

THE NUGGET



Mother Lode DX/Contest Club

The Newsletter of the Mother Lode DX/Contest Club

July 2020

Volume 25 Number 7

From the President – NC6R

Hi there, how is everyone doing? Please reach out and let others members know if you have a need.

Have you been working DX or an “all time new one”? Not exactly DX, but did manage to log state # 50 (Delaware) on 12 meters which completes my 9 band WAS. A big thank you goes to Ian W6TCP for the encouragement on the last few.

Were you able to operate the ARRL Field Day event? I could operate Saturday only but did managed to get 825 Q’s in the log before my voice gave out....I need to get better at CW.

I wanted to pass along this nice email I received from K7SV –

GA Steve,

I just received the plaque for first place low power unassisted out of state sponsored by your club. I would appreciate if you would convey my gratitude to the fine folks in MLDXCC!

I have earned a number of second or third place plaques over the years, but it was exciting to make the big time! I like the new plaque with each county being a different color.

I look forward to working you all this year. Here's hoping COVID 19 doesn't limit the various operations!

73 de Lar K7SV

Have you been able to participate in the Zoom meetings? It’s been great to see a good turnout for these presentations. I would much rather meet with all of you in person but we’ve had some people log on that might not have otherwise attended. Credit goes to W1RH and his crew for making these Zoom meeting happen. Thank you Bob for your continued effort.

On the DX front 20 meters in the evening hours has produced some surprising openings to Europe going long path. I had the pleasure the other night to operate "tag team" style with Brian W6BYR. Both he and I were able to work a number of stations ranging from the northern part of Europe down to into Italy...quite the unexpected thrill.

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

From the V.P. - W1RH



The beam is a Cushcraft A3S with the 40 meter kit. Radio was a K3/P3. The picture is of the El Dorado County ARC ARES trailer with 50 foot mast. Field Day was at Tony's (W6QA and a MLDXCC member) Apple Hill farm. We operated 1A in a Covid compliant environment.

Bob W1RH

Next Meeting

Date: August 22nd

Time: TBD

Location: Zoom

Presentation: Alan, K6SRZ - DXpedition Doctor - Swains Island

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

As there hasn't been a lot of activity, I'll do a June/July report next month.

From the Secretary - KI6YYT

No notes, as the meeting will be on the 25th of July.

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 NAQP RTTY?

Club Log Standings

Overall

1	N6JV	Norm Wilson	189
2	K6YK	John Lee	168
3	WU6W	Rick Palio	159

CW

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

Phone

1	NC6R	Steve Allred	117
2	K6YK	John Lee	96
3	WC6H	Rich Cutler	90

Data

1	N6JV	Norm Wilson	143
2	K7QDX	Michael Steiner	138
3	WU6W	Rick Palio	124

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

Member Reports

With the start of May, 6 meters has been very active. Best results into Asia and Europe have been with my 7 element LFA Yagi at 25 feet. The high Yagi at 80 feet seems better with North American stations. As of today, I have worked 35 new grids and 7 new countries including GI, GU, HB9, HC, OE, SV and SV9. The 6 meter DXCC total is now 132.

Norm N6JV

Field Day

Started out on 20 and all was going great until about 2:30 PM local time when the band suddenly died. Not a peep was heard on 15 and only static and a few rag chewers on 40. Took a 3 hour break, rested, got some food and visited with the wife. Restarted on 40 and worked some of the East Coast stations that had been absent on 20. Finished up on 80 but the static crashes made it very rough, even using the Rx loop and non-resonant antennas to listen on. No seat time on Sunday. Had several period of sustained rates of over 125 with the largest observed at 136. 825 Q's later the voice was starting to go. Ran class 1D.

73, NC6R

K6KPH was unable to do the west coast ARRL Field Day message transmission, because of the Covid19 shutdown, so I got called on to do it. While, I have done West Coast ARRL Code Proficiency runs for years, this was special, because people actually listen to it. Hey, 100 points is like 50Q's. I was amazed at the feedback I got, including hearing from someone who was with me on Field Day in 1969 that I haven't seen since.

--Jim K9JM

Field Day 2020 and a tale of Murphy – By Doug WE6Z



Overall it was a heck of a lot of fun. We did pretty well. We scored 2258 points, which is the best score since 2014. But Murphy played havoc at every step.

The best laid plans have a habit of not working out. I had planned on doing a dry run and testing the antenna, the tower trailer, and the radio/computer before the start of field day. But that was not possible this year due to time constraints related to the pandemic and my work schedule. I didn't use the tower trailer last year because I ended up operating 2E from home. So the equipment had sat unused for 2 years. That is a long time to remember if anything needed to be fixed before this year's field day.

So I got a few days off work and spent most of my free time packing for field day. I finally got everything packed and ready around noon on Thursday. I made the two and a half hour drive to the field day location without much fanfare, other than meeting two logging trucks on a barely two lane twisty mountain road. I relaxed, ate dinner, and unpacked a few things.

