



STARS News-

Oct/Nov 2008

Volume

Mark Your Calendars



Sunday, October 19

STARS Annual Meeting at Childrens Collections
2:00-4:00 pm

December 1, 2008

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

December 31, 2008

STARS annual membership fee of \$50 due. This fee covers all costs for the website, including hosting and maintenance and for our newsletter expense. A renewal form will be mailed in the fall.

STARS ANNUAL OCTOBER MEETING NEWS

DATE: Sunday, October 19, 2008

Time: 2:00-4:00 pm

Place: **Childrens Collections**

Phone: 713-664-5219

Address: 5219 Bellaire Blvd.

Bellaire, TX 77401

Hostess: Yolanda Ramirez

Come check out Yolanda's new store, opened July 28th, visit with your peers, and share ideas and concerns. Don't forget to bring some "show and tell" networking ideas! Bring an employee, spouse, another resale shop owner friend, or even your mother. **This meeting is open to members and non-members.**

Please RSVP Yolanda at Yolanda@starsresale.com or childrenscollections@live.com rather than calling so she can have enough chairs for everyone. Consider bringing your own folding chair.

TO OUR STARS MEMBERS

We so appreciate your support for our 18 year-old organization. In this stressful time of business loss due to IKE your continued support is doubly appreciated.

Dues renewal letters will go out this fall and we ask that you send in your dues of only \$50 per year by December 31st. Part of our expenses are also paid for by our long time and faithful advertisers, Dwayne Stokes, owner of A-1 Store Fixtures, Inc. and Brian Wilson, owner of Visual Horizons, provider of ConsignPro software for resale shops. A new advertiser is Kwik Kopy located in the Bay Area in Webster, TX. They have printed our Newsletter for many years and we appreciate the quality of their service to STARS.

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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, 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
Childrens Collections
5219 Bellaire Blvd.
Bellaire, TX 77401
childrenscollections@live.com

Roxanne Weiderman, 281-558-1793.
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Official STARS address is:
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR...

As we go about our communities in south Texas after the IKE experience it has become customary to greet people with questions about their family and home's survival. Our roads are clogged with traffic due to traffic lights blown away or no longer working. The trash of dead trees, carpet, and other ruined household items litter the sidewalks. Schools were out for 2 ½ weeks and hordes of Texas-size mosquitoes born in the floodwaters plague us. Many are still without electricity or phone service. A friend moved her family to a home on the coast a week before IKE and lost everything.

But then we can look on the bright side: most everyone has a story to tell that brings a smile of gratitude. A friend tells of the tree that fell through their house stopping 2 feet from the face of a sleeping child. Another family found a huge boat parked beside their house (not in their house) from another town south of them.

Down Main Street in my town of League City there are centuries-old huge oak trees all still standing, although many trees in south Texas were lost. There are no longer long lines at the gas pumps. Many churches in our area are hosting volunteers from other parts of the country who have come to help clean up, repair infrastructure and serve hot meals, ice and water to the needy. My family is not impacted and I have survivor's guilt!

IKE has proven to be fatal to a number of small businesses including several resale shops, due to pre-storm, during storm and after storm complications. It is common to see large hand written “OPEN” signs on restaurants and businesses lucky enough to have little damage and the electricity turned back on. We worry and wonder about the ones still closed.

In the days to come some of you may have to decide to close your doors. My heart goes out to you. Yet, as I call around to our members, I find that there is a strong spirit of survival in spite of the financial setbacks.

Read page 5 for what news I found.

Buy a fly swatter and get back in the game.

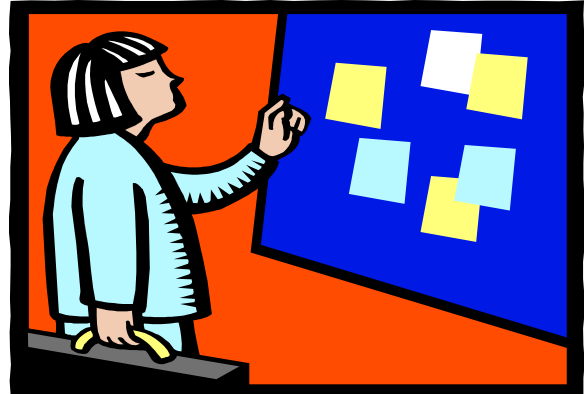
Pat Swartley



FROM THE ARCHIVES By Pat Swartley

I have a box of all, or most all, of the newsletters I have written over the last 18 years. I have looked at all that information and wished so many times that I had the time and patience to dig through it and pick out the best stuff for a book. I think I'll be about 85 years old before I can get around to it.

So, in place of the book I am going to pull out some ideas I have written about in the past to share. This article was written in 2000.



MAKE COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR STAFF EASIER

A fast, fun and effective way to communicate with your staff is to put up a dry erase board in a place in your back room where customers can't see it. Get a supply of erasable magic markers of different colors to liven up the board. As owner, you could elect to use the red color when you write something, for example. The board idea works very well if you have shifts of part-timers or full-time employees. They can also communicate between themselves as needed in a more effective way. My employees were trained to check the board before they began working to get important information or up-dates on new tasks that needed to be done that day.

It can also work well if you are by yourself to help keep track of important reminders, or to make important notes to yourself during the day.

We used the board to keep up with personal news that we want to share as well. New baby in the family? Son-in-law got a job? One important use was to inform others of events that happened in the store that everyone should be aware of. Customer or consignor problems were recorded and employees were encouraged to make comments on how to handle such situations in the future.

