

IN-SERVICE



Fall

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TERRY AND THE POWER LINE

I almost electrocuted myself installing a portable antenna while camping in the woods at Fort Benning, Georgia. I routinely set up my radio station each time I stop for the night. I listen to the shortwave bands at night, AM broadcast, and make contact with other hams on a 40 meter net (7.169 MHz) early each morning. Most parks, RV sites, and WalMart parking lots have no overhead wires. I know, I look.

Last month we traveled to Fort Benning for the graduation of a son in-law from Basic Training. We arrived three hours later than I had expected. It had been a long drive and an even longer day. At near midnight I was setting up my vertical on the tongue of the trailer. The antenna is 26 feet tall and weighs about 4 pounds. After taking a few minutes to put it together I jumped up on the tongue of the trailer to lift the antenna up on the four foot mast. This requires me to balance the antennas above my waist and place the base on the vertical upright.

I am doing this out in the piney woods at Fort Benning, Georgia. At their RV park, near a lake with swimming, boating, and fishing. Nice place.

As I was lifting the antenna there was a huge flash, I felt the electricity traveling through my arms and legs, and the next thing I knew, I was on my back, on the ground, waking up paralyzed.

Ten or fifteen seconds later I started feeling my fingers against my chest, my arms and hands were numb, I was unable to move them. Once I could move them - again still numb I tried to move them in front of my eyes to see if there was any damage. I knew I must have brushed up against high voltage lines above the trailer in the dark.

My daughter's mother in-law came out of the trailer to see what caused the flash and found me in the dark on the ground. She asked if I was okay and I said "I think so," still assessing my situation. Later she explained that as she came out of the travel trailer she could see electricity still coursing on the surface of the ground near the front of the trailer. She, of course was concerned and I started to explain what happened which I am not sure she understood. A minute later I was able to stand, slowly, and hobble to the trailer. I got a flashlight to see what happened. That is when I learned the high voltage lines feeding power to the park, and each RV site, ran directly above the trailer pads on my side of the RV street.

I am an astronomer and had surveyed the sky above the trailer looking at the stars and assessing the level of visibility and light pollution of the site. I did not see the wires.

I have no idea what the voltage above is. It's about 16 feet above the ground—high enough for RVs to safely enter a space. But not a safe place, if you are sticking a 26 foot antenna in the air. Later I was told that most likely the voltage is in the range of 12,500 volts.

I seem to be okay. I had a sprained foot, a hip and an elbow that got a bit bunged up, but otherwise fine. Cognitive functions seem okay. However, I did take it easy for a few weeks and kept the foot elevated.

I teach ham radio classes, and always caution safety reference erecting antennas. The rule is never, never place an antenna where it might come in contact with overhead power lines. The voltage in overhead lines is often high enough to literally blow things apart. While on active duty in West Germany I had the experience of investigating an accident involving a communication vehicle and overhead power lines. In that case, it was an eight-wheeled vehicle and trailer that houses an RTTY communications system. The vehicle had its antenna up, a 14 foot fiberglass whip, and was repositioning the vehicle trying to find a place on a small hill which might provide better signal. While moving the vehicle, the antenna came in contact with high voltage overhead wire. The resulting surge of electricity blew out the eight tires on the vehicle and the two tires on the trailer. I arrived within minutes of the accident to see the tires burning. I was saved from that experience because my antenna just briefly touched the power lines.

This experience could easily have ended with my death. I was very fortunate to be wearing tennis shoes, and to be on the trailer and not standing on the ground when I made contact with the high voltage. If I had been on the ground, the voltage may well have been high enough to literally have blown me apart.

Very scary.
Terry
W6LMJ

HAM RADIO IN THE UK

EchoLink

Ever since I had to take my Cushcraft MA5B HF mini-beam down due to very high winds in December 05, I've been without HF capability at my QTH. While I can operate HF elsewhere (we have a very capable HF shack on site at my workplace, for example) it takes effort to go there and operate, particularly if you're trying to meet skeds in a different time zone and on a weekend, e.g. the ASCRA weekly HF net!

