



The Idea Exchange For Chapter Officers

This leaflet contains thought starters on a great variety of subjects. They are ideas, plans, stunts, experiments, experiences, and Sam-pleasers. There is no author or originator. Through many years of RV activities and campouts, leaders of *Good Sam* Chapters tried and tested dozens of things and ways to make RV life a good life. They passed along to other leaders the "what's good" and the "what's not so good" for the typical *Good Sam* Club Chapter. It was inevitable that their lore be shared.

**This letter was edited and reprinted in part with the express permission of
Bob Ellison, former Texas State Director.**

THE IDEA EXCHANGE

PLAN AHEAD

Well thought out plans for your Chapter are as important for its success as flight plans and ample fuel are to an airliner. Plans are fun to conceive; interest and loyalty increase with participation by all your members. It is smart leadership to assign some part of the plan to each member. Every good general has contingency plans to be used when some happening prevents execution of the original plan.

FREEBIES

Don't look that word up in your dictionary. However, such things do exist. Yes, some things are free. Travel films with sound can be borrowed from airlines, cruise lines, the State (parks, wildlife, etc.), embassies of foreign countries and some manufacturers. Your local libraries can help. Try a free film or two when the weather doesn't cooperate. Let a one-man committee do the film chore.

EVERY TOWN IS PROUD

Because they differ in so many ways, all towns can be interesting. Those proud Chambers of Commerce are ready to "show and tell" and a caravan to visit the area with a Chamber of Commerce guide could probably be arranged.

RECRUITING

Even the best of Chapters loses members for one reason or more. Replacements can be recruited. The two best sources are the RV dealers and your own friendly "Howdy Sam" to all RV owners who display a smiling decal. All Chapter leaders agree that a prospect should be a guest at a rally before a Chapter decides to make him/her a member. Try making a poster about your Chapter for the RV dealers' front window.

HOW BIG IS BIG ENOUGH?

There is no perfect answer, but there are ways to find an answer that suits your Chapter. Let's consider some variables that are important. Many attractive rally sites may not be able to accommodate a Chapter with more than 20 vehicles. Fewer than eight means you'll soon be tired of hearing the same old stories, jokes, and gripes. That's when more members relieve a tense situation. When being a Chapter member ceases to be fun, it is time for "new blood" to enliven the scene. By the way, picture yourself at a three-vehicle rally in the rain! That's when it is time to appoint a membership team.

PHOOEY ON ONE MAN SHOWS

In a small Chapter, give **EVERYONE** a responsibility. Participation is wonderful; dictatorship isn't. Somehow, it's difficult to picture how a dictator could ever practice the **Good Sam** philosophy. There's one thing worse than a dictator; it's a grumpy dictator!

WHEN DUES SEEM HIGH

There are many sources of income for the Chapter Treasury: small fines for this and that, a small rally fee, "finders' fees" from a local dealer because you helped him make a sale, sale of collected paper, aluminum cans, etc. But, don't overlook ways to trim costs; two sheets of legal size paper for your newsletter cost less than three letter-size sheets often used, photocopy your newsletter instead of printing it (when you make fewer than 30 copies), and use both sides of your newsletter pages.

FLAT ON YOUR BACK

Picture a clear night at a campout far enough away from a town that no lights obscure the stars. Then find a soft and grassy spot away from the trees. Lie on your back. Relax and let your eyes adjust on distant stars. It's fun! Recognize the configurations and you may even see a satellite go by.

SOURCE OF "HOW TO"

Uncle Sam maintains an operation in Pueblo, Colorado, which is chock full of potential information! Our government publishes a large collection of informative booklets, a number of which are free and the remainder minimally priced. Write for a list of available publications to: **Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, Colorado 81009**. You'll be pleased to see how many are related to our daily problems of health, happiness, and "how to".

