

Don't Panic

An Unofficial Survivor's Guide to the Dayton Hamvention

by Phil Stein, K2RCG (booth 1525)



Hamvention can be an overwhelming, confusing experience even for the most experienced hamfest-goer. Even old-timers who have been attending for years can get disoriented because things are often a bit different from year to year.

Well, we're here to help. Survival often comes down to food, clothing, and shelter, and in the late '90s, you've got to add information as a fourth necessity.

Hamvention and its organizing committee excel at providing information; our vendors and local merchants do well with the food, clothing, and shelter.

Here's what we'd like to do for you in the survivor's guide:

1) Remind you of the many information sources and systems that have been set up to be at your service and for your assistance.

2) Give you a few tips and tricks that we have learned over the years that we haven't seen in other information sources.

3) Help you to have more fun, find more bargains, and have such a good time that you'll be sure to come back next year.

So here goes...

Information

Talk-in:

Hams have a great advantage over all other hobbyists and conference-goers in general—they have radios! The Hamvention staff has taken full advantage of this by providing the best possible information service on the talk-in frequency, 146.94 MHz (down 600). Operators are standing by 24 hours a day from the Wednesday afternoon before through Monday morning after Hamvention. Each talk-in operator has a thick notebook with the latest in every conceivable kind of information, and he or she is just waiting to help—just give a call.

A few notes to make talk-in more effective and useful: Follow net protocol, even in the wee hours of the morning...please please please DO NOT arrange to meet your colleagues on the talk-in frequency even if your intention is to move off immediately. There are many other fine, wide-area machines to use without taking precious net time. Use 145.11 (down 600), 146.91 (down 600), 146.64 (down 600) or 147.165 (up 600). During busy times, listen for a few minutes before asking your question—it might very well be answered without you having to call at all. Often, we'll listen to talk-in for hours just to stay in touch with what's happening. If you hear what seems to be malicious interference, please don't attempt to answer or talk with the interfering party.

The Program:

It's not just a pound of advertising to carry around. It's full of maps, schedules, technical program listings, exhibitor directories, and everything else you need.

Hamvention volunteers:

Anyone you see wearing a Hamvention hat or jacket has some official capacity. If they can't answer your question, they can most likely raise someone who can. There are many frequencies for internal use only, and officials can use them to get answers or handle emergency situations quickly. The paid guards do not have easy access to convention management, even though they may have radios.

Tips

Parking:

Hamvention provides some parking for commercial vendors, some parking for handicapped attendees, and a very few spots for management. Most of us who volunteer for Hamvention have to scramble for parking along with the majority of the crowd.

Unlike a few years ago and before, there is NO general admission parking available on the arena grounds. There are quite a few private paid lots adjacent to the arena and most who drive are usually accommodated, but there are no guarantees.

We recommend parking at one of the two close-in lots at Salem Mall and taking the FREE bus to the arena from there. Parking at these satellite lots is unlimited.

If you buy a boat anchor—or a whole boat for that matter—you will be able to pull up in front of the arena long enough to load your car, van, truck, or trailer.

Bargains:

Bargaining is always welcome in the tailgating area, and might even get you somewhere at the indoor commercial exhibits.

As with most flea market operations, the most generally desirable stuff is sold first, at or close to the asking price.

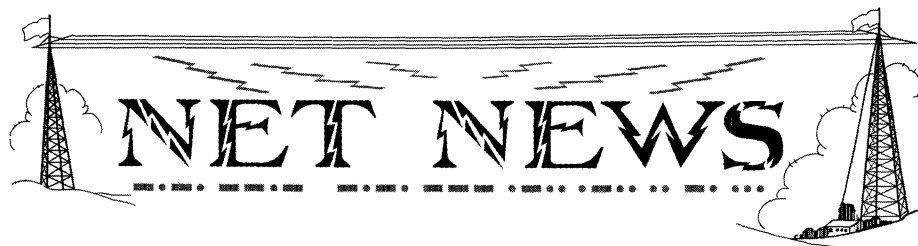
Timing:

If you see something Friday morning that you MUST have and the supply is limited, it might be best to just buy it. It takes a strong

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New CCA Sunday Net Format

by Bill Standerfer, W0GM

As the new sunspot cycle improves conditions and interest in Collins equipment increases, we're hearing more stations each week on all of the CCA nets. The 20 meter net is now averaging 130 or more stations each Sunday and we've had as many as 250 recently. Floyd Soo, W8RO, reminded me that at the peak of the old sunspot cycle the net would regularly have 250 to 300 stations, so the best is yet to come!

