



PATACS Posts

Newsletter of the Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society

September, 2022

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My turn.....

I hate to say this, but the time—in general—seems to be flying by. I don't know where it's going, but I guess it goes wherever "gone" time goes. What I do know is none of us will ever see it again. Is that a good thing? Maybe.



I also know that summer's officially over and the kids have gone back to school. 😊

I'm writing this in early September and yesterday (9/13), I got the next Covid booster and a flu shot, too. I'm a bit sore a day later. 😊 I hope you get yours soon. If our membership wants to meet in person, to not get one—as far as I'm concerned—basically says not only do you not care about yourself, you don't care about the rest of us. 🙄🙄🙄

I've only gone to one PATACS meeting in person this summer, mostly because my wife and I are staying out of anything that is indoors. But I do attend via Zoom. I'm hoping we can get back to more in-person meetings soon. So get your shot—please!

Since the last newsletter, we've (my wife and I) been to Boston, MA, Freeport, and Mt. Desert Island, ME. Driving to Maine is a very long slog. I decided that it made a lot of sense to drive to Maine in several hops, leaving on a Thursday. Our first stop was in Nahant, MA—just north of Boston. It's an island in Broad Sound, about five miles northeast of Logan Airport. We stayed overnight with a friend. Friday we drove to Freeport ("it's not a port and it's not free"—Tom Rowe) and stayed at a B&B. Saturday we drove to Mt. Desert (pronounced "dessert"—blame the French) Island and stayed with family for two weeks. We drove home via Tarrytown, NY.

Since returning ten days ago, I've been catching up with the things that didn't get done while we were away. One thing we did do was take our 4-year-old grandson to the Hirschhorn Museum for his birthday. We had a good time. I think he did too.

What's new with you?

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Thank this issue's proofreaders: [Jack McFadyen](#), [Bill Walsh](#), [Nick Wenri](#), and [Paul Howard](#)

Also, my thanks to [Bruce Rosen](#) for some additional help with tweaking the layout!

And now for something different! **A letter to the Editor** from Gabe Goldberg:

Your Editor's note in the mid-August issue ended by noting that Chrome's search engine can be changed. But since that note concerned privacy, it's useful to remember that Chrome is regarded as not being very privacy-oriented.

This Forbes article suggests avoiding Chrome: <https://bit.ly/3CRuqOS>.

And these Reviewgeek and Washington Post articles give privacy-enhancing suggestions: <https://bit.ly/3RoaszK> and <https://wapo.st/2ZyiNpg>.

###

WINDOWS 11 Virtual Memory Paging Configuration

If you use Windows 11 to edit audio, photos, or videos, consider changing this setting to reflect the amount of virtual memory your computer allocates.

By **John Krout**, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society (www.patacs.org)

Introduction

Virtual Memory is the operating system (OS) component that supports multitasking (the ability to run multiple applications concurrently), by making efficient use of finite Random Access Memory (RAM). **Virtual Memory** behavior has become more important because software has grown larger, and digital data file sizes like audio, photos and video have also grown. Both have grown even faster than physical RAM.

I purchased a new Windows 11 PC in June 2022. Aside from a long list of applications to be installed, I learned how to adjust the size of the **Virtual Memory** space on disk using the Windows 11 **Settings** app. I did this because Windows inevitably sets a size limit in storage that is far too small to be practical for bulky data. This article explains how to see and adjust that **Virtual Memory** storage limit.

Virtual Memory in a nutshell

For decades, PC operating systems have supported the ability to run multiple applications concurrently. Often, those applications require a total amount of RAM that exceeds the available physical RAM in the computer.

RAM is a critical and finite resource in any computer. The central processing unit (CPU) can execute an application to create and update data only when both the application and the data are in RAM.

Virtual Memory (VM) is an OS technique that allows the computer to share its RAM among multiple applications. From the viewpoint of any user, VM makes it *seem* as though the computer has all the RAM your applications and data need, even though your computer might not.

Here is how VM works. Applications and data that are idle are copied out of RAM onto storage, such as a hard- (HDD) or solid-state drive (SSD), making RAM space available for busy applications. When a stored application becomes busy again, such as when you click on its window, the same technique is applied: something idle in RAM is copied out onto storage, and the newly busy application is copied back into RAM so its execution can resume. Both of those activities, freeing up RAM and reloading a newly busy application and its data, take noticeable time because storage is hundreds of times *slower* than RAM.

