



STARS Newsletter

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

Oct/Nov 2009

Volume 19, Number 5

Mark Your Calendars



October 18, 2009

STARS Annual Meeting at Trudy's

October 1, 2009

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, 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 newslet-

STARS Meet for Annual Meeting October 18th

Trudy's Boutique

1927 Fairview @ Woodhead
(two blocks north of 1900 Westheimer)

Phone: 713-524-7888

"Only the BEST in Women's fashions, shoes and Accessories" describes Trudy's Boutique as their tag line says. Owners, Trudy and her husband Marion will welcome us on Sunday afternoon 1:30-4:00. Come at 1:30 to browse the shop, look for bargains, and get ideas for your store. Our meeting begins at 2:00 pm with Pat and Yolanda leading discussions of topical interest to resalers. We love sharing and getting new ideas from each other. We hope you will come!

Want to know more about ?.....

- * The importance of knowing other *STARS* shops and partnering to promote your shops?
- * Locating better prices for store supplies?
- * How to use the Internet more effectively to promote your store with free listings and ads?
 - * The top 10 most effective marketing tools? (Most of them free!).
 - * And more!

As always, the most fun at the meetings, besides getting to check out the location for the meeting, is getting to know each other and learning about other stores. Be willing to share handouts or other information about your store so everyone will be able to make knowledgeable referrals to each other.

Hope you will come! To give Trudy an idea about how many to prepare for, please give her a call the week before the meeting to let her know you are coming. Drop-ins are also welcome.

The meeting is open to *STARS* members, prospective members, employees and family (no children, please).

Inside This Issue

Letter From the Editor.....	pg 2
Important News About the CPSIA Law.....	
.....	pg 3
Dear Resale Queen.....	pg 4
Meet New Member.....	pg 5



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
Children’s Collections
5219 Bellaire Blvd.
Bellaire, TX 77401
childrenscollections@live.com

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

Official *STARS* address is:

STARS
5219 Bellaire Blvd.
Bellaire, TX 77040

***STARS* Newsletter, Writer/Editor**
Pat Swartley, 281-338-9360
Email: pswartley@yahoo.com

Layout/graphics
Karen Frerking

Letter from the editor...

There was a cartoon in the Houston Chronicle recently picturing a boss speaking to his just laid off employee: “I can’t hire you back until you start spending more money to boost the economy, but first you must pay off your debts and save money for your retirement.” And of course the joke is, how can he do any of that without a job?

In August, two national women’s magazines featured articles encouraging readers to stop discretionary spending; buy only necessities, and not to replace worn out items. In one heartfelt story a teenage daughter who needed new tennis shoes was given an extra pair of her mother’s. Both families reported ending their **frugal year** with glowing reports on how good it made them feel to not go shopping or eat out. They had more money in the bank, and had spent quality time bonding with each other. This is the new trend—less spending and more saving, and why fewer people are walking in your doors. And it’s not going to change until there is little or no anxiety about jobs.

Retail is fighting for every customer by offering huge discounts and incentives to buy. Walmart (sporting a new logo), in particular, is loading the cannons aimed at keeping their customers and crushing their competition as well. They opened 52 new stores since Feb. 1 and plan to remodel 70 percent of their present stores. **Their new business plan is called “Project Impact”—a new and improved marketing image created from surveying their customers. (see the article on time.com)**

What are the features of this new marketing strategy?

1. **Cleaner, less cluttered stores** with a clear view of most the aisles, more grouping of similar items such as grocery with grooming products near by. “We’ve brightened up the stores and opened things up for easier navigation in the wider, more breathable aisles.”
2. **Friendlier customer service** and more people on the sales floor to help customers. (two greeters at the door?)

I love it! Walmart has spent millions on developing a new marketing strategy that is basically what I’ve told you in the newsletter for 18 years: talk to your customers to find out what they want, make your store clean, uncluttered and easy to shop in, be friendly AND have outstanding customer service.

Your Editor, *Pat Swartley*



Are You Selling Safe Merchandise for Children? How Can You Be Sure?

Fact: In spite of rules, regulations, guidelines and inspections, the U. S. Government cannot prevent all unsafe merchandise from being produced and sold in retail or resale shops. Manufacturers will continue to make unsafe products, pay the fines when caught, and issue a recall. Many products come from China or other foreign countries, which compounds the problem.