As the numbers increase on the 20 meter net, we felt that some changes needed to be made to be able to better manage it. The major issue was that those with swap listings in the later call areas probably didn't have near the audience that the East coast folks did at the beginning of the net. I think the number one objective of the 20 meter net is as a Collins swap net, with technical and social contacts very important, but second in priority, we changed the format to address that issue.

Now, all swap listings will be taken at the beginning of the net. Everyone who has a buy/sell/want listing will be able to get in while the majority of audience is available to hear you and what you want to list. This has been taking from one to two hours, so you can make a listing, then leave relatively quickly if necessary. After the listing section, we will run the net just as before, by call areas, taking check-ins, answering technical questions, and listing any swaps from people who couldn't get in early. This is a rather major change in the format, but was almost universally applauded by many people who responded to my CCA Reflector poll and by commenters on the net. We will run this way for at least six months to evaluate it. If it doesn't work, we'll try something else or go back to the old way of doing business.

The second change we have made to the 20M net is that we will take check-ins by call area as the propagation moves across the country. That means 1-2-3-4-5-8-9-0-6-7. There have been times when we have lost propagation to the Midwest before the end of the net, so this will help that situation when propagation is marginal.

We have been running the very popular theme nights again this season, with a little twist. Most of the events are really theme weeks rather than just one night as before.

This gives everyone several chances to participate throughout the week. Notable exceptions are, of course, themes on some equipment, like the KWM-1, that can't operate on some of the net frequencies.

Recent theme events have brought out many examples of some of the rarer Collins gear. For example, the KW-1 night had ten of the wonderful AM transmitters on the air and AM night had 45 check-ins from 23 states. Jim Shoemaker, W0NKL, deserves a hearty thanks for his net control efforts for these events. The KWS-1 theme week had dozens of these fine sideband transmitters on the air. We still have a few interesting themes to go and have some ideas for others later in the year. Check the list below for what's coming up next.

As always, we could use more help with the net control duties. I've asked Peter Lower, VE3URO, to manage the NCS roster for the Tuesday and Thursday night 75 meter nets, so give him a call if you would like to help there. Contact Peter or me if you would like to help on the 20 meter net. Sandy Meltzer, KW6KW, manages the NCS roster for the West coast net and would be glad to have help there, too.

I'd like to thank all of you who support the CCA nets each week. Things are a bit tense at times due to contests, poor propagation, or other problems that make listening a challenge. I especially want to thank all of you who have volunteered to help run a net. We all owe WA5VVT, KW6KW, K0BS, W8RO, K7RMT, W6IRD, K1QCF, W0NKL, and all the others who have kept these nets going over the years. Without the support and participation of everyone involved, CCA and the interest in Collins equipment would not be nearly as strong as they are today. If you haven't joined us yet on the air, check the net schedule and drop by for a chat. We would love to hear you!

73 Bill, W0GM



Theme Weeks - 1999

April 11-16	Military/unique equipment (618T, SAC KWS-1s, etc.)
May 2-7	Your favorite Collins
May 16-21	KWM-380

CCA Membership Hot Line

507-282-2141

Sorry, no call-backs available!

The new CCA web site can be viewed at:

www.collinsradio.org

Join Us on the Air!



• Sunday 14.263 mHz
at 2000Z

• Tuesday 3805 kHz
at 8pm CST

• Thursday 3875 kHz
at 8pm CST

• Friday (West Coast) 3895 kHz
at 10pm CST

Sunday for Technical, Buy, Sell and Swap.
Tuesday, Thursday and Friday for Ragchew.

