

THE NUGGET



The Newsletter of the Mother Lode DX/Contest Club

June 2020

Volume 25 Number 6

From the President – NC6R

Greeting from high atop Red Mule Ridge.

So, how is everyone doing? Are you staying healthy? Please reach out and let other members know if there is a need. Ya'll are missed when we're not meeting together.

Since being laid off going to the mail box hasn't always been a welcome adventure. Many times all it contained was either junk mail or more bills to pay. However one day a few weeks ago, there inside my box was a most welcome surprise, a QSL card from VP8PJ! Here was a beautiful, glossy colored card with not only my QSO being confirmed, but expedition photos of the group and surrounding sites. Scanning over the card I noted on the inside flap, bottom row, 10th from the left was a familiar logo, the MLDXCC logo! To be a listed along with other notable and accomplished organizations that supported VP8PJ speaks volumes about the character of our club. As many of you know, MLDXCC member W1SRD was part of that DX effort. I'm proud to be part of a group that supported its own.

Have you been able to participate in the recent online Zoom meetings? It's been nice to see a good turnout for these presentations. I have to admit, while I for one would much rather meet with all of

you in person, we've had some online attendees connect in that might not have otherwise attended. As before, credit for making these Zoom meeting happen goes to MLDXCC VP W1RH. Thank you Bob for your efforts in arranging the speakers.

As I write this, the ARRL VHF contest is in full swing. Monitoring 6 meter FM (52.525) has been a blast. With my Kenwood 6 meter mobile (TK-6110) and a homemade ¼ wave vertical ground plane antenna, I was surprised to be able to get a number of Q's in the log and make contacts with hams I'd not connected with before.

12 meter WAS continues to be quite a challenge given the current solar situation. At last count LoTW showed me with 6 states to go. Know anyone in Rhode Island or Delaware that's active on 12 meters?

On the DX front, Northern Europe continues to be active for me on 20 meters in the evening hours as does the VK/ZL boys on the Anza net. Often I can work into South Africa long path during this time as well. Also thanks to John, K6YK for giving me a call on the W6SF 2 meter repeater. I was able to get India in the log on 20 CW. It's the first time I'd been able to log a contact with India for a couple of years.

Getting together at Marlene and Glenn's diner in Plymouth, I recently had the pleasure of having breakfast with and getting to know MLDXCC member Bill, N6GHZ. The camaraderie and shared experiences are priceless.

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

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

From the V.P. - W1RH

The June VHF Contest

I played around this month in the June VHF contest and, frankly, it was like watching paint dry. I only saw one really good 6 meter opening and that was in the last hour of the contest, with some 2-hop E-skip. In that final hour, I only operated for about 5 minutes. I know many of you will find this hard to believe, but Windows 10 wanted to do an update. It did and it resulted in the blue screen of death. Windows then decided to fix the problem, and it did, but at that point most of that great final hour was lost.

I don't have any horizontal antennas up for the VHF bands. I did make a handful of Q's on 2 meter FM but most were on 6 meters. My six meter operating was thanks to the loan of a four element beam from Jay, KE6GLA. The antenna was only 8 feet off the ground, but I parked it on the edge of a very steep slope. Had there been good six meter openings, I'm sure I could have worked a ton of grids. I was able to work into the East Coast with 100 watts going into 100 feet of RG8. I think the best grid square I worked, as far as distance is concerned, was FM15 and this was a CW contact. Most of my contacts were FT8.

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

73 & good DX,

Steve / NC6R



This is really the first time I've operated in this contest since I moved here from New England. You really can't appreciate the advantages of operating HF or VHF on the East Coast, especially in the Northeast, without having experienced living on both sides of the country. With the exception of the All Asian contest and I suppose working P5 when and if it is ever active again, trying to do just about any contesting, from CQWW to the ARRL June VHF QSO Party, is just more fun when doing it in the Northeast.

Other than a horizontal dipole I mounted on my chimney, I didn't have any VHF antennas at the house when I lived in the Boston area.



