

THE NUGGET



Mother Lode DX/Contest Club

The Newsletter of the Mother Lode DX/Contest Club

November 2020

Volume 25 Number 11

From the President – NC6R

Greetings MLDXCC!

What an awesome in-person meeting we had last Saturday! Although it was a smaller group, there was a great spirit of friendship by those in attendance (safely distanced of course). It was generally agreed by all that while the Zoom meetings are good alternative; nothing takes the place of meeting together.

For those of you who may not know, MLDXCC is celebrating its 25th year as a club. During the meeting Sue K6SZQ handed 20 & 25 year membership pins to those who were present. To this date we still have three (3) of the original members on our roster and a number of 20 year members.

There were several items of new business to attend to, one being the membership application of Jojo Melendres KN6HTD. A membership vote was taken and it passed unanimously; welcome Jojo.

Another item was the election of club officers for the upcoming year 2021. As all current club

officers are eligible for reelection and no objections were stated during the October nomination meeting, a motion was moved and seconded to retain our current slate of officers. A vote was taken and it passed unanimously. Congratulations to all and a big thank you for your service and dedication.

An interesting item of discussion that I presented during our meeting was the use of “ham speak” phrases. At the first ever MLDXCC meeting I attended there was talk about CQP. What the heck is CQP? It took me several meetings to understand that they were referring the California QSO Party. Another mystery voiced by a newer club member in attendance was what is 3830? As discussed, the thought is to assemble a document of phrases which would be made available through our website. I would ask you to please to submit a selection of phrases to me at nc6r4dx@gmail.com. Rich, WC6H and I will be working in conjunction to assemble the document.

As I’m writing this I’m preparing for the phone portion of Sweepstakes. Good news from W1RH our log flogger. Currently we have the highest

CW score for that portion of SS we've had in recent history; a job very well done by our CW operators!

Current published solar reports indicate the cycle is on the upswing, of which many of our members can attest to. Band conditions seem to be improving almost every day with increasing openings into Europe, Asia and Africa. There's even been an uptick in activity noted on 12 & 10 meters.

As a reminder, over the last several years we as a club have participated in the CQ DX Marathon. The Marathon accepts all DX, no matter the mode, that you've logged during this current calendar year (even though you may have logged them in the past). For a club of our smaller size we have been ranked as high as #4 in the world and #2 in North America. Let see if

From the V.P. - W1RH

2020 Sweepstakes

Well, we have put another Sweepstakes behind us. Hopefully this will be our 6th win in a row. I sweat the log count every year but somehow, we seem to come in under 50 logs. If our count comes in at over 50 logs this year, it will put us into the Unlimited Category. As I write this, I don't know just how many of our members participated. We usually come in right under 50 logs.

The claimed scores this year for both CW and SSB are just awesome.

2020 SS CW Raw SCORES

We had four logs for CW at over 200K each:

we can top that this year. As the cycle continues to improve I've noticed a number of stations becoming workable that have not been heard from in several years.

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

213,200 – Bob, N6TV

205,508 – Rich, WC6H

201,768 – David, WD6T

201,192 – Ken, K6MR

Guys, I don't know how you do it!!

We had several logs totaling between 100K and 200K:

184, 464 – Rick, N6RK

181,944 – Steve, W1SRD

168,000 – Alan, KH6TU (Alan was in Hawaii this year, so it doesn't count towards our total, but still great)

165,228 – Rick, N6XI

152,544 – Norm, N6JV

135,240 – Doug, WE6Z

130,216 – Jim, W6EU

124,320 – Jim, K9JM

122,472 – Bob, W1RH

107,900 – Tim, K7XC (low power!!)

2020 SS SSB RAW SCORES (to date)

We had one log over 300K:

301,392 – Rich, WC6H (just amazing!!)

We had five logs between 200K-300K:

286,018 – Ken, K6MR

283,725 – Matt, WX5S at W7RN

224,488 – Steve, W1SRD

220,496 – Jim, N6JS

214,840 – Steve, NC6R (The Prez puts his points where his mouth is!)

We had logs between 100k-200K:

129,762 – Norm, N6JV

113,400 – Jim, K6OK

111,520 – Bob, W1RH

110,160 – Doug, WE6Z

109,020 – Giuseppe, KE8FT

These are all huge scores, but every score shows support for the Club. Thanks to all who participated.

