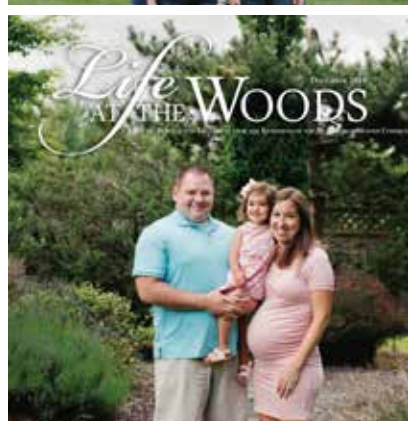
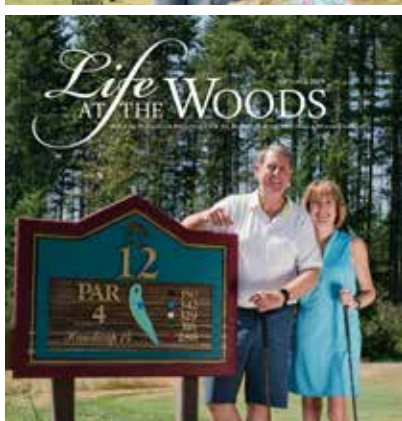


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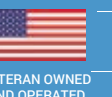
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## sponsor spotlight

by Kai Curry

pics courtesy of Spring Courtright

# Spring Home ORGANIZATION



There is a quote by Johann Goethe that says, “Let everyone sweep in front of his own door, and the whole world will be clean.” Whatever we do in our immediate vicinity radiates out to those around us, at first near and, eventually, far. Spring Courtright, of Spring Cleaning Home Organization, understands this perfectly. Having an organized living space means much more than just picking up our messes or getting rid of clutter – although

that’s a great start! Organization impacts our state of mind and the way we interact with the world.

One of the primary reasons Spring runs her organizing business is to help people “find more peace, calm and joy, so they, in turn, can take those feelings into their families and the world. This work is my contribution to community and world peace.” Since many women run their households, they’re who she most often organized with. Often, they dream of having an organized home and life, but are so busy, stressed and overwhelmed that they don’t know where to begin.

“I love helping people step off the hamster wheel of buying ‘stuff’ in pursuit of happiness – we find joy right in their own minds and homes. I’ve done this myself and have experienced incredible freedom and joy that I want to share!” Making better use of our spaces, and being more mindful of what we consume in the first place, is also good for the environment. As Spring shares, “I also want to reduce the waste stream and mindless consumption, so I take unwanted items to people in need, compost, and recycling whenever possible.”

At first, helping others get organized was something Spring did as “in-between” work after she left a previous job as the program director for an outdoor company and was unsure what she wanted to do next. “As I took time to think about it and work on a book,” she recalls, “I helped friends organize and realized they were anxious about their clutter, while for me, the bigger the mess, the more exciting and fun it was!” Spring’s energy and enthusiasm when it came to organizing help those who might be having trouble find that energy and enthusiasm themselves. “We turn organizing into a fun adventure,” she said.

At first, Spring was self-taught, reading everything she could about organizing techniques. Then, she trained with the now-famous Marie Kondo, the author of *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up* and star of a Netflix show. Her name is now a verb: someone might say, “I Konmari’d it,” after letting go of items that no longer spark joy. “After training with Marie Kondo,” Spring relates, “I realized deep down that life organizing was my new beloved career. I gained a network of organizers around the world and an amazingly strong framework that helps me quickly and efficiently help move people toward their ideal lives.” Spring says, with confidence, “With support, practice and reducing belongings to only what makes you happy and is necessary for your life, you absolutely can be an organized and happy person!”

A native Washingtonian, Spring was born in Spokane and lived in Cheney until she was 10. After a year in Seattle, her family relocated to Poulsbo. She has lived mostly in Washington ever since – Bainbridge Island, Seabeck, Port Townsend, Olympia, and Bellingham – but has lived in the High Sierra and Joshua Tree in California and in Colorado mountain towns. She has now been in Port Or-



Dining Room (After)



Living Space (After)





Play Room (Before)



Play Room (After)

chard for about five years and is married to William Fletcher, a firefighter and EMT at the Bremerton Navy Base. Her mother, who she calls “Mum,” lives nearby in a cohousing community on Bainbridge Island, while three big brothers reside in Boise and Salt Lake City.

