



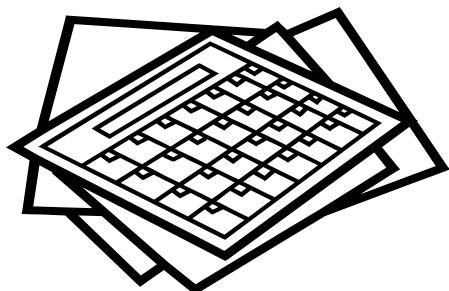
STARS Newsletter

South Texas Association of Resale Shops
Visit us at: www.starsresale.com

Feb/Mar 2006

Volume 16, Number 1

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



March 2006

1st printing of the Official *STARS* Directory published by Jacke Shipwash

June 23-26, 2006

Annual Conference of the National Association of Resale and Thrift Shops (NARTS) in Atlanta, Ga.
www.narts.org

September 2006

2nd printing of the Official *STARS* Directory

SPRING *STARS* OFFICIAL DIRECTORY COMING SOON

Jacke Shipwash, is hard at work preparing the next Directory. You will see some new names and a different look. Our color this time will be royal blue. We highly recommend that every *STAR* participate. **One big advantage of having your ad in the Directory is to make it easier for other *STARS* stores to do referrals to you.** If you want to be in the Directory but haven't received a call from Jacke yet, give her a call at 1-409-927-1295, or email her at: shipwash1@verizon.net

We are so grateful to Jacke for the many years she has published the Directory for us. Please follow her requests for deadlines so the Directory can be published on time. Bills are sent before publication and distribution but are due upon receipt and we ask that you pay promptly so that she can meet her financial obligations in producing the Directory.

Once again, I thank you for your continuing support as a *STAR* member and invite you to meet the new members listed on page 5. Give them a call or visit their shops and welcome them.

We are continuing to up-date and refresh our website. *STARS* are encouraged to link their store websites to their listing on the *STARS* website. Cost: Only \$50.00! **This one time fee expense also puts your store name on the Home Page with a link to your website.** How do you get this deal of a lifetime? **Simply send a check for \$50 to *S.T.A.R.S* at 1922 Fountain View, Houston TX 77057 and tell us your website address.**

*I will continue to visit *STARS* stores through out the year. I will call you before coming by! Remember, I no longer have a store but I can be reached by email at p_swartley@yahoo.com or by phone: 281-338-9360.*

Hoping this is the best year for you ever,

Your President, *Pat Swartley*

Inside This Issue

Presidents Letter	page 2
Around the Galaxy.....	page 3
What you should know.....	page 4
Meet new <i>STARS</i> members.....	page 5
Special insert: Meet our advertisers and How to prepare your store for a disaster	



About *STARS*...

The *STARS* Newsletter is published bi-monthly 6 times a year for Feb/Mar, April/May, June/July, Aug/Sept, Oct/Nov and Dec/Jan and is mailed to *STARS* members, prospective members, *STAR*lets and other interested persons.

STARS was founded in 1991 to promote education, networking, mentoring and co-op advertising among member for-profit resale shops.

Membership in *STARS* is open to any for-profit resale shop in business for 1 year or more in the Greater Houston area. 2005 Membership dues are \$50 per year and new members are accepted at any time. *STAR*let provisional membership is offered to new resale shops in business less than 1 year. *STAR*lets enjoy most benefits of membership for free.

STAR membership provides the opportunity to have a listing on the *S T A R S* website, www.starsresale.com. You may also place a website link for a one time fee of \$50. Contact *STARS* at 281-338-9360.

The bi-annual Official *STARS* Directory is published in March and September. For information please call publisher, Jacke Shipwash at 1-409-927-1295.

STARS volunteer board members are: President, Pat Swartley, 281-338-9360; Vice President, Kelsey Smith, Sassy Town, 281-852-1774; Sec/Treas, Yolanda Ramirez, Second Childhood on Fountainview, 713-789-6456.

STARS Newsletter Writer/Editor:

Pat Swartley

Layout/graphics: **Karen Frerking**

Advertising is accepted.

Members may advertise in a classified section free.

PRESIDENTS LETTER:

Ah, out with the old and in with the new! Don't you love fresh starts? This is the time of the year to study what worked for you in 2005 and what didn't. It's Time to set new goals. Pitney Bowes' fall business magazine listed "Ten Resolutions For 2006" that I thought were outstanding and I want to share with you.

