Practical multicore programming

The DRF fragment

Luc Maranget

Run faster.

Some programs are much easier to write that way (e.g. avoid asynchronous IO).

Run faster, our running example

The $n$ queens puzzle: placing $n$ chess queens on an $n \times n$ chessboard so that no two queens threaten each other.

A classics in backtracking: place one queen per row, from top to bottom:

```c
int solve(int n, int row, int *cols) {
    if (row == n) return 1;
    int r = 0;
    for (int i = 0; i < n; i++) {
        if (ok(i,row,cols)) {
            cols[row] = i;
            r += solve(n,row+1,cols);
        }
    }
    return r;
}
```

Demo (in queens):

```bash
% ./q.out -v -v 8 2>&1 | less
...```

Run faster, sequentially

Simple implementation (demo in queens):

```bash
% safe ./q.out 15
2279184
status: 0
real: 34.70
user: 34.57
sys: 0.01
```

Optimised implementation (demo in queens):

```bash
safe ./fast.out 15
2279184
status: 0
real: 0.66
user: 0.66
sys: 0.00
```

Optimisations: symmetries, integers as bitsets, avoiding function calls... The point is: parallelize the fastest program, not the slowest.
Faster without threads

A process in three steps

- Place queens in the first \( d \) rows.
- Count how many ways there are for placing the remaining \( n - d \) queens.
- Sum counts.

Step 2 can run concurrently...

Demo (queens), two C programs:

- \( \text{gen.out} \ -d[n] \text{ n} \): place the first \( d \) queens.
- \( \text{run.out} \): count solutions with the first \( d \) queens placed as read on standard input.

The programs \( \text{gen.out} \) and \( \text{run.out} \) communicate through files.

We shall concurrently run the requested invocations of \( \text{run.out} \), by using a shell script, a Makefile, or the parallel utility.

Before we parallelize, a quiz

How do we solve the 8-queens puzzle?

- With \( ./\text{gen.out} \) only: set \( d = 8 \).
  
  \[
  \%
  ./\text{gen.out} \ -d8
  \begin{array}{cccccccc}
  8 & 8 & 0 & 4 & 7 & 5 & 2 & 6 \\
  1 & 8 & 0 & 5 & 7 & 2 & 6 & 3 \\
  \end{array}
  \]
  \[
  \ldots
  \begin{array}{cccccccc}
  4 & 5 & 8 & 5 & 7 & 1 & 3 & 0 \\
  6 & 4 & 2
  \end{array}
  \]
  With symmetry: \( 46 \times 2 \rightarrow 92 \) solutions.

- With \( ./\text{run.out} \) only: set \( d = 0 \).
  
  \[
  \%
  ./\text{run.out}
  \begin{array}{cccc}
  0 & 8 & 0
  \end{array}
  \]
  \[
  92
  \]

Aggressive parallelism

\[
\%
\text{sh} \ \text{shell.sh} \ 17 \ > \ A/\text{script.sh}
\]

Here is \text{script.sh}:

\# Fork the computing processes, one per line of "\text{gen.out} 17" output
( echo 0 17 2 0 2 | \text{../run.out} > 000.out ) &
( echo 1 17 2 0 3 | \text{../run.out} > 001.out ) &
...
( echo 119 17 2 14 16 | \text{../run.out} > 119.out ) &
\# Wait for the computing processes to terminate
wait
\# Sum partial results
\text{cat} 000.out 001.out ... 119.out > 17.out
( echo 0 \&\& \text{awk} '{printf("%s \n",$1)}' 17.out \&\& echo p ) | \text{dc}
\%
\text{safe sh} \ \text{script.sh}
95815104
real: 11.93
user: 46.46
sys: 0.13

\textbf{Drawback:} Why run more than 4 processes at the same time on a 2 core \( \times 2 \) hyperthreaded machine?

Controlling parallelism with make \(-j\ N\)

\[
\%
\text{sh} \ \text{make.sh} \ 17 \ > \ B/\text{Makefile}
\]

The Makefile:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{all:} & \ 17.out \\
& \text{\( @\)} (\text{echo} 0 \&\& \text{awk} '{print("%s +\n",$1)}' \ 17.out \&\& \text{echo p} ) \text{ | dc}
\end{align*}
\]

\text{OUT :=} \ 000.out ... 119.out

\text{17.out:} \ \$(OUT)

\text{\( @\text{cat} \$(OUT) \to 17.out\)}

\text{000.out:}

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{echo} 1 \ 20 \ 15 \ 1 \ 1 \ 1 \ 1 \ 1 \ | \ \text{../run.out} \ > \ \$
\end{align*}
\]

\text{063.out:}

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{echo} \ 63 \ 20 \ 15 \ 1 \ 2 \ 3 \ 3 \ 3 \ | \ \text{../run.out} \ > \ \$
\end{align*}
\]

\# My machine has 2 X 2 virtual processors
\text{\% safe \ make -C B -j 4}
\text{make: Entering directory '/home/maranget/MPRI/01/queens/B'}
\text{echo 0 17 2 0 2 | \text{../run.out} > 000.out}
...

95815104
\text{make: Leaving directory '/home/maranget/MPRI/01/queens/B'}
status: 0
real: 12.04
user: 46.23
sys: 0.17

\# make \(-j\) 2 worth trying!
With the parallel utility

Usage:

```
parallel -j N command -- A_1 ... A_n
```

Will run \( n \) invocations of `command` on arguments \( A_1 ... A_n \), with at most \( N \) invocations running concurrently.

This interface is not ideal, as our program `run.out` reads its arguments from standard input.

Easily corrected:

```
% cat run.sh
#! /bin/sh
echo $1 | ./run.out
```

Using the parallel utility

A parallel.sh script that combines `gen.out` and the parallel utility:

```
... ./gen.out -gG $N \n  ( while read arg; do A="'$arg' $A"; done
  eval "parallel $J sh ./run.sh -- $A"
  awk '{printf("%s +
",$1)}'
  echo p
 ) | dc
```

Demo (in queens):

```
% J="-j 4" safe sh ./parallel.sh 17
95815104
status: 0
real: 12.12
user: 46.21
sys:  0.18
```

Processes vs. threads

Up to now we used processes.

A process is the running instance of a program:
- A process consists in, register values, memory, file descriptors etc.
- The process owns its memory.
- Processes communicate (mostly) through the file system.

A thread is a lightweight process:
- A process may host several threads.
- A thread consists in register values, file descriptors, etc.
- The threads in a process share the memory (or part of).

Multicore programming, from inside programs

**Principle**
- Manage threads explicitly,
- threads communicate through shared memory.

**Advantages**
- Efficiency: threads cost less to create than processes. Also consider context switch cost.
- Memory is faster than files, or memory hardware is faster than disk.
- User convenience: only one program to run, no scripts.

**Issues**
- Very difficult to get right.
- Relaxed memory models...

**This class**
- Programming with the C POSIX threads library (pthreads).
- Well synchronised programs only — programming on top of the Data Race Free model (DRF).
Starting a thread, getting its result

A.k.a. “asynchronous function call” — of \( f \) that accepts an argument of type \( \text{void}^{*} \) and returns a result of type \( \text{void}^{*} \)

\[
\text{void}^{*} f (\text{void}^{*} \text{arg}) \{ \ldots \}
\]

\[
\text{void} \text{run}(\ldots) \{
    \quad \text{// Compute } f(\text{arg}) \text{ asynchronously.}
    \quad \text{void}^{*} \text{arg} = \ldots;
    \quad \text{pthread_t th ;}
    \quad \text{create_thread(&th,f,\text{arg}));}
    \quad \text{// Some computation performed concurrently with } f(\text{arg}) \ldots
    \quad \text{// Get back } f(\text{arg})
    \quad \text{void}^{*} \text{r} = \text{join_thread(&th) ;}
\}
\]

Informal semantics (man pthread_create)

\[
\text{int} \text{ pthread_create (pthread_t *} \text{th}, \ldots, \text{void}^{*}(f) (\text{void}^{*}), \text{void}^{*} \text{z})
\]

\[
\quad \text{Call } f \text{ with argument } z \text{ on a new thread whose identity is stored}
\quad \text{in } *\text{th}.
\quad \text{Returns 0 (success), or error status.}
\quad \ldots \text{ are options, which we ignore for now.}
\]

\[
\text{int} \text{ pthread_join (pthread_t th, void **r)}
\]

\[
\quad \text{If the thread identified by } \text{th} \text{ has returned } v, \text{ store } v \text{ into } *\text{r}.
\quad \text{If not, suspend and wait for } \text{th} \text{ to return.}
\quad \text{Returns 0 (success), or error status.}
\quad \text{It is an error to call } \text{pthread_join more than once on the same}
\quad \text{thread.}
\]

Notice: Threads can be created “detached”. Detached threads cannot join (and spare the needed resources).

Thread create and join, helper functions

Handle error checking — this is C!

\[
\#\text{include} <\text{pthread.h}>
\#\text{include} <\text{stdlib.h}>
\#\text{include} <\text{string.h}>
\]

\[
\quad \text{static} \text{ void exit_error (char } *\text{msg, int } \text{st}) \{
    \quad \text{fprintf(stderr, } "%s:␣%s\n", \text{msg, strerror(st));}
    \quad \text{exit(EXIT_FAILURE)};
\}
\]

\[
\quad \text{void} \text{ create_thread (pthread_t *} \text{th, void}^{*}(f) (\text{void}^{*}), \text{void}^{*} \text{x}) \{
    \quad \text{int} \text{ st} = \text{pthread_create(} \text{th, NULL, f,x));}
    \quad \text{if (st} \neq 0) \text{ exit_error(} "\text{pthread_create}" ,st) ;
\}
\]

\[
\quad \text{void} \text{ join_thread (pthread_t *} \text{th) } \{
    \quad \text{void}^{*} \text{r} ;
    \quad \text{int} \text{ st} = \text{pthread_join (} \text{th, } &\text{r});
    \quad \text{if (st} \neq 0) \text{ exit_error(} "\text{pthread_join}" ,st) ;
    \quad \text{return} \text{r} ;
\}
\]

C11 thread create and join

The “new” C11 standard defines the following functions, with shorter names and (unfortunately) a slightly different interface (in header threads.h).

\[
\text{typedef int(*thrd_start_t)(void*)} ;
\text{int thrd_create(thrd_t *} \text{thr, thrd_start_t} \text{func, void}^{*} \text{arg});
\]

\[
\quad \text{The spawned function now returns an } \text{int} \text{ (was } \text{void}^{*})
\quad \text{The ’options’ argument is no longer here.}
\]

\[
\text{int thrd_join(thrd_t *} \text{thr, int *} \text{res});
\]

\[
\quad \text{We still have: if the thread identified by } \text{thr} \text{ has returned } v, \text{ store } v \text{ into } *\text{res}.
\quad \text{But the type of } v \text{ has changed w.r.t. pthreads!}
\]

To keep things gcc simple, we stick to pthread.
Asynchronous function call, easy example I

Let us compute:

\[ \sum_{k=1}^{n} k^2 \]

Sketch
- Fork \( n \) threads to compute \( 1^1, 2^2, \ldots, n^2 \).
- Sum square as we get thread results.

Asynchronous function call, easy example II