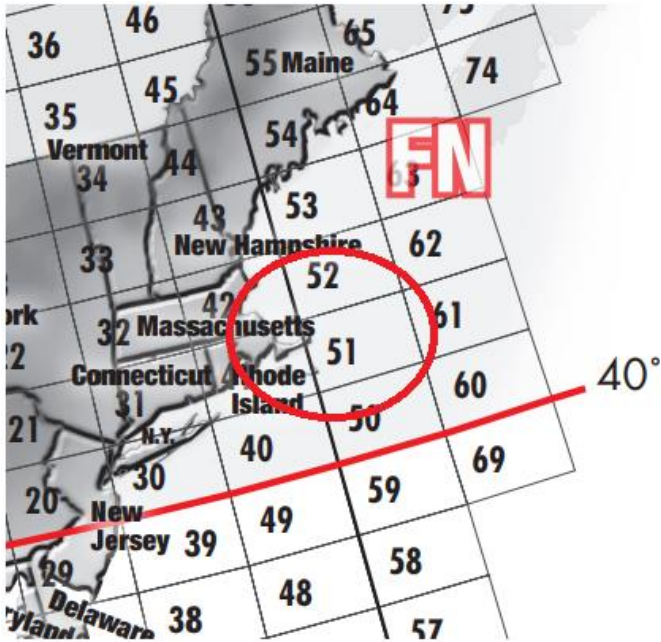
As hokey as this looks, I was able to work most of the eastern states and a bunch of western states with this dipole, which was a couple of copper rods mounted on a piece of Plexiglass in the center. DX included Canada, one or two Caribbean countries, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and that was before FT8.

For the VHF contest, my son and I operated for a few years as a one-day rover. We always kept one retired live truck at the TV station. It was stripped of just about everything except the mast and the generator. It was just kept on standby in case we ever had a truck damaged in an accident. What better vehicle to use as a rover than a live truck!

Our antennas consisted of a stack of 5 elements on 6 meters, 14 elements on 2 meters, and 19 elements on 432. We also had small beams for 220 and 1296, but not on the tall mast.



The picture, above, is of the truck parked just inside a real rare grid on the very tip of Cape Cod. FN51 is a very special grid to operate from. It is a very small sliver of land and you actually need a GPS to make sure you're within the grid.



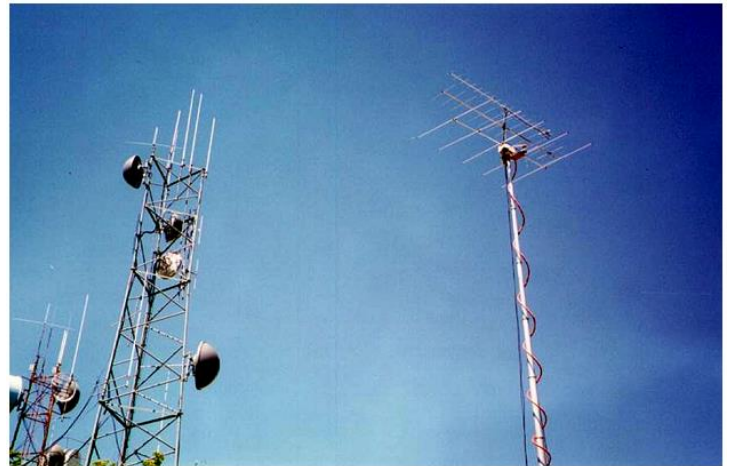
Besides being really, really rare, the location is within the Marconi Wireless Station Site, the site of the first transatlantic communication between the United States and Europe. How cool is that?



From this location, with a terrific path over water and the typical East Coast tropo, we could easily work down into the Deep South on both 2 meters and 6 meters. We made some 432 contacts into the Middle Atlantic States.

Since this was only a one day operation every year, we always operated from just three grids. One of the other grids included Mt Wachusett, the highest

point in Massachusetts east of the Connecticut River. This was an easy drive-up site and we always met 3 or 4 other VHF contest operators when we were there. It's interesting to note that we never saw another operator when we were at the Marconi site. The picture, below, is our antenna stack when operating from Mt Wachusett.



I looked in the ARRL archives and found our score for the 1997 June VHF Contest. With about only a few hours of operation, we worked 53 mults on five bands, from three grids, with a score of 7,897. Not a super score, but pretty hard to beat when operating less than 6 hours as a rover in California.

I do want to mention some of our club members who operated in this year's June VHF Contest:

Ian, **W6TCP**, and Gary, **NA6O**, operated remote, in a multi-op, with 256 Q's, 76 mults, and a score of whopping 23,712. Nice job guys!

Mike, **WA6ZTY**, in a low power effort, made 172 Q's, with 58 mults, for a score of 10,556

David, **WD6T**, operating low power, made 173 Q's, with 20 mults, for a score of 3,780

Stefan, **AF6SA**, operating high power, made 129 Q's, with 32 mults, for a score of 4,448.

Jay, **KE6GLA** operating with low power made 231 Q's, with 50 mults, for a score of 12,900

Bill, **N6ZFO**, operating high power, made 91 Q's, with 35 mults, for a score of 3,185.

Tim, **K7XC**, operating low power, made 104 Q's, with 65 mults, for a score of 6,760.

