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 Celebrate Arts**

**Earth Day | April 2019**



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Many seniors have accumulated mountains of paper throughout their lives that clutter their homes. Taking steps to organize and reduce your paper can help restore order to your living space.

**Cut the clutter: How to organize all those papers, restore order at home**

By Alicia M. Colombo

Is your home overloaded with papers? From catalogs to financial statements to receipts, paper can become an all-consuming mess that clutters our lives. Taking steps to organize and reduce your paper can help bring order to your home. "When you craft and maintain systems to manage your information, you'll reduce stress, save money, increase your credibility and feel masterful," says Leslie Robison, a professional organizer for more than 20 years and principal of Mastery Coaching and Consulting in Lansdale.

Robison teaches courses on organization and decluttering at Mt. Airy Learning Tree and Main Line School Night. When it comes to seniors and paper, Robison often sees a backlog. "People tend to save paper," she says. "People don't know what to save, how long to store it and what should be shredded or tossed. So they tend to just save everything."

**What do you need to save?**

There are several types of documents and other papers that should be saved. These include anything to do with property ownership, such as your home or car; taxes, both personal and property; legal documents; health records; and proof of who you are. The later includes licenses; passports; birth, death, marriage and divorce certificates; military records; and name-change documents.

When it comes to your car, you should save the bill of sale, title, current registration, all repair records and current warranty information.

Medicare and health-related paperwork can be copious. You should save the "Explanation of Benefits" statements until the bill is paid in full and keep health insurance statements in storage for three to five years. Robison says she has found discrepancies between providers and Medicare billing, so it's wise to keep those records for a few years.

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**Engage!**

**Volunteerism takes flight: Senior uses time to care for butterflies**

By Constance Garcia-Barrio

Nature has painted butterflies with a cunning brush, notes Chris Johnson, 70, a volunteer in the butterfly exhibition at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, 19th Street and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. "This one has what looks like an owl eye on each wing," Johnson says, referring to the winged insect in his hand. "Thanks to its deceptive wing pattern, the owl butterfly scares off potential predators, like small birds."

As he speaks, standing in the large open space within the academy that houses the live animal exhibit, more than 100 butterflies flutter around him like fugitive color from an artist's easel. "I'll tell you one thing: I've learned a lot about butterflies and insects since I started volunteering here seven years ago," Johnson says. He then points to a monarch butterfly that has landed on a tree nearby, a "master mimic" whose coloring scares off birds, frogs and other animals that eat

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Will Klein

The owl butterfly has a deceptive wing pattern that scares off potential predators, according to Academy of Natural Sciences volunteer Chris Johnson.

