

THE NUGGET



Mother Lode DX/Contest Club

The Newsletter of the Mother Lode DX/Contest Club

March 2020

Volume 25 Number 3

From the President – NC6R

For those of you that weren't at our last meeting you missed a great time! Virus notwithstanding, we had 22 in attendance. Dave, K6TQ gave a great talk on his tower installation. He related several things to do and a number of things to avoid. A big plus was the help he obtained from MLDXCC member Jim, K6OK who as an engineer was able to help Dave navigate some of the permitting pitfalls. Great job guys! Having heard the challenges you overcame gave us knowledge for future projects.

In addition to our business meeting, Rich, WC6H the MLDXCC awards chairman had on hand a box full of very nice plaques and certificates. Some of you really cleaned up! It just shows what an involved group of guys & gals we have in MLDXCC. Sue, K6SZQ first time CQP contester walked away with the CQP YL Single Op High Power plaque. I was informed that we'd be rearranging the shack wall.

VP8PJ South Orkney DX Expedition is now in the record books and the team is safely on their way home. Did you get a chance to get them in your log? As I listen to many of the comments I learned they were an "all time new one" for several of you. I too was grateful to have them in the log.

With the Visalia DX Convention having been cancelled, our next meeting is tentatively being scheduled for April 25th .

As you may have noticed MLDXCC continues to do very well for a club of its size. We frequently win awards and recognition, often beating out other clubs with much larger member rosters. Our continued success can't be done without you. Consider becoming a member, dues are only \$20 dollars a year. MLDXCC is becoming the premier DX/Contest Club.....wouldn't you like to be a part?

Here are a couple of good websites to book mark that list 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 & stay healthy, Steve / NC6R

From the V.P. - W1RH

I was just doing some random checks of MLDXCC members who worked VP8PJ and it looks like a bunch of us did. I see several of our members who worked the South Orkney team on 10 band-modes or more and many others who worked them on a few band-modes. I also noticed several who worked them on 160.

I took a look at my log. I did work them on 14 band-modes, but there were others in the club that did many more. I noticed that John, K6MM, had VP8PJ on 17 band-modes. NK7I, Rick (formerly WA6NHC), got them on a whopping 21 band-modes including 160 CW and FT8, but nothing above 17 meters. I was able to make a contact on 15 FT8. I also noticed

that many of our guys worked Steve, W1SRD, as the operator at VP8PJ. I was able to work Steve on 40 Phone. Another interesting point I found is that a number of the die-hard contesters in our club, with big stations, did not work them at all. Nothing wrong with that. We're both a DX club and a contest club. There was a time when I would never miss a big contest while rarely working DXpeditions that were on the air.

Speaking of Steve, I hope we can get him to give us a presentation in a few months. He has returned, safe and sound, and with lots of good stories. A look at the picture of one of the operating tents really makes us appreciate the dxpedition team. How



many of you would be able to handle the freezing cold, rain and snow, as well as a boat ride that could be the equivalent of riding a bucking bronco for 5 continuous days?

The ARRL Sweepstakes preliminary results are out. Not yet completely official, but this is from the ARRL website:

Affiliated Club Competition (CW + Phone)		
<i>Category</i>	<i>Club</i>	<i>Total Score</i>
Unlimited	Potomac Valley Radio Club	14,079,340
Medium	Mother Lode DX/Contest Club	3,874,762
Local	Pizza Lovers 259	1,367,848

Looking good for the little club that could! It's also good to the Pizza guys, another NorCal club win the gavel again in their category. Let's hope we can do it again next year.

Bob W1RH

Next Meeting

Date: April 25th

Time: TBD

Location: TBD

Presentation: TBD

Our last meeting was just before the COVID19 issue in the State really became hard reality. We had 22 in attendance, while keeping our distance and bumping elbows. It was really a good meeting with a terrific presentation from Dave, K6TQ, giving a very entertaining talk about the trials and tribulations of putting up a tower in his back yard.

As far as an April meeting is concerned, I don't have a clue. The Board will have to discuss. We may be able to do a streaming meeting or we may just pass on April. We really did not have a meeting scheduled for April anyway but had thought that a meeting on the day of the now cancelled Visalia IDXC might be appropriate. For those who played it safe and chose not to attend the March meeting, everyone absolutely gets why you stayed home. It was the right call.