One of the industry verbs for this activity is **Paging**. Windows 11 calls the storage space used for paging a **Paging File**.

Windows also sets a configurable limit on how much storage space is used for **Virtual Memory** behavior. That limit is typically much less than the amount of RAM contained in the computer. For any Windows 11 user who opens multiple web browser tabs or works with bulky data such as audio, photo, or video files, increasing the **Virtual Memory** space available on disk to at least the size of RAM often makes it possible to do those things without frequent delays.

How to check and set Windows 11 Virtual Memory storage space

Open the Windows 11 **Settings** app. You can see the top portion of that window in **Illustration 1**. In the left-hand pane of that window, tap the **System** heading, which is circled in the illustration.

(Windows 11 includes a lot of info that is not germane to this article and I have inserted blue boxes over that info.)

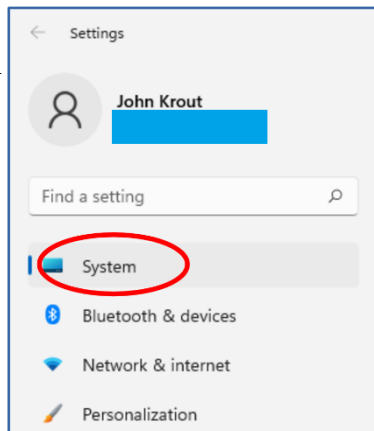


Illustration 1

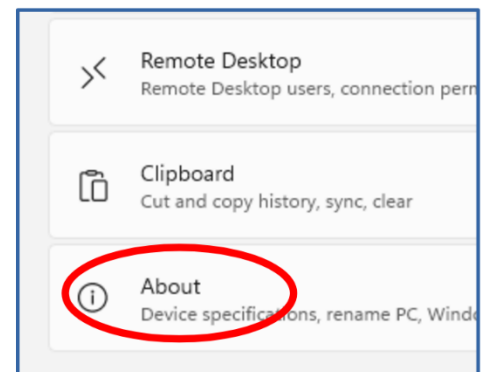


Illustration 2

In the right-hand **System** pane, scroll to the bottom. Click the **About** heading, which is shown in **Illustration 2**.

That click opens another right-hand pane.

You can see the top of that next pane in **Illustration 3**.

Click the **Advanced system settings** link, which is circled in the illustration.

That click opens the **System Properties** dialog box, which is shown in **Illustration 4**.

Click the **Advanced** tab in that box, which is circled at the top of the illustration.

In that tab, in the **Performance** section at the top, click the **Settings** button, which is circled in the illustration.

That click opens the **Performance Options** dialog box, which is shown in **Illustration 5**. In that dialog box, click the **Advanced** tab, which is circled.

In that dialog box, click the **Advanced** tab, which is circled.

In that dialog box, click the **Advanced** tab, which is circled.

When I captured that illustration, I had already adjusted my computer's space for virtual memory to be 32000 megabytes, or almost 32 gigabytes, roughly twice the RAM in my computer.

You can see that updated value in the Virtual memory section at the bottom of the **Advanced** tab in the illustration.

Initially, the default value shown there was a bit less than 3000MB, *far less* than the RAM in my computer,

which in my opinion is an unreasonably small paging file size for editing bulky data.

In that **Advanced** tab **Virtual Memory** section, click the **Change** button at the bottom.

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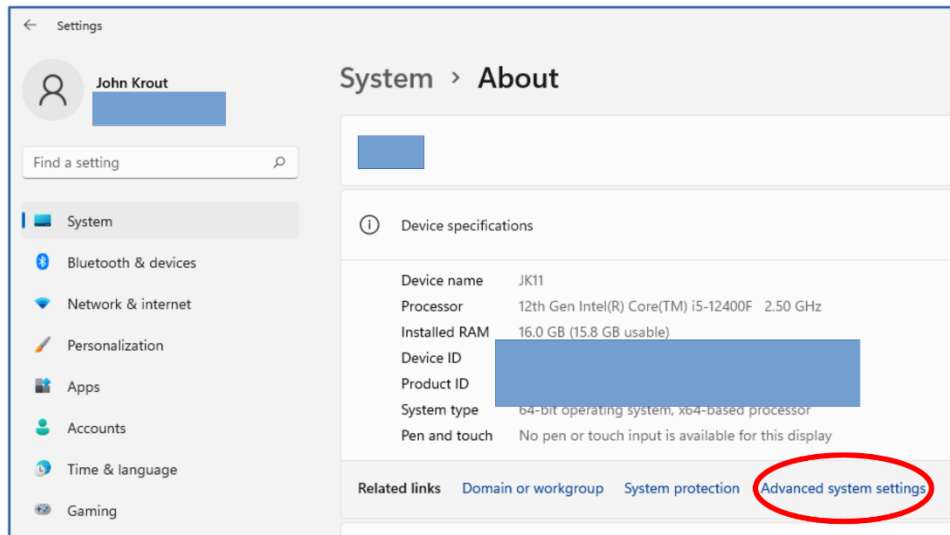


