every meal, everyone says *Hamotzi* before they eat and *Birkat Hamazon* at the end of each meal, and come Friday night, everyone still wears their white shirts. Today, a whole new generation of children, including mine, are learning things and experiencing things at camp about Judaism and a Jewish identity that they would otherwise not have an opportunity to learn.

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

One of the aspects I love the most about being in my first year as Executive Director is discovering things about camp that reveal its magic. I thought you might enjoy some of these revelations too.

In mid-March, I attended the American Camp Association's Tri-State Conference. Despite the local name, this is the largest camping conference in the world. There were camp professionals from across the United States, as well as delegations of camp people from as far away as China! As I attended sessions and walked the halls, I was stopped by camp colleagues who spied my conference badge and exclaimed, “Hey... Surprise Lake! Are you the new executive?” I was struck by two things. First, the number of camping professionals who attended SLC as either campers or counselors and then took on camping as a career, was quite remarkable. This is a huge testament to the SLC experience. Second, the number of people who took me aside to congratulate me on my achievement was truly touching. Their message to me, over and over, was that SLC is a special place and how lucky I am to have the chance to lead this storied institution. I had not expected to encounter such heartfelt sentiments from so many professionals from other summer camps.



This week we received a new camper inquiry from a family with two children. I began reading the email from the parent only to discover that this mother was not new to SLC. Rather, her father had attended camp, and so had she when she was a little girl. The family had not kept in touch with camp for some time but now that their children were approaching camp age, the idea of reconnecting with Surprise Lake became a possibility. I spoke with the parents after the mother had a chance to view our new video. She shared with me that she was struck by how much things had changed, yet how much had also been preserved. Throughout its history, finding this balance between innovation and tradition has been an important goal of Surprise Lake Camp.

Finally, I want to *kvell* (Yiddish for brag) a little with you. Two weeks ago, Linda Markowitz, SLC's Board President, and I met with the professional and lay leadership of UJA-Federation of New York. UJA-Federation has been an incredible supporter of SLC for decades. As part of their funding process, Federation does a regular assessment of camp. We were meeting to learn the results of the latest reviews. Linda and I took deep breaths and sat down with our colleagues. As we opened our assessment result packets and listened to their reviews, smiles spread across both of our faces. Whether it was program, governance or community connection, SLC received top ratings! Of course, there are opportunities for camp to grow and improve, but the bottom line is that UJA-Federation was overwhelmed with how strong and healthy camp is from every perspective.

It's hard to believe that, as I write this, there are only 100 days left until camp. I look forward to continuing to share more as I continue to discover SLC!



# IDYLLWOOD LODGE! RENOVATION IS UNDERWAY!

This fantastic renovation was made possible by Lee Kaplan and Jerry & Roz Meyer. Scheduled to be completed in spring of 2017, this renovated, heated lodge will be a wonderful addition to SLC's summer program and off-season Retreat Center.



**Reconnect with Friends!**

**Ballfield Games / Sunset Hike / Playoff Sports / Eddie Cantor Walk**  
**Star Gazing / Lakeside Games / Arts & Crafts / S'mores**

# SLC ALUMNI SPRING PARTY

**Saturday May 20, 2017**

**For more info, please visit:  
[surpriselakecamp.org/springalumniparty](http://surpriselakecamp.org/springalumniparty)**

**21+ only**

## 2017 Donation Form

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2017 Annual Scholarship Drive/Send A Child To Camp

1 Day at SLC: \$180	4 Days at SLC: \$720	Two Weeks at SLC: \$2,500 or more
2 Days at SLC: \$360	5 Days at SLC: \$900	One Session at SLC: \$5,000 or more
3 Days at SLC: \$540	One Week at SLC: \$1,260 or more	Full Summer at SLC: \$9,000 or more

### My/Our 2017 Contributions:

**Annual Scholarship Drive/Send A Child To Camp:** \$\_\_\_\_\_ (formerly the Alumni Drive)  
Gifts to the Annual Scholarship Drive are used to support current year scholarships. This is camp's greatest current need.

