

THE NUGGET



Mother Lode DX/Contest Club

The Newsletter of the Mother Lode DX/Contest Club

September 2019

Volume 24 Number 9

From the President - NC6R

Are you looking for a way to volunteer that would benefit your club? MLDXCC is looking for a newsletter editor. A couple of members have stepped in to fill the gap but ONLY on a temporary basis. If you have interest but feel you lack the know-how, there are several who would gladly mentor you.

The August meeting was at the Round Table Pizza Parlor in Auburn. The meeting turnout was good and conversation brisk on various radio subjects. A brief business meeting was held with the treasurer's report and meeting minutes from July meeting, having been printed in the newsletter, were approved as published. Featured speaker for the meeting was Jim, K9JM who gave a talk on his expedition to Spratley Island.

Of note, NCCC has asked if we'd submit our ARRL sweepstakes points to them as it marks their 50th anniversary of the event. By nearly unanimous show of hands, MLDXCC has chosen to support NCCC in this effort. As a show of appreciation, NCCC has offered to support

MLDXCC in a contest of our choosing at a later date.



Remember the upcoming Cal QSO Party. The organizers have requested your input on the Cal QSO website as to which county you will be activating. Go to www.cqp.org to register.

Your participation in the CQ DX Marathon contest is one where any DX you work, whether new or worked in previous years, counts toward your final score at the end of the year. MLDXCC has made a good showing as a club in this event and would like to continue to improve its overall standing.

A couple of good website resources to bookmark are -

The September 21st meeting will be held at Los Hermanos at 60 Ridge Rd, Sutter Creek, Ca. Additional info is available at www.mldxcc.org/meetings.

See you there.

Upcoming DX operations -

<https://www.ng3k.com/misc/adxo.html>

Contest calendar dates -

<https://www.contestcalendar.com/index.html>

That's all for now....73 and good DX! - Steve / NC6R

New Members

Please welcome the following new

Members:

James Michener – K9JM

Grass Valley, CA

Marcus Maclean – KI6WDX

Fairfield, CA

From the V.P. - W1RH

FT8, FT4, or FT0?

The HF digital modes have been around for a long time, arguably beginning with CW. Other than CW and RTTY, I really haven't played around with these modes much on HF. I had (actually still have) an MFJ multi-mode TNC and made a few packet, pactor, etc. contacts with it but quickly lost interest. I didn't see a lot of activity centered around my interests, contesting and DX'ing, and it seemed like making a contact was like watching paint dry.

A couple of years ago, it took Tyler, K6TLR, to actually show me how to operate using the FT8 mode. It was cool, but when he left, it probably took me another year to actually wake up and see that FT8 is a valid DX mode but I didn't see it as a contest mode. A March, 2019, ARRL article, quoting ClubLog 2018 figures says that the FT8 mode has grown from 8,000 FT8 contacts uploaded to ClubLog in 2017 to 14,200 FT8 contacts uploaded in 2018. I'm sure the 2019 numbers will be at least double the 2018 numbers.

Last year, MLDXCC had a meeting in Lockeford on the same day that NCCC had a meeting in Livermore. The NCCC meeting featured Ed, WOYK, doing a talk on the new FT4 mode, developed by K1JT especially for contesting. I actually ended up going to both meetings. I went to Lockeford, checked in and said hi and then arrived in Livermore about an hour later just as the lunch was being served. It was a very interesting talk and certainly sparked my interest in FT4 as a contest mode.

The basic differences between FT8 and FT4 give FT4 the advantage in transmission time (2.5 times faster than FT8 making it very similar to RTTY) while giving up signal-to-noise to achieve that faster speed. While the lost S/N is not insignificant compared to FT8, it still allows you to work signals about 10 dB weaker than needed for RTTY.

When I came up with the title for this article, I actually had to google FT0, just to make sure it wasn't a valid digital mode! It isn't, but it's there to ask you the question – Do you use this new mode? If you don't, FT0 would be the answer! There are many out there who refuse to take it seriously and I have heard them compared to those who were poo-poo'ing SSB when AM was the primary means of HF amateur voice communication. We all know how that one turned out and it's primarily because of the reduced bandwidth requirements of SSB and the ability to work stations on sideband that you could not work on AM. I remember listening to the bands when I was a kid and heard all of the complaining about the "slop-bucket" mode. SSB pretty much killed AM and FT8/FT4 could do the same to RTTY.

