

Right Now

Organize

Holidays



Organizing– The Gift to Yourself

Buffet Do's

Place Card Ideas

Lea's Amazing Easy Candy Gift

Ready for Guests

Decorating while Decluttering

Essential 5 Holiday Must Do Items



Organize Right Now!

The solution for your home, your office, your life...

Organizing- A Gift to You! Getting Things in Order Eases Stress

I love the holidays. But, before you get all crazy saying "But it's easy for her!" keep in mind that I'm also a mother, a business owner with clients who need me at that time of the year and a wife whose husband hopes I'll participate in his business' holiday happenings. With family spread across the country, there is a good chance we'll be hitting the road at some point and most certainly hitting the line at

Lea Schneider

the post office. So, yes, I've been stressed over the holidays. One thing I've learned is that you have a ton to do whether you make lists or not. The

problem with not making the lists is you never know where you stand and what's left to do. It becomes overwhelming.

The best gift you can give yourself is one of getting



organized. Grab a cup of hot chocolate and a few quiet minutes. Get out your calendar. Begin by putting in travel dates or holiday happenings.

Next, use the days without happenings to divide up your decorating, shopping, wrapping, baking and other holiday chores. Leave yourself a buffer of a few days around the holidays to be done early and just enjoy yourself. With this kind of to-do list, you can do each day's items and then chill instead of stress because you know the rest is planned.

Happy Holidays from my house to yours. -Lea

Eight Steps to Setting Up the Buffet



1. Choose location of buffet, the actual table you'll use, table covering and decorative centerpiece.
2. Work backwards by finding your electric outlets for plugging in warming trays or Crock-Pots. Add a power strip to make it easy.
3. Working back from your hot foods, choose an area for cold foods, such as salads, chips and dip or cheese trays.
4. Next to cold food, place your plates. If you are offering a salad plate, place those next to cold food or salads. Place dinner plates at the start of the entrees.
5. Place empty serving dishes on the table to figure out how to make it all fit. Label the table with sticky notes for each dish.
6. Make sure to put needed items by each other, such as butter by the rolls.
7. Because it is hard to juggle everything, I prefer to see silverware placed last on the buffet. Tie silverware in a bundle with the napkin so your guest only has one thing to pick up.
8. Short on room? Place desserts, and dessert plates, on a separate table in another room and place a bar for beverages in yet another area. This will keep the area flowing.

Holiday 2011

From the Organize Right Now mailbag-



"Just wondering if you had any unique ideas for "food identification cards for the holiday buffet table? -St. Louis, MO"

There are lots of cute ways to do food name cards or place cards for Christmas. Shop around the dollar store- I do!

- Attach cards to miniature nutcrackers.
- Collect pine cones & wedge a card in each.



• I got these warm red straw pears at the dollar store and added name tags and curling ribbon.

• Use scrapbooking templates to cut out the first letter of each word in large type such as a giant C for Cheese. Attach the large C to a card with the rest of the word.

• Glue two small ornaments together and use as a holder for name cards.

Declutter while Decorating

This week, I literally laughed out loud when I read an organizing article. The national magazine suggested that you shove your clutter in the dishwasher to prevent company from seeing it. Really? Come on. When I have company, they get fed. That would never work.



However, you can tie in some decluttering when you are decorating. It's a good thing as you clearly don't want to wrap strings of lights around stacks of paperwork.

As you get ready to decorate a surface, do remove clutter and clean it. Discard trash. If it something you can easily put away, do so.

On the other hand, if it is something you need to go through, like piles of papers, put it in the box you took the decorations out of. You'll find it when you un-decorate. (If you stick it in a closet, you'll likely forget. This way you'll remember.)

January is Get Organized Month. It is a great time to go through things, sort, purge, store properly and label. Make a fresh start then on things you removed from surfaces in order to decorate.

Happy Decorating!

Guest Preparation Checklist

Declutter guest room. Make sure to leave space on the dresser or bathroom counter for your guests' things. Stow a few things away if you need to.

Change bedding, if needed, or fluff spread and shams in dryer on no heat to remove dust. Using a sofa sleeper— be sure to open and vacuum mattress and floor under sofa.

Dust, vacuum & look in corners for cobwebs.

Open a window just long enough to **air out** any dusty or stale smells.

To the nightstand, **add a couple of newer magazines**, tissues and a small holiday decoration like a small Santa.



Make it light. **Open curtains**. Check lights for bulbs. Make sure there is a **nightlight** and a lamp for reading in bed.

Squeeze out a bit of **hanging space** in the closet and leave a few empty hangers.

Clean bathroom. Check for clean towels, hand soap, body wash, shampoo, tissues, toilet paper and drinking glasses or **paper cups for guests**.

Extra nice idea- guests are often uncomfortable to ask for **a snack**. Leave a basket with apples, granola bars, cheese crackers and bottled water. They will think you love them— and you do! If they don't eat it, no waste as you can consume them after the holidays.

Lea's Everything Orange Bark

Makes 75 to 85 candies

3 10-ounce bags white chocolate chips
3 T. oil
3 t. orange extract
6 ounces Craisins
24 ounces almond pistachio walnut pecan mixed nuts
½ of an 8 ounce package of pretzel Goldfish crackers
6 ounces dried apricots, snipped
3 snack size bags of M & Ms- (optional)
Foil liners for miniature muffin tins

Make in 3 batches because the cooling chocolate gets hard fast!

In a large bowl, melt one bag of chocolate chips in the microwave. Cook 1.5 minutes. Stir. Cook 1.5 minutes. Stir. Microwave an additional minute if needed- chocolate should be smooth. Stir in 1 T. oil and 1 t. orange extract.

While chocolate melts, snip apricots into bite size pieces. Divide the pretzels in two. Reserve half of the bag for snacking on another day. Only use half of the bag in this recipe.

Add 1/3 of the Craisins, nuts mix, pretzels, apricots and M & Ms, if desired. Stir to coat well. Divide

among muffin liners. Place on a cookie sheet in the freezer while you work on the next batch. Repeat two more times. . Place in containers and then store in the fridge so they can continue to harden. Once fully hard, they can be kept in a cool location out of the fridge.



©Professional Organizer Lea Schneider • Pensacola, FL • 850-477-2582 • organizerightnow.com

Photo Credits: The following from fotolia.com-opening gift©Anne Katrin Figge, laptop and coffee ©raphotography, pillows©Joy Fera, a modern green dinner table with utensils and wine© Stephanie Connell, red Christmas balls©Edyta Pawlowska. Other photos© Lea Schneider.

