

CHAT ROOM



KATHIE O'DONOHUE

Messy mom knows she has lots of company

Great news for all less than Martha moms out there. Let's officially make this the month of the Messy Mom. Let's celebrate and proudly join the ever-swelling ranks as we face facts. Anyone can be a neat freak, but it takes real guts, self-assuredness and creativity to live as a messy.

For a limited time, the Messy Moms Club will accept new members provided applicants fit most of the following qualifications:

You must maintain an attitude of nonchalance with regard to your homemaking endeavors. For instance, when you ask your husband to retrieve a store circular from the kitchen counter pile, and he inquires, "which pile?" you're in, no questions asked.

You qualify for membership if you've been humbled by your child's friend's mother's comments that her son feels very comfy at your home since his own house is a pit.

A friend recently asked me if her son left his Red Wings baseball cap over my house. I thought to myself, is she serious? Even if we did find it, would we possibly be able to tell if it was his? I didn't tell her there was no remote chance of finding it, not this side of her son renching adulthood.

Cluttered look

If you had to describe it, your decorating style would be called "eclectic with just a touch of moody" (in my case, think temper tantrum). But take heart, when the cluttered look comes into vogue, you'll be the hands down trend setter in your neighborhood.

You're a shoo-in if you are the one out of all your "neatle" siblings who has inherited (been genetically dumped upon) the unfortunate yet necessary role of the messy. Necessary, because without your homemaking style to compare theirs to, who could they brag about being better than?

It's also a fair assessment you've achieved messy mom status if you find yourself yelling "I work really hard to keep this place like this!" then realize you're referring to complete chaos bordering on total disaster.

Messy moms are known to be a week or two behind on reading their newspapers but find themselves helplessly unable to put them in the recycle bin without having first read them, or at least, looked through them. Many nights while reading back issues in bed, I've been astonished to discover the obituary of some celebrity. My husband doesn't read with the same sense of surprise, though, and usually tells me that's old news he heard weeks ago. Well, it's news to me!

You have all the right messy qualifications when you feel a great sense of accomplishment after slaving to keep clean and organize the garage only to find the rest of the house has gone to pot in the meantime. When your weeds could pass for shrubs, and the only flower you're able to cultivate is the occasional dandelion or wild violet. Or when the quintessential command to "CLEAN YOUR ROOM!" doesn't mean much because there's a gaping lack of role models in the home.

As an official messy mom for some time, in order to maintain a working level of sanity I have changed my mind-set. As opposed to piles, I now refer to them as files. And I keep them everywhere — on the counter, desk top, in my car, on the bedside table, in my pockets, and even in my purse. Whoever claimed diamonds are a girl's best friend was not acquainted with sticky notes.

I've read some of the subversive material circulating out there on organization that advises having a junk drawer. A singular junk drawer, are they kidding? All my drawers are junk drawers. As if they were made for some other purpose. And since I would have no idea where to begin to organize them, my thought is, why begin at all?

Messy moms are creatures of freedom who see things differently from

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MISS FARMINGTON 2001

BY MARY RODRIQUE
STAFF WRITER

The newly crowned Miss Farmington/Oakland County Tracey Finlayson began pageant day with a test administered by her new employer, the Pfizer Corp.

The University of Michigan business graduate aced the exam and the pageant last Wednesday.

"It's been two days and my head is still spinning," said Finlayson on Friday, studying for yet another corporate exam.

Hired by Pfizer on July 13, she'll be a pharmaceutical sales representative, her territory, Livonia.

The younger daughter of Bruce

and she came home in January.

"It was a blessing in disguise because it allowed me to get involved with the Miss Farmington pageant," she said.

"I believe in the mission of the pageant and thought the program could be a vehicle for my platform — earth education. This is something that fits my personality. I love to perform. This is a great way to become more involved in the community."

She plans to use the pageant scholarship money for a master's degree, although she hasn't decided when or where she'll pursue that goal. Her



Angela Corsi, Miss Farmington 2000, and the contestants perform a Broadway revue on Wednesday. Going Broadway was the theme of the 28th annual pageant.

and Susan Finlayson of Farmington Hills, Tracey earned a bachelor's degree a year ago and then joined Up With People. She traveled with 150 students performing a high-energy musical show and doing community service all over the United States. It was intended to be a year-long commitment with visits to 22 countries, but the organization went bankrupt

plate is full for now.

Finlayson and her court hit the ground running. On Thursday, she was joined by first runner-up Brooke Brennan and second runner-up Heather Barnes at the Benchmark Outdoor Outfitters in Farmington to hear Kerri Finlayson, Tracey's older sister, talk about her recent all-woman trek to the North Pole.

"We're really close. We're best friends," she said.

Finlayson says she was surprised to be crowned from the field of eight contestants.

"There were so many talented people."

Pageant executive director Ginny Morris was thrilled with the 28th

annual pageant, held for the second year at the city-owned Farmington Civic Theatre.

"We sold out every seat and even sold five tickets to stand," she said.

The pageant committee is looking at other larger venues for next year's show, she added.

Morris hopes that emcees Reynold Wolf, WDIV weathercaster, and Erin Cogswell, Miss Farmington 1998, will return next year.

Angela Corsi, Miss Farmington 2000, pinned the tiara on Finlayson's head after she took her final walk across the stage. She noted that working on an all-women Habitat for Humanity build was the most fulfilling part of her special year.

Other contestants were Leilani Thorn, 19, of Waterford, who won the non-finalist talent scholarship for a high-energy tap dance routine that included several back flips; Jessica Pedraza, 18, of Farmington Hills; Kristyn Sokolnicki, 20, of Clarkston; Kelly Zander, 17, of Farmington Hills; and Francesca Romeo, 23, of Farmington Hills, who won the Linda Jolicœur Local Business-woman scholarship.

Second runner-up Heather Barnes, 21, was voted Spirit of Miss America by her fellow contestants. The talent scholarship was a tie between Finlayson and first runner-up Brooke Brennan, 20, of Canton. Both women played piano.



Contestants hold hands and wait to hear the final results of the judges.



Number crunching: Cheryl Zajdel, Alita Bane and Diana Lis tally the judges' votes.



Congrats: Tracey Finlayson gets a hug from Ginny Morris, pageant executive director.



Passing the crown: Angela Corsi, left, congratulates Tracey Finlayson and maybe offers a few tips. Corsi, the 2000 queen, will begin her sophomore year at Michigan State this fall. Finlayson, a University of Michigan graduate, will represent Farmington and Oakland County for the next year and will participate in the Miss Michigan pageant next June.