

# The Newsletter of the Kennebec Valley Computer Society



**FEBRUARY 2011**

**Visit our Website:  
[www.kvcs.org](http://www.kvcs.org)**

## **No Membership Dues for 2011**

The Board of Directors has decided there will be no membership dues for this upcoming year. Our financials are solid, we have few expenses, so we will continue on at no cost to you.

## **Newsletter - Website - Internet linkages**

The editor has talked with the Board of Directors as to how better to link the newsletter to the Internet. One of the things that would enhance the interest in the newsletter would be to have the URL links that appear in the newsletter be 'live' rather than having to copy off the information and then going to a browser to see that site. The Board of Directors approved the idea and empowered the editor to see if there is an inexpensive way to accomplish this.

The editor has ordered a program that will provide for 'live' URL links. It has not arrived for this issue but the newsletter for March should have that capability.

## **MEETING CANCELLATION INFORMATION**

You know what time of year it is..... snow, freezing rain, sleet..... the kind of weather that often forces cancellations. However, we have plans in place if we have some nasty weather that interferes with meeting night. At the point that it has been determined a meeting is being cancelled an e-mail message will go to those members who have given us an e-mail address.

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## **KVCS MEETINGS** **General Membership**

The program for this months meeting will be Web Browsers Compared. This will be a panel discussion by members.

**Thursday, February 10, 7:00 PM**

**Buker Community Center on Armory Street, just off Western Avenue near the National Guard Armory in Augusta.**

**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**NOTE CHANGE IN LOCATION**

The next meeting will be **Wednesday, February 16**, 6:30 to 8:30 PM at Lisa's Restaurant, 15 Bangor Street, Augusta.

**The Newsletter of the  
Kennebec Valley Computer  
Society**

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You may upload copy via E-Mail or bring to the KVCS general membership meeting. **Deadline for submission of copy for the newsletter is the 15th day of the month preceding the month of issue and will be run on a space available basis.** Copy is subject to editing.

All opinions expressed herein are those of the individual authors only, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of KVCS, its Officers, Board of Directors, The Newsletter of the Kennebec Valley Computer Society or its Editor. KVCS does not guarantee the accuracy or the correctness of articles in the Newsletter nor does KVCS intend to endorse, rate, or otherwise officially comment on products available. Readers are cautioned to rely on opinions expressed exclusively at their own risk.

### **KVCS WEB SITE**

The URL for our web site is

***www.kvcs.org***

***Check there for more information about KVCS. Bob Wells is suggesting you make it the opening page for your web browser so you get the latest announcements.***

Bob Wells is the webmaster for the KVCS site. Go to [www.kvcs.org](http://www.kvcs.org) and look around. While there sign up for member access.

## **KVCS Officers and Board of Directors - 2011**

President	Tim True driver@kvcs.org
Vice President	Bob Wells hardware@kvcs.org
Secretary - Recording	Robert Lloyd Wheelock robwheelock12@aol.com
Secretary - Membership	Steve Pooler poolers@mityfine.com
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Honorary (Past President)	Josh Zukerman josh@nailbat.net
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Directors (1 Year - Expires 12/2011)	Chad Perkins chad@maine.edu Steve Day seday@tds.net

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### **GOODWILL - RECONNECT**

Goodwill Industries of Northern New England is accepting donations of computers and accessories. They will accept old or broken computers including any brand of computer, laptops, cords, keyboards, mice, monitors, scanners, printers, and fax machines and parts. Donating is free and will be accepted at all Goodwill retail stores and donation centers in Maine, New Hampshire and northern Vermont.

You will be responsible for wiping all personal information from hard drives before turning the computer over to Goodwill.



## Will our computing experience be shaped by Microsoft competitors?

By Constance Brown,  
President, Canton/Alliance/  
Massillon Users Group, Ohio  
The Memory Map, April 2010  
Issue

[www.camug.com/](http://www.camug.com/)  
[constanceb@camug.com](mailto:constanceb@camug.com)

Our total computing experience may well be shaped in the future by Microsoft competitors. Think that is an over statement? Just think of the changes Microsoft is making to keep up with new demands from a changing computer environment based on more mobile devices and the need to share documents quickly in a web-based environment. Many changes are being pioneered by competitors that are stepping up with new devices, applications, and software.

