If you’re concerned about the quantity and quality of today’s young hams, sit back in your rocker and read on...

29th Dayton Youth Forum and Counting

Plus a Quick Trip to the Rockies

BY CAROLE PERRY, WB2MGP

By all accounts, this year’s Dayton Hamvention Youth Forum (Photo A) had all the ingredients for a highly informative, successful — and 29th annual — showcasing of our young hams. Except for the fact that we had standing room only (Photo B), and actually ran out of pre-printed prize tickets, it was a wonderful experience for our young presenters.

Denver Before Dayton...

Before telling you about Dayton, though, I’d like to go back in time by one weekend, when I had the honor of conducting the Youth Forum at HamCon Colorado outside Denver with two experienced RCGA (Radio Club of America) Young Achievers and two new hams, all of whom were fairly local to the convention. I always like to showcase local youngsters at the regional forums I do across the country so that everyone becomes aware of their local young talent.

Divyam Mishra, KD0OOE, age 16, is an RCGA Young Achiever who has been at several forums with me, including the Dayton Youth Forum two years ago. He spoke about the research he is doing at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Austin Schaller, KDOFAA, is 21 and is an electrical engineering student at Le Tourneau University. Austin, too, has been a presenter at many forums with me, discussing his research on fractal antennas. These are two incredibly talented young hams.

Nicholas Hess, KE0FGI, is 13 years old. He gave a fabulous talk about the opportunities he has had exploring ham radio as a new ham. Cheyenne Sterner, NOCKS, is in the 8th grade and is already a member of at least three local ham radio organizations including Arapahoe County ARRL. All four of these young hams were excellent presenters and I was honored to moderate the Youth Forum.

Everyone involved with the HamConColorado convention and the ARRL Rocky Mountain Division could not have been more welcoming and accommodating. It was a total pleasure to have been invited to this special event!

Descent to Dayton

Descending from HamCon Colorado’s 12,000-foot elevation and catching a flight two days later to Dayton was "interesting." Attending Dayton is like coming home for me. The warmth and helpfulness afforded our Hamvention Youth Forum is superb! For the past 10 months, I have been inter-

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Photo A. For 29 years, Carole Perry, WB2MGP, has been putting impressive young hams in the Dayton spotlight at her annual Youth Forum.
viewing the 11 young hams who ended up being our presenters for the 29th Youth Forum. One more youngster who won the “Young Ham Lends a Hand” contest was recognized as well. His name is Sean Flynn, KD2BFI, and he is 16 years old. Besides promoting ham radio through his 4H STEM presentations, he has logged in over 100 hours at community service events in the past three years. If you know of a young ham who behaves in the spirit of service to his or her community, be sure to send me information about them so they can be considered for next year’s forum.

Before the first youngster took the podium, I thanked Maria Lysandrou, KB9BUS, who spoke at Friday’s Instructors’ Forum on the topic of “Attracting Females into Ham Radio.” This 17-year-old gave excellent suggestions for the high school and higher, recruitment of young women into our hobby and service.

Brandon Giek, WA9REV, age 16 (Photo C), was first to the podium. He spoke about an ARISS (Amateur Radio on the International Space Station) contact in which he was involved and his title was “Cell Phones Down, Radios Up.” He played a video clip of some of the students from Maconquah School asking questions of astronaut Kimiya Yui, KG5BPH, on board the ISS on August 27, 2015. The astronaut spoke of how he was never bored from the views they observed, and how someone gets qualified to be an astronaut.

Ell Musgrave, KM4HFZ, age 15, and Zach Haidari, KM4QIV, from the Mill Springs Academy in Alpharetta, Georgia, spoke wonderfully about “Discovering the Fun and Magic of Digital Radio Communications.” They showed us some of the activities they participate in at their school club, such as Field Day and the School Club Roundup. Their teacher, Martha Muir, W4MSA, was right there, rooting them on.

Photo C. Sixteen-year-old Brandon Giek, WA9REV, was the Youth Forum’s first speaker. His presentation, on a contact with the International Space Station, was titled “Cell Phones Down, Radios Up.”

