


**February, 2022**
**Page 1**

## My turn.....

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


I'm told we have turned over to another new year...but did we? I don't know about you—but it doesn't feel like a new year to me. It feels like a continuation of the awful, old year—except that this new year has brought something we haven't seen much of for the past few years—probably due to climate change—snow!

Surprise! This month we have two Letters (to the Editor). I'm amazed. I bet you are, too. I'll let them speak for themselves.

In the photography department, I'm very pleased with my new camera, a Canon R5. Because the camera is mirrorless, even with the new lens—the same zoom length and maximum aperture as the old one—it's 1 ½ lbs. *lighter* than it's predecessor. It doesn't sound like much, but it makes a huge difference in my ability to hand-hold it. Of course, the IBIS (in-body image stabilization) helps a lot, I am sure. High end cameras today employ a certain amount of AI (Artificial Intelligence). This Canon has the ability to pick out human and animal eyes and focus on them—which allows the photographer to get more in-focus images than ever before. There are lots of new controls to be learned, but I'm making progress.

➔ As you are aware the Omicron variant is doing another dance with our country and world. So that means that **until further notice all meetings will be held on Zoom**. Since things change quickly, check the web site ([www.patacs.org](http://www.patacs.org)) to find out where meetings are being held.



This image was taken along Skyline Drive, south of Thornton's Gap, at the Tunnel Overlook, in early November, 2021. The original exposure was in color, but it was converted to monochrome during

processing. Shot just after sunrise with a **Canon 5D Mark IV**, **Canon EF 24-105 f/4L IS II USM**, at ISO 400, 1/3200<sup>th</sup>s, f/5.6 at 105mm. Copyright Henry S. Winokur.

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This is not a “live links” table of contents...yet.

### Board of Directors Report (from Jim Rhodes):

December's Board Meeting was extremely brief; no motions or votes. Our Membership Chair announced he would be missing some meetings and would need someone to help with taking attendance; President Howard (with assistance) volunteered to fill in. Interesting discussion on problems with FIREFOX security blocking access to many sites. Some discussion on newsletter preparation and continuing need for programs/speakers for most of 2022. Other than that, a very quiet meeting.

### Letters to the Editor:

Apple's September announcements introduced new iPhones/iPads and a new Apple watch, creating buzz and immediate lust among some for all-things-new. A better approach is caring for and using devices -- Apple's and other -- until they no longer work, lack essential function, or can't take new software updates. My wife's and my iPhone 6s and 6s Plus work now as well as when we bought them in January 2016 -- and both just received iOS 15. These cameras aren't as capable as those on newer models -- but they're more than adequate. I expect they won't take iOS16 next September, so that will be an incentive to replace them to allow receiving functional enhancements and security patches. Getting almost seven years use from them softens their cost. I'll follow a similar approach with our iPads: my wife's is a generation behind mine, so it will fall off software updates first. When that happens she'll inherit mine and I'll have the newest model. Take advantage of Apple's supporting its devices for many years and avoid making Apple unnecessarily richer.

Gabriel Goldberg

And letter two:

I found several recent articles to be extremely helpful at work.

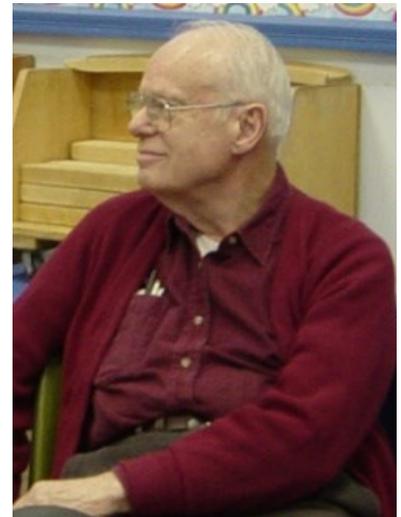
1. November 2021 “Is your mouse walking instead of running?” I always thought I had to use a mousepad.
2. October 2021 Clipboard. Dictation. Snip and Sketch Tool. Clipboard especially has resulted in a big increase in productivity.