```c
int sum(int n) {  
    // Fork
    pthread_t th[n] ;
    for (int k = 0 ; k < n ; k++)
        create_thread(&th[k],f,alloc_val(k+1)) ;

    // Retrieve and sum results
    int r = 0 ;
    for (int k = 0 ; k < n ; k++) {
        val_t *p = (val_t *)join_thread(&th[k]) ;
        r += p->v ;
        free_val(p) ;
    }
    return r ;
}
```

Asynchronous function call, easy example I

A bit of boxing.

```c
// "Boxed" int
typedef struct { int v ; } val_t ;  
// Or typedef int val_t ;
val_t *alloc_val(int i) ;
void free_val(val_t *p) ;

// Actual computation
int square(int i) { return i*i ; }

// Stub function
void *f(void *p) {
    val_t *_p = (val_t *)p ;
    int i = _p->v ;
    free_val(_p) ;
    return alloc_val(square(i)) ;
}
```

Safer and cleaner that casting "int" (or "intptr_t") into "void *" and back.

Petty optimisation: spare one thread

```c
int sum(int n) {  
    // Fork
    pthread_t th[n-1] ;
    for (int k = 0 ; k < n-1 ; k++)
        create_thread(&th[k],f,alloc_val(k+1)) ;

    // Retrieve and sum results
    int r = square(n) ;
    for (int k = 0 ; k < n-1 ; k++) {
        val_t *p = (val_t *)thread_join(&th[k]) ;
        r += p->v ;
        free_val(p) ;
    }
    return r ;
}
```
Exercise I

Count n-queens solutions using aggressive parallelism. That is write:

```c
/* count_t is the type of unsigned 64bits integers */
count_t run(int n, int depth)

Useful functions:
/* Thread create and join*/
void create_thread(pthread_t *th, void *(*f)(void *), void *x);
void *join_thread(pthread_t *th);

/* Subtask: concretely a a placement of the d first queens */
typedef struct {...} subtask_t;

/* Run a subtask */
count_t run_subtask(subtask_t *z);

typedef void emit_t(subtask_t *z);
/* Subtask generator, calls emit on all subtasks,
returns number of generated subtasks */
int generate_subtasks(int n, int depth, emit_t emit);
```

A little help

This is how one uses generator/runner for sequential computation:
(exp1/seq.out).

