

- **Notes for SLCC Zoom Meeting 3/17/26**
- Hosted by Kevin
- In Attendance: Kevin, Robbie, Harry, and Bob
- **Meeting summary**
- **Quick recap**
- The meeting primarily focused on personal updates and technical discussions among members of an Atari computer enthusiasts' club. Participants shared experiences about recent skiing trips, the challenges of modern computer systems, and the nostalgia of vintage technology. Kevin highlighted his work on upgrading an Atari 400 with a new keyboard and memory expansion card, while Harry expressed interest in installing a PBI (Parallel Bus Interface) in his Atari 1200XL. Bob shared insights into the technical aspects of PBI installations and emphasized the historical significance of the Atari 1200XL in the community. The group also discussed the enduring relevance of mainframe computers in banking and other sectors, as well as the challenges of maintaining legacy systems.
- **Next steps**
- [Harry: Obtain the A8 Pico flashcart raffle prize for the club.](#)
- [Robbie: Periodically check the club's email address \(as listed on the website\) for new member inquiries or join requests.](#)
- [Robbie: Bring the problematic monitor cable and Atari 800XL to the next meeting for Kevin to inspect/assist with the connection issue.](#)
- [Kevin: Assist Robbie at the next meeting with modifying or diagnosing the monitor cable/plug issue for the 800XL.](#)
- [Robbie: Bring a bag of springs to the next meeting if Kevin has not resolved the spring issue for the 400 keyboard case.](#)
- **Summary**
- **Weather and Raffle Planning Discussion**
- The group had an informal conversation about weather conditions across different locations, with participants sharing temperature updates ranging from 23 degrees in Cleveland to 100 degrees in Livermore. Harry confirmed he would proceed with obtaining an A8 Pico flashcart for a raffle prize, which can store Atari games and utilities on a Raspberry Pi Pico. The discussion concluded with Kevin mentioning that people had been contacting him on Facebook about their club, and he directed them to the website for email information.
- **Team Updates and Project Discussion**
- The group discussed various personal and professional updates. Kevin instructed Robbie to check the website email periodically for new joiners. Don shared his experience working with new train software on a route with approximately 300 miles of mainline, mentioning his ongoing adjustments and troubleshooting efforts. Bob and Harry joined the conversation, with Bob discussing the weather in his location and Harry explaining his presence in Cleveland for corporate meetings. The discussion included lighthearted comments about corporate meetings and networking.
- **Mainframe to PC Transition Experience**
- Bob shared his experience as a field engineer working on mainframes in the early 1990s, including details about microcode access and competition from companies like Amdahl and Hitachi. Harry discussed his work at Visa's Foster City location, where he helped build a new data center and worked on firewalls and networking, while also reflecting on the transition from mainframes to PCs. The conversation highlighted the significant changes in technology and the evolving role of IT professionals during that period.
- **Mainframe Systems in Banking**
- The group discussed the continued use of mainframes in banking and financial systems, particularly for credit card authorization transactions where strict SLA requirements of 7 seconds cannot be met by alternative systems. They shared personal anecdotes about early ATM experiences, including stories about malfunctioning machines and incorrect cash dispensations. The conversation concluded with Robbie mentioning a technical issue with a monitor cable plug that was too large for his 800XL system, and he planned to bring the equipment to the next meeting for Kevin to examine and potentially modify.
- **Monitor Connection Troubleshooting Discussion**
- The group discussed a monitor connection issue involving Luma and Chroma cables, with Kevin explaining that the problem could be caused by the motherboard being shifted or by using cables that are too large for the connector. They identified that Commodore cables might be incompatible due to different pin configurations, with the Luma and Chroma cables being switched compared to standard Atari cables. Robbie agreed to bring the equipment to a future meeting for further troubleshooting. The conversation then shifted to discussing the recent Oscars ceremony, where Robbie and Kevin shared their negative impressions of the political elements and hosting by Conan O'Brien.
- **Classic and Modern Movie Discussion**
- The group discussed various classic and modern movies, with Kevin recommending Mel Brooks' "Young Frankenstein" as the best version of Frankenstein. They also talked about other films like "WarGames", "The Last Starfighter", and the "Dune" series, with Kevin sharing his experience reading about 25 of the 30 Dune books.
- **Atari Keyboard Replacement Discussion**
- Kevin discussed replacing a keyboard in an Atari 400 computer with a B-key replacement, which he obtained for free as part of a larger lot of computer equipment. He explained the process of cleaning and installing the new keyboard, noting that it required no modifications and fit properly. Robbie offered to bring springs to the next meeting if needed, though Kevin indicated he might figure out a solution himself using items like paperclips. The conversation briefly touched on travel experiences before ending.
- **Atari PBI Installation Discussion**
- The group discussed skiing conditions at Sierra at Tahoe, which was empty due to warm weather. Harry shared information about a PBI (Parallel Bus Interface) installation for the 1200XL Atari computer, which Bob had documented in a step-by-step process. Bob explained that while the PBI is primarily useful for connecting the 1090 expansion unit for features like extended memory and networking, the installation process involves soldering 40 wires, which many found intimidating. Kevin mentioned that modern 3D printing could potentially make the installation process easier.

- **Computer Hardware Upgrade Discussion**
- The group discussed computer hardware upgrades, with Kevin presenting a memory upgrade for an Atari 400 that increases memory to 512K and makes it function like an 800. The discussion then shifted to personal topics, including family life and experiences with Y2K preparations. Robbie shared challenges his wife was having with a new Windows 11 computer, including issues with accessing a NAS drive despite having administrator rights, and the group provided suggestions for troubleshooting the permission problem.