On Friday morning I went out to the truck to start the serious unpacking. This is when I realized that part of the boom of the Force 12 C3 antenna was missing. Thinking back, I realized it was still sitting on the pile of aluminum and other antenna spare parts. A beam antenna with a third of the boom and two elements missing wouldn't work at all.

So the decision was made to drive all the way back home and pick up the missing piece of the antenna. And while I was at it, I'd pick up some dipoles just in case. So after about two hours of unpacking, and disconnecting the trailer, I hit the road. I was able to drive a little faster without the trailer, so it took less time on the mountain roads, but I hit a lot of heavy traffic in Folsom and El Dorado Hills. I stopped and got lunch in Rocklin on the way.

After lunch, checking on things, feeding the fish and cats, I loaded the missing piece and the dipoles in the truck and hit the road again. I went a different route this time so I could avoid the traffic. This route took me through Shingle Springs, Cool, and the back route to Foresthill.



After about 5 hours of driving for the day, I was a little sore. Then I realized it was my turn to cook dinner. After dinner there wasn't enough time before sunset to get the antenna fully assembled. So we planned to assemble everything and set it up Saturday morning.



We woke up early on Saturday morning and started putting everything together. I got the Force 12 C3 assembled and ready to go on the tower trailer. We got the boom mounted to the mast, then I went to hook up the battery jumper box to run the electric winch, and nothing... The jumper box battery was totally dead, even though I had charged it on Thursday. I've probably had it for six or seven years, so it was bound to die at some point. So we had to use jumper cables to run the electric winches.

Finally we got everything attached, set up, and cranked up. It was at this point that I realized that the rotor controller cable was too short to reach the operating position. Not having any extra multi conductor wire besides an ethernet cable, the decision was made to sit the rotor controller on a chair outside the operating tent. Then I realized that I didn't have an extension cord that would reach from the generator or operating position to run the rotor controller. So I temporarily powered it using the radio's extension cord, and just pointed it to 70 degrees. We just left it at that position the whole time.

After getting that sorted out, I started setting up the radio and logging laptop. At about 10AM I found out that the box with all of the computer and audio interface cables was missing. I must have left it at home somewhere. In fact, it was still sitting in the closet... So at this point there was no option to return home to get that stuff, so all digital





modes would be off the table for this Field Day. I did find one headphone Y adapter and one stereo cable, so I was able to feed the audio into the computer for CWGet and listen on my headset.

So I started the operational tests. The antenna tuner started making weird noises that I'd never heard before. I was using a switching power supply that I'd never used before, and I suspect that was the problem. Thankfully I had bought an extra power supply. It was a 50 pound 30 amp linear supply, which again, I'd never used before. The Voltage measured at 14.1 volts, but I figured that with a long power cord and fuses, it would be fine. I spent the next hour or two struggling with an RFI problem that caused severe distortion on SSB. The issue turned out to be audio cables that were just too long. So I bypassed the Kenwood speaker and plugged the Y adapter directly into the radio.

From there, it was fairly smooth sailing, besides it being 90 degrees in the tent on Saturday. Conditions were very good on 20 meters. 20 meters SSB was wall to wall, and even with the Force 12 antenna at 36 feet and at 5500 foot elevation, I wasn't able to break the pileups. CW ended up being much more productive. I ran 90% of the time. 26 WPM seemed to be a good speed, with lots of callers around 20 WPM.

Conditions on Sunday were not as good. I did work more SSB, but quickly worked all of the easy stations. I attempted to do CW on the 15 meter station, but by the time I figured out where the break-in button was on that radio, and got my CW key working, all the loud stations faded into the noise and I wasn't able to get any contacts. Towards the end on Sunday, I went to the 40 meter station and tried to work 40 CW. Same story, all the loud signals had faded and there were only a few ragchews left on the band.

Here are a few other Murphy highlights: I forgot the pancake syrup for the French toast at home. The BBQ developed a stuck regulator and quit when the chicken was half cooked. We ran over a manzanita bush in the RZR ATV and it broke some wires, causing us to break down 2 miles from camp, and we forgot to bring an HT with us. The 270 foot loop antenna wouldn't tune 80 meters, the best SWR was 7.9:1. On the way home, one of the elements of the Force 12 caught a low hanging tree branch and broke it in half. And finally when stopping for lunch on the way home, one of our party accidentally locked their keys in their vehicle and had to wait for a tow truck.

Wow, luck wasn't on our side for this Field Day trip. However we worked through all of the problems. We had an excellent time camping and we ate like kings. Another one for the books... Let's just hope next year is a lot better. I am already making a list of things to repair, improve, and test before next year's field day.





Doug WE6Z

Jim Seiferling, WB6BET
Secretary, Lodi ARC

Emilia Seiferling, KI6YYT
Secretary MLDXCC and past president, Lodi ARC

(Jim here) On the technical side we had two issues.