```c
static count_t sum;

void emit_run(subtask_t *z) {
    sum += run_subtask(z);
}

count_t run(int n, int depth) {
    sum = 0;
    (void)generate_subtasks(n,depth,emit_run);
    return sum;
}
```

Hence, write “emit” that creates threads and join on them later.
Simplification: you can assume there will be less than NTASKS subtasks.

A little more help

Define the proper type val_t for boxed count_t:

```c
typedef struct { count_t c; } val_t;

void free_val(val_t *p);
val_t *alloc_val(count_t c);
```

Define an array to store threads identifiers:

```c
static pthread_t th[NTASKS];
static int th_next;
```

Then, it’s up to you:

```c
void *run_stub(void *z) {
    count_t r = run_subtask((subtask_t *)z); free_arg(z); // Optional
    return alloc_val(r);
}

void emit_thread(subtask_t *z) {
    if (th_next >= NTASKS) exit EXIT_FAILURE; // Check enough room
    create_thread(&th[th_next],run_stub,copy_arg(z)); // NB, copy
    th_next++;
}
```

Solution I

```c
count_t run(int n, int depth) {
    count_t sum = 0;

    // Fork
    th_next = 0;
    int ntasks = generate_subtasks(n,depth,emit_thread);

    // Join
    for (int k = 0; k < ntasks; k++) {
        val_t *r = (val_t *)join_thread(&th[k]);
        sum += r->c;
        free_val(r); // optional
    }
    return sum;
}
```

Demo: Check performance (queens/tnaive.out).
Optimising the sum of squares

Avoid dynamic memory allocation (a frequent C programmer’s concern)

static volatile int sq; // Notice ‘volatile’

void *f2(void *p)
{
    int i = ((val_t *)p)->v;
    sq += i*i; // ie int x = sq; int y = i*i; sq = x + y;
    return NULL;
}

Savings achieved:
• Update running sum “sq” instead of returning boxed result.
Also notice:
• Argument space reclaimed by caller.

A simpler, broken, program

static volatile int sum = 0;
static volatile int start = 0;

void *f(void *p)
{
    while (!start); // Wait partner
    sum++;
    return NULL;
}

void run_loose(int n)
{
    int broken = 0;
    for (int k = 0; k < n; k++) {
        sum = 0; start = 0;
        pthread_t th1, th2;
        create_thread(&th1, f, NULL); create_thread(&th2, f, NULL);
        start = 1;
        (void)join_thread(&th2); (void)join_thread(&th1);
        if (sum != 2) broken++;
    }
    if (broken > 0) printf("Broken:%i/%i\n", broken, n);
}

Optimised sum of squares

int sum2(int n)
{
    sq = 0; // Be cautious
    // Fork
    pthread_t th[n]; val_t arg[n]; // Stack allocation
    for (int k = 0; k < n; k++) {
        val_t *a = &arg[k];
        a->v = k+1;
        create_thread(&th[k], f2, a);
    }
    // Join
    for (int k = 0; k < n; k++)
    (void)join_thread(&th[k]);
    return sq;
}

Do you see a problem? Yes, the program is broken...

Where broken?

The instructions sum++ performs two accesses to memory:
int x = sum; // Access R, read.
int y = x + 1; // Compute
sum = y; // Access W, write.

In our programming model (SC) accesses are atomic (they don’t mix). The effect of a program on memory results of a given interleaving of memory accesses (a.k.a a schedule).

Consider the following scheduling for threads 1 and 2:

R₁, R₂, W₂, W₁

The final value of sum is: 1.

Demo (in exp20): ./two.out
Enforcing atomicity with locks

If \([R, W]\) is considered a scheduling unit, the remaining schedules are:

\[ [R_1, W_2], [R_2, W_2], [R_1, W_1] \]

And the result is always 2.

In practice, the "scheduling unit" is defined by a lock \(L\) (or mutual exclusion lock) as:

\[
\text{lock}(L) ;
\sum++ ;
\text{unlock}(L) ;
\]

The instruction block from lock to unlock is a critical section. And there can be several locks, only the critical sections of the same lock do not mix.

Mutexes, or locks, creation

We allocate all such primitive data dynamically (calling malloc/free).

\[
\text{pthread_mutex_t *alloc_mutex(void)} \{\text{\par}
    \text{pthread_mutex_t *r = malloc_check(sizeof(*r)) ;}{\text{\par}}
    // Important, initialize mutex
    \text{int st = pthread_mutex_init(r,NULL) ;}{\text{\par}}
    \text{if (st != 0) exit_error("pthread_mutex_init",st) ;}{\text{\par}}
    \text{return r ;}{\text{\par}}
\}
\]

\[
\text{void free_mutex(pthread_mutex_t *p) \{}\text{\par}
    \text{int st = pthread_mutex_destroy(p);}{\text{\par}}
    \text{if (st != 0) error_exit("pthread_mutex_destroy",st) ;}{\text{\par}}
    \text{free(p) ;}{\text{\par}}
\}
\]

Bonus: C11 locks (not implemented yet in gcc)

\[
#include <threads.h>
\]

\[
\text{mtx_t *alloc_mutex(void)} \{\text{\par}
    \text{mtx_t *r = malloc_check(sizeof(*r)) ;}{\text{\par}}
    \text{int st = mtx_init(r,plain) ;}{\text{\par}}
    \text{if (st != thrd_success) exit_error("mtx_init",st) ;}{\text{\par}}
    \text{return r ;}{\text{\par}}
\}
\]

\[
\text{void lock_mutex(mtx_t *p) \{}\text{\par}
    \text{int st = mtx_lock(p) ;}{\text{\par}}
    \text{if (st != thrd_success) exit_error("mtx_lock",st) ;}{\text{\par}}
    \text{\par}}
\]

Etc. Notice the slightly cleaner interface... (e.g. mtx_init second argument).

Locking and unlocking (pthreads)

We only handle error-checking — this is C!

\[
\text{void lock_mutex(pthread_mutex_t *p)} \{\text{\par}
    \text{int st = pthread_mutex_lock(p) ;}{\text{\par}}
    \text{if (st != 0) exit_error("pthread_mutex_lock",st) ;}{\text{\par}}
\}
\]

\[
\text{void unlock_mutex(pthread_mutex_t *p)} \{\text{\par}
    \text{int st = pthread_mutex_unlock(p) ;}{\text{\par}}
    \text{if (st != 0) exit_error("pthread_mutex_unlock",st) ;}{\text{\par}}
\}
\]
The informal semantics of locks

A lock holds a bit of information: taken or free.

- **lock**: Acquire the lock.
  - Read status, if free, then set status to taken — *Atomically* — and return.
  - If taken then wait until free.
    - By polling the status, (busy wait),
    - or by going to sleep.
- **unlock**: Release the lock.
  - Set lock status to free,
  - then awake one sleeping thread, if any,
  - then return.

Problems with locks

**Performance:**

- Critical sections cannot execute simultaneously, and parallelism decreases. Solutions.
  - Write short critical sections, in particular avoid non-termination risks.
  - Use several locks (but see next slide).
- The code for of lock/unlock takes time. Solution: attempt balance between poll/suspend.
- Contention: when a lot of lock are performed simultaneously, performance degrades severely. Solution: hierarchical locks.

The simpler program fixed

