More class design with C++

Starting Savitch Chap. 11

Member or non-member function?

- Class operations are typically implemented as member functions
  - Declared inside class definition
  - Can directly access private members
  - Usually the task involves only one object (this)
- But some operations are more appropriate as ordinary (nonmember) functions
  - Declared outside any class definition
  - Usually the task involves more than one object
  - Cannot access private members of a class though
    - Unless they are `friend`s of the class

Implementing an ordinary function

- Consider an equality function for DayOfYear
  – Comparing two objects, so a non-member function

```
bool equal(DayOfYear date1, DayOfYear date2) {
   return date1.get_month() == date2.get_month()
          && date1.get_day() == date2.get_day();
}
```

- Why is function equal not very efficient?
  – Each call to a public accessor function requires "overhead" costs – to manage new stack frames
  – Accessing `date1.month` is simpler, more efficient
    - But it is also illegal! Unless …

friends

- Can be a function or (rarely) a whole other class
- Not class members, but can access private members of a class that has declared it as a friend
- Declared inside class by keyword `friend`

```
class DayOfYear {
public:
    friend bool equal(DayOfYear date1,
                      DayOfYear date2);
```

- Implement without `DayOfYear::`
  - Okay to use private members of DayOfYear though

A Money class with a friend

```
class Money {
public:
    friend Money add (Money, Money);
    ...
private:
    long cents;
};
Money add (Money amt1, Money amt2) {
    Money temp;
    temp.cents = amt1.cents + amt2.cents;
    return temp;
}
```

- Why is this still inefficient? How to improve it?

Parameter passing efficiency

- The add function uses "call-by-value" parameters
  - *Copies* of objects are created and then later destroyed
- Using "call-by-reference" parameters is more efficient – no copies (at that stage anyway):

```
friend Money add (Money &, Money &);
...
Money add (Money &amt1, Money &amt2) {...}
```

- But a new problem now: can't pass it constant objects – even though it doesn't change them

const

- Part of an object's type in C++

```
const int x = 12;
```

// must initialize on creation; can never change afterwards

```
someFunction(x);
```

// error if parameter is `int&` without `const`

- Good classes support constant objects: "SCO"

```
friend Money add (const Money &, const Money &);
...
Money add(const Money &amt1, const Money &amt2){…}
```

- But what about `amt1.getCents()` inside add?
  - Answer: won't compile! Unless getCents() is const too:

```
long getCents() const;
...
long Money::getCents const { return cents; }
```

Operator function overloading

- Example: `ADT operator+(const ADT &, const ADT &);`
  - Overloads `+` to return an `ADT` object (hopefully the sum of the two `ADT` arguments – best to not change operator's meaning)
- Can overload almost any C++ operator
  - At least one argument must be a user-defined type
  - Precedence, "narity", and associativity rules apply as usual
    - e.g., `+` has usual precedence, is binary or unary, l-r
    - e.g., `=` has lower precedence, is binary only, r-l
  - See other rules on page 629 of the Savitch text
- But "just because you can does not mean you should"
  - e.g., a bad idea to overload `,` or `&&` or `||` even if legal
  - And should always maintain the expected operator behavior

Operator functions for Money

- Replace add function with operator +

```
friend Money operator+
   (const Money &, const Money &);
...
Money operator+(const Money &amt1, const
  Money &amt2){ /* same implementation as add */ }
```

- Replace equal function with operator ==

```
friend bool operator== (const Money &,
  const Money &);
...
bool operator== (const Money &amt1,
  const Money &amt2) {
   return amt1.cents == amt2.cents;
}
```

2 ways to use operator functions

`Money a(100), b(50);` // two Money objects

- Can add/compare by functional notation:

  `Money sum1 = operator+(a, b);`

  `if ( operator==(a, b) )` … // false in this case

- But now can use infix notation too:

  `Money sum2 = a + b;`

  `if ( sum1 == sum2 )` … // true in this case

- By the way: C++ will try to convert any function argument to match the parameter type

  `if ( sum1 == 150 )` … // still true! See next slide.

Implicit type conversion in C++

- Converting ctors – e.g., `Money(long dollars);`
  - Any ctor that takes exactly one argument
  - Invoked whenever an argument of that type is passed to a function that expects an object
    - In the case on previous slide – 150 converted to Money(150)
- Operator conversion functions – inverse idea
  - Specify types to which an object may be converted
  - Say class Money has `operator double() const;`
    - Means a Money object can be implicitly converted to `double` in certain circumstances, like `cout << sum1;`
  - Better to overload `<<` instead for this purpose though

Member vs. non-member ops

- Recall that some functions are more naturally defined as class members
  - Specifically, any function that needs a `this` pointer:
    - e.g., ++, +=, … all need to change the object
  - And there are four operators that can only be overloaded as class members: `=`, `()`, `[]`, and `->`
- Sometimes non-member functions better though
  - e.g., binary functions, where the order of the arguments doesn't matter:
    - e.g., `==`, `<`, …, and binary forms of `+`, `-`, `*`, `/`, `%`
  - Also when must access other types – like << and >> that require access to ostream and istream (`cout`, `cin`)

Overloading << and >>

- Want to do: `cout << cost << endl;`
  - Need: `friend ostream& operator<< (ostream& outs, const Money& amount);`

```
...
ostream& operator<<( ostream& outs, const
  Money& amount) {
    // print to outs using << as usual (e.g., outs << cents;)
    return outs; // must return the ostream reference
}
```

