



The LA Organizer

NAPO-LA's Newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 7

June 2003

President's Message

June Chapter Meeting

TRANSITION

Marilyn Crouch, *Avenues to Organization*

With great joy and trepidation, I sit here to write my first president's message. I want to thank the many preceding presidents who have led NAPO-LA to its current status as a great organization. It is truly an honor to serve as NAPO-LA President. I am excited about working with an energetic Board and many wonderful volunteers. I am also very grateful to have Tanya Whitford serving as the past president. Together we will accomplish many exciting things this term!

While thinking about this article, the word "transition" kept coming to mind. As defined by Webster's, transition is the act of passing from one stage to the next. We've all had to face a transition in our daily lives, the world at large, the economy, our industry and our businesses. I believe that transition provides an opportunity to embrace change and further the richness of life.

For me, personally, leaving a

twenty-one year, secure, corporate career to start my own business as a professional organizer has been a huge transition. At times, it feels like I am on a roller coaster of ups and downs. During those times, I'm always reminded that it is about the journey and the opportunity to make a huge impact on my clients' lives! I am reminded that my richness is now measured by my experiences, not by the balance in my bank account! My volunteer involvement in NAPO-LA and the many friends I have made have been a great support to me during this transition. I encourage each of you to volunteer and experience the richness that it will add to your life. You, too, could be the NAPO-LA President some day!

Many chapter members attended this year's NAPO conference, and many have shared with me their enthusiasm and the rejuvenation that the conference brought to

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ESSELTE'S DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

Heather Thompson,
Organization Matters

This month, it is my pleasure to begin my role as your new Program Director. I want to thank Justine Miceli for bringing us interesting, informative and exciting speakers. I will do my best to keep up the trend.

With that in mind, our June speaker will be our very own, beloved Barb Schmit, who will present Esselte's Document Management Seminar. Valuable to all organizers, new or veteran, this seminar will assist us to become more efficient and productive in handling paperwork. Labor is the most expensive part of any filing system; Barb will help us reduce the time and cost of that labor. She will give hints and tips for organizing files by using the proper methods and products. This seminar strives to save each attendee at least fifteen

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Who's Who in NAPO-LA

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COORDINATORS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Associate Member Coordinator	Barb Schmit
Chapter Historian	Heather Chapman
Client Referrals Coordinator	Pat Brubaker
Database/Yellow Pages	Tanya Whitford
Ethics Committee	Sheila McCurdy
Golden Circle Advisor	Ann Gambrell
Greeting Coordinator	Toni Scharff
Meeting Assistant	Volunteer Needed
New Member Coordinator	Debra Frank
New Member Orientation	Jean Furuya, Ann Gambrell
Prospective Member Coordinator	Claire Quinlan
Public Relations	Chris McKenry
Special Projects Coordinator	Jean Furuya
Webmaster	Chris Janetsky, Tanya Whitford
Web Listing Coordinator	Toni Scharff
Web Sponsor Coordinator	Dione Wu
Workshop Co-Chairs	Jennifer Hartman, Dionne Wu

LA ORGANIZER STAFF

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The LA Organizer

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DEADLINE The first of the month for any submission.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Size	Members	Nonmembers
3-line classified	\$5.00	\$10.00
Business card size	\$10.00	\$20.00
Quarter page	\$25.00	\$50.00
Half page	\$35.00	\$70.00
Full page	\$50.00	\$100.00



The mission of the National Association of Professional Organizers is to encourage the development of Professional Organizers, to promote recognition of and to advance the professional organizing industry.

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NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP ANNUAL DUES

Individual (renews on member's anniversary)	\$200
Associate-Corporate	\$550
Associate-Branch	\$150
Associate-Local	\$250
New Member (one-time processing fee)	\$20
National NAPO Name Badge	\$10

MISSION STATEMENT—NAPO-LA

NAPO-LA is an organization dedicated to bringing Southern California Area Organizers together through networking, education, professional growth, industry updates, support, and public awareness.

