

Garage sales bring out all sorts of people

By Kathryn Reed

Sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists and several other professional ists could probably have a field day analyzing people who have garage sales and the people who go to them.

I fell into the former category last Saturday.

I'm still baffled why people on vacation go to garage sales. I find them to be the strangest breed of garage sale-goer. I realize people shop on vacation. But why for other people's stuff and not some cool souvenir instead?



What didn't sell Sept. 18 is now at the Attic thrift store.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

Maybe I'm too critical of what I had out in the driveway. Obviously, several people thought there was something special because each of those 50-cent sales added up to \$127.35 by the end of the day.

What didn't sell was thrown into the back of the Jeep to be

hauled to Barton's thrift store. It wasn't coming back into the house.

With the interior of the house about to be painted, it was time to start going through things. Drawers were unloaded, the underneath of beds sorted through (though still in need of vacuuming), closets thinned, wine glasses tossed, an entire book shelf cleared and sold, and knickknacks dumped, um, sold.

Putting out signs on fluorescent colored poster board the night before did the trick in luring would-be buyers to our street. One of our neighbors was getting rid of stuff too, so people scored on our street last Saturday.

This was the most traffic I have had at a garage. (I always just do one-dayers – there are too many other things to do in Tahoe on a weekend.) The six or so hours spent selling my wares also allowed me to engage in conversation with people I probably would not otherwise have met. A couple people I knew also stopped by.

And doing nothing is a bit of a foreign concept to me. So the garage sale got me off my computer – OK I was on it the first hour, but then I put it in the house. I brought out reading material to fill the few gaps of time.

I'm not sure if it is the economy or lack of garage sales in September, but the number of people coming by was astounding.

What I don't understand is a person who asks the price of something but doesn't bother to haggle. Some do. But plenty of others don't. Really, that \$2 rug could have gone for \$1. Oh well, I eventually got the two bucks I wanted.

I didn't sell anything for more than \$20. I asked \$25 for the bookcase and got \$20. It's hard to stay firm when neighbors are doing the bidding.

What are people thinking when they walk onto private property

with a cigarette or cigar. My hacking didn't faze any of them. Isn't there some sort of garage sale etiquette out there?

And the people who bring their kids and let them step on stuff. Unbelievable. Yes, I want to get rid of the stuff, but it doesn't need to be trampled on and broken.

And people – slow down. Nothing at any of these garage sales is that valuable that you must speed through residential neighborhoods. I apologize to my neighbors for bringing so much traffic to our little street last week.

What has amazed me at most garage sales I've had is how the stuff I got for free sells better than the stuff I paid good money for. I'm not sure what that says about my spending choices or other people's buying habits. I don't think I want to know.

I don't go to garage sales. But I know good things can be had from them – like our \$10 gas lawnmower. (Though it did cost \$15 to sharpen the blades.) And we have a set of cool cordial glasses I would have never bought in a store, but sure are fun to sip libations from.

And, yes, I'll tell my accountant about the earned income in case I need to pay taxes on it.