



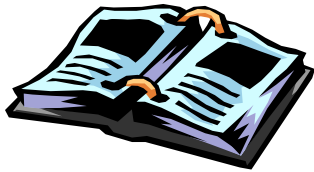
# STARS Newsletter

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

Apr/may 2006

Volume 16, Number 2

## Mark Your Calendars



### June 23-26, 2006

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

### September 2006

2<sup>nd</sup> printing of the Official *STARS* Directory

### October 2006

*STARS* annual meeting TBA

### March 2007

1<sup>st</sup> printing of the *STARS* Official Directory

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

Please visit our website soon to review your listing for accuracy. Let Yolanda know at [Yolanda@starsresale.com](mailto:Yolanda@starsresale.com) if there are any additions or changes to be made. Don't forget, you may, **at no charge**, add your email address to your listing.

**Now is the time to link your store website to your listing.** For a one-time cost of only \$50 your store name will be placed on the home page of the *STARS* website with a direct link. On your listing the name of your store will be in blue with a direct link to your website. If interested in adding this important feature, please send a check for \$50, payable to *STARS* and mail to *STARS*, 1922 Fountain View, Houston TX 77057. Please include the website address.

We will continue to make important additions and changes to our *STARS* website to benefit our members and to draw more customers. Check out the new features, "Ask the Resale Queen" and "Membership News". We wish to thank new webmaster, Eddie Runner, of [txsoft.net](http://txsoft.net) for his expertise and time in helping us refresh and improve the website. Mr. Runner is also helping *STARS* develop an online shopping store for our members to be hosted on our *STARS* website. Watch for more information coming soon.

## The *STARS* Official Directory News

Jacke Shipwash, our publisher, has distributed the Directory to all *STAR* advertisers. If you have an ad and have not received your Directories please call Yolanda ASAP at 713-789-6456.

Please note that all of our advertising space available on the Directory was taken. Space is at a premium due to *STARS* membership of 42 members and growing. If you did not advertise in the March Directory but would like to join us in September, please get your reservation in for the waiting list. Present advertisers are given first priority on space available. Jacke can be reached at 1-409-927-1295.

Your President, *Pat Swartley*

## Inside This Issue

President's Letter.....	page 2
Online shopping grows more popular...	page 3
Make your store a stand-out.....	page 4
Meet new <i>STARS/STAR</i> lets.....	page 5

**SPECIAL INSERT:** Musings from a Former Resale Shop Owner



## 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, *STARlets* 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. 2006 Membership dues are \$50 per year and new members are accepted at any time. *STARlet* provisional membership is offered to new resale shops in business less than 1 year. *STARlets* enjoy most benefits of membership for free.

*STAR* membership provides the opportunity to have a listing on the *STARS* website, [www.starsresale.com](http://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: Pat Swartley, 281-338-9360; Yolanda Ramirez and Sandra Marin, Second Childhood on Fountainview, 713-789-6456.

*STARS* Newsletter Writer/Editor:

**Pat Swartley**

Layout/graphics:

**Karen Frerking**

Advertising is accepted.  
Members may advertise

## Presidents letter:

On April 1<sup>st</sup> 2005, I handed the keys to my store, the Clothes Basket, to the President of the Assistance League of the Bay Area and walked out the door. Then I walked back in on April 15<sup>th</sup> and worked as a part-time employee for a time. Now on the anniversary of giving up my store I will retire as President of *STARS*.

During the last two months I have been giving Yolanda all of my responsibilities. She will not take the title of President, however. It has been decided that since the Board of Directors are voluntary positions we will not use titles. Yolanda is now seeking volunteers to help her. It could be you!

I shall now walk through memory lane—think violin music. In September 1991 I was invited to a meeting of resale shop owners to explore the possibility of a resale organization for the greater Houston area. About 25 shops owners attended and there was such excitement in the air! At that meeting a name was suggested and agreed upon: The South Texas Association of Resale Shops. Tony Coleman, who organized the meeting, called me later and asked if I would serve on a temporary Board of Directors. We borrowed some by-laws from an Indiana resale organization and within a year we elected officers. I volunteered to create a newsletter and did it on a typewriter! The first issues were so primitive and took so much time!

