

Almost as long as there's been ham radio, there's been concern about the next generation of amateurs. A peek into WB2MGP's annual Dayton Youth Forum should help give you confidence in our hobby's future.

Reaching For the Stars at the Dayton Youth Forum

BY CAROLE PERRY,* WB2MGP

This forum was over the top," and "What an experience for those kids!" were just some of the comments overheard as attendees of the 28th Hamvention Youth Forum left the packed room. This year the "feel good" forum featured eight young, talented hams (*Photo A*) who impressed the members of the standing-room-only audience who were there to show their usual, annual support for the well-prepared young presenters.

There was an added element of excitement that was actually palpable in the room that morning. The eight young presenters already knew that, in addition to all the anticipation of doing their talks, and of being featured as "stars" of the forum, they would be receiving many wonderful gifts that have been donated for them by manufacturers and other groups. This year there was something else for them to be excited about. Really excited. The eight young presenters, along with eight other young hams picked from the audience, were chosen to attend an ARRL sponsored luncheon after the Youth Forum featuring astronaut Mike Fincke, KE5AIT (See *Photo B*).

2015 Presenters

Here's a quick introduction to each of this year's young presenters and their topics:

KD8UAY: "Contesting for Elementary Students" – Tyler Hammond, KD8UAY, age 13, was first up as a featured

speaker. He gave an excellent presentation about "Contesting for Elementary Students." Tyler was recommended to me as a young presenter by Jim Mayercak, WX8J, who is a teacher at the Dresden Elementary School, this year's winner of the terrific contest for school kids, "School Club Roundup."

KF5BEW/KF5FYS: "Youth and The Future of Ham Radio" – Two charming young sisters, Abigail, KF5BEW, age 18, and Kendra Wilson, KF5FYS, age 16, were next at the podium. I am always delighted to have girls well-represented at any youth forum I moderate. These two young ladies were wonderful. Their enthusiasm shone through as they discussed "Youth and The Future of Ham Radio." They spoke about getting youth involved in the radio community, contesting, and nets for kids.

KG7HBY: "The Friday Night QSO Party" – Sam Case, KG7HBY, 11 years old, was one of the youngsters recommended by Ed Engleman, KG8CX, who runs the YACHT net (Young Amateur Communications Ham Team), especially for young people to come together on the air. Sam's topic was "The Friday Night QSO Party." One of the goals of the Youth Forum is for the presenters, like Sam, to be role models and show the youngsters in the audience all the fun things to get involved with when on the air. Check out: <http://yachthams.webstarts.com/index.html>.

KB1YNK: "Pneumatic Mast Systems for the Radio Amateur" – Jesse Shulins, KB1YNK, is 17 years old and was recommended by my good friend Bruce Blain, K1BG, as well as our friend Ed at the YACHT group. Jesse's won-



Photo A. The 2015 Dayton Youth Forum featured eight young presenters, ranging in age from 10 to 18. (Photo courtesy of Ed Engleman, KG8CX)



Photo B. After the forum, the eight presenters and eight additional young people from the audience were treated by the ARRL to lunch with Astronaut Mike Fincke, KE5AIT. (Photo by Bob Inderbitzen, NQ1R)

derful presentation was "Pneumatic Mast Systems for the Radio Amateur." He spoke about how he made use of a pneumatic (air driven) mast to support antennas, instead of using a more conventional crank up tower. His Power Point presentation was excellent.

AE4FH/WX4TVJ: "Two Newly Licensed Hams' Experiences in Antenna Selection, Construction, and Use

for VHF Applications" – Good friend Rich Siff, WA4BUE, from the terrific K4AMG group which has donated wonderful banners to our Youth Forum, recommended our next brother and sister presenters. Faith Hannah, AE4FH, age 10, and brother Zechariah Lea, WX4TVJ, age 12. They wowed the audience with their presentation on "Two Newly Licensed Hams' Experiences in Antenna Selection,



Photo C. One of the most engaging presentations was on "Two Newly Licensed Hams' Experiences in Antenna Selection, Construction, and Use for VHF Applications," by the brother-and-sister team of Zechariah (WX4TVJ) and Faith Hannah (AE4FH) Lea. (Photo courtesy of Charles Kirmuss, W0CBK)



