

Cedar Rapids Meet Long on Activities, Fun

More than 30 rabid Collins radio enthusiasts gathered in Cedar Rapids, Iowa August 9-11 for the annual summer meeting of the Collins Collectors Association.

The Longbranch Motor Inn was again our headquarters as the attendees gathered Friday evening for a Social Hour in the convention center. Members from across the country attended the event in the hometown of the Collins Radio Company.

Early the next morning the group took a tour of the Com-Central communication station at the Collins plant and inspected the huge antenna farm. Later the group made a special VIP inspection of the Linn County History Center exhibit dealing with company

May 15-18, 1997

Reservations Due Soon for Dayton

It is time to reserve your hotel room and annual banquet dinner reservation for the 1997 Dayton Hamvention. We have a block of 40 rooms reserved at the Radisson hotel and they will go fast. This year the rooms are \$89.00 a night plus tax. The hotel requires an \$80.00 deposit per room and must be in the form of a personal check. Credit cards may be used at check-out to settle your account but cannot be used for reservations. First check-in date is Thursday, May 15 and last check-out date is Sunday, May 18.

The annual Collins Collectors Association banquet reservations are \$25.00 each and must be made on a separate check, payable to the Collins Collectors Association. The dinner will take place Friday evening, May 16 at the Radisson Hotel and is open to anyone. More information on the banquet program will follow.

A reservation flyer is contained with this issue of the Signal. If you have any questions, please call the CCA treasurer, George DuBose, AC4FQ, by telephone or FAX (954) 434-0722. You will receive a confirmation of your room reservation and your banquet tickets in the mail.

You must also make your flea market reservations and order entrance tickets. These items are handled directly by the Dayton Hamvention people.

founder Art Collins. The History Center assembled the beautiful display with the help of the Collins family, former employees, several members of the CCA and others interested in telling the story of Collins and the company's impact on the Cedar Rapids area. The exhibit features an operating S-Line station and many pieces of vintage equipment and documents.

Back at the hotel, Ben Stearns presented a slide program on the life of Art Collins and excerpts from his forthcoming biography on the founder. Butch Schartau, KOB5, and Jay Miller, KK5IM, gave clinics on restoration and painting of equipment and fabricating small parts from polyester resin castings.

A wide selection of Collins equipment was on display in the meeting room. During breaks the attendees participated in an exercise using the new Grading Standards Data Sheet and an interesting discussion of the results followed. The general agreement was that the Grading Standards indeed helped those participating speak a more common language.

Saturday evening a dinner and banquet brought the attendees and many former Collins employees together for a good dinner and a talk by Warren Amfahl, retired engineer.

At dawn on Sunday it was off to the Cedar Valley Amateur Radio Club's annual hamfest and swap meet where it was "every man for himself" as anything remotely resembling Collins equipment was scrutinized and evaluated. A few lucky souls made some deals but it was fun for all who attended.

One additional highlight of this year's meeting was a well-detailed map showing points of "Collins" interest in the Cedar Rapids area. Many folks availed themselves of this opportunity to visit the various manufacturing and laboratory facilities as well as historical sites in the area.

Our sincere thanks goes to meeting chairman Rod Blocksme, KODAS, for his planning and management of the event and to all the Collins employees who made our visit so successful and so much fun.



At the Mike with Bill Wheeler

Chairman, Collins Collectors Association

In this issue you will read about our summer meeting where we toured the Collins Radio exhibit located in the History Center in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. We were treated to an exceptional VIP tour of the newly constructed display featuring the life of founder Art Collins and the company he built. I hope I speak for all the folks who were there when I say it was a pure pleasure and honor to experience the fascinating story of Art and to see the display of equipment. This type of historical collection has long been a dream of the Collins Collectors Association, but the tragedy of the situation is that the History Center is losing the use of their building and will be forced to relocate the entire Collins display as well as other exhibits dealing with the history of the area.

As an association I personally feel we have a responsibility, and an obligation to some degree, to support the History Center in Cedar Rapids as they attempt to relocate. Their largest task is to generate enough funds to insure a permanent home for the exhibits. They will be soliciting support from local, state and federal sources and Rockwell International will also be involved. At this time, however, it is unknown what level of support will be available from these entities.

