

# *Preparing Your Team for a Rendezvous*

## **Gathering Information**

The first step in getting ready for a rendezvous is to gather information. There are several different types of information you'll need to have. Once you have gathered this together then you can make a plan to prepare for and participate in the rendezvous activity. Here is some of the information you'll need to know to make that plan:

## **When is the rendezvous?**

Rendezvous can be a single day event or can span multiple days. Sometimes they are held during school breaks or summer vacations. You may want to plan an extended camp around the rendezvous. For example, if the rendezvous was to be held on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday during a school break, your team may want to camp Wednesday in an area near the rendezvous site. That way your ready to go and have a minimal distance to travel on Thursday when the events begin.

Once you have the dates make sure that they are marked on your calendars. You may also want to reserve team meeting times prior to the rendezvous for preparation. Also make sure parents, committee and charter organization representatives are aware of the dates so that they can plan on attending with you.

## **Where is the rendezvous?**

Location is an important aspect of the rendezvous. It determines what type of camping gear you'll need. Some areas are in the cool pines, others may be in a more desert climate. This combined with the time of the rendezvous can help you to determine the weather. Do you need to dress warm during the day? How about nights, are they cold? If you make pants for the rendezvous out of Elk hides are they going to be too warm to wear? Is the rendezvous a snow-based outing (we call these Klondike Rendezvous) where heavier jackets or capotes are required? Again knowing this information can help you plan ahead to make things you may need.

## **What activities will there be?**

Each rendezvous should have a syllabus or participant guide available. This guide will explain the rules, procedures and activities planned for the event. A sample syllabus is included in the "Rendezvous Resources" section of this reference book. Planning for a rendezvous usually requires some advanced preparation on the part of your team. For example, if knife and hawk throwing are part of the rendezvous, your team may want to practice ahead of time in your team meetings so that you can score well at the rendezvous.

Some rendezvous have a few events, others have more events than you have time to accomplish. If the rendezvous has tons of events then your team may wish to prioritize which events to go to first and which ones to go to last. There may be some time consuming events such as rappelling which take two hours to complete. Most other events may only take 15 minutes. Therefore if your team elects to do rappelling at the rendezvous you will not be able to do 8 other events you could have done during that same time. These things need to be discussed with your team and choices made before going to the rendezvous. Perhaps in this example case, your team may want

to do rappelling as a team another time when you can do more of it. This would then allow you to focus on other activities at the rendezvous.

### **What is the schedule of events?**

In the syllabus there should be a schedule for the rendezvous. Important things to note are check-in times, activity times, campfires, meetings (cracker barrel for example) or other things. Is there a campsite inspection? If so when is it? Once the full time schedule is understood and you know your teams time table (travel, extended camping, etc), then you can lay out a detailed time table for the entire outing. This detailed time table will help everyone be where they need to be when they should be there.

Some rendezvous have specific events scheduled for certain times. Others have a free-form format where participants can go to any event at any time. While the free-form method gives your team flexibility to stay longer or move on from event to event, the scheduled events mean that your team must be at certain places at certain times. Likewise missing a critical flag ceremony in the morning or turning in scorecards late can be disastrous for your teams overall scoring. All of the time tables, at least in a general format, should be planned prior to your teams leaving for the rendezvous.

### **What do we need to bring?**

Again the reference point for this information should be your syllabus. Do you need to cook for yourselves or are meals provided? Are campfires allowed? Is wood provided or available? Is there a cook-off that you need to plan dishes for? Are tents provided?

These are all good questions. At minimum the Team Captain should have a notebook with all the paperwork in it. This notebook should contain the time table (as described above), the tour permit, permission slips, medical forms, check-in rosters, scoring cards, etc. You'll also want to provide a list of personal items that each person should bring. Again depending upon the environment and climate the list may need to contain cold weather gear. The list may also contain clothing or regalia items you have made as a team such as shirts, pants, capotes, medicine pouches, hats, etc.

### **What is the cost?**

As with most activities there is usually a cost involved. The cost may be a minimal amount to cover activity supplies. It may also include event patches or perhaps the meals. Find out early what the cost is and work within your fund raising guidelines to ensure everyone can go. Funds may also need to be expended for materials in preparation for the rendezvous. These materials may include cloth for clothing, leather, paints, etc. A multi-day event may be considered part of your "long-term" camp and qualify for special funding. Check with your leaders and charter organization to find out what your fund raising plans are.