Illustration 3

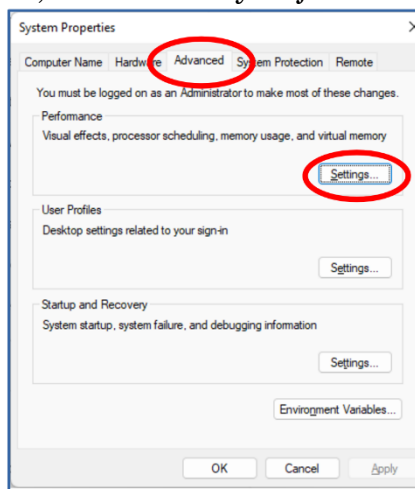


Illustration 4

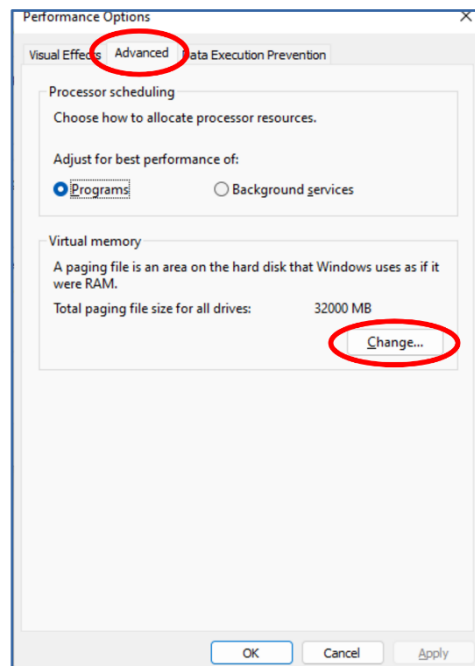


Illustration 5

A **Virtual Memory** dialog box appears, which is shown in **Illustration 6**. To adjust the default value for drive C: in the list box identifying drives, click **Drive C:** and then click the **Custom Size** button. The button is circled in the illustration, along with the data entry fields for initial and maximum **Paging File** sizes. The settings include an **Initial Paging Size** value, which I set to 32000 MB, and a **Maximum Size** value, which I set to 65000 MB. Neither size is a challenge for my new computer's 1 terabyte SSD drive.

I do not store my data in any of the Drive C:\User folders. Instead, I keep the data on a separate drive, a habit formed in the days when sometimes a hard drive died. That is less likely today with a far more energy-efficient SSD drive. My habit continues, in part because it is far easier to move my data to a new computer when the data is stored in an external drive. My external drives are in USB3 SATA docks that provide acceptable performance.