Steve Kalin

###

### In Memoriam: Ronald Schmidt...

**PATACS' 1st Vice President**, passed away the morning of January 11th at his home in Lanham, Md. Ron was 99 years old. He'd served as 1st VP (or sole VP when we modified the executive structure for several years from '09 - '12) since October of 1986. He prepared annual budgets for PATACS and the predecessor NCTCUG organization, and was of great help to our Treasurers through the years, since he'd served in that financial role for many years in a national model railroading club. Before the age of electronic copies of newsletters, Ron was our Exchange Newsletter Editor, where he would read print editions of other clubs' publications, make copies and parcel out articles from them to volunteers from our group to create / type word processing files so our editors could include them in our newsletters.



Ron was an Army officer during WWII, was attached to the White House Communications Agency, and completed his service as a Major. After the war, he installed communications systems in South America for Pan American Airways. Following that, he worked for, and retired from, the National Security Agency at Ft. Meade.

###

## CUSTOMIZABLE 2022 YEAR-AT-A GLANCE CALENDAR FILES

These free downloads make creation of convenient schedule reminders a snap for your family, club, or other organization

By John Krout, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society ([www.patacs.org](http://www.patacs.org))

(Editor's note: JPEG and JPG files are the same. The issue arose because Windows before Windows 95 couldn't handle file *extensions* that were more than 3 characters long. More [here](#).)

### INTRODUCTION

When I was a working manager, sometimes my employees would ask me for calendar info such as the next pay date or the next company holiday. Eventually I figured out a way to give them a convenient year-at-a-glance calendar, on a single page, customized with all of that info.

I did that by creating a year-long calendar on a single PowerPoint slide. I marked the pay dates with one highlight color and the holidays with another color. I exported the slide to a JPEG file, which can easily be distributed by email. The employees could use the calendar JPG file in several ways: printed, stored on a computer or a smart phone, with shortcuts on the main screen for easy access, and even use it as a computer desktop background.

Now I am making that same capability available to you, in PowerPoint and LibreOffice Impress files, free for downloading and customizing. Customized single-page calendars might be ideal to print and put on a wall, or posted on social media or another web site, or used as outlined above. In this pandemic era, any additional way to provide the group members with reminders to participate is very valuable.

Initially I have posted the 2022 files online for free downloading. I intend to make year-at-a-glance files for later years available online in the quarter before next year starts.

### KEY FEATURES OF THE FILES

The entire calendar on a single slide is a very large **table**. A table is a widely used method for organizing information in rows and columns. Tables have been a part of office applications for many years. It originated in spreadsheets, but some of the same features are available in word processor applications and in presentation applications like PowerPoint and Impress.

Each open space within a table, an intersection of a row and column, is called a **cell**. Each cell can contain text. I have filled in all the days for the calendar months in 2022.

Also, each cell can contain highlighting. I provide a bit of space below the calendar for inclusion of text boxes to provide a color key. Below, in **Illustration 1**, you will see an example of a customized 2022 calendar I prepared for my local computer club, the Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society.