**Scholarship Endowment Fund:** \$\_\_\_\_\_

Supports future scholarships.

**Building Maintenance Fund:** \$\_\_\_\_\_

Supports upkeep for structures throughout camp.

For more information on other available funds, please contact David Rosner at (212) 924-3131, x21.

### **SC Alumni Association Membership Dues**

Membership entitles Alumni to a membership card, quarterly newsletter, free admission to Alumni Day, discounts at the Alumni Store and certain events, and more.

Annual Membership: \$36    Lifetime Membership: \$250

Please bill my credit card: (No AMEX, please)

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount to Charge: \$\_\_\_\_\_

I'd like to make monthly contributions with my credit card.

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Number of Months: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Donation Amount: \$\_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to save paper & postage. Please email me my/our acknowledgment letter.  
(please confirm/include email address above)

I would like to speak with an Alumni Fundraiser and/or member of Surprise Lake Camp's professional staff about becoming a member of the 1902 Society. Membership in the 1902 Society is open to all those who include Surprise Lake Camp in their estate plans. We hope you will tell us when you have done so because we would very much like the opportunity to say "thank you" for your generosity.

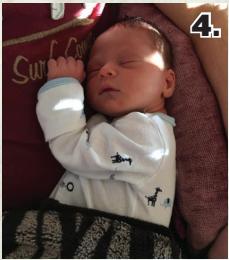
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# ANNOUNCEMENTS!



1. Mazel Tov to Jessica (Wayman) and Phil Frandina on the birth of their son, Jack Mason. He was born on November 14, 2016, and weighed 7lbs, 6oz.
2. Mazel Tov to Michael Tenenhaus on his January 15th engagement to Alli Fabrikant.
3. Mazel Tov to Allie Ball and Jordan Golan on their February 12th engagement, which took place at camp! Allie and Jordan met at camp, so we look forward to including them in our SLC wedding album!
4. Mazel Tov to Stephanie DeNardis Silverman and Gary Silverman on the birth of their son, Bretton. He was born on February 14 and weighed 7 lbs, 3 oz.
5. Congratulations to Gene Young, his wife Elizabeth, and big brother, Ronin, on the birth of Caroline Elizabeth Young. She was born on March 6.
6. Mazel Tov to Emily & Jeff Berk on the birth of their son, Corey Edward. He was born on March 15 and weighed 6lbs, 6oz.



## MATCH SLC!

### We need your help!

SLC has been awarded a three-year challenge grant by JCamp 180 (a program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation). The challenge grant targets new and lapsed donors.

Here's how YOU can help!

1. If you have never made a donation to SLC or gave before 2012 – you are eligible to participate!

2. Please take a few moments to think of friends and family who have not donated to SLC or gave before 2012. Please share their names and contact information with us ([david@surpriselake.org](mailto:david@surpriselake.org)). If you are able to facilitate the request yourself, even better, We are happy to provide you with sample emails/talking points if you like.

Every gift between \$100 and \$2,500 will be matched with an additional 20% from the foundation. Help us take advantage of this great opportunity to support our Annual Scholarship Drive. YOU can make a real and immediate difference in the life of a deserving SLC camper!

To donate (or share our donation page with others), visit [www.surpriselake.org/donate](http://www.surpriselake.org/donate), mail a check to our office or call (212) 924-3131. If you have ANY questions about the program or need help asking others for a gift, please call David at the office.

Thank you, in advance, for caring.



## MY JEWISH JOURNEY... BECAUSE OF CAMP

By Sheryl Kirschenbaum

I recently completed my third year with Lekhu Lakhem/Netivim. These are programs specifically designed for Jewish Camp Directors and offers participants accessible, positive, enriching experiences with Jewish learning. They are supported by the AVI CHAI Foundation and were established by the Foundation for Jewish Camp and the Mandel Center for Jewish Education of the JCC Association.

