

WHY HAM RADIO?

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Ham radio's fun. It exercises the brain. It enhances knowledge of geography. It adds dimensions to interpersonal contacts. It remains popular throughout the free world. It's an effective means of emergency communications. It's less expensive than you'd expect. And it's an easy hobby to get into. If none of this appeals to you, please read a little further. You might learn a little of what many hams in our local Airstream Club are talking about.

Ham radio has been around at least since "The Radio Act" of 1912 formalized the amateur radio service. While an old communications medium, ham radio is not threatened by extinction. On the contrary, amateur radio continues to grow in popularity. From under 438,000 licensed hams in the USA in 1981, today there are OVER 757,000! Ham radio continues to appeal to many people of all ages around the world.

How relevant is ham radio today? When natural disasters devastate an area, ham radio operators mobilize and provide life-saving communications throughout the region and to the message relay centers across the USA. This story is oft-repeated wherever communities' communications are disrupted. Across the globe, ham radio volunteers provide essential communications for special events like community-organized bike rides, fun runs, and other events large and small. The portability, wireless operability, and invulnerability of ham radio communications make them an ideal mode for special events and disaster response.

Ham radios are battery-powered, a perfect fit for the 12 volt systems in Airstreams. Volunteer ham radio operators learn and maintain skills to allow them to arrange temporary networks and maintain effective communications. This allows ham radio operators to stay connected despite disaster conditions. The other 99 percent of the time, ham radio operators enjoy connecting with their virtual community, ranging from less than one mile to thousands of miles distant.

Common communication modes are vulnerable to strong winds, flooding, and other disaster conditions. Landlines and cellular towers depend upon extensive infrastructure. Failure of a key segment can render inoperable an entire area's phone communication. Not so ham radio. When all else fails – Ham Radio!

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