Emilia was operating the clubs' Yaesu FT-450D on the HF bands from our trailer. I was operating VHF/UHF from the truck. After a couple of hours I went into the trailer and Emilia said she was not making many contacts, when I noticed the power bar graph on the Yaesu wasn't going to full scale. I went into the memory settings and discovered the radio was set to 25 watts. This radio hasn't been powered up since last Field Day. Before that field day I went into the settings and made sure all the defaults were normal.

I can't say what happened, but it appears whatever band that radio was set on last Field Day was only operating at 25 watts. I reset the power and then Emilia started making contacts.

The second issue was when we were leaving our FD site Sunday; I noticed that the metal fence line

across the road had an inboard electric fence system (inside the regular outside fence) to keep the sheep in. That explained all the intermittent strange noises we were hearing. I knew they weren't from the windmills, because all their wiring is underground. I won't be using that site again for HF operations. It had no effect on my VHF FM operations.

(Emilia here).On the infrastructure side.

We took our tiny trailer to the Montezuma Hills west of Rio Vista. It was quiet and windy in the middle of the windmill farm. We had beautiful views from our operational areas, hills, sheep, windmills and Mount Diablo. We had picnic food and snacks for Saturday. We had planned to return home for the evening but the wind came up (35, gusting to 40 mph) so we didn't want to take down the antennas in the dark and windy conditions, so we spent the night. Our "go box" is fully set up with backpacker food, a Jetboil for hot water, and sleeping bags. We had hot tea and breakfast in the morning. We were able to continue operating Sunday morning until the end of Field Day, ending up with 171 total contacts.









Here is the group photo of the High Sierra Field Day Group (HSFDG). Our group has been doing FD together for over 30 years in the Amador/El Dorado county area. These past years, we operate from Peddler Hill along SR88. Half of our membership operated their home stations and half chose to operate strictly distanced at Peddler Hill. In a 'normal year', we would team up to erect antennas and share operating positions, but this year we each were responsible for our own power, setup, and operation. Stations were separated by at least 100 feet, logging computers were linked by a wireless LAN using the FDLOG program. Callsign K6HS.
Photo, left to right, Alan W6AKB, Frank N6OI, Cal K6VT, Mike WA6ZTY, and Oliver KB6BA.



-Mike- WA6ZTY

EDCARC Field Day photos



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>

Tube of the Month

F-129-B/R

In a previous article, I described the tubes used in the 10 KW, BC-340 amplifier. I noted that it was unusual for the amplifier to have four parallel tubes and all the problems with that configuration. In further research, I found that in later versions of the BC-340, they replaced the four 846 tubes with two of the Federal F-129-B triodes. Each F-129-B was capable of 12 KW output so at 10 KW output, the tubes could coast along at less than half power.

The F-129-B had a maximum voltage of 12,000 volts at 2 amps and was good up to 30 MHz at full output. The filament was 18 volts at 58 amps. The F-129-B was a general-purpose tube and was used in many applications. The tube in the photo was saved from a junk pile outside an old Voice of America station in Ohio. I was told it was used as an audio driver tube. Many of the Federal tubes were also made in an air-cooled version that could be used at reduced ratings. The F-129-R is shown with its large radiator with handles.

Awards Checkers ARRL

Ken Anderson, K6TA

(DXCC, WAS, VUCC, 160M)

Rick Samoian, W6SR

The BC-340(*) was in use for several years and to the delight of the communications crews, it still required the same distillery equipment. I can't take credit for suggesting the tube change as it occurred about the time I was born. I didn't find my first big tube until about 1949.



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 we6z@hotmail.com

Not giving up...just making space.

FT-5000dx
Have box, mic, and manual. \$1995/OBO

1994 ARRL Handbook Hard Bound offer
1995 ARRL Handbook Soft Bound offer

FT-890 'AT' (AT may or may not work)
\$250/offer
FT-1000 MP with filters, accessories & box
\$995/offer
HyGain TH-7 Tri-band beam complete/looks good \$200/offer
80 Meter four square antenna...4 67' HD aluminum elements, with Comtek

control box...\$650/offer
5 BTV Hustler w/2 mounts, 80 loading coil
\$100/offer
50' coax with center & end insulators for dipole
\$ 60/offer
Satellite & old DirecTV dish...free
1992 International Callbook (remember those?)
offer
Old Novice & Tech License Guides, Tune in the World,
IMAC (old-unknown condx) with kb & mouse...???
Kenwood TR-8300 440 MHz FM transceiver with xtals for 446.000, 443.250...offer
Heath SB-200 amp. (inop) repairable (IMO) w/ manual...\$100.
May take labor instead of \$ on some items.

Email: k6lrn@arri.net
73,
Dick

2020 Meeting Dates

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

ARRL Pacific Division

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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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