

## Simple gifts start with finds at sales



Sept. 22, 2006 12:00 AM

Kathie McGuire is an avid garage saler. She searches for clothing, electronics, collectibles and, like a lot of us, other items that might catch her eye. The 52-year-old Phoenix resident even buys things when she can't quite figure out what they are.

"A lot of times the find itself will inspire me to create something," she says.

One of those inspiring times came to her last year at a garage sale in the Moon Valley area. She plunked down a dollar for a bag of 200 round, mysterious metal objects. She would later find out they were campaign button parts. Imagine the front of the button, plain without the backing or pin attached.

"I painted them a pretty copper color, stamped a horses head in the center and attached them to the cover of a notepad," Kathie said. "It turned out to make a beautiful little gift project."

Making gifts is one of Kathie's specialties. And with the help of garage sale finds she's able to create one-of-a-kind items at a price that would impress even the most experienced garage saler. For less than 15 cents she makes beautiful stationery gift sets.

"It's great to think I can make something that beautiful on such a small budget. Anyone can afford this. I'm always very excited about doing a project that's very economical. Even children can do it with their allowance," she says.

Making the stationery gift set includes a folder, envelope, note cards and embellishments. Kathie finds most of those supplies at garage sales. Decorations for the outside of the set include just about anything you can think of, glitter, decorative stamping, ribbons. And Kathie calls the ribbon on her stationery set "the find of a lifetime."

She went to a Phoenix garage sale held by a lady who had crafted for 60 years. Kathie spotted a large spool of decorative ribbon still sealed. The original price tag was \$46 but she paid just \$1.

"I get so excited about these finds. The satisfaction of buying something I know I would be paying a hundred times more for (in a store) is very satisfying," Kathie said. "It's just very smart shopping. It's like finding treasure."

If you have hobbies such as paper crafting, stamping, painting - anything - finding your supplies at garage sales can save you a lot of money. Craft items are popular at garage sales because some folks try their hand at a hobby, give it up and simply sell the supplies at a garage sale.

So, you can buy practically new items at great prices.

Here are some tips on shopping for bargain supplies at garage sales:

- Give yourself time. Don't expect to find all your supplies in one day.
- Keep an open mind. If you see interesting objects but don't know what they are, you can likely put them to use just like Kathie did with the button fronts.
- If you see something you like, but don't have a use for it now, buy it anyway. It may come in handy for future projects.
- Perspective. For a printing company, a box of cards is incomplete and unmarketable if it contains fewer than 500 cards. But for a scrap booker, a box with a few cards missing doesn't matter. "To the printer it's useless. But to me suddenly it becomes a windfall," Kathie says.

**Lynda Hammond runs the [www.GarageSaleGal.com](http://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](mailto:lynda@garagesalegal.com). She also appears on 3-TV's Good Morning Arizona.**