PATACS Posts

Newsletter of the Potomac Area Technology and Computer

My turn……

It feels like it's been a busy, busy six weeks, but without any *major* travel. We did go to NYC for my daughter-in-law's (DiL) book-publishing party and to see grandchildren #2 and #3 (by birth order, only). Allow me moment to brag about *Atossa Araxia Abrahamian's* second book: **The Hidden Globe: How Wealth Hacks The World**. The Washington Post has rated it as one of the **10 best** in 2024, and yes, we are quite proud of her.

Our son-in-law (father of grandson #1), and his best friend from college (but not his wife), has for many years put on a major pre-Thanksgiving bash called **Turducken**. It's a huge dinner party and the guest of honor is a well cooked *turducken*, which for those who don't know, is a chicken inside of a duck inside of a turkey. With nearly eighty attendees this year, including twenty or so children under the age of twelve, and lots and lots of food of all different varieties, it was quite the place to be.

I hope you had a good, if not great Thanksgiving. We did. We decided to use the party room here at our building, and it worked out quite well. There were ±22 of us. I had the job/honor of cooking two medium-sized turkeys which were quite good, though I admit they were either too big or our guests didn't eat enough, because we had quite a lot of leftovers. No matter, DiL took most of it back to NYC to make soup. What amazed me about the day? I walked nearly *four miles* inside the building using only two floors! Our apartment is about 115 yards from the party room, and needless to say, I made a lot of trips.

As of Friday (11/29), the official run to Christmas has begun, and I made it through both Black Friday and Cyber Monday without buying anything consequential, though we did replace our kitchen refrigerator a few weeks ago. The old one, a GE Profile (not even 10 years old! 👎🙁) was having "issues" and making noises. We decided it was prudent to replace it before Thanksgiving rather than risk not having it during the holiday. In its place, and after doing our due diligence, we bought (from Home *Despot*) a Bosch. So far, so good! 😊

Normally, I wouldn't put more than one article by any one author into a single issue, but I'm gonna break that rule for this issue and clean out the "to be used" folder. This issue will have two articles by two regular contributors, Frank Fota and John Krout. We could use more authors. If you want to know more about a particular subject, figure it out and write an article. You could get national coverage through APCUG (formerly known as the Association of PC Users Groups).

Have a safe and happy holiday season and I hope to see you next year!

Next printed issue: January, 2025

2025 Calendar Table files are available.

By John Krout
Potomac Area Technology And Computer Society (www.patacs.org)

*These **PowerPoint** and **LibreOffice Impress** files are available for downloading as of September 2024. Make your own personal photo calendar, using your photos. Also included: a single-page Year At-A-Glance® for marking important dates.*

Introduction

The world is awash in photos. Family photos, vacation photos, birthday party photos, anniversary photos, school activity photos. The occasions are endless. And when the cost of snapping a photo is at most a fraction of a cent, and even smart phones can take decent photos sometimes, more of us take photos, and we shoot more than ever. Social media allows easy sharing, sometimes moments after taking the photo.

Illustration 1

What is a *calendar table* file? It contains the months of the year, each month in a table, and spaces for you to insert your photos. Inside each month table, you can type useful info into each day (cell) of the table. Add birthdays, anniversaries, and the like to personalize the calendar.

These files are available in two layouts. One layout provides a full page for each month's calendar, and a full page for photos selected for that month. Those pages are in landscape orientation.

You can see an example of the full-page layout in **Illustration 1**, including 2 pages: a full-page photo on the top page, and the calendar table on the bottom page. If you wish, you can put more than one photo on the top page. The files you download contain blank pages for photos.

I have been using the **LibreOffice** *Impress* version of that file for more than 10 years. I created a quick way to create the calendar tables during that time.

What's A table?

