

## 3.8 Semaphores and Locks in Pthreads

Mutex locks are part of the Pthreads (POSIX1.c) standard.

Semaphores are not a part of Pthreads, but are in POSIX1.b.

### 3.8.1 Mutex

A Pthreads *mutex* is a lock with behavior similar to that of a Win32 `CRITICAL_SECTION`.

Operations *pthread\_mutex\_lock()* and *pthread\_mutex\_unlock()* are analogous to *EnterCriticalSection()* and *LeaveCriticalSection()*, respectively:

- A thread that calls *pthread\_mutex\_lock()* on a *mutex* is granted access to the *mutex* if no other thread owns the *mutex*; otherwise the thread is blocked.
- A thread that calls *pthread\_mutex\_lock()* on a *mutex* and is granted access to the *mutex* becomes the owner of the *mutex*.
- A thread releases its ownership by calling *pthread\_mutex\_unlock()*. A thread calling *pthread\_mutex\_unlock()* must be the owner of the *mutex*.
- There is a conditional wait operation *pthread\_mutex\_trylock(pthread\_mutex\_t\* mutex)* that will never block the calling thread.
  - If the *mutex* is currently locked, then the operation returns immediately with the error code `EBUSY`.
  - Otherwise, the calling thread becomes the owner.

Listing 3.27 shows how to use a Pthreads *mutex*.

- You initialize a *mutex* by calling the *pthread\_mutex\_init()* function. The first parameter is the address of the *mutex*. If you need to initialize a *mutex* with non-default attributes, the second parameter can specify the address of an attribute object.
- When the *mutex* is no longer needed, it is destroyed by calling *pthread\_mutex\_destroy()*.

```

#include <pthread.h>
pthread_mutex_t mutex;

void* Thread1(void* arg) {
    pthread_mutex_lock(&mutex);
    /* critical section */
    pthread_mutex_unlock(&mutex);
    return NULL;
}

void* Thread2(void* arg) {
    pthread_mutex_lock(&mutex);
    /* critical section */
    pthread_mutex_unlock(&mutex);
    return NULL;
}

int main() {
    pthread_t threadArray[2]; // array of thread IDs
    int status;                // error code
    pthread_attr_t threadAttribute; // thread attribute
    // initialize mutex
    status = pthread_mutex_init(&mutex, NULL);
    if (status != 0) { /* See Listing 1.4 for error handling */ }
    // initialize the thread attribute object
    status = pthread_attr_init(&threadAttribute);
    if (status != 0) { /* ... */ }
    // set the scheduling scope attribute
    status = pthread_attr_setscope(&threadAttribute,
        PTHREAD_SCOPE_SYSTEM);
    if (status != 0) { /* ... */ }
    // Create two threads and store their IDs in array threadArray
    status = pthread_create(&threadArray[0], &threadAttribute, Thread1, (void*) 1L);
    if (status != 0) { /* ... */ }
    status = pthread_create(&threadArray[1], &threadAttribute, Thread2, (void*) 2L);
    if (status != 0) { /* ... */ }
    status = pthread_attr_destroy(&threadAttribute); // destroy attribute object
    if (status != 0) { /* ... */ }
    // Wait for threads to finish
    status = pthread_join(threadArray[0], NULL);
    if (status != 0) { /* ... */ }
    status = pthread_join(threadArray[1], NULL);
    if (status != 0) { /* ... */ }
    // Destroy mutex
    status = pthread_mutex_destroy(&mutex);
    if (status != 0) { /* ... */ }
}

```

Listing 3.27 Using Pthreads *mutex* objects.

When you declare a static *mutex* with default attributes, you can use the `PTHREAD_MUTEX_INITIALIZER` macro instead of calling `pthread_mutex_init()`.

In Listing 3.27, we could have written:

```
pthread_mutex_t mutex = PTHREAD_MUTEX_INITIALIZER;
```

You do not need to destroy a *mutex* that was initialized using the `PTHREAD_MUTEX_INITIALIZER` macro.

By default, a Pthreads *mutex* is not recursive, which means that a thread should not try to lock a *mutex* that it already owns. However, the POSIX 1003.1 2001 standard allows a *mutex*'s type attribute to be set to recursive:

```
pthread_mutex_t mutex;  
pthread_mutexattr_t mutexAttribute;  
int status = pthread_mutexattr_init (&mutexAttribute);  
if (status !=0) { /* ... */ }  
status = pthread_mutexattr_settype(&mutexAttribute,  
    PTHREAD_MUTEX_RECURSIVE);  
if (status != 0) { /* ... */ }  
status = pthread_mutex_init(&mutex,&mutexAttribute);  
if (status != 0) { /* ... */ }
```

If a thread that owns a recursive *mutex* tries to lock the *mutex* again, the thread is immediately granted access. An owning thread must release a recursive mutex the same number of times that it requested ownership before another thread can become the owner.

### 3.8.2 Semaphore

POSIX semaphores are counting semaphores. Operations *sem\_wait()* and *sem\_post()* are equivalent to *P()* and *V()*, respectively. POSIX semaphores have the following properties:

- A semaphore is not considered to be owned by a thread – one thread can execute *sem\_wait()* on a semaphore and another thread can execute *sem\_post()*.
- When a semaphore is created, the initial value of the semaphore is specified, where  $0 \leq \text{initial value} \leq \text{SEM\_VALUE\_MAX}$ .
- Semaphore operations follow a different convention for reporting errors. They return 0 for success. On failure, they return a value of -1 and store the appropriate error number into *errno*. The C function *perror(const char\* string)* can be used to transcribe the value of *errno* into a string and print that string to *stderr*.
- The conditional wait operation *sem\_trywait(sem\_t\* sem)* never blocks the calling thread.
  - If the semaphore value is greater than 0, then the value is decremented and the operation returns immediately.
  - Otherwise, the operation returns immediately with the error code *EAGAIN* indicating that the semaphore value was not greater than 0.