It would be disastrous to future Collins collectors, future amateurs and to future citizens of the United States if we do not preserve and document the life of Arthur Collins and the Collins Radio Company. I do not think either will pass this way again.

I will be keeping the membership informed as to when and how contributions may be made as well as the progress of the project. It is my best guess that the History Center will be ready for our help in the middle of 1997. If you have any suggestions or comments, please contact me at 417-532-7710 or contact the History Center's curator, Linda Langston, at 319-362-1501.



Vanity Calls Abounding!

Heard a new call but the voice is familiar? You are not alone! Hundreds of hams recently received calls issued by the FCC under its new vanity callsign program.

Many members of the CCA have taken advantage of this program to either get their old calls back or receive a new call in accordance with the new FCC regulations. The proliferation of new calls has Net Control operators for many HF nets scratching their heads to match a new call to a familiar voice.

If you recently received a new callsign and would like to have a new CCA membership reflecting the change, please send \$1 to the CCA in care of KK5IM at 5402 1/2 Morningside Avenue, Dallas, TX 75206 and he will make you a new membership certificate. We'll publish a list of new calls in the next issue of the *Signal* as well as change your membership information.

The \$1 covers the cost of the new certificate and postage to mail it to you. After dues renewal early next year, all renewed members will receive a "1997" sticker to apply to their certificates testifying to your current status as a CCA member. Dues renewal notices will go out in January.

**Don't Forget Dayton
May 15-19, 1997**

S-Line & KWM-2 Painting
A-Line St. James Gray Overspray
75A-4 • KWS-1 • 51J- Front Panel
Repainting and NEW Custom Lettering
30S-1 Dials
Butch Schartau KOBS
507-288-0044

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As most of you know, the Great Lakes area has had some significant snowfall already! I guess that means that we will have to wait until 1997 for more of those 80 degree days! With the colder weather comes winter propagation conditions. Add that to the fact that the new sunspot cycle will really be on the upswing soon; and what we will have is great conditions to run our nets in! It wasn't so long ago that I was able to hear 90% of the country on 20 meters on Sunday afternoon, when I used to run the net from here in the Detroit area. At present, I can hear 50% of the country if I am lucky! So be forewarned—the Collins Nets are going to get more crowded as the conditions get better! This is good for our check-in numbers, but those of you that were around for the last cycle peak will remember how crowded the bands were and how much more QRM there was! It will take the cooperation of many stations to keep the nets running smoothly. Keep in mind that if you have committed to helping with a certain net, by all means, show up! If you can't make it, try to let someone else know so they can cover for you.

Another issue that I would like to address here is a real can of worms! In general, the Grading Standards for Used Collins Amateur Radio Equipment has been accepted and abided by pretty well. I want to thank all those members that have taken the time to familiarize themselves with those standards and encourage their use whenever one rates a piece of gear to sell or trade. However, many folks on the nets are still using the word "mint" to describe many pieces of equipment they list on the net. In my opinion, the word "mint" is overused and abused. I have always borrowed the definition of mint from the coin and train collectors, i.e., a piece that has never been unboxed, unpacked, unsealed, opened, circulated or used in any way! The CCA is not as hard-nosed about the grading standards

as I am; however, it is my observation that there are many well worn pieces of equipment that are represented as "mint"! I think we as a group should insist that everyone use our grading standards when they advertise equipment in a CCA sanctioned event. The last two sentences under the heading "Mint Condition" in the CCA Grading Standards state: "The phrase mint condition is a very over used one when describing the condition of radio equipment. There are very few Collins radios which actually qualify as mint! For the last 5 years, one of my goals as Net Manager, has been to eliminate the misuse of the designation "Mint Condition." So when a piece of gear that is really in Mint Condition appears, there will be no misunderstandings!