Generally speaking, a table is a set of rows and columns. The intersection of a row and a column is called a **cell**. A calendar month is a great example of a table, including a row for each week and a column for each day of the week. Each calendar cell, in this case a day, provides space for you to type meaningful info such as birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, and paydays. A cell is like a page in a word processor: you can type whatever you wish. In a day cell, there is less room available than on a page. As you can see in the illustrations, I have inserted a day number in each day cell.

Illustration 2

If you look closely at the month table of **illustration 1**, you can see two additional tables, each one appearing within a cell of the month table. Those show the prior month and the next month. I call those tiny tables **mini-months**. Those typically appear in commercially printed calendars and will make your customized calendar even more useful.

Another calendar format

In 2020, I developed a second compact layout, with each month's calendar table occupying the bottom half of a *portrait-page* layout, with space in the top half for photos selected for that month.

You can see an example of a compact layout page in **Illustration 2**, with room for photos at the top and the calendar table at the bottom of a single page. This layout lets you save ink and paper and printing time, compared to the full-page layout. The fonts are smaller, since the day cells are smaller. For the visually impaired, the original calendar format is a better choice.

Instructions appear in the files

Each file begins with two pages. The first contains general instructions. The second labels various calendar table text features including font and font size. You are welcome to change any or all as you see fit for your own purposes. From one year to the next, I typically change the font for the month and year at the top of each calendar table. You can delete the first two pages before printing your own calendar.

I imported the files to **PowerPoint 365**. I tweaked the files because certain features did not import cleanly. I saved those in **PowerPoint 97-2003** files, so they are compatible for those earlier PowerPoint versions.

Inside the calendar month tables, I have included US Federal holidays, Easter, Valentine's Day, and St. Patrick's Day. Additionally, solstices, equinoxes, new moons, and full moons are marked in day cells for photographers who like to shoot the night sky.

What files are available?

Here are the active links for downloading the files.

LibreOffice Impress files	PowerPoint files
2025 full-page layout.odp	2025 full-page layout.ppt
2025 compact layout.odp	2025 compact layout.ppt

I recommend using glossy brochure paper for printing your calendar at home. It produces good glossy photos on both sides. More info on printing and binding is available on the instructions page.

The only constraint is that these files are for personal use and non-profit use only. **Use for any for-profit activity is prohibited**.
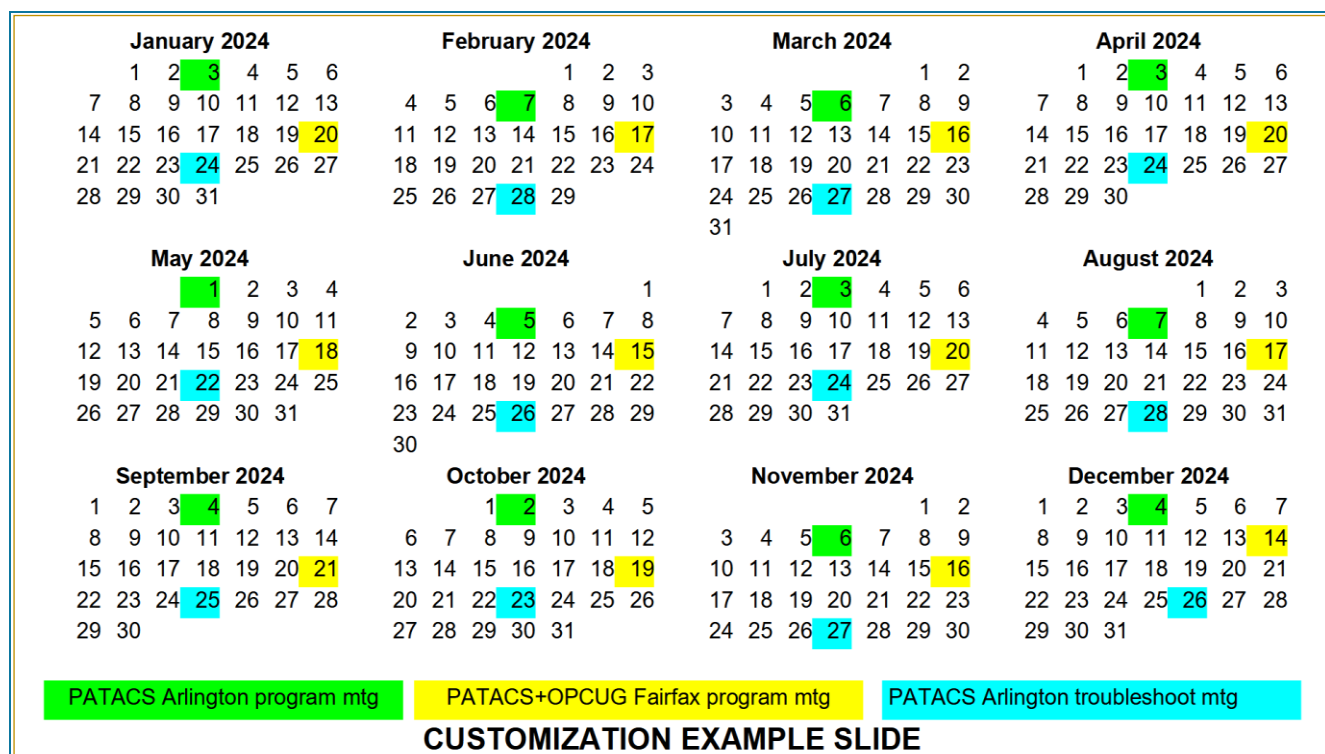
2025 At-A-Glance® files