Photo D. Special guest Tom Jose, VU2TO (right), spoke about his work with the police and other emergency communication groups in India during disaster situations. He is accompanied here at the podium by his escort Mr. S. Suri, VU2MY. (Photo courtesy of Mary Feryan, KF6QJN)

Construction, and Use for VHF Applications.” Their aplomb at the podium (Photo C) had everyone smiling. Their dad, James, WX4TV, recorded the forum for us. When the videos are edited and completed, they will be available on request for free, by contacting me at <wb2mvp@gmail.com>. Through my Radio Club of America (RCA) Youth

Activities program, these DVDs are made available to teachers and instructors of young people who show them to youngsters to inspire and motivate them.

N8CAM: Using N3FJP Software for Contesting – Cameron Thurston, N8CAM, age 16, spoke about the advantages of using N3FJP software



Photo E. A high point of the forum for the kids — as well as author WB2MGP — was the chance to meet and, in some cases, have lunch with Astronaut Mike Fincke, KE5AIT. (Photo by Bob Inderbitzen, NQ1R)

in various activities like radio contesting. Ralph Irish, W8ROI, who is the Youth Forum prize manager, recommended Cameron, who had a well-prepared talk along with his Power Point presentation.

VU2TO: Disaster Communications in India – A surprise special guest was an international visitor, 17-year-old Tom Jose, VU2TO, who joined us along with his escort Mr. S. Suri, VU2MY, who is the founder and chairman (emeritus) of India’s National Institute of Amateur Radio (Photo D). Young Tom gave a superb presentation about his work with the police and other emergency communication groups in India during disaster situations. The audience cheered as Tom won a Kenwood HT and then was chosen as one of the winners of an invitation to go to the astronaut luncheon. You had to believe that karma was there for Tom at this year’s Youth Forum. The next thing that happened was Charles Kirmuss, W0CBK, a member of my RCA Youth Activities committee who had donated the stipend checks for my presenters, reached into his wallet and presented Tom with a \$100 stipend as well. It was a beautiful moment in the true spirit of amateur radio.

Prizes and an Out-of-This World Lunch

The rest of the donated prizes were given out as the two ARRL representatives, Education Services Manager Debra Johnson, K1DMJ, and Marketing Manager Bob Inderbitzen, NQ1R, escorted the 16 lucky young hams (and me! - Photo E) to the eagerly anticipated luncheon with an astronaut.

The interaction between Mike Fincke and the young hams was terrific (Photo F). The ARRL’s hosting and sponsoring of this event in partnership with the Youth Forum provided “the experience of a lifetime” (most common feedback remark from their parents) for 16 delighted young hams.

My personal thanks to the co-sponsors of this year’s Youth Forum who added that extra special dimension of excitement: The Dayton Amateur Radio Association (DARA) and its terrific members like President Don Dubon, N6JRL, Chairman of Forums Dave Hendricks, N8HSO, and Treasurer Michael Kalter, W8CI, all made sure everything was in order behind the scenes for us; ICOM, which has been a consistent supporter and sponsor of the young presenters, gave each of them an ID-51A HT, a customized jacket, and

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an ICOM backpack with the RCA Young Achiever patch on it. In addition, an ICOM IC-7100 was donated for a lucky adult in the audience. This is always a big hit.

Each presenter also got a \$100 stipend and an RCA Young Achiever certificate from my RCA Youth Activities program. MFJ and Kenwood were generous with their donations as well. This year we welcomed DX Engineering and QCWA as

new sponsors. L'Anse Creuse ARC, Delaware Lehigh ARC, AMSAT, CQ, and the Dayton Stamp Club all made contributions that added to the wondrous experience for the young people at the forum.

As always, be sure to recommend any talented, articulate young hams you encounter during the year to me. See you all in 2016!

Photo F. Astronaut KE5AIT took time to sign autographs as well as chat with the young hams during the ARRL-sponsored luncheon. (Photo by Bob Inderbitzen, NQ1R)

