

For more than three decades, WB2MGP has been organizing and moderating the annual Dayton Youth Forum ... and it never gets old!

32 Dayton Youth Forums and Counting

BY CAROLE PERRY,* WB2MGP

It was the 32nd time I'd said, "Welcome to the annual Hamvention Youth Forum," but what a thrill it always is for me to be able to say it. It takes many volunteers to put together this three-hour forum each year, showcasing the talent and creativity of our hobby's next generation; and somehow it all always comes together. A quick look around the large room (Photo A) gave me ample opportunity to identify and thank the many Radio Club of America volunteers and others who donned the yellow ribbon necklace with the medallion saying "Carole's Monitor" (Photo B).

A Hollywood Surprise

It was a terrific surprise for our audience, when right on a pre-arranged cue, the young actor Jet Jurgensmeyer, KEØUWZ (Photo C), who plays Tim Allen's grandson, Boyd,

on the TV show "Last Man Standing," was escorted in by Gordon West, WB6NOA, to address my audience. What a terrific role model this young ham is! He shared, with great enthusiasm, how much fun he was having in ham radio as he and his dad had studied together, got licensed together, and are having wonderful adventures together. I invited Jet to give his own presentation about his adventures next year.

The stars of the forum are, of course, our fabulous and talented young hams who have worked so hard all year to give a great presentation at Hamvention. The theme of the forum this year was "The Inclusiveness of Ham Radio." We had two presenters from different countries, others from different cultures, and all with different abilities and interests.

Connor Black, W4IPC, age 17, was recommended to me by Rich Siff, W4BUE, from the K4AMG Memorial Amateur Radio Club in Virginia. Connor is the president of the Great Bridge High School ARC. He spoke about the fun he has with "Working Satellites and DX Contesting." There is tremen-

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Photo A. The 2019 Hamvention Youth Forum – the 32nd annual showcase of young hams – was well-attended as always. (Photos courtesy of Charles Kimuss, WØCBK)



Photo B. Here are some of our prizes with (left to right) John Slobodnik, N8NXW; Richard Stubbs, KC5NSZ, from MFJ; and Ralph Irish, W8ROI. John and Ralph are from one of our big sponsors, the L'Anse Creuse Amateur Radio Club.



Photo C. TV actor Jet Jurgensmeyer, KE0UWZ, was a surprise visitor to the 2019 Dayton Youth Forum.



Photo D. Presenter Isaac Schofer, AC3EJ, introduces the next speaker, Marissa Robledo, W4AQT.

dous interest across the country now with young hams and contesting. Connor was a great leadoff to our eight young presenters.

Fourteen-year-old Isaac Schofer, AC3CJ, gave an excellent presentation about "The BITX40 Radio Project" that he worked so hard to perfect; while helping and instructing other young people with the project at the KID Museum at the KM3KID Amateur Radio Society. Isaac is also a member of SilverSat, a youth group that is working towards building a CubeSat that they hope to launch into space. Isaac is a perfect example of a young ham who is fortunate enough to have very supportive parents and a great mentor (Elmer), David Bern, W2LNX.

Marissa Robledo, W4AQT, age 12, was introduced by Isaac (Photo D) and spoke enthusiastically about "Why Working Satellites Helps Students." She was recommended and coached by Neil Rapp, WB9VPG. Marissa participated in a science fair project in which she compared the signal strengths of a whip antenna versus a Yagi on satellites. It made me smile to see a 12-year-old YL speak about all the educational benefits of working with satellites.

Next up was Galen Gold, KB6EE, age 20, who had an interesting talk on "Contesting for Youth by Youth with the YARC." Galen is a student at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in upstate New York and is also an officer of the YARC (Young Amateurs Radio Club), WY4RC. The club's efforts to encourage contesting among young hams are very commendable.