After including the compact format calendar files, I introduced a single-page Year-At-A Glance® file, showing all 12 months on one page. Originally, back when I was working, I found this useful for informing my employees and myself of key dates such as pay dates and company holidays. Each year, I marked those dates on the Year-At-A-Glance® and then exported the customized calendar page as a GIF file. That file is printable and usable as a Windows background image. I used it as a Windows background image on my company computer.

I believe club members will be happy to have such customized reminders visible, either as a printed page or as an image file on a computer. You can customize the page and then export it as a PDF file or a GIF or JPG or PNG image file, and then distribute the files to your club members via email and by posting on your club Web site.

A 2025 At-A-Glance® Customization Example

Each file contains an unmarked 2025 calendar page, and an example of customization. Also included are instructions for customization, for exporting as an image file, and for use on computers and portable devices.

You can see a 2024 At-A-Glance® customization example in **illustration 3**.

CUSTOMIZATION EXAMPLE SLIDE

Illustration 3

If you include a customized 2025 At-A-Glance® calendar in a physical newsletter published in black& white, then I suggest using **Bold, underlining, or physical shapes surrounding date numbers** to indicate different key dates. Surrounding a date number with a circle or rectangle works well.

I sized the PowerPoint slides so that the Export of a customized 2025 At-A-Glance® slide to an image file will automatically be Full High Definition (FHD) dimensions, 1920 by 1080. That size provides high quality appearance on a computer monitor, HDTV, and smart phone, etc.

The 2025 At-A-Glance® files are available for all individuals and groups to customize and distribute on a royalty-free basis.

Here are the active links for downloading the 2025 At-A-Glance® files.

LibreOffice Impress file	2025 at a Glance.odp
PowerPoint file	2025 at a Glance.ppt

John Krout has been shooting photos since his dad gave him a Kodak Brownie film camera in 1963. He has been writing and speaking about digital photography for several years.

###

Can't Find Your Glasses? There's an App for That.

By Frank Fota, fotafm@gmail.com
Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society (PATACS)

If you are nearsighted and can't find your glasses, but can find your smartphone, the smartphone camera (i.e., the photo app) can be used in a pinch to provide a clear view for your search. Most phones have a flashlight that can be used if it's dark. I don't advise climbing flights of stairs with a smartphone in hand to perform your eyeglasses search. You could lose your bearings and balance and potentially trip and fall. The magnifier app may be easier to use than the photo app.

