



Inside this issue:

Cooking with Gwen	2
Up coming Programs	3
Decluttering Tips	4
Decluttering <i>continued</i>	5
Trivia	6
Decluttering tips <i>continued</i>	7
Trivia Answers	

# The Wire

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## Organize your life: Decluttering tips

Do you feel suffocated by stuff? When you open a drawer or cabinet, do you experience an anxious feeling you can't quite explain? Do you ever come across a chipped glass or a sweater with a hole in it and wonder "Why do I still have this?" If so, you're not alone.

Multiple studies have found that Americans are drowning in their possessions. A study by the University of California at Los Angeles found middle-class families with garages full to bursting, sprawling toy and book collections and refrigerators cluttered with magnets. The U.S. Department of Energy reported that 25 percent of people with two-car garages didn't have space to park a car, and a report by the National Association of Professional Organizers found we'll spend an average of one year of our lives looking for lost possessions due to clutter.

As you age, clutter can become even more of a problem, causing tripping hazards, stress and exacerbating memory loss issues. Whether you're planning to move to an assisted living community and want to downsize, or are thinking of the future and don't want to put your family through the added grief of poring through your possessions after your death, now is the time to declutter. What's more, you may find yourself feeling free and cleansed. Here are a few tips on how to declutter for good:

### Choose a method

You may find yourself feeling free and cleansed when you declutter.

*Continued on page 4*

## Cooking with Gwen

Gwen is the Meal Coordinator for both Sanford and Starbuck GEMS Meal programs. Her love of Seniors and cooking is apparent as everything she makes is fantastic!

If you have not yet been to a meal program, check out our calendar and give us a call. We would love to see you!



### Creamy Cucumber Salad

- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 tsp white vinegar
- 1 tbsp minced fresh dill
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1.2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp garlic powder
- 3 cup peeled, thinly sliced cucumbers
- 1 cup thinly sliced red onion



#### Instructions

In a medium mixing bowl, combine sour cream, vinegar, 1 Tbsp. dill, sugar, salt, and garlic powder. Stir until combined. Add cucumbers. Add red onion.

## Upcoming Programs

### **BBQ at Burns' Museum**

**Thursday, June 20, Burns Museum located at 3023 Ferndale Rd, Ferndale**

**Come out and tour the Burns Family Collection and stay for a BBQ lunch**

**Cost: \$8 p.p.**

**Please pre-register by calling Leanne at 204-735-3052 by Thursday June 13**

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## **Folklorama Tour 2019**

**Friday, Aug 9: \$90 p.p.**

Visit 3 pavilions and enjoy included food, beverages and cultural shows.

(VIP treatment: No lines ups, reserved seating, table service.)

- ◆ First Nations Pavilion: appetizer and cultural alcoholic beverage
- ◆ African Pavilion: meal and domestic alcoholic beverage
- ◆ Argentina Tango Pavilion: dessert and non-alcoholic beverage

**The bus will pick up in Starbuck, Sanford, and Oak Bluff.**

**Seating is limited!** Note: Seating is reserved for residents of R.M. of Macdonald until June 15th. After June 15th, friends and family who are not residents of the R.M. of Macdonald are more than welcome to join us.

**Please reserve with Leanne by July 13, 2019, 204-735-3052**

## **Decluttering Tips** *Continued from page 1*

Decluttering has become highly popular over the last few years, which means you have plenty of methods to choose from. One of the most popular methods comes from the book *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, a bestseller that encourages readers to tackle clutter all at once. The author advises setting aside full days or large sets of time to declutter for good. The core of the method is to only keep items that "spark joy" when you hold them and to part with the rest, as well as to declutter by category – clothes, books, papers, miscellaneous and mementos – rather than by room.

This method will certainly yield the most dramatic results in the shortest amount of time, but if you don't have the energy level to undertake a tidying marathon for days at a time, you can try a more gradual approach. If this sounds like you, you can try the 40 Bags in 40 Days approach. Set aside some time each day to rid yourself of one garbage bag of trash, clutter, clothes you haven't worn in years, etc. This may sound daunting, but the average household is so full that you may be surprised how easily you can fill a trash bag.

