

Retrochallenge 2021 – Paleoferrosaurus

October 28, 2021

The Jargon File defines “kluge” as follows:

***kluge**: /klooʒ/ [from the German 'klug', clever; poss. related to Polish & Russian 'klucz' (a key, a hint, a main point)]*

- 1. n. A Rube Goldberg (or Heath Robinson) device, whether in hardware or software.*
- 2. n. A clever programming trick intended to solve a particular nasty case in an expedient, if not clear, manner. Often used to repair bugs. Often involves ad-hockery and verges on being a crock.*
- 3. n. Something that works for the wrong reason.*
- 4. vt. To insert a kluge into a program. "I've kluged this routine to get around that weird bug, but there's probably a better way."*
- 5. n. A feature that is implemented in a rude manner.*

At this point, my project is not only a kluge, I consistently misspell it as “kludge.”

I mean, the damn thing is starting to work and I've met some of my goals for the Retrochallenge, but I've got a control system (the TI 99/4A) with a temperamental power supply (even after replacement.) I've got a matrix switch that exhibits what you might call “non-deterministic” behavior – partly due to sloppy wiring, a problematic bread board, and “interesting” polar relays from the 1930's. The silly thing still has rodent damage, and I've completely trashed my work area to the point that I can't bear to set up a video camera and record the machine in operation.

Given my work schedule and the current date, I might actually find a few hours to work on the damned thing before All-Hallows' Eve, but I doubt the documentation will be up to par. This one is coming right down to the wire!

– Paleoferrosaurus