You might have gotten the idea that Spring was a wanderer for a time, and you are right. As she explains: “After getting my BA in environmental education, I shed most of my belongings in my twenties and traveled around the West, leading outdoor trips and teaching all ages – canoeing, kayaking, stand up paddleboarding, backpacking, mountain biking, rock climbing, snowboarding, dog sledding, natural history, ecology, earth science. Between seasons, I developed a deep love of traveling.” Although she has now settled into her vocation as an organizer

of lives, that doesn’t mean she has lost her taste for adventure! “I’ve been a kayak and outdoor guide for 20 years, and every year, I lead women’s trips to Blake Island and Belize! I hope to be leading trips to Uganda soon!”

So what does getting organized with Spring’s help look like? It starts with a free phone consultation, then the first session begins with goal setting for not just the home, but for her clients’ lives. “Each session is five-six hours long with a lunch break in the middle,” Spring explains. “My hours are flexible to work with clients’ needs and energy levels. Whole-home and life organizing takes at least seven sessions, sometimes 15-20. A lot depends on how much work people are willing and able to do between sessions.” Working with Spring is a unique experience – she makes things fun and shares her wide array of life experiences, years of professional organizing, creative mind, and personal style with the job. She also brings healthy, whole food snacks and lunch to share with clients if they wish. “My husband and I are avid edible gardeners and cooks, and I love sharing the delicious, nutritious food we make!” Spring also offers an online program and coaching via telephone.

According to Spring, the only regret clients have after signing up for her services is that they didn’t do so sooner! “Starting right this moment, you can change who you are and where your life is going just by paying attention to and changing your thoughts,” Spring advises. “To become more organized, you first absolutely must listen to what your mind is telling you from moment to moment. If you let it tell you you’re an unorganized person, you’re terrible at something, or you’ll never stop feeling overwhelmed, your actions will reflect these thoughts and make these true.” Getting organized is not just a one-time thing. “My goal is to help each person I work with become an organized person, not just to make their space look pretty for a while,” Spring says. “Client-friends often call me a life organizing coach because I help them see and change patterns and habits that cause clutter, anxiety and overwhelm.”


So, start on your New Year’s resolution early! Spring’s appointment book is full one or two months out, so be sure to get yourself penciled in sooner rather than later. Spring Cleaning Home Organization is offering \$30 off to the first three people who mention this article or the accompanying ad and sign up for 10 or more sessions.

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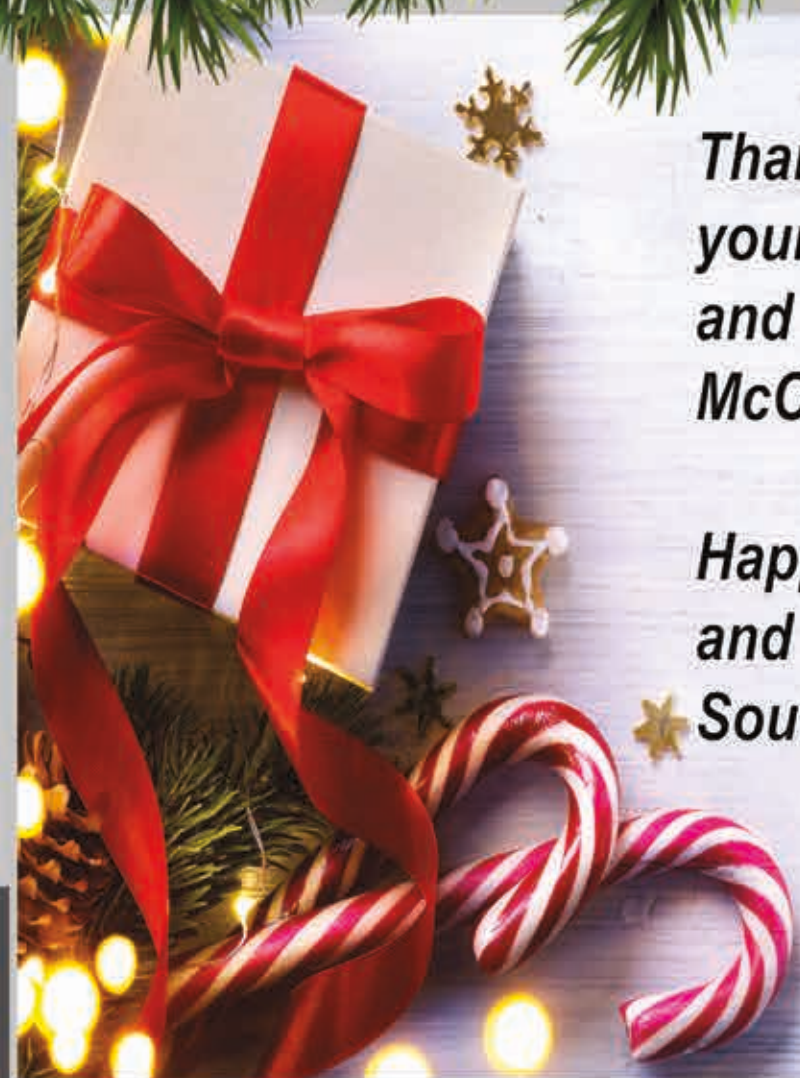