One competitor is Google. Google Docs were designed to allow the creation of documents online in an environment similar to Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, making it easy to collaborate in real time. Price? No charge. A few months ago Google released the new Chrome Browser. Google also released the Android operating system for phones which are very popular and not susceptible to the viruses written for Windows. Droid phones allow users to browse the internet, exchange email, take pictures, and do hundreds of tasks quickly and efficiently. Oh, yes. People talk on them too.

We have been waiting for Google's new Chrome Operating System, wondering how it will compare to Windows. To answer that question, I visited Google's official blog. Here is some of

what I learned from the July 7, 2009, entry.

"Google Chrome OS will run on both x86 as well as ARM chips and we are working with multiple OEMs to bring a number of netbooks to market next year. The software architecture is simple — Google Chrome running within a new windowing system on top of a Linux kernel. For application developers, the web is the platform. All web-based applications will automatically work and new applications can be written using your favorite web technologies. And, of course, these apps will run not only on Google Chrome OS, but on any standards-based browser on Windows, Mac and Linux thereby giving developers the largest user base of any platform.

"Google Chrome OS is a new project, separate from Android. Android was designed from the beginning to work across a variety of devices from phones to set-top boxes to netbooks. Google Chrome OS is being created for people who spend most of their time on the web, and is being designed to power computers ranging from small netbooks to full-size desktop systems. While there are areas where Google Chrome OS and Android overlap, we believe choice will drive innovation for the benefit of everyone, including Google."

"We hear a lot from our users and their message is clear — computers need to get better. People want to get to their email instantly, without wasting time waiting for their computers to boot and browsers to start up. They want their computers to always run as fast as when they first bought them. They want their data to be accessible to them wherever they are and not have to worry about losing their computer or forgetting to

back up files. Even more importantly, they don't want to spend hours configuring their computers to work with every new piece of hardware, or have to worry about constant software updates."

On November 19, 2009, Google open-sourced the code for Chrome OS, a year before the developers anticipate that the OS will be ready for general use. Anyone who wishes to download the code and contribute to the development of the operating system may do so. I am not a developer and have no interest in writing code. But I am interested in the results. It is a totally new way of computing. Here are excerpts from Google's official blog on November 19.

"First, it's all about the web. All apps are web apps. The entire experience takes place within the browser and there are no conventional desktop applications. This means users do not have to deal with installing, managing and updating programs."

"Second, because all apps live within the browser, there are significant benefits to security. Unlike traditional operating systems, Chrome OS doesn't trust the applications you run. Each app is contained within a security sandbox making it harder for malware and viruses to infect your computer. Furthermore, Chrome OS barely trusts itself. Every time you restart your computer the operating system verifies the integrity of its code. If your system has been compromised, it is designed to fix itself with a reboot. While no computer can be made completely secure, we're going to make life much harder (and less profitable) for the bad

**-continued on page 7-**

## **Microsoft Offers Free “Fix it” Utilities**

**By Ira Wilsker, Member, Golden  
Triangle PC Group, Texas;  
Radio Show Host on KLVI and  
Columnist, the Examiner,  
Beaumont, Texas  
Iwilsker@sbcglobal.net**

### **WEBSITES:**

<http://support.microsoft.com/fixit>  
<http://fixitcenter.support.microsoft.com>  
[https://fixit.support.microsoft.com/  
reporting/gadget/fixit4me.gadget](https://fixit.support.microsoft.com/reporting/gadget/fixit4me.gadget)

We have all heard the moans and groans about Microsoft's frequent lack of response in terms of its technical support, unless we are willing to pay significant support fees. I have had mixed success at using Microsoft's support forums, including no responses to multiple postings about my Windows 7 upgrade problems; countless other posts in that forum and other Microsoft support forums lament the same sentiment, that Microsoft is sometimes (often) non-responsive. The tide may be turning in a positive direction for Microsoft, as it recently released "Microsoft Fix it Solution Center" ([support.microsoft.com/fixit](http://support.microsoft.com/fixit)), and "Microsoft Fix it Center Online (beta)" ([fixitcenter.support.microsoft.com](http://fixitcenter.support.microsoft.com)). For those with Vista or Windows 7, Microsoft also released a "gadget," ([fixit.support.microsoft.com/reporting/gadget/fixit4me.gadget](http://fixit.support.microsoft.com/reporting/gadget/fixit4me.gadget)) which will display a small image on the desktop showing that latest list of "Fix it" utilities. These small utilities will run on Windows XP, Vista, or Windows 7.