NAPO-Los Angeles
PMB 134, 10573 W. Pico Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90064
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www.napola.org

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP

National Membership required
 Includes electronic newsletter

ANNUAL DUES

Basic Member (Oct. 1st–Sept. 30th)	\$75
Full Member (includes meetings/available in Sept.)	\$135
Out-of-State Individual (Oct. 1st–Sept. 30th)	\$50
Associate Member (Oct. 1st–Sept. 30th)	\$150
New/Lapsed Member Processing Fee	\$10
Meeting Fee	\$7

NONMEMBERS

Newsletter Subscription (annual)	\$25
Meeting Visitor Fee	\$15



RESOURCE FOR ORGANIZATION PRODUCTS AND IDEAS EXPANDS TO PASADENA

Bill Pedrotti, *Organized Living, Pasadena Store Manager*

The crazy days of summer are upon us, and just in time to help efficiently tackle summer projects, Organized Living has opened another store in Southern California. Pasadena's Organized Living, conveniently located in The Shops on Lake Avenue, opens its doors over Memorial Day weekend.

The new, 18,000-square-foot Organized Living store features all of the storage and organization products, display vignettes and helpful Sales Associates many of you have experienced at our Los Angeles store in the original Farmers Market. Like the Los Angeles store, the Pasadena location will be open from 9:30 am-9:00 pm Monday-Saturday and 10 am-7 pm Sunday to provide you and your clients with tools to simplify and organize your lives.

A partner in your craft, Organized Living is the ultimate source for making major projects less time-intensive. We know no one wants to spend hours searching for solutions. We understand your time is a commodity, so we embrace the challenge of

helping both you and your clients recapture time to enjoy the summer.



As the calendar fills up with fun summer activities and vacations, we crave simplicity and more time to enjoy these things. Organized Living not only helps you in your everyday life with great time- and space-saving products for all areas of the home and

office, but we can also assist you in organization on the road. Be sure to visit our travel section featuring great packing systems from Eagle Creek, a variety of leak-proof bottles and other handy travel accessories.

Our Sales Associates are rigorously trained and familiar with our products to help you devise solutions that work. We are here to help you make the most of the time you spend with clients. Our Furniture Experts can help you select pieces to fit individual lifestyles and suggest products to make spaces functional. Our Closet Experts assess needs, create custom closet designs and demonstrate installation. Organized Living experts take the time necessary to help you to achieve the results your clients desire.



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Sponsors/Resources

We wish to extend a great big

Thank you

to our Platinum Website Sponsors

Esselte

Organized Living

Go to www.napola.org and click on Sponsors/Resources for more information on what our sponsors have to offer.

Complete details on becoming a NAPO-LA Website Sponsor are available online or by contacting Dione Wu, our Web Sponsor Coordinator, at advertising@napola.org



Members...

...remember to bring any unused cell phones and ink cartridges to the meeting for recycling. You can download and print a receipt for the cell phones at our Chapter's website. Go to <http://www.napola.org/displaynewsletter.cfm>, then download and print the pdf file for Donate-a-Phone.

Thanks!

We're So Proud!

Talia Eisen, *Clarity Professional Organizing*

June is the first month of the new year here at NAPO-LA, and we are proud to announce that we have a great incoming Board of Directors. Elections were held in March, and the new Board was inaugurated in April. This past year, NAPO-LA saw the addition of a bright and active new crop of members who have really taken an interest in their chapter. We are pleased to say that many of our new Board members are new to NAPO-LA this past year, showing great dedication and support for the chapter. Heather Thompson, Nicole Juarez, Chris Janetsky and I all joined this past year. Robin Davi and Marilyn Crouch are generously serving second terms and will provide plenty of veteran support. Past President Tanya Whitford will have a seat on the Board, continuing her valued contribution and leadership. We are all pleased to share our enthusiasm and support of NAPO-LA.

The new Board of Directors for the 2003–2004 term

President

MARILYN CROUCH

VP/Membership

NICOLE JUAREZ

Communications Director

CHRIS JANETSKY

Program Director

HEATHER THOMPSON

Secretary

TALIA EISEN

Treasurer

ROBIN DAVI

Past President

TANYA WHITFORD

Agenda

Monday, June 23, 2003

- 5:50 Registration: Please wear badge
- 6:15 Meeting begins promptly
 - President's Remarks
 - Member Spotlights
 - Announcements *
 - Computer Tips
- 7:00 Break
- 7:15 Presentation ; Document Management by Barb Schmit
- 8:35 Meeting adjourned

Fourth Monday except as announced
Olympic Collection Conference Center
11301 Olympic Blvd. at Sawtelle

Parking: \$5 Look for signs to meeting.
Meeting: \$7 NAPO-LA members
\$15 Visitors/prospective members

We welcome all Professional Organizers and those interested in entering the field (no clients please). Business attire is appreciated. Networking table is available to display brochures and flyers.

* To make an announcement, please email HeatherThompson@napola.org PRIOR to the meeting or call her at (818) 621-7185.