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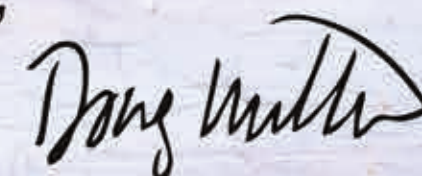
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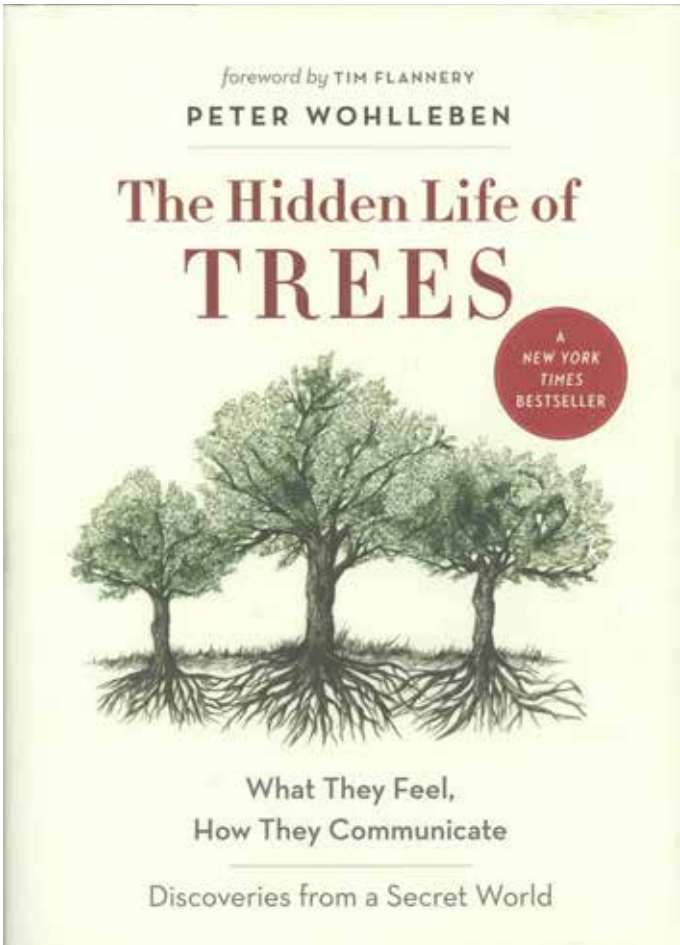


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### book review

By Helen Punches

# The Hidden Life of TREES

by PETER WOHLLEBEN

Peter Wohlleben is a German forester. For twenty years after earning his degree in forestry, he held a government job managing a commercial forest, where his task was to produce as many logs as possible, as efficiently as possible. By nature, more of a tree hugger than tree feller, he finally left that job and now works for the community of Hummel, managing their natural, old-growth forest in a much more forest-friendly way.

For those of us who live surrounded by forest, this book is a little gem well worth reading. Although the forests being described are in Germany, I think we can assume that German-speaking trees behave in the same way as the ones we know here. And the way they behave is amazing in its complexity and its parallels with animal and even human behavior.