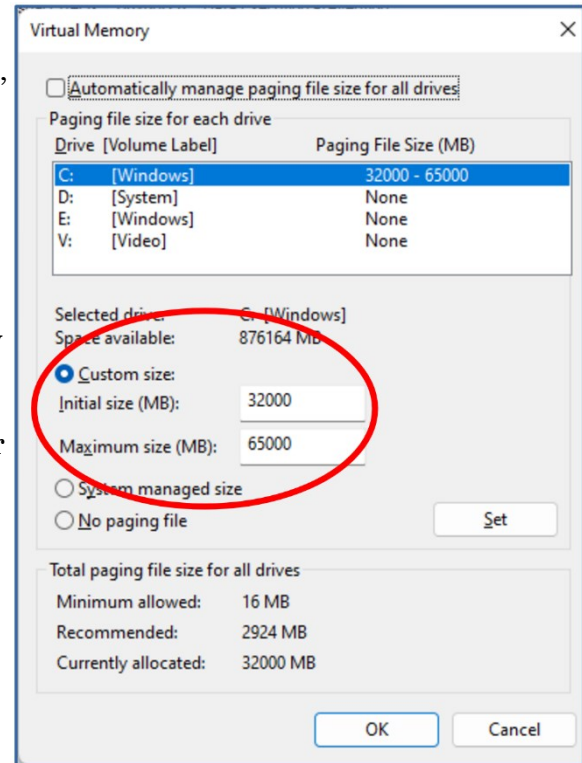


Illustration 6

###

Logic Game Apps for Android and iPhone

By Dorothy Fitch, Editor, Green Bytes
GVR Computer Club <https://www.ccgvaz.org/>

I seem to have become addicted to logic games on my Kindle (and sometimes my phone). I guess of all the possible addictions, this one would rank low in being troubling. However, these games can be time-consuming when I should be doing more productive things. So, I figure it might let me know if my mental faculties start to wane if I happen to notice.

How do I choose a logic game? I look for free games and read reviews. After downloading a game, I see how easy it is to learn to play it, whether it has a tutorial, and if there are either no ads or non-intrusive ones. These three games passed those tests. Beware, they can be addictive, and you may (as I did in one case) spend a tiny amount of cash to get more levels. However, because they are logic puzzles, you can generally play the same puzzle multiple times because you won't remember the layout or solution.

Here are my favorite three:

(Ed: As of 9/14/22, all links work in the PDF version, but obviously not the printed version.)



Thermometer Puzzles

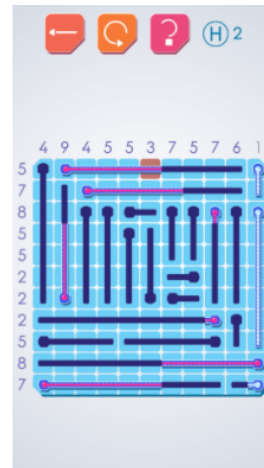
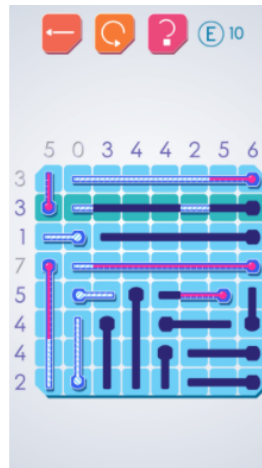
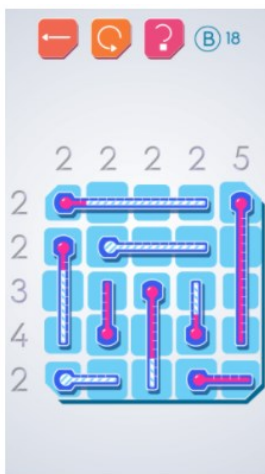
[Download to your Kindle from Amazon.](#)

[Download a version for your Android phone at the Play Store.](#)

[Download a version for your iPhone.](#)

This puzzle comes with 260 games, but I'll confess to spending \$5.99 for another 900 games. Nevertheless, it offers a good tutorial and a handy "undo" option.

The object is to fill the thermometers with mercury to have the correct number of red squares as indicated by the labels at the top and left sides. Unfortunately, the mercury starts at the "bulb" end of a "tube" and can't reappear after an empty cell. The difficulty ranges from grid sizes of 4x4 to 11x11 (or 13x13 if you purchase all the levels).



The puzzles are untimed, and you can get unlimited hints. A row or column highlighted in green shows where you can make a move (but doesn't tell you what to do). An orange box indicates an error.



The phone version for [Android](#) or [iPhone](#) is from the same manufacturer but is slightly different. For example, it sometimes omits numbers that tell you how much mercury you need, which is an interesting twist. However, it has loud and long ads to wait through. So I use it in a pinch.



Real Einstein's Riddle

[Download from the Google Play Store to a Kindle or Android phone.](#)

[Download from the Apple Store.](#)

[Learn how to play \(video\).](#)

This puzzle comes with 5000 puzzles and 15 daily challenges, all for free.

