

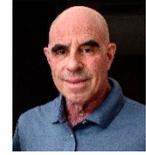


June/July 2021

Page 1

## My turn.....

Henry Winokur, Editor, ([editor@patacs.org](mailto:editor@patacs.org))



You have a slightly used—but now only one—editor from this point on. “Who?” you may ask? Ever the smart-alec, all I can say is “three guesses...”.

First I want to thank **Kathy Perrin** and **Geof Goodrum** for their exemplary work over the last few years. Second, I’d like to thank Mel Mikosinski for his work on this new format. It’s a work in progress, may not be quite finished. But it’s close!

Do you see in color? I expect that most of us do. I like to use color in any document I produce. Ask my OLLI-GMU students! It’s much more interesting than oh-so-boring *monochrome*. Unfortunately the mailed version will continue to be monochrome. But the emailed PDF version will, I hope, use more color. Let me know—in a few months—what you think.

I want to make this one point: this is **your newsletter**. I’d like to know what you want. Would you be interested in a “Letters to the Editor” column? I would but it means you have to participate. I’d like to get your feedback on:

1. Font sizes and types (Serif v. Sans Serif),
2. Number of columns, and
3. Content.

Let’s take this one item at a time.

**Fonts:** The choice is **Serif** v. **Sans Serif**. What’s the difference? **Serif** fonts have “ends” or “flourishes” on them. **Sans Serif** fonts just end...so far this document is written in **Calibri, 12 point**, which is a **Sans Serif** font. The problem is that certain letters are hard to identify, especially if they are out of context. For example an upper case “l” (eye) looks like a lower case “l” (el). With a serif font that’s not a problem. The 2<sup>nd</sup> issue is font size. Everything up to this point is **12 point**.

But after seeing my first try, I’ve decided to make some changes. I will be using serif fonts, notably:

**Sitka Banner**, at *14 point* for the general text, and paragraph headers in **Sitka Banner** in 16 point, (though the example fonts are in **bold**, which is not how they’ll be in normal use).

Next to consider is how many columns you want. One column makes things easier to read *on-screen*. Two columns may make it easier in the printed form. What do you think? To demonstrate, some of the issue will be laid out in one column, and some in 2 columns.

As you may know, I’m a “Windows guy”. The problem is that I don’t know much about the other two major OS’s (**OS** = operating system), Apple or Linux. If you want to know

more about them, you have to let me know... I'm not very good at *reading* minds...yet, anyway. Or better yet, write an article about something that interests you regarding

today's technology, whether it be about those two OSs or something else entirely. I would much rather include your musing's here than someone from the outside the Club.

A couple of other changes: I am not a fan of URL shorteners like [Bit.ly](#) and [TinyURL](#). The reason is simple: using shorteners prevents easy viewing of where a link points. (And yes, one can use their "decoder ring" and figure out where that shortened URL points, but I see that as extra work that no one should have to do.) Without that knowledge, how do you know if you are going to a web site that won't put malware on your computer? You don't. In light of that, ***I will not use them.*** Either the link will sit out of sight "below" a word or phrase (as above in the word "Bit.ly"), or the entire link will be listed in the document. If you get the printed version, and the link is "below" the word, you will be forced to go the PDF to see where the link points. Sorry, but it's just safer that way.

OK. That's enough from me for now...

*Henry*

### Contents

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| My Turn (Editor's notes) .....   | Page 1  |
| Watch your personal computer, phone or tablet <i>on</i> your HDTV..... | Page 3  |
| React 7-in-1 Vehicle Emergency Multi-tool.....                         | Page 4  |
| Linux Mint 20.1.....   | Page 6  |
| Safe Experimenting.....  | Page 7  |
| PATACS Membership Info / PATACS Email Discussion Group Info.....       | Page 11 |
| Interesting Web links.....   | Page 12 |
| Special Membership Promotion/ Presenters Needed .....                  | Page 13 |
| PATACS Archive/APCUG Info/Final Image.....                             | Page 14 |
| PATACS Information.....  | Page 15 |

###

## WATCH YOUR PERSONAL COMPUTER, PHONE OR TABLET ON YOUR HDTV

Two ways to make that big screen work for you

By John Krout, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society (PATACS)

