

HAAM Radio Continues to Carry Fellowship

Under the heading HAAM, one learns that HAAM radio, established in 1953, is an international fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous members who also hold amateur radio licenses. Normally, these operators are called "hams" but the fellowship added an extra "A" to the word to combine ham radio and AA. We extend warmth and friendship to our members who have difficulty attending regular meetings. AA shortwave listeners are also invited to participate.

Box 459 carried a nice article about our fellowship in the October-November 1992 issue. I also wrote an article about this group in the Area 24 Newsletter several years ago. I thought maybe a lot of new members may be interested in our fellowship especially if they are ham radio operators. Also for those that read my earlier article, a update on our work.

We have approximately 300 members around the U.S. and Canada. We also have had members in the UK and Mexico. Sometimes we receive calls from ships in various oceans and mobile operators traveling in remote areas. Very often we hear from a mail carrier in the remote area of Montana who travels for miles and spends very long periods on the road. His only AA meeting is to contact our fellowship on the air.

In the interest of anonymity, the regular meetings on the air are called "Freinds of Bill W." Moreover the meetings are more like informal get-togethers than meetings because the radio bands are open to anyone. We don't have a format as such. One member might say "How has your week been?" ; another will answer "Great! and I went to a meeting last night where the topic was gratitude". There might be news about about a new member or that we haven't heard from a oldtimer in a while. Many times a AA member may be tuning the band and run across us by accident. This person is usually surprised to find us. Are we really sure they found us by "accident?" Remembering to preserve the anonymity of individual members is hardly a problem since the HAAMs know each other mainly by their call letters. My call letters are W0SDI. We get to know each other pretty well over the years. Nowever, we have never met each other face to face. This changed in the year 2000 because we set up a hospitality room at the International Convention in Minneapolis. Many of us met for the first time at the hospitality room. It was a exciting time for us and we got together for a meeting and dinner. We plan on doing the same thing in Toronto in 2005.

Robert B., call letters K6LX ,in Santa Barbara, CA is the coordinator of HAAM. Yours truly is the net control for most of the nets we operate. Below are the frequencies and times we operate for those in Area 24 that are hams or just want to listen as short wave listners.

... (net times and freq are omitted, see main page) ...

I have been in touch with AA's all over the world and made some wonderful friends. We have a saying that if you make a AA contact today, chances are you won't drink today or get into trouble. Those hams in remote areas of the country both here and in Canada are grateful for our HAAM group as this may be the only AA meeting they will get for many weeks. It's like holding hands across the country. Sometimes we will have someone stop by and say "who is Bill W.?" We just explain that we are free from alcohol and share our sobriety. I remember once someone thought we were friends of Bill Clinton the past President. We do not promote AA in any way therefore don't violate the Traditions.

In closing, I think it's a unique way to 12 step and carry the message by just being there. It's a solid support system. If someone is not going to meetings, it may remind them to go. If someone finds us on the air it may be just the thing they need for that day. I look forward every day to my "on the air" meeting. Finally, in the language of ham radio, I send you my 73's (best wishes), or my 88's (love and kisses), or my 24's (stay sober a day at a time). We use that language that the untrained listener cannot understand when we are on the air.

If anyone wants more information about HAAM, please contact me.

Yours in the fellowship,

Gary WØSDI