Treasurer's Two Bits

by Gary Leininger, W7YO

I think it is only fitting in this issue that I thank all those CCA Members for the cards, letters, prayers, and phone calls that served to bolster my spirits during my recent surgery and recovery. I am currently doing better than the doctors had expected and will certainly strive to continue that trend.

On the lighter side, I am pleased to report that CCA has grown to 866 members, with about 60 of those joining in the last three months. This volume caused me to fall behind on mailing new member packets, but with the help of Art Lewis, WA8VSI, the work is nearly caught up—Thanks Art. With that "Bit" of info, I'll say 73 until the next Signal, but will be sure to meet up with many of you on the nets.
w7yo@cloudnet.com

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Don't Panic... Dayton Survival Guide

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stomach to wait for time to pass and the price to drop, taking the chance that it will also be on someone else's MUST-have list.

If you can bear to wait it out, though, most sellers will drop their prices as time goes on. By Sunday morning, most tailgate vendors will be anxious to get rid of anything cheaply rather than take it home again. Be careful, though, many vendors leave by noon Sunday so don't wait until the very last minute to capture that treasure.

Door prizes:

Your Hamvention ticket has a prize stub with your number. Fill out the personal information and take the stub to the Main Arena as early as possible! The earlier you get your ticket into the barrel, the more chances you will have to win a prize. Check the TV monitors for your number. If you can wait around for Sunday's 1 PM main drawing, you have a good chance of winning something because you must be present to win and most people have left. They keep drawing until the get a ticket of someone who is there. You do NOT have to be present to win a "Major" prize—someone will call you or you can find it posted on our www.hamvention.org web site.

Food, Clothing, & Shelter

Food:

Your food options at Hara Arena are limited to, well, arena food. There are lots of food stands inside, a large dining area (which is also the only place to sit down at the whole show unless you like grass or pavement), and a small bar/restaurant at the Southwest corner of the building complex.

The bar is open very early with coffee and such, and there are a few seats inside as well. There are also two or three food stands outside adjacent to the arena. Beer is available at a couple of the stands, but almost everything else is from the four basic food groups: hot dogs, potato chips, donuts, and coffee.

For a relatively fast lunch or snack that's a cut above arena food, take the free bus to Salem Mall, which has an outstanding food court, or walk a block East on Shiloh Springs Road (in front of the arena) to a passable Chinese restaurant.

Breakfast is good at Friendly's South of the arena on Main Street, and at the Cracker Barrel at the Little York Road exit (60) of I-75. There are also a lot of nice places on Miller Lane.

Dayton has a wide variety of dinner experiences available. You can find all of the usual chains, such as Applebee's, Max and

Irma's, Boston Market, and so forth. There's also a Spaghetti Warehouse downtown which is inexpensive, nice, and family-oriented.

For fine dining, try Jay's (seafood, always crowded), the Pine Club (steaks), L'Auberge or King Cole (Continental). Be prepared to dress accordingly for the latter two. Other favorites are Peasant Stock (country European), Shades of Jade (Chinese, and a bit far away besides), and many others.

Clothing:

What should I wear? What weather should I prepare for? Weather has often been a major challenge at Hamvention. The event dates were moved in 1995 to mid-May after a string of cold, wet years, and the 1996-98 weather was almost ideal.

Nevertheless, you should certainly come to town prepared with an umbrella and/or poncho, a windbreaker jacket, and several layers of clothing that can be easily adjusted for a range from windy, rainy and 50 through bright sun and 90. Of course you don't have to take all of this to the arena every day. Tune into the NWS weather on 162.475 before you leave your motel or campsite, and take what you will most likely need that day.

Aside from the two fancy restaurants mentioned above, you won't need anything dressy, although many wear jackets and ties or gowns to the Hamvention banquet.

The official Hamvention tee-shirts are on sale at the flea-market booth just on the other side of the fence from the bus loading area. These shirts change every year and reflect the same artwork as the cover of the program. The booth is managed by the local Xenia XWARN radio club.

For other clothing needs, you'll have to go to the Huber Heights area to shop for clothes or the Fairfield Mall on I-675 and Fairfield road.