Abbreviated Minutes May Board Meeting

Talia Eisen, *Clarity Professional Organizing*

1. The Relocation Committee presented the Westin LAX, the Culver City Radisson, and the Skirball Cultural Center as possible chapter meeting locations. It is difficult to find a meeting location that meets all of our needs.
2. The chapter audit will be completed by June 1, 2003.
3. A ballot to approve the new Policy and Procedure Manuals was unanimously approved as presented. The manuals are in effect as of April 8, 2003. All Chapter members are encouraged to read them.
4. Chris Janetsky will join Tanya Whitford as a Website Administrator.
5. The incoming 2003–2004 Board Members attended an orientation meeting and received their new position binders. They will attend a Board retreat May 31.



A Manual For Professional Organizers
By Cyndi Seidler

Get your copy!

To buy, go to:
www.professional-organizers.com/manual.htm

Robin Davi: Simply Arranged

Talia Eisen, *Clarity Professional Organizing*

Quite simply, Robin is as caring as she is organized. She has said that if anyone from NAPO needed her, even if it was a call in the middle of the night, she would be there. She strongly believes in standing by those who are important to her. Robin believes “Life is short,” and she wishes to make the most of it. “You don’t have to do a lot,” she says. “It is not about what you spend on someone. It’s sending a card, the things you say, kindness to a stranger...These are the important things, the things that build character.”

Certainly, Robin has shown this strength of character in her involvement with NAPO LA. Since she joined the chapter in the Spring of 2001, she has been newsletter editor, prospective member coordinator, a GO Week volunteer, and secretary on the board of directors. This year, she is serving as our chapter treasurer, after taking over mid-term last year. She also worked tirelessly on the policy and procedure manuals. Her dedication to the chapter has made it possible for the previous board to accomplish some of its most important goals for the year.

Robin started her company, *Simply Arranged*, in 2001. She has a twenty-year background in corporate work, but had to reconsider her path when she was struck with severe carpal tunnel syndrome. She underwent surgery for the problem. As she recovered, she began to think of what else she might do. A friend had heard

of professional organizing and told Robin, “You could do that!” Robin looked into it, found the NAPO website and attended a meeting. She went to conference in Austin, where she had a wonderful time. She came home, thought of her business name and jumped in, “to see.” She has not looked back since. Her great energy and enthusiasm—and her caring, giving nature—have made her a success. Although Robin works primarily with residential clients, she enjoys doing home offices and paper systems. Her goal is to improve people’s lives by teaching them simpler ways to do things, by freeing up their time and by showing them how to use space wisely. She is very good at finding space and helping clients to use what they have. “I like to give them a lot of bang for their buck.”

Robin and her husband have a twenty-one year old son in college. They are a close-knit family who enjoy vacationing together. The three of them were on their way back from a trip to celebrate Mother’s Day at the time of this interview. Robin also enjoys cross-stitch, going to movies and spending time with good friends. She also collects cookbooks and collected more than 150 of them during her travels.

The Volunteer of the Month is a member selected by the Board of Directors in recognition of his or her outstanding contributions to our chapter. The winner is announced at each chapter meeting and will be profiled in this column the following month.



*Volunteer of the Month
Robin Davi*



WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER

Nicole Juarez, VP Membership, *Elements of Organizing*

Cheryl L. Perkins

Creating Balance
8180 Manitoba Street, Unit 149
Playa Del Rey, CA 90293
cherper@attbi.com
(310) 306-1769

Cheryl worked for fifteen years as a court reporter. However, she wanted to make a career change that would utilize her organizational skills; so she chose professional organizing. Cheryl would like to help others create harmony and balance in their lives, while tapping into her own creative side. Her desire is to learn about the principles of *feng shui* and eventually incorporate them into her organizing business.



Twenty-seven happy Los Angeles Chapter members attended the NAPO National Conference and Expo in Denver last month; seventeen of them made it to the group photo session!

National Convention

Conventional Wisdom

Kristen Connors

Ok, so you're asking yourself, "Should I or shouldn't I"—go to the NAPO Conference that is. Yes, you should. I did. Sure, I had to work out a few serious details—the money, a place to stay, who's gonna walk Fido. In short, I had to get organized!

The minus: three days out of my very busy life. The pluses: a chance to meet and visit with other organized-minded people, a chance to reaffirm my suspicions that I was not the only person in the world who preferred my spices labeled alphabetically or my shoes to be laid out according to color and season. I had to take the opportunity to hang with the "truly organized cool."