I served as Vice President for 2 years and then was elected President in 1994. From 1998 to the present I served as a volunteer President. By the way, one of the charter members, a graphic artist, created our *STARS* logo at my request.

We grew to nearly 50 members before the Gulf Wars in the early 90's and then lost a third of our membership during it and shortly afterwards. By contrast, we have lost very few members during the Iraq war and presently have 42 members, plus a number of *STARlets* waiting in the wings to qualify for membership.

Yolanda is a charter member of *STARS* and has been my right hand man. I would be hard pressed to pick which one of us is more dedicated or has worked harder for *STARS*.

I have every confidence that *STARS* will continue to grow. **My parting gift to *STARS* is the renewal of the domain name, [starsresale.com](http://starsresale.com), registration for the next 6 years!** I will continue to promote *STARS* to non-member resale shops and will continue to visit and shop in as many *STARS* stores as I can get to! In the meanwhile, you may reach me at [p\\_swartley@yahoo.com](mailto:p_swartley@yahoo.com) or by phone: 281-338-9360. My home address is: 2206 Waters Edge Lane, league City TX 77573.

I am proud to have had the opportunity to serve *STARS*. Thank you for the many friendships and inspiring adventures!

*Pat Swartley*



## How Do You Pay Consignors?

As some of you may have already figured out: there is no right or wrong way to do resale. It is a matter of which way is best or right for you and your particular situation. And as you can imagine, there is a variety of ways to pay consignors that works for some and wouldn't work for others.

### Here are some ideas or options:

1. **Pay consignors whatever you owe them, whenever they want it.** Some shops encourage consignors to come in and check on their account and use their credit or take the money. One *STAR* owner said she enjoyed the game of trying to see if they could get the consignor to part with the money before they got out of the store! "If we delayed payment for 5-10 minutes they usually found something to use the credit on, and frequently they just endorsed the back of the check we just gave them." One *STAR* also sends checks to consignors who didn't come in, and one *STAR* store only pays out when they are asked.

Some stores limit the time the consignor may ask for the money due them, or put "void after 60 days" on the checks. Banks may or may not honor this.

2. **Pay consignors by check once a month.** Stores that do this usually let the consignor use their credit to shop with during the month. Some stores pay out every nickel that is owed and some cut checks for amounts of \$10 or more. Some stores require the consignor to pick up the check, and others mail it. One *STAR* tells consignors they may pick up their check before the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month or it is mailed.
3. **Pay consignors at the end of the consignment period.** One check instead of 2 or three saves time and money. Some consignors prefer to be paid this way but others will not like it. Allowing credit is a good idea here, too.

## Online Shopping More Popular Than Ever

There is a new book out entitled: "FutureShop" by Daviel Nissanoff (Penguin Press, (available on Amazon for under \$25) that will strike fear in the hearts of any resale/consignment shop owner. There is no doubt that the day is coming when buying and selling online will become huge. The process will be made easier and more people will sit in their bathrobe at home to buy and sell online, or use a "facilitator" to do the selling for them.

Facilitator franchises are growing by leaps and bounds. Check out this new one: The Online Outpost at [www.theonlineoutpost.com](http://www.theonlineoutpost.com). Nissanoff says, "drop shops...will soon be as pervasive as Starbucks."

Resale/consignment shop owners should take a hard look at how they can benefit from this growing trend. They should no longer rely completely on the "touchy, feely" customer who prefers to browse and give their money to a human rather than a computer.

We could be the "drop shop" for the consignor with the luxury items who has trusted us in the past to sell their items. Think about it: how many times have you received unusual or very expensive items and have been forced to turn it down or apologize to the consignor that you will have to price it low to sell?

*STARS* has done research in the area of selling online and we have selected a provider to offer this service to our members. The online store package includes training so that you can service your own online shop. When available, complete information will be shown on our website under "Member News".



## Put a Smile in Your Voice (when you answer the phone)

Jacke Shipwash, our *STARS* Directory publisher, talks on the phone to a lot of people everyday in the course of doing her publishing business, and she is amazed at how some businesses answer the phone as if they are annoyed with the interruption of their day.