Ken, **N6RO**, in 4 hours and operating high power, made 67 Q's, with 31 mults, for a score of 2,077.

Bob, **W6RC**, operating low power, made 64 Q's, with 19 grids, for a score of 1,216.

Nice job guys! After watching paint dry for far too many hours on the VHF contest weekend, I can really appreciate your scores.

Only KE6GLA, K6YK, and K6LRN posted their scores to MLDXCC. Not a problem, because this is not one of our focus contests.

Why not?

Well, I took a look at the 2018 club results (2019 is not yet posted for some reason) and the reason is pretty obvious. The top ten clubs in the Medium Club class were all from either the Midwest or the

East Coast. If you took all of the scores in 2018 from MLDXCC and NCCC, and added them together, we would have had a total score of 26,019 points. That would have placed us 28th in the Medium Club Category. No, this is not a sandbox we want to play in seriously....

Our next meeting will be July 25th. At this point, I am going to say it will be another Zoom meeting. While I was not happy in the beginning to have to do virtual meetings, I must say that it's actually been a lot of fun. If you haven't joined us yet, you really should. We have had good speakers who never would have made a local meeting and we start our meetings with 30 minutes of just chat, just as we would do at a lunch meeting. I don't have a speaker yet, so watch the reflector and the website for more information.

Bob W1RH

Next Meeting

Date: July 28th

Time: TBD

Location: TBD

Presentation: TBD

MLDXCC Treasurer - K6SZQ

MLDXCC Treasurer's Report- May 2020

4/30/2020	Opening Balance	\$2,211.36
	Income	\$0.00
	Expenses	\$0.00
5/31/2020	Ending Balance	\$2,211.36

From the Secretary - KI6YYT

MLDXCC June 6, 2020 Meeting Notes
by Secretary Emilia Seiferling, KI6YYT

President Steve, NC6R, called the Zoom meeting to order. There were at least 30 members and guests on line. Note from Secretary: If Zoom meeting participants would please sign in using their call sign and name, it would be much easier and more accurate taking attendance.

The Treasurer's report was no change in the month of May. Dues are due and payable. There were directions in the last newsletter on how to pay your dues. The MLDXCC needs paid dues to cover club expenses for the year.

The minutes of the May meeting were approved as emailed.

President Steve asked if there were any announcements from club members on recent achievements. There were several: Antarctica was worked by several members, Campbell Island in N.Z. was also worked. Giuseppe, KB8FT, won low power, Yolo County in the CQP contest, Steve, NC6R, got #2 in the British Columbia contest. Emilia, KI6YYT, was finally able to pick up her plaque for #1 Low Power YL in CQP, from Bob, N6TCE. It had been awarded at the start of the lock down at the last in person MLDXCC meeting, but we weren't able to attend that meeting.

A joint meeting with MLDXCC and NCCC was discussed. Due to uncertain conditions, as far as group gatherings and reopening of restaurants to large groups, no date or location has been set.

The VHF Contest is the weekend of June 13-14.

The formal portion of the meeting was then adjourned.

The speaker for our Zoom meeting was given by NK7I. The program detailed his move from California to Idaho. He outlined the many steps needed to relocate and set up his ham shack and tower at his new home.

CLUB Dues

2020 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.
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

Contest Results

How did you do in the ARRL June VHF contest?

CQ	WPX	CW
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I had a blast in the WPX CW contest. Murphy struck early with a serial port problem. Those darn FTDI USB to serial adapters don't work with sending CW with N1MM. But after swapping those out, I was back on the air. I put 29.5 hours of BIC. Conditions were very good. I ended up with 1207 QSOs, 466 Prefixes and 815,966 points.
Doug WE6Z

Club Log Standings

Overall

1	N6JV	Norm Wilson	188
2	K6YK	John Lee	168
3	WU6W	Rick Palio	154

CW

1	K6YK	John Lee	159
2	N6JV	Norm Wilson	141
3	WC6H	Rich Cutler	112

Phone

1	NC6R	Steve Allred	114
2	K6YK	John Lee	96
3	WC6H	Rich Cutler	90

Data

1	N6JV	Norm Wilson	139
2	K7QDX	Michael Steiner	135
3	WU6W	Rick Palio	120

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

Member Reports

WE6Z's SX-100 Project:

Recently I found some vintage Hallicrafters for sale. My friend and I drove down to the Bay Area to pick them up. Some of them included an SX-42, SX-71, SX-99, and an SX-100. All radios were in unknown condition. I figured that they would be excellent candidates for restoration at some point in the future.