The goal is to follow clues, eliminate the impossible combinations (shown in brown), and keep the good ones (in green) by tapping icons in the grid at the lower left. Although the text clues are initially helpful (it is fun to play the game in a foreign language!), you will eventually use the background colors of the boxes as your guide.

The "How to Play" tutorial is excellent, and the video (link above) is good, although it doesn't show that you can hold down (long press) on an image to remove all other occurrences of it in that row. Start with the easy levels, and you'll soon want to try the larger grids. You can save your position and later restore the puzzle to that point if you had to guess (which does happen in larger grids), and the path you initially took didn't work out. Click to enlarge any of these images.



Sudoku

[Download to your Kindle from Amazon.](#)

[Download to your Android phone at the Google Play Store.](#)

[Download to your iPhone from the Apple Store.](#)

I probably don't have to introduce you to Sudoku. Although you put numbers into the grid (a different number from 1 to 9 in each row, column, and section), there is no math involved, just logic.

I like this particular version of Sudoku because there are no ads, there are unlimited puzzles and many difficulty levels. In addition, you can add multiple numbers to each cell to aid in solving the more challenging ones. You can also save a game and complete it later.

W	E	B
S	U	D
O	K	U

I also use this version on my Android phone.

I recently read that the man credited with creating Sukodu and introducing it to the world has died. [His story is here.](#)

I hope you enjoy some of these puzzles as much as I do!

###

Nexar Beam Dash Cam

By George Harding, Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society

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This product is useful and installs with minimum effort. It is a plug-and-play dashcam that installs behind the rear-view mirror.



It records 1080p full HD video, which gives you a vivid 135-degree picture of the view from your windshield. Recording can be up to 4 hours.

A nice feature is the parking mode. Here, you get 24/7 security, and the dashcam can sense any impact and starts recording instantly. In addition, recorded footage can be downloaded to your cell phone for viewing. The included GPS feature even retains the vehicle's

location.

The companion app allows for live or delayed viewing of footage. In addition, recordings are backed up to the cloud, making them easy to use.

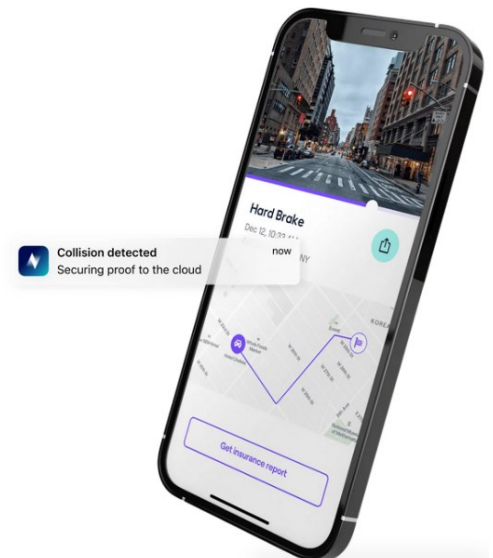
The dashcam comes with a 32GB microSD card, which can be upgraded if desired. In addition, unlimited, free cloud storage means that even if the dashcam is lost or stolen, the recordings can still be viewed and accessed from anywhere.

This is a really nifty device that is useful and may be the key to proving liability in an accident.

Nexar Beam Dash Cam

<https://shop.getnexar.com/products/nexar-beam-gps-dash-cam>

Price (as of 9/14/2022) \$140



###

The Other Side of the Bitcoin

By David Kretchmar, Computer Technician, Sun City
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I contributed an article titled "Bitcoin - the New Gold?". I stated that "Gold and Bitcoin, as different as they are, both have characteristics of good investment vehicles and sound money." (*Editor: the article appeared in the January 2022 edition of POSTS.*)

I emphasized the positive aspects of Bitcoin (along with other cryptocurrencies). I concluded by stating, "Bitcoin is becoming a valued currency not by force of government declaration or people's acquiescence, but by recognition and popular acceptance."



Yet any investment with tremendous past profits and massive future potential also necessarily has tremendous *downside* potential. In this article, I will discuss what I think could be the downfall of Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies.

Scarcity?

Under current protocols, the maximum number of Bitcoins that can ever be mined is 21 million. There are approximately 18.8 million bitcoins in circulation today. It is estimated the last bitcoin will be mined in 2040.

