Notes For SLCC Zoom Meeting, Tuesday, Nov. 25th, 2025

Hosted by Kevin

Attended by Kevin, Robbie, Harry, John, Don, Bob, Mariano, Scott, and Matthew

Meeting summary

Quick recap

The group began by discussing the passing of Burger Becky and sharing updates from various members including weather conditions and technical issues. They then shared their Thanksgiving celebration experiences and discussed Atari-related updates, including hardware challenges and new developments in 3D printed cases and PBI boards. The conversation ended with demonstrations of GUI interfaces and particle simulations, followed by discussions about various hardware issues and upcoming sales events, before ending with Thanksgiving wishes.

Next steps

- Kevin: Borrow Harry's working 2-port 5200 to troubleshoot and compare voltages/resistances on his non-working 5200 unit.
- Don: Share a video or screen capture of the new TrainZ route next week or at a future meeting.

Summary

Remembering Burger Becky

The group discussed the passing of Burger Becky, a developer who recently passed away, and mentioned that her wife Janelle had also been sick. Robbie joined the meeting from Tucson, Arizona, and the group chatted about the weather there. Don was present from the East Coast, and Matthew joined briefly but had technical difficulties. The conversation concluded with a discussion about pronoun options in a platform they were using.

Global Thanksgiving Celebrations Discussed

The group discussed Thanksgiving traditions, with Robbie sharing his experience celebrating the holiday in Tucson with family and a large party at a football game. Mariano mentioned celebrating with his daughter and friends, while Kevin noted that Thanksgiving is an American-made-up holiday that doesn't translate well to other cultures. They also discussed how Thanksgiving is celebrated in Japan, where it involves eating Kentucky Fried Chicken, which requires reservations months in advance.

Atari Updates and Technical Challenges

The group discussed various Atari-related updates and challenges. Scott shared that he had powered up his Atari XL and encountered a power strip issue, while Matthew reported that his 800XL's brake key was not working after cleaning the back plate. John mentioned receiving the AWA Archive, which includes a cartridge, USB drive, and 5.25-inch floppy for the 8-bit, as well as various software and resources. Harry briefly mentioned his upcoming travel for work, including attending conventions for Microsoft and AWS.

Pressure Pads for Drive Humming

Harry shared his excitement about finding pressure pads to replace the felt solution he currently uses to silence the humming noise on his 1050s and 810s drives. Kevin suggested considering the grain direction of the felt when installing it to prevent disc damage, and Harry acknowledged this detail for future reference. The group discussed the potential of cutting the pressure pads to fit different drive models, with Harry expressing optimism about finally resolving the humming issue.

3D Printed 1450 XLD Case

Kevin showed a 3D printed case for a 1450 XLD computer, which he had taken apart but not yet assembled with drives. He explained that the case was printed with a single color and included a keyboard bezel, with the files for the 1450 XLD board available on DropCheck's website. Kevin mentioned that all modern off-the-shelf parts except for specialized chips like GTIA and Pokey could be used in the recreation, and the cartridge slot was based on a 1200XL design.

Atari PBI Board Compatibility Discussion

The group discussed a prototype PBI (Parallel Bus Interface) board designed to work with 600 and 800XL Atari computers, noting that while it is compatible with most PBI devices, it is not 100% compatible with all of them. Kevin explained that the board uses standard 360K floppy drives with a Molex connector and runs drives at 288 RPM, which he confirmed works with DOS 2.0 and 2.5 disks. Scott inquired about the significance of drive speed, and Kevin noted that while the drives might load faster at 300 RPM, the audio from the drive mechanism sounds the same as standard speeds.

New Case Design and Testing

Kevin demonstrated a new case design that fits the board and ports properly, though there are minor fitting issues with the power switch and standoffs that can be addressed in software. He showed that the drive bezel fits on both old and new machines, and mentioned that the case color is slightly lighter than the original but still acceptable. The group discussed testing different variants like stereo or quad Pokey reproduction, with Kevin noting that many new games support stereo Pokey options. Mariano inquired about demo software for stereo functionality, to which Kevin replied that most new games have options for it, though he hasn't tested it himself. Harry expressed interest in purchasing a 3D printer to create similar cases, while Scott asked about the construction method, to which Kevin confirmed it was glued together.

Magazine Printing Error Discussion

The group discussed a misprint in a recent magazine issue, where page 41 was printed twice and page 43 was missing. John mentioned that the error had been fixed in the digital edition, which was made available for free download. Kevin noted that the incorrect printed version might become valuable in the future, while Mariano expressed interest in obtaining the missing Volume 2 of the magazine.

Atari GUI and Chaos Demo

The group watched a demo of a GUI interface for Atari, which Bob shared using screen sharing functionality. Mariano demonstrated a non-Atari program showing chaotic particle behavior with the butterfly effect, which he had previously ported from Atari to Python. The participants expressed appreciation for both demonstrations, with Kevin and others praising the GUI interface as "really cool" and "beautiful."

GPU Particle Simulation Demo

Mariano demonstrated a parallelized particle simulation running on a GPU, showing how 60,000 particles could be processed simultaneously, with the results displaying colorful patterns as particles diverged. The group discussed the advantages of GPU computing over CPUs, with Kevin noting that supercomputers now use GPUs rather than CPUs due to their efficiency for simple, parallel operations. Mariano also mentioned his work on supporting ARM architecture through Apple Silicon, noting the significant power consumption benefits compared to Intel processors, though Harry pointed out that ARM Windows has not been successful in the market.

Tech Troubles and Holiday Plans

The group discussed various topics including Harry's damaged Commodore 64 FujiNet, Kevin's troubled Atari 5200, and Don's announcement of completing a TrainZ route. They also talked about upcoming Black Friday sales and the Atari Game Station Pro. The conversation ended with everyone wishing each other a happy Thanksgiving.