## ***Sharpen and Learn New Skills***

One of the keys in getting the most from a rendezvous experience is to prepare ahead of time. Those teams who show up ready to rendezvous are far ahead of those who arrive with no understanding of what to expect. This section will cover several areas in which your team can prepare and practice ahead of time for. These things can be done as part of your regular weekly team meetings leading up to the rendezvous. In fact I have seen some teams work on these skills for nine months prior to a rendezvous. The skills and activities are so diverse you could make an entire annual program out of them if you so choose.

## **Speak the Lingo**

The mountain man or frontiersman had a language all their own. Learning the terms and usage of them will help you to understand more during the rendezvous. Again this is something that can be practiced and integrated into your regular speech among teammates. A list of Mountain Man Terms can be found in the “Rendezvous Resources” section of this reference book.

## **Practice the Activities**

Some of the activities you can just show up to and learn about at the rendezvous. Other activities you may want to practice ahead of time. Practicing can be fun to do during a team meeting on the weeks preceding the rendezvous. Practice sessions will also help to get your team excited about the rendezvous. For example, if the rendezvous includes flint and steel or hawk and knife throwing then these could be learned and practiced ahead of time. Then at the rendezvous your team can have an edge on other teams that may not come as prepared. Other activities such as C.O.P.E. are such that they cannot or should not be practiced ahead. Use the list of priority events (discussed above) to decide which activities to prepare for ahead of time.

## **Make Regalia Items**

One of the best ways to get excited about a rendezvous is to make items for an official rendezvous period uniform or “Regalia”. This uniform can usually be worn in place of the Class “A” uniform during the rendezvous. It also feels good to know that you’ve personally made everything your wearing. The skills you’ll learn in the process are the same skills the mountain man learned in their days.

Items that can be made include shirts, pants, medicine pouches, possible bags, canteens, ball bags, moccasins, breach cloths, belts, scabbers, knives, sheaths, necklaces, chokers, suspenders, hats, capotes and more. You’ll find information on most of these in the activities and resources sections of this reference.

## **Make Trade Items**

As your team makes their regalia items (as discussed above), you may find that some are easy or particularly fun to make. You and your team can make extra ones of these items and bring them to the rendezvous to trade. Most rendezvous have a trading blank or traders row where others display their wares. For example, if you were good at making necklaces, you could make several and bring them to the rendezvous with a goal to trade them for a knife or a possible bag which you didn’t have time to make. This is how the mountain man survived. They made things while they were holed up for the Winter months and then traded those things for other items they needed at rendezvous and with the Indians.

## Trade

Bring those items to trade. The trading area is always packed with people. Most are trying to buy things for cash. If someone shows up to trade items they have made they usually get top priority and the better deal. Heads will turn and respect will be given to those who come prepared with their own homemade items to trade. At a recent rendezvous one person came with a box of wood blocks, each of which had two strike anywhere matches stuck in the end. On the blocks was written "Rechargeable Dual-beam Flashlight". He traded them all in just a few minutes and they were the hit of the rendezvous. And it really didn't take him too long to make them before he came. You'd be surprised what might make a good trade item.

## Bestow Mountain Man Names

From the early days, mountain men were given special names that they were referred to by. Most mountain men seldom if ever used their real given names once they received a mountain man name. A mountain man name is bestowed by a person's peers to them. The name was sometimes derogatory but in most cases (as it should be in all cases in scouts) was a name of respect. Mountain man names can be developed by your team and given to team members and your adult leaders. Then from that time on, including your time at the rendezvous, you can refer to that person by their mountain man name.

Mountain man names are traditionally bestowed during a simple campfire ceremony as follows: A campfire is lit using flint and steel (no matches!) and all gather around. The person who is to be given a name is called out and they are asked to quickly walk around the campfire three times backwards while everyone repeats their current name again and again. This is the process of "removing" their old name. Then the person walks quickly forward around the campfire three times as the group says their new mountain man name again and again. In this way they are given their new name. Usually there is one person who leads this ceremony. That person is usually the "experienced" mountain man in the group.

