

keene calendar syndication

What: A presentation to the Keene Downtown Group by Jon Udell

When: August 6, 2008

Why: To solve our collective calendar problem

Who: Jon Udell is an author, information architect, software developer, and new media innovator. His 1999 book, Practical Internet Groupware, helped lay the foundation for what we now call social software. Udell has been a software developer at Lotus, was BYTE Magazine's executive editor and Web maven, and has worked as an independent consultant. A hands-on thinker, Udell's analysis of industry trends has always been informed by his own ongoing experiments with software, information architecture, and new media. From 2002 to 2006 he was InfoWorld's lead analyst, author of the weekly Strategic Developer column, and blogger-in-chief. In January 2007 he joined Microsoft as a technical evangelist. 603.313.8713, judell@mv.com

keene's best public calendar, circa 2005

 <p>The Evening of Cape Breton Music Jerry Holland with Boba Barry</p> <p>Keene, NH Town Hall Saturday March 26, 2005 8:00 PM</p>	<p>Spring Sweet 16 Auction!</p> <p>State Joseph Regional School's Sweet 16 Auction!</p> <p>Date: Saturday, April 2, 2005 Start: 8:30 am - 10:00 pm Start starts: 9:00 pm</p> <p>Time: 7:00 pm Location: Amazing Hall / Gymnasium</p> <p>Something For Everyone! See You There!</p>	<p>Keene Art Association presents</p> <p>ERIC AHO</p> <p>"Some Thoughts on Painting"</p> <p>at Keene Public Library 60 Water Street, Keene</p> <p>Wednesday, March 23rd 6:30 - 8:30 pm</p> <p>Free admission and public is welcome.</p>	<p>MAKING UP OUR MINDS About Iraq and Military Service</p> <p>A talk by "BOB" MASSIE by the Veterans Center, USMC, Staff Sergeant and Korean War Veteran</p> <p>Monday evening April 4 7:00 pm Keene Children's Community Center 60 Washington Street, Keene, NH</p>	<p>BOOK SALE</p> <p>FRIDAY, April 1, 9AM - 6PM SATURDAY, April 2, 9AM - 3PM</p> <p>• Thousands of items! • Every category represented!</p> <p>KEENE PUBLIC LIBRARY 60 WATER STREET KEENE, NH</p> <p>BOOK SALE</p>
<p>HAPPY EASTER TO ALL</p> <p>THE HAPPY'S FREE EASTER BAIT DEVIL</p> <p>... (text continues) ...</p>	<p>CONTRA DANCE KEENE, NH FRIDAY MARCH 25</p> <p>RANDY MILLER BOB MCQUILLEN PIANO STEVE ZAKON-ANDERSON CALLER</p> <p>8 PM - MIDNIGHT \$7.00</p> <p>STONEWALL FARM 242 CHESTERFIELD ROAD</p>	<p>OPEN MIC</p> <p>EVERY THURSDAY</p> <p>AT 8:30 pm</p> <p>INSIDE THE DARK STAR PUB 630 PARK AVE KEENE - NEW HAMPSHIRE</p>	<p>5th Annual Charity Folk Art Auction To Benefit From the Heart Studio & Gardens Sunday March 20, 2005 Lecture Starts at 1pm with preview at noon.</p> <p>Madison N. Louge Lloyd P. Young Student Center Keene State College Madison St. Keene, NH</p> <p>Sponsored by Habitat for Humanity Keene State College Chapter With Auctioneer Bruce Ansdan</p>	<p>Dance like no one is watching</p> <p>... (text continues) ...</p>
<p>Writing from your Heart</p> <p>... (text continues) ...</p>	<p>2005 TEEN YOGA</p> <p>... (text continues) ...</p>	<p>COMICS MAKING GROUP</p> <p>... (text continues) ...</p>	<p>9th Annual Headstock Region Job and Information Fair</p> <p>TUESDAY MARCH 29 10 AM - 4 PM</p> <p>FREE ADMISSION</p>	<p>... (text continues) ...</p>
<p>Keene Farmers Market</p> <p>Support Your Local Farmers and Artisans</p> <p>Check out the Great Products at Keene Farmers Market Tuesdays and Saturdays 9am to 2pm</p>	<p>Apple Hill Chamber Players</p> <p>The Moving Company Dance Center</p> <p>Together on stage at the Peterborough Players</p> <p>Saturday March 12 8 pm</p>	<p>THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEvised</p> <p>... (text continues) ...</p>	<p>Reclaim Democracy.org</p> <p>JEFF MILLICHEN is coming to Keene!</p> <p>... (text continues) ...</p>	<p>Keene Teen Idol</p> <p>It's an IDOL weekend!</p> <p>YOU MAY HAVE THE CHANCE TO BE THE FIRST Keene Teen IDOL!</p> <p>... (text continues) ...</p>

