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- [Meeka's AdamCon Photo Gallery](#) with loads of shots from all of the days of AdamCon 13.
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Wednesday

Here is my attempt at a blow-by-blow report of the happenings at AdamCon. For me it really started on Wednesday, the 11th of July. On the [chat](#) I asked which way to go to get to AdamCon. I got suggestions from both Richard Clee and Rich Drushel. Between the two of them they gave me two similar but different routes to the hotel. In the end, I followed some of each route.

Thursday

My plan was simple for Thursday. Jill had to work until 12:30, so I would work in the morning, and meet Jill after she finished work. Well, work took much longer than expected and we didn't hit the road until after 5pm. We did make it to the hotel by midnight. And when we got there we were greeted by Meeka and Judy Slopsema and Pam Clee. This is Pam's first AdamCon, but her parents Frances and Richard are regulars. Pam took the time to congratulate us for our new addition to our family due on December 27. A new Adamite is how they put it on the regular Wednesday chat when we first announced that Jill was pregnant.

Well what with working and driving, I was tired so I tried to head for bed as soon as possible. I took a peek in a couple of rooms and said hello to Ron Mitchell (who also arrived late), and a few others including Herman and George but didn't stay to chat.

I woke up Jill, who had been sleeping in the car, and with Meeka's help and a cart borrowed from George's room we had the car unpacked in a jiffy. I had a session to run in the afternoon, and of course there was a great deal of my Adam and related computer equipment to set up. When we first arrived, Rich Drushel the ever busy chairman of the conference was out running errands to prepare for Friday, but he did say come by to say "Hi" when he saw us before we went to bed.

I consulted the schedule and found that breakfast started at 7:30am. So since it was already 2, it wasn't far away. I called for a wake up call and went to sleep.

Friday

Apparently, Jill's sleep during the trip on Thursday had recharged her and by 7:30, she had had her shower and was anxious for me to go to the Cafe for breakfast. Of course when we got there, breakfast was still a half hour away, and we had the cafe to ourselves for a goodly amount of time.

Since the cafe has good natural lighting, I took some pictures using my digital camera of those at breakfast. The bacon was decidedly more crispy than I had seen at any of the twelve previous AdamCons that I've attended. Even Jill commented on it, knowing as she did from last AdamCon that Ron Mitchell would be looking for it. I cook my bacon more than that, but that's as much as I can get Jill to do when she prepares bacon. After breakfast there was a break so I took that chance to upload my pictures to the AdamCon Daily reports web site.

Jill's previous energy sapped, Jill decided on a nap. After all, there's nothing Jill likes better than a na when she's on vacation. I made it back just in time for the welcome by Rich Drushel. While there he gave us several new inserts for our folders which we had received the night before. So added to our folder was the rules for the Treasure Hunt which involved a combination of trivia and tasks. All of the answers to the trivia and the equipment for the tasks were provided by Rich Drushel or were available through the use of the BBSes provided by Herman and George. A lot of the information is also available on the web. The tasks required some use of the Adam, but some could be done with an emulator. Richard Cleo declared that the cross stitch mug with the AdamCon XIII pattern was surely mine. So I treated it as a personal challenge.

Session 1: Introduction to Adam BBSes

I mentioned Adam BBSes. There haven't been any Adam BBSes available for a while now. It seems that the Internet has largely replaced the desire for BBSes. I can remember in 1985 that there were dozens of BBSes all across Toronto. But nowadays the repositories of knowledge and communities of conversation have all moved to web sites and email mailing lists. But for the weekend, both Herman and George (of <http://www.hlm-gmk.com>) had pulled their respective BBSes out and made them available. Many of the treasure hunt challenges seemed to involve the BBSes. For instance, I had to get an ID or have my ID reactivated on both the Trading Post and the Adam Exchange BBSes. In the session I didn't get a chance to try either. I was going to log on after Pam. Just when Pam was about to sit down at one of the BBSes, she was distracted by the web cam that Rich D was running to allow others to look in on the 'Con happenings over the Internet.

