

A Bonus Section for Our North Carolina Readers

Carolina Living

people & places™

Around Your State

Dilworth—Good Living

Durham—Voices of Health

Manteo—Inshore Fishing

Morehead City—Loving Lighthouses

...and more

Conquer a cluttered home
15 minutes at a time.
see page 26

Southern Living

Cleaning up your home may not give you sculpted abs or even buns of steel, but it will make you feel better. And that won't just be in your imagination, according to Marla Cilley.

This Brevard-based decluttering guru believes that doing housework will give you a lift, while leaving it undone may actually hurt your health. "Guilt, anxiety, and perfectionism cause most of the chronic illnesses in women," she says. Those of us feeling pangs about our messy homes suffer from a crippling case of

Declutter Queen

Through her online advice network, Marla Cilley reforms thousands of clutter-challenged women.

perfectionism, she believes. "We're taught this from the day that we're born: If you can't do it right, don't do it at all," she explains. "We're paralyzed because we don't think we have time to clean a house like our mamas did."

Marla makes such observations through daily e-mails and a Web site, www.flylady.net, offering free decluttering and cleanup tips to 261,000 members around the world. (The name "FlyLady" comes from the days when Marla taught fly-fishing.) Almost all (99.5%) of her "fly-babies," as she calls them, are women, and most were not BO (Born Organized). Instead, her online advice fiefdom rings true with those of us who suffer CHAOS (Can't Have Anyone Over Syndrome).

The FlyLady program began with a familiar New Year's resolution: "I am going to get organized this year." That was 1999.

At the time, the compact house that Marla shares with husband Robert constantly rebuked her. Like a dust bunny albatross, the burden of a disorganized home made her miserable. "If I got up in the middle of the night," she says, "I tripped over something."



PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLIE

Marla began a free online advice service after she gained control over her own cluttered home.

Take Baby Steps

So she decided to clean her sink. "I chose one thing that I could do," she explains. That single accomplishment helped her overcome feelings of inadequacy about the total disarray in her house. It also led to a revelation: Just as clutter causes more clutter, clean begets clean. As the sink emerged

cleaner, so did Marla's entire house.

"When we take baby steps to accomplish goals instead of becoming overwhelmed by the process, we can do anything," she says. Marla used a program called Sidetracked Home Executives

"You can do anything for 15 minutes."

Marla Cilley

Tips for "FLYing"

- Work at your own pace.
- Clean one area at a time. Don't get side-tracked.
- If you spend 15 minutes a day tossing clutter, you'll see major changes over time.
- Open your mail near the trash can, and throw away junk mail immediately.
- Give away books and magazines you've read.
- Remember, you are never behind when cleaning up your domicile. You are not competing with anyone.
- Your house did not get dirty in one day, and it is not going to get clean overnight.

“We’re paralyzed because we don’t think we have time to clean a house like our mamas did.”

Marla Cilley

(SHE) by Pam Young and Peggy Jones to fit her own needs. “I used their system, but I realized that I had never established routines,” she explains. Her adaptation led to the FlyLady System, which combines her discoveries with the SHE system. (Her Web site and theirs are linked, and the three women are good friends.) “These routines will work for anybody, if adapted to fit individual homes,” Marla adds.

Like a loving mother, the FlyLady and her crew remain relentlessly cheerful, warm, and friendly toward online members who sign up for the 15 to 20 daily “flymails.” The frequent electronic reminders and testimonials challenge members to pursue specific goals and often invite

them to take care of themselves first. Compassion shines through every missive, although the FlyLady accepts no whining.

Adventures in Cleaning

The FlyLady manages to make grungy housework fun. A timer set for 15 minutes figures prominently in many of the system’s directives. “A timer not only limits how long you must do something, but it also gives you permission to stop,” Marla explains. “You can do anything for 15 minutes.”

The dreaded to-do list becomes a “Parade of Daily Adventures.” Catchall clutter areas get cleaned with “Hot Spot Fire Drills.” A “Weekly Home Blessing Hour” guides members to spotless homes.



Marla began her clutter-free odyssey by shining her kitchen sink. She says that cleaning begins with baby steps, no matter how messy your home.



Shhhhhharlotte Shout



Every September there's a vibrant festival in a city that's quietly making a name for itself. Arts and Culture. Music. Food. A month-long community celebration showcasing the taste and talents of Charlotte's own. Go to www.charlotteshout.com for details or call 1-800-231-4636 and we'll tell you all the other great things to do in Charlotte while you're here.



Visit
Charlotte

A favorite—the “27-Fling Boogie”—asks members to run through the house with a garbage bag and gleefully grab 27 items that are no longer useful or that don't bring a smile. Marla usually performs this task while belting out, “Please release me, let me go.”

Boogying through your home at warp speed, scooping up clutter, and flinging it out of your life feels great. “It's such a relief to get rid of stuff that's weighing you down,” Marla says. That's STUFF (Something That Undermines Family Fun), which brings us to one of the FlyLady's basic tenets: You clean your house to nurture your family and yourself—not in response to some guilt-mongering character in your head.

Most recently, Marla has added a new phase to the system aimed at helping women declutter their bodies. “Body clutter is just like house clutter,” Marla explains. “If you don't love it, you have to get rid of it. Everybody hates the ‘E’ word—exercise. But if you look at it as loving movement for your body, and you're having fun, then you'll do it.

“It's not a diet,” she emphasizes. “It's fun little ways to take care of your body.”

In short, the FlyLady's program is about “Finally Loving Yourself,” as one flybaby aptly renamed the title.



A timer set at 15 minutes is a big part of Marla's plan to declutter homes. It serves to limit the amount of time spent on a task.

Marla's Commandments

In addition to Marla Cilley's number one requirement—keeping your sink clean and shiny—many of her 11 Commandments ask members to pursue joy with a vengeance. “Do something for yourself every day, maybe every morning and night,” advises number 10. “It is contagious.” The last item on the list offers this bit of wisdom: “Don't forget to laugh every day. Pamper yourself—you deserve it.”

On behalf of women everywhere who feel overworked and overwhelmed, Marla offers these words of comfort and advice: “We deserve to enjoy life. We have someone in-

side of us that deserves to play.”

NANCY DORMAN-HICKSON

Boogie Fever: To join Marla Cilley's program, visit www.flylady.net.

Outlet shopping evolved.

80 STORES FEATURING Banana Republic Factory Store, Bose, Brooks Brothers Factory Store, Carolina Pottery, Carter's, Eddie Bauer, Gap Outlet, Le Creuset, Liz Claiborne, Mikasa, Nike Factory Store, OshKosh B'Gosh, Polo Ralph Lauren Factory Store, Reebok, Samsonite, Timberland, Tommy Hilfiger Company Store, Wilsons Leather Outlet, Zales Outlet and more AT SAVINGS OF 25% TO 65% EVERY DAY...SHOP BETTER.

CAROLINA PREMIUM OUTLETS

SMITHFIELD, NC • I-40 TO I-85, EXIT 95 OR US 70, EXIT 334 • (919) 989-6767
VISIT PREMIUMOUTLETS.COM FOR HOURS • CHELSEA PROPERTY GROUP

A SIMON Company