



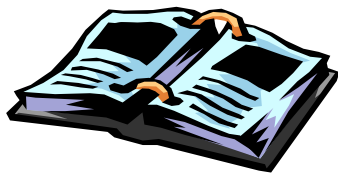
# STARS Newsletter

South Texas Association of Resale Shops  
visit us at: [www.starsresale.com](http://www.starsresale.com)

Dec 2009/Jan 2010

Volume 19, Number 6

## Mark Your Calendars



### December 31, 2009

Renewal of membership dues deadline (except for members joining after June 1, 2009). Dues are \$50 (and have been for 18 years!). Support your association and maintain your listing on the website and continue to receive the newsletter.

### February 2010

Next printing of the *STARS* Newsletter. We welcome news or articles from *STARS* members. Contact the Editor, Pat Swartley, at [pswartley@yahoo.com](mailto:pswartley@yahoo.com) or by phone 281-338-9360.

### June 25-28, 2010

NARTS Annual Conference designed for resale professionals, Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Palm Beach, Florida. Visit [www.narts.org](http://www.narts.org) for more information

## 'TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY!

Want to end the year with a bang? Use December to deliver the best customer service of the year. How can you do this? Remember this is the season of giving. **Plan a Christmas Open House** for 3 days including a Saturday. Invite everyone in your database. Make phone calls to the VIP customers. Some stores do an after-hours party/sales event with wine and cheese or other refreshments. Give careful thought to a creative sales promotion; not the old 10-20% off, please.

**Purpose:** To tell your customers you appreciate their business, and to "create a buzz" Find a cute inexpensive gift to give everyone free, or tie it to a promotion such as all purchases over a certain amount gets a free Christmas mug, for example. I found nice mugs for only .50 cents in a thrift store. We put red or green Christmas wrapping paper inside along with some Christmas candy. Had to spend \$25 or more to get it. Children's stores can have Santa drop by or hand out toys or balloons. Hire extra part-timers to really connect with the customers and sell your stuff, and to watch and refresh the food and drink table. Chair massages, anyone? That gets them in.

I use to hire a professional decorator to do my store using some of my decorations and renting some of hers. She did the planning and we worked out how much of the work my employees would do and how much she would do. Worth every penny I paid her! My store looked fabulous! And professional. Play fabulous Christmas music. Choose refreshments that aren't sticky or salty. Everyone dress up in Christmas finery. Yeah, put on the antlers or wear a Christmas bell! **One last tip: Shoplifting is worse in December than any other month.**

**HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

*From Pat and Yolanda*

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## 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 and other interested persons.

*STARS* was founded in 1991 to promote education, networking, mentoring and co-op advertising among member.

**Membership in *STARS* is open to “for-profit” resale/consignment shops in South Texas.**

Membership is only \$50 a year and entitles a member to a listing on the *STARS* website, [www.starsresale.com](http://www.starsresale.com), a copy of the newsletter published 6 times a year, and an invitation to advertise in our annual *STARS* Official Directory which is printed each June.

We invite our members to link their shop website to their listing on the *STARS* website. No additional hosting fee is charged. A free email account is also available.

**TO JOIN *STARS*: visit our website and click on “membership” for information.** Print and fill out the membership forms and mail with a check for \$50 payable to *STARS*, to the *STARS* official address below.

### ***STARS* Volunteer Board Members are:**

**Yolanda Ramirez**, 713-664-5219  
**Children’s Collections**  
5219 Bellaire Blvd.  
Bellaire, TX 77401  
[childrenscollections@live.com](mailto:childrenscollections@live.com)

**Roxanne Weiderman**, 281-558-1793.  
**Clothes for Kids**  
14520 Memorial Dr. #20  
Houston, TX 77079

**Official *STARS* address is:**  
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**Layout/graphics**  
Karen Frerking

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR.....

Hard to believe 2009 is nearing the end. Most people are glad to see it end, I believe. How can we make 2010 the best year ever? I hope there are some useful tips in this newsletter to help make that happen. I have to say that most of the best ideas I ever got was from listening and learning from a variety of sources. Keep your eyes and ears open for new ideas to wow your customers. Why do you shop at a particular store? What do they do to get your business?

As we near the end of the year Yolanda will be looking for your \$50 renewal fee for *STARS* membership. Yolanda does an incredible job for you with no pay and no title. I tried to make her get a title like Manager or something, but that wasn’t important to her. No one in our association is as dedicated to *STARS* as she is, or has worked as hard to service the organization. Not only does she keep our website running but she also promotes *STARS* at every opportunity. She has dedicated many hours getting the *STARS* website linked to as many sites as possible that promote retail/resale businesses.

The \$50 renewal fee pays for hosting and maintenance of our website and the graphics, printing and mailing of the newsletter. Your renewal fee is very important to maintain these important services for your membership.

**Before mailing in your renewal, please check your web-site listing. Is all information correct? Do you want to change your “tag Line?” Do you still sell the same stuff, or have you added other merchandise? Link your website to your listing. It is free. Give Yolanda your info, when you send in the check.**

Remember to check the website for information about other *STARS* and recommend the website to customers who are looking for merchandise you don’t carry. Our website has several years of past Newsletters, also.