During this session I spent a little time going over the Treasure Hunt list and seeing what I could do. I looked up some of the trivia on my laptop but I had only 5 answers out of the 30 questions/activities. The rules required that we finish 15 to compete, or first to 20 wins. I studied the rest of the questions, but several required that I be sitting in front of an Adam. I sat in the first row on the right. That Adam didn't have a monitor or power supply. I tried to hook it up to my laptop as a monitor but without power, I was out of luck. Oh well, maybe later.

Session 2: ColecoVision and Adam Games

Elanor Drushel was up next. At 11 and a half she is the youngest presenter at an AdamCon. She came to the Adam for the games, and that is what brings her back again and again. She showed off some of her favorite games, including "Smurf: Rescue in Gargamel's Castle" which is also one of my

favorites, "Roc'N Rope" which I never got very far in and "Antarctic Adventure" which is still a really great game. I mentioned "Beamrider" as one of my favorites and Elanor demoed it. I asked her about one of the Treasure Hunt challenges which was to get a score of at least 30,000 points in the game "Spy Hunter" which isn't a game that I'm familiar with.' (All of these games except Spy Hunter are still available from USA Telegames <http://www.telegames.com/>). I still don't know where to get Spy Hunter, but Rich has a cartridge of it and that is what I played later on Thursday. He also has a backup of it on his PC. Elanor didn't have any tips.

Then came lunch. Although I planned my session topic back in early June, I was madly typing my session notes, which I hadn't had time to write up. It was now or never. I checked on Jill and got her into the lunch. I don't really remember who I sat with at each meal, but I tried to sit with different people at each meal.

Session 3: Adam Emulator Utilities

Guy Bona was up next with his latest and greatest vision of the Adam Emulator utilities. He has been hard at work on making the dcopy and eosdisk utilities easier to use to extract files, copy from Adam media and otherwise work with Adam disks and disk images. All of this is built on Marcel de Kogels hard work. You can get a copy of Guy's files from his web site at <http://members.core.com/~bonag/Index.htm> He also gave us a preview of a Visual Basic project he has been working on.

Before I knew it, my session was up. So I rushed up stairs with Rich Drushel and printed my notes, worked with him to staple them and returned to start my session. Jill went on a field trip to Walmart to replace our missing socks.

Session 4: The Truth is Out There!

My first session of AdamCon was on Truth Tables: AND, OR, NOT, NAND, NOR and XOR. We learned an algebraic notation for the inputs and how to prove two algebraic expressions equivalent using a truth table. We learned techniques for listing all of the possible combinations of inputs and how to know how many possibilities there really were. My [session handout](#) contained the basis of my session.

After a break we jumped into SmartBASIC and tried out the example program. After a bit of experimentation I improved the program a little to give nicer output. After typing it in, and a crash course in the ins and outs of working in SmartBASIC, we tried a number of experiments. Then I gave 4 challenges based on translating the formulas from algebraic notation into SmartBASIC. When it was all over, I told everyone to be ready for Session 1 on Saturday where we were going to make use of what we had learned.

Jill came back and had found socks, some nice shirts, but not the dress she was hoping for. Next it was time for swimming with Jill, Judy and Bob Slopsema, Elanor Drushel and Meeka. That was great. I've actually brought my swim suit to every AdamCon, but I at most 'Cons I don't get to swim. Afterwards I had a quick nap. Supper was another time for some socializing. After supper there was much to do I went out and about to visit.

Pat Herrington and her husband Bob showed up. I said hi, and we moved into the meeting room. While I was there, it seems that several people had been playing Spy Hunter. This was my chance to try it out. With some coaching from Bob and Meeka, I played one game to 32795. The work of a convention chair is never done so Rich was off running errands again. The Treasure Hunt rules

suggested that I was to show Rich D my score. To document my game I took a couple of pictures with my digital camera. You can just make out the score if you look in my picture gallery.

I spent a bit of time in that evening trying to decode Herman's contact database. It ran under Geo Works, which worked great on an IBM XT, but not so well on his Pentium 3 system. We tried in vain to get it to work on his system or decode the file. The database had partial records, and some sort of an index at the beginning. I wrote a program in QBASIC to display the contents as an overview.

