

ALFA ROADRUNNERS GUIDE FOR WAGON MASTERS And ASSISTANT WAGON MASTERS Revised: June 1, 2014

This was prepared to aid membership/hosts in planning and running a chapter rally. One of the first things to remember is that **you are not attempting to “out do” any past rallies**, but to add your personality and originality to your own rally. This idea has been very successful and thus creates a lot of new and different experiences for our members.

Keep in mind that our membership and future members come in all ages and sizes and, therefore, plans should be made accordingly. No matter what you plan, there will be one or two individuals who will not be pleased. You must recognize this and not let them ruin the rally for you and everyone else.

When you decide to become a rally Wagon Master you will find the experience very rewarding. In the process, you will have many pleasurable experiences and the membership will enjoy themselves.

PLANNING A RALLY You have approached the Board or they have approached you with a site and a date in mind for a future chapter rally.

Wagon Master (WM) Responsibilities:

The WM will have jurisdiction over the chapter rally. The WM should visit the potential site and/or help in its selection.

One of the first things is locating a suitable site. A rally site may be a campground, a state or local park, an open field, or even a shopping center parking lot. A suitable site depends on the type of rally you are planning and the number of coaches you expect as well as the time of the year. You should try to provide a level area approximately 20' x 60' for coaches to park. If it is a campground you should check to be sure there are sufficient spaces of adequate size. You should visually check the facility yourself.

Ask about electrical capacities to handle our needs. Watch also for low hanging wires and trees as well as tight turns for incoming coaches and tow cars. The parking area should be viewed, with attention given to discovering potential ground hazards, grass cutting needed, and garbage disposal. Check at fairgrounds to see that livestock areas are cleaned before parking coaches next to them. Observing and discussing these problems to the campground management during your advance visit will bring to attention your expectation for problems to be resolved prior to the rally.

There should be a covered place for meetings and social events (breakfast, social hours, etc), and if it is in the cooler part of the year, it might be enclosed and heated.

Next is to confirm the site (availability) for the rally dates desired and make the necessary reservations. If there is a special event scheduled for the area during the desired dates, it may be necessary to reserve as much as a year in advance.

Now that a site has been obtained, thought must be given to whether you wish to have a specific theme for the rally so that expenses can be planned. The specific theme may be decided before the site is obtained. This may be the case when the rally is planned around a local event.

Find Co-Hosts or Assistant Wagon Masters (AsstWM)

The next task is to find Co-WM or AsstWM for the rally. They will assist in parking, registration, food, etc. If you work as a team, each handling different responsibilities, the effort will be minimal and fun.

Draft Agenda The next step is to draft a rough agenda of the rally to incorporate applicable coffee times, social hours, food, etc. At this point in time, you must decide on what type of food you are going to have, if any, such as “pot-luck”, “themed pot-luck”, dine out, catered, etc. Some ideas in this area are crab feasts, shrimp or crawfish boils, traditional picnics, pig roasts, Italian, Mexican, etc.

Keep the rally light, moving and with enough variety to make members want to return to future campouts. There is no set rule on time of activities – whatever you think will work best should be your guide.

Estimate Costs As soon as you have formalized plans for what the rally is going to include, a package must be put together of “X” amount of dollars for rally fee and “X” amount of dollars for camping per evening.

Registration Limitations The amount of space available at a particular rally site may require registration deadlines and limitations on the number of coaches. Be prepared to notify senders of late-arriving registrations that space and/or electric availability has been exceeded. This may be done by direct mail, phone or inclusion of an article in the newsletter. In case an overflow area is unavailable, you may need to return forms and monies sent.

The WM or designee receiving registrations should keep a tally form listing the members in the sequence of forms received. Putting the list into an alphabetical list will enable your registration people to rapidly check in each coach as it arrives.

Notify Editor Once this is accomplished, an e-mail should be written to the Newsletter Editor and should incorporate an article about the rally to appear in the newsletter. This article should include a brief summary of the rally – what is being done for excitement, where it is going to be held, earliest date of arrival, even though a nightly charge may be added for early arrivals, what are the plans for food, and what should the membership bring to the rally, such as tables, chairs, or if you plan to furnish any of the items such as plates, silverware, tables, etc. Most important of all, give explicit directions on how to get to the rally site.

