

SPECTRUM MONITOR

On the Road for Youth Amateur Radio

By Carole Perry

2015 was host to a whirlwind of experiences for Radio Club of America (RCA) Youth Activities, showcasing the best and brightest



young hams. In May, I moderated the 28th annual Dayton Hamvention Youth Forum with eight terrific RCA Young Achievers giving fabulous presentations to a standing-room-only audience.

Eight more young hams were chosen from the audience to join them for an American Radio Relay League (ARRL)-sponsored lunch with an astronaut following the forum. For 90 minutes, the youngsters asked questions and interacted with ham radio astronaut Mike Fincke. By all accounts, it was an incredible experience for the kids.

In August, I attended the Boxboro ARRL New England Convention in Boston and met with several young hams from the Clay Center Amateur Radio Club. It's always gratifying to see youngsters getting exposure to ham radio in schools and after-school programs. Several of these youngsters would make good future candidates to present at the Hamvention Youth Forum.

I traveled on to Torrance, California, in September to moderate a youth forum and keynote a luncheon at HamCon, the ARRL Southwest Division Convention. I had several 10- and 11-year-olds from the Dorothy Grant Elementary School speak about their experiences with ham radio in their classroom. Meghan Tahbas, 17, also spoke about how her 4-H amateur radio club spoke with the USS Pampanito submarine on its radio. This opened up a whole new initiative for the RCA Youth Activities committee to pursue — getting ham radio classes and clubs introduced through 4-H organizations.

While in the Los Angeles area, I was invited to visit the set of the Tim Allen show “Last Man Standing.” Allen’s character is a salesman at

This opened up a whole new initiative for the RCA Youth Activities committee to pursue — getting ham radio classes and clubs introduced through 4-H organizations.

Outdoor Man, a survivalist and a ham radio operator. It was great fun sitting at the actual ham station on the set. Many of the crew are hams, thanks to the support and encouragement of producer John Amodeo.

Also in September, I spoke about our RCA Youth Activities initiatives at the Wings Over the Rockies Air and Space Museum in Denver. We have supported the ham radio station there with donations of radios and ARRL license manuals for the youngsters in the program.

At Pacificon in Northern California in October, I moderated a youth forum with a talented group of young hams who gave terrific presentations about their exciting experiences with ham radio. Fourteen-year-old Rohan Agrawal gave a wonderful talk about his follow-up RCA Technical Symposium presentation last year that discussed combining Bluetooth technology with ham radio. Nine-year-old Sujay Ojha spoke about “A Fourth Grader’s Journey into Ham Radio.” He also had a PowerPoint presentation about the role of radio during earthquakes in Nepal when he was there. Rahul Tewari, 15, spoke about his role as the net control of the Bay Area net repeater. Tewari is in high school under the tutelage of teacher Dwain Fairweather from the Valley Christian JH Satellite Tracking program. Nora Witkowski, 6, spoke



Galen Asphaug, 2015 RCA Young Achiever

about her ability to make new friends through her involvement from a young age with ham radio. Teacher Darryl Paule, KI6MSP, ended the session with a great presentation about combining science, technology engineering and math (STEM) with radio in the classroom.

Also in October, the RCA Youth Activities committee made a substantial donation to a group of ham radio operators who were going to Cuba on Expedition T42US. One group member, middle school coordinator Nancy Yoshida, coordinated the radio demonstrations in a school they visited in Havana. Our committee will follow up on several international initiatives in 2016 supporting young hams worldwide. (See MCCmag.com for more details on global efforts to introduce young people to amateur radio.)

In November, at the RCA Banquet and Awards weekend in Silicon Valley, we featured a new RCA Young Achiever who presented at the Tech-

nical Symposium. Fifteen-year-old Galen Asphaug, KK6NNP, gave a presentation titled "My Nine Years of Experiences with Electronics." For the past five years, we've had dynamic, talented youngsters giving presentations at the symposium. They all have demonstrated technical expertise and creativity in wireless communications. We are privileged to showcase these young ham radio operators where they are exposed to tremendous networking opportunities. I also follow up with their education and career choices for years after these opportunities. It has been a very rewarding experience for all of us.

In February, I will conduct a Youth Forum at HamCation in Orlando, Florida. In May, I will moderate the Dayton Hamvention Youth Forum and Instructors' Forum for the 29th year. The three-hour youth forum provides a venue to feature the best and brightest young hams. This coming year, I will fea-

ture at least eight talented youngsters speaking on different technical topics to an extremely supportive audience. Many manufacturers, such as Icom America, MFJ Enterprises, DX Engineering and JVKENWOOD, are major contributors to the forum along with RCA.

The goals for the RCA Youth Activities program continue to be the support and encouragement of young, talented hams and technical students, both as individuals and in their classrooms. We give monetary support along with books and equipment to schools, scouting groups and youth groups that instruct in technical studies and in ham radio. Be sure to recommend talented youngsters who are interested in speaking at different venues to me. We remain dedicated to the support and encouragement of young people in technical hobbies and pursuits. ■

Carole Perry, WB2MGP, is a Radio Club of America (RCA) fellow and director. She founded the RCA Youth Activities Committee in 2007. The program assists 33 schools and three museums. The committee has given 78 RCA Young Achiever awards to encourage students under 18 who demonstrate excellence in wireless communications. To get involved with or to make a contribution to RCA Youth Activities, contact Perry at wb2mgp@gmail.com.