Finally, with regard to the Tuesday and Thursday evening get togethers on 75 meters, please note that all references to the net times will be in local times. On the east coast and parts of the Midwest, this means that the round tables begin at 2100 and run to 2300 EST or EDT! The reason that the times do not coincide with UTC is that the later starting times allow folks to get dinner out of the way, and also gives the folks on the west coast a chance to check in. We tried keeping the Sunday nets on local times too, but the net preceding ours stays with UTC and we conflicted with them during seasonal time changes. So, at the moment, we have to follow UTC time on our Sunday afternoon nets.

Thanks to all who assist with the nets!
-73 de Floyd, W8RO (ex KF8AT)



The following is a report of check-ins to the Sunday afternoon 20 meter net. This list includes "for the numbers," technical and swap:

Date	Check-Ins	Comments
September 1	51	
September 8	51	
September 15		No Report
September 22		No Report
September 29	65	
October 6		No Report
October 13	57	
October 20		No Report
October 27	28	CQWW
November 3	99	
November 11	82	

-73 de Butch, KOBS

Join Us on the Air!

14.263 MHz
Sundays
2000Z
3805 Khz
Tuesdays and
3875 Khz Thursdays
0100Z

Sunday for Technical and Swap.
Tuesday and Thursday for ragchew.

August 9-11

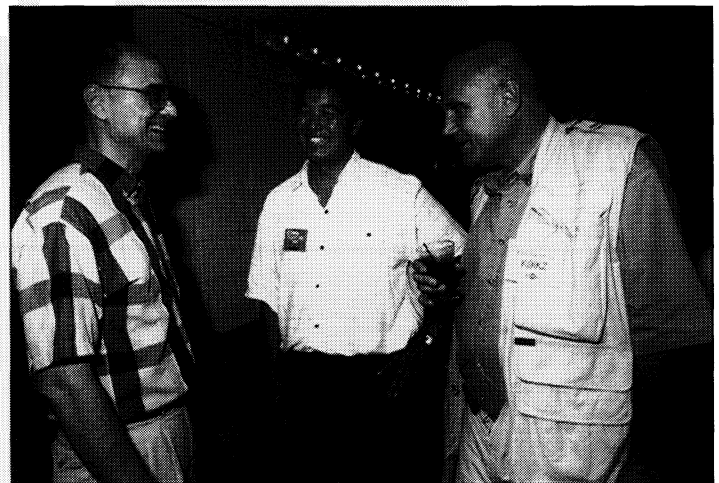
Members Enjoy Annual Cedar Rapids Meet



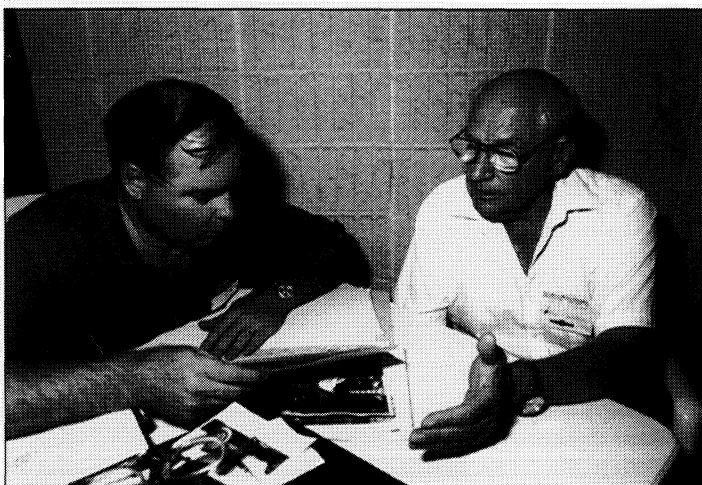
The attendees of the 1996 Cedar Rapids meet gather for a group picture in front of the massive billboard antennas at the Com-Central antenna farm near the Collins main plant.
-Photos by Jay Miller, KK5IM