COMBINED CW PLUS SSB

I do want to note some combined CW + SSB scores:

506,900 – Rich, WC6H

487,210 – Ken, K6MR

406,432 – Steve, W1SRD

370,652 – Matt, WX5S (CW at NW6P; SSB at W7RN)

282,306 – Norm, N6JV

275,154 – WD6T

266,048 – Rick, N6XI

245,500 – Doug, WE6Z

233,992 – Bob, W1RH

197,400 – Jim, K6OK

174,524 – Jim, K9JM

157,110 – Dick, K6LRN

153,180 – Jim, K7XC

As far as the lists, above, if I missed anyone and your score was posted at the time I wrote this, I owe you lunch!

This club is not dependent on just those who made over 100K in Sweepstakes. Remember, we're also a DX club and as far as contesting goes, we also do CQP with a somewhat different group of operators. Everyone in this club counts! I just wanted to show those who scored big in Sweepstakes 2020.

Bob W1RH



Kay Anderson, K6KO announced that Monday the 16th will be Ken Anderson's (K6TA) 81st birthday and passed around a card for all to sign.

October minutes and September Treasurer's Report were published in the latest newsletter. Rick Samoian, W6SR moved to accept the minutes and report as published. Rich Cutler, WC6H seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Steve announced that those who want to get ahead of things can pay their 2021 dues now by either giving them to Sue at a meeting or mailing or paying through Paypal.

Jojo Melendres (KN6HTD) submitted a membership application about himself and his station. Jim Singer, N6JS nominated him as a member; Ronald Eaves, W6RPM seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Member Achievements:

- Rick Samoian, W6SR was proud to announce that he has completed 10 Band WAS
- Ronald Eaves, W6RPM reported that he is awaiting 2 confirmations for this WAC award
- Doug Phillips, WE6Z was pleased that he had scored a new personal best in SS CW with 805 contacts. Doug also mentioned that we need to encourage more members to upload to club log for newsletter rankings.



Announcements:

- Steve mentioned that HF activity is ramping up as the sunspot cycle increases.
- SS SSB contest will be November 21-22. PLEASE post your score to 3830 but do NOT upload to ARRL without first checking with Bob Hess, W1RH who is our log flogger. We must keep our total number of logs combined (SS CW & SS SB) to 50 or less or we move into the unlimited category. We are looking for another win in the Medium Category. Rich Cutler, WC6H will be speaking tomorrow on the NCCC zoom meeting on effective tips for Sweepstakes contesting success. He shared a number of tips us today.

Elections:

At the October meeting, all existing Board Members were asked to run again, as all were eligible to do so. There were no other nominations at this meeting. Norm Wilson, N6JV moved that we accept the entire slate as presented. Rick Samoian, W6SR seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Officers for 2021 are:

- President - Steve Allred, NC6R
- Vice President - Bob Hess, W1RH
- Treasurer - Sue Allred, K6SZQ
- Secretary - Emilia Seiferling, KI6YTT
- Directors - Jeff Stai, WK6I; Rich Cutler, WC6H; and Steve Dyer, W1SRD

Rick Samoian, W6SR mentioned that he had recently received email notification that the

SCDX Club is meeting in the next month to decide to disband the club after 73 years. It seems that no one is interested in Zoom Meetings and no one is willing to run for office. There was some discussion about how we might insure that our club remains healthy. In addition to recruiting new members, some ideas were given on how to mentor those new members.

Next Meeting:

January - date and location to be announced.

Ronald Eaves, W6RPM moved to adjourn; Rick Samoian, W6SR seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 1:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Allred, K6SZQ for Secretary - Emilia Seiferling, KI6YTT

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

Club Log Standings

Overall

1	N6JV	Norm Wilson	190
2	K6YK	John Lee	178
3	K7QDX	Michael Steiner	163

CW

1	K6YK	John Lee	168
2	N6JV	Norm Wilson	146
3	WC6H	Rich Cutler	112

Phone

1	NC6R	Steve Allred	127
2	K6YK	John Lee	104
3	WC6H	Rich Cutler	92

Data

1	K7QDX	Michael Steiner	161
2	N6JV	Norm Wilson	143
3	K6OK	Jim Varney	137

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

In the news

Facing imminent collapse, the Arecibo Observatory will be demolished. After 57 years of service, several recent cable failures have caused the National Science Foundation to pull the plug on the observatory. It was determined that the dish and its supporting cables could not be safely repaired.



