

# THE NUGGET



Mother Lode DX/Contest Club

## The Newsletter of the Mother Lode DX/Contest Club

November 2023

Volume 28 Number 11

With the holidays and a lack of copy, the Nugget is a bit late. I have included a partial listing of SS scores. I heard a rumor that the next MLDXCC meeting may be on December 16. We need to elect officers or sack the treasury and throw a New Years party to drink up the balance. No idea where this meeting will be. DXing has been good with some new band countries including 70 on 4 new bands. Merry Christmas to all.



the editor

### CW SS

W7RN(N6TV)	193,970
WC6H	166,830
N6ZFO	149,260
KH6TU	144,670
WX5S	119,000
W1RH	111,552
W1SRD	105,168
W6EU	92,310
WE6Z	84,336
K6MM	60,648
WX6V	51,576
N6XI	46,080
N6US (KH7Y)	33,880
KA6W	30,856
AF6SA	21,450
NU6T	12,626
NU6T	12,626

### PHONE SS

WC6H	270,114
W7N (WX5S)	249,390
N6RK	168,640
W1SRD	143,208
KE6FT	121,852
WE6Z	108,360
N6XI	89,590
AE6Y	60,060
AF6SA	49,494
K6TQ	35,000
K6OK	33,000
N6NFB	29,304

## DELETED COUNTRIES

### Swan Island

Swan Island is located 95 miles from Honduras in the Caribbean. There are three main islands, Great Swan, Little Swan, and Booby Cay. Discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1502 A.D., he named them Islas de Las Pozas (Islands of the Pools). They were renamed in the 1700s after the Captain of the Cygnet, Charles Swan who was captured by pirates.



It became a US possession in the 1840s when an American entrepreneur, John Valentine White, began exploring for guano (not hard to find) on the island. In 1857 he claimed the island under the Guano Act of 1840. One may wonder why someone would mine guano. Well, the islands were transferred to the Atlantic and Pacific Guano Company who sold shares of stock totaling \$5,000,000. Even today that is a lot of poop! The owners even minted their own currency, not unlike our currency today... pretty worthless! (*Cash is Trash... Warren Buffett, An Editor position and \$5 can get you a cup of coffee*).

The ownership of the island passed through a few hands and ended up in the possession of the American Fruit Company who grew coconut palms there and also established the first wireless relay station for the American fleet in the Caribbean. It also relayed hurricane information. Over the years this station passed to the U.S. Weather Bureau and then to NWS, then to the FAA and back to the NWS. The islands were also used for a USDA cattle quarantine station. This went on into the 1960s.

One interesting story is Radio Swan. The CIA set up a broadcast station in 1960 to aid in the invasion of Cuba, [Radio Americas](#). Furthermore, they established a covert training base there for the invasion. After the Bay of Pigs the station was taken down and moved to their next covert op, Vietnam. The island used in 1987 by the CIA to train the Contras.

Another interesting story revolves around a group of Texas high school kids in 1965. They robbed a local armory, formed an "army" with the intent of freeing "oppressed countries". They trained on US soil! Their first op was operation Liberation of Swan Island. You know, even back then there were kooks who did strange things! The difference back then is we identified them as nuts and did not try to placate them by normalizing their behavior.

There was a standing argument over possession of the islands. Honduras claimed them on the basis that Columbus, an Italian that apparently spoke Spanish, claimed the islands for Spain and the islands should be in the possession of the nearest Spanish speaking country. Maybe that will work for us today. We have to pick an island that was discovered by an English speaking nation and wrest away from a non-English speaking country! The US vacated its claim in 1972 in spite of the fact that an US court established that American had clear title to them. Was this to hide the covert CIA bases and stations from Americans? Enquiring minds want to know!

In recent times a US corporation expressed interest in building luxury condos and hotels plus a "human stem-cell" research facility (*hmm... Why there? Do stem-cells have to be housed in isolation? Does this sound like something Fauci would do?*) but alas it is now scheduled to be an isolated high security prison for gang members, probably housing many of the MS-13 leaders.