Many cryptocurrencies have a finite limit, and the speed at which they will be increased is largely unknown and not controlled by any authority. But the scarcity element exists only within some specific cryptocurrencies, such as Bitcoin, Cardano (45 billion limit, 32 billion in circulation), and Litecoin (84 billion limit, 24 billion in circulation).

Other cryptocurrencies, such as Ethereum and Dogecoin, have no limit. There are well over 1,000 cryptocurrencies in existence, with new ones being created seemingly weekly. The potential supply of cryptocurrencies is infinite, limited only by the human imagination and the willingness of individuals to fork over their cash. Cryptocurrencies are far from scarce.

Loss of Key

The key is the secret code required to access a cryptocurrency wallet. The loss of this code means the loss of all assets stored in the wallet. If the PC hard drive or flash drive fails or is accidentally discarded, this can happen. According to estimates, this is common; it has happened with up to 25% of crypto-wallet owners who have lost over 18 *billion* dollars worth of digital currencies. Unfortunately, it is impossible to restore the code and recover the currency if lost.

Technical issues

Technical problems on the servers where cryptocurrency wallets are stored happen with disturbing frequency. Investors who have suffered losses cannot claim a refund regardless of whose fault it is. Usually, the problems are caused by hackers and occasionally by bugs in software or hardware, but no matter – when the money disappears, it's gone.

Government Intervention

Some governments seem willing to accept or at least accommodate cryptocurrencies, such as the US and Canada. However, other nations, such as Russia and China, have denounced or outlawed cryptocurrencies within their borders. In late September, the Chinese



government expanded its ban on Chinese financial institutions providing crypto-related services. In addition, it restated its goal of forcing miners out of business. This announcement knocked 10% or more off of the values of many cryptocurrencies on 9/24/21 before a small recovery.

Governments lose the ability to use fiscal policies to control their economies when they allow the widespread adoption of digital currency. In addition, if crypto-currencies were widely adopted, nations would lose the purpose and power of their national banking systems.

There are fears of rising cybercrime and other crime rates due to the increased ability to transfer value through untraceable financial transactions. In addition, some claim the rise of crypto-based payments could increase the ability of people to engage in illegal activities without leaving a trail, another reason many governments opposed the adoption of cryptocurrencies. However, I believe these fears are overstated since law enforcement has been able to trace and recover some cyber ransom proceeds, which would probably have been impossible with cash.

Speculation Gone Wild?

On a Sunday afternoon in early September, my wife and I almost accidentally wandered into a "cryptocurrency seminar" held in a small meeting room at DV (*Ed: abbreviation*



unknown.) here in Sun City (AZ). We soon discovered that we were in a multi-level marketing (MLM) rally, including testimonies of several people stating they had made hundreds and thousands of dollars in seconds or minutes by using the system the presenters were promoting. Loud claps and cheers followed each testimony. They named several cryptocurrencies; most were unknown to me.

One MLM rally provides anecdotal evidence of probably nothing. However, I have to wonder how many other like-minded individuals worldwide have embraced the suspension of logic and critical thinking required to be swept up by the allure of quick profits in cryptocurrencies.

Conclusions

Many of us can remember the "dot com" boom at the end of the last century. Any company claiming to have an idea relating to providing anything through the then-new internet could issue stock and reach a substantial valuation. Many new companies had no earnings or revenues, yet they doubled in price the day they started trading. Investors knew these stocks had no intrinsic value, but no matter if they could sell them at a higher price than they paid. That sounds very much like most cryptocurrencies today.

When the crash came in 2000, even the few good internet companies such as Amazon and Priceline (Booking.com) saw the destruction of a substantial majority of their market value. This persisted for many years until they eventually recovered and went higher.

Unfortunately, most of the dot com companies whose value soared astronomically came

crashing back to earth, becoming worthless and losing investors billions of dollars.



The current cryptocurrency craze exhibits many similarities to the dot com boom and echoes many speculative bubbles of the past. For example, the Dutch "tulip mania" in the 17th century is considered the first recorded speculative asset bubble. Prices for some rare tulip

bulbs reached amazingly high levels, \$750,000 in today's money, then dramatically collapsed to virtually nothing.

A \$50k cryptocurrency investment has the potential to become a half-million dollars or more or to become worthless; you won't even be left with a beautiful flower. And remember, there exists no centralized exchange like there was with stocks and even for tulip bulbs. So, it could be very ugly. History never repeats, but it certainly rhymes.