The board served to keep our employees informed up to the minute, and appreciated for their work and their ideas to make the business run more smoothly.

Here are a few examples found on our board:

"Barb—can you work for me next Tues?" Marilyn

"We need paper towels and cokes!"

"Everyone—don't forget to date the incoming consignments"

"Saturday sales were terrific—keep up the good work!"

"Thank you, Carole, the window displays look great!"

"All blue tags have been marked down as to today."

"Watch Lillian—we think she is shop-lifting."

"Should we take expired coupons or not? Opinions, please"

"Congrats to Caroline on the new grandbaby girl."

Customer Quotes Today: "You have a fabulous store!", "I always find something special when I shop here!", "The quality of your clothes and your prices are fantastic!"



Dear Resale Queen



Dear Resale Queen,

I want to operate my store with certain days and hours for consignors to leave their consignments. My plan is set for my convenience and for the hours I have extra help in the store. It prevents us from being overwhelmed with merchandise or our days being constantly interrupted with people coming in with consignments. Also, part of each day I am alone in the store and I can't handle incoming consignments and all the other tasks I must do.

My problem: My consignors don't like the restrictions and complain all the time and try to get me to take consignments outside the days and hours I have set. What can I do to stop this aggravation?

Signed, Frazzled in Friendswood

Dear Fraz,

Let me tell you a true story. One day I was visiting a resale shop and chatting with an employee. We were the only ones in the store. A lady came in with an arm full of obviously very nice ladies clothing she wanted to leave for consignment. The employee stopped her at the door with these words: "I'm sorry, but we aren't taking consignments now. We take consignments only on bla, bla, bla, and besides our rule is if there is only one worker in the store we don't take consignments." She then went on to explain why they had that rule: While attention was given to the consignment someone might take the opportunity to steal—yeah, she said that.

The lady pleaded with her to make an exception as this was her only day off and she didn't want to drag all that stuff back home. I whispered to the employee, "Hey, these are very nice clothes and I will watch your store while you process them." Remember, there was no one in the store! Did she think the President of the South Texas Association of Resale Shops would steal while she processed the clothes? No good. The employee stuck to her guns. The lady begged her to just take the clothes and process them when they processed consignments. No, she was told, the consignor had to be present when consignments were processed.

The employee said she would get into trouble if she broke the rules, sorry. Would she call the owner and ask to make an exception, the lady asked? No was the answer. The lady said she would take her items to another resale shop and left. **Here is the kicker: the lady was a registered consignor and the employee admitted she always brought in nice things.**

True story #2: One day a lady came into my store in a rush. She carried a load of fabulous clothes on her arms. She was in a fury. Seems like the resale shop she had dealt with for years turned her away from their door because they stopped taking consignments at 4 pm and she was 10 minutes late. She became a great source of revenue for me. I talked to the owner about what happened and asked her why she did not take the clothes of such a good faithful consignor?. She said, "yeah, I regret doing that, but my back room was already filled and my policy is no one goes home until the back room is cleaned out and the merchandise is on the floor, and we would have had to work overtime if we had taken her clothes and nobody likes to do that."

Now, did anyone learn from these stories? Lesson #1 is: writing your policies on stone tablets and never varying will cost you consignors. **Lesson #2 is:** Can you afford to run off good consignors? Is your business so profitable that losing consignors is preferred over bending rules or making more consignor friendly rules? **Lesson #3 is:** Is your convenience more important than the convenience of your consignors who provide product you need to stay in business?

In resale there is no one right or wrong way to do anything. The only standard is to determine what your customers/consignors want and to do your best to meet their needs. If consignors don't like your policies they will go someplace else. Be willing to review how you do business, and try to make changes more pleasing to your clientele or suffer the consequences.

Signed: The Resale Queen



IKE News Around the Galaxy.....



As you can imagine, IKE caused much stress and loss of business to our STARS. Most suffered little damage, but had to stay closed due to power failure.

My former business, **the Clothes Basket**, now **the Assistance League of the Bay Area Resale shop**, lost their store. We were across the street from Clear Lake. They had just gotten in a lot of great clothes. The interior is gutted now, almost everything gone, but plans are being made to rebuild and the new roof is already on.

Right next door to my own shop was STARS member, **Front Room**, an antique, collectibles, house wares shop that closed August 31st and was empty when the storm took out the front window.

Other local STARS, here in the Bay Area, suffered some damage. Changes Ladies shop, took in some water. They had just expanded their store and remodeled. Belles and Beaus (formerly Sunday's Child) lost their new sign in front of their store and sustained some minor water damage to the newly remodeled store.

Perfectly Good Gently Used, Etc also in League City, will close December 31. Toby is ready to retire. We will miss this long time STARS member. Shop there for great discounts on already marked down goods. Look for ad in the STARS Official Directory 2008.

STARS were contacted through-out Greater Houston and most everyone said they came out fine. It was reported that Trudy's Boutique suffered major water damage and is closed indefinitely. Stores that didn't answer their phones as we did our survey on 9/25 were Clothes for Kids and Another Debut.

The biggest comment from STARS shops is that although open, few customers are coming in the doors. Nearly half a million homes and businesses are still without power as we go to press, traffic is bad with all the out of town recovery workers and then we have half of Galveston's population living with us.

You would think the climate is good for all those people to look to resale to solve their clothing and home needs. How can you reach out to them?

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



S.T.A.R.S. Newsletter
C/O Pat Swartley
2206 Waters Edge Ln.
League City, TX 77573

First Class Mail
Address Correction Requested



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