



Rummage sale treasure — a fireman's hat.



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"If you go to enough garage sales," says one local lady who does, "then sooner or later you have to put on one of your own."

And so she sums up that activity — call it recreation or business venture — that is becoming a way of life on the suburban scene.

Scan this newspaper's classified ad columns under the heading "Miscellaneous For Sale." In any issue you'll find 30 to 40 ads for garage or basement sales.

Drive from Plymouth through Livonia to Farmington or Redford any fall weekend. You're likely to see at least a dozen home-painted signs that point the way to a sale of discards.

Follow a few of these signs. Talk to the sellers and the shoppers. You'll be convinced that the adage "one man's junk is another's treasure" has never been truer than in Observerland, 1970.

OF COURSE, CHURCHES have been having rummage sales for years. But it used to be that when you really wanted to make money, you rented an empty store or borrowed a church basement in the inner-city area and set up shop where the needy lived.

Now the churches hold their sales right here. So do all sorts of organizations raising funds for worthy ventures like scholarship funds. And so do individuals of all ages and all stations.

Who puts on the garage sale?

In some recent ones here, it was college students raising money for tuition or wardrobe. Or a group of neighbors getting together for a business venture at spring or fall house-cleaning time. Young mothers with maternity and baby clothes no longer needed.

There also are youngsters who sell outgrown toys to raise money for a coveted bike or for Christmas shopping. And of course the regular seller, not to be confused with a deal-

er, who advertises a sale maybe twice a year.

Who goes to buy?

No longer just the low-income family, although its members still shop and have benefited by a far greater selection.

Now come the neighborhood children to spend a nickel or a dime for a book or toy. The high school girls who supplement wardrobes with a suit for a dollar or a sweater for a quarter. Young marrieds, who used to go to such sales in Grosse Pointe or Birmingham to look for home furnishings but now find them here.

ON A RECENT SATURDAY, you might have met an antique collector who regularly seeks out and sometimes finds, unrecognized valuables: a hobbyist looking for small boxes and picture frames to decorate; a teacher picking up games for her class to use on rainy days, and a dramatics coach gathering up materials for some splendid costumes.

And always there are the senior citizens and other householders who find a day of driving from sale to sale inexpensive and fascinating entertainment.

Mrs. Arthur Phillips of Redford Township might be considered an expert on basement sales.

"I started out when they first got popular — maybe three or four years ago," she said as she neared the end of her recent sale.

She had advertised a sale for Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and she and her husband figured they had about 150 customers and counted \$162 receipts.

"You really do it all the first day," Mrs. Phillips said. "And there are always people, usually dealers, who want to buy ahead of time."

She enjoys putting on spring and fall sales because "it's profitable and you meet the nicest people." She finds the fall sales best. "In the spring people are busier with their yards, and in the fall we sell things like pretty plates that will be filled with cookies for a Christmas present."

MRS. PHILLIPS HAS done plenty of shopping at garage sales too.

"I've bought so many things for our trailer that it's as well equipped as the house," she said. "And when our son had an apartment at Eastern Michigan University I got him all sorts of small appliances."

"Then when he gave up the apartment, I sold it all and got the money back."

She said she often buys work clothes for the family and "once at a sale at St. Agatha I picked up a pair of trousers and just happened to notice my own mending."

"I didn't buy those," she said. "I had

given them to the church sale because they were too small."

The Phillips are always ready to adjust prices a bit, and at the end of each sale a Goodwill Industries truck takes away what isn't sold. "I usually have a small basket of good things I keep for the next sale," Mrs. Phillips added.

GOING THE GARAGE sale route for the first time recently was Mrs. Kenneth Wanless of Farmington.

"We're moving to Texas, and moving costs are so high that we wanted to unload as much as possible," she said. She also turned away early customers but had to start selling at 8 a.m. Saturday — "before we had breakfast."

"It was interesting, and we were quite busy for a while," Mrs. Wanless added. Selling just household and garage items because "we gave away the clothes," she counted an intake of about \$82 up to 1 p.m.

On Blackburn Avenue in Rosedale Gardens, Livonia, the James Hewitt garage was scene of a sale put on by 11 families in the block. After several cooperative ventures in different garages, they have it down to a system.

"We have a different color for each family participating," Mrs. Hewitt explained. "Each item is tagged with that color, and the money goes into the envelope with the same color."

She had the sale this time because "I figured it was my turn," but added that now that her children are older she thinks she'll have less she wants to sell and may not be participating again.

HELPING MIND the store was young Cindy Hewitt, who has made about \$30 in several sales selling her own belongings.

"The kids get to keep what we take in from their things," her mother explained.

Typical of the customers were Mr. and Mrs. James Opris of Plymouth and their toddler son Joey. They had come across the Blackburn sale while looking for another in the same subdivision.

"We have an apartment and we find we can get things inexpensively this way," Opris said. "Besides, it's fun."

It must be said that the popularity of this pastime isn't universal.

"Don't use my name," said one woman looking around at the First United Methodist Church of Farmington rummage sale. "My husband would kill me if he knew I was here."

But before the end of the day, she had made a second visit to the bargain counters. The lure of the rummage sale can be irresistible.



A carton makes a good shopping cart.



Plenty of ties for sale.