Some would say, "Kristen, you're nuts to go to such a convention." To them I say... "File it under 'J' for

Just Don't Care." (Or should that be under 'D'?)

Using the "Sign-up" deadline as my final motivation, the decision was made within hours of the gates closing. With a few short clicks of the mouse at the convention website, I was registered and on my way to Colorado.

I showed up to the convention prepared and armed with a five-subject notebook, extra pens, high-protein treats, bottled water and a good attitude. I found my way to registration, where I was greeted with a friendly welcome and a bag filled with a binder and some great handouts for the upcoming events. The bag came in particularly handy as the one I carried from home suffered from a leak

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National Conference & Expo 2003

Glorya Belgrade Schklair,
The Practical Organizer

Q Did Los Angeles Chapter members participate in the NAPO Conference in Colorado?

A Our chapter is always highly visible; we are participants extraordinaire! Debbie Gilster as conference chair was "in the minute" supervising, cajoling and instructing every minute of every day. Dorothy Breininger made us proud of our NAPO National Board as we observed the National Board meeting. We heard from Dorothy again when she presented the four Organizers Choice Awards on Saturday.

Kevin and Lynn Hall once again assumed the demanding task of securing workshop hosts, two of whom were Toni Scharf and Glorya Schklair. Karen Simon supervised the Hospitality Suite and awarded the winning Chapter Banner to the new Houston Chapter.

In the second Keynote Session, Tanya Whitford, a worthy nominee for the Founders' Award, starred in a skit with Susan Lannis as two organizers who breached NAPO ethics standards. Over four hundred noise-makers sounded the alarm to point out their moral violations.

In her inimitable style, Ann Gambrell announced the winner of the Founders' Award. For the first

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Thoughts from NAPO-LA members

“I LOVED going to my first NAPO Conference and Expo. The networking was stimulating and fun. Some of the sessions were very educational and useful for me. The keynote speaker, Alan Weiss, was fantastic. I loved —and felt honored —being a member of the *Ask The Organizer* panel. I learned so much from the other panelists and got great feedback! The hotel was clean and attractive and the food was good; but there was so much of it that I felt like I was on a cruise ship! I’ll sign on for Chicago as soon as they send out the notices.” — Lynne Gilberg, *Lynne Gilberg Organizing*

“1. I learned a LOT. *Great speakers*. It was my first conference as well. 2. The hotel, which was really nice, I thought, should have been closer to the city, for more options: dinner, exercise, etc., after the conference. 3. The food was so-so. I eat really healthy. There maybe could be a choice of two or three meals to choose from.” — Cheryl Perkins, *Creating Balance*.

“The thought-provoking keynote session on ethics, more than answering what is/isn’t ethical, served to prove to many of us what a profoundly wonderful, diverse group we are: so many different ideas. We were forced to conclude that ethics is about perception - very little is unequivocally right or wrong.” —Toni Scharff, *The Simplicity Project*

“The roundtable discussions in our Golden Circle meeting were excellent, and it would be great if we could take some—or all—of the topics and make them into full sessions for veteran organizers. There were only one or two sessions in the general conference that addressed our needs, and we need more information of this type. Whoever thought of it: thank you!” — Sheila McCurdy, *Clutter Stop*

“The 2003 NAPO conference was great. The workshops were very good, the EXPO was bigger than ever, and as always, it is good to meet and network with new organizers and to spend time with old friends and colleagues. It is not to be missed!” — Ann Gambrell, *Creative Time-Plus*

“This was my 4th conference and one of my favorites. It is so wonderful to build relationships with organizers across the country and get to see them each year. I enjoyed everything- the pre-conference leadership forum, the keynotes, the sessions, the people, and the Expo. I bought more goodies in this Expo than I ever have in the past. When it was over, I was so sad. Conference is such a great experience! I am looking forward to Chicago next year!” — Tanya Whitford, *Organizing Wonders*

“I was exposed to new information that has helped educate me about new and different ways to take my business to the next level. I also met other organizers from various parts of the country, thereby expanding my “network” and resource base. Aside from this, I was excited by the many new products I was introduced to during my visits to the Expo.” — Debra Frank, *let’s get organized!*

“Denver was my fourth conference, and as usual, it didn’t disappoint me. The hotel was beautiful; even the food was exceptional. What I realized is that I have made so many wonderful connections with organizers from all over the country who have become my friends. There simply isn’t enough time at conference to really spend time with all of them. What a great problem to have!” — Lisa Sarasohn, *Hire Order*

“The conference was well attended by new participants in the industry, this was definitely encouraging to see as a veteran. I met an army officer that has his own business now, just holding back until he ‘retires’ from the service within the year. The affects of our new management company were evident at this conference. They performed very well in bringing our association a highly enjoyable and rewarding conference.” — Kevin Hall, *Clutter No More, Inc.!*

Organized Living is a company committed to new product innovation, and we welcome your ideas and expertise in creating customer-centric solutions to organizing challenges. As part of our partnership with NAPO, we encourage you to join our Designer Discount program. By completing a simple registration form, NAPO members can enjoy a 20 percent discount off of regularly priced items when shopping for clients.