Thanks to the Southern California DX Club Newsletter

## Tube of the Month

### WE 241B

Western Electric was a major manufacturer of equipment and tubes for the military and broadcasting in the 1920s. Military types developed in WW1 were refined for civilian use. In 1921, Western Electric announced a new triode that looked like an enlarged “U” plotron or WE 211A, but was about 13 inches tall. In 1924 a refined type called the [WE 212D](#) replaced the original tube. Many of Western Electric’s commercial broadcast transmitters utilized the 212D in their finals and modulators. The 212D could operate at full power up to 1500 KHz, but up to 4500 KHz, it had to operate at reduced power.

The late 1920s saw much development in the use of higher frequencies in the “short waves” for long distance communications (DXing). W6AM’s “[California Kilowatt](#)” on 40 meters is an example. Western Electric wished to enter this market for sales as well as for its in-house equipment. The basis 212 envelope was equipped with a plate cap and was introduced as the 214A in 1928 followed by the [214B](#) in 1934. This new tube was rated as having a dissipation of 275 watts with a maximum of 3000 volts at 350 ma on the plate. The filament uses 14 volts at 6 amps. Maximum full power is 7.5 MHz but could be used at 22.5 MHz with 1000 volts on the plate. This tube is 14.5 inches tall and 3.63 inches in diameter. The base is a bayonet style with a side pin, but has only 3 pins.

The 241B was in production into the 1950s, but is a seldom seen tube today. The old 212D and E tubes were produced in much larger quantities. Their usefulness as modulator tubes wasn’t affected by their poor frequency range. One reason that this tube wasn’t widely used, is because of its competition. In 1934, some hams in California began offering the EIMAC [150T](#) (later 250T) that filled that operational niche and dominated the competition.

Norm N6JV

Visit the museum at [N6JV.com](http://N6JV.com)



**Convention Registration Begins Next Week, Nov. 15th at 10 AM!**

Go to our website to register on line or to download the registration form.

<http://www.dxconvention.org/>

Planning is well underway! We already have 4 top drawer presentations, and both the DX Academy and DX University are booked. Furthermore, the DX, Contest, YL, and ARRL forums are now on the schedule. If you plan to attend Friday and would like a box lunch (\$23) please let us know so we can keep the headcount.

Steve Jones, who is heading up the Bus Tour, contacted Suzanne Bianco at Visit Visalia, the city's visitor center. She has put together a wonderful bus tour of the local gardens and parks for us. If you are bringing a friend or spouse who is not a ham this would be a great diversion and it is scheduled so they will not miss the big events!

We have found an Emcee! Josh Nass, KI6NAZ, has agreed to help us out. Josh is the founder of the Ham Radio Crash Course website which covers all aspects of our hobby. He is a YouTube personality as well as a blogger and he is keeping our hobby in the limelight. We are sure you will enjoy his wit and personality as he heads up the Banquet and Breakfast events! If you have some children (grandchildren, great-grandchildren, young kids) who may have an interest in the hobby, bring them along. We are focusing this convention on newbies and those interested in learning about our great hobby!

Raffle prizes are being collected and they will rival the 2023 raffle so keep an eye out for information on how to purchase them before the convention (*not on line but by phone*).

We will update you periodically as we progress through planning.

Let's make the 2024 IDXC one to remember!

Bill  
N6RV  
2024 IDXC Co-Chair

Mel  
K6SY  
2024 IDXC Co-Chair

## Club Log Standings 2023

### Overall

1	W1SRD	Steve Dyer	257
2	NK7I	Rick Bates	245
3	K6OK	Jim Varney	241

### CW

1	K6YK	John Lee	203
2	K6OK	Jim Varney	141
3	N6JV	Norm Wilson	128

### Phone

1	NC6R	Steve Allred	167
2	W6SRD	Steve Dyer	161
3	K6YK	John Lee	146

### Data

1	W1SRD	Steve Dyer	238
2	W6DR	Dave Ritchie	235
3	NK7I	Rick Bates	234

## Awards Checkers ARRL

Rick Samoian, W6SR

(DXCC, WAS, VUCC, 160M)

\*Proposed and approved at the November 12, 2016 MLDXCC general meeting.

Northern California Contest Club (NCCC) announced their focus contests at their August 2018 meeting. This list can be found in the Aug 2018 NCCC newsletter.

## Postal Increase

Product	Price before Jan. 22	Price after Jan. 22
Letters (1 oz.)	60 cents	63 cents
Letters (metered 1 oz.)	57 cents	60 cents
Domestic Postcards	44 cents	48 cents
International Postcards	\$1.40	\$1.45
International Letter (1 oz.)	\$1.40	\$1.45

## MLDXCC Focus Contests

The following lists all contests in which MLDXCC would appreciate your efforts.

