



The lamp that wouldn't cut off, the furry spy in the closet, and

# Other Tales Of Technical Wizardry

## King of the remotes

My husband ran over 14 miles of wire in our new home for his home automation project. Using a laptop or cell phone, he will be able to control and monitor everything: lights, doors, alarms, motion detectors, video, TV, satellite.

My friends all think he is crazy for the effort that this project has required, crawling through rafters, pulling multiple types of cables, drilling countless holes.

I know that we will have an amazingly sophisticated, smart home. I just hope that I can figure out how to turn on the lights.

*Chris Paszko, West End, Randolph EMC*

## Lightning in the yard

Soon after purchasing a new SLR digital camera, I had gotten my fill of flower and puppy dog pictures. I decided to try the delayed shutter feature on the camera and came up with the idea of having my wife, Amanda, walk across the yard with a flashlight. To my surprise we came up with this photo.



We decided to tell her parents and a few folks at church that I had gotten a picture of lightning running into the house. Most people were in awe that I had such "good timing."

*Rob McComas, Mill Spring, Rutherford EMC*

## Helloooo!

During the month of August, my father was experiencing trouble with his home telephone. The telephone would ring but you could not receive or make calls. You could only hear the phone ring.



Well, my father has an "antique" telephone that dates back to the early 1900s. (He's a collector.) A friend who is also a telephone repairman had installed modern basic wiring so this phone could be "plugged" into today's phone jack. But no one had ever used it. Until this particular day . . .

It worked!

We plugged this phone (circa 1915) into the home phone jack. Using his cell phone, my father called his home phone number. Immediately, we heard a "ticking" sound. This antique phone was trying to ring. Of course, these phones did not have bells built in them, but it was ticking, as it would have over 90 years ago! The audio was very clear. We then called his cell phone with this antique.

Who says that you can never go back? Well, you can. We replaced his house phone.

*Joey Sellers, Hamlet, Pee Dee EMC*

## The flash at night

One evening we had gone to bed to watch TV. My husband, Gary, had already gone to sleep. I turned the TV off and was almost asleep when I heard an "electrical buzz." My eyes were closed, but I was sure there had been a flash of light.

Later I thought to tell Gary about this, thinking maybe the automatic timer on the TV was malfunctioning. We didn't think much of it until a few nights later when it happened again. Once again, I was the only one awake. I unplugged the TV, concerned that it could have a short.

A few nights later (TV still unplugged), I see this flash of light again. I am a little unnerved at this point, having seen too many sci-fi movies, alien abductions and such. The next day, we removed the TV from the bedroom.

The next time the flash happened, I was certain that the power was arcing from the electrical outlets, but there were no scorching marks on the wall.

After witnessing this light show for several nights, I had had enough. It was time to involve Union Power. They came when I wasn't home but left me a message that everything checked out. I was relieved but still puzzled. Night came, and there was the same light show again!

A friend told us to turn the power off in that end of the house until he could come check things out. That night I went to bed feeling a little better, because there was no power in that end of the house. Gary was watching

TV in another room. I was almost asleep when I heard the sound and the flash again! Now I was convinced that I was going to be the next alien abductee and started yelling for Gary. He came and laid across the bed waiting for something to happen. He had always been asleep when it happened before.

When Gary finally went off to bed, he kicked something under the bed, and the flash went off in his face. It was his deer camera.

What was happening was that when the air conditioning went on, it would blow the bed skirt and activate his deer camera which he'd stored under the bed.

To all you hunters: Take the batteries out of your deer cameras before you store them.

*Gary and Diana Johnson  
Concord, Union Power*

### **Furby gets scared**

For those who don't remember, Furby was popular in the late 1990s. Furby is a little furry animal-robot toy with big eyes. Around then, my young daughter had one, but after a few years, it was thrown in the back of the closet and forgotten.



A year or so goes by, when one night around 3 a.m. I hear a voice calling. Thinking it was one of my three kids, I get up to investigate. I follow the voice to my daughter's closet and Furby is in there calling for help. "It's dark in here. I'm scared."

I rummaged through the closet until I found him. It worried me so bad, I even went to the trouble to find a screwdriver to remove the batteries. I never heard Furby speak any English before, so I was having flash-backs

from some of those bad teen horror movies where the toys come alive and kill the family.

Well, it seems new Furbies start out speaking Furbish but are programmed to speak less Furbish and more English as they get older. My understanding is they go on auto-pilot after a while and are independent of their owners. They even have a computer chip that can record voices. (I guess to add to their vocabulary!) They were even prohibited from being in homes of employees of the National Security Agency, because they could be used to spy on the U.S. (Washington Post, January 13, 1999, "Furby a Threat to National Security?")

My husband eventually took Furby on to school to entertain his high school students. Now am protected at home by my electronic robo-dog who will, according to the instructions, guard the house and bark when he hears any loud noise.

*Connie Puckett, Midland,  
Union Power Cooperative*

### **Mystery lamps**

We purchased the tall slender lamp with the burgundy shade for our bedroom. When I had surgery and needed easy access to light during the night, we put a "touch" lamp switch apparatus on it. Now it comes on at will. It comes on in the middle of the night as well as



during the day. It comes on even if you touch the night table it sits on. This happens every day and night, and it is a mystery to us, but we do not know how to repair it.

The ginger jar lamp with the dark green shade in our den also comes on by itself, but not as often as the one in our bedroom does. If we leave the house, lock the door and the dead bolt, and put the alarm system on, this jar light is on when we come home. We don't know what causes this either.

Everything else electronic in our six-year-old home works. We would welcome any suggestions for overcoming this problem. ☹

*Jean Sosebee, Bessemer City,  
Rutherford EMC*

*Thanks to everyone who sent us tales of technical wizardry. You can see more on our Web site. Next month we'll publish some of your favorite holiday recipes {Deadline was Oct. 15}.*



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#### **The Rules**

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. One entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos should be a minimum of 1200 by 800 pixels.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
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