

## Find new homes for unwanted items

**Q: I need to know how I can sell or give away unwanted items.**

**A:** There are many places where you can sell or donate items you don't want.

There are benefits to finding a new home for these objects. You will create extra space in your house, make money, and share with someone not as fortunate as yourself.

**Unwanted food**  
If the package is unopened and the date for use hasn't expired, check with a local food pantry.

If you can't find a local food pantry, call a local church and they may be able to help you.

**Valuable items**  
Advertise valuable items in the newspaper. Remember that you will have to make arrangements for possible buyers to come and see what you have for sale.

Contact a local auction house.

Contact a local estate sale company.

Sell items at a resale shop.

Set up an auction on eBay. Be sure to find out all fees included for these companies. Find out whether you need to provide a way to get the valuable pieces to the company, or if it provides transport.

**General items**  
Schools can always use school supplies like pens, pencils and paper.

Some libraries accept books; sometimes they'll sell books as a fund-raiser.

Give to charitable organizations, such as Goodwill or the Salvation Army.

Local churches sometimes have missions that would benefit from your "extra stuff."

Have a garage sale.

Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts can use camping equipment.



**Domestic Planner**  
Diana Koenig

and craft materials.  
**Special collections**  
Generally, find a club or business that relates to the special collection. Ask extended family members if they are interested in your collection.

**Dolls** - Talk to a local doll club.

**Stamps** - See a stamp dealer.

**Coins** - See a coin dealer.

**Others** - Consider an eBay auction, auction house or antique dealer.

**Furniture and appliances** can be repaired and recycled by organizations and individuals.

**Appliance dealers** may be interested in parts from broken appliances.

Items you want to keep  
There may be some items you want to keep but you are limited on space (remember, you won't have temperature control).

**Store in the attic.**

**Hang from the ceiling in your garage.**

**Rent a storage locker** (you can pay extra for temperature control).

**Build shelves in a basement storage area.**

Today's refrigerator bulletin: "Sell it, donate, or give it to a friend!"

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## 'Old service man' keeps on serving

I look back some 40 years ago and remember the Navy days and how I loved to fix anything that made a sound.

I had just finished taking a correspondence course on appliance repair, and anytime a teammate's wife called for appliance repair, I was the guy.

During all of these years there have been many occasions when I receive a call a day or two short of Christmas Day.

I owned a business for 20 years and I remember always making a customer happy by giving a product away to some deserving soul.

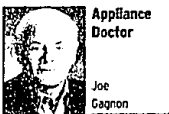
I figured that once I became a sort of big shot radio guy I would get away from doing service calls or answering emergency phone calls, but I came to find out that you just can't take the service out of an old service man.

**WATER FILTER**

My next-door neighbor, Marilyn, called me on Dec. 23 to tell me she had changed the water filter inside her refrigerator for the first time.

This 6-month-old side-by-side refrigerator has a water dispenser in the door, and the filter needs changing every six months or the water she would drink would be terrible. (Not good for one's health would be a better description.)

Marilyn asked me to come



**Appliance Doctor**  
Joe Gagnon

over and look at the glass of water she had just poured herself, which appeared awful cloudy.

I gave her instructions on how to solve this problem and went on my merry way.

**Always let a gallon of water run through the system after changing the filter.**

**CONNECTIONS**

That same day at work, Chuck told me that when he moved his electric range to clean behind it, he heard a "pzzzz" noise and blew a circuit breaker on the electrical panel downstairs.

He pulled out the stove and followed the electrical cord (called a pig's tail) to where it connects on a terminal block. One of the connectors was loose and showed the wire.

He reconnected the cord, and now the stove top burners weren't working.

Family was arriving that night from Minnesota, and he was ready to go and buy a new stove.

I drove over to Chuck's

house and pulled out the range and went right to the cord connectors that he had tightened.

I asked Chuck for the tool he had used to tighten the nuts, and he told me he didn't have any tools - he used his fingers, which was evident. All three of the nuts were loose; they no longer were once I used a wrench on them.

When I was done we checked out the range operation and everything worked fine.

**Always pull the cord when working on an appliance, and remember the electrical connections need to be good and tight.**

**RINSING DISHES**

On the night of Christmas Eve, my brother-in-law, Bill, called from out of state.

Their 2-month-old dishwasher wasn't pumping the water out of it, and he was blaming his wife, Dawn, for the problem.

She no longer rinses off the dishes because you don't have to with this new model.

She received this piece of information from the sales department when she bought it.

I had Bill pull off the lower spray arms and the screen while I was on the phone, and he found a grate that was covered with food. There was no

way the water could even get to the pump.

