

# IN-SERVICE



Winter

Volume 83

February 2003

## ASCRA NETS

### HF Beacons Useful

Have you listened to the international beacon signals? I find them interesting to show propagation conditions even though I rarely call a DX station.

The beacons transmit on the 20 through 10M bands and are all on the same frequency in each band. Eighteen beacons spaced world-wide transmit, each in their own 10 second segment of a three minute period. In that ten seconds they send their call at 22 wpm followed by four one-second dashes. The call and first dash is transmitted at 100 watts. The other dashes follow at 10 watts, 1 watt and 100 milliwatts respectively. The next beacon then begins sending from its location, etc.

Perhaps it sounds too much like work to copy the cw and figure out where the station is located? It all has been made easy. Two tools are available which make beacon listening easy and fun.

The first is a map for your wall with LED lights to show where the station you are hearing is located. This map is available as a MFJ-890. (MFJ Enterprises)

If you don't want to spend \$100 for the MFJ-890 and if you have a Windows computer in your shack you can do it all at no cost.

A nice program called BeaconTrack by DL1SP is available free, displaying a map of the world and the locations of each beacon. It synchronizes with your computer clock and shows which beacon is transmitting at a particular time. You will want to set your computer clock exactly and there is another nice free program to do that via WWV on the internet.

To print the beacon schedule go to <http://www.ncdxf.org/>, click on beacons and then beacon transmission schedule. To get the map display go to: <http://www.dl1sp.de/> and download the BeaconTrack software. To synchronize your computer clock with WWV download "NistTime" from <http://home.socal.rr.com/atsoftware/>. After down-loading, an icon will appear on your desktop for setting your computer clock.

You can listen for the beacons on 14.100, 18.110, 21.150, 24.930 and 28.200 Mhz.

I have enjoyed watching HF propagation change with time and frequency. Sometimes 10 Meters will seem quiet but a beacon will come in strong from Madeira near the Azores or Venezuela SA. I usually listen to the beacons before our Sunday 20M net to see if our ASCRA stations in England or Australia might be coming in.

73 Editor

**Does anyone read this kind of article and actually try it out? Let me know what kind of articles you want. Editor**

### 20 Meter Net

Frequency 14.287 MHz

1530 Central Time Sunday

Net Control WB2UJL Ernie Miles

These are the checkins that I have recorded. Several weeks there were others that cared for net control and I may have some checkins missing.

Ernie

NØBGG, Larry Oiler	N5ECP, Jeff Salmons
NØELM, Fred Troeh	N5UJB, Jim Atterberry Sr.
WAØFGW, Randy Bronson	NSLCL, David Gates
WAØIBS, Andy Ferrara	W6LMJ, Terry Redding
WØSHQ, Robin Cross (Guest operator WØFEN)	K6PSS, Dave Olsen
KØWTU, Joseph Mangum III	W6RWH, Hale Collins
KGØXU, Michael Hahn	K7BU, Willard Retz
KD1R, Ralph Stetson	NL7CO, Don Ross
KC2BIY, Charlie	K7MD, LaVal Spencer
W2TFT, Tom Thatcher	KA7VMA, Dick Wynes
WB2UJL, Ernie Miles	N8LCD, Bob Moy
W3HEN, John Seither II	K8QA, Mike Oiler
KG4CRQ, Percy Harris	W8QK, Muirl Robinson
KA4RUT, George Klett	KC9AIE, Dan Gonshorek
K4SZW, Bill DeVault Sr.	KB9JLC, Ken Collard
KE4VXC, Chet Allen	WB9ORO, RuthAnn Daniels
N4WTW, Mike Glowaski	WA9SNU, Jim Daniels

### Lamoni IA 2 Meter Net

Frequency 146.13/73

1930 Central Time Sunday

Net Control KØISA Tony Crandell

### Silent Key

Floyd Lehman W7FDL

Tom Thatcher notified us of Floyd's death just as we went to press with the IN-SERVICE. Floyd's XYL Carmen KB7QGL had asked him to pass along the sad news. Her address is: Carmen Lehman, 6313 W Pine Grove Drive, Coeur D'Alene ID 83815-8670. Phone: 801-722-2676

# What Can We Do To Improve ASCRA?

Ernie Miles WB2UJL

Apalachin NY

Recently I was surprised by a critical comment made to another party about ASCRA and thought there was some truth in what had been said.