Damage caused by the failure of the first auxiliary cable in August | Image: UCF

Member Reports

Hi all, after moving to an antenna restricted community in El Dorado Hills in late 2018, I thought my radio days were over. However, with the generosity of Fred, K6IJ, I was able to piggy-back on one of his many radios, a Flex 6500, plus my Elecraft 500W PA, and a combination of simple multi-polarized wire antennas + a 6M square-loop. On the 29th of October, I was finally able to finally complete my 10BWAS. 160M-6M, 12M was the last band, and (of course) Delaware was the last state. It took eight months to secure the last contact (#50) on 12M. I recently attached my 12M stick-on plaque to my 5BWAS award plaque (see below). As you probably noticed the date of the 5BWAS award is March of 2019. I have been a HAM for many years, over 55 but never really collected states. Nor pursued the WAS award, although I had many LOTW credits because of the many contests I operated. So I guess the bottom line is that you're never too old to have fun, and collect awards even

with simple antennas even if they are via an internet connection.....de Rick, W6SR



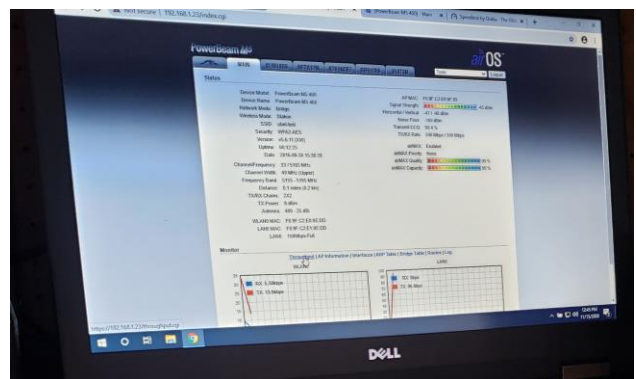
a perfect candidate because they are on a different band as my normal WiFi, and they have a very long range. In fact these dishes have a range of 25 kilometers in ideal conditions. So 300+ feet wouldn't be a problem. I installed one dish on the roof of my house, re-using the old dish network antenna mount. I installed the other on the barn using another recycled dish network mount. Alignment was easy and I got a solid 300Mbps connection between the dishes.



Doug's WiFi remote SDR Project

I've been thinking for a long time about setting up a remote SDR receiver so that I could look at band conditions from my QTH rather than depending on the spotting network and other stations with superior antennas.

One thing that I wanted to do, was place the receiver as far away as possible from my transmitting antennas. As a 300+ foot Ethernet cable is impractical because of all of the obstacles it would have to cross between my house and my barn, I decided a WiFi link would be the best bet. A year ago I acquired a pair of 15" Ubiquiti 5 Ghz WiFi dishes. These would be





The program I chose was SDRUno. It is made to run with the SDRPlay receivers. It allows you to add multiple sub receivers within the bandwidth of the SDRPlay receiver.



Next, for the SDR receiver I chose the SDRPlay. I already had an RSP1a on hand and have had success in the past with it. The major advantage of this SDR is its bandwidth. With a powerful computer, it can listen to 8 MHz at once. This will allow me to monitor more than one ham band at the same time.

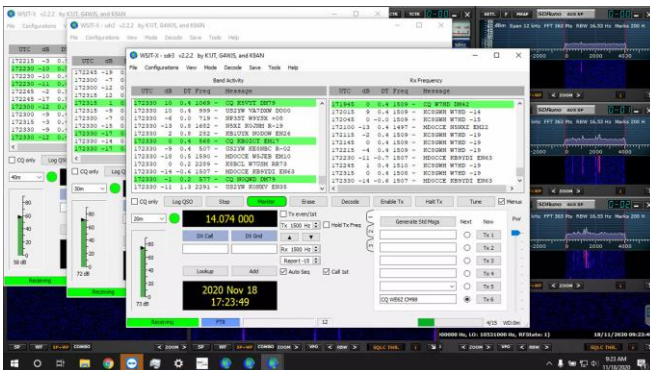
In order to take advantage of that wide bandwidth you need decently a fast, modern, multi-core computer. I went with a dell laptop with a 6th Generation Intel Core i7-6820HQ (Quad Core, 2.7GHz, 8MB cache). It is about 4 years old.