Here is an example of a few names given myself and some friends:

<b>Mountain Man Name</b>	<b>Reasoning</b>
Conundrum	Someone who collects puzzles (and writes rendezvous books)
Ham Bone	A ham radio enthusiast
Bullwhip	A person who nearly took his own ear off the first time he tried to use a whip.
Megahertz	Another ham radio enthusiast
Fire in the Hole	A person who owns a canon which is often used at our rendezvous
Chuckwagon	A person who often cooks for large groups of scouts
Keener	A good shot (and a decent editor)

## ***Helping Others Through Service***

An important part of any scouting activity is service. Sometimes it's difficult to find ways to integrate service into specific activities. The rendezvous provides many different ways that you and your team can extend service to others. The rendezvous syllabus most likely will help you in this regard. Read it carefully and look for service related information. In many cases there may be special awards or recognitions just for the service aspect of the rendezvous. At any rate be sure to watch for opportunities. In addition to that here are a few other hints and tips.

### **Teach skills to other teams**

As you prepare for the rendezvous your team will no doubt learn many new skills. These skills may include craft or regalia items as well as general activity skills. Your team may also invest in buying or making equipment such as throwing hawks or leatherworking tools. As your team learns take the opportunity to help other teams learn as well. Most teams would love to find more resources (such as your team) that could help them get started. Make sure your district and council leaders know what resources you have and are willing to share. It's this network of service that will help others catch the vision and be prepared to have a great time.

### **Invite others to join**

The rendezvous is a great time to invite friends into the program. The rendezvous is a good showcase of true high adventure that makes up the Varsity Scouting program. Take the opportunity to invite others as your team prepares for the rendezvous. Your friends will feel the excitement and energy and want to join in with you. Hey maybe they're even good at some of the activities and can help your team score big!

### **Go the extra mile**

Look for ways to serve while at the rendezvous. Don't walk by trash on the ground, pick it up. Look for staff that are working hard and ask if you can help them. Perhaps you can even help at the event areas which can give the event leaders time to eat their lunch or take a bathroom break. After having participated as a leader in several rendezvous I can tell you that any help offered would be greatly appreciated. After all, look at what these leaders are doing for you.

## Showing Off Your Team

If you spend time preparing for the rendezvous then no doubt you'll be proud to show off your team and you've earned it. There's plenty of ways to show off at the rendezvous and it's encouraged. Other teams will see what you've done and it will inspire them to prepare more next time. Here's a few ideas to help you show off what you've accomplished.

### Clothing

Wear your regalia items. It may be too hot at times to wear all of it but you can certainly wear it at flag early in the morning. Take the opportunity to get your team picture taken as well. Even if



**Team spirit is show in the shirts, hats and medicine pouches this team has made**



**Another good looking team – This one won the top LTO award at both our 1999 and 2001 rendezvous**

you don't have regalia but you have matching class "B" t-shirts, wear them. A team that looks like they're together generally performs better than one who doesn't.

### Camp

Make an impressive camp. Some teams learn how to make teepee's. Others construct wall tents like the mountain man would use. Some bring in logs and lash camp projects throughout their site. Bring an American flag and hoist it in your camp along with your team flag. Make an entry gate with your team sign hanging under it. Let the others know who is camped here.

### Spirit

Show your team spirit wherever you go. Have cheers and yells ready and use them as you walk from event to event or when you arrive at a new activity or just before leaving an activity. Let the other teams know you're in the area and ready to participate.

### Leadership

Make sure your team is organized with the proper youth leadership it needs to succeed. Make sure everyone is aware of that leadership and uses it. Use the "patrol method" as described in the handbook. This will reduce disagreements and will allow your team to accomplish far more than an unorganized team in the activities during the rendezvous.

## ***Low Budget Tips and Tricks***

Now a lot of teams when they look at the rendezvous say that they can't afford to get into it this much because of budget restrictions. Well there's plenty of ways you can get around those restrictions and still fully participate and look good. This section outlines a few hints and tips that I've seen over the years. If you get resourceful and consider all the opportunities you'll no doubt find more than this.

### **Tie-Die**

Did you know with a little patience and some dye you can make regular cloth look just like buckskins? I've seen some that looks so real that you have to almost touch it before you can tell that it's not. Using this method you can use old t-shirts or other cloth and make shirts, pants, bags and many other items for little or no cost.

When talking about clothes there are other options besides buckskins. Did you know that corduroy was used in the mountain man era? Many other cloths were as well. Of course the one thing they really didn't have back then was pockets. That's why you need to make a possible bag to carry your stuff in.