The SX-100 was in the best condition. I opened it up, and to my surprise it had been 90 percent recapped already. I replaced the power supply filter caps and

one Tiny Chief cap. I slowly brought it up on my variac, and it came to life! This receiver is a lot of fun. It has selectable Sidebands, selectable filter widths, and a notch filter. It performed very well on 40 and 80 meters when testing.

When I get a little more time, I will hook it up to the service monitor and check the receive sensitivity on all bands and if necessary do an alignment. It's a heck of a lot of fun to bring these old rigs back to life.





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

846

One of the smallest water cooled tubes made in the 1930s and 40s, was the 846 triode. It was designed to be a general purpose tube with an output of 2.5 KW. Its simple construction with short internal leads allowed it to operate up to 50 MHz. The tube was a bit under 10 inches long. In operation, it would sit with the metal anode in a tank of cooled water. One of the filament leads has a number of ceramic beads around it to keep from shorting across to the second lead.

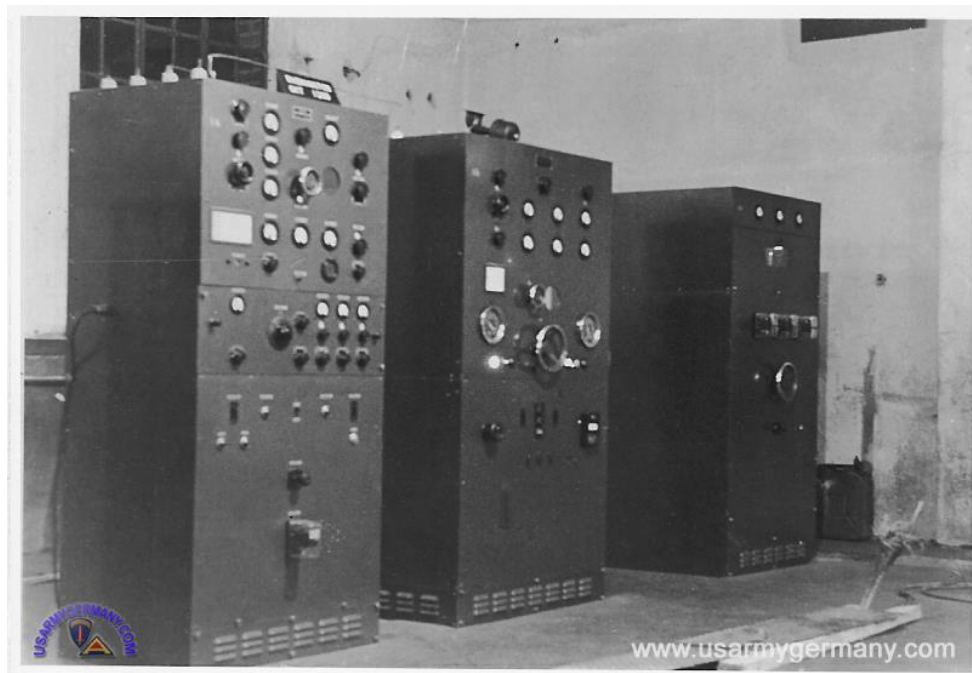
The only equipment that I can find that used this tube was the three ton BC-340 amplifier from World War II. This amplifier delivered 10 kilowatts into 600 ohm feeders and used four of the 846 tubes. With the problems matching several parallel tubes, I find it odd that they chose this size of tube as single water cooled tubes were available that would avoid many problems and



simplify the circuitry. The four tubes would require 11 volts at 204 amps to light them all.

The driver for the BC-340 was the BC-339 which was a kilowatt transmitter operating from 4 to 26.5 MHz using CW and FSK. The Army photograph shows the BC-339 on the left, the BC-340 in the middle and the unit on the end may be the rectifier unit. In addition there was a chiller for the distilled water. Distilled water must have been hard to find in remote

locations, so a still was provided. After the needed distilled water was produced, the Army personnel "re-purposed" the still and kept it very busy and popular with the troops.



Visit the museum at 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 Events

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

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

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

<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

Need QSL cards, business cards, club banners?
Contact VINA K6VNA vina@sign-tek.com

I have an HP 608D signal generator for sale. It works. \$40.00 Doug WE6Z

2020 Meeting Dates

January - 25
Feb - none
March - 14
Apr - 18 Zoom
May -9 Zoom
June - 6 Zoom

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>

ARRL Pacific Division

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Jim Tiemstra K6JAT
k6jat@aol.com

Pacific Division Vice Director
Kristen McIntyre K6WX
kristen@alum.mit.edu

July - 28 Zoom
August -
September -
October -
November -
Dec -

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

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/>

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The MLDXCC Newsletter

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