As for an antenna, I used an active antenna mounted on the corner of the barn. I'll move it to a higher location when I get some more time and a break in the weather. The antenna is called "MiniWhip Active Antenna" and is made in Ukraine. It covers 10 kHz - 30 MHz.



<https://www.ebay.com/itm/MiniWhip-Active-Antenna-Assembled-in-Box-HF-LF-VLF-mini-whip-sdr-RX-portable-sw/222469570201>

FT8 seems to be a very good indicator of band conditions. So I opted to run multiple instances of the WSJT-X software.



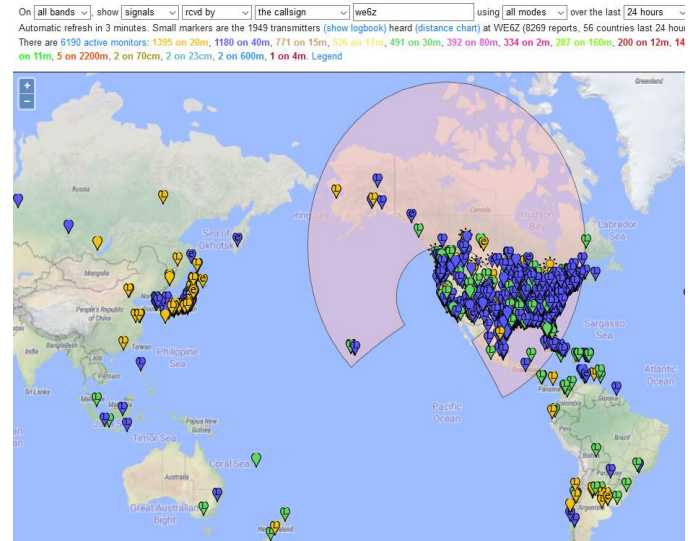
Since the SDR can see 8 Mhz, I adjusted the software so that it can listen to 7.074, 10.136, and 14.074 Mhz.

In the future I plan to add a second or third SDR receiver so that I can monitor 80, 40, 20, and 15 meters.

I use the site PSK Reporter to show the signals that my SDR is receiving. It allows you to filter by callsign sent/received, band, time, and mode.

In the last 24 hours my little SDR has received 8378 signals from 56 different countries.

<https://pskreporter.info/pskmap.html>



Doug WE6Z

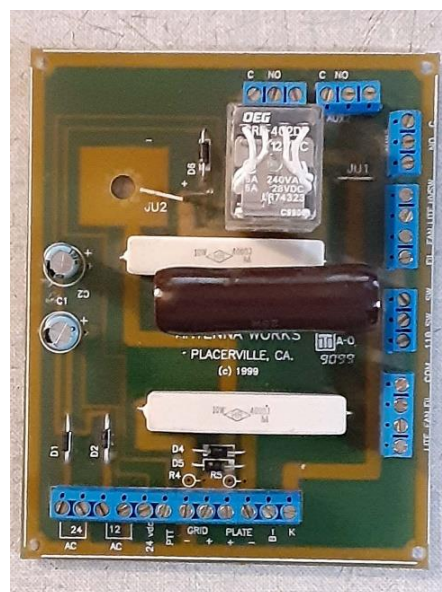
Norm's 1500 Watt 2- Meter GS35b Amplifier

For the 2-meter EME project, I needed a good amplifier. I looked into solid state designs, but the cost ran well over \$2000 so I decided to build something using the GS35b Russian triode. They are cheap and I have had great success with them on 6 meters. I had some components from a project that had never been completed. Antenna Works, Inc. of Placerville had been making a series of VHF amplifiers using 8877 tubes. I had one of their boxes with its front panel and control board. These amplifiers were based on a design developed at EIMAC and appeared in the August 1971 issue of *Ham Radio*. The enclosure was perfect for the 8877, but a GS35b is much larger, so some