Most shop owners do not realize, says Jacke, that a telephone call is their chance to win a new customer or to remind an old customer how wonderful you are! Often they, or their employees are tired, stressed or harried and fail to answer the phone in a cordial manner, or say hello, thank you or even good bye. If the person who answers the phone can take the time to properly answer the phone and speak in a relaxed manner, all calls could be turned into "sales" calls regardless of the reason for the call. Take the time to chat with the caller to find out why they called and look for an opportunity to tell them about special sales or events going on or coming up soon. Give them a reason to want to come by. "Everyone has money in their pocket," adds Jacke, "so be kind and courteous to all callers and the odds of you making a sale to them will be greater. This applies to anyone who comes through your front door, too!"

We all know this, right? So, why do we still get in a hurry and answer the phone by just spitting out the name of our store that sends a clear message we don't have time to talk?

## STAND OUT BY FINDING YOUR NICHE

*(This article appeared in the Houston Chronicle business section, Sunday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, written by Ron Consolino, a management counselor for SCORE, a non-profit volunteer association dedicated to counseling small business owners. Visit their website: [www.scorehouston.org](http://www.scorehouston.org).)*

Mr. Consolino answered a question about how can a small business owner stand out when competing against other stores offering just about the same services?

His advice was: "In today's competitive business climate, you've got to separate yourself from the pack. You've got to create a niche by offering something nobody else has, and by targeting your business to a few select markets...then offering specialized goods and services attractive to a specific group of prospective buyers."

He continues, is there a niche that your competition has failed to fill? Do you have a specific expertise in a particular area? Can you find a niche by putting a spin on something you already do?

The first step toward answering these questions is to take a good look at the retail and resale stores in your area that provide your type of merchandise or services. What can you do better? What merchandise should you consider adding or taking away?

### Here are some choices *STARS* stores have made to create a niche and stand out in the crowd:

- One *STAR* noticed that thrift and resale shops in her area closed on Mondays. She stays open and enjoys a great day.
- A Ladies shop offers prom dress rentals and stays open late one evening.
- Another store offers after hour shopping parties that include refreshments and make-overs.
- One store offers a VIP card to select customers that entitles them to 10% off full-price merchandise anytime. Wouldn't you shop there first before going to other stores?
- Several high-end resale shops offer pick-up personal shopper services for their top consignors.
- More and more shops are offering online selling of selected merchandise, thus giving their shop the edge in competition.
- A number of *STARS* accept consignments of specialty retail stores current or end of season items.



## Welcome New Members

### Boaters' Resale Shop

1206 A FM 2094 (Marina Bay Drive)  
Kemah, TX 77565  
Phone: 713-614-8884  
email: paul.yirga@virtual-harbor-master.com

Owner, Paul Yirga, sells boat equipment and small boats. An interesting feature of his store is that he offers advertising space on his walls to businesses that have products or services that benefit the boater.

### Kid To Kid

6777 Woodland Parkway at Kuylendahl  
Woodlands, TX 77382  
Phone: 281-419-3339  
email: info@kidtokidtexas.com

Owner, Donna Gylling, buys outright, but does offer limited consignments on furniture. Kid to Kid is a member of a national franchise.

### My Closet, Your Closet

1608 S. Friendswood Dr.  
Friendswood, TX 77546  
Phone: 281-992.0900  
email: mycloset2005@sbcglobal.net

Owner, Carla Anderson is a new owner and sells ladies clothing and accessories.

### A Perfect Fit

14520 Memorial Drive, Ste #30  
Houston, TX 77079  
Phone: 281-679-6795

Owner, Marie Pace, has been in business 2 years and was previously employed for 8 years at a local resale shop. Her store sells everything for the lady.

### Baubles & Beads

3503 W. Holcombe Blvd.  
Houston, TX 77025  
Phone: 713-592-5501

New owner is Sandra Harris. This franchise store sells ladies clothing and accessories.