It is up to you, to determine which products are more likely to be safe for your children from infant to age 12. It is wise to check the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission website for recalls on toys, furniture, clothing or other items you may suspect is unsafe. **Their website is www.cpsc.gov.**

Last August the CPSC put into law their Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) that went into effect February 10, 2009. The law set new standards and guidelines for resale shops to prevent the sale of unsafe products for children under 12. Many children's resale shops stopped selling toys and infant equipment to avoid the risk of breaking the law. (CPSC has long discouraged the sale of used car seats.)

Savvy resale shops have always checked recall lists before accepting beds, playpens, high chairs, infant carriers, strollers or other infant furniture and equipment. Now under the CPSIA law, a resale shop can be fined a minimum of \$100,000 if a recalled item or any of the items listed below are found in their store.

The CPSIA law bans resale shops from selling these 5 things:

1. Items with a lead content of over 600 ppm. There is no reliable way a resale shop can test a product for lead. It was suggested that they contact the manufacturers; however it is difficult to get answers from them. **Best advice for resale shops and the consumer: stay away from products and manufacturers who are offenders in the recalls for lead. Especially Use caution in buying children's jewelry and accessories.**
2. Another part of the law outlaws six different phthalates in any products for children under 12. Phthalates are chemicals added to plastic to make it soft and pliable and is found in baby bottles and rubber ducks, for example. **Best advice: Avoid products made of soft, bendable plastic.**
3. Any recalled item.
4. Any item with parts smaller than 1 ¼" for children under 3 years old.
5. Toys, or products with magnets, such as Polly Pockets, and Littlest Pet shop.

On May 7, 2009, the CPSC issued guidelines for resellers. You can download it at www.narts.org/CPSIA_info.htm (first link.)



Dear Resale Queen,

I just opened my shop and I love everything I have to do to run it EXCEPT accepting consignments. Sometimes I get so nervous when I see a consignor come in the door, especially when I see I won't be able to take most of the stuff. What can I do to get more confidence?

Signed: Just a bowl of Jello

Dear Jello,

Have you ever heard the phrase, "fake it 'til you make it?" It is so important to ooze with self-confidence when you stride up to that nasty consignment. A take charge, I-know-what-I-am-doing attitude will intimidate the consignor and make it easier for her or him to accept rejection. Keep a smile on your face and don't let your voice wimp out. If you show the slightest sign of indecision over an item you risk getting pushed into taking it, and you will always regret it, believe me!

I know it is hard to hide a look of anger or disgust over a consignment with old, worn out stuff. I would sigh, look sadly at the merchandise and say something like, "This is great stuff but you held on to it a little too long, or wore it a few times too many." Then I'd smile and quickly change the subject, or holler to an employee, "Kathy, would you help Mrs.....take her things to the car?"

I hated it if the consignor looked forlorn and said, "but what am I going to do with all this stuff?" I use to feel sorry for them and offer to bag it all up and donate to a charity until one day a consignor said to me, "I didn't think you'd take any of it." That was a light bulb moment. There are people who already know you won't take any of their stuff but they hope they are wrong, or they just want to get rid of it and hope you will provide a solution. **My policy was I would only donate clean, useable stuff that was slightly below my standard.**

Bottom line: Be as relaxed and nice as you can be with any potential consignor. Have positive, readable consignment contracts and an efficient take-in policy. Be selective with rejected items you accept for donations—don't burden your charity with donations they will only have to carry to the dumpster.

Dear Resale Queen,

I had no idea when I opened my shop how much time it would take to run it. Sometimes I get overwhelmed with all the work. What should I do?

Signed: Just draggin'

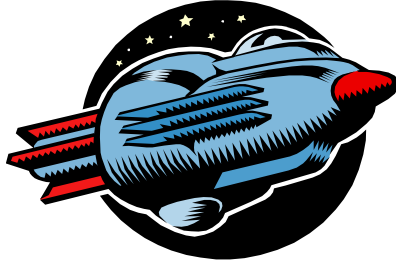
Dear draggin',

I have heard this story a lot in my many years in and out of the resale business and it makes me very sad. You MUST find a balance between your real life and your work life, no matter what it takes. For me, I was lucky enough to have fabulous employees so I could take time off for a luncheon, to visit other resale shops, take care of important store business, go on vacation, etc. I paid a price for that—my employee cost was high, but it was worth it to me in terms of overall benefits to quality of life and health. If making as much money as you can is your priority, you will have a short life span in the resale business and it won't be near as much fun.