Shelter:

The only OTHER place to sit down is in the grandstands in the arena. Any door into the arena except the ones at the 12- 3- 6- and 9-o'clock positions will take you into the grandstands.

When it rains, everyone heads indoors. This makes it very uncomfortable indoors, as their ventilation is not fabulous even under the best of conditions (especially in East Hall). If you have an umbrella or poncho, you can avoid the rush and have the flea market all to yourself.

Most experienced Hamventioners reserve next year's room as they are leaving this year's show. This might put a newcomer at a bit of a disadvantage, but there are quite a

few rooms available, and you should be able to find something good if you plan ahead and reserve at least six weeks before the event. Even during Hamvention, there are rooms available in towns less than an hour away. Try Xenia, Beavercreek, Troy and Springfield OH first. Richmond, IN, the northern suburbs of Cincinnati, and the western suburbs of Columbus are all close enough to be practical, yet far enough to not have much Hamvention traffic. We keep an updated list of available rooms on the Hamvention website. Check our list of hotels for ideas.

For campers, we have a list of Dayton area campsites and the KOA makes every effort to accommodate all comers, but not necessarily with hookups.

And remember - most importantly.....

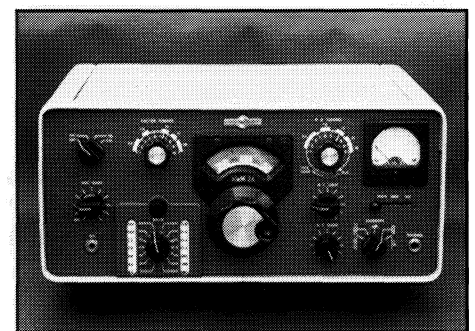
Don't Panic...



Dayton '99 Dance Card

by Butch Schartau, KOBS

Hap, WA4UPV has once again volunteered to do the dance card for Dayton. For you Dayton newcomers, the dance card is a small card that easily fits into your shirt pocket and lists all the flea market space numbers of the Collins collectors. To help Hap in compiling this list of space numbers, you can pass your numbers to any of the NCS on any of the CCA's nets or send me an email at KOBS@IBM.NET and I will forward to Hap.



Technical Tips

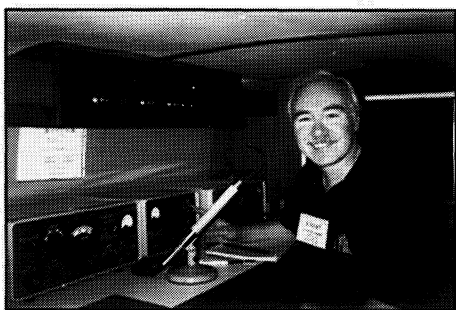
by William J. Diamond (Bill), WR0T

Some KWM2's exhibit an audio howl or feedback at high volume levels. I found that by moving the caps to a slightly different physical location on the audio tubes eliminated or reduced the problem. It would appear that lead dress is very important to avoid ground loops and oscillations.

S-Lines, Treasures and Tears

It's not just the price that counts

by George Maier, K1GXT



George Maier, K1GXT

Over the years, one of my most consistent ham friends has been Don Sicard, K1OSG. Don and I first met through the magic of amateur radio, but we became social friends as well. As teenagers, we took our dates to the same high school dances, in college we learn about cold 807's. Our first jobs were together at Microwave Associates or M/A-COM as it became known. M/A-COM had dozen of hams in the work force in those days, not the least of whom was the CEO, Dana Atchley, W1CF, who was constantly experimenting with phased verticals, and co-founder of ColatchCo, with Fred Collins, W1FC, also an ex M/A-COM guy. Another famous M/A-COM alumni was Sam Harris, W1BU, inventor of the parametric amplifier, and later the chief engineer at the 1000' deep space array in Aricebo, Puerto Rico.

Eventually, Donald and I married our YL's and set about building our lives and families. All the while, we kept in touch via the airwaves; like when the Army took him to Texas in the

late 1960's, and opportunity took me to California in the late 1970's. In 1983, I moved back to Massachusetts, and we started our eyeball get togethers again.

