

Team RoadShow 2011 post-RAGBRAI Newsletter

- 1) Introduction
- 2) RAGBRAI 2011 Spending Report
 - a. Income breakdown
 - b. Spending breakdown
 - c. Discussion
 - i. Mandatory Free vs Sliding Scale
 1. history
- 3) Recap of Discussion
 - a. Communication
 - i. What works, what doesn't
 - ii. Solutions
 1. Website fixes
 - a. Gallery
 - b. Forum
 - iii. Discussion
 - b. Transportation
 - i. Brainstorm recap
 - ii. Desired features
- 4) Delegation
- 5) Merchandise

1) Introduction

Hey Team RoadShowers!

This is the post 2011 RAGBRAI newsletter. We haven't done a post-RAGBRAI newsletter before, but this was a special year. This newsletter is also available in PDF form at (address) if you'd like to share it.

I am currently rebuilding the TRS website, and useful information is popping up every day. I will link to it several times in this newsletter. Please peruse it and give me feedback directly or in the forum: <http://www.teamroadshow.com/forum>

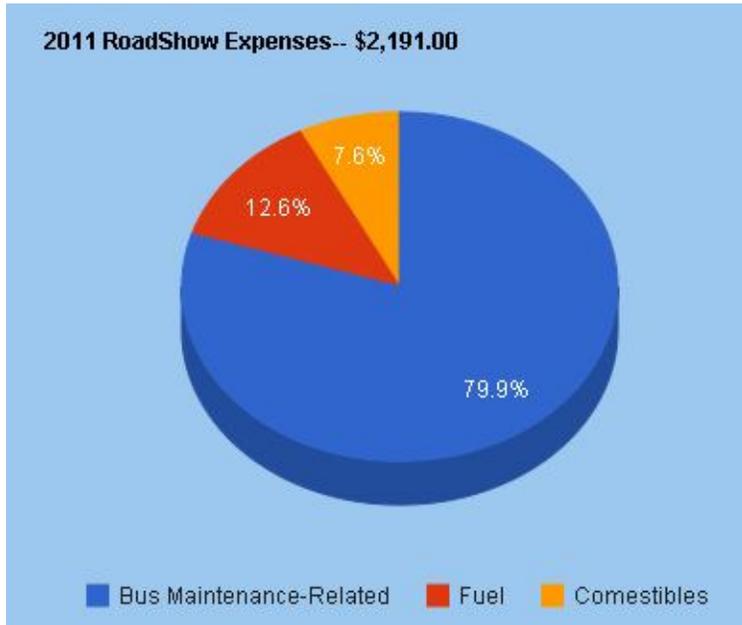
And yes, I do know that the website, forum, gallery, and café press pages are currently butt-ugly. I'm working on it.

2) RAGBRAI 2011 Spending Report

I have shared a google doc explaining our finances at http://teamroadshow.com/?page_id=12 . The password is *****. I've included the contents of the TRS finances sheet in this newsletter. Feel free to check the google doc at any time to see how your TRS dues are being spent. There is no sensitive information shared in the doc, but please don't share the password with non-members anyway.

Note: The below U-Haul cost is an estimate, as I have not been able to get the actual amount figured out. This is because I returned the U-haul to a weird spot and I'm waiting for them to mail me the invoice.

Detailed Expenses Omitted from Online Version



Total 2011 Income	\$2,162.10
Total 2011 Expenses	\$2,191.00
Balance	-\$28.90

Kendra, our treasurer, has the details:

Contrary to some expectations, RoadShow finances for 2011 were actually better than usual: we almost broke even! We have shared a finance spreadsheet for you to peruse at your leisure, but here's breakdown of the important bits. We collected \$1,767.00 in dues this year from team members. Coupled with the \$395.10 earned at the juggling shows (hooray for attention-starved weirdos!), that makes a total income of \$2,162.10.

The average contribution for weeklong riders was \$102.80. However, when we toss out the top and bottom contributions, that average shifts to \$93.85. For partial-week riders, the average was \$45 (\$36.67 with the minimum and maximum tossed out).

Unsurprisingly, the majority of expenses went toward transportation and its associated complications. We spent \$1,750 on bus maintenance, repair, and replacement [U-haul rental] and an additional \$275 for fuel for both the bus and the U-Haul. Because of generous contributions of beer from Diane, Isaac, and Johnny, as well as a deliciously donated lasagna dinner from Britt's family, we spent only \$166 on food, beer, and miscellaneous camp supplies (officially).