Due to this lack of HF capability at home, I've been forced to try alternative means of working DX, the main one being EchoLink. For those of you that have never heard of EchoLink (or its close cousin IRLP), it's basically a way of using the Internet to enable VHF radio users to make DX QSOs. It's basically a VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) system, much like Skype, but available only to radio hams due to the fact that it is integrated with the VHF repeater network throughout the world.

For example ASCRA's very own WØYO-R repeater at Graceland, which operates on 146.730 locally in Lamoni, is connected into the EchoLink network (EchoLink node 127318). I can link into this using EchoLink software installed on my PC (www.echolink.org) or Mac (echomac.sourceforge.net), with an audio headset plugged into the mic and headphone ports on my machine. Once connected over the internet, I effectively become another user on this repeater, just like someone using an HT to access it right there in Lamoni. The only real difference is that my transmitted audio into and received audio from the repeater travel via digitised audio data packets on the Internet rather than modulated RF. Okay, I'll be one of the first to admit that using the Internet to achieve the lion's share of the DX path is a bit of a cheat, but with no HF antennas available at my QTH an Echolink QSO is still better than no QSO!

I've had good contacts with members of the Graceland Ham Club using this method over the years, with my first such QSO in 2004. You can hear some recorded audio from these early contacts on my website at www.hisimage.co.uk/m5bop/ascra/

My home town is Ipswich, in the county of Suffolk, on the East coast of the UK (locator JO02OB) and is fortunate enough to also have its own EchoLink node. This leads to a far more interesting way to use EchoLink! I can use my HT to access my local link node (MB7IIP-L, which appears in the 2m band on 145.3375 locally), and assuming the link is not already in use, can use DTMF commands from my HT keypad to connect MB7IIP-L to a remote node, say WØYO-R at Graceland, via the Internet. Once linked, transmissions are relayed bi-directionally between the two nodes with surprisingly little audio delay, allowing me to have a QSO pretty much as if I was a direct user of the Lamoni repeater!

I try to use this method whenever possible, as a QSO then involves radio on both ends of the link, making it seem far more like a regular radio QSO! The bad news is that due to local license restrictions, the Ipswich node is only active from 0600 UTC through 0000 UTC, which means that from midnight to 6am UK time this VHF access isn't available for use. This is a real pain when trying to work the states, as it doesn't align well with US peak ham operating hours!

The +6 hrs difference with Independence & Lamoni (CDT) means that I can't work VHF to them from 6 pm to midnight local, i.e. prime repeater hours!

The +5 hrs difference with Terry in Florida (EDT) isn't much better, with 7 pm to 1am being out of the picture!

If I'm up after midnight, I'll use the EchoLink client on my PC or Mac to work people during these times, as this generally works 24 hours, but expect a slightly comatose response, especially on a work day! Not sure if Fred, VK3AQN, in Melbourne, Australia has an EchoLink or IRLP node near to him - perhaps he'll write to IN-SERVICE and let us know!

To contact ASCRA guys in Independence, I currently log into the KCOJTE-L link (EchoLink node number 133333) which gets me on the same frequency split as the WØTOJ repeater in Independence. This means that anyone listening on TOJ (RX 147.090, TX 147.690) should be able to hear when I call CQ!

If I've whetted your appetite, and you'd like to try and contact me via this route, you can try to connect to the Ipswich EchoLink node, MB7IIP-L, Echolink node number 262500. If you connect via VHF you'll need to key in this node number to connect the two nodes. Commands to do this vary, but your local node should have a web site that gives details - for example see the site for my local node in Ipswich:

www.g7dnt.co.uk/pageID_4147696.html

Due to the time difference, it's probably better to arrange a sked via e-mail (m5bop@hisimage.co.uk) to be sure I'll be listening. Weekend QSOs are better, as I'm less likely to be working thus opening up a wider range of contact hours!

