

Notes For SLCC Zoom Meeting 7-29-2025

Hosted by Kevin

In Attendance: Robbie, Kevin, Don, Lenore, Richard , Bob , Ron, and Garrett.

1. Event Preparation – Vintage Computer Festival (VCF)

- Robbie and Kevin discussed attendance logistics for the upcoming VCF, including entry questions, setup times, and what equipment to bring.
- It was clarified that only modern XL-related Atari equipment is needed; older peripherals like the 850 interface or modems are unnecessary.
- Kevin mentioned bringing heat sinks to protect Atari 14-series chips from overheating.
- Participants confirmed who will attend: Robbie, Kevin, Bob, Richard, Ron will attend; Garrett and Don cannot attend.
- Discussion about bringing power supplies, cables, and peripherals was held; bringing extras is appreciated if relevant to the computers exhibited.
- Richard and others will be transporting equipment to the event; logistical considerations about travel distances and arrangements were shared.
- A new magazine featuring Atari and retro computing was introduced, including type-in programs and advertorials for the club.

2. Technical Discussions

- Kevin has been preparing detailed notes and descriptions for equipment at the VCF.
- Richard is assembling a motherboard (1250) and preparing it for shipping with other items.
- Lenore is working on 3D printing an Atari 1090 case; discussion about printing difficulties and requesting modifications to accommodate larger print beds.
- Bob is installing wiring and a battery-powered lighting system in his barn, successfully testing power for radios and tools.
- Ron is testing plotters (1020 works; 1025 untested due to noise); discussion about additional plotter models and modems.
- A cheap 3D scanner was purchased and will be tested at the show for scanning items.
- Discussion about hardware upgrades and compatibility between Atari and Amiga systems with accelerators and memory enhancements.

3. Atari and Retro Computing News

- Update on the new Commodore computer release, “Ultimate 64,” funded by investors and planned for launch next year with real hardware.
- Mention of new Atari-related hardware and accessories.
- Discussion on the current educational use of computers: tablets and Chromebooks are prevalent in schools, but programming education is limited compared to earlier decades.

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- The importance of teaching typing skills and basic computer use was highlighted, with nostalgic references to older typing software like "Typo Attack."

4. Ham Radio and Related Hobbies

- Garrett shared his recent activities with ham radio, including digital weak-signal modes and an award for contacting every continent.
- He showed a vintage radio used in the movie "Die Hard."
- The group discussed emergency communication preparations using solar panels and batteries.
- Don and Garrett discussed various ham radio equipment and their condition.

5. AI and Technology Insights

- Kevin and Garrett experimented with AI tools (ChatGPT and Google Gemini) for generating equipment descriptions; the results varied in quality.
- Bill creates podcast summaries using AI that synthesize weekly meeting content.
- Conversation on AI-generated music: 20% of Spotify's music is AI-generated, sounding convincing and raising ethical discussions about disclosure.
- Mention of potential AI support for Atari hardware and the impact of AI on retro coding competitions.

6. Miscellaneous Discussions

- Train travel experiences shared, with contrasting views on modern train services and simulations.
- TV shows discussed included Star Trek series ("Lower Decks," "Strange New Worlds") and "The Last of Us."
- Anecdotes about use of vintage technology for secure military systems (e.g., old disk drives used in missile launch systems).
- Conversation about repair techniques for floppy drives and cassette tapes.
- General camaraderie and light-hearted banter throughout the meeting.

Action Items and Reminders

- Robbie to attend VCF at 10 AM, and bring relevant Atari equipment.
- Kevin to finalize exhibit notes and descriptions.
- Richard to transport equipment to VCF and assist with packing.
- Testing and use of 3D scanner at the event.
- Await modifications on 3D printing files from the creator for improved assembly ease.
- Continued monitoring of communications with donors regarding Atari equipment contributions.

Meeting Adjourned. Plans to meet again at VCF and follow up on projects.