

## Thoughts on communications from previous ale committees:

Ann Arbor (1983) - Be sure that letters are written in clear, straightforward prose. Have the letters reviewed before they are sent out, because what's obvious to the writer is not always obvious to the reader. Remember also that the letters will be read by only one person on each team, so most of the people who show up at the ale will have no idea what you said in them.

In addition to having maps of the area, the schedule, and emergency information posted, try to post a list of expected teams, their home bases, and expected attendance. The first question almost everyone asks is, "Who's coming?"

St. Louis (1986) - Verbosity in mailings is counterproductive; generate enthusiasm by presenting the general picture of your ale - people trust you to attend to the minutiae. Strive to limit cuteness and inside jokes.

Have someone manning a phone all day Friday, at least, to coordinate everyone as they run the myriad of errands.

Madison (1987) - List of things to be included in early spring mailing: registration form; update site into; dietary requirements; child care (co-op or paid? numbers?); bed, bunk, or tent?; t-shirts? souvenir?; mass dances; schedule; climate info; travel plans?

List of things to be included in confirmation of registration and information packet: confirmation (sleeping space, food, child care, t-shirts, fees); map and directions; recap of mass dances; detailed schedule; recommended gear; designated travel person; request for notification of travel plans.

Other things listed: publish participant list; publish internal memos; provide site(emergency) contacts - address and phone.

Colorado (1989) - We had people calling up to the night before to give flight information, which plays havoc with schedules.

Flights came in from a half-hour early to 2 hours late. What this meant was that a few flights did not get met at the gate. Thus, in the future, it might be wise to state in the letter a landmark in the airport as a fallback point.

One alternative that did work was to have a constantly manned phone at a Morris central. In that way, anyone who is really lost can get hold of someone. Plus, persons at the airport can pass messages back and forth about someone who had changed flights. And when all else fails, you can do what we did and page Mr. Morris Dancer.

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, get them to leave hours as well. It avoids playing telephone tag all the time.

Get copies of everything to everyone. (In their case, this was registration information that didn't arrive at the campsite when the registrar was delayed).

Beth's comments for 1990:

Communications are extremely important. Better to err on letting people know too much than too little - at the campsite. The early letters don't reach everyone, but when they arrive, they want to know (or be able to find out with a minimum of trouble) how to find out all kinds of details and information on everything!