

# Midwest Morris Ale

ATTENTION K-MART SHOPPERS!

## SIXTH ANNUAL MIDWEST MORRIS ALE

Friday through Monday

MAY 23, 24, 25 & 26, 1986

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

January 10, 1986

Dear Folks:

The Capering Roisters of St. Louis bring you greetings and best wishes for the New Year, and invite your attendance at the Sixth Annual Midwest Morris Ale, open to all teams, individuals and friends of the Morris.

Arrangements made to date: We have secured excellent camping facilities, with space indoors for over 200 and plenty of room for tents, some facilities for those needing privacy (such as parents with young children), an enormous dining room and kitchen, and covered spaces for workshops and other activities. We have also secured the necessary permits for a wide variety of tours in the St. Louis area, dancing in or at the St. Louis Art Museum, Missouri Botanical Garden, The St. Louis Arch, Union Station, St. Louis Zoo, Central West End Streets & Pubs, Laclede's Landing, Mississippi Overlook Stage, and several Gazebo & Pavilion Picnic and Dance Sites. We are working out plans with the Childgrove Country Dancers so that those who intensely desire to visit the Kimmswick Country Dance Weekend may do so. Most of our dance sites offer protection from rain and are in pleasant surroundings where audiences may be expected.

In order to keep costs within reason and still provide the amenities to which we have grown accustomed, we are applying to two public bodies for Financial Support.

We need, for this purpose, a statement of whether you or your team may attend. Note, please, MAY, not will. This is not a commitment on your part. If you are certain that you are not coming to St. Louis, please say so. Of course, you can change your mind on that, but please let us know.

We also want a rough estimate of the number of people who you think may attend. This can be the number of people on your team. If you have the ability to get a more accurate estimate today, when you receive this, or tomorrow at the latest, fine. However, we need this information right now, yesterday, so we respectfully request that you do some arithmetic and fill out the enclosed post card and mail it immediately, without further ado. Do not wait until your next team practice. Do it now! Thanks. The more people who may come, the more money we ask for.



For all we know, you may not be the correct person to have sent this to, in respect of whatever team it is that you belong to, if any. The names and addresses we have are at best a year old, although we have done some checking. Please see that this is given to the person you think is the correct recipient, if you feel you aren't. On the enclosed post card we are asking for the correct name, address and telephone number of two people on your team with whom we can communicate over the next five months, just in case.

Interest has already been expressed by two of the four known elementary school teams in the U.S., and by three garland teams. While emphasis at the Ale has traditionally been on the Cotswold Morris, we welcome other Morris traditions, and will make every effort to provide favorable performance conditions for all, and workshops for those requesting them. We would like to see some longsword, rapper, Northwest, and clog dancing here. And of course we welcome your friends and relations as well.

We welcome your comments, suggestions, requests, complaints and correspondence.

If you know of anyone or any team, or any miscellaneous agglomeration of folks that is not on or associated with the persons and teams on the accompanying list, please let us know, and feel free to make a copy of this letter for them as well. But also let us know about them, even if they are not interested. We need to have a more up-to-date list for the 1987 Ale as well.

Respectfully submitted,

Your Humble & Obedient Servants,

THE CAPERING ROISTERS

By

John B. Shewmaker, Squire

LeeLee Long, Bagman

Daniel O'Halloran, Reinforced Concrete

Address: Capering Roisters  
c/o John B. Shewmaker  
4907 Pershing Place  
St. Louis, Missouri 63108

Telephones: John Shewmaker: (314) 367-9017 (home: there's an answering machine); (314) 367-9079 (home: no answering machine); (314) 725-6920 (work). Dan O'Halloran: (314) 821-2254.

Enclosures

Some teams have Refrigerators: we have Reinforced Concrete.



POSTSCRIPT - a variety of matters -

The attached letter is being sent to the following list, at the addresses shown. In a couple of cases, the letter is being sent mainly for information, with no expectation that the teams with which the addressees are affiliated will appear at the Midwest Ale; we would be glad to be proven wrong in this assumption. In a couple of other cases the teams in question may not exist except as remnants. Remnants are welcome. A copy of this letter is being hand-delivered also to Katy Early at her new address (somewhere in Chicago), and a copy is being sent to Judy Goldsmith, in Madison.

