

LATE STARTS OK FOR SALES IN COLD MONTHS



LYNDA HAMMOND, Special for The Republic

I saw an interesting thing the other day while winding down my Friday garage sale morning in east Mesa. It was just after 9, and I'd already been browsing for bargains for three hours. I thought I'd hit just about all of them when I saw two ladies putting up a sign at an intersection. I was certain, since it was relatively late, that their sale wouldn't be until the next day but just in case I circled the block anyway. And I'm glad I did. Their sale was opening in minutes.

Oh goodie! There's nothing like being the first one at a garage sale. When that garage door rolls up I feel like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, you know when the movie turns to color. Everything is nice and fresh. The ladies had clothing, kitchen and household items and even collectibles up for grabs, all very tempting. But their late start had my attention, too, since garage sales in the Valley usually start at the crack of dawn, not 9:30. Gosh, that's practically lunchtime to most avid garage salers.

Turns out this was Barbara Hardesty's first garage sale, and she says she just wasn't sure what time she should open up. But then her daughter, who has experience with garage sales in the Valley, called and, ah, weighed in on the subject.

"She said she couldn't believe we weren't set up yet. She says, 'Mom, you should've been out by six.' So we rushed around and got out here." It could've been worse. Barbara and her sister, Brenda Britt of Prescott, were planning to open at noon. Noon? Brenda says that's when things get started in Prescott Valley since it's usually so cold up there. But for the Phoenix area, that's way too late. Or is it?

Barbara and Brenda's sale just might be a testament that sales here are always a hit no matter what time you start them. Barbara tells me even though she got a late start she was busy non-stop from the time she opened until 2 that afternoon. The next day she opened bright and early only to sit there twiddling her thumbs.

"We didn't get our first customer until 7:30. But after that it was pretty busy."

Barbara blames the colder temperatures for the slow start. Plus, there were two huge neighborhood sales nearby that may have garnered most of the attention.

If you're having a sale during the colder months, here are some tips to make yours a bigger, and warmer, success:

- * It's OK to open and close later; 7-1 is good.
- * If you open at 6 you'll still get some business (I'll probably be there!), but look for it to pick up later.
- * Whether selling or buying, dress in layers so you can peel them off as it warms up.
- * Sell hot coffee or cider. The more comfy your customers, the more likely they'll stay and linger over your items.

By the way, I did go back to perusing Barbara's items. I nabbed an old, brass floor ashtray with the handle on top and an amber glass tray that fits snugly on top. I got it for \$8. I don't smoke and never have but there's something beautiful about those old, art deco style ashtrays that I just can't resist.

Lynda Hammond runs the www.GarageSaleGal.com Web site where you can list and look for garage sales online and read past columns. Contact her at Lynda@GarageSaleGal.com. Lynda also does garage sale segments on 3-TV's Good Morning Arizona