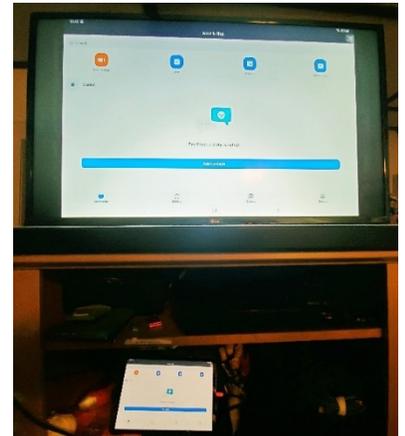
### INTRODUCTION

There are basically two ways to make your computer, phone, or tablet screen visible on an HDTV.

Why would this be useful to you? I can think of some reasons.

One is to make the screen visible at a distance, or throughout a room. If you have an HDTV in the kitchen, you could be fixing a meal or snack while watching.

You can share the screen with others. Maybe a user of some application or game needs a helping hand, or maybe you need a helping hand? Watching on the HDTV keeps your hands free and makes it easy to offer or try hints and tips.



*Illustration 1*

In this era of Zoom meetings, you can literally make the Zoom meeting visible on the HDTV and leave your hands free to take notes.

For longer meetings, sometimes watching a big screen at a distance is less strain on your eyes.

### TWO WAYS TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

One way to make your screen visible on your HDTV is via an HDMI cable, just as if you were attaching a Blu Ray player or Roku box to the HDTV. Most recent laptops have an HDMI output port on the side. A tap on a function key, usually **F4**, turns screen video output through that HDMI port on and off.

Tablets and smart phones can do the same, by adding a **Display adapter cable**, an inexpensive accessory. You can see an example in **illustration 1** (above) of my tablet running the Zoom app, connected by a Display Adapter and an HDMI cable to my HDTV. (*EN: be sure to get the correct adapter. There are lots of choices and it must match your cable from your monitor or TV.*)



**Illustration 2**

A second way is available if your HDTV is itself connected to your home Local Area Network (LAN), or a media box such as Roku or Chromecast is attached to the HDTV and is connected to your LAN. In that case, you can connect by sending the screen video across your LAN to the network connected HDTV or media box.

If you use a VPN client on your computer, tablet or phone, then you will have to disable that VPN client to make this work. You can see an example in **illustration 2**: my Android tablet, connected through WiFi to my HDTV, displaying the launch of a SpaceX rocket June 5, 2021.

## GET STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

I wrote a 2-part article series on how to make these connections work. The articles are now part of the permanent collection of Zoom articles on the **PATACS.org** web site. You can read the PDF articles online. If you want to keep copies for handy reference, then you can download the PDFs to your computer, phone, and/or tablet.

**Part 1** covers **Windows 10** personal computers. The URL is:

[https://www.patacs.org/zoom/jk\\_zoom\\_hdtvp1.pdf](https://www.patacs.org/zoom/jk_zoom_hdtvp1.pdf).

**Part 2** covers **Android tablets** and **smart phones**. The URL:

[https://www.patacs.org/zoom/jk\\_zoom\\_hdtvp2.pdf](https://www.patacs.org/zoom/jk_zoom_hdtvp2.pdf).

**About The Author:** John Krout is a PATACS member, and has been writing about creative uses of personal computers and technology since the early 1980s. He lives in Arlington VA.

# # #

## React 7-In-1 Vehicle Emergency Multi-Tool

by George Harding, Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society

Tucson Computer Society

[www.aztcs.org](http://www.aztcs.org)

actuary110 (at) yahoo.com

Here's a handy gadget! It's multipurpose and has seven uses.



1. It can be used in your car to charge any USB chargeable device. You plug it into your car's power outlet. The enclosed battery will charge if needed and any of our additional devices that you connect to it will charge as well. There is a battery charge indicator to tell you how much charge is available.
2. It can be used away from your car as a charger for any USB chargeable device
3. It is a flashlight. A button on the side of the React turns on the light. Further presses cycle through low and high options. A long press turns it off.
4. Using the side button also gives you access to a red flashing light.
5. A button on the other side of the React turns on the S.O.S. alarm.
6. React includes a seat belt cutter, available for emergency use. The blade is protected so it won't slice your fingers, but it is strong enough to slice a seat belt.
7. React can also be used to break window glass in an emergency. It should not be used to break laminated, windshield, or pane glass.

