

# amelia barrett

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZER

530.401.4730 Direct

OrganizeNevadaCounty.com

AmeliaRBarrett@gmail.com

## MAY ARCHIVED "WEEKLY DISH"

For the week beginning Tuesday, May 27th, 2008.

With the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Yard Sale coming up this weekend I want to share a quick and easy list of questions to ask yourself when deciding on what stays and what goes. Anybody can use this list that is looking to do a "clutter sweep" in their home. The key is to be honest with yourself and DON'T go back and forth - that means that once you decide to sell or get rid of something you can't take it back! The list titled Toss or Keep? By Donna Smallin will make your indecisions history!

Keep or toss? Ask yourself:

- Have I used this item in the past year?
- Has anyone else in my home used it in the past year?
- Do I have a definite use for this item in the foreseeable future?
- If it's broken, is it worth fixing?
- Does this item serve a worthwhile purpose in my life?
- Is it more important to me to keep this item that to have the space it occupies?
- Do I love it?
- Does someone in my household love it?
- Would it be difficult or expensive for me to get another one?

Smallin suggest that "there are no right or wrong answers, but a 'Yes' answer provides a sound reason to keep that item. A 'No' answer, on the other hand, gives a good reason to toss it."

A few more question I like:

- Does it reflect who you are now?
- Is it easy to use and maintain?
- Do you have a "home" for it in your space?

I hope you're cleaning out quest has been successful. Remember that with a little time and dedication, anything is possible.

For the week beginning Tuesday, May 20th, 2008.

As I begin to prepare for the upcoming 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Yard Sale, I'm focusing in on giving helpful advice to clients, friends, and family that are joining me in the clean out. Most everybody that is participating will have clothes to sell. With that being said, I'll share a quick list I have compiled of easy closet fixes that can tidy up your space after you've cleared out the clutter.

- Store off season clothes, hats, and scarves in clear storage bins with description labels (see last weeks Dish for labeling bins of clothes in storage).
- Get shoe boxes for all pairs of shoes (remember to stow away the off season shoes as well). Depending on your budget, these can be purchased or easily made. To make: go to your local shoe store and ask for shoe boxes they're throwing out. You can cover the outsides with fabric, contact paper, or even paper mache them with your favorite clippings.
- Purchase sorting trays (often found at office supply stores) to house the smaller in season items that don't stack or hang well (i.e. scarves, belts, lingerie & underwear, socks, swimsuits, etc.) When buying containers like these, remember to think: flexible & functional. Buy something that can easily be moved to another house or used in a different location (i.e. in the closet vs. in a dresser drawer).
- Synchronize the hangers! If you don't already have all the same hangers, consider the switch. Having all hanger the same size and color just makes a closet look that much neater.
- Keep a container for consignment and/or donate items.
- Keep a list or container (depending on how much space you have) of clothing needed to be hemmed.
- Keep a box, basket or bin near where you hang your clothes. When you take something off the hanger, put it in the bin. Then, when it's time to do the laundry, take the bin of hangers to the laundry room and hang up the clothes when they're fresh out of the dryer!

Just today I stumbled upon an article that works perfect with my closet organizing quest. Organize magazine's new May/June 2008 issue features an article written by Lori Wynne titled Dressing Spiffy in a Jiffy (if you'd like to read this article please email me and I'll send it to you). She outlines the basics to easily dressing yourself with your current wardrobe by giving simple tips, reminders, and just plain smart ideas to consider when organizing your closet.

I challenge you to take these tips to heart and get yourself (and maybe a significant other) organized from the inside (literally the inside of your closet) out!

For the week beginning Tuesday, May 13th, 2008.

As my son's 1<sup>st</sup> birthday quickly approaches, I feel like the Rubbermaid® tubs of his old clothes and toy just keep growing. At this point, I have come to terms with the fact that my son will probably outgrow things faster than I can keep them clean. This, in turn, has made me appreciate the order in his room! The flow of toys & clothes coming in always matches the flow going out. And, as his toys get rotated around, (which is a MUST for any kid...they get board too easily otherwise!) easy to understand labels are always marking the outside of each toy container.

Having a child has really given me the "hands on experience" to know what organizing systems work for kids. The following is a list I create of essential "systems" for any child's room:

- Some type of container to house outgrown clothes and outgrown toys (usually kept in the closet). When the containers fill up, transfer the items into storage.
- A container for toys to be fixed and clothes to be hemmed.
- A BabyBriefcase® (<http://www.organizedfromthestart.com/>). I got this as a baby shower gift, but it would still be applicable to any age child. It's an organized and easy way to store your child's important papers. It also has room to add your own categories as you find need.
- A shoe rack that is easily accessible for them. Start showing your kids at a young age that shoes come off in the house and get put away.
- A laundry basket. Of course, this one is a no brainier! When the basket is full, it's time to do laundry!
- An overstock supply area or container, depending on your specific needs. This would include items your child/baby uses such as: shampoo, toothbrushes, diapers, wipes, sunscreen, lotion, etc. When you run out of an item, you should know exactly where the back up is.

One book that I think has great ideas and organizing solutions for kids is Organizing Plain & Simple by Donna Smallin (<http://www.unclutter.com/>). She says there are “three basic principles to keep in mind when organizing kids’ rooms:

1. **Make it easy to put things away.** Provide plenty of containers for putting like items together, so kids can see at a glance what goes where.
2. **Organize from the bottom up.** Keep frequently used items accessible on lower shelves and in bottom drawers. Store less frequently used items higher up.
3. **Label everything.** Label shelves, drawers, and containers. For children who can’t read, label with drawings, photographs, or pictures cut out of magazines or catalogs.”

I like these principles because they’re fundamental and easy to apply. One other tip from Smallin that I thought was very useful: “Store children’s seasonal clothing and shoes in stackable storage containers or boxed labeled with seasons, sex and size rather than by child’s name: for example, ‘Summer – Girl’s Size 10-12.’”

I can’t believe my son will be turning 1 in less than 4 weeks. And I can’t even imagine what the clutter in his room would be like if there wasn’t functional flow. I hope this inspires you to show your child the benefits of being organized!

For the week beginning Tuesday, May 6th, 2008.

Gosh, I can’t believe it’s already May! Happy Cinco de Mayo! This time of year always reminds me of yard sales. Maybe it’s because I, myself, am a total “Spring Cleaner” and feel the urge to recycle my lightly used treasures so other people can enjoy them. Or maybe it’s because everywhere I drove this weekend I saw yard sale signs all over! Whatever it is, I am driven to start a community swap meet within Nevada County. My ultimate goal is to host a bi-weekly swap meet during the summer months in Nevada County. My short-term goal is to host an “Annual Organize Nevada County Yard Sale” at my residence.

That being said, I will be hosting the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Organize Nevada County Yard Sale on Saturday May 31<sup>st</sup> and Sunday June 1<sup>st</sup>. If you are at all interested and have items to sell please contact me directly and I will forward you more information.

While doing research to prepare myself for my 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Yard Sale, I came across a very informational article by Ramona Creel of OnlineOrganizing.com ([www.onlineorganizing.com](http://www.onlineorganizing.com)) titled Yard Sale Checklist (<http://www.theblufish.com/organizing/decluttering/articles/yardsale/index.html>). Creel offers easy suggestions for hosting and running your yard sale smoothly and successfully.

Remember, recycling saves landfill space, recycling saves energy, recycling saves natural resources, and recycling reduces air & water pollution!