For more information about Organized Living and the Designer Discount program, feel free to speak with me at the Pasadena store or with my colleague Scott Kilburn at our Los Angeles location. For a complete list of store locations and more information about the products we offer, visit our new Web site at www.organizedliving.com.

Happy Birthday to You!

June

10 *Dolores Kaytes*
28 *Talia Eisen*

July

10 *Chris Janetsky*
12 *Ann Gambrell*
17 *Diana Ryan*
18 *Heather Thompson*

August

2 *Christine Reiter*
4 *Marci Alpert*
5 *Mary Xanthos*
7 *Barbara Glass*
16 *Kathleen Klein*
23 *Mikki Lesowitz-Holiday*

time in NAPO history the Founders' Award was a tie, and two trophies were presented. Linda Rothschild and Terry Prince were the honored recipients. This year the Organizing Excellence Award was presented to "Partners in Housing," a local group that provides transitional housing and resources necessary to achieve successful self-sufficiency for homeless families. Their work dovetails with the Golden Circle Quantum Leap program.

Donna McMillan, Golden Circle Chair, inspired veteran NAPO members to be a continued presence in the relationships vital to continuity in our organization. Donna inspired Golden Circle members with an enlightening workshop led by Dr. Alan Weiss and a Saturday meeting that included a well attended round table discussion.

Lynne Gilberg was a panelist at the Ask the Organizer session. Sheila McCurdy's book, *The Floor Is Not An Option* was a sell-out. Yours truly chaired the Awards luncheon. I was proud to take my place as a Los Angeles chapter member contributing my effort to our national organization. Twenty-seven members of our chapter attended and all contributed to the success of Conference 2003.

Attending the NAPO conference each year, I am revitalized, energized and inspired. As the old song goes, "Who Could Ask For Anything More?"

Please e-mail comments to this month's question to glorya@schklair.com



Members in the News

NAPO-LA MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

An article titled "Clear your Clutter" appeared in the *Placentia News-Times* on May 8. The author wrote that Susan Lasater of Clearly Organized, Rachel M. Sparks of Sparks Organizing Services, Robin Dorsh of Organized Environments and Jennifer Hartman of Heart of the Matter Organizing teamed up to help a Fullerton resident organize her single car garage. The article mentioned that all the organizers are members of the Los Angeles chapter of the National Association of Professional Organizers, a great promotion for our chapter!

Chris McKenry, owner of *Get It Together LA*, will receive the President's Award from the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce on June 5th. The award is given annually to the small business that has both impacted the city of West Hollywood and been vitally involved in the Chamber itself. Besides being an active member of NAPO-LA and the West Hollywood Chamber, Chris also serves as publicity chair of the American Cancer Society's West Hollywood Relay for Life.

them. I hope you enjoy reading about their conference experiences in this issue of the *LA Organizer*. If you were not able to attend the conference, you may purchase conference tapes from NAPO and continue to educate yourself and enhance your business!

As the Board members transition into their new roles, we are all filled with excitement and enthusiasm about the term ahead of us. On May 31, 2003 we had our first Board retreat to strategize, and discuss our goals and plans for the upcoming year. The day was filled with a lot of great energy, ideas, excitement and teamwork. Stay tuned for the report I'll be giving at the June meeting!

As you face transition in your life, embrace the change and remember: **"To exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly."**
—Henri Bergson

minutes a day when they use the techniques described.

Learn them and teach them to your clients. And you never know, Barb might have products for us to take home, too.

I would like to thank April's speakers for sharing their informative case studies: Lisa Sarasohn, *Hire Order*; Justine Miceli, Organizer; Robin Davi, *Simply Arranged*; Claire Quinlan, Organizer; Tanya Whitford, *Organizing Wonders*; and Marianna Long, *Spatial Consultants*. Your willingness to share makes us all better professional organizers.