The manufacturer recommends that the tool be replaced after using either the glass breaker or the seat belt cutter.

The tool comes with a cable that can be used for charging the internal battery. The unit also comes with a User Manual.

It has a one-year limited warranty. This is a very handy tool to keep in your car for use when needed.

**React** by LimitlessInnovations      **Price** \$40

<https://limitlessinnovations.com/collections/usb-chargers/products/react-7-in-1-vehicle-emergency-multi-tool-powered-by-chargehub>

*(EN: the address was checked July 19, 2021 and still works)*

# # #

## Linux Mint 20.1

By Cal Esneault, former President of CCCC & leader of many Open-Source Workshops & SIGs  
Cajun Clickers Computer Club, February 2021 issue, CCCC Computer News

[www.clickers.org](http://www.clickers.org) office (at) clickers.org

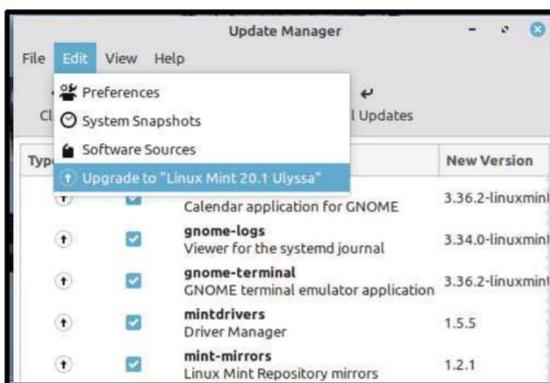
Linux Mint is a Linux distribution based on Ubuntu. A long-term support version, Linux Mint



20, was released in June of 2020. An updated version, Mint 20.1, was released on January 8, 2021. This version is known as a “point” release, which contains software features developed by Linux Mint which are different from Mint 20 version (the majority of programs remain tied to the Ubuntu 20.04 LTS ([Long Term Support](#)) repository).

Point releases tend to “refresh” some of the GUI features, and I checked out the Mint 20.1 version with the Cinnamon desktop. Examples of changes that were upgraded to the newest Cinnamon 4.8 desktop and a new set of screen backgrounds.

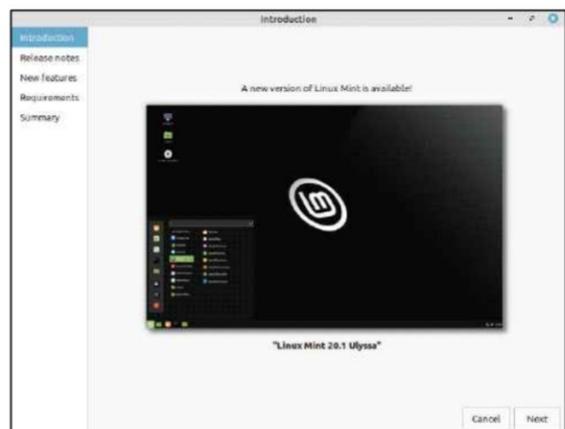
Mint continues its practice of making an upgrade from the previous LTS as easy and automated as possible. First, it will alert the user that a new “Update Manager” app is available. When this is updated, a new entry appears in the “Edit” section that gives a “one-click” upgrade. Be sure to perform all the other regular upgrades before proceeding.



The first steps in the upgrade lead you through a series of pages (see next column) where you click “continue” to progress down a list. First and foremost, you are encouraged to back up your system in case issues arise.

There are sections on

“Release Notes” (issues commonly encountered or helpful configuration hints) and on “New Features” (detailed descriptions of improvements and changes). You can skip the links if you wish, but I always find it advisable to take a quick glance. If you later need to review them after installation, you can find these items on the Mint website.



Before anything is changed, you must check a message at the end indicates if it was a box stating you understand any potential risks success. You have to reboot for the upgrade (for this type of release, risks are minimal). to take effect. The upgrade only takes a few minutes, and a

*(EN: what did you think of the 2-column format, above? Please...let me know. Thanks.)*

As usual, this interim upgrade went smoothly on my machine. Although only a few minor items were changed, it is always good to keep current.