While I was there, Ron logged onto George's BBS which was set up in their room. He looked around a little, then paged George. George talked online for a while, but then couldn't figure out how to exit the chat. So he reset the BBS to quit the operator chat mode. At this point, it was getting late and I needed sleep, and to finish preparing for my session in the morning.

I went back to my room where Jill was already asleep and decided that it was too late for an intense session of writing, so I took my reference books and found 6 pages that summarized my session. I went to the front desk and had the clerk make a few copies. I took copies of the pages back to my room to work on them. I looked in my bags and bags of stuff for the scissors and tape I needed to make a photocopy master. I found that I had tape in the car, but I had left my scissors and sharp knife at home. So I resorted to ripping the pages to size. Secure in the knowledge that I had something to give as handouts, I went to bed.

Saturday

Jill awoke before me and we went to breakfast at 8am. This time a little later than the day before. We had breakfast and I excused myself to go make the copies that I needed. I asked at the front desk, and they couldn't do as many copies as I wanted. They sent me to an Office Place store. So, no problem I thought, I have half a hour until my session was scheduled to begin. Off I went. First I went towards the airport. Then I decided that that was the wrong direction. Before I turned around, I did get to see the Glen Research Lab of NASA. Then I went off towards the Walmart that Jill had visited. After driving for a long while I came to the Office Place which was out of business. Foiled again! So I explored around a little more. I stopped at a couple of places, but it was getting late and I returned empty handed. Having had breakfast Jill went back to bed.

Session 1: Schematics are the Map to Treasure

For this session I worked on logic gates and how to translate the formulas from the day before into schematic diagrams. We talked about all of the symbols you see on schematics and what they mean. I opted to take a break at 10:30 and went and got my Adam and set it up at the table where I sat for other sessions. After the break, we tried translating some formulas to schematic diagrams. I went over the answers with everyone and we even proved that two of the circuits we drew were the same using the truth tables from the previous day. We also reviewed the anatomy of a logic IC and how to place it in a circuit.

Session 2: Introduction to Autonomous Robotics

Rich Drushel was on the loose telling us about the session that was scheduled for after lunch. Basically we had two parallel tasks to complete: building a "Johnny Cab" Lego base and programming the smarts (a "Handy Board" controller) in an interpreted C language. The board is available for experimentation from places listed at <http://www.handyboard.com>.

After Rich's intro, it was time once again for lunch. Just before lunch I asked Elanor when her father was granted his doctorate. I got a hint from Rich that on the Adam Exchange BBS he posted a message the day after he was granted it. Thinking back, I remembered reading the message but I would need to log on to George's BBS to find the date.

On the way to lunch Ron and I discussed the Treasure Hunt challenge to write a brief summary of our AdamCon experience and print it on an Adam printer. Well, it seems that (as seen in the Wednesday chat) Rich had replaced all of the SmartWRITER printers with stand alone power supplies. We consulted with Rich and he grimaced and said that the 24 pin dot matrix printer that he had attached to one of the Adams would be acceptable. So that was something to do later, now that we knew that it wasn't a brain teaser.

After lunch we were off to the parking lot to plan for our road trip to the Robot Lab. In my car were Jillian, Bob and Judy Slopsema. We "raced" against Pam Clee's car the whole way there and arrived together. By the time that we were parked, the other vehicles had arrived and we started off towards the lab itself. On the way Rich D pointed out the sights of the Case Western Reserve campus. After negotiating several passcard doors we arrived at the lab.

Session 3: Building an Autonomous LEGO Robot

I knew that I wanted to spend my time building, and Murray McCollough sat next to me, and we formed a team. I tried to get Frances to do the programming for our team, but she opted to work with George on the team next to us. So, Jillian ended up on our team doing the programming. Murray and I set up on the rug, and dived into the 35 pages of assembly instructions. When I was younger, I'd had many Lego Techniques kits and had build some robots using all of the gears, axles and motors that I had access to. Recently I've been renewing my interest in Robotics and I wanted to get my hands dirty. We worked diligently, and except when Jill took parts so that she could experiment on the programming side, we did well. In fact, we were about 2 minutes behind the rocket fast assembly team of Meeka and Judy.