Note that MB7IIP-L is just a simplex link which pops up in the 2m band (145.3375) in my locality, rather than being connected to a repeater like WØYO-R and KCOJTE-L. This is unfortunate for you guys, as being able to access my local repeater (GB3PO) would open up a wider range of contacts for you in the UK. The good news is that this link is regularly monitored by the locals here, so if you holler long enough you'll probably get a response sooner or later!

Remote Base

While EchoLink is great, it doesn't work for joining the ASCRA weekly 20M or 40M net because it all works on VHF! One solution to this problem which I've yet to try is to access a remote HF base station via the Internet, such as N4ØLT at Terry's offices in West Palm Beach. Assuming Terry is not using this himself to access the net, this could be a great option. Apparently there are quite a few of these remote base nodes dotted around the world and available to licensed hams, so even if Terry's isn't available, there should be other viable sites. I'll keep you posted with my progress on this; the timing of this on a Sunday (either 9.30pm or 10.30pm local, depending on summertime) works well for me from home.

UK ASCRA Membership

As far as ASCRA membership goes, I'm still currently the only ASCRA member in the UK. Given that I know of no other ham radio operators within the UK church membership (I know pretty much everyone in the British Isles church, at least by association) that may seem unlikely to change anytime soon! However, I first learnt about ASCRA through reading an article published in the Saints Herald many, many years ago, before I became fully licensed, so maybe its time we did that again! - or at least got a mention in our regional e-mail newsletters! I'll try to get something in our British Isles e-news; you never know there may be someone who decides they would like to become

the second UK ASCRA ham! I do know lots of Christian Radio Hams in the UK though, through my membership of WACRAL (the World Association of Christian Radio Amateurs and Listeners), so I'm not alone over here! If you're interested you can find out more about WACRAL at www.wacral.org

Mark Riley, M5BOP

ASCRA BOARD CANDIDATES

BARBARA REDDING W5HKY

My name is Barbara A. Redding, W5HKY (previously HP1XBR, WD5HKY, DA2FX, WN5HKY). I have been licensed since 1977, as a Novice for two years, Technician for 15 years, Advanced for six months and Extra since 1993.

With my husband, children, brother, sister-in-laws and now my son-in-laws licensed, and our older grandchildren talking about getting licensed, I can say that amateur radio really is a family affair, and ASCRA has always been there for us.

ASCRA was our link to the U.S. when we were out of the country. The Sunday afternoon net is one place our friends from all over the world know they can find us. For better than 30 years we have spent most Sunday afternoons listening, if not actively talking on the net. Most years Terry and I have traveled Independence for the ASCRA meetings and I would be honored to continue to actively serve ASCRA.

BOB FARNHAM KGØII

Since receiving my Novice ticket in high school, I continued to upgrade my skills and knowledge; receiving my Amateur Extra ticket in 1995. I have conducted licensing classes and exam sessions as an accredited volunteer examiner for

the ARRL. I served as President of the Lamoni Amateur Radio Association from 1993 until 2006. I was elected to the ASCRA Board of Directors in 1998; serving as President from 2004 through 2006. I am committed to the principles of ASCRA and the Amateur Radio Service. ASCRA is now at a critical time in its history and must find a way to reactivate its membership and/or attract new members. I am happy to continue in my service to the community of ASCRA members.

ERNEST MILES WB2UJL

I've enjoyed the tremendous friendships that have formed over the years. I have been a member and served as a director of ASCRA since the 70's. I have served as the President and net control for the 20 M Sunday net. I want to be a part of ASCRA's future.

CHUCK PALMER NØNN

Chuck Palmer is a current member of the board of directors and the ASCRA treasurer. His bio and photo were not available at printing time for this issue of IN-SERVICE.

DOUG SHAW WAØEMX

Licensed since 1962, I am a founding member of the ASCRA board of directors, serving continuously since we organized in 1973. Over the years I have proudly served ASCRA in all elected and many appointed offices. I am currently serving in my third stint as Secretary.

