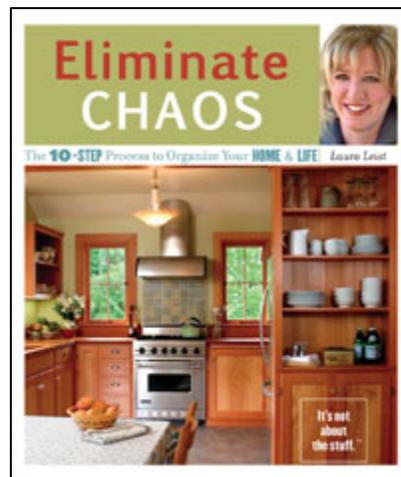


May 24, 2006

Weekly find: 'Eliminate Chaos'

What's the first thing you do when you start organizing a room (or garage, or kitchen)? You shop for all those cool organizer drawers, racks, hooks, baskets, etc. Right? Wrong! You pick up Laura Leist's book, "[Eliminate Chaos](#)" (\$19.95, published by Sasquatch Books, May 2006) and take a step-by-step approach to get your house, and maybe even your life, in order. Leist lays out a simple plan to organize any room in the house without A.) procrastinating, B.) tearing your hair out, C.) quitting in the middle, or D.) simply making cosmetic changes.



The local author has had plenty of experience rolling up her shirt sleeves and getting her hands dirty in clients' closets as well as home offices. She's organized everything-from computer files to kitchen drawers to garages, spiders and all. She's also on the board of directors for the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO).

The book goes beyond finding the right shelves for the sports gear in your garage. It touches upon the psychological reasons we procrastinate when it comes to straightening up our homes. Leist offers insight and solutions-it's obvious she's experienced some of these issues herself (read her heartfelt preface), and has worked with many clients where depression or thriftiness has contributed to a houseful of clutter.

The concrete tips of sorting and purging give me hope. Leist holds your hand (figuratively) through every step. Each project in the book is a real-life messy child's room, inefficient laundry room or office in dire need of help, and all are documented with color photographs.

Though each project is individually unique, you get more than just a general idea of what it's going to take in terms of time, materials and cash. The anecdotes of those being organized are interesting, such as the woman who used her bedroom closet as a dumping ground for household odds and ends and stored her clothes in bins in the bedroom. (Makes you feel less alone when it comes to being disorganized.)

I'm inspired by the book. I have a long list of do's: office, upstairs and downstairs closet, garage. I'll think I'll just take them one step at a time...

Available at independent stores including [Capers](#), [Third Place Books](#), [Elliott Bay Book Co.](#) and [University Bookstore](#). Also available at Barnes & Noble, Borders, and IKEA.

— Kathy Schultz
NWsource shopping columnist