THE CYBERSENTINEL

The official newsletter of CyberPatriot—AFA's National Youth Cyber Education Program

February 2021 | In This Issue

National Commissioner's Cache

That our cyber world has radically changed by the pandemic is powerfully illustrated by two documents shared with me last week by two brilliant colleagues, Cindy DeCarlo at Cisco and Lance Spencer at AT&T. The data are stunning. First, from AT&T, these revelations: When the pandemic struck, AT&T accommodated a 20% immediate increase in traffic; the number of minutes of audio- and videoconferencing across the network, on every platform, went up five-fold; and AT&T's customers were spending 33 % more time talking on cellphones and sending 40 % more text messages. Think about running a global enterprise like AT&T's and seeing that sort of explosive growth in demand overnight! And this, courtesy of Cisco's 2021 Data Privacy Benchmark Study: 60% of organizations say they weren't prepared for privacy and security requirements involved in the shift to remote work, and 87% of consumers expressed concerns about the privacy protections of the tools they needed to use to work, interact and connect remotely. The combination of dramatically higher cyber activity, coupled with the realization that in-place privacy and cybersecurity measures weren't adequate says one thing every CyberPatriot sponsor, partner, coach, mentor, participant, and stakeholder should ponder: The world has changed, and the CyberPatriot program YOU support is more vital than ever before. If we are to protect the cybersphere as we must, we need the talent to do it, and this critical program is delivering like no other. Thanks especially to our sponsors, led by Northrop Grumman Foundation, for making all of this possible.

CyberPatriot National Finals Competition

We are pleased to announce that the CyberPatriot XIII National Finals Competition will be held virtually on March 20-21, 2021. This is the second year that the National Finals have transitioned to a virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In May of 2020, the CyberPatriot National Finals were held virtually after the in-person National Finals Competition scheduled for March of 2020 was cancelled and moved to a virtual format.

CyberPatriot is planning a robust virtual National Finals competition, which will once again include the Network Security Master Challenge, the Cisco NetAcad Challenge, the AT&T Mobile Computing Challenge, the TCP/IP (The Career Portal/Industry Perspective) event with CyberPatriot sponsors, an Opening Ceremony, and an Awards Ceremony. The top overall teams in the Open and All Service Division will receive scholarships from Northrop Grumman and the top Open and All Service Division teams in the Cisco NetAcad Challenge will receive scholarships from Cisco.

CyberPatriot XIII Round 3

On Saturday, January 23rd, 2021, Round 3 concluded with 2587 teams competing. The maximum number of points before the networking challenge for the Gold, Silver and Middle School Tiers are 300. For Platinum Tier teams the maximum score prior to the Networking Challenge is 400 points with the highest scoring team earning 372 points. Round 3 had 357 Middle School Teams competing.

Teams competing in Round 3 were also vying for the AFA State Awards. Based on Round 3 scores, the top three teams overall in each state, Canada, and At-Large region will receive a hard-copy AFA State Award in each division of the competition. Because the level of difficulty varies between tiers and scores are not adjusted for difficulty, Platinum Teir teams always rank higher than Gold Tier teams, which always rank higher thank Silver Tier teams. The top three Gold and Silver Tier teams in each state, Canada, and At-Large teams will receive a digital Round 3 Tier Certificate.

AFA CyberCamps

AFA CyberCamp registration opens on February 1st, 2021 and is open through May 1st, 2021. Instructions for registering to host a camp can be found **HERE.**

> The 2021 AFA CyberCamp dates are:
> Week 1: June 7-11
> Week 2: June 14-18
> Week 3: June 21-25
> Week 4: July 12-16
> Week 5: July 19-23
> Week 6: July 26-30
> Week 7: August 2-6

CyberPatriot has modified camp materials to be able to be conducted in a virtual environment but will also allow camp host to hold in-person camps so long as they follow CDC Guidelines and their local regulations surrounding COVID-19.

CyberPatriot Shoutout

From Little League Baseball to Cybersecurity | By Maria Hertzberg and Cindy Kim

The start of the new 2020 spring baseball season was exciting for a group of baseball friends, especially after our league claiming the Junior League World Series Championship in 2019. John Hertzberg, Cameron Kim, Christopher Park, Matthew Tom, Jack Verity and Samuel Yun had high hopes of playing the best baseball games of their baseball careers and creating more unforgettable memories in the dugouts and on the field. They were practicing 2-3 times each week with 2 games during the week. The pre-season was just warming up when the pandemic forced the league to cancel the entire season. All balls were grounded. Baseball hats hung. Batting cages and fields were locked up.