Android Phones

There are several "magnifier apps for Android," including free apps and built-in features. A search included but was not limited to:

- **Magnifier**: A free, customizable app that turns your phone into a digital magnifier
- **Magnifier Plus**: An app that uses your phone's camera to magnify images and make small text and objects easier to see
- **Magnifier & Microscope [Cozy]**: An app that turns your phone into a digital magnifier
- **Magnifying Glass**: A free app that helps you magnify small text

Android also has a built-in magnification feature that works with most apps and the Chrome browser:

- Go to Settings
- Select Accessibility
- Select Magnification
- Turn on the Magnification shortcut

To use the magnification feature, you can:

- Press the Accessibility button to zoom in temporarily or tap to zoom into an area
- Use two fingers to move around the screen
- Pinch with two fingers to adjust the zoom
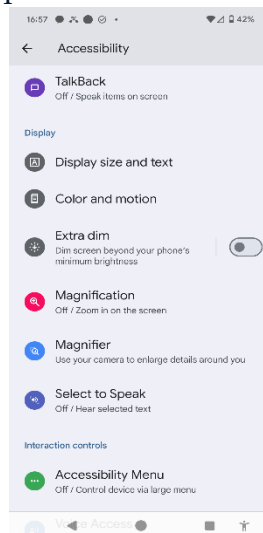
iPhones

The Magnifier app on an iPhone is a free tool that helps people with low vision to better see objects and scenes around them. It can be used to enlarge small print, such as on a menu, or to zoom in on pictures.

To use the Magnifier app on an iPhone:

- Open the Home Screen
- Swipe down and search for Magnifier
- Point the camera at the object you want to magnify
- Tap the Freeze Frame button
- Drag the slider or pinch with your fingers to magnify the image. You can also add Magnifier to the Control Center for easier access. To do this:
- Open Settings
- Tap Control Center
- Tap the Add button to add Magnifier
- Magnifier should not be used in high-risk or emergency situations, for navigation, or in circumstances where you may be harmed or injured.
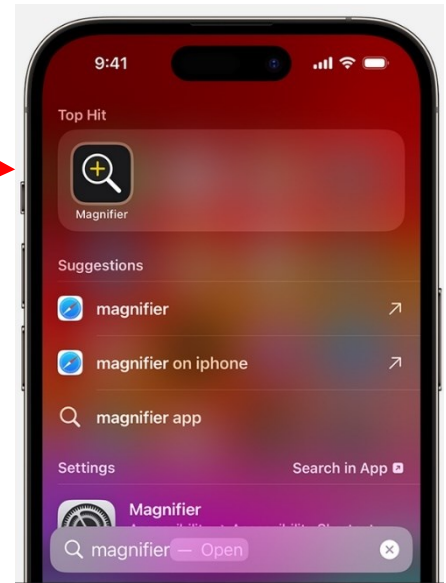
What can you do if you can't find your smartphone or your glasses?

Curl your thumb and index finger like you were making an "OK" sign but bend and curl over your finger to form a very small hole. Now place your hand as close to your eye as possible and look through the hole. Your field of view will be limited and appear dim but details seen through the hole will be clear.

In essence, you are creating a pin-hole camera with your hand. Try it 🙂

For more information see:

1. Tom's Guide, How to use the Android on-screen magnifier, by Emma Street, Nov. 30, 2023

2. Apple Support Community, Use Magnifier on your iPhone or iPad, Feb. 27, 2024

###

Start a Windows Application Automatically.

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

Any application you use frequently can be started automatically by Windows when Windows starts. That might be your Web browser, Windows File Explorer, Zoom, or anything. You can enable applications to start automatically. Here's how:

Introduction

This technique came to my attention when I started looking for Windows applications to provide alarms when my Windows laptop battery reached a high level when charging or a low level when discharging. It made sense for such an application to run automatically when Windows started.

In a nutshell, making an application start automatically takes just the *two steps* described below.

1. To start an application whenever you start windows, you must *find* or *create a* **shortcut** for that software. Shortcuts may already be on your Windows Desktop.