For instance, trees nourish their young, who mostly grow up and establish residence nearby. They also lend sustenance to needy friends and continue to do so even when those friends are apparently (but not really) dead. They even send out warnings if they sense danger from toxic substances or predatory interlopers. They are tribal; their benevolent social behavior extends only to other trees of their own kind. On the other hand, when it comes to life-giving light, water, and space, they are fiercely competitive – happily shouldering aside any upstarts who try to interfere with their progress, whether tribe member or not. And, of course, all of this behavior takes place on a timeline sooo muuuch sloower than ours.

When you take a walk on one of our beautiful nature trails or a hike in the mountains, you see many kinds of trees. In our region, most are conifers, which have been around for 170 million years. More modern deciduous trees have only been here for 100 million years. Most trees don't reach maturity for about 150 years. The oldest tree known is a spruce in Sweden, the living roots of which are determined to be 9,550 years old! Its upper story is newer, but the roots are the originals.

Those of us who worry about windstorms are uncomfortably aware that the root balls of our Douglas firs are shallow and wide, intertwining for support with those of their neighboring trees, which means that if a tree has no close neighbors, it's in danger of toppling over on your house in severe wind. Actually, it turns out that most trees withstand crises much better if they're part of a group. But in the daily life of trees, the relationships with other species are even more important. The movement of food and water through the roots is enhanced by the various fungi that live among the roots. Birds and insects play an important role in fertilizing and disseminating their seeds. And, of course, many birds, insects, and small mammals choose to live in and on trees, which is beneficial or not, depending on the habits of the tenant.

I really enjoyed this book. It was a little slow-going at first (not much plot tension, after all), but when I tried to put it down in favor of another book, I found that I couldn't. The author has written several books but, rather than being a polished writer, he's more of a folksy storyteller, which is comfortable and nice. And in his good-natured conversational style, he administers a huge dose of science so smoothly that you probably won't even notice. He really knows trees and loves trees, and his enthusiasm is contagious. I'm pretty sure if you read this book, your walks in the woods will take on a whole new dimension for you. Wouldn't that be fun!



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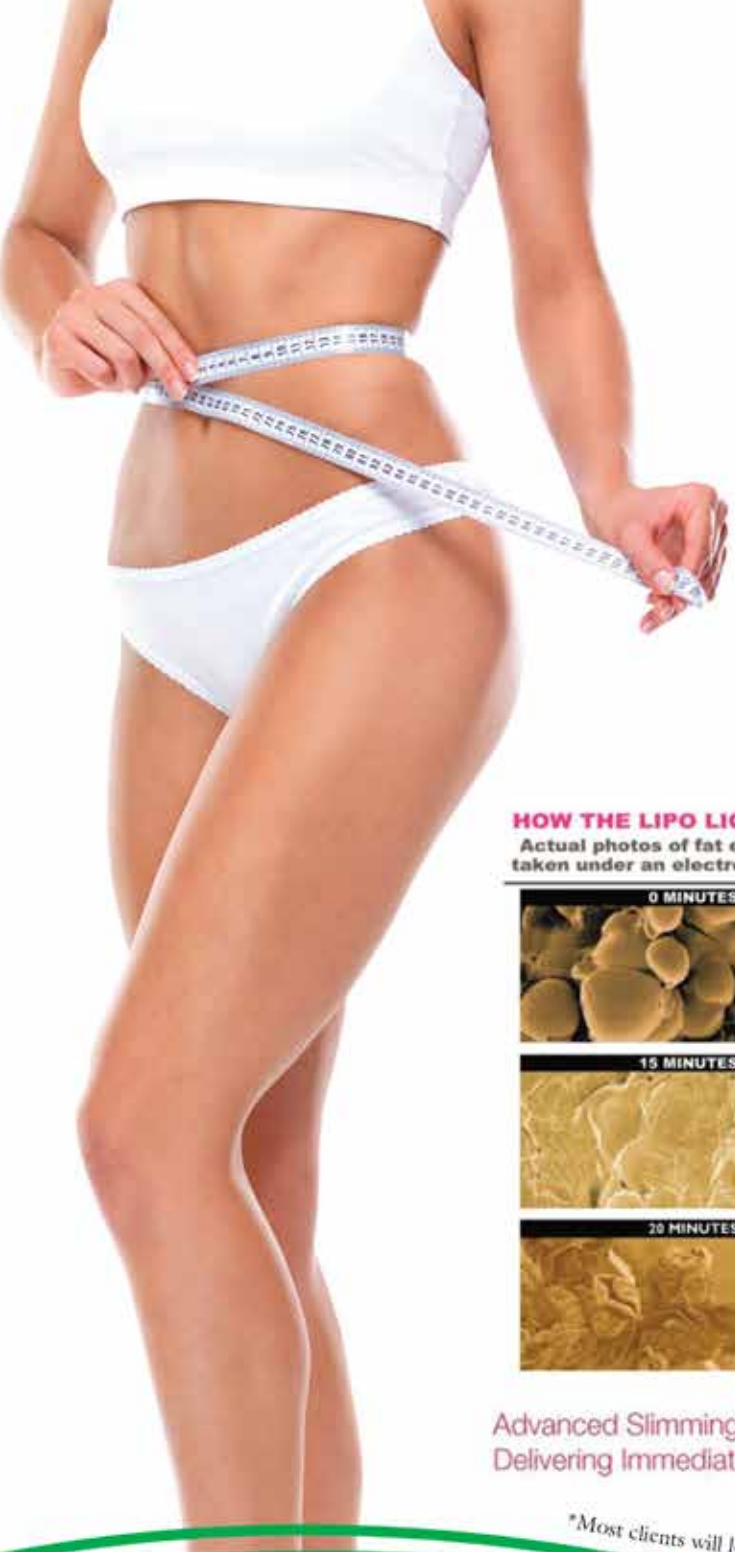
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# OBSERVING OOSOUJI

