

# THE NUGGET



Mother Lode DX/Contest Club

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

August 2021

Volume 26 Number 8

### **From the President – NC6R**

Greetings MLDXCC members!

Things have been super busy over here with us preparing for a potential evacuation due to the Caldor fire.

CQP is coming up in October. I hope you are able to participate. It's one of the few contests where we are the DX!

Don't forget the Western Placer swap meet in Lincoln on Saturday September 18<sup>th</sup>. We plan to have a club meeting after the swap meet.

### **From the V.P. - W1RH**

Wow, it has been crazy busy over here. Keeping track of the fires in the area and helping out local El Dorado county residents has kept me swamped.

In other news, the WW DIGI contest is coming up on Saturday the 28<sup>th</sup> and I encourage everyone to participate.

For rules and additional details see <https://www-digi.com/>

As always, here are websites to view upcoming contest and DX announcements -

Contest calendar dates are listed at - <https://www.contestcalendar.com/index.html>

DX operation announcements can be found at - <https://www.ng3k.com/misc/adxo.html>

73 & good DX,

Steve / NC6R

MLDXCC President

Bob W1RH

### **Next Meeting**

**Date:** September – 18<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** TBD

**Location:** TBD

**Presentation:** TBD

## **MLDXCC Treasurer - K6SZQ**

MLDXCC Treasurer's Report - July 2021

6/30/2021	Opening Balance	\$2,568.06
	Income	\$0.00
	none	
	Expenses	\$0.00
	none	
7/31/2021	Ending Balance	\$2,568.06

## **From the Secretary - KI6YYT**

No notes, as the August meeting hasn't been held yet.

Emilia Seiferling KI6YYT

## **CLUB Dues**

**2021 dues are due!**

The Dues period runs from Jan 1 to Dec 31. Dues are \$20.00 individual, \$30.00 family

PayPal – Send to: [motherlodeclub@gmail.com](mailto:motherlodeclub@gmail.com).  
Use the Friends and Family option.

Cash or Check - Given to a club officer at a meeting. Or mail to the Treasurer - Sue Allred K6SZQ, 17610 Red Mule Rd. Fiddletown, CA 95629

## **Club Log Standings**

### **Overall**

1	N6JV	Norm Wilson	183
2	NK7I	Rick Bates	180
3	NJ6G	Dennis Moore	180

### **CW**

1	K6YK	John Lee	127
2	N6JV	Norm Wilson	111
3	WE6Z	Doug Phillips	91

### **Phone**

1	NC6R	Steve Allred	117
2	K6YK	John Lee	78
3	K6TQ	Dave Sanders	73

### **Data**

1	NJ6G	Dennis Moore	174
2	NK7I	Rick Bates	173
3	N6JV	Norm Wilson	155

*Club Log Standings are based on worked entities during the calendar year.*

## **Member Reports**

Final results have been posted for the 2021 ARRL DX Phone contest. I won the Pacific Division again for Single Op Unlimited, Low Power.

73, Dennis NJ6G

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### **Take the WW Digi Challenge!**

Jim, K6OK

August 28th and 29th will be the third running of the World Wide Digi DX Contest, where hams compete using FT4 and FT8 digital modes. Scoring is based on the number of QSOs; the number of Maidenhead Grid Fields (first two

letters of the grid square) contacted per band, and is heavily distance-weighted. For NCCC members, it's a 20x KB contest, so lots of points to be had!

So what is the challenge? Let's look at the all-time records set for stations in California for this relatively new contest:

Class	Call	QSO	Grids	Score	
SOHP	K6OK	548	146	242,268	
SOLP	KR1DX	921	125	240,250	op. K6JO
MSHP	K6UFO	574	123	146,493	op. K6TD,
ND2T,K6UFO					
MMHP	NW6P	513	61	51,667	op.
W9KKN,NW6P,WX5S					

As you can see, yours truly holds the all-time high score for W6 across all categories. So here's my challenge to you: beat my score and take the record from me! I'd be delighted to see my record fall. I only operate SO1R with 500 watts, so any serious BIC effort from my fellow club members can knock me off my perch.