2. To arrange for Windows to start the software automatically, you must paste a copy of the shortcut into a specific folder on Drive C.

How to recognize a Shortcut

A shortcut is a pointer to an application. Double-click the shortcut to start the application. Using a shortcut is like clicking on a link (URL) in a web page to open the page identified by the URL. Shortcuts are tiny files.

In **illustration 1,** you can see two of the shortcuts on my desktop. Notice that each has a curved arrow in the lower left corner. That curved arrow indicates that the icon is a shortcut.
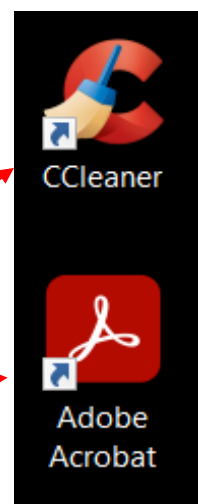

Illustration 1

If a shortcut for the software already appears on your Desktop, then you can skip the next section and go to "**Where to Paste the shortcut**". Copy the Desktop shortcut by **right clicking** on the shortcut and selecting **Copy** from the list.

How to create a shortcut

If you cannot find a shortcut, create one.

In the **Windows 10** Start menu, one way to do so begins with the alphabetic list of installed applications. That Start menu option is named **Apps**. You can see that option in **illustration 2**. The Apps list appears as a sub-menu outside of the Start menu. (I have customized startup menu.) In a standard Windows 10 startup menu, the Apps list may appear inside the Start menu, without clicking any icon or button.
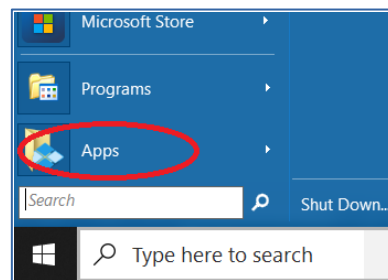

Illustration 2

In **Windows 11**, the option is **All apps** and appears in the upper-right corner of the Start menu. You can see that option in **illustration 3**. Click that option, and the Apps list appears *inside* the Start menu as a scrolling list.
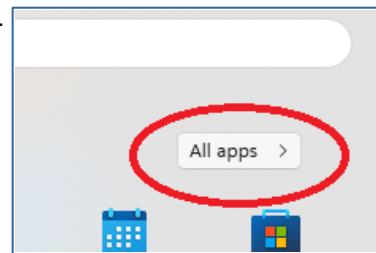

Illustration 3

The following steps apply to both Windows 10 and 11.

Scroll through the Apps list and find your desired application. Click and drag your application to your Desktop screen. That action creates a shortcut in the Desktop folder. Once that shortcut exists, you can **right click** on the item and select **copy** *OR* open File Explorer, browse to the Desktop folder, find the shortcut there and copy it.

For example, **illustration 4** shows Windows File Explorer with my Desktop folder selected in the left pane. Shortcuts appear in that folder in the right pane. Shortcuts for Calendar and Clock appear in the upper right corner. I used the method described above to create them.
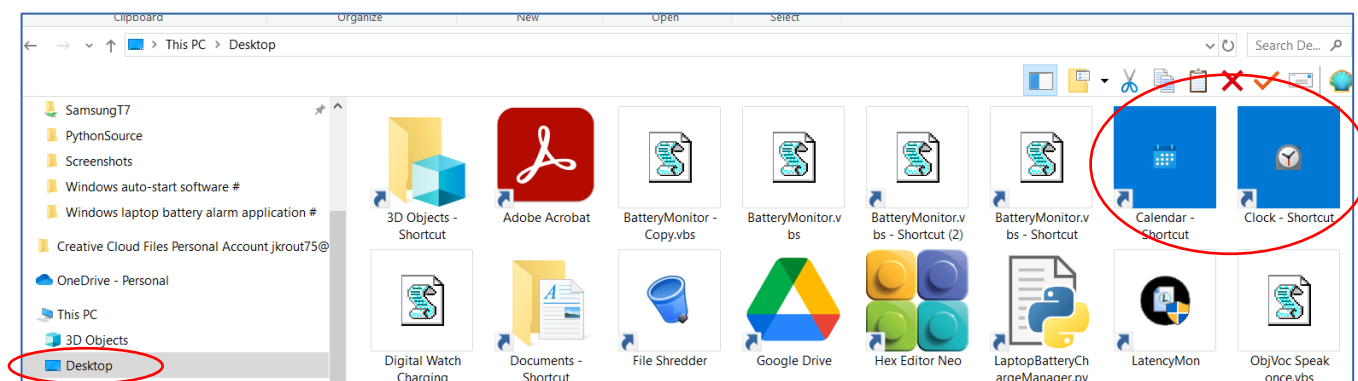