```c
static volatile int sum = 0;
static pthread_mutex_t *mutex;

void *g(void *p) {
    lock_mutex(mutex);
    sum++;
    unlock_mutex(mutex);
    return NULL;
}

void run_locked(void) {
    sum = 0;
    mutex = alloc_mutex();
    pthread_t th1, th2;
    create_thread(&th1, f, NULL); create_thread(&th2, f, NULL);
    (void) join_thread(&th2); (void) join_thread(&th1);
    free_mutex(mutex);
    if (sum != 2) printf("Pas possible");
}
```

Problems with locks

**Correction**: Locks are error prone. One easily reaches *deadlock*:

Assume that \( f_1 \) use lock \( L_1 \) and \( f_2 \) uses \( L_2 \). Then, if \( f_1 \) and \( f_2 \) are mutually recursive, we may have the following execution trace:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thread 1</th>
<th>Thread 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lock(( L_1 ))</td>
<td>lock(( L_2 ))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lock(( L_2 ))</td>
<td>lock(( L_1 ))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unlock(( L_2 ))</td>
<td>unlock(( L_1 ))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unlock(( L_1 ))</td>
<td>unlock(( L_2 ))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a consequence, programming with lock is not compositional, saved for a crippling discipline: use only one lock (or *master lock*), or take locks following a defined order (hard to check).
Exercise II

Write the $n$-queens solver without `thread_join`.
Indeed, thread creation is (somehow) simplified, since there is no need to save threads somewhere.

```c
static volatile count_t sum;
static pthread_mutex_t *mutex;
static wait_t *wait_on; // To be defined.

void *run_stub(void *z) {
    count_t r = run_subtask((subtask_t *)z);
    free_arg(z);
    lock_mutex(mutex); sum += r; unlock_mutex(mutex);
    tick(wait_on); // Signal I am done
    return NULL;
}

void emit_thread(subtask_t *z) {
    pthread_t th; // Hum!
    // Notice detached, ie no provision for join.
    create_thread_detached(&th,run_stub,copy_arg(z));
}
```

Coding bonus

For the curious, here is the code of `create_thread_detached`:

```c
void create_thread_detached((pthread_t *th, void *(*f)(void *), void *x) {
    pthread_attr_t tattr;
    int st;
    st = pthread_attr_init(&tattr);
    if (st != 0) exit_error("pthread_attr_init",st);
    st = pthread_attr_setdetachstate(&tattr,PTHREAD_CREATE_DETACHED);
    if (st != 0) exit_error("pthread_attr_setdetachstate",st);
    st = pthread_create(th,&tattr,f,x);
    if (st != 0) exit_error("pthread_create",st);
    st = pthread_attr_destroy(&tattr);
    if (st != 0) exit_error("pthread_attr_destroy",st);
}
```

Well... Just remember that one does not join on a detached thread and thus spare the associated resources.

Breaking news: simpler coding...