FT8/FT4 has indeed attracted my attention. CW is still my favorite mode and it does, obviously, require skill, but there is some knowledge and skill involved in working those rare ones or in contesting using FT8/FT4. WSJT-X, K1JT's app has been used almost exclusively to make FT8 and FT4 contacts, but when the contest program, WriteLog, came out with DigiRite, I had to try it out and I soon became a believer in this program for both DX'ing and contesting using these modes. I have been using

WriteLog/DigiRite in the DXpedition mode to log FT8/FT4 contacts for about two months now and I have worked 149 band-modes and about 100 countries in those two months. Being primarily a contester, I have never taken the WARC bands seriously and have only a Cushcraft R-5 vertical for 12 and 17 meters. Nevertheless, I have managed to work 20 countries in this period on 17 meters with a really bad signal and really poor propagation.....and that's precisely why FT8 has become so popular. It allows the guy using a minimal antenna system and 100 watts or less, living in an antenna restricted area, to work the world.

At this month's meeting, I'll talk a bit about FT8 and FT4 in language those who have not used the modes can understand. I'll show some pictures of my own station and setup and I'll remote into my station and actually make contacts, putting them up in real time on the projector screen. I will have a computer loaded with WriteLog/DigiRite and WSJT-X and perhaps some other programs to show how it's done. I absolutely do not claim to be an expert, so I'm encouraging those of you who have used these modes to share your ideas and techniques with the group. We're meeting at a really good Mexican restaurant, in Sutter Creek, so I hope to see you there this weekend.

From the Secretary - K6SZQ

General Meeting Minutes
August 24, 2019
Round Table Pizza, Auburn

Meeting was called to order at 12:15 p.m. by Steve Allred, NC6R. 21 members were in

attendance, and 5 guests (two of whom were later voted in to membership).

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

July minutes were published in the August newsletter. Bob Officer, N6TCE moved to accept the minutes as published. Rick Samoian, W6SR seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Treasurer's report was published in the August newsletter. Rick Samoian, W6SR moved to accept the report published. Bob Officer, N6TCE seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Old Business: None

New Business:

James Michener, K9JM submitted an application for membership. Steve read James' qualifications. Bob Hess, W1RH and Mike Steiner, K7QDX nominated James for membership. The membership approved the application.

Marcus Maclean, KI6WDX submitted an application for membership. Steve read Marcus' qualifications. Jerry Olive, KD6WKY and Bob Hess, W1RH nominated Marcus for membership. The membership approved the application.

We are still in need of a newsletter editor. Steve thanked Norm Wilson, N6JV and Rick Samoian, W6SR for filling in as interim editors.

Steve announced to the group that NCCC has requested that we back them with our points for the 50th Anniversary Sweepstakes. They do not normally participate and help us with big wins for the last several years, but they participated in the first, and would like to do so again to commemorate the 50th. They will in turn give us their points in another contest of our choosing. Steve asked the group how they felt about this. Consensus was that we should honor this special request (with the caveat that this is a one time deal!)

Announcements:

- For the solar report, it was mentioned that the lowest recorded level was 65.7; it has been running 66-67 for the last month and a half, with only one sunspot last month. Bob Hess, W1RH noted that despite conditions, he has logged 72 countries last week on FT8.

- Steve Allred, NC6R mentioned several upcoming contests/events

- o This weekend is the Hawaii QSO party, Kansas QSO party, Ohio QSO party, VK/ZL YL QSO party, 6 meter fall spring, and the YORC - a youth event - if you are 30 & under you work everybody; if you are over 30 then you only work those under 30.