This article is intended to let the members understand:

1. How we are organized and why a few members continue to be involved as directors and officers.

2. Comments made on the Sunday net are dominated by personal and church activity in contrast to technical ham discussions about equipment and operational matters.

3. Another purpose is to open discussion about ASCRA and see if we can figure out how to improve it.

ASCRA has 12 directors. Six are elected every year by the members and the 12 directors gather in April for an annual business meeting to care for a budget and other matters as necessary.

Members can nominate up to 6 members to serve as directors and the membership votes based on what they know about the individuals. In many cases the members do not know any of the candidates. As directors are expected to travel to Independence for the annual business meeting, they usually don't know anyone they can nominate.

This is in contrast to the "GROUP OF INVOLVED MEMBERS" that have become known to each other and share a social relationship with maybe 30-50 other members.

I'll give an example of how things happen.

When a little known ASCRA member nominates him or her self, probably at quite a distance from Independence, that person is usually not well known by other ASCRA members. They do not receive enough votes to become a director. Those better known by members will receive the most votes.

This almost eliminates any nominee that:

1. Does not live near Independence.

2. Has not participated on the 20M net.

3. Has not attended the general meetings during conference.

These events are the way members have become acquainted with enough members to become the existing directors.

## Comments about the net.....

When we gather on the 20M net each Sunday, we are checking on the status of our friends. Each person chooses to talk about whatever they wish. When we have questions, we get back on those subjects. It turns out Church activities are a dominant subject and the health of the family.

Naturally there are frequent questions about signal quality and antenna construction plans, but this is not the

primary subject matter. If we want to change what we talk about, we can, but most of us don't feel uncomfortable talking about almost anything with our friends.

## About the organization .....

Those given the responsibility of being directors have always been dedicated to the continuation of ASCRA into the future.

Many years ago Terry, W6LMJ, told us, "Organizations will die unless the membership feels ownership in the organization". We have tried desperately to find projects and programs that would encourage membership participation, including writing articles for the In-Service. Years ago when we provided communications with La Buena Fe, we all identified with that essential service.

This quest for noble endeavors continues and needs input anytime from the members to meet this goal.

## Now for some of my feelings about the organization.....

ASCRA members are a kind of brotherhood in the church. These ASCRA friends are the salt of the earth so to speak and the relationships are on a higher level than any other friends I have.

Directors dealing with each other in behalf of ASCRA has been with great sensitivity and great respect for each other, in ways I never expected.

I attribute this to ASCRA being a Church member organization.

That is the value of the organization to me, but I do not feel being involved with ASCRA is a calling.

## Back to needed improvements.....

Can you think how we can direct ASCRA in a better way?

Michael, KGØXU, suggested adding personal information about candidates to the ballot. This will allow members to be better acquainted with the candidates. This will probably be discussed in the next business meeting.

In the February In-Service, Michael, KGØXU encouraged any local members or someone visiting in Independence to give

him a call to arrange to operate WØSHQ. His office phone in the Temple is 833-1000 X2284 (or 800-825-2806 X2284) his home phone is 816-252-4451.

Robin, WØFEN, has been traveling to Independence regularly to operate the ASCRA station in the Auditorium on the Sunday 20M net which meets at 3:30PM local time. You may also choose to contact him at 816-246-7330.

The "Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence" program was brought to the attention of ASCRA members to provide another technically interesting volunteer effort that ASCRA members could participate in with their PC's. After doing some reading which stirred their interest, some continue to enjoy their participation in SETI.

E-MAIL is another way of communication for those who no longer operate radio equipment. The In-Service has several E-MAIL addresses. There is also an ASCRA web page

where members can register their addresses. This is another way to get to know more of the members.

Can you get more involved in ASCRA? Please put a higher priority on this challenge.

Ernie, WB2UJL  
ErnieMiles@aol.com

*If you have a response or suggestions regarding these two articles on ASCRA send them to the authors or the IN-SERVICE editor.*

## ASCRA Journey - Part 2

By Michael Hahn, KGØXU  
Executive Director  
Independence MO

In the August 2002 issue of *In Service* I shared some thoughts on where we have been as an organization and issued the challenge to think about where we want to go in the future. I suggested that we are primarily a fellowship association, which is the first of our purposes. In fact, this is what has held us together despite the lack of other activities such as those ASCRA participated in during its early years of organization.