These programs, and all those involved with them, changed my life. I came in believing I was "Judaically impaired." The thought of me being a "Jewish Educator" was laughable to me. But through this program, I realized that what I had inside me and what Judaism has to offer are very similar, and I learned how to connect the dots and bring Judaism to life. Anyone with a passion for life and learning can be a Jewish educator, and I am thrilled to be able to bring this message to our camp community. I will forever be grateful to the people who created, supported, and were involved with these programs. When I returned from my final retreat, I wrote the following:

- ...I can comfortably participate in conversations with my Jewish education team
- ...I can comfortably share a d'var torah (words of torah)
- ...I call myself a Jewish educator
- ...I light candles on Shabbat
- ...I find teachable moments in so many places
- ...I can make Judaism accessible to everyone
- ...I am less intimidated by Jewish text
- ...I have the ability to share Judaism in a more meaningful way with our campers
- ...I have the ability to share my knowledge and be heard
- ...I am not just a "Jew" by birth; being Jewish has a different meaning
- ...I can comfortably lead prayers
- ...I can comfortably quote Jewish text
- ...I see life and camp through a Jewish lens

Because of You/Because of Camp...

I could go on and on... the list is probably endless!

# GET YOUR FEET WET<sup>SM</sup>



Is your child curious about sleepaway camp, but not quite ready to take the plunge? Why not try Surprise Lake Camp's Five Day GET YOUR FEET WET<sup>SM</sup> Program for Children entering Grades 1-4 August 23-27, 2017

**THE BEST STAFF! THE BEST PROGRAM! THE BEST FACILITIES!**

Only \$195

GET YOUR FEET WET<sup>SM</sup> is supervised and staffed by Surprise Lake Camp Alumni, and has been for the past several years. This fantastic, dedicated, and energetic group of volunteers, led by Seth Stein and Gayle Hoffman Doyle, takes this already remarkable program to new heights! If anyone is interested in learning more about this wonderful opportunity for kids to get a taste of Surprise Lake Camp, please call Seth at 917-922-9986 or email him at [seth@surpriselake.org](mailto:seth@surpriselake.org). We look forward to another amazing year of GET YOUR FEET WET<sup>SM</sup>!



# AL'S STAFF MEMOIRS AT SLC

In my last article I reminisced about my days as a camper at Surprise Lake Camp. In this article I would like to share with you some of my memories of the days when I was a CIT, a Counselor, and Bugler at SLC. I recently celebrated my 78th birthday on November 4th. It gives me great pleasure to reminisce at this stage of my life about the wonderful days I spent at Surprise Lake Camp.

I was hired by the Camp Director, Asher Melzer, as a Counselor in Training for the summer of 1955. During the remaining summers of the 50's, through 1960, I was a counselor,



Asher Melzer, Camp Director, and Ray Berger, Ass't Camp Director.

as well as the bugler. One of the CIT's I met during the summer of 1955 was Jack Levi. We still maintain a friendship with each other after all these years.

Jack, who is a Charter Alumni member, is an Endodontist in Teaneck, NJ. One fond memory I have of Jack occurred in 1955 when we had a hurricane that produced a lot of heavy rain, with lots of water that cascaded down the hills toward the lake. Some of the nine-year old boys in my group got together and built a dam behind their cabin that caused a big flood to develop in front of a staff cabin in the unit below. Jack Levi was one of the staff members in that cabin, and it was some time before they were able to get out, go to the bathroom, or even get to the dining hall to have their meals. Without going into a lot of detail, it was a very humorous situation, except for the staff members in that cabin!