ARRL SS CW/PH

ARRL DX Phone\*

ARRL DX CW\*

ARRL 10M\*

ARRL 160M\*

California QSO Party

ARRL RTTY RU

CQ WPX RTTY

CQ WPX SSB

CQ WPX CW

## 2023 Meeting Dates

June 17, Shingle Springs  
July 22, Shingle Springs  
August 26 Lockeford  
September none  
October 22 Oakley  
November none  
December 16 (tentative)

## The NOAA Solar Update

Click the link below to display the latest NOAA solar predictions.

<http://www.swpc.noaa.gov/products/weekly-highlights-and-27-day-forecast>

## Upcoming Events

For the latest contest info. click on the following link:

<http://www.contestcalendar.com/contestcal.html>

## Upcoming DX and DXpeditions

Click the link below to display upcoming DXpeditions.

<http://www.ng3k.com/Misc/adxo.html>

## MLDXCC Reflector

The MLDXCC reflector is maintained at groups.io. Visit <https://groups.io/g/mldxcc>

We also maintain a spotting reflector at <https://groups.io/g/MLDXCC-Spots>

We are also on Facebook!  
<https://www.facebook.com>

## Classifieds

*Members are requested to review their classified ads each month for accuracy and to resubmit their ads or confirm their desire to keep it running in the next issue.*

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Need QSL cards, business cards, club banners?  
Contact Vina K6VNA [vina@sign-tek.com](mailto:vina@sign-tek.com)

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## COAX FOR SALE

For Sale: 272 feet of 1 ¼ " Andrew Superflex VXL6 Heliax. \$750, connectors available. Brand new, still on original 5' diameter spool. All or nothing, no cutting to shorter lengths. Good for long run to antenna field. 0.146 dB attenuation per 100' at 30 MHz. 0.996 dB attenuation per 100' AT 450 MHz. I will deliver with-in most of Northern California (distance and location negotiable) for cost of gasoline. This will take a pick-up truck or large flat-bed trailer to move. Pick-ups with a 5' bed you will risk breaking your cab back window, plan accordingly. Dave, W6DE, 530-409-7877

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## An Excellent Soldering Iron for the Field

Gary NA6O

Someone asked recently on TowerTalk for suggestions regarding a cordless soldering iron that was adequate for heavy wires, such as #10 AWG. I have such an iron: The Weller WLBU75, a compact butane-powered pencil-style iron. They rate it at "75 Watts" but in my experience it's more powerful than that.

There is much to like about this tool. It's solidly built, compact, and fits nicely in your hand as well as your tool bag. It lights with a flick of a switch and heats to soldering temperature in less than 15 seconds. There's a tiny hole you can look into and see the orange glow of the flame. Wind will not blow it out, ever. It has a temperature adjustment valve but I've always left mine wide open for single, quick jobs. After turning it off, carefully slip the ventilated protective cover back on and you can safely place it back in your tool bag. There's a window where you can inspect the butane level and it refills just like an ordinary lighter. I don't know how long it will run on a full tank but it has to be an hour or more. Also, I think the tip will last a very long time (they charge way too much for replacements).

After a demo for W6SX at the NCCC picnic soldering a pair of #10 wires twisted together, he purchased one as did W6TCP. Weller used to sell the iron alone but now it seems only to come in a kit which costs more. The kit is part number WLBUK75 and at the moment costs about \$76 at various online stores including Amazon and Zoro. The kit also contains open-ended tips so it works like a mini-torch.



## Area Clubs

Northern California Contest Club -

<https://www.nccc.cc>

Lodi Amateur Radio Club -

<http://www.lodiarc.org>

Stockton Delta Amateur Radio Club -

<http://www.w6sf.org>

Pizza Lovers 259 –

<https://www.pl259.org>

El Dorado Amateur Radio Club -

<http://edcarc.net>

Sierra Foothills Amateur Radio Club -

<http://www.w6ek.org>

Redwood Empire DX Association -

<http://www.redxa.com>

Calaveras Amateur Radio Society

<http://calaverasars.org/>

Tuolumne County Amateur Radio Electronics  
Society (TCARES)

<https://tcares.net/>

## ARRL Pacific Division

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