

A Yard Sale Story

Written by Laura Packard
Wednesday, 29 June 2016 06:48



I am here to tell you I survived, but just barely, one of America's most treasured innovations; the good old-fashioned yard sale.

Some folks may argue that a yard (or attic or garage) sale is simply a way to dump unwanted crap for chump change and call it a day.

True, but let's be honest here, because whatever you decide to call a private transaction of gently used goods from one fine citizen to another, the sale is not really a sale at all; it's a blood sport.

Why would I openly invite hostility into my otherwise serene surroundings, anyway, you may be wondering right about now? Well, the reason is two-fold. One, Charlie wanted to put our old side-by-side fridge and the washer and dryer on Craigslist so he could park in the garage. I hear Craigslist, and people, I think of, and quite reasonably at that, MURDER. I dare you, Google it. It's frightening. However, my husband argues that giving your address out in the paper isn't any different. But if you like to gamble, and I really do but not with my life, your local paper with an audience of 13,000 is less likely to catch the eye of a serial killer than sending it out there to the entire 7 billion who roam the earth.

The second reason is my Aunt Pam. She is my relative who can slug down her morning Metamucil, enjoy a good 2-hour discourse on bowel functioning, while draining two pots of coffee before noon when she finally decides to get dressed. She is a hoot and a half, and as I've describe her in the past, sweeter than molasses but tougher than a \$2 steak in the scratch and dent bin at the Piggly Wiggly. I just adore her.

Any-hoo, she loves herself a good yard sale, I mean LOVES it. As she puts it, "It's the most exciting, legal thing you can do."

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And I know this because I have seen her in action at my grandmother's estate sale in Athens all those years ago right after she passed:

"Norma would have wanted me to have those art deco dishes," the not-so-friendly neighbor lady told Pam.

"Yes, of course, she would. But only if you paid \$10 for them."

When two ladies grabbed grandma's black, cordless telephone at the same time and commenced to wrestle, Aunt Pam walked up to the dynamic duo all the while yelling, "Hold the phone! Hold the phone!" (Get it, hold the phone? Gosh, I love puns, especially when they are unintentional.)

"Ladies, look. You can stroll on down to the Wal-Mart and get one for \$19.99. I know because I bought it there for mama. Now, I don't think losing a limb nor life is worth a cheap old piece of plastic and wires. Figure it out and don't forget to pay the lady at the door."

Now granted this was an estate sale, which as Aunt Pan explains, "is the catnip these people live for."

So, therefore, I can only assume a little yard sale is akin to the "dingle-berries" she has to snip off with scissors when she grooms her beloved kitty, Busy.

Charlie wholeheartedly agrees. The last yard sale he helped with was after our Columbia move in 2001.

He still can't talk about it.

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So Pam said she'd step up and down she came from Raleigh.

Now, before we could even talk about pricing, she held a back porch bourbon and Coke meeting, where we discussed 'the ten rules to a successful yard sale':

1. No checks, that's what the ATM is for.
2. Holding is for infants. If you hold an item, you gotta give me ten.
3. If you're rude, you hit the streets.
4. If something is heavy, this girl is not heftin' the other end outta here. Best go back and get a buddy.
5. Hold your pricing notebook close to the vest. I have known people to walk around and stare over your shoulder.
6. Never accept a "bundle." I never bundle anything unless I know the show's a

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