

Memory Hunters and Gatherers

Dear Homekeeper,

Glimpsing life through a child's eyes, particularly when it's their first discovery of something is a precious serendipity I cherish. Various themes about exploring how to hold onto significant memories often come from scheduled events. As a homekeeper, I at times would create an experience particularly for my grandchildren to share a favorite memory, sans technology. These experiences can fall under the category of the classic (like when I showed them once how to dye Easter eggs with food coloring).

Opportunities to create lasting memories occur outside the home, especially when a special keepsake from that event can trigger the memory for self and others. One such opportune moment coming up is on June 1: the annual Baldwin City's Citywide Yard Sale. The sign-up deadline is May 28 so to be included in Digital & print maps listing. Maps will be available at the Library, City Hall, and in the Maple Weekly. New this year: a thrift store truck will be available in town for sellers to donate any unsold items.

To be honest I was never much into yard sales. Depending on the stage of life, you might find yourself needing things, then get in the accumulation stage only to later need to declutter. Then one year after I moved here, I signed up for the city-wide yard sale when I was moving into a smaller house. Ironically, due to another life change, I ended up replacing most of what I sold! Letting go of things is a challenge for me, often wanting them back the day after I part with them.

Community-wide yard sales, like those promoted by a city, are especially fortuitous for both sellers and buyers. At a nearby military installation where service assignments change annually, an all-installation-wide sale event is held to help military families unload items before moving. Although it sounds inconvenient, buyers could not park on the installation (only on the peripheral surrounding streets off base) but would walk through the sales and then carry their treasures back to their cars, often with license plates from Missouri, Iowa, and Nebraska. During one such event, we asked a military resident if we could sell six of the ten lab puppies left over from a litter. We provided a playpen to corral the puppies and while the playpen took a beating, they were all sold. I believe the playpen made the presentation of the pups even more adorable.

With this experience in mind, I signed up for the Baldwin City Yard sale. I made much more money than I anticipated and was inspired by overhearing the customer's ideas on how they were going to use items. I staged similar items together and showed how to combine them in a decorative fashion which made it even more enjoyable at set up time. Two teachers bought all the various eclectic desk accessories and organizers I had accumulated over the years for each of my four kids' desks and the home office. They planned to use the accessories at the various learning stations in their classrooms. It was also enjoyable to meet my neighbors and other town folk.

In the spirit of repurposing, reusing, and recycling things, yard sales are budget-friendly for a homekeeper not to mention the bargains for the homekeeper's budget. You can make it a family-oriented outing which admittedly takes some persuasion. Don't let that deter you.

We've all had serendipitous outings come together unexpectedly for the best memorable experience. Here collectors can make unique discoveries, or grandparents can find extra toys to keep for when the grands visit, and others can discover a cool picture frames, unique lamps, or a small piece of furniture to showcase memorabilia at home.

If you are a seller with children, involve them in the process to teach them retail skills and the ability to "let go" of some things. Be sure to compensate them! Kids could also host a lemonade stand at your sale or ask another yard sale host if they can set up a refreshment stand.

Homekeepers can initiate the creation of a memory, from your own recollections by participating in just such a local event.

Until next time, warmest regards. Cathenry.ch@gmail.com

P.S. One person's stuff can be another person's treasure.