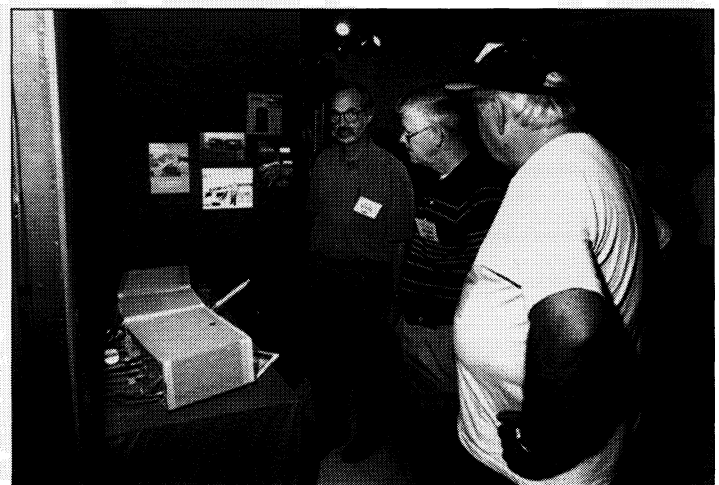
Warren Bruene, W5OLY, explains a point of radio theory to an attentive group during the hospitality get-together.



Rod Blocksome, KODAS, Floyd Soo, W8RO (ex-KF8AT), and Ron Steinberg, K9IKZ, share a laugh during the hospitality hour at the Longbranch.



Jim Stitzinger, WA3CEX, and Chuck Carney, W5PWV look over some historic Collins photographs from Chuck's collection. Carney was the marketing manager for the Collins amateur product line in the 1960s.



Bill Carns, N7OTQ, Gene Robinson, N5LDX, and Gene Holcombe, N5ZDF, admire the working S-Line amateur station at the Linn County History Center during the group's VIP tour of the Art Collins Exhibit.

Your Help is Needed

Technical Data Sheets Well Underway

The primary vehicle for sharing technical information about Collins amateur equipment is our Technical Data Sheet program.

Our little four-page newsletter is designed to keep the membership informed of people and events within our organization. There is insufficient room to go into great depth on technical issues so important to the restoration and operation of our equipment.

Contained with this issue are two Data Sheets dealing with painting and restoration and small parts fabrication. In 1997 we plan to greatly expand the scope of our Data Sheets with detailed bulletins on service, modifications and techniques. There is a great deal of raw information available and it will require some effort on the part of the membership to bring it to publication.

It is our intent to make these Data Sheets attractive as well as informative and as error free as possible. That is the easy part. To gather the information, make photographs

and drawings and write the technical story requires resources that are in the hands of the membership.

We will start off 1997 with a modification Data Sheet dealing with the 180S-1 antenna tuner and a comprehensive listing and cross-reference to electron tubes used in all Collins amateur equipment. Floyd Soo is working on a comprehensive Data Sheet for the 30S-1 power amplifier and others are hard at work on information for simple service and electronic evaluation of equipment.

We would like your input and participation on other subjects for Data Sheets. Our format allows for up to 16 pages for a Data Sheet so there is plenty of room. It is our intent to avoid "lifting" previously published material from Collins catalogs and the like so our results will depend, to some degree, on originality and creativity.

Other input necessary for a successful publication is a supply of feature stories on