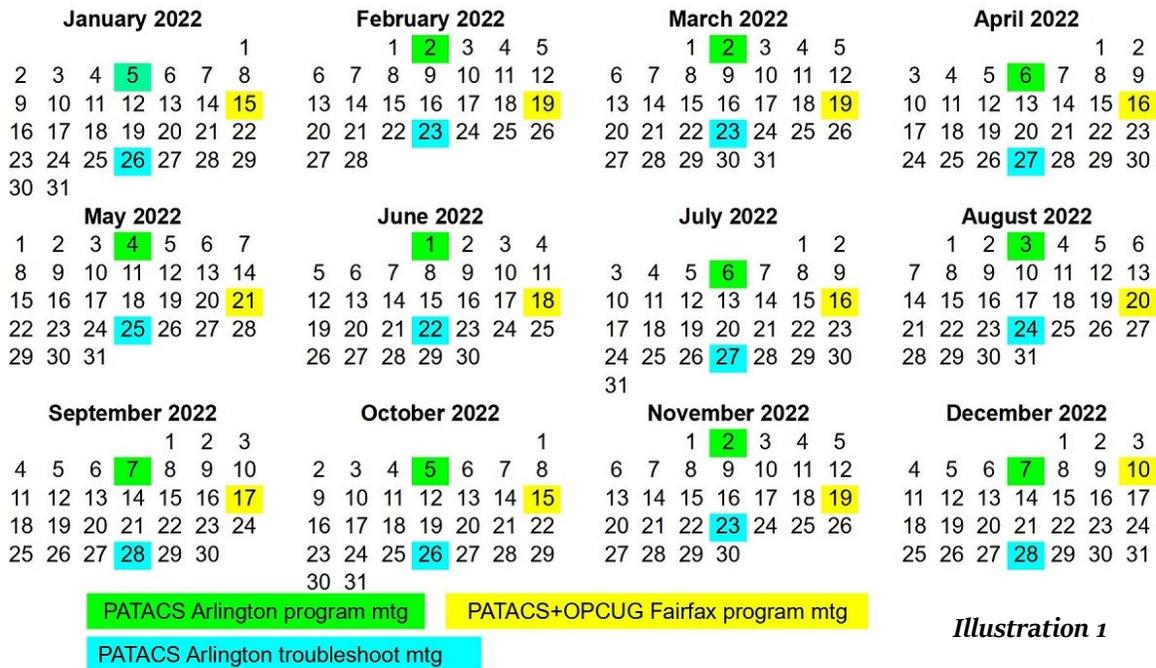


Illustration 1

### HOW TO CUSTOMIZE THE FILES

Save a copy of the unmodified year-at-a-glance file on your computer. Each time you want to make a new year-at-a-glance calendar, make a copy of the file, and name that copy for the group whose events or meetings you will customize on the calendar. Always customize the copy, not the original file.

Decide which types of events you will mark on the calendar. Keep in mind you will also create an event key on the same slide, and room for that is modest at best. If you want to mark a great variety of events, then you will also need to create an event key with many separate colors and relatively small text.

Open the year-at-a-glance file. Select the slide on which the un-customized calendar appears. That slide is the second one in the file.

Choose a color for each event type. In the example, I included three types of events and used three colors.

For each event type, apply the event color to the dates on which the event type appears. This is known as highlighting, just like using a highlighting marker in a physical textbook or handout. In the year-at-a-glance files, I have included instructions for how to apply highlighting.

During this process, it is prudent to save your customization work frequently.

Create an event key on the bottom of the customized calendar slide. I used text boxes to accomplish that. For each event type, I applied the same highlighting color in the text box containing that event type name.

Once you have finished your calendar customization and saved your finished work, you can export the customized calendar slide in a form that makes it easy to distribute to your group. Instructions for exporting are included in each file.

For most purposes, including printing, use on a Windows 10 computer, and use on portable devices running Android 11, I recommend exporting as a JPEG image.

I have also included in the year-at-a-glance files instructions for Windows 10 use of a JPEG file as a desktop background, for Windows 10 creation of a desktop shortcut for accessing a JPEG file, and for Android 11 creation of a home screen shortcut.

Additionally, for iOS users, it is valuable to rotate the calendar JPEG image to portrait orientation and convert the rotated JPEG to a PDF. The PDF version enables users to create a shortcut on the home screen of their iOS devices. Apple, for a reason unknown to me, does not permit creation of a shortcut for a photo using iOS 15. Instructions for rotation and conversion are supplied in the year-at-a-glance files.

