

### EECS402 Lecture 14

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Revisiting Use Of: Copy Constructors **Assignment Operators** Destructors

1



#### **Problem Description**

- Recall:
  - Copy ctors are used when a copy of an object needs to be made (most often via a pass-by-value parameter)
  - Assignment operators are used to assign one object's attributes to another object's
- Both of these do a "member-by-member copy"
  - Algorithm: For each data member of the right-hand-side object, copy its value into the corresponding member of the left-hand-side object
  - If the member is an integer, the 4 bytes containing the int are copied
  - If the member is a double, the 8 bytes containing the double are copied
  - If the member is a pointer, the 4\* bytes containing the pointer are copied
    - NOTE: Only the 4\* bytes of the pointer are copied, even if the pointer is pointing to an array of 100 values!

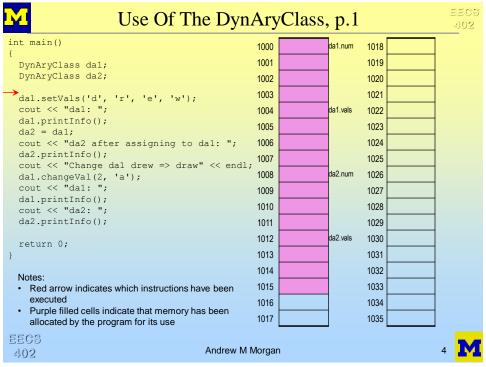
\*: These days, pointers are usually 8 bytes, but I still talk about them like they're 4 bytes since it makes it easier to include in examples showing memory, etc.

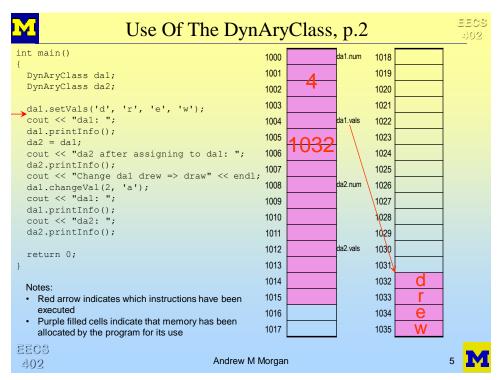
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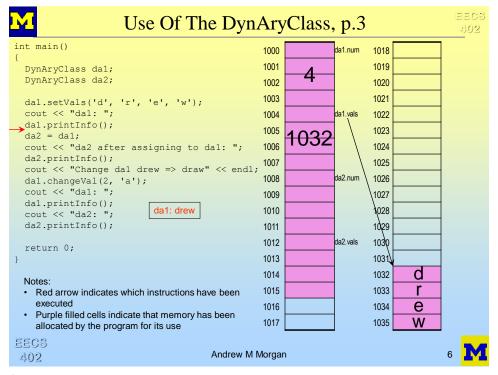


