

## "Yard Sale"

It's the season of the yard sale, a time to empty the basement of life's accumulated flotsam, displaying irreparable and worthless items in hopes to extract money for them from strangers. It's a scheme to get someone to pay *you* so *they* can eventually throw *your* stuff away.

Advertise a sale and expect treasure hunters swarming like carpenter ants, each hoping you're unknowingly parting with valuable museum quality heirlooms. Following PT Barnum's dictum about a sucker born every minute, theoretically expect upwards of 60 of them every hour, recognizable by the damage to their cars sustained in repeated rear end collisions, caused when they stopped suddenly after seeing a table full of used spatulas.

I conducted a sale recently, seeking buyers for still moist items recovered from my annual basement flood. Rather than spending 45 minutes carting my stuff to the dump, I spent an hour setting up, sat for 8 hours as people sneered collectively at my taste in music and furniture, and made \$16, or less than \$2 an hour. The stuff I didn't sell still took me 45 minutes to drive to the dump.

I sold scratched albums of long dead rock stars and clothes that no longer fit made of materials now known to be carcinogenic.. Also a wooden tennis racket that predated both graphite and Billie Jean King and a patio grill that leaks propane..... but only a little.

Buyers come, thinking they're smarter than you and act foolishly to get upper hand, indignantly refusing to pay fifteen cents for rusty hedge clippers they believe are worth no more than a dime. Some won't even bother to ask if the ceramic bowl for a quarter was used for casseroles or to feed your dog.

Objects in our universe, some physicists say, never really disappear.....they simply show up later at someone else's yard sale. As a seller, I ask myself if tossing stuff in the trash is less costly. As a buyer, I have to ask myself what I was thinking when I bought ONE rollerblade. I did visit a another sale over the weekend. I can't be sure, but I think I bought back my old tennis racket.