

## Technology and Me

Grand Marais Public Library is set to host Lighthouse Center for Vision Loss, Duluth, for a presentation titled "Technology and Me" at the library on Wednesday, February 27, at 6:00 pm. This presentation is aimed at individuals 55 and older and their family members, and is not limited to those who have issues of vision loss. All ages and abilities are invited to attend. Presenter is scheduled to be Aaron Windsor, Lighthouse Technology Instructor.

The focus of this event is Smart Phones for Smart People: How to make optimum use of your smart phone. Other topics that may be covered include: How technology can improve the lives of those 55 and older, Smartphones, tablets, apps, Alexa and internet use, magnification and reading aids, health monitors and home safety, and

staying connected.

Those who care to attend are encouraged to think about what was their original purpose in purchasing their device, and then to consider what kinds of problems have been encountered in regard to achieving those goals. Doing so will help formulate a question to be asked of the presenter at the event that may help overcome such barriers.

There is one additional scheduled presentations on these and other topics near the end of March, so if your question is not answered at this event there will be additional upcoming opportunities.

These events are sponsored by Lighthouse Center for Vision Loss and the Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation.

This event is free and open to the general public.

## Local Climate Change Solutions

Grand Marais Public Library will host the Cook County Local Energy Project (CCLEP) on Saturday, March 9, for their 2nd installment of "Local Climate Change Solutions" speaking series. The event is scheduled from 5 PM until 7PM. It is free and open to the general public.

The discussion at this meeting is intended to build upon the event held at the library last October. Included will be input from CCLEP, local utilities, city officials, and

citizens of Cook County. This is intended to be a forum to discuss climate change concerns as well as solutions that can be addressed by members of our community at the local level.

Interested parties may contact CCLEP at [localenergy@boreal.org](mailto:localenergy@boreal.org) with questions and/or suggestions for community involvement in the event. The presenters ask those who would like to be a part of the solution be present. All are welcome without charge or obligation.

## Your Legal Rights: Using Public Wi-Fi Networks

From the Office of Minnesota Attorney General Lori Swanson

While public Wi-Fi networks (or Wi-Fi "hotspots") offer free and convenient access to the Internet in public spaces, other network users may be able to watch your activity online and obtain your passwords and account information, putting you at risk of theft or identity theft.

How Can Someone Get My Information Using Public Wi-Fi Networks? Criminals can use software from the Internet to monitor your web browsing activity and view anything that appears on your device's screen while using the public Wi-Fi network. In addition, hackers may use public Wi-Fi networks to remotely access people's smartphones, tablets and computers to install malware or spyware that can transmit information from the device directly to the hacker.

What Information is at Risk? Almost everything on your device, from user names, passwords, and e-mail addresses to the apps installed, credit card and bank account information, Social Security numbers, and birth dates can be vulnerable. If a hacker acquires your account credentials (user name and password), this information may be used to steal additional information or money from your accounts.

### WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MYSELF?

Use the Most Secure Network Available. If you use a public Wi-Fi network, choose the most secure

network available. If you aren't sure whether the network is secure, ask an employee. Common secure network types include WEP, WPA, and WPA2 (the strongest). Even encrypted networks aren't a guarantee that your device will be safe while using the network, however, as some hackers may be able to bypass a secure network's encryption methods.

Use Encrypted Websites. If you send personal information through a website using a public Wi-Fi network, make sure the website is encrypted (encryption converts the information to jumbled code that reverts back to its original state once it reaches its destination). You can determine if a website is encrypted by looking at the web address. If it begins with "https," then it is encrypted (the "s" stands for "secure").

Check for encryption on every webpage where you send or receive information-even within the same website-as some pages may be encrypted while others are not.

Log-out Immediately After Use. If you log-in to an account using a public Wi-Fi network, sign out as soon as you are done using the account. Otherwise, someone could access your account long after you were accessing it.

