

December 2008

"May your walls know joy; may every room hold laughter and every window open to great possibility."

Maryanne Radmacher-Hershey, 1995

"Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family. Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one."

Jane Howard, "Families"

The Holidays, The Economy and Money

With the economy, it's no surprise that secondhand and consignment shops and websites like E-Bay and Etsy are booming right now during the holiday season. Many times, their stock is like new and has never been worn or used. You can find some good bargains in these kinds of stores as long as you know what you're looking for.

- Small children don't care if a toy comes in the packaging or not. They just want the toy. One year, my sister wrapped up a toy my niece never played with for my then 2-year-old nephew. He loved it and never knew it was a "regift."
- Baby furniture, maternity clothes, luggage, and small appliances are very popular at consignment shops. Even bridal dresses are being snatched up for little money.
- Look over any item carefully. Most of the secondhand stores do not take returns. Once you buy it, you cannot return it.
- Etsy.com usually features gifts people have made. So if you want that homemade touch and don't have the time or skill, take a look.
- Janet Luhrs' book *The Guide to Simple Living* is a good resource to have on your shelf. The guru of the "voluntary simplicity" movement has quite a few great ideas to stretch your dollars and simplify your life at home. Click [here](#) for her website, but you must pay to subscribe. For the book, click [here](#). Someone like Luhrs probably doesn't mind if you find it used.

Need some money tips for the holidays? Here are a few articles I uncovered on Yahoo.com.

- This [story](#) shows you how to handle holiday money issues with tact. One example is how to deal with someone who surprises you with a present.
- The folks at [Motley Fool](#) wrote answers to some of our burning financial issues. Each session is organized by month and title so you can pick the topics you're interested in reading more about.
- If you want to avoid the [Top 10 Holiday Mistakes](#) to Avoid this year, read this article. My favorite tip? Don't buy someone a fruitcake. A very helpful yet amusing list.

You can freshen up your place for the holidays on the cheap. Here are a few ideas to create some inexpensive decor:

- Go to Half-Priced Books or other secondhand book stores and look for a book of art you like. For the price of one book, you get a large supply of art. Just cut out the ones you like and put them into frames. This trick also works with just about anything – calendars, leaves, dried flowers, children's artwork, greeting cards, and stamps. Use whatever strikes your fancy. Get creative.

- Is your frame much bigger than your picture? No need to worry about mats. Just find a pretty piece of paper in the scrapbooking section. Attach your picture to the paper with scrapbooking picture corners or the removable glue sticks.
- Fill a glass bowl with ornaments, pinecones, or whatever else you find and use it as a table centerpiece.

Let's GO! Get Organized Month

January is Get Organized (GO) Month, and we'll have several events for you to participate in. The first one is the **Got Clutter? Organizing Expo on Thursday, January 8, 2009 from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.** This event is open to all faculty and staff and will be in the CPB 8th Floor ballrooms. Come and pick up some good ideas for your office and home.

Other GO Month events include:

- **Organizing at Home** – Noon to 1 p.m., Wednesday, January 14 at the CPB 8th Floor, Room 1. Presenter is none other than little ol' me!
- **Using Technology to Get Faculty Work Done** – Noon to 1 p.m., Friday, January 16th in Searles, R11.2103. Presenters so far: Tejpal Grover, M.D. and Eric Tamm, M.D.
- **Organizing Your Student and Children** – Noon to 1 p.m., Wednesday, January 21 at the ACB1.2325, Rooms A-C. Presenter is Ellen Delap, CPO®.
- **Gone Green? Everything You Need to Know About Recycling at Work and Home** – Noon to 1 p.m., Friday, January 23 at the CPB 8th Floor, Room 3. Presenters are: Rick Dillard, John Gamble, Michael Pokluda, all of MD Anderson; and Jonathan Lowe of Goodwill.
- **Conquering the Perfectionism and Procrastination Paralysis** – Noon to 1 p.m., Monday, January 26, at the AT&T Auditorium, B2.4730. Presenter: TBA.
- **Personal Computer Recycling Day for Employees** – 8 a.m. to noon, Saturday, January 24 at the Pawnee Building, 3000 Pawnee (in the back parking lot). This event is co-sponsored with Asset Management and Integrated Desktop Services. We will take your computers, monitors, printers, laptops, and cell phone. Please bring your MD Anderson badge.
- **Outlook and E-Mail Management** – Noon to 1 p.m., Wednesday, January 28 in the CPB 8th Floor, Room 4. Presenters are TBA.

An Organizer Carol

I had great fun the other day coming up with the organizer's version of popular Christmas carols. I'll post these on my blog (www.theclutterprincess.com). Feel free to e-mail yours, and I'll post them too. Let's have a little fun this holiday! Here are my versions:

- What Pile Is This?
- Oh Holy Mess (The piles are gently swaying)
- It Came Upon a Desktop Clear
- Organizers Are Coming to Town
- Oh, Come All Ye Organized
- Over the Clutter and Through the Paper (To an organized house we go)
- Hark! The Cleared Desks Sing
- Silent Clutter (Holy Clutter)
- Oh Little Piles of Papers
- And the big finale: **The 12 Days of Organizing**
On the twelfth day of Christmas, my organizer found my:
Twelve years of receipts
Eleven unmatched socks
Ten tattered magazines
Nine old conference bags
Eight pencil cups
Seven bags to charity
Six broken computers

Five bottle openers
Four sizes of clothes
Three fondue pots
Two organizing books
And one label maker!

Got Clutter? I have developed 15 minute, 30 minute and 45 minute presentations on organizing, time management, and productivity. Moving to a new building? I also have a 30-minute presentation on preparing for a move for your department. I also do one-on-one sessions in your office and help you come up with a solution to your organizing problems. To schedule a presentation or a one-on-one appointment, call 713-792-8061 or email jsimon@mdanderson.org. **For past newsletters, click [here](#).** Follow me on Twitter! Look up JaniceSimon. For Facebook, look for Janice M. Simon.

I wish all of you a safe, happy and joyous holiday season and a Happy New Year! Happy Organizing! See you in 2009.

Janice

LINKS:

- **Simple Living:** <http://www.simpleliving.com/Default.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>
- **Holiday Money Issues with Tact:** <http://finance.yahoo.com/personal-finance/article/106235/Handle-Holiday-Money-Issues-With-Tact>
- **Motley Fools:** <http://finance.yahoo.com/things-to-do>
- **Holiday Mistakes:** <http://finance.yahoo.com/banking-budgeting/article/106275/10-Holiday-Money-Mistakes>