

Thoughts on social activities from previous ale committees:

In 1982 - we also enlisted the aid of local (non-morris) musicians to play for the dance, since some of the morris musicians had voiced their preference for dancing over playing the music.

People seem to want from an ale: time to hang out together to socialize, sing and drink, etc.

The coordinators also kept an eye on the 'things people want from an ale list' to keep on track and tried to keep the schedule from getting too cramped. We found we had to not try to do everything we thought would be fun.

In Ann Arbor, we like to have a church tour on Sunday morning.

I like to have a little awards ceremony at dinner. It's nice to recognize people who have helped with the ale, and to commemorate those who distinguish themselves by outlandish behavior. If you can get somebody with a good imagination who can do a little shopping during the ale, this is a nice touch.

Ann Arbor (1988) - A band was hired for Saturday night costing about \$100 and callers were solicited from the attendees. The sound system was supplied by Ann Arbor Council for Traditional Music and Dance without charge (every little bit helps). The Sunday night entertainment was an all-volunteer effort. Some teams have been coming to the Ale for years and can be counted on to step forward on Sunday night; however, I found it useful to approach the smaller or newer teams one-on-one to encourage them to offer a skit or whatever. The newer teams have a lot of talent and need just a little personal encouragement to get up. (Beth's comment: this is fine, but I think the skit night in Colorado was too long, so our task may be to figure out how to limit skits without cutting anyone out).

Colorado (1989) - We did not hire a contra band, and people seemed to enjoy playing. We did have one main musician running it. And what he did feel was that we could have used someone to run the sound system. He also highly recommended getting a good sound system. As well as for the contra, we did use the sound system for mass dance practice, and it was a real help. Alternatively, one could rent a bullhorn, which could then be used outside. In either case, some artificial aid for the foremen is a help.

Beth's thoughts:

I really like past ales where Saturday night was less formally organized, and thus a lot of good, spontaneous singing and other activities just happened. I preferred having skits and nicer dinner and dance all on Sunday night - the 3½ hours of skits in Colorado was a bit long for my taste.

I'd like to see the following, if possible: singing that is welcoming and open (not too much of songs for show that everyone can't join in on) - we need to figure how to use the mass song idea; skits have to happen, but we need to limit them, so think about whether an advance warning should be sent in March so teams don't bring 2 and more skits; an awards ceremony would be great. Other ideas presented have included a gay and lesbian tour (talk to Dan Heine), ping pong tournament and Morris

Social activities (continued):

Olympics (talk to Tom Barnes).

I'm not sure how you'd like to handle music for the contra dance. Many have indicated they think we can find plenty of willing musicians among morris dancers. If so, we need to survey this in the March mailing. Someone from Last Gaspé (Madison, WI) told me he heard a rumor that we were thinking of bringing them out for the ale. It was the first I had heard of it. It's a possibility, if they are willing to come for room and board and hardly any money! Think about it, decide something and let me know. Ted Hodapp has agreed to organize the callers for the dance. You might want to check with him to see if there is a need to survey callers in the March mailing. If you decide you want to check with local musicians, I can give you names and phone numbers. If we use morris musicians or Last Gaspé we will likely need to get a sound system - maybe Brain Humphrey would donate the use of his.

The Girl Scouts have a list of equipment that can be used if requested in advance. I am not sure whether there is any additional charge. This includes things like canoes, paddles, sailboats, earthballs, bows and arrows. Let me know if you think any of these are a good idea.

I guess my biggest concern is that there's so much that's possible and sounds like great fun, that we could easily overdo it. I think we must work hard to not schedule too much. And too many options makes for confusion. So