Illustration 4

Where to Paste the Shortcut

Paste the shortcut in the following folder to automatically start it when Windows starts.

C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\StartUp

It turns out that the C:\ProgramData is *invisible* by default. Initially, you will not see it. You can make the **ProgramData** folder visible by configuring Windows File Explorer to **show Hidden items.**
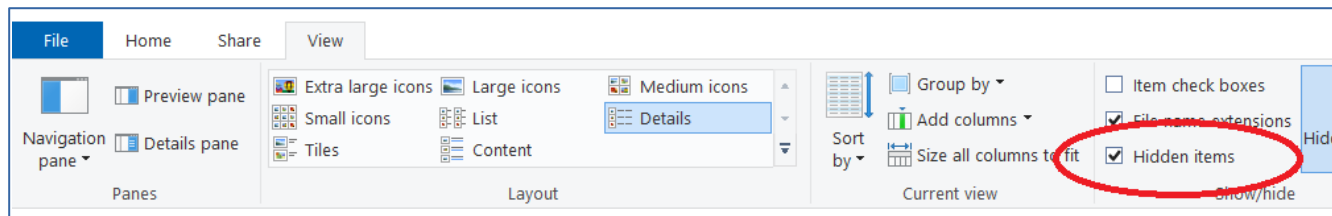

Illustration 5

In **Windows 10**, in the upper left corner of File Explorer, click the **View tab**. On the right-hand side, above the right-hand pane listing files (in the *Current View* mini-menu), find the **Hidden items** box. In **illustration 5**, that box is circled and contains a checkmark. To place that checkmark in the box, click it. When the box is checked, hidden folders become visible.

In **Windows 11**, File Explorer does not contain tabs. It takes a few clicks to find the option to display **Hidden items**. In File Explorer, the
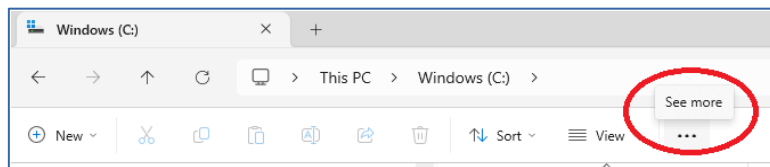

Illustration 6

first step is to find the ellipsis (three dots) to the right of the word *View* circled in **illustration 6**. When the mouse hovers over it, the words **See More** appear. Click the ellipsis. A menu drops down.

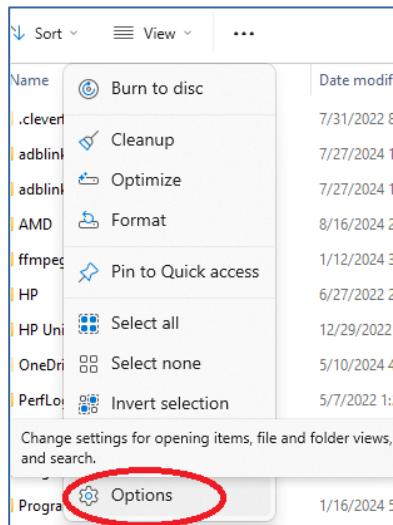See the menu in **illustration 7** (left). In that menu, choose the Options choice at the bottom.

