

# Baltimore



**SUBSCRIBE!**

[New Subscribers](#)  
[Gift Subscription](#)  
[Customer Care](#)  
[Download iPad Edition](#)  
[Contact Baltimore](#)

**MAGAZINE FOOD & DRINK EVENTS BLOGS VIDEO PROMOTIONS**

**BEST OF BALTIMORE CULTURE HEALTH TRAVEL HOME & GARDEN STYLE BRIDE FACEBOOK TWITTER**

## Junk Drawer Wars

Sue Romanic's calling is to rescue those with simply too much stuff.

By *Martha Thomas*

g+1

Share 3



CREDIT: PHOTO BY DAVID REHOR

Sue Romanic's clients sometimes worry that they might be like those folks on TV who can't even open their front doors. But Romanic, a professional organizer who has seen her share of hoarders, is happy to explain what separates the common Packrat Americanus from those suffering from severe emotional disorders.

"Collectors put things on display," says Romanic, who worked as a kindergarten teacher and an editor before starting her company, Organized! by Romanic, in 2000. And "packrats may have one room in the house where they dump everything"—but they still invite people into their homes. Then, of course, there are those who just have more belongings than they know what to do with. Like Pat (last name withheld), who received a free consultation from Romanic after putting her name in a jar at the Howard County Fair. "I didn't expect to like her," admits Pat, whose Clarksville home of more than 50 years was filled with unfinished crafts projects, toys from her children, and her mother's costume jewelry. "I thought she was going to look at my house and say, 'Why do you have all this junk?'" Instead, says Pat, "she organized my stuff like you wouldn't believe."

Romanic has been called in to clean up for many serious hoarders, too—whose compulsive collecting may be related to addiction and severe depression. There was the guy who managed to hold onto his professional television job by living in his SUV after his stuff took over the house, and the woman who had crammed money into the bodies of a doll collection that filled her home. But these clients only account for about 10 percent of Romanic's business. The rest are people like a Roland Park resident who occasionally calls her to help organize the linen closet, or adult children who can't face going through a deceased parent's belongings. In one such case, Romanic recalls, the divorced father "left a closet full of sport coats. In every pocket was a condom, a comb, and some mints." (No wonder his daughters were relieved to pay the \$75-125 per hour for Romanic's help.)

Romanic, who is a deacon in her church, says she approaches the tough cases without judgment. "I think of it as a ministry. I roll up my sleeves and help them make their lives better."

Issue date: March, 2013

Tags: Home and Garden

<http://www.baltimoremagazine.net/old-site/home-and-garden/2013/03/junk-drawer-wars>