Get Help with Technology on Tech Tuesdays

Written by Beth Helstien
 Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator

VIEW from San Juan Island **LIBRARY**

Writing this column for an online news source forces me to think about my uneasy relationship with all things digital. Just this morning I found myself grumbling that I'd like to come to work one day and be able to accomplish the things on my "To Do" list without having to learn a new technology to do them.

Today I had to work for the first time with an online tool to send bulk emails, and I also learned to capture an image of a Facebook page and manipulate the image like a photograph. So when members of the public visit the Library frustrated with technology, I feel their pain.

The Library is trying something new to reduce the pain. We will be offering Get Help with Technology on Tech Tuesdays. Drop in on Tuesday mornings to get instruction, trouble-shooting or help with your technology questions. Bring the device (laptop, Kindle, smartphone, tablet, etc.) and a Library volunteer will be here to help. You will learn by doing and get personalized attention for your tech needs.

Tech Tuesdays will take place Tuesday mornings throughout the summer from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM. Volunteers, called tech-xperts, will be on hand to work with tech users one-on-one to find solutions to technology problems. Volunteers are trained to find answers to technology questions and respect the privacy of your devices.

We hope that by having a weekly drop-in session, we won't be asking people who need to learn something to wait for weeks or months until the Library can offer a class about it. And we also hope that the program will provide skilled community volunteers a meaningful and rewarding opportunity to assist others who need help.

With Tech Tuesdays we can offer a real person to give assistance. We're calling this a "beta program." The Library will offer Tech Tuesdays through the summer, and then determine if it replaces the need for some of the Library technology programs, such as classes in using tablets.

The technology in our lives, from email to smartphones, from Facebook to Spotify, enriches us, connects us -- and can make us frustrated and feel crazy -- all at the same time. We hope that Tech Tuesdays can help participants feel less pain from the tech in their lives, and perhaps even discover some of the joy that can come from efficiency and connection.