●Notes For Slcc Zoom Meeting, 12-23-2025

●Hosted by Kevin

●In Attendance: Kevin, Robbie, Michael, Mariano, Scott, Harry, and Bob

●Meeting summary

●Quick recap

●The meeting began with a discussion about Atari computers and their technical specifications, including BASIC cartridges and RAM expansions. The group explored various aspects of Atari's design and upgradeability, particularly focusing on personality boards and programming capabilities, while also discussing challenges with chip programming and hardware modifications. The conversation concluded with personal updates from the group members, including technical projects, gaming experiences, and holiday preparations, along with a demonstration of Atari programming work.

●Next steps

●Harry: Send Kevin the GitHub link with all versions of the Chinese programmer software
●Harry: Help Kevin backup and flash the 32-in-1 OS on his Atari using the CPLD programmer
●Kevin: Bring the 32-in-1 OS to Harry to try flashing it with different bins

●Summary

● Atari BASIC Cartridge Requirements

●The group discussed the requirement of the BASIC cartridge for early Atari computers, particularly the 400 and 800 models, to run certain games and productivity tools. They noted that many commercial games and productivity programs from the early 1980s needed BASIC to function, and without the cartridge, users might assume they had a faulty ATR. Michael shared his experience with his 400, explaining that when he first bought it, it didn't come with a BASIC cartridge or any games, leaving him disappointed. He eventually added a cassette drive and a BASIC cartridge to enhance his computing experience.

● Atari 400/800 Technical Specifications

●The group discussed the technical specifications and modifications required for the Atari 400 and 800 computers, particularly focusing on the 48K RAM expansion module. Kevin confirmed that the 48K module required soldering modifications and could be installed in both the 400 and 800 models, though with different configurations. The discussion revealed that the Atari 400 was

originally intended as a game console rather than a full computer, with the addition of a keyboard coming later due to the success of Star Raiders. The conversation concluded with a recommendation to watch a new YouTube video called "The Rise of Classic Home Computers" which features an extensive middle section about Atari.

● Atari and Vintage Computing Discussion

●The group discussed a YouTube video about Atari computers, which Kevin found informative despite some inaccuracies. Mariano mentioned the Atari 50 Anniversary collection, which includes remakes of classic games and interviews. Harry shared that he obtained a reprint of Compute Gazette issue 2. The conversation then shifted to a Commodore 64 video by Bill Hurd, where Michael pointed out some historical inaccuracies about Atari's early computers. Kevin shared his experience getting his Atari 800 upgraded to GTIA at Atari headquarters, though he had to wait about a week and a half for the service.

● Atari Personality Board Design Challenges

●The group discussed the design and upgradeability of Atari's personality boards, particularly comparing the 800 and 1200/XL series. Scott noted that while the 800 series was designed to be upgradeable with user-changing personality boards, Atari never fully utilized this capability, leading to limited significant changes beyond bug fixes. The discussion touched on the 1200 series' limitations and the challenges of backward compatibility, with Michael and Kevin sharing their experiences with the 1200 models, including Michael's experience with a non-functioning machine due to potential socket damage.

● Atari 8-bit OS Customization

●The group discussed upgrading and customizing Atari 8-bit computers, focusing on the 32-in-1 OS thread that Kevin found. They explored the possibility of trying different operating systems, with Harry offering to use his CPLD programmer to flash new OSes in seconds. The conversation touched on PAL versions of the computers, noting that PAL software would not work on NTSC systems due to color and screen display issues. Michael mentioned creating a board called Palburst that could add PAL color capabilities to NTSC systems.

● Old Chip Programming Challenges

●The group discussed programming and modifying chips for various systems, including PAL and NTSC configurations. Kevin expressed challenges with finding compatible EPROMs and software for programming older chips, while Harry offered to share a GitHub repository containing multiple versions of programming software. Michael suggested using vintage Atari programmers for programming older chips, which Kevin acknowledged as a viable option but noted their rarity. The conversation highlighted the need for specific hardware and software to support older chip programming, with Harry taking the initiative to provide the necessary resources.

● Device Replication and Power Outage

●The group discussed the challenges of replicating an old electronic device due to its epoxy-filled case, which was likely designed to prevent cloning. Bob shared his success with generating 220 watts from small solar panels, which he uses to power lights and devices. The conversation shifted to a recent power outage in San Francisco, where Robbie explained that it affected Waymo cars

and caused significant disruptions, with PG&E offering compensation but facing criticism for the incident and their handling of the situation.

● PG&E Rates and Tech Collectibles

●The group discussed various topics, including PG&E's rate hikes and attempts to pass costs onto customers, with Kevin expressing frustration about not receiving input on these changes as a shareholder. Harry shared his recent purchases of gaming and programming equipment, including a Vectrex cart dumper and various adapters, which he acquired at a low cost from AliExpress. The conversation then shifted to a discussion about different types of PLCC adapters and their functionalities, with Kevin and Harry comparing their collections and uses. Michael clarified that the CS model has higher voltage capabilities compared to the 2+ model, which Harry initially misunderstood.

● Vintage DOS Portable Computer Discussion

●Kevin discussed a vintage DOS portable computer, explaining its features and sharing a new acquisition: a pre-programmed PCB with a menu system for running various software applications. Harry inquired about the device's operating system and display, and Michael compared its size to a VHS cassette. The group briefly discussed the computer's specifications, including its monochrome LCD display and battery-backed-up memory.

● Personal Updates and Project Sharing

●The group discussed various personal updates and projects. Kevin shared details about a memory card with pre-installed software and battery replacement process. Mariano talked about his work situation, good performance reviews, and his experience playing a new game called Dispatch. The conversation ended with Mariano sharing a video demo of his Atari programming work, which received positive feedback from the group.