I will continue to write the newsletter in 2010. And why not? It is so much fun and I always feel that every issue is the best one I have done. If I had a wish for Santa it would be to encourage you to share ideas, or concerns for me to respond to, even questions for the Resale Queen! My email is [pswartley@yahoo.com](mailto:pswartley@yahoo.com).

*STARS* is one of the oldest resale associations in the country. In our February issue I will recognize and honor our oldest *STARS* members in good standing. We so appreciate everyone of you who have supported *STARS* during the last 19 years.

Your Editor, *Pat Swartley*



QUOTE FROM “MONEY TALK”, A PAMPHLET DISTRIBUTED BY THE PERSONAL MARKETING COMPANY.

“Continuing to market your business during a down economy sends the message to your customers that you are confident in your product or service. It builds credibility and puts you ahead of competitors who reduced their marketing budget when the economy rebounds...**Remember, if you aren’t appearing before your clients, you may be disappearing.**”

You might be tempted to cut your marketing budget but research has shown that this may simply be a good short-term fix that has long-term implications on a company’s success. Companies that continued their advertising increased their market share when the recession was over.

I remember in the early 90’s my store was experiencing fewer sales and I dropped most of my marketing budget. I began to get customers coming into the store questioning me about whether I was going out of business. They mentioned that they didn’t see my advertising as much as before. It seemed I spent a lot of each day reassuring customers and consignors we intended to stay in business, and were just cutting some of our expenses. It further hurt sales and slowed consignments coming in.

When business was booming in the mid to late 90’s some of my good customers remarked that they saw my advertising “everywhere.” The fact is, it wasn’t everywhere, but it was **consistent** in the few choice venues that I determined worked best for reaching the customer profile that flocked to my store. Who is your customer and where do they live? And what is the best way to reach them? Too often we waste money advertising to people who would not be interested in the merchandise we carry. **A good part of your marketing budget needs to target your VIP customers, and turning once-in-awhile customers into VIP clients.**

A MARKETING PROMOTION I DON’T RECOMMEND

Recently I shopped in a store that was doing a promotion for a “free shopping spree.” I bought \$50 worth of merchandise and got a “chance.” I was thrilled to be called a few days later and told I had “won” the “prize.” I rushed down to the store (not a *STAR* store) to get my prize. The only employee was busy ringing up sales, so I looked around the store to see what I could get for winning a free shopping spree and I wondered how much it was as the message didn’t tell me. Lo and behold, it seemed that a lot of people in the store had also “won” and when they brought their stuff to the sales counter they were being told that the prize was 50% off on any purchases they made! Apparently everyone who put a ticket in the bowl was called and told they had “won.” And what a lousy prize—they had to spend money to get “free” stuff. I walked out and didn’t collect my “prize.” And I have to wonder what else they aren’t honest about. They lost me as a customer.



## Dear Resale Queen,

I own a children's consignment/resale shop and I refuse to consign car seats because I am not qualified or trained to inspect them for defective parts and I have no way of knowing if they have been in a car accident. My consignors continue to remind me that other resale shops take car seats. I don't want to upset my consignors or fellow children's resale shop owners. How should I handle this?

**Signed: Please do not use my name.**

## Dear No Name,

First of all, you are the boss of your shop, right? Never give that right to anyone else. You should smile sweetly and say, "The National Association of Resale and Thrift Shops tell their members not to sell car seats and that is good enough for me." Share that information with other shop owners at every opportunity. Better yet, pass on the website: [www.narts.org](http://www.narts.org) so they can get full information about products they should sell or not sell.

## Dear Resale Queen,

I want to open a resale shop and I have my business plan and lots of capital. I am concerned about getting a lease. What should I know?

**Signed: Ready to jump into the resale business**

## Dear Ready To Jump,

You are so amazing! A lot of new store owners rent a space and THEN wonder how they will run it or pay the bills. Here is what you need to know: All leases are written to benefit the landlord. Nobody cares about what is fair or right for you, the tenant. I know, I know, this is shocking, but true. The biggest mistake a new shop owner makes is to not get a commercial Leasing agent to negotiate the lease for them. One shop owner took my advice and told me later that the agent not only got her lower rent, but got the landlord to agree to a new air conditioner and a credit for her to do a build out of the space! You will not have to pay any fees to the leasing agent for this service.

Another mistake is to rent a space that turns out to be too small before your first year is over. Always rent the largest space you can afford and give some consideration to what you would do if you needed more space. Even moving down the street costs a lot of money and aggravation.

## Dear Resale Queen,

In these slow economic times with fewer customers coming in the door, what is your advice to keep sales up?

