An Organised Tent is a Happy Tent.

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(originally done at Pennsic in 2011, so some may be out of date for troll)

Getting started

Well it might seem odd to talk about organising at Pennsic when you have alreadyarrived, but this is the perfect time to start. You are in the middle of thingsso they are fresh in your minds.So…

When does organising for Pennsic begin

We start getting ready for the next Pennsic while we are at the current one. Ifyou do nothing else take a look around and see what is working this year andwhat is not. We use our Pennsic book notes pages to list things we forgot,didn't think of before or things we don't really need.Have your vehicle checked out to make sure it is ok for the trip. You don't wantto end up stranded on the Ohio turnpike at four in the morning in the rain.Personal experience.

Packing list

Every year I make a list. When I start my list, I begin with the tent and listeverything I will need. Then I move onto the things that go into the tent. Thenthe other things I will need while I am there. If it comes to Pennsic it goeson the list, no matter how simple or how much I think I will remember that.Because no I will probably forget it.Now that you have your list, what to do with it. The two weeks prior to Pennsicmy living room looks like a bomb went off. It becomes our staging area. Anythingin the house that is going to Pennsic goes into the living room. I recommendthis if you have the room. Once I have it in the pile a checkmark goes by theitem on the list.

What do I need

Every person has their own needs and things they cannot live without. I have hadmany people say "I want your list", well my list may not suit your needs butthese are the things everyone needs. You need…Money and ID. You will not get in without them. And remember Troll insists onpicture ID.(but since we are here already you know that). As soon as I get ourprereg I put it into the van glove box.Something to sleep in. Your tent, Pavilion, someone else's tent pavilion, ifyou are sharing.Something to sleep on. A bed, cot, air mattress, foam pad on the ground. Irecommend a bed if you have the room to bring it. And if you are making one foryourself or having one made, have one that you can slide a Rubbermaid under.Ours will fit 6 if we need it. Prime reason, storage that is not underfoot.Something to sit on. Chair, bench, stool, something you will preferably not besharing.Something to sit at. TV table, table. You may have a project to work on or ameal you want to eat. Your lap sometimes is not big enough or convenient.Something to wear. Enough for your whole stay at Pennsic. It will probably bewetter, dryer, hotter, colder than you think, sometimes all on the same day.All other things are an option that your space will determine. For me if I'm notcomfortable I would rather not go. This is the one vacation I go on in the year.

Weather

At Pennsic we get it all, wet, dry, hot, cold sometimes all on the same day. Sunscreen and hats are a good thing. Keep an extra set of mundane in yourvehicle so if you get soaked you will have something dry to get into. This setof clothes is what I usually keep to change into for the way home.Storms can come quickly but we usually have warning. If you leave your camp withthe though that it is going to storm you will not have to have someone in camplooking after your stuff. If you are in camp help look after others you neverknow when you might need the favour. I don't think we have had snow, but Icould be wrong. We have had frost freeze advisories. We have had scorching hotdays.

Loading your stuff

I grab my list and see if there is anything that I have not checked off. Now isthe time to grab it and bring it all out to the vehicle. If it is all aroundyou, you can see what you have to pack when. If you can, pack your tent on top,last thing in first thing out. We bring a small tarp to unload other stuff ontoin case we get there and there is still dew on the ground, or it has rained tothe point that there is a lot of mud already. Play Tetris with your stuff, don'twaste space in packing you don't know if you will need it at the end. We packour chairs and our water bottles last. (for those breaks your friends will tellyou to take). Once it goes into our van I cross it off the list. Pack your list,keep it handy so you can go over it while you are there to see what you need fornext year/time.

Driving

Have plenty of water and snacks. Give yourself plenty of time to arrive safely.Make frequent stops, pull over and take a nap if you need it.We have often travelled at night. There is usually no problem with constructionslowdowns, little traffic, no sun in your eyes, no gawker slowdown on the I79.Load up kids with portable DVD players, MP3'S, books, paper, pens, remindercrayons will melt in your car.