A few years ago, Don had a fatal heart attack, and became a silent key. It's probably the biggest loss I've suffered outside of my immediate family. He had always wanted to acquire some Collins gear, and eventually got hold of a 30L-1, but stopped there. After his passing, I bought the amplifier at the current market price from his widow, Barbara. This one piece of ham gear means more to me than any other in my collection. Every time I turn it on, it's a tangible tribute to the memory of my old pal, K1OSG, and it gives me some comfort to think that a part of his spirit lives in those glowing 811A's.

Recently, I was extremely fortunate to be able to buy a 75S-1 and 32S-1 from Erik Stromsted, W1ZBT, another old friend, and former M/A-COM employee that knew Don and the other quite well also. Erik was the original owner of this S-Line, but made a decision to move on to something new, and I was lucky enough to be around him at the right time.

Soon I'll have this nostalgic S-Line and 30L-1 running as a set up, and you'll hear it on the CCA nets. You know, rigs can be bought and rigs can be sold, but this one is as special as they come. No matter where the prices go, this Collins rig will be my permanent treasure, and one that will give me fond memories of good friends and good times past. It gives collecting a whole new meaning.

Collins Cruise

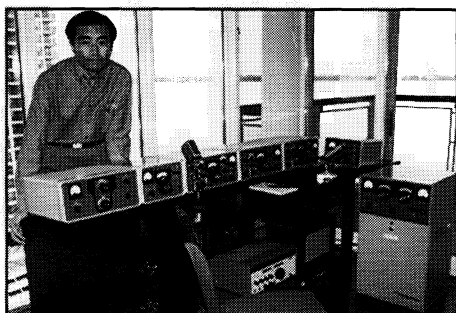
CCA sails into the sunset



The charm of the eastern Caribbean will be this year's destination for the Collins Collectors Association as we head to San Juan, St. Thomas and then to St. Maarten and the Bahamas on board the Celebrity Lines Century on November 6, 1999 from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. We hope you will join us for a week of sun-and-fun and relaxation with the Collins family of friends and the trip of a lifetime. Be at sea with us when we check into the Sunday afternoon net as a maritime mobile. This is the one trip you'll really enjoy with Spa treatments, nightly shows, superb dining, the Century has it all.

If you would like to join us or need more information contact our agent, Ports of Call Travel at 1-888-500-7447 they have made group rates available to the CCA and friends. It is not necessary to be a member of the Collins Collectors Association to receive the group rate, just advise them you are travelling with the CCA. We hope you will join us on our Collins Cruise. We are sure it will be one to remember.

In the Shack



Hiro Sakai, AD4EC / VE3

Send us a picture of your shack and we might use it in a future issue of the *Signal* or on the new CCA web site. Just mail a good quality (color) photograph to the CCA address and we'll scan it in and return it to you ASAP. Or, email a photo to cca@collinsradio.org. Please include your return address, call sign, and any shack information.



At the Mike with KW6KW

Sandy Meltzer - President, Collins Collectors Association

Spring is here and many of us in the CCA are getting ready for the Dayton Hamvention next month. I want to thank Phil Stein for letting us print his "Don't Panic" article...it should help you prepare for Dayton...especially if you have never been there before. I've been a ham for almost 40 years, but this will be my first time at Dayton and I'm really looking forward to it. Special thanks to John WA5VVT, Art WA8VSJ, Butch KOBS, Gary W7YO, and Larry WA9VRH for helping prepare the CCA for Dayton this year...including hotel accommodations, advertising, and the CCA Banquet on Friday night, May 14th.

We're working hard to improve the quality and content of the articles we publish in the *Signal*, but we need your help. If you have a technical article or some Collins-related "Technical Tips" you would like to contribute for future issues, please contact Gene Duprey, K1GD via email at: gene_duprey@comsys.rockwell.com or via the CCA P.O. Box. I want to thank Gene, K1GD for heading up the newsletter committee...please support his efforts.

See you at Dayton. 73