

ZERO BIAS: A CQ Editorial

BY RICH MOSESON,* W2VU

YOTA, YCP, YARC ... ARRL is MIA

The key letter in the abbreviations and acronyms in the headline is "Y." In all three cases, it refers to young hams — Youngsters on the Air, Youth Contesting Program, Young Amateurs Radio Club. You'll notice that there's no "Y" in ARRL, figuratively as well as literally, and that's a problem.

It certainly isn't a new problem. My initial involvement in organized amateur radio (beyond my local club) was a program I tried to get the League behind for outreach to young people back in the early 1980s. The response at the time was that it would be best to pursue the program through local clubs and the net result was an article in *QST* and an appointment to the then-newly-created position of Affiliated Club Coordinator for the ARRL section in which I lived at the time. A few years later, "Amateur Radio Newslines" producer Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF (SK), started the Young Ham of the Year award, a program with which *CQ* has been proudly affiliated nearly since its start. Around the same time, Carole Perry, WB2MGP, began showcasing the abilities and accomplishments of young hams at her annual Dayton Hamvention® Youth Forum — #32 is coming up next month!

More recently, Mike Kalter, W8CI, of the Dayton Amateur Radio Association, organized the Dave Kalter Memorial Youth DX Adventure program in memory of his brother, KB8OCP (now the program's callsign). Each year, this program gives a few young hams the opportunity to operate from a DX location with guidance from accomplished DXers. For 2019, three young operators will go to Curacao for DX adventure in July.

This month's Contesting column (p. 82) reports on the formation in 2017 of the Young Amateurs Radio Club (YARC) and its effort to create an American equivalent of Europe's Youth Contesting Program (YCP; also discussed in Contesting this month and in the past). The YCP in Europe is part of the broader Youth On The Air (YOTA) program sponsored by Region 1 of the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU).

Another YOTA activity is its annual youth camp, to which a young American ham is frequently invited. This past January's *CQ* featured a report by Faith Hannah Lea, AE4FH, on her experience as the U.S. member of last year's YOTA camp in South Africa. Faith Hannah returns to our pages this month with a report in the DX column on a family mini-DXpedition to the Dry Tortugas (p. 78). In addition, Tim Duffy, K3LR, regularly hosts young hams at his contest superstation in Pennsylvania (one group was scheduled to be there for the recent *CQ* WPX SSB Contest). And the Radio Club of America (of which Tim is the current president and Carole is youth activities chair) has an active Youth Activities program which sponsors Carole's Dayton forum each year and presents annual Young Achiever awards.

There is one missing element from all of these great programs and activities: The ARRL. While the League has long sponsored an annual teacher training program, provides grants for equipping school club stations (a program which originated with an idea from *CQ*), holds a "Kids' Day" activity on the air and offers mini-grants to clubs that promote youth activities, virtually all of these programs are a step removed, sticking with the mindset I first heard nearly 40 years ago — "go through the local clubs."

Across the pond, on the other hand, the YOTA program is a direct hands-on activity of IARU Region 1, with a full-time staff member providing coordination. YOTA camps and the YCP program have had the direct support of and participation by the national ham radio association of each host country. There

*Email: <w2vu@cq-amateur-radio.com>

"When it comes to direct sponsorship of youth recruitment and mentoring programs, ARRL has been missing in action for decades, and it's time for that to end."

is no equivalent on this side of the Atlantic, either by the ARRL or IARU Region 2 (of which ARRL is the 800-lb. gorilla).

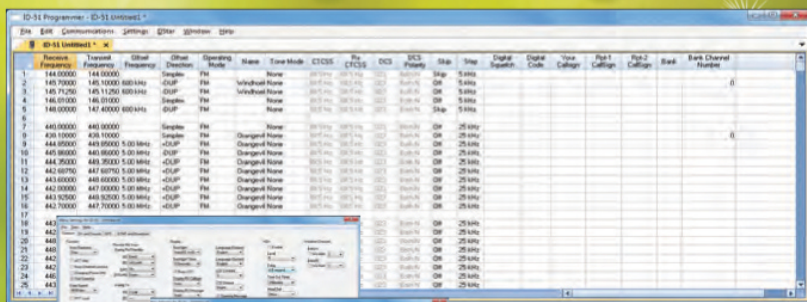
Last August, we discussed efforts by one of the first American hams to take part in a YOTA camp to build support for a similar program here. He told us that he first approached the League but could not generate any real interest. That is mind-boggling but hardly surprising.