This contest is unique, takes a different mindset and strategy, and requires some preparation. If you think, "FT8 is easy, I'll just kick back and do it for 24 hours," you'll do okay but it won't be optimal. Based on my experience doing full BIC efforts in both prior editions of this contest I'll share some tips with you to help improve your score.

**Rate is Not King.** FT4 and FT8 are fixed-rate modes. The highest possible number of QSOs in 24 hours is 1,920 for FT8 and 3,840 for FT4, assuming perfect exchanges and no repeats. The WW Digi operator needs to think of each 7.5- or 15-second FT time-cycle as a scarce resource, with the goal of extracting the most multipliers

and points possible from each fixed time slot. Calling CQ and "letting the mults come to you" will not get you the highest possible score.

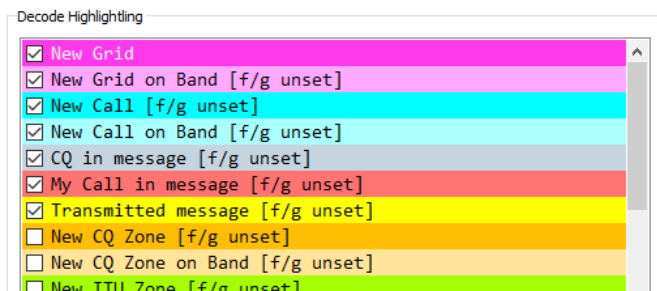
**Use S&P To Your Advantage.** In this contest, the CQ message is "CQ WW call grid" and so if you call them you already have their call and exchange. You can be selective on which CQ'er to call and prioritize those that will generate the most points. Once you have the new grids and the high point value CQ'ers in the log, then CQ'ing can be productive in stirring up new Q's.

**Think Of It As "Speed DXing."** Long distance QSOs pay off -- even when using the slower but more sensitive FT8 mode. Every 3,000 km of distance between you and the other station is a mult point. Keeping an eye on spots and propagation with nimble QSY'ing will maximize long haul contacts.

**Watch PSK Reporter and Spotting Networks.** FT8 gets boring fast. Use the dead time between cycles to study spots and propagation. Set up alerts to let you know when remote DX is being heard. Hint: watch for ZS stations, those are 6-pointers, and are worth QSY'ing to. Be on the alert for unusual propagation that FT8's long reach can exploit -- especially on 20 meters.

**Work Deep Asia As Much As Possible.** YB, 9M, central and western VK, HS, are all 5-pointers from NorCal. When that window is open and you've exhausted the contest frequencies, it can be worthwhile to then dip into the non-contest FT8 standard frequencies to grab some 5-pointers as well.

**Use WSJT-X's Color Highlighting.** After the decoding cycle is complete, you've only got a couple of seconds to choose which station to call. Bright colors can be used to help new mults stand out from a long list of decodes.



- Under Settings, make sure "New Grid" and "New Grid On Band" are checked and set with a bright color. Drag them to the top of the list so they have highest priority. This will help you spot new mults after each decode cycle.
- Uncheck all categories that aren't relevant in the contest.
- Check "New Call" and "New Call on Band" with lighter colors as they are lower priority.
- Check "CQ in Message," drag it below grids and calls use a gray color. These will be dupes.

**FT4 vs FT8.** Use FT4's higher rate for EU 4-pointers and JA 3-pointers but don't overstay. Use FT4 in daytime when DX windows are closed to collect all domestic grids, especially on 20; FT4 is also busy on 40 in the evening. Generally, focusing on collecting distant new grids for 5- and 6-points with the slower but more sensitive FT8 will yield more points than running FT4 for rate.

**Transmit on the Band Edges.** If the band you're working is crowded, use "Hold TX Freq" and choose a transmit frequency near a band edge. This increases the chance your signal will be heard by the other station with less QRM.

**Evens and Odds, Mix 'Em Up.** After working a band for a while on Even time cycles then switch to Odd. You can then work stations you didn't hear because they were transmitting while you were transmitting.