The Resale Queen



News Around the Galaxy.....



New Member

Georgie's Resale

120 S. Friendswood Dr.
Friendswood, TX 77546

Phone: 281-639-1889
www.georgiesresale.com
georgiesresale@gmail.com

Owner, Irma Arenivar, has been open since July 7, 09. Georgie's is located in a strip center at the SE corner of FM2351 and Hyw 518 in Friendswood. Although a small store, about 1000-1200 sq ft of sales space, it is neatly filled with a variety of items from books, toys, clothing and accessories, house wares and more. Irma is careful about the quality of her merchandise, which she buys new or from customers and garage sales. There is a large selection of new jewelry and accessories. I always find a bargain I love when I shop there.

Irma always has customers in her store when I visit there. She is a very hands-on owner-- very important to create customer confidence and loyalty. She has a good location in the small but fast growing Friendswood community known for its loyalty to local stores.

Irma's husband George, said they have a lot of repeat business. While there a customer said to him, "every time I come in here I see new things." Ah, yeah! This is one of the biggest reasons you will have repeat business. Not getting a lot of new stuff? Move the stuff around to make it look that way. George, a marketing consultant, also uses an email service, **mailchimp.com** that has been

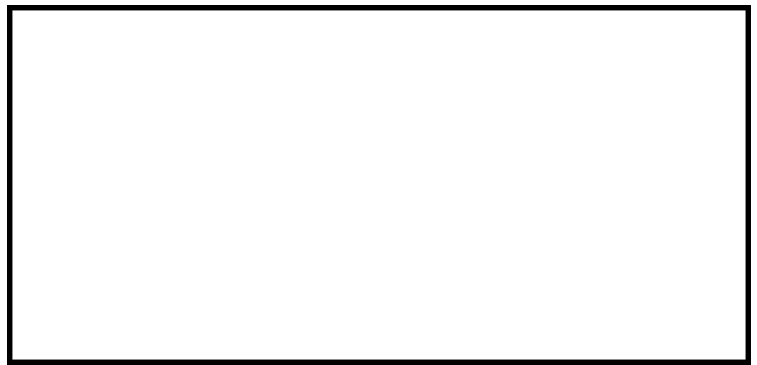
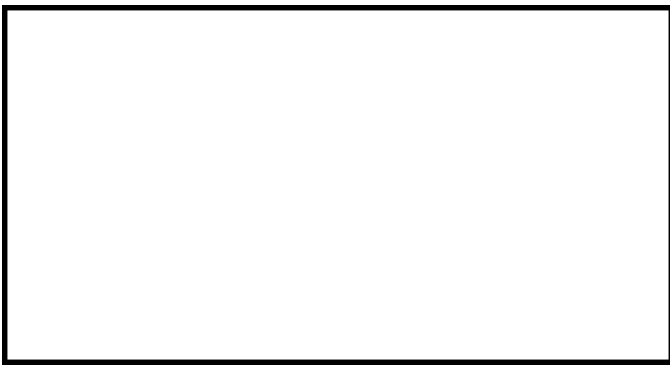
very effective and free for the first 3,000 sendouts a month. It also tracks how many look at your email message.

I picked up a nice red pen—no cheapie, either—with the name, address and phone number of the store. I'll try hard to hold on to it. Promotional items with your store name, etc is a good marketing idea to remind the customer of your store.

Interestingly, Irma never shopped resale before opening her shop, but she had a love of garage sale shopping and learned how to choose the best stuff at the best price. She loves her shop and it shows in everything she does, from being there for her customers, to the care she takes in displaying her wares, and not over-pricing her merchandise. Welcome New *STAR*!!!

A Reminder from Yolanda...All cell phone numbers are being released to telemarketing companies. YOU WILL BE CHARGED FOR THESE CALLS IF YOU ANSWER OR LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE. Opt out by calling this number from your cell phone: 888-382-1222 (FTC do not Call). Your number will be blocked for 5 years.

CHECK THIS...A *STAR* was taken to small claims court recently over a payment dispute. She shares this important information: 1. You must have an original signed copy of the consignment contract no older than 4 years. 2. You need at least 4 years of past records backed up of your store software, or manual records. 3. You may send documents supporting your side of the dispute to the court for the judge to review before your court date. 4. Be aware that the judge asks questions which you answer and there is no opportunity to just tell your side.



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