



Bright Look to the Future: The Dayton Youth Forum – Part I

By Carole Perry WB2MGP

“The kids were awesome . . . the kids’ topics were amazing.” The buzz was palpable as a packed room emptied after the three-hour Youth Forum at the Dayton Hamvention® in May.

It was the 23rd year of the forum – but we’d never been given that much time for presentations. I had nine of the most terrific youngsters it has ever been my pleasure to work with. They ranged in age from 10 to 16 and came from several regions of the country.

As the audience filed out – picking up their souvenir T-shirts, comic books, and other ICOM items – the reaction to the young speakers seemed universal: *Wow*.

I always tell the kids they needn’t ever be nervous, because the folks who show up for this forum are the “love audience.” They traditionally are as attentive and responsive with their support of the young speakers as anyone could wish for in an audience. To show appreciation for the years of support, ICOM donated an IC7200 HF rig as a door prize to be won by an adult.

The first speaker was Nate Anderson KDØJAV, 14, from BARC Jr. in Boulder, Colorado. His topic was *Hams Save Lives with Skywarn*. Nate was wearing a raincoat and boots during part of his dramatic and informative presentation. This General class youngster told us that before Skywarn, which uses ham radio spotters, 2,300 people had died from weather related incidents. Since Skywarn the number dropped to 800 deaths in 10 years. For more information go to <http://www.weather.gov>.

Up next was Brady Gordon KDØBJS, 10, also from BARC Jr., who spoke on *Digital Modes – QSOs Below the Noise Level*. Brady uses these modes when voice doesn’t work. He spoke of the five most popular modes: PSK-31 (phase shift keying at 31 baud), RTTY (radio teletype), Olivia (teletype protocol), SSTV (slow scan TV) and CW (the original digital mode: Morse code). Brady used a telegraph key to get our attention, and then to sign off. What an impressive 10-year-old speaker.



During the Youth Forum at the 2010 Dayton Hamvention®, 14-year-old Nate Anderson, KDØJAV, of Boulder, Colorado makes a presentation explaining how “Hams Save Lives With Skywarn.”



Speaking on “Digital Modes – QSOs Below The Noise Level” was Brady Gordon, KDØBJS, 10, from Boulder, Colorado.



Joey Freeland, KDØHFZ, 15, of Central City, Iowa, talks about his hobbies within the hobby during the Dayton Hamvention® Youth Forum.



Andrew Koenig, KE5GDB, 16, from Houston, addresses forum attendees on "Youth and Amateur Radio Satellites."

Joey Freeland KDØHFZ, 15, from Central City, Iowa, was introduced by his dad, Joe Freeland, KDØHGA, who spoke of the fun of the bonding that took place between them as they studied and pursued their favorite aspects of the hobby together.

Joey's topic was *My First Year: Exploring Hobbies within the Hobby*. He was the ARRL Amateur Youth Operator of the Year for the State of Iowa in 2009 and spoke about volunteering; how he contributes to the local weather net, and his weather spotting training. He's also enjoyed using Morse code for DX contacts. Joey spoke about contesting, designing and building antennas, kit building, and using WSPR maps (Weak Signal Propagation Reporter network). Obviously, Joey has enjoyed many hobbies within the hobby and stresses the importance of always having fun.

My fourth speaker was Andrew Koenig, KE5GDB, 16, from Houston, who spoke about *Youth and Amateur Radio Satellites*. Named the 2009 *Amateur Radio Newslines* Young Ham of the Year, he has been featured twice in *CQ Amateur Radio* magazine for his inventiveness and technical expertise.

Andrew is active with the Boy Scouts and also has fun contacting the International Space Station. He stressed the importance of always checking the batteries in your radio before an attempt at a big contact. He encouraged everyone to check out the AMSAT booth and to go to <http://www.AMSAT.org> for more information. Andrew announced what time he would be doing a pass in

action at the flea market that afternoon. He is a good example of a youngster experimenting with different aspects of the hobby.

