

HAMFESTING MADE SIMPLE

by "The Old Goat"

1. *Look at a road map, figure out where you are going, and take a map in the car.* An astounding number of people don't do this. They just hear there's a hamfest somewhere north of the Equator and take off in the car. After they get completely lost, they complain that talk-in isn't being very helpful. Is this dumb, or what?
2. *Carpool.* It's more fun, cuts expenses, and helps the parking lot crunch. A few hamfests charge admission by the carload, so you might save even more.
3. *Arrive early.* Whatever the announced closing time, these days most 1-day hamfests are in the bucket by noon or 1 PM. Most action takes place in the first three hours.
4. *Find an alternative food source.* As you near the hamfest site, note places to eat lunch that you'll pass on the way home. If the hamfest food looks tasty and costs less than your car payment, fine. If it's absurdly over-priced or smells like carpet scraps, you have another choice.
5. *Find out about license rests ahead of time.* Contact sponsors for availability, location, time, and pre-registration. Some hamfests take walk-ins, but many do not. Be there on time, with all the stuff you need. *Expect to wait several hours for the results*, especially if a lot of people were tested.
6. *Tailgate sales are 'as-is.'* If a deal seems too good to be true, it probably is. Don't know enough to buy wisely? Then travel with people who do, and learn from them.
7. *Beware purchases to be shipped later.* If you're paying for something to be made for you (hat, badge, T-shirt, etc.), tell the vendor what time you plan to leave and that you'll want either the goods or your money back at that time -- no if's, and's, or sob stories. "I'll put it in the mail tomorrow," is usually English for "Kiss your money goodbye, chum."
8. *Don't buy illegal stuff*, such as pirated software or theft-of-service devices. Check for serial numbers on merchandise that should have one. Police have been known to arrest vendors of illegal merchandise at hamfests, if the sponsors haven't thrown the creeps out, first.
9. *Print plainly on your door prize stub.* If they guess wrong when they try to decipher your name and call, and read it wrong over the PA system, you'll never know you could have taken home a prize.
10. *Use common sense.* In hot weather, wear a hat, use anti-sunburn goop, and drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids. If you put purchases in the car, stow them out of sight. Always be careful with your wallet and your HT, and lock your car. The Old Goat saw one guy get his HT back after he left it behind in the men's john; don't count on being so lucky.
11. *Check out hamfest flyers and freebie literature.* These are found at the ARRL table, at the place where you deposit your prize ticket stub, and on vendor tables.

PROGRAMS . . . PROGRAMS

JULY: Dick Stauffer WB3JCE on astronomy
AUGUST: Bob Josuweit WA3PZO on "Early Trans-Atlantic Communications"