# # #

## Safe Experimenting

By Dick Maybach, Brookdale Computer User Group

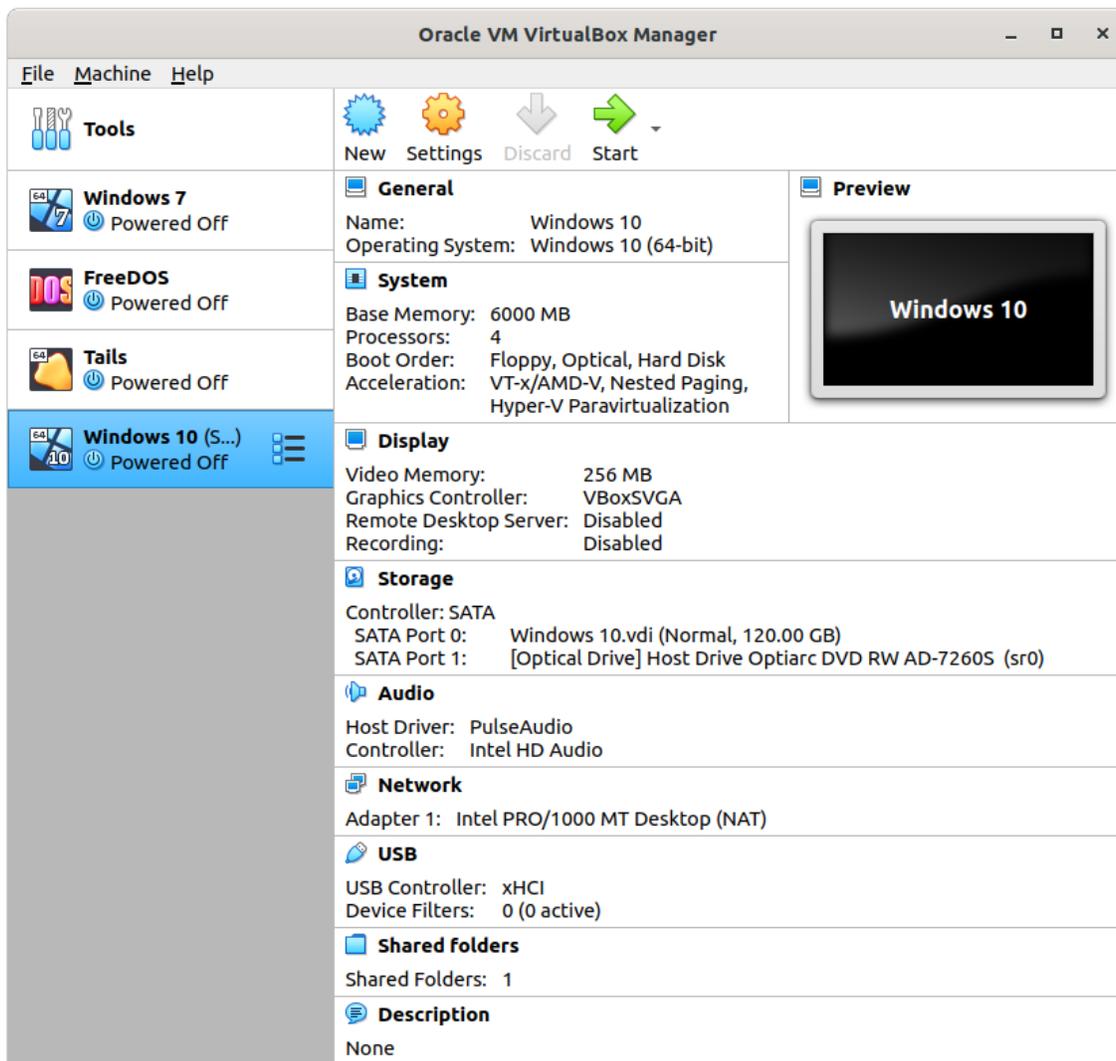
[www.bcug.com](http://www.bcug.com) n2nd (at) att.net

At the dawn of the personal computer age, life was simpler and more fun. Malware didn't exist, nor did the Internet, and the most valuable thing on our PC was the BASIC program **Hunt the Wumpus**. We continually tried new software (usually discarding it immediately). Now our PCs contain vital data, such as family photos, financial records, tax returns, and email history, which makes many reluctant to experiment. While the Internet is full of free and cheap software, much of it is tainted, and we are hesitant to take a chance with anything. Moreover, modern operating systems are complex, making tinkering with their organization hazardous. As a result, we are sitting in a huge virtual library, but afraid to take a book off the shelf.

