The Newsletter of the
Kennebec Valley Computer Society

APRIL 2011

Tim True, President of the Society presenting the Past Presidents' Award to Josh Zukerman

An App –
What it is and What it does
By Sandy Berger, Compu-KISS
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An app can be found on the iPhone and the iPad as well as many other smart phones and tablet PCs. In fact, Apple's introduction of the idea of apps in 2008 is what made smart phones and tablet PCs so popular. Up until that time, we were all used to full-blown programs like those that run on a computer. Most of these programs contain millions of lines of code, have numerous functions, and have menus that open up to reveal a multitude of choices. In contrast, an app is a little mini program that has one basic function. It is an expression in simplicity.

IN THIS ISSUE

GEEKS ON WHEELS TOUR

The next 'tour' is To Be Determined but likely in May. It starts out at the Gardiner station and ends up in Boston with stops here and there coming and going. If you are interested talk with Tim True or send him an e-mail - driver@kvcs.org

KVCS MEETINGS
General Membership

The program for this months meeting will be Smart Phone applications presented by Josh Zukerman and others.
Thursday, April 14, 7:00 PM
Buker Community Center on Armory Street, just off Western Avenue near the National Guard Armory in Augusta.

Board of Directors Meeting

The next meeting will be **Wednesday, April 20**, 6:30 to 8:30 PM at Lisa's Restaurant, 15 Bangor Street, Augusta.

KVCS WEB SITE
www.kvcs.org

Click the link for more information about KVCS. Bob Wells, our webmaster is suggesting you make it the opening page for your web browser so you get the latest announcements.

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

Member of
The Association of
Personal Computer User Groups

Sugar Games
Rainbow Mystery
www.sugargames.com
PC & Mac $19.95
Reviewed by Patricia Hill, Review Editor,
Computer Booters of Sun Lakes (AZ)
www.computerbooters.com
BooterPat@aol.com

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Join Lily on her quest to break the curse in this swap-and-match puzzle. Some time passes and the evil wizards turn the Rainbow World into a tainted landscape. But Lily is determined to bring life and color into this world again. Help Lily solve puzzles on her way while keeping an eye out for powerful trophies. They'll give you the edge you need to twist your way through 70 levels. That's a lot of levels – but you'll enjoy every one.

There are three different game modes: Relaxed (untimed), Classic (timed) and Duel (against the computer). I preferred Classic as it challenged me more than the other two. The game is extremely addictive and I won't tell you how many hours I've played – all the while convincing myself it was all time well spent on the review.

The graphics are bold, the music is soothing and you have hints and suggested moves, when you need them.

The directions could be written more clearly, but the game is not difficult (hence all my playing hours) and it's not hard to fill in the gaps. Having to click on Close, Close, Exit and Quit to leave the game is a bit lengthy.

The web site has free demos as well as downloads for several additional games. Check it out!

Mac vs PC -
How Do You Decide?
By Abby Stokes, Author,
Is This Thing On?
www.abbyandme.com
abbystokes@yahoo.com

I'm regularly asked "Should I buy a Mac or a PC?" It's a battle not unlike the Hatfields vs the McCoys.

For those of you that don't know the difference, a Mac/Apple (the name is interchangeable) is one manufacturer of both laptop and desktop computers. The inside (operating system or the brain) and the outside (hardware or what you touch) are both designed by Apple. A PC is every other manufacturer of the outside of a laptop or desktop computer (HP, Sony, Dell, etc.) with the operating system manufactured by Microsoft.

The answer to the question "Should I buy a Mac or a PC?" is a question: "Who will you call for help on Sunday afternoon when something goes wrong with your computer?" Your computer lifeline needs to understand the kind of computer you have. So, if your computer lifeline is your neighbor, your daughter, or your friend next door purchase a PC or Mac according to what they use. You don't need to buy the exact model they have, but you'll want to buy a computer that they understand and can help you with.

Let's call a spade a spade. I've been teaching computers for 17 years and I can say with complete confidence that NO COMPUTER is "user-friendly." That is just damn good marketing. That doesn't mean you can't learn to use a computer, whether it is a PC or a Mac, but

there's very little about any computer that is intuitive or friendly. Once you understand some of the techniques necessary to operate it, the computer becomes more intuitive in the same way that driving a car becomes intuitive, but it isn't any thanks to some of the design choices. Who was the genius that put the Caps Lock key so close to the Shift key? What is the logic of clicking Start to turn off the computer? I could go on... The upside is, like a car, the computer can bring you to wonderful places making it worth the effort to learn how to operate it. And, like a car, you don't need to understand the nitty gritty of how it works in order to work it.