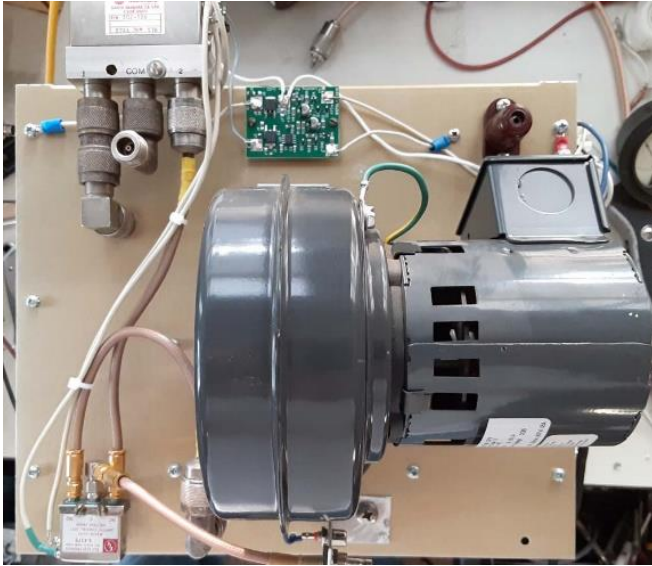
modification was needed. The 8877 uses a septar socket and the GS35b uses a hole in the chassis. The tuning mechanisms were made for the smaller tube, so some calculating was needed. The 8877 has a standard type grid and in grounded grid, the output capacity is 10 pF. A GS35b is a planar triode designed for duty up to 1 GHz and has an output capacity of about 4 pF. Since the GS35b is much larger, it will have more stray capacity, so the tubes mounted in a similar box will have close to the same combined capacity and the tuning system will be close.

The first problem was the GS35b being too tall for the box. A panel was used as a chassis to mount the 8877 and it had to be removed and mounted lower in the enclosure. During this process, the old socket was removed and the larger hole for the GS35b was cut on the lathe. It needed to be very accurately cut to snugly hold the tube with some small clamps. All connections to the tube's plate needed to be attached to a square clamp. The diameter wouldn't fit the new tube, so the lathe was again used to cut it to the correct diameter.

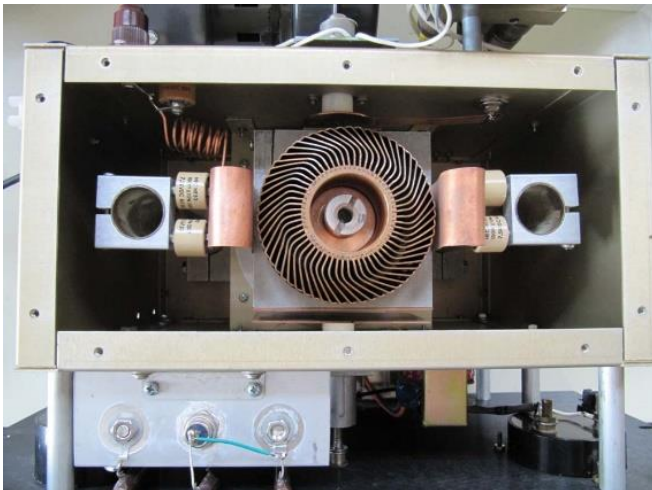
The filament transformer couldn't be used, so a smaller 12-volt at 4-amp transformer was mounted on the box between the box and the front panel. A second 28-volt control voltage transformer was fit where it was handy. The control board used the original design's hardware.



The Antenna Works control board is a very useful assembly. It included the PTT relay and current limiting resistor as well as 12 and 28 VDC power supply circuits. It has convenient attachment points for the meters, fan, control voltages and bias. The 8877 uses a 12-volt zener diode, but the GS35b needs over 40 volts, so I remotely mounted three series connected zeners above the control board.



The back of the box holds the blower, high voltage connector and the relays. The large relay is a Dow-Key, 402 type that is liked for its high isolation. It is a latching relay and it has extra relay contacts to control the small SMA relay used in the input. The small circuit board beside the 402, is a latching relay control board made by W6PQL. It switches the relay when operated by the sequenced PTT line. The relay is rated at 2 KW on 2-meters.



The tuned lines are connected to the plate clamp with strips of thin brass sheets. A chimney was made from a sheet of Teflon. In front of the tube is a billows assembly operated by the main knob that adjusts the distance between a copper plate and another plate mounted to the plate clamp. Tuning is very smooth. The loading capacitor plate is similar and mounted on the back of the tube. The tuning of the plate circuit and "T" match input circuit were checked with an MFJ analyzer and a grid dip meter to confirm that my estimates were close. With about 70 watts of drive, the tube operates very smoothly due to the optimum Q of the tuning circuits. I have 3700 volts on the plate and it seems to handle it without problems. The proof will be using JT65B on EME where it's going to get hot. The GS35b has a dissipation of about 2500 watts, so I'm not worried.