What Microsoft has apparently done is to take many of the most common problems reported by Windows users and create a library of small utilities that can automatically repair those problems.

Microsoft says that Microsoft Fix it will "Find and fix common problems." According to Microsoft, "We're working hard to automate solutions to common software problems in an easy, intuitive way that is available when and where you need it. So whether you are looking for a solution in help or support content, or an error report, Fix it provides a way to apply automated fixes, workarounds, or configuration changes so you don't have to perform a long list of manual steps yourself."

The Microsoft Fix it Solution Center offers online automated fixes for problems with Windows itself, Internet Explorer, Enterprise Products, Office, Email and Messaging (Outlook and Outlook Express), Windows Media Player, Xbox and Zune, and Games and Consumer Products. In reviewing the dozens of fixes available under these headings, I can recognize many of the problems that I have either experienced myself, or have heard of others with those explicit problems. One of the several issues that I have had with my Windows 7 machine is that sometimes the CD/DVD drive will not run, and it shows up on Device Manager with an exclamation point indicating that the drive has a problem. I reinstalled the manufacturer's latest drivers, and reinstalled my CD and DVD software, and still the drive was not always recognized, and therefore would not work. I found a Fix it solution that said that it might be able to repair my settings such that my drive would be recognized, and within seconds of running the Fix it utility, my drive worked flawlessly, and has continued to run since the appropriate Fix it was run. Other Windows fixes include appearance issues, sound and print problems, system and security problems, and update problems. For those not sure if a fix is

appropriate, most of the Fix it utilities check to see if that selected fix is appropriate, and will stop it from executing if it is not necessary.

Even though I generally do not use it, Internet Explorer (the "big blue e") is still the most widely used browser in the world, with more users than all other browsers combined. Even though it is widely used, users still have a variety of problems with Internet Explorer. Many of those problems may be instantly resolved by applying one of the fixes listed. By simply clicking on the fix, and following the on screen prompts, the repair will be completed automatically.

There are dozens of other useful utilities in the Microsoft Fix It Solution Center, and it is likely that users who are having problems with Windows and its companion components may find a solution here. It is definitely worthy of a try.

For those who want to have an even more automated solution to their Windows problems, they may prefer the Fix it Center Online (beta). Microsoft's slogan for this particular service is "Click, click, fixed." Microsoft claims that this service is easy, relevant, and allows the user to be in control of the process. The diagnosis and repair service begins by downloading a small (437kb) file "FixitCenter\_Run.exe". According to Microsoft, "Fix it Center finds and fixes many common PC and device problems automatically. It also helps prevent new problems by proactively checking for known issues and installing updates. Fix it Center helps to consolidate the many steps of diagnosing and repairing a problem into an automated tool that does the work

for you.” When run, the downloaded executable file will download a machine specific build that is explicitly for your computer, and highly personalized for the software and hardware on your computer.

For my new Windows 7 computer, the Microsoft Fix it Center beta identified 25 distinct functions on my computer that may be candidates for repair or maintenance. Clicking on an item will give a brief description of what will be repaired. Clicking on the “Run” button will obviously run the appropriate utility. Many of the utilities will perform necessary fixes and adjustments themselves, but some require some degree of interaction from the user. I tried several of the listed utilities, and had mixed results; some worked well and made noticeable improvements, while others were not successful. That is just the results on my particular Windows 7 computer; I had a greater rate of success on my older Windows XP computer, as well as other computers (XP and Vista) that I tried it on.

While not perfect, I can see where many of the issues and problems encountered by Windows users could be easily remedied by utilizing these utilities. It should be noted that the Fix it Center Online is still in beta, which means that it is not a finished and refined product, and that there is still some work to be done on it. Still, these free Fix it utilities should be considered as a potential solution for many of the Windows problems that we encounter.

**Article provided by Articles2Go**

**KVCS**  
**Since 1984 - Central Maine's First**  
**Computer User Group**

## **Windows Explorer**

**By Wil Wakely, President, Seniors  
Computer Group, California  
Bits & Bytes, June 2010 Issue  
[www.scg.org/wilw@adnc.com](http://www.scg.org/wilw@adnc.com)**

What a terrible name! Often confused with Internet Explorer, this file manipulator is one of the most useful and used programs on my computer. I often talk with people who don't know what this program is. They have never used it, and I am curious as to how they can accomplish anything with their computer without familiarity with this powerful utility. Here's what it does:

Windows, as with most operating systems, is based upon a file structure where each program, picture, song or document is stored in a named file in some memory device, e.g., a hard drive, CD, DVD or flash drive. Groups of similar files are stored in named folders. Windows Explorer is a file manipulator allowing you to find, copy, move, save, launch, and a variety of other operations on individual and groups of files.

