

Creative Living



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organizing
Dorothy
Lehmkuhl

Q: My husband lives in perpetual disorder. His car is a mess, his desk is overflowing, the garage is piled high, and there's a constant "nest" around his side of the bed. Regardless of whether I clean up after him or how long I ignore his trail, it doesn't seem to matter. He leaves for work at a different time each day; there seems to be no rhythm to his life. This, of course, affects our life, our children and our home. Help!

A: The majority of functionally disorganized adults continue this destructive lifestyle because of psychological problems incurred during childhood. These people are living out a guilty rebellion — usually against a parent, even though the parent may be long dead.

It may have begun when his parents said, "Johnny, clean up your room!" and Johnny inwardly replied, "You can't make me." Johnny may have been a "good boy" — that is, not openly rebelling with drugs, alcohol or vandalism — but, since almost every teen will rebel in some way, this is the method he chose.

Johnny perceived his parents' admonitions as an invasion of his territory and an attack on his identity and autonomy. Although the "attacks" may have been imaginary, he correctly sensed his parents' need to control. That's when defiance set in. Johnny proceeded to live chaotically in the mistaken belief that order equals "being controlled" and disorder equals "freedom."

Another aspect of this lifestyle is being "busy, busy," wherein Johnny is frantically active, taking on more than he can possibly achieve and providing himself with "excuses" for not cleaning up. A Catch 22 results with the inability to change, yet subconsciously believing, "I must be bad." In the meantime he continues to sabotage his own life and those around him.

The chronically disorganized person must understand it is not "cute" to be messy. It's neither clever nor endearing to "get away" with being chaotic — or to expect someone else to clean up. Show this article to your husband, but don't expect a quick change. With time, however, he may begin to understand the problem and improve some of his ways.

Readers: If you want to review my articles, the first year's columns have now been collected into a new booklet entitled *Organizing — Vol. 1 — 12 Columns to Improve Your Life*. You can get a copy of this 66-page booklet for yourself or for a gift by sending a long, self-addressed envelope with 65 cents postage and a \$3 check payable to Organizing Techniques, 6185 Worthington, Birmingham 35209.

condo
queriesRobert M.
Meisner

Q: Our board is having a problem interpreting the rights of the adjacent landowner for an easement over our roads. The adjacent landowner wants to construct a private hospital. We are deeply concerned about his rights to go over our roads and come into our subdivision at various locations. We have talked to the developer but he says, "You'll find us in court." What can we do?

A: The first thing your homeowner's association should do is contact legal counsel to review the purported easement, which gives the neighboring developer the supposed right to use your roadways and/or to cut into your subdivision.

The attorney should examine the purported intent of the easement and whether it gives the neighboring developer the rights he claims that he has. Sometimes developers win by intimidation, particularly over a homeowner association that is underfunded.

The homeowner association should determine whether, in fact, it has any legal rights against the developer, and whether it has the right to raise money by way of assessments in order to meet the developer head-on.

Also check to see whether the developer has gotten the proper permits and/or approvals from the local municipality and whether the members of your subdivision are adequately notified of the purported subdivision or the purported building plans of the developer.

There may be ways to stop the developer in his tracks short of litigation and you are well advised to get a determination of all of your legal rights.

Robert M. Meisner is a Birmingham attorney specializing in condominiums, real estate and corporate law. You are invited to submit topics you would like to see discussed in this column, including questions about condominiums, by writing Robert M. Meisner, 30200 Telegraph Road, Suite 487, Birmingham 48010. This column provides general information and should not be construed as legal opinion.

Kitchen and bath
Elegant versions of intimate spaces

HOW ARE we spending our remodeling dollars on the kitchen and bathroom? Here's a roundup of the newest designs and products.

Yellow kitchens and pink bathrooms are out, and white is in. If you can't live with white, accept with a primary color. Otherwise it's pale gray (teamed with black, peach or jade) or almond.

Kitchen designs are big and look more like work centers and family rooms than past designs.

European high-tech ideas are the strongest new look, and Wisconsin has perfected its faux marble and granite laminate counters to include factory-built decorative counter edges, which previously were constructed by the installer, says Wisconsin representative Ron Wood. The benefit, he continues, is speed and price.

THE COUNTRY LOOK is still available, but for the '90s it's more sophisticated, with elegant dark cherry woods or bleached oak and pine topped with contemporary countertops and Euro-style faucets and hardware.

The L-shape kitchen is still a popular floor plan, but look for islands to contain extra sinks and work space, as well as eating areas. Televisions, phones, microwaves, computers and popcorn poppers are now built-in under the top cabinets, allowing a maximum of counter space.

A third generation to those old white Corningware stovetops, modern ranges are called cooktops and come with a newer, more heat-effective black glass top that can be installed over almost any counter.

The buzzwords for the cooktops of the '90s are induction, downdraft, solid disk and quartz halogen.

Induction cooktops use magnetic waves instead of conventional heat, and the pot gets hot but not the counter. The catch is that you must use iron or steel pots.

DOWNDRAFT REFERS to the exhaust system that eliminates the need for an overhead hood.

The solid disk cooking system is a European idea with American emphasis on easy-cleaning appliances. The disks are sealed to the glass surface, and automatic sensors control cooking temperature. The system uses any kind of cookware and has the advantages, and the disadvantages, of cast-iron cooking.