Although the GS35b tubes are new, they have been in storage sometimes for decades so they require some processing before high voltage is applied. The tube I am using was run with the filament and the fan on for two days. The tube was then hi-potted at 10,000 volts to remove any gas that might be present. No arc-over occurred. N6JV

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

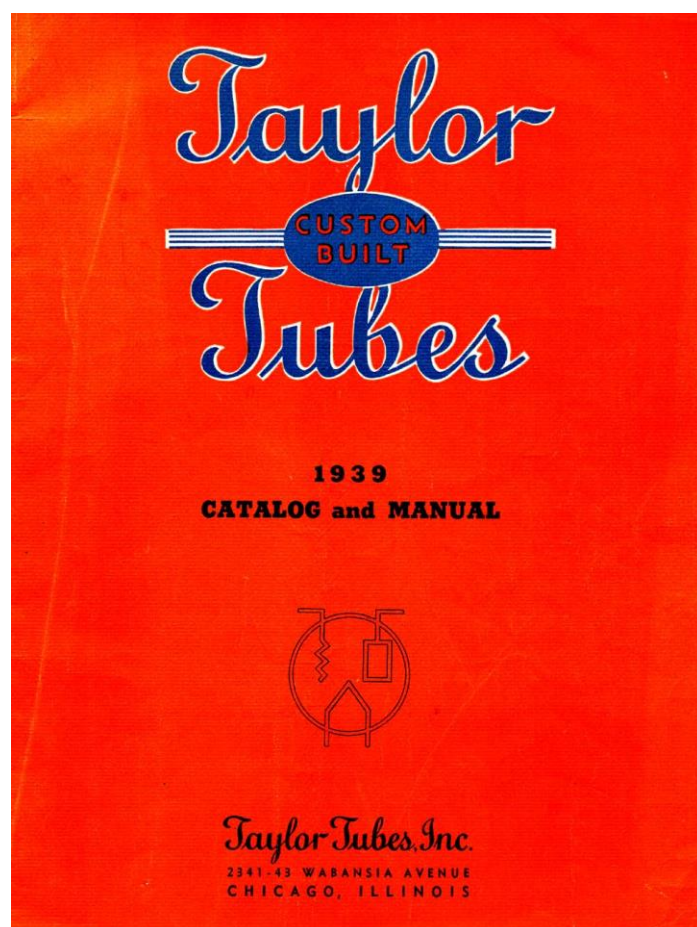
(DXCC, WAS, VUCC, 160M)

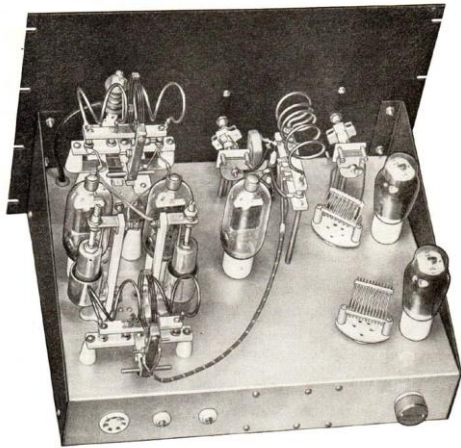
Rick Samoian, W6SR

Tube of the Month

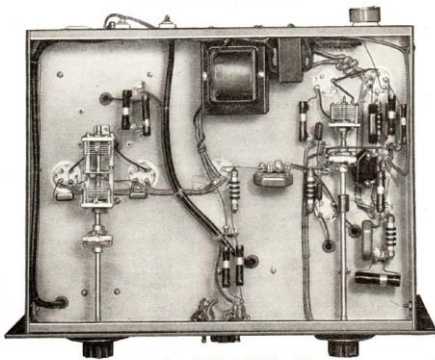
T-40

In the late 1930s, tube companies like EIMAC had big competition from several other makers. One of the most successful in the ham market was Taylor Tubes from Chicago, Ill. Taylor produced a big selection of their own designs as well as a few standard types. They also published a catalog and manual each year. These booklets showed data sheets on each tube as well as descriptions on rigs that could use their tubes. If you bought all the tubes for one of their complete transmitters, Taylor would give you all the chassis that were pre-drilled for the parts. Was this the start of the radio kit marketing that would be so popular 30 years later? Taylor survived WWII, but the last catalog I have seen was 1945.