You can restore the adventure to PCs by setting up an environment, separate from the one presently on your machine, where you can experiment safely. However, remember that an effective backup discipline is always your last and best defense. Let's examine three such environments, virtual machines (VMs), dual-booting, and separate hardware.

No matter which environment you choose, you will need an operating system for it. If you use Windows, you have to purchase a separate copy, as the Microsoft license allows Windows to be installed in only one environment. Windows 10 is available (from Amazon) for as little as \$50, which lets you achieve greatly increased security and yet stay in familiar surroundings. You also could use Linux, which opens up a whole new world of open-source software and which is generally malware-free, but the environment change may be traumatic.

The easiest separate environment to set up is a virtual machine, such as Oracle's VirtualBox, but it requires capable hardware, at least eight Gbytes of RAM (16 is better), and 30 to 50 GB of available disk space. When the VM is running, your hardware is supporting two environments, the one on your PC (called the host) and the one on the VM (called the guest). As a result, the guest environment may be noticeably slow, but less so if your hardware supports virtual environments. The key features on the CPU are VT-x on Intel and AMD-V on AMD processors, and these are now common, even on laptops. Be sure to check your VM documentation, as these features may be disabled in your BIOS.

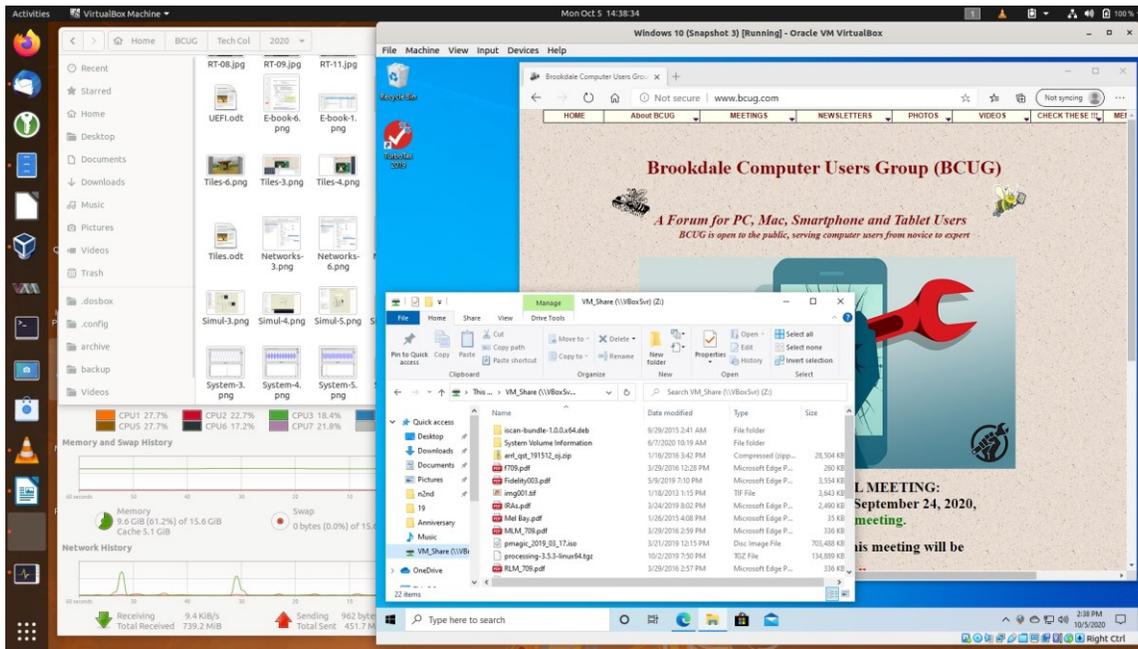


**Figure 1.** VirtualBox Manager.

In operation, a VM looks like an application to the host; see **Figure 1**, which shows the VirtualBox manager. You use a virtual manager to add, delete, and configure VMs, and this PC

has four, Windows 7, FreeDOS, Tails, and Windows 10. The figure also shows a summary of the VM running Windows 10.