### **Make your own beads and buttons**

Beads can get expensive and it's tough to get the variety you need. But you can make buttons and beads from deer or elk antlers by cutting slices on a bandsaw and then drilling holes in them. Buff them using a plastic buffing compound and they'll look really good. Authentic too! You can also make beads from rocks. Get a rock tumbler and for pennies you can polish a load of rocks. Then use a diamond tip Dremel tool to drill holes in them for beading. If you take some time and look for the rocks you can make some impressive necklaces for next to nothing.

### **Cloth Paints for Beads**

Cloth paints can be used to make small dot patterns on clothing to look like complex beading. Get a couple of different colors and experiment around. It can usually be done fairly quickly and has the same effect on your clothes as hours of complex beading would. Again the cost (and time) is dramatically lower than that of real beads.

### **Thrift Stores**

Thrift stores have tons of good stuff. Look for necklaces which can be broken up for beads. Did you know you can get several hundred beads from an old wooden beaded car seat cushion? Talk to a taxi company and see if they might have an old one to give you. Thrift stores also have lots of leather items such as purses, coats and pants. Purses can be changed almost as is to a possible bag with very little work. Other items can be adjusted or cut up for the leather. Upholstery shops are also a good source of free material for medicine pouches. You can also find fur coats which may be slightly damaged. The fur can then be reused to make or decorate other items.

One team I know went to a local thrift store and selected a large pile of leather goods. They asked for the store manager and explained that they were scouts and needed this material for their program. They asked if they could get a special price on the goods. The manager said that the items were worth about two hours of their labor and put them to work. Two hours later the team left with their pile of leather and a feeling of satisfaction. It cost them nothing but a little time.

## **Contributions**

There are many businesses that would love to donate items if they were just asked. Too many people ask for money. Look around and get the materials you need. I know one team that got all the materials for several teepees donated by a construction company that had all the wood and had access to the cloth. For them it was an easy donation. For the team, they ended up with a full camp of teepees at the next rendezvous. Look around for companies that have materials you could use. Explain what you're doing and most will be glad to help.

## ***So Where Do We Go From Here?***

If you've made it through and understood this section then you're on your way. If you have a syllabus and know the events then you can look them up in the "Skills Resources" section of this reference. Then start working on them. Plan out your program from now until the rendezvous. Make a list of what you want to accomplish and then use your team leadership to work on getting the materials and resources to accomplish those things. The appendix section has some good information in it as well. Although the remainder of this reference focuses on organizing a rendezvous it also contains information that may be useful for you to know. The more you work on it the more prepared your team will be and the better rendezvous experience you'll have. So jump into it and have fun! Maybe we'll see you there!

## ***A Special Note to Coaches***

The rendezvous activity provides a great vehicle for learning and teaching both temporal and spiritual lessons. Don't let this activity be just for playing games, there's more to it than that. Remember "Scouting is a game with a purpose" as Baden Powell said. Take some time to study the mountain man or frontiersman. Learn some of the stories of these great men. Use the stories to captivate your audience and to emphasize a point. As your team gets ready for the rendezvous they will become excited about learning about this era. If during the same time you teach other lessons (such as Sunday lessons with the sponsoring organization), then these lessons can be intertwined with mountain man themes.



**Use the team campfire and other opportunities to bring home a message for the youth**

Have a good coaches corner or scoutmasters minute prepared to present at the end of each team meeting. The rendezvous theme lends itself well to teaching about preparedness, life skills, self sufficiency, persistence, service and many other themes. For example, religious leaders can research scriptures that relate to each activity you do during the rendezvous. During a campfire these can be tied in to the overall rendezvous theme to create teaching opportunities. As these principles are repetitively taught through Sunday lessons, coaches corners, campfires, and combined with memorable other activities, they will stick with the youth.

Also the skills learned will benefit these youth throughout their life. I've had young men return years later and tell me how they have used their sewing skills again and again since they've been out on their own away from mom. These are the skills they learned while making shirts, pants and other regalia items. Get creative in cooking with the youth. Step it up a notch and help them win the Dutch oven cook-off. These are skills they'll continue to use. They will become skilled while on the outside it would appear as though they were just having fun. Step back and consider the true purposes of the activity. The fun will just happen automatically as a result.