```c
void create_thread_detached( pthread_t *th, void *(*f)(void *), void *x) {
    int st;
    st = pthread_create(th,NULL,f,x);
    if (st != 0) exit_error("pthread_create",st);
    st = pthread_detach(*th);
    if (st != 0) exit_error("pthread_detach",st);
}
```

Exercise II, run function

```c
count_t run(int n, int depth) {
    /* Initialise */
    mutex = alloc_mutex();
    wait_on = alloc_wait();
    sum = 0;
    /* Fork all subtasks */
    int ntasks = generate_subtasks(n,depth,emit_thread);
    /* Wait result */
    wait_done(wait_on,ntasks);
    return sum;
}
```
Real exercise II

Write the wait_t component.

```c
/* Component to wait on */
typedef struct {
    pthread_mutex_t *mutex ;
    volatile int nret ;
} wait_t ;

wait_t *alloc_wait(void) {
    wait_t *r = malloc_check(sizeof(*r)) ;
    r->nret = 0 ;
    r->mutex = alloc_mutex() ;
    return r ;
}

void tick(wait_t *p) ; // To be written
void wait_done(wait_t *p, int ntasks) ; // To be written
```

Solution II

Function tick is easy, we have seen this before:

```c
void tick(wait_t *p) {
    lock_mutex(p->mutex) ;
    p->nret++ ;
    unlock_mutex(p->mutex) ;
}
```

Function wait_on looks easy:

```c
void wait_done(wait_t *p, int ntasks) {
    while (p->nret < ntasks) ;
}
```

But...

- Busy waiting degrades performance (demo queens/busy.out, can be worse)
- We are no longer in the DRF fragment of pthreads!

Data Race Free guarantee

**Race:** occurs when two different threads access the same shared location *simultaneously*, and when at least one access is a write.

**(Non) simultaneous accesses** Accesses “ordered” by pthreads calls:

- Accesses in critical sections that use the same lock.
- Accesses performed before calling pthread_create, and accesses by the created thread.
- Accesses by thread th, and accesses performed by the caller of pthread_join(th, ...).

**DRF execution:** An execution with no data races.

**DRF guarantee:** All executions of a program whose SC executions are DRF (a DRF program) are SC. The behaviour of non-DRF programs is unspecified.

And indeed we have a race on wait_on->nret.

Data-race old-style

Simultaneous accesses to data may, in some circumstance, yield absurd results. On this machine, in 32bits mode, we execute simultaneously:

```c
void P0(void *p) {
    uint64_t *x = (uint64_t*)p;
    *x = 0x0101010101010101 ;
}
```

```c
void P1(void *p) {
    uint64_t *x = (uint64_t*)p;
    *x = 0x0101010101010101 ;
    uint64_t r = *x;
}
```

Demo:

```
# We execute the test (initial value of *x is zero)
10025054:>1:r=0x0;
29906 :>1:r=0x1010101;
9945040:>1:r=0x101010101010101;
```

Value 0x101010101010101 results from accesses to quad words not being atomic.
Ordering accesses

Critical sections restore atomicity by mutual exclusion. That is, the instructions in critical section never execute simultaneously:

Let \(a\) and \(b\) be memory accesses.

A usable (\textit{i.e.} with DRF guarantee) memory model will lift critical section ordering to memory accesses.

Ordering accesses, in pthreads

In POSIX threads, two accesses “separated” by synchronisation calls are not simultaneous. Hence, they are not \textit{racy}.

Here, accesses \(a\) and \(b\) are separated by the sequence unlock-lock.

There is more than locks: synchronisation barrier

Accesses before \((a)\) and after \((b, c)\) ea \(d\) the barrier cannot execute simultaneously. There is \textit{no data-race}.

Back to our race on \(p->nret\), bad solutions

We can...

\begin{itemize}
  \item Ignore the issue (it works on x86).
  \item Program (correctly) out of the DRF fragment (hard, non-portable [no longer true with C11], see next classes).
  \item Avoid the race, as writes to \(p->nret\) are protected by \(p->mutex\), we additionally protect reads:
\end{itemize}

\begin{verbatim}
void wait_done(wait_t *p, int ntasks) {
  for (; ; ) {
    int over;
    lock_mutex(p->mutex);
    over = p->nret >= ntasks;
    unlock_mutex(p->mutex);
    if (over) return;
  }
}
\end{verbatim}

Efficiency penalty may be severe (try, demo)\ldots It can be alleviated by introducing a sleep delay in loop (however, introduces latency).
Solving all problems

We aim at:
- The waiting thread sleeps as long as less than ntasks computing threads have ticked.
- The last thread to tick awake the main thread.

In fact, we aim at something similar to the “sleep when someone is in critical section” behavior or mutexes.

A condition variable C is a device for doing this.
- wait(C,L), release the lock L and suspend on condition C atomically.
- signal(C) wake up one thread suspended on C, if any.
- broadcast(C) wake up all threads suspended on C.

Notice that awaken threads will hold the mutex L they have released when performing wait(C,L).

A simpler example

A synchronous cell, to be used once (pthread_join may use something similar).

typedef struct {
  pthread_mutex_t *mutex;
  pthread_cond_t *cond;
  int v,something ;
} cell_t ;

// NB. alloc_cell initialises mutex and condition
cell_t alloc_cell(void) ;
void free_cell(cell_t *p) ;

// Put v in cell
void put(cell_t *p,int v) ;

//Get value from cell, suspending until something is here.
int get(cell_t *p) ;

A simpler example, continued

void put(cell_t *p,int v) {
  lock_mutex(p->mutex) ;
  if (something) {
    unlock_mutex(p->mutex) ;
    fprintf(stderr,"put␣more␣than␣once!\n") ;
    exit(2)
  }
  p->something = 1 ;
  p->v = v ;
  signal_cond(p->cond) ; // Signal (potential) reader
  unlock_mutex(p->mutex) ;
}

int get(cell_t *p) {
  int r ;
  lock_mutex(p->mutex) ;
  // Correct, when wait_cond returns only when signalled
  if (!something) wait_cond(p->cond,mutex) ;
  r = p->v ;
  unlock_mutex(p->mutex) ;
  return r ;
}

Spurious wakeups

Notice We wrote if (!something) wait_cond(...). While the preferred idiom is while (!something) wait_cond(...).

Why so?

- Spurious wakeups? wait_cond may return for any reason.
- POSIX standard allows spurious wakeups.
- Program logic (see FIFO later) often commands a loop around wait_cond anyway.
- I did not observed them,
get in presence of spurious wakeups

The function `get` must be written as follows:

```c
int get(cell_t *p) {
    int r;
    lock_mutex(p->mutex);
    // If no spurious wakeup, loop will run at most once
    while (!something) wait_cond(p->cond, mutex);
    r = p->v;
    unlock_mutex(p->mutex);
    return r;
}
```

**Exercise II with a condition variable, part A**

```c
typedef struct {
    pthread_mutex_t *mutex;
    pthread_cond_t *cond;
    volatile int nret, ntasks; // Notice ntasks kept inside
} wait_t;

wait_t *alloc_wait(void) {
    wait_t *r = malloc_check(sizeof(*r));
    r->nret = 0;
    r->ntasks = 0;
    r->mutex = alloc_mutex();
    r->cond = alloc_cond();
    return r;
}

void tick(wait_t *p);
void wait_done(wait_t *p, int ntasks);
```

**Solution II with a condition variable**

```c
void wait_done(wait_t *p, int ntasks) {
    lock_mutex(p->mutex);
    p->ntasks = ntasks;
    while (p->nret < p->ntasks)
        wait_cond(p->cond, p->mutex);
    unlock_mutex(p->mutex);
}

void tick(wait_t *p) {
    lock_mutex(p->mutex);
    p->nret++;
    if (p->ntasks > 0 && p->nret >= p->ntasks)
        signal_cond(p->cond);
    unlock_mutex(p->mutex);
}
```

**Controlled parallelism**

Remember, using `make -j N` (or `parallel -j N`) we could limit computing processes to `N` instances.

We want the same for threads.

Idea:
- Have `N` computing threads,
- which execute available subtasks one after the other, sequentially.

Sometimes called “a processor farm”, computing threads are “slaves”. A “master” allocates subtasks to slaves.
Master and slaves

Assume a (concurrent, blocking, bounded) FIFO component:

Slaves get subtasks from the FIFO:

```c
static fifo_t *fifo;
static count_t sum;
static pthread_t *mutex;

void *slave(void *) {
    for (; ; ) {
        subtask_t *z = get(fifo); // Will block if fifo is empty
        count_t c = run_subtask(z);
        free_arg(z);
        lock_mutex(mutex);
        sum += c;
        unlock_mutex(mutex);
    }
}
```

While the master (main thread) put subtasks into the fifo.

```c
void emit_fifo(subtask_t *z) {
    // Will block if fifo is full
    put(fifo, copy_arg(z));
}

int master(int n, int depth) {
    return generate_subtasks(n, depth, emit_fifo);
}
```

Let us write the fifo

Starting from a non-concurrent, non-blocking, bounded fifo.