Illustration 7

The menu disappears. The **Folder Options** dialog box appears(**illustration 8**). Click the **View tab**, which is circled in the illustration.

Illustration 8

       The **View tab** of the dialog box includes a scrollable list of File Explorer **Advanced settings** options (right).

The option to show **Hidden files, folders and drives** is close to the top of the list. After selection, the *circle* to the left of the option description words is blue and thick. By default, that option is not selected; click it.
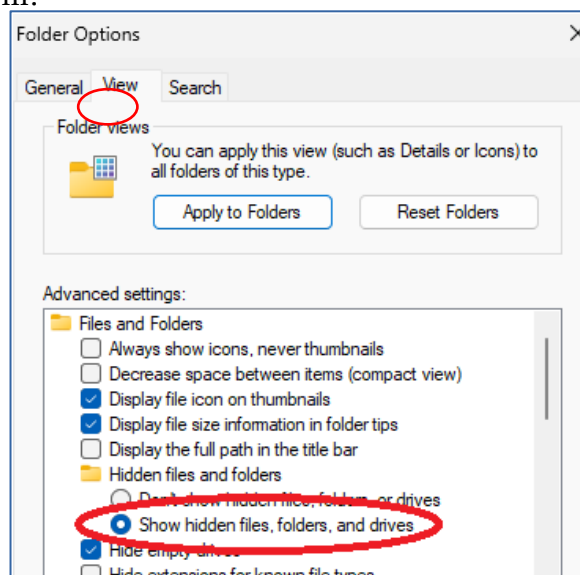
After doing that, click the OK button at the bottom of the dialog box. The dialog box closes. The hidden folders are now visible, along with the folders contained in them.

Use File Explorer to browse inside the **ProgramData** folder to the **Startup** folder and paste your copied shortcut there.

<div align="center">###</div>

No Headphone Adapter on Your Smartphone? No problem.

By Frank Fota, fotafm@gmail.com
Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society (PATACS)

Smartphone manufacturers assume that a 3.5 mm headphone jack is no longer needed. Smartphone customers own or will also be purchasing wireless earbuds. For some, the smartphone they now possess was one of only a few options offered by their cellular service provider. If you have wired earbuds, the USB power port can be used for audio. However, you need a USB to 3.5 mm headphone jack adapter.

Two adaptors can be purchased from Amazon.com for less than $10. The images below are linked to the Amazon.com website.

Bluetooth Earbuds

If you have Bluetooth earbuds, you simply need to pair them with your new phone. To pair a Bluetooth accessory (e.g., earbuds) with an iPhone or Android device:

Enable Bluetooth

Go to **Settings > Bluetooth** and turn on (enable) **Bluetooth**. A drop-down menu is typically present on the home screen of your smartphone that allows you to enable or disable Bluetooth and wireless network connections. You might also need to enable Bluetooth within specific apps that you intend to use with your wireless earbuds.

Place Your Earbuds in Discovery Mode

Make sure your earbuds are close to your device and in discovery mode. Discovery mode is typically enabled by pressing one of the buttons (e.g., power, volume, or mode) on the earbuds. If you're not sure how to make your earbuds discoverable, check the instructions that came with them.

Pair the Devices

Select the earbuds' name when it appears on your phone. You might need to enter a PIN or passcode. If a pin or passcode is required, it will be provided in the instructions that came with the earbuds.

Troubleshooting

If your earbuds won't pair with your phone:
 - Make sure they are close to your phone
 - Turn them off and on again. You may have to remove the batteries.
 - Check that your earbuds are fully charged or connected to power
 - Replace the earbud batteries if needed
 - Ensure Bluetooth is turned on for the app you're using with your earbuds

AirPods are compatible with all Bluetooth devices, but features differ when used with Android phones.