The camp we have rented is Camp Don Bosco, a Catholic Youth Conference Camp, thirty miles south of the center of St. Louis in Jefferson County, adjacent to Hillsboro, the county seat (pop. 1,500) of Jefferson County. This is not the camp that we showed to Dave Seibert last July 4, but the one seen recently by Nancy Keogel of the Maroon Bells and John Bealle of the Bloomington Quarry Morris. They saw it at night (separately, we should add), when most of you will first see it, and agreed that it was suitable.

We will have liability insurance under the blanket policy covering all Archdiocesan events, and our understanding is that this insurance will cover the Ale wherever we are, not just at camp. The blanket policy has nothing to do with blankets.

The Capering Roisters is acting under the guise of a Missouri not-for-profit corporation called "The Media School, Inc." This corporation does not run a school, but except when dancing, lives a quiet existence in a desk drawer.

The camp is going to charge us \$5 per person per night for anyone sleeping on its cots - the kind of cots with which we are all too familiar. On the other hand, it will charge only \$2 per night per person for anyone in a tent. We are charged with the responsibility (as things now stand) of ascertaining who slept where and for how long. This has the advantage (for us) of not having to put up lots of money before the Ale (we have \$50 on deposit), and helps with cash flow. It has the further advantage of converting what has been a fixed cost heretofore into a variable cost. The disadvantage is that it introduces the need for some extra bookkeeping, and will put on everyone the responsibility to be honest about what accommodations they are actually using, especially as we intend to pass most if not all of the savings on to those who use tents. (School teams, which presumably are without tents, may not be able to afford cabins at the stated price, and will probably require a subsidy.)

The tent sites are a large lawn (or two), and some sites in the woods. Nothing involves a long walk, and almost all the paths are paved with gravel. We heartily recommend tenting, for cost, privacy and comfort. There are, however, enough beds to house the entire Ale indoors, if need be.



The Capering Roisters have been volunteered by their squire into making a new set of bells to belong to CDSS for use at Pinewoods (CDSS has provided the bells); these will be available in St. Louis for use by anyone (such as a Garland team) who wishes to participate in massed dances but is suffering for the lack of bells. The squire may be seeking to relocate after the Ale.

We will get out a list of massed dances as soon as possible: Ed Stern has kindly provided a list of what has been done in other years, and when, and the results of last year's formal survey. We conducted an informal poll of a few people last summer at English week at Pinewoods. There will be few new dances. If anyone has a particular favorite, or a suggestion, please write us right away; to the same effect if you have a particular antipathy to something.

We would like to add the Bidford dance Abraham Brown, and believe that enough of the Midwest was represented in Jim Morrison's Bidford class to make a start on this single-step dance, which has the only disadvantage of being somewhat tiring if you do all the figures. The remedy is to not do all the figures, but to do the ones which are peculiar to Bidford. The "spiral" figure has interesting possibilities in a massed dance. We have a videotape of this dance from the class and Jim's notes to share. We want to get the massed dance list prepared early for those teams which have not participated in the Ale before.

St. Louis has emerged in the past few years as a major center for air travel: Ozark Airlines has its home office here and its principal hub; TWA has one of its two principal hubs here (the other being New York City). St. Louis is served by a bewildering variety of airlines. Note especially: Peoples Air now flies to St. Louis. Because of all of this, air travel to St. Louis is competitively priced. Check more than one airline if you plan to fly, and explore the various discount packages. Lambert Field here has a good safety record.

A number of folks have expressed interest in attending the Kimmswick Country Dance weekend, which will be taking place about eight miles away through the woods. This is a crowded event, with an already inadequate dance floor, and the persons responsible for that event have expressed reservations about being innundated by Morris dancers on Saturday night. Kimmswick will levy its own charges for those attending it.

We intend to schedule a variety of things for people to do on Saturday night so that not everyone will be tempted to head off to Kimmswick. Among the real possibilities is the use of the Jefferson College heated swimming pool after dinner. We will, of course, include the Kimmswick event on one or more Saturday and possibly Sunday performance tours. More on this later. Sunday night we will have our own Contradance, and unless a simply superb wood floor should be found in the vicinity, we will stay at camp for it, using the large dining hall.