My recent association with the Centerpoint Medical Center (Independence, MO) Emergency Operations Center, past service of many years as Army MARS NCS and ARRL Emergency Coordinator, and installation of the La Buena Fe (Honduras) Clinic Ham Station, reflect my strong belief in radio amateurs' obligation to be well versed in and capable of emergency communications support. I hope to spur more ASCRA members to actively support their local ARES and other local and national Emergency Responder organizations and on air networks.

Because of rapidly advancing communication technologies, I am excited with great enthusiasm for ASCRA's growing potential for service to the Church and the communities of which it is a part. I feel truly blessed by over 35 years as a member, ardent supporter and promoter of ASCRA, to which I am firmly committed.

ROBIN CROSS WØFEN

I have been a Ham for nearly 30 years. I have held the Extra Class license since 1985. I joined ASCRA as soon as I heard about it. I have been Net Control for the 80-meter net in the early 80s and more recently for the 20 and 40 meter nets when I can assist. I have been a Director on and off for about 20 years. I have been Secretary and am currently the Executive Director.

Since moving to the Independence area I have consistently operated the WØSHQ station at the Auditorium for which I am Trustee. I am deeply committed to ASCRA. I look forward to representing you to the best of my ability.

Professionally, I am the Chief Engineer for the Kansas City NPR affiliate FM Radio Station. I have been a Broadcast Engineer for over 30 years. I love tubes and amplifiers that use "empty state" devices.

I enjoy tuning up an amplifier. I can talk about technical areas for hours.

20-M AND 40-M NET CHECK-INS

Nov 10, 2008

These are the check-ins on the 20-M and 40-M nets since July 31, 2008. Once again Net Control was shared and the following are the 20-M and 40-M net check-ins. Sorry for any mistakes.

Ernie Miles, WB2UJL

20 M net

NØAIX, Larry Ragan
NØELM, Fred Troeh
WAØIBS, Andy Ferrar
KØJNW, Michael Thayer
ABØPV, Lee Snider
NØYD, Thomas Mc Tighe
NØWZH, Steven Hampton

KB1QBF, John Prickett

WB2IVN, Michael Zuckerman
K2QJV, Arthur Stiffey

W3ZSA, Alan Kipe

KE4AMQ, Fred Massoni
KC4EAG, Terry Redding Jr.
KG4LMW, Stuart Clark
N4WTW, Michael Glowaski

KD5BFE, James Craft
N5CCW, Steve Hampton
KB5FNX, Edward Terrell
KD5HQE, Charles Cody
W5OMU, Jeffrey Burmeister
KB5PQP, Anson Luna

WØDZX, Dave Atkins
WØFEN, Robin Cross
NØJHX, Gary Martin
NØMLF, Donald Wilson
WØSHQ, ASCRA Club
KCØWOT, Eric Hueftle

N2JHX, Stephen Ellerd
WB2UJL, Ernie Miles

KD4BHB, Lawrence Lackey
KI4FCQ, Richard Arthur
KA4RUR, Fred Carslick

KE5BJ, Matthew Bonnette
N5ECP, Jeff Salmons
KE5GVA, Terry McKee
N5JDL, James Lindsay
WD5NOT, Brian Gillespey
W5RF, Robert Feldtman

K5RMB, Edward Lozano
KK5XU, Danny Clayton

W6LMJ, Terry Redding
WB6TFD, Joseph Colouch

W7ABF, Dwayne Campbell
K7NCG, Jim Fish

WD8DFW, Raymond De Ramo
K8QA, Michael Oiler
KC8RMR, Claudius Anderson
KC8VHA, Richard Parker