- o There are a lot of upcoming state QSO parties - Colorado, Tennessee, Nebraska, Texas, Alabama, Iowa, New Hampshire, New Jersey and don't forget the Washington State Salmon Run

- o All Asian DX Phone is coming up, as well as ARRL September VHF contest, the All Africa International DX Contest, and the FT4/FT8

World Wide Digi DX Contest on August 31st. (Steve reminded everyone about how critical clock accuracy is during FT8 operations with an anecdote about how just a minute or two kept him from decoding anyone during a recent FT8 session)

- Jay Harmon KE6GLA mentioned that the El Dorado Club will be having a SOTA demo at the helipad/lookout area at Big Hill on September 21st from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Jerry Olive, KD6WKY mentioned that this year is the 150th anniversary of the Hiram Percy Contest.
- Bob Hess, W1RH has been talking to Tom Tamorina about a field trip to Tom's big contest station near Virginia City, Nevada. Several members indicated interest in doing a field trip outside of the meeting, and Bob will check into that and report back.
- It was announced that there are 18 DXpeditions occurring between now and the July meeting. For details and a full listing, go to ng3k.com and click on " ng3k provided resources" and then click on "Announced DX Operations".
- Steve reminded all that Cal QSO is coming up October 5th and 6th and asked who is participating, and have they registered at www.cqp.org? Jerry Olive, KD6WKY will be operating in Glenn County. Bob Hess, W1RH indicated that he and a group will be operating Tehema County again this year, and Bob Officer,

N6TCE reported his group will be activating Mariposa County.

Member Achievements:

- Doug Phillips, WE6Z got Kuwait this morning in the log on 20 m FT8
- Bob Officer, N6TCE reported logging Easter Island
- John Lee, K6YK reported that he is having a lot of fun with SOTA contacts, and currently has over 1000 QSO's for about 4900 points.
- Norm Wilson, N6JV reported receiving WAC award with EME. South America was the challenge. He also is working on WAS - 10 band again. He was 5BWAS #148 in 1972 with QSL cards. He is now doing so with LOTW and has 5BWAS #3,587 and has the 10 bands completed.

Club Achievements: None to report

• Next Meeting:

September 21st - location to be announced. Program is expected to be Dave Engle, who will speak on DX Lab logging software.

Rick Samoian, W6SR moved to adjourn; Mike Steiner, K7QDX seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 12:47 p.m. For the program, Jim Michener gave a presentation on the 9M0W Spratley Island DX21pedition.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Allred, K6SZQ – Secretary

MLDXCC Treasurer - K6TLR

Paying Dues:

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 K6TLR, 3141 Rushall Ct, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

Club Log Standings

Overall

1	N6JV	Norm Wilson	236
2	K6YK	John Lee	191
3	W6DE	Dave Engle	167

CW

1	N6JV	Norm Wilson	175
2	K6YK	John Lee	171
3	NA6O	Gary Johnson	128

Phone

1	N6JV	Norm Wilson	113
2	NC6R	Steve Allred	109
3	K6YK	John Lee	83

Data

1	K7QDX	Michael Steiner	162
2	N6JV	Norm Wilson	143
3	W6DE	Dave Engle	131

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

MLDXCC Website update

Norm, N6JV would like to update the “member's stations” section of our website. Many of the pics are old and outdated, and many of us have

Dits and Dahs

K7XC is working on a 40 meter rotatable dipole at 63 feet and a 1000 foot loop at 30 feet.

Do you have something you'd like to see here in Dits and Dahs? License upgrade? Call sign change? New equipment? Send it to the editor!

moved. So please send Norm a photo of your smiley face at your station, as well a photo of your antenna system. Let's get our website current.

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
(DXCC, WAS, VUCC, 160M)

Dennis King, N6KD
(WAS, VUCC)

2019 ARRL PACIFIC DIVISION

PACIFICON 2019

October 18, 19 & 20, 2019

"The Science of Radio"

San Ramon, California

San Ramon Marriott Hotel

2600 Bishop Drive

San Ramon, California, 94583

HAM RADIO CONVENTION

Go to the Pacificon Website for

Events, Schedules & Registration

Youth 17 & under admitted free

College students 25 and under: \$5

Advance registration closes October 6, 2019.