Arriving

Go to Troll with everything you need, extra fee money, Id, prereg form, licenceplate number. You will get through much faster. Also don't show up at peaktimes and expect to breeze through.

Setting up

Once we get to our site we unload what is needed to set up the pavilion, ourchairs and water. Once the roof of the tent is set up my wife usually takes thekids and gets food or ice, mostly so they can run off some energy, Pennsic isusually a six hour drive for us, they need to run off some steam.Day one is get the pavilion up, day two is make it a home for the two weeks. Wehave a few tapestries that we hang.We don't bring anything that we will be devastated if it gets ruined. It ispennsic and mud doesn't usually come out.Have something you can go swimming in. Moraine State park has a wonderful beachthat we go to almost every day. It helps to cool off your core temperature andmakes the heat easier to take.We have foam that we place between the ropes and the pavilion to keep it fromleaking.Rings at the bottom of your ropes allows you to pound the stakes right into theground and still be able to adjust your ropes. (stopping a trip hazard)Hang as much from your walls as you can if you have a pavilion. The less youhave on the floor to trip on or kick your toes on in the middle of the night andits raining the better.If you have ropes that stick out into walkways solar lights work well.

Things that can help to organise

Anything that will keep stuff off the floor and out of the way.Clothes rack, we have one that hangs off the pavilion poles, but one on wheelsis fine if you have flat enough ground.Shelves, free standing ones, or hanging ones.Laundry bag, for clothes that are to dirty to put away or clothes you will notbe wearing again.Storage bed, one made to be storage or that you can put bins under.Nice bed spread, your bed is the largest thing in your tent. If you have thatlook good you can often not see the rest of the stuff out of place.I bring a four drawer plastic tower for socks and underwear, I like to know theywill stay dry no matter what, I also make a cover for it.I also made a cover to go over our hanging shelves so you don't see the mess.We keep a dry set of mundane clothes in the car, just in case.Depending on you bed you can make hanging pockets, to keep small things handy.We have curtains in our pavilion to section it off.We use hanging plant brackets to hang stuff on. We just add an eye bolt to thetop hole and tie it at the bottom. I tie our curtain poles to them and they giveyou hooks to hang stuff from.If you think of things you want for Pennsic, write them on your calendar inDecember and transfer them once you put up your new one in January.

Other stuff

Keep your flashlight in the same place all the time so that you know where it iswhen you need it.Carpets are great. Not only is it really nice to get up in the morning and feelcarpeting on your feet it also keeps the dampness down at night and it alsosaves your tent floor .We bring a Luggable Loo, it is great for the kids it is also nice when it israining at night.Bring a camera to take pictures of things or ways others keep organised.Paper, pens, etc to make notes or for classes. The back of your Pennsic book isgreat for that.Baby wipes work as well for adults and kids as for babies.If you have medical concerns let others in camp know, so they can keep and eyeout for you.Take advantage of the misting tents. And remember never leave camp without awater bottle.We have a large cooler and one of the best tips we have come up with is, to takelarge storage containers to put your ice into. You can stack them if you need toand it keeps your food from floating in water. Also once it is melted you canuse the water for washing up with or if it has just come out of the cooler youcan put it in a small tub and cool your feet off in it.One issue that has come up with pavilions. Pennsic has beetles that love tocrawl up the walls to the roof and in the night they have a habit of dropping.One gentle in our camp had to go to the hospital one night when one dropped intohis ear. Since getting our pavilion we have made a canopy to go over our bed,every year when we take it down there are at least five dead beetles on it.

Kids

Henna your child with their medallion number, your name, and the group you arecamping with, just in case they get lost.If you have small children a Rubbermaid is great to add some water to for themto splash in.

Things we often forget

Batteries for flashlights, extra socks for the Coleman lantern, things that you can bring with you that you might not want to spend your Pennsic money on whenbrining it is just as easy.Any medication, that is not a cost you want at Pennsic.