MORE FOR YOUR MONEY

The high price of fuel is easier to live with if you learn the tricks of getting more pleasure out of every RVing mile. Consider these ideas:

- Secondary roads are often more full of scenery and surprises than Interstate highways.
- Lakes and rivers have a habit of being **OFF** the Interstate
- State highways are far more interesting than National or Interstate highways
- Many of the charming and fascinating places that will make excellent "look see" side trips from a rally site are there, with little research.

Write the State Department of Highways in your State for information on the availability of county maps. These maps cover amazing details about places and routes that make travel more of an adventure and scenic delight. You'll be glad you did.

CHAPTER PROPERTY

Large Chapters that have found ways to enlarge their treasury are plentiful, first recruit more members, and then spark a money-raising committee. Soon, there will be enough in the treasury to pay for an all-season party tent with sidewalls for winter use, a portable grill, folding tables, and needed lighting accessories. How about a copier or a P.A. system? The ideas are many!

CAMPFIRE PLEASURES

When the moon creeps over the trees and the stars come out it might be time for a relaxed sing-along around the campfire. All music stores have inexpensive books of old time favorites. It's a rewarding addition to any campout!

WHO TALKS WHEN?

A good President or Chairperson remembers that members get tired of hearing him or her monopolize every meeting. Find ways to encourage ALL members to speak up; it is an easy way to improve their interest in Chapter doings, plans, and growth. Let a meeting last just as long as interest is high. A good leader **LEADS** and **DELEGATES!**

WASONMASTERS

Wagonmaster's have found that they can plan an important role in keeping harmony among Chapter members through assigning parking spaces in a special way:

- Put visitors or prospective members next to their host
- Break up cliques by giving everyone a change of neighbors
- Don't put pop-up tent campers beside a 35' two-bath motor home.

NEWSLETTER CHECK

Airline pilots go through an extensive checklist prior to takeoff. It's a precaution of importance to newsletter writers as well. Try this one:

- Have I spelled names correctly?
- Does the entire letter help the new member?
- Are directions to the next rally foolproof?
- Have I avoided the "letter to Aunt Mary" style of writing?
- Are necessary phone numbers included?
- Has the forthcoming outing been described in a way to make every member eager to attend?
- Did I give praise where deserved?
- Is the punctuation correct or confusing?
- Did I outline the program for the next rally in detail?
- Did I provide needed roster corrections?
- Was there a touch of humor?
- Did I try to make my paste-ups timely as well as neat?

P.S. The next 12 are up to you! 😊

STAG PARTY

No, this is a different type. A sunny Saturday morning when the Chapter is enjoying a campout is a great time for Sams to organize Maintenance Teams for the annual wheel bearing grease job on trailers, testing CBs, re-caulking windows and seams, rotating tires, etc. A novice will be grateful for the help of you old timers!

GOOD SAMPARK MEMBERS

Good Sampark members are just like all Good Sams. When you see something you or your chapter can do, right now, to help that Good Sam Park, do it! It's time well spent. You'll know it when you next visit that park.

CRAFTY CRAFTERS

A Chapter Holiday party had the whole group in gales of laughter at the antics of a puppet duck made by a craft-wise member. Just two feet, a cutout wooden body, springs as legs, and a puppeteer's cross with fine wires and that's it. You can do it. Magazines are loaded with craft ideas. Some chapters have a craft director who teaches "how to" when a Saturday rain changes plans. It's not only the Samanthas who like to make clever items. Make a special craft a Chapter project!

BOREDOM ISN'T NECESSARY

Even RV's don't like being stuck in a rut. When a Chapter plays the same game every night of every rally, it will be long before several members decide to be loners or join a Chapter with members who got "out of the rut". Encourage members to find new games or activities for the group. This helps to keep involvement high and people interested.

A BARGAIN

This headline will be understood by most Samanthas because they see the little racks of booklets every time they go to the grocery store. Next time, look through the title and you'll find several that belong in an RV.

EVERY GOOD SAM CAN BE A BETTER GOOD SAM!