

1997 MIDWEST MORRIS ALE NOTES OAK APPLE

- **Sites** The two items that had to be reserved early were the campsite at Bethel Horizons, which John and Patricia set up, including the cooking, right after the 96 Ale, and the use of the Capitol grounds, which Deirdre set up last fall, and returned to in March to discover that the reservation trolls had given us Labor Day and given an annual Labor Day event (Taste of Madison) the Memorial Day slot. It was traumatic, but she straightened it out.
- **Organization** Basically, we probably had an all-time minimum of it. The good part was minimal meetings, the bad part was, we got the initial and second letters out late, which may have increased the confusion at the end
- **Basic Organizational Tool - Spreadsheet** John set up a magic spread sheet that kept track of all the information the guests sent us. A copy is in the materials, and the thing itself can be got from John at jpstott.src.wisc.edu All of our ordering and sorting and transport and menu requirements and T-shirt arrangements were driven by the spreadsheet. It was the Ale Brains.
- **Correspondence and Information** John set up the web site, and Barbara composed one initial letter with an estimation form, and one confirmation letter with the necessary travel, equipment, music and general scoop. The second letter went to people who answered the first one. Much exchange went on on John's and Barbara's E-mail. This was very useful as we got closer to the date.
- **Shirts** Heather got quotes and a schedule from the local silk-screen place, and found that we could imprint laundry (team) bags, shopping bags, and I donated several sorry white sheets which were torn up and imprinted to make the road signs, the bus numbers and the check-in sign. The signs that needed more info than the logo got acrylic paint lettering. At the latest moment the silk-

screen place would guarantee us, Heather took the up-to-the-minute order list off John's information spread sheet, with the sizes and numbers of shirts and bags, counted up the teams for laundry bags, and set the silk screeners in motion. They managed to come through on Monday rather than Wednesday, which was a good thing because the sorting party took longer than we thought it would. We sorted by team, affixed buttons to shirts to avoid size confusion, and stuffed the team's laundry bag. We combined this with bottling, finishing the buttons, and labelling homebrew at Casey and Bill's, and it took a long evening on Monday night. This was the first full-crew corvee.

- **Buttons** I rented the machine for \$15 from an enterprising 12 year old I know, and made a deal with him to buy blanks in bulk and sell him the surplus at cost. We upped the rent to \$20 when we found out what a nifty machine it was. Button blanks cost \$54 dollars for 500 blanks. The actual manufacturing took 2 and some-odd people equivalents a day and a half, at a small group corvee on Sunday, and at the Monday corvee at Casey and Bill's. Buttons without a shirt or bag to affix to were included in the team's laundry bag in an envelope. We then cured the defects and omissions by setting up the button machine at the camp, and setting out a sign up for people to register any button problems. The buttons were the passport to the Saturday lunch buffet. So far as we know, this worked OK.

- **Transport - Buses** Frances canvassed the local bus companies for prices; Dotty made the arrangements with the Verona School District, which came in low bid, and seemed adequately flexible. John arranged for the camp's bus with the camp manager. The shuttle on Sunday worked less well than planned, because it was so cold and windy we changed the plan on Sunday morning. Instead of half the group eating at the destination, we just staggered eating at the camp making the change by posted notices on colored paper and a bit of personal contact with

responsible guests. The only hitch with the buses was the recurring problem of not carrying kids under 5 which made a problem for the parents. Denise Kania provided the kernel of a parents' cooperative transport to town. We provided maps.

- **Transportation to and from** Dotty took the information from John's information spread sheet and created pickup and departure schedules. She and Don have small station wagons and carried what they could. Mike has a van, and carried more. He also put up a group from Colorado on Friday night that came in later than would be reasonable to transport, and brought them to the first stand on Saturday. We also benefitted from some carrying by our friend Jean.

- **Beer** Joseph got 4 half barrels, 2 special and 1 Maibock from Capitol Brewery in Middleton, and 1 Gray's Oatmeal Stout from Janesville and a ¼ barrel of Sprechers' root beer from Milwaukee through Woodmans', a local discount liquor store/grocery. We could have used another ¼ barrel of root beer. Taps came free with the Capitol beer, and were rented from Woodmans'. The barrels to put them in were scrounged, mostly from John's work, along with an extra tap, and also clean muck buckets from Joseph and Barbara's farm. Ice, after the initial dose from Woodmans', came from a convenience store in Dodgeville, and it got very pricey when the fishermen hit the place big time for the holiday and ran it out. Some of our beer was cooled with what was reputed to be pure glacial ice, and it cost as if they had flown it in from Everest. The group also put away somewhere between 10 and 12 12-packs of springwater (La Croix,) and 4 gallons of lemonade. There were about 6 gallons of beer left over, and our take is that they wouldn't have been left if the weather had been warmer.

- **Food** Patricia did the ordering and conveyed all the special needs to the Bethel cook, Carol. Patricia also bought nourishing snacks, (bread, cheese, fruit, peanut butter, etc.) to keep replenishing a side table with, so that munchies were available at all times. Stuff came, stuff

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went. This was the one job that actually had to deal with flak, by its nature. People always complain about food no matter what. The one actual shortfall was Saturday dinner, which occurred because the cooks really didn't understand what Patricia meant by adults who eat like teenagers. Also, a number of people were very late to the meal, and other people looked at the empty line and decided to take seconds, since there was food and no visible people. When the people became visible, they were very cranky, and Patricia had to go buy some more food. This was the most painful incident we know of. (The only other painful incident was having to clean the barn for the contra dance...people have varying dust tolerance thresholds.)

- **Announcements** We avoided almost all of them by buying big squeaky pens and dayglo paper in various colors and I posted all the information I knew on the dining room and bathhouse walls. This system was supplemented with individual oral news-passing to responsible guests, and seemed to work fine. Even the change in shuttle plans on Sunday was handled this way.
- **Outcome** It was confirmed at the decompression-and-drink-up-the-leftover-beer party that no Oak Apple had expressed anything but love and admiration for every other Oak Apple and helpful friend, and we were all amazed at the cooperation we got from the guests. They were wonderful....a whole ale, and not a cross word among the home team. We've known teams to break up over hosting an ale, on occasion. Anyhow, we had a good time, and we have gotten good reviews so far, so I am setting down our experience in the hope it may give future hosts some encouragement. It wasn't so bad at all.