

Central Georgia Amateur Radio Club, Inc.

P.O. Box 2585, Warner Robins, Georgia 31099

www.wa4ort.com



★ January 2012 Newsletter ★

Upcoming Events

- **January 28 – HamCram** 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Butts County ARES, BCFD Station #7, 144 Colwell Road, Jackson, GA
Contact W4DED@arrl.net
- **February 4 – HamCram**, 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM Mercer University Building, 502 2nd Ave, Eastman 31023. Call Bill [478] 542-1620
- **February 9 – CGARC regular monthly meeting**, located at First Christian Church, 100 N. Houston Road. 6:30 PM VE testing and socializing, 7:30 PM meeting starts.
- **February 18 – ‘Freeze Fest’**, Locust Fork, AL, ARRL sanctioned, Blount County ARC, w4blt.org for info.
- **February 25 – Dalton Hamfest**, Dalton, GA ARC <http://DaltonHamfest.com>
- **February 26 – Daytona 500**, Sponsored by NASCAR – What? Don't you know that Hams like to watch million dollar rednecks make left turns, too!
- **March 3 – BirminghamHamfest**, Alabama Section Convention, <http://w4cue.com>
- **March 8 – CGARC regular monthly meeting**, located at First Christian Church, 100 N. Houston Road. 6:30 PM VE testing and socializing, 7:30 PM meeting starts.
- **April 12 – CGARC regular monthly meeting**, located at First Christian Church, 100 N. Houston Road. 6:30 PM VE testing and socializing, 7:30 PM meeting starts.
- **April 21 – HamCram**, Houston Medical Center, 1601 Watson Blvd, Warner Robins, 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- **May 12 – Heart of Georgia**, Byron, GA 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM, sponsored by CGARC, MGRA, BMSRC. <http://wa4ort.com>
Dave KN4DS and Bill WR4BA are the co-chairmen of the hamfest. Flyers are available if anyone wants some to take out of town with them. Call Dave or Bill to get them.



In This Issue

In addition to the Upcoming events on the opposite column we have several interesting articles in this issue.

Page 2 – A recap of 2011 Club Membership and a report on our 2011 HamCram Program.

Page 3 – Mike's (WM4B) **Squelch Tail** report on the club's repeaters and the intertie system.

Page 4 – **DX Code of Conduct**, the rules of etiquette you need to know *before* pressing the mic button and calling CQ DX.

Page 5 – “**3900 Saturdays**”, from W4WXA.

Page 6 – **Tailgater's Space**, listings of For Sale, Wanted and Trade items.

Page 7/8 – Tower Climbing Safety, by AB4RT

Page 9 – Club officers listing and contact info.

☆ - ☆ - ☆ - ☆ - ☆



Mrs. Elaine Privette, KB4KNE, was selected “2011 Honorary Member”. Pictured at left she holds the plaque she received from club president Dave Stewart, KN4DS during our club's Christmas Party.

For the second year in a row Mike Besemer, WM4B, at right, was selected by fellow club members as “Amateur Operator of the Year”. Mike is a hard working and dedicated member, spending countless hours keeping our club repeaters on the air at top performance.



New Club Members for 2011

by Bill Atkins, WR4BA

During the year of 2011 we had eleven Hams join our club. Below is a list of those joining the club this past year.

Joanie Adams, KK4CRK, Byron (paid 2012)
Larry Adams, KK4BZA, Byron (paid 2012)
Jason Bowers, KK4AGU, Bonaire (paid 2012)
John Brown, K4SLY, Dacula (\$15.00 due)
Guillermo Hernandez, NP4GH, Hardeeville SC
(paid 2012)
Joshua McCall, KJ4IPZ, Macon (\$20.00 due)
Sean McMahon, WB0VER, Warner Robins
(paid 2012)
Bob Minton, W4SOF, Perry (paid 2012)
Angel Ramey, KJ4RFY, Macon (paid 2012)
Jim Rogers, KJ4VKX, Macon (paid 2012)
Randall Sorrow, KJ4YKA, Warner Robins
(paid 2012)
(\$17.50 due)

Thanks to all these 11 new 2011 members for joining our faithful this past year. As a result our club maintained a very respectable total of 79 members. Of the 79 total 2011 year-ending membership the club records show 55 are ARRL members. That is a very good 70% participation. If you are not sure our club records reflect your ARRL membership correctly please check the far right column on the membership roster where a '1' denotes 'YES' for ARRL membership and '0' denotes 'NO' ARRL membership. If yours is incorrect please email or call Bill WR4BA for correction.