The VM snapshot feature is useful for experimenters. Making a snapshot is equivalent to cloning the environment, and if the current experiment isn't successful, you can restore things with a click or two. Also, since VMs are just files on the host when you back up the host, you also back up the VMs.



**Figure 2.** Host Desktop with a VM Running.

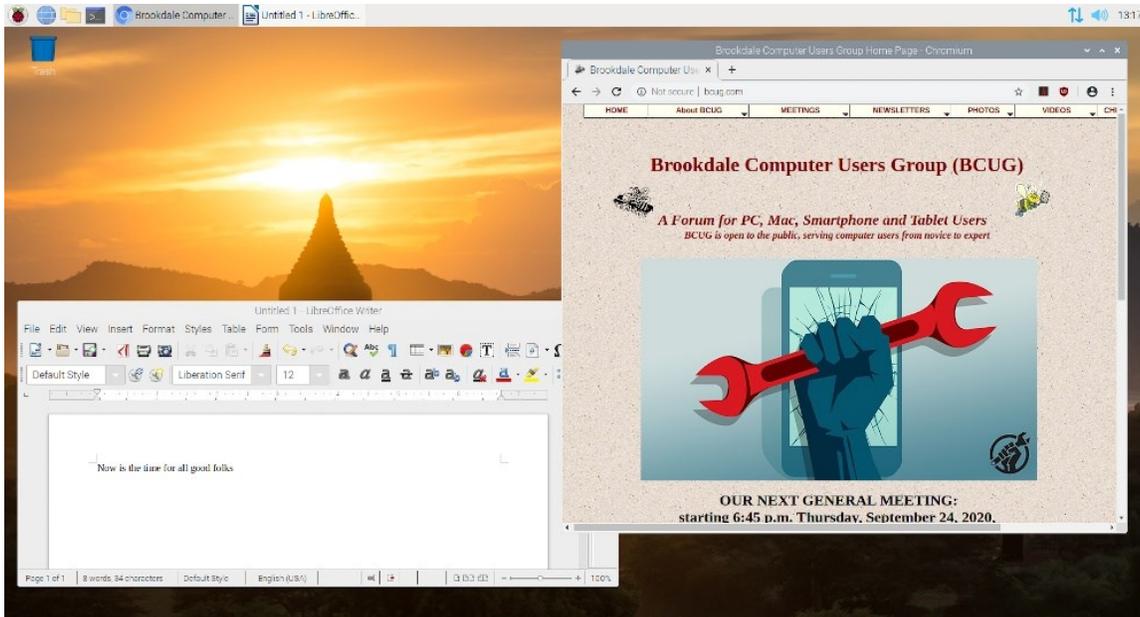
**Figure 2** shows Windows 10 running in a VM on a Linux host. As you can see Windows has access to the Internet. Note also the file-manager window, which is looking at a directory on the host. Both Linux and Windows can access files in this directory, making it easy for the two to exchange information. You can also copy and paste between the two. However, these features require that you install the Guest Extensions to VirtualBox (see its documentation).

Before VMs became available, I used dual-booting for experimenting. This has the advantage of making all the resources of the host machine available to both environments; using VMs of course means that resources are shared between the host and the guest. The drawback is that setting up dual-booting requires some expertise and adds some risk. Here are the steps.

- Back up the system.
- Defrag the operating system to ensure that nothing is stored at the high addresses.

- Shrink the partition to make space for a second one above it. The second partition should contain at least 100 Gbytes. If you are short of space on your disk, you'll have to install a second one.
- Install the second OS in the second partition.

This involves more risk than installing an application, so do your homework before attempting it. You also must be careful to back up the second environment separately.



**Figure 3.** Raspberry Pi Desktop.

The last and safest method of obtaining a test environment is to use a separate PC. Many of us have old, unused machines, making this approach very cheap indeed. Its main disadvantage is the space occupied. If you don't have an unused PC or are short on space, consider a Raspberry Pi model 4. It has as much power as a PC of a few years ago; see **Figure 3**. If you share your PC display, keyboard, and mouse with the Raspberry, it uses almost no space. A KVM (Keyboard Video, Mouse) switch will allow you to do the sharing conveniently. Alternatively, you can set up a remote desktop to access the Pi from your PC, making the former appear as an application on the latter. It doesn't even have to be in the same room; all both need is a connection to your home network. If you haven't used a Raspberry Pi, you should first read the introductory material on its website, <https://www.raspberrypi.org/>. Setting one up is quite different than getting started with a new PC. Instead of a hard disk, it uses a microSD card, which you'll buy separately and on which you must install the operating system that you'll download from the Raspberry Pi website. The OS is a Linux variant, which probably involves yet more study, but the whole idea of experimenting is to learn.

