

Garage Sale Gal **THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC**



Lynda Hammond

Garage Sale Gal

Everybody has a story—and this one's electrifying ***Lynda Hammond***

Three things I love about garage sales:

- 1/Getting an incredible bargain
- 2/Bragging rights- Telling people the rock-bottom-low price I paid for something and then watching their eyes widen in amazement.
- 3/The enthusiasm when other garage salers share stories about *their* great buys. And this last point brings me to the topic of this week's column.

Whenever I'm out garage saling I tend to run into folks who want to tell me about their recent, fabulous finds. They're full of enthusiasm. Their voice changes pitch, their eyes get big, they smile a lot and typically use their hands in describing the moment they spotted a treasure amongst what some people would consider junk. And I really want to hear about these discoveries. I mean, it's almost as good as *me* finding the items myself—*almost*.

Take for instance; two things Gail Robertson has found recently while garage saling in Mesa.

Gail didn't see what she was looking for at one sale so she asked the sellers if they had it--a cell phone. "I remember, the lady said she thought she might have one inside. She came back out with a Blackberry in her hand. I couldn't believe it." Gail paid just \$15 for the Blackberry 8800 series which retails for about \$275 on line (Amazon.com). Gail charged it up and- voila- it's a keeper. "Oh my gosh, when I found out it worked I was like 'wow'. You can do everything with it-- get directions, download music and my son even watches movies on it."

See what I mean about these stories---incredible enthusiasm.

Gail has done well lately with electronic-gizmos at garage sales. She also recently found a PlayStation II with two hand-held controllers and even a game inside.

"Now that's a steal," said Chris Thompson, 17, who overheard Gail tell me the story while we were gabbing at his family's recent garage sale.

She paid \$15 for the ensemble which retails for about \$200.

Gail admits she took some chances---buying the items not knowing whether they worked. But both work perfectly—like new.

Of course, that's not always the case with electronics we buy at garage sales. So, here are a few tips on how to make sure your electronic find has some juice left in it.

Electrifying Deals

1/Think before you buy-You might want to think twice about buying a curling iron or coffee maker at a garage sale. Unless it's brand new in the original box chances are it's been used quite a bit.

2/Try it out- If you are interested in an electronic item ask the seller if you can plug it in to see how it works. Find the nearest outdoor socket and give it a try. If it doesn't work, you saved a bit of time and a few bucks.

3/Don't give up hope-So, let's say you get your electronic garage sale bargain home and it's a dud. Find out if there's a recall on the item, you might even get a brand new one out the deal. A couple years ago I wrote a column on a man who bought a Toshiba pocket PC for \$2. Jerry Ritter went to the company's Web site and discovered that particular PC had been recalled due to a defect. Jerry sent the company his garage sale PC and Toshiba sent him a brand new one! Jerry estimated—at the time-- that find was worth \$600!



(pic by Lynda Hammond) Gail Robertson of Mesa smiles as she tells me about some of her best garage sale buys. While she finds great stuff, the accounting professional admits she garage sales only sporadically. "I'll find myself going every weekend when there's something I'm looking for. And then I'll stop going for months at a time."

MY FAVORITE FIND

Send us a picture of your favorite find. 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 television anchor who left the anchor desk for the love of garage sales. Contact her at Lynda@GarageSaleGal.com. Lynda also does garage sale segments on 3-TV's Good Morning Arizona.

#####