

Garage Sale Gal **THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC**



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Mayhem ***Lynda Hammond***

It was a zoo--pure pandemonium, mayhem, madness. Car horns blared as buyers walked to sales darting in front of stalled traffic and turning a recent neighborhood sale in Chandler into a frustrating, congested mess. And guess what? I loved every minute of it! It was a garage sale lover's dream with gobs of sales and people scampering for deals.

"This is way beyond what we expected. It's unbelievable," says Joe Reynolds, a board member of the HOA for Ironwood Vistas off Arizona Avenue, who was forced to direct traffic. Drivers were idling bumper-to-bumper on the narrow streets with no place to park or drive as they waited for a break.

"I'm going to call the police," one woman who didn't want her name used told me.

Joe didn't like that idea.

"Now if you do that they're going to close us down. That's what they'll do," he said tersely to the woman.

She called anyway.

I was lucky I got to the sale at 6:30 and was able to find a place to park in an out-of-the-way cul-de-sac. But just ten minutes later drivers were honking at cars ahead of them and tempers were flaring.

On the flipside, people who *had* found a place to park (some even partly on the sidewalks!) were thrilled. I saw buyers happily lugging or wheeling garage sale finds--bikes, scooters, vacuum cleaners, laundry baskets and decorative baskets. "Oh, great find. How much did you pay for that?" I asked one lady who was walking with a gorgeous woven basket in her arms. "Three dollars," she smiled broadly. "It's yours for six," she offered. I passed on the basket!

Judy Pappenheim, who prefers neighborhood sales, came all the way from Casa Grande just for the deals. "I love the variety here. I've seen everything from kid's toys and clothes to bathtubs and toilets to furniture-- really nice furniture, too," Judy tells me.

Jason Slagter, fresh from a donut run, was stuck in traffic at his front gate but he didn't seem to mind. "I'm having an open house in here. So, the more the merrier," the real estate agent said. Jason would tell me later 45 people had some through his open house in just three hours—a great

turnout.

Meanwhile, back to the woman who called the police.

She was hoping to buy a fake potted plant for a deal but the seller wouldn't come down on the price. She walked around empty handed and a bit perturbed.

"They really should have planned better for this. This is just ridiculous. That's what it is," she said shaking her head and walking away.

(Chandler police did later show up but things were under control by then.)

'Tis the season.

October and November are the busiest months for bustling neighborhood sales—the weather is perfect and after a long hot summer buyers are ready to shop while sellers are eager to clear the clutter before the holidays.

Planning for neighborhood sales

***Consider crowd size-**If you have a lot of people participating in your sale, you'll likely get large crowds so plan accordingly.

***Traffic cop-** If you anticipate heavy traffic appoint someone—an off-duty police officer-- to direct cars.

***Parking alternatives-**Ironwood Vistas was a gated community but right across the street was an open field. Eventually buyers began parking there but it might have been a good idea to have opened it a bit earlier.



Joe Reynolds directs traffic in and out of his neighborhood during a community-wide sale last Saturday. “Normally we have good crowds but I’ve never seen anything like this,” he told me.
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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