MLDXCC Treasurer - K6SZQ

MLDXCC Treasurer's Report- February 2020

1/31/2020 Opening Balance		\$2,643.10
Income		\$240.00
2020 Dues - Paypal	\$60.00	
2020 Dues - Checking	\$180.00	
Expenses		\$50.00
NCCC - QP Plaque Sponsorship	\$50.00	
2/29/2020 Ending Balance		\$2,833.10

From the Secretary - KI6YYT



General Meeting Minutes

March 14th, 2020
Los Hermanos, Sutter Creek

Meeting was called to order at 1209 p.m. by Steve Allred, NC6R. 19 members and 3 guests were in attendance.

Steve started by asking for guests and members to introduce themselves. We then went around the room and each person introduced themselves.

January minutes were published in the February newsletter. Norm Wilson, N6JV moved to accept the

minutes as published. Ron Eaves, W6RPM seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

January Treasurer's Report was published in the February newsletter. Bob Officer, N6TCE moved to accept the report as published. John Lee, K6YK seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Steve reminded everyone that 2020 dues were due and to see Sue Allred, K6SZQ if you need to pay dues or wish to order a MLDXCC name badge.

New Business:

Steve asked for discussion as to whether we wanted a meeting in April since the International DX Convention in Visalia had been cancelled due to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) issue and groups of 50 or more being requested not to meet publicly. Consensus was to have an April meeting, most likely on the same weekend that Visalia had been scheduled.

Announcements:

- Steve announced that the Loomis Swap meet which was originally scheduled for next weekend (March 21) is being postponed, date TBD.
- Bob Officer, N6TCE gave a brief solar report.

Member Achievements:

- Bob Officer, N6TCE announced that he received his WAS certificate with lots of stickers on it.

- Skip Chraft, N6NFB stated that he got 23 States confirmed on FT8 as he works on WAS for that mode.
- A number of members mentioned that they had recently gotten All Time New Ones (ATNO) including Dave Sanders, K6TQ (4, including the UN), Bob Officer, N6TCE (4 ATNO) and Karen Officer, K6KSO (2 ATNO). Almost all present indicated that they had made at least one contact with VP8PJ - the South Orkney Island Dxpedition.
- Consensus was that the phone portion of the ARRL DX Contest was not that good, but Norm Wilson, N6JV reported that the CW portion of the Contest was better, as CW conditions were quite good.
- Norm Wilson, N6JV also encouraged members to get on the air and rack up countries for their CQ Marathon score. Although the contest runs all year, typically you can run up a lot of the points at the beginning of the year. Norm has already logged 176 DX entities and worked all 40 zones.
- John Lee, K6YK reported than in his SOTA quest he currently has 9900 points and is ranked 1st in California. He had set a goal for 10,000 by the end of 2019, but will be there shortly.

Upcoming DXpeditions / Contests

- CQ WW WPX Phone - March 28th
- ARRL Rookie Roundup - April 19th
- Remember the State QSO Party Challenge - there are a number of upcoming state QSO Parties in the next month.

Club Achievements:

Bob Hess, W1RH confirmed that MLDXCC won ARRL Sweepstakes for the medium club category.

Awards:

Rich Cutler, WC6H presented members with the 2019 Year Plaques and Certificates.

Next Meeting:

April - date and location to be announced.

Bob Hess, W1RH moved to adjourn; Jim Singer, N6JS seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 12:52 p.m

Dave Sanders, K6TQ gave a presentation on "A Tower of Challenges"

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Allred, K6SZQ - taking minutes for Secretary
Emilia Sieferling, KI6YYT

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

The ARRL RTTY Roundup is over. How did you do? The NCCC got the required 51 logs to submit as an unlimited club.

Club Log Standings

Overall

1	N6JV	Norm Wilson	178
2	K6YK	John Lee	149
3	WU6W	Rick Palio	125

CW

1	K6YK	John Lee	138
2	N6JV	Norm Wilson	136
3	NA6O	Gary Johnson	90

Phone

1	NC6R	Steve Allred	103
2	K6YK	John Lee	86
3	NA6O	Gary Johnson	52

Data

1	N6JV	Norm Wilson	130
2	K6OK	James Varney	101
3	WU6W	Rick Palio	96

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

Member Reports

K6YK has been working SOTA stations, and reached the 10,000 point level as a "chaser" or "shack sloth"! Does this make me a Super Sloth? I don't know. That equates to about 2,000 QSOs.

At last check I was #2 in California for 2020 and #1 on CW in California on CW.