Sibi Raja, KE0MWB (Photo E), age 15, was recommended by a radio club with which I have long been affiliated. The Boulder Amateur Radio Club (BARC), through BARC Jr., which was founded years ago by now Silent Keys Ellie and Rip VanWinkle, is still mentoring youngsters and welcoming them into ham radio. Sibi had a really informative presentation about "Working with FEMA and Emergency Preparedness." As I travel around the country, moderating youth forums, I have observed that there is a growing interest and involvement with this topic amongst our teens. I now hand out a list of links for CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), which provides resources for young hams getting involved with the service aspect of our hobby.

Next up to the podium was 13-year-old Vonita Latham, KM4CLT (Photo F). Vonita is a student at the Little Mennonite School in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, where she is will be starting the 8th grade this fall. She comes from a family of eight hams, including older sister Violetta, KM4ATT, who pre-



Photo E. Sibi Raba, KE0WMB, spoke about young hams and emergency communications.



Photo F. Vonita Latham, KM4CLT, followed in the footsteps of her sister, Violetta, who presented at the 2018 Hamvention Youth Forum.



Photo G. Xenia Berger, ZL4YL, traveled all the way from New Zealand to take part in this year's youth forum ... in Xenia, Ohio!

sented at last year's Hamvention Youth Forum. Vonita's topic was her family's involvement with "Boy Scout JOTA," or Jamboree On The Air. I had the privilege of featuring Vonita at my youth forum at the Orlando Hamcation® in February. The audience was just as impressed with her presentation there as in Florida. It's a genuine treat for me to give some of our Hamvention young



Photo H. Jose Foxx, XE3FOX, spoke about LoRa, a spread-spectrum technology widely use by the Internet of Things.

hams an opportunity for a "dress rehearsal" at other conventions.

It was an awesome experience listening to our next speaker, Xenia Berger, ZL4YL, age 18, from New Zealand. She captivated the audience with her beautiful speaking voice and her topic of "Getting Involved in Fun Ways with Amateur Radio." She regaled us with fascinating stories of how



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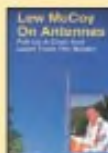
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Photo I. At the end of their presentations, all of the speakers were called up to the front and given a standing ovation by members of the audience.

she and her family have had so many wonderful ham radio adventures in different countries.

Jose Foxx, XE3FOX, age 16 (Photo H), was an eloquent speaker about LoRa technology. LoRa is a form of spread-spectrum modulation and is short for "long range." It is used extensively for communication among "Internet of Things" devices. Jose came to us from Mexico City and worked very hard to be a presenter at the Hamvention Youth Forum.

We were especially pleased to welcome Xenia and Jose who traveled to

the United States with their families to attend Hamvention.

It was obvious that our audience really appreciated the talented and creative young presenters, because at the end, when I called them all up (Photo I), they received a well-deserved standing ovation. It was terrific!

Looking to the Future ... and to Mars

We also had a marvelous guest speaker, Dr. Tamitha Skov, a research scientist best known as the Space Weather Woman (see <[woman.com>\). She gave a fascinating talk \(Photo J\) to the "Mars generation" about how big an impact space weather will have on travel to Mars and then living there. Tamitha is always a welcome speaker at my forums. We appreciate her being there.](http://www.spaceweather</p>
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Lending a Hand

We also announced the two winners of this year's "Young Ham Lends a Hand" contest, sponsored jointly by RCA and QCWA (Quarter Century Wireless Association). The two recipients — who will each receive a \$100 check — were Dhruv Rebba, KC9ZJX (Photo K) and Christopher Harper, KG5TIO. Be sure to send nominations for next year's competition to <wb2mgp@gmail.com> along with your reasons for nominating them. For more information contact me at the above address.

A Team Effort

Many thanks were given to our hosts, the numerous Dayton Amateur Radio Association (DARA) volunteers, including Jim Simpson, WB8QZZ, who live-streams the forum for us, as well as Terry Scott, NV8E, and Reuben Meeks, W8GUC, in charge of forums.

Also, I sincerely appreciate all the behind-the-scenes machinations and conversations that go on all year long thanks to Michael Kalter, W8CI; Jack Gerbs, WB8SCT; Jim Storms, AB8YK; and Ron Cramer, KD8ENJ, to ensure all the logistical success of our forum.