KB9YRF, Victor Dickson

40 M net

WØDZX, David Atkins
KØIUQ, Louis Appel
ABØPV, Lee Snider
KCØUZZ, Edward Davis

K1JCJ, Robert McDonald

WB2UJL, Ernie Miles

WW4GC, Gary Craft
KT4VK, Donald Henderson

N5CCW, South TX Club
N5TFS, Dwight Spurlock

KC7BEL, Travis Bodily

W8EDX, Edward Jesse
N8PDF, Denis Boudreau
KC8VHA, Richard Parker

KA9GXZ, Fredrich Kopp

N5RVA, Jack Kryder

W6RTN, Philip Cole

K7BRK, Christopher Altwegg
W7SUR, William Shields

N8LCD, Robert Moy
KC8RBZ, David Stautberg
KC8RUR, Jill Raymer

WØFEN, Robin Cross
KØJNW, Michael Thayer
NØUYV, Glenn Sherman

WA2WOL, John Iseman

WB4LFC, Jerry Giddens
W4VKK, Herbert Johnson

W5LN, Carlos Hamm

W7KU, Robert Kimbrell

KD8JFC, Michael Downey
KA8PRE, Robert Vaughn
KF8ZN, Michael Haydon

K9JWJ, Jimmy Mahuron

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2009 ASCRA DIRECTORS BALLOT
ASSOCIATION OF SAINTS CHURCH RADIO AMATEURS, INC.

Election Ballot - Board of Directors - 2009-2010 term

Members only may vote for up to six (6) nominees by checking the box, by circling, or otherwise marking their selections. **More than six votes will invalidate your ballot.** **Ballots may be returned to the Secretary via postal mail, fax, or E-mail.** Each member voting must submit a separate ballot to avoid invalidation -- no multiple votes on the same ballot will be accepted. The name and call sign of the voting member must be clearly indicated for a ballot to be valid. If returning paper or fax ballots please also sign your name on the ballot as indicated. A simple E-mail listing your selections, by name and call sign, is an acceptable alternative to returning the ballot form itself but must include "Submitted by: your name, call sign" because E-mail addresses often do not sufficiently identify the originator. Contact the Secretary if you voted via Email and did not receive an acknowledgement.

Ballots must be RECEIVED by 23:59 CST, Saturday, January 3, 2009.

Voting Member's Signature & call sign: _____
(Please print your name below signature)

Six nominees were submitted by the 25 October 2008 deadline; listed in alphabetical order by first name. If you wish to write-in different name(s), use a space provided. **Vote for no more than six.**

- ** Barbara Redding, W5HKY, West Palm Beach, FL
- Bob Farnham, KG0II, Lamoni, IA
- ** Chuck Palmer, N0ONN, Independence, MO (Treasurer)
- ** Doug Shaw, WA0EMX, Raytown, MO (Secretary)
- ** Ernie Miles, WB2UJL, Durham, NC
- ** Robin Cross, W0FEN, Kansas City, MO (Executive Director)
- _____
- _____
- _____

** Indicates incumbent board member (current office held if any)

Return mailed ballots to:

Douglas Shaw, WA0EMX, wa0emx@arrl.net
Secretary
Association of Saints Church Radio Amateurs, Inc.
P.O. Box 73
Independence, MO 64051

or c/o secretary's home address:
11312 East 55 Terrace
Raytown, MO 64133-2965

Call or otherwise contact the Secretary in advance to have receiving Fax activated: 816-358-6856

Since ASCRA has no dues please consider sending a tax exempt donation by check paid to ASCRA, Inc., to help defray newsletter and other operating or project expenses.

Questions, concerns or comments regarding the ballot process are welcomed via your ballot envelope or may be sent to Doug Shaw via E-mail at: wa0emx@arrl.net.

If possible, please review your ASCRA directory/roster data on <http://www.ascra.org>. If you have any changes for the database (license class upgrades, new post office or E-mail addresses, phone numbers, etc.), please send them to the Directory Manager at ftroeh@onmbb.com or mail them to:

Fred Troeh, NØELM
36399 W Barcelona Ln
Maricopa, AZ 85238

If you have any changes for the database (upgrades, new post office or e-mail addresses, phone numbers, etc.), or if you want to receive this newsletter electronically, please contact me at ftroeh@onmbb.com (note new e-mail address; the iastate address no longer works) or by postal mail:

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IN-SERVICE

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