2011 Membership Dues

It's that time of year again. Many of you have responded and paid your 2012 club dues. If you have, thank you for your continued support of the club and your promptness. If you have not paid, please take a moment and drop your payment in the mail at the club P.O. Box address at the top of this Newsletter or, better yet, bring it to the next meeting. As a reminder if you are one of the many new 2011 members your 2012 dues may be prorated based on the date you joined. On the new member list in the left column I have indicated the amount of your dues or have you marked 'paid 2012' if you have either paid or joined the club after October 1, 2011. If you have any questions contact club Secretary/Treasurer Bill WR4BA.

Five HamCram Classes in 2011

by Bill Atkins, WR4BA

During 2011 CGARC members conducted five HamCram classes to help a lot of folks get into Ham Radio or upgrade their license. Here is the complete list of 2011 HamCrams, location and number of successful students (Technician in left and then General in far right column).

Date	Location	Students	
1/15/2011	Houston Med Center	10	0
2/19/2011	Macon 911 Center	9	3
5/14/2011	Dublin	3	2
6/11/2011	Houston Med Center	2	2
9/10/2011	Montezuma	20	0
	Totals	44	7

Many thanks go out to several club members for their efforts. Dave (KN4DS), Joe (N4SP), Tim (AF1G), Preston (WR4PM), Gene (KJ4QFF) and Bill (WR4BA) sat through and assisted part or all day in almost all of the classes. Several other members came out and gave the students help, advice and needed encouragement. There were many VE's that came in and helped administer the tests. The paperwork was a monster but the group was up to the challenge and did a great job. Mark (KJ4KJN) and John (KJ4BEO) were the local leaders that organized the Montezuma event and got the huge class together.

This type of growth in the Amateur Radio ranks is what will guarantee the future of our great hobby. The total number of new Hams licensed by our HamCrams just in 2011 was 44 Technicians. We also assisted with the upgrade of 7 new Generals. The total number of new and upgrade licenses since the beginning of our HamCrams in two and one half years is 160 Technicians and 45 General upgrades. The success ratio is 160 of 188 Technicians (85%) and 45 of 61 Generals (74%) (NOTE: Several of the General attempts were just 'OK, I passed Tech so why not try for General', causing the success ratio to be skewed somewhat lower). ☆ - ☆ - ☆ - ☆

You might be a Ham Operator if...

From the rambling 'senior' mind of Bill WR4BA

- ❖ ...you got more 'toys' for Christmas than your children or grandchildren. (c)
- ❖ ...you strung Christmas lights on your tower or dipole wires. (c)

Squelch Tails

by *Mike Besemer, WM4B*

Happy New Year everyone,

Thankfully, we've survived another year with only minor glitches on the club's repeater systems. Looking through the logs, I see that we replaced the power amplifier transistor on the 146.850 repeater, installed a new air conditioner at the 146.850 site, and changed a capacitor in the 145.110 repeater. Thanks to the availability of a spare repeater, we suffered NO downtime on the 146.850 system and only a few days downtime (while awaiting parts) on the 145.110. All-in-all, not too bad - especially when you consider the amount of usage these systems get.

As predicted in the last edition, we had a LOT of Tropospheric ducting (Tropo) late last summer and into the early fall. For several months we were regularly hearing other repeaters from several hundred miles away, and on a number of occasions were able to have QSOs with folks in Florida and South Carolina. More than likely, we'll start to see the same kind of thing next spring when the weather begins to warm up and daylight starts coming a bit earlier. Keep listening - there's no telling what might show up.

At the time of this writing, the link between the Warner Robins and Cochran repeater has been taken down due to the fact that the RF path between the sites is inadequate with our current antenna configuration. I'm hopeful that a simple re-aiming of the antenna at the Warner Robins site will correct the problem, but thus far we've been unable to secure permission to climb the water tower to move the antenna. If we ever obtain that permission, we'll try to put the link back up, but until that time we cannot link directly to Cochran. In the meantime, the link has been moved to the Peach State Intertie hub-repeater frequency, so we're still able to access the Intertie for the various nets that are held. (Thanks to Preston - WR4PM for loaning us a beam.) Bringing up and dropping the link now only requires one set of codes: '**COC1**' will

bring the link up, and '**COCO**' will drop the link. Currently, the repeater controller is having difficulty decoding DTMF tones from the Intertie side, so it's likely that someone on the 146.850 will have to ensure the links are enabled and disabled at the proper times. Hopefully that problem can be resolved so the link can be controlled in both directions.