What were these boys to do? With a mindset ready for training and gear in tow, they had nowhere to go. At the same time, distance learning became the new mode of education and each student was provided with an iPad. Was distance learning the new game in town? It felt like a flyball was thrown at the boys and they had to learn how to catch it. Would these boys' 6th grade elementary school year experiences disappear in the year of cancellation, too?

This is the story of Team Home Plate. The Little League Cybersecurity Team traded their bats and gloves for computers and monitors. It was a total change of paraphernalia from cleats and baseball hats to mouse pads and headsets. It was a different game. No longer batting cages and fields, but virtual machines with Windows and Linux systems. No longer in-person practices, but weekly training over zoom and discord! No longer baseball, but cybersecurity.

But not all was wasted. These Little League baseball players were accustomed to drills, practices, warmups, and games. The speed and agility they learned on the baseball fields quickly transitioned to moving between readme/forensics questions and checklists. The endurance they had learned in long baseball games have given the players confidence to compete in a long 6-hour cybersecurity competition. It was a different transition for the team led by Coach

Pictured (Top: John Hertzberg, Cameron Kim, Christopher Park; Bottom: Matthew Tom, Jack Verity and Samuel Yun)

Cindy Kim. And her determination and persistence resulted in a seamless team formation and transition. She knew that with her electrical engineering background and decades of experiences in various tech industries (aerospace/IFE, communication, semiconductors, etc.), she could maneuver and coach the team. In fact, she declared that cybersecurity was not vastly different from baseball. Coach Kim called for team meetings to discuss strategies and goals. The same alertness and anticipation used in baseball was applicable in cybersecurity. She was confident that the Little League team could transition into a cybersecurity team. She was also confident that boys will create new memories that will define their 6th grade year through cybersecurity. And just like that, the baseball players dedicated their time to learning new skills in a new field (even one player zoomed from Korea for weeks)!

Many hands make light work. After a few weeks of learning the ropes, Ho Yun jumped alongside of Team Home Plate and became an Assistant Coach. With his career background in Linux system and networking, Coach Yun passionately and patiently trained and guided the baseball players with Coach Kim. The Troy High School cybersecurity teachers and student trainers also devoted to offer weekly training. And a very special shoutout to Allen Stubblefield, Cyber Defense Teacher and the head cybersecurity coach at Troy High School, for his swift action to move all cyber trainings to online this year and for his vision to offer the trainings to the middle school students!

Many cybersecurity teams represent their schools. In the case of Team Home Plate, they represent the diversity in their community. The team members come from 5 different schools.

throughout the school district. The diversity brought its own set of challenges that included different school schedules and even team registration logistics. However, with the support of Helene Daage (CyberPatriot), Tim Winters (GHLL), Allen Stubblefield (Troy High School), a cybersecurity team based on Little League belong was formed and Team Home Plate found a community in cybersecurity.

You could say Team Home Plate is a team of rookies to CyberPatriot and in the cybersecurity community. But watch out! They are hoping to hit it out of the park and make a home run!

Medina Valley High School Cyber Patriot Team
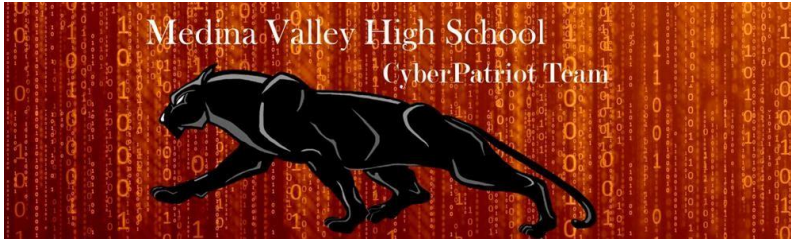
The Media Valley High School CyberPatriot team has their own website and newsletter, Bits & Bytes, to discuss all things CyberPatriot. As stated on their mvisd.com/Domain/1421, the team's Vision is, "The vision of the Medina Valley CyberPatriots program is to promote cyber awareness, computer security practices, and cyber ethics. All of these are essential attributes for creating a secure network infrastructure, teaching the students how to detect threats, and how to defend against cyber-attacks in a safe virtual environment."

Show Your Support for CyberPatriot

If you, your team, coach or mentor have any photos or stories about how you represent CyberPatriot, please send them to us to share at h.daage@uscyberpatriot.org. We want to see how your team is wearing the CyberPatriot swag. Creativity is encouraged.