Once you have hardware for your test environment, you'll need an operating system. A VM and dual-booting give you the most flexibility, as you can use anything your host PC supports. With a Raspberry Pi, you'll be running Linux. Your options on a second PC depend on its age; older units may not support Windows 10 for example. You might also consider switching to Linux, as many distributions support older hardware. It also has thousands of free applications available.

Regardless of how you choose to do your experimenting, continue to exercise care if you transfer files to your home PC, as they can carry malware. Also, when you use virtual machines and dual-booting, you are not completely isolated from your home environment. Cross-contamination, while unlikely, is not impossible.

# # #

## **PATACS Membership**

PATACS memberships are now available via electronic payment for US \$30 per year. Payment may also be made via check or cash at our meetings. Benefits include:

- Eligibility for door prize drawings,
- Download of the full color, PDF-format PATACS Posts newsletter,
- Optional US Mail delivery of the B&W print edition of the newsletter,
- Access to the PATACS email list (see below),
- Access to our membership database for noncommercial use,
- members only classified ads in the newsletter for free.

The time, effort, and money saved from your association with PATACS will quickly exceed the nominal annual dues. Apply for or extend your membership at <https://www.patacs.org/membershipat.html>. You may also use the membership application to update your membership contact information.

## **PATACS Email Discussion Group**

Join the PATACS members-only email group to discuss tech topics of mutual interest, ask and answer questions, share resources, convey news, and increase our sense of shared community with fellow members.

Email sent to the Group and replies are distributed to all Group subscribers. You must be a current PATACS member and register a valid email address to join the Group. Review the information at <https://groups.io/g/patacs> and click on the "Join This Group" button. If

you do not receive email from [patacs@group.io](mailto:patacs@group.io) after joining, check the spam folder in your email program and ensure your email program does not block the address. Below are excerpts from recent posts on the list.

(Editor's note: In order to see the articles that the link points to, you have to be logged into the Group. If you're not a member, you can join at <https://groups.io/g/patacs>)

From Gary Oddi: TPM Warning:

[https://groups.io/g/patacs/topic/tpm issue warning/84066388?p=,,,20,0,0,0::recentpostdate%2Fsticky,,,20,2,0,84066388](https://groups.io/g/patacs/topic/tpm+issue+warning/84066388?p=,,,20,0,0,0::recentpostdate%2Fsticky,,,20,2,0,84066388)

From Mel Mikosinsk, on TPM (for Windows 11) status:

[https://groups.io/g/patacs/topic/tpm issue/84060976?p=,,,20,0,0,0::recentpostdate%2Fsticky,,,20,2,0,84060976](https://groups.io/g/patacs/topic/tpm+issue/84060976?p=,,,20,0,0,0::recentpostdate%2Fsticky,,,20,2,0,84060976)

From Gabe Goldberg on Too many cell phone notifications?:

[https://groups.io/g/patacs/topic/too many cell phone/84142412?p=,,,20,0,0,0::recentpostdate%2Fsticky,,,20,2,0,84142412](https://groups.io/g/patacs/topic/too+many+cell+phone/84142412?p=,,,20,0,0,0::recentpostdate%2Fsticky,,,20,2,0,84142412)

From Phi Smith III, on the real reason (for the coming) Windows 11:

[https://groups.io/g/patacs/topic/controlling and using/84226094?p=,,,20,0,0,0::recentpostdate%2Fsticky,,,20,2,0,84226094](https://groups.io/g/patacs/topic/controlling+and+using/84226094?p=,,,20,0,0,0::recentpostdate%2Fsticky,,,20,2,0,84226094)

## Interesting web links .....

Symbol keys that might not be on your keyboard: <https://tabatkins.github.io/symbols/>

Free Windows Clipboard extender: [Ditto](#) / [Wiki](#) / [Getting Started](#)

25 Google Map Tricks: <https://www.pcmag.com/how-to/google-maps-tips-tricks>

Onelook Reverse Dictionary and Thesaurus: <https://www.onelook.com/reverse-dictionary.shtml>

State of Maryland pothole repairs (must be state highways in Maryland):

[https://marylandsha.secure.force.com/customercare/request for service](https://marylandsha.secure.force.com/customercare/request+for+service)

(Editor's note: VA? I don't know...I don't live there...but if you find the URL, and give it to me, it'll get in here!)