### Sally's Star Resale

1102 S. 31<sup>st</sup> Street  
Temple, TX 76504  
Phone: 1-254-771-0896  
email: sallysresale@aol.com

Owner: Sally Lewelling, sells family resale clothing

## Welcome New STARlet

### Lizzie's Resale

2121 W. Main (FM 518)  
League City, TX 77673  
Phone: 281-554-4200  
email: adefatta@yahoo.com

Owners, Tracy and Anthony Defatta, opened in December 2005 right on FM 518, just west of I-45. Just down the street to the east is Changes Kids Resale, Sunday's Child and Perfectly Good Gently Used Etc.

## Check this out

More and more *STARS* are selling on line as a benefit to their consignors. If you want to consider doing eBay, go to Kate Holmes site, [www.tgtbt.com](http://www.tgtbt.com) and click on "site map". Choose "sharing excerpts" and scroll down to information about using eBay written by resale shops owners who have had a lot of experience and success. Their tips are outstanding.

Debbie Damon, at B'Dazzled called the other day to share some good news. She had an energy expert examine why her electric bills were so high and he recommended that the tract lighting and recess bulbs be changed to a low heat, low energy user ProLume bulbs, which are blue-white glow compact fluorescent bulbs. She needed 66 and got an incredible deal for just over \$400 from Light Bulbs Unlimited. Call Adul Flores at 713-783-1606. If you set up a commercial account you can get a great deal like Debbie.

By the way, Debbie has received a large number of brand new formals and eveningwear from a specialty shop. These gowns can sell for pageant, prom, charity events, Mary Kay seminars, and mother of the bride. They are current styles still being sold locally and they are priced from \$88-\$198 in sizes zero-20. **As an added service, Debbie tells the customer that they may return a cleaned gown for consignment!**

## Musings From a Former Consignment/Resale Shop Owner

By *Pat*

*Swartley*

The other day I reflected on the 20 years I was consumed by the resale industry as a shop owner and decided I should share some advice for those of you still carrying the torch. I have to say I was passionate about resale all the way to the finish line. Good times or bad times, it didn't matter. I loved my store and couldn't wait to get to it each day.

I feel extremely lucky that I was able to choose what for me, was the best exit. And do I regret giving up the store? Well, the other day I kind of missed the hectic pace of running a resale shop, so I visited my old store, now owned by a charity, The Assistance League of the Bay Area. My eyes teared up a little as I looked around the store. Then a volunteer on duty showed me the back room piled high with donations. That took care of it. Yeah, I'm done.

**And so dear friends still full of the resale passion, these are my parting words of wisdom:**

1. **Protect that passion.** Take care of yourself and take care of the important things. Get someone else to sort hangers, pull reclaims, clean the store, or do the books. Don't let burn-out stalk you. It breaks my heart when I visit a resale shop and see a harried owner working mostly alone trying to do everything, especially when she tells me she was at her shop until midnight doing mundane tasks.
2. I know a former resale shop owner who set her procedures and policies and never changed them for the 10 years she was in business. How boring! **Evaluate everything you do often to see if you can provide better customer service.** Never give up seeking better and more creative ways to reach customers and to keep them coming back.
3. **Take advantage of every opportunity to learn more and better ways to do business.** Start with NARTS and Kate Holmes' educational opportunities. Go to Conference. There is nothing like attending a Conference to keep the passion alive. You will get affirmation that you are doing some things right and you'll get more "tools" to advance your business. I do not believe I would have stayed in business 20 years without this experience and knowledge, nor would I have had as much fun!
4. **Be a supporter of other resale shops in your area.** Get to know the owners. What a wonderful opportunity to mentor, share concerns, celebrate successes, learn enough to make informed referrals and much more! I personally have gotten some of the best ideas ever from talking to other shop owners or visiting their stores.
5. **Protect the business.** The first time I took a down turn in revenue I had no back-up capital and had to borrow money from family to stay in business. Thank goodness they had it! The second time it happened I had an established line-of-credit at my bank and a savings money market account to back me. Consider a term life insurance policy on you paid for by the business in the event of your passing.

*Last of all, Do whatever it takes to enjoy life in your store and outside it!*