In that same issue of *In Service*, the cover story was about the success of the class at SPEC in Lamoni, Iowa. Steven Holm joined the ranks of amateur radio and of ASCRA as KCØNVX. This is an activity that the members of ASCRA can be proud of and assist with, either through their time or their contributions. I suspect that many of our members are involved in their local clubs doing this and making their contributions locally. This is as it should be.

Is there more that we can do? Should we do more? With the limitations of time and proximity what activities should ASCRA engage in where all its members can participate? Perhaps if we look at the six purposes as outlined in our Articles of Incorporation and our Bylaws we could come up with some ideas. Generally they have to do with the following themes:

- Fellowship
- Operate to assist society/government
- Operate to assist the church/charity
- Education
- Research
- Maintain the Association

In this article I will cover the first three purposes and use a future article to cover the last three and make some conclusions.

Purpose 1 - To establish, maintain, support, and operate an association of persons commonly interested in amateur radio communication. As I said previously - we do this really well. We have been an association for over 25 years. Nets are a practical expression in the amateur community for those with common interests and have been a major way for us to communicate with each other over the years. In part 1 of this article Terry Redding, W6LMJ, suggested that we figure out how many years or the actual number of times we have met in our Sunday fellowship net and develop and participate in a special event commemorating our association. I think that's a great idea!

Purpose 2 - To legally utilize communication skills and the licenses granted to service our community and, in this way, lessen the burden of government. I believe it was the intent of those who directed ASCRA in the early years that we be actively engaged and visible in our communities, particularly Independence, Missouri, in support of organizations such as RACES and ARES. In fact, ASCRA was so committed to this idea that a subsidiary organization was created called EARS - Emergency Amateur Radio System. The repeaters were put in place to be a major presence in Independence and the surrounding area. Some of the "Old Timers" could perhaps write an article on this.

For many of us, we are involved in this activity in our local communities as well. Some might participate in region-wide groups during times of disaster.

Purpose 3 - To legally utilize communication skills and the licenses granted to service any religious and charitable organization and in this way lessen human suffering. Years ago ASCRA participated in linking via amateur radio auto-patch several appointees of the church in Mexico and South America with President W. Wallace Smith during a general

conference business session. What a wonderful way to show our skills and abilities by assisting in this kind of process. With the advent of cell phones and the internet, our services in this regard are not as necessary as they once might have been. Yet there is still much that we could do on behalf of service to our church.

How many of you are involved with the Red Cross or other charitable organizations when they sponsor events? The Central Stakes Chapter of ASCRA, many years ago, assisted a local organization for battered women, which sponsored a walk to raise money and awareness for their organization. I know of two local members who participate in the MS-150 bike-a-thon as either participants or as radio support personnel.

Next time I will talk about the other purposes of ASCRA and ask some important questions to get us thinking about the unique issues we face today and how our Association can engage them. I encourage your thoughts in response to this series of articles. Let's share our ideas together as we begin to build and shape a new vision for ASCRA.

Michael Hahn KGØXU

[mhahn@CofChrist.org](mailto:mhahn@CofChrist.org)

\* \* \* \* \*

From Dick Wynes KA7VMA [dickwynes@netscape.net](mailto:dickwynes@netscape.net)

Enjoyed getting to visit with you guys a week ago on the ASCRA net.

I am active on the radio, just not much on 20 m band. I have a butternut vertical hf v2 with 160m coil. I check in on some traffic nets on 80 and 40, and work a little cw on 40. Now that I know the hustler whip will get me in on the ASCRA net, I have 20m and 17m loading coils, I will try and do that more often.

Dick

## News from Colorado –

### January 2003

By Dave Cook – KCØMHT  
Castle Rock CO

years. Rumors have been untrue that when he asked for Melanie's hand in marriage that I insisted that he had to pass the Technicians test first. However, my new son-in-law has a great interest in meteorology. Observing the activity of ARES District 24 during the Haymen Fire has made the young man dust of his old police scanner. So perhaps there may be another ASCRA HAM in Colorado some day.