If Hotel lodging is needed

reserve your room on-line; or

Call Marriott Hotel Reservations at 1-800-228-9290

and ask if special Pacificon rate is still available.

Unique forums programs

Pacificon 2019 features a long list of great Forums

and presentations from some of the most well-

known and respected names in

Amateur Radio.

Tube of the Month

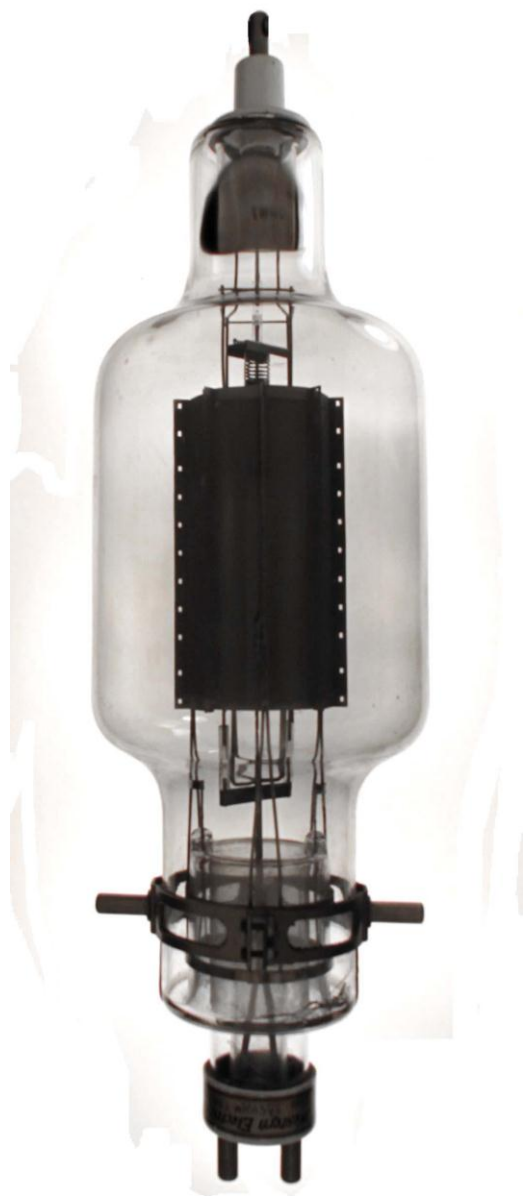
WE 279A

In the 1920s, several manufacturers produced water cooled tubes in the 5 KW range that were intended for commercial and military use. Most glass tubes were limited to 250 watt dissipation. Western Electric decided to make new larger tubes that would fill the gap up to where water cooling would become necessary. It would be over 20 years before ceramic power tubes would be available. In 1930, Western Electric started producing the 1000 watt dissipation 251A and the 1200 watt 279A. These tubes would operate well into the short wave bands where most existing tubes wouldn't. The 279A was the most powerful glass tube produced up to that date.

The 279A was a monster at 21.5 inches tall and 6 inches in diameter. It was also built "upside down". The base only had 2 large pins for the filament and the grid came out the top. The two plate connections came out the side a few inches above the base. I imagine it was plugged in much like a giant fuse. The tube could be used at full power up to 20 MHz. There was a complex system of springs to keep proper filament tension. The 279A had a mu of 10 and operated at 3000 VDC at 800 ma. The huge cylindrical plate would glow cherry red at maximum dissipation.

The 279A was used in several amplifiers to produce 1000 watts or better. Applications included aviation ground control, police, military and commercial broadcasting. In 1941 it was replaced by the WE379A and in 1948 all production of large transmitting tubes was transferred to Machlett. Other manufacturers such as Amperex and Sylvania produced their versions of the tube.

