

Garage Sale Gal
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Garage Sale Gal is dreaming of an Easy-Bake Oven

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When I was little, all I wanted for Christmas was an Easy-Bake Oven. I knew if I could come downstairs after Santa's visit and find that beautiful hunk of avocado green shiny metal under the tree I'd never ask for another thing.

I'm still waiting.

Although I haven't given up hope that someday I might get my 1960s miniature appliance on Dec. 25, I have expanded my search. A garage sale is where I just might come across my coveted cooking contraption. I even have my fantasy of how the dream discovery all plays out: I walk up to a garage sale, not knowing what I'll come across but hoping it's something special. That's when I spot it. An Easy-Bake Oven sitting in a far-off corner of the driveway beside an ab cruncher and a bunch of once highly collectible Beanie Babies. Suddenly, the sounds of the garage sale crowd fade away and it's only me and that beautiful oven. It beckons me. I buy it for only \$2. Of course, it comes unused in the original box with all the accessories - pans and such. I go home and bake a chocolate cake in the light-bulb-heated oven. I'm happy, elated. I taste my concoction. I'm sick now because the chocolate mix is original - 40 years old! But I don't dwell on the negative. I finally have my dream Christmas gift.

That was my dream but the reality is that every year would pass without the oven under the tree. So, I'd ask my mom why she refused me the joys of an Easy-Bake Oven. "Use the big oven in our kitchen. You're big enough."

Oh, the humanity.

I'm certain never getting that oven under the tree scarred me for life.

I don't cook now. I can't cook. And if I try my hand in the kitchen, it's usually not pretty.

I've even set my kitchen on fire - twice. They were small fires. Yes, the fire department came but nobody was hurt ... just some damage to the BIG oven.

If only I'd had that tiny oven on which to practice my recipes. I'm sure it could've sharpened my skills in the kitchen. In fact, according to Wikipedia, some celebrity chefs, including Bobby Flay, got their start on an Easy-Bake Oven.

If there's something that has eluded you each holiday season, try searching for it at a garage sale.

"If the items are no longer available in stores, garage sales may be one of the few places to find some things," said Gretchen Hermann, a New York garage-sale fanatic who wrote her college dissertation on garage sales. "There's so much history at a garage sale. You find stuff that was popular back when - old yogurt makers and other consumer fads."

Christmas is only four days away. Maybe Santa will bring my "fad" this year. If not, I'll continue perusing garage sales - where everyday is like Christmas anyway!



(PHOTO BY LYNDA HAMMOND):

The Garage Sale Gal and her brother, circa 1967 at Lazarus Department Store in downtown Columbus, Oh.

This is me at age 5 with my brother Mike, 6. I'm pretty sure—after I got done crying (hey, that beard scared me!)-- I asked Santa for an Easy-Bake Oven for Christmas that year.

Favorite Find

Do you have a garage sale find you love? Something that makes you smile when you look at it? Share it with us. Send us your picture. Include your name, email address and phone number and email it to: Lynda@GarageSaleGal.com. Watch for the story of your treasure in this column!

Lynda Hammond is a former TV broadcaster who left the anchor desk for the love of garage sales. Contact her at Lynda@GarageSaleGal.com. She also does garage sale segments on 3-TV's Good Morning Arizona.