- Want to do: `cin >> price >> tax;`
  - Need: `friend istream& operator>> (istream& ins, Money& amount);`

About member operator functions

- First argument is `this` – but it's hidden
  - Always the left argument of binary operations
  - So there can be no implicit conversion of left argument – must be object of the correct type
  - Is the only argument of unary operations
- Often return `*this` to allow operation chaining
  - e.g., imagine a Money += (compound assignment op)

```
Money& operator+= (const Money &right);
...
Money& Money::operator+= (Money const &right) {
    return *this = *this + right;
}  // assuming operator= and operator+ are both already defined
```

- Note: two versions of `operator++` and `operator--`
- And usually want two versions of `operator[]`

Three free member operators

- By default, for any class C (even `class C {};`), the compiler supplies three member operators
- An assignment operator

```
C& operator=(const C &);
```

  - Like a free copy ctor … makes a shallow copy
  - So often necessary to redefine it to make a deep copy
- And two different address-of operators
  - One for mutable objects:

```
C* operator&();
```

  - And one for constant objects:

```
const C* operator&() const;
```

  - No good reason to redefine either of these functions!

Classes with dynamic memory

- Must properly manage – to avoid memory leaks
  - C++ does not have an automatic garbage collector – so C++ programmers are responsible for returning memory to the free store
- Example class from text (Display 11.11): `StringVar`

```
...
private:
  char *value; // pointer to dynamic array of characters
  int max_length; //declared max length of array
```

  - Point is to hold/manage a C-string of any length

Managing dynamic memory

- Constructor (usually) allocates it

```
StringVar(const char a[]);
...
StringVar::StringVar(const char a[]) :
                     max_length(strlen(a)) {
    value = new char[max_length + 1];
    strcpy(value, a);
}
```

- But what happens when the object is destroyed?

```
StringVar s1("hot");  // on stack, will go out of scope soon
```

- Solution is to define a destructor (a.k.a. dtor)

Destructors - dtors

- A dtor is invoked whenever an object goes out of scope, or by `delete` for objects on free store
  - Compiler supplies a default one if you don't
  - Default won't free dynamic memory or other resources
- Defined like a ctor, but with a ~ in front, and it may not take any arguments

```
~StringVar();
...
StringVar::~StringVar() { delete [] value; }
```

- *Can* invoke directly on an object (unlike ctors)

```
stringPtr->~StringVar();  // rarely done though
```

Manager functions (inc. Big 3)

- 4 functions every class must properly manage:
  - <u>Default ctor</u>, <u>copy ctor</u>, <u>dtor</u>, and <u>assignment operator</u>
    - Compiler supplies defaults of all 4, but often should redefine
  - Latter three also known as "The Big Three" – *if you need to redefine one of them, then you need to redefine all three of them*
- Copy ctor – `StringVar(const StringVar&);`
  - Compiler-supplied version makes a "shallow copy"
  - Invoked when initializing with object as argument: `StringVar s(otherString);`
    - Or by "C-style" syntax: `StringVar s = otherString;`
  - Also invoked to pass (or return) an object by value to (or from) a function

See 11-11.cpp and 11-12.cpp (also in ~mikec/cs32/Savitch/Chapter11/)

Implementing StringVar copy ctor

- Question: why not just keep the default copy ctor for StringVar objects?
- Ans: Need a complete, independent copy of the argument – even if the argument is *this
  - Therefore must create new dynamic array, and copy all characters to the new array

```
StringVar::StringVar(const StringVar& other) :
  max_length(other.length()) {
    value = new char[max_length + 1];
    strcpy(value, other.value);
}
```

Why redefine the = operator?

- Given these declarations:
  `StringVar s1("cat"), s2("rabbit");`
- The following statement is legal:
  `s1 = s2;`
- But without redefining operator=, we would have s1.value and s2.value both pointing to the same memory location (a "shallow copy")
  – Furthermore, s1's old value is now a memory leak
- So:

```
StringVar& StringVar::operator=
                (const StringVar& right);
```

Defining operator= [version 1]

- The definition of = for StringVar could be as follows:

```
StringVar& StringVar::operator=
                   (const StringVar& right){

    int new_length = strlen(right.value);
    if (( new_length) > max_length)
        new_length = max_length;

    for(int i = 0; i < new_length; i++)
        value[i] = right.value[i];
    value[new_length] = '\0';
}
```

- Notice anything wrong with this version?

Defining operator= [version 2]

```
StringVar& StringVar::operator=
                      (const StringVar& right){
    delete[] value;
    int new_length = strlen(right.value);
    max_length = new_length;
    value = new char[max_length + 1];

    for(int i = 0; i < new_length; i++)
        value[i] = right.value[i];
    value[new_length] = '\0';
}
```

- That solves problem of incompletely copied strings, but …
- What if somebody uses it as follows? `s1 = s1;`

Defining operator= [finally?]

- Idea is to delete value only if more space needed:

```
StringVar& StringVar::operator=
                     (const StringVar& right){
    int new_length = strlen(right.value);
    if (new_length > max_length) {
        delete[] value;
        max_length = new_length;
        value = new char[max_length + 1];
    }
    for(int i = 0; i < new_length; i++)
        value[i] = right.value[i];
    value[new_length] = '\0';
}
```