

Garage Sale Gal

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Gas prices raise garage salers anxiety

Lynda Hammond

Dave Potter has shortened his garage sale route. He loves garage sales but the price of gas is forcing him to shop closer to his Mesa home. "It's just not worth it. Even if you get good deals out there you're still burning gas."

Linda Peterson of Gilbert feels the same way. "I still go to sales but I don't go as far as I used to." Linda was helping her daughter sell some things at a recent garage sale. It was quieter than usual. "We aren't seeing the people that would pull up in large pick-up trucks and haul off lots of stuff off like we have in the past. I gotta think it's because of the high price of gas."

The high gas prices are affecting all of us but when it comes to cruising for garage sales *I* haven't changed a thing. After all garage sales are a way of life for me---they're where I get my column ideas and incredible bargains. I mean where else could I meet a man who's selling his wife's purse for \$1 with seven credit cards still tucked inside (oops!) or buy a solid wood, pink cat that weighs 30 lbs.? (Yep, I really have one. Bought it for \$8 at a sale a few years ago and it's still napping in my "extra" bedroom.) So, it would take a lot more than gas prices to keep me from my work and passion. But if filling the tank has put the brakes on *your* garage saling here are some ideas on how to cope, whether you're a seller or a buyer.

Saving gas

For shoppers

Don't leave your car running- I often see buyers leave their car running when they walk up to sales. According to the experts, idling guzzles more gas than turning your car on and off. Plus, it's safer anyway to take the keys with you.

Look for neighborhood sales- You can park and walk. Or consider driving to the neighborhood with your bicycle and bike around the area looking for deals. Exercise and bargain hunting—what a combo!

Drive slower- I know for me this one's a toughie. When I'm approaching a sale, I'm like a dog chasing a bone—I drive faster. But it'll save more gas if we drive slower and coast up to a sale.

Map it out- Know your route before you go. Many Web sites provide free maps to the sales. Print them out to organize your route.

For sellers

Have a big sale- Make it worth a shopper's time and gas. Get relatives and friends to bring over items. If you have a lot to sell, folks will get out of their car and shop your sale.

Good signs- Make signs with bright neon card board. Keep it simple—write only one word "sale" and draw an arrow. Include "arrows" in the same color paper and post them if you're house is nestled deep into your neighborhood. And

be sure to take signs down to prevent littering. Plus, you can reuse them next time.
Gas money- It's worth it to have a garage sale. Turn all that clutter into gas money!

Thankfully, there will always be garage sales--we just need to better organize our routes and when having a sale -- make it worth a shopper's hard earned gas money.



(Photo: Lynda Hammond) Gilbert resident Linda Peterson helps her daughter run a garage sale. "It's killing me standing here. What's out there today? I'm worried I'm missing a lot of sales," Linda asks me when I stop at their sale on a Friday in Mesa. You might be able to guess Linda is usually shopping at sales, not having them. Yes, she missed out on a few good ones on this day but she was saving gas by not driving around too. Linda says her garage sale route has gotten a bit smaller thanks to the high price of gas.

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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