- 1. Review your expenses.** If you find a cost that isn't paying for itself, resolve to either cut it or redirect those funds elsewhere. Do you pay too much for tags? How can that cost be reduced?
- 2. Renew/Update Everything.** This is a good time to make major changes in policy or procedures. Have a staff meeting with employees to review changes.
- 3. Network More.** Join a networking group or local business organization. Meeting with other entrepreneurs serves as the best business school for the buck and often allows you to cultivate a whole new potential customer base.
- 4. Set up a Regular Meeting Schedule.** Establish a regular weekly time for you to take stock of your progress on operations and sales goals. Stay focused on your company's larger goals and be able to respond more quickly to changing circumstances.
- 5. Make Paying Taxes Less Complicated.** Open a special bank account to deposit money for tax payments. Transfer the money to your operating account as needed. Consider opening a separate operating account to pay expenses and a consignor account to pay consignors. Let your credit card money deposit to the consignor account.
- 6. Develop a Secession Plan.** If you have business partners, it is wise to have a Buy-Sell Agreement in place in case a partner exits due to death, disability, or divorce. This agreement will help with the survival of the Business. Consider a term life insurance policy on each partner paid for by the business with the business as the beneficiary in the event a partner passes.
- 7. Review Your Disaster Plan.** Read the article on this subject on our insert page.
- 8. Just Say No.** Make a commitment to yourself that if something doesn't involve your family or doesn't help your business grow, pass on it.
- 9. Listen to Your Customers.** Chat with your new and old customers about how well your business treats them, what they like and dislike, and what they would change.
- 10. Pick and Stick!** Pick a couple of these items and doggedly stick to them

Wishing you a more successful year than last year and I look forward to visiting your shop in the near future if I haven't already done so!

Pat Swartley



News Around the Galaxy



A recent trip to Sugar Land provided your president with an opportunity to pick up some resale tips to pass along. First store to be visited was **La Boutique**, owned by Barry and Nancy Bravman. Two things caught my attention: the store was well organized, easy to shop around and comfortably stocked with ladies clothing and accessories. Barry uses 4-way racks in the front of the store. As a matter of fact, most of our higher end ladies resale shops use 4-ways more than any other fixture. The second thing was Barry's enthusiasm. He is so into his store. His cheerfulness in dealing with customers was inspiring. **Attitude goes a long way, believe me, in conveying an atmosphere of a successfully well-run business, which in turn makes customers want to shop and consign with you.** Big sellers for him are furs, which he keeps near the sales counter.

Reprise, has been in business 17 years (and a *STAR* most of that time) selling upscale ladies clothing. Owner, Susan Basler, consigns better women's clothing. She has a common story of a landlord asking for a large rent increase when the present lease expires. A number of our *STARS* have been forced out of business by this situation. The standard commercial lease is written solely for the benefit of the landlord. For this reason, it is wise to hire a commercial leasing agent to negotiate for you, or to have a lawyer review the contract. One thing to ask for is a clause stating what percentage the landlord may raise your rent when the lease expires. If you can't get such a condition, be prepared for the worse. **The fact that you were a good tenant never seems to cut any ice at lease renewal time, so don't count on it.**

Second Edition is next door to Reprise, and both stores have been *STARS* from the beginning. Bill Pettis, owner and manager, is seeking to sell his consignment store. His asking price includes all business equipment and fixtures, customer list, etc. He sells a variety of furnishings, and collectibles. Interested parties may call him at 281-242-5445. **Rule of thumb: your business is only worth the property you own. Goodwill, name recognition and an established business reputation is only worth what someone is willing to pay for.**

Best Little Wearhouse has been sold to a 3-way partnership and the managing partner is Terry Rambin. As a former sales professional with a very well known, high end ladies retail store, Terry brings a lot of experience to the job. Her skills in merchandising and marketing are impressive and very evident in the appearance of the store. She says she is "always moving and changing things around." The customer thinks everything is new. One area is designed for "themes" such as prom, rodeo, or holiday wear. Other clothing is on 4-way racks placed by color and type rather than size.

Best promotion was inviting former retail customers to an after hours party. Good food, wine and incredible sales. Some of the party-goers have returned to consign their fine clothes and even Terry's former boss sends her end of season consignments! **Do you have a target market to invite to an after-hours event? Perhaps you could return a percentage of the sales toward a fund-raiser theme.**

The Way We Wore is our only vintage store. Owner, Pam Nunnally, buys outright from individuals and estate sales. She carries clothing for men and women from the 20s to the 80s. Customers may either buy or rent her vintage wear. Who are her customers? They are Middle school kids to grandma's going to theme parties, and high school and young adults who like to dress vintage. Well, everybody, actually. Located in an old house on Waugh Dr, each room is filled with clothes of a certain era. Pam does not do mark downs and is willing to negotiate prices. Her stuff is priced to sell and there is little complaint about the prices. Looking for vintage jewelry? This is the place to come.



HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR YOU TO KNOW.....

It's that time again....Your local county Appraisal District will be sending out taxation forms soon. You are required by law to fill them out and return by the April 15th deadline. If you don't turn it in, the Appraisal District in your county will very likely significantly increase the evaluation and taxes on your business property. If you protest the increase it will be noticed that you never sent the rendition form in and a fine can be imposed.