Or you can set aside a chunk of time to begin – one hour, three hours or 30 minutes if you can't do more – and start with your closet or office.

### **Ask for help**

If you have mobility issues or just need some emotional support, don't be afraid to ask. Don't be shy about enlisting help from your children – chances are they would rather help you declutter and sort through your possessions now, with your input, rather than after you pass. Or you can invite over a friend, or another person who lives in your assisted living community, to come sit with you while you undertake decluttering. You can hand them items to sort into keep, donate and trash piles. Turn on some music to make it more enjoyable.

### **Part ways with mementos**

This is often a tough one, so don't start with mementos. Instead, when you come across keepsakes that spark joyful memories or a pang of sadness as you recall something or someone from your past, put them aside in a box or bag to be sorted later. Once you've gone through all of your other, less sentimental items – clothing, old receipts, the clutter in your kitchen cabinets – then you can get to the more difficult items.

When you're having trouble letting go of a memento, ask yourself whether it brings you happiness. If so, keep it. You may be surprised by how many items you have that do the opposite, and instead evoke feelings of anxiety, guilt or sadness. Resist the temptation to keep these around.

Why do you want to be reminded of a relationship that went sour or a book you're ashamed you never finished? You don't have to rid yourself of all mementos – instead, surround

Continued on page 5

## Decluttering Tips *Continued from page 4*

yourself with your favorite ones that remind you of the happy times.

### Donate items ASAP

Get rid of the clutter by getting these items out of the house as soon as possible. Once you've filed a bag or box with items to be donated, put them in your car and drive them to the donation center as soon as you can. You can also look for charities to pick up your donations from your home. Then enjoy the freeing feeling you'll get once you've parted ways with unnecessary clutter.

<https://www.edgewoodhealthcare.com/organize-your-life-decluttering-tips-for-seniors/>

## Decluttering Challenges

- **Medications and medical apparatus** Medical needs vary as we age: the medications and dosages change, but all too often we don't throw away prior drug prescriptions. Time to get rid of them. Find out if your pharmacy has a take-back program; if not, figure that most prescription drugs can be put in the garbage. The FDA advises taking the pills out of the containers and mixing them with coffee grounds or vegetable peelings; then use a marker to black out the label – or scratch it out – before you put the container in the garbage. Some substances, such as narcotic pain relievers, should be flushed; check the label for instructions. Old crutches from 10 years ago? If you need crutches again, you'll want to get a new and improved pair. Donate the ones you have.
- **Eyeglasses and hearing aids** We keep them because they were expensive purchases. "But they are not doing you any good sitting in the drawer if you're not wearing them," says Getzkin. Keep you last pair of glasses for use in an emergency, and recycle or donate the rest.
- **Nostalgic objects** In [Psychology Today](#), Jim Davies, Ph.D. recommends photographing some of those keepsakes you've been holding on to for years. "I take a picture, and save it in a folder called 'nostalgia.' Once I have this picture, I feel better about giving or throwing away the object, because part of why I wanted to save it was because I didn't want to forget."
- **Inherited Items** Things we inherit from parents or grandparents, can be hard to part with. "You feel like you are throwing away a person, but you're not. You're throwing away a possession of that person. Part of my job is to give you permission to let things go," Getzkin explains. "In the old days when we didn't have a lot of storage or big houses, we had one set of china and it was passed down from generation to generation," she says. Nobody really needs multiple sets.
- **Clothing** On Houzz, Jennifer Phelps tackles a closet edit. Phelps recommends discarding clothes that make you feel bad about yourself: clothes from working days past; clothes you've "grown" out of. And she relates an exercise in editing she used with a client: She taped to the wall a picture of a jacket that the woman very much wanted to buy, and then hung each piece of clothing alongside it.