**Use SO2R if you can.** If you have two radios, FT modes are ideal for alternating CQ's. Make sure one radio is transmitting on odd cycles and the other on the evens. If you transmit simultaneously on two bands that puts you into a Multi category.

**Don't Forget 80 and 160.** Even if conditions are poor on those bands, set aside a small amount of time to grab domestic grids on those bands to build up your grid count.

**No 73 after RR73.** This is the convention now and most FT contesters have adopted it. There are some casual ops who expect a final 73, and if they don't get it, might give you a NIL. Sending 73 after RR73 after every QSO consumes a lot of time and probably isn't worth it to avoid a few NIL's. Also, don't get sucked into long repeat loops. If a QSO isn't happening after 2 or 3 tries, then move on. Every time slot is precious!

**Prepare In Advance.** Spend time making sure your software is set up and working well. For

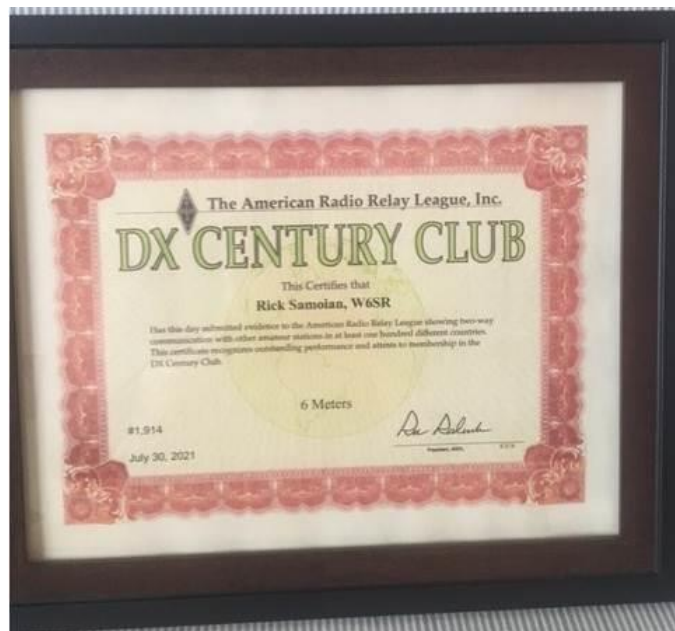
WSJT-X, set up separate "Configurations" for WW Digi FT4 and FT8. Just prior to the contest I like to:

- Make sure my software is up to date (version 2.4.0 for WSJT-X users)
- Copy my ALL.txt and wsjtx\_log.adi files to another folder, then use Erase under Settings. The .adi file must be empty at the start of the contest is necessary so the coloring will work properly.
- Go to Settings/Colors and click Rescan ADIF Log to doubly ensure that coloring will be set to a zero baseline.
- Go to Settings/Colors and click "Only grid Fields sought." This is needed to make the new grid coloring work properly. If it is not checked then if you work CM98 to capture the CM grid field, CM99 will show as a new grid field when it isn't.
- Make sure all of the recommended contest frequencies and the standard watering hole frequencies are loaded into your software. Remove extraneous ones.
- Set your PC's clock is set as accurately as possible.

**Smaller Stations:** If you have a modest setup, say 100 watts and a wire, WW Digi is a great opportunity to work new countries or states.

The WW Digi contest runs from 1200Z on early Saturday morning August 28 to 1159Z on the 29th, a 24-hour contest. Good luck in the contest!