Speaking of linking, please remember that when you are linked to the Intertie, it requires about 1-second for all the repeaters in the system to come up. Please keep this in mind when using the link, and remember to wait about 1-second after keying your microphone before you speak. I recently monitored one of the nets and nearly every station was having the first word or two of their transmission truncated because they failed to wait for the systems to come up. During normal operation, it's only somewhat annoying - but think of how difficult it would be to pass traffic during an emergency if you were unable to hear the first word or two of the other station's transmission.

Since we've got a number of newcomers in the area, I want to mention that there is a complete list of repeater user commands and courtesy tone descriptions available for review on the www.wa4ort.com website and also at <http://cgarc.wikidot.com>. Our systems are fairly complicated and emit quite a variety of beeps, bleeps, and squawks. Hopefully the information on the websites will eliminate some confusion.

If there are ever any issues with the repeaters that need attention, please let myself or Dan - KF8DB know about them. There are several links on the websites above that will allow you to contact us by email, or you can catch us on-the-air. I know that some folks are hesitant to let us know about repeater problems, but we count on the users to let us know if something isn't right. It's far easier for us to work repair time into our schedules when we know about the problem right away.

And on a final note, I'd like to make a shameless plug for the repeater system that is

Squelch Tails (continued on page 4)

Squelch Tails (continued from page 3)

being hosted by the Houston Medical Center in Warner Robins. Don, KJ4PEI did a great job of getting us rack space on the 5th Floor of the new wing and talked the hospital into funding and installing the antenna system. WM4B/R is up-and-running on 146.670 MHz (-600 KHz) and 443.150 MHz (+ 5 MHz). The two repeaters are linked full-time and both require an 82.5 Hz. PL tone. A considerable amount of time and \$\$\$ was required to bring this system on-line, so please make use of them.

Until next time,

73,

Mike – WM4B

☆ – ☆ – ☆ – ☆ – ☆

CQ DX....CQ CQ CQ....CQ DX

by Bill Atkins, WR4BA

Quite a few newer Hams are upgrading to General and Extra and are 'gearing up' with rigs and antennas to "reach out and touch" some of those long distant (DX) stations.

Once you have chosen and bought that HF rig and have built, erected and tested that antenna system, there is one final thing you need to do before pressing that PTT bottom and calling CQ DX. The code of conduct for operating DX is listed below and is available on the web at <http://www.dx-code.org> for you guidance. These rules are not in the FCC rules and regulation per say but they are not merely suggestions either. If you want a pleasant experience working DX you will be much more accepted by others on the air if you follow the code.

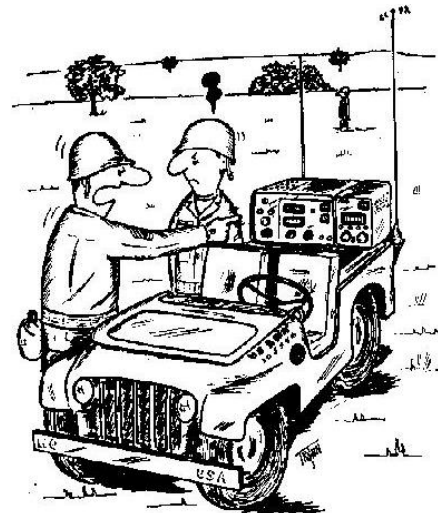
Please get QSL cards printed and research QSL bureaus so you can be prepared to promptly return QSL when requested. A QSL bureau is a third party facility that bundles then forwards QSL cards around the world, saving lots of money on postage. This is one of many reasons you will want to join ARRL, if you haven't already. ARRL is one of several organizations that offer QSL Bureau service. You can Google 'QSL Bureau' for more info.



The DX Code Of Conduct

Information from www.dx-code.org

- ◇ I will listen, and listen, and then listen again before calling.
- ◇ I will only call if I can copy the DX station properly.
- ◇ I will not trust the DX cluster and will be sure of the DX station's call sign before calling.
- ◇ I will not interfere with the DX station nor anyone calling and will never tune up on the DX frequency or in the QSO slot.
- ◇ I will wait for the DX station to end a contact before I call.
- ◇ I will always send my full call sign.
- ◇ I will call and then listen for a reasonable interval. I will not call continuously.
- ◇ I will not transmit when the DX operator calls another call sign, not mine.
- ◇ I will not transmit when the DX operator queries a call sign not like mine.
- ◇ I will not transmit when the DX station requests geographic areas other than mine.
- ◇ When the DX operator calls me, I will not repeat my call sign unless I think he has copied it incorrectly.
- ◇ I will be thankful if and when I do make a contact.
- ◇ I will respect my fellow hams and conduct myself so as to earn their respect. ☆end☆



"I don't care if Division doesn't send QSL cards, Private. Get on that radio and send in my report right now!"

