

Winter/ Spring 2002



CAMP HAIASTAN

CAMP HAI-LITES

Camp Haiastan prepares for its 52nd Camping Season

During the summer of 2001 Camp Haiastan of the A.Y.F. celebrated 50 years of camping excellence. The weekend was full of memories and remembrance, but most importantly there was an affirmation of the commitment to create another 50 years of camping magic.

Camp Haiastan and its current Board of Directors for the 2002 camping season is pleased to announce the hiring of Peter Jelalian as the Director of Summer Operations for the 2002 season. Mr. Jelalian is no stranger to Camp Haiastan. As a camper for six years, a counselor for four years, and a former director over 8 years in the late 1970's and throughout the 1980's, he brings to the camp his many years of service and experience. Widely recognized as a great organizer, leader, and teacher, Jelalian will bring to Camp Haiastan a level of excellence that will surely enhance the program. As a parent and a teacher, his skills will be

an enormous asset to the camp. Camp Haiastan's first priority is the safety of our staff and campers and Jelalian's experience makes him the best candidate for the job. Peter Jelalian comes to Camp Haiastan from the New York area where he is finishing up his 13th year as a teacher of special needs in the Rockland County School System. He lives in N.Y. with his wife Christine and their daughter Theresa. Welcome back Peter!

For more information about our upcoming season and special events, please call the camp office at (508) 528-0505 and speak to Bob Avakian, or visit our website at: camphaiastan.org

The 2002 Camp Haiastan Board of Directors are:

Joshua A. Tevekelian—Chairman

Steve Mesrobian—Clerk/Treasurer

Aremin Hacobian—Secretary

Sarkis Garibian

Mesrob Odian

Peter Buchaklian

Mark Manuelian

Executive Director:
Bob Avakian



"Camp Haiastan is a magical place!"

Work begins on the new pool

Work has begun on a new pool. Thanks to generous grants from the Armenian Youth Foundation, The Lincy Foundation, and many individuals who have contributed to the further improvement of Camp Haiastan, a new, larger, state-of-the-art pool will be ready

for the summer of 2002. The new L-shaped pool is 3700 square feet and located behind the cabin circle, adjacent to the toilet facility. It will accommodate our growing number of campers and permit several different activities at one time. The pool will also have brand

new equipment and be handicap accessible. The new location is ideal whereas it takes the campers away from the higher traffic area near the front entrance of the camp and allows them more privacy in a more secure area.

Plans are underway to convert the old pool into a play area for different activities, perhaps street hockey and shuffleboard!

This is the first of many major improvements planned at the camp, and we will continue to update you on our many initiatives. As always, though, your visit is preferable and we'd love to see you at the camp. Come visit!

Special points of interest:

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50th Anniversary Celebration a Big Success!

Over 400 individuals, including alumni, parents, campers and friends of Camp Haiastan gathered at the Camp over the weekend of July 27-29, 2001 to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Camp Haiastan.

Friends and alumni gathered from as far away as California and Washington State for the purpose of paying tribute to the camp. There was representation from Florida, Canada, and all places in between.

Events kicked off with an open house reception Friday evening on the grounds of the camp, with 150 enthusiastic supporters in attendance.

Saturday evening was a wonderful affair where more than 400 enthusiastic friends gathered at Dikran Tzamhour Hall for a celebratory dinner-dance. The catered dinner was provided by Pipinelle's in Franklin, MA and music was provided by the Richie Berberian and Mike Gostanian Ensembles.

On Sunday morning, anyone who was staying around the camp and willing to get up early was invited to a brunch in the "mess" hall of the camp and afterwards took a tour of the grounds. Later in the day on Sunday, many people took advantage of the annual picnic that was thrown by the St. Stephens Armenian Church in Watertown, MA. It was a beautiful day!

The weekend was very successful and raised over \$100,000 in contributions and pledges that will be used to insure our success over the next 50 years!

During the weekend, the Camp Board announced ambitious plans for the continued expansion and improvement of the facilities at Camp Haiastan. Plans include construction of a new, larger, state-of-the-art swimming pool (construction has begun!); construction of a covered play area; expansion and improvement of the shower and toilet facilities; and the acquisition of additional land to serve as a buffer between the camp and the growing local community.

The Board of Directors would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people who helped make this weekend a success. If you would like a copy of the commemorative scrapbook that was created for the weekend, they can be purchased by calling the camp office. Get one now, they are going fast and will be a keepsake you will cherish forever and look back on fondly. We guarantee some laughs too!

Camp Haiastan Announces First Time Camper Incentive

In keeping with the mission of trying to make Camp Haiastan accessible to all who would like to attend, the Board of Directors is offering a special incentive to first time campers who decide to attend the camp during the first session. As the camp celebrates its 52nd camping season, the Board of Directors is inviting any first time camper who comes to camp between June 30, 2002 and July 14, 2002 **50% off the camping fee!** This offer is good for first

time campers only in the first session. Any camper who has previously attended Camp Haiastan, regardless of any break in attendance, is not eligible for this promotion.

If you have already signed up a first time camper and would like to take advantage of this program, please call Bob Avakian at (508) 528-

0505.