Jim, K6OK



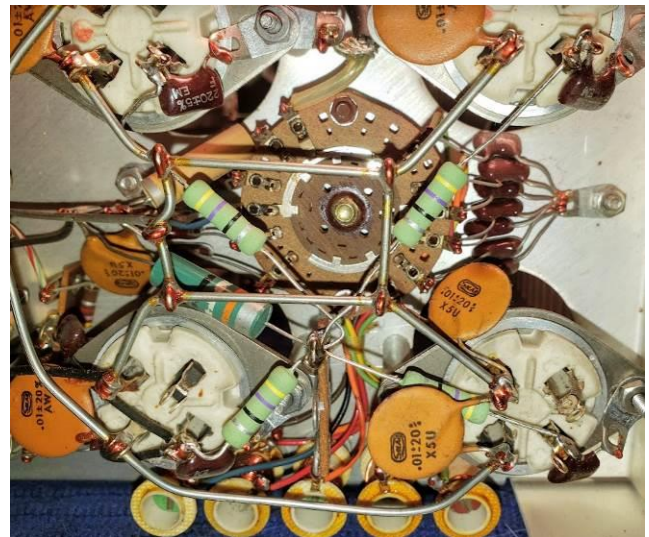
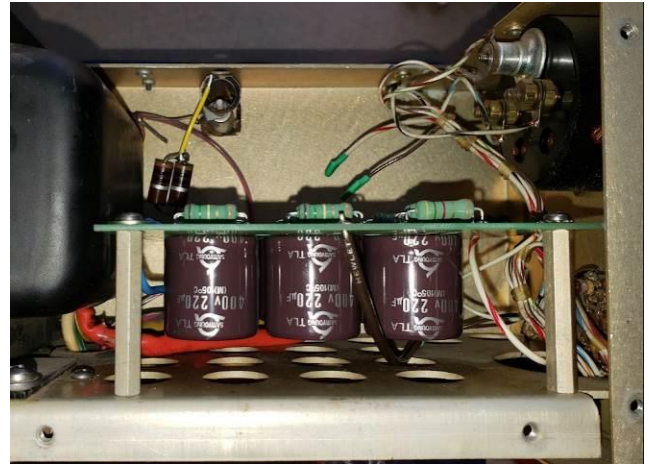
Well as John Lennon and Paul McCartney wrote "With a Little Help From My Friends" I finally completed my 6M DXCC working BV3UF for # 100 (all ready confirmed via LOTW). Worked J35X a week earlier for #99. The station is a remote Flex 6500 and KPA-500 at Fred's (KH7Y) QTH in Pine Grove. Without Fred's help it would be impossible for me to still be active in HAM radio, since we live in a over 55 community where no outside antennas are permitted. BTW: That also completes 10BDXCC 160-6M.....de Rick, W6SR

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### Doug's 30L-1 project

This month's project is a Collins 30L-1. I replaced the power supply and diode board with a new Young Kim board. I located and replaced several burned resistors including the grid resistors. I replaced all 4 tubes, as one of them had cracked. And finally, replaced the fan

motor and associated bushings. Hopefully it's ready for another 50 years of service.





Doug WE6Z

## **ARRL Contesting Certificates**

If you have participated in ARRL Contests by submitting your log, enter your call sign and see your available certificates. You can view and download them. The certificates show where you placed in the contest.

<http://contests.arrl.org/certificates.php>

## **Awards Checkers ARRL**

Ken Anderson, K6TA

(DXCC, WAS, VUCC, 160M)

Rick Samoian, W6SR

## **Tube of the Month**

### **4-400A/8438**

EIMAC had been working on their new tetrode line through most of WWII with their 4-125A and [4-250A](#) tubes. These were a big success. They wanted to go bigger so they introduced the much larger [4-750A](#) in 1946. They quickly discovered that with a better designed plate structure, they could improve the dissipation. The [4-1000A](#) was the result in 1947. It was obvious that the same type of structure would work on the 4-250A, so the [4-400A](#) was introduced in 1948 with FM broadcast in mind. The 4-400A had the same 5-volt, 14.5-amp filament as the 4-250A and a maximum voltage of 4000 volts. Both tubes were capable of 1000 watts output, but the 4-400A did it with a greater margin. They also introduced

the 4-400A/400 Air-System Socket to provide adequate air to the tube without requiring the chassis to be pressurized. That socket was re-named the SK-400. If you use a pressurized chassis, the Johnson 122-275 ceramic socket can be used with a chimney at a big savings.