Meet the CyberPatriot Staff

An Interview with Frank Zaborowski | Senior Director, CyberPatriot Operations [TO BE UPDATED]

Q: The CyberPatriot Tech Team is one to reckon with and it's success is due to the exceptional teamwork. As head of the Tech Team, how do you promote teamwork?

A: We have a good technical team at CyberPatriot because we hire our staff based on whether they are a good fit for the entire CyberPatriot program office team. The National Commissioner Bernie Skoch set up a process that allows the entire staff to interview prospective team members. Our philosophy is that advanced technical skills can be learned, but because our team is small, a person must have the right fit. Everyone must be all-in to accomplish our mission in CyberPatriot's ever changing and fast paced environment. Technical skills can be learned but getting along with colleagues involves chemistry and is key to teamwork.

Promoting teamwork is easy with the CyberPatriot tech team. The tech team was fortunate to have benefited from the hiring process. Gamail, Lisa, and Leah are professionals who will go the extra mile to accomplish a task or help another colleague. We encourage all members of the team to put forth their ideas and opinions. Critiques of everyone's ideas, including my own, are encouraged. We also solve problems at the lowest level. Team members have the freedom to help each other and share information. I allow my team to make decisions and solve problems.

I need to underscore that the tech team is part of the bigger CyberPatriot team. Rachel, Rebecca, Helene, and Nick all contribute to our mission. We could not do it without them. Then there is our external team of the AFA staff who set up our events. Our Presenting Sponsor, The Northrop Grumman Foundation, and our other sponsors not only provide us with funding but with help. Cisco and the University of Texas at San Antonio, Center for Infrastructure Assurance and Security provide technical support and development seamless with the tech team.

Q: What advice would you give to teams that are looking to increase their teamwork skills?

A: Organize your team according to skills and interests. Do your jobs. Socialize with everyone at least a little. Help each other ... AND... ask for help, which is harder than you think. Asking for help shows humility and understanding your limits -- not weakness. Remember that you will not be friends with everyone, but you owe them your respect and kindness. Finally, do something hard together in or out of CyberPatriot. Shared adversity strengthens teamwork and the ability to deal with stress. I have seen some very good teams on paper disintegrate because under stress they could not get along with each other.

Q: How did you get started with CyberPatriot?

A: I retired from the Marine Corps with many years of experience in communications and information technology. I also had teaching experience and a degree in education. I wanted to find a job where I could use my skills to help young people to be successful. The wife of a friend of mine worked at the Air Force Association (AFA). At a dinner party with them I mentioned the type of job I wanted. A few days later, she contacted me and told me that a job fitting my requirements opened at AFA. When I interviewed for the job, I knew immediately that CyberPatriot was where I wanted to work. Another connection to my job was that CyberPatriot National Commissioner Bernie Skoch and I served together on a major DoD project -- the Global Command and Control System.

Q: Many competitors and coaches look up to you as a leader, what advice would you give them to when they are the head of a technical team?

A: People are more important than technology. Foster teamwork. Give your people appropriate guidance for their level. Provide them with the support, tools, and training they need to accomplish the mission. Then allow them the freedom to do their job within general limits. Don't be afraid to roll up your sleeves and help with tasks well below your level. Have redundancy and a "Plan B" for your people and technology. Then train for it. There should never be a single point of failure that you have not addressed. Always remember that everyone fails sometimes. Accentuate the positive and pick the team up and keep them moving.

Q: What is your favorite CyberPatriot memory?

A: There are too many to count! We have done a lot of things that people thought were unachievable. But I would say that my favorite memories deal with the CyberPatriot competitors. It gives me great satisfaction to know that our nation's future is going to be in the hands of such capable young men and women. Also, our Coaches and Mentors have my greatest admiration for the time and effort they put into their teams. Though I am not at liberty to share details, I am struck by their honesty and ethical standards.

Q: Do you have any other stories you would like to share with the newsletter?

A: As a friend of mine said, in the end, the person who wins is not the person with the most things, but the person with the best stories. I would say that my best stories deal with how CyberPatriot has changed the lives of students in giving them a path to a successful future. It touches my heart that with a maximum score of 300 points, that a team with 97 points will fight for one point as much as a team with 297 points.

CyberPatriot & The News

Heartland students compete in nationwide CyberPatriot Challenge
CAPE GIRARDEAU, Mo. (KFVS) - The Air Force JROTC CyberPatriot Team from Cape Central High School is competing in a nationwide CyberPatriot Challenge.
This team is currently first in the state and 45th in the nation out of roughly 800 teams.