The year 2002 has been the driest year in recorded history for Colorado. Many officials are concerned that 2003 may be even worse if we do not get much needed moisture. The snow pack in the mountains is 80% of normal which could translate to more wild fires in the summer. Time will tell.

The last part of 2002 has been a busy one here in Castle Rock. In November, my oldest daughter Melanie married a nice young man she has been dating for the last 2

During the Thanksgiving holiday my family, my siblings and their families, invaded Florida for a family reunion, hosted by KF4TBU (my older brother and his family – Davies, FI). KF4TBU showed me the fine art of Morse code as he pounded on the key of a crystal bound Drake Transceiver. It was truly a work of art. The memories continued with snorkeling in the Florida Keys in wet suits (water was 72 degrees). We explored the coral under the water and spotted 2 barracudas and a small shark. It was reported that after seeing their parents aunts and uncles in wet suits, seeing these large fish was not nearly as scary!

Since the Haymen, Coal-Seam, and Missionary fires have been contained and almost forgotten, the ARES District 24 wanted to fine-tune the lessons we learned. We participated in various exercises using GPS. We discovered that by using the GPS, we could give the authorities a more accurate picture on the extent of the wildfire. We also participated in access management exercises so we could relay a more accurate picture of the damage.

One of the hard lessons I learned during the Haymen fire was that while in the Douglas County Justice Center communication room I had to be escorted everywhere, including the Men's room. Which meant that I had to ration the amount of soft drinks and snacks I had. So in December, I applied for and was accepted into R.A.C.E.S.

Colorado Connection had asked for volunteers to help repair some of our repeaters in the mountains (Wolf Creek Pass, Conifer Mountain, Glenwood Springs). What a wonderful excuse to go 4 wheeling and snowmobiling. But it was for a good cause, as those repeaters are needed to help find lost hikers and downed airplanes. Recently, a downed airplane used a combination of cell phones and radios to call for help. The Search and Rescue teams used the amateur repeaters. It is wonderful how folks are grateful for HAM Radio.

73,  
Dave Cook – KCØMHT  
[dave\\_cook@juno.com](mailto:dave_cook@juno.com)

## ... And from other places

From Fred (VK3AQN) and Margaret Naylor:  
Warrenwood Victoria Australia  
(sent to Doug Shaw)

We have not travelled much this year, except for trips to Sydney to visit family and a holiday on the northern NSW coast. Margaret and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary last July. Our youngest grandchild, Tom, was born last January and our eldest, Louise (25), is to be married in January - the first to walk down the aisle. We have 10 grandchildren now.

Our youngest son, Matthew, now lives in Blue Springs, Missouri, with his family and works for Outreach International.

Have not been on radio for many months. I have just a simple dipole at about 25ft and the local noise from overhead electrical cables is terrific. Yes, it would be nice to check-in to the net again. Perhaps I should make up a mobile outfit, then I could go to an area free from noise and the possibility of tv. I do have a Kenwood TS50 and a mobile antenna - so what's stopping me but a lack of will!

Guess I am in a way suffering from withdrawal of the excellent radio conditions I experienced in Emerald and anything else seems not worth bothering about. I tell myself I must treat my situation as if I am starting up all over again!

Please give my best regards to the guys on the net.  
We are both well. Margaret is doing quite a bit of painting.

Happy New Year to you both - may it be a good year for us all.

Kindest regards,  
Fred and Margaret.

\* \* \* \* \*

An Item of interest from Doug Shaw:

*Regarding* Ken Krahl a long time Chief Engineer for KLDS and KMBC in Independence and Kansas City. Ken's early work in broadcasting for the church and in the public sector is memorialized by our continued use of his former Ham Radio call sign, WØSHQ, for our club station... located in the Auditorium building at the Temple complex in Independence, Missouri.

And from Dave Bland KBØGR:

Doug's comment concerning Ken Krahl, WØSHQ/sk, provides the opportunity to call everyone's attention to the article in the current issue of QST (January 2003, page 86 and 87) concerning the early years of Robert Gold (W9DHL, KH6JU, W3PDA and WA2IIB), highlighted by a picture of Robert clinging to his antenna mast in Lamoni in 1939. Also pictured is the late ASCRA member, Stew Wight, then W9NMA..

Dave, KBØGR