The formal policy of Camp Don Bosco is that no alcohol is permitted. Our written contract is consistent with that policy. Our verbal understanding with the camp director, Mr. Kevin McInnis (who lives on the grounds), is that beer and wine will be permitted, with discretion to be observed, as, for example, to avoid glass bottles which might be broken, and no unseemly displays of egregiously awful behaviour attributable to alcohol poisoning. I assured him that the character and reputation of the dancers were such that he could rest easy, especially as we may have school-aged children among us. Everyone I have spoken with on the subject agrees that my assurances to Mr. McInnis are well-founded. If anyone proposes to use the occasion to get absolutely wasted, we reserve the right to exile him or her to a suitable domain - perhaps the pond at the end of the horse pasture.

There is plenty of space, however, for middle-of-the-night partying and late-night singing, without disturbing anyone.

The possibility of having the oft-postponed workshop on home brewing is a reality - there is a local purveyor of supplies for that purpose who is willing to lead a workshop. It would doubtless be appropriate for those already versed in the art to have some product to sample and taste - an allowable exception to the request to avoid glass containers. Note, we express NO OPINION as to the lawfulness of transporting homebrew across state lines for personal use.

That the Federal law allows the production of beer and wine for family consumption under certain circumstances is undeniable; but this does not answer other questions, such as the state laws concerning manufacture or any laws affecting importation to or transportation through another state. If you do not have a well-researched, written legal opinion offering you some advice (keeping in mind that such advice offers much solace and comfort to persons locked up by people of a differing legal opinion - it is always well to have something on hand to read), the better part of valor may be to leave the samples at home. However, if it can be brought here, a formal Tasting in the context of a brewing workshop would be in order. Mr. Eric Stein, our own favored Domestic Brewer, may have some samples available for tasting.

We will also have plenty of non-alcoholic things to drink.

There has already been a request made for a garland dance workshop. We would like to know the extent of such interest, as a roofed area might be needed larger than that available at camp. We are willing to explore having such a Sunday morning workshop after breakfast but not at the camp if there is sufficient demand. The camp has three large roofed structures suitable for workshops (including the dining room), but nothing the size of a large gymnasium.

Tour schedules for Saturday, May 24, will be made up sufficiently



far in advance of the Ale that we can send a copy to anyone, together with maps, who cannot reach camp by automobile before the tours actually start. That way, those who are unobtainably devoid (as the Dean once put it), can catch up with a tour in progress. We will accomodate anyone who must fly in on Saturday morning. The home of John B. Shewmaker is but a few minutes drive from the majority of the dance sites in the City of St. Louis, and will serve as an informal headquarters if needed while we are in the City.

Regarding finances: we are making every effort to keep costs to participants down, and lower than 1985 Ale, where the cost was \$29 a person. The question we are seeking the answer to, namely how many participants we might expect, should be answered without regard to the cost of the Ale; you should assume for present purposes that we do a good job of keeping the cost to participants at the \$20 to \$25 level, if not lower.

We have already secured two dance sites that are willing to contribute money: the Missouri Botanical Garden and the newly renovated St. Louis Union Station (no longer a train station). We have received public money before for workshops, and are optimistic about getting some help for the Ale: please respond soon with your best guess of how many to expect. Note, please, that the postcard also asks you to estimate the number of non-dancers we might expect (this refers to spouses, friends and children. Musicians should be included among the dancers for this purpose).

There is nothing binding about these numbers: we are merely trying to prepare reasonably accurate proposals for the Missouri Arts Council and the new Regional Cultural and Arts Development Commission, which have funded us in the past.

BUT

PLEASE

NOTE: Neither of these funding agencies is going to announce any contract award before MAY 1, 1986, so that we will not know the final actual charge for the Ale until that date (although we may be given some informal, non-binding information in advance). People may have to make some decisions (such as whether to get a supersaver airplane ticket) on the basis of whatever fee we announce in advance of that date, with the hope that the amount will be thereafter reduced. That is, we may announce a registration fee of some amount in March or April, based on costs to us (net of any certain income), which we hope will be subsequently lowered by a favorable outcome on our funding requests.

If anybody knows how to find people on the Lexington and Louisville teams, we would appreciate knowing their current addresses, so that we may mail a copy of this letter to them.