Protect Your Device. Keep your software up-to-date and never turn your firewall off. Your device will notify you when an update is available. Install anti-spyware/anti-

## Having Less Stuff May Equal More Free Time

By Kate Jackson

Having to dig through a laundry pile the size of a small car each morning, in search of that elusive sock - or realizing that the sink is completely full and you still have enough dishes to last for days - is a sure sign that you simply have too much stuff.

While many of us are feeling cooped up in our homes this time of year and cabin fever is setting in, what better time to take advantage of this opportunity.

In the summer months, all this clutter can be too easy to ignore. What with all the traveling, gardening, barbeques and trips to the beach, we just don't spend all that much time indoors.

But, eventually, we have to deal with reality - often sooner rather than later. Blame the air temperature or the mob of kids underfoot if you want but, at the end (or beginning or middle) of the day, a cluttered house is a real drag.

But, what is there to be done? Surely we must need all those clothes or dishes or toys or...maybe we don't?

Maybe, just maybe, the space occupied by all this "stuff" that we hang on to is more than just physical: perhaps its weight and presence is a mental one too.

Let's be clear, no one is suggesting you pare down your belongings to a carefully counted two-digit number (unless you want to, that is). But, taking a few pages from the minimalist's book might set you on the road to a less cluttered mind. Oh ya, and a more pleasant living space, too.

Here are a couple of really good reasons to begin to learn how to let go of (some of) your material things:

First of all, it feels good to get rid of stuff. Seriously, it does. Just

malware software (there are several reputable products available online for free or with free trial periods).

Identify any public Wi-Fi network that you connect to as a "Public Network" and turn off file sharing on your computer. Consider disabling your wireless connection if you are using your device in a place with a public Wi-Fi network and do not need Internet access.

Look into using a virtual private network ("VPN"), or other add-ons or plug-ins which encrypt information between your device and the Internet.

A Word On Mobile Phones and Apps. Since mobile apps may have limited or no encryption, it can be best to avoid using them to relay important information on a public Wi-Fi network. If you have to use a mobile app to send sensitive information, only use networks you know are secure or a 3G or 4G network. Some smart phones have a feature that automatically connects them to any available network. Turn off this feature in the phone's settings, or turn the phone to "airplane mode."

try it. Go ahead and sell something, or give it away or recycle it.

Better yet try it with ten things, or twenty. There's a good chance you will experience a thrilling sense of light and airy joy, you may even feel as though you have finally thrown a heavy yoke from your shoulders after a long journey and you are frolicking on a grassy hillside in the sun.

Be careful, it may become addicting. Soon you might find yourself feverishly hunting around the house for things to get rid of. Just go with it, there's a whole new world of clear surfaces and organized drawers in your future.

Second, having less stuff frees up your time and energy. This might not make sense at first, but here's the truth: stuff needs to be managed, it needs to be washed, rearranged and cared for. This, of course, takes time.

Think about this: what if you had half as much laundry to wash and fold every week, half as many toys and books to organize and pick up, half as many dishes to stack, wash and put away? How much time would have left over to play with the kids or read a book or lay on the floor and look at the ceiling fan?

The answer is...quite a bit. As crazy as it sounds, material belongings take more than just our money - they take our time, attention and energy away from more important things. They take away from the real, actual lives we want to be living.

So, the next time you feel like you're drowning in clutter and stuff, look around: there's a good chance you actually are. It's as easy as standing up and putting together a pile (or three) to help you start lightening your load. Try it. You'll be so glad you did.

Steps to Take if Your Online Account is Hacked. You might not realize your online account was hacked right away. Once you discover the intrusion, however, take the following steps:

1. Change your password immediately. Hackers may change your password, preventing you from accessing your account. If you are unable to access your account, contact the website directly and it can assist you in restoring your account.

2. Contact your bank or credit card companies immediately and let them know your account may be compromised. Monitor the activity on the account for any fraudulent transactions (in some cases, hackers may not use your information right away, so it can be helpful to regularly monitor your account).

3. Contact your friends and family to let them know your account has been hacked. Hackers may try to gain access to your e-mail contact list and send e-mails from your account purporting to be from you. Notifying family and friends that your account has been compromised may help protect them from hackers.