In the end we finished building our robot, a few minutes after Jill said that she was ready to begin real testing. She wrote a program to move the robot in a perfect square, which we debugged on the desk. Then we tried the program with the robot on the floor it turned into a half stop sign shape path (half of an octagon) due to slippage on the rug. After adjusting the parameters a little, we had a square again. Then we made a program that used the sensors to detect obstacles (Murray's hand made a good obstacle), then had the robot back up and turn away from the obstacle.

Finally we told it to move until it detected an obstacle and let it loose on the course. It turns out that we needed to add an "impatience" behaviour to make it work around objects that slip under the bumper sensors and become trapped under the robot. So we pulled it off the course and reprogrammed it, and set it out against the "Monster Truck" Johnny Cab modified by Bob and Doug Slopsema.

By then other teams were adding their robots. We spent some time enjoying the show. Then all too soon, we had to disassemble the robots and go off to supper.

Online Chat

The restaurant in Little Italy that we went to tried our patience a little but the food was good. I arranged to rush back with Jill to the chat but what with a stop for gas, and making arrangements to get Bob and Judy back separately, I still joined the chat at about 9:20. The [chat transcript](#) is

available, so check it out. Although there were several copy shops near CWRU, I was anxious to get back to the hotel, so I still didn't have time to get my copies done.

To further my Treasure Hunt challenge, I decided to ask Zonker for his help. One of the questions was to find a message from Zonker (Bart Lynch) anywhere that had him starting a sentence with a capital letter, excluding CP/M, EOS or TDOS. In response he posted a very memorable message to the coladam mailing list. (coladam-admin@csclub.uwaterloo.ca is the address to go to to subscribe).

Then I decided that the only way to get 8 more treasure hunt questions was to go and visit George and Herman again. I needed to renew my account on George's BBS and get my password. Then I scanned the message bases for the date of Rich's PhD. I also needed to post a message, reply to a message and have someone else reply to my message. Finally I needed to find out how Herman spelled "original" in his posts.

I spent over an hour looking around and with George's help did all of those things and found out about the Adam section Sysop email address for the now defunct Cleveland Freenet.

I now needed to reset my password on the Trading Post, Herman's BBS. So Herman went to the meeting room, 100, to get his BBS. I took a peek at the time and realized that it was already 12:30am. I had intended to get to bed before now. At this rate I would get more and more behind on sleep as the weekend progressed. Well, I logged on to Herman's BBS. It turns out that I've actually never been on before. I spent some time learning about AdamCon IV. Herman marveled over how much stuff he'd written up for that AdamCon. I went through a list of all of the attendees and which AdamCons they had been to up to AC4. He and George made comments about many of the names I read out to them. Then mercifully my 75 minute connection expired and I went off to bed.

Sunday

I scraped out of bed and off to breakfast at 8:30am. Having arrived later on Sunday than the other days, I was thankful to see that breakfast waited for me. I had given up on photocopying my presentation notes and had been too tired from my late night BBSing to do the hands on seminar I had originally envisioned.

Session 1: Building Adam Hardware

In this session I discussed the tools and methods that you could use to build Adam hardware. First I presented the basic expansion ports in an Adam console: slot 1, 2, 3, side port expansion, AdamNET port on front and side, cartridge slot, power port with AdamNET, and 2 tape drive connections as well as 2 joystick connectors, TV out, monitor out, and monitor+sound out. I mentioned that there are also industry standard expansion ports: parallel port, serial port and IDE ports available with MI or Orphanware boards for example. With this maze of options I gave examples of each type of expansion. I also showed off the schematics for the three boards of the Adam (game board, mother board, and tape drive). Several people were impressed with the clarity of my documents.

