



In Good Taste With Heather Rogge

Jean Soyk, Professional Organizer, "Making Your Life Easier"



Jean Soyk



All of Jean's work is done confidentially, but the homeowner where Jean worked on the pantry agreed to share before and after photos.



January is well underway and, if you're like most people, you've already broken your New Year's resolution. If you resolved to get organized in 2010 and you're still unsure how to get started, then Jean Soyk of Organized Nest, LLC, can help. January is Get Organized Month. According to a recent survey conducted on behalf of National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO), respondents agree getting organized is definitely a necessity. Of those polled, 71 percent said their quality of life would improve if they were better organized. 65 percent described their home as at least moderately disorganized and 27 percent said disorder keeps them from being effective at work.

As Jean will tell you, starting is one of the toughest things. Experts suggest finding a decluttering buddy. An honest friend or a hired organizer can help you put things in perspective and part with items you just don't need anymore. Jean, who lives in West Bend, started her business, Organized Nest, LLC in 2008.

She enjoyed the TV show Clean Sweep. Professional Organizer Peter Walsh would help people with their overwhelming rooms of clutter and Jean would say "I want that job" as she watched the

take a space that is not usable and turn it into functional space that they can be proud of. She takes clutter out and replaces it with organization - giving people the time and space to enjoy their home.

episode should air within the next couple of weeks.

Since virtually everyone is either organizationally challenged, obsessed or perpetually in progress, Jean offered the following tips:

- Start with a small space, and don't leave the area until done. It is too easy to get distracted when putting something else away. Just make a box for things that don't belong in that space and don't put it away until you are done with the area you are working on.

- Keep like-things together and in the space that you use them. She said this is a great technique for your closet. You may think you need to buy another turtleneck but when you group them together you realize you already have three.

- Keep the things you use most in the areas that are easiest to access.

- Set aside time to work on the projects and allow enough time.

- Allocate small amounts of time every day to maintain the space.

- Remember, every person is unique and each solution is unique.

- Jean is especially fond of the clothes hanger trick. Reverse the way your clothes are hung in your closet. When you wear and return an item, replace the hanger the correct way



The homeowner is thrilled with the results. "My children really love it - they can find things quickly and easily."

show. She joined NAPO, which is the national organization and then NAPO-Wisconsin. Jean enjoys the satisfaction of helping people

Jean was especially excited that she recently spent a day helping fellow organizers work on a home in Milwaukee for the TV show Hoarders. The

- Realize that organization does not mean having a perfect space, but a space where you can find things easily.

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around. At the end of a season or year you can clearly see what you haven't worn and what you can live without.

Jean recently worked on a pantry project in West Bend. It was a relatively quick and inexpensive project. Jean and the homeowner took everything out of the pantry and sorted by general category (for example: canned, baking, appliances, plastic containers). They checked expiration dates and made sure there was matching lids to containers. Any unused or duplicate items were donated. After a thorough cleaning and the purchase of \$40 of containers for food and storage, they were ready to put things back. Jean believes it is important to take several factors into consideration when placing items. You should consider things like how often an item is used, do the kids need to be able to reach it and can you easily see what was there. This project was completed in 3 hours and really makes the space more functional.

Organized Nest can help you organize spaces large and small. Jean can help with the process of downsizing to a smaller home or assisting families clean out a home or an apartment after a loved one has passed away. She also offers her services to pack and unpack for a move or to prepare a home to be sold. She also can serve as a mentor, teaching as you organize together. Like exercising, sometimes you need a trainer to keep you accountable and moving forward. Jean can guide, focus and motivate you. Once organized you will save time and space.

Jean prepares an electronic newsletter with tips and ideas. To receive it, send her an email to organizednest@sbcglobal.net. Jean said she also is happy to make presentations on organization to groups. She can also be reached at 262-355-5355. Her website is organizednestLLC.com

Jean is sharing two recipes that she submitted from the Soyk family cookbook.

Tortellini Sausage Soup

*6-8 cups chicken broth
1 lb. pork sausage with pizza seasoning
9 oz refrigerated cheese tortellini
1 cup sliced carrots
1/2 cup celery
2 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley
1/3 cup Parmesan cheese*

Brown pork sausage and drain. To get more grease off, place paper towel over newspaper, spread the meat on top for 15 minutes to drain. In large kettle, combine chicken broth, meat, tortellini, carrot, celery. Bring to a boil and continue for 8 minutes. Stir in parsley. Top each serving with Parmesan cheese. Makes 4-6 servings. You can also add a handful of another shaped noodle in to add variety, but then you may need more broth.

Jean's note was that this recipe is "great to make a huge batch and freeze in several containers and then thaw for a quick meal."

Gina's Special K Bars

*1 cup white sugar
1 cup white Karo syrup
1 cup peanut butter
1 tsp vanilla
6 cups Special K cereal (can substitute other cereals such as Cheerios or Corn Flakes)
1 cup chocolate chips
1/2 cup butterscotch chips*

Grease a big bowl and add cereal. Bring sugar and Karo syrup to a boil (or you can microwave it). Then add peanut butter and vanilla. Stir. Pour mixture over cereal and mix until cereal is evenly coated. Pad into greased pan. (For thicker bars, use 9" x 13" pan, or jelly sheet for thinner ones.) For topping, melt chocolate and butterscotch chips (can microwave these) until you can stir into a smooth mixture. Frost the bars and cut when cool.

These were Jean's mother-in-law's specialty. Gina passed away a year-and-a-half ago but this recipe will always be known as her bars.