## BLACK &amp; WHITE CALENDAR FOR PRINT PUBLICATION

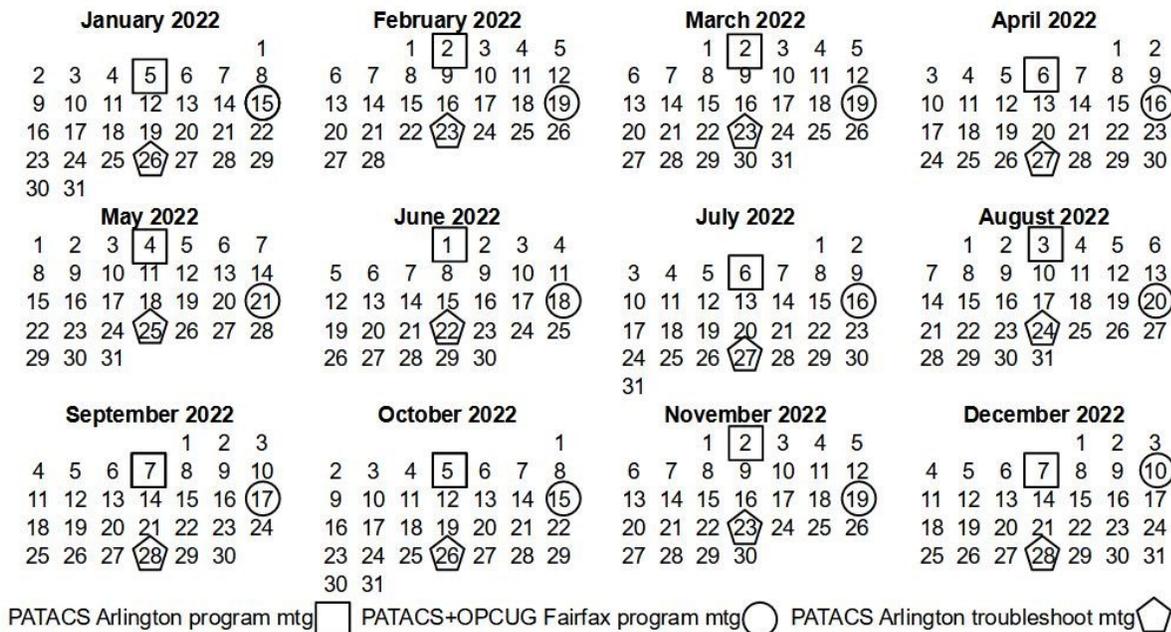


Illustration 2

The calendar can appear in a newsletter if room is available. If physical newsletter copies are printed in black & white, colors will appear as gray shades and may make it difficult for readers to see the dates. In that case, it may be useful to make a second customized black & white calendar, applying **shapes** such as circles, squares and pentagons around dates.

You can see an example in **Illustration 2**. I created this black & white example using the **Impress 2022** year-at-a-glance calendar file, with each of the symbols sized at 0.30 by 0.30 inches.

## DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE CUSTOMIZED CALENDAR

The customized calendar JPEG and PDF files are modestly sized. The files can be distributed by email, on an organization web site, or on an organization's social media page.

## HOW TO OBTAIN THE CALENDAR FILES

I have posted the 2022 year-at-a-glance calendar files on the Internet in both PowerPoint and LibreOffice Impress files. Here are the links for downloading the files.

**LibreOffice Impress file ODP**

[2022 year-at-a-glance](#)

**PowerPoint file PPT**

[2022 year-at-a-glance](#)

I hope you find that your effort turns out to be valuable for all who use the customized calendars you create.

**John Krout** has been writing and speaking about creative uses of personal computers since the early 1980s. Now retired, he enjoyed a long career as a software designer and developer for federal government contractors creating or maintaining large federal agency computer systems. He lives in Arlington, VA.

###

## **Backup Using Windows 10 – Protect your Data (and System)**

By Phil Sorrentino, Newsletter Contributor, Sarasota Technology Users Group

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As many of us have learned from hearing some sad stories, data backup needs to be an integral part of using our computers. As such, you would think that the Operating System developer would have included backup as part of the OS; well, fortunately, they did. Not only did Microsoft include the ability to back up your data, but it included the ability to back up your system as well. Although Windows 10 offers these backup solutions, this has not always been the case. In the Operating System's early days (maybe all the way leading up to Windows 7), Data and System backup was left to third-party software developers, who provided software such as Acronis True Image, Goodsync, and Macrium Reflect. So, at this point, many of us are using other solutions for backup, like FreeFileSync for data backup and EaseUs Todo for system backup. But the Windows 10 features may be a good choice for someone who does not want to get involved with new applications but wants to start to protect their data at least, and possibly even have a system image backup.

