



Contact: Sylvia O'Hagan
sylvia@sylviaohagan.com
914-693-5135/914-439-1999

Family and Consumer Science Expert: 'Organizing Empowers Us'

*–Organizing helps consumers to take charge, feel better in tough times–
–Seasonal cleaning and 'shedding' for extra storage space are good first steps–*

WAYNE, N.J., May 24 , 2011 – Consumers, unsettled by everything from the incessant recession to the wrath of Mother Nature, can get a “sense of empowerment” by taking charge of their own immediate surroundings – through something as simple as a seasonal cleaning and indoor/outdoor organizing project, says [Family and Consumer Science Expert Elizabeth Hagen](#).

“People might think of seasonal cleaning as old-fashioned, or just another thankless chore,” says the author of *Organize with Confidence*. “But taking control of something that you actually have power over, such as your space and storage, can be emotionally uplifting and energizing.”

Hagen, who served on the board of the [National Association of Professional Organizers \(NAPO\)](#), continues: “Not only is cleaning, decluttering and organizing, indoors and outdoors, good for your psyche, but it also helps you to make better use of time and save money.

“When your mind is cluttered you lose focus,” she explains. “It’s the same when you have a cluttered house: you waste time by not being able to easily find things and you waste money by making duplicate purchases inadvertently. Whether it’s running out for another roll of tape when you know that you have one somewhere, or spending 30 minutes searching every time you need a hammer, just living with disorganization every day can be costly, debilitating and depressing.”

For those who might not know where to start when it comes to cleaning, decluttering and organizing, Hagen recommends making a plan, starting small and setting goals.

“Organize your project before you start,” she urges. “And don’t attack simultaneous projects or anything too big to begin with. Instead, focus on small projects, one at a time. The feeling of accomplishment, satisfaction and peace that go with an organized life can be addicting!”

Elizabeth Hagen's tips for tackling cleaning, decluttering and organizing

During her frequent motivational talks to groups around the country, Hagen offers the following:

- Visualize what indoor or outdoor spaces you’d like to free up for more important or enjoyable purposes. How will they look after you're done? For motivation, picture yourself enjoying the revamped space.
- Prioritize your approach to cleaning, decluttering and organizing. What will you tackle first? When will you do it? Will you have help? What’s next? Make a list and check off your “assignments” as you go.
- Determine your decision-making philosophy. What will guide decisions on things to keep and things to part with? For example: How often do you use an item? Do you love it? Establish your criteria in

advance and stick to them. It will speed up the process.

- Decide what you will do with excess items. Make a pile for donations, for trash, for a yard sale or for alternative storage, like a backyard storage shed.
- Put your decluttering and organizing project on a calendar – and follow through.

The new frugality: more saving, more storage required

“In today’s economy consumers are more apt to hold onto things than in previous years,” Hagen notes. “For example, recent studies by the [NPD Group](#), a leading market research firm, show that there’s ‘a new frugality’ among consumers who are repairing or keeping things longer than they did during boom years.

“In addition to not throwing things out, some consumers also are likely to add new possessions as their families grow, further increasing their need for organization and storage,” Hagen adds. “In the past, an expanding family often led to having a larger home, but today a move to more spacious quarters is out of reach for many, and having enough space to accommodate a serious organization effort becomes a really big challenge.

“Something that people might not have thought of to help meet the challenge,” she says, “is what I call ‘shedding’ – organizing with an outdoor storage shed. With a shed, you can dramatically increase your storage space, and, if you choose a do-it-yourself shed kit, you can add this space most economically.”

Hagen is quick to point out that organization is an important consideration for shed storage, too. She offers these recommendations so that your shed doesn't become just another place for clutter:

- Use the storage space wisely for things that are important to you; plan what will go in it.
- Carefully [select the right size shed](#) for your needs and your budget.
- Make setting up your shed fun. How about a shed-raising party?
- Consider giving family members storage sections of their own: Dad’s tools, the kids’ outdoor toys, Mom’s craft supplies or seasonal decorations.
- Use organizing aids, such as labels, [shelves and racks](#) to make the best use of space.
- Place things used most frequently in front, things used less often in back, and place things that might be dangerous to children or pets, such as cleaning supplies, up and out of reach.

[See video of Elizabeth's shedding tips \(http://www.sheds.com/decluttering/organizationaltips.html\)](http://www.sheds.com/decluttering/organizationaltips.html)

“I believe in the old adage, ‘A place for everything, and everything in its place,’” says Hagen. “Taking control of the space around you, with the right storage solution, can be emotionally empowering and make for an easier, happier, more enjoyable life.”

About Arrow Storage Products

[Arrow Storage Products](#) is the world’s largest designer, producer and distributor of steel shed kits, offered in a wide range of prices, as low as \$200, in a wide variety of models that could meet virtually any consumer budget and need. Arrow has sold more than 12 million of its made-in-the-USA sheds worldwide, through such top retailers as [Home Depot](#), [Lowe’s](#), [Sears](#), [Menards](#) and [Walmart](#). For more information, and to find a shed that’s right for you, visit www.sheds.com

For more information about Elizabeth Hagen, please visit www.elizabethhagen.com

Headshots, photos, video/b-roll available on request.