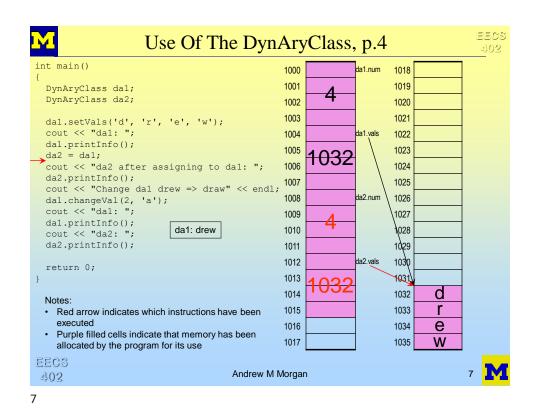
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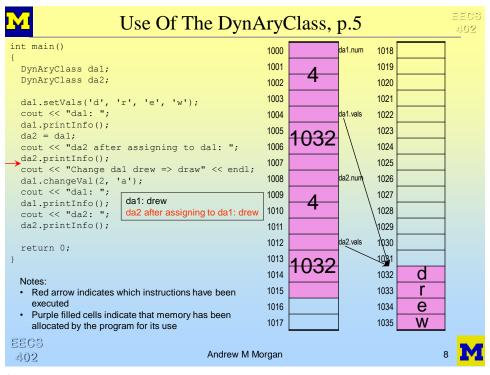
```
A Dynamic Array Class
class DynAryClass
                                           void changeVal(int index, char c)
 private:
                                             if (index >= 0 && index < num)
   int num;
   char *vals; //Will point to
                                               vals[index] = c;
                //array of chars
 public:
                                             else
   void setVals(char a, char b,
                 char c)
                                               cout << "Out of range" << endl;
     num = 3;
     vals = new char[num];
     vals[0] = a;
vals[1] = b;
                                           void printInfo() const
     vals[2] = c;
                                             for (i = 0; i < num; i++)
   void setVals(char a, char b,
                                               cout << vals[i];</pre>
                 char c, char d)
                                             cout << endl;
     num = 4;
     vals = new char[num];
                                       };
     vals[0] = a;
     vals[1] = b;
     vals[2] = c;
vals[3] = d;
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402
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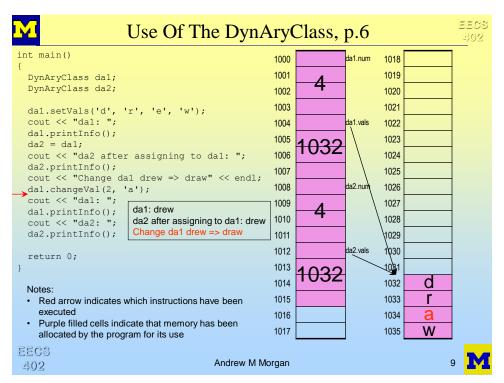


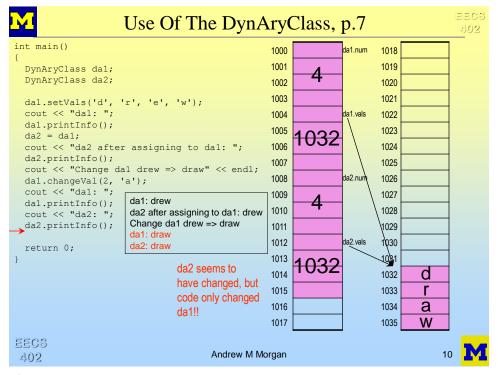














#### **Problem Solution**

402

- The member-by-member assignment operator copied only the pointer value
  - This results in multiple objects pointing to the same physical memory location
  - When one object changes the memory, change is seen on other objects since that memory is "shared" between the objects
- Programmer must override the default assignment behavior to prevent this, if it is a problem!
  - Provide your own implementation of the assignment operator that does more than a member-by-member copy
  - Create a whole new array for the left-hand-side object and copy the contents over
