

As the weather cools, sales heat up



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You've heard the old saying, "I feel like a kid in a candy store"? Well, that's exactly what I feel like when I see a neighborhood garage sale. By now most of you know I salivate at the mere site of one or two sales. But imagine an area where there are hundreds of them - some right next door to each other! Oh, wow, it's Disneyland. Non-stop fun and lots of souvenirs to take home!

Well, get ready because October in the Valley is ripe for multifamily or neighborhood sales. The weather may be cooling off, but the garage-sale climate is just starting to heat up. The beautiful blue autumn sky and comfortable weather make it the ideal time to hunt for bargains or set up shop. For many communities a neighborhood sale is an annual activity.

Kenny Klaus, an east Mesa real estate agent, says there's nothing like a big neighborhood sale.

"Let's face it, we're in a world where people gotta have it now . . . so, what better place to go than where you'll find 10 sales on every street?"

He springs for the cost of advertising and signs for several neighborhood sales in the Southeast Valley and says it's well worth the cost.

"It's fun. You meet people. Talk to your neighbors. It helps create a community within a community."

This time of year is popular for garage sales also because snowbirds are back, holidays are just around the corner and we need to make room for gifts and guests, and lots of folks have relocated, and it's time to organize the household.

So, if you don't want to hire a construction crew to add a room onto your home, get rid of some of that stuff by having a neighborhood garage sale. Here are some tips for smooth shopping and selling.

Sellers

1. Contact your HOA and city about rules regarding neighborhood garage sales.
2. Consider having your sale on Friday even if the group sale is on Saturday. I've found I usually make twice the amount of money on Friday because there are fewer sales for buyers to choose from. Marilyn Hayes, 69, is skipping her Mesa neighborhood sale this year. "I thought last year there was just too much competition."
3. Get as many people on "your" street to have a sale. Buyers will be more likely to park near your home .
4. Advertise your sale in the newspaper and on Web sites emphasizing the "group" sale aspect. Although gas prices are lower, the relatively high price still has buyers looking for more concentrated areas to shop.
5. Post BIG signs at all entrances to your community. Use smaller signs pointing folks to your house. If buyers don't see balloons or signs they may not take the time to turn onto your street.

Buyers

1. Check ads for neighborhood sales in *The Arizona Republic* and GarageSaleGal.com, or similar sites.
2. Arrive early. If sellers are setting up, ask if it's OK to take a look. Most will welcome you with open arms.
3. Negotiate. A neighborhood sale makes for a buyer's market since there are so many to choose from. Sellers are more likely to lower their price if they think you'll leave and head to other sales.
4. Drive carefully and considerately.

Lynda Hammond runs the www.GarageSaleGal.com Web site, where you can list and look for garage sales online, and read past columns. Reach her at lynda@garagesalegal.com. She also appears on 3-TV's *Good Morning Arizona*.