Please note that this does not include the cost of pizza in Carroll; we had not yet received many dues at that point and had to take up a separate collection to pay for it. I suspect that Troy and other support crew also paid for some food and supplies out of their own pockets along the way, but they repeatedly refused to disclose that information or accept repayment, the rascals. Our

total recorded expenses were \$2,191.00.

Those of you who are math whizzes have already figured this out, but for the rest of you, the official RoadShow balance for 2011 was a gentle -\$28.90. Not bad, considering. If luck is a lady next year and we generate comparable income and fewer dramatic expenses, we should be fairly comfortable and have some padding for bus improvements and/or better ingredients for our talented chefs.

C) Spending Discussion

There are some important things to keep in mind when looking at the financials. First, keep in mind that the support crew traditionally does not pay dues. This is because they are working their butts off while we have fun. This distinction was more evident when TRS had a dedicated support crew of more than 1-2 people. This year those people were Troy and Johnny, and both of them “donated” unofficially by not letting us reimburse them for many purchases. This is part of the reason why our official expenses were so low this year.

There was a lot of discussion this year about replacing the TRS sliding scale of \$0-\$millions with a mandatory fee. However, with an average “free-will” donation of ~\$90 *after* throwing out the extreme outliers, a median contribution of \$60, and considering only three riders didn’t pay dues (but made up for it with work), I don’t feel like this is necessary. During the 8 years that TRS has existed, we’ve had many people who wouldn’t have been able to come if we’d had a mandatory fee, and I would hate to have missed out on their friendships. Many of those people have become regular financial contributors.

Approximately \$400, or about 19% of our income this year came from our juggling shows. The majority of that was just one night in Grinnell (three shows). \$60 of that was from the fire show in IA city, *after* paying out \$20 to our musicians. We did fewer shows this year than in previous years due to the stress and work related to the bus breaking down, the extreme heat, and a variety of other factors. This number is usually higher, and has been how we’ve financed 50% or more of RAGBRAI in the past. We’ve had some years where all the food and beer from Tuesday through the end of the week have been paid for by performance earnings. However, for that to happen again, there needs to be a focused effort to get the performers into the downtown area by 6 or 7pm, and fed by 5 or 6 pm.

If there are enough people who still feel very strongly about implementing a mandatory fee we can discuss it, but for what it’s worth if that is implemented I’ll probably start a TRS scholarship where I cover the costs of those who can’t pay the fee. I will suggest a \$50-\$60 starting point for fees. I also want to thank greatly those of you who are donating hundreds of dollars to TRS each year – it’s because of you that we are able to let people with lower incomes come and enjoy RAGBRAI with us.

3) Recap of RAGBRAI Discussion

In one of the towns we had a detailed discussion about buying a news bus and communication. I'd like to recap that discussion here so we can begin acting on what we decided.

First of all, I'd like to explain how TRS is managed. There are several volunteer organizer "officer" positions that are in place to make the flow of information easier. I am the Ringmaster, "At Large" coordinator, and Webmaster. Kendra is the Treasurer and Support Crew Chief. Paul Jennings is the IA Team Leader. Tim Roberts and Tamas Peterson are the Bus Stewards. We currently have no WI Team Leader, but the position has been formerly filled by Jackson and Ariel. It seems to have defaulted recently to BJ, who is doing a wonderful job. Our Indiana contingent has traditionally been self-sufficient and organized through the "at-large" coordinator (me). At the minimum, these people need to be kept in the loop about all TRS issues.

a) Communication

There was a lot of discussion about how best to communicate as a team. The e-mail list seems to work, but it's not a great place for discussions. Facebook works, but not everyone has or wants a facebook account. We had a forum on our website for a few years, but nobody ever used it so I let it slowly die the death of a million spams. We didn't come up with a solution during the meeting.

My solution is this: I have installed phpBB on TeamRoadShow.com. You can go directly to it here: <http://teamroadshow.com/forum/> You'll need to register to post, but everyone can read. Registration requires my authorization to defeat spam, but it's quick and easy. Just follow the link on the website. Let's test it by having our discussion based off this e-mail there. I'll be adding an RSS feature soon to make it even easier to track discussions, similar to how FB notifies people of updates.

Note: Pick a username that is obvious. I'm already getting spam bots attempting to register, so if I don't recognize your name I'm going to mark it as spam.

I'll also be posting important updates to the news section of the website with a link to the subsequent discussion in the forum.

I have also fixed the TRS gallery, and it can be found here:

<http://teamroadshow.com/gallery/main.php>

Please feel free to upload pictures there, and look at some TRS history. It's nice to have the photos up on TRS as opposed to (or as well as) spread out all of FB and the rest of the interwebs.