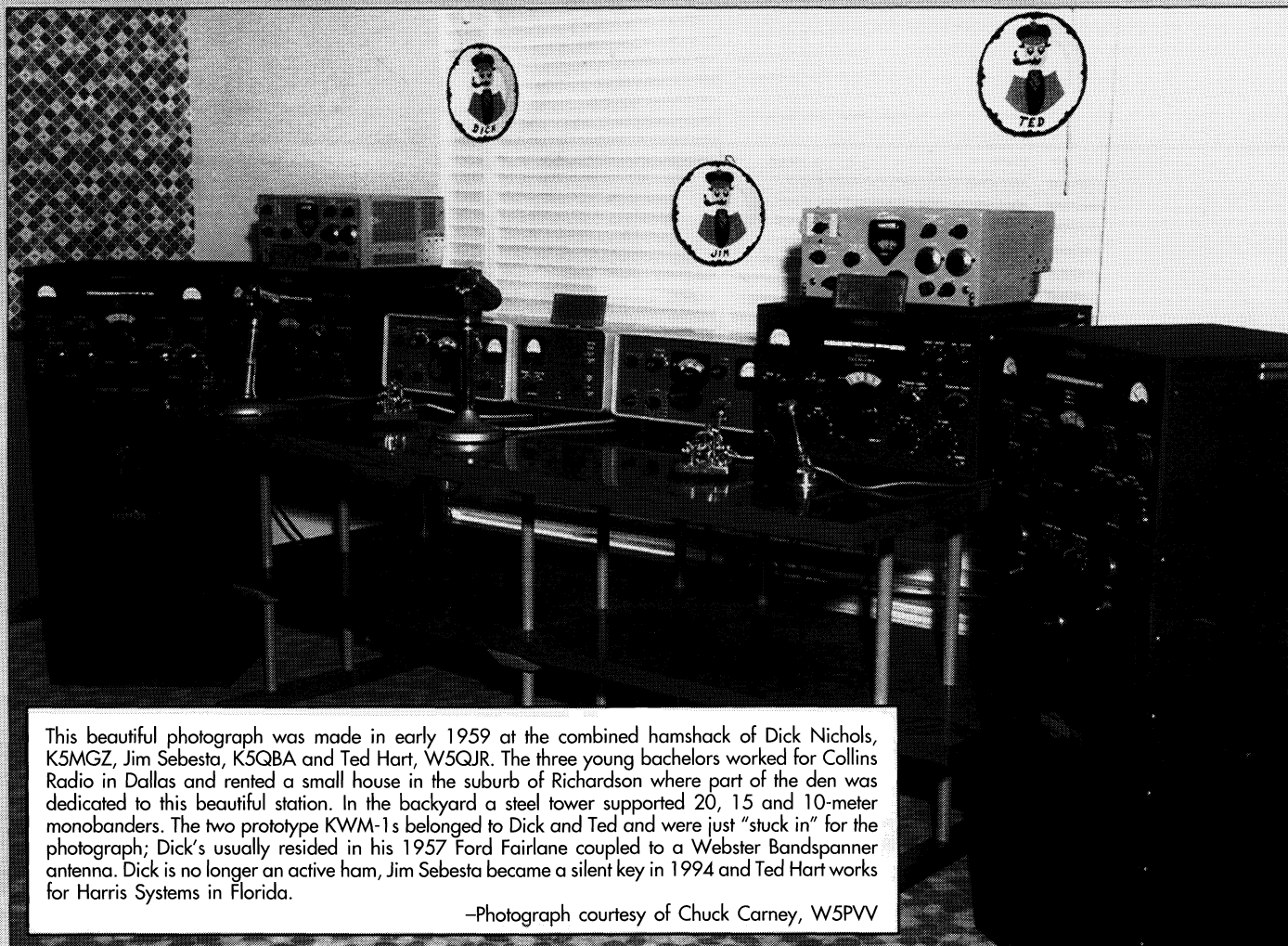
interesting people in our organization. There are many hams in our group with colorful amateur radio careers whose stories need to be told. You don't have to be a Pulitzer prize winning author to do a story on someone you know. Simply contact the editor with your idea and get after it!

Photographs of your shack are always welcome as are pictures of interesting equipment you've come across. If you've got a question about something Collins related, there's a good chance others out there are looking for the answer as well.

Please give us some input and make a commitment now to share your talent or knowledge with the group.

**1997 Dues Notices Will
Be Mailed in January!
This is the last
Signal for 1996**

A Look Back in Time...



This beautiful photograph was made in early 1959 at the combined hamshack of Dick Nichols, K5MGZ, Jim Sebesta, K5QBA and Ted Hart, W5QJR. The three young bachelors worked for Collins Radio in Dallas and rented a small house in the suburb of Richardson where part of the den was dedicated to this beautiful station. In the backyard a steel tower supported 20, 15 and 10-meter monobanders. The two prototype KWM-1s belonged to Dick and Ted and were just "stuck in" for the photograph; Dick's usually resided in his 1957 Ford Fairlane coupled to a Webster Bandspanner antenna. Dick is no longer an active ham, Jim Sebesta became a silent key in 1994 and Ted Hart works for Harris Systems in Florida.

-Photograph courtesy of Chuck Carney, W5PVV