

Make it mission possible Organize the garage before winter

After a summer full of activity, your garage needs to be cleaned and organized so you can put your car and summer equipment back in for the winter. Here are some ideas for helping you organize what now may look like a mission impossible.

The walls of your garage are perfect for hanging lightweight items, such as tools, sleds and bicycles. Visit your local hardware or home improvement center to find a wide variety of hooks, hangers or racks. They are easy to install and will provide many opportunities for storage. You can also purchase some pegboard that is built to hold different types of clips, bins and shelves. Attach the pegboard to your garage wall and start adding the items that you wish to store. If you have some boards lying around (one-by-three or wider), you can build your own homemade storage wall. Place the tools, or other items, you wish to hang on the board and mark with a pencil. Then remove the tools, tilt the board slightly, drive some 2- to 3-inch nails into it and nail the entire board onto your garage wall. Then hang the tools on the board.

You won't be able to hang lumber or bags of peat moss on the wall, so you'll need some hefty shelves. There are steel shelves available at hardware or home improvement centers for a minimal cost. If you want to save money and are the type who appreciates handcrafted work, you can make

your own shelves. To make the brackets for the shelves, you'll need two one-by-three pieces of lumber no longer than 20 inches. One board will serve as the shelf support and the other as the brace for the support. Miter the ends of the brace at a 45-degree angle so that they slope toward each other. If the studs to your garage wall are exposed, you can nail the supports to the sides of the studs at vertical intervals about the length of the brace or horizontally every few feet. Make sure that the boards for the shelves will be level and fasten the supports with 2 1/4-inch nails or 2-inch screws. Then nail or screw one end of each brace to the stud and the other end to the support. Use wide boards for your shelves. You may or may not have to fasten them to the bracket.

If the garage joists are exposed, you can lay a piece of plywood (1/2 inch thick or thicker) across the joists for storing screen doors, wide pieces of wood or other items. You should store valuable tools or equipment in locked cabinets. Try checking with your local school to see if they have any old lockers, or look for some used kitchen cabinets at a garage sale. Store hazardous materials in locked cabinets and very heavy items on blocks safely out of the way.

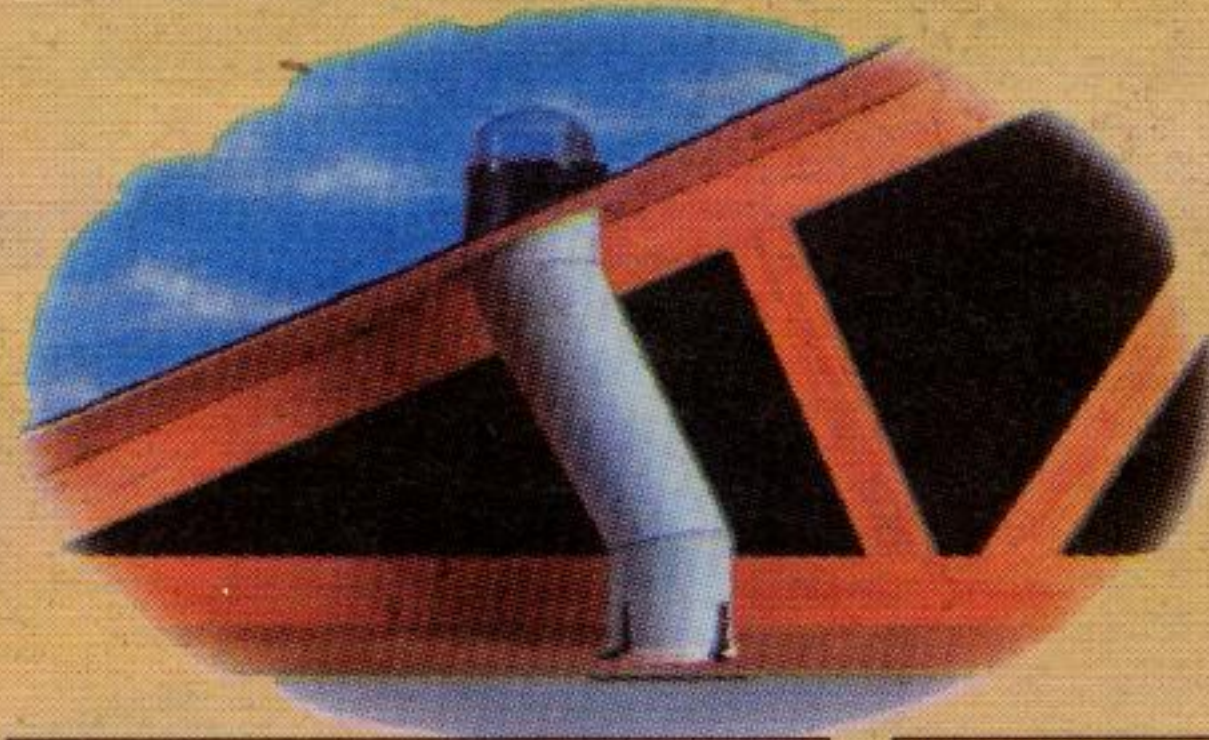
With just a little ingenuity and some hard work, you may find that there is room in the garage for your car after all.