The sooner the article is sent to the Chapter Newsletter Editor the better. This allows the Newsletter Editor to plan future newsletters based on the material available. Please note that fees must be kept as low as possible, yet not scrimping so as to hurt the success of the rally. LOTS OF ENJOYMENT CAN BE HAD AT A LOW PRICE. Attached to the article should be a copy of your registration form.

The pre-rally write-up should include the following information

1. Registration form

2. Name and concise directions to the rally site
3. Names of the Rally WM/AsstWM
4. Name/Address of the person registration form and money
5. Cost of the rally, with and without food
6. Cost of an extra person (grandchildren and visitors who are not adult chapter members pay an extra charge. Children under 16 of a chapter in parent's coach are free (except for catered/outside meals)
7. The dates and length of the rally
8. Emergency contact phone number for the campground and/or local police
9. Planned highlights or local points of interest
10. What, if anything, you are asking registrants to bring
11. The registration deadline
12. The name and address, email and contact phone of the registrant
13. The cost of stay over camping, if available
14. Ascertain which services are available (such as electricity, sewer, water) and include this information in publication

Keep Track of Expenses Some rallies require money to be paid in advance. If advance money is required, a request should be made to the chapter's executive board. It is mandatory to keep all receipts and to keep track of your out of pocket expenses. At the close of the rally, deduct these and all other costs from the money taken in and submit this information of your rally report. No costs pertaining to a rally should come out of the WM's pocket.

Refund Requests The rejection or acceptance of requests for refund is to be based on whether a cost is incurred by the Chapter. Generally, refunds for rally and camping fees plus food are given if notification is received prior to the rally and food ordering adjustments can be made.

Refunds for rally registrants who may miss a catered meal are not given.

Left Over Items The Chapter may have some consumable items in its possession from previous rallies. Request a list of these approximately two or three weeks before the rally date. Once this is accomplished, you are well on your way to another fine rally.

Schedule of Events Next, a schedule of events must be compiled; if possible have a copy for each coach so everyone knows when and where coffee, social hours, playtime, meetings, meals, activities, etc. are to be conducted. One way of accomplishing this is to include it in the article to the Newsletter Editor or to send to registrants via e-mail. Coordinate with the Chapter President when, where and if meetings are to be held.

Involving Newcomers WM have the additional responsibility during a Chapter Rally for greeting guests and first timers and getting them involved in rally activities. This task can be assigned to AsstWMs or another rally participant.

ON SITE

Identify Host Coaches If possible, you should be the first to arrive at the site of your rally. Your coach should be immediately visible for arriving coaches. It is important that your coach be marked in such a way that the membership can find it easily and that your co-hosts are parked close to you so that you can locate them when needed. Keep in mind that you, as WM, are only one person and, therefore, cannot do everything by yourself; move tables, decorate,

make morning coffee, etc. So, if you see something which should be done, ask a member if he/she could do it for you; most members will be happy to help you.

Parking Guidance An area should be set aside as close to activities and buildings to accommodate members with disabilities. WM/AsstWM coaches should be parked so as to be visible by arriving coaches and close to the registration table, covered areas and bulletin board. All parking is to be done by Chapter designated parkers (for larger rallies).

Posting Road Signs Road signs should be posted at strategic locations and turns leading to the rally site, when possible. You are encouraged to map your sign placements so ALL signs can be picked up at the conclusion of the rally.

Wagon Master Early Arrival You or your designees usually arrive prior to the rally day (sometimes as much as 2 days early). This is to take care of things as sign locating, confirming all contracts and necessary registrants from parking in the wrong places. Your advance planning will pay off in attendee enjoyment and a problem-free experience.

P.A. System Determine whether a P.A. system will be needed and available for use at rally.

Security The need to plan for the nighttime security of campers will vary according to the type, layout, and location of your rally ground. Requesting campground surveillance and/or area police surveillance should be considered.

Rally Clean-up When the rally ends, WM/AsstWM are responsible for ensuring the site is properly cleaned up.

