



STARS Newsletter

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

Oct/Nov 2007

Volume 17, Number 5

STARS Annual Meeting in League City, TX

DATE: Sunday, October 21
TIME: 2-4 pm (come a little early to meet and mingle!)
PLACE: Small CHANGES-KIDS RESALE
920 West Main Street
League City, TX 77573
Phone: 281-338-5164

We are taking the annual meeting south this year to Small Changes, owned by our Hostess, Cheryl Corbett. Her shop is in a stand-alone building just ½ mile east of I-45 on Main Street (hwy 518). If you are coming from Houston, exit 1-45 at League City, go left (east) under the freeway. The store is on the left just past the Walgreen's at the light on Calder Road. From the south, exit League City and turn right on Main Street.

Cheryl has been in the resale business since 1994 and is a member of STARS and also NARTS. There are a number of resale shops in the area, STARS and non-STARS members, who will be invited to the meeting.

We also hope that all STARS through out the Greater Houston metro area will make the effort to attend this meeting. It will be a wonderful opportunity to share ideas and concerns about the resale industry AND meet other owners facing the same difficulties in today's resale market. We also encourage everyone to share news about your shop's uniqueness, and we welcome handouts of promotional ideas and successful advertising venues.

Although reservations are not required it is helpful to Cheryl to know how many to plan for. If you have a folding chair, bring it along! Any questions, please call Cheryl.

Editor,
Pat Swartley

Mark Your Calendars

October 2007

Delivery of the STARS Official Directory. If you have advertised, please pay your invoice as per instructions from Jacke. Any questions, call Jacke at 409-771-6393.

Sunday, October 21, 2007

STARS Annual Meeting 2-4 pm

December 1, 2008

Next mail out of the STARS Newsletter. We welcome news or articles of interest to our membership. Send to: Pat Swartley, 2206 Waters Edge Lane, League City, TX 77573 or call 281-338-9360. Email at pswartley@yahoo.com

December 31, 2008

STARS Annual Dues due

March 2008

Spring STARS Official Directory

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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 for-profit resale shops.

Membership in STARS is open to for-profit resale shops in South Texas. Membership dues are only \$50 per year. New members pay a mandatory one time listing fee of \$50 to be included on the STARS website, www.starsresale.com. A STARS member may link their shop website to their STARS listing at any time for a one-time fee of \$50. Contact STARS at 713-789-6456.

How to join STARS: Go on-line to the STARS website and click on "Membership." Follow the directions. You may pay the required initial fee of \$100 (\$150 in you wish to also link your website to your STARS listing) on-line with a credit card or if you prefer, download the membership form and mail a check to STARS, 1922 Fountain View, Houston, TX 77057

The bi-annual STARS Official Directory is distributed through-out Greater Houston and surrounding areas in March and September. A member is not required to participate but is encouraged to do so. For information about the Directory, please contact the Publisher, Jacke Shipwash at 1-409-771-6393.

STARS volunteer board members are: Yolanda Ramirez and Sandra Marin, Second Childhood on Fountainview, 713-789-6456.

STARS Newsletter Writer/Editor:

Pat Swartley
281-338-9360

Layout/graphics:
Karen Frerking

Advertising is accepted.

Letter from the editor...

One of the reasons I stayed in the resale business and enjoyed some success (sometimes success was defined as being able to stay in business) was because I loved the challenges of creating new ideas to increase business. Or sometimes you can just get lucky in discovering a wonderful opportunity to make more money.

Debbie Damon at B'Dazzled has one of those stories. First of all, a consignor brought her some purses (see the article on page 3) that she realized were very unusual and might be valuable and difficult to sell in her store. She looked the purses up in the resale "library", otherwise known as e-Bay, and checked out the brand and the sales history. She was able to contact people who knew the brand and from there decided not to list the items on e-Bay but to list them with an auction house, instead. For all these details, ask Debbie! Long story short: the sale of these purses far exceeded everyone's expectations.

And there is more: The purses were listed in the auction catalog along with beautiful pictures of them under Debbie's store name. The check for the sales will go to her store and she will pay the consignor the agreed upon percentage. She has already received visits and calls from auction attendees about her store and services.

About this time Debbie also got an opportunity to write an article about her adventure with the purses for Resale Houston Magazine. This beautifully written and printed article will go on her website and she will make a copy of it to hand out in her store. Priceless advertising for practically no cost. I especially like that Debbie involved her "Ladies of B'Dazzled" in the writing of the article and her willingness to share her experience and good fortune with STARS.

You know, folks, that is why STARS came about. We began because resale shop owners wanted to fellowship and share experiences with each other. I hope that you will take this opportunity to meet and share at our next STARS meeting. I will be there and I hope you will too!

Pat Swartley



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MARK DOWNS MOVE MERCHANDISE...by Pat Swartley

In my 20 plus years of involvement in the resale industry I place doing reclaims (“pulls”, some call it) at the top of the list of the most aggravating chores to be done, along with the attending problem of trying to get people to pick up the “pulls”. A very close second is doing markdowns.

Some of you are scratching your heads: what’s the big deal? I bet you are the ones who solve that problem by just sticking signs all over your store, “red tags, 20% off; blue tags, 30% off; white tags, 40% off”—. You get the picture. And then you greet every customer walking in with a verbal rendition of the tag sales. I could write a whole page about why you shouldn’t do this, but let’s move on.

