

Notes For SLCC Zoom Meeting 4-8-2025

Hosted by Kevin

In Attendance, Kevin, Scott, Ron, Bob, Scott, Richard, and Don

- **Quick recap**

- The meeting covered a wide range of topics, including personal updates, technology projects, and property-related issues. Participants discussed recent experiences with job interviews, custom-built machines, home security concerns, and beekeeping, as well as property taxes and solar panel systems. The group also shared updates on various hobbies and interests, including model trains, vintage computers, and gaming events.

- **Next steps**

- • Scott: Follow up with bee sting arm swelling if condition persists or worsens
- • Scott: File protest against property tax appraisal increase with local tax authorities
- • Ronald: Measure monitor jack hole size from 800 XL to ensure correct drilling size for 600 XL
- • Ronald: Install video mod circuitry and monitor jack on 600 XL, using step drill bit and proper temperature techniques for safe plastic drilling
- • Ronald: Try the sun method first to warm up the plastic before drilling to reduce brittleness
- • Don: Submit completed train route design to the Train Z site for community feedback
- • Kevin: Text Robbie to check on his absence from the meeting
- • Kevin: Try MoviePass card again as credit for movie ticket purchase
- • Kevin: Follow up about Mrs. Drop's potential attendance for next week's meeting

- **Summary**

- **Richard's Custom Archival Machine**

- Richard shares updates on his recent activities. He mentions having a third interview for a job with a Hong Kong-based company. He also showcases a custom-built archival machine he created, which includes a full Windows computer, multiple floppy drive formats, and two Greaseweazle devices for creating and reading floppy disks. Additionally, Richard demonstrates a new device called USB4VC, which allows the use of modern USB and Bluetooth peripherals with legacy computers. He explains that it can be adapted for different vintage systems, including Macs, by changing a board.

- **Swatting Incident and AI Surveillance**

- Richard discussed his recent experience with a swatting incident involving his daughter. He mentioned that the situation has been escalated and they are now working with the FBI. Richard also shared that the local police chief and some city council members are aware of the situation. He learned about the city's issues from a police officer and also discovered that 3/4 of the police on the street respond to calls. Richard also mentioned that he has been advised to install more cameras at his home. The team discussed the potential for being watched and the implications of AI recording.

- **Organizing Storage Room and Drilling Techniques**

- Richard discussed his ongoing process of organizing his storage room, specifically focusing on categorizing his various items. Ronald shared his plans to work on a video MOD on his 600 Excel, adding circuitry and a monitor jack. He also mentioned his concerns about

drilling a hole in the old plastic of his Atari 800 XL. Bob provided advice on using a step drill at low speed for drilling holes in old materials. The team also discussed the importance of proper hole drilling techniques and the potential use of a step drill.

- **Beekeeping's Financial and Tax Benefits**

- Scott discusses his recent experience with beekeeping, including getting stung multiple times and suffering from a swollen arm. He explains the potential financial benefits of beekeeping, citing an example where having 12 hives on 20 acres could save approximately \$6,000 in annual property taxes through an agricultural exemption. Scott mentions that his property's appraised value has increased significantly, and he needs to address this issue with the appraisal district.

- **Property Tax Issues in States**

- The team discussed property tax issues in their respective states. Bob mentioned that he has one new property, while Richard and Scott discussed the Texas property tax system, which allows for a 10% annual increase. Scott also mentioned the possibility of protesting his property tax increase. Don shared that there is a movement in Florida to eliminate property taxes on primary residences. The team also discussed the homestead exemption in Florida, which reduces the taxable value of a primary residence.

- **Home Improvements and Property Tax**

- Scott discusses his recent home improvements and property tax assessments. He mentions building a garden shed that is taxed, but notes discrepancies in the square footage and classification that work in his favor. Scott also shares that he bought his wife a 60-inch riding lawn mower for their Texas anniversary, which would be illegal in California due to new regulations banning small off-road engines of 25 horsepower or less. The conversation then shifts to California's electric mandate and its impact on various equipment, including generators in motor homes.

- **Solar Panel System Fails Expectations**

- Bob discusses his experience with a solar panel system he purchased, which failed to meet his expectations of running lights at night and recharging during the day. Scott mentions that Atari systems require low power, while Kevin recalls that Fry's Electronics used to offer a range of compatible solar components for custom system design. The group discusses the challenges of finding suitable solar equipment, including issues with specifications, interchangeability, and customer support from manufacturers.

- **Atari Booth at Midwest Gaming Classic**

- In the meeting, Kevin shared a video about the new Atari booth at the Midwest Gaming Classic. The booth featured new games, hardware, accessories, and merchandise. The new games were updated versions with the latest hardware and graphics. The Atari 2600, 7800, 400 mini, joysticks, and game pads were also showcased. The Atari Age was part of the booth, and the company was trying to do something new while still keeping it old.

- **Atari Laser Printer Discussion**

- In the meeting, Kevin discussed his recent work on fixing a printer issue, which involved using a flexible tubing to advance the paper. He also mentioned his possession of an Atari laser printer, which he had acquired for a low price. Ronald expressed interest in the Atari laser printer, but Kevin clarified that it was too large to be useful. The conversation ended with Kevin stating that the printer was a "boat anchor" with no practical use.

- **Model Train and MoviePass Discussion**

- The group discusses various topics, including Don's completion of his train route project and Kevin's acquisition of a rare, old model train. Scott shares an anecdote about a colleague's train setup at work, and Don mentions a virtual Bart system project he once saw. Kevin shows off his new model train, explaining its unique features and his plans to modify it. The conversation then shifts to Kevin's experience with MoviePass, where he encountered difficulties using the card due to unclear instructions. The meeting concludes with a brief discussion about the stock market, with Kevin encouraging buying during the current downturn.