

Lynda Hammond **THE GARAGE SALE GAL**



Sonoran Swap Meet

Lynda Hammond

You've probably seen them before.

I have.

In fact, chances are they've been to your house, shopping at your garage sale.

They've been to mine.

And every time I see them they've pique my curiosity. I've always wanted to write a story but because of an inability to communicate, it hasn't happened until now.

"They" are people who buy huge truck loads of garage sale items and resell them.

The other day when I saw what had to have been the biggest lot of garage sale purchases I've ever seen in my life being hauled in a pickup and trailer---well, I knew there had to be a way to find out more about these people that work so incredibly hard for their living.

From my limited Spanish I learned in college I was able to ask Luis Angel and his wife, Zulma Garcia, if I could get them to pose for a picture with their newly acquired possessions.

"Si. Si," Zulma tells me enthusiastically.

I'd never seen this couple buying up goods before but I have seen a lot of other people doing the same thing.

When I caught up with Luis and Zulma they appeared very happy with their stash so far. I wanted more than just the picture. I wanted to know more about what they do with all this stuff but there was that language barrier thing.

However, Luis saved the day.

He waved down a guy in a pick-up truck and asked him to translate for us. It was a challenging interview but I do think I got the gist of it--thanks to our translator, Salomon Gamez.

Okay, so here's the deal. Five years ago Luis lost his job in the computer industry. But the couple had always liked garage saling. "I like to shop. We make money doing something we like to do," Zulma told me through Salomon.

So, Zulma and Luis have made garage sales their life, their livelihood. They live Sonora, Mexico but drive up here to the Valley every other weekend to stock up on merchandise. They go to dozens of garage sales searching for mostly furniture and other bigger items. They'll buy anything that's priced right, in good shape and fits in their trailer. The couple then drives the huge haul back down to Sonora where they sell everything at a swap meet that's held every two weeks. Then they head back north to Arizona—or what I like to call the Garage Sale Capitol of the World--and start the whole process over.

So inspiring-- at a time when many of us are out of work—they zero in on something they love to do and make a living at it..even if it is back breaking.

After two days of garage saling, their pickup and trailer were nearly full with chairs, couches, beds and mattresses, tables, dressers, exercise equipment and they'd only spent \$150.

They are usually able to double their money by selling at the swap meet even though they have to pay taxes on each item when they cross the border into Mexico.

This is hard work. Can you imagine? It would be like moving every two weeks! I get winded just taking out the trash (okay, my husband takes it out but I get tired watching *him* do it!).



(pic provided by Lynda Hammond) Zulma Garcia and Luis Angel pose proudly with their latest garage sale buys. And that trailer continues on about 10 plus more feet to the right—couldn't get the entire thing in the shot!

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 the author of the new book, The Garage Sale Gal's Guide to Making Money Off Your Stuff. Check out www.GarageSaleGal.com for details on where to buy the book. Contact her at Lynda@GarageSaleGal.com.

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