Well, with that we took a break. Another famous long break resulted in Rich Drushel offering to push up the schedule by an hour. Even with 6 hours of session time, I was still running overtime.

After the break I talked about the latest in small scale production. I focused on <http://www.apcircuits.com> about whom I've received a personal recommendation. It turns out that they can produce boards sent to them electronically in any quantity from 2 on up. They are the people that I plan on using for various Adam projects such as the [GALBlast](#) which can program "GAL

chips 16V8/A/B/C/D/Z/ZD, 18V10/B, 20V8/A/B/Z, 20RA10/B, 20XV10/B, 22V10/B/C/Z, 26CV12/B, 6001/B and 6002B manufactured by Lattice, National Semiconductors and STMicrosystems" but not PALs as stated in my seminar. It can both read and write GALs and the software is Windows based. To take a design from concept to completion the best way to go is CAD/CAM software such as [Cadsoft's](#) Eagle schematic and PCB (Printed Circuit Board) layout software.

In my session I displayed a schematic I had drawn using the Eagle software on my laptop computer and then I displayed a finished parts layout also prepared in Eagle. The software partly automates the layout and allows for designs that can be up to 16 layers. The version I use is the free hobbyist version and allows for just 2 layer designs at sizes of up to 100mm by 70mm. That size is sufficient for many Adam designs.

Then with only ten minutes left, I spent some time explaining some of the tools that a hardware hobbyist might have, and some tips on how to use them.

Then came lunch. Just before lunch I wrote a brief report on AdamCon and printed it on a BubbleJet printer that I had brought with me. This was of course another Treasure Hunt item. Before we knew it we were back at it with a truly unique session.

Adam Hardware Contest

Jill suggested at lunch that she should team up with me, and Meeka should team up with Doug for a contest of dexterity and skill at completely disassembling and then reassembling a working Adam. The goal was to put all of the screws in the correct position and boot a SmartBASIC tape to a boot prompt. By the time we were inside the session room, the lines had been drawn and the expert/novice teams picked were Bob Slopsema as expert and Judy as worker against Doug and Meeka. Or in other words the older Slopsemas versus the younger Slopsemas.

With Rich as judge, the rules were given along with two screw drivers each (Phillips for the screws, and a slot to use as a lever). Then a crazy race was held. The winners, even after much interference by the judge was Meeka and Doug. The judge decided just as the older team caught up that they had missed two screws that he had moved, and made them disassemble their Adam again to replace them. At any rate, both teams were successful and managed to boot to SmartBASIC.

During this session I was able to get my AdamCon XIII themed picture on my Adam to print on the Canon BubbleJet BJC-4300ex to print fine from PowerPoint. This was another Treasure Hunt item. Also, I wrote and demonstrated a program that printed the even numbers from 0 to 100 in 4 columns written in SmartBASIC to Rich Drushel. I got Ron Mitchell to write one, and my wife Jill wrote one too. It turns out that all three of us wrote completely different programs that produced completely different output and yet they all matched the description of the challenge.

Session 2: 3 Most Important Rules of Personal Computing: Backup, Backup, Backup!

In this round table discussion lead by Ron Mitchell, we looked at all aspects of backup. Everything from simply having a current copy in more than one location to making CD-Recordable backups. We discussed the procedures and the effects of loss of data.

During this session I decided to get a couple more Treasure Hunt points. First I made a bootable TDOS disk from a blank unformatted disk. I demonstrated the result to Rich D at the end of the session. I also managed to set up a game of Slither between Guy Bona and I thus getting both the

"Play a 2 player game with another person" Treasure Hunt Challenge and the "Play a game that requires either the Roller Controller or the Driving Module".