Randy Mitchell KJ6BXV, 11, from Ojai, California spoke about *Starting a Youth Net*. At the invitation of a local ham, he and his sister attended an ARRL Field Day and became interested in the log book contacts and the idea of talking across the state and around the world. This motivated him to visit a local club in search of more youth. He and his sister got licensed and are working hard to recruit more young people to join them. They got permission from the repeater owner to run a youth net. The very supportive club behind all this is OVARC, Ojai Valley Amateur Radio Club.

Randy has worked the ARES net from the police department and had six regular check ins. He and his sister Jackie visited the Sea Scouts to recruit more members for the net. They now have eight check ins on the Youth Net. Randy's goal is to get at least one student operator in every school in the country. Wouldn't that be great?

A long time contributor to the Dayton Youth Forum is good friend, Al Eckman WW8WW, who is the teacher in charge of the Lowell High School ARGYL (Amateur Radio Group of Youth in Lowell) in Michigan. This year, Al not only brought four young people to do presentations, he also brought along AV club members, so they could record the entire forum.

The first two speakers from ARGYL were 16-year-olds Jeff Onan, KD8KUR, and Bob Schreur, KD8IJI, who spoke about *Building a Good Club* and their fundraising efforts: They get paid for helping to set up the Lowell Community Expo Center, they run a yearly hamfest, and they have a battle of the bands.

They also do a great deal of volunteering in their community and recently helped clean up a major stretch of highway.

Another good tip in building a good club is to have fun activities, they said. Their club has bowling, sledding, beach activities, laser tag, pizza parties, fox hunts, and a model aircraft group. The kids host nets and are participants in HF and VHF contests.

They participated in a lighthouse activation on Lake Michigan and ran the special event station at the Gerald Ford Museum. In preparation for their appearance at last year's Dayton Forum, they

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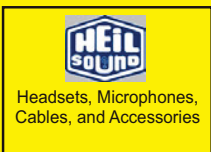


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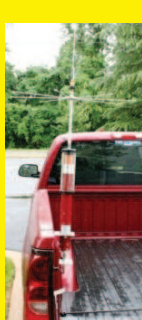
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Jeff Onan, KD8KUR, left, and Bob Schreur, KD8IJI, both 16, of Lowell (Michigan) High School's ARGYL - Amateur Radio Group of Youth in Lowell.



went up in a hot air balloon, rode on an old locomotive, and rode in a plane to test the radio signals on all three modes of transportation. They own VHF and UHF repeaters, and have their own shack, tower and antenna.

The ARGYL youngsters have recruiting efforts for middle school students by holding orientation for 8th graders. They offer equipment scholarships to other students, and are working on plans to expand to a technology club.

Ben Veltman, KD8GBY, 16, and Caleb Pratt, KD8CPK, 15, from ARGYL, spoke on the topic of *Build It Yourself*. Martin Jue and Richard Stubbs of MFJ donated kits for the group to build for their Youth Forum presentation. They shared their check list in preparation for working with kits, with the audience. They showed slides of the different stages of progress in building their transceivers. They gave us excellent tips about soldering techniques and coil winding. What

an impressive group of young adults having fun and learning at the same time in their radio club. For more information about this group, visit them at <http://www.wlhrsradio.org>. The boys presented me with an ARGYL T-shirt which I will be so proud to wear.

Next, all nine of the speakers were presented with ICOM HTs, MFJ antennas, Radio Club of America stipend checks of \$100 each, along with the RCA Young Achiever's Award certificate and an envelope of amateur radio stamps, space covers, and a certificate from the L'Anse Creuse ARC.

In addition to the excellent presentations by the nine speakers, there were other interesting people who spoke at the forum about events coming up for young people in ham radio.

Several manufacturer-co-sponsors of the Youth Forum stopped by to wish the kids well and give them words of encouragement. In Part II, I'll give more details of the exciting adventures coming up.

If you know of any youngster who would like to be interviewed for a chance to give a presentation at the Youth Forum next year, please have them get in touch with me in September or October. Bravo to this year's young speakers!