Continued on page 7

## A Bag of Tricks

This trivia will stretch your long term memory and working memory

**All of the answers in this word definition game contain the consecutive letters BAG**

1. Surprisingly, many historians believe that this musical instrument originated in the middle east, not in Scotland.
2. The capital of Iraq
3. A seedy, run-down hotel or lodging
4. A person who talks and talks and talks but says little of value.
5. A long thin loaf of French bread.
6. Nickname for a wealthy person.
7. This safety device was first introduced in American cars in the mid 1970's.
8. A small round bread that likely originated in the Jewish area of Krakow, Poland in the 17th century.
9. Northerners who went south after the Civil War to profit from the unsettled conditions during Reconstruction.
10. This root vegetable, called *swede* in England, originated in Scandinavia or Russia as a cross between the cabbage and the turnip.
11. This is an old fashioned word for lower back pain.
12. An Italian custard dessert that is traditionally served with fresh figs, but in North America is often served in a champagne glass with strawberries and blueberries.

**Answers on page 7**



Morris, an 82-year-old man, went to the doctor to get a physical.

A few days later, the doctor saw Morris walking down the street with a gorgeous young woman on his arm.

A couple of days afterward, the doctor spoke to Morris and said, "You're really doing great, aren't you?"

Morris replied, "Just doing what you said, Doc - 'Get a hot mamma and be cheerful.'"

The doctor said, "I didn't say that. I said, 'You've got a heart murmur- be careful.'"

## Decluttering Tips *Continued from page 5*

Would her client choose this over the jacket? If there was no contest, it went in the giveaway pile.

- **Old gadgets** Jim Davies in Psychology Today refers to the “endowment effect”: he explains that “When we own something, we value it more than we would have been willing to pay for it when we didn’t have it.” In his decluttering, he asks himself if he would be willing to pay what a gadget is worth – say, \$20 for his old point-and-shoot. If the answer is no, he sells or donates it.
- **Utensils** On [Oprah](#), Peter Walsh came up with the “cardboard box test” for utensils. You could use the same test for those pens and pencils that have been accumulating in cups and jars. Take all the utensils out of the drawer and put them in a cardboard box. For the next month, each time you use one, put it back in the drawer. At the end of the month, whatever you haven’t used, you don’t need.
- **Paperwork** We live in a world of digital files and virtual paperwork. Having a real paper trail is wise under certain circumstances, but we don’t need 30 years of financials. “There are some papers you need to hang on to for life, some you can relinquish after a set amount of time and some papers that you can throw out the same day they arrive” says Getzkin. Your attorney or accountant can tell you which papers fall into the different categories. Making the effort a few minutes each day to sort and toss incoming paperwork keeps piles from forming. “Eighty percent of what we keep, we’ll never look at again,” Getzkin estimates. “It’s just taking up space in our homes.” Some paperwork can be scanned and saved on your hard drive.

<https://seniorplanet.org/too-much-old-stuff-how-to-bust-the-clutter/>

### Answers to bag of Tricks Trivia

1. bagpipe 2. Baghdad 3. fleabag 4. windbag 5. baguette 6. moneybags 7. air-bag 8. bagel 9. carpetbaggers 10. rutabaga 11. lumbago 12. zabaglione

Macdonald Services to Seniors has a Website!

Check us out at

**MacdonaldSeniors.ca**

## Macdonald Services to Seniors

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Helping seniors remain in their own homes

M.S.S. is a service to all older adults within the R.M. of Macdonald.

We can help with transportation, home and yard maintenance, house-keeping, foot care, medical equipment loans, filling out forms, accessing information, Victoria Lifeline and ERIK. Please call for information.

M.S.S. relies on volunteers and service providers to help older adults remain in their own homes for as long as possible.

If you have a few hours to give, please call Leanne to see how you can be of service. We are always looking for people to help with transportation, light house cleaning, or even friendly visiting.

### Service Providers Featured in Previous Issues:

#### Foot Care:

A Step in Time Foot Care: Brenda Grom—204-509-1817

#### Hair Care:

Hair I Am Mobile Salon: Leah Macaulay—204-470-2727

If you offer services for seniors, and would like to be featured in this newsletter, please contact Leanne

**Macdonald Services to Seniors is in  
Need of Drivers, and House cleaners  
in all communities.**

**If you are interested in putting your name forward to  
be contacted when someone requires help with trans-  
portation or light house cleaning, please call Leanne.**