The 4-400A/8438 was used in several commercial and military amplifiers for several years. In the 1960s, a zero-bias triode version of this package, the [3-500Z](#), became popular in grounded grid amplifiers. The grids of the 4-400A could be tied together and make it a good alternative to the new expensive tube. At high voltage, both tubes required some fixed bias, so when an exchange is made, the biasing zener diode needs to be changed. Surplus 4-400As became in high demand. A version of the 4-400A was made with the base and pin structure of the 3-500Z and it was designated the 4-400B or 7527.



4-400A (OLD)



4-400A (NEW)



4-400B

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

Norm N6JV

### **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

\*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.

- ARRL RTTY RU
- CQ WPX RTTY

- CQ WPX SSB
- CQ WPX CW

### **MLDXCC – Outgoing ARRL Bureau**

The Mother Lode DX/Contest Club will provide Outgoing QSL Bureau services to current paid club members. The policy is as follows:

The club will cover packaging, shipping, and the \$7.00 ARRL fee. Members will be responsible for the \$1.15 per ounce fee, payable to the club. A scale will be provided at the designated meetings to weigh the cards.

Twice per year, at the March and October meetings, members may bring their outgoing cards (or have delivered by another club member) to the meeting for collection and collating.



All regulations set forth by the ARRL must be met, including:

Members must be ARRL members to use outgoing bureau.

Must provide proof of membership (QST mailing label, ARRL membership card)

Cards need to be sorted according to ARRL requirements when brought to club.

The after-meeting program at those meetings would be dedicated to weighing, merging the cards, and making sure the paperwork is in order.

For more information regarding the ARRL Outgoing Bureau, please visit

<http://www.arrl.org/outgoing-qsl-service>

### **QSL bureau rates have changed.**

Outgoing QSL Service

QSL Service Fee Structure (effective May 15, 2019)

ARRL members — including foreign members, QSL Managers, or managers for DXpeditions — should enclose payment as follows:

Effective May 15, 2019, the rate structure is:

\$2 for 10 or fewer cards in one envelope.

\$3 for 11-20 cards in one envelope, or 75 cents per ounce, for packages with 21 or more cards.

[For example, a package containing 1.5 pounds of cards -- 24 ounces, or about 225 cards -- will cost \$18.]

Under the new fee structure, there are no transaction service fees.

You should use an accurate scale to weigh your cards. Most post offices have scales that you

may use.

Please pay by check (or money order) and write your call sign on the check. Send cash at your own risk. DO NOT send postage stamps or IRCs. Please make checks payable to: "The ARRL Outgoing QSL Service."

Packages received with insufficient payment will not be processed until the balance is paid in full. The outgoing QSL bureau does not keep money on account.

### **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 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>

## UPCOMING Events

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

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

## 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.

### The Northern California Swap

Thursday evenings at 8 PM local on the N6ICW repeater system 147.195 +123

Join Armand WB2ZEI and the group to buy, sell, or trade amateur radio related gear. Check-ins and visitors welcome.

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**New! "The Serial Box"** (SBOX) by N6TV – Combination Serial Port Splitter, ACOM / Elecraft / SPE Amplifier Interface, FSK/CW/PTT keying interface, and Breakout Box

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<https://www.eham.net/reviews/detail/13971>

Serial Box



Serial Box

"The Y-BOX" by N6TV – 4-way Elecraft K3/K3S ACC port splitter, Elecraft Amplifier Interface, and Breakout Box

<https://www.eham.net/reviews/detail/13296>



Y-Box

N6TV

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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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Collins 75S-3



Restored and aligned. Asking \$375

Collins 75A-3



Restored and aligned. Asking \$375

Doug [we6z@hotmail.com](mailto:we6z@hotmail.com)

## Swapmeet



**Fifteenth Annual Sacramento Valley Hamfest**

**Hi-Tech Saturday, Sept 18, 2021**

**Liquidators 0700 to 1200 Hours**

Presented by Western Placer Amateur Radio Club

65 McBean Park Dr. (Hwy. 193) Lincoln CA

Bandstand Parking Lot  
License Exam Sessions

Drawing Prizes  
Vendor Setup 0600

Buy and Sell  
Ham Radio Related Stuff Only  
\$10 per space-Approximately 9' x 12'