- Most often, when you overload the assignment operator in this way, you will want to overload the copy ctor too
  - Default copy ctor has same problem since it does a member-by-member copy as
     well

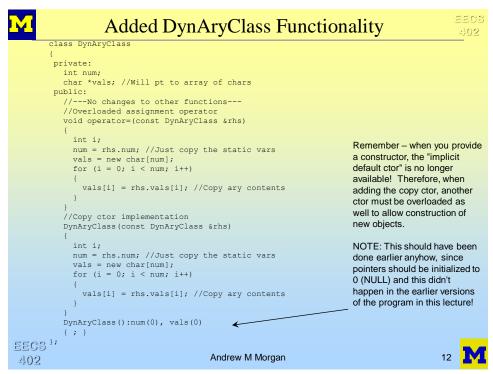
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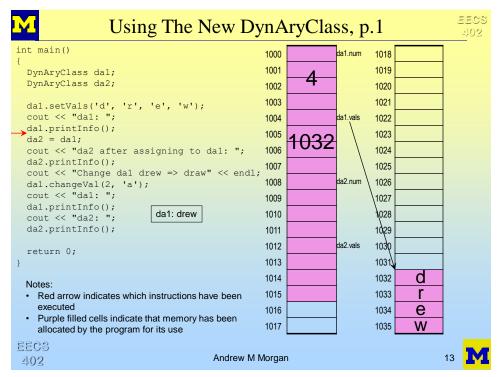
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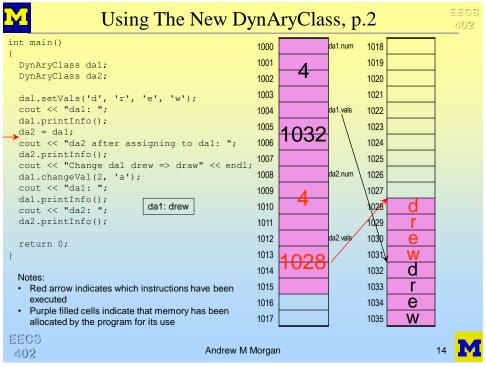
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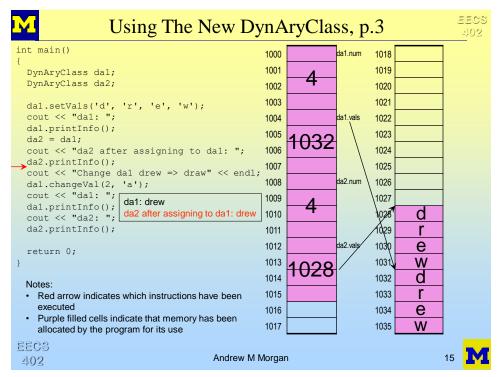


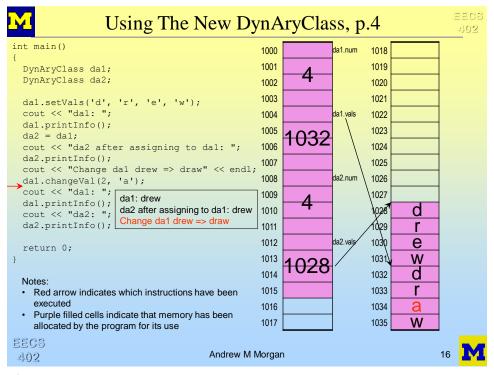
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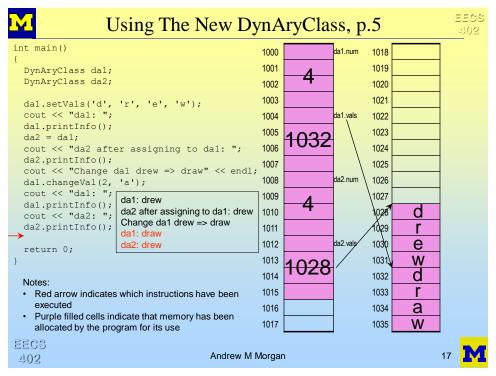














#### General Rule, Version 1

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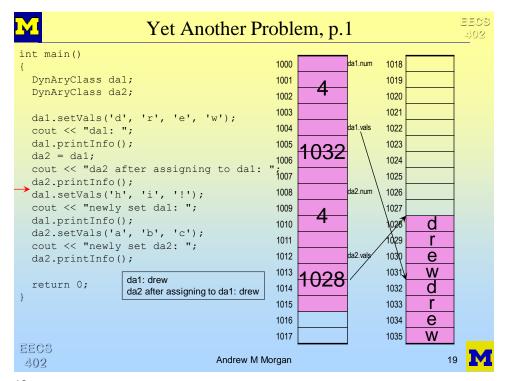
- When a class you write contains data members that will point to dynamically allocated memory:
  - Override the assignment operator so that a full copy of the object (and all dynamic memory associated with it) is made when assigning
    - This will take the place of (override) the default assignment operator that performs a shallow copy
  - Override the copy constructor so that a full copy of the object (and all dynamic memory associated with it) is made when copying
    - This will take the place of (override) the default copy ctor that performs a shallow copy
  - Overload another constructor (default or otherwise) so that objects can be constructed with something other than the copy ctor
  - Initialize the pointer members to 0 (NULL) in the ctors

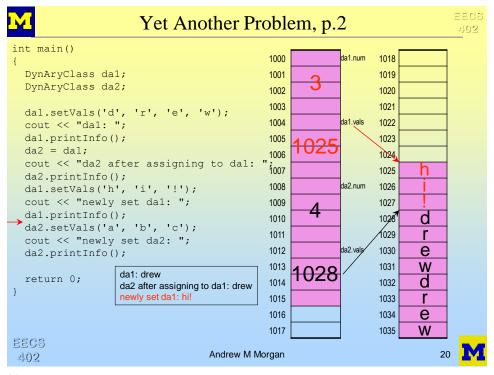
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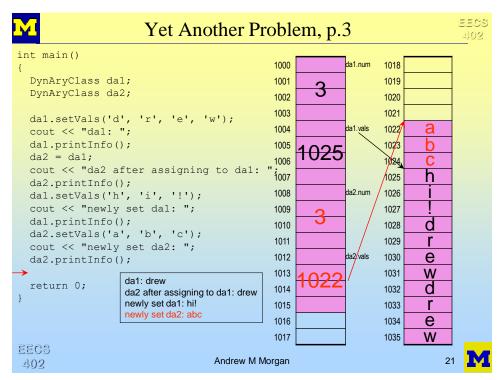
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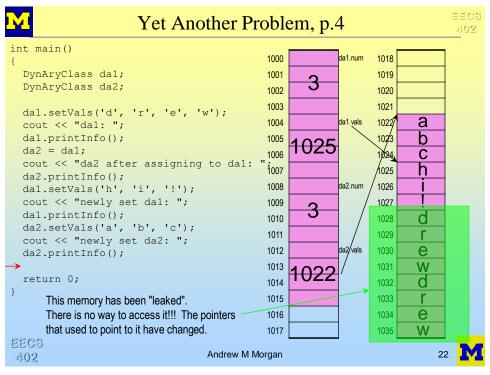
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### Plugging The Memory Leak

- · You must be sure to delete memory when you will no longer use it!
- Use the delete operator to free up memory before re-allocating new memory