Let us remind you that you are not required to report the earnings of your consignors or to give out names and addresses of them if they bring you **personal items and are not in the business of selling such items**. If you have new consignment items from a vendor in the business of selling such items they are responsible for their own business property taxes. Check with your accountant if you have further questions.

Is it fake or is it real? A consignor comes in with what appears to be an expensive designer labeled item such as a purse and tells you it is real. How can you tell? Do you feel comfortable taking their word or guessing? Most of us don't. So what's a body to do? There are several websites that offer tips on spotting fakes. Here are a few of them: Counterfeit Louis Vuitton, Fendi Bag Lady and Fake Hermes. For other sites visit the Narts website, www.narts.org, and click on their Newsletter. Read the article on "The Facts on Fakes!" If you sell "Knock offs" this is a must read article.

The future is here...when we started our *STARS* website 6 years ago it was a rather new thing and few of us even had websites or emails. Today, almost everyone has one or both. The good news is that a lot of your customers have email accounts and now is the time to take advantage of that. **The hottest, not to mention the cheapest, way to reach your customers is through email.** www.constantcontact.com is a website designed to help you reach this target market. They offer a wealth of information on how to make email marketing work ("email marketing 101") and offer a free 60 day trial.

How do you get the emails? **Put out a guest book at the sales counter and ask customers if they would like to be on your mailing list.** Offer the opportunity to sign up as an email or a "snail" mail receiver. Some people will not have an email or will prefer not to give you the address no matter how much you promise not to share it. You could have several different email accounts such as one for consignors, retail customers and one for your very important VIP customers.

Use email messages to remind the recipients of up-coming store events or sales, give consignment information, or put out a notice of special inventory that has just arrived. Be brief and contact sparingly or risk the receiver deleting unread messages. You are just a keystroke away from contacting hundreds of your customers! With increased postage and printing costs today, it is worth considering! And of course YOU don't have time to do all this—get a family member or valued employee to do it all.

Don't forget to check the *STARS* website, www.starsresale.com and click on the Resource Page. We have direct links to beneficial sites (who also provide links to us!). Check out Visual Horizons, Kate Holmes, NARTS, Consignment Shops and more! Consignment Shops is a well-established site listing resale shops all over the country. The state of Texas is 5th in contacts hitting this site. Check out a membership listing on this site.

FYI: On the NARTS site, www.narts.org click on "newsletter" and check out 3 articles your President wrote for Narts. They are: How to Make Money, Create a Shop Newsletter and The Coupon Capers.



WELCOME NEW *STARS* MEMBERS

Designer Consignor

2614B Chestnut Ridge Dr.
Kingwood, TX 77339
Phone: 281-359-8002
email: designer-consignor@earthlink.net
Website: www.mydesignerconsignor.com
Merchandise: New and consignment ladies
clothing and Accessories

Owner, Tina Campbell, once a *STARlet* and now a *STAR*, has been open one year. She and her husband researched the resale business and Tina used her experiences as an avid resale/consignment customer in designing her stores policies and procedures. She has lots of family help and said she loves ConsignPro software, a product of Visual Horizons (see ad on the back page.) Best marketing move last year? "Come back bucks".

The Children's Closet

2618 Chestnut Ridge
Kingwood, TX 77339
Phone: 281-446-5600
email: shrlwbbr@yahoo.com
Website: www.kingwoodresale.com
Merchandise: Children's items

Owner, Sharel Webber, also a former *STARlet*, is in the same shopping center with Designer Consignor and she and Tina work together doing referrals and sharing ideas. Sharel attended the *STARS* Annual Meeting in October and was very happy with the many ideas she came away with.

Sign on a Resale shop door: This is a PG Rated store for "Parental Guidance". Please provide supervision for your children while shopping.

Just 4 Kidz Resale Boutique

10814 Hughes Rd
Houston, TX 77089
Phone: 281-464-8050
email: just4kidz@mail.com
Website: www.just4kidzresale.com
Merchandise: Children's clothing, toys, baby
items and maternity

Owner, Judy Tijerina, former *STARlet*, has a dry erase board on the wall behind the sales counter on which she can write the specials of the day, what consignment items she needs and other valuable information for the customer. Judy uses small double rounders that save a lot of space and are very popular now in children's shops. Good little children in her store get a treat when their mommy checks out. A good advertising venue for her has been Space City Parent Magazine published in the SE (Bay Area). Results from her ad really increased when she began using a picture of the inside of the store.

Kloset Klassics

1105 Moskowitz
Seabrook, TX 77586
Phone: 281-474-3884
Merchandise: Ladies designer label clothing
and accessories priced to sell

Owner, Tagreed Tawil, also a former *STARlet*, has a shop in an old frame house in old Seabrook near the post office. She is open Thurs-Sun from 11 am-6 pm. Being on a side street with little traffic poses a problem in promoting her business, and she relies heavily on word of mouth referrals and promotions to encourage repeat visits.