A quick way to launch it is to right click on the Start button and select Explore from the sub-menu. A better way in XP is to place an Icon for Windows Explorer on your desktop. To do this, first locate the program: Start/All programs/Accessories/Windows Explorer; then right click it and in the drop-down menu select “Send to/desktop (create shortcut)”.

I don't like the Icon view; I prefer the Details view with no Icons and more information. The Details view allows you to sort the filenames by alpha ascending (A to Z) by clicking on the Name in the gray title bar. Clicking Name a second time will sort the file

name alpha descending (Z to A). Sorting by Size, Type (file extension), or Date Modified is done the same way. Under Tools/Folder Options/View tab, be sure to uncheck “Hide extensions for known file types” and check “Show hidden files and folders.” Then click the “Apply to all folders” button to set all views to the same settings. Windows 7 recognized the importance of this program and keeps it on the taskbar for easy launch. It is a yellow file folder Icon, third from the left Start button.

An easier application of Windows Explorer is to bring up two copies, resized and located so you can see both side by side. Then you can easily Move or Copy files between the two windows using d-d (drag and drop). By default files d-d to the same drive are Moved; files d-d to different drives are Copied. Holding down the left mouse button during the d-d allows you to select either option. To add new folders or sub-folders use the menu File/New/Folder command.

A good site to visit to learn many more features of Windows Explorer is: <http://www.toejumper.net/speed5/winx5.htm>. Familiarize yourself with this powerful program so you can control your computer, and not have your computer control you!

**Article provided by Articles2Go**

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### **GEEKS ON WHEELS**

**The next trip is now scheduled for Saturday, February 12, 2011. We will be on our way to Cambridge, MA. Computers, cameras and whatever else you may be looking for. Interested in going? Let Tim True know - [driver@kvcs.org](mailto:driver@kvcs.org)**

KENNEBEC VALLEY COMPUTER SOCIETY  
Presents

# Web Browsers Compared



Internet  
Explorer



Firefox



Chrome



Safari



Opera

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**Presented by**

**Panel Discussion**

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**Thursday February 10 th 2011 - 7 PM**

**Social Time 6:30 to 7 PM**

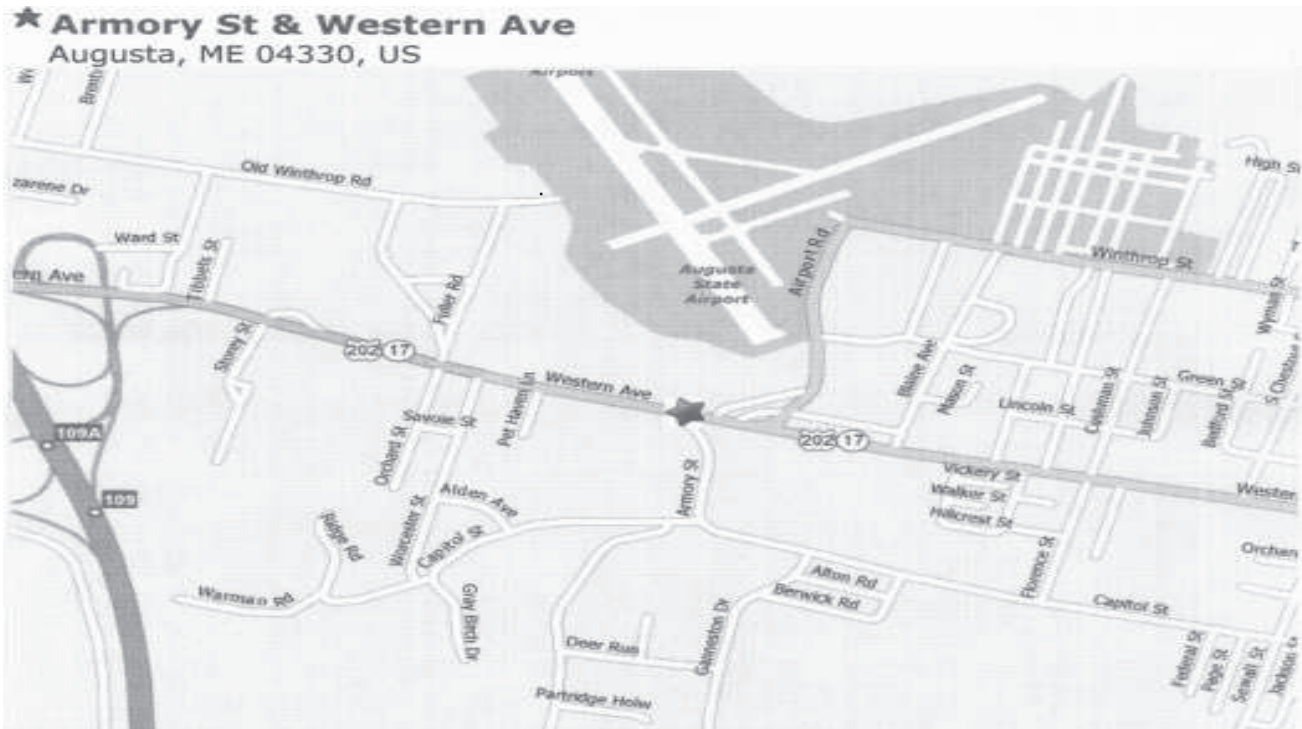
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**Lou Buker Community Center  
Armory Street  
Augusta, Maine**