—By Kathy Scott, special

Let the Sunshine in

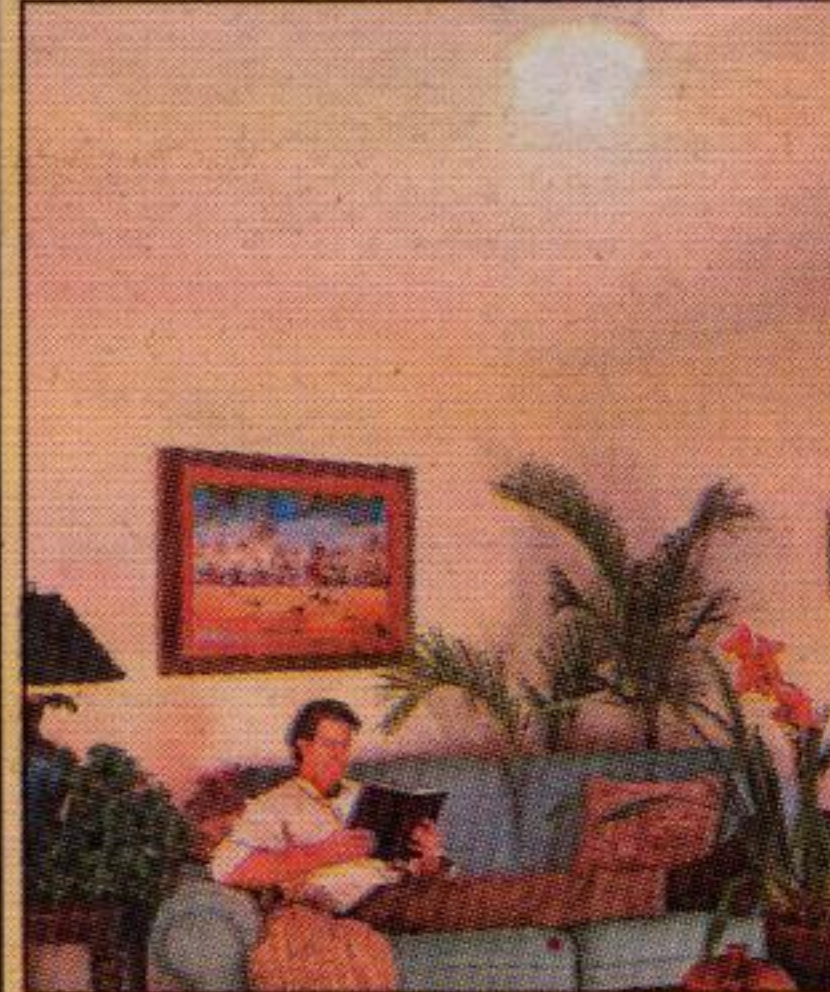
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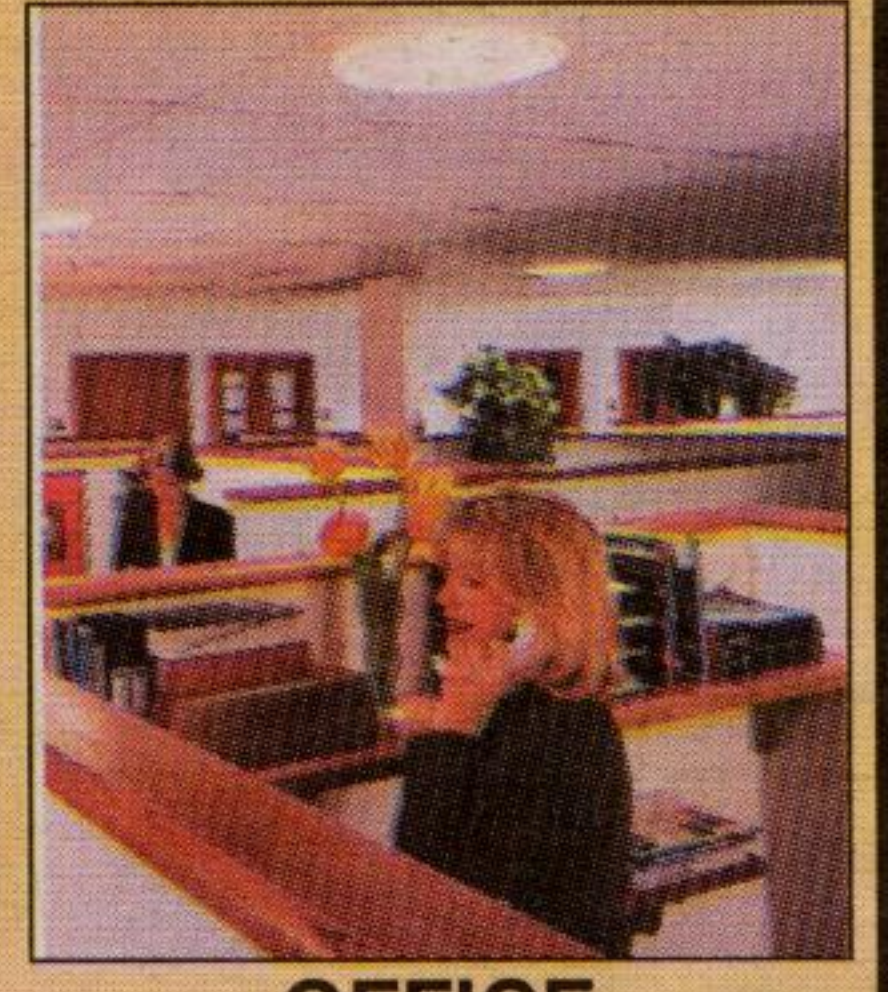
