

## Family Living Focus

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### Clutter - Source of Stress?

Have you spent the day sorting and rearranging those items that you need a home for but you don't know where? Does this happen all too often when you want to have a meeting for the PTO fund raiser at your home? Or you have a few special friends in for dessert? Clutter has a way of sneaking up on a person. Someone once said that housekeeping is like stringing beads without a knot on the end of the string. It seems to be a never-ending process.

Do you want to get more organized, but things are such a mess that you don't know where to start? Does just looking at the piles of paper, clothes, toys, etc. cause you to feel tired before you start? This may be referred to as visual stress. Stress can be defined as pressure from outside that can make you feel tense inside.

We look for easy ways to store or camouflage clutter. Added storage or bought storage units might be one solution; but often these are soon overflowing again. Instead of hiding clutter, you might want to try and think why it is there in the first place.

We have our reasons why we are keeping certain items. One might be that we no longer do "spring or fall" cleaning. This was the time when we sorted out what was important to keep from one

season to the next. We also discarded items. Homes are smaller, with less storage areas, often with no basements or attics or even available storage in the main part of the home.

Jill C. Major, who writes about clutter defines it as "things that are worth saving, but haven't been put away, deposited on top of things that are not worth saving but haven't been thrown away, which have settled next to things you aren't sure what to do with".

Not everyone is concerned with clutter if it's unfinished objects (UFO), the craft-projects, or stack of magazines. A problem occurs when you can't get done what you want or it causes a person to trip or fall. You waste your time looking for an item that you know is in one of those piles.

You make the decision which possessions will remain with you and which ones should go. Trying to hold onto everything may keep you from being in control of your life. Research tells us that as human beings we have a high need to be in control of situations. One toll of clutter is that everything stashed away or hidden is also stashed away in our mind and continues to drain our mental energy.

How can we make a start at getting rid of clutter? There are many books written on the sub-

ject of organization and what steps are involved. Basically, it comes down to decision-making. You have decided that you want to do something with all the accumulation. One suggestion is to start with a small area. Work at it for a short period of time. This is so you don't overwhelm yourself, become too tired with thinking about all you have to do. You may want to involve the entire family or someone else to help you. Pick a time of day when you feel highly energized. A garage sale date for the neighborhood or an organization that has asked for donations is a good incentive to "de-clutter".

The steps that one uses for sorting fall into three or four areas. First, identify items that you really want, example: objects that are used or are kept as mementos. Things I really want and need. (Be sensible). The next one is the *junk or trash pile*. Things like unmated items, (a single glove, broken scissors, etc.), items that you can't use. These needed to be discarded.

The third pile is the items you want to *give away*, to a yard sale, or donate to a charity store or your local church's yard sale. Things you no longer have use for but someone else might. Last is the *maybe pile*. This pile could grow, so be cautious about the items you keep. You might find yourself back starting all over again.

Decisions take time and energy. These type of decisions involve the process of letting go. It can be an emotional time as you make this decision to get rid of an item that a friend or relative gave you. Has it outlived its usefulness? You may have to make a choice. It is this type of decision that drains your energy as you are sorting.

Try to take a few "stitches in

time" with your items that you bring into the home or your work area. For example, we are overloaded with paper. Junk mail can easily be discarded in a convenient wastebasket at an area you use for your home office. Keep a wastebasket in each room.

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Reading materials—magazines, newspaper. If you don't have time to read an article from the paper, clip and file in folder

for later reading. If this reading is not getting done, you might want to consider what magazines you can do without and not renew a subscription. (You could go to the local library and borrow issues).

Preventive maintenance is a way to keep clutter under control. Think before you buy an item—"Where am I going to put it?" Make a list of items that you'd like to purchase. If it stays on the list for a long time, then you may realize that you can live without it. Say, "No Thanks," to people who want to give you items. Keep a recycle box handy for those items that you are not sure you will use in your home.

Remember de-junking, de-cluttering or sorting and discarding can help with your mental outlook as well as save your cleaning time.



## Lancaster Society 14

On July 13, Lancaster Society 14 met at the home of Ellen Newswanger, hostesses were Anna Marie Groff, Dorothy Musser and Ada Rohrer who served delicious refreshments. For roll call, members told the number of grandchildren each has. The program was adventures of grandmothers told by Polly Stoltzfus, Ellen Newswanger, and Donna Coleman. Members also had a baby shower for Donna. Each member also donated a non-perishable food item for the Food Bank.

A picnic was held August 11th at the Tinney Pavilion in Stras-

burg. Gladys Esbenshade provided delicious turkey. Mr. & Mrs. John Henry Herr presented the program, "Coping with Cultures," a slide presentation of various cultures. Hostesses were Mary Deitzel, Elva Rowe, Caroline Stoltzfus, and Rhoda Landis.

On the 14th of September, members met at the home of Gladys Esbenshade. Millie Herr had devotions. Each told what she brought for the auction. Donna Coleman was the auctioneer. She sold plants, flowers, baked goods, crafts, and garden produce.

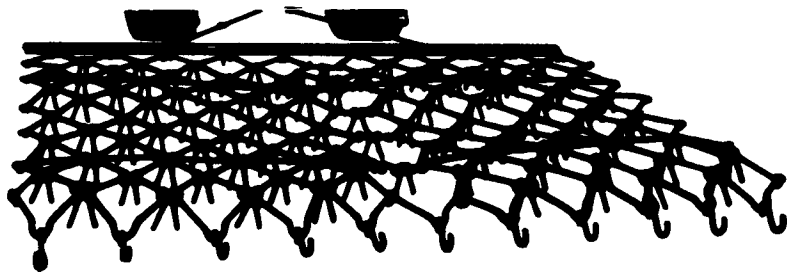
## Lancaster Society 8

Lancaster Society of Farm Women No. 8 met on October 12 at the home of Arlene Witman in Mount Joy. Margaret Hiesey gave devotions. Hostesses were Mildred Hirst, Evelyn Russell, and Arlene Witman. Mike Cassidy, staff director connected with the State Democrat Caucus, was guest speaker who gave up-to-date facts on present issues. The November 9 meeting will be held at the Donegal Presbyterian Church in Mount Joy. Members are to bring items for the Food Bank.

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