It's true that a Mac is less vulnerable to viruses. That is a definite plus. And it can be argued that the inside of a Mac may have been or still is better, lusher, or more advanced than a PC, but you and I won't ever notice the difference. If you're a graphic designer, a Mac is probably a better idea. For us, the average user, both a Mac and a PC will equally meet our needs with e-mail, word-processing, and the Internet.

If you're comfortable with whichever kind of computer you already have, there's no reason to succumb to pressure because someone you know LOVES their Mac or PC. Will they be there to help you when with a computer question or problem?

If you decide to change from PC to Mac or vice versa, you can make the transition with same patience required with a new spouse. They'll be good days and bad days and eventually you'll hit a comfort level with all the changes. A different operating system does require that

you purchase all new software which can be pricey. Research the cost of whatever software you have on your existing computer before you make the change.

No matter the pressure or hard sell that comes your way, your computer choice is YOURS to make. Hold fast to what suits your needs, wallet, and comfort level. Tell them I said so!

For more on Mac vs PC visit Chapter 6 (p. 47) in "Is This Thing On?" A Computer Handbook for Late Bloomers, Technophobes, and the Kicking & Screaming

Try Ready Boost

Recently I had two laptops in for work. One had a memory limitation of 2 GB of RAM and the owner wanted to run Windows 7. The other laptop was capable of 4 GB of memory but had 2 GB on board. I tried to get an additional 2 GB into the latter computer but it would not take the modules. I was reading an article about speeding up computers with Ready Boost. It is available on Windows Vista and 7. You use a 4GB USB thumb drive and assign the drive as a swap file. This gave both computers a decent performance increase to enable them to run Windows 7 easily with the limited RAM on board. You will need a USB 2.0 port for this to work. If the thumb drive is a good fit Windows will give you the option to enable it. When the *AutoPlay* window pops up, select *Speed up my system*; then follow the instructions.   **-editor-**

GIMP

**Written by Paul Braget,
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Microcomputer Users Group)**

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It is awesome what one can do with a camera today. With a camera in hand and a photo manipulation editor/program (application), one could only imagine what may be next on the to-do list. It enlarges our world, especially with open access to various editing tools. One of the tools that will work with multiple platforms (e.g. Windows, Mac, Linux, Unix) is the GIMP.
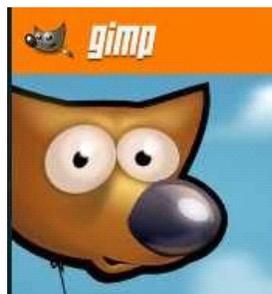
GIMP (The GNU Image Manipulation Program) is a free software raster graphics editor. Primarily, GIMP is used as a tool for photo manipulations, such as resizing, editing, and cropping photos, combining multiple images, and converting between different image formats.

I was first introduced to this graphical program by a fellow student while working at the resource center (computer lab) at South Puget Sound Community College in 1997. It allowed us to work in the graphic arts field without spending tons of cash.

In the media, this popular application caught the attention of many in the photography field. As a popular application, GIMP is regularly reviewed and criticized, the reviews often targeting the fitness of GIMP for use in professional environments; for example, GIMP is often cited as a replacement for Adobe Photoshop. Even though comparisons to Photoshop are of regular occurrence, the maintainers of GIMP state that GIMP does not aim to replicate Photoshop.

A Google search for "Gimp vs Photoshop" in quotes currently shows 8,750 hits on my Ubuntu Machine (8.04) using the FireFox search option. I've been seeing this flame war going on since the turn of the century. A use of a program should not be judged by (flame wars) quantity (or how many sold), but should be utilized for its quality (price vs performance).

Photoshop costs around $700 these days, and GIMP is free, so of course if cost is a main factor you're going to swerve towards GIMP. But—and you knew there was a 'but' coming—it's not that simple. Photoshop has two leads over GIMP: (1) patented features, and (2) the interface that everyone is used to. Most especially, GIMP is out of the running for professional print shop editing, thanks to the patent lock on industrial features such as color correction and CMYK. GIMP can emulate these features with work-arounds, or it can get sued, and that's all there is to it.