This may be obvious, but the reason for having a backup is to restore a file, a folder, or a collection of files and folders if something is accidentally destroyed or deleted. The backup is just a copy, an exact duplicate, and is not processed in any way so that the backup files can be used by any programs that could use the original files. (Most backup software does not process the data files at all, but some backup software does. Some backup applications process the files to make the resulting backup files smaller, probably to save space, but this makes the files useable only by the backup application and not the original applications.)

So, first, let's review the difference between data and system. Data are all the files created by applications. This could be documents which may be the output from Word or Excel, pictures

that come from a camera or your phone, music purchased from iTunes, videos that have been produced by MovieMaker, financial and tax records that TurboTax may have produced, etc. Data are basically all the "stuff" you produce while using your computer software applications. Hopefully, in File Explorer, you have the "File name extensions" box in the View Tab checked so you can identify these files. Once that box is checked you will see file extensions on each file like .docx, .xlsx, .jpg, .png, .mp3, .wav, .mov, .avi, .ttax. Hopefully, most of these are familiar to you.

System, on the other hand, is a copy of the Operating System and all of its components (referred to as the Operating Environment), as they exist in the memory of your operating computer. This includes installed applications like Photoshop, anti-virus, and anti-malware software like Malwarebytes, added Utilities like CCleaner, drivers added to the OS, and updates to all the above. The resulting system backup file(s) is(are) typically referred to as an image (of the Operating Environment). The image can only be created by a specific imaging program, and the image created can then only be used by that same imaging program to restore the image. (The reason for having an image is to be able to re-install your "Operating Environment" if, or rather when, a virus or hardware problem makes your system unusable. For example, ever have a disk failure or a malware infection?)

Now that we know what is being protected when we say data or system backup, let us look at the backup features provided in Windows 10. The data backup feature is in the "Update & Security" section of Settings. (Windows Start – Settings – Update & Security) Next, choose Backup in the list on the left. The backup feature is called "Back up using File History." The first step is to connect an external or portable drive to the computer using one of the USB connectors and then click the "+ Add a drive." Next in the list of drives, select the drive you just connected. This will change the "+" to "Automatically back up my files" with the switch set to "On." Your added drive is now set up to be the backup drive. Next, select "More Options" so you can determine how often your files are backed up (default is "every hour"), how long to keep your backup files (default is "forever," but "until space is needed" may be a better choice), and what files are backed up. (To remove a folder, click the folder and then click "Remove," to add a folder, click "+Add a folder" under "Back up these folders." There is even an "Exclude these folders" option at the end of the list of folders.) If, or when, you no longer want to backup to the drive shown, click "Stop using drive" under "Backup to a different drive." To restore a file or folder from a backup drive, choose "Restore files from a current backup" at the bottom of the "Backup options."

Creating a system image is, as usual, a little more complicated. It is not in Settings, but rather it is in the Control Panel. Click the Search icon next to the Start button and type in Control.

Select "Control Panel" and when in Control Panel select "Backup and Restore (Windows 7)." (I know this is Windows 10.) Choose "Create a system image" on the left side of the "Backup or Restore your files", then choose "Create a system image." On the "Where do you want to save the backup" screen, select a hard drive. Select the C: drive if it is not selected already on the "Which drives do you want to include in the backup" screen. And finally, on the "Confirm your settings" screen, review the settings and "Start the backup." You will also have to "Create a system repair disc" to use to boot your system. Restoring your system image is done by selecting "Restore my files" on the bottom of the "Backup or Restore your files" screen. Creating a system image is relatively easy; however, "Restoring" an image takes a little training, even though the individual steps are not difficult. My practical feeling is that Restoring an image should be done only by, or with the help of, a tech-savvy friend. Even if you don't attempt to create/restore an image, make sure you backup your data.

