

Notes for SLCC-Atari Zoom Meeting 5/19/26

Hosted by Kevin

In Attendance, Kevin, Robbie, Don, Richard Chennault, Scott, Bob, Ron

Meeting summary

Quick recap

This was a casual computer hobbyist meeting where participants discussed various retro computing topics and shared recent acquisitions. Richard showed off a new wireless Atari joystick he purchased, which came in mint condition with the original box and manual. Kevin demonstrated a working Atari Mega File 44 hard drive that he had restored, which works with his ST machines. The group discussed the upcoming SpaceX Starship launch scheduled for Thursday at 3:30 PM Central time. Don shared stories about his experience with steam locomotives, particularly the Big Boy trains. Bob mentioned teaching his wife Sharon to mow the lawn on their half-acre property. Richard discussed his ongoing quest to find an Atari 800XL in its original box, mentioning that Bruce's website was sold out of XL models but had 130s available for around \$185. The conversation also touched on various technical topics including Navy aircraft carriers, business practices in international manufacturing, and the challenges of working at heights during home improvement projects.

Next steps

Kevin

- [Meet with BobL \(and Sharon\) on Thursday to exchange/assist with motherboard swap, pending Bob's confirmation.](#)

Richard Chennault

- [Contact the Atari Club in Clifton, New Jersey, regarding the special offer and membership details for the newly acquired Atari wireless joysticks.](#)
- [3D print \(or otherwise source\) a replacement battery cover for the Atari wireless joystick.](#)
- [Continue search for an Atari 800XL in box \(possibly via eBay, B&C Computer Visions, or Bruce\), and reach out to Kevin and others for leads/pricing.](#)

Scott

- [Watch SpaceX Starship launch on Thursday and share any notable updates with the group.](#)

Bob

- [Confirm availability for Thursday meeting with Kevin for motherboard exchange, and email Kevin to coordinate.](#)

Summary

Steam Locomotive Discussion Meeting

The meeting began with casual conversation about weather conditions and trees, particularly focusing on redwoods and wind damage potential. Don shared information about steam locomotives, specifically discussing the "Big Boy" steam locomotive and the Challenger series. The conversation ended with participants greeting Richard as he joined the call.

Conventional Aircraft Carrier Discussion

The group discussed the potential benefits of bringing back conventionally powered aircraft carriers like the Kitty Hawk class, which would be cheaper and faster to build than nuclear carriers. They noted that 6 of the 11 US carriers are currently not usable, leaving only 5 to cover global operations. Scott joined the meeting to share that the SpaceX Starship launch has been delayed to Thursday at 3:30 PM Central time, with 22 dummy satellites including two with cameras to inspect the heat shield.

Atari Remote Control System Demo

Richard demonstrated an Atari remote control system he had acquired, which included a joystick, receiver, and batteries. He noted that one battery cover was missing but could likely be replaced with a 3D print, and the system appeared to be in good condition overall. Richard also mentioned receiving an Atari TT RATT VME card from across the Atlantic that acts as a transputer with VGA emulation and HDMI output capabilities.

Atari Computer Collecting Discussion

The group discussed various Atari computers and accessories, with Richard sharing his excitement about acquiring new wireless Atari joysticks in mint condition. Kevin demonstrated a working Mega File 44 hard drive that he restored, and the discussion included technical details about transputers and their historical context. Richard mentioned needing to find an Atari 800XL in its original box and discussed the diminishing availability of vintage computer equipment. Ronald briefly joined to share that he had been working on upgrading his personal PC and exploring Linux-based retro gaming solutions.

PC Rebuilding and Parts Discussion

Ron discussed rebuilding his main PC using components he had purchased during the pandemic before prices increased significantly. The group briefly discussed local weather conditions and fire safety in the area before Scott joined to search for computer parts online, noting that XL models were sold out but 130 models and populated motherboards were still available.

Keyboard Upgrades and International Business

The group discussed keyboard upgrades for XE machines, with Kevin suggesting third-party Cherry key switches and plunger adapters as alternatives to expensive upgrades. Don shared his experience with offshore manufacturing challenges, explaining how a company moved production from China to Singapore due to corruption issues, though he was ultimately laid off as a result. The conversation concluded with a discussion about international business practices and the use of envelopes for payments in various countries, particularly in Japan and Taiwan.

Lawn Mowing and Safety Techniques

Bob shared that he is teaching Sharon how to mow the lawn using a self-propelled mower, and she is doing well with about half an acre. The group discussed challenges of working at heights without scaffolding, with Kevin suggesting using stacked 1200 boxes as a platform and sharing his method of using ladders and 2x4s for makeshift scaffolding. The conversation concluded with participants sharing stories about dangerous tasks they performed in their youth, including car maintenance and spring replacements, highlighting how much more cautious they are now.

Home Improvement and Tech Projects

The group discussed Robbie's home improvement project installing artificial turf with Heavenly Greens, which will cover under 300 square feet including removal of an odd brick wall with carved initials. Kevin and Bob planned to meet on Thursday to work on switching motherboards, with Bob needing to confirm availability with his boss and sister-in-law's visit. The conversation concluded with discussions about retirement activities and a mention of an upcoming SpaceX launch on Thursday.