A common misperception is that GIMP lacks many more features that Photoshop has. In fact, with the exception of features that depend on patented algorithms, Gimp is 99% on par with Photoshop in capabilities. It's just that Photoshop users try Gimp, are immediately lost in the different and somewhat baroque interface, and leave in terror. Having the features doesn't do you much good if you can't find them!

Oki-doki, now that the comparisons have been made short and sweet, one might ask, "Where can I find this Graphical Image Manipulation Program?" It comes with the Ubuntu operating system as part of a packaged deal. Or the links below will guide you to your favorite operating system platform.

—Installers for GIMP on Windows:
http://gimpwin.sourceforge.net/ stable.html (NOTE: Not Working)
—GIMP on OS X:
http://gimp.lisanet.de/Website/ Download.html (NOTE: Not Working
—GIMP for a variety of Linux Distributions and Windows:
http://www.gimp.org/downloads/
—GIMP for Unix:
http://www.gimp.org/unix/

For help in getting started with GIMP, online tutorials abound:
—Regular tutorials:
http://www.gimp-tutorials.com/
—Video tutorials:
http://sixrevisions.com/graphics-design/gimp_video_tutorials/

-Apps-continued-

A good app does only one thing and it does it very quickly and easily. There are no nested menus and there are very few choices to make. One similarity between a full-blown program and an app is that both can be started by an icon that you choose by using a mouse or by pressing your finger on the screen.

One of the best things about apps are that they are easy to use. The true beauty of the apps, however lies in their variety. There are hundreds of thousands of apps, but you don't have to use them all. You can choose only the ones you want. A computer program may be able to handle 100 different functions. Even if you only want to use one of those functions, you still have to install the entire program. Apps are different. You only install the ones you need.

However, like computer programs, apps are specific to an operating system. For example, a program that is created for the Mac will not run on a PC. An app that was created for the iPhone will not work on an Android phone. Each operating system has their own App Store or Marketplace where you can download apps. Many apps are free. Many are under $2.

Right now there is a large selection of apps for the Apple iPhone and iPad at the iTunes App Store. BlackBerry, Google (Android), Microsoft, Nokia, and Samsung all offer apps through their own app storefronts.

If you have never used a smart phone or a tablet PC that uses apps, you will be amazed by the sheer number and variety of apps. Apple has over 300,000 apps in their App Store.

Google has more than 200,000 in their marketplace.

Because of the wide variety of apps, it is difficult to talk about them all, but let me give you a quick idea of what an app can do. Using an app, you can you express your artist abilities, play the piano, or visit with your Facebook friends. You can turn your phone into a level to get that picture straight, or turn it into a light saber and become a savior of the universe. There are apps to let you play games, find recipes, read news, get stock quotes, follow sports, shop, and compare prices. There are apps that help you relax, time the seeping of your tea, identify any song, tune your guitar, and even match the color of any object to a paint color.

Yes, there is an app that will help you do almost anything. And people are using these apps in numbers that seem almost unimaginable.

The Apple app store opened on July 10, 2008 and they have already had over 10,000,000,000 downloads. The wild popularity of apps will entrench that word in the technical dictionaries for many years to come.

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-Gimp-continued

—Special tutorials:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9EfZFeFhyg&feature=related

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5cmNwgJ91w&feature=relate

SPRING IS HERE……

GEEK SPEAK

MALWARE

Short for "malicious software," malware refers to software programs designed to damage or do other unwanted actions on a computer system. In Spanish, "mal" is a prefix that means "bad," making the term "badware," which is a good way to remember it (even if you're not Spanish).

Common examples of malware include viruses, worms, trojan horses, and spyware. Viruses, for example, can cause havoc on a computer's hard drive by deleting files or directory information. Spyware can gather data from a user's system without the user knowing it. This can include anything from the Web pages a user visits to personal information, such as credit card numbers.

It is unfortunate that there are software programmers out there with malicious intent, but it is good to be aware of the fact. You can install anti-virus and anti-spyware utilities on your computer that will seek and destroy the malicious programs they find on your computer. So join the fight against badware and install some protective utilities on your hard drive!

MEBIBYTE

A mebibyte is a unit of data storage that equals 2 to the 20th power, or 1,048,576 bytes. While a megabyte can be estimated as 10^6 or 1,000,000 bytes, a mebibyte is exactly 1,048,576 bytes. This is to avoid the ambiguity associated with the size of megabytes. A mebibyte is 1,024 kibibytes and precedes the gibibyte unit of measurement.

