Thoughts on registration from previous ale committees:

St. Louis (1986) - Use a registration form that you can put directly into a binder that will serve as the registration book. Do not transfer all of the information off of the forms into a computer - this requires at least a double handling of a lot of material at a point when your time is at a premium. Design the form to allow you to tabulate from it the specific information you need (e.g. # of t-shirts and sizes) and to enter any at a later date (e.g. has this person paid? Arrived? etc.). Keep it simple or it will scare people into not filling it out at all; have your team fill out the form themselves before you mail it. If you would like to work up a directory of participants from your registration information, do so as a parallel operation, secondary to your registration efforts.

   Fill out the buttons by hand as the registration forms arrive. Make sleeping arrangements for yourselves that allow you to be at the camp early and rested.

Madison (1987) - Registration: Changes - make sure that all changes, money collected and money disbursed are documented. Devise forms and train people to use them. If it is all in a computer, make sure that you have an operator with no other commitments for most of the ale! Deadline - set it far enough before the ale to ensure that you can buy-book number dependent things (buses, t-shirts, . . . ). Mailing - get the registration out early so that people have a chance to reply. Ours was delayed and people don't take a deadline seriously if they don't get the mailing early. Teams need at least two weeks from receiving the mailing to reply. Surcharge - encourage people to act early by charging more for late payment or registration and refunding less for cancellation (no charge for direct replacements). $5 would have been realistic for the 1987 ale to cover the expenses.

   Lists of things for registration committee: site map; produce buttons; get and sell t-shirts; coordinate design; check in participants; set up bulletin boards and on-site communication (messages, official info); sleeping arrangements; lost and found; on-site amenities (crutches, first aid); registration paperwork; coordinate travel; designate and staff contact phone. (Beth's note: some of these are designated tasks for other committees for 1990).

Ann Arbor (1988) - It might be useful to know that 40% of the 1988 attendees were willing to pay extra for premium accommodations, 10% preferred to sleep in tents, and the rest seemed content with the one-room cabins. Warning, count beds yourself before signing a contract; our camp actually had 10% fewer beds than we were led to believe.

   The idea of a late fee (which we used) was suggested by Oak Apple (1987) and they were right, it kept the number of late registrations very manageable (about 15 people). Asking the teams to total their own numbers and dollars did help. Mail early!! And give deadlines.

   There were different views of what registration should be like at the campsite on Friday. One view saw registration as a small reception/party area with people getting out of their cars and checking-in. They would have been given their t-shirts, buttons, maps, cabin/parking directions and generally welcomed. The plan we went with had check-in set up like a drive-through window. As you drove in, we checked your name off a list and sent you off to your cabin with a map. I preferred the plan we used because it reduced bottlenecks and got you settled the fastest, and the dining hall was a good place to hand out t-shirts and buttons and start partying!

   We had at least a dozen people who wanted to participate for only a

Registration (continued):


fraction of the weekend, from one day to only the dance Saturday night.
We improvised a schedule of suggested fees/donations to allow these
people to pay their share.

Colorado (1989) - One idea of ours that worked was to put the buttons
on the t-shirts beforehand, and then bag them together by team.  It
means one person can do most of the registration at the camp.  Further-
more, it is one more thing that can be done beforehand, rather than
at the camp.
    We used Ann Arbor's registration form, which we liked as it let
responding teams do most of the work of adding the figures up.  However,
its downside is that one can not make up an ale address book from it.
    Telephone Calls:  if you give out a telephone number, give out the
hours you can be reached.  This avoids getting woken up at 7:00 a.m.
Conversely, when someone calls, and wants an answer, get them to leave
hours as well.  It avoids playing telephone tag all the time.
    Get copies of everything to everyone.  When our registrar was delayed
getting to camp, we had no one there.  All of the housing and registration
materials were with the registrar, so even when we got some hosts to the
camp, they had no information.


Beth's thoughts on registration for 1990:

Make it so that it is easy in all ways - for teams filling in forms,
for you in getting information from the forms to whomever needs it,
and especially for how registration at the campsight is actually done.
We want to strive to prevent attendees arriving and being greeted by
a stressed out person!

I've attached copies of registration forms from previous years.  The
idea of just xeroxing the form and including it with a package of
t-shirts, or whatever else, is a good one.  It makes it very clear
who's at fault if there are any mistakes.  You get what you asked for.

We'll do a tour of the camp at some time in the future, so you can get
an idea of the lay of the land.  This will have bearing on how to set
up registration at the camp.  We might (given the site) want to do a
drive-in window check-in and have t-shirts, buttons, etc., in the
dining hall.  This will make more sense when you've seen the site.