73, John

I got these five ATNO's during the ARRL DX SSB Contest:

Brunei Darussalam (V85RG)
United Nations HQ (4U1UN)
Fernando de Noronha (PY0F)
Mongolia (JT1BV)
Saint Martin (TO0A)

73.....!

Dave K6TQ
Folsom, CA

WE6Z's nixie tube clock Project:

This months project is a nixie tube clock.



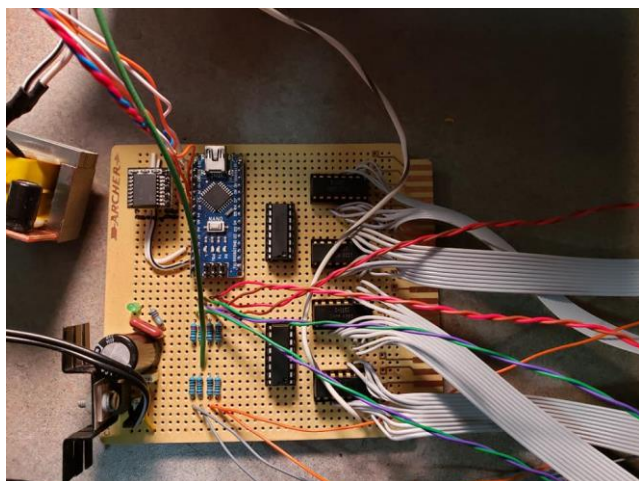
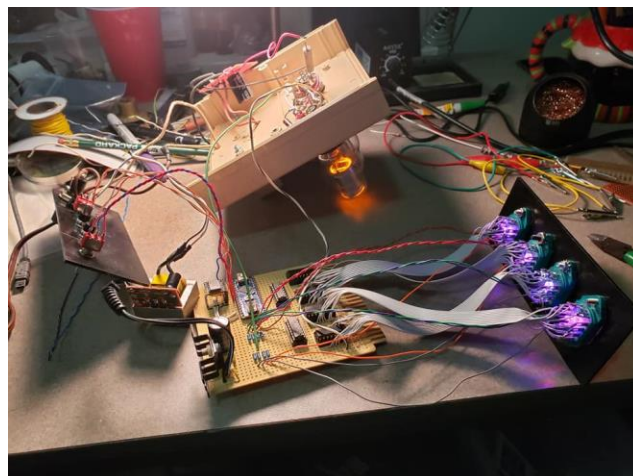
I wanted to build another nixie clock, so I looked through the junk box. I found 4 B5991 Nixie tubes with sockets. I also found a cool plastic project box. I chose this one because of the way it comes apart, and because it would be fairly easy to mount the front facing nixie tubes.

For this clock I wanted to add some VR regulation tubes for extra glow. I found the OD3 and OA3 tubes in series would give me a regulated voltage of 180 volts. Digging through the transformer bucket, I located a 220 volt transformer. After a few iterations with a dropping resistor, I changed the power supply design to a choke input power supply. I located a nice 15 henry choke, and that dropped the voltage to the correct range for the VR tubes.

The clock is run by an Arduino Nano, two 74HC595 shift registers, and four HP 1820-0092 driver ICs. The arduino reads a DS3231 real time clock module and displays the time in 24 hour format.

I decided to put some RGB LEDs on the rear of the sockets, so that the outside of the nixies would be illuminated.

This project turned out to be a heck of a lot of fun. It took me two weeks to build, working an hour or two a night on it.



For the full build and lots more pictures, see my blog <https://nixieclock2020.blogspot.com/>

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

2019 MLDXCC Awards

Presented at the March 14th, 2020 Meeting
California QSO Party Achievements:

Certificates for New County Record:

- Amador - Fred Honnold, N6US
- El Dorado - Bob LeClerc, W6RC
- Glenn - N6GK (Operator - Jerry Olive, KD6WKY)
- Mariposa - N6TCE (Operators - Bob Officer, N6TCE; Karen Officer K6KSO; John Litz, NZ6Q, Annie Lewis, N6ACL and Kyle Dopkus, K6KDD)
- Plumas - W6CQP (Operator Todd Remington, KH2TJ)
- Stanislaus - Dean Wood, N6DE
- Tehema - K6T (Operators Martin Bayes, AA1ON; Bob Hess, W1RH; Steve Dyer, W1SRD and Doris Wong, K0BEE)
- Tuolumne - George Overturf, N6GEO
- Yolo - K6CQP (Operators Giuseppe Molinaro, KE8FT and Robert Venditti, W6AW)

Plaques:

- Top Multi-Single Expedition - K6T (Operators Martin Bayes, AA1ON; Bob Hess, W1RH; Steve Dyer, W1SRD and Doris Wong, K0BEE)
- SO YL HP - Sue Allred, K6SZQ
- SO YL LP - Emelia Sieferling, KI6YYT
- LP Assisted County Expedition- Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
- SO LP Assisted - Dean Wood, N6DE
- SO LP - Jay Harmor, KE6GLA
- SO HP - Doug Phillips, WE6Z

Sweepstakes Achievements:

- CW SO Unlimited LP - Jim Varney, K6OK
- CW Multi HP - N6RO (Operators Ken Keeler, N6RO; David Jaffee, WD6T and Gary Johnson, NA6O)
- SSB SO Unlimited HP - W7RN (Operator Matt Thomas, WX5S)
- CW SO HP - W7RN (Operator Bob Wilson, N6TV)
- SSB SO HP - Rich Cutler, WC6H
- CW SO LP - Jay Harmor, KE6GLA

General Achievements:

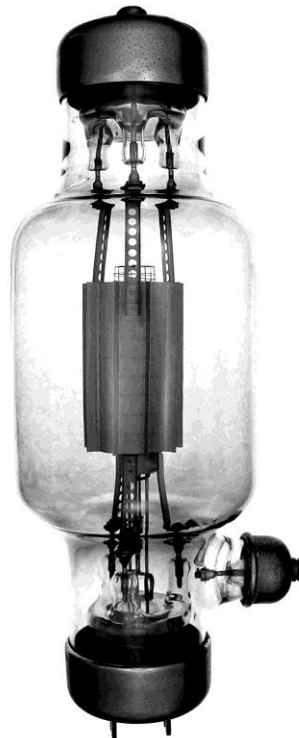
- Most Improved Contestor - Jay Harmor, KE6GLA
- Contestor of the Year - David Jaffe - WD6T
- 2019 Digital DXer - Mike Steiner, K7QDX
- 2019 CW DXer - Norm Wilson, N6JV
- 2019 SSB DXer - Steve Allred, NC6R
- 2019 All Mode DXer - Norm Wilson, N6JV
- 2019 Lifetime Achievement - Norm Wilson, N6JV

Tube of the Month

HK-1554 GAMMATRON

The HK-1554 GAMMATRON is a high power triode made by Heintz and Kaufman in South San Francisco beginning in 1935 or 36. It was one of the first three conventional triode tubes types made by H&K. The company was still making the Gridless Gammatrons at that time and kept the brand name Gammatron long after the gridless tubes were discontinued. It has a mu of 12.5 so will work in both RF and audio. Maximum voltage is 5000 volts at 1 amp. The dissipation is 1000 watts and could be pushed to 1500 watts with forced air. Maximum frequency was 60 megacycles. Tantalum metal was used for the plate and grid. The tantalum withstands heavy overloads and acts as a "getter" to remove any gas when it gets hot. At the time it was made, it was one of the largest all glass transmitting tubes being produced. The overall length is 18.5 inches and it has a diameter of 5.5 inches. Original price in 1936 was \$250. The three heavy element supports were a feature of all the H&K tubes. The heavy support straps, as seen in the photo, added more plate and grid surface to increase heat dissipation and they added mechanical strength. H&K made a slightly larger tube called the HK-3054 with similar features and a dissipation of 1500 watts. The 3054 was advertised (1936) as the largest glass tube made.

This example was found at a ham swap and I didn't know what it was at the time. This tube isn't marked. I suspected H&K but it was some time before I found complete H&K tube manuals and data sheets. I have never seen another example and don't know how many were actually produced although H&K was still advertising them in 1946.



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 the following available:

Signalink external soundcard interface for FT-8,
in original packaging, excellent condition \$80

(3) HP 606B RF signal generators. Clean and
working, \$100 each.

(3) HP 200CD wide range oscillators. Untested
but have more for parts if needed, \$40 each.

(1) HP 400D VTVM RMS volts and decibels. \$25

(1) HP 400L VTVM RMS volts and decibels. \$25

(2) HP 400H VTVM RMS volts and decibels. \$25

Vintage 120vac Variac \$30

Tripp-lite PR-15 12vdc power supply \$40

Henry 2-KD classic HF amp, clean \$800

W6BRY Brian

2020 Meeting Dates

January - 25

Feb - none

March - 14

Apr - 25

May -

June -

July -

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.*

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>

Please contact the editor to have your club listed here

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The MLDXCC Newsletter

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