his/her own question to ask the astronaut. Their parents and other campers were starting to gather. Even some of the spectators were involved in their own form of digital communication (photo G)

11:45 AM
Barry got the show on the road by giving an introduction: “I’m Barry Cohen, and you don’t have to know that! This is all about the kids. They worked very hard on preparing for this contact.” Barry and his team had made this a totally kid-run event. While NPARC did the major setting up of the Earth station, all operation would be done by the youngsters.

11:50 AM
The ARISS control team called on the cell phone. Nick, KC20NP, told them that we’re going for a contact!

11:54 AM
The ISS saw sunrise as it crossed from night into day as displayed on the big screen. The control op, Vaani, KC2SPJ, has been an active ham since 2007. Vaani is a member of the NPARC. She was 11 years old when she got her Technician Class license.

12:02 PM
The radio footprint of the ISS was now crossing into Mexico.

12:04 PM
As we watched the ISS fly over the state of Texas, Barry took a few questions from the audience.

12:08 PM
Everyone noticed the approach of the ISS on the big screen: four minutes to go! At this point, Barry walks to the back of the pavilion. It is clear this is the kids’ show!

12:11 PM
The static from the radio filled the area. Vaani picked up the mic and...

“NA1SS this is N2XJ over.”
... still static...
“NA1SS this is N2XJ over.”
... then loud and clear the reply: “N2XJ here is NA1SS calling on schedule.”
The voice of Greg Chamitoff, KD5PKZ, had broken through and the entire audience was captive to the event.

One by one, each of the participants asked their questions. The questions varied from the experiments that Greg was performing on the station to what an eclipse might look like from the outpost. Greg talked about the importance of young people following their dreams. If they wanted to be in the space pro-

gram, he said, they should by all means go for it. He stressed the importance of doing your best in school, and of the study of math and science. “Believe in yourself and believe in your dreams and do the best that you can do,” Greg said.
The quality of the audio and strength of signal was impressive! Vaani went to each of the kids with the radio’s mic and the mic for the public-address system (photo H). These kids were very well-rehearsed. They spoke clearly and their questions were excellent. They had even been coached as to how far away from themselves to hold the mic. At one point, when asked what it was like to