

The Thrill of the Hunt

Seasoned Yard Sale Shoppers

Can't Resist a Good Deal

Florida Times-Union, Friday Lifestyle; Page E-1

By Brandy Hilboldt Allport

Photos by Reggie Jarrett

Saturday morning. For most people, it's a time to sleep late, eat a leisurely breakfast and linger over a second cup of coffee.

Judy Dailey and her mother, Alvira Bitter, are not most people. They are die-hard garage salers, and by 7:45 a.m. they are out the door and into Dailey maroon Chevy Blazer— the perfect vehicle for hauling their haul— on the lookout for treasures at lower than bargain basement prices. They are not alone on their early morning quest. Tooling around any Jacksonville neighborhood on a Saturday morning reveals that Dailey and Bitter have hundreds of kindred spirits.

Like all people addicted to garage sales, they love to tell stories about their “steals.” Dailey has a decorative brushed concrete angel hanging on her porch that she snagged for \$5. A few months ago, she spotted one just like it at a major retailer for \$69.95. Though she doesn't usually buy clothes at the sales — she is more interested in decorative household items, toys, books and DVDs for her grandchildren— she did buy a Liz Claiborne wrap dress one time. The tags were still on it. She paid \$5, Bitter's best buy tale is about a brass floor lamp. She picked it up for \$6. When she took it to Finn's Brass and Silver Polish, Mike Finn told her it was forged brass and was worth \$450.

So, just what is available at the clean-out-the-closet-and-make-a-few-bucks-events, which go by different names: moving sales, garage sales, estate sales, rummage sales, yard sales?

You name it.

Dolls, dishes, Christmas ornaments, clothes, furniture, knick-knacks, jewelry, pots and pans, toys, camping equipment. It's not all “hshld misc” though. According to Facebook posts from last Saturday,

shoppers could pick up an igloo shaped dog house, a left-handed bow, quilting frames, a john boat motor and leftover plumbing supplies.

On that day, Dailey bought a silver ring a plaque that stated “Insanity is hereditary, You get it from your children” and a blue striped water tumbler. Bitter mostly browsed.

The next Saturday Dailey and Bitter attended five sales. Their agenda called for seven, but because it rained Friday night, two sales were postponed. At the first stop, a home in Ortega, there were beaded gowns and leather purses hanging on racks in the driveway, Dailey and Bitter sailed by them.

They looked through the garage casting discerning eyes over framed paintings, about a dozen pairs of shoes size 9 ½, books and a lawn mower, among other things.

“Lawn mower work?” asked a man in a ball cap, poking at the wheels.

As he and the seller Diane Till, discussed the movers condition, Dailey found a treasure: a box of about 20 shells, perfect for decorating her daughter’s tiki bar. They were priced at \$3. She offered \$2. Till hesitated, saying the shells were collected from beaches all over the world.

“2.50?”

“2.75,” Till said.

Dailey walked away with the shells and a cat-shaped box (\$1). On to the next. At a Riverside area estate, Bitter fingered a crocheted tablecloth (\$10). Though she thought it was in good shape and a fair price – no sale. She has plenty of tablecloths.

As Dailey and Bitter looked, another garage-saling team, cousins Shirely Darden and Rosalind Darden scrutinized the things displayed on a card table– bottles, mugs, decorative fruit and children’s clothes. They are veterans of the local circuit, shopping almost every Saturday since 1986. Rosalind Darden has three girls ages 10, 13, and 20, so she was thrilled to find two Publix shopping bags full of sample-size shampoos and lotions for a mere \$3.

Their best buys ever?

Rosalind Dardin got a clothes dryer in perfect condition for \$20. She bought it seven months ago, and it works like a champ. And Shirley Darden once found an antique, pearl-encrusted broach for \$3.

As the Dardens chatted, Dailey and Bitter waited near the front door, ready to head for the next stop.

Remember, this is an early person’s game. By 10 a.m. Dailey and Bitter are usually at Krystal snacking and talking with friends. Rosalind Darden understood their hurry.

“If you want to look for something after 11, you can hang it up,” she said. “All the good stuff is gone by then.”