**The Public is Cordially Invited**

**Bring a friend, meet a friend**

# KVCS MEETING LOCATION



## MELUG-Central Linux User Group Meeting

The Next MELUG-Central Meeting Will be on Saturday, February 12

PLACE: Kennebec Valley Community College, Fairfield,  
in the Frye Bldg - Room 110 at 10:30am.

PRESENTER: Group discussion.

TOPIC: Join us and share what in Linux you have been working on.

Also any problems you have encountered and how you solved them.

Someone else may have the problem and you may be able to help them.

### Microsoft Competitors - continued

guys. If you dig security, read the Chrome OS Security Overview or watch the video.”

“Most of all, we are obsessed with speed. We are taking out every unnecessary process, optimizing many operations and running everything possible in parallel. This means you can go from turning on the computer to surfing the web in a few seconds. Our obsession with speed goes all the way down to the metal. We are specifying reference hardware

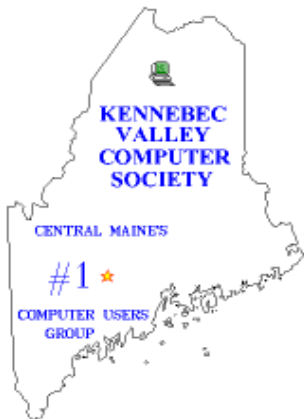
components to create the fastest experience for Google Chrome OS.” No doubt this new model will change the way we use computers in the future—at least for most people. Things will not change suddenly. But it is highly likely that a web based computing environment will be the norm for most users in the future.

### Article provided by Articles2Go

Almost finished and I have another one of those blank spaces to fill but don't have anything short enough to fit in the space.

I recently built a computer for a client. I used a Quad Core AMD processor along with 4 GB of RAM. The end result was a speedy unit that handles Windows 7 very nicely. The price was exceedingly low for the CPU/motherboard/memory combo. My old ball park number for similar combos was \$340. This combo came in at just about \$200. As of this writing RAM prices are coming down. I saw an ad for 8 GB of DDR3 memory for \$89. The memory was a name brand. Not sure how long these low prices will hold. Now is a good time to buy if you are so inclined. **-editor-**

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**KENNEBEC VALLEY COMPUTER SOCIETY**

**Post Office Box 2791, Augusta, Maine 04338-2791**

\_\_\_\_ Change of address

\_\_\_\_ I would like to see more. Please send me a complimentary issue of the Newsletter.

\_\_\_\_ I would like to join KVCS / renew my membership.

( ) Annual Renewal (Dues waived for 2011 membership year)

FOR KVCS USE

( ) New Member (Dues waived for 2011 membership year)

DP \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Family (Dues waived for 2011 membership year)

CH \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Student (Full time status - Dues waived for 2011 membership year)

CA \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Your Interest in Joining KVCS? \_\_\_\_\_

Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_

**11/02** Signature: \_\_\_\_\_