Cartoon source unknown

'3900 Saturdays'

This story was forwarded to me from Tom Haskins, W4WXA. As I am thanking Tom now, you will thank him once you have read it. It's well worth your time.

The older I get, the more I enjoy Saturday mornings. Perhaps it's the quiet solitude that comes with being the first to rise, or maybe it's the unbounded joy of not having to be at work. Either way, the first few hours of a Saturday morning are most enjoyable.

A few weeks ago, I was shuffling toward the garage with a steaming cup of coffee in one hand and the morning paper in the other. What began as a typical Saturday morning turned into one of those lessons that life seems to hand you from time to time. Let me tell you about it:

I turned the dial up into the phone portion of the band on my Ham radio in order to listen to a Saturday morning swap net. Along the way, I came across an older sounding chap, with a tremendous signal and a golden voice. You know the kind. He sounded like he should be in the broadcasting business. He was telling whomever he was talking with something about 'a thousand marbles'. I was intrigued and stopped to listen to what he had to say....

'Well, Tom, it sure sounds like you're busy with your job. I'm sure they pay you well but it's a shame you have to be away from home and your family so much. Hard to believe a young fellow should have to work sixty or seventy hours a week to make ends meet. It's too bad you missed your daughter's 'dance recital' he continued. 'Let me tell you something that has helped me keep my own priorities.' And that's when he began to explain his theory of a 'Thousand Marbles.'

'You see, I sat down one day and did a little arithmetic. The average person lives about seventy-five years. I know, some live more and some live less, but on average, folks live about seventy-five years.

'Now then, I multiplied 75 times 52 and I came up with 3900, which is the number of Saturdays that the average person has in their entire lifetime.

Now, stick with me, Tom, I'm getting to the important part.

It took me until I was fifty-five years old to think about all this in any detail', he went on, 'and by that time I had lived through over twenty-eight hundred Saturdays.' 'I got to thinking that if I lived to be seventy-five, I only had about a thousand of them left to enjoy. So I went to a toy store and bought every single marble they had. I ended up having to visit three toy stores to round up 1000 marbles. I took them home and put them inside a large, clear plastic container right here in the shack next to my gear.'

'Every Saturday since then, I have taken one marble out and thrown it away. I found that by watching the marbles diminish, I focused more on the really important things in life. There's nothing like watching your time here on this earth run out to help get your priorities straight.'

'Now let me tell you one last thing before I sign-off with you and take my lovely wife out for breakfast. This morning, I took the very last marble out of the container. I figure that if I make it until next Saturday then I have been given a little extra time. And the one thing we can all use is a little more time.'

'It was nice to meet you, Tom. I hope you spend more time with your family, and I hope to meet you again here on the band. This is a 75 Year old Man, K9NZQ, clear and going QRT, good morning!

You could have heard a pin drop on the band when this fellow signed off. I guess he gave us all a lot to think about. I had planned to work on the antenna that morning, and then I was going to meet up with a few fellow Hams to work on the next club newsletter

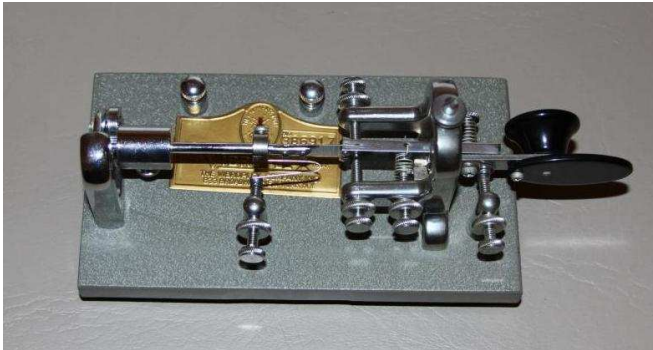
Instead, I went upstairs and woke my wife up with a kiss. 'C'mon honey, I'm taking you and the kids to breakfast.' 'What brought this on?' she asked with a smile. 'Oh, nothing special, it's just been a long time since we spent a Saturday together with the kids. And hey, can we stop at a toy store while we're out? I need to buy some marbles

☆ - ☆ - ☆ - ☆ - ☆

Tailgater's Space

For Sale: Bill (WR4BA) [478] 542-1620
Two (2) Yaesu FT-2800M 2-Meter mobile
radio, 5/10/25/65 Watts output, both in mint
condition. Manuals included. Asking **\$200.00**
for each, sold separately, or will consider
reasonable offers or trades. Got too many!

