

Garage Sale Gal **THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC**



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Staying in the shadows for deals at sales

Lynda Hammond

It can be spooky, a bit scary. It happens when it's still dark outside, before the crack of dawn. They lurk in the shadows, following behind hoping to go unnoticed. Some are silent as a lamb, look, and drive on by. Yet others tail their target, stopping, watching and starting again when they do. Who or what are they? Yes, it's Halloween but these aren't ghosts or goblins, I like to call them "sign followers". They're garage sale fanatics who spot sellers putting up signs for a sale. You see, they want to be the earliest to arrive to get a jump on the fierce competition between buyers. They want first crack at that antique trunk for \$10 or the sofa that's a real steal at just \$20.

Darcy Colacita of Mesa holds a garage sale a couple times a year and she gets up really early to prepare. While her husband is setting up shop she's out posting the signs. She laughs when she tells me, it just never fails, when she's putting them up at least one person follows her close behind from sign to sign. "It seems like the serious garage salers are out early. They're the ones that follow me. People are waiting to see what way the signs are pointing. And I really don't mind. It's good business."

Now, I'm an early bird, too and I've seen people posting signs in the past but I'm a bit bolder than some buyers (okay, a lot bolder!). You see I just roll down my window and give a shout out "Where's your sale?" and "Do you mind if I head that way now?" Usually sellers are happy to point the way. After all the work they've done you can bet they don't want to miss a sale.

Darcy is amused by the "followers"; however, if you're not thrilled with the idea, I may have a solution. Here's what you do: while someone is watching the sale, another person should be putting up the signs. But make sure you start posting the signs closest to your sale and working outward. For example, post your first sign at the nearest turn to your house, then the next sign at the second spot and so on—so that by the time you're done posting signs you're at the farthest spot from your house. Doing it this way means you'll likely get folks to your sale sooner---customers that might otherwise skip your place. A Halloween trick instead of a treat!

Since we're on the topic of signs, there's one issue I constantly get emails on---old, withered signs blowing in the wind covered by cobwebs. Okay, that might be an exaggeration but we do tend to forget about garage sale signs at the end of the day. So to keep the villagers from storming the castle, after the sale pick up all the signs we've posted.

It'll keep our community clean, help forge good relationships with our neighbors and hey-- we can re-use them for the next sale. After all, we're recycling all those goods we've sold at the sale we might as well recycle the signs, too.

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(pic by Lynda Hammond) Darcy Colacito says it

never fails—every time she has a garage sale she is followed by persistent buyers. As she puts up her signs folks wait patiently in their car, figure out her trail all in hopes of getting the first shot at all the treasures.

MY 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 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.

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