###

## Bitcoin - the New Gold?

By David Kretchmar, Computer Technician  
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In March 2021, **the total market value of Bitcoin exceeded one trillion dollars** for the first time. In addition, each individual bitcoin recently touched a value of over \$60,000 before falling back.

Bitcoin's pullback was precipitated by Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell when he made what was perceived as negative comments about Bitcoin. "Crypto assets are highly volatile—see Bitcoin—and therefore not useful as a store of value. Moreover, they're not backed by anything. Instead, they're more of an asset for speculation. It is essentially a substitute for gold rather than the dollar." Powell also reiterated the IRS's position that sellers and spenders of bitcoins would be required to report capital gains as though Bitcoins were stock.





To put this gold/bitcoin comparison in perspective, **the total market value of gold in the world is about 10 trillion dollars, ten times the total market value of Bitcoin.**

In this discussion, I'm using the term "Bitcoin" to represent the numerous crypto currencies such as Ethereum and 100 smaller cryptocurrencies, many offering very different features and superior to bitcoin by some measures.

Nevertheless, Bitcoin is the most widely known, and Bitcoin's value currently represents almost 90% of the total value of all cryptocurrencies.

### Durability

Gold is an inert element that does not oxidize. Bitcoin is dependent on the internet and all of the decentralized participants in its operation. So, if there is some global catastrophe that destroys the internet, then only gold survives. But for anything less than that, Bitcoin and gold are equally durable. A much more likely scenario is the internet suffering some serious but limited issues and being problematic for days or weeks. Without the internet, all financial institutions would have problems functioning. Some theorize that because of its decentralized structure, Bitcoin might emerge as "the peoples" money in the event of an internet meltdown. Bitcoin is currently preferred in nations like Venezuela and other third-world countries, where the fiat currency (Ed's note: money not backed up by any commodity, such as gold or silver) issued by the government has become virtually worthless.

### Transferability



You can trade gold on paper if you are willing to assume third-party risk, which defeats part of the purpose of holding gold. To transfer physical gold, you usually need to move it. Large quantities of gold are heavy and difficult, and expensive to transfer securely. Commissions can be excruciating for small gold transactions.

Bitcoin can be sent to another address controlled by somebody anywhere in the world in seconds, and the transfer is confirmed and permanently recorded in minutes. Thus, Bitcoin is infinitely more transferable than gold.

## Divisibility

It is difficult to divide gold, particularly for small amounts. Bitcoin can be subdivided today into 100,000,000 units called satoshis, and the protocol could be extended in the future to support even smaller amounts if that becomes necessary. Bitcoin is infinitely more divisible than gold.

## Scarcity

The scarcity of gold is well understood; in the history of humankind, about 6 billion troy ounces of gold have been produced, 90% of which is estimated to exist still. All the gold ever mined would fit inside a 20-meter cube. The world's supply of produced gold increases by roughly 1 - 2% each year, depending on the metal price and discoveries of deposits.



Bitcoin has a limit of 21,000,000 units, including Bitcoins permanently out of circulation due to lost keys. Changing the rules to allow more units of Bitcoin would require a consensus of users. This is possible, but it is very doubtful that the Bitcoin stakeholders would choose a course that would hurt the value of their assets.

Interestingly, both gold and Bitcoin are produced by "mining." Each has been mined to the extent estimated to be approaching 85 - 90% of the total quantity that will ever be produced. Thus, Bitcoin and gold are both scarce commodities.

## Recognizability

Gold can be counterfeited and sometimes needs to be tested for purity. Authentication can be tricky, but not that difficult for experienced people.

Bitcoin cannot be counterfeited, and it is easy to verify the validity of Bitcoin based on the blockchain, the shared Bitcoin ledger. As a result, Bitcoin is more recognizable than gold, at least among people who understand what a Bitcoin is.

## Taxation

Bitcoins are taxed just like stocks, with a maximum 15% or 20% rate on long-term capital

gains (assets held for at least a year). That compares favorably with most other alternative investments. But, as Jerome Powell stated, people who use Bitcoin to make a purchase create a taxable event they have to report.