When "Doc" Maslin retired as Waterfront Director, Harry Vogel took on that role. In addition to his summer responsibilities, Harry worked as a camp host most weekends during the fall, winter, and spring months, along with Asher Melzer, and Ray Berger, our Assistant Camp Director. Different groups from various community centers and organizations in the New York City area spent weekends at camp throughout the year, enjoying a variety of activities. When Harry went into the Paratrooper reserves, Asher asked me to pinch hit during his absence. Although I worked quite hard every weekend as a camp host, it was an enjoyable experience that I will never forget. I still remember Ash practicing playing his guitar

while singing different Hebrew and camp songs, and I practiced playing the bugle, which was a role I had in addition to being a counselor.

When I started writing my memoirs of my days at SLC, I wanted to include as many names as possible in the event that some of our older alumni might remember some of the people who were an important part of the history of Surprise Lake Camp. In addition to the people I mentioned in my previous article, I remember several Division Heads such as Dick



Al Elkins, at the Mt. Beacon Firetower, in July, 1955.

Titan, Max Fuchs, Stan Opas, Moe Cohen, and Bob Gottesfeld. Herb Gross was the Office Manager at SLC every summer and showed wonderful movies to the staff every Saturday night. Herb has been a resident of San Diego, CA for all of his adult life, where he is a retired school teacher,

as well as a Charter Alumni member. I can never forget Tess Cohen, Henny Cohen's wife, who was the Canteen Manager for many years back in the 50s, and of course, she was also a Charter Alumni member.

One person I will never forget is Ronald Kerstein, who was a counselor with me back in the 50s. In addition to our duties as fellow counselors, we played a lot of Ping Pong and Black Jack in our free time. Ron, who was a Charter Alumni member, married Naomi and became a CPA. We kept in touch with each other for many years, but sadly, Ron recently passed away.

In all of the years I was a counselor I had only one homesick camper. His name was Joel, and his homesickness was so serious that he had to have his meals at the infirmary under the supervision of our camp mother, "Mama K." One day I noticed that one of my fingers had swelled up and really hurt. I went to the infirmary to have my finger checked out, and the nurse informed me she would have to lance my finger in order to relieve the swelling. I asked the nurse what lancing meant, she told me that she would freeze my finger, and then cut the swelling with a razor



Eddie & Ida Cantor, at the dedication of the Eddie Cantor Theater in Sept., 1955.

blade. When she walked out of the examination room to get the necessary medical tools, I ran out of the other door because I was afraid of the lancing. However, the following night I was unable to sleep due to the pain in my finger, so I had to go back to the nurse. This time she asked my camper, Joel, to watch me to make sure that I didn't leave again. When she came back to do the lancing, Joel asked the nurse if he could stay to watch. After the nurse froze my finger, I started to cringe. (which is something I still do today whenever I get any injection). Joel laughed

so hard due to the look on my face, and as a result of my finger problem and bravery, Joel seemed to be cured of his homesickness and enjoyed his remaining time at camp!

Another memorable event that I recall was a Friday night Sabbath Service in our unit, which happened to be Unit C.



Campers performing at the Eddie Cantor Theater.

After we concluded reciting the Sabbath prayers, I told the campers a biblical story. We then had a very interesting discussion with the campers that started around 8:00pm and continued with all the counselor until around 11:30pm that night, long after all the campers were asleep. Although I don't believe we came to any conclusion, it was a fascinating night that I have never forgotten.

In September 1955, the Eddie Cantor Theater was dedicated. Eddie and his wife, Ida, came to camp to celebrate the erection of this wonderful building. Needless to say, many programs and entertainment events have taken place at the Eddie Cantor Theater during the past sixty-one years, and it has been an important part of our camp's history.

Although I recall many other memories of the days I spent as a counselor at SLC, I would like to conclude this part of my memoirs as a Staff member. In the next and final segment of my SLC memoirs, I would like to share with you my involvement in the formation of the Surprise Lake Camp Alumni Association, and how we evolved into the fantastic organization we are today.

Al Elkins, Past President  
SLC Alumni Association