Take one look at the prize tables (a sampling is in Photo B) and you have to



Photo J. One adult speaker was Dr. Tamitha Skov, the "Space Weather Woman," who talked about the impact of space weather on future trips to Mars — trips that some members of this audience might someday take.

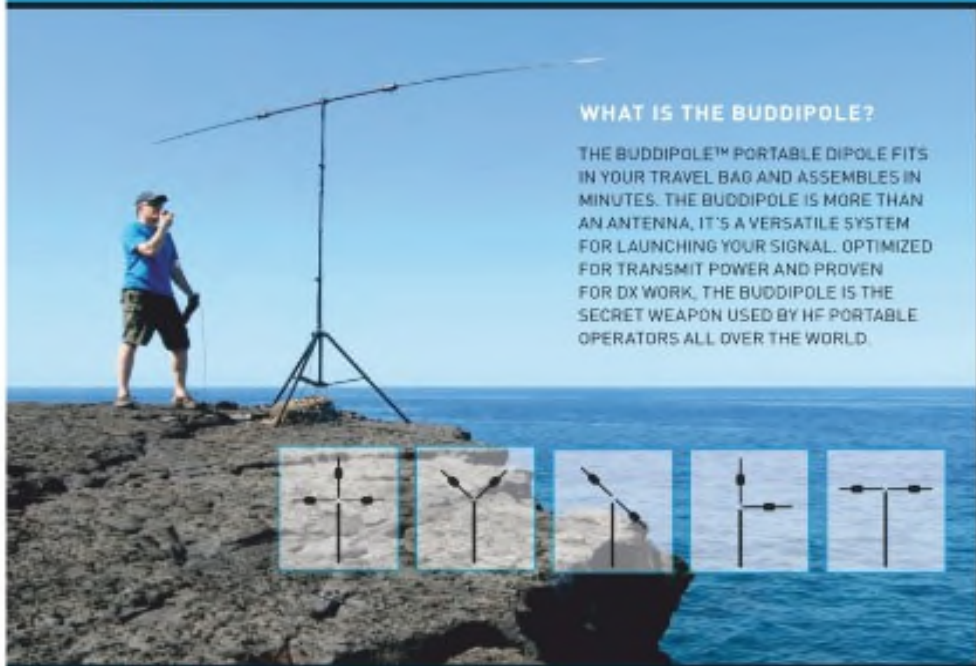


Photo K. From left, Mr. Mohan from NIAR in India; Charles Kirmuss, RCA Director and a sponsor of the Youth Forum; Dhruv Rebba, KC9ZJX, one of the winners of the Young Ham Lends a Hand contest; and Hari Rebba, Dhruv's dad.



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Photo L. The all-ham Wagner family belongs to the Portage County Amateur Radio Service, which helps sponsor the Hamvention Youth Forum. Don't be surprised if one or more of these young hams is a presenter next year.

be in awe at the generosity of our sponsors with their donations of so many wonderful door prizes and gifts for our young presenters. RCA, ICOM, JVC Kenwood, MFJ, L'anse Creuse ARC, QCWA, AMSAT, DX Engineering, ARRL, Radio Amateur Callsign Historian, Portage County Amateur Radio Service, Delaware Lehigh ARC, Heil Sound, and Kirmuss Audio all provided an hour's worth of giving out prizes to the presenters and to our wonderful "love audience." Personal thanks to all of our sponsors from a very grateful moderator.

I am delighted to share that at every youth forum for the past six years, at least one young ham in the audience (*Photo L*) has asked if he or she could be interviewed for the next year's Hamvention Youth Forum. One major goal of ours is to showcase dynamic young presenters who are passionate about an aspect of our hobby and service, and who are capable of conveying an informative and inspirational message to the young people in the audience. Happily, this year's forum had two talented youngsters in the audience, who are already booked to be interviewed in September for 2020.

It has been my personal privilege to be the moderator through more than three decades for the inspirational Hamvention Youth Forum. Please be sure to recommend your choice of talented young hams to be future youth forum presenters, ASAP. I look forward to working with our best and brightest who never fail to impress us. Again, my thanks to our generous sponsors and to all our volunteers.