

Garage Sale Gal **THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC**



Garage Sale Gal

Garage Sale Gal

Garage Sale Returns ***Lynda Hammond***

*'Twas the day after Christmas and all through the mall, people crowd in wall-to-wall!
Some clamber for bargains and look for a deal while others return things that have no appeal.*

Yes, today is the biggest, busiest day for returns— we get money back or exchange things from under the Christmas tree that just aren't quite right.

Now, returns aren't something we have to worry about at garage sales---or so one would think.

It has happened to me.

I was having a garage sale at my home in Indianapolis and all was going smoothly when I spotted a man who'd earlier bought an antique golf bag and wooden clubs at my sale. He was carrying the set with him.

"I want to return these," he said. "My wife won't let me keep them."

"Okay," I said, a bit dumbfounded and flabbergasted as I handed him back his \$4. Yep, that's all he paid! But I refunded his money.

Why? Well, for starters he knew where I lived and I didn't want to wake up one morning and see toilet paper in my trees, eggs on my windows or worse.

This may've been just a garage sale—you might be saying--but it's still important to treat buyers with respect and kindness. It's simply not worth it to argue with someone over a few dollars. Plus, chances are you'll get more money for the returned item next time.

That's what happened to Mesa resident Raedine Yerkes.

She sold a large 4 ft. tall ceramic planter for \$20. The buyer gave Raedine the money and said she'd have to pick it up later with a larger vehicle. But she never came back. "I really wanted to get that out of my garage and I wasn't happy about having to lug it back in," Raedine said.

Two weeks later Raedine spotted the buyer in a grocery store. The woman told her she'd changed her mind and no longer wanted the vase and 'Oh, by the way, could she get her money back?' "I kind of stammered and went 'ah', okay'. I figured a partial refund would've been fair since I had to store it. But I gave her all her money back."

The inconvenient situation turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

Just a month later, Raedine held another sale and sold the vase for \$45—more than twice she got from the first buyer!

I know, I'm with you—it sounds crazy to even think about returning a garage sale buy. Well, ah...call me crazy.

I paid \$3 for a brass birdcage lamp at a recent sale in Chandler. It had unique, claw feet adding architectural interest. I thanked the seller and was getting in my car when I spotted a problem—one of the feet was missing. I didn't know how I'd fix it so I walked back up the driveway and asked for my money back, apologizing that I hadn't looked at it more closely. But not only did he give me my money back, he told me I could *keep* the lamp. Now, that's a happy return!



(pic provided by Lynda Hammond) Steve Davenport of Chandler sold me this heavy brass birdcage lamp. I love the birdcage part so I planned on taking it apart, painting it red and setting it on a shelf in my kitchen. But turns out one of the ornate feet on the bottom was missing. I returned it to Steve and was met with nothing but kindness. “We have several stores we operate and I’ve always been about the service. That’s what you do is keep people happy,” said Steve. Hey, I’m happy! I’ll disguise the missing foot and display it proudly on a perch in my home.

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.

#####