Photo D. William Ferguson, KJ4EYZ, shared tips on setting up your station for successful DXing. How would he know? Well, he was licensed at age 7 and earned his DXCC at age 8!
Skyler Fennell, KDOWHB, age 17, spoke about "Home Brewing on a Budget." At the HamCon Colorado banquet the previous weekend, Skyler was called up to receive the ARRL Rocky Division 2015 Young Ham of the Year Award. He was then called back to the podium to receive the group's Technical Achievement award. He spoke about his interest in electronics and how it led him into ham radio. He showed slides of all the repeater projects he's been involved with including the STEM school 440-MHz repeater and others using homebrew methods and equipment. Paul, NOAH, and Anna, WQANT, Veal worked with him on the school projects.

William Ferguson, KJ4EYZ, age 14 (Photo D), spoke about "Setting Up a Radio Station to Chase DX." William was the 2015 Youth Plaque winner for the 2015 Virginia QSO Party sponsored by K4AMG. He was first licensed at age 7 and is one of the youngest in the world to receive his DXCC at the age of 8. He spoke about his increased capabilities of contacting a DX station by using advanced DX chasing techniques.

Hope Lea, KM4IPF, age 9, spoke about "Talking through the Birds." We saw slides of her satellite station and she spoke about getting ready for a satellite pass, and actually working a satellite. Her presentation culminated with a short video of her working a satellite and telling us she'd like to work more DX in the future.

Kelsey Seymour, K3LSY, age 17, spoke about "Preparing Yourself: An In-Depth Look at Go-Kits for Emergencies." This young ham has been in scouting for 10 years, and acted as our IT person for setting up all the presentations on the laptop for our young presenters. As part of an Eagle Scout project he put together an "amateur radio go-kit." Besides outlining all the ham gear to prepare, he listed all the personal items to bring along to be self-sufficient for 24 hours. Some of the items listed were personal ID, cash, food, water, flashlight, batteries and so on. Kelsey also suggested practicing using your go-kit during the year at such events as Field Day.

Jacob Nagel, ADOJA, a 16-year-old (Photo E) with a professional sounding speaking voice, was next. His topic was...
“CHIRP—It’s Not Just for the Birds: Using Computer Software to Program Your Radio.” To help minimize the frustration of new hams in programming their radios, Jacob took us through the use of CHIRP with radio programming basics, including exporting listings from Repeaterbook.com.

Marty Sullivan, KC1CWF, age 14, spoke about “Homebrewing Fun and Contesting.” He explained why homebrewing is the way to go, for him. He listed cost, customizing your needs, and fun, as the main reasons he enjoys building his own equipment. His project, which he described in detail, was “antenna switching.” I had the opportunity of observing Marty on the radio while attending the August 2015 ARRL Boxboro convention. We can all be proud of the skill set he has achieved.

Dhruv Rebbi, KC9ZJX, age 11 (Photo F) is in the 6th grade in Bloomington, Illinois. He enjoys dual citizenship with the U.S. and India. Thanks to the efforts of Hamvention’s Michael Kalter, W8CI, in arranging for talented young hams from India to be part of our Youth Forum, young Dhruv was an excellent addition with his terrific presentation. He spoke about his “Inspirations and Accomplishments with Ham Radio.” Dhruv first attended Hamvention in 2013 and got his initial inspiration there to get involved, learn more, and volunteer more. He has been helping communities in the United States and in India with radio communications. This accomplished young ham had to get cut off by me because of time constraints, before he completed his entire presentation. Therefore, he is officially invited back next year to be the very first speaker at the 30th Hamvention Youth Forum.

The incredibly generous sponsors of our Youth Forum are: Radio Club of America (Photo G), ICOM, MFJ, Kenwood, Kirmuss & Associates, L'Anse Creuse ARC, QCWA, Delaware Lehigh ARC, Heil Sound, WSYI, and ARRL. All of our young presenters left the forum with their arms laden with gifts. Other big prizes (Photo H) were given out to adults and to young people in the audience. ICOM generously donated an IC-7100 in addition to radios and other gifts donated by my young speakers. We sincerely appreciate the support of all our sponsors!

Please send any creative ideas or suggestions you may have for our 30th Hamvention Youth Forum next year, to <caroleperry@ix.netcom.com>.