keene's best public calendar, circa 2008

<http://elmcity.info/events>



[home](#) [events](#) [photos](#) [videos](#) [blogs](#) [dining](#) [library](#)

upcoming events in and around keene

sources: [antioch](#), [armadillos](#), [aveo](#), [chamber of commerce](#), [city of keene](#), [eventful](#), [frost free library](#), [hannah grimes](#), [keene state](#), [keene public library](#), [keene young professionals](#), [monadnock folk](#), [monadnock regional high](#), [swamp bats](#), [unh cooperative extension](#), [ymca](#)

Sun Aug 03 2008 >>

- 09:00 AM [Coffey and Jazz, with Bob Coffey](#) (wtsa 96.7 fm 1450 am)
- 10:00 AM [Sunday School](#) (eventful: Grace Community Evangelical Free Church)
- 10:00 AM [Painting the Beautiful: American Impressionist Paintings](#) (eventful: The Windham Art Gallery)
- 10:30 AM [Sunday School](#) (eventful: The Federated Church of Marlborough)
- 12:00 PM [Wheelock and Robin Hood Pools \(until 6PM\)](#) (Wheelock and Robin Hood Parks)
- 12:30 PM [lap swim](#) (ymca)
- 02:00 PM [Open Mic Jam](#) (eventful: The Ceilidh House Pub)
- 03:30 PM [Mindfulness Practice](#) (eventful: Monadnock Mindfulness Practice Center)
- 05:00 PM [AA: Big Book Step Study Group](#) (eventful: 463 Washington St)
- 10:00 PM [AA: Keene Serenity Group](#) (eventful: 64 Beaver St)
- [Summer Program - Get Real Getaway](#) (eventful: Brattleboro Center)
- [Cheshire Fair](#) (eventful: Cheshire Fairgrounds)
- [Cheshire Fair](#) (eventful: Cheshire Fairgrounds)
- [Blade Runner: The Final Cut](#) (eventful: Colonial Theatre)
- [Race For Your Life, Charlie Brown](#) (eventful: Colonial Theatre)
- [2008 Summer Workshop](#) (eventful: Vermont Jazz Center)
- [Cheshire Kennel Club, Inc.](#) (eventful: Wheelock Park)
- [Heart of New England Chihuahua Club](#) (eventful: Wheelock Park)
- [Vizsla Club of Central New England](#) (eventful: Wheelock Park)

<< Mon Aug 04 2008 >> ^

- 06:00 AM [lap swim](#) (ymca)
- 07:00 AM [Cheshire Walkers: Indoor Walking Program](#) (eventful: Keene Recreation Center)
- 07:00 AM [AA: On Awakening Group](#) (eventful: Keene Unitarian Universalist Church)
- 08:30 AM [open/lap swim \(1 lane\)](#) (ymca)
- 10:00 AM [Painting the Beautiful: American Impressionist Paintings](#) (eventful: The Windham Art Gallery)
- 11:00 AM [mom and baby yoga](#) (Cheshire Medical Center)

August 2008						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

How to contribute

Events posted to any of the calendars in the above list will show up here.

If your online calendar isn't on the list and you'd like to include it, [just ask](#).

If you don't already publish an online calendar, there are a couple of options.