Listing 3.28 shows how Pthreads semaphore objects are used.

- Header file *<semaphore.h>* must be included to use the semaphore operations. Semaphores are of the type *sem\_t*.
- A semaphore is created by calling the *sem\_init()* function.
  - The first argument is the address of the semaphore.
  - If the second argument is non-zero, the semaphore can be shared between processes. Otherwise, it can be shared only between threads in the same process.
  - The third argument is the initial value.
- When the semaphore is no longer needed, it is destroyed by calling *sem\_destroy()*.

```

#include <pthread.h>
#include <semaphore.h>
#include <stdio.h>

sem_t s;

void* Thread1(void* arg) {
    int status;
    status = sem_wait(&s);
    if (status !=0) {
        std::cout << __FILE__ << ":" << __LINE__ << " - " << flush;
        perror("sem_wait failed"); exit(status);
    }
    /* critical section */
    status = sem_post(&s);
    if (status !=0) {
        std::cout << __FILE__ << ":" << __LINE__ << " - " << flush;
        perror("sem_post failed"); exit(status);
    }
    return NULL; // implicit call to pthread_exit(NULL);
}

void* Thread2(void* arg) {
    int status;
    status = sem_wait(&s);
    if (status !=0) {
        std::cout << __FILE__ << ":" << __LINE__ << " - " << flush;
        perror("sem_wait failed"); exit(status);
    }
    /* critical section */
    status = sem_post(&s);
    if (status !=0) {
        std::cout << __FILE__ << ":" << __LINE__ << " - " << flush;
        perror("sem_post failed"); exit(status);
    }
    return NULL; // implicit call to pthread_exit(NULL);
}

```

Listing 3.28 Using POSIX semaphore objects.

```

int main() {
    pthread_t threadArray[2];           // array of thread IDs
    int status;                         // error code
    pthread_attr_t threadAttribute;     // thread attribute

    // initialize semaphore s
    status = sem_init(&s,0,1);
    if (status !=0) {
        std::cout << __FILE__ << ":" << __LINE__ << " - " << flush;
        perror("sem_init failed"); exit(status);
    }
    // initialize the thread attribute object
    status = pthread_attr_init(&threadAttribute);
    if (status != 0) { /* see Listing 1.4 for Pthreads error handling */}
    // set the scheduling scope attribute
    status = pthread_attr_setscope(&threadAttribute, PTHREAD_SCOPE_SYSTEM);
    if (status != 0) { /* ... */}

    // Create two threads and store their IDs in array threadArray
    status = pthread_create(&threadArray[0], &threadAttribute, Thread1, (void*) 1L);
    if (status != 0) { /* ... */}
    status = pthread_create(&threadArray[1], &threadAttribute, Thread2, (void*) 2L);
    if (status != 0) { /* ... */}
    status = pthread_attr_destroy(&threadAttribute); // destroy the attribute object
    if (status != 0) { /* ... */}

    // Wait for threads to finish
    status = pthread_join(threadArray[0],NULL);
    if (status != 0) { /* ... */}
    status = pthread_join(threadArray[1],NULL);
    if (status != 0) { /* ... */}

    // Destroy semaphore s
    status = sem_destroy(&s);
    if (status !=0) {
        std::cout << __FILE__ << ":" << __LINE__ << " - " << flush;
        perror("sem_destroy failed"); exit(status);
    }
}

```

Listing 3.28 (cont.) Using POSIX semaphore objects.

Listing 3.29 shows wrapper class *POSIXSemaphore*.

```
#include <pthread.h>
#include <semaphore.h>
#include <stdio.h>
#include <iostream>
const int maxDefault = 999;
class POSIXSemaphore {
private:
    sem_t s;
    int permits;
public:
    void P();
    void V();
    POSIXSemaphore(int initial);
    ~POSIXSemaphore();
};
POSIXSemaphore::POSIXSemaphore (int initial) : permits(initial) {
    // assume semaphore is accessed by the threads in a single process
    int status = sem_init(&s, 0, initial);
    if (status !=0) {
        std::cout << __FILE__ << ":" << __LINE__ << " - " << flush;
        perror("sem_init failed"); exit(status);
    }
}
POSIXSemaphore::~ ~ POSIXSemaphore () {
    int status = sem_destroy(&s);
    if (status !=0) {
        std::cout << __FILE__ << ":" << __LINE__ << " - " << flush;
        perror("sem_destroy failed"); exit(status);
    }
}
void POSIXSemaphore::P() {
    int status = sem_wait(&s);
    if (status !=0)
        std::cout << __FILE__ << ":"
            << __LINE__ << " - " << flush;
    perror("sem_wait failed");
    exit(status);
}
void POSIXSemaphore::V() {
    int status = sem_post(&s);
    if (status !=0) {
        std::cout << __FILE__ << ":"
            << __LINE__ << " - " << flush;
        perror("sem_post failed");
        exit(status);
    }
}
```

Listing 3.29 Class *POSIXSemaphore*.