Gold is taxed as a collectible, and sales do not have the advantage of favorable long-term capital gain treatment. When sold, gold gains are taxed at the individual's ordinary income tax rate to a maximum of 28%. Gold buyers may also have to pay sales tax, depending on relevant state laws.

## Conclusions

Gold and Bitcoin, as different as they are, both have good investment vehicles and sound money characteristics. As more people grow comfortable with Bitcoin and understand how it works, Bitcoin will replace gold as a store of value. This is precisely what we see happening right now. If this continues, some specialists predict the price of Bitcoin in US dollars should stabilize at \$300,000 - \$500,000, but it's going to be volatile. Any investment with tremendous upside potential also has massive downside risk.

Price is ultimately determined by supply and demand. Demand comes from widespread recognition, a liquid market, and sustained interest. Bitcoin has been unique, achieving a worldwide network in less than 15 years. Other currencies are acknowledging Bitcoin and even inking their value to Bitcoin. The US and other countries are looking into issuing their own digital currencies. Individuals and vendors worldwide are beginning to adopt Bitcoin as a payment mechanism and as stored value.

Bitcoin is becoming a valued currency not by force of government declaration or people's acquiescence but by recognition and widespread acceptance.

###

## Linux as an Alternative Operating System

By Joe Callison, Author, GEEK FREE & FOR~GO (For Geeks Only) blogs; Convener, Seniors Computer Club of Greater Kansas City, Senior Techies SIG

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For decades, computer hobbyists looking for a free or low-cost alternative to Microsoft Windows or Apple macOS operating systems have turned to Linux. Because of its reliability, modest hardware resource requirements, and low cost, it is now widely used for embedded operating systems for smart devices and a large percentage of computer servers powering

companies and the internet. In recent years, improvements in the distribution process by organizations such as Ubuntu have made it more accessible to even those with modest computer skills by using bootable “live” CD or USB downloads that let you try it out without installing on the computer unless you choose to do so. Of course, the performance will be much faster when installed rather than running from the CD or USB files.

**CAUTION:** Choosing to install Linux on a computer will reformat and overwrite your existing files and operating system unless you do it properly to allow dual-booting Linux with your existing operating system! If you are unsure about the process, get help!

Great improvements in the available graphical user interfaces have made Linux very user-friendly for existing Windows and macOS users, with some user interfaces even mimicking much of the look and feel of those operating systems.

What is Linux? <https://www.linux.com/what-is-linux/>

History of Linux [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Linux](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Linux)

Linux Distributions <https://distrowatch.com/>

Some of the Best Distributions for Windows (or macOS) Users in 2021  
<https://www.fossmint.com/linux-distribution-for-windows-users/>

Some of the Best Distributions for Beginners, Mainstream and Advanced Users in 2021  
<https://www.techradar.com/best/best-linux-distros>

Linux is a great choice for those wanting to continue using an older desktop or laptop computer that does not have the resources to run the latest operating system version from Microsoft or do so satisfactorily, or use it as a Linux computer to explore its capabilities.

One of the benefits of Linux is the huge availability of free quality software to try out. You may be familiar with some of the most popular ones that have also been available for Windows users, such as LibreOffice (Microsoft Office alternative), GIMP (photo editor), Audacity (music editor), VLC (media player), and many others.

###

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The next issue will be in about 7 weeks—**March 2022**

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# First Class

AFFIX  
FIRST  
CLASS  
POSTAGE

TEMP-RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

As our monthly meeting schedules start to revert to pre-pandemic types, be sure to check the web site (below) for up-to-date information. Meeting time & locations listed below are either *Zoom-only* (Z) or Hybrid (in-person & Z) marked by an (H).

General Meeting in Arlington	7:00 – 9:00 PM	1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday	Z
Board of Directors Meeting	7:00 – 9:00 PM	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday	Z
Fairfax General Meeting	12:45 – 3:30 PM	3 <sup>rd</sup> Saturday	Z
Technology & PC Help Desk in Arlington	7:00 – 9:00 PM	4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday	Z

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## PATACS Event Information

Call 703-370-7649 for Meeting Announcements

Web site: <https://www.patacs.org>

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