Because I was using the roller controller to play Slither (which is a game that I really love), I faced several challenges. To hook it to an Adam, I had to power the unit from somewhere. The controller came with a special dongle to attach it to an Adam by the power connector. But Rich didn't have the dongle in the room. Time for Plan B. Plan B involved using an original ColecoVision and power supply. My Adam's display accepts only composite in or RGB in. Because it uses an AIM board, I was using RGB in from my Adam. But the ColecoVision didn't have a composite out or RGB out, so I needed another answer. The answer I chose relied on the fact that the power from the Roller Controller could come from the ColecoVision, even if the controller was connected to the joystick ports on my Adam. Perfect. I tried it out and found that the game couldn't get past the Select Level screen of any of the games I tried. I tested the controller functions in SmartWRITER. It worked perfectly. This just wasn't working out. So, I moved over to one of the set up disassembled and reassembled Adams. I hooked the Roller Controller to one of them, inserted Slither, and was up and running. I was going so well on one life that several people came over to see what I was up to. Just as Rich arrived, I was distracted and died. I said to Guy "Your turn" and got up. Rich was suitably impressed that I was able to kill two birds with one stone.

ANN Meeting

Finally it came time to discuss the ANN issues of the day. We spent a great deal of time talking about building new IDE drives as an ANN project, making an archive of useful Adam stuff on CD-ROM and where to have the next AdamCon. I'm happy to say that the next AdamCon will be held by the Slopsemas in Michigan. The one after that is tentatively planned for Comox BC, hosted by Ron Mitchell. As for hardware I am going to try a first hardware project of manufacturing IDE slot 1 cards. And we discussed bringing an ANN CD to future AdamCons, updated as we go along.

Going over the Treasure Hunt answers, I had 28 of the 30 done. I couldn't find the proper cable to transfer a file to my Adam over the serial port, and I was out of time. With that wound down it was time to get ready for the banquet. Jill and I went out on a road trip for some more cash for travel money and raffle tickets. I had a shower and a short nap. When it was time for the banquet I was recharged and ready to go. Jill asked for an extra half hour of sleep.

Banquet

The banquet included the awarding of prizes for a wild Monster Truck Robot (as seen on Meeka's <http://adam.hollowdreams.com>) modifications done by Bob and Doug. They got a cross stitched AdamCon XIII mug. I won a mug for Jill due to the Treasure Hunt. Pam asked if I was always such an over achiever. Jill said absolutely. Then there were prizes for the Assembly-Disassembly contest, which went to Meeka and Doug (a CWRU Easter Egg Hunt t-shirt). Also there were many door prizes and of course the much coveted grand prize of Jean Stone's afghan. This year she made one in the exact colours of our new furniture. But it went to Ron Mitchell. He exclaimed that his mother might just send him to another AdamCon with that kind of prize.

After supper we did the traditional passing of the banner and a group picture. Even with a group our size it took quite a bit of negotiation to get all of the people into a picture. Then to round out the festivities, we went to the pool area and watched an extended fireworks display (only the second in AdamCon history, the first being at AdamCon 5).

Finally it was time to disassemble the meeting room. Then put all of the equipment in cars. I had my Adam, and a wide assortment of hardware related stuff that I had to separate out and get in my car. I had the car packed by 10:30pm. Perfect time for an early bedtime.

With the car packed, I said thanks and good-night to everyone in the parking lot, where Rich and Joan were working out how to get the collected Drushels home.

Then Jill and I went back upstairs to say good bye to a few others. We spent some time in Frances and Richard Clees' room. And finally went off to bed. After all, Jill had to work the next day at noon, so we planned to leave at 5:15am. I was in bed by 12:30am.

Monday

Bright and early, after seemingly only half a night's sleep we went to the front desk at 5am. Apparently it wasn't as early as I'd at first suspected, since there was a line up consisting of Ron Mitchell and Murray McCollough all checking out to catch various planes. Not being a morning person, this was a bit much for me. But in the end I got checked out, went for supplies and left for Toronto. The trip would have been uneventful, if it weren't for the speeding ticket I got in Hamilton. Even then I did get Jill to work on time, and went home for some much needed sleep. I function best on not 4-6 hours sleep but in fact 9 hours sleep.

In summary, it was a tremendous time. An AdamCon to treasure, and one that has refueled me for another year as a Coleco Adam owner.

Send feedback to [Dale Wick \(dmwick@home.com\)](mailto:dmwick@home.com)