I will also be sharing a TRS Roster with full team contact information using Google Docs to aid in communication. I haven't found a way to do this yet that doesn't let spambots index all your e-mail addresses. Even the password-protected TRS website option isn't safe because of how google shares docs. For now if you want access to the roster you need to request it directly from me.

b) Transportation

The diesel in the bus is fixed, but the veggie oil is still broken, and there is a hole in the radiator that will cost over \$800 to fix. We are putting off the radiator fix and trying to get the bus back to WI. During our RAGBRAI team meeting we (seemed) to agree that veggie oil is great, but *only* if we have a full-time mechanic maintaining the bus. The fact is, we don't and won't anytime in the near future. We need a bus that is standardized so that anyone can work on it. Here is what I remember from the discussion we had:

- Keep the existing bus
 - Pros: Cheapest, easiest option. Runs on Veggie (sometimes), Already customized. Can carry people and bikes, most communal option.
 - Cons: Non-standard, broken radiator, hard to keep running.
- Buy a new bus
 - Pros: Might find a standardized, easy to maintain bus. Can customize from scratch. Can carry people and bikes, most communal option.
 - Cons: Expensive. Might have to customize from scratch, including installing top rack. Need person-power to customize. Hundreds of volunteer hours needed. Financial support needed.
- Rent a U-Haul every year (or something similar)
 - Pros: No maintenance issues, relatively easy
 - Cons: Might destroy it. Can't carry people. Issues with legal drivers. Hard to get people to and from start/end of RAGBRAI. Possibly more expensive option in the long run -\$500/year or more.
- Cargo-van with trailers (similar to how WI did it for several years when IA had a small bus)
 - Pros: Forces a large support crew due to the large # of vehicles (also a con). Buying a cargo-van *might* be cheaper than a buying a bus. Easy maintenance, possibly less gas. Vans can be people's daily drivers.
 - Cons: Less communal than being in one vehicle, no roof to sit on
- Share a bus with a tailgating group
 - Pros: Bus is kept up for most of the year by other people, should be less expensive
 - Cons: It's not our bus or our paint job. May be customized for tailgating and not RAGBRAI (ie bike tracks, etc). Hard to manage. Not 100% reliable. Who pays for maintenance?

If I missed something please let me know.

Personally, I'd like a bus, either new or old. Probably new. From what I've heard the perfect system would encourage socializing (ie everyone on one vehicle), transport people and bikes, and be reliable. Preferably it'd have lots of seating, a rack on top, and the ability to cook.

Personally, I'd like it to have a TRS logo somewhere on it (see our first bus:

http://teamroadshow.com/gallery/v/armada/bus/?g2_page=12)



However, before we make that decision we need to do research. We need to know:

- 1) How much would it take to fix the old bus and make it standard?
- 2) What can we sell the old bus for?
 - a. As a whole?
 - b. Parted out (veggie system, etc)
- 3) How much are new (old) buses?
 - a. Is it cheaper to buy a less expensive non-customized bus or a more expensive customized bus that already has a top rack, etc?
- 4) How much are used cargo-vans?
- 5) How should we raise the money?

My proposed solution to the funding problem is to set up a **kickstarter fund**.

<http://www.kickstarter.com/> It's a site where people pledge money, but no money changes hands until the funding goal is met. That way people won't be charged until we are guaranteed that we can afford the new bus/van/other thing. I'm still researching the logistics.

This leads us to:

4) Delegation

We need people to research the above options. We also need an official WI team leader(s) who can help keep track of information. As we delegate out jobs communication is key, so please utilize the forum. We also need all found information to be reported to the TRS officers and possibly posted in the forum. As more and more information is gained I will compile it and send out summary reports (or you could check the forum).

If you would like to work on researching the above options please let me know. If I missed any options or needs please let me know as well.

5) Merchandise

There was a lot of talk about merch this year. The Café Pres shirts are available here: <http://www.cafepress.com/UnexpectedFailure/7289877> and are linked to from the website.

I like the idea of doing a screen printing run. I have access to screen printing at the UO but I don't know how to work it yet, and likely will get too busy again. If someone wants to research doing a screen printing run so we can throw out some cheap shirts let me know. (I may have a guy in Southern Oregon who can do a run for \$5/shirt). The downside is that we need the money up front. When I did the last screen printing run (2005) I lost about \$60 because of the minimum order requirement and not enough people bought shirts. I think we can do better now.

I have high-quality versions of all the TRS logos, so please don't do something crazy like try to make a shirt off the website images. E-mail me first!

And that, my friends, is the state of things. I'd write a witty conclusion but I'd rather go work on the website. Please let me know if you can help with the bus search or if I missed anything.

--- Seager