And quartz halogen, the wonder stove of the year, uses neonlike tubes that generate a very intense, red-hot light (the burner actually glows red) that cooks the food as fast and easily as gas without the mess of a traditional gas stove.

Among the higher profile cooktop manufacturers are Amana, which calls its entry for the '90s InstaGlow. The cooktop features a cooking system with a black glass top over three star-shaped heating elements that have instant-response coils and one quartz halogen heating element designed to give rapid heat. Benefits are

easy cleanup, quick heating and use of any cookware.

General Electric, which calls its line Monogram, offers several styles of cooktops, including gas, electric heat, solid disks, induction cooking and the down-draft cooking systems.

EUROPEAN MODELS include the British Solarpaced Ceramic Cooktop. It has two halogen elements and a solid plate electric cooktop with a fine porcelain finish over two sealed elements, one temperature-sensing element and three fast-cooking elements.

The West German company Miele offers stainless-steel cooktops with solid disk heating systems, ceramic cooktops covering automatic cooking zones and highspeed zones for a variety of cookware sizes.

MIELE'S GOURMET Combiset System integrates electric, gas and ceramic top units plus a grill built over a water bath to remove all cooking odors and provide a rising steam to keep meats tender.

For the rest of the kitchen appliances, the key word is invisible. Most are built-in and covered with wood (either bleached oak or European larch) or a sheet of black glass, but they usually blend in with the decor.

Details to look for in refrigerators include night-lights, water and ice dispensers and doors with pullout shelves that make it easy to pull out meat and vegetable drawers for cleaning.

Dishwashers have been updated and have shelves that can be moved to accommodate large pots and pans, but the star is by Miele, which features three tiers instead of the usual two, with a tray for flatware on the top.

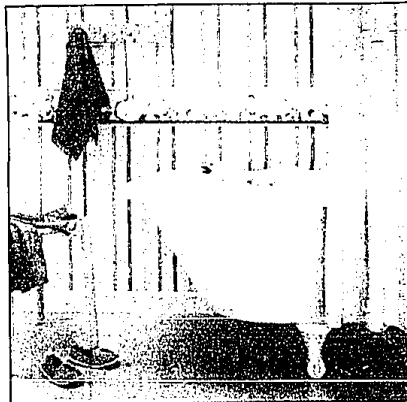
OVENS TEND to be conventional, convection and microwave, and General Electric combines all three for the serious chef.

You'll still see white porcelain and stainless-steel sinks in the kitchen, but companies such as Corian by DuPont are designing drop-in sinks that look like they and the counters are one unit (without the standard metal rim or tile grouting around the sink).

It's very tactile. People want to touch it, explains Jim Bechtold, a Corian spokesman, who adds that he uses the material in his own home. The material is made of a liquid liquid Corian into solid Corian are part of the new International look Americans are favoring in the kitchen, as well as the bathroom.

Also showing European flair are sinks with a beveled drain board on one side (for drying one's imported crystal) and Corian counters with built-in lights along its edges. This company now offers customers matching faucets in gold trimmed with Corian by Pacific Faucet and matching switch plates for kitchens, as well as bathrooms.

In the past five years, gold (actually brass-plated) faucets were the rage, but now it's a futuristic white or red faucet that's running hot



For a children's bathroom, use bright colors and an old-fashioned bathtub. And what could be more appropriate than a bright yellow rubber ducky theme?

and cold at the sink.

One of the trendsetters in this category is a \$400 model by KWC of Switzerland that features a single-lever faucet with anti-scald temperature restrictors, built-in noise reducers, a pop-up, pullout two-flow function hand sprayer and a drip-free design that's guaranteed for 10 years.

ANOTHER EUROPEAN company, Hansgrohe, makes its sleek faucets in red, white, yellow, black and chrome with similar features. Pop-up hand sprayers and single-lever styles are standard equipment, and they feature color-matched handles that don't twist because of a ball-bearing design. Shower heads are self-cleaning with a variety of jet sprays available.

For those who still like separate hot-and-cold water faucets in gold or chrome, you'll find them, but instead of decorative fish and swans, the look is short, square and squatly faucet handles with a no-nonsense attitude.

The bathroom is either streamlined in the European manner or lavish and decadent in the European manner. Take your pick. Go for a spur-and-square-shape toilet that flushes with the touch of a button on the top, a sensuous black with gold-fleck design that matches the tub, sink and bidet. Or turn your powder room into a French court with gilt and baroque designs, assured that early American bathrooms (and kitchens) are passe.

The country look is still available, but for the '90s it's more sophisticated, with elegant dark cherry woods or bleached oak and pine topped with contemporary countertops and Euro-style faucets and hardware.

It's EXTRA weather resistant

A new lumber that resists the ravages of rain and sun should be a boon to builders and back yard do-it-yourselfers this season. The product is Wolmanized EXTRA Weather-Resistant Lumber.

The new product has been pressure-treated with a water repellent to resist warping and cracking caused by the absorption and release of moisture. Like regular Wolmanized pressure-treated wood, Wolmanized EXTRA also resists fungal rot and termites.

Tests which simulated two to three years of exposure to weather have demonstrated that Wolmanized EXTRA lumber shows almost two-thirds more moisture resistance than pressure-treated lumber protected with a leading water sealer. Even after 10 years' simulated exposure, Wolmanized EXTRA lumber showed almost 40 percent less water absorption than lumber protected with surface sealer.

Area Church's Lumber Yards stores are one of the outlets for the new product.

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