For Sale: Bill (WR4BA) [478] 542-1620 helping
Mrs. Kay Peterson sell some of her silent key
husband's {WD4SLL} equipment.
Absolute MINT condition Vibroplex S/N 386917
and is pictured below. Asking **\$50.00**



For Sale: (Bill (WR4BA) [478] 542-1620
HP computer tower, older generation. 40 GB
HD, CD, CDRW, 3.5" FD, LAN and Sound
cards. It works or can be used for parts. No
peripheral equipment included. \$25.00 obo

For Sale: by Joe (KC4LNX) [478] 542-0767
Heathkit HW-101 SSB/CW 100 watt
transceiver with power supply and manual.
Sold as is. Has not been modified. Has not
been in use for about 20 years. Easily rebuilt
and tuned up. \$75.00 obo.

For Sale: by Joe (KC4LNX) [478] 542-0767
Drake 2B Ham receiver with matching speaker
and manual. It's a tube type that's early to mid
sixties vintage? \$50.00 obo.

Wanted to buy: by Joe (KC4LNX) [478] 542-
0767 need a 1:1 current balun for dipole in
excellent condition.

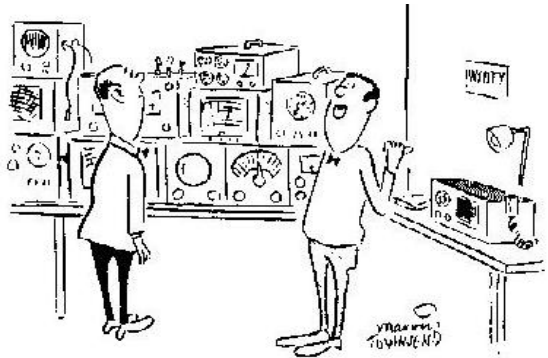
You might be a Ham Operator if...

From the rambling 'senior' mind of Bill WR4BA

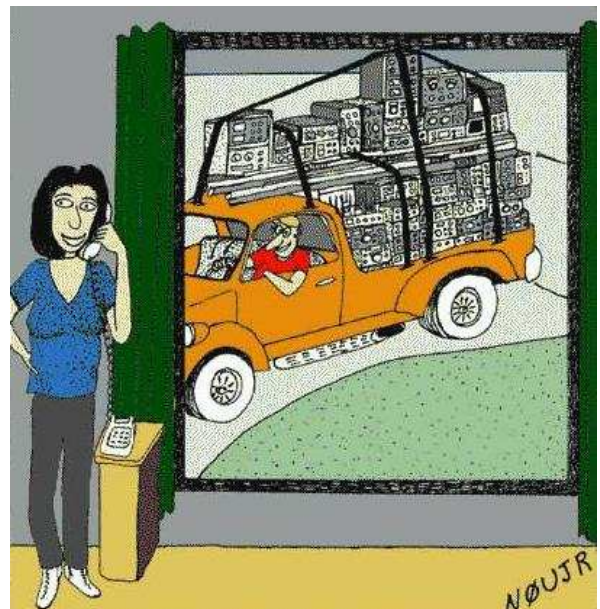
- ❖ ...you have more pictures of your Ham gear than you do of your spouse.^(c)

Are you an ARRL Member?

Do you know all of the benefits of membership? Are you aware of all the things ARRL does for Amateur Radio? Have you heard of lobbyists in Washington DC? Who do you think continues fighting to preserve our allocated frequency spectrum? Most licensed Ham operators don't know about all the things going on that threatens our precious airways. Check all this out at <http://www.ARRL.org> and read about all the things our friends are doing for all of us and our hobby. If not an ARRL member just visit and click to join. – ☆ – ☆ –



"Oh, that's my test equipment over there. This is my Ham gear here." (looks like WM4B's shack)



No, Greg went to the Hamfest today to get rid of a couple of old radios that were cluttering up the place. Oh, I think I hear him pulling in now.

Tower Climbing Safety

by Robert Tuck, AB4RT

Safety in climbing is something that I take seriously. I have been climbing mountains and towers for over 20 years. In all of that time, neither anyone that I have been with or nor myself have been injured beyond a scratch nor have we ever loaded the climbing lanyards. I have taught numerous persons how to climb and rappel.