1. If you maintain a calendar in a program like Outlook, Google Calendar, or Apple iCal, you can publish your calendar in a way that enables the information to flow here and elsewhere. Here's how to do that for [Outlook 2007](#), [Google Calendar](#), and [Apple iCal](#).

2. Sign up for [Eventful](#) and post events to one of the [Keene venues](#).

events for today, aug 6, 2008

<< **Wed Aug 06 2008** >> ^

06:00 AM [lap swim](#) (ymca)
07:45 AM [Keene Housing Authority](#) (831 Court St)
08:00 AM [Monadnock Mindfulness](#) (eventful: Monadnock Mindfulness Practice Center)
08:30 AM [open/lap swim \(1 lane\)](#) (ymca)
09:30 AM [Toddler and Infant Story Hours](#) (eventful: The Windham Art Gallery)
10:00 AM [Painting the Beautiful: American Impressionist Paintings](#) (eventful: The Windham Art Gallery)
11:00 AM [adult lap swim](#) (ymca)
12:00 PM [NIA Dance](#) (Moving Company)
12:30 PM [Overeaters Anonymous](#) (eventful: The Windham Art Gallery)
01:00 PM [Wheelock and Robin Hood Pools \(until 6:45\)](#) (Wheelock and Robin Hood Parks)
01:00 PM [Yoga](#) (YMCA)
01:00 PM [open/lap swim \(1 lane\)](#) (ymca)
02:30 PM [senior/open swim](#) (ymca)
03:30 PM [Adult Knitting Group](#) (eventful: Vernon Free Library)
06:00 PM [Wednesday Prayer Meeting](#) (eventful: Beth-el Bible Church)
06:00 PM [Vacuum Store vs Gilsum Village Store \(C\)](#) (eventful: Gilsum Field)
06:00 PM [Video Headquarters vs Greenwald Realty \(D3\)](#) (eventful: Hanna Legion Field)
06:00 PM [Lab'n Lager vs Troy Mills \(D2\)](#) (eventful: Troy Field)
06:00 PM [WR Painting vs C and S 2 \(D2\)](#) (eventful: Underwood Field)
06:30 PM [Bingo](#) (eventful: Knights Of Columbus 819)
07:00 PM [Summer Concert - Westmoreland Town Band](#) (eventful: Keene Recreation Center)
07:00 PM [international brotherhood of electrical workers, unit 5](#) (eventful: Keene Recreation Center)
07:00 PM [Hands On Healing](#) (eventful: The Windham Art Gallery)
07:30 PM [Ames Pontiac Parts vs Chesterfield Interiors \(D3\)](#) (eventful: Mike Rogers Field)
07:30 PM [open/lap swim](#) (ymca)
08:15 PM [AA: Keene Original Group](#) (eventful: St. James Church)
[33rd Annual Golf Tournament](#) (chamber of commerce)
[Matryoshki in Monadnock; Celebrating the Cultures of Russia, Eastern Europe and the Balkans. "MUSICAL PLEASURES FOR FLUTE AND GUITAR."](#) (chamber of commerce)
[Summer Concert: Westmoreland Town Band](#) (chamber of commerce)
[Ad Hoc Sustainability Design Committee](#) (city of keene)
[Keene Housing Authority](#) (city of keene)
[Martin Luther King/Jonathan Daniels Committee](#) (city of keene)
[Summer Program - Get Real Getaway](#) (eventful: Brattleboro Center)
[Special Anniversary Exhibit](#) (eventful: Historical Society Of Cheshire County)

where do these events come from?

They are *syndicated* from websites around town that use a standard calendar syndication format called iCalendar (or iCal):

- Armadillos
- Ashuelot Valley Environmental Observatory (AVEO)
- Frost Free Library
- Hannah Grimes
- Mondanock Folk Society
- Swamp Bats
- UNH Cooperative Extension
- Monadnock Regional High (but not, tragically, Keene High!)
- Eventful.com (A general-purpose calendar service on the web)

As when a newspaper syndicates columns, a website that syndicates a calendar publishes the information once, and it then appears in many contexts.