Bill cleaned the grate, and I could hear the water pump out over the telephone. He asked me to inform Dawn of certain facts and he passed the phone to her.

I said, "Dawn, your dishwasher isn't a garbage disposer and you should rinse off your dishes before you put them in there, regardless of what the salesperson told you."

You would think that after 40 years of doing this I would get tired of it, but that's not the case.

A human being has a built-in need for feeling wanted. Any service technician will tell you that he or she feels good after completing a repair on a product.

Then again, maybe it's the Christmas spirit that I try to maintain for the other 11 months of the year. Isn't it great just to be alive?

**Keep up the spirit and have a good new year. Stay tuned.**

**Weekend note:** The Appliance Doctor will be broadcasting from WXTV's Sports Fest and Health and Fitness Show at the Novi Expo Center Friday-Sunday, Jan. 3-5.

Joe Gagnon can now be heard on WWJ-950 and WXYT-1270. He is a member and past president of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals. His phone number is (248) 455-7281.

## Prepare recipes for food stain removal

Whether it's a buffet for 50 or an intimate dinner for close friends and family, when choosing your menu, take a few minutes to plan ahead for spills.

"First, always check the stain warranties on your carpet and upholstery," said Tom Wlodarczyk of Modern Floors & Interiors Carpet One in Walled Lake.

"Make sure you know what the manufacturer recommends so you don't void the warranty. Then put together a first-aid

kit well stocked with supplies to deal with common spills."

Wlodarczyk recommends the following items for a first-aid kit: unprinted paper towels, ammonia, baking soda, clear dishwashing detergent, non-chlorine laundry presoak, vinegar, and clothing spot remover.

For fruit punch, juices and cola - Sprinkle dry baking soda on the stain, then vacuum.

Using a damp sponge and a blotting action, rinse off the

remaining baking soda, being careful not to over-wet the area.

Then, mix 1 teaspoon of enzyme laundry presoak in 1 cup of warm (not hot) water and blot the spill with a dampened towel.

Rinse as above. Dry well with a towel.

When dry, vacuum or brush to restore texture.

For greasy foods such as roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy - Gently scoop or

scrape off the excess with a blunt edge of a spoon, working from the edge of the spill to the middle.

Then, dab on a non-oily, non-caustic dry cleaning solvent such as those sold for clothing spot removal. Blot off the solvent and repeat as necessary.

Rinse by blotting with a damp sponge. Finish by applying a weighted pad of white paper towels to the area overnight.

## COLORS

FROM PAGE C1

a hint of color. And then brighter accent colors fill in around the room."

**THE LONG VIEW**

Don't fret if you bought a navy blue couch last year. Remember, color trends, particularly, in decor and furnishings, do not last forever.

And they are more stable, partly because homeowners

seek longevity when they buy a chair or couch; buyers are not looking to swap color schemes each and every year.

Color trends also seem to develop with way ideas evolve, over a decade, rather a year or two, said Sharon Chris, a Troy interior designer and member of the Michigan Design Center's Designer On Call program.

Identifying color trends from year to year, she said, is "a bit of guessing game."

Patterns, however, do gradually emerge, partly because color choices reflect the sensibilities of the times and larger design trends, Chris said.

**THE BLUES**

The current and booming popularity of blue - some say it's the color of the decade - is a good example.

With its capacity to soothe and stabilize us in a world full of obligations and worries - yet little time for reflection, it's no wonder homeowners are and will continue to be drawn to the tinctures of ocean, sky, water and rain.

"Blue has that calming effect,

a safe harbor from that wild, crazy, horrible world," Chris said. "And that goes along with the idea of creating personal refuge at home."

"Blue is no longer a single or limited color." In the current decade, blue translates into such shades as aqua, turquoise, periwinkle and even ice. "We've always acknowledged these colors and knew they existed, but we are using the entire range."

David Kallis, multi-room house designer for West Bloomfield's EXPO Design Center, which also has locations in Troy and Shelby Township, describes currently popular shades of blue as "fresh and refreshing."

**SOFT AND MUTED**

Interestingly, brighter tones are getting the same cues as the blues, Chris said. They, too, are colors we see in the natural world.

So the jewel tones of the '90s have succumbed to kinder, gentler brights, "more softened and more muted," Chris said.

Yesterday's emerald is, today, moss, sage and artichoke. Purple, for instance, comes forth in tones of eggplant and plum.

Again, these are shades that make us feel good, which fits into the larger decor trend of creating spaces that foster well-being, Chris said.

"People are really coming home again. This is not new - but people really are spending money, not to create a showcase, not to keep up with the Joneses, but to create a warm, comfortable, friendly environment."

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