```
void setVals(char a, char b,
             char c)
 num = 3;
 delete [] vals;
  vals = new char[num];
 vals[0] = a;
 vals[1] = b;
  vals[2] = c;
void setVals(char a, char b,
            char c, char d)
 num = 4;
 delete [] vals;
 vals = new char[num];
 vals[0] = a;
  vals[1] = b;
 vals[2] = c;
 vals[3] = d;
```

Recall that using delete on a null pointer will have no effect (and will not seg fault). Using delete on a pointer that points to memory not owned by your program WILL cause a seg fault.

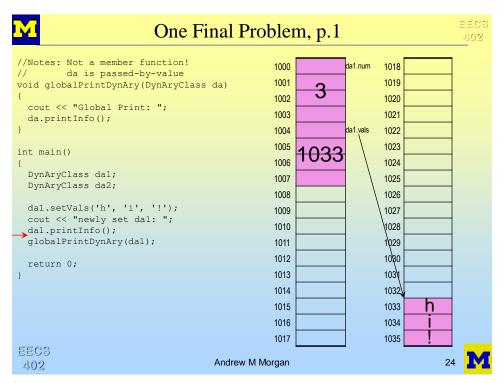
Therefore, it is important that the "vals" member be initialized to NULL so that the first time these functions are used, vals is a null pointer and the delete operator will not cause a seg fault.

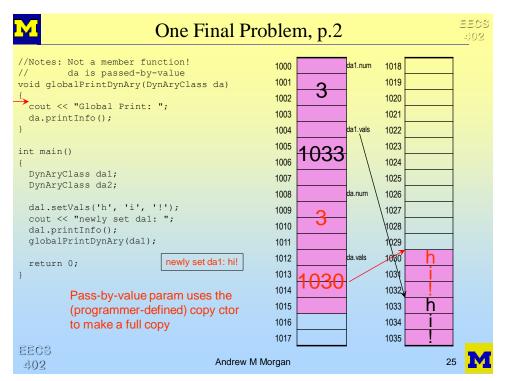
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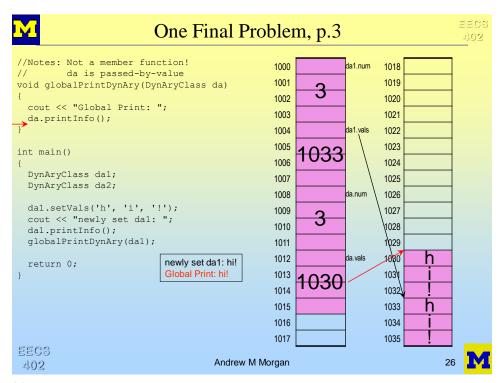
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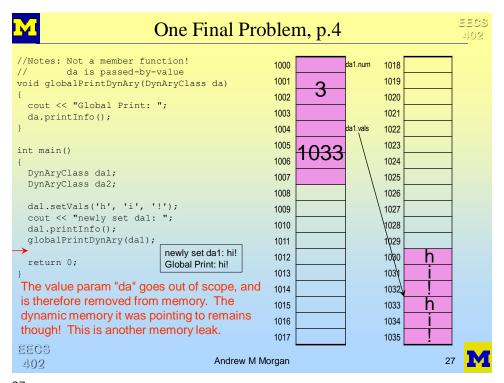
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## Plugging Memory Leak #2

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- The memory leak was caused by an object being destroyed, but the dynamic memory associated with it remaining allocated
- Every time an object is destroyed, the destructor is called
- Solution: Provide a destructor that frees up dynamic memory associated with an object

```
class DynAryClass
{
    private:
        int num;
        char *vals; //Will pt to array of chars
    public:
        //---No changes to other functions---

        //Dtor - frees up dynamic memory associated with
        //the object being destroyed
        ~DynAryClass()
        {
            delete [] vals;
        }

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    };

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    28
```



#### General Rule, Version 2



- When a class you write contains data members that will point to dynamically allocated memory:
  - Override the assignment operator so that a full copy of the object (and all dynamic memory associated with it) is made when assigning
    - This will take the place of (override) the default assignment operator that performs a shallow copy
  - Override the copy constructor so that a full copy of the object (and all dynamic memory associated with it) is made when copying
    - This will take the place of (override) the default copy ctor that performs a shallow copy
  - Overload another constructor (default or otherwise) so that objects can be created with something other than the copy ctor
  - Initialize the pointer members to 0 (NULL) in the ctors
  - Provide a destructor so that dynamic memory used by an object is freed when the object is destroyed

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