When it comes to direct sponsorship of youth recruitment and mentoring programs, ARRL has been missing in action for decades, and it's time for that to end. What could possibly be more important to the future of amateur radio, or a better use of ARRL member dues, than direct support and sponsorship of activities that not only encourage young people to get their ham licenses but help them get on the air, learn how to build stuff, and discover all the excitement our hobby has to offer?



Participants in last year's Youngsters on the Air camp in South Africa launched a balloon carrying amateur radio payloads they'd built themselves. ARRL needs to lead similar programs here in the U.S. (Photo by WX4TV)

Radio Programming Made Soooo Easy



Easy Editing Includes:

- Auto fill for many details.
- Calculations (offset frequency, offset direction, etc) are done for you.
- Allowable values match those of your radio.

Your radio does more than just memories. So does this software.

384
379 unique radio
Programmers...
Check for your
radio model at:
www.rtsystems.com

- Explore all your radio can do by seeing the features on the computer screen.
- Options you struggle to set from the face of the radio can be set up and saved in the Programmer, then easily transferred to the radio.

Available from RT Systems or Your Local Radio Dealer
800-476-0719 | www.rtsystems.com
Personal Assistance Mon.-Fri., 8:00-5:00, Sat. 9:00-1:00 Mountain Time



The League's new CEO says he wants to reach out to a broader base of amateurs with ARRL programs and services. Here's a starting point: Get behind — better yet, get out in front of — programs and activities such as an American version of YOTA and the YCP, with direct support and leadership. Programs and activities by individuals, clubs and other organizations are important and should continue to be supported, but there is no substitute for direct hands-on leadership by the national association to show that mentoring the next generation of hams is a number-one priority. It may be that there's no "I" in "team," but there needs to be a "Y" in "ARRL."

Smart Cities, Smart Cars (and QRM?)

In this issue's "Communications Horizons" column (p. 64), Rob de Santos, K8RKD, writes about "smart cities" and the growing need for "smart infrastructure," systems that will allow increasingly autonomous vehicles to be alerted to changing traffic signals, reduced speed limits or road hazards, such as icy conditions or a traffic slowdown ahead. It sounds like science fiction, but the need for this type of communication is right on the horizon. While fully autonomous vehicles are still experimental right now, many of today's cars have close-to-autonomous technology already built in. I had the opportunity during a recent trip to spend a few days driving a rental car that featured look-ahead radar and lane-departure alerts with "steering assist." Combined with traditional cruise control, this car was nearly able to drive itself. If I started drifting out of my lane, it not only beeped at me, but started to pull the car back into the lane on its own (putting on the turn signal disabled this feature; and yes, Mom, I waited until I was in an area with no nearby traffic to play with it). With cruise control on, the car maintained a safe following distance for me. At one point, I was in traffic with the cruise control set at

the speed limit of 50 miles per hour. Another driver pulled into my lane ahead of me and my car automatically slowed down to about 45 to maintain a gap of roughly four car lengths. That car then made a right turn ... and mine very smoothly accelerated itself back up to 50! It was amazing! I recall thinking that it's too bad it can't tell when a traffic light is turning red or when the speed limit changes. That's exactly the type of smart infrastructure that Rob writes about this month.

What does this have to do with ham radio? There's added spectrum usage for all of these communication systems, of course, but Rob notes that most of them will operate on frequencies already allocated for 5G systems. The big factor for hams is that our cars — in addition to already being rolling computers — are on their way to becoming rolling communication platforms as well. And that creates new levels of electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) concerns for us as hams. Will all of these systems cause interference on our receivers and/or raise our noise floors? (Probably.) But more concerning is whether a mobile amateur radio transmitter will interfere with the vehicle's communication systems — or those of the cars around us — and cause them to behave unpredictably. This is a serious concern that our industry will need to monitor and work to minimize as our vehicles become more dependent on a "clean" RF environment to operate safely and efficiently.

Welcome Back, Gerry!

We're pleased to have "Listening Post" editor Gerry Dexter back in the saddle as of this issue. Gerry has been sidelined for the past three months while recovering from a hip fracture. We're glad to have you back aboard! (PS — We're still looking for new Awards Editor and USA-CA Award Manager. Email me if you're interested.)
—73, Rich, W2VU