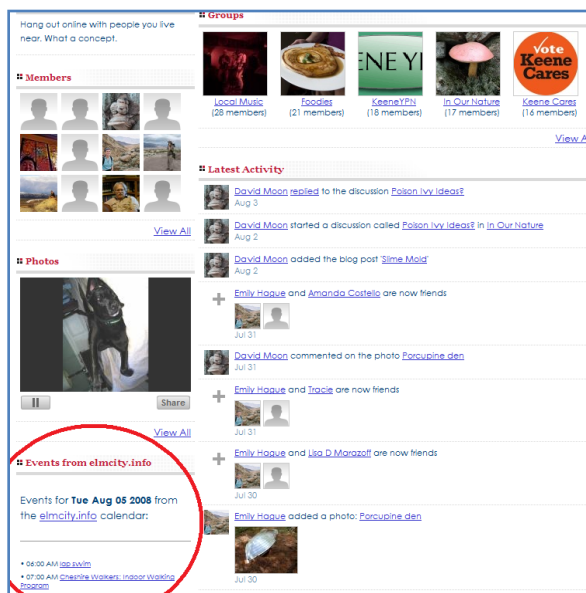
is the elmcity.info calendar proprietary?

No.

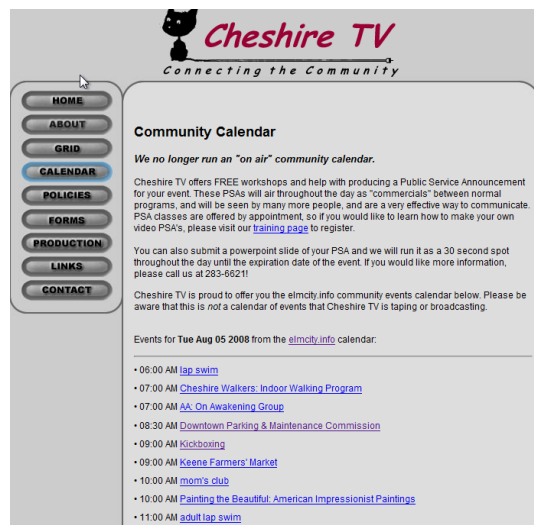
Elmcity.info doesn't own, store, or control *any* information. It only *syndicates* information from other websites.

The same information can be syndicated to any other site that wants to display it. In fact you will also find it at citizenkeene, a new community site, and at the Cheshire TV site.

Elmcity.info calendar at citizenkeene:



Elmcity.info calendar at cheshire tv:



so is the problem solved?

No, not quite.

Most of the events shown for today weren't published by the event promoters.

They were published by me.

Why?

To show what it would look like if all event promoters *did* publish events to the web using the iCal standard.

Some events for today that the promoters themselves could easily have published in this way, but didn't:

- YMCA open/lap swim
- Moco NIA Dance
- Monadnock Mindfulness
- Keene Housing Authority
- Whitney Brothers vs. The Mountain

why weren't these events published?

Because it's not widely known that you can publish calendars online, and syndicate them, using software:

- that is familiar and easy to use
- that is free or inexpensive
- that you may already have and use

Examples:

- Google Calendar
- Apple iCal
- Outlook 2007

With any of these programs, you can:

- Maintain a calendar for your own purposes
- Publish it to the web using HTML
- Publish it to the web as iCal

why isn't publishing html or pdf good enough?

This is the crux of the issue. Local organizations that publish HTML-only calendars include:

- Colonial Theater
- Keene Sentinel
- Keene Public Library

Local organizations that publish PDF-only calendars include:

- Keene High School
- Moving Company

When you publish a calendar as an HTML page or a PDF file, you are creating an *information silo*.

Yes, it's true that you're enabling a visitor to your website to find out that your movie is at 7PM on Thurs, or that your yoga class is at 1PM every Tues.

But to put together the *complete picture* of everything that's happening in Keene today, or a week from Friday, a person would have to visit dozens of these information silos.

And then try to collate all the events from all those silos by date.

People just can't do that, so they don't. Computers can, if we give them the information in a standard format they can read and understand.

