

Garage Sale Gal

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC



Garage Sale Gal

leads to business

Abundance of garage sale finds

Lynda Hammond

Diane Stevens opened a business for one reason: she adores garage sales.

The Gilbert resident snaps up so many treasures at sales and things were starting to pile up around the house. So, Diane's answer to her inability to "just say no to garage sales" was to open up a booth at an antique mall. "I just love shopping so much but you get overwhelmed with stuff. So, I started the booth, not for the money but I do it so that I can continue to shop." Diane says.

Diane, a social worker, has been garage saling now for more than 30 years—ever since her Mom inspired her to look at misfit furniture in different ways. When she was growing up in Iowa, her Mom would go to thrift stores and garage sales and buy old tables, chairs and other big items. "I came by it naturally because my Mother used to get her hands dirty and refurbish pieces. Then she'd sell them to antique stores."

Today, Diane continues buying old, withered and even broken pieces and breathes new life into them with sand paper, paint and a few nails. She also keeps her eyes open for smaller things—powder compacts and jewelry. One time at a garage sale she bought a gold solitaire diamond wedding ring set for just \$20 from a woman who was going through a divorce. She also purchases practical items. "There are some things I will never buy in a store. I get all my picture frames from garage sales. You can buy some beautiful ones for a dollar. And I also always buy candles at sales. Usually they've never been used."

Diane enjoys the process of going to garage sales and stocking up on things for her booth (she now has two to accommodate all her treasures) at the Antique Plaza in Mesa. "Garage saling is almost like when you go camping, everyone's always really friendly and people really chat a lot. And it's a fun activity to do outdoors."

The two antique spaces cost Diane \$180 a month in rent, plus 10% of all her sales go to management of the mall. Even during these tough economic times she manages to eke out a small profit each month. Diane still holds garage sales, too, to get rid of some of her items but she's only allowed to have three a year in her neighborhood. So, several times a year she takes things up to a friend's house in Payson for a sale.

If you're a die-hard garage saler with a lot to get rid of—maybe an antique booth is the way to go for you.

Antique Booth

***Think Small**-Diane says it's easier to sell small items, such as collectibles, jewelry and other trinkets. It makes transporting things easier and takes up less space. (Bigger booths cost more each month.)

***Have inventory ready**- Don't rent a booth and then set out to buy stock. You'll waste money as your booth remains empty.

***Have fun**-Diane says you won't get rich with an antique booth. But it is a great way to unload things you no longer want.



I ran into Diane Stevens at a garage sale in Mesa where she told me about her passion for garage sales. "I always wondered if I'd ever run into you at a garage sale. I'm so glad I did because I know you love garage sales just as much as I do," Diane told me. As you might imagine, Diane and I had a lot to talk about!

Talk to the Garage Sale Gal!

Do you have a question or comment about garage or estate bargain sales? Email the Garage Sale Gal:
Lynda@GarageSaleGal.com.

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 local TV stations.

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