home  
matters

By Shauna Osborne

## OUT WITH THE OLD

It's a new year, and we're all familiar with New Year's resolutions and the idea of "out with the old, in with the new." Indeed, there's something about turning over the calendar page (hello, 2020!) that feels fresh and invigorating, like anything is possible. In Japanese culture, the concept of *oosouji*, which literally translates as "oo" (big) + "souji" (cleaning), presents a similar notion, with an emphasis on **clearing out the old**. In fact, they consider it inauspicious to welcome a new year with any "old business" (including dirt and clutter!) unresolved.

The practice of *oosouji*, traditionally celebrated on December 28 in Japan, has its roots in spiritual convictions. As Buddhism is a holistic religion, followers' devotion to purity before their deities encompasses physical cleanliness, which pours over into emotional and spiritual clarity. In short, when we are clean – our bodies *and* our spaces – it is easier to be at peace; outward cleanliness represents what we want to attract coming into the new year.

So, how can we adopt this beautiful practice for use as we march forward into 2020? **Start with the right mindset.** I know I often view cleaning as a dreaded task, something monotonous and to be procrastinated as long as possible. This problematic mentality should be transformed into one of forward-looking and sacred productivity. Much like a ritual, clearing out the physical dust of the old year also means clearing out the emotional and mental dust, wiping the slate clean for what's to come.

With that healthy viewpoint in mind, it's time to get your hands dirty:

- *Oosouji* is, traditionally, a **top-to-bottom cleaning**, so start at the top by dusting ceilings and fans, wiping down walls, and dusting furniture, and then vacuuming, sweeping, or mopping floors.
- Likewise, **start at the entrance to a room** and work your way around it in a clockwise rotation. You will finish your work in the room back at the beginning, the exit, a symbol for the cycle of old and new.
- Designate several boxes in each room for **items that are no longer meaningful, beautiful, or loved**, and when you've finished with your task, pass them along by donating, if appropriate. Clutter tends to creep its way into our lives throughout the year, and eliminating what you no longer use creates space

for new ideas and frees you from unnecessary burdens. Also, include a **bag or box for waste**, removing it (symbolically, taking out the mental "trash") from the house as soon as you finish that room. You will be surprised at how much lighter you feel!

- Lastly, **remove stains from your home**, whether they're on the furniture, carpet, or grout. Old stains remind us of the past and have no place in your newly purged space.

If possible, every family member should be involved in your cleansing practice, making careful decisions about their individual possessions and benefitting from this fresh start. Happy New Year!



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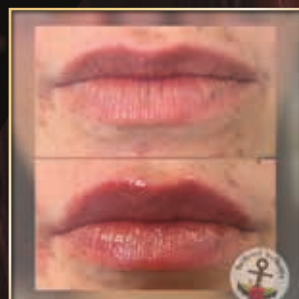
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