That standard format is iCal.

so, what do we do?

If your business or organization publishes events rarely, you can register at Eventful.com and publish them there. Events listed for venues within 15 miles of Keene will automatically syndicate to elmcity.info and elsewhere (e.g. citizen keene, cheshire tv, chamber of commerce, others).

If you have a more complicated schedule of events, use one of these programs:

- Google Calendar
- Outlook 2007
- Apple iCal

Any of these can publish HTML pages to your website for people to read on your website, and also publish iCal *feeds* for computers to collect and organize.

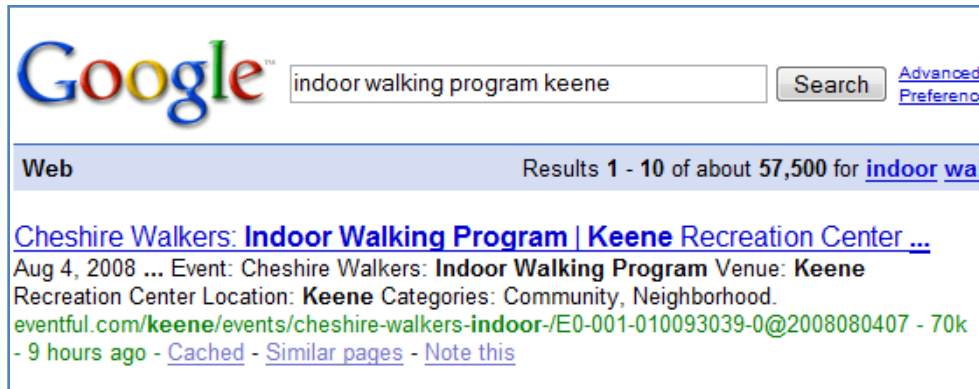
Tutorials on how to do this are available at elmcity.info/events.

Once you publish your calendar using one of these programs, let me know the web address (URL) of the iCal feed. That way I can syndicate it to (and beyond) elmcity.info.

Another advantage of publishing an iCal feed: Individuals can syndicate your event feed to their personal Outlook, Google, or Apple calendars.

publicity and the google effect

Although HTML representations of calendar events don't syndicate, they do play a crucial role. Look at the first hit when searching for "indoor walking program keene":



The first hit on Google is exactly what the Cheshire Walkers would hope for.

This event, which I published to Eventful.com, syndicates to the elmcity.info calendar by way of Eventful's iCal feed.

But Eventful also publishes the same information as an HTML web page.

That web page is indexed by Google and the other search engines.

Try this experiment. If your business is sponsoring an event, write down the title that best describes that event, and search for it.

Does it come up as the first hit? Odds are, no.

Now go to Eventful.com and post your event there, using that title. It'll show up on the elmcity.info calendar within about 4 hours.

Then wait 3 days and search for it again.

Does your event come up first now? Yes!

the big picture

Here are three achievable outcomes. We can:

1. *Know* everything that's going on around town
2. *Contribute* our own events that we want to publicize
3. *Project* a vibrant web presence beyond the city limits

Dozens of interesting events, small and large, happen here every day. But they're not easy to discover. News still travels mostly by word of mouth. And so we miss lots of things. Did you hear about these?

- State archery championship at the Rec Center in May
- Berklee jazz guitarist Mitch Seidel at Armadillos in June
- Tom Wessels' Pisgah trail walk in July

We miss things like this every day because we never hear about them, or maybe we do hear about them but too late.

It doesn't have to be that way.

If we collectively understand and apply the web calendar standard, we can:

- Promote our own events, in our own ways, for our own purposes, on our own websites
- Syndicate those same events -- without any retyping or republishing -- to a non-proprietary network of community events
- Plug into that network, at various points, to see the big picture view of everything that's happening

We need this for ourselves. It will improve the quality of our lives as Keene residents.

But the same mechanism will be a powerful marketing tool for Keene. Anyone who visits Keene, or is thinking about moving to Keene, will be able to see the same big picture.

It's all doable. And doing it is faster, easier, and cheaper than you think.