Like it or not, markdowns are an indisputable fact of life in the retail (resale) industry. Everyone does it and everyone does it differently. You will see some retail stores mark down merchandise as they put it out on the floor as new merchandise! It is a great trick. First they over-price it and then they mark it down and the consumer grabs it off the rack thinking it is a bargain. Other stores mark it down very soon after it hits the floor. Again, you should be suspicious why. It wasn’t too long ago that we witnessed some incredible reductions in price by the major department stores. We frequently saw full-page ads advertising, “take another 40% off the lowest price,” or, “75% off already marked down merchandise.” It was crazy. Now you usually see those kinds of ads moving seasonal merchandise.

Why did they do that, other than to empty our stores and to depress the heck out of us resale shop owners? TO MOVE MERCHANDISE. I have to tell you, Kohl’s Department store must move a lot of merchandise. I’ve never paid full price for anything. I vote them the most aggressive with their markdowns. Seniors can usually take another 10-15% off, also. As a senior, If I shop in a department store I go there first.

If you have paid attention you know that markdowns are to MOVE MERCHANDISE that is not selling or to just move it for a quick buck as I think some dept. stores have done. Resale shops traditionally do markdowns for merchandise that is not selling. Don’t try to figure out why it didn’t sell. There are a lot of possible reasons—probably priced too high-- but you’ll never know for sure. **What you need to figure out is how to get rid of it and make some money before it is donated.** To keep frequent shoppers you must make them think there is constant turnover.

The prevailing trend in retail and resale is to pull marked down merchandise off the floor to a place that requires the shopper to walk through the store to get to it with the expectation that he or she will see a full priced item they can’t live without on the way. And it is the best way to keep your racks less full (and easier for your customer to shop) for all the new stuff you are putting out

One markdown idea I really like: Do your first markdown, whatever it is, on the tag. Pull them off the floor if you can, but for the second markdown, (when the item is “expired”) do pull the item to a special place in the back and put up a sign: “take an additional 50% off.” (this saves another physical markdown and anyone can do THIS math). **Whatever is left after a few weeks, sell for \$1. (Note: I once had an employee who bought a lot of \$1 items and then tried to open a consignment account with them.)**

Donate whatever is left. This is stuff nobody wants to buy or take back! If you time it right, you can do the reclaims as you begin to move the markdowns to the back. and before it is put on the dollar rack. (note: On the rare occurrence that I sold a reclaim item on the dollar rack I paid the consignor as if it sold at the second markdown.) Got a lot of stuff going to the final markdown? Time to Review your take-in policy!



CHECK THIS OUT!

Google has implemented a new feature, which enables you to type a phone number into the search bar, hit “enter, and be given the person’s name and address. If you also click on MapQuest, you will get a map to the person’s house! It’s a nationwide reverse phone book!!

The safety issues are obvious. Fortunately you can opt out of this service by simply putting your cursor to the left of your number in between the telephone icon, and a pop-up form will appear where you can have your number erased within 48 hours.

AROUND THE GALAXY



We have heard disturbing news that a former STAR was harassed by an irate customer who later called the police to arrest the store owner, who was arrested and led from her store in handcuffs because she pushed the customer away from her, the story goes.

The Houston police department will respond to a complaint of a physical attack on an individual regardless of the circumstance if that person presses charges. If you find yourself confronted by a customer losing control, you must immediately ask that customer to leave or you will call the police, then walk to the phone and pick up the receiver. If you have to go through with the call, tell the police you are being threatened by a customer who has been asked to leave and they refuse to do so. Any physical contact between you and the customer can result in expensive fines and lawyer fees. **There are crazy people and it is important you do not to let them trap you into an altercation. Keep the phone number of your local police department taped near the phone. Do not call 911 unless you feel you are in immediate danger.**

There is also disturbing news about all the children’s toys and furniture being recalled. It would seem one must spend half the day checking www.cpsc.gov for all the recalled merchandise! **STARS would welcome some comment on this subject from our children’s store owners. Please email Pat at pswartley@yahoo.com or pick up the phone and call 281-338-9360 to share your views.**

One of our long time faithful advertisers is **MaximGroup Insurance (formerly Hall’s Insurance)** One of our STARS is a VERY satisfied customer. JoAnne O’Neil, owner of Another Debut and adjoining store Peanut Butter and Jelly, experienced a horrific bolt of lightning on June 28 that took out her phones, cash register, one computer and the air conditioning. As smoke filled her store she called 911 and MaximGroup. A “wonderful” agent appeared the next day, assessed the damage, “got everything fixed and settled up in two weeks.” The poor store owner next door to her spent hours haggling with his insurance company which took two months fixing his problems!

Here is the best part: On that fateful day JoAnn became concerned about the terrible rain and stormy weather and did a “total” back up of her resale software that allowed her to get right back in business when her computer was replaced!

A reminder: In the early 1990’s Hall’s Insurance was the first company in Texas to write a comprehensive business policy for resale shops. Carolyn Wagner who worked long months with Traveler’s Insurance to get this insurance for STARS is no longer with the company but give them a call at 281-337-9410 if you need insurance.

***LOOK INSIDE FOR THE LATEST
S.T.A.R.S. DIRECTORY INFORMATION***



S.T.A.R.S. *Newsletter*
C/O Yolanda Ramirez
1922 Fountain View
Houston, TX 77057

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Address Correction Requested



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