Visit the museum at N6JV.com
Norm N6JV



YAESU G-800 REPAIR

A few years ago, I purchased a very well used Yaesu G-800 rotor at a swap meet. When I set up my 6 meter EME antenna on 25 feet of Rohn 25 tower, I used this rotor. This month, I was moving the antenna to the West when the rotor

seized. It had always been slow, but there was no moving it. I took it down and open it up. The ball bearings were very dirty with thick black grease covering the gears and bearing races. A real mess. I cleaned the grease from every place I could reach. The races were caked in dry grease. After cleaning the surface grease off the races I applied WD-40 to them and brushed the grooves with a small wire brush until they were clean. I applied some lithium grease to the grooves with my finger. The ball bearings were in poor shape, so I ordered 100 new 3/8 diameter bearings from Amazon. They arrived the next day. A good deal for less than \$10 postpaid. I applied adequate grease to the bearings and gears and re-assembled the rotor. It ran very smoothly.



It was obvious that this rotor had never been properly serviced. I would like to get another rotor for a spare, but before I put it on a tower, I'm going to spend the 10 dollars on some new ball bearings and a grease job. Climbing is getting harder to do at my age and I can afford the 10 bucks. 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>

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.

For sale: Kenwood TS-590S. This one has the Kenwood installed daughterboard to fix the ALC overshoot problem (have paperwork for that). Cosmetically 9/10, no dings or significant scratches. Original box, manual, mic, power cord. \$600 firm. Can meet most members halfway to hand off.

73 Jim K6OK

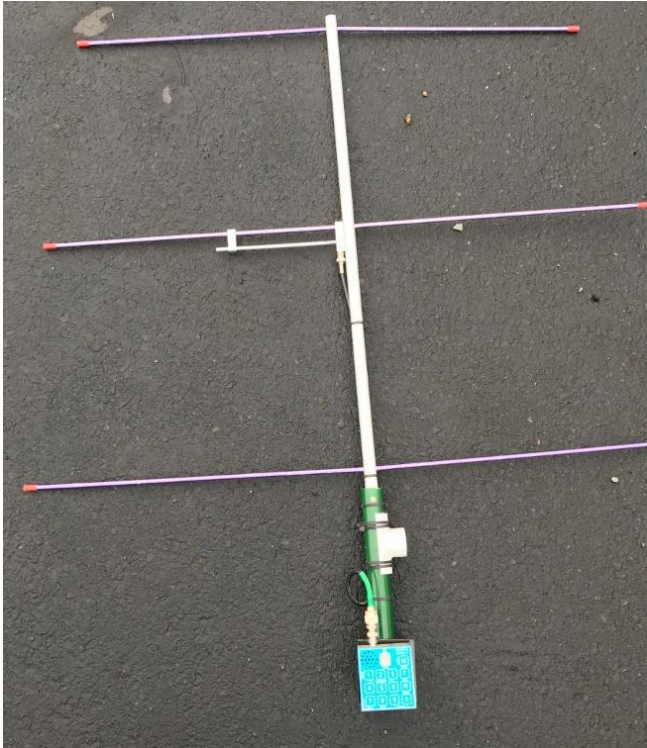
k6ok@arrl.net or can text me at 916 too oh too 6458

FOR SALE—FROM THE ESTATE OF W6HFM

This is a VK3YNG Sniffer 4, which is one of the best transmitter hunt devices on the market. To get one of these, you need to order it from Australia. I paid about \$300 for mine. This one

comes with the beam and I believe we also have some books on transmitter hunting that can be thrown in. This unit works by automatically attenuating the signal as you get closer to the hidden transmitter. An audible tone changes frequency as the signal gets stronger. The club will be doing a transmitter hunt soon. If you want to be competitive, you'll want this. It works on the 2 meter band and also the aircraft beacon location channels. \$200 .





Heil Gold ICM Microphone w/HB-1 Boom, support brack and PTT (beautiful for a base station) (\$100)



Contact Bob, W1RH w1rh@yahoo.com

Dennis NJ6G has the following items for sale:

Astron RS-50 Power Supply - \$95 OBO

M2 RC2800 Rotator Controller - \$225

Dennis, NJ6G dennis@mail4life.net

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

Need QSL cards, business cards, club banners?

Contact Vina K6VNA vina@sign-tek.com

2019 Meeting Dates

January 26
Feb - None
March 16
Apr - None
May 11
June 15
July 27
August 24
September 21
October 12
November 9
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>

Please contact the editor to have your club listed here.

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The MLDXCC NEWSLETTER

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