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Sale holders get best results with good bait

Word of warning: Avoid 'yard sale' tag

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but "yard sale" if you want it to stand out.)

We listed things we had a lot of, that we knew collectors looked for. The night before the sale, we made four signs on poster board using big, black block letters and tacked them up in high-traffic areas close by.

An hour before the sale

The morning of the sale we began setting things out an hour before the sale was to begin, knowing a few early birds would be by. (Unless you're having an indoor sale, you really can't keep people out without being rude.) I found that if I didn't bargain with the first person interested in an item, I might never get another interested buyer all day.

While setting up, we noticed another sale less than a block away. This was to our advantage. People are more inclined to go to locations that have more than one sale nearby. It's the philosophy that prompts car dealers to move to the same strip. They know people like a lot of choices close together.

To give the sale ambience, as my husband put it, we put a palm tree and two white rockers from our back porch out front. A lot of people wanted to buy the rockers and the tree. I finally put a not-for-sale sign on them.

Elderly gentleman

The first person to appear was an elderly gentleman I'd never met who lived in the white monolithic apartment building next door. Not a good beginning; he wouldn't stop talking. It didn't seem to matter to him whether I was listening or not. I was afraid he would drive people away with his endless prattle.

To my dismay, he was the first of many to use me as a sounding board that day, and most were neighbors. They knew they had a captive audience in me.

One elderly woman bought a pair of shoes for 50 cents. She said she'd have to walk home to get the money. I said, "You can take them with you. I trust you."

As the woman with the shoes left, another woman snidely said, "You'll never see that lady again." About 30 minutes later, the woman who bought the shoes came back not only with 50 cents, but a lunch bag filled with chocolate donuts. "In case you get hungry out here," she said.

"Look, lady, you can bargain with me, but you can't steal from me."

PATTY MARTINO ALSPAUGH
YARD SALE HOLDER

Praised ice cream maker

One woman praised a Donvier ice cream maker and said I was selling it for too little. Upon hearing that I'd never even tried it, she really did a sales job on me. By the time she finished, I took the price tag off and brought the ice cream maker back inside. That wasn't the only time someone sold me my own stuff that day.

One woman kept asking me (after appealing to my sympathy by pointing out her blind eye and deaf ear), "Will you take a quarter for this? Will you take a dime for this?" She was referring to things that cost \$4 or more. Finally, I said in agitation, "Look, lady, you can bargain with me, but you can't steal from me."

She ended up leaving with an embroidered piece of cloth that I gave her — for nothing.

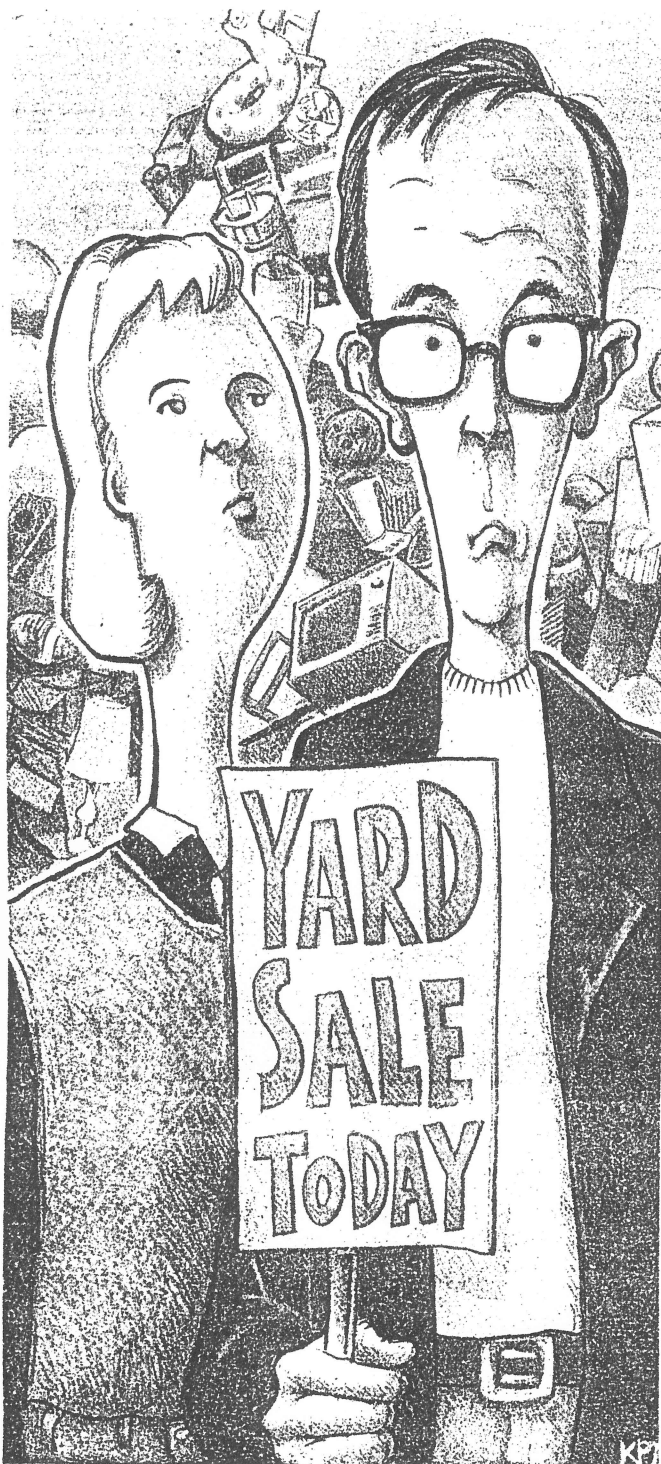
Yelled to neighbors

At the end of the day, my husband — who had been gone during most of the sale — yelled across the street to some of our young neighbors that we were giving stuff away, mostly books, albums, greeting cards and dishes.

Before we knew it, we had a half-dozen sets of kids out front. Since things were free, I was surprised they weren't greedy. Most only took a few items.

Later, we took what was left to the Salvation Army and we took down our signs. (One year, I failed to do this and some nice person threw the signs down in my front yard for me.)

We counted our money and were pleasantly surprised to see that we'd made more than \$400 selling things we didn't even need. So we treated ourselves that night to a four-star dinner, to go, and ate it in our newly spacious apartment.



Right bait gets results

BY PATTY MARTINO ALSPAUGH
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Soon after I got married, my husband began to nag me about all the books, clothes and other things that I'd amassed over the years. It was all a matter of space — the lack thereof.

To maintain marital bliss, I suggested a yard sale. True, I'd collected a lot of stuff that I no longer liked or needed. So, the first thing we did was to set a date.

About two weeks before the sale, we both sorted through our belongings. We picked out things we were willing to part with — often with urgings from one another, like, "Get rid of that" or "You never use that."

After piling junk into corners, abutting it against walls and throwing it into boxes, we were ready to price. We marked lower rather than higher if in doubt, but not too low — figuring we'd price a little higher than what we wanted so that people could bargain with

us, but not too high to scare them off.

Make their mistake

That's where a lot of people make their mistake — they price things too high and won't bargain. People go to yard sales expecting a bargain — nothing less.

Just because you paid \$50 for a blender doesn't mean you're going to sell it for anywhere near that. Probably a fifth to a tenth of an item's cost is realistically what you can expect someone to pay at a yard sale and even this depends on the item. Some of it you can't give away, as we were to find out.

We waited until the day before the sale to put the classified ad in the paper, in case of rain, in which case we would have postponed it. Since it was near tax time, we called the sale an income tax sale. (Name it anything

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