I have seen the video of the IDIOT free climbing the 1800' tower and of a different person free climbing a 40' tower. Free climbing is defined as climbing without the use of fall prevention gear. Both of these climbers did attach to the tower when they got to their working positions. People, how far of a fall does it take to injure or kill? You will probably survive a 12-15 foot fall with only broken bones. But what if you fall 5 feet and land on that ground rod sticking out of the ground? There are Amateur Radio Operators injured or killed every year due to tower activities and I believe that almost all of these incidents are preventable.

The first thing that I do when I am asked to work on a tower is to inspect the tower. See my last article for information about that. Don't forget to look at the area for power lines, trees or other hazards. I do not hesitate to use extra guys, leg braces, bolts or methods to get the job done safely. I have taken down several towers that I would not climb.

OSHA rules stipulate (I know that as individuals we are not bound by OSHA Rules), among other things, that: a full body harness be used; that a fall arrest device be used; automatic double locking carabineers and that you must be attached to the tower 100% of the time. This implies that a dual lanyard system MUST be used.

Helmet - Your brain is the most important organ in your body. Why not protect it? A very short fall can cause serious brain/head injury. I always use a rated climbing helmet while doing tower work. And because I may drop something, from a 1 ounce nut to a 65lb tower



section, I require that anyone around the base of the tower wear one also. And I go one step further, I don't want anybody - helmet or not - in the zone, where something may be dropped, unless they have a reason to be there.

Ropes - I also only use rated ropes for overhead work. I will use a non-rated rope for a tag line. Load rated ropes cost about \$1 a foot (Bluewater 7/16 Static line) and have strength of over 7,000 pounds.

Harnesses - I prefer to use a full body harness. It protects and cushions my body if I suffer a fall. It contains me if I happen to go upside down. Using a safety belt will put all of the force on your lower back in the event of a fall. A half harness has several issues: it does not protect you from inverting, it puts all of the fall force on your back and it does not have side positioning loops. A harness made of leather is no longer acceptable. Leather can crack and break without warning. Thinking of no harness? I don't like to gamble with my life.



Lanyards - Your lanyard must attach to a strong part of the tower that you are climbing. This does not mean that you can use the cross braces on Rohn 25/45



Tower Climbing Safety (cont'd from pg 7)

towers. The proper lanyard will have a carabineer with an opening large enough to go around one of the tower legs. Some water towers and some commercial towers have a 3/8" cable running up the entire length of the tower. There is a special device called a Cable Grab that attaches to this cable. The cable grab attaches to the front of the harness and "grabs" the cable. When properly used, at most the fall distance will be 8-10 inches. A dual lanyard system is still needed for when you reach your work position. A proper dual lanyard has a fall arrest device and two lanyards coming off of that device. One of the lanyards must be attached to the tower at all times. The fall arrest device is used to lessen the impact to your body in the event of a fall. It absorbs the energy of a fall and slows you down. Once used, it must be replaced. This function is built into some single lanyards. If you use two of this type of lanyard and both are attached to the tower at the same time, your body will have to absorb twice as much force.

At right is the shock absorbing device to go with the Lanyard. Notice the folds.



Positioning Lanyard - A positioning lanyard is nice to have. It allows you to adjust it to provide some comfort at your work position. It does not have a shock absorbing device built in. Don't use your dual lanyards as a work positioning device.

Carabineers & Hardware - Use rated hardware. "Keychain" and dog chain/boat type carabineers do not provide a safety margin. These types are



only rated at a few hundred pounds. The climbing types are rated for a minimum of 5,000 lbs and some are rated for 13,000. The same goes for pulleys. Your body falling a couple of feet can generate several thousand pounds of force on your equipment.

Boots - And don't forget work boots. I could do without the steel toe, but the reinforced arch spreads out the force of standing on those Z braces.

Gloves - Towers are made out of metal and are sometimes galvanized. There are usually sharp edges or small snags protruding out.

Harnesses, helmets, lanyards, ropes do wear out and they do deteriorate with age. Each manufacturer has its own guidelines as to when to retire a piece of equipment. Treat every piece of gear with respect - you are trusting it with your life. Store it properly. Keep it clean. Inspect it before and after every use. Do not, I repeat, **DO NOT** use non-load rated gear. You might get away with it a few times.



Robert, AB4RT, pictured here outfitted and ready to **safely** climb. The total weight of equipment is about 35 lbs. Robert's weight? (?)

