

Eliminating Chaos at Home

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By SAINT BRYAN / Evening Magazine

Let's face it. Most of us have at least one dirty little secret in our home – that one room or closet that has gotten completely out of control.

The last thing we want to do is take on all that clutter, but there are professional organizers that can help eliminate the chaos.

For the last six years, Nita and Larry Sackett have devoted most of their attention to the grandchildren and almost no attention to the home office on the second floor.



Before...

Anyone who's ever lived in the same place for a while knows what happens. Papers, books, water bottles – you name it – just begin accumulating. And the home office becomes the place where things get lost.

Can the Sacketts ever reclaim their room from the clutter?

Maybe, with a little help.

Laura Leist is a professional organizer. Her company has the very "can-do" sounding name – "Eliminate Chaos."

Laura typically gets paid \$75 per hour to organize, but here are a few of her secrets for free.

"The organizing process is not about shuffling things around. Shuffling objects. Shuffling papers. It's about making really tough decisions on what we can get rid of. What can we really live without and what must we really keep. So in the end we have what we truly love and what we need," she said.

Step One: Sorting and Purging

We started Friday to give Larry and Nita all weekend to sort through the papers, books and magazine, and to purge the inessential.

Step Two: Grouping

Laura returned Monday with her assistants for step two.

"Try not to do all the work in one little area because you'll end up just stepping over things. But if you have the room, spread it out," said Laura. "Designate certain areas for groups of like items."

So office supplies went into the guest room, computer equipment in the playroom, and games in the hallway.

A breakthrough came Monday afternoon when Larry saw his desktop again.

Step Three: Putting things in their place



This is where Jennifer Watkins and her company, "Storables," comes in. Brand-new shelves were stocked with plastic containers and wicker baskets – each one labeled.

"All we need are your dimensions and what you're organizing and we can set you up with just the perfect solution for your organizing needs," she said.

In all, it took 83 hours of work. Adding the Storables products to the organizer's fees, and the total cost came to \$1,640.

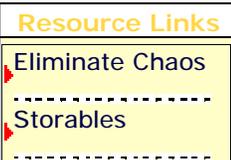
Was it worth it?

Well, Larry and Nita Sackett got their home office back. Now they felt ready to take on the rest of the house.

Laura has two more tips for those big organizing jobs:

First, make sure you give yourself plenty of time because it always takes longer than you think.

Two, stay focused. Don't get side-tracked by other rooms and other projects.



Laura can be reached via her Web site at *Eliminate Chaos*, or by e-mail at *laura@eliminatechaos.com*.

Thanks to Storables for donating both time and merchandise to the project. They have three stores in the Seattle area.