```c
typedef struct {
    int sz;
    int fst,lst,nitems;
    subtask_t **t; // Array of (subtask_t *)
} fifo_t;

typedef enum {OK,NO} ret_val; // Return value for put below

int put(fifo_t *f, subtask_t *z) {
    if (f->nitems == f->sz) return NO;
    f->t[f->fst] = z;
    f->fst++; f->fst %= f->sz; f->nitems++;
    return OK;
}

subtask_t *get(fifo_t *f) {
    subtask_t *r;
    if (f->nitems == 0) return NULL; // special value
    r = f->t[f->fst];
    f->fst++; f->fst %= f->sz; f->nitems--;
}
```

Concurrent fifo, definition

```c
typedef struct {
    pthread_mutex_t *mutex;
    pthread_cond_t *is_empty, *is_full;
    int sz;
    int fst,lst,nitems;
    subtask_t **t;
} fifo_t;
```
Concurrent fifo, creation

```c
fifo_t *alloc_fifo(int sz) {
    fifo_t *r = malloc_check(sizeof(*r)) ;
    r->fst = r->lst = r->nitems = 0 ;
    r->sz = sz ;
    r->t = calloc(sz,sizeof(*r->t)) ;
    if (!r->t) {
        perror("calloc") ;
        exit(2) ;
    }
    r->mutex = alloc_mutex() ;
    r->is_empty = alloc_cond() ;
    r->is_full = alloc_cond() ;
    return r ;
}
```

Concurrent fifo, put

```c
void put(fifo_t *f,subtask_t *z) {
    lock_mutex(f->mutex) ;
    // If full ?
    while (f->nitems == f->sz) {
        wait_cond(f->is_full,f->mutex) ;
    }
    // Now store z
    int was_empty = f->nitems == 0 ;
    f->t[f->lst] = z ;
    f->lst++; f->lst %= f->sz ; f->nitems++ ;
    // If was empty?
    if (was_empty) {
        broadcast_cond(f->is_empty) ; // Why not signal?
    }
    unlock_mutex(f->mutex) ;
}
```

Concurrent fifo, get

```c
Exercise III!
subtask_t *get(fifo_t *f) {
    subtask_t *r ;
    lock_mutex(f->mutex) ;
    // If empty?
    while (f->nitems == 0) {
        wait_cond(f->is_empty,f->mutex) ;
    }
    // Retrieve value
    int was_full = f->nitems == f->sz ;
    r = f->t[f->fst] ;
    f->fst++; f->fst %= f->sz ; f->nitems-- ;
    // If was full
    if (was_full) {
        broadcast_cond(f->is_full) ;
    }
    unlock_mutex(f->mutex) ;
    return r ;
}
```

Why not signal (instead of broadcast) in put and get?

If you do not see, try ex3/bad.out -v 18 (code with signal in place of broadcast).

We then see no parallelism, why?

We witness the following scenario (or a similar one):
- \( N \) slaves suspend on the empty fifo,
- The master fills the fifo, awaking one slave while putting the first task.
- As a result, \( N - 1 \) tasks are suspended and no one awakes them.
How do we detect termination?

Solution (1) the wait_t component:

```c
void *slave(void *) {
    for (; ;) {
        subtask_t *z = get(fifo); // Will block if fifo is empty
        count_t c = run_subtask(z);
        ... tick(wait_on);
    }
}
```

Problem: thread resources are not reclaimed (to that aim slave should return...).

// Shall see master termination later
wait_done(wait_on, ntasks);

```c
return count;
```

(Going further: Add a kill functionality to the fifo.)

---

How do we detect termination?

Solution (2): special value NULL in fifo means that computation is over.

Master:

```c
// Shall see master termination later
put(fifo, NULL);
for (int k = 0; k < nprocs; k++)
    (void) pthread_join(&th[k]);
```

And slave:

```c
void *slave(void *) {
    for (; ;) {
        subtask_t *z = get(fifo); // Will block if fifo is empty
        if (z == NULL) {
            put(fifo, z); // For other slaves..
            return NULL;
        }
        ... return count;
    }
}
```

Notice: Fifo behaviour is instrumental. Demo: Efficiency

(queens/topt.out -j4 -d2 17).

---

Performance on some 2 cores, ×2 machine

![Graph showing performance comparison]

wall clock time in sec. P2 is the “parallel” implementation, T2 is the pthreads implementation.

---

Performance on this 2 cores, ×2 machine

![Graph showing performance comparison]

Wall clock time in sec. P2 is the “parallel” implementation, T2 is the pthreads implementation.
Performance on a 8 cores, ×2 machine

Wall clock time in sec. P8 is the "parallel" implementation, T8 is the pthreads implementation.

Performance on a 12 cores, ×2 machine

Wall clock time in sec. P12 is the "parallel" implementation, T12 is the pthreads implementation.