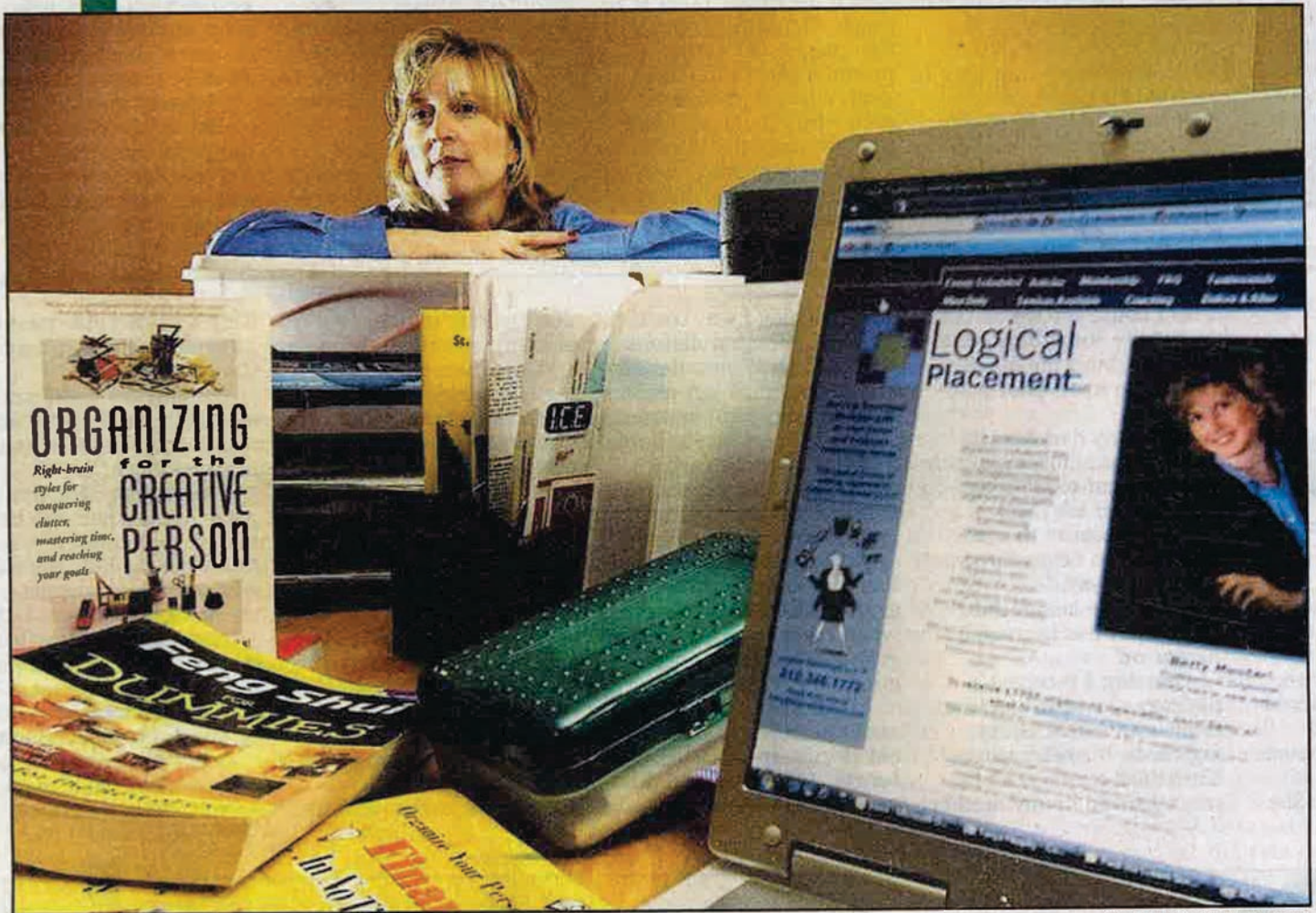


Resolve to organize



The Flint Journal • Ryan Garza

▲ Professional organizer Betty Huotari of Fenton is owner of Logical Placement.

Professionals offer advice on eliminating clutter

By Brenda Brissette Mata
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Getting organized at the beginning of the year ranks right up there with losing weight when it comes to resolutions.

"The problem," said Betty Huotari of Tyrone Township, president of the Michigan Chapter of the National Association of Professional Organizers, "is that a lot of people lose the list by February."

Huotari has always been organized. She turned her personal passion into a business in 2001. At the time she said there were six professional organizers in the state of Michigan. Today she said there are at least 85.

Her company, Logical Placement, helps families and companies get organized.

Huotari also teaches community education classes on organizing.

"I begin by helping clients prioritize," Huotari said. "I help them break it down, kind of get their vision."

She asks clients to determine their ultimate goal.

"Do you want to eat at the kitchen table? How do they want a room to function?" she said.

Huotari said she works side by side with clients. "I don't do it all for them," she said. "Otherwise they won't learn anything."

In some cases one visit is all that's necessary, but Huotari said she has some clients that have her return month after month.

"We do the kitchen, next month the bedroom, the third month, the basement," she said. Costs vary from \$40 to \$60 an hour.

Huotari said the number one problem for most clients is that they are buried in paper.

Getting control of paper is one of the most important steps in

organizing a home.

She also suggests clients have a vision for their spaces.

"It's important to know what you plan to do," she said. "If you need a craft room, make a craft room. You need to know where you will pay your bills, at what desk, at what table."

And third in her top three suggestions for getting organized?

"Have the right tools in place," she said.

Huotari said customers, particularly women, are multi-taskers and it's easy to get distracted while trying to accomplish four or five things at the same time.

"Doing laundry, packing lunches, paying bills ... you get distracted and pulled away from a project because you have to look for your checkbook or the shredder or envelopes. It's hard to get anything done that way," she said.

► Pros, D2

“I tell people to get their hands on all their papers. Life can be much more stress free and productive when you get paper under control.”

Judy Lubowicki, www.clutterfreeorganizing.com

Websites to help with organization

By Kathleen Hom

The Washington Post

The following free Web-based tools offer guidance that'll take the sting out of the cleaning process. They can be coupled with other resolutions, such as keeping track of finances and teaching kids responsibility, so you can knock out two resolutions at once.

Pageonce

Companies push customers to move from paper to electronic statements, touting it as a way to make life easier. But when you have numerous Web sites to check and too many user names and passwords to remember, it can be a headache. Pageonce (www.pageonce.com) allows users to check

all accounts, including credit card, banking, utility and online retailers, in one swoop from any Web browser, BlackBerry or iPhone. Users are notified when bills are due to help avoid late payments and fees, and statements are updated with the latest transactions. To safeguard accounts, Pageonce asks for only an e-mail address and Zip code during sign-up (no account numbers), and services are read-only, meaning Pageonce cannot manipulate accounts.

Chore Wars

When you've been doing them for a while, chores lose their appeal. Try Chore Wars (www.chorewars.com) if bribing your kids with cash isn't an option or if they are avid

gamers. The site couples household tasks with a fantasy gaming experience. Users do chores, log in, gain points and can fight mythical beasts. The basic setup is free (an advanced version costs \$10), and parents can log in to see what duties have been completed and how long they took.

'The O Myth'

"The O Myth" (www.theomymyth.com) is a sporadic half-hour radio show hosted by Washington professional organizers Brandie Kajino and Krista Colvin. The duo delves into common misconceptions about organizing, such as what you should invest time in streamlining (your garage) and what you can disregard (your underwear drawer).