Bring your own tables  
COVID Restrictions May Apply

**Hamfest Info at WWW.WPARC.US**

Talk-in Frequency 147.300 (+) 67 Hz

"Hello..." Celebrating 80 Years of Unswerving Radio Enthusiasm

Please Support Our Sponsors



# Ham Swap

Saturday, September 4, 2021

Cabela's, Reno, Nevada

**Summer Ham Swap at Cabelas, Reno, Nevada**

**8650 Boomtown Garson Rd. Verdi, NV (RENO)**

**Saturday, September 4, 2021**

Talk-In Repeater: 147.210 + PL 100.0

DMR: Talk Group: SNARS (31328)

### DIRECTIONS FROM CALIFORNIA

Take Exit 4 from I-80. Turn Left at the top of the ramp and follow the road around to Cabela's located on the left. We will be in the north eastern parking lot.



<http://renohamswap.com/>

## **2021 Meeting Dates**

January – 23<sup>rd</sup> Zoom  
Feb – none  
March – 20<sup>th</sup>  
Apr – 17<sup>th</sup>  
May – 15<sup>th</sup>  
June – 19<sup>th</sup>  
July – 24<sup>th</sup>  
August – 28<sup>th</sup>  
September – 18<sup>th</sup>  
October – 23<sup>rd</sup>  
November – 13<sup>th</sup>  
Dec – none

*Dates are arranged to accommodate major contest dates. Meeting dates are subject to change. MLDXCC traditionally holds a mid-year combined meeting with NCCC.*

## **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/>

*Please contact the editor to have your club listed here.*

## **ARRL Pacific Division**

Pacific Division Director

Kristen A. McIntyre K6WX

[k6wx@arrl.org](mailto:k6wx@arrl.org)

Pacific Division Vice Director

Vacant

East Bay Section Manager

Jim Siemons, W6LK

[jim@siemons.com](mailto:jim@siemons.com)

Nevada Section Manager

John Bigley, N7UR

[n7ur@arrl.org](mailto:n7ur@arrl.org)

Pacific Section Manager

Joe Speroni, AH0A

[ah0a@arrl.org](mailto:ah0a@arrl.org)

San Francisco Section Manager

Bill Hillendahl, KH6GJV

[kh6gjb@arrl.org](mailto:kh6gjb@arrl.org)

Santa Clara Valley Section Manager

James Armstrong

[nv6w@arrl.org](mailto:nv6w@arrl.org)

Sacramento Valley Section Manager

Dr. Carol Milazzo, KP4MD

[kp4md@arrl.org](mailto:kp4md@arrl.org)

San Joaquin Valley Section Manager  
John Litz NZ6Q  
[john@litz.com](mailto:john@litz.com)

## **Officers of the MLDXCC**

President, Steve Allred, NC6R  
[sallred@volcano.net](mailto:sallred@volcano.net)

Vice President, Bob Hess, W1RH  
[w1rh@yahoo.com](mailto:w1rh@yahoo.com)

Director, Rich Cutler, WC6H  
[wc6h@yahoo.com](mailto:wc6h@yahoo.com)

Director, Steve Dyer, W1SRD  
[w1srd@arrl.net](mailto:w1srd@arrl.net)

Director, Jeff Stai, WK6I  
[wk6i.jeff@gmail.com](mailto:wk6i.jeff@gmail.com)

Secretary, Emilia Seiferling, K16YYT  
[ki6yyt@arrl.net](mailto:ki6yyt@arrl.net)

Treasurer, Sue Allred, K6SZQ  
[sueallred@volcano.net](mailto:sueallred@volcano.net)

Publicity Manager, Bob Hess, W1RH  
[w1rh@yahoo.com](mailto:w1rh@yahoo.com)

Editor, Doug Philips, WE6Z  
[we6z@hotmail.com](mailto:we6z@hotmail.com)

Webmaster, Norm Wilson, N6JV  
[n6jv@n6jv.com](mailto:n6jv@n6jv.com)

## **The MLDXCC Newsletter**

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