For more information see:

1. [Android Authority](), Bluetooth connection problems? Here are 11 fixes, by Mark O'Neill, Apr. 18, 2023

2. [Apple Support Community](), If you can't connect a Bluetooth accessory to your iPhone or iPad, Jun. 12, 2024

<div align="center">###</div>

Why this Photographer is a Morning Person.

By Lynda Buske
Ottawa PC Users' Group, Ontario, Canada, https://opcug.ca

I have previously written about taking photographs in the evening or at night (https://opcug.ca/Photography/EveningPhotography_v3.pdf). However, I prefer to shoot in the morning, especially during the blue hour before the sun comes up. (**Ed's note**: all of the "named" hours occur twice each day: morning and evening.) While not everyone wants to get up that early (often 4 am in the summer), there are some definite advantages and photo opportunities that you don't get in the evening.

Technically, many of the tips are similar, like compensating for low light by using a tripod, opening aperture wide (small f/stop number numerically), bumping your ISO up (sensitivity to light), or perhaps using a cell phone, which tends to cope with low light situations well. When my phone is set to "night sight," it takes multiple short exposures and combines the images into a single, appropriately exposed photo.

However, this column will discuss the non-technical advantages of shooting pre-dawn rather than post-sunset. These tips, however, apply mostly to landscape photography; if you like to shoot the city nightlife, you will not find much going on in the morning. If someone is still partying, then they are probably not worth photographing!

Depending on the time of year, there is a good chance you can catch some interesting frost or mist during the morning blue hour. Both often disappear shortly after dawn when the sun burns off fog or melts frost.

Birds get very active around dawn. It is not just sheer luck catching migratory geese at dawn.

You can hear them getting excited in the dark, and the minute the sun rises, they take off.

I find the early morning very relaxing. There is less city noise from traffic, especially in the summer when it is way before rush hour. Roads in the evening, regardless of the time of year, are busy before and after sunset. Parking is a breeze in the morning, and there is no competition for my favourite (Ed.'s note: the author is Canadian) vantage points. If you are lakeside, the reflections are great in the morning before wind and boat traffic ruin them.

I like fewer people around, but the evening might be better if you want a lot of human interest in your photos. I usually have just enough fishermen, joggers, bikers, or kayakers to add interest if I want it.

However, they seldom get in my way.

As a petite lady, I am nervous when strange men approach me in the evening. I am never sure of their intentions (innocent though they may be), and I concentrate more on picking up verbal or physical clues than on my photography. People can be distracting when asking questions about your gear (always the guys) at a critical moment when I'm trying to shift from blue hour settings to dawn settings. If someone says a few words at 5 am, I do not feel threatened, and conversations are usually short since perhaps neither of us has had a coffee! I think most of the baddies are simply not out at that hour.

###

Last Shot: Once again, a bit too much white space, so you get a couple of photos from the editor's (September) trip to Alaska. The first several nights of the trip were spent in

Glacier Bay National Park in Gustavus—about a 20 minute flight northwest of Juneau. "Eyes Left"!

©Henry S. Winokur

Canon R5, 1/3200th seconds, f/5, ISO 1250,
Canon RF 100-500 f/4.5-7.1 L IS USM, 186mm

"The south end of a northbound Puffin"

Canon R5
1/3200s, f/7.1,
ISO 2500,

Canon
RF100-500
f/4.5-7.1 L IS
USM, 500mm

©Henry S. Winokur

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First Class

TEMP-RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

▶

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

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

Arlington Mtg: 5711 S. 4th ST., Arl. VA   Fairfax Mtg: 4210 Roberts RD., Fairfax, VA

Meetings are Hybrid or Zoom (as above)
Fairfax Health/Safety: https://www.patacs.org/fairfaxattreqmts.html
Online Meeting Access Will Be Sent Via Email

PATACS Event Information
Messages may be left at 703-370-7649
Website: https://www.patacs.org
Please NOTE: No meeting on 12/25; Jan. 1st will be Zoom only.

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