Top View—Unit No. 2—High Freq. R.F.



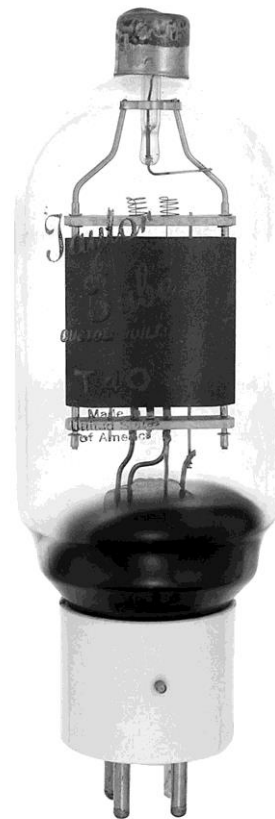
Bottom View—Unit No. 2—High Freq. R.F.

23



In 1938, my father was W6LLA in Corcoran, CA., and wanted to work some DX. Ten meters was

the big phone DX band, so he constructed a new amplifier using push pull Taylor T-40 triodes. This gave him over 100 watts output. The T-40 and TZ-40 were triodes that would operate up to 5 meters. The mu for the T-40 was 25 and the TZ-40 the mu was 62. The TZ-40 was a zero-bias tube. Like most of the Taylor tubes, the T-40s had carbon anodes. At \$3.50 each, the tubes were very popular and in their first year, Taylor sold over 11,000 of the “wonder tubes”. Long before I was licensed, I knew about the T-40s on 10-meters and often looked at my father’s scrap book with all the DX QSL cards. I was hooked on DXing and that RME 69 receiver became mine in 1959 when I passed the test.



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.

California QSO Party 2020

CQP 2020 from Alpine County - W6BRY, WE6Z

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>

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>

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



© 2018 N6TV

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>



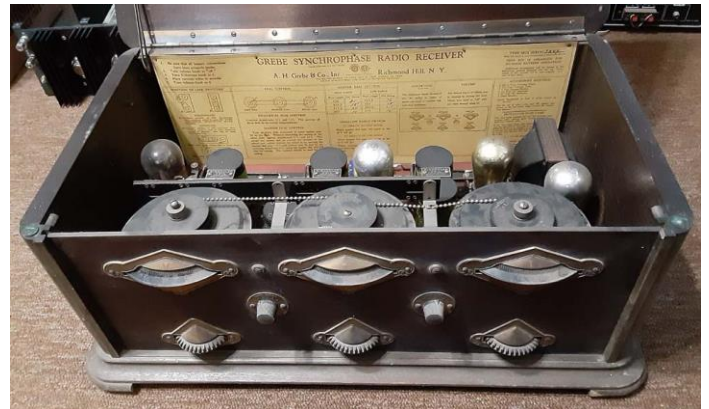
© 2018 N6TV

Y-Box
N6TV

For Sale:

Kenwood TS-430S Transceiver
 160 through 10 meters including WARC bands
 PS-30 power supply
 Microphone
 Good all band radio that would be a good mobile unit.
 Asking \$350 for the package





1925 GREBE Synchronphase battery powered AM radio. Missing one tube but in excellent shape. Needs case re-finish. \$300
 These are estate items being handled by N6JV in Wilton.
N6JV@N6JV.com
 (916) 689-3534 (916) 330-7334 (CELL)

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

2020 Meeting Dates

January - 25
Feb - none
March - 14
Apr – 18 Zoom
May -9 Zoom
June – 6 Zoom
July – 25 Zoom
August – 22 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

Pacific Division Director
Jim Tiemstra K6JAT
k6jat@aol.com

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

East Bay Section Manager
Jim Siemons, W6LK
jim@siemons.com

September – 19 Zoom
October – 17 Zoom
November – 14 Sutter Creek/Martel
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.*

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/>

Please contact the editor to have your club listed here.

Nevada Section Manager
John Bigley, N7UR
n7ur@arrl.org

Pacific Section Manager
Joe Speroni, AH0A
ah0a@arrl.org

San Francisco Section Manager
Bill Hillendahl, KH6GJV
kh6gjev@arrl.org

Santa Clara Valley Section Manager
Brandon Bianchi, NI6C
ni6c@arrl.org

Sacramento Valley Section Manager
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