KENNEBEC VALLEY COMPUTER SOCIETY

Presents

A Demonstration of Smart Phone "Apps"

Presented by

Josh Zukerman and others

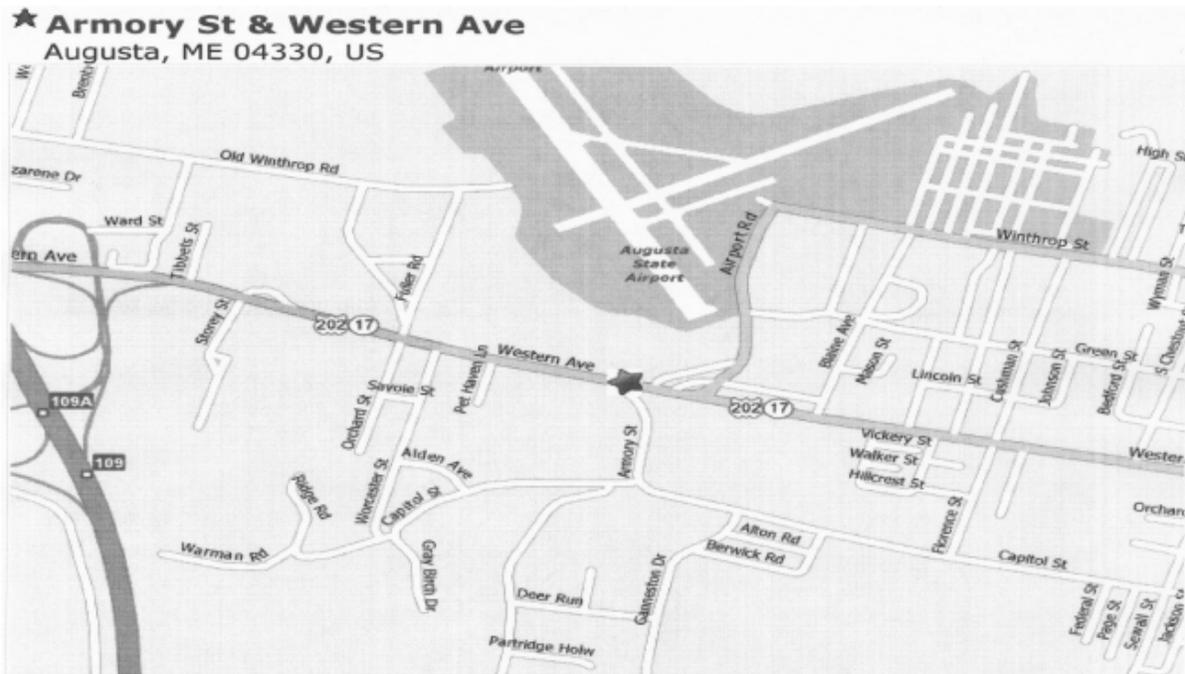## Thursday April 14 th 2011 - 7 PM

Social Time 6:30 to 7 PM

Lou Buker Community Center
Armory Street
Augusta, Maine

The Public is Cordially Invited

Bring a friend, meet a friend

KVCS MEETING LOCATION

★ Armory St & Western Ave
Augusta, ME 04330, US

MELUG-Central Maine Linux Users Group Meeting

The Next MELUG-Central Meeting Will be on Saturday, April 16
PLACE: Kennebec Valley Community College, Fairfield,
in the Frye Bldg - Room 110 at 10:30am.
PRESENTER: Discussion. Videoconferencing the meetings.

For more information www.melug-central.org

Kennebec Valley Computer Society
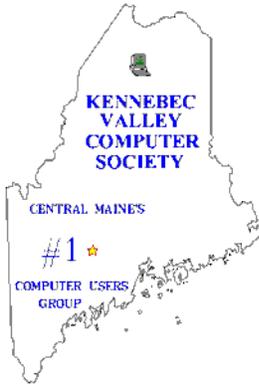**Account Balances Report**
March 16, 2011

Bank Accounts

Certificate of Deposit	2,005.16
Checking	230.59
TOTAL Bank Accounts	**2,235.75**
OVERALL TOTAL	**2,235.75**

April Fools Day joke played on us by
Mother Nature -
11 inches of wet heavy snow

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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:_____

Adddress:_____ City/State_____ Zip:_____

Home Phone:_____ Work Phone:_____

Date of Birth:_____/_____/_____

Your Interest in Joining KVCS?_____

Referred by: _____

11/04   Signature:_____