



Trash vs. Treasure

By Candi Smith

Have you ever seen something on the side of the road set out for the trash that causes you to stop—and put it in your car? Or have you ever driven around neighborhoods on the evening before “big trash day” just so you could see if any good stuff was waiting for the taking?

People set things out in the trash that are valuable, or at least hold a nostalgic appeal for potential buyers.

According to Stacey and Jason Roske, owners of KC Auction Company, LLC, they’ve termed finds like these “brake

dust”—meaning that all it costs you is the price of applying your brakes! And believe it or not, people set things out in the trash that are valuable, or at least hold a nostalgic appeal for potential buyers.

Every other Tuesday night beginning at 6:00 p.m., KC Auction attracts a steady crowd who find items such as rare artwork, garden tools, Pottery Barn furniture or diamond rings. Most auctions have items from multiple consigners so the variety is endless and always interesting.

Jason has been in the antique business for over 15 years, and one of the most frequent questions he’s asked is, “How can I determine the value of my antiques and collectibles?” He has narrowed the answer into the following four categories:

- ★ **Rarity** is the greatest factor of all. The more limited the edition of the item you’re trying to sell, the more valuable it will be. So, the first edition of a book is going to be worth more than its subsequent editions. Likewise, things that might have been termed “collector’s item” (remember those Avon bottles in the 70s?) are not worth much in the resale world today.

- ★ **Quality** is the next important factor. Items that require craftsmanship, time and topnotch materials will always hold their value regardless of their age. But items cheaply made will seldom sell for much—even if they were made 50 years ago.

- ★ **Condition** is another key factor to consider when evaluating an item. If an item is cracked, flawed (even if it occurred during its manufacturing) or damaged in any way, it can significantly decrease its selling price. So, even if you

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think your buyer won't notice—believe it, they will. Especially if they have any knowledge in reselling antiques.

★ Finally, it all comes down to market demand. If you don't have a buyer, it doesn't matter if your item passes the first three categories with flying colors. The tastes of buyers change over the years, so what might be hot today might not be tomorrow.

Another great local resource is the Junk in My Trunk radio show at 1140 AM. Touted as “Kansas City's Premier Bargain Shopper's Radio Show,” hosts Darren Smith and John Todd refer to themselves as the “Junk Mafia.” Long-time “thrifters” and bargain hunters, the guys realized they had a lot of knowledge about where to find good deals. And with the tough economy getting tougher, what started as a hobby grew into a business.

Once you get a quality item at a fraction of the cost (like the Coach purse my friend bought for one dollar!), it's hard to go back to paying retail.

Now, three times a week (Monday, 10-11 a.m., Thursday, 10-11 a.m. and Saturday, 9-10 a.m.), you can find them broadcasting about where to find bargains (ranging from rummage sales to local auctions) in the Kansas City area. And as any good “thriftier” can tell you, once you get

a quality item at a fraction of the cost (like the Coach purse my friend bought for one dollar!), it's hard to go back to paying retail.

And let's not forget that women like to look sharp but also save a buck. There's a shop where you can find a Vera Wang skirt or Donna Karan sweater that's either gently worn or still has the tags hanging on it—for a fraction of its original retail price. White Clover Recycled Designer Apparel Company (cleverly advertised as “guilt free pleasure and le\$\$ green”) is a consignment clothing and accessories boutique.

Its owner, Catherine Jones, spent a lifetime preparing for entrepreneurship. Using her years of corporate experience, her creative background in the arts and a passion for fashion, she launched White Clover in May 2009. She realized that women today are cutting corners however they can, and many of them are finding their way to consignment boutiques such as hers. Not only do they discover quality clothing at great prices, they are able to consign clothing they no longer wear. Once their items sell, consignors can either receive 40% cash back or 50% in a merchandise credit.

Catherine adds, “The items you keep can be mixed with classic pieces or current styles that don't have to cost a fortune. Shopping thriftily is smart, eco-chic and you'll feel like a millionaire without spending like one!” **HL**

For more information about KC Auction Company, visit kcauctionco.com. For more information about Junk in My Trunk, visit junkmafia.com. And for more information about White Clover, visit whitecloverkc.com.



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