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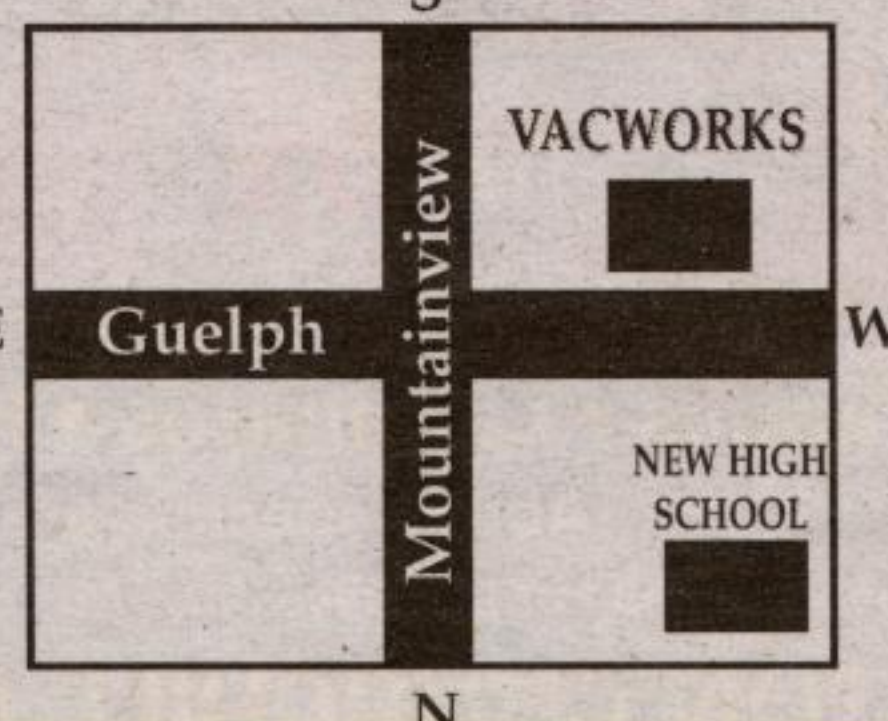
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