Need information on DC area (VA included!) services?

Check out Consumer's Checkbook: <https://www.checkbook.org/>

**And from some publications the editor reads:**

**Did you know there's no really "official" system tray?:**

<https://www.howtogeek.com/685748/did-you-know-windows-has-never-had-a-system-tray>.

**How fast do you need/want the internet to be...really?** The real question is, is this fast enough? <https://www.pcmag.com/news/internet-speed-world-record-obliterated-by-engineers-in-japan>

**James Bond is getting a new car. What about you?**

<https://www.reviewgeek.com/92254/aston-martins-valhalla-hybrid-supercar-is-so-over-the-top-its-james-bonds-next-car>

**Interested in a new iPad? This story will tell you which one(s) is/are the best right now:**

<https://www.pcmag.com/picks/whats-the-best-ipad-to-buy>

**Did you know the Hubble telescope was down for a few weeks? NASA did, but they've got it up and running again:** <https://www.reviewgeek.com/92264/the-hubble-telescope-is-back-online-but-its-not-out-of-the-woods-yet>

**If you can't afford to buy MS Office in any of its versions**—understandable, it's not cheap—there are several others that are what could be described as Office "Princes". They're not the King (MS Office is...) though they try to be, but, and it's a BIG BUT, they are *free*. Which one should you try? This may help: Open Office v. Libre Office—which is better:

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/libreoffice-vs-openoffice>

## **PATACS Special Membership Promotion**

Current members who bring a new member to the organization will receive a six month extension of their membership. New member is defined as someone who has not been a member in the thirty-six months prior to month of received application. The new member should list your name as the 'source' of their membership on the application form (<https://www.patacs.org/membershipat.html>).

## **We need Presenters for our meetings**

Finding presenters for our meeting programs is proving difficult – how about stepping forward and offering your help in the effort to enhance the value we all receive from PATACS membership?

Please consider speaking to your friends at an Arlington or Fairfax meeting. We'd love to feature your take on a smart phone or tablet app. A presentation on these or other topics of interest to you would undoubtedly be welcomed by your PATACS colleagues. We have space in our schedule for 15, 30, 60 and 75 minute discussions – what are *you* waiting for? We also have ready-made paragraphs you could use in e-mail communications to help us find speakers. Contact: [director2@patacs.org](mailto:director2@patacs.org).

### **PATACS Meetings Archive**

Did you know that videos and presentation slides of most PATACS meetings are available on the PATACS website's 'Recent Meetings' page? Go to <https://www.patacs.org/recmtgspat.html> and scroll down for links.

### **APCUG Resources**

PATACS is a member of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), a worldwide organization that helps technology user groups by facilitating communications between member groups and industry vendors.

### **Archived APCUG Presentations**

Presentation PDFs and handouts can be found at: <https://apcug2.org/category/virtual-tech-conference>. APCUG presentation videos are posted on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/apcugvideos>.

I warned you that I'd put in a photo or other space filler, if you didn't submit an article now and then. This one is one of mine. That way I know there won't be any copyright issues. It's of the harbor in Lubec, Maine at sunset. Lubec is the eastern most town in the continental United States.



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## PATACS Information

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**Publicity:**..... Volunteer Needed

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# First Class

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## The monthly schedule of meetings via Zoom

|                                  |                 |                           |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Arlington General Meeting        | 7:00 – 9:00 PM  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday |
| Board of Directors Meeting       | 7:00 – 9:00 PM  | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday    |
| Fairfax General Meeting          | 12:45 – 3:30 PM | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Saturday  |
| Arlington Trouble-shooting, etc. | 7:00 – 9:00 PM  | 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday |

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Physical Meetings Canceled  
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