Calendar

June

Entrepreneurs Do-It-Yourself
Marketing Month

- 23 Let-it-Go Day
- 23 Board Meeting 2:30pm
- 23 Chapter Meeting 6:15pm

Topic: Esselte's Document Management

July

- 6-12 Take-Charge-of-Change Week
- 28 Board Meeting 2:30pm
- 28 Chapter Meeting 6:15pm

Topic: Round Table Discussions

August

Women's Small Business Month

- 1-7 Simplify Your Life Week
- 4-10 National Fraud Awareness Week
- 7 Treasure Your Customers Day
- 10 National Garage Sale Day
- 25 Board Meeting 2:30pm
- 25 Chapter Meeting 6:15pm

Topic: To Grow or Not To Grow

WEBSITE HITS NAPO-LA 2003

Chris Janetsky, *All Organized*

	<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>
Home Page	4160	4069
Find an Organizer	1747	1888
Click on Individual Organizer	799	1093
Calendar	273	232
Becoming a Member	58	52
Cumulative Hits	10840	11101

Membership Report

Nicole Juarez, VP Membership. *Elements of Organizing*

April Meeting Attendance	44
Members	29
Guests	8
New Members	7
Total Membership NAPO-LA	89

ing bottle that drenched all my of belongings. Good thing I brought that “good attitude.”

A few hours later the convention was in full swing. I was now among 400 or so like-minded professionals; I was ready to figure out ways to apply my talents to my new and exciting career.

The classes were all first-rate, though I found some to be more applicable to me than others. *Residential Organizing 101*, taught by Sue DeRoos, provided some great tips on how to organize a tool box and some ingenious products and where to find them. Judith Kirk’s *Setting Your Fees* was also most helpful, as she revealed to us that we’re all not charging nearly enough for our services. Of course, Barb Schmit’s class was a sure thing—I think we all found our next super speaker. And, nothing was more fun than listening to Dr. Judith Briles: my pig’s tail was quite curly!

The high point of the conference was the opening keynote, given by Dr. Alan Weiss. He spoke about the value of our business and helped give me the mindset to go out and make a run at this endeavor. This is, indeed, a brand new service. He gave suggestions on how to express our value to potential clients as well as a pep talk on how to get out there and get the race started with a firm belief that we were all going to cross the finish line with great success!

The social aspects of the event were as valuable as the lectures themselves. These were tiring days and it was great fun to mix with my newfound colleagues. Some of these people included Donna Smallin, the author of one of my favorite books, *Organizing Plain and Simple*, as well as Ellen Faye of *Straighten-Up*, and my new email buddy, Barb from Colorado.

So there you have it—interesting, fun, insightful, inspirational and well worth my time. The convention was, in a word, “organized,” and done so to perfection.

Spring Cleaning

Esther Simon, *Traditional Home Organizer*

For many of you who delayed your spring cleaning until now, I have some encouraging advice for you. The first step towards getting the house clean is to make a list of your most important tasks and break it down into bite-size pieces. Identify what is important and what will make you feel better about your living situation. Remember that some things need better maintenance than others, and some household cleaning will show off better. For example, a clean carpet will be more rewarding than clean windows.

After you have made your list, assign each task to a different day or divide a larger task between two days. Get your mind

into gear and get psyched up to really enjoy the results. There are some nice books on how to clean practically anything. Reading them can encourage you to tackle a difficult task. For some people, it might be better to do a little spring cleaning throughout the year to avoid being overwhelmed before the summer. Clean your kitchen drawers once a month or straighten your clothes closet every time you get something new.

As you work your way around the house, de-clutter. It will make the house look bigger and make you less stressed, as you will be able to find things more easily.

involve your family as you tackle each room. Reward your kids by hiding money in the bookcase between books; see if they can find it while they are cleaning and reorganizing for you.

Many of us will hire extra help once a year to get the dirty projects done; use that as a special gift to yourself. It is always nice to look forward to a reward: a new decoration in the home; new towels for the bathroom or just a nice massage would be a great reward for all the



work you put into making your home clean and beautiful.

Remember: you can reduce the stress by being prepared. Understand what you feel

when you think about cleaning, analyze your feelings and break down your fears. Get some good ideas from books and magazines. Set your goals and be realistic about your time restrictions and handicaps or strengths. List all the rooms in your house and what you want to do in each. Decide how much time each task will require, and assign it to a day on the calendar. Plan to do something every other day if daily is too often. Most important: don’t forget to reward yourself when everything is clean and done.