As always, the camp does have a financial assistance program for the 1st and 4th sessions and you must call the office to discuss this non-related program. We hope to see many new faces this summer.

To receive information about financial assistance in the first and fourth session, CALL THE CAMP at 508-528-0505

The A.R.S. and Camp Haiastan to implement new Armenian School Program during the summer of 2002 and beyond

At their annual convention last year, the Armenian Relief Society, Eastern, U.S.A. approved a \$10,000 budget to revitalize the Armenian School Program at Camp Haiastan.

A special committee has been selected, made up of educators, former camp staffers and A.R.S. representatives to create this exciting program. The committee is focusing on developing an innovative curriculum using modern teaching methods and

resources that will interest the campers.

Additionally, there will be a speaker series that will be structured to attract professionals not only in the field of Armenian culture and history, but also in the areas of major concern and interest to today's pre-teens and teens. These lectures will compliment the new Armenian School program.

In conjunction with the Camp Board of Directors, the A.R.S. will provide the necessary training and resources for the entire camp staff to as-

sist in promoting Armenian culture. The Board of Directors thinks this program will greatly enhance the program during the summer and that the resources available will help the campers to become more familiar with the Armenian language.

Much thanks to the A.R.S for their support!

Letter from Former Camper Berj Bahtiarian

Dear Former Camper, Parent, AYP'er, Friend:

A few months ago, I had the pleasure of attending Camp Haiastan's 50th Anniversary Reunion. Although it was a big success and there were about 400 people there, I would have liked to have seen an even bigger turnout.

I had been like a little "kid" looking forward to this weekend ever since I found out about it. This was the first time in over twenty years that I had been back to the camp and, boy, what a difference since I was a camper. A great many things have changed and obviously improved. The Camp Haiastan Board of Directors have done an excellent job through the years, with a limited budget, of expanding and making the camp a place that has been appealing to Armenian children.

I must admit that as we drove into the camp entrance on Friday night, I had tears in my eyes remembering the six great summers (1952-57) that I spent as a camper. In fact, the first year the camp did not want to take me because I was too young. The first two years we had a boys' session in July and a girls' session in August. I think it was in 1954 that the camp became co-ed. WOW! This was going to be fun, and it was!

At that time, we didn't have a pool to swim in and we had to swim in the lake. One year, there was a hurricane coming up the East Coast and the counselors were afraid that it was going to hit the camp. So we all picked up our mattresses, carried them to the Rec Hall and we all spent the night

there. You can imagine that none of us got much sleep that night. The staff had us put on a talent show and we had a lot of fun. Fortunately, the storm by-passed us and the next morning all was back to normal.

Saturday night, during the dinner-dance, we were given an outline of the plans for the future of the camp. Two of the primary goals that the Camp Board presented were to replace the existing swimming pool and to buy the property adjacent to the camp. The pool is old, it has been repaired, refurbished and babied for a long time. In addition we have outgrown it. It is much too small for the number of campers we have today. The plans are to build a new, larger pool in an area behind the cabins.

When we were told about the idea of buying the adjacent property, my first thought was: "Why do we need more land?" Well, the town of Franklin is growing like crazy. It isn't the sleepy little town that I remember and there is strong possibility that this property will be developed in the foreseeable future. Due to its proximity to the area of the camp that we use every day, when this property is developed, we will be looking into the back yards of new homes and losing whatever privacy we have. The purchase is a preemptive move and quite a logical one.

AYF Camp Haiastan is without question the best endeavor that our community has ever undertaken for the Armenian children in this country. Friendships that were made as campers have become lifelong friendships and in several cases they have become marriages. We've already seen a

second generation of campers and this year we have a third generation attending.

In order to achieve their goals, to maintain the character of the camp, and to expand the camp, the Board of Directors need to raise a sizable amount of money. I would like to ask you for your help in order to make these plans a reality. It doesn't matter how much you give, whether it's \$50 or \$20,000, I can assure you that whatever you give, it will be greatly appreciated.

All of us are inundated with letters appealing for money from innumerable organizations and most of them are truly in need and are helpful to our community. Well, I guess I am doing the exactly same thing. I am certainly not going to tell you not to give to other Armenian organizations. However, you must remember that our children are our future and Camp Haiastan is one of the best ways in which to build for that future. Please help in any way you can. Send your tax-deductible donations to Camp Haiastan, P.O. Box C, Franklin, MA 02038

Sincerely yours,
Berj Bahtiarian

A Letter from Camper Michelle Hagopian

I love Camp Haiastan for many reasons. This is my second year at camp. The counselors each year are great. The activities are cool. And the food is awesome.

I've made new friends both years I was here. You can't be bored at camp, it has to be impossible! There's so much to do! For sports we play basketball, kickball, volleyball, soccer, ping pong, etc. If you're not playing sports, you could be hanging out with your friends on the

swings or eating the great camp food.

The counselors always find something for you to do. They're always nice too. We have two dances, a talent show, song night, peanut carnival, and a night activity every night. The pool feels good on really hot days, too. There is also free swim in the afternoons. So there are many reasons why Camp Haiastan is #1.

Love, Michelle

"You can't be bored at Camp, it has to be impossible."