**Signed: Cobwebs on my cash register.**

## Dear Cobweb,

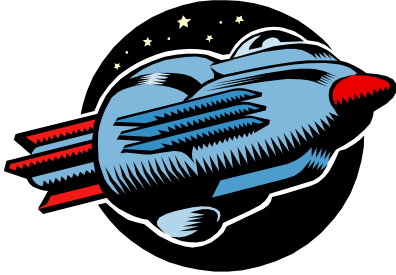
Do not mope in the back of your store. Get out there with a positive attitude and a smile on your face and make every customer who walks in the door feel like they have totally made your day by coming in. Then stay on the floor and sell your stuff. Next, continue to market your store as much as possible. See my article on page 3 about this subject.



*The Resale Queen*



### News Around the Galaxy.....



**Peanut Butter & Jelly and Another Debut** closed their doors Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>. Deterioration of the shopping center and surrounding neighborhood, and a desire not to relocate was the reason. Thank you, JoAnn for your long association with *STARS*.

**Box of Chocolates** has changed their name to **Retail Therapy**. Owner, Kim Smith expanded the store to 3700 sq ft and added home décor to their children's and ladies inventory. Kim is a member of NARTS and attended last years Conference, and The *STARS* Annual Meeting in October.

#### ***STARS* visit Trudy's for the October Annual *STARS* meeting**

Thank you, Trudy and Marion Collier for hosting the annual meeting. We had a wonderful time of sharing information and ideas seated among the couture fashions of this small but uncluttered store. Trudy's clients and consignors represent the connoisseurs of high-end fashion. No Chico's or Ann Klein to be found here. Marion said when potential consignors call, the first question asked is "where do you shop for clothing?"

He also said it is not uncommon for a first time customer to walk in, spend a few minutes and walk out. Not everyone can appreciate the labels, quality of merchandise and the prices of their exclusive ladies garments and accessories, and they understand that. They have a harder time pricing items than the average resale shop, as you can imagine.

There is always that conflict of putting a fair price on an item, yet attracting a buyer. Debbie Damon of B'Dazzled shared that she sells better couture on eBay for much higher prices than she can get in her shop.

As with any resale shop I go to, I would have been happy to buy several items had they been my size! It was a pleasure to shop in such a well-organized store full of "wow, look at that" items..... The Editor.

#### **New STARS member**

##### **Jackie's Resale**

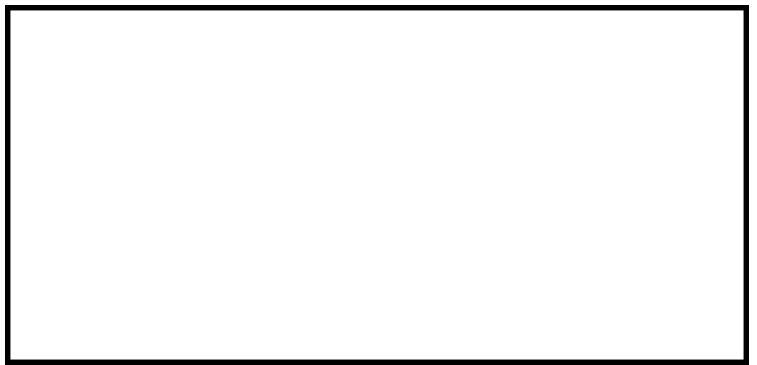
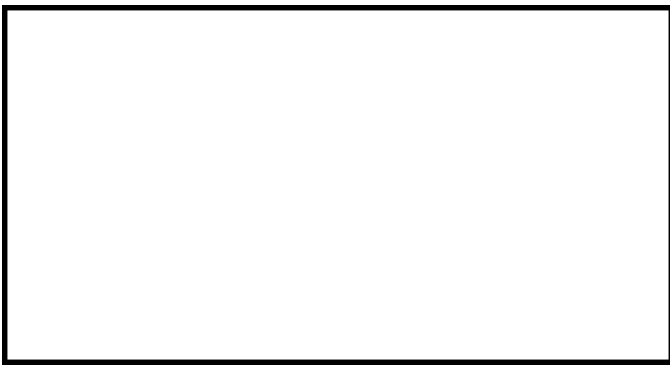
**1101 West Main, Ste. C**

**League City, TX 77573**

**Phone: 281-332-0000 email: rjackiesresale@aol.com**

Owners, Paul and Rosa Rivera opened March 2009 in a strip shopping center near 1-45 on 518 also known as Main Street in League City. Rosa's sister Irma owns **Georgie's Resale** in Friendswood featured in the Oct/Nov issue. Both stores sell similar merchandise—a little bit of everything including clothing, new accessories and gift items, books, furniture, home décor and children's items.

**Jackie's** buys out-right, purchases new, accept donations, gives credit, or accepts limited consignments of better quality items. Their small store is very nicely merchandised, and no wonder; Paul has worked as a retail manager of several high end shops in the Galleria and works full time in Jackie's. "It's a lot of work, but fun," says Paul. Marketing is also his forte, and he fully recognizes the value of good customer service. He not only took me to the department I was interested in, but showed me my size and pointed out particular items that were of exceptional value. PEOPLE, SELL YOUR STUFF. DON'T LET CUSTOMERS WANDER AROUND YOUR STORE. FIND OUT WHAT THEY WANT AND HELP THEM FIND IT.



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**A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTH TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF RESALE SHOPS**  
**Since 1991**