###

What Makes a Great Organization Great?

By Jim Cerny, Forums Coordinator, and Class Instructor

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Most “non-profit” organizations exist to help others. They help in the community and have a mission and goals. Although I am writing this article for the members of our organization, the Sarasota Technical Users Group, I am hoping that this article will benefit many members of other organizations and yours. It has to do with making things better – to help more people in more ways. And we are NOT talking about money here! What makes an organization work to do some good is its people. If other organizations are like ours, you will see that only a handful of people do almost all the work (*Ed: like PATACS*). They serve on boards, committees, make phone calls, send out communications, and more. Wouldn't it be a big help if someone volunteered to help, if only for one or two hours a MONTH?!

Yes, it would! Let's take an example; we'll call him Joe. Joe likes to help others and enjoys it very much. He serves on the board, sends out communications, and answers emails about the organization. The big help for Joe would be if someone would volunteer to send out one or two emails a month. Or make a couple of phone calls to verify membership. Or send out an email survey. This frees Joe up to do a better job in other ways, not to mention to give him a break.

Why do people not volunteer to help? I've heard many reasons over the years, and here are the main ones:

1. **I don't have the time.** Yes, you do. This is not a full-time job, and you will not be bothered by many phone calls or emails. There are plenty of needs for people like YOU, anyone, to give just an hour or two a month.
2. **I don't have the skills** or knowledge. You don't need ANY skills or expertise to help. Of course, if you DO have some skills that could be useful, that's great. But we need people to help first; many areas need your help, and no skills are required! Besides, we offer free training too!
3. **I'm taking care of a sick relative.** Wow, that's important, and no one wants you to neglect your taking care of someone who needs you daily. But if you have the time to make phone calls to your friends, can't you make a few calls for your organization? Or

send an email? A phone call to a member is a great personal touch that makes the organization more meaningful. Keeping in touch with members is a huge step to making a good organization a great organization.

Here are some things our organization would like to do to help our members, but we need volunteers to help:

- A. Offer more classes – our instructors could use some help (no, you do not have to teach).
- B. More contact with our members to understand how our organization helps them and what they would need or like in the future.
- C. Conduct a survey to help us do more and better things.
- D. Improve communications with our members – news articles, email, and phone calls.
- E. More recognition of others, especially our volunteers, organizing a gift or luncheon.
- F. Asking other members to help too!

There are many benefits to helping too – you will make new friends, learn something new, have more fun in your life, and have something to talk about (which makes you a more exciting person). What's NOT to like?

I also do volunteer work at a food pantry. I once asked another volunteer this question: "Wouldn't it be great if some of these people who come here to get food would volunteer just for an hour to help us distribute it? I know they have the time." The answer I got back was a bit shocking. The answer was, "These people do not think that way; it is not in their mindset." It was tough for me to understand that. I can't imagine people taking advantage of a not-for-profit organization over and over again and not thinking to "pay back" a little with an hour of their time. What do you think about that?

Organizations would always like to improve and do more for their members.

Every such organization needs everyone to contribute a little to provide more. Will you donate an hour or two a month?

Contact ANYONE in your organization to find out how. And thank you for your kind help in advance.

###

UH OH...I ran out of articles that will fit, so instead you get a couple of photos that I took this summer. The first one is a plane taking off from DCA (National Airport) shot early on

an August morning. The second image is a 3-image combination for HDR recorded in mid-July at McKee-Beshers WMA south of Poolesville, MD. Please let me know what you think.



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As Porky—you remember him, right?—Pig would say "That's all folks!"

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First Class

AFFIX
FIRST
CLASS
POSTAGE

TEMP-RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Meeting schedule (Zoom=Online Only, Hybrid=Online/In-person)

1 st Wednesday	7:00 - 9 PM	Arlington General Meeting	Hybrid
3 rd Monday	7:00 - 9 PM	Board of Directors Meeting	Zoom
3 rd Saturday	12:45 - 3:30 PM	Fairfax General Meeting	Hybrid
4 th Wednesday	7:00 - 9 PM	Technology & PC Help Desk	Hybrid

Meetings are Hybrid or Zoom (as above)
To attend in person you must meet the requirements. See [patacs.org](https://www.patacs.org).
Online Meeting Access Will Be Sent Via Email

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Messages may be left at 703-370-7649
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