FOOD

Coffee Is usually provided every morning of the rally except for arrival day. This can be accompanied by donuts and/or fruit, etc. Another option would be that Rally provides the coffee and participants provide the “**Ands**” which can be anything: toast, rolls, oatmeal, etc.

Breakfast Is it going to be “on your own”, community, or travel to a local restaurant? A community or pot-luck breakfast encourages members to get together and socialize. It can be a lot of work and is not for everyone but if everyone pitches in, it is a lot of fun. Of course, if you have scheduled coffee “Ands”, breakfast is taken care of.

Another option is “breakfast in a bag” omlettes. Participants can bring their own eggs and ingredients to share (bacon, peppers, cheese, sausage, onions, mushrooms, etc.) Remember you need quart sized freezer bags for this and they shouldn't be overfilled. Omlettes are cooked in large kettles of boiling water.

Social Hours You must decide, if you plan to have this as part of the rally, how many days and when? An event that has been tried and gone over well is to have “Chip & Dip” hour at noon to suffice for lunch rather than just before the dinner hour.

Lunch A community lunch can be a wonderful way to get everyone together. At one rally the hosts provided tow six foot submarine rolls, each coach was requested to bring specific items. After much fun and effort, two sandwiches were completed for all to eat.

Dinner How many days will be planned dinners?

Should there be a “Welcome Dinner”? Does it have to be prepared/provided by WM or could it be a pot-luck?

Should there be a “Sheriff’s Dinner”? If so, WM or AsstWM should designate the “Sheriff” who quietly collects violations during the rally to be shared with members at this dinner. All fines are usually donated to a local charity of choice of WM/AsstWM.

Is it going to be pot-luck, themed pot-luck, at a local restaurant or on your own? At a themed pot-luck members must bring a dish that meets the theme; i.e., Italian, Polish, etc. When you decide what kind of even you are going to have, make sure you publish your “schedule of events” and what the members are to bring, chairs, silverware, dishes, etc. If you plan to furnish any of these items, it should be noted so that members can plan accordingly.

Entertainment You shouldn’t feel you must provide entertainment for the members. But you should try to schedule things that will cause people to mix and mingle. This can be accomplished in several ways. The “Chip and Dip” social around noon is one way. A social/entertainment hour before/after dinner is another. Guessing games, card games and other games encourage people to mix and mingle. Often one or more members who enjoy these activities will coordinate if asked to assist.

Free Time Should free time or evenings be scheduled?

ESSENTIAL FINAL DETAILS

Now that you have hosted a successful Chapter Rally, there are a few details remaining to be performed

1. Was the site left in as good or better condition than when you arrived?
2. Write a brief summary of the rally and forward to the Newsletter Editor and President
3. Write thank you letters to campground staff, vendors, suppliers and other applicable people.
4. Last, but not least, a financial report must be prepared and sent to the President. This should be completed as soon as possible, preferably within two weeks.

Fiscal Responsibility

When conducting a Chapter rally, your efforts should be directed to incur neither a substantial profit nor a major loss of Chapter monies. You are expected to maintain records of all income and expenditures.

Money Handling

Registration forms and checks are to be made out to the Chapter and sent to the person designated by the WM to handle registration. An advance may be requested from the WM and/or the registration money received can be used for the purchase of rally supplies and services.

Rally Accounting

WM are expected to request reimbursement for all reasonable costs necessarily associated with putting on the rally. This includes phone calls and postal charges. You are not expected to subsidize the rally.

All money received and expended must be accounted for and documented. Remember to instruct any committee members to give you all their bills and receipts as well. A form will be available on the Alfa Roadrunners website: www.alfaroadrunners.net to assist in the

accounting. Attach receipts to a copy of the form and send to the WM. All expenses should be submitted to the WM no later than three (3) weeks after the rally.

The better planned rallies are the most successful rallies.

ADVANCE PLANNING IS A MUST
REMEMBER, YOUR OFFICERS ARE AVAILABLE TO AID YOU
IN PLANNING A SUCCESSFUL RALLY,
ASK FOR OUR HELP!