

Garage Sale Gal **THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC**



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Gilbert garage saler sees more than most of us ***Lynda Hammond***

When most of us garage sale our biggest challenges are where to go and what to buy. But Connie Jacomini has a bit of a bigger obstacle. She's blind. "It isn't really hard for me. I've been blind all my life, so I don't miss things I've never done or seen."

The year was 1967. Connie was 2 years old playing in the basement of her Trenton, New Jersey home. She picked up an unopened bottle of root beer and shook it. The pressure caused the bottle to explode in her face. She immediately lost one eye and would go blind in her other eye six weeks later.

The disability doesn't keep the Gilbert resident from doing much of anything. She's a busy wife and stay at home mom with two teenage sons and a house full of animals including four dogs, four cats and a lizard. Garage saling is her way of escaping the hectic household for some fun and relaxation. "It's great to get out and be moving around. I like the variety of garage saling and never knowing what you'll find. I love being around people and talking to them."

Connie hits garage sales with her husband, Pete, who guides her to things he thinks she'd be interested in. "We've been garage saling together for so long he knows what I like and don't like."

I met the couple at a garage sale in Gilbert where the three of us were pawing through about 200 wooden cigar boxes. They were beautiful with colorful, vintage-style labels and various shapes and sizes—perfect to sit around the house in stacks on a table. Pete would pick up one of the boxes, tell Connie the color then hand it to her so she could feel it. She'd run her hands around the entire box checking it like an expert cigar box aficionado. "Usually I can catch something that people with sight can't. I can feel slight imperfections—if the label is peeling or if there's a chip in it." Connie chose 60 boxes—paying a dollar each. She'll give a few to her dad who "just likes cigar boxes" and the rest will be put to use in her own home. She'll keep receipts, bills and other papers in them. The different shaped boxes will keep her organized by helping her to know what each one contains.

It would be understandable if Connie was bitter about her accident, however, she's anything but. She's energetic and exudes positivity. In fact, she has some advice for folks who may be facing challenges in their life and for those of us who sometimes just have a bad day. "Don't sit at home and feel sorry for yourself, get out of the house and do something with your life. You have to get over it. Be able to initiate your own training and know what to do to make your life better for you."

One way Connie helps to make her life better is by going to garage sales. A lucky break for me—since I had the good fortune of meeting her.



(Photo: Lynda Hammond) Pete and Connie Jacomini stand over gobs of empty cigar boxes up for grabs at a recent garage sale in Gilbert. Connie, who is blind, often shops at garage sales but never lets her disability interfere with finding a bargain. "I've never had a problem. I can always communicate. As long as the seller wants to talk, I'm okay. And most people are willing to help."

MY FAVORITE FIND

Do you have a garage sale find you love? Something that makes you smile when you look at it? Share it with us. Send us your picture. Include your name, email address and phone number and email it to: Lynda@GarageSaleGal.com. Watch for the story of *your* treasure in this column!

Lynda Hammond is a former television anchor who left the anchor desk for the love of garage sales. Contact her at Lynda@GarageSaleGal.com. Lynda also does garage sale segments on 3-TV's Good Morning Arizona.

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